Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend Council adopt Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C163 and request the Minister for Planning to approve the Amendment.

Key issues

2. Amendment C163 seeks to introduce a new Student Housing Policy into the Melbourne Planning Scheme, and to delete the Student Housing-Development and Management Controls 1999 as a reference document in the Planning Scheme. The student housing policy and amendment documentation are at Attachment 2.

3. Amendment C163 was publicly exhibited from 22 July 2010 to 30 August 2010. The November 2010 Future Melbourne Committee considered the submissions from the exhibition, endorsed changes to the amendment policy in response to submissions, and referred the amendment and the submissions to a Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning.

4. At the 2 March 2011 Panel hearing there were presentations from the authors of *Transnational and Temporary: student, community and place making in central Melbourne*, and the Carlton Residents Association. The Panel’s report has been circulated to submitters and is at Attachment 3.

5. The Panel concluded that the Amendment advances State and local strategic planning objectives and will provide an important performance based policy to guide and enforce a good level of comfort and amenity in purpose built student housing.

6. The Panel recommended that Amendment C163 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme be adopted as exhibited and subject to the changes endorsed at the November 2010 Future Melbourne Committee. See Attachment 4 for an outline of the amendment process.

Recommendation from management

7. That the Future Melbourne Committee:

   7.1. note the Independent Panel’s recommendation;

   7.2. recommend Council:

      7.2.1. adopt Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C163 – Student Housing Policy, pursuant to Section 29 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; and

      7.2.2. submit Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C163 – Student Housing Policy to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. Clause 22.24 - Student Housing Policy and amendment documentation
3. Amendment C163 Panel Report
4. Amendment process diagram
SUPPORTING ATTACHMENT

Legal

1. Section 29(1) of the Planning and Environment 1987 (‘the Act’) provides that after complying with Divisions 1 and 2 in respect of an amendment or any part of it including considering the Panel’s report, the planning authority may adopt the amendment with or without changes.

2. Section 31(1) of the Act provides that the planning authority must submit an adopted amendment to the Minister for approval. The Minister may approve an amendment with or without changes, or refuse to approve the amendment.

3. If approved, the Minister must then publish a notice of the approval of an amendment in the Government Gazette and the planning authority must give notice of the approval of the amendment in a manner satisfactory to the Minister.

4. The recommendation made in the report is consistent with the Act.

Finance

5. Under Section 6 of the Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2000 Council is required to pay a fee of $798 for the Minister’s consideration of the approval request and to give notice of approval of an amendment in the government gazette. Once the planning scheme is approved, Council will also be required to place a notice in a newspaper circulating in the local area. The costs will be met from within the existing Strategic Planning Branch’s 2010-11 operating budget.

Conflict of interest

6. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Stakeholder consultation

7. Amendment C163 has been publicly exhibited. The submissions received during exhibition have been considered by Council and by a Panel, during which all submitters were given the opportunity to present.

Relation to Council policy

8. Amendment C163 is consistent with the objectives of the Municipal Strategic Statement and supports Future Melbourne.

Environmental sustainability

9. The Amendment will not impact negatively on the environment. The proposed Student Housing Policy promotes convenient walking access to public transport, shops and education facilities. The Policy also encourages bicycle parking and supports planning applications that provide limited or no car parking for students.
STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

This policy applies where a planning permit is required for the use or development of student housing, typically under the definition of residential building or residential college.

For the purpose of this policy Student housing is defined as the use or development of land for:

- Accommodation that is purpose built to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions; or
- Accommodation that is modified or converted (for more than ten habitable rooms) to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions. This would include accommodation that was used in the past as a dwelling.

This policy does not apply:

- To informal student housing where students occupy dwellings as defined within the planning scheme. Dwellings can be used for shared housing without the need for a planning permit.
- If the accommodation comprises a number of fully self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling.

Policy basis

The City of Melbourne is home to many tertiary educational institutions. The University of Melbourne and RMIT University are foremost amongst these.

These institutions cater for a large number of students who move to Melbourne to study from overseas, interstate and from regional Victoria. Some of these students seek specialist accommodation services that will support their period of study in Melbourne. The demand for this type of accommodation is projected to be ongoing.

Purpose built student housing has specific requirements compared to other types of dwellings which need to be addressed at the planning permit application stage.

This policy supports purpose built student housing which provides for pastoral care, reduces social isolation and which facilitates social interaction and communication among the students.

The location and design of purpose built student accommodation needs to be affordable, meet the practical requirements of students, and have convenient walking access to public transport and shops, and convenient access to educational and community facilities. The standards included in this policy are the minimum requirements for student life.

Collaboration between developers and universities is encouraged to achieve the objectives of this policy.

The Municipal Strategic Statement supports:

- "the provision of affordable, safe and well designed and managed student housing in locations with good access to public transport, services and tertiary education facilities"; and
- "affordable accommodation options for students."

This policy is supported by the findings of Transnational and temporary: Students, community and place-making in central Melbourne 2009, a report prepared by the University of Melbourne.

Objectives

To ensure that the internal layout of rooms and communal facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the reasonable requirements of an active social, work, and private life of the student while promoting social interaction.
To provide a safe, healthy, secure and well managed living environment.

22.24-3  Policy

Bicycle, Motorcycle, Scooter and Car Parking, and Loading and Unloading

It is policy to:

- Encourage at least one bicycle parking space per student
- Design and locate bicycle parking in accordance with the decision guidelines at Clause 52.34-4;
- Provide adequate space on the land for motorcycle and scooter parking;
- Design safe and efficient motorcycle and scooter parking;
- Provide car parking for the management and servicing needs of the building;
- Support applications that provide limited or no car parking for students;
- Design car spaces and accessways in accordance with Clause 52.06-3; and
- Provide adequate space on the land for loading and unloading vehicles and waste collection.

Layout, Students’ rooms and Shared Spaces

Student rooms may comprise various levels of shared facilities including:

- Student rooms with all facilities except laundry facilities;
- Student rooms with en-suite bathrooms and shared laundry and cook facilities; or
- Hostel type facility where rooms are for sleeping and studying and shared laundry, cooking and bathroom facilities are provided.

Students’ Rooms

It is policy that:

- Every room has a size, layout and design able to comfortably accommodate:
  - A bed accessible from a long side;
  - A study area with a desk and bookshelf;
  - A robe /drawer unit with ample storage space for clothing and personal items;
  - Computer and TV;
  - A table or bench to provide a space to eat separate from that used for study purposes;

One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a minimum floor space of 10.8m² for a room to be used as a basic single student bedroom. This does not include a kitchen or an en-suite.

- Every room has direct access to daylight and fresh air and an external window.
- That at least one source of light to study bedrooms be from external walls open to the sky.
- Each room is not unreasonably overlooked by another room, either in the same building or an adjoining property.
- Rooms should be designed and located to limit excessive noise and disruption from pedestrian or vehicle traffic from within or outside the complex.
- Where private kitchen facilities are provided there should be adequate room for a microwave, stove top cooker, fridge, clear bench space and sink with hot and cold running water, as well as storage space for food, crockery, utensils, cleaning equipment and a designated location for garbage and re-cycling.
• Adequate long term storage in a secure location is provided.

Shared Facilities
It is policy that:
• Shared laundries include the following:
  • A reasonably attractive design conducive to incidental socialising; and.
  • Appropriate provision of shared facilities including washing machines, clothes dryers, laundry tubs with hot and cold water and clotheslines.
• Shared cooking and dining facilities include the following:
  • A designated location for garbage and re-cycling bins; and
  • Appropriate provision of shared cooking and dining facilities including stove top cookers, sinks with running hot and cold water, refrigerators, freezers, bench space for food preparation and storage space for dry goods.
• The provision of storage areas for property manager’s equipment and building maintenance is encouraged.
• The provision of appropriate waste management facilities is encouraged.
• Shared facilities are located in a safe and accessible location for all students.
• Corridors and stairways are healthy attractive spaces, with natural lighting and ventilation and are conducive to incidental social interaction.

Communal outdoor space and internal common areas
It is policy to:
• Ensure each student has access to communal outdoor space that is well designed, safe and accessible and can be maintained appropriately;
  One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a ratio of 2.5m² of communal outdoor space per student, in a maximum of two parcels, each parcel with a minimum width of 3m.
• Ensure adequate solar access into any communal outdoor space;
• Ensure each student has access to internal common areas that are capable of being used for multiple functions to meet a range of study, social, cultural and religious needs of students;
  One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a common living area or recreation room with a minimum of 15m² in area for the first 12 students, and a further 15m² for each additional 12 students thereafter;
• Ensure internal common areas are well located adjacent to high movement areas and doors to internal common areas contain glass to enable natural surveillance from circulation areas;
• Encourage a direct relationship between communal outdoor spaces and common internal spaces to enhance function and safety;
• Ensure that lighting of internal and external access areas is adequate;
• Ensure that all common areas promote student interaction and a sense of community;
• Require that all common areas remain the responsibility of the building management and not be sold off independently.

The floor area of bedrooms, bathrooms, laundries, reception area, storage, kitchens, car parking, loading docks, driveways, clothes drying areas, corridors and the like are not counted when determining the area of internal communal living area. Dining areas may be included as communal living area.
Conversion of Existing Buildings

It is policy to:

- Consider the capacity of the building to meet the requirements of this policy, particularly the provision of communal open space when assessing applications for the conversion of an existing building to student housing.

Application Requirements

The responsible authority may require a Management Plan to be submitted and approved before the use of the student housing commences.

The Management Plan should include, but is not limited to:

- Permanent display of the Management Plan in a common area.
- Provision for at-call contact details of a suitably responsible contact person for response 24 hours a day and seven days a week, to be displayed so they are clearly visible to any person entering the site.
- Provision of information on community and education services, including health, counselling and cultural services.
- Provision of information on local public transport and to encourage walking (e.g. information on facilities within walking distance, local public transport timetables, outlets for purchase of Myki tickets, car share services, etc).
- House rules regarding occupancy and behaviour of students and visitors.
- Resolution process for disputes between students and complaints from persons not residing on the site.
- Areas where washed clothes may be dried.
- Details of rubbish bin storage and waste collection.
- Employment of a suitably qualified manager or lead tenant who is accommodated on-site.
- Details of which unit is to be set aside for the resident manager and how this unit is to be managed.
- The nature of the management of the complex and the contact details of the manager/lead tenant.
- Critical Incident Management and Emergency & Evacuation Procedures.
- Management procedures over holiday periods.
- Information for students on how to use the building effectively, efficiently and responsibly.
21.11 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

General


Housing and community


Business and Retail


Urban Form and Structure and character

Docklands Open Space Strategy.
Melbourne Docklands Outdoor Signage Guidelines, 2004
Swanston Street, Carlton- Urban Design Guidelines, 1999
West Melbourne Structure Plan, April 2005
Carlton Brewery Masterplan, October 2007

Parks

Parks Policy, 1997.
Transport and Access

Port of Melbourne Land Use Plan, 2002.
City West Plan, 2002.

Environment


Local Area Plans

Southbank Structure Plan (Final Draft), 1999.
North West 2010 Local Plan, 1999.
Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Melbourne, which is the planning authority for this amendment.

Land affected by the amendment.

The amendment applies to all land within the City of Melbourne.

What the amendment does.

The amendment introduces Clause 22.24 – Student Housing Policy, into the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Melbourne Planning Scheme and deletes the Student Housing - Development and Management Controls, 1999 as a Reference Document from the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

The Student Housing Policy will apply where a planning permit is required for the use or development of student housing. Student Housing is defined as land used for:

- Accommodation that is purpose built to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions; or
- Accommodation that is modified or converted (for more than ten habitable rooms) to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions. This would include accommodation that was used in the past as a dwelling.

The Policy does not apply to informal student housing where students occupy dwellings as defined within the planning scheme or if the accommodation comprises a number of fully self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling.

The policy will provide direction for Council, the community and the development industry in considering applications for student housing.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

- Why is the amendment required?

In 2006, a three year project funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage grant program commenced. The research project, called Transnational and temporary: Students, community and place-making in central Melbourne, was conducted by the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the City of Melbourne, the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.
The Transnational & Temporary report found that the inadequate nature of existing housing contributes to the segregation and separateness of international students and provides insufficient opportunities for socialising.

Transnational & Temporary has recommended that student housing complexes in central Melbourne need to be more affordable, encourage social and cultural diversity among the tenants and encourage internal and external interactions such as is provided by student housing complexes with common facilities.

Planning permit applications are currently assessed against Council’s Student Housing Development and Management Control guidelines, however the status of these guidelines is uncertain and often questioned at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal because they are not included in a local planning policy. In this way the policy will provide greater certainty for new applicants and planning officers when assessing an application.

- How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

Section 4 (1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 contains the following relevant objective for planning in Victoria:

(a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land;

(b) to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;

(c) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The proposed student housing policy provides clear objectives for the use and development of student housing. The policy objectives are:

• To ensure that the internal layout and facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the requirements of student life, and promote social interaction; and

• To provide a safe, secure and well managed living environment.

It is considered that these objectives will assist in the implementation of the objectives of planning in Victoria.

- How does the amendment address the environmental effects and any relevant social and economic effects?

The amendment is expected to have no significant effect on the environment. However by promoting minimal car parking requirements and an increased amount of bike parking, as well as ensuring student housing is well located near public transport and shops, car usage may be reduced. The Policy also includes performance objectives for student housing to include appropriate waste management facilities.

The amendment is expected to have positive economic and social effects. The amendment will encourage purpose built student housing that is well located and designed, is affordable, meets the practical requirements of students, has convenient walking access to public transport and shops, and convenient access to educational and community facilities.
• Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister’s Direction applicable to the amendment?

The amendment is consistent with Ministerial Direction No. 9 — Metropolitan Strategy. The following aspects of Melbourne 2030 are relevant:

Direction 1: A more Compact City

The amendment is consistent with this strategic direction as it promotes the use and development of student housing facilities at locations close to public transport, shops, and educational and community facilities.

Direction 4 - A More Prosperous City

The amendment provides for housing for overseas students in locations with good access to education centres and is thereby contributing to the knowledge economy.

Direction 6 — A Fairer City of Melbourne

The policy encourages the appropriate location of student housing as well as affordable choices for students, by encouraging minimum standards required for student life.

Direction 8 — Better Transport Links

The amendment encourages the better use of public transport. As the policy aims to locate student housing close to public transport or an associated tertiary education institution, it will reduce dependency on car travel and encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

The amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under Section 7(5) of the Act. It is also consistent with Ministerial Direction No. 12 — Strategic Assessment of Amendment as set out in this explanatory report.

• How does the amendment support or implement the State Planning Policy Framework?

Clause 16.02 (Medium Density Housing) of the State Planning Policy Framework seeks to encourage medium density housing that improves housing choices and makes the best use of existing infrastructure. The amendment is consistent with this clause in that the provision of purpose built student housing and appropriate shared facilities will increase the housing choices available for students and encourage better use of services and transport.

Clause 18.02 (Infrastructure, Car Parking and Public Transport Access to Development) seeks to ensure that developments take advantage of all available modes of public transport and minimise the impacts on existing transport networks. The policy is consistent with this clause as it encourages student housing in areas with good access to public transport.

Clause 18.07 (Education Facilities) encourages the integration of education facilities with local communities. Tertiary facilities are encouraged in areas with good access to public transport and activity centres. The policy encourages student housing to locate in these areas.
Clause 19.03 (Design and Built Form) encourages high quality urban design to enhance liveability, diversity and safety and to promote the attractiveness of cities. In particular development should create environments that enhance personal safety, provide active street frontages, promote energy efficiency and should aspire to high standards in architectural design. The policy encourages urban design that promotes personal safety, and facilities to enhance the liveability of student life.

- How does the amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework?

Council’s MSS outlines Council’s strategic direction for future land use planning and development.

Clause 21.04 Land Use seeks to “Support the provision of affordable, safe and well designed and managed student housing in locations with good access to public transport services and tertiary education facilities” and “support affordable accommodation options for students”.

Clause 21.05 City Structure and Built Form seeks to manage amenity through built form strategies, encouraging safety, social character and diversity. The policy encourages sustainable built form which includes passive solar design and seeks to have principles of community safety incorporated in the design of buildings.

Clause 21.06 Transport and Communications Infrastructure seeks to increase the use of public transport systems and improve the sustainability and liveability of the municipality and surrounding areas. The clause also encourages improved bicycle facilities, pedestrian travel and vehicular access to the city that is provided in an environmentally sustainable way.

The student housing policy supports these clauses.

- Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

It is considered that the amendment makes proper use of the Victorian Planning Provisions. The implementation of a policy on student housing facilities is the most transparent and efficient way to alter the scheme to provide clear guidance for assessment of these types of planning applications.

- How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

In development this policy Council has sought the views of relevant agencies and stakeholder groups through the exhibition process.

- What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The consideration of any subsequent planning permits for the land will not impose significant resource or administration costs on the Council. The policy does not include any additional permit triggers.

Where you may inspect this Amendment.

Detailed information about the Amendment is available on the City of Melbourne web site at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au.
The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

Melbourne City Council
Planning Reception
Level 3, 240 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Telephone: 9658 9658

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Planning and Community Development web site at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/publicinspection.
Planning and Environment Act 1987

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C163

The planning authority for this amendment is the City of Melbourne.

The Melbourne Planning Scheme is amended as follows:

Planning Scheme Ordinance

The Planning Scheme Ordinance is amended as follows:

1. In Local Planning Policy Framework — replace Clause 21.11 with a new Clause 21.11 in the form of the attached document. The details of the changes are as follows:

   • Student Housing - Development and Management Controls, 1999 has been deleted as a Reference Document

2. In Local Planning Policy Framework — following Clause 22.23, insert a new Clause 22.24 in the form of the attached document.

End of document
## Amendment C163

List of changes to the Melbourne Planning Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause / Map Numbers</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.11</td>
<td>Insert a new Clause 21.11 “Reference Documents” in the form of the attached document.</td>
<td>Deletes the Student Housing - Development and Management Controls, 1999 as a Reference Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>Following Clause 22.23 “Stormwater Management (Water Sensitive Urban Design)” insert a new Clause 22.24 “Student Housing Policy” in accordance with the attached document</td>
<td>Inserts a new Local Planning Policy on Student housing into the Planning Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIST OF AMENDMENTS (Information to accompany amendment)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Amendments</td>
<td>Insert: Amendment number “C163”, In operation from, DATE, with the brief description, “introduces a new Local Planning Policy, Student Housing Policy (Clause 22.24) into the Planning Scheme and deletes the Student Housing - Development and Management Controls, 1999 as a Reference Document in the Municipal Strategic Statement”.</td>
<td>Updates list of amendments to the planning scheme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME
AMENDMENT C163
STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

PANEL REPORT

8 APRIL 2011
MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME
AMENDMENT C163
STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

PANEL REPORT

Renate Howe, Chair

8 APRIL 2011
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APPENDIX 1 REVISED VERSION OF CLAUSE 22.24 STUDENT HOUSING POLICY ..................................................................................................................22
1. INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the Panel appointed pursuant to Section 153 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to hear and consider submissions in respect of the Amendment.

Amendment C163 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme, as exhibited, proposes to introduce a new local policy for student housing. The purpose of the Amendment is to ensure that purpose built student housing is designed to provide a good level of amenity and comfort to students. The City of Melbourne is the Planning Authority.

The Amendment C163 was publicly exhibited between 22 July 2010 and 30 August 2010. Four submissions in total were received from:

- Urbis on behalf of Urbanest Pty Ltd;
- Carlton Residents Association Inc;
- Andrew Martel, Professor Paolo Tombesi, Faculty of Architecture and Building, The University of Melbourne and Gerard Pinto; and
- Property and Campus Services, The University of Melbourne.

A Directions Hearing was held on 2 February 21011 and the Public Hearing was held on 2 March 2011. The following parties appeared at the Public Hearing:

- City of Melbourne represented by Robyn Hellman and Deborah Payne, Strategic Planning and Sustainability,
- Andrew Martel and Gerard Pinto, Faculty of Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne,
- Carlton Residents Association Inc represented by Warren Green.
2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Background

In recent years Melbourne has become home to a large number of students most of whom attend either RMIT University or the University of Melbourne. There are also numerous technical and language colleges located in the City of Melbourne area. Currently more than one third of the municipality’s residents are students and about half of these are international students.

Amendment C163 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme is a response to this changing social and demographic nature of the city’s residents. It proposes to introduce a new local policy for student housing which, as the submission on behalf of the City of Melbourne stated, will ‘ensure that purpose built student housing is designed to provide housing that is functional, affordable, liveable and promotes student welfare.’

The proposed amendment is the culmination of recent research and policy consideration in relation to student housing needs. A sound strategic basis for the amendment has been provided by a study undertaken in 2007/2008 by the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the City of Melbourne, the Department of Planning and the Department of Sustainability and Environment which surveyed the experience of students at RMIT University and The University of Melbourne who live in and around the central city.

This study, Transnational and Temporary: student, community and place making in central Melbourne, was published in early 2009. It found that accommodation in existing student housing provided insufficient opportunities for socialising especially for international students and contributed to their social segregation. The study included a range of recommendations to improve the experiences of international students some of which had significance for the planning scheme.

The primary planning recommendation was that a student housing policy should be prepared by the City of Melbourne and that purpose designed student housing complexes should be more affordable, encourage social and cultural diversity among tenants and encourage internal and external interactions.

The City of Melbourne submitted that the proposed amendment is a strategic policy response to the evidence and findings in the Transnational and Temporary study. In preparing the amendment, research had also been conducted into other recently gazetted student housing policies in other Melbourne municipalities especially the City of Glen Eira and the City of Stonnington.
The Panel was informed that in developing the policy, Council had not discarded its *Student Housing Development and Management Control Guidelines*, currently a Reference Document in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), and that many of the Guideline’s objectives and standards had been incorporated into the proposed amendment.

The effect of Amendment C163, which introduces Clause 22.24 into the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme and deletes the existing *Student Housing - Development and Management Controls, 1999* as a Reference Document from the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), will be as follows:

- There will be a Student Housing Policy in the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme.
- The *Student Housing -Development and Management Controls, 1999*, will no longer hold any statutory weight.

### 2.2 Details of the Amendment

The Panel was informed that the Council currently receives two types of planning permit applications for housing students:

- self-contained apartments which are in fact ordinary dwellings under the Melbourne Planning Scheme but which have often been presented and assessed as student accommodation in order to justify reductions in parking requirements.
- accommodation comprising rooms served by shared kitchens and/or bathrooms. These are assessed as residential buildings under the Planning Scheme.

The Student Housing Policy will apply where a planning permit is required for the use or development of student housing, typically under the definition of residential building or residential college. Student housing is defined in the proposed Clause 22.24 as the use and development of land for:

- accommodation that is purpose built to accommodate bone fide students while studying at tertiary institutions: or
- accommodation that is modified or converted (for more than ten habitable rooms) to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions. This would include accommodation that was used in the past as a dwelling.

The Student Housing Policy does not apply to informal student housing where students occupy dwellings as defined within the Melbourne Planning Scheme or if the accommodation comprises a number of fully self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling.
Those proposals which are dwellings under the Planning Scheme will be assessed as dwellings with all the associated requirements, including private open space and car parking, while purpose built student housing will be assessed under the provisions of this policy.

Council circulated an amended version of the proposed Clause 22.24 prior to the Hearing in response to the submissions made to the exhibited amendment. A copy of the amended Clause 22.24 (dated September 2010) that was referred to the Panel is provided in Appendix 1. Clause 22.24 is set out as follows:

22.24-1 Policy Basis

The policy supports purpose built student housing that provides standards for the minimum requirements for the provision of affordable housing which facilitates social interaction and communication among students.

22.24-2 Objectives

The policy ensures that the internal layout of rooms and communal facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the reasonable requirements of student life and provide a safe, healthy, secure and well managed living environment.

22.24-3 Policy

This section sets out policies in relation to:

- Bicycle, Motorcycle Scooter and Car Parking and Loading and Unloading of Vehicles and Waste Collection;
- Layout, Students’ Rooms and Shared Spaces;
- Shared Facilities; and
- Communal outdoor space and internal common areas.

22.24-4 Application Requirements

This section:

- recommends standards for the design of shared common facilities;
- recommends standards for the amount of common indoor and outdoor space per student;
- recommends the provision of a Management Plan that will support the pastoral care of students; and
- recommends design standards so that student rooms meet their needs for privacy, amenity, space and functionality.
2.3 How Will the Amendment Operate?

The Student Housing Policy will apply in any zone where accommodation is a permitted use. A permit will be triggered by the use and/or development provisions of the zone. The submission on behalf of the City of Melbourne stated that in practice, it is anticipated that there will be few, if any applications that propose a student housing development of less than four storeys.

The proposed Clause 22.24 will be applied in conjunction with other applicable sections of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. The submission on behalf of the City of Melbourne stated that where appropriate the policy will be considered in conjunction with numerous clauses of the Melbourne Planning Scheme namely Clauses 15.01-2, 22.01, 22.17, 52.35 and 55.

Depending on where the development is located, either Clause 22.01; Urban Design within the Capital City Zone or Clause 22.17; Urban Design outside the Capital City Zone will apply. These policies generally address building design, scale, siting, massing and bulk to ensure that a new building sits comfortably within its context and contributes positively to the public domain.

In all Residential Zones and Mixed Use Zones, the provisions of Clause 55 also apply for developments under four storeys. These provisions address a range of matters such as neighbourhood character, site layout and building massing. They also include matters which are addressed in the Student Housing Policy such as minimum standards for private open space, storage areas and access to daylight.

The Council submission stated that it is anticipated that Council and VCAT will take a similar approach to that taken in regard to other local policies that encourage variations to Clause 55 requirements in the Planning Scheme, namely to consider both the Clause 55 requirement and the provision specified in the local policy and then apply a rate that is appropriate in the circumstances of the case.

As it is anticipated that few applications will propose a development of less than four storeys, most applications will be considered in conjunction with Clause 15.01-2, Urban design principles, Clause 52.35, Urban context report and design response for residential development of four or more storeys and either Clause 22.01 or Clause 22.17.

The policy guidelines of Clause 15.01-2 direct decision-makers to have regard to the Design Guidelines for Higher Density Residential Development (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2004). The Design Guidelines complement the proposed Student Housing Policy in that they contain guidance on the following matters:

- Urban context, which includes neighbourhood character;
• Building Envelope, which includes height, massing, street setbacks, relationship to adjoining buildings, views to and from residential units, wind protection and roof forms;
• Street pattern and street-edge quality, which includes building entries and front fences;
• Circulation and Services, including parking layout and site services;
• Building layout and design; and
• Open space and landscape design, which includes private and communal open space and public open space.

Clause 52.35 specifies the requirements for an urban context report so that the permit application can be appropriately assessed.

In relation to the proposed Amendment, policies have been developed in conjunction with relevant provisions in the Melbourne Planning Scheme as follows:

**Bicycle, Motorcycle, Scooter and Car Parking and Loading and Unloading of Vehicles and Waste Collection**

Clause 52.06 (car parking) specifies, by use, the number of car spaces required to be provided on site. For residential buildings of four or more storeys, this clause states that one car parking space should be provided on site per lodging room. However, it was submitted by Council that ‘as almost any location within the City of Melbourne has good access to public transport, shops and other facilities, students will not require cars to move freely around the City.’ Thus the guidance provided on decision making in Clause 22.24-3 includes, as policy, that it will:

Support applications that provide limited or no car parking for student.

However, the policy supports provision for car parking for management and the servicing needs of the building and for loading and unloading vehicles and waste collection.

While the policy supports provision for motorcycle and scooter parking, the main emphasis is to encourage ‘at least one bicycle parking space per student’. The Panel was informed that these policies reinforce overall Council policies of discouraging car use and encouraging bicycle use in the city area. Thus the provision of one space per student was considered reasonable as there is no requirement for student car parking.

**Layout, Students’ Rooms and Shared Spaces**

The policy contains guidance on the size, layout and design of student rooms and recommends that ‘one way to comply with this policy would be to provide a minimum floor space of 10.8m² for a room to be used as a basic single student room
‘not including a kitchen or en-suite’. Policy for shared facilities includes guidance for laundries, cooking and dining facilities and storage areas.

The policy also contains guidance in relation to communal outdoor space and internal common living areas policy and recommends 1.25m² of communal outdoor space per student in a maximum of two parcels, each parcel with a minimum width of 3m’ and a ‘common living area or recreation room with a minimum of 15m² in area for the first 12 students and a further 15m² for each additional 12 students thereafter’.

The Council submission stated that the above recommendations do not contradict any provisions in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) or the Health (Prescribed Accommodation) Regulations 2001.

The matters that should be included in a Management Plan which the Council may require before the use of the student housing commences are included in 22-24-4: Application Requirements. These include provisions for at-call contact details of a suitably responsible contact person to be clearly displayed, provision of information on community and education services, house rules, a resolution process for disputes and the employment of a suitably qualified manager or lead tenant accommodated on site.

2.4 Amendment Process

On 6 April 2010 Council’s Future Melbourne Committee resolved to support a Planning Scheme Amendment to introduce a student housing policy into the Melbourne Planning Scheme and to request authorisation from the Minister to exhibit the amendment.

By letter dated 19 May 2010, the Department of Planning and Community Development advised that while there was broad support for the introduction of a student housing policy there were concerns that the policy should not duplicate BCA Regulations and that it should be made clear that standards were discretionary and not mandatory.

In response to this advice, changes were made to the draft amendment by the responsible authority in order to remove overlap with other regulations especially building (BCA) regulations. As well, mandatory requirements were changed to performance-based criteria and guidance provided as to how the recommended standards, especially for student room sizes and the provision of indoor and outdoor space, could be achieved.

The modified policy was forwarded to the Minister and by letter dated 25 June 2010 the Minister for Planning, under delegation, authorised Council to prepare and exhibit the Amendment then numbered C154.
Pursuant to section 19(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 the Amendment was publicly exhibited between 22 July and 30 August 2010. The Panel is satisfied that the exhibition process was comprehensive and was appropriately advertised.

Four submissions were received in response to the exhibition of the Amendment. All four supported the introduction of the Student Housing Policy into the Melbourne Planning Scheme but recommended some changes.

In response to these submissions a number of changes to the exhibited Amendment were recommended by Planning Officers and were endorsed at the Council’s Future Melbourne (Planning) Committee Meeting, No 20 held on 9 November 2010. The Panel was provided with a copy of the amendment as endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee which identified the changes to the policy. The changes had the effect of providing further detail in relation to recommended policies especially in relation to Layout, Students’ rooms and Shared spaces.

Following endorsement by Council, Amendment C163 (previously C154), was forwarded to the Minister for Planning requesting the appointment of a Panel to consider submissions.
3. **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

This section of the Report considers the policy context for the Amendment and focuses on the strategic and policy issues. It assesses how the Amendment meets the objectives of the Planning Scheme.

### 3.1 Policy framework

#### (i) State Planning Policy Framework

Relevant parts of the SPPF include:

- **Clause 15** - Built Environment and Heritage in particular 15.01-1 and 15.02-1.
- **Clause 16** – Housing in particular Clause 16.01 which has as its objective that:

  *Planning should provide for housing diversity and ensure the efficient provision of supporting infrastructure. New housing should have access to services and be planned for long term sustainability, including walkability to activity centres, public transport, schools and open space. Planning for housing should include providing land for affordable housing.*

- **Clause 17**- Economic Development in particular 17.02-4
- **Clause 18**- Transport in particular 18.02-1 and 18.02-2

  The objective of Clause 18.02-1 is to promote the use of sustainable personal transport by encouraging the use of walking and cycling and ensuring that development provides opportunity for these modes.

  The objective of Clause 18.02-2 is to integrate planning for cycling with land use and development planning and encourage as alternative modes of travel.

- **Clause 19** - Infrastructure in particular 19.02-2.

#### (ii) Local Planning Policy Framework

**Municipal Strategic Statement, Melbourne Planning Scheme, Clause 21**

Section 21.03-1, Vision and Approach underlines the vision for Melbourne:

*To be a thriving and sustainable City that simultaneously pursues economic prosperity, social equity and environmental quality.*

Section 21.04-1 Housing and Community identifies the importance of providing housing which can cater for the needs of residents at various stages of their lives and reduce the opportunity for social isolation, exclusion and discrimination.
Objective 4 is ‘to support a diverse range of housing tenures, types and options to meet the needs of the community. Implementation strategies include:

Support the provision of affordable, safe and well designed and managed student housing in locations with good access to public transport, services and tertiary education facilities.

Section 21.04-5 Knowledge and Innovation recognises that Melbourne has a national and international profile as a location for excellent education facilities and with this, a large local and overseas student population which contributes to Melbourne’s economy, cultural diversity and vitality.

Objective 13 is ‘to ensure a high standard of “soft infrastructure” to support innovative activity and education.’ Implementation strategies include:

Support the provision of facilities and services for students and researchers.
Support affordable accommodation options for students.

3.2 Planning scheme provisions

Particular provisions

The Future Melbourne Community Plan (September 2008) is an endorsed policy of the Council and contains ‘the community’s vision for the management, development and direction of our city to 2020 and beyond’ (p6). It sets out the vision for Melbourne as a ‘bold, inspirational and sustainable city’ (p13). Its vision includes a city for people, a knowledge city and a connected city’ and includes among its goals, valuing Melbourne’s student community: local and international students and ensuring they ‘are better supported and integrated with the local community.’

3.3 Other planning strategies

Metropolitan Strategy

Ministerial Direction No 9 calls for a consideration of the amendment’s consistency with Melbourne 2030. The most relevant parts of Melbourne 2030 are:

• Direction 1- A More Compact City and in particular policy 1.3 which seeks to locate a substantial proportion of new housing in or close to activity centres and other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport.

• Direction 4 – A More Prosperous City, in particular Policy 4.4 which seeks to create opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education.
- Direction 6 – A Fairer City and in particular policy 6.1 which seeks to increase the supply of well-located affordable housing.
- Direction 8 – Better Transport Links and in particular policy 8.7 which aims to give more priority to cycling and walking in planning urban development and in managing our road system and neighbourhoods.

3.4 Panel Assessment

Overall, the Panel concluded that the proposed amendment would forward important strategic objectives for the state and the City of Melbourne.

It supports strategic objectives in the SPPF, for housing diversity and encourages the efficient use of infrastructure, especially transport infrastructure and the use of bicycles.

At the metropolitan strategic planning level it supports the objectives of Melbourne 2030 for a more compact city focused on use of transport infrastructure.

The proposed amendment also supports the Local Planning Policy Framework especially Objective 4 of Section 21.04-1 Housing and Community which encourages:

\[
\text{The provision of affordable, safe and well designed and managed student housing in locations with good access to public transport, services and tertiary education facilities.}
\]

The proposed amendment also supports the endorsed Future Melbourne Community Plan and its vision for ‘a city for people, a knowledge city and a connected city’ and includes amongst its goals ‘valuing Melbourne’s student community: local and international students and ensuring they are better supported and integrated with the local community.’
4. **ISSUES**

4.1 **What are the issues?**

The Panel identified the following issues in relation to meeting the planning objectives of the proposed amendment:

- **Strategic justification**
  
  Is the Amendment consistent with State and Local Planning Policy?

- **Definition of Student Housing**
  
  Will the definition ensure that all applications for purpose built student housing will be subject to the policy?

- **Room size and layout**
  
  Do the recommendations for the size and layout of student rooms meet the needs of students for adequate and comfortable space for living and studying?

- **Indoor and outdoor open space**;
  
  Are the recommendations for the provision of indoor and outdoor open space sufficient to meet the objectives for encouraging student interaction?

- **Car and bicycle parking; and**
  
  Are the proposed provisions for student car parking and bicycle parking appropriate?

- **Management Plan**
  
  Should the recommendation for a Management Plan be subject to a Section 173 Agreement?

4.2 **Policy context of the issues**

The City of Melbourne has experienced a very significant expansion in the building of student accommodation over the last ten years. This expansion has predominantly been in the form of multi storey apartment buildings that are developed as fully contained units designed for student occupation.

The inclusion of a Student Housing Policy in the Melbourne Planning Scheme will be of benefit to planning decision-making in this significant area. While the *Student Housing Development and Management Control Guidelines*, a Reference Document in the Municipal Strategic Statement since 1999, has generally been effective in guiding the development of student housing in Melbourne, the Panel was informed that the statutory weight of the guidelines has been successfully challenged at VCAT and in other planning forums.
The proposed amendment has a sound basis in building on the experience gained through administration of the Student Housing and Management Control Guidelines. It is also a welcome example of evidence-based policy as a response to the research findings of the report Transnational and Temporary: Students, community and place making in central Melbourne released in 2009 and which included a range of recommendations to improve the experiences of international students. The primary planning recommendation of the report was that a Student Housing Policy should be prepared and that purpose-designed student housing complexes need to be more affordable, encourage social and cultural diversity among the tenants and encourage internal and external interactions.

4.3 Evidence and submissions

There were no submissions opposing this Amendment and no expert evidence was presented at the Panel Hearing. The four submissions received in response to the exhibition of the Amendment supported the introduction of the policy but recommended some changes.

4.4 Submissions

Urbanest Pty Ltd

Urbis on behalf of Urbanest Pty Ltd, an international company solely involved in the development and ongoing management of student accommodation facilities. Urbanest is in the preliminary planning stages for a new large accommodation facility within the CBD which could provide approximately 500 beds. The submission was supportive of a policy document within the Melbourne Planning Scheme ‘which sets out quantifiable criteria for the assessment of proposals.’

However, there were a number of areas identified in the submission where further refinement for large developments was needed prior to incorporation in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

- Bicycle parking requirements. It was submitted that the requirement for the provision of one bicycle parking space per student was excessive for larger developments.
- Loading and unloading space requirements were not necessary.
- External open space requirements of 2.5 square metres per student in a maximum of two parcels each parcel with a minimum width of 3m is excessive especially in large CBD developments.
- Internal open space requirements were also excessive for large student developments especially the guideline for providing a minimum of 15m² in area for the first 12 students and for each additional 12 students.
It was submitted that reference within the policy of a minimum floor space of 10.8 square metres for bedroom/studies was not necessary as it was possible to provide all the facilities listed in the policy requirements in rooms of a smaller size.

It was submitted that the discretion in the draft policy for the preparation of Management Plans should be changed to a mandatory requirement for developments over 50 beds.

The policy does not provide sufficient requirements for safety, especially for large developments.

**University of Melbourne**

The submission of Chris White, Property and Campus Services, on behalf of the University of Melbourne, a major generator of housing requirements within the City of Melbourne, was generally supportive. However, the following changes were suggested in relation to the exhibited Amendment.

The Amendment proposes to introduce a new terminology of student housing into the Melbourne Planning Scheme without reference to existing definitions within the scheme which should be resolved.

The discussion of types of layouts of student accommodation includes ‘hostel type facilities where rooms are for sleeping and studying.’ It was submitted that ‘this style of development would not provide facilities appropriate for socialising or encouraging good eating habits and should be amended to read ‘Hostel type facilities where rooms are for sleeping and studying and shared areas are provided for bathrooms, cooking, eating, laundry and socialising.’

Under the heading of Shared Facilities those recommended for cooking and dining do not include bench space for food preparation.

Under the heading related to the provision of Communal Outdoor Space and Internal Common Areas insufficient communal space is provided that would be capable of accommodating all students housed within the development. The policy should be redefined to state that:

*Internal common areas are to be provided of sufficient size to accommodate at least half the students housed within the development at one time. The internal common areas should be capable of being used for multiple functions to meet a range of study, social, cultural and religious needs of students.*
Carlton Residents Association Inc (CRA)

The submission by Warren Green on behalf of the Carlton Residents Association Inc (CRA) supported the inclusion of the Student Housing Policy within the Melbourne Planning Scheme especially because of the increased ability to enforce guidelines. However, the major concern of the CRA was that there does not appear to be any appropriate mechanism to address inappropriate use of buildings ‘built to accommodate bona fide students at tertiary institutions.’ The CRA submission noted that there have been examples of student housing developments approved in the past which have been occupied by non-students and there were examples of the sale of individual units into the general housing market. This was of concern to the CRA given the lesser standard of amenity.

In speaking to this submission at the Hearing, Mr Green referred to concerns related to the lack of provision for car parking in the exhibited amendment and for more stringent requirements in relation to Management Plans. The CRA submission recommended that a Management Plan under a Section 173 Agreement should be required which limited the use of the building to bona fide students.

Andrew Martel, Professor Paolo Tombesi and Gerard Pinto

The submission by Andrew Martel and Professor Paolo Tombesi, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne and Gerard Pinto, authors of the Transnational and Temporary, Students, community and place making in central Melbourne, (2009) report, supported the advertised amendment and the formal inclusion of the student housing policy in the planning scheme but raised questions regarding the wording of parts of the proposed amendment. Their submission was detailed and included specific recommendations regarding the wording of the proposed Student Housing Policy.

Of special concern was the definition of student housing which the submitters believed would ‘effectively exclude the majority of developments built in Melbourne in the past decade specifically to house students as they have largely been developments of self-contained units.’ It was submitted that ‘apartment buildings designed for student occupation that are developed as fully self-contained units sold-off the plan continue to be the favoured economic model by developers’.

Their detailed recommendations included that the definition of student housing should be:

*Accommodation that is purpose built to accommodate bone fide students while studying at tertiary institutions including developments that consist of individual self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling.*
The policy should not apply if the accommodation comprises a number of fully self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling and where there is no pastoral care or student management organization operating in the development.

In relation to 22.24-2 Objectives, it was submitted that the term ‘student life’ should be expanded to explicitly include provision for social, study and private activities and that the provision of a healthy environment should be included in the objectives and recommended the following re-wording:

- to ensure that the internal layout of individual apartments and communal facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the reasonable requirements of an active social work and private life of the resident.
- to provide a healthy, secure and well-managed living environment

In relation to 22.24-3 Policy regarding Student Rooms it was submitted that a minimum room size not be mandatory. Rather, minimum sizes/areas for specific activities or tasks should be stated. It was also submitted that to ensure a healthy environment the guidelines specify requirements that are above stated BCA minimums, particularly concerning external light and ventilation.

The recommendations in relation to student rooms were as follows:

- Every room has a size, layout and design able to comfortably accommodate:
  - A bed accessible from a long side
  - A study area with a desk and bookshelf with a minimum clear desk depth of 400mm and minimum clear length of 1 metre
  - A robe and draw units with ample storage space for clothing and personal items with a total volume of not less than 2 cubic metres per occupant
  - Computer and TV infrastructure
  - A table or bench to provide a space to eat separate from that used for study purposes.

  It was submitted that rooms under 11m² in internal area (excluding kitchen area or en-suite) in particular would need to clearly demonstrate that they complied with above minimum provisions.

- Every room has direct access to daylight and fresh air and an external window, with a recommendation that the ratio of window area to room floor area is at least 15%.

- That one source of light to study bedrooms to be from external walls open to the sky.

- Each room is not unreasonably overlooked by another room, either in the same building or an adjoining property and that internal glazing to rooms cannot be used as a light source below 1800mm from the room floor.
- Rooms should be designed to limit excessive noise or visual disruption from pedestrian or vehicular traffic from within or outside the complex.
- Where private kitchen facilities are provided there should be adequate room for a microwave, stove top cooker, fridge, clear bench space and sink with hot and cold running water, as well as storage space for food, crockery, utensils, cleaning equipment with a total volume of not less than 2 cubic metres and a designated location for garbage and re-cycling. Beds must not be located within 2 metres of stove top cookers or sinks.
- Adequate long term storage in a secure location is provided.

In regard to 22.24-3 Policy regarding Shared Facilities that the environmental performances of corridors and stairways should be considered along with their potential social and practical functions and recommended that the policy should state that:

- *Corridors and stairways are healthy attractive spaces, with natural lighting and ventilation conducive to incidental social interaction.*

### 4.5 Response to submissions

In responding to these submissions, the Panel was informed by the City of Melbourne that some of the recommendations, especially the detailed recommendations made by the authors of the *Transformation and Transition* report, had been included in the revised Amendment subsequently adopted by the Council and referred to the Panel. As already noted, a copy of the Amendment identifying the subsequent changes made in response to submissions was tabled at the Panel Hearing.

The Panel was also informed that many issues raised in submissions could not be dealt with by the Planning Scheme and should be addressed in conjunction with other powers of the Melbourne City Council and by the educational institutions. This was especially true in relation to recommendations regarding social integration. For example, in insuring a diverse mixture of students, not just international students, among residents in student housing developments must depend on broader university and Council policies.

In response to submissions by the CRA and *Transnational and Transition* authors that the policy does not address the integration of buildings into their surrounds, the City of Melbourne submitted that the this policy focuses specifically on the quality of student housing and that the integration of buildings and their surrounds to create a more secure and sociable public order can be achieved by other parts of the Planning Scheme.
4.6 Discussion

The proposed Student Housing Policy draws on the Council’s experience of administering the Student Housing Management and Development Guidelines 1999 over a decade that has seen extensive development of student housing in the city area. Along with this experience the proposed amendment draws on other Student Housing Policies in the metropolitan area, especially those incorporated into the Planning Schemes of the City of Glen Eira and the City of Stonnington. The City of Glen Eira, which includes the Caulfield campus of Monash University, has a high proportion of international students and is of most relevance to the proposed Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment. However, neither municipality has the concentration of large multi unit developments of purpose built student housing as does Melbourne.

The proposed amendment is generally consistent with other metropolitan student housing policies in encouraging a minimum room size of 10.8m² and in recommendations for the provision of indoor and outdoor open space. However, Amendment C163 differs in relation to the provision of student car parking and in the recommendation for one bicycle space to be provided for each student resident. In the Panel’s view this difference is justified given the location of student housing in the City of Melbourne on major tram and train transport routes and the policy of the City of Melbourne to discourage car use especially in the central city area.

The proposed amendment has benefited from the research and recommendations of the Transnational and Transition report, especially the need for a Student Housing Policy. The report also emphasised the importance of communal areas and recommended that unit sizes could remain small ‘only if they were accompanied by communal areas that become part of standard living space’ and that well designed communal areas, especially cooking and eating areas should be provided.’

Overall, in relation to the issues identified as important in meeting the planning objectives of the proposed amendment, the Panel finds as follows:

**Strategic Justification**

As previously discussed in Section 3, the proposed amendment supports major strategic planning objectives at all levels of government.

**Definition of student housing**

There is a need to ensure that student housing is purpose built to ensure the needs of future occupants are met, in particular the need to have areas to socialise and interact. The Panel notes that authors of the Transitional and Temporary report preferred a definition which allowed buildings containing individual self-contained units, under the definition of a dwelling, to be built as Student Housing.
The Panel disagrees, and finds that the proposed definition of student housing provides clarity and direction in the assessment of future applications for student housing in the City of Melbourne. It provides the Council both with flexibility and guidelines that can be used in pre-application discussions with developers.

The definition in the proposed Clause 22.24 will allow Council to ensure that student housing proposals are purpose built and not typical dwellings applied for under the guise of student housing.

**Size and layout of student rooms**

The Panel supports the suggested guideline of a minimum room size of 10.8m² for study bedrooms. The policy will ensure that developments meet the needs of students for adequate and comfortable space for living and studying.

**Indoor and outdoor communal areas**

The Panel finds that the policy is sufficient to meet the important objectives for encouraging student interaction, especially if well placed in developments. No convincing argument was advanced that justified a reduction in communal areas in large developments.

**Car and bicycle parking**

The policy to ‘support applications that provide limited or no car parking for students’ is endorsed by the Panel especially in the context other relevant policies of the City of Melbourne to reduce car use in the city area. The Panel notes that Council have the discretion to vary this requirement if appropriate for specific applications.

The Panel supports the policy of encouraging the provision of at least one bicycle space per student, including in large developments. This is particularly relevant given Council’s preference for reduced car parking on site.

**Management Plan**

As previously discussed, the proposed definition of will provide more certainty in considering applications for student housing. The Panel finds that this is likely to assist Council in determining applications for student housing and decide whether a Management Plan is required and/or appropriate. While Section 173 Agreements have been used by other municipalities, it is the Panel’s view that a Section 173 Agreement is not necessary to limit the use or to implement the Management Plan. A permit condition can be used and is more than appropriate.
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amendment C163 introduces Clause 22.24 into the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme and deletes the existing Student Housing- Development and Management Controls, 1999 as a Reference document from the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

The Amendment is intended to ensure that purpose built student housing is designed to provide a good level of amenity and comfort for students and promote student welfare. It will provide direction for future applications for student housing, set performance based design standards for student rooms, facilities and open space and support students’ sense of belonging and social interaction.

Having considered these issues the Panel concludes that the proposed amendment forwards state and local strategic planning objectives. A Student Housing that has greater statutory weight than the current Student Housing Development and Management Control Guidelines is especially important due to the size and intensity of purpose built student housing developments in the City of Melbourne area. The amendment will provide an important performance based Student Housing Policy to guide and enforce student housing provision in the future.

The Panel therefore recommends that Amendment C163 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme be adopted as exhibited subject to the revised Clause 22.24 as attached in Appendix 1.
APPENDIX 1  REVISED VERSION OF CLAUSE 22.24 STUDENT HOUSING POLICY
22.24 STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

This policy applies where a planning permit is required for the use or development of student housing, typically under the definition of residential building or residential college.

For the purpose of this policy Student housing is defined as the use or development of land for:

- Accommodation that is purpose built to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions; or
- Accommodation that is modified or converted (for more than ten habitable rooms) to accommodate bona fide students while studying at tertiary institutions. This would include accommodation that was used in the past as a dwelling.

This policy does not apply:

- To informal student housing where students occupy dwellings as defined within the planning scheme. Dwellings can be used for shared housing without the need for a planning permit.
- If the accommodation comprises a number of fully self-contained units that meet the definition of a dwelling.

22.24-1 Policy basis

The City of Melbourne is home to many tertiary educational institutions. The University of Melbourne and RMIT University are foremost amongst these.

These institutions cater for a large number of students who move to Melbourne to study from overseas, interstate and from regional Victoria. Some of these students seek specialist accommodation services that will support their period of study in Melbourne. The demand for this type of accommodation is projected to be ongoing.

Purpose built student housing has specific requirements compared to other types of dwellings which need to be addressed at the planning permit application stage.

This policy supports purpose built student housing which provides for pastoral care, reduces social isolation and which facilitates social interaction and communication among the students.

The location and design of purpose built student accommodation needs to be affordable, meet the practical requirements of students, and have convenient walking access to public transport and shops, and convenient access to educational and community facilities. The standards included in this policy are the minimum requirements for student life.

Collaboration between developers and universities is encouraged to achieve the objectives of this policy.

The Municipal Strategic Statement supports:

- “the provision of affordable, safe and well designed and managed student housing in locations with good access to public transport, services and tertiary education facilities”; and
- “affordable accommodation options for students.”

This policy is supported by the findings of Transnational and temporary: Students, community and place-making in central Melbourne 2009, a report prepared by the University of Melbourne.

22.24-2 Objectives

- To ensure that the internal layout of rooms and communal facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the reasonable requirements of an active social, work, and private life of the student while promoting social interaction.
To provide a safe, healthy, secure and well managed living environment.

### Policy

#### Bicycle, Motorcycle, Scooter and Car Parking, and Loading and Unloading

It is policy to:

- Encourage at least one bicycle parking space per student.
- Design and locate bicycle parking in accordance with the decision guidelines at Clause 52.34-4;
- Provide adequate space on the land for motorcycle and scooter parking;
- Design safe and efficient motorcycle and scooter parking;
- Provide car parking for the management and servicing needs of the building;
- Support applications that provide limited or no car parking for students;
- Design car spaces and accessways in accordance with Clause 52.06-3; and
- Provide adequate space on the land for loading and unloading vehicles and waste collection.

#### Layout, Students’ rooms and Shared Spaces

Student rooms may comprise various levels of shared facilities including:

- Student rooms with all facilities except laundry facilities;
- Student rooms with en-suite bathrooms and shared laundry and cook facilities; or
- Hostel type facility where rooms are for sleeping and studying and shared laundry, cooking and bathroom facilities are provided.

#### Students’ Rooms

It is policy that:

- Every room has a size, layout and design able to comfortably accommodate:
  - A bed accessible from a long side;
  - A study area with a desk and bookshelf;
  - A robe /drawer unit with ample storage space for clothing and personal items;
  - Computer and TV;
  - A table or bench to provide a space to eat separate from that used for study purposes;

One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a minimum floor space of 10.8m² for a room to be used as a basic single student bedroom. This does not include a kitchen or an en-suite.

- Every room has direct access to daylight and fresh air and an external window.
- That at least one source of light to study bedrooms be from external walls open to the sky.
- Each room is not unreasonably overlooked by another room, either in the same building or an adjoining property.
- Rooms should be designed and located to limit excessive noise and disruption from pedestrian or vehicle traffic from within or outside the complex.

- Where private kitchen facilities are provided there should be adequate room for a microwave, stove top cooker, fridge, clear bench space and sink with hot and cold running water, as well as storage space for food, crockery, utensils, cleaning equipment and a designated location for garbage and re-cycling.

- Adequate long term storage in a secure location is provided.

**Shared Facilities**

It is policy that:

- Shared laundries include the following:
  - A reasonably attractive design conducive to incidental socialising; and
  - Appropriate provision of shared facilities including washing machines, clothes dryers, laundry tubs with hot and cold water and clotheslines.

- Shared cooking and dining facilities include the following:
  - A designated location for garbage and re-cycling bins; and
  - Appropriate provision of shared cooking and dining facilities including stove top cookers, sinks with running hot and cold water, refrigerators, freezers, bench space for food preparation and storage space for dry goods.

- The provision of storage areas for property manager’s equipment and building maintenance is encouraged.

- The provision of appropriate waste management facilities is encouraged.

- Shared facilities are located in a safe and accessible location for all students.

- Corridors and stairways are healthy attractive spaces, with natural lighting and ventilation and are conducive to incidental social interaction.

**Communal outdoor space and internal common areas**

It is policy to:

- Ensure each student has access to communal outdoor space that is well designed, safe and accessible and can be maintained appropriately; One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a ratio of 2.5m² of communal outdoor space per student, in a maximum of two parcels, each parcel with a minimum width of 3m;

- Ensure adequate solar access into any communal outdoor space;

- Ensure each student has access to internal common areas that are capable of being used for multiple functions to meet a range of study, social, cultural and religious needs of students; One way to comply with this policy would be to provide a common living area or recreation room with a minimum of 15m² in area for the first 12 students, and a further 15m² for each additional 12 students thereafter;

- Ensure internal common areas are well located adjacent to high movement areas and doors to internal common areas contain glass to enable natural surveillance from circulation areas;

- Encourage a direct relationship between communal outdoor spaces and common internal spaces to enhance function and safety;
Ensure that lighting of internal and external access areas is adequate;
Ensure that all common areas promote student interaction and a sense of community;
Require that all common areas remain the responsibility of the building management and not be sold off independently.

The floor area of bedrooms, bathrooms, laundries, reception area, storage, kitchens, car parking, loading docks, driveways, clothes drying areas, corridors and the like are not counted when determining the area of internal communal living area. Dining areas may be included as communal living area.

Conversion of Existing Buildings

It is policy to:

Consider the capacity of the building to meet the requirements of this policy, particularly the provision of communal open space when assessing applications for the conversion of an existing building to student housing.

Application Requirements

The responsible authority may require a Management Plan to be submitted and approved before the use of the student housing commences.

The Management Plan should include, but is not limited to:

- Permanent display of the Management Plan in a common area.
- Provision for at-call contact details of a suitably responsible contact person for response 24 hours a day and seven days a week, to be displayed so they are clearly visible to any person entering the site.
- Provision of information on community and education services, including health, counselling and cultural services.
- Provision of information on local public transport and to encourage walking (e.g. information on facilities within walking distance, local public transport timetables, outlets for purchase of Myki tickets, car share services etc).
- House rules regarding occupancy and behaviour of students and visitors.
- Resolution process for disputes between students and complaints from persons not residing on the site.
- Areas where washed clothes may be dried.
- Details of rubbish bin storage and waste collection.
- Employment of a suitably qualified manager or lead tenant who is accommodated on-site.
- Details of which unit is to be set aside for the resident manager and how this unit is to be managed.
- The nature of the management of the complex and the contact details of the manager/lead tenant.
- Critical Incident Management and Emergency & Evacuation Procedures.
- Management procedures over holiday periods.
- Information for students on how to use the building effectively, efficiently and responsibly.
Council resolves to commence the Amendment process

Minister gives authorisation to prepare the amendment (in some cases the Minister may give exemption from the statutory notice requirements)

Public notice of the amendment is given. Submissions invited.

No submissions received / Submissions received

Submissions reported to Council

Council Abandon Amendment / Council proceed with the Amendment (no changes) / Council proceed with a revised Amendment

Independent Panel Hearing conducted to review amendment and submissions (2 March 2011)

Panel Report received

Council Abandon Amendment / Council Adopt Amendment with no changes / Council Adopt amendment with changes

Minister advised of Council’s decision

Minister approves or rejects the Amendment (conditions may be imposed on an approved Amendment)