

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect at work: delivering density done well

Good density doesn't happen by accident. The Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA) provides independent design advice that turns planning ambition into well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. These two case studies show how.

Bangs Street, Prahran: independent design advice in a public private partnership

Bangs Street, Prahran delivered 434 social and private rental homes under Homes Victoria's Ground Lease Model.

The OVGA was involved from the start of procurement, developing the design principles embedded in the bid documents and reviewing tender submissions.

The OVGA advocated for a better public realm, including street tree protection and prioritising pedestrian movement, and for more liveable apartments with better daylight, ventilation and layouts. It also encouraged greater height to the commercial precinct on High Street and recommended independent post occupancy evaluation.

The project shows how independent design leadership can lead to not only better design, at even greater density than originally planned.



Photography: Tom Blachford

Bell to Moreland level crossing removal project: designing rail for the local community



Photography: Peter Clarke

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project elevated the Upfield line, removing four level crossings and creating 2.5 kilometres of linear park.

The OVGA worked through a dedicated resource so the project met community needs and aspirations. It advised on the Urban Design Framework and chaired the panel assessing bids and guiding design to construction.

Its advice led to activation nodes along the paths, improving amenity and passive surveillance beneath the elevated rail, and landscape interfaces that increased tree canopy and water sensitive urban design, creating a cool, green break through the urban environment.

These outcomes create a safe, green, well-connected neighbourhood where more housing is feasible and has greater social licence, with the linear park softening the impact of change.

The Australian Institute of Architects and Planning Institute of Australia are asking the next Victorian Government to support the ongoing role of the OVGA as an independent voice for design quality.

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