



**Australian
Institute of
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Tuesday, 12 August 2025

Hon Sam O'Connor
Minister for Housing
1 William Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
Via email: housing@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Cc: christien.duffey@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister O'Connor,

The Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter (the Institute) welcomes the Queensland Government's leadership in tackling the housing crisis through the *Homes for Queenslanders* strategy.

However, we believe that to fully achieve the strategy's objectives—especially around home ownership, sustainability, and Queensland's lifestyle—greater attention must be paid to delivering more housing of better quality.

The attached submission highlights key issues and proposes three practical recommendations to help achieve affordable, enduring and safe homes for Queensland communities:

1. Develop a *Statewide Infill Housing and Apartment Design Guide* that is co-designed with government, architects, and builder; user-friendly, visual, and aligned with planning schemes.
2. Fund local governments to access design expertise, including supporting design review panels and appointing city architects, and providing access to the Queensland Government Architect's advice.
3. Support local governments to develop pre-approved housing designs for tailored duplex, triplex, and apartment designs suited to local contexts that are developed with both liveability and buildability in mind.

We believe your department through the Office of the Queensland Government Architect along with the Department State Development, Infrastructure and Planning would be well placed to partner in collaboration with industry in delivering all the above recommendations.

The Institute stands ready to assist with any of these recommendations, and we thank the Government for its leadership, partnership, and focus on delivering better homes, faster, for all Queenslanders.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or senior representatives of your department to discuss how we can help the Government progress a coordinated approach to achieving its objectives.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Stalker', with a stylized, flowing script.

Caroline Stalker FRAIA
Queensland Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects



Australian
Institute of
Architects

AFFORDABLE, ENDURING AND SAFE HOMES FOR QUEENSLAND COMMUNITIES



Submission by the Australian Institute of Architects
(Queensland Chapter) in support of the Queensland
Government's Homes for Queenslanders strategy

QUEENSLAND CHAPTER

Submission: August 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) represents 2,400 architects statewide, and 14,000 nationally. Our members work on large scale projects around Australia and the world. We are made up of businesses that are solutions focused, and as a body have deep expertise in complex projects delivery.

The Australian Institute of Architects (Queensland Chapter) warmly welcomes the Queensland Government's strong commitment to tackling the housing crisis through increased supply, stimulating economic growth.

We particularly note and applaud the Residential Activation Fund, additional Priority Development Area (PDA) declarations, the tax and affordability relief and the social and community housing expansion programs, and the Building Reg Reno.

Legislative reform, targeted investment, and support for social, community, and first-home buyer housing are all steps that will deliver more Queenslanders an affordable place to call home—sooner.

Promoting good housing design across the state is of vital importance to deliver the State's core housing objectives of:

- home ownership and wealth creation
- affordable household energy
- housing options attuned Queenslanders' range of needs and budgets.
- protecting Queenslanders' lifestyles.

HOUSING DESIGN ACROSS QUEENSLAND

Much of the housing that needs to be built will be provided within existing communities, close to services and facilities, amongst existing residents.

Unfortunately, we see significant design flaws in much low-medium density products such as duplexes, triplexes and townhouses, and apartment buildings that could be readily avoided by the application of good design. These occur despite our current regulatory framework, and despite the best efforts of local government planning staff.

Some common design failures seen across Queensland are:

- **Extremely hot buildings** with no shading, limited cross ventilation and access to natural light that are uncomfortable and expensive to run.
- **Windowless bedrooms** that do not with no access to direct light and ventilation resulting in poor health outcomes.
- **Blank façades** from extensive, full-length garages to the street, resulting in poor neighbourhood outcomes, activation and surveillance to the street.

- **Poor outlook** such as living spaces with an outlook 1m to a blank wall, side fence and no light or breeze.
- **Lack of well-designed covered outdoor space** – nowhere for children to play, or groups to socialise outside, contrary to our Queensland lifestyle.
- **Lack of privacy** with residents looking directly into neighbouring living rooms and comprising privacy and enjoyment of the outdoors reducing liveability and social cohesion.
- **No landscape** especially in denser housing formats making homes and neighbourhoods hotter.
- **Poor construction** with buildings that leak, crack, or require expensive retrofits.

WHY POOR DESIGN HAPPENS

Despite good intentions, the current planning and development system often permits housing that does not meet basic standards of amenity, energy efficiency, privacy or value. Many homes are being designed by people with no training or expertise in residential design. The result is poor design outcomes.

The Queensland Development Code (QDC), Queensland Housing Code (QHC) and local planning schemes all set out to try to ensure poor design outcomes are avoided, and yet many products we are seeing delivered on the ground have these common design flaws. With development applications being prepared by individuals or companies with no training in design, lack of knowledge, lack of skill, and lack of understanding about how to achieve other than the simpler numerical outcomes (setbacks) are the core problems.

We believe there is a strong role for the State Government to play, delivering on State priorities by supporting better design across the State by providing local government with additional resource and support.

STATE SUPPORTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DELIVER MORE AND DELIVER BETTER

Housing design issues are all dealt with at the coal face of the development process in local governments. Some larger local governments have the capacity to employ inhouse architectural and design advice to help applicants create better environments, though most do not.

We believe there is a strong case for some further design-based state wide resources that go beyond QHC provisions, combined with programs to assist local government deliver better design.

We appreciate that the Queensland Government is focused on cutting red tape and streamlining planning processes, and we support this. The solution is not more regulation—

but better resources, better guidance, and smarter support for local government and home builders.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We propose a practical, light-touch approach that supports the Government's housing objectives and helps industry deliver well-designed homes with no added red tape:

Develop a Statewide Standardised Infill Housing and Apartment Planning and Design Guide that is:

- tailored to local government and the home-building industry
- a simple how-to-guide addressing basic design elements that can be picked up by untrained designers
- developed in collaboration between government, design professionals and the industry
- structured to deliver government priorities.

Fund local governments to access skilled design resources that:

- help Queensland local governments access design expertise, set up their own design review panels, and/or employ city architects
- encourage local governments to seek advice from the Office of the Queensland Government Architect and Queensland Urban Design and Places Panel
- support local governments that are experiencing development pressures to appoint full or part time architects in their development assessment teams.

Support local governments to develop their own pre-approved duplex, triplex and low-rise apartment designs to suit their local area, but based on the Statewide advice that is:

- tailored to their local areas
- developed in collaboration between architects and the construction industry to ensure both liveability and viability in the market.

THE BENEFITS TO QUEENSLAND

The Institute believes these initiatives would help to:

- reduce energy bills
- streamline Development Application (DA) assessment by improving design up-front
- support local governments to deliver better outcomes without imposing new regulations
- create safer, more welcoming communities
- facilitate enduring, affordable investments for home buyers
- protect and promote our distinctive Queensland lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

We are confident that with a modest investment in design capability and policy scaffolding, Queensland can lead the nation in delivering housing that endures—not just in quantity, but in quality.

Success depends on a multi-agency commitment from the Queensland Government, backed by industry.