Draft Boarding Houses Regulation 2013

Regulation Impact Statement

Easy Read version
**How to use this document**

This information is written in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

Some words are written in **bold**. We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 23.

This Easy Read document is a summary of a longer document.

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What is this document about?

This document is about changes that the NSW Government wants to make to the rules about boarding houses.

A boarding house is a house that has rooms for rent.

People who live in boarding houses are called residents.

A general boarding house has 5 or more residents.

Residents pay for:

- the room they live in
- the rooms they use with others, such as a kitchen or lounge room.
In some boarding houses, residents also pay for:

- their meals
- some services.

Some residents have additional needs because they are aged, have a disability or mental illness.

They may need help with things like meals, taking medicines and showering.
Boarding houses where more than 2 people with additional needs live are called **assisted boarding houses**.

This document is mostly about assisted boarding houses.

In this document, we also talk about old boarding houses and new boarding houses.

**Old boarding houses** are already open. People are living in them at the moment.

**New boarding houses** are those that will open in the future.

Some people who live in boarding houses have been treated badly.

We want to make sure that everyone who lives in a boarding house is safe, comfortable, feels at home and has the things they need.
For this to happen, we need to make changes to the rules about boarding houses.

We think there are 4 different options for how we can change the rules and make things better.

At the moment, we are talking about these options. They are just ideas. We want to know what you think about our ideas.

The instructions for telling us what you think are on page 19.

There are also some questions for you to think about. The questions are on page 20.

We are also talking to the owners of boarding houses to find out what they think.
What rules apply to boarding houses?

In NSW, there are some laws that apply to boarding houses. Laws are the rules that we all must follow.

The laws that apply are:

- **Boarding Houses Act 2012**
  This new law gives people who live in boarding houses more rights.

- **Youth and Community Services Regulation 2010**
  These are the rules about how assisted boarding houses are run now.

- **Boarding Houses Regulation 2013**
  These are new rules. We are still working on them.

  The changes we are talking about in this document are for these new rules.

  You can have a say about these rules.

  We explain how to tell us what you think on page 19.
There is also an international agreement that applies.

This is called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability. 
This agreement says that people with a disability have the same rights as everybody else.

It applies all around the world.
Why are we making changes?

The NSW Government wants to change the rules about boarding houses.

Some people have had problems in the places where they live.

We want to make things better for people who live in boarding houses.

For example, many people who live in boarding houses cannot choose to have their own room.

They have to share a room with 1 or more other people.

Some boarding houses have too many residents.

This means there is not enough space for all the residents to be comfortable.

Some people who live in boarding houses have been treated badly. We want to change this.
We believe that everyone who lives in a boarding house should:

- get help to see a doctor or other service when they need to
- be treated well
- have tasty and healthy food
- be allowed to use a telephone
- be able to see family and friends when they want to
- be able to go out and do the things they enjoy, like play sport or go to the movies
- be able to look after their own money.
What changes are we making?

We are changing the rules that assisted boarding houses must follow.

Some of the new rules will mean big changes.

One of the big changes we are talking about is making sure people with additional needs can have their own room if that’s what they want.

This means you can be by yourself and have privacy if you want it.

If 2 people know each other and want to share a room, they can.

Another big change we are talking about is putting a limit on the number of people who can live in a boarding house.

We want to have the right number for you to feel at home.

We are talking about a maximum of 30 people, but we want to know what you think about this.
In many boarding houses, changes will be made to the size of the rooms.

At the moment, the law says that a room for 1 person must be at least 7.5 square metres in size.

The new law says:

- Rooms for 1 person will be at least 5.5 square metres in size – which is smaller than the current law.

- Rooms for 2 people will be at least 11 square metres in size.
There will be other changes, including:

- Making it easier for you to get any help you need. This includes having help buttons.

- Having at least 1 worker in the boarding house all the time.

- The workers should have good training and be helpful. And there must always be a worker there who knows how to do first aid.

- Having more privacy. You must be able to lock the door of your room if you want to. Only you and the workers at the boarding house will have a key to your room.

- Having good ways to tell someone if there’s a problem.
What are the options?

**Option 1**

We do nothing.

Option 1 means we let things stay the same as they are now.

Most residents will still share a room.

Some boarding houses will still have too many residents.

This will not help stop people being treated badly.

**Option 2**

We say that new boarding houses have to meet all the new rules.

Old boarding houses have to meet most of the new rules.

But they don’t need to make the big changes:

- residents with additional needs can have their own room if they want to
- no more than 30 residents in a house.

This means that most residents in old boarding houses will still share a room.

Some old boarding houses will still have too many residents.
Option 3

We say that all boarding houses – both new and old – have to meet the rules.

In this option, every boarding house would have to meet some of the rules straight away.

But old boarding houses would have 5 years to make the biggest changes:

- residents with additional needs can have their own room if they want to
- no more than 30 residents in a house.

Option 4

We say that all new and old boarding houses have to meet all the rules straight away.

This includes the big changes:

- residents with additional needs can have their own room if they want to
- no more than 30 residents in a house.
Options 3 and 4 mean that all boarding houses should be safer, more comfortable and have better services.

But these options also mean that some old boarding houses may need to:

- do building work
- change the number of rooms they have
- close down because they don’t want to or can’t make the changes
- stop offering rooms to people with additional needs.

This means that some people may have to move or change boarding house.

We will help these people find a new place to live.
Questions you may have

Will my room be smaller?
We are still talking about how big a room for one person needs to be.
Some people may get a room smaller than they have now.
Your room must be big enough to be comfortable for your needs.

What if I want to share a room?
People who know each other and want to share a room together can do this.
The room must be big enough to be comfortable for 2 people.

What if the boarding house I live in has too many people?
The boarding house will need to make changes and not all the people will be able to continue living there.
We will help people find a new place to live.
How to tell us what you think

There are 3 ways to tell us what you think:

Write to us at:
Boarding House Reform
Law and Justice Directorate
Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Family and Community Services
Level 4, 83 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Send us an email at:
BoardingHouseReform@facs.nsw.gov.au

Speak to us on the phone:
(02) 9248 0835

We want you to tell us what you think by 5 o’clock on Monday 15 April 2013.
What do you think?

Which option do you think is the best?

- Option 1 – let things stay as they are
- Option 2 – old boarding houses don’t have to change
- Option 3 – old boarding houses have 5 years to make the biggest changes
- Option 4 – all boarding houses must make the changes straight away

Would you like to have your own room or share?

- My own room
- Share a room

What do you think of the size of the rooms people live in now?

- The rooms need to be bigger
- The rooms need to be smaller
- The rooms are about the right size
- Other – please tell us what you think:
How many residents do you think is the right number to have in 1 boarding house?

- Up to 10 people
- Between 10 and 30 people
- Between 30 and 50 people
- More than 50 people
- Another number? Please tell us:

Do you think old boarding houses can make these big changes straight away?

- Yes
- No

If you said no, how much time do you think will they need?

- Less than 5 years
- 5 years
- More than 5 years

Please share your ideas about this if you want to.
Do you think the changes we are talking about will give you enough privacy?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Do you think the changes will help you to feel comfortable, safe and at home?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Are there other changes you think we should make to the rules about boarding houses?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Additional needs

Some people need support because they are aged, have a disability or mental illness.

Assisted boarding house

A boarding house that includes 2 or more residents who have additional needs.

Boarding house

A house that has rooms for rent. A boarding house can be in 1, 2 or more buildings in the same place.

The people who live in boarding houses pay for:

- the room they live in
- the rooms they use with others, such as a kitchen or lounge room.
General boarding house
A boarding house that has 5 or more residents.

New boarding houses
Boarding houses that have not yet been built.

Old boarding houses
Boarding houses that are already built and people live in them now.

Resident
A person who lives in a boarding house.