

**Submission
No 25**

INQUIRY INTO APARTMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

Organisation: Bayside City Council

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29 October 2021

Sally Connolly MP
Chair
Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee
Via email: apartmentdesign@parliament.vic.gov.au

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Dear Ms Connolly

SUBMISSION – INQUIRY INTO APARTMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Parliament of Victoria's 'Inquiry into apartment design standards' (the 'Inquiry'). With the expected increases again in population post Covid-19, the consolidation of population in areas close to transport and other services, the emphasis on the '20-minute neighbourhood' and sustainability, apartment-style housing is of vital importance. Bayside City Council is supportive of the general scope of the Inquiry in seeking to improve overall apartment quality and liveability.

I would firstly like to highlight the success of the initial Better Apartment Designs Standards (BADs) in creating improved planning and built form outcomes in particular concerning energy efficiency, reducing noise impacts for residents and improving light and ventilation across developments.

Whilst we note these particular successes of BADs, we would urge the Inquiry to investigate the need for more stringent and updated Standards and Objectives due to improvements in technology, building materials, standards for energy efficiency since 2016 when BADs was introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) and the general acceptance of a climate emergency by the State and Local governments.

We implore the Inquiry to investigate the feasibility for the introduction of increased high quality and precise design (for example Passive Haus design techniques) within developments and identify areas where the reduction of the carbon footprint of the construction sector can be supported by the VPPs. In addition, we would urge the Inquiry to investigate the need for the inclusion of standalone daylight access standard, with the increased numbers of people working from home due to Covid-19. The pandemic has highlighted the importance for all homes to have access to air, nature, sunlight and personal space.

We are also encouraged by the Minister's recent announcement to amend the current BADs with the introduction of new standards requiring wind assessment and ensuring external materiality is safe, durable and responds to a site's context. The revision of standards to alter the scale, location and in some circumstances provision of balconies, increased landscaping, and a lower trigger dwelling number for the inclusion of communal open space within developments, is also recognised as a positive in the review process.

It is vitally important any impact of new or amended standards is carefully considered. For example, if introducing minimum standards this should be a minimum and not a target by the development industry.

Any potential State wide planning scheme amendment should undergo a rigorous drafting process so as the intent and objective of the amendment is correctly translated into the VPPs in a concise and efficient manner to serve the amendment's purpose sufficiently.

On balance we are of the opinion these additional standards will increase the liveability and function of apartments for residents and provide developers with increased flexibility within their designs.

With any discussion addressing BADS, the inclusion of housing access and affordability (including inclusionary zoning, key worker housing and housing for those with limited mobility) must also be included. We would also be conscious that the cost of burden associated with changes in BADS does not fall disproportionately onto the purchasers of apartments.

As with any potential changes to legislation, the amendments should be evidence based and involve industry consultation (including with the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, Homes Victoria, etc) with the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback and a transparent process.

Please accept this submission as an interim officer submission, which is expected to be endorsed at a future meeting of Council.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Mr Tom Vercoe, Acting Manager Urban Strategy on [REDACTED] or via email to [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Matthew Cripps.

Matthew Cripps

Director City Planning and Amenity