

# Tick a Box Planning makes Sydney Apartments Dull

Friday, 28 September 2018

At a recent forum on Innovative Apartments it became clear that the design of Sydney's apartments is being overly controlled by a tick a box planning system, says the Urban Taskforce.

"Over the last decade the government rules and guides for the design of apartment buildings has become more complex leading to a tick a box planning assessment process that is leading to less innovation and design diversity," says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "At a recent Urban Taskforce forum on how to balance regulation and innovation in the design of apartment buildings the Mayor of Burwood, John Faker, called for more innovation and diversity in design. Mark Raggett of Melbourne architects ARM ARCHITECTURE demonstrated how a strong culture of architecture in Melbourne has made innovative design the accepted way to design apartment buildings."

"The debate was timely as a growing negative attitude from community groups about apartments seems to be partly based on the dull look of many apartments that all look the same. The Urban Taskforce believes the excessive number of controls and guidelines in the NSW Government's Apartment Design Guide are being implemented as tick a box requirements by planners in councils. Added to these controls are up to 25 specialist reports required by most councils in specialist areas that must demonstrate compliance with even more rules. Architects at the forum stated that apartment design was being driven by numbers and an excessive number of rules which is eliminating merit based assessment. One architect said that the process was 'taking away the soul of Sydney'."

"The Acting NSW Government Architect, Olivia Hyde, presented the NSW Government's focus on design excellence through a number of publications, policies and design review processes but she agreed that the many councils were using guides as rules despite government documents saying this should not occur."

"The Urban Taskforce believes that a special design excellence approval path is required that bypasses the excessive number of rules that are forcing low common dominator designs rather than encouraging innovative solutions through merit assessment. The state government must establish a pathway for innovative apartment building design that local councils can use to enrich their neighbourhoods."

See below an image of Orbis Apartments in Melbourne by ARM ARCHITECTURE



The **Urban Taskforce** is a property development industry group, representing Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers.

Media Enquires: **Chris Johnson, Chief Executive Officer: 0412 258 283.**

Follow us on:

