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# DUAL OCCUPANCY IN ZONE SD

(Single Dwelling Residential)

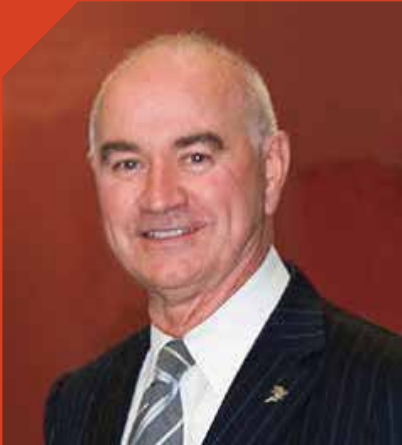
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## DISCUSSION PAPER

March 2016



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
**PLANNING  
COMMISSION**



Dear Stakeholder

The Northern Territory Planning Commission has recently undertaken extensive community consultation to develop a range of land use plans, including Area Plans for Darwin's Inner and Mid-Suburbs; the Holtze locality; land use plans for Alice Springs and Katherine; a Sub Regional plan for the Litchfield area and the overarching Darwin Regional Land Use Plan.

Throughout this consultation, the concepts of 'dual occupancy' and the subdivision of Single Dwelling (SD) lots have been raised by many residents in the community.

Most other Australian jurisdictions have policies relating to dual occupancy, which generally refers to the ability to develop a second dwelling on what has previously been a single residential lot.

For some residents, subdividing a larger lot would provide an opportunity for renewal and revitalisation while maintaining the existing character of the suburb. For older residents, smaller blocks are found to be easier to maintain, and would enable residents to remain in their established community.

From a strategic planning perspective, dual occupancy helps to deliver diversity in housing choice and affordability for changing demographics as well as a more compact urban form to reduce urban sprawl and maximise efficiencies through existing infrastructure.

For these reasons, the Northern Territory Planning Commission has developed a draft proposal to introduce the opportunity for dual occupancy development to occur within Zone SD of the NT Planning Scheme. This document discusses key considerations around dual occupancy to assist you in providing feedback on the proposal.

More information is available on our website, including the dates and times for more detailed briefings on the dual occupancy proposal.

We look forward to hearing your views on dual occupancy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Gary Nairn'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'G' and 'N'.

**The Hon Gary Nairn AO**  
Chairman, NT Planning Commission



## WHAT IS DUAL OCCUPANCY?

Dual occupancy is two dwellings on one lot of land – either attached or detached dwellings.

Dual occupancy features in most planning schemes across Australia, but varies in terms of minimum lot size, location criteria, design controls and assessment processes.

Currently in the Northern Territory, the Planning Scheme allows for an independent unit to be constructed on the same site as a single dwelling. The maximum floor area of the independent unit is 50m<sup>2</sup> in urban areas and 80m<sup>2</sup> in rural areas. Independent unit proposals are assessed as appropriate to the site having regard to the potential impact of the independent unit on the amenity of adjoining and nearby properties.

## WHY IS DUAL OCCUPANCY BEING CONSIDERED IN THE NT?

Dual occupancy helps to deliver diversity in housing choice and affordability for changing demographics, as well as a more compact urban form that reduces urban sprawl and maximises efficiencies through existing infrastructure.

Recent community feedback on land use planning in Darwin and Alice Springs has identified dual occupancy, or subdivision of single dwellings lots, as a preferred option for increasing density in established residential areas to accommodate future population growth while maintaining the existing character of a suburb. In most cases, people would prefer dual occupancy to higher densities, such as Zones MD or MR that allow for multiple dwellings from 2 to 4 levels.

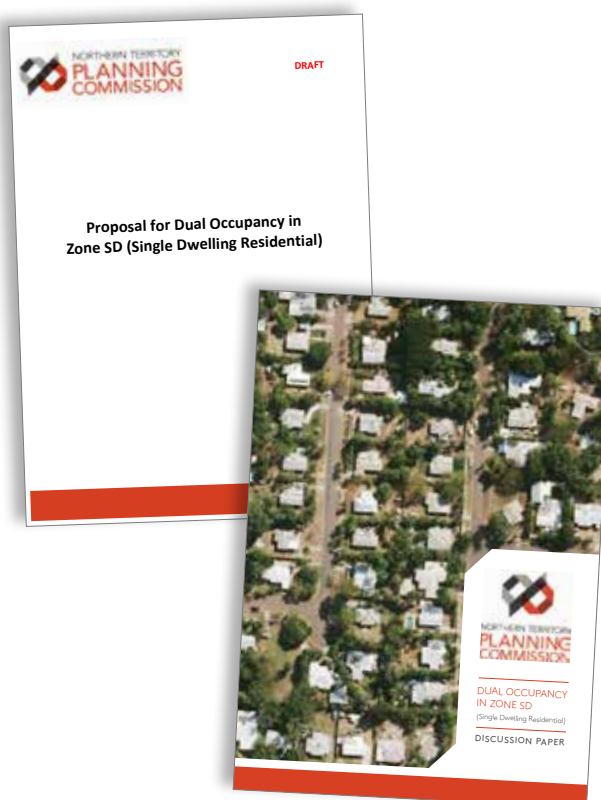
Community interest in dual occupancy is reinforced in recent independent market research that indicates around three quarters of residents

surveyed in Darwin's inner and mid suburbs support the concept of dual occupancy, with the majority of participants also indicating they have no interest in subdividing their own property.

This reflects the reality experienced in other Australian cities which have seen a gradual "salt and pepper" dispersal of dual occupancies across traditional suburbs over time.

## WHAT IS PROPOSED FOR THE NT?

The Planning Commission has developed a proposal to introduce the opportunity for dual occupancy development to occur within Zone SD (Single Dwelling) of the NT Planning Scheme. The proposal is available on the Planning Commission website at [www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au](http://www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au) and community feedback is welcome over coming months until 18 April 2016. Key considerations of the proposal are discussed in this paper.



## LOT SIZE

The minimum lot size on which dual occupancy development could occur is proposed as 800m<sup>2</sup>, with each resulting dwelling requiring a minimum lot size of 400m<sup>2</sup>. The NT Planning Scheme currently specifies a minimum lot size of 450m<sup>2</sup> for Zone SD in greenfield areas.

Given the market value and positioning of existing dwellings on 800m<sup>2</sup> lots, dual occupancy development would most likely be undertaken as a redevelopment of a lot on which there is an existing single house that has reached the end of its economic life or as a new development on a vacant lot.

The table below shows the number of 800m<sup>2</sup> lots, as compared to other potential minimum lot sizes of 900m<sup>2</sup> and 1000m<sup>2</sup>. While lot size is the determinant of eligibility for dual occupancy, development decisions will be determined by a broad range of market driven factors, including consumer preference and economic feasibility.

Although a larger minimum lot size generally equates to less eligible lots, the majority of larger lots are likely to be located in a more concentrated area, including the old East Side in Alice Springs and the older suburbs of Darwin such as Stuart Park, Fannie Bay, Parap and Nightcliff.

	Total SD Lots	Minimum 800m <sup>2</sup>		Minimum 900m <sup>2</sup>		Minimum 1000m <sup>2</sup>	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>GREATER DARWIN</b>	22,743	16,301	72	5,637	25	2,967	13
City of Darwin	13,975	11,709	84	4,581	33	2,562	18
City of Palmerston	8,744	4,577	52	1,051	12	404	5
<b>ALICE SPRINGS</b>	5,302	4,728	89	2,368	45	1,512	29
<b>KATHERINE</b>	1,627	1,578	97	497	31	294	18
<b>TENNANT CREEK</b>	701	568	81	330	47	204	29

Number of lots within Zone SD, major urban areas by minimum lot size, Sept 2015

### TELL US:

- ▲ Do you think a minimum lot size of 800m<sup>2</sup> will help to ensure a more even distribution of dual occupancy developments across the urban areas of the NT?
- ▲ Should dual occupancy development be limited to larger minimum lot sizes that are likely to be located in more concentrated areas, including the older suburbs?

## LOCATION

It is proposed that dual occupancy developments could occur in Zone SD on lots that are a minimum of 800m<sup>2</sup>. These lots are dispersed throughout the urban areas of the NT.

The maps below show the location of 800m<sup>2</sup> lots, as compared to other potential minimum lot sizes of 900m<sup>2</sup> and 1000m<sup>2</sup>. Dual occupancy will not always be feasible for all lots over the minimum lot size in all locations, with the practicality of upgrading sewer and water infrastructure a key consideration.

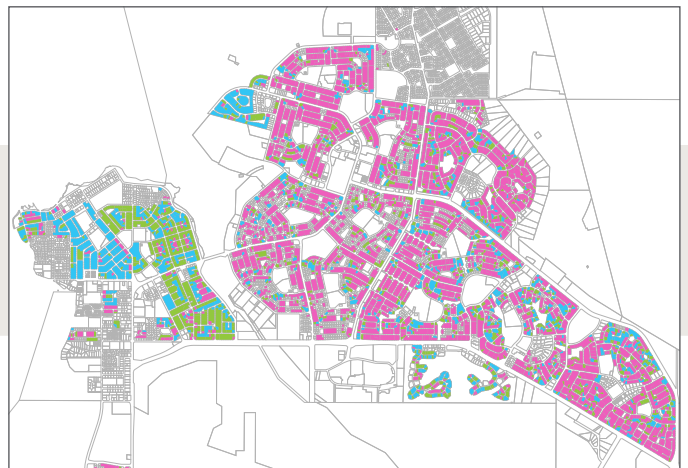
### TELL US:

▲ Are some areas of the NT more suitable for dual occupancy developments than others?

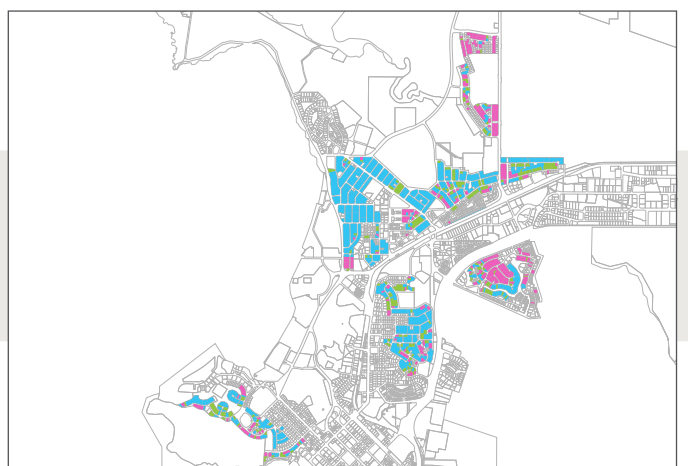
### LEGEND

- SD Lots 800m<sup>2</sup>-899m<sup>2</sup>
- SD Lots 900m<sup>2</sup>-999m<sup>2</sup>
- SD Lots 1,000m<sup>2</sup> and above

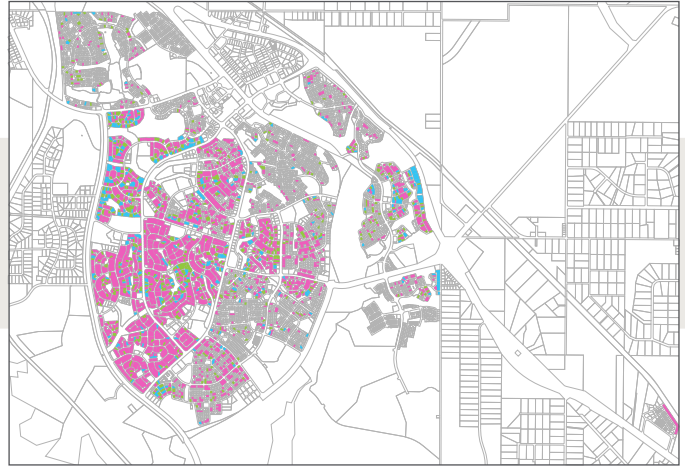
### DARWIN MID AND NORTHERN SUBURBS



### DARWIN INNER SUBURBS



## PALMERSTON



## ALICE SPRINGS



## KATHERINE



## TENNANT CREEK



Larger versions of the above, plus other maps indicating lot sizes, are available on the Planning Commission website.

## DESIGN CONTROLS

Any dual occupancy development would need to meet the general requirements of the NT Planning Scheme and Local Government Subdivision Guidelines, including provisions around setbacks, storm water drainage, landscaping, parking requirements and essential services.

Dual occupancy can take many forms, depending on the shape of the lot and the development proposed. Examples include two side by side detached dwellings or one dwelling in the front of a lot and one at the rear. Duplexes are also examples of dual occupancy developments. Some possible examples of dual occupancy are shown in the figure below.



Figure: Examples of dual occupancy developments in a residential area

### TELL US:

- ▲ Are there additional design controls that should apply to dual occupancy developments?

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Dual Occupancy development proposals would be the subject of a development application that is assessed by the Development Consent Authority. This requires public exhibition for two weeks and the placement of a development application sign on the land for that duration. Public submissions can be received during the exhibition period. At the close of the exhibition period all submissions received will be provided to the applicant and the proposal will be considered by the Development Consent Authority at one of its regular meetings. Submitters are invited to attend the meeting to talk to their submission. A report by the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment on the proposal is published on the Department's website prior to the meeting and for a period of one month after.

Once a development permit is obtained by the applicant, a building permit is required before site works and construction can commence.

It is proposed that subdivision may occur as part of a dual occupancy development application or as a separate process.

### TELL US:

- ▲ What, if any, restrictions should apply to the subdivision of Single Dwelling (SD)?



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: [ntpc@nt.gov.au](mailto:ntpc@nt.gov.au)

Website: [www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au](http://www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au)

Phone: (08) 8924 7540

The Northern Territory Planning Commission is an independent and advisory statutory authority that prepares strategic land use plans to manage growth in anticipation rather than in response.

The Planning Commission proactively sets the strategic framework for better integrated land use, transport and infrastructure planning, delivering more sustainable and cost-effective outcomes for the community, with sensitivity to environmental and heritage values.