

# Planning in a market economy: lessons from Wentworth Point and Cockburn Central

Dr Laura Crommelin, Dr Laurence Troy, Dr Hazel Easthope, Associate Professor Simon Pinnegar, and Professor Bill Randolph<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> City Futures Research Centre, Faculty of Built Environment, UNSW

The compact city model has become planning orthodoxy for Australia's major cities, with metropolitan plans promoting higher density infill as a key strategy for meeting the housing needs of growing urban populations. The production of high density housing in existing urban areas often requires negotiating more complex issues than greenfield development, however, including the challenges of aggregating fragmented land ownership, the increased cost and difficulty of upgrading existing infrastructure, and the need to engage with existing residents. This complexity is exacerbated by the reliance on the private market to deliver new development, meaning the planning, supply and consumption of housing involves players with different – and sometimes incompatible – goals and motivations. Producing high quality projects amidst this complexity requires significant strategic planning capacity, to ensure market activity is directed towards achieving good public outcomes.

This paper draws on the findings of a multi-year study of compact city planning in Perth and Sydney, involving analysis of development data, stakeholder interviews and local case studies. It compares the outcomes of two urban renewal projects, Wentworth Point (16km west of Sydney's CBD) and Cockburn Central (22 km south of Perth's CBD). By examining the history of the two projects and assessing the results to date, the paper identifies key lessons for planners seeking to ensure good public outcomes through compact city planning. While both projects illustrate the complex governance and planning challenges underpinning major urban renewal, the comparison also highlights the variegated outcomes delivered under market led approaches to renewal.