

6 April 2010

## MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C154 - STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

**Portfolio** Planning

**Division** City Planning and Infrastructure

**Presenter** David Mayes, Manager Strategic Planning

### Purpose

1. To seek approval from the Future Melbourne Committee to exhibit Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C154 Student Housing Policy.

### Recommendation from management

2. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
  - 2.1. support a planning scheme amendment to introduce Clause 22.24 Student Housing Policy, into the Melbourne Planning Scheme; and
  - 2.2. seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C154 for public exhibition and proceed with the exhibition of the Amendment.

### Background

3. In 1999 a student housing local planning policy including design guidelines was drafted. The draft policy did not proceed and instead the design guidelines were included as a reference document called *Student Housing Development and Management Controls* in the Municipal Strategic Statement of the new format Melbourne Planning Scheme. These guidelines were aimed at addressing the request from developers of student housing for significantly lower amounts of on-site car parking than usually required for residential developments. This was a major concern of Council at the time. The guidelines are at Attachment 1.
4. The *Student Housing Development and Management Controls* guidelines are used to assess applications for student housing and their status will be elevated if they become a local planning policy in the Melbourne Planning Scheme.
5. Over the last decade Melbourne has become one of the world's most successful student cities. The City of Melbourne is an important focus of this identity and students have become significant contributors to the social, cultural and economic vitality of the city. The quality of life of students who study and live here is therefore an important issue for Council.
6. At its March 2007 meeting, following the consideration of a planning permit application for a student housing development, Council's Planning Committee requested a policy paper on student housing in the City of Melbourne.

7. In 2006 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 commenced a three year research project into the issues and needs of international students studying and living in the City of Melbourne, called *Transnational and temporary: Students, community and place-making in central Melbourne (T&T)*. The project looked at the experience of students at RMIT and the University of Melbourne who live in and around the central city.
8. The final T&T report published in early 2009 found that existing student housing provided insufficient opportunities for socialising and contributed to the social segregation of international students. The report recommended 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. These and other wide ranging recommendations from the T&T report will require coordinated action from the universities, the City of Melbourne, other local councils and state and federal governments.

### Key issues

9. The Amendment is required in order to formalise the relevant provisions in Council's Student Housing Development and Management Control guidelines, and to address the issues raised in *Transnational and Temporary* to improve the quality of student life.
10. The Policy clarifies the City of Melbourne's strategic objectives as they relate to student housing and provides guidelines to ensure that the objectives are met.
11. T&T recommended the integration of the buildings with their surrounds to create a more secure and sociable public realm. Council's existing planning scheme policies ensure that all types of buildings contribute to their urban environment in this way and these policies will be subject to further review and improvement as the planning scheme review progresses. This Policy therefore focuses specifically on the quality of the student housing.
12. The proposed Policy builds on Council's 1999 *Student Housing Development and Management Control* guidelines but since then, Council has developed a more sophisticated understanding of student issues and compared to its position before 1999, now has planning and transport policies that generally promote and allow lower provision of on-site car parking. This Policy therefore has a stronger emphasis on the quality of life recommendations made in the T&T report.
13. The Amendment is expected to have a positive effect on the environment. By promoting minimal car parking requirements and an increased amount of bike parking, car usage may be reduced. The Policy also includes performance objectives for student housing to include appropriate waste management facilities and energy efficient appliances.
14. The Amendment is expected to have positive economic and social effects. The amendment will encourage purpose built student housing that is well designed, is affordable, and meets the practical requirements of students.
15. Council receives two types of planning permit applications for housing for students:
  - 15.1. self-contained apartments which are in fact ordinary "dwellings" under the Melbourne Planning Scheme but are often presented and assessed as student accommodation; and
  - 15.2. managed accommodation comprising rooms served by shared kitchens and /or bathrooms. These are assessed as "residential buildings" under the Planning Scheme.

16. The proposed Student Housing Policy distinguishes between housing proposals that are marketed to students but which are nevertheless just ordinary “dwellings” under the Melbourne Planning Scheme, and housing which is specially designed for students. Those proposals which are “dwellings” under the Planning Scheme will be assessed as dwellings with all the associated requirements, while purpose built student housing will be assessed under the provisions of this Policy.
17. The Policy supports students’ sense of belonging and social interaction through:
  - 17.1. the requirement for, and design of, shared common facilities and includes minimum standards for the amount of common indoor and outdoor space per student;
  - 17.2. the provision for a management plan that will support the pastoral care of students; and
  - 17.3. internal design standards that will meets students’ needs for privacy, amenity, space and functionality, and parking for bicycles, motor cycles and cars.
18. The Policy has design standards for three different types of student accommodation with varying degrees of shared facilities:
  - 18.1. student rooms with all facilities except laundry facilities;
  - 18.2. student rooms with en-suite bathrooms; or
  - 18.3. hostel type facilities where rooms are for sleeping and studying.
19. The policy will provide greater certainty for Council and developers and has been designed to increase the amenity of student accommodation without onerous provisions that could reduce the development viability. The draft Policy and exhibition documentation is at Attachment 2.
20. The provisions for bedroom size, layout and design need to be understood in the context of there being shared lounge/ sitting room, and possibly other facilities. The size of a student’s bedroom in their parent’s home or other shared accommodation would likely be similar.

#### **Time frame**

21. If Committee resolves to proceed with this Amendment, authorisation will be sought from the Minister for Planning to prepare Amendment C154 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme for exhibition in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (“the Act”).

#### **Relation to Council policy**

22. Planning permit applications are currently assessed against Council’s *Student Housing Development and Management Control* guidelines (Attachment 1).
23. The relevant aspects of these guidelines have been incorporated into the proposed Student Housing Policy. It is intended that if the proposed Student Housing Policy is approved by the Minister and incorporated into the Melbourne Planning Scheme, then the guidelines will be removed as a reference document.

#### **Consultation**

24. The T&T investigation was based on extensive stakeholder consultation. The Policy has been consulted on internally and with the Department of Planning and Community Development.

25. The proposed Student Housing Policy will be exhibited as a planning scheme amendment for one month, giving stakeholder and interested parties the opportunity to make a formal submission and participate in the amendment process. Stakeholders will be notified directly, and the Amendment will be advertised in The Age, local newspapers and on Council's website.

**Finance**

26. Allowance for the costs associated with the preparation of a student housing local planning policy and the subsequent planning scheme amendment, has been made in the 2009/10 Council budget.

**Conflict of interest**

27. 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.

**Legal**

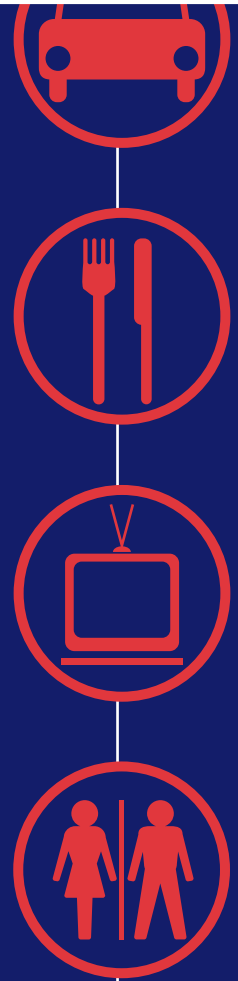
28. Division 1 of Part 3 of the Act covers planning scheme amendments including their exhibition. Section 9 of the Act provides that the Minister may authorise the preparation of an amendment to a planning scheme.
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**Attachments:**

1. Student Housing Development and Management Controls
2. Student Housing Policy

# Student Housing

Development &  
Management Controls

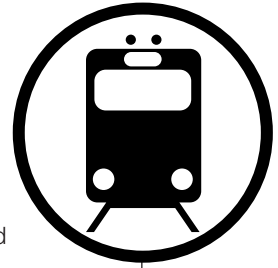


## Introduction

This guide has been produced by the City of Melbourne to provide developers and owner operators with the requirements for student accommodation.

The guidelines provide developers with the appropriate standards expected of student accommodation, whether they plan to convert small buildings or high-rise offices, convert and extend an existing dwelling or build a new building.

While they outline the planning and performance of effective and useable student housing, the guidelines are by no means prescriptive or exhaustive in the possible approaches that developers may take. They should be read in conjunction with the Building Code of Australia and any other requirements by authorities that control building and planning and the safety and amenity of development sites.



## Student accommodation in the City of Melbourne

Over the years, Melbourne's reputation as a seat of learning has grown, both within Australia and abroad.

In the City of Melbourne itself, the number of students enrolled at major tertiary institutions has been steadily increasing. From a base of about 10,000 in 1996, the population of students living within the City of Melbourne is expected to grow to as many as 15,000 by the year 2001.

In past years the private rental market, together with colleges and halls of residence, provided a wide range of affordable housing for students. But the lowest vacancy rate in over a decade in the private rental market has seen students either living in sub-standard accommodation or moving further away from the city. The demand for student housing within the City is great and growing.

The development of student housing provides benefits for both Victoria and the City of Melbourne, as it supports the educational sector and attracts "export" income from international students. The city also benefits from population and expenditure increases as more students move into the area.

The facts speak for themselves: during 1996, a quarter of students who lived within the city were international students who spent an estimated \$47.4 million on accommodation and living expenses. The remaining were metropolitan, country or interstate students, who spent an estimated \$94.6 million on accommodation and living.

While student populations are currently concentrated in the CBD, Carlton and Parkville, opportunities exist in the inner north-west of the municipality to develop smaller, more affordable student housing projects. Such developments would create significant economic benefits for the local community while meeting the growing demand for student housing within the city.

# Design Considerations

## Introduction

There are many types of housing suitable for student accommodation and residences. They range from the single room rented from a landlord, to share houses, institutional residential colleges, hostels and rooming houses, with or without catering and other services, and freehold ownership of houses or apartments.

While in all of these categories, various building codes and regulations control building standards, they do not specifically provide for student housing, nor is the term defined in the planning context.

Student housing implies a generic form of housing that offers specific amenities. If a developer wishes to describe a project as student housing, the development must conform to appropriate standards designed with the student occupant in mind.

The guidelines outlined in this publication provide the basic information applicable to all scales of student housing projects. Developers are free to adapt and modify the amenities they provide in their projects, but must justify any departure and explain the benefits of the changes. Compliance with the minimum standards will not always ensure satisfactory performance nor guarantee planning approval.

Projects of more than 100 beds are regarded as “major student housing complexes” and will require special attention in both the design and management of the project. Developments in this category may be granted concessions subject to the amenities and community benefits they provide.

## Design Principles

The ultimate goal of a successful student housing development is to deliver a good “living experience” for its occupants and should, therefore, include the following principles.

### *Privacy*

Each student should enjoy a private personal space to accommodate sleeping and study activities as well as social interaction with other students or visitors. Naturally, privacy provisions should also extend to the bathing and toileting functions.

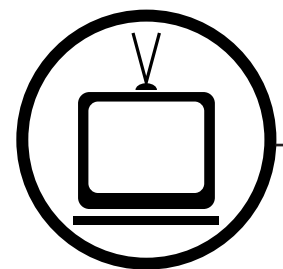
### *Amenity*

Each student room should be designed so that it is not excessively over-looked by another room in the same facility or by adjoining properties. It should not be subject to excessive noise, nor should there be disruptions from pedestrian or vehicle traffic from within or outside the complex.

There should be an adequate ratio of bathing and toilet facilities to keep waiting time to a minimum.

### *Functionality*

The student room should be large enough to allow space for a desk and computer, a bed, book shelves, wardrobe space, other storage space and a pin-up board. Each room should have adequate natural light and ventilation, a window in an external wall, adequate artificial light, secure locks and should be easily maintained and cleaned.



### *Communality*

The ability to interact with other students outside their study bedrooms is essential to foster a sense of community among the residents of a student housing complex. Facilities that can provide that community extension include:

- a shared kitchen
- a dining/meals area
- a sitting room/television room
- a tea and coffee station or vending machine area
- a laundry
- an exercise room/gymnasium
- a recreation/games room

The extent of facilities provided will vary from project to project and with the type of accommodation proposed by the developer. But as the number of students being housed increases, so should the number and type of facilities provided. The careful planning and provision of these facilities can improve the marketability of such residences, ensuring greater demand and reliable rental income to the developer or owner.

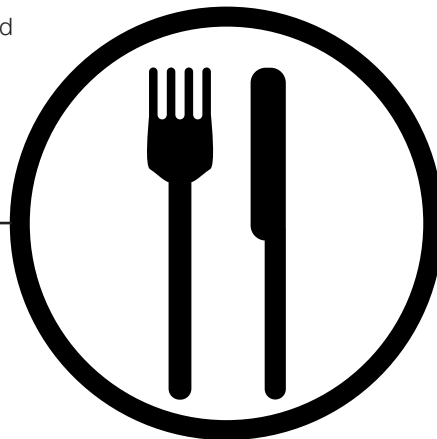
### *Bicycle Parking*

An area specifically set aside for bicycle parking will avoid such problems as bicycles parked in hallways or on balconies, which can prove unsightly and detract from the appearance of the facility.

Bicycle parking facilities in developments used for student housing should be provided at the rate of one bicycle for every three beds.

In providing bicycle parking facilities, the following should be considered:

- A highly visible location provides a measure of security.
- Bicycle storage should be located to avoid access via steps and should be accessible to pedestrian entrances to encourage their use.
- For maximum safety these facilities should be located away from areas of high pedestrian use and vehicle traffic.





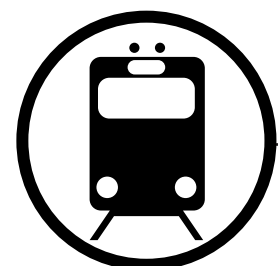
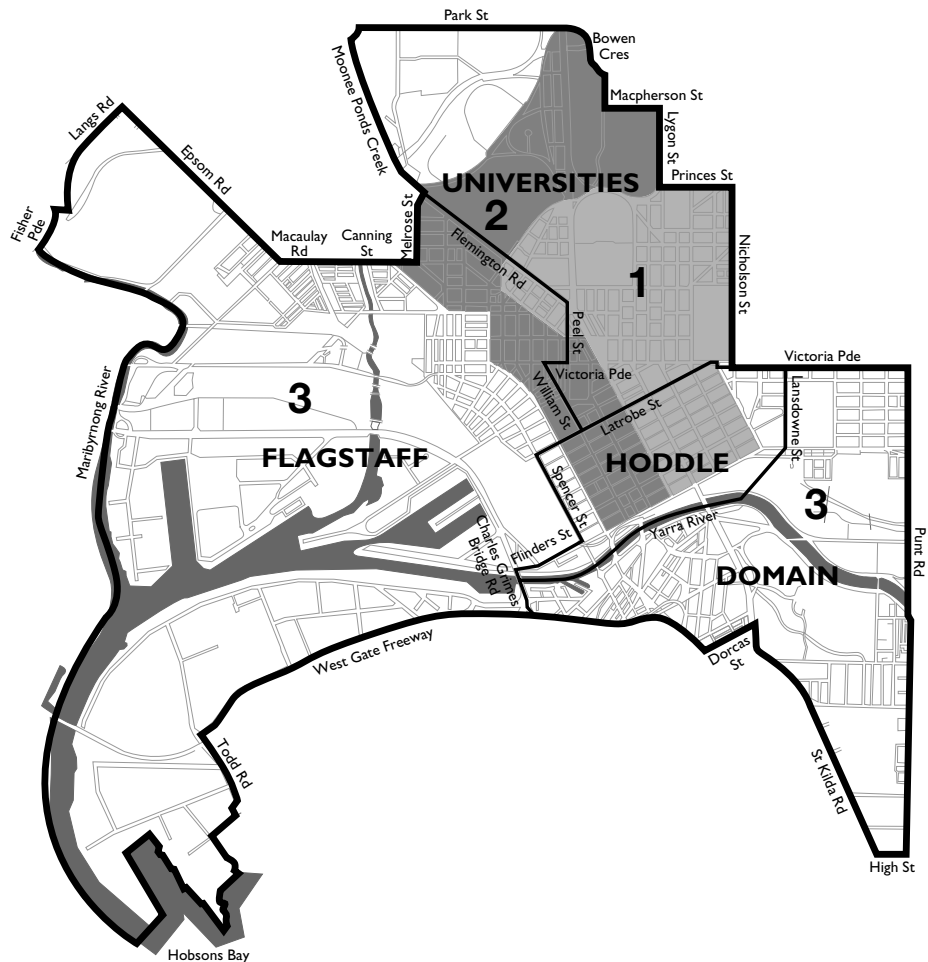
*Car Parking*

The number of car parking facilities to be provided for student housing depends on the type of accommodation and on the proximity of the accommodation to public transport and to the tertiary institution itself.

The recommended parking spaces are summarised in the following table:

<b>Zone Location</b>	<b>Accommodation Hostel</b>	<b>Apartments</b>
<i>Zone 1</i> Within 500m of a tertiary institution	0.1 car spaces per bed	0.25 car spaces per bed
<i>Zone 2</i> Further than 500m with direct public transport access	0.1 car spaces per bed	0.25 car spaces per bed
<i>Zone 3</i> Further than 500m with poor public transport access	0.2 car spaces per bed	0.5 car spaces per bed

The following map (Map 1) indicates the above zones in relation to the tertiary institutions in the City of Melbourne.



## Recycling and refurbishing buildings

The past decade has seen old warehouses, industrial workshops and offices in the city gain a new lease of life as converted apartments or commercial and retail space.

For the purpose of these guidelines, any comments about the recycling and refurbishing of buildings can only be general in nature. The re-generation of buildings involves other issues including planning constraints, the opinions of neighbours, traffic and access, adjacent structures and the impact of topography.

The following principles should, however, be taken into consideration.

### *Plan Dimensions*

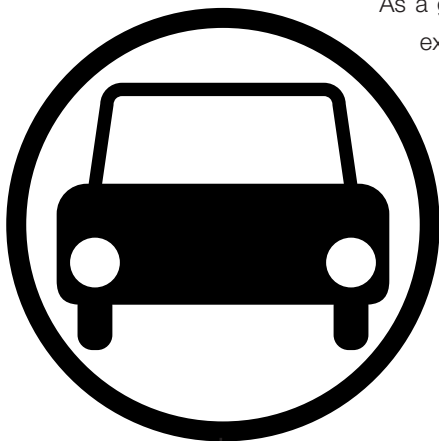
The number of rooms able to fit into any existing building can be assessed by using the basic student accommodation room plan on page 8. In small floor areas, the room size can be varied slightly to provide an adequate number of rooms, but the functionality of these rooms should not be compromised. Generally, access areas, clear circulation routes and shared facilities can provide planning flexibility.

Smaller buildings will have their limitations, so the initial decision on whether a building is suitable for use as student accommodation is critical.

### *Natural Light*

Although larger buildings may seem ideal for student housing, they also present their own problems. They may have the space for large numbers of study bedrooms, but many of the rooms will be internalised and have no natural light or external aspect. In these cases, it is important for floors to be arranged so that light wells and courtyards can be included in the design.

Installing light wells in a multi-level existing building may be expensive, but this should not be an argument for compromising the amenity of study bedrooms.



As a general principal, all sources of light to study bedrooms must be from external walls open to the sky and not through highlight windows to corridors or through glazed internal light wells or atria. While this requirement is in conflict with Clause F4.3 of the Building Code of Australia, it is a fundamental minimum standard for accommodation.

### *Plan Configuration*

Many buildings ripe for refurbishment or recycling are generally industrial or commercial buildings that are no longer being used for their original purpose. Often, they are located in built-up areas and are attached on one or more sides.

Such buildings are limited by the difficulty of placing windows in external walls. As light and ventilation are vital in any living environment, an initial assessment of the building should be made to determine whether windows and some external aspect will be available to all active spaces and rooms used by the students. This assessment should be conducted before the building is purchased or any applications lodged.

In small buildings that are totally surrounded, gaining an external aspect may only be possible if a large portion of the floor area is removed. If the building is small and tall, the problem becomes even more complex.

The buildings best suited for conversion into residential use are those that are free standing or located on corners. These offer the greatest scope for providing amenity. When planning for large numbers of rooms, the basic study bedroom module should remain a primary consideration.

### *Building Height*

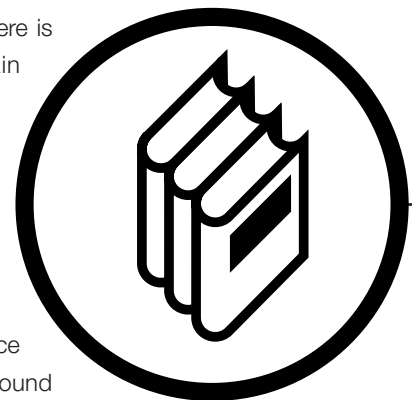
Multiple levels in a building can be an advantage because of their potentially greater yield. But they can also create problems, with efficient access and the added expense of elevators among the most significant.

In larger buildings, more ducts are needed achieve efficient and logical placement of amenities resulting in increased servicing costs. Possible fire rating difficulties and the safety of occupants and visitors are also important concerns. All these issues should be assessed before purchasing a building or lodging applications, as they may well determine the eventual configuration of the plan and its consequences on yield and amenity.

### *Carparking*

Providing carparking with existing buildings can often be difficult if there is no available open space on the site. Carparking requires certain minimum dimensions to accommodate vehicles and allow for circulation. Narrow buildings, existing structures, walls and columns can impose major restrictions on the use of floor space.

Basement carparking can also pose problems because it requires ramp access, which in turn reduces the amount of useable floor space. Carparking at upper levels is generally impractical because of the need for ramp access and because valuable accommodation space is being sacrificed. In some cases, existing buildings on sloping ground may offer potential for vehicle access.

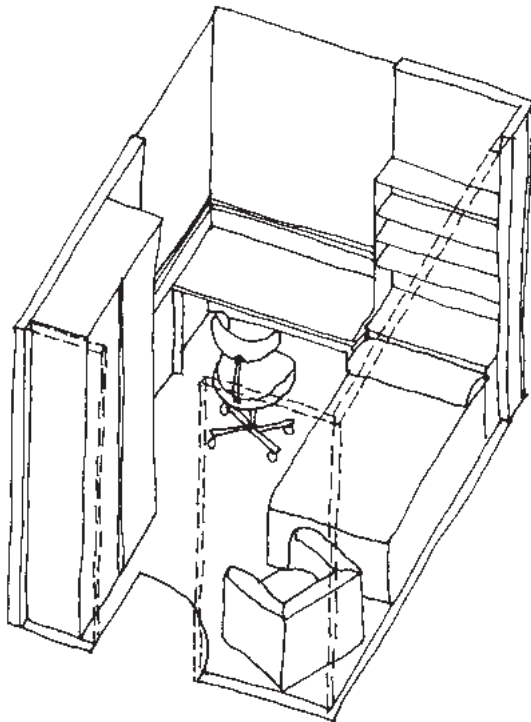
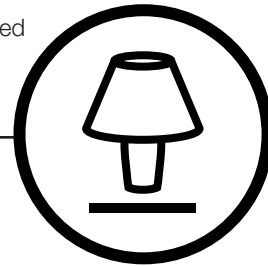


### *Student Study Bedrooms*

- Convenient, efficient, well-lit and ventilated are the key elements of a basic study bedroom.
- Space should be available for visitors or other students to gather for group study.
- With technology being an integral part of modern studies, a larger bench space than the conventional domestic student desk is required for equipment such as a desktop computers, printers, scanners and modems.
- Graphic design, architecture and arts students require even larger surfaces for drawing boards, layout work and visual materials.
- Sound insulation should be installed to prevent noise between individual study bedrooms and between bedrooms and other facilities or common rooms.

Construction should be detailed to achieve an STC rating on walls, floors and ceilings of no less than 45 decibels.

- When selecting materials, developers should consider internal room acoustics, maintenance and wearability. Joinery should be built in with robust hinges and fixings, although portable fittings do allow students to reconfigure and personalise their own space.
- Providing handbasins in rooms requires marginally extra floor space, but has the advantage of saving space and decreasing demand and wear and tear in shared bathroom facilities. The inclusion of handbasins in study bedrooms also means they can be used outside the academic year for conference, seminar or workshop accommodation.



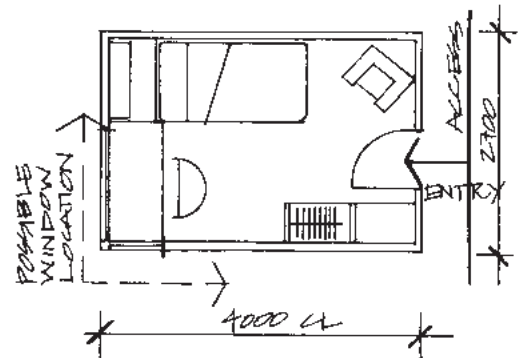
**Room 1**

*Basic Single Student Accommodation Unit (Without handbasin)*

Floor area 10.8m<sup>2</sup>

A unit of this size must accommodate the following:

- Desk suitable for computer and work space
- Single bed (a maximum 3/4 bed at 1100 mm wide)
- Book shelves
- Cupboard/wardrobe
- Generally, access to the room is in the narrow wall.
- Window is located in the narrow wall or possibly in the corner.

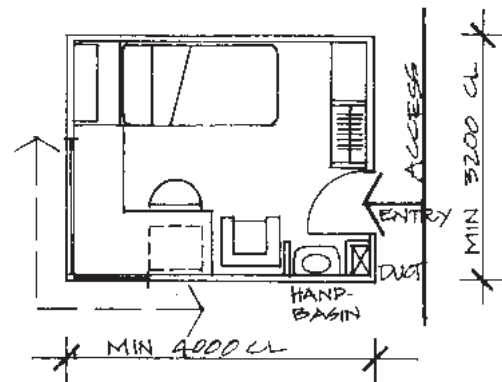
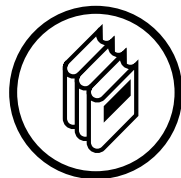


**Room 2**

*Basic Single Student Accommodation Unit (With handbasin)*

Floor area 12.8m<sup>2</sup>

- Desk suitable for computer and work space
- Single bed (a maximum 3/4 bed at 1100 mm wide)
- Book shelves
- Cupboard/wardrobe
- Generally, access to the room is in the narrow wall.
- Window is in the narrow wall or possibly in the corner.
- Handbasin with duct and mirror



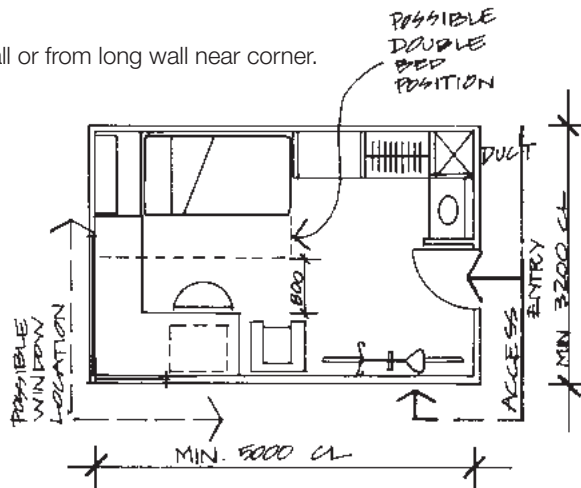
**Room 3**

*Basic Single Student Accommodation Unit*

*(With handbasin and able to accommodate double bed)*

Floor area 16m<sup>2</sup>

- Floor space is larger for greater flexibility and is able to accommodate a double bed.
- If a double bed is installed, desk dimensions need to be changed and loss of clear space allowed for.
- Book shelves
- Cupboard/wardrobe
- Handbasin with duct
- Access to room is possible from narrow end wall or from long wall near corner.



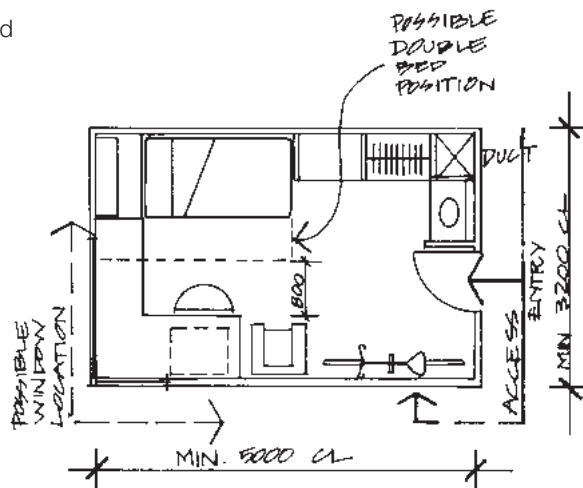
**Room 4**

*Basic Single Student Accommodation Units*

*(With handbasin and able to accommodate double bed)*

Floor area 16m<sup>2</sup>

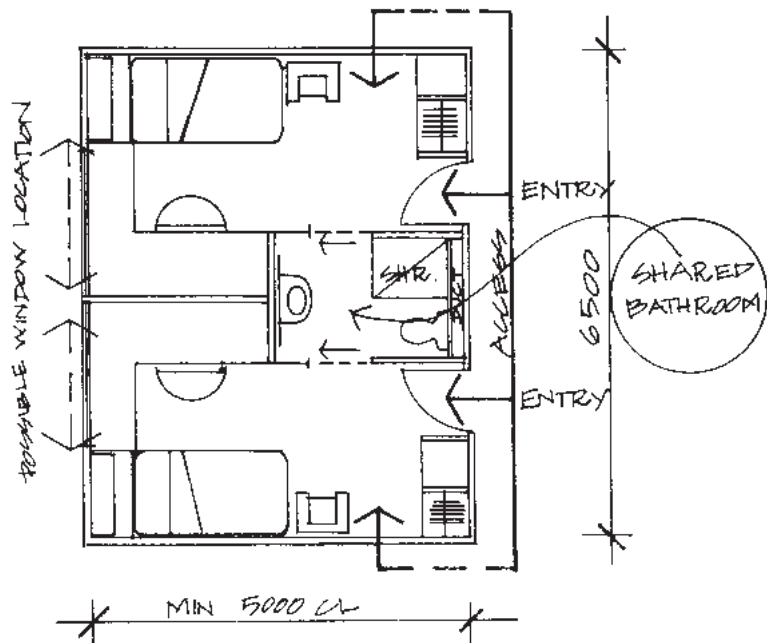
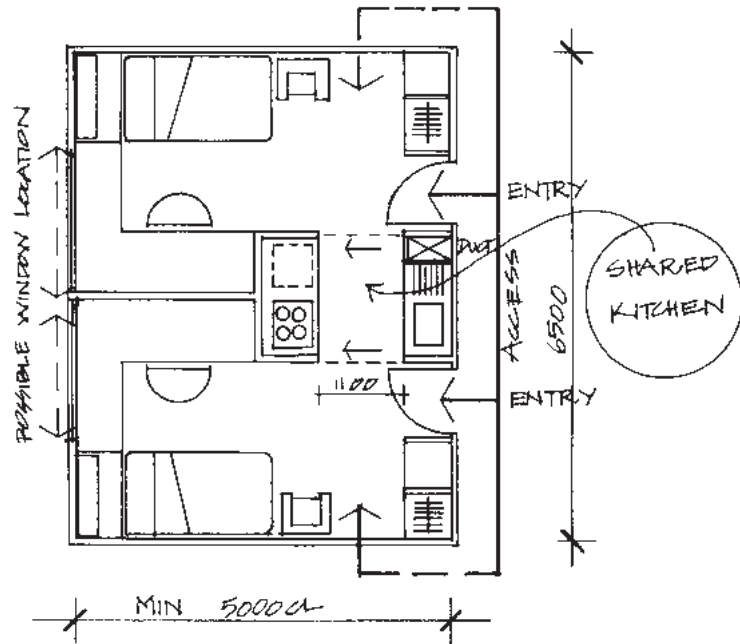
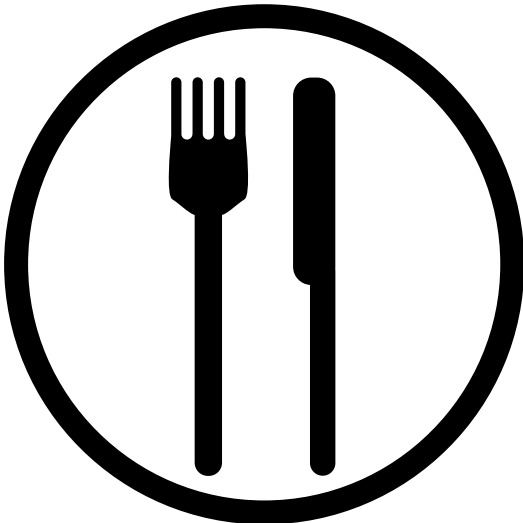
- Purpose designed to accommodate double bed
- Increased desk size possible
- Wall-mounted book shelves
- Cupboard/wardrobe
- Handbasin with duct



**Room 5**

*Single Student Unit with Shared Kitchen/Bathroom*

- Further upgrading of accommodation provides either a cooking/wash-up facility or a bathroom
- Student rooms have access from within and not through a common corridor.
- Sound insulation and ventilation of the service area is critical.
- The principle of this design can be included with various room configurations for both single or double room types.
- Floor waste is necessary in this plan.
- Units can be planned to stack vertically, with shared ducts, in a multi-level development.



**Grouping of Study Bedrooms**

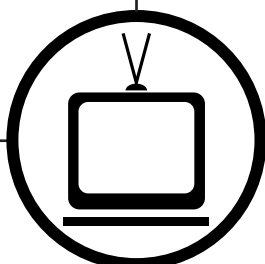
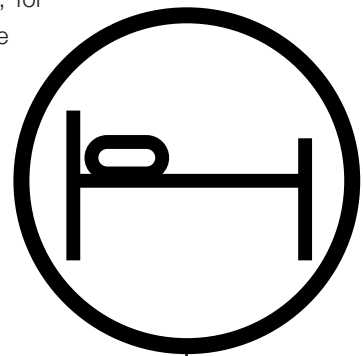
- If a development does not provide cooking facilities, nine to 12 student rooms can share a common living/sitting space.
- If a development provides cooking facilities to be shared by students, then room groupings should be less – from five to seven.
- Shared cooking facilities require secure storage of goods, greater space, a refrigerator, possible dishwasher space, cutlery and crockery.
- Access to sunlight for common spaces or sitting rooms is less critical than for study bedrooms.

Study bedrooms are occupied both night and day and in all seasons, therefore sunlight at some time during the day adds to their amenity. When planning a group of rooms in a complex with other facilities, an attempt should be made to avoid a solely southern orientation for rooms. The appeal of each room is improved when access to natural light is supplemented by sunlight. Although access to sunlight in common spaces is less critical than in study bedrooms, access to natural light remains vital.

In grouping together study bedrooms and facilities into a floor plan, flexibility is restricted when working with minimum spaces. Placement of the basic study bedroom (Room 1), for example, is restricted because of the fixed position of the door in the room. The slightly larger study bedroom plan, however, offers more flexibility because the door can be placed in two possible positions.

- Access to bathroom facilities is preferable if they are located off private corridors rather than off common spaces. In some cases, facilities such as free standing kitchens located within larger, open living areas can screen access doors to bedrooms and bathrooms.
- The following guidelines cover the space allowance per student for study bedrooms and kitchen space:

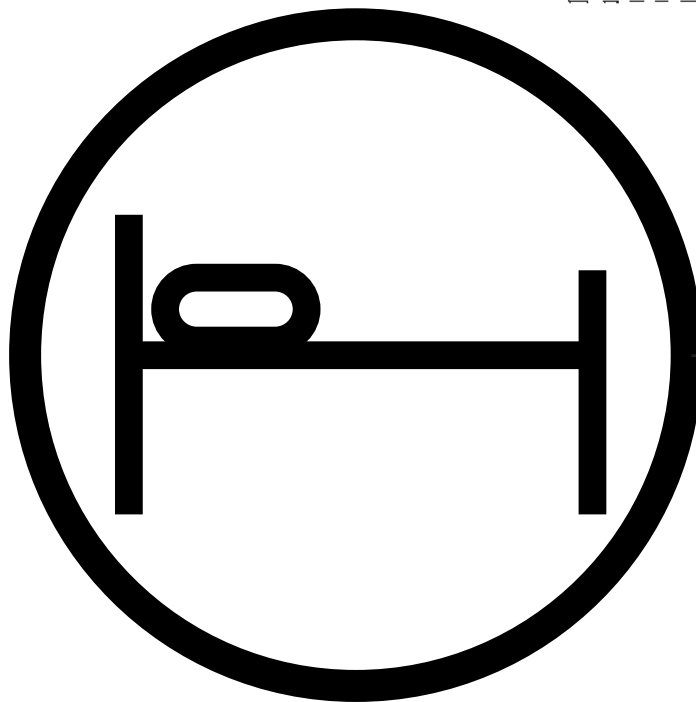
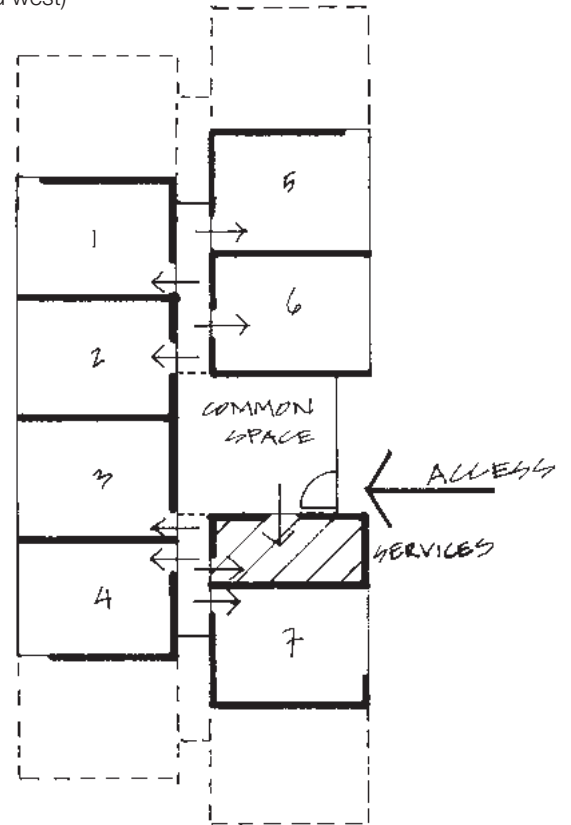
Study bedroom	8.5m <sup>2</sup> - 13m <sup>2</sup>
Ancillary spaces	1.5m <sup>2</sup>
Amenity spaces	2.2m <sup>2</sup>
Circulation	3.2m <sup>2</sup>
15.2m <sup>2</sup> - 19.7m <sup>2</sup> /student	





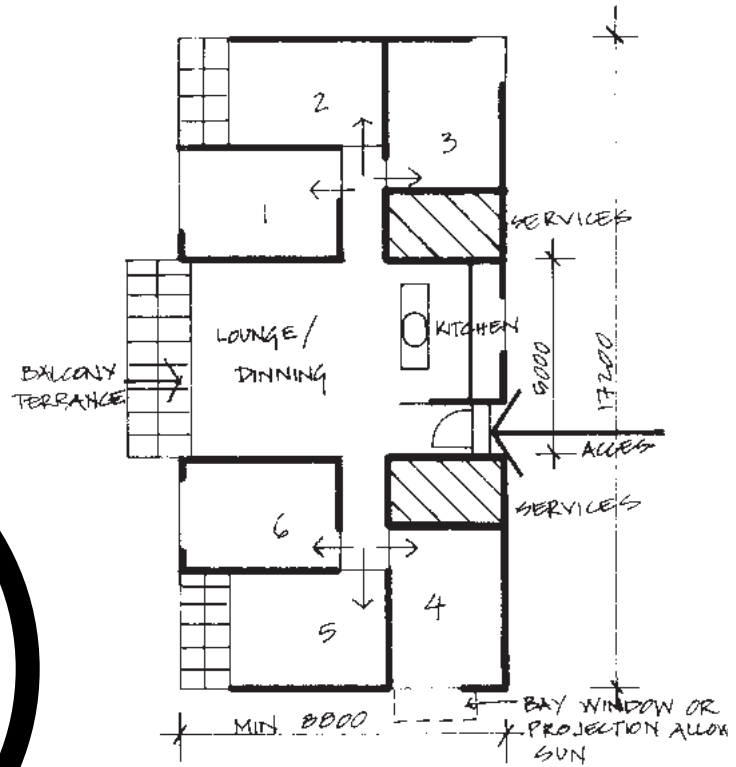
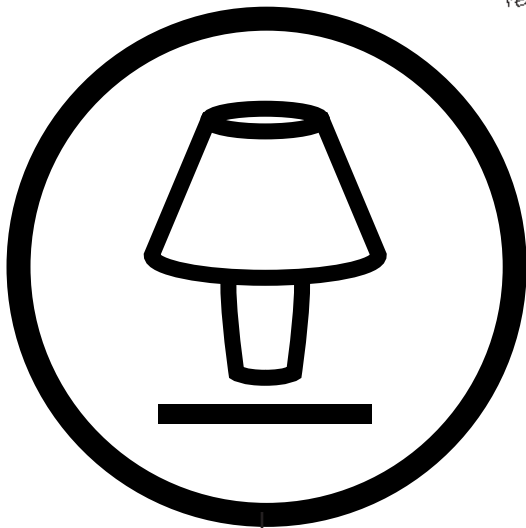
**Simple Plan 7-11 Units (No food preparation)**

- Simple double-loaded corridor
- Common entry with assembly/lounge space
- Secondary service access off common space only
- Study bedroom entries off private corridor, NOT from common space
- Allows sun penetration to all rooms
- Maximise orientation of bedrooms to the north (east and west)



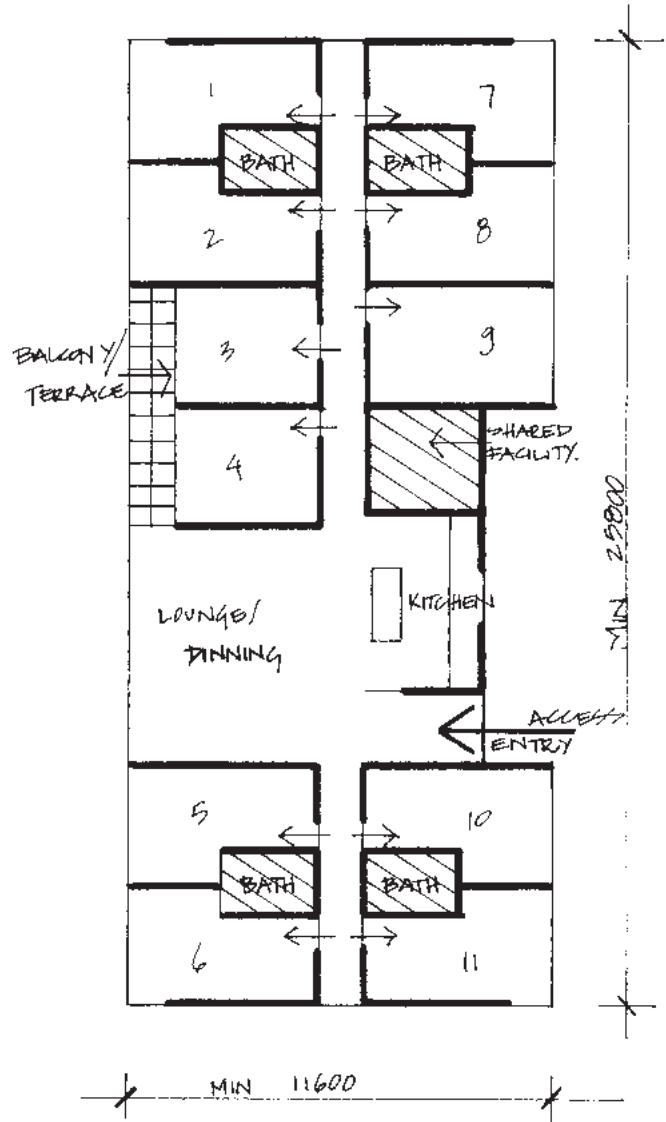
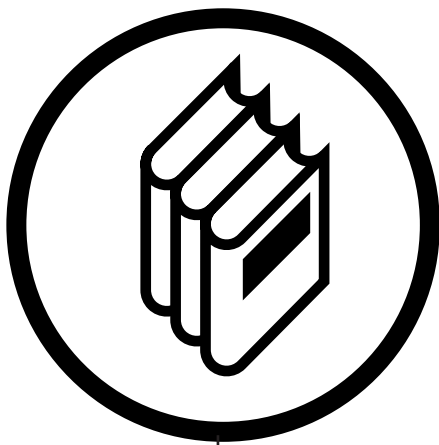
**Simple Plan 5-7 Units (Shared kitchen)**

- Double-loaded corridor to study bedrooms
- Bedrooms arranged around common living/dining/kitchen space
- Entry into common space rather than into bedroom corridors creates greater privacy.
- Six bedrooms allow sun penetration into each from north (east and west).
- Split bathroom facilities provide direct access and lessen demand pressure.
- Three bedrooms per facility encourages ownership and care.
- Laundry located in either facility.



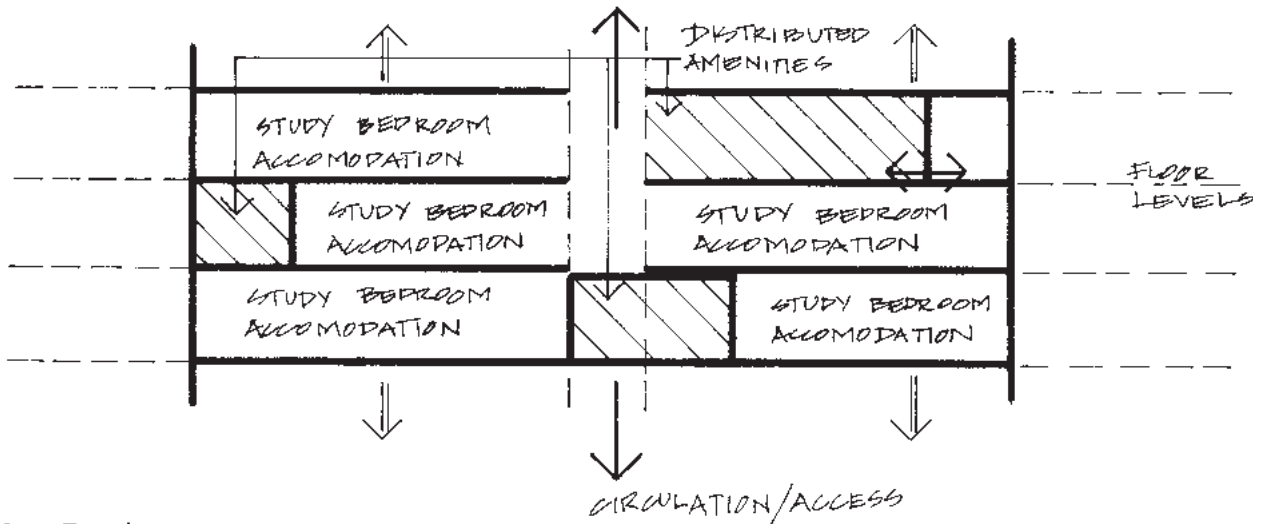
**Complex Plan – Different Study Bedrooms with Shared Kitchen and Bathrooms**

- 11 study bedrooms
- Rooms are paired around a shared bathroom, reducing demand and wear and tear on communal facilities and enhancing a sense of ownership.
- Room clusters are organised around a core living/meals area and a shared service zone.
- Centralised access and entry lobby creates greater privacy.
- There is balcony/terrace access from communal living space.
- Eight bedrooms receive direct sunlight at some period of the day.



**Complex Plan – Multi-Level Mixed Unit Development (Incorporating Larger Numbers of Single Study Bedrooms, Double Study Bedrooms and Shared Bathroom/Toilets)**

- Multi-level construction allows for efficient and economical distribution of communal spaces throughout a facility. For example, a larger living space may be provided on an intermediate level servicing three levels of study bedroom clusters, rather than providing a living space on each level.
- The facility may incorporate smaller dining/meals areas, accommodating about five or six students each, plus a small sitting area adjacent to a stairway.
- Cross pedestrian traffic should be minimised to enhance amenity.
- Facility should have secure access and a clear entry point.
- Interconnecting voids can assist in the orientation of the facility and enhance penetration of sunlight into large floor areas.
- Split levels can be used to zone large numbers of study bedrooms, allowing for more natural light and easier access. Complete level changes are not essential for effective separation of areas.



SECTION

- MULTI-LEVEL → DISTRIBUTED FACILITIES



## Major student housing projects (more than 100 beds)

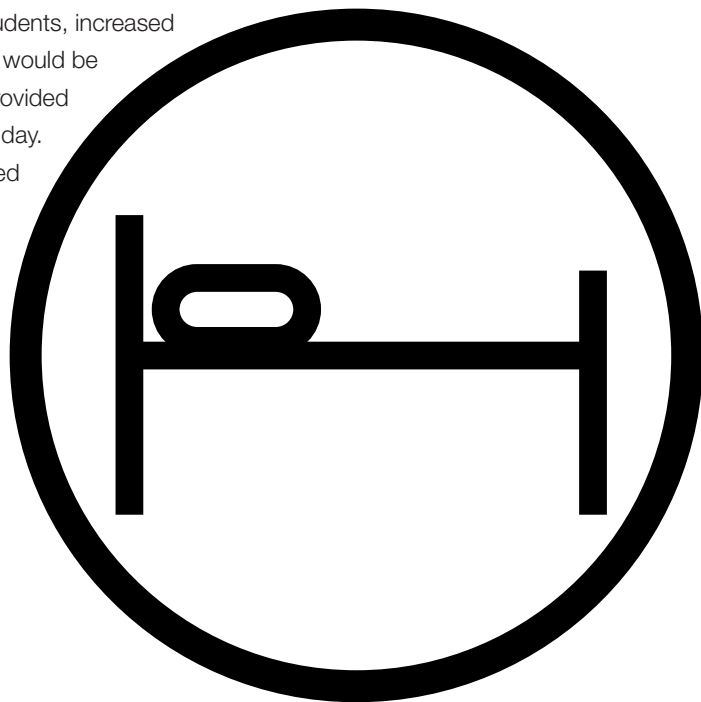
Once a student housing project increases beyond the 100-bed mark, the project becomes more complex in both its design and management.

An increased population of resident students means:

- a greater demand for services
- the need for a variety of accommodation types (catering, for example, to different lengths of stay, age groups, etc. )
- higher construction costs
- a greater need for sophisticated security
- a greater impact on community infrastructure, for example, on services, traffic access and roads, carparking, etc.

By virtue of its scale, a large student housing project can also increase opportunities for both the housing project and the community.

- A wide range of facilities can be attached to the project that can serve either the community or a nearby educational institution.
- There is greater scope to provide technological and other services to students such as meeting rooms, tutorial rooms, photocopying services and so on.
- Facilities for recreation, communal activities and meeting places such as barbeques and informal reception areas, become possible, depending on the project's scale and demand for these facilities.
- The integration of commercial and public uses into the project, such as cafes, bistros, bars, convenience shops, take away food stores, a post office or employment agency, also becomes possible, providing benefits to the neighbourhood.
- With the larger population of students, increased management and pastoral care would be required. Such care could be provided seven days a week, 24 hours a day. These services could be provided from by providers in the community, and the community itself would benefit from contact with members of a diverse student population.





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GPO Box 1603M  
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Hotline (03) 9658 9658  
Email [enquiries@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@melbourne.vic.gov.au)  
Internet <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au>

## 22.24 STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

[Insert  
Date]  
C[No.]

This policy applies where a planning permit is required for the use or development of *student housing*.

*Student housing* is 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

[Insert  
Date]  
C[No.]

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

[Insert  
Date]  
C[No.]

- To ensure that the internal layout and facilities provide sufficient space and amenity for the requirements of student life, and promote social interaction.
- To provide a safe, secure and well managed living environment.

**22.24-3 Policy**

[Insert  
Date]  
C[No.]

***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 and locate motorcycle and scooter parking in accordance with AS/NZ2890.1:2004;
- 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 (shared laundry and cooking facilities); or
- Hostel type facility where rooms are for sleeping and studying.

**Students' Rooms**

It is policy that:

- Every room has a size, layout and design able to comfortably accommodate:
  - A bed;
  - 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;

A minimum floor space of 10.8m<sup>2</sup> must be provided for a room to be used as a basic single student bedroom. This does not include a kitchen or an ensuite.

- Every room has direct access to daylight and fresh air and outlook.
- All sources 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.
- Rooms should not be subject to excessive noise, nor 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 laundry facilities be provided as follows:
  - One 5kg capacity automatic washing machine and one domestic dryer for every 12 students. A minimum 4-star energy rating must be achieved.;
  - At least one large laundry tub with running hot and cold water;
  - 30m of clothesline for every 12 students in an outdoor area (can be retractable); and
  - A reasonably attractive design conducive to incidental socialising.
- Shared cooking and dining facilities be provided as follows:
  - A communal kitchen and dining area with a minimum area of 15m<sup>2</sup> plus 1m<sup>2</sup> for each additional student above 12 students.
  - One stove top cooker and one sink with running hot and cold water for every 6 people.
  - Refrigerator storage space of approximately 0.25m<sup>3</sup> per student unless bar fridges are provided in each bedroom.
  - Freezer storage space of approximately 0.15m<sup>3</sup> per student.
  - Storage for dry goods of approximately 0.30m<sup>3</sup> per student which allows for the secure storing of food for each student in the kitchen area.
  - A designated location for garbage and re-cycling bins.
- Shared bathroom facilities must comply with the minimum requirements of the Building Regulations 2006.
- 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 attractive spaces, conducive to incidental social interaction.

**Communal outdoor space and internal common areas**

It is policy to:

- Provide a ratio of 2.5m<sup>2</sup> of communal outdoor space per student, in a maximum of two parcels, each parcel with a minimum width of 3m;
- Ensure each student has access to communal outdoor space that is well designed, safe and accessible and can be maintained appropriately;
- Ensure adequate solar access into any communal outdoor space;
- Provide a common living area or recreation room with a minimum of 15m<sup>2</sup> in area for the first 12 students, and a further 15m<sup>2</sup> for each additional 12 students thereafter;
- Ensure that internal common areas are capable of being used for multiple functions to meet a range of study, social, cultural and religious needs of students;
- 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 following issues when assessing applications for the conversion of an existing building to student housing:
  - The capacity of the building to meet the requirements of this policy, particularly the provision of communal open space.

#### **22.24-4**

[Insert  
Date]  
C[No.]

### **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 (eg. 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 or may not be dried.
- Details of rubbish bin storage and waste collection.
- Employment of a suitably qualified manager or lead tenant who is accommodated on-site.
- 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.

**FINANCE ATTACHMENT**

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**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C154 - STUDENT HOUSING  
POLICY**

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There are no major financial implications for Council arising from the recommendations contained in the report. The costs associated with the preparation of a student housing local planning policy and the subsequent planning scheme amendment is provided in the 2009/10 operational budget.

**Phu Nguyen**  
Acting Manager Financial Services

**LEGAL ATTACHMENT**

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**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C154 - STUDENT HOUSING  
POLICY**

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Division 1 of Part 3 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (“the Act”) covers planning scheme amendments. Section 9 of the Act provides that the Minister may authorise the preparation of an amendment to a planning scheme.

The division 1 also sets out the relevant provisions in relation the exhibition and notification of proposed Planning Scheme amendments as well as the process for public submissions and the consideration of those submissions by the planning authority or an appointed panel.

Ongoing legal advice will be provided as required.

**Kim Wood**  
Manager Legal Services