Affordable and social housing

Summary
Access to diverse, accessible and well-serviced housing, and land for housing, is fundamental to supporting affordable living outcomes.

Affordable living is more than just the financial cost of housing. It takes into account a range of factors including the way in which we live, the size, type and cost of housing or cost of renting a dwelling, and the resources we use to connect to employment, services, open space and family and friends.

Affordable housing is only one component of affordable living. In Queensland, there is a shortage of affordable housing available for rent or purchase.

As our cities and regions grow, it becomes increasingly important that housing across the state is provided in a timely manner and caters for different household and family types, ages, community needs, lifestyles, and incomes.

Although housing affordability is influenced by a number of factors, the planning system has a key role to play in facilitating the delivery of social and affordable housing and contribute to affordable living more broadly.

This includes, but is not limited to:
- ensuring an abundant supply of appropriately zoned land and a mix of lot sizes
- encouraging best practice, innovative and adaptable urban design
- reducing barriers and regulatory inefficiencies in the planning system
- promoting incentives.

The state’s interest in social and affordable housing is predominately supported by two state interest areas:
- housing supply and diversity
- liveable communities.

What are the changes?
State Planning Policy
The draft State Planning Policy (SPP) includes the following key changes to support affordable and social housing outcomes through the planning system:

- Part C: Purpose and guiding principles:
  - The guiding principles have been amended to reinforce the need for local government plans to adopt the lowest appropriate level of assessment for development and to support a 10–15 year supply of land for development.

- Part D: The state interests:
  - the Housing supply and diversity state interest statement has been amended to require affordable housing outcomes to be supported in land use planning and development decisions.

- Part E: State interest policies:
  - The challenges associated with housing affordability and the role of the planning system in responding to this challenge is highlighted in the introduction to the SPP liveable communities and housing theme.
  - Options to support the delivery of affordable housing (such as flexible planning arrangements, diverse housing choice and the need to avoid or minimise regulatory barriers or inefficiencies) are emphasised in the introduction to housing supply and diversity.
  - Policies in housing supply and diversity have been redrafted to encourage appropriate zoning and a mix of lot sizes and dwelling types, including housing to cater for low to moderate incomes, seniors and people requiring assisted living.
  - Policies in liveable communities have been redrafted to facilitate and promote affordable living and sustainable and complete communities.
Policies in development and construction have been expanded to facilitate the efficient development of residential land by adopting the lowest appropriate level of assessment and providing an appropriate mix of lot sizes and configurations.

- **Part F: Glossary:**
  - The SPP glossary definition of ‘affordable housing’ has been amended to align with the Planning Regulation (see Planning Regulation 2017).
  - New definitions for ‘affordable living’ and ‘complete communities’ have been included to align with *ShapingSEQ: the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan*.

**Planning Regulation 2017**
The administrative definition of ‘affordable housing’ (currently included in the Queensland Planning Provisions version 4.0) has been amended and included in the draft Planning Regulation 2017.

The revised definition states that affordable housing means: ‘housing that is appropriate to the needs of low to moderate income households, where those households will spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing costs’.

**Why have these changes been made?**
The land use planning system plays a critical role in helping to facilitate social and affordable housing outcomes at the local scale.

The proposed changes support the state government’s commitment to providing safe, secure and affordable housing options for all Queenslanders.

In particular, the amendments align with other key government initiatives such as the Department of Housing and Public Works’ Housing Strategy and proposed changes to the Queensland Housing Code, under the Building Plan, to facilitate a diverse range of housing types, including for small lot housing. The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is also preparing a model Reconfiguring a Lot Code to complement the building standards under the proposed Queensland Housing Code to provide best practice subdivision design standards.

**What do the changes mean for you?**
Local governments will need to ensure planning schemes support affordable living outcomes. This includes ensuring there is sufficient and appropriately zoned land for housing, specifying the lowest level of assessment for residential land uses and considering the use of incentives for the delivery of affordable and social housing, particularly in areas in close proximity to services and amenities.

Through effective plan making and implementation, local communities can expect greater access to a diverse range of housing types and increased liveability through good urban design and more complete communities.

Additional guidance material will be prepared to support the abovementioned state interest policy amendments and assist local governments to support affordable housing outcomes.

**Have your say**
You can have your say on the draft Planning Regulation, SPP and SDAP by visiting qld.gov.au/planninginterests and making a submission online.