



Submission on Better Apartments Discussion Paper

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unChain Inc (formerly unChain St Kilda) is an incorporated body of Port Phillip residents and traders. (See www.unchainstkilda.org). Originally we were brought together by concerns about the proposed development on the St Kilda Triangle. Now we are interested in an array of matters arising in Port Phillip, especially the appropriate development of our inner city.

We have members from all political parties but we do not have any political allegiance. We have an e-mail membership of over 2000 people. In the 2012 Port Phillip Council elections, three unChain councillors were elected and we gained about 36% of the first preference votes across the municipality. We can therefore claim to speak on behalf of a significant number of residents and traders in Port Phillip.

unChain supports the mandatory apartment design standards to improve the quality of apartments in Melbourne.

unChain has read the submissions of the City of Port Phillip and the Fishermans Bend Network. We strongly endorse those submissions. We will therefore not repeat the detailed analysis in those two papers. We simply submit that

- There should be SEP65-style standards with appropriate modifications for the different regulatory environment in Victoria
- There should be plot-ratio standards, which will promote a diversity of outcomes.

unChain further submits that the Labor government has a mandate to introduce apartment standards. unChain surveyed the candidates in the 2014 election campaign. Labor's successful candidate in the Albert Park electorate was asked whether he supported mandatory design standards for new apartments in Melbourne. This was his commitment:

Hon Martin Foley (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality, Minister for Creative Industries)

As Melbourne continues to grow, and as the Victorian economy continues to change, we will see an increase in population within the city bounds. An increase in apartment dwelling is going to be part of accommodating this population growth. This requires a thoughtful government, one which looks beyond the electoral cycle.

The current Minister for Planning has approved an unprecedented number of high-density mega tower dwellings. But he has done so without considering the bigger picture - what that is doing to Melbourne and our inner city communities.

As Planning expert Professor Michael Buxton stated, when he criticised the pace and secrecy with which the Napthine Government was approving skyscrapers, saying so many so quickly was unprecedented. "This is a really irresponsible way of planning a City". (source: Age newspaper, 29 September).

The consequences of this bad planning can be seen in the 74 level of micro apartments approved by the Melbourne City Council in Lorimer Street and sitting on the desk of the State Government. This building is an example of why we need mandatory design standards.

Apartments are places where people live. They need to be built on sustaining both communities and the wider environment. Therefore, these should be places that are at a minimum, pleasantly habitable. This means having minimum levels of light, air flow, sound proofing and size.

From a market perspective planning schemes should be required to set out a diverse range of options of housing to deliver a diverse range of peoples and backgrounds to make our future high density communities interesting places socially as well as design wise.

While short term investors may be willing to snap up apartments, developers should be building something that people themselves want to actually live in, so as to ensure we don't have a market glut. Labor's plans change will around the need for design standards.

This will be led by a team built around the Government Architects Office and will ensure these standards are clear and enforceable- and even more importantly contribute to our status as the world's most liveable City.

unChain supports the position of our local member, Martin Foley, and the Port Phillip Council that we need mandatory minimum standards for new apartments.