

HIA calls for one housing standard

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QUEENSLAND'S building code overload is costing new developers almost \$200 million a year in extra fees and lost time, a new report states.

The additional cost of gaining a building approval and cost to construction brought on by the more than 500 variations of development constraints in Queensland has been revealed in a Housing Industry Australia report.

It found that the absence of a mandated statewide housing code in Queensland contributed to at least \$150 to \$200 million each year in direct costs.

It has renewed calls from the property industry to bring Queensland into line with other states and develop a single housing code.

HIA executive director Warwick Temby said various local government planning schemes, conditions of approval for subdivisions, government constraints and developer covenants made the process of building or renovating a home slower, more complex and more expensive.

"Housing is less affordable because of it," he said. "It costs local governments money because they have to administer it, not to mention the industry, and is a dead weight to the whole building process."

The report found half of the 20,000 new home approvals and 60,000 renovation approvals each year needed some form of local government planning approval. Constraints

can include height limits, site cover, designated outdoor space and boundary setbacks.

Some councils require up to three car parking spaces while others only require one.

"There is no reason why you should need to be further from the boundary in one local government area than in another," Mr Temby said. "It should be standard no matter where you live."

When trying to overcome constraints, or simply finding out the applicable regulations, costs can be bumped up by about \$2500 per property because of planning applications and reports, council fees, amendments to home plans, disputes, appeals and delays.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mick de Brenni confirmed a single housing code for Queensland had been discussed. "We are currently talking to the housing industry and local government about the impacts of implementing a uniform code," he said.

Professional Certification Group director Ain Kuru said the abundance of varying building regulations "frightened people off".

He said each time a proposed home did not fit in with council requirements, it required a planning assessment, which could take several weeks and cost more than \$1000.

Property Council Queensland executive director Chris Mountford said the different housing regulations across Queensland came at a "very real cost" to homebuyers.