

Council's new design requirements

Building code

By **Pat Stringa**

THREE-metre ceilings, six-star noise insulation, compulsory lifts big enough to hold stretchers in three-storey homes and two metre external corridors are just some of the now compulsory design requirements for anyone building in the Rockdale Council area.

The changes are part of a new building code called the Residential Amenity Improvement Strategy (RAIS) which applies to single dwellings, townhouses or apartments. Councillors and staff jointly created the strategy which will be official from July 7, but has been council policy since March.

The council adopted the strategy at a June 22 meeting.

But it then called an extraordinary meeting on Monday, June 27, after Greens councillor Lisa de Leau and independents, Liz Barlow and Yvonne Bellamy, lodged a rescission motion to overturn the decision.

The majority of councillors rejected the rescission motion after a 20-minute debate.

Cr Gary Green, who voted against the rescission motion, stormed out of the council chambers and said the meeting was a waste of ratepayers' money.

Cr de Leau said it was important to improve residential amenity, but she was not convinced RAIS achieved that.

"By placing these prescriptive standards we won't be making housing affordable," she said at the extraordinary meeting.

Other changes include a compulsory second toilet for two or more bedroom homes, a minimum of 800mm balustrade heights which must be in opaque glass to hide clutter on balconies and an increase in the minimum size of a single bedroom apartments. The strategy does not include attics, basements and rooftop facilities and penthouses as floorspace. The council's director of planning and development, Karl Mezgailis, said councillors aimed with RAIS to improve development quality.