

The Chronicle

HD **Poor quality shows in Melbourne towers**
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Melbourne's newest high-rise towers are overrun by bad-quality apartments, but the investors who **buy** them do not care – as long as they get the rent.

A Melbourne City Council study has estimated 55 per cent of the city's tallest **apartment** buildings over 15 storeys are of "poor" quality, with common design flaws such as cramped layouts and a lack of natural light.

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Meanwhile, windowless bedrooms exist in almost a quarter of new **residential** developments studied.

Some of Melbourne's architects are so unhappy with the result of buildings they have designed they have refused to have their name associated with them, the Australian Institute of Architects has revealed.

The **group**'s president, Melbourne architect Jon Clements, is backing calls for minimum **apartment** design standards, mandated through legislation.

"The general feeling among architects is that it's ridiculous to be forcing architects to produce buildings that don't deliver appropriate quality and amenity standards," he said.

Melbourne City Council's Future Living report, which analysed the design of 25 of the city's new **residential** developments, found poorer quality apartments were more likely to be located in taller apartments.

All 11 of the high-rise **apartment** designs studied were considered either poor or average quality.

Common failings included kitchens in hallways, poor storage, lack of ventilation and excessive energy use.

But the report's authors said as long as there was someone willing to rent the **property**, the investors who **buy** 85 per cent of apartments in the municipality were not bothered.

"An owner occupier ... will be more discerning when it comes to layout, access to sunlight, daylight, ventilation and adequate storage," the report said.

"An investor will be less concerned with these elements as long as the **apartment** can be rented."

There are no laws in Victoria governing how apartments must be designed, beyond the National Construction Code.

Victoria's high cost of construction and the hefty sums paid for blocks of land are among the factors being blamed for developers skimping on the quality of apartments.

Mr Clements said some developers would simply employ another designer if an architect made a stand on **apartment** quality standards.

“If there is legislation in place around minimum standards the developers have to achieve the standards. If you don’t [have rules] the architects will be subject to pressure”.

Though Mr Clements argued it was possible to build very liveable small apartments, if designed right.

Last week it was revealed Melbourne is home to developments so dense that they would not pass laws in **Hong Kong** New York and London, prompting concerns the city was building the slums of the future.

CO autuht : Australian Institute of Architects | melurn : Melbourne City Council

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NS garchi : Architecture | gart : Art | gcat : Political/General News | gent : Arts/Entertainment

RE austr : Australia | melb : Melbourne | queensl : Queensland | victor : Victoria (Australia) | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania

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