

Exhibition of simplified Housing Code

Frequently Asked Questions

June 2016

What is the purpose of the Review and why is it happening now?

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development) 2008 (the Policy) commenced in 2009.
- The Policy applies State-wide and allows certain types of development to be carried out as exempt (without approval), or as complying development (projects that can be fast-tracked through the approval process).
- There are currently 12 exempt and complying development codes in the Policy, which include controls for a range of developments such as residential, commercial and industrial.

What is the Housing Code?

- Part 3 of the Policy is known as the General Housing Code. It establishes development standards for residential development that can be undertaken as complying development.
- The types of development covered by the General Housing Code include:
 - new single or two storey dwellings
 - alterations to existing dwellings
 - other home improvements or renovations, like garages and swimming pools
- The General Housing Code sets the controls for development, such as building height, boundary setbacks, private open space and landscaping, privacy requirements, and building articulation. The General Housing Code is being renamed the Housing Code.

Why is the Government reviewing the existing Housing Code?

- The Department of Planning and Environment continuously monitors and reviews the Policy to ensure that it is helping to reduce red tape, save time and cut development costs for homeowners and businesses.
- Feedback received from stakeholders, including certifiers, builders, architects, land owners, business owners and councils, indicates that the General Housing Code is difficult to understand and apply.
- This undermines the intent of the Policy, which is to make it easier, faster and less costly for home owners and businesses to undertake exempt and complying development.

What are the changes to the Housing Code?

- Following feedback received, the Department proposes to replace the existing General Housing Code with a new simplified Housing Code.
- The new Housing Code will be expressed in plain English and contain diagrams and tables, making it more effective and easier to use.
- The overall intent of the amendment is to simplify the existing development standards for one and two storey dwellings, extensions to dwellings and other developments like garages and swimming pools so that more people are able to understand and use the Policy.
- For most developments permitted under the Policy the built form outcome will be similar following the amendments.

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What will be the impacts of a simplified Housing Code and who benefits?

- In 2014-15 complying development certificates (CDC) accounted for 32 per cent of all development approvals, up from 29 per cent in 2013-14.
- The total value of CDCs approved in 2014-15 was \$5.24 billion.
- Complying development is a fast tracked approval pathway with approvals being issued within an average of 22 days. This compares with the average determination time of 71 days for a development application, which involves a merit assessment by local council.
- Increasing the take-up of complying development means real savings in time and money for homeowners and businesses and frees up council planning resources to focus on more complex development applications and strategic planning.
- Simplified planning rules mean more certainty when certifiers and councils assess a proposal.
- The simplification of Housing Code will also support the State Government's target of increasing the take-up of complying development by removing complexity as a barrier to take up.

What happens next?

- At the end of the public consultation period, the Department will review all submissions and then prepare a report for the Minister for Planning.
- Once the Minister makes a decision about the amendment, an update will be published on the Department of Planning and Environment website at:
<http://planspolicies.planning.nsw.gov.au/>
- The Department will also write to everyone who made a submission to provide them with an update.

How do I comment on the proposal?

- Submissions on the exhibition of simplified Housing Code will close on 12 August 2016.
- You can view and make a submission:
 - Online at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals
 - the Department's Information Centre,
23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney.
- You can make a submission by:
 - responding online at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals
 - emailing codes@planning.nsw.gov.au
 - by mail to the Director, Codes and Approval Pathways
GPO Box 39, Sydney, NSW 2001
- All submissions will be made public in line with the Department's objective to promote an open and transparent planning system. . If you do not want your name published, please state this clearly at the top of your submission. Before making a submission, please read our privacy statement at:
www.planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy

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Where can I find out more?

- Call our Information Centre on 1300 305 695.
- If English isn't your first language, please call 131 450. Ask for an interpreter in your language and then request to be connected to our Information Centre on 1300 305 695.
- Email information@planning.nsw.gov.au