

Question on Notice

No. 1574

Asked on 29 November 2023

MR T WATTS asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (HON S MILES) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the State Government's policy to encourage Queenslanders to build granny flats to increase housing access—

Is the Deputy Premier aware of (a) additional utility charges (water connection or usage etc.), (b) additional council infrastructure charges, (c) council reclassification of properties and (d) any other third-party increases?

ANSWER [MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING AND MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS (HON M SCANLON)]:

On 18 December 2023, I was appointed as Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works and as such, I am now the responsible Minister to answer this Question.

(a) Additional utility charges (water connection or usage etc.)

Secondary dwellings are used in conjunction with, and subordinate to, another dwelling on the same lot, and are included in the definition of 'dwelling house'. This means that a secondary dwelling is smaller in size and scale and shares features such as a letterbox and utilities. For example, there is single main water, electricity and sewer connections to the lot, with single usage bills.

However, there is no limitation on an owner from separating utility connections for the primary and the secondary dwelling. This may incur a connection charge from the utility provider, and usage may be paid by the resident of the secondary dwelling.

(b) Additional Council infrastructure charges

Local governments can levy charges to cover the costs of providing trunk infrastructure (i.e., water infrastructure, transport infrastructure or sewerage), if they have a local government infrastructure plan or an infrastructure agreement in place, and it has been determined that the development will place extra demand on the trunk infrastructure network.

If a local government has a local government infrastructure plan in place, the local government is required to adopt an infrastructure charges resolution to levy charges, which can be no more than the maximum amount set out in the Planning Regulation.

The amendment relating to secondary dwellings did not affect payment of infrastructure charges as per the respective local government fees and charges schedule in their infrastructure charges resolution.

For a dwelling house, the maximum amount that can be charged is \$22,200 for each dwelling with two or less bedrooms or \$31,080 for each dwelling with three or more bedrooms. This means that local governments can levy a charge for both the primary and a secondary dwelling as separate dwellings.

Since the amendments to the Planning Regulation in 2022 came into effect, the Queensland Government has heard from the housing sector, industry and community that infrastructure charges being levied for secondary dwellings by some local governments are excessive, if not prohibitive, and limiting investment in this type of development.

Given these concerns, the Queensland Government is considering whether the planning and infrastructure charging framework is structured appropriately to support secondary dwellings. While this is undertaken, the Queensland Government has written to the Local Government Association of Queensland to encourage local governments to levy charges that are reflective of the expected impacts on the local infrastructure networks, so that that infrastructure charging is not barrier to unlocking critical supply of new homes, including secondary dwellings.

(c) Council reclassification of buildings

The planning framework does not remove the requirement to obtain a building approval or to meet requirements under other legislation, such as fire safety requirements. A change in how a premises is used, including for a secondary dwelling, may require a change in classification for the building. For example, where a carport or a garage is changed into a secondary dwelling.

Each homeowner will need to ensure their secondary dwelling complies with building code requirements so accommodation for renters is safe as well as complying with any other local government or legislative requirements.

Advice should be sought from building certifier for information about any additional requirements, including whether there would be a change to the building classification.

(d) Other third party increases

While the term 'other third party increases' is unclear, other costs associated with building, construction or insurances are not regulated under the planning framework.