

VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO APARTMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

Institute presentation to Victorian Parliament Legislative Assembly
Environment and Planning Committee.

Wednesday February 16th. 12:00 noon



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

Institute member-representatives and personnel

Institute member-representatives:

Bill Krotiris FRAIA

Victorian Chapter President and National Councillor Australian Institute of Architects.

Principal John Wardle Architects

Member Design Excellence Advisory Committee – City of Melbourne

Expert Panel Member- AACA (Architects Accreditation Council of Australia) for the updating of the 2021 NSCA (National Standards of Competency for Architects)

James Legge FRAIA

Founding Director, Six Degrees Architects

Victorian Design Review Panel Member – Office of Victorian Government Architect

Foundational Member, Nightingale Housing Board

Project Director: Nightingale 2.0 – Fairfield

Project Director: Big Housing Build, Spot Purchase Program – Technical Review

Project Director: VPA Small Lot Housing Code Part 2 – Architectural Review

Human Research & Ethics Committee, Eye & Ear Hospital

Sarah Buckeridge FRAIA

Co-Managing Director Hayball

Expert Panel Member Melbourne Central City Built Form Review (C270), Architectural Testing 2016 Presented Expert Evidence at Planning Panels Victoria (Client: DELWP)

Better Apartments Design Analysis and Solutions Report & Apartment Design Guidelines (Client: DELWP)

Project Director -- Project 100 Accommodation, AIA Victorian Architecture Awards 2021 and Winner, Best Overend Award for Residential Architecture – Multiple Housing

Power Housing Australia – Affiliate Member

Presenting at AHURI National Housing Conference- March 2022

Institute personnel:

Tim Leslie FRAIA

Victorian State Manager Australian Institute of Architects

Victorian Design Review Panel Member – Office of Victorian Government Architect

Paul Zanatta.

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Key priorities arising from the Institute's submission

The Vision: liveable apartments as a mainstream housing choice

(Recommendations: 1-4)

Designing the Vision

(Recommendations: 2,3,7)

Enabling the Vision through a cohesive regulatory and policy framework

(Recommendations: 3,4,6,7)

Building the Vision – responsiveness on procurement (Recommendations: 7,8,9)

Protecting the Vision over the long term

(Recommendations: 5,6)



The Vision

liveable apartments

A mainstream housing choice for Victorians

A viable alternative option to house on land

CBD, Inner Urban, broader metropolis and regional centres



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Designing the Vision

Incorporating good design

Precinct level design thinking

Designing for residents

Public realm – streetscape and activation
(e.g C308)



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Enabling the Vision

cohesive policy and regulatory framework

Connect and deliver a broad suite of Government's policy objectives and the community's aspirations

- sustainability and action on climate change¹
- climate change adaptation action plans²
- greening and cooling the urban environment ³
- substitution/ removal of gas from residential domestic use⁴
- climate resilience and public health(heat wave, extreme weather)⁵
- Big Housing Build and growing affordable housing including access for vulnerable groups with special needs⁶
- Green wedge and agricultural land use – preventing urban sprawl⁷
- 20 minute neighbourhoods⁸
- social and economic inclusion policies^{9, 10, 11}

Endnote references. Slide 19 ➡



Enabling the Vision

cohesive policy and regulatory framework

Regulatory Framework

Better Apartment Design Standards (BADS) 1 addressed the lower end of the market and helped raise minimum standards

BADS 2 improves internal communal amenity and external public realm.

Future BADS need to balance prescriptive planning and performance-based approaches including better site planning, especially building separation.

NSW's State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 65 and a new Designing in Place SEPP bring together different elements into a cohesive design-led framework.

Design Review Panels are a critical enabler for this vision.



Building the Vision revisiting procurement

Impacts of novated design and construct
(Code of Novation).

NSW have introduced design and construction
declarations (completed designs and
documentation are mandatory).

Victorian Government has the opportunity to
introduce declarations in its building reform right
now.



Protecting the Vision

long term requirements

- Consumer protection over the long-term life cycle of a building
- Handing over the building
- Maintenance requirements and the need for electronic building manuals
- Duty of care of developers, **designers**, builders and owners' corporations
- Residual risk and insurance
- Reduced cost and increased wellbeing for owners and tenants of sustainably built apartments



Image attributions

Slide 3 – Avenue Rise LHA Apartments, Camberwell. Hayball Architects. Hayball photography.

Slide 4 – Hawke & King. Six Degrees Architects. Photography by Greg Elms.

Slide 5 – Nightingale 2.O, Fairfield. Six Degrees Architects. Photography by Rory Gardiner.

Slide 6 – Nightingale 2.O, Fairfield. Six Degrees Architects. Photography by Tess Kelly.

Slide 7 – Burwood Brickworks Garden Apartments – Frasers Property. Hayball Architects. Photography by Shannon McGrath.

Slide 8 – Nightingale Village, Brunswick. Breathe Architects, Hayball Architects and Kennedy Nolan Architects. Hayball photography.

Slide 9 – Nightingale 2.O, Fairfield. Six Degrees Architects. Photography by Tom Ross.

Questions from the Committee

Reference material

Precis of recommendations made in the Institute's submission

1. [A clear Victorian Government vision about apartments as a mainstream housing choice.](#)
2. [Apartments are designed, approved and built to local context, not just as a building on a site.](#)
3. [Apartment designs are reviewed by DRPs. Space requirements and disability access to be especially considered.](#)
4. [Higher standards for accessibility in apartment/complexes are developed/ adopted by Government.](#)
5. [Stronger regulation to protect consumers long-term interests including oversight of maintenance](#)
- 6.1 [Sustainability guidelines. Zero-carbon apartments by 2030, with sustainable\(y\) /sourced materials.](#)
- 6.2 [Decarbonise existing apartment buildings and upgrade existing older building stock.](#)
7. [A more holistic regulatory framework for ADGs and regulatory framework for design review panels.](#)
8. [Adopt the joint Institute, ACA and AASA recommendations in response to the National Registration Framework](#)
9. [The Victorian Government promotes Institute's Code of Novation to improve apartment construction quality.](#)

Recommendations made in the Institute's submission

- **Recommendation 1.** The Victorian Government articulates a clear vision about apartments as a mainstream housing choice, particularly for families with dependent children and how it will influence the housing supply market to deliver this as a high quality and affordable housing choice for households across a broad social and economic spectrum. This vision should articulate:
 - Apartments first and foremost as housing – “people’s homes”, as against an asset class or investment.
 - Consumer protections including for residential tenants of apartments to ensure long term tenure for families thereby helping to create stable inclusive communities within apartment complexes.
 - How to create liveable, sustainable, and inclusive communities of people who live in apartments with respect to all types of households and at all aged and stages of people’s lives.
 - How to improve affordability of liveable apartments.

[Return to precis ↩](#)

Recommendations made in the Institute's submission

Recommendation 2. Planners pay greater attention to developing well designed master plans and planning controls such as Melbourne City Council's Amendment C308 for the Central City and Southbank so that apartment complexes are designed, approved and built with respect to the local context, and not just as a building on a site.

Recommendation 3. A more comprehensive appraisal of proposed apartments designs is undertaken using Design Review Panels to ensure that all apartments are contributing to housing stock that meets the need of end users in respect of indoor and outdoor space. There should be a particular focus on ensuring that there is an adequate supply of apartments with sufficient outdoor (and indoor) space for people living with disabilities who have high physical support needs and rely on a wheelchair for their personal mobility.

[Return to precis ↩](#)

Recommendations made in the Institute's submission

Recommendation 4. The Victorian Government develops and promotes much higher standards for accessibility in apartments and apartment complexes that go beyond the National Construction Code and the current standards set out in the Apartment Design Guidelines. Reference standards include Accessibility Standard AS1428.1, Adaptability Standard AS4299 and the Gold and Platinum Standards of the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines. It is critical that the access standards consider all areas of the complex.

Recommendation 5. The Victorian Government undertakes a review to develop a stronger framework and scheme of regulation to ensure that householders' long-term interests are protected over the long-term life course of apartment buildings by provide robust government regulatory oversight for long term maintenance. This should be supported by the introduction of electronic building manuals.

[Return to precis ↩](#)

Recommendations made in the Institute's submission

Recommendation 6.1 Develop further sustainability guidelines for apartments that:

- establishes a 2030 target for apartments to be designed and constructed for zero-carbon operation and provides specific guidance for sustainable building design and construction practice which addresses issues of:
 - embodied carbon and energy of materials
 - life cycle assessment of materials
 - disclosure of materials' composition
 - impact of the building in its local context
- supply chain responsibility for building materials in relation to broader social and economic outcomes such as the eradication of enforced labour.

Recommendation 6.2 Develop and implement policy strategies to 'decarbonise' existing apartment buildings and upgrade existing older building stock as a low carbon sustainable option.

[Return to precis](#) ↩

Recommendations made in the Institute's submission

Recommendation 7. Develop a more holistic regulatory framework for the Apartment Design Guidelines through a more succinct and focussed regulatory instrument than the Victorian Planning Provisions – similar to the NSW SEPP 65, but also noting the development of the NSW Designing in Place SEPP. In particular, consideration should be given to establishing a statewide framework and regulatory scheme for design review panels.

Recommendation 8. The Victorian Government adopts the recommendations of the joint statement by the Australian Institute of Architects, the Association for Consulting Architects (ACA) and the Association of Architectural Schools of Australasia (AASA) in response to the National Registration Framework for Building Practitioners.

Recommendation 9. The Victorian Government give greater guidance to procurement methods so that the intentions of department designs, including designs approved design review panels, and pursuing design excellence are enabled to be fully realised and deliver high quality, liveable, sustainable and affordable apartments. This is to be supported by using the Code of Novation (for novated design and construct procurement) soon to be published by the Australian Institute of Architects.

[Return to precis ↩](#)

References

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2. The Draft Built Environment Adaptation Action Plan. <https://engage.vic.gov.au/aaps-builtenvironment>
3. <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-for-melbourne/plan-melbourne/cooling-greening-melbourne>
4. Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap. Consultation paper. <https://engage.vic.gov.au/download/document/17455>
5. Health and human services climate change adaptation action plan, 2022-2026. https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/health-human-services-climate-change-adaptation-action-plan-2022-2026_O.pdf
6. Homes Victoria. 2021. Establishing a 10-Year Strategy for Social and Affordable Housing. A discussion paper prepared for sector stakeholders and partners by the Victorian Government. https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.vic-engage.files/7216/1275/1586/2006743_Q_sector_discussion_paper_WEB.pdf
7. Planning for Melbourne's green wedges and agricultural land. <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/green-wedges-and-agricultural-land> and <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gwal>
8. <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-for-melbourne/plan-melbourne/20-minute-neighbourhoods>
9. The Victorian Connection. People, communities and the economy. Economic & Social Inclusion. <https://connection.vic.gov.au/category/the-economy/economic-social-inclusion>
10. The Victorian Connection. People, communities and the economy. The small homes making a big difference. <https://connection.vic.gov.au/the-small-homes-making-a-big-difference>
11. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Secretary's message. DFFH Strategic Plan 2021. <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/secretarys-message>