

## Better Apartments – Draft Design Standards

Comments: Carlton Residents Association 14 September 2016

### Light Wells

This Standard includes the following measure: Ensure bedroom windows in separate dwellings are staggered to avoid direct views. It is submitted that this measure should be supplemented by incorporating additional physical measures [eg incorporation of translucent glass] to strengthen the privacy objective.

### Windows

Windows in any habitable room serve several functions, they

- Provide access to daylight [and possibly sunlight]
- Provide ventilation, and
- May provide a valued outlook

While access to daylight and good ventilation will be important for a living room [for example]; for a bedroom, access to good ventilation is arguably much more important than access to daylight. In these circumstances, bedrooms should not be required to satisfy the Window Standard. More specifically, it should not be necessary for a bedroom window to be directly visible from any point in a bedroom.

### Noise Impacts

This Standard includes the following measure: Noise transfer between apartments (above, below and adjoining) can be mitigated by configuring bedrooms and living rooms back to back respectively. While this, and other measures, will reduce airborne noise, it is submitted that impact noise should also be addressed by adopting appropriate construction standards.

### Energy Efficiency

The suggested standards should be “tweaked”. For example, while solar access to north-facing windows should be maximised **in winter**, in summer, these windows require shading. And again, it must be possible to **restrict** solar access to west-facing windows in summer.

Further, this standard should be expanded to embrace energy efficiency, generation, storage AND monitoring. Where possible, all multi-unit developments should include solar energy generation and storage capacity for the common areas [as a minimum requirement]. Also, all apartments should have individual metering of all their utilities [electricity, gas AND water].

### Water Management

While it is fine to encourage the collection of rainwater for non-drinking purposes such as for flushing toilets, laundry and garden use, this standard should include some mandatory benchmarks. For example, in mixed use developments, sufficient rainwater should be collected to enable the flushing of ALL non-residential and common area toilets. Similarly, the capacity of rainwater tanks should be sufficient to satisfy ALL the garden watering needs.

### Planning Scheme Provisions – Cross-References

Where proposed Standards include references to other policies and clauses [eg CI 55 of the Planning Scheme] these Standards should include the full reference where these policies and/or clauses may be located.

### Apartment size restrictions

While it is agreed that very small apartments [eg 25 sqm in area] can, with clever design, provide a quality home environment, Responsible Authorities should be given the discretion to refuse developments which include small apartments that fail to satisfy one or more of the key design standards. These key design standards would include those which address natural light and ventilation, energy and water efficiency matters, and minimum accessibility [universal design] matters.