

This document is one of a series of information snapshots provided in conjunction with a detailed review of literature associated with Liveable Social and Affordable Higher Density Housing SBEnc research project.

INTRODUCTION

The *Liveable Social and Affordable Higher Density Housing* SBEnc project is investigating liveable¹ and affordable higher density housing opportunities, with a focus on urban precincts. Key topics reviewed include:

- 1) Liveability outcomes, including accessibility in both medium and high density housing and the urban precinct.
- 2) Adoption of liveable design elements, highlighting successful best practice examples, and identifying pathways for adoption and barriers to uptake.
- 3) Understanding the value equation through capturing and demonstrating social and economic benefits to the broader community.
- 4) Exploring next generation thinking in order to maximise future infrastructure benefits and minimise future risks.

Regulations, national and international standards, government policy and cross-sectoral guidelines all inform the development and delivery of liveable and accessible housing and urban precincts in Australia. This legislative and policy environment is entwined with industry and community expectations, and return on investment decisions made on a daily basis, which together shape the built environment outcomes.

This snapshot provides an overview of the current regulatory and policy environment at a national level, and specifically at Queensland (Qld) and Western Australian (WA) state level. Additional details provided in the review of literature are available on the project website - <https://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-71/>. This analysis of regulatory and policy environment will inform the *Liveability Framework for Medium and Higher Density Housing* that is currently under development as one of the outcomes of this research.

THE AUSTRALIAN REGULATORY AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB)

The ABCB 'is a joint initiative of all levels of government in Australia, together with the building and plumbing industries. Its key objective is to oversee issues relating to health, safety, amenity and accessibility, and sustainability in buildings.' (ABCB 2019).

ABCB Accessible Housing Project and Project Timeline

The ABCB *Accessible Housing* project commenced in 2018. Its main aim was to undertake a Regulation Impact Assessment (RIA) of options meeting minimum accessibility standards to be potentially applied through the National Construction Code (NCC)² (ABCB 2018a). The RIA assessment 'will consider the Livable Housing Design Guidelines Silver and Gold level specifications as possible options for a minimum accessibility standard, and additional options identified through consultation' (ABCB 2020a).

¹ Inclusive of universal housing design and urban based liveable design features to be detailed in the *Liveable Social and Affordable Higher Density Housing* framework currently under development.

² 'The NCC is a performance-based code containing all Performance Requirements for the construction of buildings. It is built around a hierarchy of guidance and code compliance levels, with the Performance Requirements being the minimum level that buildings, building elements, and plumbing and drainage systems must meet'. <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/ncc-online/NCC>

ABCB Accessible Housing Project Timeline

2018	Accessible Housing Options Paper released for public comment; Accessible Housing National Consultation Forums.
2019	Consultation Outcomes Report; Work begins on RIS.
2020	Conclusion of RIS process; Development of content for NCC 2022 (if directed by Governments).
2021	Consultation on NCC 2022 public comment draft; Decision on inclusion of accessible housing provisions; ABCB Board determines NCC provisions if Governments decide to proceed.
2022	NCC takes effect in all States and Territories on 1 May.

Source: (ABCB 2020a)

The associated Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (C-RIS) is currently out for public consultation, closing 31 August 2020. Any decisions as to whether to include a minimum accessible housing standard for private housing in the 2022 National Construction Code (NCC) based on this assessment will inform the current SBEnc research on *Liveable Social and Affordable Higher Density Housing*.

Australian and International Standards

As part of the development of regulatory and policy framework for liveable social and affordable higher density housing, key standards of relevance developed by Standards Australia³ and International Standards Organisation (ISO)⁴ were considered and include:

- AS 1428 Design for Access and Mobility:
 - Part 1: General requirements for access — Buildings;
 - Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements — Buildings and facilities;
 - Part 3: Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities; and
 - Part 4: Tactile ground surface indicators for the orientation of people with vision impairment.
- AS 4299 1995 Adaptable Housing - relates to residential, rather than to public buildings. Draws upon AS 1428 Design for Access and Mobility Parts 1 & 2.
- AS 1735.12 1999: Lifts, Elevators, Moving Walks - Part 12: Facilities for persons with disabilities.
- ISO 21801-1:2020 Cognitive Accessibility –guidelines for the design and development of cognitively accessible systems, including products, services and built environments.
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 – in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Human Rights Commission provides a guide to this standard (Australian Human Rights Commission 2013). Whilst private housing is not covered this should still be considered in this report.
- ISO 21542:20100 Building construction - Accessibility and usability of the built environment - specifies a range of requirements and recommendations for many of the elements of construction, assemblies, components and fittings which comprise the built environment.

Other relevant guidelines, schemes, strategies and networks

The following table **Error! Reference source not found.** summarises other key national guidelines, schemes, strategies and networks relevant to understanding the regulatory and policy environment in Australia around liveable and accessible housing.

³ Standards Australia is an independent, non-governmental organisation responsible for developing standards (<https://www.standards.org.au/>).

⁴ The International Standards Organisation (ISO) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 164 national standards bodies (<https://www.iso.org/about-us.html>).

Summary of relevant national guidelines, schemes, strategies and networks

Document	Description
Livable Housing Design Guidelines (LHDG)	Developed by Livable Housing Australia (LHA) - a partnership of community and consumer groups, government and industry. LHDG champions the mainstream adoption of livable housing design principles in new homes (LHA 2017).
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) - National Disability Insurance Scheme	The SDA Design Standard outlines detailed design requirements based on the four categories of SDA design: improved liveability; robust; fully accessible; and high physical support (National Disability Insurance Scheme 2019).
National Disability Strategy	NDS is the Commonwealth Government initiative whose priorities include 'the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing; digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life (COAG 2011)
Living Longer, Living Better	Commonwealth Government's 'Living Longer, Living Better' (2012) program is informed by reforms in aged care, which have identified that the home will be the predominant place where people age and for longer than is currently the case (ABCB 2019).
Australian Network on Disability (AND)	AND is a national, membership based, for-purpose organisation that is focussed on enabling people with disability to engage in all aspects of business' (AND 2020).
Australian Network for Universal Housing Design	Provides links to relevant information, examples and documentation.
Council of the Aging (COTA)	COTA's key principals include: maximise economic, social and political participation of older Australians; promote positive views of ageing and interdependence and consciousness across generations; redress disadvantage and discrimination; and protect and extend services and programs (COTA, 2020).
Healthy Active by Design	Provides resources as a practical guide - includes evidence, advice and examples to assist with the development of healthy and active neighbourhoods Heart Foundations 2020 a, b & c)

State-based regulatory and policy environments

The effective integration between national and state and territory planning policies is required in order to avoid overlaps and conflicts. The following tables highlight some of the strategies and documents which exist to regulate and/or guide requirements around higher density social and affordable housing in both Queensland and Western Australia.

Key strategies and documents – Qld

Documents	Intent and deliverables
Density and Diversity Done Well	Ideas competition for increasing suburban densities.
Social Housing Design Guide to Design Standards for Social Housing (under review)	Simplifies and harmonises several earlier state government documents. Specifies housing design.
Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027	10 year strategy highlighting priority areas around growth, prosperity, connection and confidence.
Housing principles for inclusive communities	Housing principles associated with inclusive communities: rights, choice, control and inclusion. These align with the above strategy and the intent of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
Shaping SEQ South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017	Encouraging growth within the current urban footprint.
Economic Development Queensland (EDQ)	Partners with local governments, industry and the community to help deliver a range of projects on urban sites which support renewal.

Queensland Urban Design and Places Panel	Provides independent expert advice on the design of major infrastructure and urban-planning projects.
Healthy Places, Healthy People: Creating great places to keep Queenslanders healthy.	Mechanism for government agencies to consider/integrate health outcomes into policies, practices and investment decisions.
Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2017 to 2026	Promoting and monitoring various physical activity indicators as a part of this strategy.
State Planning Policy 2017 (under review)	Considers housing supply and diversity, planning for safety and resilience, and planning for infrastructure.
State Planning Policy – state interest guidance material - Liveable communities (under review)	Considers: the characteristics of the built and natural environments; access to employment, goods and services, and open space; and resilience to natural hazards and the effects of climate change.

In WA, the regulatory framework is currently subject to a comprehensive review. The process of consultation will be completed in 2020 and will consider, in its response to stakeholders' inputs, the wider and complex context of COVID-19 (WA DLPH 2019 & 2020). The reform is focussing on design standards, planning instruments, and consultation processes with particular regard to early community engagement. The aim of these reforms is to ensure the planning framework has been developed in consultation with the community and is guided by a strategy to develop liveable and attractive precincts (Government of WA, 2020).

Key strategies and documents – WA

Documents	Intent and deliverables
WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030	Considers how to improve access to suitable and affordable homes and respond to current and future need. (WA Department of Communities, 2020).
Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20	This plan aims 'to achieve better outcomes for individuals and families, deliver inclusive and connected communities and create a housing system that is more responsive to a broader range of needs' (Government of Western Australia, 2018).
State planning policy 3.1 R-Codes	Provides for residential and mixed-use developments; residential design; future opportunities for better living choices and affordability; variety and diversity (WA DLPH and WA Planning Commission, 2018).
Design WA and Office of the Government Architect	State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment - addresses design quality and built form outcomes across economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits (Design WA 2019). Design Review Guide - 'best-practice model for the establishment of new design review panels' (WA DLPH 2019).
DevelopmentWA	Has a diverse portfolio of industrial, commercial and residential projects including the creation of new cities and communities, precinct-scale urban renewal and major destination projects (DevelopmentWA 2020).
Action plan for Planning Reform (2019)	Provides strategic direction across the planning framework; enabling community involvement; and ensures planning system is fit-for-purpose and can meet the challenges of growth (WA DLPH 2019).
Western Australian Planning Commission Strategic Plan 2018-2021	WAPC facilitates infill development and sustainable urban growth; address barriers to affordable living and housing diversity through policy; enable affordable, accessible and safe communities.
State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment	Addresses design quality and built form outcomes. Seeks to deliver the broad economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits deriving from good design outcomes and supports consistent and design review and assessment processes (Design WA, WA DLPH et al., 2019).
State planning policy 7.3.1 R-Codes Volume 1 & 2	Provide for residential and mixed-use development through appropriate residential design; future residents' opportunities for better living choices and affordability; variety and diversity (WA DLPH and WAPC 2018).

DevelopmentWA	Has a portfolio of industrial, commercial and residential projects. 'Their work includes the creation of new cities and communities, precinct-scale urban renewal and major destination projects to support and shape WA's growth' (DevelopmentWA 2020).
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Informing the framework

The regulatory and guidance materials summarised above will inform the liveability framework being developed by the research team. Furthermore, the *Accessible Housing Options Paper: Consultation Report* (ACBC 2019), which provides accounts of stakeholder feedback, has been used to inform thinking and recommendations. In addition, the team will undertake further stakeholder interviews to test and finalise the framework.

IN CONCLUSION:

Further details on this snapshot and supporting literature is available on the project website: <https://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-71/>.

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