

Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation) Amendment Bill 2023

Submission No: 25
Submitted by: Greater Whitsunday Communities, Regional Development Australia
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

Our Ref.: HAAPOLA SUBMISSION



SENT BY EMAIL TO: SDRIC@parliament.qld.gov.au

31 October 2023

Committee Secretary
State Development and Regional Industries Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY (PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT) BILL 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2023.

Greater Whitsunday Communities (GWC) partnered with Regional Development Australia, Greater Whitsundays (RDA GW), to develop solutions to the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regions' housing crisis by initiating the Greater Whitsunday Housing Project.

On 15 August 2023, GWC and RDA GW hosted a Housing Summit as part of the Housing Project, which included a Roundtable (Dec 2022), Research Project (July 2023), Summit and Action Plan.

The Summit attracted approximately 170 participants, including the Queensland Government Minister for Housing, Meaghan Scanlon, the Mayors of the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Councils, their CEOs and many officers, representatives of organisations across the housing supply chain, homeless service providers, social and affordable housing providers, developers, real estate agents and employers.

The [Greater Whitsunday Housing Playbook](#) informed discussions at the Summit, supported by Fact Sheets linked to workshop topics.

An Action Plan has been developed from the solutions tabled at the Summit and prioritised in a survey of participants post the Summit.

The data gathered and consultation that has taken place as part of the Greater Whitsunday Housing Project has equipped GWC and RDA GW to understand the housing ecosystem within the Greater Whitsunday region, including potential policy enablers that could unlock additional housing supply.

Consultation with stakeholders during the engagement process that informed the Playbook and at the Summit highlighted the levers that would be most effective for State and Federal Governments to use, and they sit firmly in the area of **incentives and grants**, as well as **reducing red-tape** and making it easier (quicker, cheaper and simpler) to deal with regional councils.

In addition, the Greater Whitsunday Housing Playbook recommended:

1. The State government commit to update the 2012 Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan.
2. The State government prioritise the preparation of Regional Infrastructure Plan in conjunction with review of the Regional Plan.
3. Investigate an expanded catalyst infrastructure funding regime for the region, including State and Commonwealth funding opportunities.
4. Establish consistent residential development requirements in planning schemes across local government areas in the region including:
 - Reviewing zoning provisions to enable more diverse housing types in a range of residential zones,
 - Identifying specific housing types suitable for 'as-or-right' development (i.e. accepted development not requiring development approval),
 - Identifying opportunities to reduce or remove the need for assessment when changing between residential land uses on land zoned for housing, and
 - Making a greater range of housing types a lower level of assessment (i.e. code assessable instead of impact assessable).

Specific feedback on the Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2023.

- **Timeframe:** A thirteen (13) day consultation period is not sufficient for local governments to effectively consider the impacts of the wide-ranging changes proposed.
- **Temporary Accepted Development:** The purpose of the provision is unclear, and we understand that current planning regulations already exempts emergency accommodation from being assessable under a local planning instrument.
- **State Facilitated Application:** Centralising assessments at a Ministerial level raises concerns about how the Greater Whitsunday region will be impacted considering the priority tends to always be SEQ. We have concerns about the State Governments ability to resource and effectively assess development applications for our region, as well as alignment to infrastructure funding and/or on-ground delivery to facility development. Concerns extend to the transparency and equality of the outcomes.
 - *It may be worth considering whether it would be more appropriate to only apply the proposed amendments to SEQ.*
- **Urban Investigative Zone:** This amendment may have the unintended consequence of delaying housing stock where a DA is lodged while planning schemes are being amended to reflect this new zone. The time it takes to amend planning schemes is significant, and GWC and RDA GW would rather encourage the State Government to consider reform to Queensland's Planning Scheme amendment process to enable a more streamlined and affordable process for local government to achieve policy changes and responses to contemporary planning issues and the needs of our communities.

Conclusion

Greater Whitsunday Communities and Regional Development Australia, Greater Whitsundays, welcomes the State Governments proactivity to address the housing crisis in Queensland.

However, after reflecting on the proposed Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2023, it appears that DSDLGIP are trying to unlock more housing stock by centralising decision making power at a State level and introducing changes to zones that require changes to planning schemes, and these take time. The unintended consequence could be a slowing down of housing delivery for our region.

Considering the fact that the regions are, and have always been, less of a priority for the State Government than SEQ, our concern is that these changes will penalise the regions more than help them.

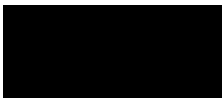
What is needed now is less regulation as opposed to more, and the streamlining of processes to make it **quicker and cheaper for local governments to make amendments to their planning schemes.**

GWC and RDA GW would encourage the State Government to focus on the levers that will be most effective in unlocking housing stock – that is, **incentives to build new homes.**

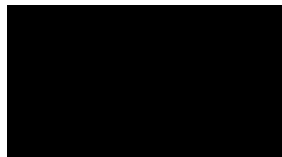
The Greater Whitsunday Housing Playbook also recommended the State Government create a specialist planning team (such as the NSW Regional Flying Squad) to resource and prioritise key planning and infrastructure actions (e.g. planning scheme, regional plan and infrastructure plan reviews).

GWC and RDA GW welcomes an opportunity to consult further and explore how we can progress some of the suggestions made above.

Yours sincerely



Carol Norris, GWC
Executive Officer



Rob Cocco, RDA GW
CEO

