

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing



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BETTER APARTMENT DESIGNS FOR OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Andrews Labor Government is improving the design of apartments and ensuring they provide more open green space for residents.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne today announced new planning rules make sure new apartment designs are attractive, built from durable materials and don't exacerbate windy conditions for the street and public spaces.

With more people working from home, it has never been more important to ensure that apartment buildings have more green and open space and more communal living facilities.

The new planning rules fulfil a key Labor election commitment and will be implemented into planning schemes later in the year to allow industry time to become familiar with the new rules.

Landscaping design standards will be strengthened to increase green space in and around apartment buildings, such as courtyards, lawns or greenery at the street frontage. Developers will also be required to include more areas with deep soil to encourage canopy tree growth.

The standards will mean that any apartment building with more than ten residences must provide communal space – which could include seating areas and barbecue facilities for residents to step outside for fresh air while also building a sense of community.

Apartment buildings more than five storeys high will need to consider the wind impacts to avoid wind tunnelling on our streets and to ensure comfortable wind conditions in our public areas and private open space.

The new standards will eliminate underused, windswept balconies on buildings taller than 40 metres, which gives more design flexibility so these homes can have more usable space inside the apartment, like winter gardens.

The new standards will also ensure apartments have more natural light, as balconies can be designed to minimise overshadowing for apartments below. Economic analysis has shown that these reforms will deliver significant community benefits, including energy efficiency and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

These changes are about ensuring that residents of apartment buildings – both tenants and owner-occupiers – get the full benefits of their community and their lifestyle is improved by clever design choices. For more information on the updated design standards, visit planning.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

“As Victoria continues to grow, these standards will be crucial to ensure that our suburbs, towns and urban areas have high density living that is designed well, with liveability and wellbeing at the heart of its design.”

“People are spending more time in their homes and are using their apartments as places of work. Having green space and communal areas is vital to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of apartment residents.”

“So many Victorians live in apartments. So, we want apartments to be the best they can be. This will ensure that Melbourne remains one of the world's most liveable cities.”

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