

Granny flat opportunities to open up in WA

Written by Jennifer Duke 01 March 2013

Granny flats will be able to be rented out to unrelated tenants if the state's Liberal government is re-elected, planning minister John Day said in an announcement yesterday.

Mr Day said that the floor space allowances would increase from 60 to 70 square metres in granny flats to enable owners to rent them out to students and seniors as a more affordable housing option. Only specific areas are currently entitled to rent their granny flats to non-related parties.

This would take place under a changing of the state's residential design codes.

"At the moment, granny flats must be used by family members or the homeowner themselves. By scrapping this old restriction, so-called 'empty nesters' and seniors can unlock equity in their homes and receive a regular income, or provide space for a carer to live close by in their aging years," Mr Day said.

"There is also potential for students and young people looking for affordable accommodation to rent granny flats."

Investors looking to see whether their property applies should remember that normal planning requirements around setbacks and density will continue to apply, "but this change will introduce more flexibility and more rental accommodation to the real estate market."

The main reasons for the amendment were listed as housing diversity to provide for Perth's changing household demographic, to assist with housing affordability and to provide for an injection into the local construction industry.

The Liberal Party's housing affordability policy states that "at present an antiquated rule within the State residential design codes restricts the ability of most to be able to take advantage of this."

Similar allowances were made within New South Wales in 2009 seeing many investors constructing granny flats to take advantage of increased rental income.

The state election's polling day is 9 March 2013, while early voting has been allowed since 20 February.

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