

Improving residential standards in Tasmania



About the project

The project aims to improve housing supply, affordability and diversity, by reviewing planning controls for residential development in Tasmania.

Run by the State Planning Office, the project is one of the outcomes of the five-yearly review of the State Planning Provisions (SPPs). Regular review of planning requirements is necessary to make sure that planning standards respond to contemporary issues.

The project has identified opportunities to make sure the standards are fit for purpose, and can improve liveability, equity, healthy spaces and sustainability.

Who's involved?

The State Planning Office in the Department of Premier and Cabinet leads the project. It is supported by a Technical Reference Group (TRG) to provide expert knowledge and local experience.

The TRG includes members from:

- Australian Institute of Architects
- Homes Tasmania
- local government
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Department of State Growth.

The State Planning Office engaged ERA Planning and Environment to lead the project team who meet with the TRG at key touchpoints during the project.

The process

The project started in September 2023 and involved:

- detailed background research
- data analysis, and
- stakeholder and community engagement.

Input was sought from the TRG, representatives of local and state government and established community and industry groups. Broader engagement with the Tasmanian public has also informed the project.



For more information
about the project, visit
www.stateplanning.tas.gov.au

What we heard

Previous engagement

Previous engagement outcomes formed the basis for developing improvement options and were built on during the project. Key matters raised during previous engagement include:

- **Statewide approach to standards:** There are both pros and cons to a consistent state wide approach to the planning system.
- **Drafting concerns:** How standards are interpreted, varied levels of complexity and prescription in some standards, and some that are not achieving their intended outcomes.
- **Development standards:** Including multiple dwelling densities, setbacks, building envelope, site coverage, open space, garage and carport design, privacy, fencing and waste storage.

Project engagement

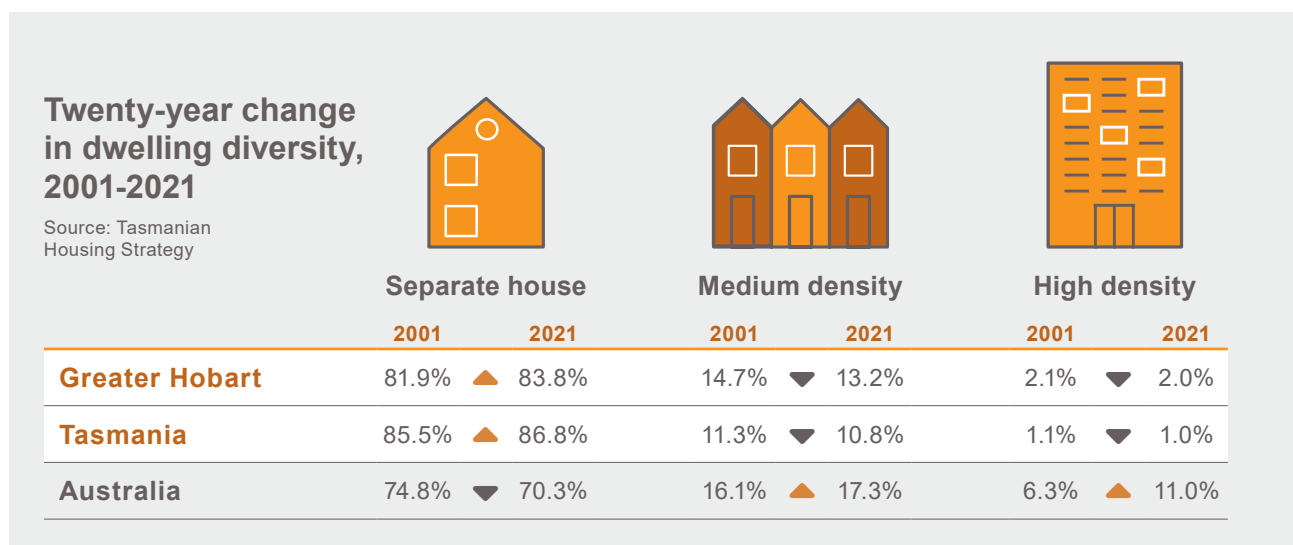
Key stakeholders and the broader Tasmanian community were engaged to provide feedback on the draft recommendations report. Online survey results indicated a high level of support for recommendations related to plot ratio (85%), height and setback separation (82%), solar access (74%), lot design (89%), urban greening (85%), movement network (96%), and services (89%).

A high level of support was also provided in written submissions with respondents often commenting on detailed drafting preferences, rather than identifying any fundamental flaws with the recommendations. More detailed information on the engagement process is contained in the consultation summary report which is available for download at the Planning in Tasmania website.

Housing in Tasmania

Understanding the housing we currently have in Tasmania and what we need in the future are critical to the project. Existing demand for social housing is significant, with 4,500 applications on the social housing register in July 2023. Forecasts show that 32% of total demand will be from low-income households (around 12,500 households).

Over the last twenty years, housing in Tasmania has become less dense and less diverse, going against the national trend. Housing demand over the coming years will be greatest in Southern Tasmania, including the need for higher density dwellings, such as apartments and townhouses. To date, there are mixed views on how to achieve this change.



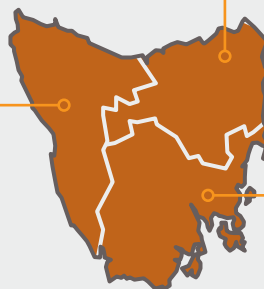
Dwelling demand to 2041

High series projections from the Tasmanian Housing Strategy indicate that housing demand over the coming years will be greatest in Southern Tasmania. This includes a proportional increase in demand for higher density dwellings, such as apartments and townhouses.

North-west region

3,000

total dwellings
incl. <300 higher
density dwellings



Northern region

6,500

total dwellings
incl. 4,000 higher
density dwellings

Southern region

29,000

total dwellings
incl. 16,000 higher
density dwellings

The role of planning in housing

The role of planning in housing delivery is fundamentally a spatial task: to coordinate a pipeline of housing aligned with infrastructure capacity, population trends and housing preferences, and to encourage the right housing in the right place.

The Planning Institute of Australia has identified three overarching principles that planning systems should adopt to support housing delivery:

- Enabling housing for those in need
- Encouraging more housing diversity and good design
- Improving decision-making systems and strategies.

Best practice planning

The Business Council of Australia's national review of planning systems shows that Tasmania's system ranks well among the other states and territories. Specifically, its speedy approval timeframes, and consistent statewide standards.

Despite these positives, there are some omissions in residential standards in Tasmania when compared to other states and territories.

What needs improvement through the planning system?

Based on research and engagement to date, there are some fundamental themes that are capable of being addressed through Tasmania's residential standards (the SPPs) and have been taken into account in the Final Recommendations Report.

We need to improve:



Housing choice, including affordability, diversity and density



Design quality, looking for opportunities for innovation and design excellence



Subdivision, improving the layout and liveability of new neighbourhoods



Spatial application of zones, promoting greater application of zones that allow more density and diversity of housing in the right locations

Final Recommendations Report

About the report

The Final Recommendations Report looks to facilitate improved planning requirements for a variety of housing options which balance the need to increase housing supply in a way that also encourages liveability and affordability for Tasmanian communities.

What's in the report?

The report introduces the project and its context, outlines the improvements, highlights engagement outcomes, and details next steps for implementation. For quick reference, the report can be navigated through the following sections.

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

Next steps

This report sets the context for the housing we have and need, highlights opportunities, and outlines recommendations for improving Tasmania's residential standards.

The implementation of the recommendations will be undertaken as a separate process.

This will include detailed drafting of the improved standards and a formal planning scheme amendment (or series of planning scheme amendments) pursuant to the requirements of the LUPA Act. The formal planning scheme amendment process will be subject to a public comment period.

Contact us

For more information about the 'Improving residential standards in Tasmania' project, you can visit our website or contact the project team via the details below.

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