

Submission

Draft Housing Strategy 2014 – 2018

Southbank Residents Group (SRG) commends the City of Melbourne for the initiative of producing a draft housing strategy and opening it for public comment and debate.

SRG would like to submit the following comments and questions for consideration with the further development of the plan.

Goal 1 – Help provide 1721 affordable homes (subsidised) for low and moderate income earners by 2021

- Is this figure over and above the affordable homes already provided through the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) or are they included as a contributor to this figure? There are already a number of properties available through NRAS within the municipality.
- The figure of 15% is proposed for this provision within new developments. SRG believes this figure should not be any higher. We disagree with the 20% provision within the Boyd model, this is excessive. Owing to this we feel the Boyd model is not a good example.
- SRG demands that the affordable housing to be spread throughout the municipality and not concentrated in pockets within the municipality or suburbs.
- Likewise SRG demands that affordable housing within any single development is also not concentrated on any specific floors but spread throughout the development.

Goal 2 – Improve the design quality and environmental performance of new apartments.

- This is absolutely fundamentally important and needs to be afforded upmost attention by the CoM.
- The residents already residing in high density accommodation need to be consulted extensively on their experiences. Particular attention should be afforded to those first time occupiers of new developments as these people will be acutely aware of deficiencies before they personally made permanent adjustments to the living space.
- Robust legislation needs to be developed to identify and stop the loopholes developers currently enjoy. One such example is the use of borrowed light for a bedroom is currently not allowed, however the developer will make (for example) a one bedroom plus study apartment. The study will utilise borrowed light. In principle this is fine, except the study is often large enough to be ‘converted’ into a bedroom and coincidentally contains built-in robes. Therefore when it is sold by the developer it is a ‘1bed plus study’, however when it hits the commercial rental market it is then advertised as a two bedroom. SRG has examples of apartments where the ‘study’ (using borrowed light) is larger than the master bedroom, and



coincidentally also has built in robes. It would appear the developer planned the design to be two bedroom but marketed it as one bedroom plus study and allowed the purchaser to use their own creative thinking or the sales staff may have discreetly presented the property as a two bedroom.

- This goal should extend beyond apartments and also include the entire development as many of the environmental performance targets start with the development and then flow down to the apartments.

Goal 3 – Foster a high level of awareness and knowledge around good housing outcomes

- SRG commends the intent of this goal.
- CoM has an opportunity to be a leading example for Australia, however SRG feels it is too late to be a leading example to the world. Victoria and the CoM missed the opportunity to get this right earlier and be a world leading example. There is already too many poorly designed developments that lacked oversight or the leadership from the City.

Southbank Residents Group will makes itself available for further consultation with this strategy if required.



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