

Developer calls for green laws to save native vegetation in apartment complexes as Melbourne gets denser

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An ecowarrior turned developer has called for tougher regulations to outlaw apartment construction projects that strip land of trees and vegetation.

Developers of multi-residential projects such as apartments should leave a substantial part of the site for nature, according to Theodore Kerlidis.

His company Longboat Property is building a 61 unit, four-level complex in Roberts Rd, West Footscray, has left 50 per cent of the site next to Stony Creek green, and is planting native species.

He said the “scored earth” practices of some developers were outdated and he called on local councils to ban people stripping sites and leaving a barren landscape.

“We need to re-imagine Victoria and return the garden to our state,” Mr Kerlidis said.

“Developers have a significant role to play in the greening of our cities ... it’s about leaving a significant part of a site’s available land for trees and ecology.”

Mr Kerlidis said leaving land for nature and including sustainable building features was commercially viable with buyers paying more for the liveability of having nature in an urban setting.

Maribyrnong Council’s director of planning service, Nigel Higgins, said the council supported initiatives that contributed to greening the west. Its planning scheme provided minimum garden sizes which could be used to protect vegetation and heritage trees, he said.

Victoria University’s Institute for Sustainability and Innovation Professor Roger Jones said natural habitat was not just for wildlife but for people and contributed a sense of wellbeing.