

### Essential worker housing wins for Good Design

Sydney architecture and design practice TURNER has been honoured at the recent Good Design Awards. The practice won an award in the Architectural Design category for its innovation in delivering the Meridian Miranda project.

The Meridian Miranda development, owned by Aware Real Estate and developed in partnership with Altis Property Partners, creates housing for essential workers at reduced rents, allowing essential workers to live close to their place of employment.

Miranda, located approximately 30 kilometres south of Sydney's CBD, has a medium house price much higher than metropolitan Sydney and is increasingly unaffordable, particularly for essential workers.

The residential project reserves 50% of its 102 apartments for workers in essential industries such as aged care, health care, education, emergency services and childcare. The remaining apartments were sold as private residential housing.

TURNER Director James McCarthy says successful essential worker housing is about delivering high amenity and security of tenure to attract and retain tenants.

"Essential worker apartments need to work well from an operational point of view, but they also need to be beautiful and appeal to the needs of their target demographics," he says.

Essential worker housing shouldn't compromise on design, and this quality of design was a driving factor on the Meridian Miranda project.

"We were looking to create a luxurious feel to the apartments," Altis Property Partners Project Director Joseph Ajaka says of the project, highlighting an emphasis on space, finishes and detail throughout the entire design.

It was critical to the architects and client that the level of finish and specification did not vary between the affordable rental building and the private housing component and this formed the basis of the high quality specifications for the project.

James says Aware Real Estate and Altis Property Partners' extensive research process with future residents of their projects means apartments are tailored to their users.

"Research informs our apartment design, including what residents want from their shared amenities. This results in projects highly in tune with the market's needs."

He says there are many learnings the practice applied to Meridian Miranda from its extensive portfolio of multi-residential projects. The practice is currently delivering several projects for Aware Real Estate and Altis Property Partners that are reserved for essential workers, and are in close proximity to employment hubs such as hospitals, universities and schools.

"Creating community, attracting tenants and designing buildings that are easy to maintain in the long-term is paramount.

"It's incredibly important for architects to understand the requirements from an operational perspective. And, of course, essential worker housing should be well designed – seamlessly blending high amenity and function. Our design must draw tenants to the building in the first instance, but serve their needs and keep them happy there for many years to come."

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