

# Mid-rise apartment code could add Paris quality to Sydney's growth

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A mid-rise apartment code could lead to precincts of 6 to 8 storey apartments that brought the character of Paris to Sydney, says the Urban Taskforce.

"The NSW Government has a housing code that encourages 2 storey houses through quick 10 day planning approvals," Says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "With Sydney's projected population growth requiring a doubling of the number of homes over the next 50 years, we must encourage more mid-rise apartments as a major component of housing such large growth. We cannot rely only on 2 storey houses so a mid-rise apartment code with 30 day approvals will be needed."

"Clearly taller towers will also be part of the mix and these will need longer assessment times."

"The Urban Taskforce has proposed a straight forward two page Complying Code for mid-rise apartments that requires qualified architects to design the buildings, sets rules for setbacks, heights, landscape, parking, apartment size, solar access and the need for design reviews. The planning system does not need vast volumes of complex rules. Our code respects the context and the amenity of neighbours as well as requiring an expert to deliver a quality result."

"Mid-rise apartments represent a third way to deliver housing between two storey houses and high-rise apartment towers. At a height of 6 to 8 storeys these apartments are family friendly with parents able to keep an eye on children playing in a common garden. They also blend into the landscape well as the Australian gum tree grows to height similar to an 8 storey building. There are excellent Sydney examples of apartments sited amongst a forest of trees that provide shade and reinforce the importance of nature."

"A simple complying code for mid-rise apartments can also help to renew large areas of 1960s walk up flats that are now reaching their use-by date. With the NSW Government's proposed reduction to 75% for the number of strata owners agreeing to a renewal process the likelihood of change to these out of date buildings is increased. The use of a complying code will speed up the renewal process and give confidence to investors about potential yields."

"The proposed mid-rise apartment code would be a strong signal from the government that it supports this building type as a preferred way to house the growing future population. Without a code like the one we have proposed the street by street battles over every project will frustrate the development industry and leave the community with no certainty."

To see an electronic version of the Urban Taskforce Complying Code for Mid-Rise Apartment Buildings click here: <http://www.urbantaskforce.com.au/urbanideas/december2014/>

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

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