

Two Questions Re Intensification

Date Requested: 12 August 2025
Date Provided: 13 August 2025

Request

I note in a paper to the Press that medium density is three to four storeys. Can you clarify the height of medium density.

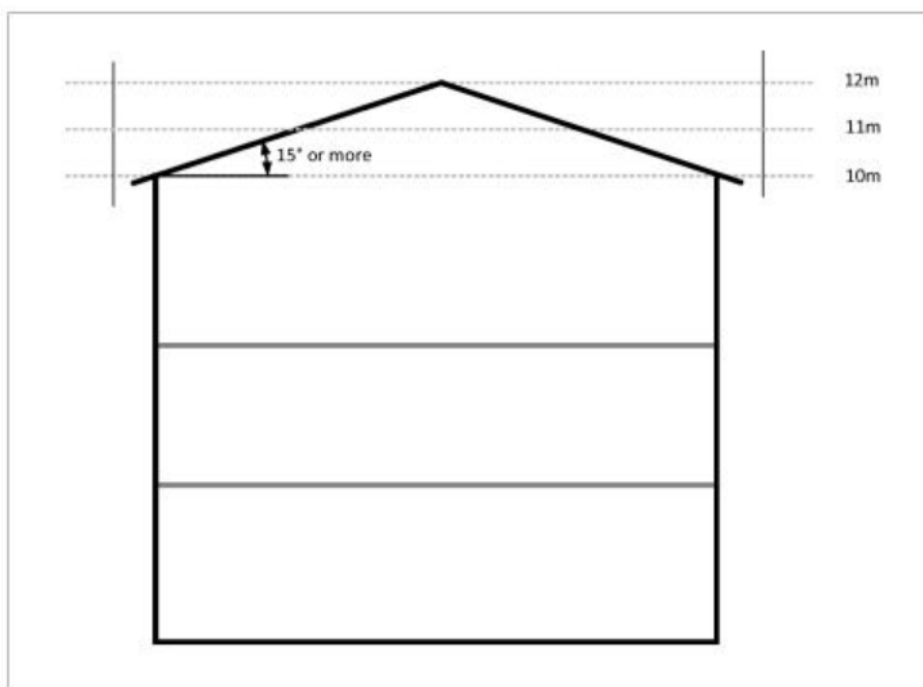
1. Is this a prescribed height by central government?
2. Are there any other changes to the medium density rules?
3. If not required by central government - why are we doing this?
4. Surely it goes against the recommendation of the IHP which we seem to be bound to.?

Council Response

1. Is this a prescribed height by central government?

Yes, the Medium Density Residential Standards in Schedule 3A of the RMA prescribe a maximum height as follows, which is required as a baseline for the rules applying in the High Density and Medium Density Residential zones.

Buildings must not exceed 11 metres in height, except that 50% of a building's roof in elevation, measured vertically from the junction between wall and roof, may exceed this height by 1 metre, where the entire roof slopes 15° or more, as shown on the following diagram:



Four storey development is technically possible but in the majority of cases, this would be limited to a maximum of 3 storeys.

2. Are there any other changes to the medium density rules?

Yes. As MDRS is the baseline, many rules differ. See this [comparison against District Plan residential zones](#) included in PC14 evidence.

If you are referring to changes being introduced by the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill before Parliament, the provisions of the amendment bill introduce changes to make MDRS optional but not changes to the standards themselves.

3. If not required by central government - why are we doing this?

We are required to zone additional areas as medium density in order to meet the housing sufficiency requirements for Council to opt out of PC14. This can only be achieved by accepting more of the IHP Recommendations on PC14, which apply MDRS and other related controls.

Plan Change 14 is to implement the National Policy Statement on Urban Development and MDRS as prescribed in the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021.

4. Surely it goes against the recommendation of the IHP which we seem to be bound to?

Council can only show we are achieving the housing requirements by accepting more of the IHP Recommendation. The recommendation from the IHP was for medium density to apply across all urban residential zones in Christchurch; the current proposal is to limit this spatial application to select areas.

The Council is required to implement MDRS and the only scope for limiting development to a lesser scale than MDRS is by way of a qualifying matter. This has all been considered by the IHP and who have made recommendations to Council.