



DISCUSSION PAPER

**Livable Housing Options
to make new homes
easier to use for
everybody, everyday,
at all stages of life**

October 2019





Introduction – Why make homes easier and safer to use?

Residents and families want homes that are easy to enter, easy to navigate in and around, and designed to meet their changing needs across their lifetime. Residents would also like to age-in-place as it can be expensive, emotional and inconvenient to relocate because their home is no longer suitable for them.

Canterbury Bankstown Council recognises these needs and is looking at options to:

- Make new homes easier to use to a broader cross-section of the community, including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families.
- Meet residents' needs over a greater period of their lifetime to reduce the need to relocate to alternative housing or carry out costly home modifications.
- Enable a rapid response to changing life needs which can be swift and unexpected.

This Discussion Paper outlines a range of options that Council may consider before deciding the preferred way forward. The options include:

1. Apply the minimum standard (Silver) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to all new homes that require development approval.
2. Apply a mix of the minimum and higher standards (Silver, Gold and Platinum) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to most new homes that require development approval.
3. Continue with Council's current approach i.e. apply the Adaptable Housing Australian Standards to apartments, town houses and villas.

The intended outcome is to amend Council's development controls to implement the preferred option endorsed by Council.



Source: Livable Housing Design Guidelines (page 9)

You are invited to have your say on which option you prefer, or whether there are other options which Council may consider.

If you wish to comment, please provide your written feedback by:

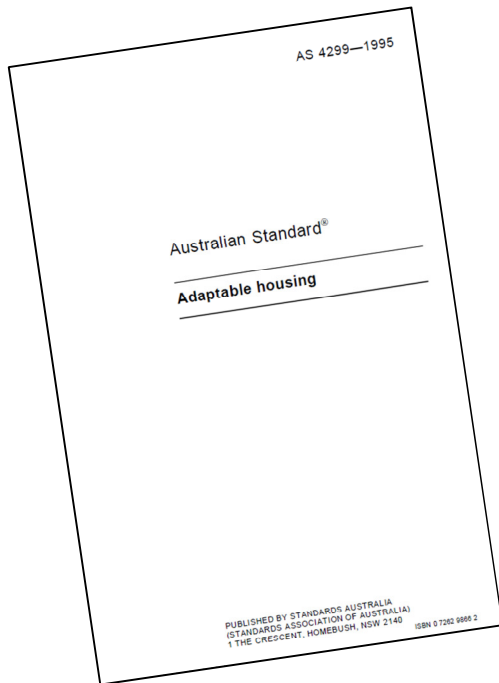
- Online survey submission below; or
- Post - General Manager, Canterbury Bankstown Council, PO Box 8, Bankstown NSW 1885; or
- Email - haveyoursay@cbc.city.nsw.gov.au

The closing date for submissions is 15 November 2019.

For more information, please call Council's Spatial Planning Unit on 9707 9000.



What is Council's current position?



For the last 20 years, Council has applied the Adaptable Housing Australian Standard (4299–1995). This is currently the same approach as most other councils in Sydney.

Adaptable housing means a home that is custom-designed to meet the needs of people requiring a higher level of access from the outset, including seniors and people with disabilities (either living independently or with family support).

As a basic premise, adaptable housing requires the home to be adaptable for a person using a wheelchair. The implication is adaptable housing is typically located on the ground floor, with particular attention given to continuous accessible paths of travel and circulation spaces.

Adaptable housing also allows for future modifications should they be required to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities. For example, modifying kitchen joinery and altering the laundry to improve access and usability.

Council's Development Control Plans currently require new apartments, town houses and villas to design a certain proportion of dwellings as adaptable housing. The table below outlines the current requirements.

New buildings	Bankstown DCP 2015	Canterbury DCP 2012
Villas and townhouses	10% dwellings	10% dwellings
Apartments and shop top housing	1 adaptable dwelling + 1 adaptable dwelling per 50 dwellings	Apartments = 10% dwellings Shop top housing = 10% of dwellings if development is ≥ 30 dwellings
Boarding houses and group homes	10% rooms	No requirement
Houses, dual occupancies and secondary dwellings	No requirement	No requirement



Council recognises there is a need to review these requirements to reflect future population and industry best practice directions.

Table 1: Council's current controls – Adaptable Housing Australian Standard

Building Design Requirements		Adaptable Housing Australian Standard (4299–1995)
1	Dwelling access (width)	✓ 1m
2	Dwelling entrance (width)	✓ 0.85m
3	Internal doors / corridors (width)	✓ 0.82m / 1m
4	Toilet (wall clearance)	✓ 0.9m
5	Shower (area)	✓ 1.16m x 1.1m
6	Reinforcement of bathroom walls	✓
7	Internal stairways (width)	✓ 1m
8	Kitchen space (bench clearance)	✓ 1.55m
9	Laundry space (bench clearance)	✓ 1.55m
10	Ground floor bedroom (area)	X
11	Switches / power points (height)	✓ 0.9m
12	Door and tap hardware	✓
13	Family / living room (area)	✓ 2.25m diameter
14	Window sills	✓
15	Flooring	✓ slip resistant



What are the future population and industry best practice directions?

Population Directions and Community Needs

Council prepared the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement to guide the future of the City of Canterbury Bankstown for the next 20 years.

The City's population is forecast to reach 500,000 by 2036. The Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement recognises a need to provide housing to meet the forecast growth and that a crucial outcome will be a rich diversity in housing to cater to a broad range of household needs. The provision of livable housing will be crucial to meeting a genuine sustainable mix of housing needs.

For example, the mature aged community is becoming increasingly important as the population is projected to age rapidly, with a high growth rate in the over 65 demographics. Older people generally like to stay near their families and friends, which is why residents look for homes where they can age-in-place.



Source: Shutterstock (2019)



The 2016 Census also reported that over 23,000 residents in the City needed assistance in their day-to-day lives due to a disability.

It is important for Council to consider these needs when making decisions about future building design controls.

An action in the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement is to encourage homes that enable our community to age-in-place and to encourage homes that are easier to use to a broader cross-section of the community, including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families.

This Discussion Paper looks at options to implement this action of the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement.



Source: Shutter stock (2019)



Industry Best Practice Directions – Changing to Livable Homes

The NSW Government, industry, social housing providers and some councils are moving from the Adaptable Housing Australian Standard to a new set of guidelines, known as the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.



Livable homes enhance the quality of life of all occupants at all stages of their life.

Source: Livable Housing Design Guidelines (page 8)

The Livable Housing Design Guidelines were introduced in 2010 following the National Conference on Universal Housing Design. The Commonwealth Government supports the Guidelines as a way to provide nationally consistent guidelines. Livable Housing Australia (a not-for-profit organisation) was created to administer the Guidelines.

The Guidelines aim to provide homes that are designed to meet the changing needs of most home occupants throughout their lifetime, including seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children, and people with disabilities and their families.

For example, for those with limited mobility, reduced vision or other impairment, the ability to perform common tasks such as carrying shopping into the home, cooking a meal, using the bathroom or accessing items from high shelves may be unnecessarily limited by the physical design of a home. The Guidelines recommend building features, fittings and products that increase usability, benefiting people of all ages and abilities, and allowing people to age-in-place.



The Guidelines contain three types of building design standards: Platinum, Gold and Silver.



Silver Level

Seven core livable housing design elements

Focuses on the key structural and spatial elements that are critical to ensure future flexibility and adaptability of the home. Incorporating these features will avoid more costly home modification if required at a later date.



Gold Level

Enhanced requirements for most of the core livable housing design elements plus additional elements.

The gold level provides for more generous dimensions for most of the core livable housing design elements and introduces additional elements in areas such as the kitchen and bedroom.



Platinum Level

Some further enhanced requirements for the core livable housing design elements plus all remaining elements.

All 15 elements are featured in the platinum level. This level describes design elements that would better accommodate ageing in place and people with higher mobility needs. This level requires more generous dimensions for most of the core livable design elements and introduces additional elements for features such as the living room and flooring.

Source: Livable Housing Design Guidelines (page 12)



Livable Housing Australia's goal is for all new homes to achieve a minimum standard (Silver). The Australian Building Codes Board is currently exploring options to mandate the guidelines in the Building Code of Australia, based on the Silver / Gold specifications.

Table 2 outlines the different requirements of the Platinum, Gold and Silver Standards.

Table 2: Comparison of Council's current controls (Adaptable Housing Australian Standard) and the Livable Housing Design Guidelines

Core Building Design Requirements		Adaptable Housing Australian Standard	Livable Housing Design Guidelines		
			Silver	Gold	Platinum
1	Dwelling access (width)	✓ 1m	✓	✓ +	✓ + +
2	Dwelling entrance (width)	✓ 0.85m	✓	✓	✓ +
3	Internal doors / corridors (width)	✓ 0.82m / 1m	✓	✓ +	✓ + +
4	Toilet (wall clearance)	✓ 0.9m	✓	✓ +	✓ + +
5	Shower (area)	✓ 1.16m x 1.1m	✓	✓ –	✓
6	Reinforcement of bathroom walls	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Internal stairways (width)	✓ 1m	✓	✓	✓ +
8	Kitchen space (bench clearance)	✓ 1.55m	X	✓ –	✓
9	Laundry space (bench clearance)	✓ 1.55m	X	✓ –	✓
10	Ground floor bedroom (area)	X	X	✓	✓
11	Switches / power points (height)	✓ 0.9m / –	X	✓	✓
12	Door and tap hardware	✓	X	✓	✓
13	Family / living room (area)	✓ 2.25m diameter	X	X	✓
14	Window sills	✓	X	X	✓
15	Flooring	✓ slip resistant	X	X	✓

In relation to the Gold and Platinum Standards, (+) means more generous dimensions compared to the Australian Standard and (–) means the dimensions are less compared to the Australian Standard.



What are the options for consideration?

Council is exploring a range of options to decide how it may change the development controls to make new homes easier to use to a broader cross-section of the community.

This Discussion Paper uses the terms ‘adaptable housing’ and ‘livable housing’ to describe the options.

Adaptable housing means a home that is designed to meet the needs of people requiring a higher level of access from the outset, and is usually designed and built with a specific person’s needs in mind.

Livable housing means a home that is designed to meet the changing needs of a broader cross-section of the community throughout their lifetime.

The options identified in this Discussion Paper would apply to new residential development that require development approval (not including alterations and additions to existing homes). It is not possible to apply Council’s DCP controls to complying development (such as houses and secondary dwellings) under the State Codes.



Source: Shutterstock (2019)



Option 1 (Livable Housing): Apply the minimum standard (Silver) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to all new homes.

This option proposes to apply the Livable Housing Design Guidelines (Silver Standard) to all new homes, in response to the future population and industry directions.

The Silver Standard is the minimum standard to make homes easier and safer to use by focusing on design improvements to dwelling access, dwelling entrance, internal doors and corridors, internal stairways and bathrooms.

Example of a bathroom with livable design features



Source: Livable Housing Australia



The benefits of this option are:

- It provides the minimum standard to meet the changing needs of most home occupants throughout their lifetime.
- It uses standard building products and practices to overcome access and usability problems.
- It aligns with the Livable Housing Australia's goal for all new homes to achieve a minimum standard (Silver). While this option is the minimum standard, it would apply to all new residential development that requires development approval.
- The Silver Standard would cost less to construct compared to the Australian Standard.
- The likely average yield under this option may be approximately 2,000–2,500 dwellings per year.

The limitation is this option applies mainly to entry ways, corridors and bathrooms, and does not apply to the design of other rooms in the home. The Silver Standard does not require bedrooms on the ground floor.



Option 2 (Livable Housing): Apply a mix of the minimum and higher standards (Silver, Gold and Platinum) under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to most new homes.

This option proposes to apply a variation of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines to most new homes, in response to the future population and industry directions.

Rather than limit the building design to the minimum Silver Standard, it proposes to apply a mix of the Platinum, Gold and Silver Standards as follows:

- 20% Silver, 10% Gold and 10% Platinum to new apartments, town houses and villas;
- Gold Standard to at least one dwelling in a dual occupancy; and
- Silver Standard to new secondary dwellings and houses requiring a development application.

Example of a ground floor with space (door to the left) which may be used as a bedroom



Source: Livable Housing Australia



The benefits of this option are:

- The Platinum and Gold Standards apply to the design of most or all rooms in the home. For example, the Gold Standard requires space on the ground floor to be designed for use as a bedroom by a person using a wheelchair.
- It provides a mix of housing products where the rooms and services are of a size that are usable by a broader cross-section of the community. For example, slightly wider doorways or passageways are more easily navigated by users of mobility devices such as walking frames, wheelchairs or a child's pram. The Gold Standard requires bedrooms on the ground floor.
- The Silver and Gold Standards would cost less to construct compared to the Australian Standard. It is assumed all development types would be more expensive under the Platinum Standard compared to the other standards.
- The likely average yield under this option would be approximately 1,000 dwellings per year.

The limitation is this option requires more generous dimensions for most rooms compared to the Silver Standard under Option 1.



Source: Shutterstock (2019)



Option 3 (Adaptable Housing): Continue with Council's current approach i.e. apply the Adaptable Housing Australian Standards to apartments, town houses and villas.

This option proposes to continue with the current policy, rather than apply the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

The benefits of this option are:

- It is specific to designing homes to accommodate varying degrees of physical ability over time.
- The number of requirements are greater compared to the Silver and Gold Standards under the the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

The limitations of this option are:

- It does not meet a growing trend toward industry best practice directions.
- It is currently limited to 10% of dwellings in new large multi-dwelling development.
- The Australian Standard does not require bedrooms on the ground floor.
- The Australian Standard would cost more to construct compared to the Silver and Gold Standards under the the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.
- The likely average yield under this option may be low at approximately 100 dwellings per year.



Next Steps

Following the exhibition, Council will consider submissions to decide which option will inform future building design controls to ensure new homes in our City are easier to use to a broader cross-section of the community.

Council thanks you for your feedback on the Discussion Paper.



Source: Shutterstock (2019)