

## PROMISE FOR CHEAPER HOUSING OPTIONS DELIVERED

1 August 2009

Premier Nathan Rees announced today the Government had delivered its promise to make it easier to build affordable housing – cheaper rental properties, granny flats and specialised social housing.

The Premier and Planning Minister Kristina Keneally visited a unit development in south Sydney to promote the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

“Our plans to make cheaper housing available for those who need it most are firmly in place from today,” said Mr Rees.

“We promised to take action and we delivered on that promise.

“The global downturn has put pressure on low income earners and the most disadvantaged to secure low-cost housing.

“Across NSW, there are over 190,000 households with low or moderate incomes paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent.

The SEPP is the fifth part of the Government’s major planning changes and includes streamlined approvals for:

- **Below market rental properties** – Low rise developments such as townhouses and villas will be allowed in all residential zones with more than 50% of dwellings offered at 20% below market rate for 10 years.
- **Secondary dwellings, or ‘granny flats’** - now permitted in **all residential zones** and can be approved within ten days under the NSW Housing Code.
- **Disability Group homes** of up to 10 bedrooms can be self-approved by DADHC , and proposals from non-government organisations can get 10-day approval under a ‘checklist-style’ complying development code.
- **Boarding houses** will be easier to approve in residential areas and some business zones, incentives will encourage construction of boarding houses, and new standards will allow rooms in boarding houses to include kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- **Counselling** and other support services working with groups such as the homeless can now be delivered without having to go through council development application processes.

“The new rules are an incentive for developers across the state to invest in projects that include cheaper rental dwellings.

“This increases the supply of affordable housing stock, and increases the supply of rental housing overall, which drives down price for everyone.

“Families will also be able to build ‘granny flats’ more easily, for our elderly grandparents, parents’ and for children who are staying longer at home.

“During these tough times students will also benefit from low rent options while families use them as potential sources of income.

“Planning approval will also be easier for disability group homes and boarding houses.

“A good planning system should invite investment and provide a home and support if it needed for the most vulnerable.

“Our policies are focused on providing services and stimulating the construction industry which creates jobs.

Planning Minister Kristina Keneally said the Affordable Housing SEPP did not affect existing protections for amenity, design and height restrictions.

“There are a range of land zonings which allow residential development, including zoning which only allows freestanding houses,” Ms Keneally said.

“Where land is already zoned for units, a sliding scale of additional floor space can be permitted within height controls. It must also include between 20% and 50% affordable housing.

“While the affordable housing components will be managed by a registered community housing provider, the private component can be strata titled and sold.

“Neighbourhood amenity will be protected with proposed plans publicly exhibited and assessed by councils,” Ms Keneally said.

Housing Minister, David Borger, said the people who benefited from the policy included those:

- Earning no more than 120 per cent of the Sydney median income (about \$75,900) and not paying more than 30 per cent of this income as rent, or
- Eligible under the National Rental Affordability Scheme – with rent capped at 80 per cent of the market rate or less.

“A mix of public and private residents means healthier communities but that hasn’t always been easy to achieve,” Mr Borger said.

“This policy will help create healthier neighbourhoods by making it easier for Government, NGO’s and the private sector to deliver more low cost rental housing.”