

PROPERTY WATCH

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Unlock the potential of the granny flat

BY BRENDAN CRABB

AN ILLAWARRA architect says the booming granny flats industry could be "what we've been looking at for decades" in terms of tackling housing affordability.

Semi-retired Wollongong architect Andrew Conacher has been designing buildings for 35 years.

He estimated the humble granny flat to cost within the sub-\$100,000 range and said they were an ideal rental for singles or couples who didn't need a lot of space.

He said complying policy changes proposed by the Department of Planning could increase the amount and type of complying development that people could use to build granny flats.

"The significance there is that granny flats can only be a certain size of the existing dwelling, whereas this new legislation means that the granny flat could be the same size as the front house, ie. a dual occupancy," he said.

"It's a big change to what councils will be able to approve in future.

"When this legislation comes out, I think there's going to be a huge boom in granny flats again. But they'll be larger ones that fall outside the current category."

Mr Conacher said "a lot of project home type people have now started manufacturing granny flats, so it's been quite a boom industry at the bottom of the developer market." "I think that's going to continue, because it's affordable," he said.

"People are using them for



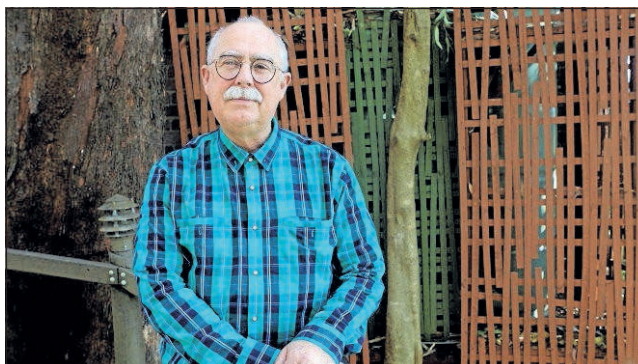
POPULAR: Elise Vella, marketing co-ordinator at RESCON Builders said granny flat construction has boomed over the past eight years and continues to grow exponentially. **Picture:** Supplied

Airbnbs, for rental... And it's good because people on a low income can afford to live somewhere. That's something that the market hasn't addressed for years.

"I think it's going to continue and strengthen, and I think this new complying policy when it finally gets out will increase the uptake.

"But in terms of housing affordability, I think it's what we've been looking at for decades."

In NSW, where the Affordable Rental Housing - State Environmental Planning Policy that allows property owners to rent their secondary dwellings came into place in 2009, demand for tax depreciation schedules - used to calculate tax



Andrew Conacher. Do you have an interesting real estate story that could be featured in a future edition? Please e-mail brendan.crabb@fairfaxmedia.com.au.

deductions - for granny flats rose 24 per cent in the year to June 2017, says quantity surveyor and tax consultancy BMT Tax Depreciation.

RESCON Builders specialises in granny flats.

Elise Vella, marketing

co-ordinator at RESCON Builders said granny flat construction has boomed over the past eight years and continues to grow exponentially.

Ms Vella said they sought to help unlock the "considerable potential of 60sqm".

"A lot of people aren't aware of the possibilities of a granny flat," she said.

"There's the investment potential and living potential for say, family members, whether it's elderly parents, or younger children wanting to separate a little from the main house.

"They're comfortable living spaces as well, you don't feel like it's tight or squashy.

"It's amazing what you can do with the space... And obviously granny flats are prime for helping contribute to mortgages."

RESCON Builders have a new granny flat display grand opening on Saturday.

Their display will be open seven days, 10am-3pm, at 7A Baan Baan Street, Dapto.

REQUEST TO SPARE REGIONS

HOLIDAY platform Stayz has released a response to the NSW Government's short-term holiday letting Options Paper, outlining actions they believe the government must now undertake to protect tourism and local jobs in regional NSW.

The government is seeking to regulate short-term rental accommodation. The Stayz submission includes proposed measures such as recognition of the economic importance of tourism in regional NSW, compulsory registration of all short-term rental accommodation and measures to improve industry conduct. There are currently 199 Stayz listings in the Illawarra.

APARTMENT RESIDENTS HAVE A SAY

OUR Strata Community, Our Choice spokesperson Stephen Goddard said apartment residents needed to make their voices heard on the Options Paper.

"Owners corporations want a say on short-term stays and if it is allowed in residential buildings, and this Options Paper makes provision for that," he said.

"The only way that the rule could come into force though is for the people in Wollongong who agree to make their voice heard... This isn't about banning the short-stay industry, it's about sensible regulation to address the concerns of apartment owners."

Submissions close October 31.

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