

# Building design

Dunlop Avenue, Ascot Vale

## Building design

During our engagement with the community in late 2017 and early 2018, we heard that there were concerns about the proposed density (the number of new dwellings) as part of the renewal. In response to this, we reduced the number of dwellings from 240 to 200 to better suit the character of the immediate area. We have also reduced the height of the new buildings to be lower than the outer layer of the leaves on the surrounding trees. We will be building 88 new public housing homes and 112 new private and affordable homes.

In mid-2018 we completed interviews with the residents living on the estate to understand their household size and requirements. We used this information to decide the type of replacement public housing we will build as part of the renewal.

We know that there are 150 residents currently living on the estate - an occupancy rate of 1.9 people per dwelling. We also know that 51 per cent of the current households living in two-bedroom units would be comfortable living in a smaller one-bedroom home. This tells us that currently there are 41 bedrooms on the site that residents are not using.

We acknowledge that there is also some demand for three and four-bedroom dwellings, and these families are living in overcrowded homes. Every resident currently living in existing housing on the estate has the right to return. This has been enshrined in a legally binding deed poll attached to all tenancy agreements for the program. To ensure this we will design nine, three-bedroom flexible dwellings and two, four-bedroom flexible dwellings. Flexible design allows us to change the internal layout of the units to combine smaller units to make one larger unit if needed.

**Table 1: Summary of changes to the number of bedrooms in dwellings**

Public housing dwellings				
	Current no. dwellings	Household eligibility <sup>1</sup>	Proposed no. dwellings	Difference relative to eligibility
1-bedroom	0	41	39	-2
2-bedroom	80	24 <sup>2</sup>	45	21
3-bedroom	0	13	4	-9
4-bedroom	0	2	0	-2
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>8</b>

  

Bedrooms				
	Current bedrooms	Bedroom eligibility	Proposed bedrooms	Difference relative to eligibility
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>5</b>

We looked at the buildings in the surrounding area and used this to guide the new design. Based on our initial site investigations and feedback from the community, we made a decision early in the design process to locate the new public open space at the end of Vasey Street. This land is generally flat (compared to the rest of the site) and it will draw people's focus and create a better connection to the rest of the Ascot Vale Estate to the south.

We are proposing that there will be six separate buildings, evenly spaced across the site. This will allow for 'green breaks' between the buildings which will achieve two things. Firstly, they will look nicer when viewed from outside

<sup>1</sup> Survey complete in June 2018. The term 'eligibility' here means the household size (bedrooms) a family is eligible for.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of survey five units were vacant. We have assumed 2-bedroom eligibility for these vacant units.

the estate and looking in. Secondly, they will create homes that have more natural light and all of the things you need inside the estate making them better for people to live in.

We will design the units on the ground level facing Dunlop Avenue and Rothwell Street so that residents can access their front door from the street, and not from an internal lobby and corridor. We hope this will bring more life and people to the street, in the same way houses are on a typical street in the surrounding neighbourhood. We have brought the new buildings closer to the street in a consistent way (parallel to the street) which is also typical of the way buildings are in neighbouring streets.

The new homes will be energy efficient so that they are easier to cool in summer and heat in winter. We are making this a priority as it will reduce the ongoing energy costs for future residents and make the new homes comfortable to live in all year round.

## Frequently asked questions

### Why are you building mostly one and two bedroom dwellings?

One of the key findings of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2017 report was that our current housing stock does not meet the demands of most tenants on the Victorian Housing Register (80 per cent of the list requires a one or two-bedroom dwelling). We need to build a greater number of one and two-bedroom dwellings rather than three or four-bedroom homes, to meet demand.

Building three and four-bedroom properties that are underutilised will not help us house more people from the waitlist. It will just mean we house the same number of people in larger homes.

### What do you mean by 'flexible' dwelling design?

Flexible design allows us to change the internal design to combine smaller units to make one larger unit or to change larger units into smaller units. For example, a one-bedroom and a two-bedroom dwelling can be changed into one single three-bedroom dwelling.

We are doing this as it allows us to adjust our plans to make sure we can accommodate all families if they choose to return after construction.

### Will the buildings be built differently for public and private housing?

We will design all housing to be 'tenure blind' so that the buildings look the same regardless of who is living there. The buildings will be the same quality standard and will use the same quality of materials inside and out.

### Will the public housing have separate toilets?

We've heard from residents living on the Ascot Vale Estate and other estates around Melbourne that they would prefer a toilet that is separate from the main bathroom. At Dunlop Avenue, the two and three-bedroom homes will have a separate toilet. The exception to this will be those dwellings we design for accessibility.

### How are you designing for accessibility?

All six buildings on the site will have a lift to the upper floors so that people with mobility issues, the elderly and parents with prams can get in and out of their homes easily. In addition to this, we will design five per cent of the homes to be accessible.

### What energy rating will the new homes have?

We will design all new homes to achieve a 7 Star NatHERS and Green Star 5 Star rating, which is one star above the national average.

## Related reports, plans and images

- Victorian Auditor-General's Report June 2017, *Managing Victoria's Public Housing*
- Plan 1: Existing site context, Plan 2: Existing site plan, Plan 3: Site layout, Image 1: Indicative sketch - Dunlop Avenue, Image 2: Indicative public housing floor plans and flexible floor plans

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