Planning Permit Data Review Report
with case studies (2010 - 2015)

Central City Built Form Review
For Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

APRIL 2016
Key Findings

Key findings from the evidence based review in the period, July 2010 - October 2015 are:

* 84% of all issued permits were for predominantly residential land use

* 61% of all issued permits were for small site sizes of 1500m² or less, including 31% below 800m²

* 36% of all issued permits were permitted a Gross Floor Area over 26,000m² on small sites of 1500m² or less

* 61% of all issued permits were for building heights above 100 metres, including 16% above 200 metres in height

* 82% of all issued permits in Southbank were over 100 metres in building height, with 61% being inconsistent with the discretionary controls

* 62% of the 84 reviewed permits were consistent with the designated discretionary maximum street wall height control (Hoddle Grid–40 metres and Southbank–30 metres)

* 91% of all issued permits did not meet the discretionary minimum front setback control of 10 metres or more

* 17% of all issued permits had no front setback

* Based on an average minimum side setback distances, 83% of permits had less than 5 metre side setbacks, including 65% with less than 3 metres

* Based on an average minimum side setback distances, 25% of permits had no side setback and 47% of permits had no rear setback

* 60% of all issued permits in the review period had a site based Floor Area Ratio of more than 20:1, excessively dense by comparable international standards

* 42% of high density permits (20:1 or more) were on small sites of 1500m² or less

* 9% of all permits had a site based Floor Area Ratio of more than 40:1 on sites under 1500m²

* Designated public spaces and pedestrian streets were subjected to additional shadows, of up to 695m²

* Case study evidence highlights the cumulative and tangible impact of inconsistent planning permits

Limitations

The report is limited to the review of built form planning controls that define the built form envelope. The report makes minor reference to objectives outlined in Design Development Policy, but does not review the detailed design or architectural qualities of the permitted built form. However, the influence of place-based design excellence in achieving the city's socio-economic, cultural and environmental objectives is acknowledged. Finally, the built or unbuilt status of these permits is not relevant to the review of issued planning permits.
2. Purpose of Report

Within the context of the Central City Built Form Review (CCBFR) in Melbourne, this report reviews the issued planning permits in the CCBFR area in the period, July 2010 to October 2015 inclusive. Specifically, the purpose of the report is to assess the consistency and inconsistency of 80 issued planning permits with the mandatory and discretionary built form planning controls, in the five year period, prior to the implementation of interim planning controls (September 2015 – September 2016). This evidence will inform the outcomes of the Central City Built Form Review (CCBFR) and potential planning control amendments.

The key built form planning controls that have been reviewed are: Building Height, Street Wall Height, Tower Front Setback, Tower Separation (Tower Setback – Side and Rear), Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Sunlight to Public Spaces. The primary evidence for the assessment is measurable spatial data for each issued permit, such as distance, ratio and area.

For the stated review period, July 2010 to October 2015 inclusive, the report includes the following:

- **Background information** including the relevant planning controls for each precinct and evident permit characteristics such as the responsible planning authority, precinct location, site size, gross floor area and predominant land use

- **Summaries of data** for each permit with regard to the relevant planning controls, including precinct-based bar graphs and scatter diagrams (to show correlation with site size)

- **Data-based findings** that describe evident patterns of compliance and non-compliance or consistency and inconsistency for each of the built form planning controls

- **Case studies** that show evident issues and patterns of consistency and inconsistency with planning controls and other planning policy objectives (Design Development Overlays) including negative and positive impacts on streetscape context and recently permitted built form on individual sites. This section of the report includes recent visual empirical data (such as photographs, shadow diagrams or measurable drawings) and also 3 dimensional impressions of unbuilt permits

- **Key Findings** for each of the above.

As part of the CCBFR process, regulated planning requirements such as wind impact and overshadowing of public spaces have been assessed in detail by other specialists, alongside daylight access (which is not regulated in Melbourne).

This report includes findings from the metric and built form evidence that demonstrate clear patterns of both divergence and convergence with regard to each planning control.