

Better Apartments in Neighbourhoods

Industry and Council Fact Sheet



Creating Better Apartments in Neighbourhoods

The government is updating the Better Apartments Design Standards

Why do we need to update the apartment standards?

More Victorians are choosing apartments to be their homes. This is not only because of affordability, but also because of convenience and access to jobs and services.

To look after our city's liveability, the Victorian Government committed to updating the planning rules to create better apartments in our neighbourhoods.

The Better Apartments Design Standards have been updated to implement the Victorian Government's election commitment to improve the external amenity of

apartment buildings. The updated design standards will ensure that:

- Apartment buildings provide green open space for residents and add to neighbourhood amenity;
- The standards respond to changing population trends including more families choosing to live in apartments; and
- Streets and spaces surrounding apartment buildings are not windy and remain safe and pleasant.

The updated standards can be viewed in full at <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/better-apartments>

Implementation

The standards are being announced now to give time for industry and councils to familiarise themselves with the changes.

The standards will be implemented via a planning scheme amendment later in 2021, a minimum two months after the February 2021 announcement. Transitional arrangements will apply to applications lodged before the amendment date.

To support implementation of the updated standards, the Department will be providing:

- a preview of the updated standards;
- a preview of updates to the Apartment Design Guidelines for Victoria;
- videos that succinctly explain the changes; and
- a new practice note to support the Wind Impacts Standard.

The Better Apartments Design Standards address four main policy aims:

- Provision of communal green space and improved landscaping;
- Use of high-quality building facades;
- Protection of streets from wind impacts; and
- Creation of attractive and engaging street frontages.

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Consultation

The updated standards have been developed in consultation with industry, local government, and the community. Public consultation on the external amenity standards was undertaken in August-September 2019. Further targeted consultation with the project's industry and local government reference groups was undertaken in 2020 to refine the standards.

The consultation report can be viewed here: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/building-better-apartments-in-neighbourhoods>

Monitoring and Review

The Department is monitoring the implementation of the Better Apartments Design Standards to ensure they continue to meet the needs of Victorians. Monitoring work has identified that some adjustments can be made to the private open space standard. The changes relate to balcony depths on apartment buildings and how balconies can be provided on tall buildings. This is to improve energy efficiency in apartments and provide more flexible use of space for residents.

Addressing the issues

Communal open space should be provided in common areas of buildings of 10 dwellings or more to improve residents' health and wellbeing and provide urban cooling. It should be accessible, functional and easy to maintain. The current standard for communal open space applies to buildings of 40 dwellings or more.

Landscaping should not be an afterthought in building design and planning but incorporated from the beginning of the process. Canopy trees should have enough space so that they thrive.

Building façades should be of a high quality, incorporating materials that are durable and make a positive contribution to the existing streetscape.

Publicly accessible outdoor space within an apartment development or on surrounding streets should not have unacceptable wind impacts, as they create unpleasant spaces to walk and congregate.

Street frontages should avoid blank walls or high fences. Car parking entrances and waste collection areas should not be visible from the street.



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What are the changes?

Standard	Change
Communal Open Space Clause 55.07-2 Standard B36 and Clause 58.03-2 Standard D7	Updated
Landscaping Clause 55.07-4 Standard B38 and Clause 58.03-5 Standard D10	Updated
Functional layout Clause 58.07-1 Standard D24	Updated
Private open space Clause 55.07-9 Standard B43 and Clause 58.05-3 Standard D19	Updated
Site Services Clause 58.06-2 Standard D22	Updated
Site Services Clause 55.07-X	New
Integration with the street Clause 58.02-5 Standard D5	Updated
Integration with the street Clause 55.07-X	New
Access Clause 58.03-6 Standard D11	Updated
Access Clause 55.07-X	New
Wind Impacts Clause 58.XX-X	New
External Walls and Materials Clause 55.07-X and Clause 58.XX-X	New

To learn more

Visit <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/better-apartments>

To discuss further

Contact

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