

Supportive housing

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING) 2009

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 (AHSEPP) supports vulnerable people by increasing the number of housing opportunities for people making the transition from supported living or homelessness to independent living.

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) (AHSEPP) was introduced on 31 July 2009 to increase the supply and diversity of affordable rental and social housing in NSW.

The AHSEPP promotes infill affordable rental housing in existing residential and mixed use areas by providing development opportunities and floor space incentives. Developments are required to be well-located, accessible and of a high quality design.

The NSW Government made amendments to the AHSEPP on 20 May 2011 after in a review of the AHSEPP that was carried out after it had been in effect for a year.

Feedback during the review revealed general community support for a State planning policy to encourage more affordable rental housing, but also highlighted the need for the NSW Government to work more closely with councils and the community on identifying the most appropriate locations for new affordable housing.

No changes were made to the supportive housing provisions.

Why do we need affordable housing?

Throughout New South Wales there is a strong need for affordable housing amongst different groups of people. The need for more affordable housing across NSW is reflected in figures which show there were over 47,000 people in NSW on waiting lists for suitable accommodation in February 2010.

It is essential that government at all levels, private industry and the non-government sector work in partnership toward finding innovative ways to provide the housing. There are significant new opportunities in this growing market for industry.

What is supportive accommodation?

Supportive accommodation involves permanent, secure accommodation in self-contained apartments, together with on-site support services (such as counselling and life skills development) for people making the transition from supported living or homelessness to fully independent living. It is generally operated by non-for-profit organisations and charities for those requiring support.

APPROVAL OF SUPPORTIVE ACCOMMODATION

Under the provisions of the AHSEPP, supportive accommodation can be provided in existing residential flat buildings or boarding houses without the need for development consent, but only if the development does not involve the erection of, alteration of, or addition to a building.

Where alterations or additions are required to an existing building, relevant provisions of a council's local environmental plan and development control plans must be considered in relation to appropriate design and environmental factors. The council's standard development application process would apply, and applicants will need to lodge an application with the council. Applications are determined by the relevant local council or, if they have a capital investment value of more than \$5 million, by the Joint Regional Planning Panel.

In circumstances where the alterations or additions are minor or routine, they may constitute exempt or complying development under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. If considered to be exempt development, no further approval is required. If it is complying development, a complying development application will need to be made with a private or council accredited certifier.

CASE STUDY: Camperdown

The Camperdown Homelessness Project will provide affordable housing to people on low incomes as well as providing long-term housing with support services to people who have previously been chronically homeless. It is based on the successful Common Ground model from New York. Linking support with long-term housing has been found to be the best way to help those who are homeless get their lives back on track.

The project, part funded by the joint Commonwealth and State initiative “A Place to Call Home”, will involve building a six-storey development containing a mix of self-contained studios, one and two-bedroom apartments, plus space for on-site support services on the ground floor. The facility will include a 24-hour concierge service providing controlled access to the building to ensure the safety and security of residents.

The on-site support services will include health, counselling, vocational training, living skills and financial management and the tenants will also have access to training and employment opportunities. This project is about providing the appropriate support for previously homeless people to be able to maintain their tenancy and integrate back into the community.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The AHSEP is available on the NSW legislation website: www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

Further information can be found on the Department’s website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/affordablehousing

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Artist's impression of Camperdown Project
(City of Sydney Major Development Assessment Sub-Committee Report 2010)