



# FORWARD PLANNING

Technology, architecture and shared resources are bringing communities of the future together for all the right reasons

The year 2048 may seem light years away, but Melbourne's urban landscape could change in a design and functionality sense sooner rather than later.

Central to the shift will be increasing roles of technology, community, amenity and infrastructure as the state government's Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 strategy highlights how Melbourne will transition to a bigger, smarter and greener city.

Property Buyers Expo event producer Kylie Mayer helped create an interactive installation to show how housing might look in 2040 and beyond based on "current global opinions".

"There was a team of us (including) architect studio NSS and Russians, French, Italians who scoured the globe and read stuff from futurists, economists and sustainability experts and looked at where appliance technology is going, so we could come up with what it might look like in 2040," Ms Mayer said.

She said a "Mother hen" would run households by connecting everything from beds and wardrobes — assessing energy consumption, room temperatures, security and occupants' schedules on the same screen that displays the weather.

Virtual wardrobes and smart mirrors suggest outfits to wear based on the forecast and knowing which items are ready when clothes are washed and ironed by the water-free laundry unit. Even going to the toilet will provide a medical prognosis for diabetes or hydration levels.

The provision of infrastructure was the only hurdle to this becoming reality, Ms Mayer said, with many applications five to 15 years away from being made available.

Some predict Melbourne's urban landscape will evolve into a high-rise centre, with European-style townhouses in the middle and outlying detached dwellings.

There would also be up to 11 suburban employment, education and entertainment precincts to reduce the need for commutes over long distances.

"Distributing a greater share of urban development around a network of rail-based urban centres within Melbourne is essential if we are to be a liveable city with a population of eight million," RMIT University Centre for Urban Research director Jago Dodson said.

"To pay for this, we should halt all freeway construction and use the funds saved to accelerate rail development as well as walking and cycling infrastructure," Professor Jago said.

RMIT School of Architecture and Urban Design's Mark Jacques believes freestanding houses and apartments will still dominate the landscape but other housing types will provide a bridge, or the so-called "missing middle".

The Victorian Government's Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 strategy aims to make the city bigger, smarter and greener.

## NIGHTINGALE HOUSING

The Nightingale model aims to deliver financially, socially and environmentally sustainable residences.

Nightingale 1, in Brunswick (above), is a 20-apartment building conceived by Breathe Architecture in 2014.

Completed last December, it scores 8.2 stars in the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme, is 100 per cent fossil-fuel free, and rainwater harvesting is used for irrigation and common-area toilets.

The cheapest one-bedroom option sold for \$415,000, and the best two-bedroom apartment for \$655,000.

Apartments in the Nightingale projects are sold by ballot; register your interest via the Nightingale website to be recorded as a potential purchaser. You will be notified and invited to attend an information session when a project becomes "live" in the area you have nominated.

While each project is different, it generally takes about two and a half years from attending the initial information session to moving in.

[nightingalehousing.org](http://nightingalehousing.org)

Together with affordable housing initiatives, such as the state government's Inclusionary Housing Pilot, these could take the form of projects including Nightingale Housing's residences based on Germany's Baugruppen process, or cohousing by Urban Coup.

Baugruppen (German for "building group") is a design driven, ownership-based housing model that has also been adopted in WA.

"Rather than being autonomous and focused on the individual, these new (housing) types will be developed around shared infrastructure — car share, communal open space, shared food production, precinct-based power, waste and energy," Professor Jacques said.

"While it's unlikely that these developments will have a dominant market share, they will ... have a profound effect on how we understand the idea of housing and what constitutes a community in Melbourne."

## URBAN COUP

Formed in May 2008, the Urban Coup is the initiative of a group of Melburnians with a shared vision of creating housing and community.

The group's aim is to pioneer sustainable and diverse, socially and environmentally responsible urban cohousing in Melbourne.

Cohousing is a participatory model of housing integrated private dwellings, communal spaces and shared resources.

The "Coup" is currently pursuing two projects that reflect complementary approaches to cohousing.

Near & Tall is a high-density apartment development of about 25 households close to the CBD.

It is at an advanced stage of planning and has a projected move-in date of December 2020.

Far & Wide is a lower-density, garden-set development of up to 20 households planned for the middle to outer suburbs.

Participants are currently being sought to further develop the plan.

[urbancoup.org](http://urbancoup.org)



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