

Submission to: Strengthening Australia's foreign investment framework

From: Anthony Learmonth

Point 20 – I would like to make two comments about this point.

Foreign persons should not be able to buy vacant land in residential areas. This will create a loophole where older houses will be bulldozed to render the land vacant.

RE temporary residents buying property, I feel that foreign persons who are temporary residents in Australia shouldn't be allowed to buy real estate properties in Australia. As the vast majority of these temporary residents are students, they should simply rent accommodation as most Australian students do.

Point 21 – I feel that foreign persons should also be barred from buying off the plan properties. The argument was always that this would increase the housing supply and alleviate housing affordability problems. However if the entire building, of over 100 dwellings, is being sold offshore, this is not opening up any new dwellings for existing Australian residents, and thus not helping the problem at all.

Point 23 - In the case of a conviction for an illegal purchase of a residential property, illegally purchased properties should be seized by the government, sold and all the money used to fund the FIRB's investigatory body. I feel a penalty of this nature would act as an extreme disincentive for illegal residential investments.

As it will be difficult for estate agents to determine who is a resident and who isn't, all residential property buyers in Australia should be scrutinized to avoid any suggestions of racial profiling. Such a process would be expensive, so substantial funds will be required. Thus seizing and selling illegally properties will provide funding for the implementation of the law.

Foreign buyers should be able to purchase 1 property only. I believe some foreign nationals are investing in real estate here simply to "offshore" and park money in a stable, safe environment. Many of these houses then stay empty. Housing is for people to live in - NOT to act as a "bank" for foreign nationals.