

Riverina-Murray Housing

Fact Sheet #2

April 2016

Planning for the Riverina-Murray

The NSW Government has released the draft Riverina-Murray Regional Plan (draft Plan) to guide sustainable growth in the region over the next 20 years.

It outlines a vision to grow and diversify the economy over the next 20 years by creating more jobs; strengthening the region's cities, centres, towns and villages; and sustainably managing its agricultural, mining and natural resources.

You can have a say on the draft Plan which is now on exhibition.

What does the draft Plan say about housing?

The draft Plan identifies a number of key housing issues facing the region, including the provision of a range of housing options for seniors, the management of rural residential development, the provision of accommodation for seasonal and itinerant workers, and the provision of affordable housing.

What does the draft Plan propose for housing for seniors?

By 2036, more than 27 per cent of the region's population will be aged 65 years and over.

As people age, their housing requirements may change. Housing for seniors ranges from independent smaller homes that are specifically built to meet the needs of people as they age, to communal independent living arrangements, residential aged care facilities, and high-care hospital and palliative care facilities.

The draft Plan identifies the potential of the regional cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith, to accommodate greater housing choice. It identifies the potential for seniors housing to be integrated into medium and high density housing that is close to established services, such as health and public transport.

Providing greater housing choice across the region is important to allow for ageing in place. The draft Plan proposes that the NSW Government work with councils to provide a range of low-care and independent seniors' accommodation options across the region. The NSW Government is also proposing to examine the operation of State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 in regional areas as part of its continuing aim to improve the operation of the planning system.

What does the draft Plan propose for rural residential lifestyle development?

The draft Plan identifies that the encroachment of rural residential development onto productive agricultural land and identified mineral and energy resources can affect the viability and future growth of these industries and can lead to land use conflicts.

Demand for this type of development is driven by the desire for a rural lifestyle in close proximity to larger settlements or to scenic features such as the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

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The draft Plan proposes to develop and implement principles to assess locations for future rural residential development, which will minimise the potential for land use conflicts with productive, zoned agricultural land and mineral and energy resources.

What does the draft Plan propose for accommodation for seasonal and itinerant workers?

Seasonal workers across the region support agribusiness industries, including wine, orchard fruit (including citrus and nuts) and cotton and berry industries, particularly during harvest periods.

The region does not currently have an adequate range of accommodation options to appropriately accommodate the future needs of seasonal and itinerant workers. This undersupply of suitable accommodation results in increased rental housing pressures and health and safety concerns from overcrowding and makeshift housing in sheds, containers and rural buildings.

The draft Plan proposes to develop and implement guidelines to help councils plan and manage seasonal and itinerant worker accommodation in the region.

What does the draft Plan propose for accommodation for affordable housing?

The draft Plan identifies that more needs to be done to meet the housing needs of people on very low, low and moderate incomes.

The draft Plan proposes that councils can help to improve affordable housing through their planning strategies and local environmental plans, by:

- providing model controls that require affordable housing is included in developments, reducing contributions;
- providing other incentives to boost construction of affordable housing; and
- promoting new caravan parks and manufactured home estates in existing settlements.

The NSW Government is also working on a whole-of-government strategy for affordable housing. This strategy will assess the need for social, public and affordable housing across NSW, provide greater planning certainty and facilitate complementary activities, such as partnering with affordable housing providers.

How will the final Plan be implemented?

A Coordination and Monitoring Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the final Riverina-Murray Regional Plan, comprising State agencies and councils.

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Further information

To find out more about what is in the draft Plan and to make a comment visit:
www.planning.nsw.gov.au/riverinamurray