

Housing Design Policy

Purpose and application

This Housing Design Policy (the Policy) establishes design principles and standards for the construction of new homes, including turnkey developments, that align with the objectives of the Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023-2043 (the Strategy). The principles and standards may inform acquisition, maintenance, and upgrades as appropriate.

The application of the policy is required for:

- New and major refurbishments of existing housing stock and transitional and crisis accommodation developed by Homes Tasmania, including Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) housing.
- New and major refurbishments of existing housing stock and transitional and crisis accommodation development supported by Homes Tasmania, including:
 - stock built by Community Housing Providers, registered charities or other organisations that receive any funding or other support including, subsidised land
 - stock built for the private market through subsidised housing programs such as build-to-rent and Homes Tasmania land release.

The Policy is summarised as a concise set of high-level guiding principles and design standards. The application of these principles and standards will be facilitated by a supporting document, the Housing Design Guidelines, which provides practitioners and decision makers with guidance for the application of the principles and standards during design and assessment processes.

Policy context

This Policy has been developed to align with national, state and local government design, planning and construction policies and regulation, including the:

- Tasmanian Planning Scheme, Tasmanian Planning Commission
- Medium Density Design Guidelines, Department of State Growth
- Regional land use strategies (RLUS), State Planning Office
- National Construction Code 2025 Public Comment Draft

- Liveable Housing Design Guidelines, Liveable Housing Australia
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Design Standard, National Disability Insurance Agency

This Policy adheres to relevant legislation and overarching policy directions including:

- Statement of Ministerial Expectations, February 2023, Homes Tasmania
- *Homes Tasmania Act 2022*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998*
- *Building Act 2016*
- *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*
- Renewable Energy Target (RET) Scheme and Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Strategic Asset Management Plan, Homes Tasmania
- Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023-2043

The Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023-2043 (the Strategy) prioritises safe, appropriate, and affordable housing for all Tasmanians. The Strategy, and its action plan, provides a framework to develop a housing system in Tasmania that is affordable and responsive to the needs of the Tasmanian community.

Homes Tasmania's Housing Design Policy is a key driver of the quality of social and affordable rental housing built in Tasmania and funded by Homes Tasmania. The Policy provides a translation of the Strategy's mission and outcomes for Tasmanians into standards that can be applied to design and assessment processes for new housing.

Guiding principles

The Strategy's mission statement is: To deliver a well-functioning housing system that provides safe, appropriate, and affordable housing for all Tasmanians.

This mission statement has been used to develop three high level principles for the design standards in this policy, as follows:

- **Safe:**
Homes Tasmania builds homes and creates communities. The physical and emotional safety of our clients while striving to build communities that integrate Tasmanians from all backgrounds is a key priority of our operations.

- **Appropriate:**
Dwellings are designed to the diverse needs of Tasmanians, balanced against the Strategy's vision to end homelessness in Tasmania by assisting as many people as possible. New housing should maximise the capacity of residential sites through development that is sensitive to its context to support good outcomes for tenants and neighbours.
- **Affordable:**
Upfront capital costs should be balanced against the ongoing and long-term cost implications of design decisions on the operation and maintenance of buildings and sites. Dwellings should use clever design and material choices, rather than utilitarian design, to maintain a standard of housing that meets the community's expectations of a suitable dwelling to live in and alongside.

Design standards

The Strategy's outcomes include: Tasmanians live in quality, sustainable and durable homes that meet their needs.

This outcome has been used to create three clusters of design standards that are to be applied to new social and affordable rental housing.

Quality

- **Standard 1: Desirable**
New housing developments and major refurbishments will positively respond and contribute to the future character aspirations of their neighbourhoods. They will be tenure blind and foster a sense of belonging to support social cohesion.
- **Standard 2: Diverse**
New homes should be designed to meet household demand as determined by Homes Tasmania's data. Housing developments should accommodate a range of household types, and circumstances to support ageing in place and create inclusive communities.
- **Standard 3: Liveable**
New homes will support the physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety of tenants and be constructed to Silver Liveable Housing Standards generally and Gold level for kitchen, laundry and bedrooms. Dwellings should include sufficiently sized joinery, storage and electrical outlets to meet the community's expectations of a suitably equipped dwelling. Multi-residential developments will include good quality communal spaces, mitigate against noise-related issues and be configured to support resident independence, security, dignity and comfort.

Sustainable

- **Standard 4: Respectful**

New housing developments and major refurbishments will be located, sited and designed to positively respond to their context and reduce the impact of residential communities on the natural environment.

- **Standard 5: Connected**

New housing developments and major refurbishments will be well-located to increase tenant participation in their communities and to reduce their broader housing-related costs. New development will be in suburbs to meet expressed demand, close to public transport and amenity.

- **Standard 6: Resourceful**

New housing developments and major refurbishments will make efficient use of energy, water, land, materials and built infrastructure during their entire lifecycle (construction, occupation and ongoing maintenance). Dwellings will be orientated and built to reach a Nationwide Housing Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) 7-star rating where possible and support innovations in resources. Multi-residential developments should be configured to maximise benefits for individual households and property operators.

Durable

- **Standard 7: Resilient**

New housing developments and major refurbishments will be designed to anticipate and accommodate climatic and environmental challenges and future infrastructure and service adaptations. Dwellings will be robustly designed to adapt to the changing needs of households, operators and owners to retain their value over time.

- **Standard 8: Strategic**

New housing developments and major refurbishments will balance upfront capital expenses against their whole-of-life operational expenses, including operational costs and maintenance efficiency, and multi-residential developments will be designed to be strata titled. Dwellings will be designed to optimise their potential to increase social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits and sense of pride for households.

- **Standard 9: Integrated**

New homes will be designed to work within the housing support infrastructure, maintenance and operations systems to ensure efficient and satisfactory service delivery for residents. Products, systems and technology will be specified to consider the availability and cost of maintenance services, operations and other logistics across Tasmania.

Interpretation

Designers and assessors should interpret the design standard to the best of their professional ability using the policy's guiding principles to understand the intent. If the design standards can be interpreted in different ways, the designers and assessors should interpret the information to get the best outcome as defined by the intent of the policy's guiding principles.

To assist, Homes Tasmania has prepared the Housing Design Guidelines (the guidelines) to provide designers and assessors with a practical guide to apply the Housing Design Policy at three scales: location, site and dwelling. The guidelines, which will be regularly reviewed, draw upon industry best practice and empirical research to:

- Support the informed application of the guiding principles and design standards within design and assessment processes.
- Facilitate the delivery of stock aligned to the specific and changing needs of key groups of Tasmanians requiring housing assistance.
- Encourage the use of new and innovative developments in design and building materials, including smart technologies to assist people living with functional impairment.

Compliance

Developments that will need to demonstrate compliance with the Housing Design Policy should include a design report with the following information as a minimum:

- A coversheet that articulates the alignment of the development proposal to the target group.
- Articulation of the application of the design standards at the scale of the site plan (Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at a minimum) which can either be part of the coversheet or alongside site documentation.
- Articulation of the application of the design standards at the scale of dwelling floor plans that include the connection to their respective private outdoor spaces (Standards 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 at a minimum) which can either be part of the coversheet or alongside dwelling documentation.

Information should be presented using written and graphic language that is accessible to a range of audiences, including:

- Homes Tasmania development, maintenance and allocation teams.
- Planning and design experts (including architects, interior designers, landscape architects and urban designers) in Development Assessment Processes.
- Funding and grant assessment panels.
- A general audience during the public exhibition of the proposed development.

Glossary

Affordable housing	Rental housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the needs of very low-, low- and moderate-income households. This is generally understood to mean housing that costs no more than 30 per cent of a household's gross income.
Community housing	Housing owned or managed by non-government organisations for people on low- to moderate-incomes. Community housing rent is typically set below market rate. Residents in community housing are eligible for their rent to be subsidised by Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
Crisis and transitional accommodation	Crisis and transitional accommodation is available for people in a housing crisis including shelter accommodation and Safe Space facilities.
Major refurbishment	The redevelopment of an existing built asset to increase the number of dwellings and/or a change in use (for example, the refurbishment temporary accommodation to become permanent social housing).
SDA housing	Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is a range of housing designed for people with extreme functional impairment or high support needs. SDA dwellings have accessible features to help residents live more independently and allow other supports to be delivered better or more safely.
Social housing	Social housing is affordable housing provided by the government and community sectors to assist people who are unable to afford or access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. It includes public housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing and community housing. Rents are set as a proportion of household income.

Relevant documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and procedures, including the:

- [Tasmanian Housing Strategy](#)
- [Tasmanian Planning Scheme](#)
- [Tasmanian Planning Directives: Residential Development Standards](#)
- [Regional Land Use Strategies](#)
- [Australian Building Codes Board's National Construction Code](#)
- [Liveable Housing Australia's Liveable Housing Standards](#)

Our contact details



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For questions about the design standards and any possible conflicts with other mandatory requirements, email
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