

Frequently Asked Questions: Urban Growth Monitor 9

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 Perth metropolitan and Peel; and
- 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 and targeted regional centres and activity areas.

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 – looks at the three region schemes to identify the stock of land available for urban development (urban and urban deferred zoned land).

Tier two – looks at the development status of the land zoned for urban development.

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

Tier four – looks at the spatial distribution of current residential subdivision approvals.

What is the infill model?

The infill model used in the *Urban Growth Monitor* defines an accurate spatial extent of the infill areas of the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions. 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 defined as part of the infill model. In contrast, new residential dwellings outside of infill areas are classified as greenfield dwellings. The infill model uses data from 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 for the Metropolitan and Peel region scheme areas.

Gross residential densities, namely dwellings per hectare, for each SA1 in Perth metropolitan and Peel are calculated using Census data as at 2006. Based on the distribution of densities for each of the SA1s, a mean or benchmark density can be derived. Areas which have gross residential densities greater than the benchmark are considered to be infill areas. Conversely, areas with gross residential densities below the benchmark are categorised as greenfield areas. Locations which are geographically surrounded by areas with gross residential densities higher than the benchmark are automatically included as infill areas. The infill model reported in this edition covers the total stock and proportion of infill and greenfield dwellings from 2011 onwards.

Why is measuring infill important?

One of the objectives of *Directions 2031 and Beyond* and the *Perth and Peel@3.5million* documents is to create a more compact and connected city. Achieving this vision will require increasing the level of infill in existing areas and improving dwelling density in future greenfield residential developments. Measuring infill helps track the gradual progress towards achieving the long term vision of a compact and connected city.

How should the infill dwelling targets be used?

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

Infill dwelling construction is reported at the sub-region scale in the *Urban Growth Monitor* as in any given year, individual local governments will experience varying levels of development activity. In addition to fluctuations in the number of dwellings constructed in infill areas from year to year, demolitions represent a leading indicator of future dwelling construction. This is because in many cases, dwelling demolition may facilitate further dwelling construction at higher densities.

It is realistic to expect that higher yield infill projects will take time to progress through the planning and development pipeline. For these reasons, it is critical to note that infill dwelling development is unlikely to progress in a smooth or linear fashion.

What is the difference between land supply and lot supply?

The term 'land supply' is frequently used by government, industry and in the media, but often it is in different contexts and with different implications. In the context of the *Urban Growth Monitor*, land supply refers to the amount of land that is zoned for residential, industrial or commercial use in a region scheme and is undeveloped. It is important to note that buyers of residential land often use the term 'land supply' in reference to the number of developed and serviced lots that are available to purchase, for the purpose of dwelling construction. By contrast, in the context of the *Urban Growth Monitor* this is referred to as 'lot supply'.

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 within 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 (including only the site area of lots actually developed for residential use). Net site dwelling density includes 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 (including only the site area of lots actually developed for residential use) 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 includes only the site area of lots developed with dwellings.

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; and
- 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 draft *Sub-regional Planning Frameworks* for the Central, North-West, North-East and South Metropolitan Peel sub-regions.

In this context, the draft *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 draft 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 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.