Property Council warns 100 Gold Coast projects threatened by tower height ruling

Gold Coast councillors face an urgent call to act after a landmark court ruling threw more than $4bn in construction and 4341 new homes into doubt.

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More than $4bn in construction work is at risk on the Gold Coast after a bombshell Court of Appeal decision threw doubt over significant height increases on high rise developments.

Gold Coast City Council senior planners have received an industry impact assessment report from the Property Council of Queensland that shows 44 projects are at risk.

Property Council Queensland executive director Jess Caire said in an email without a clear path forward projects could be delayed, redesigned or abandoned altogether.

She confirmed 100 projects could be impacted in the next 12 months.

"The consequence will be fewer dwellings entering the market, reduced housing choice and greater pressure on affordability across the Gold Coast," she said.

Councillors on the eve of Tuesday's council meeting were being urged to introduce a Temporary Local Planning Instrument to provide immediate certainty about development.

The Property Council warned the full-time equivalent employment of the projects at risk would be up to 14,483 workers.

Meanwhile, the number of dwellings impacted would be 4341 with the construction value between $4.39bn to $5.48bn.

"A clear interim pathway is critical to restoring confidence, maintaining investment certainty and ensuring housing supply is not unnecessarily delayed," Ms Caire said.

Jess Caire of the Property Council — their research shows impact of a recent court decision on high rise development on the Gold Coast. Picture: NewsWire/ Tertius Pickard.

"At a time when all levels of government are focused on increasing housing supply, the current uncertainty risks having the opposite effect.

"The projects affected are not theoretical future opportunities. They are developments actively progressing through the pipeline that would deliver new homes, jobs and investment across the Gold Coast."

The Property Council's 2026 Gold Coast Apartment Snapshot showed the region is already delivering less than half the attached dwellings required under the South East Queensland Regional Plan, with a shortfall of more than 3000 homes each year.

This Bulletin revealed in August that a 14-level tower development at Palm Beach had been delayed as council sought urgent legal advice after a landmark Court of Appeal ruling cast doubt on its height uplift criteria.

Construction work on the Gold Coast on new towers. Picture: Glenn Hampson.

Under the City Plan, an increase of up to 50 per cent in height can be given if a developer meets several measures including "housing choice and affordability".

But the Court of Appeal sent an application — a beachfront tower at Bilinga including 20 luxury units — back to the planning court to reconsider how it could meet that criteria.

Council filed to appeal on August 18, saying the Court of Appeal erred in its decision on "housing choice and affordability".

Council said it could not comment further given it is before the courts.

Kath Down from Save Our Southern Gold Coast — questioning use of ratepayer funds. Picture: Glenn Hampson.

But Community Alliance leader John Hicks said residents expected transparency on why council had decided to lodge an appeal.

"We consider this important and expensive decision must be put to a full council vote for ratification. There should also be a publicly available supplementary agenda paper and the matter should be debated in open session," he said.

Save Our Southern Gold Coast president Kath Down said it also raised serious questions about the use of ratepayer funds.

"Ratepayers are entitled to know who authorised council to commence this nationally significant proceeding, whether our elected councillors voted on it and how much public money has been committed," she said.