

Frequently Asked Questions: Urban Growth Monitor 11

What is the *Urban Growth Monitor*?

The *Urban Growth Monitor* measures land development and dwelling construction in the Perth metropolitan, Peel and Greater Bunbury regions. It provides detailed information and analysis on the following key stages of the land supply process:

- urban and urban deferred zoned land supply
- consumption rates of urban zoned land
- how long our current land supply will last
- rates of residential infill development in the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions
- density trends.

What is the Urban Development Program?

The Urban Development Program (UDP) is prepared for the Western Australian Planning Commission to fulfil the requirements for tracking and modelling land supply as outlined in the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. The UDP aims to monitor land supply and assist in the timely delivery of residential, industrial and commercial land across Western Australia's urban and regional centres.

For the latest edition of the *Urban Growth Monitor* as well as other Urban Development Program publications please visit the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage website or contact udp@planning.wa.gov.au

What is the tiered land supply assessment model?

The *Urban Growth Monitor* uses the tiered land supply assessment model, which is a Geographic Information System (GIS) based tool to provide a detailed analysis of the stock of land zoned urban or urban deferred within the Metropolitan, Peel and Greater Bunbury region schemes.

Tier one – identifies the stock of land available for urban development (urban and urban deferred zoned land) in each of the State's three region scheme areas.

Tier two – assesses the development status (urbanised or non-urbanised) of the stock of land available for urban development identified in tier one.

Tier three – examines the land use dynamics of land zoned for urban development.

Tier four – describes the volume and spatial distribution of current residential subdivision approvals.

What is the infill model?

In the context of the *Urban Growth Monitor*, infill refers to the construction of new residential dwellings in urbanised areas that meet specific density criteria. New dwellings constructed outside of infill areas are classified as greenfield dwellings.

The infill model used in the *Urban Growth Monitor* defines the spatial extent of infill areas in the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions using data from Australian Bureau of Statistics geographic catchment areas known as mesh blocks. These mesh blocks are aggregated into a larger scale, using the statistical area level one (SA1) boundaries of the 2011 Census to construct the spatial framework used to estimate infill volumes.

Gross residential densities, namely dwellings per hectare, for each SA1 in the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions are calculated using Census data. Based on the distribution of densities across Perth and Peel, a benchmark development density can be derived. Areas which have densities greater than the benchmark are considered to be infill areas. Conversely, areas with densities below the development benchmark are categorised as greenfield areas.

Locations which are geographically surrounded by areas with gross residential densities higher than the benchmark are also included as infill areas, regardless of their individual development density.

How is the infill rate calculated?

In the *Urban Growth Monitor* the infill rate refers to the net increase in dwellings within infill areas as a proportion of the collective net increase in dwellings across the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions. Net increase, in this context, refers to the number of dwellings constructed minus the number of dwellings demolished in a calendar year.

Why is measuring infill important?

One of the objectives of the *Perth and Peel@3.5million* suite of documents is to create a more compact and connected city. Achieving this vision will require an increase in the level of infill development in existing areas and improving dwelling density in future greenfield residential developments. Measuring infill helps track progress towards achieving this goal.

How should the infill dwelling targets be used?

The *Urban Growth Monitor* reports on infill development, in relation to housing targets, at a sub-regional level. Individual local governments will experience varying levels of development activity due to a variety of factors including market cycles and the existing volume and maturity of urban form.

Infill dwelling targets to 2031 and to 2050 for local governments have been identified for the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions in the *Perth and Peel@3.5million* suite of documents. The dwelling targets, in conjunction with infill monitoring, are intended to be used as a policy evaluation tool by local governments when preparing local planning schemes and strategies.

What is the difference between land supply and lot supply?

The term 'land supply' can be used in a variety of contexts with different meanings and implications. The *Urban Growth Monitor* refers to land supply as the amount of undeveloped land zoned for urban purposes in a region scheme.

Residential land buyers, on the other hand, frequently use the term 'land supply' in reference to the number of developed and serviced lots available to purchase. In the context of the *Urban Growth Monitor*, this is viewed as 'lot supply' and an undersupply would be referred to as a 'lot shortage'.

How is dwelling density measured?

The concept of dwelling density is fundamental to urban planning and understanding dwelling dynamics. Dwelling density is the relationship between the number of dwellings and the available or utilised land area and is usually described in terms of the number of dwellings per hectare.

As part of the Urban Development Program, the *Urban Growth Monitor* has developed methodologies for measuring density at a number of different levels for a range of different purposes:

1. **Gross zone dwelling density:** the number of dwellings per gross hectare of urbanised land only. This measure includes the urbanised portion of land zoned for urban development including local roads, parks and other incidental uses. Gross zone dwelling density includes lots on urban zoned land but does not include dwellings on city centre zoned land.
2. **Net site dwelling density:** the number of dwellings per net site hectare, which includes only the site area of lots actually developed for residential use. Net site dwelling density measures only the internal site area of lots which have been developed with dwellings, regardless of when the dwellings were constructed. This provides a snapshot of net site dwelling density as at the reporting period.
3. **Net site dwelling density by build year:** the number of dwellings per net site hectare based only on lots which were developed with dwellings constructed in the specified time period. This measure provides the most accurate indication of the changing nature of residential development, as it refers specifically to the density of recently completed building activity, rather than the collective urban form of the study area.

What data sources does the *Urban Growth Monitor* use?

The information presented in the *Urban Growth Monitor* is derived from a range of data sources including:

- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage internal spatial and approvals databases
- resident population, building approvals, dwelling completions and dwelling commencements from the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- property information from Landgate's property valuation database.

How does the *Urban Growth Monitor* help inform planning decisions?

The information reported in the *Urban Growth Monitor* in conjunction with the other UDP products are produced for the Western Australian Planning Commission to promote a better understanding of land supply and land use planning and development. They provide essential baseline information that helps State infrastructure agencies, public utilities, local governments and the private sector with decision making and forward planning.

How is the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage supporting a more compact and connected city?

The *Perth and Peel@3.5 million* strategic suite of documents has been developed as a unified long-term growth strategy for land use and infrastructure for the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions. The suite of documents provides guidance on where sustainable development should occur over the next 35 to 40 years to accommodate the anticipated increase in population.

Together with the *Perth and Peel@3.5 million* report, the strategic suite consists of four Sub-regional Planning Frameworks for the Central, North West, North East and South Metropolitan Peel subregions.

In this context, the Sub-regional Planning Frameworks are an important mechanism for managing urban growth and achieving the increased urban consolidation and residential housing choice required to accommodate our anticipated long-term population growth.

The frameworks provide opportunities for higher-density residential development, particularly around activity centres, station precincts and along high-frequency public transport routes.

They guide infill development to deliver a more compact and connected city and promote the connectivity and development of activity centres, corridors, industrial nodes and station precincts. This in turn will help to drive employment opportunities outside the Central Business District with the key objective to provide employment options where people live, thereby reducing the need for people to commute long distances for work.