

Reformed Residential Zones

General Information on the Reformed Residential Zones

What was reviewed?

New residential zones were introduced into Victorian Planning Schemes in July 2014. Councils were required to transition from the previous residential land controls to the new suite of zones.

Some councils had completed more background work than others when the new zones were introduced. As a result, there were inconsistencies in how the new zones were applied and how much public consultation was undertaken.

An independent Advisory Committee was appointed in November 2015 to report on how the zones have been applied by Councils, and what the impacts of the new zones have been.

Why are changes being made?

The changes are the first step towards ensuring a consistent state-wide approach to residential development. The revised zones will improve housing diversity and choice across all council areas, while protecting the open and garden character of more sensitive residential areas.

What is changing?

Changes are being made to the three main residential zones that apply across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. These changes include:

- Increasing the mandatory maximum height for development in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone from 8 metres to 9 metres (2 storey maximum).
- Increasing the discretionary height limit for development in the General Residential Zone from 9 metres to a mandatory maximum height of 11 metres (3 storey maximum).
- Introducing a mandatory garden area requirement in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone and General Residential Zone to enhance the garden and open character of residential areas.
- Removing the restriction on the number of dwellings that can be built on a property in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Summary of the new controls

	Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	General Residential Zone (GRZ)	Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)
Is there a cap on the number of dwellings per lot?	No (no change).	No (no change).	No. The default limit of two dwellings per lot has been removed.
Maximum building heights and number of storeys	Discretionary 13.5 metres (no change).	Mandatory 11 metres and maximum 3 storeys (increased from discretionary 9 metres and no storey limit).	Mandatory 9 metres and maximum 2 storeys (increased from mandatory 8 metres and no storey limit).
Can the maximum heights and number of storeys be varied by councils?	Yes. Councils can set a mandatory height limit of at least 13.5 metres in a schedule to the zone.	Yes. Councils can set an alternative maximum height and number of storeys in a schedule to the zone. These must be more than 11 metres and 3 storeys.	Yes. Council can set an alternative maximum height and number of storeys in a schedule to the zone. These must be more than 9 metres and 2 storeys.
Is there a mandatory minimum garden area requirement?	No.	Yes.	Yes.

What is the new garden area requirement?

The garden area requirement applies to developments in the General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone. It is a mandatory requirement for a minimum garden size. The requirements vary depending on the size of your land:

Lot size	Minimum percentage of a lot set aside as garden area
400 – 500 square metres	25%
501 – 650 square metres	30%
Above 650 square metres	35%

The minimum garden area includes areas such as lawns and garden beds, but not things like driveways.

Example of the garden area requirement

Before

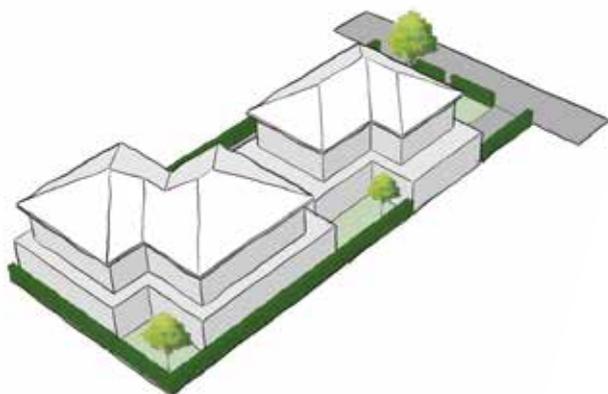


Figure 1: Typical dual occupancy constructed without the new 35% minimum garden area requirement.

After

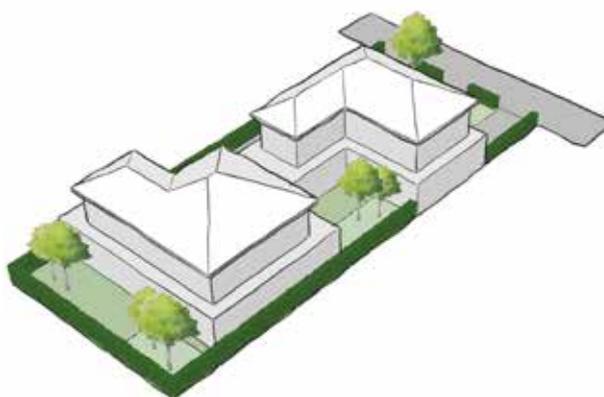


Figure 2: Typical dual occupancy constructed with the new 35% minimum garden area requirement.

Are there transitional provisions?

The General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone include transitional provisions for the garden area requirement and the changes to building heights and the number of storeys allowed.

Do I need a planning permit?

In each of these three residential zones, you need a planning permit to:

- Build two or more dwellings on a lot (e.g. units, townhouses, apartments).
- Build or extend one dwelling on a small lot (less than 300m² or 500m² depending on your council).

More information

You can check the zoning of your property by using the Government's [Planning Maps Online tool](#), or by contacting your local council.

You should contact your local council for specific advice about the planning controls that apply to your land, or advice on developing your property.

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