

Granny flat size allowance increased in ACT

By Jennifer Duke

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A new change to the Territory Plan is allowing investors in ACT to build secondary residences, also known as granny flats, to be built up to 90 square metres in size, where previously they could only be 75 square metres.

Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Simon Corbell, today said that the increase was to address concerns around the commencement of *variation 306* in July 2013.

Variation 306 was the much awaited removal of the restriction on who could occupy a 'habitable suite' or 'relocatable unit', better known as a secondary dwelling or granny flat. Essentially, this allowed investors to start using the granny flats in a similar way to that being seen in New South Wales. While this strategy has [seen many investors diving into eligible Sydney suburbs](#) to make the most of a potential dual income over the past couple of years, there are [a number of pros and cons to be aware of](#).

Corbell said that this was an effort to provide affordable housing options. The 90 square metres for the dwelling size is the floor area measured to the outside face of the external walls, including internal walls between the living areas and garage, but excluding the garage.

"By allowing greater floor area in secondary residences, Canberra families can help their parents or students to live independently in a residence that is large enough to be comfortable yet small enough to be manageable," said Corbell of the new change.

"The additional size will also help builders meet the adaptable housing standards for a variety of dwelling layouts, including two-bedroom dwellings. This allows the secondary residence to meet the requirements of the current occupant as well as the needs of occupants in the future."

The change is based on the territory's planning strategy, which looks to increase urban intensification.

"We hope this policy refinement will encourage more Canberrans to build versatile buildings which will improve the city's housing diversity and introduce more affordable housing options for the Territory's population," he said.

The increase came as part of [Technical Amendment 2013-12](#), which came into effect on 17 January this year.

It notes the following:

Residential Zones Development Code

i. Increase maximum size of secondary residence from 75m² to 90m²

- ii. Retention of private open space requirements for an existing dwelling where a secondary residence is proposed*
- iii. Clarification of requirement for statement of endorsement for demolition*
- iv. Removal of rule R39 relating to subdivision under Unit Titles Act 2001*
- v. Clarify that rule R57 water sensitive urban design requirements for multi unit residential development does not include secondary residences.*

Achievable rent on granny flats vary, however some suburbs are seeing properties asking for rents of up to \$360 to \$410 per week for a one-bedroom granny flat - such as in [Griffith](#) - down to \$265 per week for a one-bedroom granny flat in [Kaleen](#).