



Department of Planning,  
Lands and Heritage



# Position Statement:

## Special Residential Zone

May 2021

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## 1. Policy Intent

This position statement outlines the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) intent to discontinue the special residential zone in local planning schemes. It also provides general guidance measures for subdivision, use and development in existing special residential zones.

## 2. Special Residential zone in Western Australia

Special residential zones were created in local planning schemes to allow for lots of a size which offered a spacious lifestyle at densities lower than traditional 'quarter acre' residential lots but higher than those found in the rural residential zone (one to four hectares). Typically, special residential lots ranged in size from 2,000m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (one hectare).

The Special Residential zone was removed from Schedule 3 of *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (the Regulations). The objectives for

the zone will be removed from the Regulations in the next stage of their review, scheduled in 2021.

Special residential development is considered an inefficient use of residential land. It places pressure on State and local governments for services and infrastructure which are difficult to provide because of the dispersed pattern of subdivision. It can also limit opportunities for urban development by fragmenting land, and making land assembly and the provision of services more difficult and costly. When it can be appropriately justified, low-density residential development should be serviced to a similar standard to other residential development.

## 3. Application of this policy

This position statement applies to land zoned special residential under a local planning scheme.

This position statement is to be considered in association with:

- *State Planning Policy 2.4: Basic raw materials*

- *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural planning*
- *State Planning Policy 3: Urban growth and settlement*
- *State Planning Policy 7.3: Residential Design Codes Volume 1*
- *Operational Policy 1.1 Subdivision of land - general principles*
- *Operational Policy 1.7 General road planning*
- *Operational Policy 2.2 Residential subdivision*
- *Operational Policy 2.3 Public open space in residential areas*
- *Operational Policy 5.1 Regional roads (vehicular access)*

## 4. Policy objectives

The objectives of this position statement are to:

- phase out the special residential zone in local planning schemes
- provide general guidance for subdivision and development of existing special residential zoned land to:

- protect the character and amenity of rural areas adjacent to existing special residential zones
- mitigate potential adverse effects between rural land uses and adjacent special residential zones and
- conserve vegetation and landform through appropriate lot sizes.

## 5. Policy measures

### 5.1 Phasing out the special residential zone

It is the intention that the special residential zone be discontinued as local planning schemes are reviewed and amended and replaced with an appropriate zone, which may include residential, with a low-density residential coding under the *Residential Design Codes Volume 1*.

The WAPC will not support scheme amendments to rezone land to special residential. As local planning schemes are reviewed, land currently zoned special residential will need to be identified as an alternative zone, such as residential, with an appropriate code of R2, R2.5 or R5.

### 5.2 Structure plan and subdivision considerations

Each structure plan is to be viewed and able to be read as a standalone document. It is acceptable to refer to a preceding higher-level, endorsed structure plan, such as sub-regional or district structure plans, to avoid repetition, as and where appropriate. The information to be included in a structure plan is outlined in Schedule 2, Part 4, clause 16 of the deemed provisions of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

The following considerations will be applied in the assessment of a structure plan or subdivision of land within a special residential zone.

#### 5.2.1 Layout and Lot size

- a) Lot sizes to vary between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- b) Reflect the topographical and environmental characteristics of the land and minimize land fill and earthworks.
- c) Seek to preserve vegetation and rehabilitate denuded areas.

- d) Important topographical or environmental features such as a creek, lake or group of trees may be required to be protected and retained via ceding of the land to the Crown.
- e) The special residential zone should not be adversely affected by activities of adjoining rural land uses and development in the special residential zone should not limit the continued operation of existing rural land uses. Appropriate setback distances may be required between rural land use and proposed dwellings on the special residential lots. This may be achieved via lot size, layout and the use of building envelopes or exclusion areas.

#### 5.2.2 Servicing

- a) Services of a type and standard typical of a residential zone. Reticulated water will be required as a condition of subdivision approval.

#### 5.2.3 Roads

- b) Where possible, be connected to reticulated sewerage. Where this is not possible, and land is suitable for on-site effluent disposal, the provisions of the *Government Sewerage Policy (2019)* will be applied.
  - c) Services (e.g. water, sewerage, power) may require an integrated design of service corridors aligned with roads to minimize the clearing of vegetation.
  - d) The WAPC will generally require the provision of underground power to lots in the special residential zone and may consider alternative power supply based upon the advice of the relevant licensed service provider.
- a) Roads shall be sealed, curbed and drained and culverts provided where required.

- b) Properties may require suitable uniform fencing along boundaries and road reserves.

for subdivision proposals in accordance with *Better Urban Water Management (WAPC 2008)*.

#### 5.2.4 Open Space

- a) Generally, a public open space contribution is not requested in special residential zones due to the larger lot sizes.

## 6. Definitions

Refer to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

#### 5.2.5 Bushfire

- a) Site design should accord with standards of *State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas and Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas*.

#### 5.2.6 Drainage and water management

- a) The retention and protection of natural storm water drainage channels by providing drainage reservations or easements for storm water.
- b) In situations where there are significant water management issues, an *Urban Water Management Plan* should be prepared