

## Summary of Current Policy Relating to Apartment Developments – State, Local & Other Councils

### State Policy

The *Victoria Planning Provisions*, within every planning scheme, address design and amenity issues for medium density housing development up to four storeys. Clause 55 (*ResCode*) addresses issues about neighbourhood character, building form, site layout and building massing, amenity impacts and on-site amenity, and facilities for medium density housing development up to four storeys. It encourages residential development that provides reasonable standards of amenity by providing objectives and standards relating to overlooking, daylight, solar access, overshadowing and noise.

The *Guidelines for Higher Density Residential Development* (DSE 2004) are applicable to residential development higher than four storeys. They provide 'best practice' design advice only, promoting high quality public and private amenity and good design in higher density residential development, and do not impose compulsory standards. Additionally, the *National Construction Code* (NCC) currently provides the principal regulation in Victoria regarding the design and amenity of apartments. The NCC provides minimum standards for aspects such as ceiling heights, the minimum areas of window required for natural light and ventilation, and sound insulation.

### Local Policy

At the local level, Darebin City Council has adopted local policies that provide design guidelines to be used in the assessment of planning applications for residential or mixed residential and commercial development. Policy 22.06 *Residential and Mixed Use Development of Less than Four Storeys in Commercial 1 and Priority Development Zones 1 & 2* applies to residential and mixed-use, which includes a residential use, development.

The policy is structured around ten design elements: Sustainability; Design and materials; Building heights; Dwelling diversity; Car parking and vehicular access; Street address; Amenity impacts; On-site amenity; On-site Amenity and facilities; Waste management; Equitable access. Each element includes one or more objectives and discretionary design guidelines to be used in the assessment of planning applications. Policy 22.07 *Residential & Mixed Use Development of Four or More Storeys* also applies to residential and mixed use, which includes a residential use, development though of a greater scale.

This policy is very similar to 22.06, and is also structured around the same ten design elements, with one or more objectives and discretionary design guidelines to be used in the assessment of planning applications.

### Local Policy Examples - Other Councils

Some Councils have developed localised approaches to addressing apartment design. The City of Moreland has produced the *Moreland Apartment Design Code* (August 2014), which forms part of planning scheme amendment C142, and aims to improve the quality of development of five or more storeys.

It provides a set of objectives, standards and decision guidelines for assessing development applications. Design aspects are grouped under the themes of Passive Design Elements; Internal Amenity and Facilities; and External Amenity. These draft design controls were considered at a Panel Hearing in March-April 2015, with the Panel Report released in early June 2015. Moreland Council will consider the recommendations of the Panel at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

The City of Melbourne has considered the quality of apartment design in *Future Living: a discussion paper identifying issues and options for housing for our community* (May 2013). Subsequently the draft Housing Strategy *Homes for People* (May 2014) was released. This strategy considers aspects such as housing affordability, apartment size, environmental performance, and the cumulative impact of higher density development at the broader precinct level. It then sets out three goals to help achieve affordable and well-designed housing that meets diverse needs, along with twelve actions to help achieve the goals.