

BETTER APARTMENTS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

December 2015



Better Apartments Public Engagement Summary

The Victorian Government is examining how to best improve the internal design and amenity of new apartments to sustain Victoria’s liveability and promote high quality apartment living opportunities.

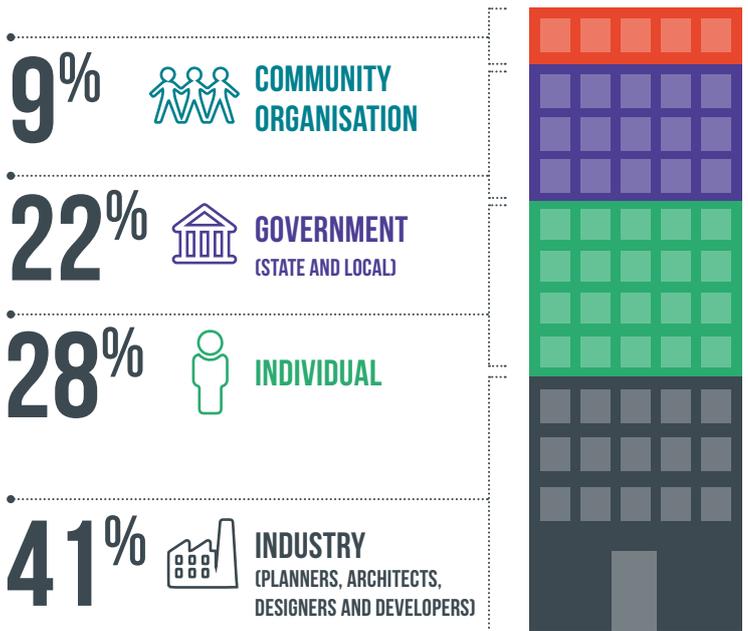
The *Better Apartments - A Discussion Paper*, released in May 2015, kick-started a statewide conversation with the community, local government, and industry about internal apartment amenity and potential future design guidelines and mechanisms.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INCLUDED:

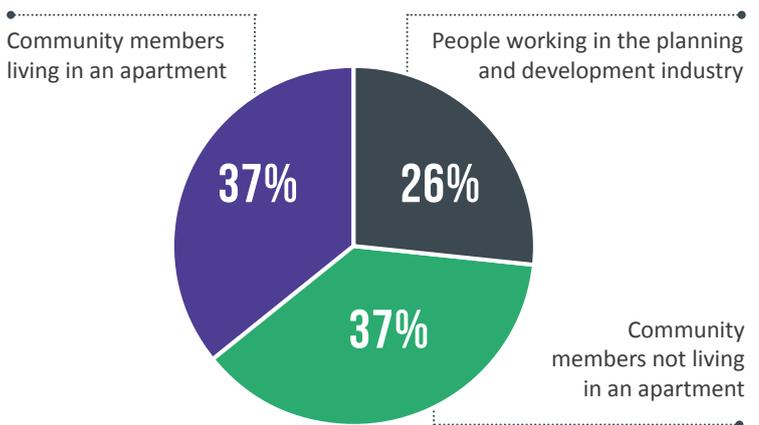


WHO PARTICIPATED

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:



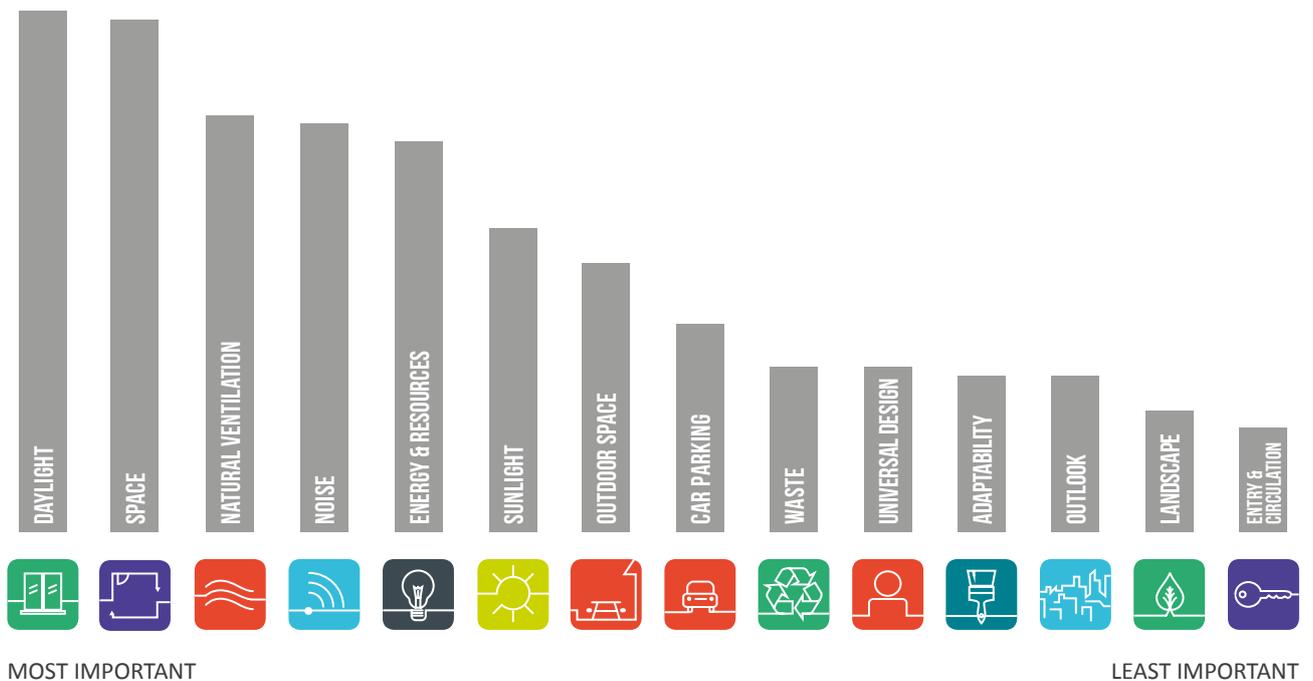
SURVEY



What you told us

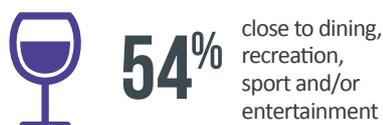
People were asked to rank the key issues affecting apartment amenity by most to least important. The top issues were daylight, space, natural ventilation and noise.

KEY ISSUES RANKED



SURVEY SNAPSHOT

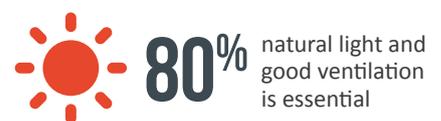
ASPECTS PEOPLE LIKE MOST



ASPECTS PEOPLE LIKE LEAST



TOP 3 ATTITUDES



AMENITY ISSUES	GENERAL VIEWS	MIXED VIEWS
 <p>DAYLIGHT Access to daylight is the most important issue affecting apartment amenity, particularly to living areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daylight access affects the health and wellbeing of apartment residents. There is a need to set minimum standards for daylight access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The best method for determining an appropriate minimum standard for daylight access. Whether ‘borrowed’ light provides an acceptable means of daylight access.
 <p>SUNLIGHT Apartments should receive access to sunlight, although access to daylight is more important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunlight access needs to be balanced with thermal comfort requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The best means of ensuring the majority of apartments receive adequate access to sunlight.
 <p>SPACE Adequate space is essential to apartment amenity. Functional space is just as important as size.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting minimum standards for room sizes within an apartment is more beneficial than setting minimum standards for an overall apartment size. Provision of a variety of apartments (i.e. with different numbers of bedrooms) will help meet the needs of a diversity of households. Adequate storage space contributes to apartment amenity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The best measure of an appropriate minimum apartment size and ceiling height.
 <p>OUTLOOK A ‘green’ outlook is valued by most people so long as privacy is not compromised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining a good outlook will largely depend on the site context. There is a need to address privacy and outlook requirements in a balanced way. Residential buildings should be effectively designed so as to not limit the development potential of adjoining sites by affecting the outlook and privacy needs of future residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most effective design responses to achieve a good outlook.
 <p>NATURAL VENTILATION Good natural ventilation is a key determinant of high quality apartment living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural ventilation is important in areas such as living rooms and bedrooms. There are multiple design solutions to ensure effective natural ventilation. Thermal comfort is affected by natural ventilation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether apartments should be dual aspect to accommodate cross ventilation. Whether natural ventilation is necessary in areas that can be mechanically ventilated (i.e. bathrooms and laundries) Whether the existing National Construction Code (NCC) is an adequate mechanism for regulating natural ventilation.
 <p>NOISE Noise between apartments and from external sources is affecting apartment amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most problematic noises come from within the apartment building, particularly from other apartments, communal spaces and services (i.e. air conditioning, garbage chutes and lift wells). The main sources of external noise are from motor vehicles, trains and trams, and entertainment venues. There is a need to include noise mitigation measures during construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether minimum standards are required for noise mitigation. Whether the National Construction Code (NCC) is an adequate tool to deal with noise mitigation measures.

AMENITY ISSUES	GENERAL VIEWS	MIXED VIEWS
 <p>OUTDOOR SPACE Private and communal outdoor spaces are valued features of apartment living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of outdoor spaces need to be provided in an apartment development. • Communal outdoor space is considered an advantage of apartment living. • Apartments should be provided with balconies in most circumstances. • Requirements for outdoor space should be determined by the location, type and size of a development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether communal open space is necessary. • Whether the provision of balconies to all apartments should be mandatory. • The need for minimum balcony and outdoor space size standards. • Whether communal spaces should offset private outdoor space requirements.
 <p>ADAPTABILITY Designing apartment buildings to be adapted in the future is beneficial.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important determining factors of building adaptability are: the location of infrastructure and services, flexible floor plans and wall locations, and ceiling heights. 	
 <p>LANDSCAPE Access to garden areas on apartment sites is important, however landscaping is not considered a significant amenity issue that needs addressing on balance with other issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping should be determined by the amount and location of open space at a site, and access to daylight and sunlight. • There are a variety of methods for providing landscaping within an apartment development. • There should be different landscaping requirements for low and higher rise developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there should be minimum standards relating to landscaping areas. • How landscaped areas can be effectively managed over time.
 <p>UNIVERSAL DESIGN Designing apartment buildings and a proportion of apartments to be universally accessible for people of all abilities and ages is preferred.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design is a basic human right. • Flexible design outcomes are important to promote accessibility for people with limited mobility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether mandating a minimum number of universally designed apartments will impact on the overall design of a building and development costs. • The percentage of apartments within a development that should be universally designed.
 <p>ENERGY AND RESOURCES Improving the energy and resource efficiency performance of an apartment and apartment building is important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving a higher minimum green star rating is a key design solution to improving the energy and resource efficiency of apartments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether energy and resource efficiency should be assessed through the planning system, the building system or both. • The need for state-wide environmentally sustainable design (ESD) standards. • Whether apartments should have individual metering of utilities.

AMENITY ISSUES	GENERAL VIEWS	MIXED VIEWS
 <p>WASTE The collection and management of household waste is an important consideration for the design of apartment buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design of waste collection depends on the number of apartments within the apartment building. It is beneficial to prepare a waste management plan in the preliminary stages of an apartment development. Facilities that separate organic, recyclable and non-recyclable waste are preferred. Adequate space should be provided within an apartment development for appropriate waste collection. 	
 <p>CAR PARKING Key factors for determining appropriate car parking provision and good design are occupant needs and the local context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amenity, design and layout of car parking areas requires careful consideration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether car parking requirements should be discretionary and based on location, access to public transport and alternative transport solutions. The suitability of car stackers when space is limited.
 <p>ENTRY AND CIRCULATION Apartments require good access and appropriate loading and areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to the provision of access for deliveries, removals and building work. Goods lifts should be adequately sized. Lobbies and communal entrance areas should be safe and clearly identifiable. 	
<p>IMPLEMENTATION: GETTING THE TOOLS RIGHT Any final product or outcome resulting from the discussion paper needs to be implemented in a practical way. There are mixed views on the type of tools needed to promote high quality apartment living opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for a consistent, state-wide approach to address existing inconsistencies in decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the design of apartments requires further regulation. Whether regulation should occur through the planning system and/or the building system. Whether a mandatory or performance-based regulatory approach is likely to be more effective.

Where to from here

The feedback from the public engagement informs the development of draft apartment design guidelines and the most appropriate mechanisms for implementation. The next steps are:



For more information and to read the full Better Apartments Engagement Report, visit delwp.vic.gov.au/better-apartments

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