

September 2019



Darebin City Council  
ABN 75 815 980 522

In reply please quote reference:

**Ref: A5227741**

Hon. Richard Wynne  
Minister for Planning  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Minister

## **Re: Better Apartments in Neighbourhoods – Discussion Paper 2019**

We welcome the opportunity to provide input into the *Better Apartments in Neighbourhoods – Discussion Paper 2019*.

The *Better Apartments in Neighbourhood - Discussion Paper 2019* addresses some of the identified issues with new apartment buildings and supports Council in achieving greener, cooler and more liveable neighbourhoods. To accommodate the expected population growth in the City of Darebin, apartment buildings will become more common. The City of Darebin is supportive of the proposed changes outlined in the *Better Apartments in Neighbourhood Discussion Paper 2019* (see attached submission) but considers the shortfalls and missed opportunities in the *Discussion Paper* in addressing critical issues such as climate change, social and affordable housing and design excellence.

### *Climate Emergency*

In 2016, the City of Darebin declared a climate emergency, recognising that urgent action is required to address the impacts of a changing climate. The planning system can help to address climate change through encouraging more sustainable built form. Statistically buildings use 40% of the world's energy, emit 40% of the world carbon emissions, and use 20% of the worlds available drinking water (Nabers 2019, Retrieved from <https://www.nabers.gov.au> ).

Regulatory controls to require environmentally sustainable development (ESD) for new apartments will greatly assist in reducing the impact of population growth and urbanisation on our environmental resources. Environmentally sustainable development (ESD) can assist in reducing carbon emissions, reducing energy, waste and water consumption. The City of Darebin is committed to becoming an energy and water efficient city that reduces waste and supports more stringent regulatory controls for ESD.

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The current targets of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 under the *Climate Change Act* (2017) and *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* is considered far too slow. The City of Darebin is supportive of the State Government taking more urgent action in addressing the impacts of climate change.

On the 2 September 2019, Council resolved:

*That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to:*

- *Declare a Climate Emergency*
- *Establish a \$1 billion dollar fund for councils to build the resilience of climate change vulnerable communities.*
- *Commit to providing maximum protection for all people, economies, species, ecosystems, and civilisations, and to fully restoring a safe climate*
- *Mobilise the required resources and take effective action at the necessary scale and speed across Australia,*
- *Transform the economy to zero emissions and make a fair contribution to drawing down the excess carbon dioxide in the air,*
- *Encourage all other governments around the world to take these same actions.*
- *Amend the Planning and Environment Act to take into account climate risk as a factor in planning schemes and planning decisions;*
- *Introduce mandatory disclosure of energy performance for all buildings at sale or lease;*
- *Mandate minimum energy efficiency performance standards for rental properties;*
- *Provide incentives for low-income homeowners to upgrade their homes;*
- *Introduce obligations on energy companies to achieve annual energy efficiency reductions.*
- *Introduce minimum energy performance standards to at least a 7-star NATHERS equivalent and the introduction of an energy usage budget (whole-of-building) for new builds and major renovations of homes*
- *Increase the resources that the Victorian Building Authority has to address non-compliance; and*
- *Provide additional funding to ensure all new social housing complies with minimum energy performance standards and that the energy efficiency existing social housing is improved.*

### *Social and affordable housing*

The City of Darebin supports increasing the supply of social and affordable housing, the need for affordable housing in Darebin currently exceeds the current patterns of affordable housing supply, without significant change in the development industry to increase this supply, this is likely to increase.

The City of Darebin requests that the state government dedicate ongoing funding to increase the supply of affordable housing and consider introducing inclusionary zoning for large developments.

### *Design Excellence*

The proposed new standards represent a positive step by the State Government in strengthening the design requirements for new apartment buildings. However, without opportunity to mandate critical aspects of design, such as heights, poor development outcomes have resulted, creating precedents for other developments. More discussion around the opportunities to improve design outcomes may be required to strengthen the quality of design outcomes for Victoria's neighbourhoods.

Yours sincerely,

Senders Title

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