

Q&A: Tasman District Housing Accord

1. What is a Housing Accord?

A Housing Accord is an agreement between the Minister for Building and Housing and a council to work together to address housing supply and affordability issues in a city or district.

The Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas (HASHA) Act 2013 states that a Housing Accord must be in writing, set out agreed targets, set out how the parties will work together to achieve the purposes of the Act, and provide for either party to terminate the agreement with no less than three months' notice.

2. How will the Accord work?

Once the Accord takes effect, the Tasman District Council will have the ability to recommend Special Housing Areas (SHAs) to the Minister of Building and Housing. SHAs are discrete geographic areas within which the more permissive resource consenting powers of the Act can be used. SHAs will be formally declared by Order in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Building and Housing.

When recommending SHAs, the Council (and then the Minister) may include criteria for "qualifying developments" within the SHAs (i.e. developments that can use the fast-tracked and more permissive planning and consenting processes outlined below). These criteria can include height limitations, a minimum number of dwellings and a percentage of affordable dwellings.

3. What areas will the Accord focus on?

The Accord will have particular focus on Richmond, Motueka, and Wakefield.

4. How would a resource consent for a qualifying development be approved?

Qualifying developments must be predominantly residential and must meet any height or affordability criteria that the Council specifies for the SHA they are in. Applications for resource consents under the HASHA Act can only be made for developments in SHAs. The application would be considered by the Tasman District Council and the consents would need to be processed within 60 working days, except for excluded time periods as defined in section 88C of the Resource Management Act 1991.

If the resource consent application is combined with a plan change (or variation) request, the application must be processed within 130 working days.

5. What else is the Government doing to improve housing supply and affordability?

Housing Accords are just one part of the Government's wider programme to improve housing supply and affordability in New Zealand.

The Government also has introduced initiatives to address the cost of building materials, development contributions, building productivity and compliance costs to improve affordability nationwide.

The Government has also introduced the new \$435 million KiwiSaver HomeStart support package for first home buyers, which came into effect 1 April this year. The scheme provides a grant of up to \$20,000 for a couple or \$10,000 for an individual purchasing a first home. It is projected that 850 first home buyers in Tasman will benefit from HomeStart over the next five years.