

Archicentre Australia welcome new apartment design rules set to put an end to ‘dog boxes’

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Archicentre Australia has welcomed Victoria’s incoming apartment design standards.

NEW apartment design rules set to put an end to “dog box” developments have been welcomed by a national architecture advisory service.

Archicentre Australia said the incoming apartment design standards, set to be introduced by the State Government in March, were an important step forward for livability in Victoria.

“They will make apartments more resident-friendly and help remove some of the problems which led to many being termed ‘dog boxes’,” director Peter Georgiev said.

“It is ludicrous that some of the apartments being built today have bedrooms too small for even a double bed and without 1960s standards for natural light.”

The new rules outline a minimum living area of 10sq m for studio and one-bedroom apartments and of 12sq m for two-bedroom or larger.

Apartments will have to include a balcony or private outdoor space under the rules, which will also put in place basic standards for natural light, ventilation, storage and noise impact.

Developers will need to meet the guidelines in order to get planning approval.

“The new laws are a step in the right direction,” Mr Georgiev said.

“But the government must do more to ensure that the city of today is comfortable for the next generation.

“Architects need to be part of the solution as they are best suited and have necessary design acumen to provide amenity and flexibility for apartment living.

“Unlike many European countries where the public is protected by laws that require buildings to be designed by architects, this is not the case in Australia — making the efforts of its architects all the more important as purveyors of independent and informed design and construction advice.”

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Meanwhile, recent Secret Agent research, used in developing the new rules, shows apartments with sunlight, natural ventilation, open views and outdoor space in large developments sold at an average of about \$50,000 more than those with just three or two of those factors.

Apartments with one or none of the four elements sold on average for another \$50,000 less.

Homes that ticked all the boxes in buildings with five or less levels sold on average for about \$63,000 more than those with two or three.

And those with one or zero of the four elements nearly another \$40,000 less

“This demonstrates that better design standards will have a significant impact on apartment prices once they come into effect,” the report concludes.

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