Submission No 43

INQUIRY INTO RURAL HOUSING AND SECOND DWELLINGS REFORM

Organisation: Urban City Group

Date Received: 7 October 2025

Submission to the Select Committee on Rural Housing and Second Dwellings Reform

To the Committee,

My name is Troy Myers, proprietor of Urban City Group, a member of the Hawkesbury Business Group, and a lifelong resident of the Hawkesbury. I have also had the privilege of serving within Hawkesbury Council's planning department, giving me a first-hand understanding of the challenges faced by both local government and the wider community when it comes to rural housing delivery.

I speak not only as a planning professional but as a long-term local who cares deeply about achieving balanced, practical housing outcomes for rural communities.

We appreciate the Committee's focus on the proposed changes to the Rural Housing SEPP—particularly Part 3A of the Rural Housing Code and SEPP Housing 2021. These reforms present a valuable opportunity to simplify planning pathways and provide much-needed housing flexibility in rural areas. However, to be effective, they must meaningfully address the practical limitations that have restricted genuine housing choice to date.

At present, Dual Occupancies cannot be approved via a Complying Development Certificate (CDC). Moreover, detached Dual Occupancies are currently prohibited in rural zones in many Council areas.

In reference to the proposed changes to the Part 3A - Rural Housing Code and SEPP Housing 2021, I would also like the committee to consider changes required for outbuildings and ancillary developments such as sheds, pools, carports etc. Currently ancillary development cannot be approved via a CDC when there is more than 1 dwelling located on a property. I believe that this a sensible, logical progression in the development of the code.

I believe that detached Dual Occupancies and associated ancillary development should also be included in Part 3D – Inland Housing Code under SEPP (Exempt & Complying Development Codes) 2008.

One area I'd like to address specifically is the issue of dual occupancies on flood-prone land. Currently, attached dual occupancies are not supported in these areas. It logically follows that detached dual occupancies should also not be supported on flood-prone land, given they present similar risks.

That said, in appropriate locations, detached dual occupancies offer significant benefits. They are far more cost-effective to construct. Unlike attached forms of *Detached Dual Occupancies*, they do not require alterations to the existing building — avoiding the need for complex and costly changes to roofs and supporting structures.

Furthermore, from a compliance and construction perspective, detached dual occupancies simplify the building process. Provided dwellings are more than 1.8 metres apart, fire-rated walls are not required — which removes a major cost barrier and accelerates delivery.

Beyond the economic benefits, detached dual occupancies are *family friendly*. They allow *older parents* to remain close to their children and grandchildren, offer housing options for growing families, and support *independent living* — all while reducing the burden on the *aged care* and *childcare systems*.

We respectfully recommend that the Part 3A Rural Housing Code, Part 3D – Inland Housing Code and SEPP Housing 2021 be amended to allow Detached dual occupancies and ancillary development where there are not more than two dwellings on site.

This would enable modest, family-oriented development—without compromising rural character, amenity, or infrastructure capacity. There is no practical reason why such development should not be permissible under the SEPP, provided it meets existing design and siting standards.

Allowing Detached Dual Occupancies and associated ancillary development on rural properties would:

- ***Support multi-generational living, helping families stay together on the same property.***
- ***Support multi-generational living and provide housing for aging family members. Enabling older residents to age in place.***
- ***Allow older residents to downsize and age in place, close to loved ones.***
- ***Give younger people a more achievable path into the local housing market.***
- ***Deliver affordable and flexible housing options for rural communities.***
- ***Enable families to build an investment property on land they already own, supporting their financial security.***
- ***Encourage small-scale investment that benefits local trades and economies.***
- ***And importantly, for areas such as the Hawkesbury, create local employment opportunities which is vital given that around 30% of our local workforce is employed in the construction industry.***
- ***Reduce unnecessary pressure on the formal DA system for simple, low-impact proposals.***

We also recommend that the Department consider streamlining approval processes and ensuring clear, consistent interpretation of the SEPP across councils and certifiers. Ambiguity in policy language often leads to inconsistent application, creating delays and uncertainty for applicants.

In summary, we strongly support reform that prioritises clarity, practicality, and accessibility. Updating the SEPPs to permit Detached Dual Occupancies and ancillary development on rural lots with up to two dwellings is a simple and achievable step that would have a meaningful and immediate impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and to contribute to a more responsive and practical rural housing framework for NSW.

Kind Regards,

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