

9 November 2016

Lynne Sheridan
Acting Director
Codes and Approved Pathways
Planning & Environment
NSW Government
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

by email to lynne.sheridan@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Lynne

Thank you for sending me the draft Medium Density Design Guide.

I am convinced that with proper controls, the idea of *separate individual title secondary dwellings* can provide adequate housing for young people in particular, as a stepping stone for them to move up to a larger house as needed if and when the family grows.

I have some further comments as follows :-

- my comments are restricted to secondary dwelling dual occupancy arrangements and in particular the structures commonly called 'granny flats' but better described as secondary dwellings or backyard cabins. I am not addressing any other issues in the above Guide.
- It is generally accepted that Sydney's population growth means that the concept of the Australian dream of a house on a quarter acre block in the suburbs has passed into history for most young people under 35, for the foreseeable future.
- Accordingly, avenues need to be created to allow them to at least have a stepping stone into the housing market which can provide them with enough space for themselves and even for the firstborn in the family.
- The quarter acre block can still provide adequate housing for two types of residences with proper planning and this can be achieved by subdivision.
- *However, by creating another building envelope within the boundaries of an existing property, the newly created lot must have its own separate individual title.*

../2

- Dual occupancies without separate titles will not allow the new resident on the new lot to have equity in the land so important for the new resident's financial and psychological well-being.
- With a separate title, the new lot can be mortgaged, leased and traded on the open market.
- Secondary dwellings are now being built to a high standard and can provide flexible living arrangements, ideally with privacy from the main home and the street.
- Most secondary dwellings can accommodate a young couple or a young couple with a child. Of course, older couples could also benefit from the opportunity of owning a smaller dwelling.
- If a secondary dwelling is built according to complying development rules, the speed at which it can be completed is greatly enhanced.
- To make it more affordable, it may even be appropriate to give stamp duty relief to first time purchasers of secondary dwellings.
- If the planning laws are changed to allow secondary dwellings *with separate titles* there will no doubt be a pent up demand which will put pressure on secondary dwelling builders (although as I understand it this niche section of the building industry is already well established), Building Certifiers and Local Councils. Obviously, this will need to be anticipated and addressed.

In the context of a stepping stone to homeownership for first home buyers, I have no brief for existing homeowners or seniors or others with subdividable land. I have no personal opportunities, nor do I act for anyone with an interest in promoting these concepts.

I have a number of friends who have built secondary dwellings on their properties on the Northern Beaches. These structures are well-built, comfortable, private and flexible. There is a strong rental market already for these types of dwellings in this part of Sydney. However, I'm confident that a survey of these tenants would show that most would prefer to be able to buy the dwelling at a reasonable price if they could have their own separate title.

I hope that the concept of *separate individual title secondary dwellings* is favourably considered.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Huntingdon