

Improving residential standards in Tasmania

Draft recommendations consultation report

State Planning Office | September 2024

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We honour and pay our respect to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom has and will ensure the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded.

Always was, always will be.

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1 Introduction

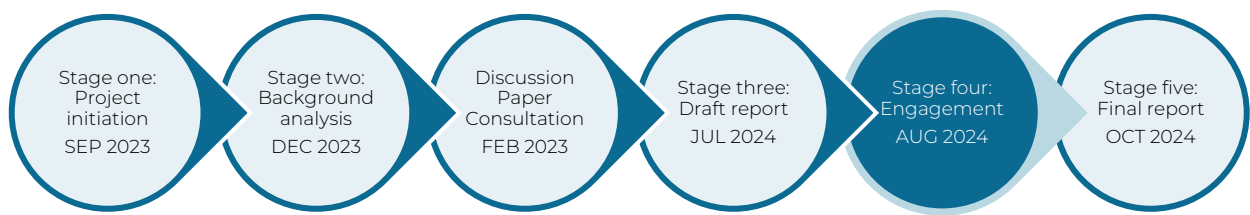
1.1 The project

The State Planning Office is progressing the review of Tasmania’s residential use and development standards in the main urban zones in the State Planning Provisions (SPPs). The Improving Residential Standards in Tasmanian project (the Project) aims to develop recommendations that will inform future amendments to the SPPs.

The Project is being led by the State Planning Office in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), with a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from Social Policy (DPAC) and Urban Renewal and Development (State Growth).

To support the Project, a Technical Reference Group (TRG) has been established which is comprised of representatives of the Australian Institute of Architects, Homes Tasmania, Local Government (each of the three regions), Planning Institute of Australia, and State Growth. To progress the Project, the State Planning Office engaged ERA Planning and Environment with HIP V HYPE and Studio GL as the Project Team.

1.1.1 Project methodology



1.2 Draft Recommendations Report

The preparation of a Draft Recommendations Report (the draft report), and associated engagement, is the Project’s first broader public engagement touchpoint. It provides the context for the Project, highlights best practice, and outlines a range of recommendations for improvements to the residential use and development standards within the State Planning Provisions (SPPs). It also provided the basis for engagement with the Tasmanian public via an online survey.

The structure of the Draft Recommendations Report is as follows:

Section 1-2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6	Section 7-8
Introduction	Definitions and terms	A mature suite of residential standards	Homes in business zones	The right housing in the right location	Other improvements and next steps
Introduces the project, background context, and feedback opportunities	Outlines the improvements to definitions and terms	Outlines the improvements to use, development and subdivision standards	Outlines the improvements to residential standards in business zones	Details the implementation framework for delivering improvements	Outlines improvements to miscellaneous matters and details next steps

2 Engagement process

2.1 Why engage?

2.1.1 Engagement purpose

The purpose of the engagement process was to:

- Collect constructive feedback from the Tasmanian community on the potential improvements to residential standards as outlined in the Draft Recommendations Report.
- Articulate how the recommendations will achieve improved residential development outcomes for proponents, regulators, and the community.
- Gain a balanced understanding of stakeholder views associated with controls related to residential development and subdivision.
- Provide a summary of the key challenges and benefits of certain approaches to new or revised residential development standards.
- Raise awareness of the project within the community, the development industry, and government to promote a deeper understanding of the role of the residential standards in the planning system.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to refine the recommendations.

2.1.2 Engagement objectives

The key objectives of the Draft Recommendations Report and associated online survey were to:

- Ensure that all Tasmanians have an opportunity to inform the final suite of recommendations.
- Ensure the recommendations are based upon community, industry and government expertise and are can practically and efficiently achieve their intended outcomes.
- Understand the level of support within the Tasmanian community for the proposed improvements and where refinements can be made to best reflect the feedback received.

2.2 Engagement approach

The Draft Recommendations Report provided an important engagement opportunity to obtain broad public feedback via an integrated online survey. Stakeholders also had the option to provide written feedback via email if that method was preferred over the online survey.

The Draft Recommendations Report included a high degree of technical information in the main body of the report. To maximise opportunities for broader engagement with the public, a series of fact sheets were created as an easy reference guide. The fact sheets focussed on more plain English explanations of the recommended improvements, and why they are considered important.

To initiate the feedback process, the Draft Recommendations Report and details regarding the online survey were posted on the Planning in Tasmania website (www.stateplanning.tas.gov.au), and shared via direct email to key stakeholders, including State government agencies, local government, community housing providers, property, building and housing bodies, community groups, professional institutes, and infrastructure providers. Throughout the survey period, follow-up and reminder emails were issued to all stakeholders to encourage feedback.

To guide the feedback process, the State Planning Office held a series of industry briefings and meetings prior to survey responses and written submissions being prepared by stakeholders.

2.3 Engagement response

2.3.1 Who we heard from

The survey period ran from Wednesday 24 July 2024 to Friday 6 September 2024; with some participants being granted a week extension to 13 September 2024 to prepare their written submissions. A total of 27 survey responses were received, along with 41 written responses via email. 6 industry briefings were held by the State Planning Office. Some respondents utilised both the survey and email opportunities, resulting in a total of 65 entities providing feedback.



A summary of respondents is provided below:

- 14 local councils
- Three (3) council groups, including Cradle Coast Authority, Northern Tasmania Regional Planning Group, and Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Six (6) State government agencies including Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Office of the Coordinator-General Department, Heritage Tasmania, Department of State Growth, and Homes Tasmania.
- 17 organisations including planning professionals, housing bodies, community groups, and professional institutes.
- 25 individuals or not stated.

2.3.1.1 Demographics

The survey asked respondents to volunteer their age, with 89% (24) choosing to do so. There were no respondents under 20 years of age or over 80 years of age. 41% (11) of respondents were 35-49 years, 26% (7) were 50-64 years, 15% were 20-34 years, and 7% were 65-79 years.

The survey asked respondents to volunteer their postcode location, with all choosing to do so. 78% (21) of respondents were in the Southern region, 11% (3) were in the Northern region, and 7% (2) were in the Northwest region.

2.3.2 Future engagement

A final report is being prepared and the Project will now be finalised. The State Planning Office will progress the recommendations through the drafting of new State Planning Provisions that will then be progressed through the legislative process under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*. There will be additional opportunities for input through the legislative process including public exhibition and hearings undertaken by the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

3 Engagement analysis

A high level of support was received for the draft recommendations, with no fundamental issues raised through the engagement process. Many written submissions focused on detailed drafting matters, and there was some recurring feedback and themes that respondents raised. These matters are outlined below, following the order of sections as they appear in the Draft Recommendations Report.

3.1 Context

The Draft Recommendations Report provides some background context around the housing we have, the housing we are delivering, and the housing we need. The context section follows the results of a Discussion Paper undertaken in earlier stages of the Project. No survey questions were asked in relation to this section, noting that a survey was completed for the Discussion Paper. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- **The residential standards are one part of the housing supply system, and wider system changes must also be considered.**
- **The Project is clearly focussed on improving housing density and diversity.**

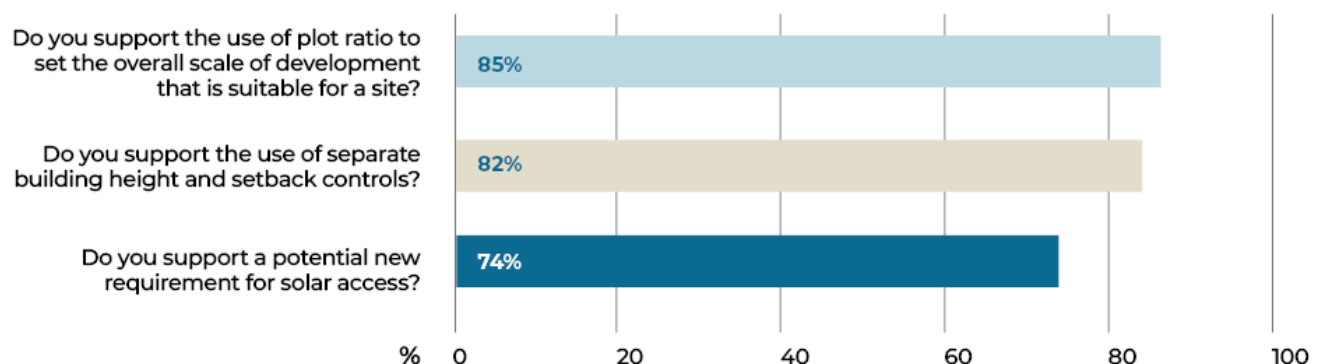
3.2 Definitions

The Draft Recommendations Reports outlines improvements to the terms and definitions necessary for the optimal operation of the residential standards in the SPPs. No survey questions were asked in relation to the recommended definitions. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- **The recommended definitions are broadly supported irrespective of the detailed drafting, as is the use of a nesting table.**
- **The definition of apartment building should more closely align with the existing definition in the National Construction Code.**
- **The definition of townhouse should apply to two or more attached dwellings and use the terminology of shared or party walls.**

3.3 Development standards

The Draft Recommendations Report details a range of potential improvements to existing development standards in the urban residential zones. The following section provides a summary of the quantitative and qualitative results from the survey and written submissions. Overall, there was a high level of support for the recommended improvements to the development standards.



3.3.1 Use status

No survey questions were asked in relation to the recommended improvements to the use tables in the urban residential zones. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- **Multiple dwellings should not be a No Permit Required use status; they should be a Permitted status.**

3.3.2 Plot ratio

Question 1 of the online survey asked respondents *'Do you support the use of plot ratio to set the overall scale of development that is suitable for a site?'*. 85% (23) of respondents support the use of plot ratio, while 11% (3) oppose it. 4% (1) of respondents were neutral.

Question 2 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential plot ratio controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- **The inclusion of plot ratio is broadly supported by most respondents, with some stressing the importance of plot ratio working together with other elements such as height, setback, landscaping and solar access to deliver quality outcomes.**
- **A small number of respondents raised specific matters including:**
 - **questioning the removal of the building envelope standard;**
 - **the potential for underdevelopment of key sites to be addressed by a minimum plot ratio metric; and**
 - **questioning whether the plot ratio metric is high enough to encourage the housing diversity being sought.**
- **The inclusion of plot ratio bonuses in proximity to 'high frequency transit corridors' should be resolved through ongoing work to define those corridors.**
- **The performance pathway should have regard to visual impact.**
- **The performance pathway should clarify what is meant by the term 'degree to which' and should explicitly refer to relevant sections of the Medium Density Design Guidelines. [Note: this applies to all performance pathways that include this assessment criterion]**

3.3.3 Building height and setbacks

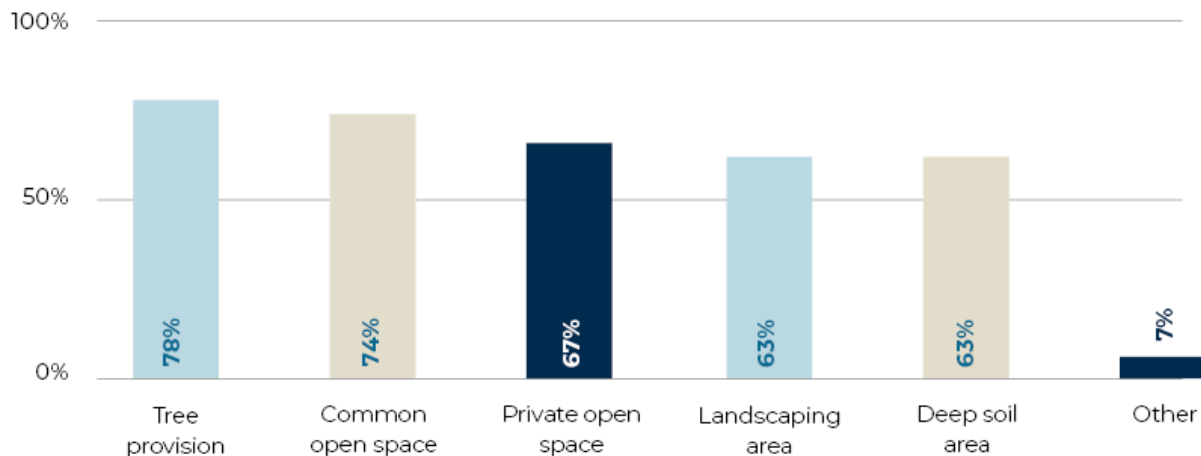
Question 3 of the online survey asked respondents *'Do you support the use of separate building height and setback controls'*. 82% (22) of respondents support the separation of building height and setback controls. 11% (3) of respondents somewhat oppose it, but no respondents strongly oppose it. 7% (2) of respondents were neutral.

Question 4 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential building height or setback controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- **The separation of building height and setback standards is broadly supported by most respondents.**
- **A 0m setback should be allowed for single storey buildings and outbuildings.**
- **A 1.5m rear setback is arbitrary and leads to dead space.**
- **The setback metric should relate to dwelling height in metres, not storeys.**

3.3.4 Landscaping and open space

Question 5 of the online survey asked respondents 'Which of the following landscaping and open space controls do you support?'. The options are provided below with the percentage of respondents who indicated support.



Question 6 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential landscaping and open space controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The introduction of landscaping and open space requirements is broadly supported by most respondents.
- The landscaping area requirements should be less onerous for development in the Business zones and Inner Residential Zone when compared to the General Residential Zone and Low Density Residential Zone.

3.3.5 Solar access

Question 7 of the online survey asked respondents 'Do you support a potential new requirement for solar access?'. 74% (20) of respondents support the use of solar access controls, while 22% (6) oppose it. 4% (1) of respondents were neutral.

Question 8 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential solar access controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The recommended solar access provisions are generally supported by most respondents; particularly the consolidation of three existing standards into a single new clause.
- Many areas in Tasmania cannot meet these provisions due to the existing conditions such as topography and surrounding built form; the standard should account for this.
- Solar access in equinox periods is arguably more important than winter solstice for access to private open space.

3.3.6 Frontage elevation

No survey questions were asked in relation to the recommended improvements to the frontage elevation standards. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- The recommended frontage elevation provisions are supported by many respondents.
- There was relatively small amount of feedback in relation to these recommended standards.

3.3.7 Privacy

No survey questions were asked in relation to the recommendation to retain the existing privacy metrics without change. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- The privacy metrics should be coordinated with setback and building separation requirements.
- The privacy requirements should be less onerous for development in the Inner Residential Zone when compared to the General Residential Zone and Low Density Residential Zone.
- The recommendation for no change misses the opportunity to reduce reliance on hard screening, by allowing landscaped screening or consideration of angles of view.

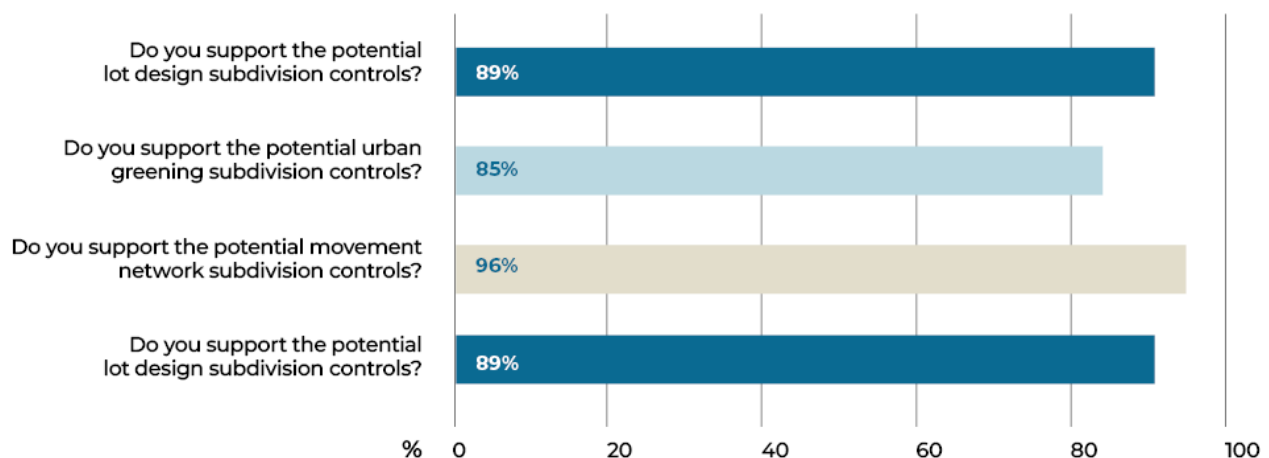
3.3.8 Storage

No survey questions were asked in relation to the recommended storage provisions. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- The inclusion of dwelling storage parameters is broadly supported.
- The minimum waste storage area should be increased to account for the increasing trend for three bins per dwelling.

3.4 Subdivision standards

The Draft Recommendations Report proposes a range of potential improvements to the existing subdivision standards, including lot design to enable increased housing choice through diversity in lot design; urban greening to improve design quality, liveability and climate resilience; movement networks to design for all modes of transport including more sustainable choices; and services to improve climate resilience through integrated water management. Overall, there was a high level of support for the recommended improvements to the subdivision standards.



3.4.1 Lot design

Question 9 of the online survey asked respondents 'Do you support the potential lot design subdivision controls?'. 89% (24) of respondents support the use of lot design controls, while 4% (1) oppose it. 7% (2) of respondents were neutral.

Question 10 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential lot design controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The recommended lot design parameters are broadly supported by most respondents.
- The inclusion of lot size diversity in proximity to 'high frequency transit corridors' should be resolved through ongoing work to define those corridors.
- For lot size diversity, the proportion of large lots should be comparatively less than small lots, because they take up more land area to deliver.
- There needs to be mechanisms to ensure that lots remain for the intended dwelling typology.

3.4.2 Urban greening

Question 11 of the online survey asked respondents 'Do you support the potential urban greening subdivision controls?'. 85% (23) of respondents support the use of urban greening controls, while 7% (2) oppose it. 7% (2) of respondents were neutral.

Question 12 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential urban greening controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The recommended urban greening parameters are broadly supported by most respondents.
- The option to provide a cash or land contribution for public open space should be available to all scales of subdivision.
- The *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* will need to be amended to allow a 10% public open space contribution.
- The provision for street trees should apply per lineal meter of frontage, not per lot.

3.4.3 Movement network

Question 13 of the online survey asked respondents 'Do you support the potential movement network subdivision controls?'. 96% (26) of respondents support the use of movement network controls, while no respondents oppose it. 4% (1) of respondents were neutral.

Question 14 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential movement network controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The recommended movement network parameters are broadly supported by most respondents, with mixed opinions on the detailed metrics.
- Several respondents acknowledged that the details should be resolved through the parallel work on the subdivision design guidelines, including the concept of a potential public transport route.

3.4.4 Services

Question 15 of the online survey asked respondents 'Do you support the potential lot design subdivision controls?'. 89% (24) of respondents support the use of services controls, while 4% (1) of respondents oppose it. 7% (2) of respondents were neutral.

Question 16 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential services controls. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The recommended inclusion of stormwater parameters in the subdivision standards is broadly supported by most respondents.
- The 15-lot threshold to apply the stormwater requirements is questioned by some respondents.
- The State Stormwater Strategy should not be referenced as it is outdated. Stormwater requirements should be updated as part of the parallel work on the subdivision design guidelines.
- There should be the opportunity to provide a cash-in-lieu contribution for onsite water sensitive urban design.

3.5 Homes in business zones

The Draft Recommendations Report proposes a range of potential improvements to the residential standards in business zones. No survey questions were asked in relation to these recommendations. Key feedback from the written submissions is summarised below.

- **Broad level of support for the inclusion of more dwelling standards in business zones.**
- **The liveable housing bonus for homes in business zones should equally apply to homes in residential zones. The bonus metric should be height in metres, rather than in storeys.**
- **A standalone apartment design guide for business zones should be considered.**
- **The Village zone should be in the scope of this project.**
- **The landscaping requirements should be less onerous for development in the business zones when compared to the residential zone provisions.**
- **Building height in the Urban Mixed Use zone should be increased so that it is equal to or more than the Inner Residential Zone.**

3.6 Implementation framework

The recommended improvements to development and subdivision standards can be implemented in many ways. The Draft Recommendations Report proposes arrived at three options that focus on zones and codes, which are the key tools available through the State Planning Provisions. The three options are:

1. Improvements through existing zones
2. Improvements through new zones and aligned zone application guidelines
3. Improvements through new codes

Questions 17, 18 and 19 of the online survey asked respondents to indicate their level of support for each of the implementation options on a scale of zero to ten, with 0 representing no support, and 10 representing strong support.

Option 1 scored an average of 4.7/10, with 44% (12) of respondents rating this option above 5/10; indicating a neutral response.

Option 2 scored an average of 7.4/10, with 85% (23) of respondents rating this option above 5/10; indicating a supported response.

Option 3 scored an average of 5.6/10, with 52% (14) of respondents rating this option above 5/10; indicating a neutral response.

Question 20 asked respondents for further feedback on the potential implementation framework options, or other options they would like to suggest. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- **A marginally higher level of support was provided for Option 2 compared to the other options, noting that more work is required to define the exact settlement/zone boundaries.**
- **Many respondents recognised that the changes could be implemented more quickly under Option 1, with less risk of adding to the burdens of ongoing reform.**
- **Many respondents offered their own hybrid implementation approach, with little consistency across respondents.**

3.7 Other improvements

The Draft Recommendations Report proposes a range of other improvements beyond the specifics covered in the preceding sections. Question 21 of the online survey asked respondents for further feedback on the Draft Recommendations Report and the potential improvements proposed. Key feedback is summarised below, which combines results from the qualitative survey responses and content in written submissions.

- The preparation of explanatory figures, fact sheets, and technical guides are essential to deliver the desired outcomes through the improved standards.
- Broad level of support for inclusion of the medium density and subdivision design guidelines as incorporated documents that are referenced in the improved standards.
- Broad level of support for further work to comprehensively investigate the opportunities and feasibility for infrastructure contributions and inclusionary zoning that extend beyond the recommended improvements of this project.
- Broad level of support for the recommended parking reductions.

3.8 Observations

Some overarching observations have been noted from the qualitative survey results and written submissions. The following observations provide some important context to assist with decision making on the final recommendations:

- The content of many respondents' submissions suggests reliance on the fact sheets to inform their position, without a detailed comprehension of the recommended improvements.
- Respondents were well attuned to matters in their municipality but often had little understanding of the spectrum of issues existing across the State.
- There were differences in the level of support and detailed drafting preferences between respondents in metropolitan and regional areas, with a higher level of support by metropolitan based respondents.
- No notable differences in the qualitative feedback provided in the survey versus written submissions.



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