

Treasurer tackles Australia's acute lack of housing

Build or pay the price

HOME buyers and renters could face rising prices if Australia does not build more houses more quickly to satisfy growing demand, Treasurer Wayne Swan has warned.

Seeking to put pressure on the states and land authorities about the housing squeeze, Mr Swan said the nation faced an estimated housing shortfall of 400,000 by 2028.

He said it was time to confront controversial issues such as planning and zoning laws

Phillip Hudson

national political editor

and to speed up land release. Mr Swan said in some cases it took 15 years from the time land was developed to a completed house.

"We can and must do better than this," he told a closed-door meeting of housing industry chiefs.

"We are not building enough houses and if this continues then we will all be paying increasingly more and more for our housing whether it be in

terms of repayments or in terms of rent.

"We need to deliver planning and zoning reforms to reduce the time it takes to develop, build and deliver homes."

The Housing Industry Association said that last year about 130,000 homes were built in Australia — the lowest number in a decade.

HIA chief economist Harley Dale said taking into account population growth and other factors, the nation needed about 190,000 homes last year.

Mr Swan said he did not want the great Australian

dream of home ownership to be beyond the reach of most Australians.

"Unless constraints to the supply side of the market are addressed, our cities will not adapt to meet the needs of a growing population and we will see continued problems of affordability for ordinary Australians," he said.

Mr Swan called for planning and policy co-operation to fix the low supply of housing.

"Housing affordability is an issue close to my own heart — one brought home by my two daughters trying to get into

the market," he said. Among the issues Mr Swan is looking at is how to tackle disincentives that keep older people living alone or as couples in big houses after their children leave. Many say it is too costly to shift to a smaller home.

Mr Swan also signalled concern about developer charges, and the uncertainty and delay they caused.

Dr Dale said governments needed to find a more efficient planning process and ensure a more timely release of land.

He also called for stamp duty on new homes to be cut.



Wayne Swan

Fashion's black on track for winter

Emily Power

MODELS stalked a black carpet catwalk under a hot summer sun yesterday to show off next season's sexiest fashion trends.

The L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival launched its official program at Federation Square.

Sultry autumn/winter looks by sass and bide, Dion Lee, Thurley, Manning Cartell, Wayne Cooper, Limerdrop, Scanlan and Theodore, Sportsgirl, Levante and Jonathan Aston were on show for a crowd of fashion lovers.

All of the festival events at Federation Square, including catwalk parades, will be free.

Emerging talent, established designers and chain stores catering for every budget will showcase new collections in parades at Federation Square, Central Pier at Docklands and Malvern Town Hall.

The festival runs from March 14 to 21, with tickets through Ticketmaster.



They've got the looks: models show some of the new-season styles ready for the L'Oreal Fashion Festival. Picture: REBECCA MICHAEL

NRL chopper cost \$40,000

PAPERS show that it cost almost \$40,000 to deliver the NRL Grand Final trophy by Black Hawk helicopter to ANZ Stadium last year.

The chopper delivered the trophy and match-day ball

before "bowing" to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

It then led a Mexican wave and left before kickoff in the match between Melbourne Storm and Parramatta Eels, which the Storm won.

Snorkeller missing in bay

A SEARCH will resume today for a missing snorkeller feared drowned in Port Phillip Bay.

Police searched for Robert Zakarija, 39, of Mont Albert, after he disappeared while spear fishing near the Cerberus

at Half Moon Bay on Tuesday. His family raised the alarm after he failed to return home yesterday morning.

The father-of-two's wallet and phone were found in his Honda HRV at the scene.

Tide turning in Afghanistan

THOUSANDS of extra troops and the right strategy are "turning the tide" in Afghanistan, Australia's defence force chief has told a Senate hearing.

Air Chief Marshall Angus

Houston backed US General Stanley McChrystal.

"We have the right strategy, we have the right leader in General McChrystal," he told an estimates hearing in Canberra yesterday.

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All information accurate as at 3 February 2010 sourced from CANSTAR CANNEX.

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