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Tēnā koutou katoa

Christchurch City Council submission on the MBIE 'Granny Flats' Proposal

Introduction

1. The Christchurch City Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) proposal to 'make it easier to build granny flats', released jointly MBIE and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) on 17 June 2024. The Council appreciates the early opportunity to provide feedback on this matter, which aligns with its ongoing efforts to address housing needs.
2. In general, the Council supports the proposed changes to make it easier to build granny flats, provided that they align with housing intensification goals and include sufficient oversight and compliance mechanisms.
3. The Council has attached a detailed submission, which responds directly to the consultation questions.

Key points of the submission

4. The Council acknowledges the longstanding issue of housing affordability but notes that single-level detached units, such as granny flats, may be an inefficient land use in larger metropolitan environments. These units may conflict with the broader goals of housing intensification set out in the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) and Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS), whilst acknowledging that government has indicated the future optionality of the MDRS
5. While the Council supports the goal of reducing costs and barriers to building, there are significant concerns regarding the proposal to exempt granny flats from building consent. The Council sees that the current LBP (Licensed Building Practitioners) scheme does not provide adequate oversight to ensure compliance, posing risks to homeowners.
6. We are particularly concerned about the lack of local authority control and enforcement with the proposed NES to permit granny flats without resource consent in rural and residential zones. The Council suggests that any national direction must align with local zoning standards and allow for the consideration of local conditions and infrastructure constraints, and further, that any Tier 1 Council should be exempt from any such direction.
7. We also highlight potential operational challenges and financial implications associated with the proposal. These include increased monitoring and enforcement costs, and the need for changes to the Local Government Act 2002 to ensure Councils can still charge Development Contributions to support infrastructure costs.

8. Furthermore, we propose several alternative approaches, including using the Building Amendment Act 2012 framework to create a "simple building consent" category for minor residential units, which would simplify the consent process without removing necessary oversight.

Conclusion

9. The Council is seeking:
- Greater consideration of the impacts on areas already subject to the Medium Density Residential Standards, National Policy Statement for Urban Development, and future Housing Growth Targets.
 - A NES that is specifically targeted to the enablement of minor residential units, with zone standards used to direct the location and occupation of land.
 - Expansion of the scope of restrictions to align with the qualifying matters framework already established through the NPS-UD.
 - Use of changes brought about through the Building Act Amendment 2012 to recategorize minor residential units to a "simple building consent" category, thereby significantly reducing building consent processing requirements and costs.
 - Changes to the Local Government Act 2002 to ensure Councils retain the ability to charge for Development Contributions.
 - Control of three waters servicing connection via associated bylaws.
 - At a minimum, ensure there is notification to Council of completion of works and the submission of relevant documentation detailing the authorized person(s) who completed works and associated producer statements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

For any clarification on points within this submission please contact Ike.Kleynbos@ccc.govt.nz

Yours faithfully



Pauline Cotter

Deputy Mayor of Christchurch