

# City of Sydney planning red tape will add costs

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Excessive ventilation and solar access requirements introduced by the City of Sydney will add costs to new apartments says the urban Taskforce

"The City of Sydney Council has recently added two new ventilation and solar access requirements for apartment buildings that will increase costs." Says Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson "A number of our members have raised concerns that excessive micro data is now required for measuring solar access with evidence of compliance every 15 minutes required. Another proposal for natural ventilation of apartments on noise effected sites is estimated to add over \$40,000 to each apartment."

"We understand that the new requirement to demonstrate solar access to an apartment for every 15 minutes is taking at least 3 days for consultants to calculate and feed into the cities system for an average building. Clearly this excessive interpretation of rules from the Apartment Design Guide (ADG) will add to the cost of getting an approval through the City of Sydney Council. The ADG is only a guide but many councils are using it as a tick the box rule book and this is restricting innovation in the design of apartment buildings. The rules for apartments in Victoria only call for solar access to north-facing windows to be maximised which is a far simpler requirement. Most cities in the world do not have solar access rules and leave this issue to the market to determine."

"The City of Sydney Council requirement that applicants must present details of solar access for every 15 minutes for a two hour period between 9am and 3pm in mid -winter seems to be an interpretation of a Design Guidance note in the Apartment Design Guide. The Design Guidance says; 'To maximise the benefits of direct sunlight within living rooms and private open spaces, a minimum of 1 square metre of direct sunlight, measured at 1 metre above floor level, is achieved for at least 15 minutes.' This is micro red tape at its worse when used as a formal rule that applicants must comply with."

"The natural ventilation issue for apartments in noise affected areas requires apartments 10 L/s per person for 85-90 percent of all hours in the year as required in the Draft Alternative Natural Ventilation of Apartments – Performance Pathway Guideline. Many in the industry believe this is an excessive requirement that can be handled better through ceiling fans. The ADG only requires 60 percent of apartments below 9 storeys to have natural ventilation and the Victorian Government only requires 40 percent. Clearly a more sensible approach is required in noise effected areas rather than the expensive construction of solar chimneys to move air."

"At a time when Sydney's housing is so expensive, despite recent falls in price, it is important that a reasonable balance between amenity and price is achieved. It does not help Sydney's affordability crisis to implement micro rules that have dubious value compared to their cost. The state government must monitor red tape excesses from Sydney councils."

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

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