



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers

Hearing date: 5 August 2025

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Retrofit Lab

Received date: 17 September 2025

1. John BERGER, p.45

Question asked:

I am just interested in your Bordeaux case study, and my interest is: what is the difference in their standards and their compliance issues as opposed to Australian standards?

Brendon McNIVEN: Good question. I could not comment on that. I do not know the detail. I am not sure if –

Rory HYDE: We might have to take that on notice.

Response: Our understanding is that the apartments forming a part of this project were upgraded to current comfort, safety, energy, and accessibility standards in France.

In general terms, building standards in France are comparable to or more stringent than those in Australia. Standards around comfort and sustainability are in particular more stringent reflecting the harsher climatic conditions in winter months and the higher value placed on energy and carbon performance in Europe.

It should be noted that current building standards relating to retrofit in France allow a degree of relaxation with respect to energy performance. It is not clear from publicly available information whether this relaxation was taken advantage of in the case of Bordeaux. Notwithstanding this, it is also our understanding that work carried out (and presented to the inquiry), by OFFICE Architects demonstrates that full compliance to current Australian standards can be met in the case of the public housing towers.