



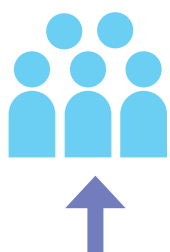
Have your Say

Improving
apartment design
and affordability



Planning &
Environment

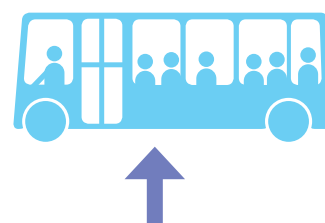
The importance of good apartment design



The NSW population is growing, both in Sydney and in regional centres. At the same time, population changes mean that a higher proportion of people are aged over 65 and there are more households with one or two occupants.



These and other changes are driving a growing demand for apartments that are affordable.



With these changes taking place, it is important for both people living in apartments and for whole neighbourhoods that they are **well designed** and **affordable**.

Apartment design policy in NSW

The design of apartments has improved markedly over the last decade, and much of this can be attributed to the NSW policy that deals with the design of apartments, and the *Residential flat design code* that accompanies it.

A comprehensive review of State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 Design Quality of Residential Flat Buildings (SEPP 65) and the *Residential flat design code*, introduced in 2002, confirmed that the policy set a new benchmark for apartment design. While the review found that the policy and the design code are still relevant today, extensive stakeholder and community consultation highlighted that with some changes the policy has the potential to improve apartment design further, to account for population change and to make apartments more affordable.

A number of changes are now proposed to support the supply of **well designed, affordable apartments**, to introduce **greater consistency** in the adoption of basic design principles, and to encourage **more innovative design**.

The proposed changes to the policy, together with the new *Apartment design guide* – which will replace the design code – are now on exhibition for public comment and are briefly outlined here.

Let us know what you think.

Snapshot of the proposals

Changes to SEPP 65

- The policy will be extended to include mixed use development and shop top housing of three or more storeys and four or more dwellings in addition to residential flat buildings
- **Councils will be able to appoint design review panels,** independent experts who advise councils on design quality for proposed apartment developments, and they can decide who is on the panel
- The new *Apartment design guide* will replace the *Residential flat design code*
- Key elements of the *Apartment design guide* will prevail over council requirements, to promote certainty and consistency for visual privacy, solar and daylight access, common spaces, apartment layout, ceiling heights, balconies and private open space, natural ventilation and storage
- It is now clear that apartment buildings being assessed under SEPP 65 will also need to comply with BASIX (the building sustainability index)
- If the minimum standard in the *Apartment design guide* is met for apartment size, car parking requirements and ceiling heights, a development cannot be refused on that basis
- New aims have been introduced to provide a variety of housing types, affordable housing and timely assessment of applications



Communal open space to suit a range of activities



Deep soil zones encourage healthy plants and trees



Increasing privacy while maintaining light and air



Revamped Residential Flat Design Code

- The *Apartment design guide* will replace the *Residential flat design code*, reflecting a shift towards greater flexibility and design innovation, whilst ensuring that apartment buildings continue to incorporate the principles of good design
- More criteria and solutions for good design outcomes
- Greater flexibility to tailor design solutions
- Options to reduce car parking minimums, if a site is located close to a railway station, light rail stop or regional centre
- A minimum size for studio apartments of 35 square metres
- Criteria and solutions for the adaptive reuse of buildings and for limiting noise transfer between apartments, buildings and their private open spaces

Functional, organised and comfortable layouts



2 bedroom mid-floor plate 2 storey gallery access



2 bedroom mid-floor plate dual aspect



2 bedroom corner apartment

Car parking

- The *Apartment design guide* recognises that car parking is a big cost in an apartment development and is passed on to buyers in purchase costs
- The design guide also recognises that access to frequent public transport reduces the need for reliance on a car
- This is why there is no specified minimum requirement for car parking for new apartment developments located in nominated inner and middle ring metropolitan areas of Sydney where they are within 400 metres of a railway station or light rail stop
- For sites located within 400m of a railway station or light rail stop in the remainder of metropolitan Sydney, the relevant minimum will be the requirement set out in the Roads and Maritime Services' *Guide to traffic generating development* or the council's requirements, whichever is less
- For sites located within 400m – 800m of a railway station or light rail stop, the relevant requirement set out in the Roads and Maritime Services' *Guide to traffic generating development* or the council's requirements will apply, whichever is less
- Where less car parking compared to council's requirements is provided, councils are encouraged to limit on street resident parking for these new residents
- In certain regional areas, the RMS's Guide will apply to sites within 400 metres of nominated regional centres
- The introduction of the new minimum car parking requirement enables an applicant to propose more parking to meet consumer demand

Cycle parking





Having your say

The NSW Government wants to know what you think about the proposed changes outlined here.

You can find out more or make a submission at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals by 31 October 2014.

Once the exhibition concludes submissions will be reviewed and the Department will provide a report to the Minister for Planning.

Subject to the Minister's agreement, changes may be made to SEPP 65 and the *Apartment design guide*.

Submissions will be made public on the Department's website. Please refer to the Department's privacy policy www.planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy

Screens balance both ventilation and light



Increasing the amount of sunlight apartments receive



Balconies





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