Submission No 68

INQUIRY INTO RURAL HOUSING AND SECOND DWELLINGS REFORM

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Parliamentary Submission

Committee on Rural Housing and Second Dwellings Reform

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I wish to address the Committee on Rural Housing and Second Dwellings Reform the viewpoints of a construction business owner, family and community member of Port Macquarie Hastings Area in NSW.

Whilst I support strengthening or change to a range of areas to enable access to flexible, affordable and resilient housing in the form of a second dwelling, we will only be addressing the following Terms of reference in this submission.

- (c) the benefits and risks of permitting second dwellings on RU1–RU6, C3 and C4 zoned lands, including via complying development
- e) the impact of removing restrictions on dwelling size, attachment, and internal lot distance and implications of enabling second dwellings to be larger than, or function as, the primary dwelling
- (f) the role of elevation criteria and 1-in-100-year flood mapping in determining permissibility and the use of performance-based solutions for flood-prone lands (e.g., elevation certification), other land-based hazards and environmental impacts

(c) the benefits and risks of permitting second dwellings on RU1–RU6, C3 and C4 zoned lands, including via complying development
Land zoned in these areas are common in our regional area and many of the lots have suitable accessibility and infrastructure for consideration of second dwellings. By changing attachment specifications via breezeway and remove need for subdivision allows flexibility of use for landholders.

Social impacts need to be considered and the impacts on community housing discussed. Many of our families need the option of a second dwelling for younger adult children who wish to stay in their home community – particularly those who sought employment opportunities locally or chose education at our Tertiary institutes such as Charles Sturt University.

Previously our academic children would need to move away long distances or interstate to obtain tertiary education face to face. By staying at home with parents reduces financial strain of living away from home, allowing them to save for their own home deposit when studies complete.

Additionally, the homes zoned RU1-6 often have limited access to residential aged care services, so having options available for intergenerational living without attachment to primary home means families can support their aged or disabled loved ones without the need for residential placement or relocation.
Our parents should be supported in a ‘home’ not confined to sq metres or breezeways. They should be able to have the option to live and settle in their ageing years with space for their possessions and room for their care should the need arise.

When building second dwellings, the need to relax complying development needs to also be considered, particularly when the structure of the dwelling is straightforward or previous submissions for same design and construction processes have been passed.

An alternative to this is to fast-track Development Applications for second dwellings of a certain size and design.

e) the impact of removing restrictions on dwelling size, attachment, and internal lot distance and implications of enabling second dwellings to be larger than, or function as, the primary dwelling

Currently second dwellings over 60sq metres are required to pay Council Contributions when completed. The contribution cost is proportionate to the size of the dwelling.
However, second dwellings can be built up to 75% of the primary dwelling size, and whilst needing to pay these contributions initially, there is no further council contributions required for the second dwelling.

One possible solution is to remove council contributions for second dwellings over 60sqmtrs and adding reasonable, proportionate rates for second dwellings. This would increase revenue over time for council and reduce financial strain upfront.

There would likely be a greater uptake of second dwellings if the contributions removed. The larger sizes would allow for:

- Greater variety of second dwelling design and functionality
- Increase in business opportunity for Builders / Construction Industry
- Greater quality of living and wellbeing for those in the second dwelling by allowing more space and privacy

Removing the attachment requirement of a breezeway between dwellings on rural properties allows for greater flexibility in lifestyle and increased in privacy.
Technological advances reduce the need for the vulnerable to be in earshot away, when they can be walking distance on the same property and still have support on hand or close by.

(f) the role of elevation criteria and 1-in-100-year flood mapping in determining permissibility and the use of performance-based solutions for flood-prone lands (e.g., elevation certification), other land-based hazards and environmental impacts

The mapping of the 1 in 100-year floods and subsequent elevations of second dwellings has had a significant impact on both clients and construction businesses.

A recent example we encountered is in a residential area where new flood mapping had led to changes in flooring heights of proposed second dwellings. The new Defined Flood Level (DFL) height requirement greatly exceeded the existing floor level of neighbouring properties. Noting that a flood has never impacted this area to our knowledge. Increasing height of buildings means increased accessibility considerations and impeded privacy for owners and adjacent properties.

New or renovated Homes in 1-100 year flood zones should be met with building code standards that reduce damage in floods. Factors such as use of materials that withstand flood damage and design that reduces impact of floodwaters can be used to reduce the physical impact of floods on dwellings, without need for harsh planning laws.