



Department of Planning,  
Lands and Heritage



# Draft Position Statement: Residential aged care

October 2019

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This document is available in alternative  
formats on application to the  
Communications Branch.

## 1. Policy intent

This document outlines the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) interim requirements to support the consideration and provision of residential aged care within the local government planning framework in Western Australia. It seeks to remove planning process barriers and encourage the provision of an appropriate supply and diversity of residential aged care options by establishing a consistent, simplified and streamlined approvals framework supported by a strategically-led system. It is proposed to complement existing government policies and services for the aged.

When reviewed and where relevant, the WAPC will support amendments to incorporate the statutory content from this Position Statement into the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 as model or deemed provisions.

## 2. Residential aged care in Western Australia

Our population is ageing at a faster rate than ever before. The number of older Australians will more than double in the next 40 years. At a State level, WA Tomorrow forecasts an 86 per cent increase in people aged over 85 by 2031. The challenges arising from this trend in population demographics is often recognised as one of the megatrends affecting global society.

An ageing population impacts on all aspects of community life, including the economy, and options to address these impacts are complex and multi-faceted. The implications of inadequate planning to support the needs of our ageing population are significant and include, but are not limited to, increased Federal and State government housing and health care services and associated funding, and increased costs to retrofit existing developments to accommodate aged persons' needs.

Within the State planning framework, State Planning Policy 7.3 Residential Design Codes Volume 1 (R-Codes) provides density bonuses to encourage greater provision of housing developed for aged or dependent persons. However, these provisions alone are not expected to meet the growing demand and changing

needs of the industry, including increased consumer desire for choice and flexibility to age in place and expectations in relation to lifestyle, entertainment options and affordability.

The growth in an ageing population, coupled with more complex needs due to increases in life expectancy and changing patterns of disease, will result in an increased demand for options that support a flexible transition from independent living to residential aged care.

Residential aged care facilities provide a range of care options and accommodation for older people who are unable to continue living independently in their own homes. The type of care provided ranges from personal care to assist with activities of daily living through to nursing care on a 24-hour basis. Flexible aged care delivery models that provide for transitioning needs are desirable for consumers and assist in creating a competitive and viable business product.

The provision of personal and/or nursing care within residential aged care facilities is what distinguishes this type of land use from other types of accommodation for the aged, such as retirement villages where residents live independently. Retirement villages are complexes of residential units or separate complexes of residential units on common land. They may be privately owned or owned by not-for-profit organisations.

A strategically-led planning system that incorporates appropriate incentives to encourage investment in the provision of aged persons' housing and residential aged care, is considered the key to facilitating a streamlined approval process and consistent decision-making.

### 3. Application of this policy

This position statement applies to the preparation and assessment of local planning strategies, local planning schemes and local planning policies throughout Western Australia.

### 4. Policy objectives

This position statement seeks to achieve:

- consistent strategic planning consideration of aged care needs in local planning/housing strategies
- consistent statutory planning guidance to standardise aged care-related land-use definitions and zoning permissibility in local planning schemes.

All other inter-related issues that impact on seniors' housing, affordable housing and changes to the R-Codes are outside the scope of this position statement.

### 5. Policy measures

#### 5.1 Strategic planning considerations

##### Local planning strategies and/or local housing strategies

All local planning strategies and/or local housing strategies should consider, evaluate and provide for future aged care needs by incorporating a dedicated section within the strategy that details:

- existing and future projected demographic profiles for aged persons applying WAPC's WA Tomorrow data
- existing and future projected aged persons' housing and residential aged care needs across the municipality
- medium to long-term aged persons' housing and residential aged care (beds) provision targets aligned to projected future demand
- incentives intended to be outlined in local planning schemes, local planning policies and other long-term local government strategies to facilitate increased supply, including:
  - development-based incentives such as density, height and plot ratio bonuses
  - other mechanisms such as surplus land sales/lease/joint venture programs

- the identification of suitable sites based on appropriate locational criteria such as zoning, proximity and accessibility to services
- consideration of acceptable development standards, including built form outcomes, design criteria, streetscape requirements, permissible height, density and development setbacks.

Future residential aged care needs identified in local planning strategies and/or local housing strategies must translate into locations, sites and densities in local planning schemes in accordance with the statutory planning requirements below.

### Local planning policies

It is preferable for a local government's position on aged care to be formalised within a local planning strategy and/or local housing strategy. Where this is not possible, or as an interim measure, local planning policies may be used to supplement the local government's position on aged persons' housing and residential aged care facilities.

## 5.2 STATUTORY PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

### Local planning schemes

Local planning schemes should align to the local planning strategy and/or local housing strategy content to facilitate the streamlined delivery of identified aged care needs.

Where applicable, local planning schemes should contain the following land use definitions:

#### **Residential aged care facility:**

a residential facility providing personal and/or nursing care primarily to aged or dependent persons which, as well as accommodation, includes appropriate staffing to meet the nursing and personal care needs of residents; meals and cleaning services; furnishings, furniture and equipment. This may consist of multiple components that include residential respite (short-term) care, aged or dependent persons' dwellings and a retirement village, but does not include a hospital, rehabilitation or psychiatric facility.

**Retirement village:** a development with self-contained, independent dwellings for aged or dependent persons together with communal amenities and land uses incidental and ancillary to the provision of such

accommodation, but does not include a development which includes these features as a component of a residential aged care facility.

Where applicable, 'residential aged care facility' and 'retirement village' should be classified as permitted 'P' land uses in residential zones in the local planning scheme zoning and land use classification tables, unless sufficient justification on proper and orderly planning and locational grounds is provided by the local government to otherwise allocate a discretionary 'D' or 'A' land use permissibility.

In industrial or similar zones where sensitive land use conflict exists, residential aged care facilities and retirement villages should be prohibited 'X' land uses. In all other zones, such as rural, residential aged care facilities and retirement villages should be discretionary 'D' or 'A' land uses.

Incidental and ancillary amenities and land-uses associated with and supporting residential aged care facilities and retirement villages (for example medical consulting room, pharmacy, café and the like) that are accessible for residents only should be considered and determined under the above new land-use definitions.

Amenities and land uses associated with and supporting residential aged care facilities and retirement villages that are accessible to both residents and the

general public should be considered as separate use classes and determined in accordance with the land use classification table under the local planning scheme.

All other aged care-related development proposals that fall outside the above new land use definitions should be considered and determined under the R-Codes and appropriate zoning and land use classification table in the local planning scheme.

### Development approvals for residential aged care facilities and retirement villages

Residential aged care facilities and retirement villages are encouraged within residential zones, in line with the local strategic planning framework (section 5.1).

A Local Development Plan (LDP) should be prepared if development standards for residential aged care facilities and retirement villages are not specified in the local planning scheme or strategic planning framework.

A LDP should ensure the development is compatible and integrated with streetscape(s) and existing or future desired built form of the locality. LDPs must outline built form requirements, including, but not limited to, building height bulk and scale, open space, setback, access, parking, landscaping, servicing and drainage, visual privacy, solar access and other relevant development requirements.

**Development approvals for proposals that include aged or dependent persons' dwellings assessed under the R-Codes**

Clause 5.1.1 C1.4i of the R-Codes provides a density bonus for aged or dependent persons' dwellings. If desired, this clause may be applied to eligible component(s) of a residential aged care facility or retirement village proposal. In these cases, the calculation to determine the number of permissible dwellings should be limited to the eligible portion(s) of the development only, consisting of self-contained, independent aged or dependent persons dwellings.

## **6. Definitions**

***Aged person***

a person who is aged 55 years or over.

***Dependent person***

a person with a recognised form of disability requiring special accommodation for independent living or special care.

***Residential aged care facility***

a residential facility providing personal and/or nursing care primarily to aged or dependent persons which, as well as accommodation, includes appropriate staffing to meet the nursing and personal care needs of residents; meals and cleaning services; furnishings, furniture and equipment. This may consist of multiple components that include residential respite (short-term) care, aged or dependent persons' dwellings and a retirement village, but does not include a hospital, rehabilitation or psychiatric facility.

***Retirement village***

a development with self-contained, independent dwellings for aged or dependent persons together with communal amenities and land uses incidental and ancillary to the provision of such accommodation, but does not include a development which includes these features as a component of a residential aged care facility.