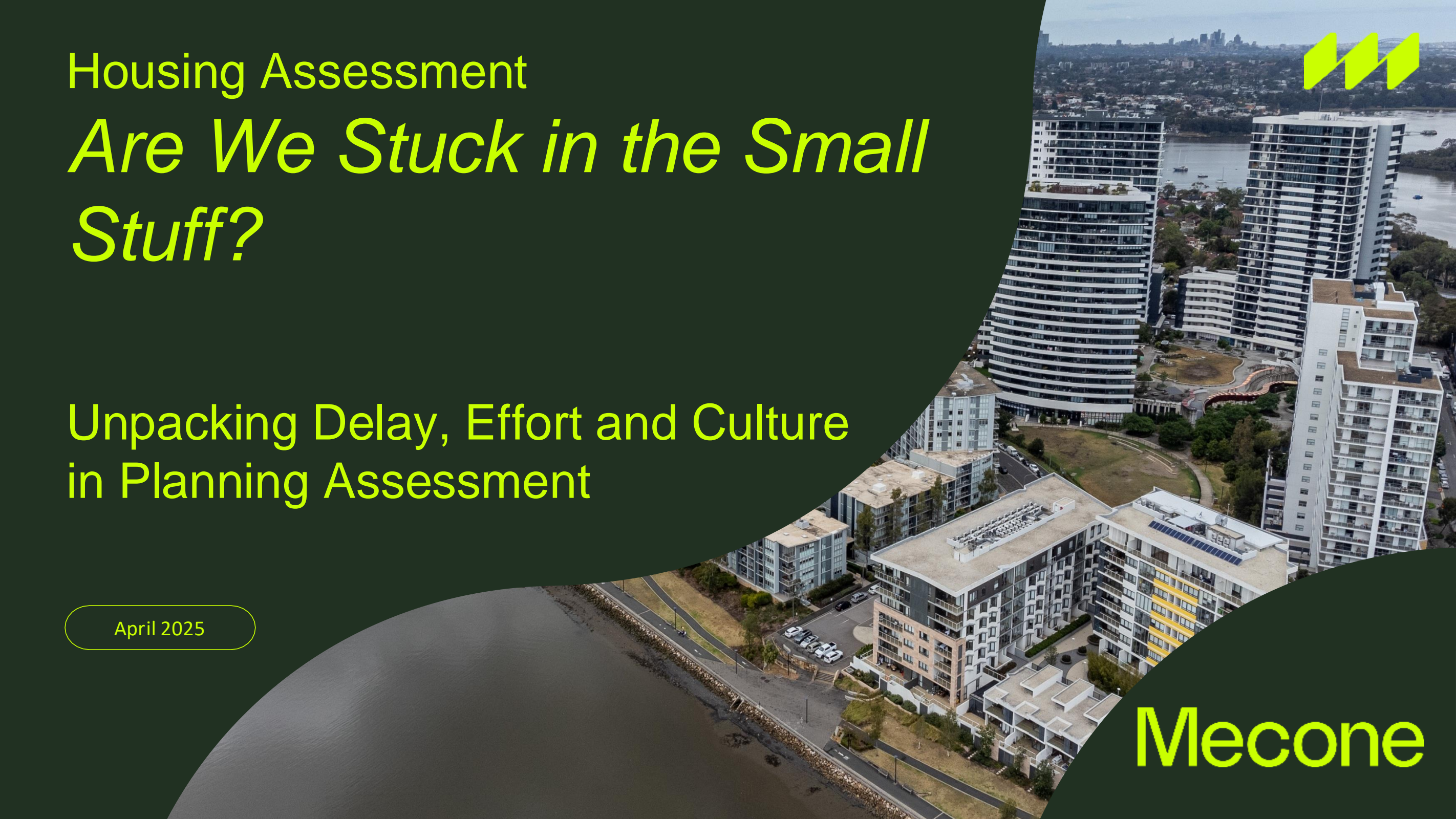# Housing Assessment

Are We Stuck in the Small Stuff?
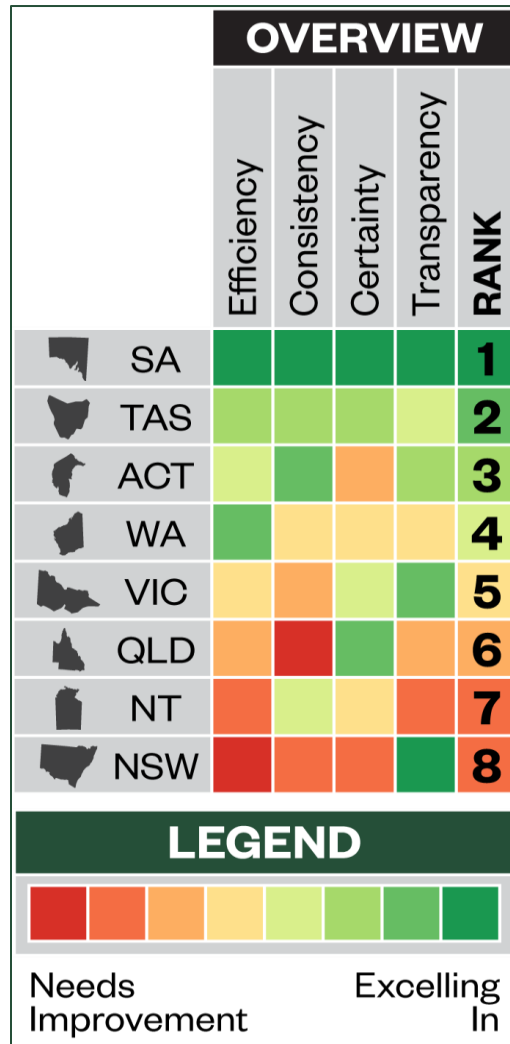
Unpacking Delay, Effort and Culture in Planning Assessment

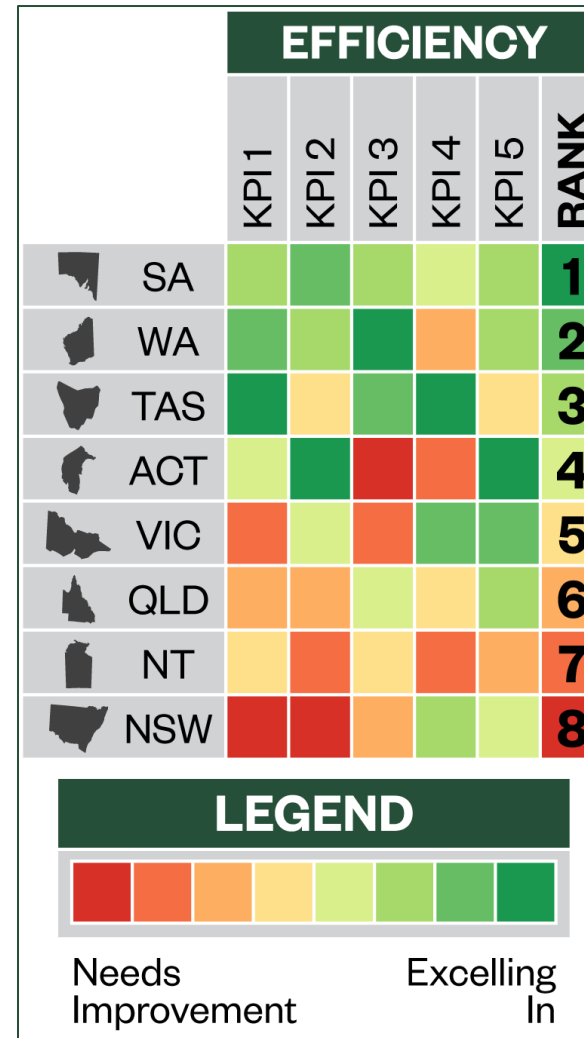April 2025

Mecone

How does the NSW Planning System Rate?

OVERVIEW

	Efficiency	Consistency	Certainty	Transparency	RANK
SA					1
TAS					2
ACT					3
WA					4
VIC					5
QLD					6
NT					7
NSW					8

LEGEND

Needs Improvement — Excelling In

Jurisdictional scorecard overview 2024

EFFICIENCY

	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5	RANK
SA						1
WA						2
TAS						3
ACT						4
VIC						5
QLD						6
NT						7
NSW						8

LEGEND

Needs Improvement — Excelling In

Scorecard for efficiency

Efficiency in determining development applications

KPI 1: Average turnaround times for development applications valued under $30 million

KPI 2: Average turnaround times for development applications valued at over $30 million

KPI 3: Average turnaround time for construction approval post-development application

KPI 4: Average time observed for Proponent-initiated and planning authority code amendments

KPI 5: Residential building approvals per capita (ABS statistics)

Source: Regulation Rumble – An Australian Jurisdictional Planning Scorecard 2024

Comparing development assessment timeframes

- NSW, on average, takes longer than every other state to assess development applications

- Timeframes to assess development application for resources projects are essential the same as residential development applications
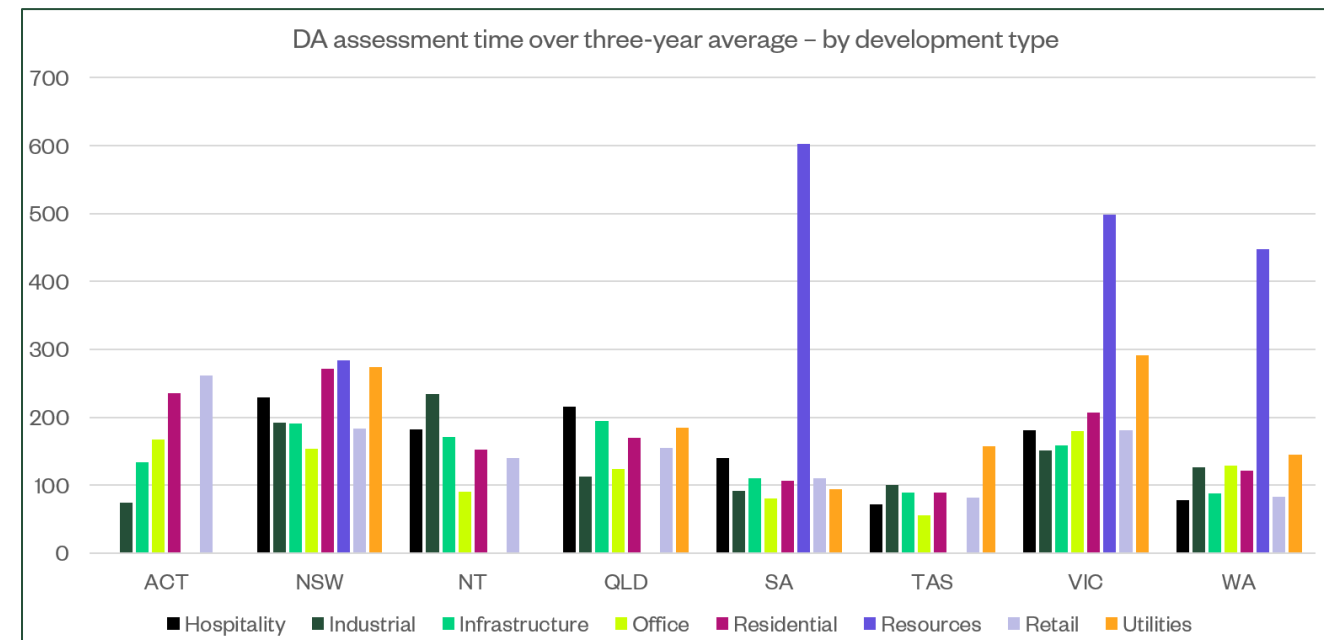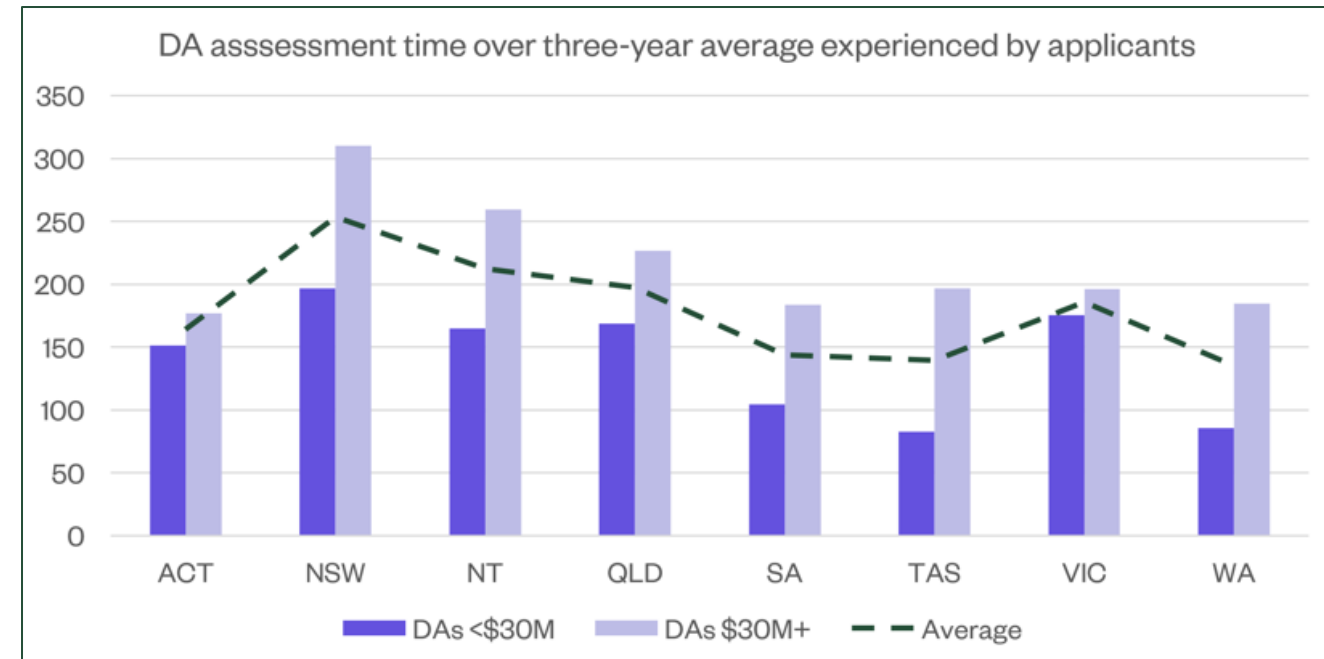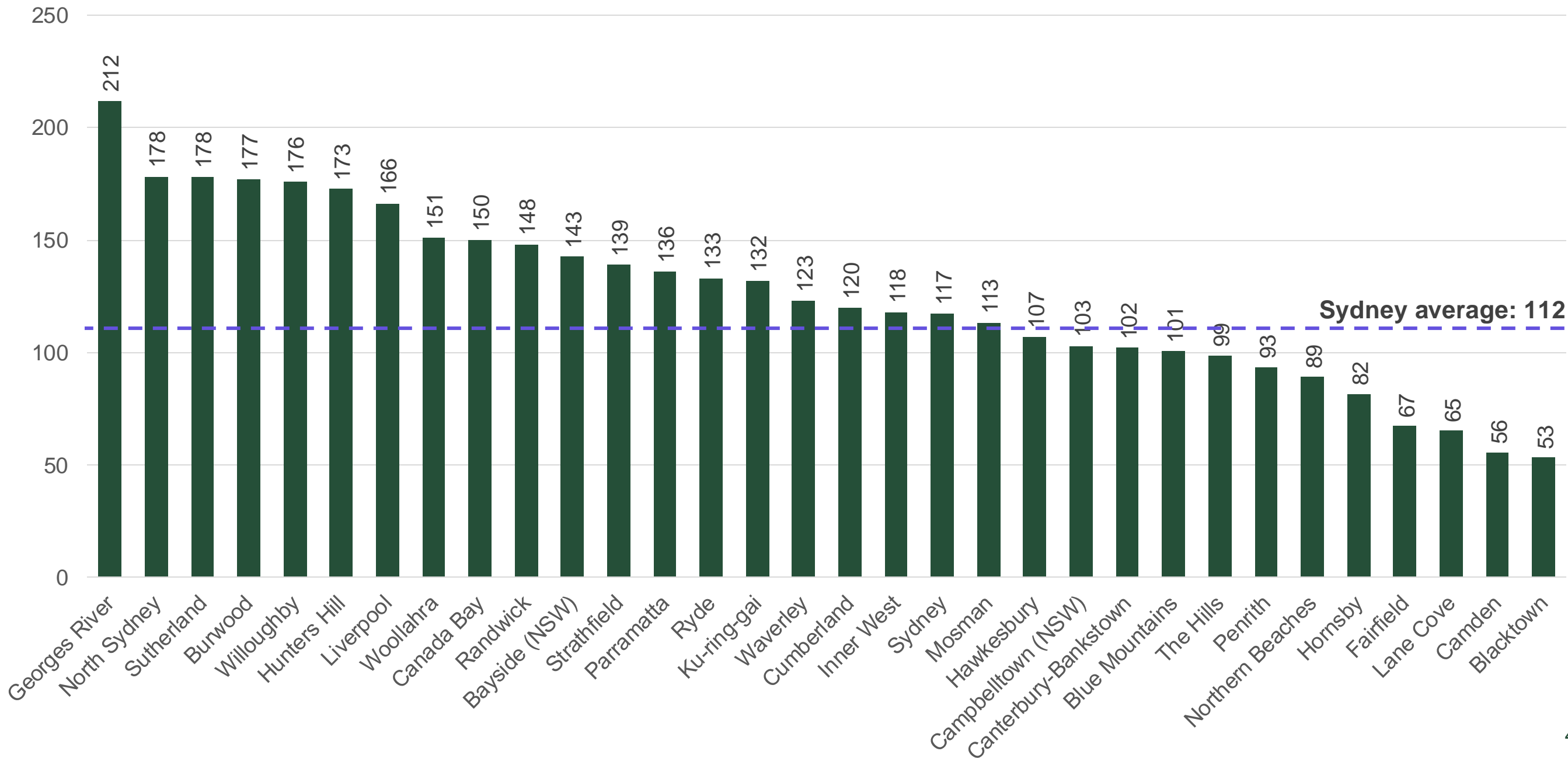

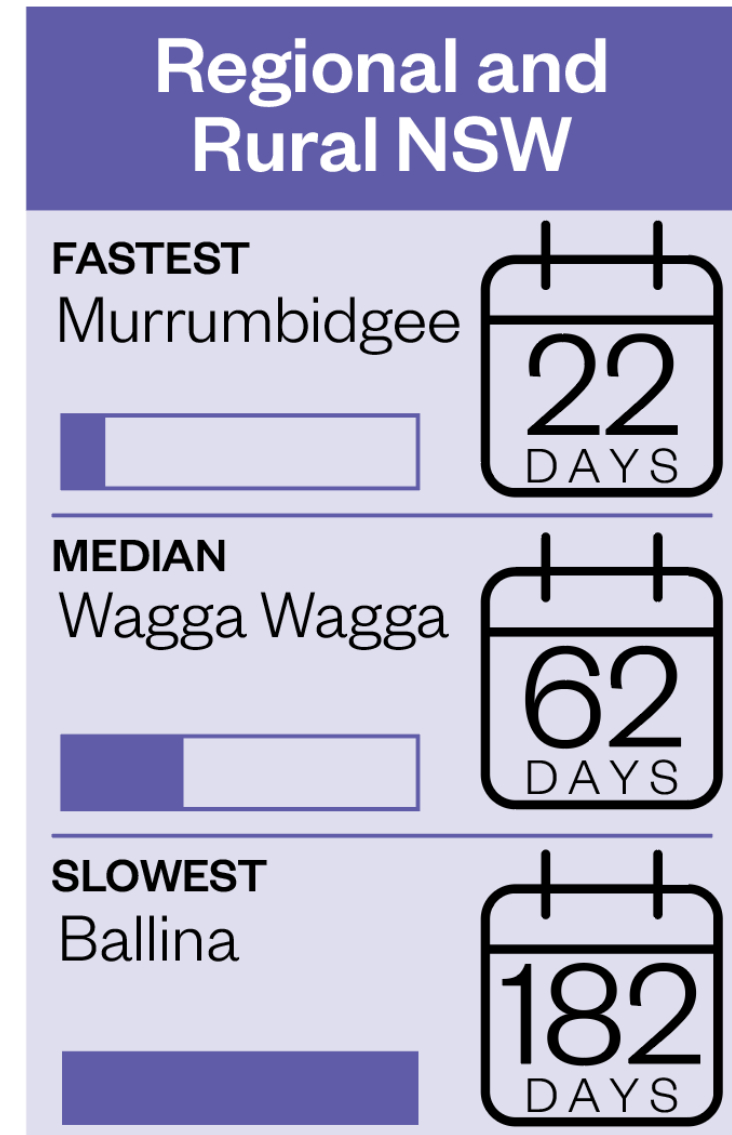

Data source: BCI Central (2024)

Average Days from Lodgement to Determination for Residential DAs by LGA (2021–2025)

Sydney average: 112

LGA	Days
Georges River	212
North Sydney	178
Sutherland	178
Burwood	177
Willoughby	176
Hunters Hill	173
Liverpool	166
Woollahra	151
Canada Bay	150
Randwick	148
Bayside (NSW)	143
Strathfield	139
Parramatta	136
Ryde	133
Ku-ring-gai	132
Waverley	123
Cumberland	120
Inner West	118
Sydney	117
Mosman	113
Hawkesbury	107
Campbelltown (NSW)	103
Canterbury-Bankstown	102
Blue Mountains	101
The Hills	99
Penrith	93
Northern Beaches	89
Hornsby	82
Fairfield	67
Lane Cove	65
Camden	56
Blacktown	53

Days to Determination – Residential DAs

Sydney Metropolitan Area

FASTEST
Blacktown
53 DAYS

MEDIAN
Waverley
123 DAYS

SLOWEST
Georges River
212 DAYS

Greater Metropolitan Area

FASTEST
Blacktown & Port Stephens
53 DAYS

MEDIAN
Sydney
117 DAYS

SLOWEST
Georges River
212 DAYS

Regional and Rural NSW

FASTEST
Murrumbidgee
22 DAYS

MEDIAN
Wagga Wagga
62 DAYS

SLOWEST
Ballina
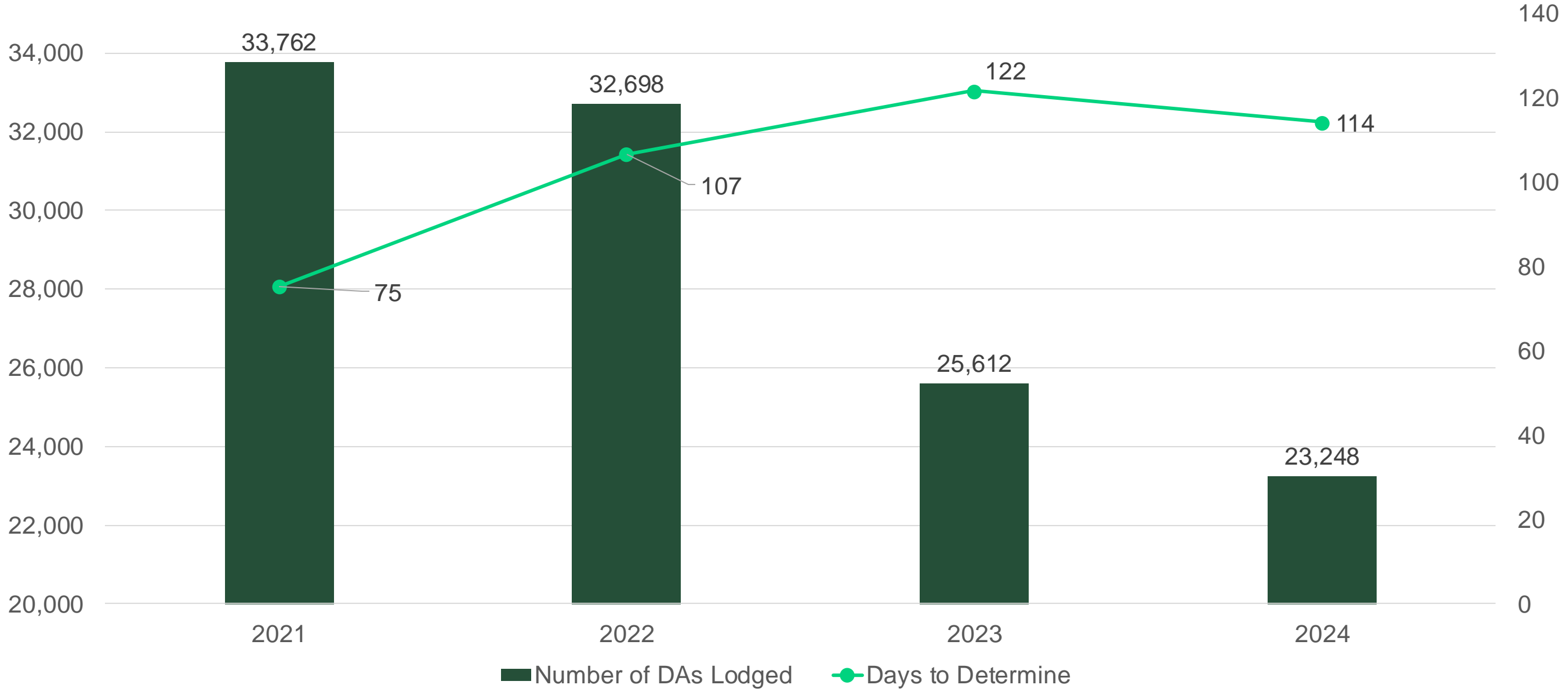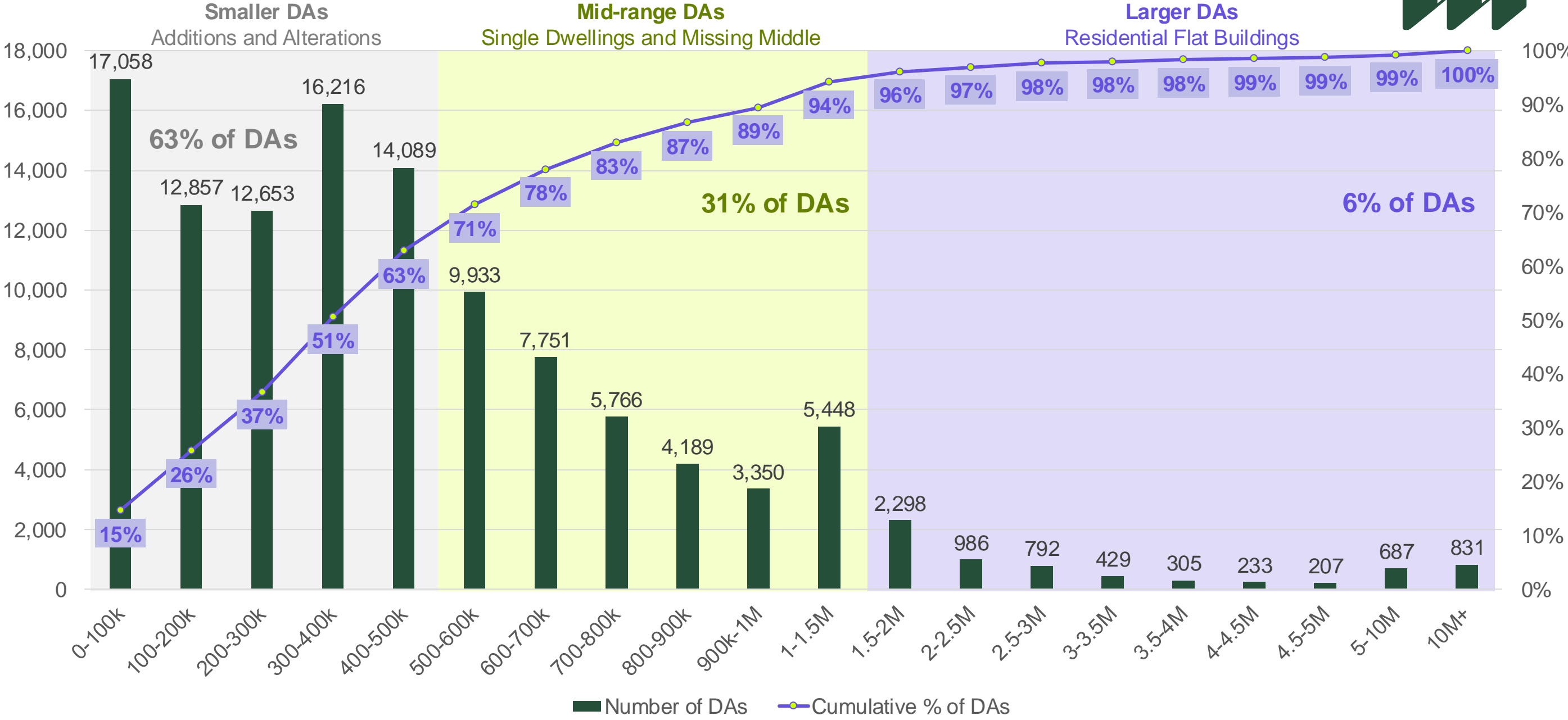182 DAYS
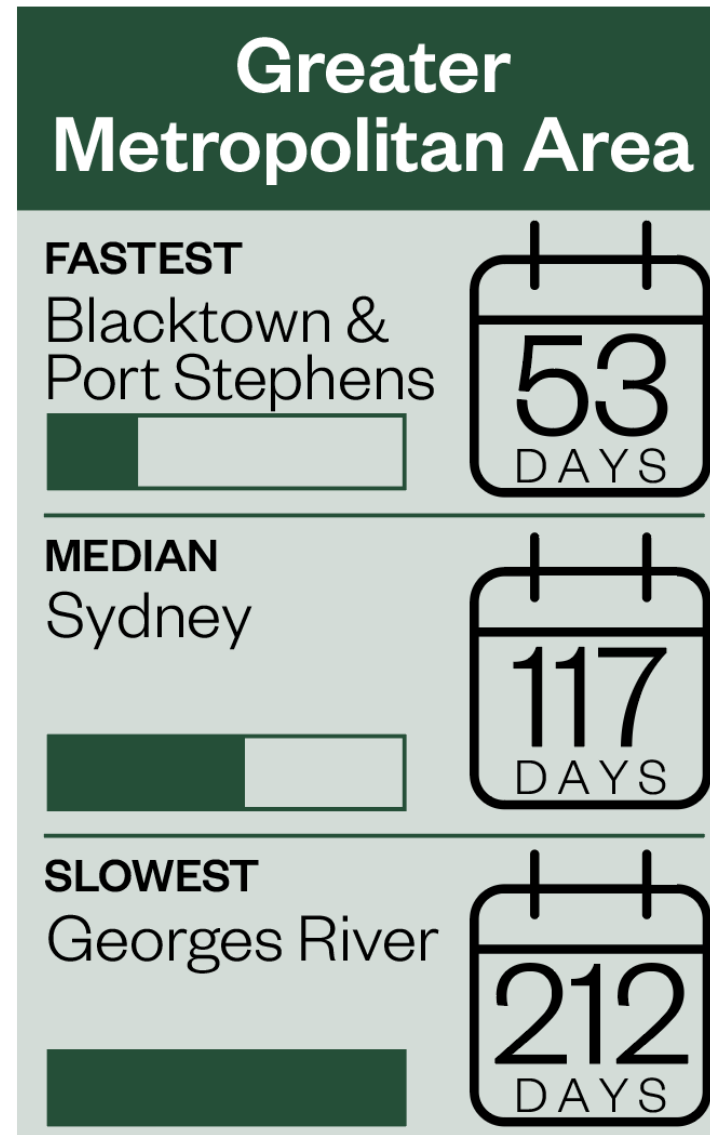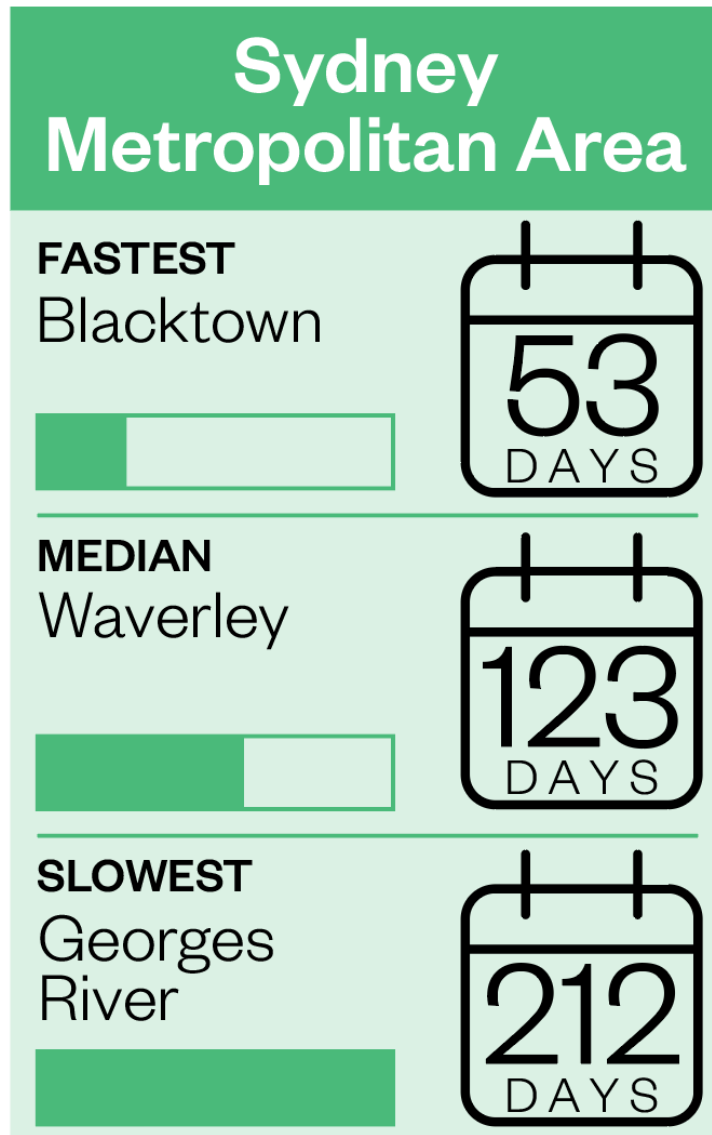
Assessment times can vary greatly depending on council – from 22 days in Murrumbidgee to 212 days in Georges River.

Number of residential DAs lodged versus days to determination

Despite the number of DAs lodged decreasing, DA assessment times have ballooned out to over 100 days.

6

Value of Development for Residential DAs (2021 – 2025) in NSW ($)

Smaller DAs
Additions and Alterations

Mid-range DAs
Single Dwellings and Missing Middle

Larger DAs
Residential Flat Buildings

63% of DAs

31% of DAs

6% of DAs

Number of DAs values:
- 0-100k: 17,058
- 100-200k: 12,857
- 200-300k: 12,653
- 300-400k: 16,216
- 400-500k: 14,089
- 500-600k: 9,933
- 600-700k: 7,751
- 700-800k: 5,766
- 800-900k: 4,189
- 900k-1M: 3,350
- 1-1.5M: 5,448
- 1.5-2M: 2,298
- 2-2.5M: 986
- 2.5-3M: 792
- 3-3.5M: 429
- 3.5-4M: 305
- 4-4.5M: 233
- 4.5-5M: 207
- 5-10M: 687
- 10M+: 831

Cumulative % of DAs:
15%, 26%, 37%, 51%, 63%, 71%, 78%, 83%, 87%, 89%, 94%, 96%, 97%, 98%, 98%, 98%, 99%, 99%, 99%, 100%

■ Number of DAs **—○— Cumulative % of DAs**

89% of residential DAs are <$1 million. Approximately 31% of residential DAs are in the $500-1,500K range (typically single dwellings and missing middle).

Where to From Here?

How do we fast-track the 89%? (Most of these DAs are low-risk—can we process them accordingly?)

What's a fair and transparent DA timeframe for every council? (Is a 10x disparity in NSW (4X metro)—from 22 to 212 days—defensible?)

Have we designed our assessment systems for risk, or for delivery? (Are we protecting against poor outcomes or just adding layers?)

Can we speed up approvals without abandoning good planning? (Strategic planning is a NSW strength—why are we walking away from it?)

What kind of planning culture do we want to cultivate? (One that enables outcomes—or one that defends process?)