

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C213whse

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the planning authority?

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

The Amendment has been made at the request of Whitehorse City Council.

Land affected by the Amendment

The Amendment applies to the whole of the Whitehorse municipality.

What the amendment does

The Amendment amends local policy for student accommodation in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme consistent with the *Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018.

The Amendment proposes to make the following changes to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme:

- Replace Clause 22.14 Student Accommodation Policy with a revised policy.
- Amend Clauses 21.01 Municipal profile, 21.06 Housing and 21.07 Economic development of the Municipal Strategic Statement to correct references to tertiary institutions and to list the background documents underpinning the policy changes recommended by the *Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018.

Strategic assessment of the Amendment

Why is the Amendment required?

The City of Whitehorse is home to two key tertiary institutions, the Box Hill Institute (approximately 37,000 students) and Deakin University (approximately 28,000 students). A number of local and international students reside in Whitehorse and require a range of housing needs and resources.

Council recognises the need to plan for student accommodation, to ensure it meets the needs of the student demographic as well as reducing potential amenity impacts on existing communities. It is widely recognised that students require specialised accommodation with regard to location, design and facilities.

The first Whitehorse Student Accommodation Study was done in 2006. Documents produced as part of this project informed the development of a Local Planning Policy and in June 2009 Amendment C87 was gazetted to introduce a *Student Accommodation Policy* at Clause 22.14 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. This policy applies to all planning permit applications for purpose-built student accommodation in the municipality.

After using the existing policy for nearly 10 years and in light of the growth in the municipality's student population, it was considered necessary to review the current local policy in the planning scheme and undertake a wider investigation of issues perceived to be associated with accommodation of students in Whitehorse.

A review of student accommodation in Whitehorse has been undertaken and a Background Paper and Strategy have been produced. These documents include and address issues identified throughout the research, analysis and consultation process. The amendment intends to replace the existing Clause 22.14 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme with a revised and updated Student Accommodation Policy. The outcome of the amendment is a revised policy that addresses many of the planning issues in relation to student accommodation in Whitehorse.

The planning scheme amendment introduces a revised local planning policy that addresses many of the issues raised through the Whitehorse Student Accommodation Review. The planning scheme amendment is supported by the *Student Accommodation Strategy – Background Report*, August 2018 and the *Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018. The revised Student Accommodation Policy at Clause 22.14 addresses many of the planning related issues in relation to Student Accommodation in Whitehorse.

The amendment will benefit students living in Student Accommodation facilities in Whitehorse through improved design requirements. The amendment will also have a net community benefit by addressing many of the issues associated with Student Accommodation. It is considered that the community benefit will outweigh the cost of the new requirements.

The amendment does not repeat provisions already in the scheme. It replaces and updates what is already in Clause 22.14. There are no other regulations that deal specifically with student accommodation premises.

Proposed changes to the MSS/LPPF

Changes proposed to current clauses within the MSS/LPPF are as follows:

Clause 21.01 – Municipal Profile

- Deleting the reference to TAFE and reflecting the correct term 'Box Hill Institute'.
- Deleting the reference to Deakin University being designated as a Health Precinct and correcting the reference to an 'Education Precinct.'
- Inserting 21.01-1 Background documents
- Listing the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy – Background Report*, August 2018 and the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018.

Clause 21.06 – Housing

- Replacing the 'Reference' documents with 'Background' documents.
- Listing the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy – Background Report*, August 2018 and the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018.

Clause 21.07 – Economic Development

- Replacing the 'Reference' documents with 'Background' documents.
- Listing the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy – Background Report*, August 2018 and the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy*, August 2018.

Clause 22.14 – Student Accommodation

- Amending the local planning policy to address many of the issues raised through the Whitehorse Student Accommodation Review.

How does the Amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The objectives of planning in Victoria are outlined within Section 4(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. They include:

- (a) To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;
- (b) To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
- (c) To secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;
- (d) To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value;
- (e) To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community;
- (f) To facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);
- (fa) To facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria;
- (g) To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The amendment requires applications for student housing to be assessed against this policy, which provides clear objectives for the use and development of student accommodation facilities to Council, the development industry and the community. These objectives include:

- To develop student accommodation that meets the needs of students.
- To ensure accommodation is subject to appropriate on-going management.
- To conveniently and appropriately locating student accommodation.
- To provide appropriate car and bicycle parking.
- To develop practical and efficient building designs that meet the living requirements of tertiary students.
- To provide communal spaces that contribute to the functioning and amenity of student accommodation and promote interaction between students.

It is considered that these objectives of the Student Accommodation Policy will assist in the implementation of the objectives of planning in Victoria (Sections 4(1) and 12(1) (a) of the Act).

How does the Amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The amendment is expected to have no significant effect on the environment. The revised Student Accommodation Policy continues to promote the location of student accommodation facilities along the Principal Public Transport Network, in close proximity to shops and within 500 metres of tertiary education facilities. The policy also encourages bicycle parking and supports planning applications that provide limited car parking for students.

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, and convenient access to educational and community facilities. The amendment is expected to have a positive impact on the economy by encouraging the location of student accommodation facilities within a Metropolitan or Major activity centre.

Does the Amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

There is no bushfire risk considered relevant to this amendment. The sites likely sites for student accommodation are located in well-established urban areas.

Does the Amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The Amendment complies with the following Minister's Directions that are applicable to the amendment:

- Ministerial Direction - The Form and Content of Planning Schemes (section 7(5) of the Act).
- Direction No. 9 – Metropolitan Planning Strategy

Outcome 2 of Plan Melbourne, *Providing housing choice in locations close to jobs and services*, is relevant to this Amendment. The amendment is consistent with the directions and policies of Plan Melbourne as it encourages the location of student housing close to transport and job opportunities and encourages the provision of greater choice and diversity for housing. The amendment does not propose anything that will compromise the implementation of the Metropolitan Planning Strategy.

- Direction No. 11 – Strategic Assessment of Amendments
- Direction No. 15 – The Planning Scheme Amendment Process

The Amendment is accompanied by all of the information required by the directions.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The following objectives and strategies of the Planning Policy Framework are considered relevant to this amendment:

Clause 15.01-2S – Building Design

This Clause seeks to achieve building design outcomes that contribute positively to the local context and enhance the public realm. The amendment seeks to achieve this by promoting the use of high quality finishes and design that provides an active interface to the street.

Clause 16.01-3S – Housing Diversity

This Clause seeks to provide for a range of housing types to meet diverse needs. This amendment acknowledges the need for quality student accommodation that provides a mix of dwelling types and designed to facilitate social interaction and engagement as well as providing safe, private spaces for students.

Clause 16.1-2S – Location of Residential Development

Objective

To locate new housing in designated locations that offer good access to jobs, services and transport.

The proposed amendment supports the location of student accommodation that provides convenient access to tertiary education institutions and easy access to a wide range of shops, restaurants, financial, social, entertainment and leisure facilities and to public transport.

Clause 16.01 Residential Development

Objective

To promote a housing market that meets community needs.

One of the strategies of this Clause include ensuring that an appropriate quantity, quality and type of housing is provided, including aged care facilities and other housing suitable for older people, supported accommodation for people with a disability, *student accommodation* and social housing.

The proposed amendment addresses this strategy by providing building design guidelines to ensure that an appropriate quality of student accommodation is provided.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

The amendment does not propose any substantive changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and is consistent with the directions contained in the MSS.

The proposed amendment seeks to replace the existing Student Accommodation Policy at Clause 22.14 with a revised policy that reflect the results of the 2018 Student Accommodation Review that has been undertaken by Council.

Clause 21.05 - Environment

Clause 21.05 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme encourages development in those areas of the municipality with excellent public transport links.

The proposed amendment further supports this by promoting the preferred location for student accommodation as within a Metropolitan or Major Activity Centre or along the Principal Public Transport Network.

Clause 21.06 – Housing

Clause 21.06 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme recognises the need to provide more accommodation for students, and accommodation which better meets their needs in terms of quality and affordability in areas near Deakin University Burwood Campus and Box Hill Institute of TAFE.

The proposed amendment promotes this vision by encouraging student accommodation to locate:

- Within a Metropolitan or Major Activity Centre
- On sites that are within 500 metres of a tertiary education institution
- On sites abutting the Principal Public Transport Network.

21.06-4 Housing Diversity

Clause 21.06-4 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme recognises the need to provide high quality and accessible housing to meet the needs of the students that will continue to be attracted to Deakin University Burwood Campus and Box Hill Institute of TAFE and will require housing with high quality accessibility and services. This Clause also encourages appropriate student housing close to the university campuses in a form that respects the existing or preferred character of the area.

The proposed amendment supports this Clause by encouraging the location of student accommodation facilities within 500 metres of tertiary institutions.

21.06-5 Housing Affordability

One of the key issues of Clause 21.06-5 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme is ensuring student housing is consistent with the location and design requirements of Council Policy.

The proposed amendment replaces the existing Student Accommodation Policy at Clause 22.14 with a revised policy that has the following objectives:

- To develop student accommodation that meets the needs of students
- To ensure student accommodation is subject to appropriate on-going management.
- To conveniently and appropriately locate student accommodation
- To provide appropriate car and bicycle parking
- To develop practical and efficient building designs that meet the living requirements of tertiary students
- To provide communal spaces that contribute to the functioning and amenity of student accommodation and promotes interaction between students.

Does the Amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

It is considered that the amendment makes proper use of the Victoria 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.

Planning Scheme Amendment VC148

It is noted the new Planning Policy Framework was introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions and all Victorian planning schemes following gazettal of Amendment VC148 on 31 July 2018. While state and regional policy were integrated into the framework as part of Amendment VC148, existing local policy was retained in local planning schemes.

The Local Planning Policy Framework content in local planning schemes is yet to be translated into the new framework. Although the translation exercise will require a review of local policy content, key local issues and strategic directions from an LPPF will be maintained. Planning schemes are being translated in groups, with completion expected by mid-2021.

It is acknowledged that the updated local policy 22.14 Student Accommodation being proposed as part of Amendment C213whse will be further revised as part of the upcoming translation process.

How does the Amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The views of relevant stakeholder groups and the student tertiary student population of Whitehorse were sought during the development of the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy – Background Paper, 2018* and the *City of Whitehorse Student Accommodation Strategy, 2018*.

Does the Amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

There is no impact on the transport system created by the proposed amendment. The revised policy identifies that preferred locations for student accommodation facilities are on campus or within 500m of a tertiary education institution, within a Metropolitan or Major activity centre or along the Principal Public Transport Network. This will help to promote a culture of walking, cycling and public transport use.

Resource and administrative costs

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

The Amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

- Whitehorse City Council, Planning Counter, 379 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading;

- Whitehorse City Council Service Centres at Box Hill Town Hall and Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre;
- Libraries in the City of Whitehouse at Nunawading, Vermont South, Blackburn and Box Hill;
- On the internet at: www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au.

The Amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website at www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection.

Submissions

Any person who may be affected by the Amendment may make a submission to the planning authority. Submissions about the Amendment must be received by 5pm on Monday 7 October 2019.

A submission must be sent to: Anne North, Strategic Planner, Whitehorse City Council, Locked Bag 2, Nunawading Delivery Centre VIC 3131, or alternatively you may email the submission to strategic.planning@whitehorse.vic.gov.au.

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: January 2020
- Panel hearing: February 2020