

THE AUSTRALIAN

Government declares high density is important as work starts on 72-storey tower

• JOHN MASANAUSKAS

THE State Government has endorsed Hong Kong-style apartment living for the inner city as construction starts on the CBD's tallest residential tower.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy has slammed critics who say we're building too many skyscrapers in central Melbourne.

"There are critics who say we are heading down the Hong Kong path, but in doing so they miss the point about why high density is important in defined locations," he said.

"The Government can continue to expand the urban growth boundary to Traralgon, but that is completely unsustainable and that would be completely silly".



Brady Group's Vision Apartments. *Source:* Supplied

Mr Guy officially launched works for Vision Apartments - a \$400 million, 72-storey tower to be built opposite the Queen Victoria Market in Elizabeth St.

It will boast 542 units, accommodate up to 2000 people and be the tallest apartment tower in the CBD.

Mr Guy said that housing the growing population in such skyscrapers in defined locations was better than the policy of some planning experts to build high density apartment blocks along train and tram lines in the suburbs.

"Simply saying that having seven storeys along every street, in every cul de sac, in every neighbourhood of Melbourne is not a sustainable nor sensible option for our city," he said.

"For the long term sustainability of this city, this Government believes that concentrating growth around activities areas, particularly around our central city area, is going to be the most important way we can accommodate population growth sustainably into the future."

Mr Guy said that the Vision project was in an ideal location - close to public transport and the iconic Queen Victoria Market.

But Mary Drost, from residents' lobby group Planning Backlash, said it would be a tragedy for the market.

"It's an historical area that should be protected," she said.

"It's one of our great tourist attractions".

Daniel Brady, from Vision developer the Brady Property Group, said 85 per cent of the units had been sold.

"We've had a lot of local buyers, because it's mainly two to three bedroom units, catering more for the owner-occupier market," he said.

Mr Guy dismissed reports that the Melbourne apartment market was overheated, saying such developments showed the market was thriving.