

Frequently Asked Questions



PlanSA



Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment

Q – What is a Code Amendment?

A – The Planning and Design Code contains the planning rules and policies that guide what can be developed in South Australia. Planning authorities use these planning rules to assess development proposals.

A Code Amendment is a proposal to change the policies, rules or mapping within the Code, which can change the way that future developments are assessed.

Q – What is the Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment?

A – State and local government are responsible for providing diverse housing options in residential areas for different household types, life stages and lifestyle choices. This is embedded in state planning policies and regional plans, including *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2017 Update)*.

To enhance housing diversity and options for South Australia's population, the State Planning Commission has initiated the Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment. This code amendment focuses on planning rules related to apartment-type accommodation to provide additional design flexibility to support and encourage the development of this style of housing.

Key features proposed in the Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment include:

- introducing a new form of 'co-living' accommodation for residences that incorporate shared facilities, such as kitchens or bathrooms
- allowing increased building height up to 4-6 storeys for large retirement villages and supported living developments to provide more accommodation for our ageing population to continue living in their own communities
- more flexibility in apartment design, by focussing on rules that contribute to a comfortable home, such as minimum bedroom and living area dimensions, rather than minimum total floor area.
- more guidance on how shared rooms and open spaces are designed, including being conveniently located near residences and having good access to sunlight, appropriate seating, lighting and other features
- better guidance on the provision of communal space and shared facilities for student accommodation.

Q – How is co-living accommodation different from conventional residences?

A – Co-living is a form of residential accommodation.

However, co-living residences do not have either a full kitchen or full bathroom, and rely on shared kitchen and/or bathroom facilities instead. They feature communal areas and shared facilities, encouraging communal living.

Conventional residences, including apartments, are fully self-contained with their own full kitchen and bathroom.

An apartment building could contain both co-living residences and conventional residences. Co-living can also occur in other building forms, an adapted large house or boarding house.

The requirements for co-living residences are slightly different compared to conventional residences. For instance, there are lower minimum living and bedroom area dimensions because communal recreation spaces and shared facilities are provided.

Q – What is the difference between co-living accommodation and co-located housing?

A – Co-living and co-located housing, despite having similar names, are quite different. Both are important new housing types that will enable housing diversity and choice.

Co-located housing is a new class of housing proposed through the draft Future Living Code Amendment that refers to a group of two or more homes that share gardens and some amenities. It always includes an existing established home that forms part of the co-located housing development and encourages 'adaptive re-use' to modify the existing housing and incorporate it into the co-located housing design.

Co-located housing is proposed in established suburbs where standard infill housing isn't appropriate. It must complement existing neighbourhood character, including protecting historic and character values, and incorporate high-quality design.

The result is high-quality designed homes surrounding communal open space. Mature vegetation is retained, and existing streetscape character preserved, while providing a range of smaller housing options.

Co-located housing can be self-contained, unlike co-living which relies on shared facilities.

Co-located housing must provide communal open space for shared use, while co-living doesn't necessarily need to provide communal open space, if sufficient private open space is provided.

Further information on co-located housing and the Future Living Code Amendment can be found at yoursay.sa.gov.au/future-living.

Q – How is purpose-built student accommodation different from co-living and apartments in a residential flat building?

A – Purpose-built student accommodation differs from co-living and apartments in a residential flat building because it is specifically for temporary occupation by students.

Requirements for student accommodation differ from other forms of accommodation because they are tailored to meet the needs of students. For instance, student accommodation can be either self-contained or not self-contained, has no minimum room size, requires less storage space and must include communal facilities and spaces to encourage social interaction.

To help provide appropriate communal facilities and shared spaces for student accommodation, new planning rules are proposed to be included in the Planning and Design Code, and a new practice guideline for communal recreation areas and shared facilities has been drafted. The planning rules and guidelines mirror those for co-living developments. This includes being conveniently located near residences and having good access to sunlight, appropriate seating, lighting and other features, as well as providing guidance on facility size and capacity.

If a purpose-built student accommodation building is proposed to be used as either co-living or conventional apartments, a development application would be required for a change in land use. The proposal would be assessed against requirements in the Planning and Design Code.

Q – What changes to apartment size criteria are proposed to provide more flexibility for building apartment-style homes?

A – The current minimum floor area criteria for apartments are proposed to be removed and replaced with minimum dimensions for living rooms and bedrooms.

This focuses requirements on areas of the apartment that are most important for comfortable living, and avoids arbitrary overall apartment size, which does not necessarily achieve good internal floor layout or design.

It therefore enables potentially smaller, well-designed apartments that still achieve comfortable living to be provided.

Q – What changes to communal open space policy are proposed to provide more flexibility for building apartment-style homes?

A – Planning rules are proposed to be revised to clarify that communal open space, such as rooftop gardens, can be provided instead of private open space, such as private balconies. The rate at which communal open space is provided has been reduced compared to private open space.

The new communal open space rate ensures there is a suitable amount of usable space initially, after which there is a gradual increase based on the number of homes (up to a maximum area of 250 m²). The proposed communal open space for a residential flat building with multiple stories would include:

- the equivalent private open space rate for the five largest dwellings
- an additional 4 m² (equivalent to the private open space rate for a studio apartment) for each additional dwelling until a total of 250 m² is reached.

A communal open space rate of 2.5 m² per residence is prescribed for co-living and student accommodation, lower than the rate for private open space, which applies per bedroom not per residence.

These new communal open space rates work with the new planning rules guiding design of communal open space, such as solar access, planting areas, seating, lighting and other facilities.

This provides more flexibility for providing open space in an apartment development, either through providing a single large communal open space or smaller individual balconies for each apartment.

Q – What is the difference between retirement living and supported accommodation?

A – Retirement living facilities, often called ‘retirement villages’, provide homes for retired people who want to live independently. Retirement living developments often include shared facilities such as activity spaces. They operate under the *Retirement Villages Act 2016*.

Supported accommodation is residential accommodation for people requiring regular personal care or medical assistance, such as a nursing home.

Q – How does the draft Code Amendment support providing accommodation for older people in the community?

A – The draft Code Amendment supports opportunities for retirement living facilities and supported accommodation development on large sites. Changes are proposed to respond to the limited availability of retirement and aged care accommodation and increasing demand due to our ageing population.

A new “Significant Retirement Facility and Supported Accommodation Site Overlay” is proposed, which will allow additional building height on sites more than 1 hectare in area:

- on sites between 1 and 2 hectares in area, building height up to 4 storeys
- on sites above 2 hectares in area, building height up to 6 storeys.

The proposed overlay also enables the development of larger compatible non-residential uses, such as cafes or allied health services, on these retirement facilities and supported accommodation sites. Shops, offices and consulting rooms are envisaged up to 450 m² in floor area where they support the facility’s residents, workers, visitors and the local community.

Q – Where would the new Significant Retirement Facility and Supported Accommodation Site Overlay apply?

A – The new Overlay is proposed to apply in suburban neighbourhood-type locations where some degree of residential infill is expected. It is not proposed to apply to areas where residential infill is not generally envisaged, such as the Established Neighbourhood Zone.

The new Overlay is needed because more than 85 per cent of retirement facilities and Australian Government aged care facilities are located in suburban neighbourhood-type zones, where building height is typically limited to two storeys.

This means that an overwhelming majority of facilities are constrained by building height controls and limited in their ability to increase capacity. This poses serious implications for providing age-appropriate accommodation in response to the growing demands of an ageing population.

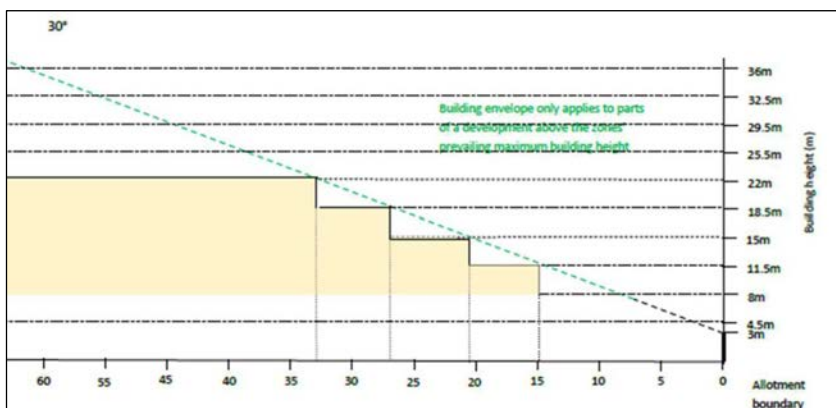
Q – How would neighbouring properties be protected from the impacts of increased building height in retirement living and supported accommodation facilities?

A – In order to protect adjoining properties, additional building height must be contained within a 30-degree building envelope applying from all allotment boundaries.

This means that buildings next to the boundary would be low level and taller buildings of 4-6 storeys would be located in the centre of the large retirement living or supported accommodation facility.

The zone’s front, side and rear setback policy continues to apply to parts of a development below the zone’s prevailing building height maximum. For instance, in a zone where a two-storey maximum building height applies to an area, the Overlay’s building envelope policy will apply above this level, and the setback requirements for the ground and second storey apply as they do for any development.

The operation of the 30-degree building envelope will mean that, at a minimum, each additional building level would need to be set back further from the allotment boundary than the level below. This concept is illustrated in the image below:



Q – Were planning rules for build-to-rent accommodation explored as part of investigations to develop the draft code amendment?

A – As part of investigation in developing the draft Code Amendment, the need for a separate land use definition and rules for build-to-rent accommodation were explored.

Following this review, it was determined that other amendments in the draft Code Amendment provide additional flexibility in apartment design that support build-to-rent developments, and that a separate land use definition was not warranted based on whether the apartments are owned or rented, as the Planning and Design Code guides the built form and design rather than tenure of a building.

Q – How can I have my say on the draft Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment?

A – Community and stakeholder feedback on the draft Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment is important and can help influence the design and nature of apartment-style buildings constructed in South Australia.

Share your feedback from 5 December 2024 until 5:00 pm 27 February 2025.

All feedback is encouraged to be submitted via the YourSAy website at:

- yoursay.sa.gov.au/accommodation-diversity

Alternatively, feedback can be provided via:

- [PlanSA online submission form](#)
- Email: plansasubmissions@sa.gov.au
(subject: Submission – Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment)
- Post: Attention: State Planning Commission, GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001.

All feedback will be carefully considered in finalising the Code Amendment and captured in an engagement report.

The engagement report will be provided to the State Planning Commission and the Minister for Planning to assist with final decision-making.

Once a decision has been made, the engagement report, including all feedback received during consultation, will be published on the PlanSA website. Names and organisation details will be included with published submissions, but personal addresses, email addresses and phone numbers will not be published.

Q – Where can I get more information about the draft Accommodation Diversity Code Amendment?

A – A series of community information sessions will be held online via Zoom to provide further details about the draft Code Amendment and provide the chance the community to ask questions.

For further information about the draft Code Amendment, information sessions and how to share your feedback, visit the YourSAy website at: yoursay.sa.gov.au/accommodation-diversity.

Hard copies of the draft Code Amendment can also be viewed at PlanSA office at level 9, 83 Pirie Street, Adelaide.

For more information contact PlanSA on:

- Telephone: 1800 752 664
Email: plansa@sa.gov.au
Visit: plan.sa.gov.au/en/ca/accommodation-diversity