

**Submission
No 611**

INQUIRY INTO THE REDEVELOPMENT OF MELBOURNE'S PUBLIC HOUSING TOWERS

Organisation: The Salvation Army Australia

Date Received: 27 March 2025



Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers

March 2025



About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an international Christian movement with a presence in more than 130 countries. Operating in Australia since 1880, The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of social services and programs for people experiencing hardship, injustice and social exclusion.

The Salvation Army Australia provides more than 1,000 social programs and activities through networks of social support services, community centres and churches across the country.

Programs include:

- Financial counselling, financial literacy and microfinance
- Emergency relief and related services
- Homelessness services
- Youth services
- Family and domestic violence services
- Alcohol, drugs and other addictions
- Chaplaincy
- Emergency and disaster response
- Aged care
- Employment services

As a mission-driven organisation, The Salvation Army seeks to reduce social disadvantage and create a fair and harmonious society through holistic and person-centred approaches that reflect our mission to share the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity and equity.

Further information about The Salvation Army can be accessed at:

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/>



Table of contents

Our commitment to inclusion	iv
Executive summary	v
Summary of recommendations.....	vi
1 Growing social housing in Victoria	7
<i>Exploring the opportunities presented by Community Housing Providers</i>	8
2 The Melbourne public housing tower project.....	10
<i>Engaging and consulting stakeholders</i>	10
<i>Keeping communities connected</i>	13
3 Equipping and resourcing community organisations to provide solutions	16
<i>Implementing transition support solutions</i>	17
4 Conclusion.....	18
Appendix A The Salvation Army's Footprint.....	19



Our commitment to inclusion

The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present and future.

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children. Our values are:

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Diversity
- Collaboration

The Salvation Army is a worldwide movement known for its acceptance and unconditional love for all people. We love unconditionally, because God first loved us. The Bible says, “God so loves the world” (John 3:16, RGT). As both a church and charity, we believe all people are loved by God and are worthy of having their needs met. Everyone is welcome to find love, hope, and acceptance at The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army Australia Territory wishes to acknowledge that members of the LGBTIQA+ community have experienced hurt and exclusion because of mixed comments and responses made in the past. The Salvation Army is committed to inclusive practice that recognises and values diversity. We are ensuring our services affirm the right to equality, fairness, and decency for all LGBTIQA+ people, rectifying all forms of discriminatory practice throughout the organisation.

We seek to partner with LGBTIQA+ people and allies to work with us to build an inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe environment in every aspect of Salvation Army organisation and services. Everyone has a right to feel safe and respected.

Learn more about our commitment to inclusion: <salvationarmy.org.au/about-us>





Executive summary

The Salvation Army welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (the Committee) in relation to the Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers (the redevelopment project).

The Salvation Army is a major provider of housing and homelessness services across Australia, including services in several of Melbourne's public housing towers. We provide homes for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. We manage 1,850 properties across the country, providing long-term housing, transitional housing, and crisis and rooming house tenancies, which support more than 3,200 people. This includes over 850 properties in Victoria.

Across Australia there is insufficient social and affordable housing to meet demand, and this increasing trend is driving rising homelessness. Every day we witness the real, human costs of this escalating and avoidable crisis.

Our service delivery has highlighted that, to be effective, the way housing and homelessness responses are provided must consider the unique experiences and needs of different groups and individuals in the community. This includes ensuring that the resources are available and appropriate for individuals when and how they need it.

Within a context of record investment by the Victorian Government in new social and affordable housing, The Salvation Army maintains that deep, ongoing investment in this critical infrastructure should be the overwhelming priority of governments to address the housing crisis. The availability of accessible, appropriate and affordable housing must serve as a precursor to other initiatives that work towards improved life outcomes and housing outcomes for all Victorians.

We acknowledge and support efforts to improve the quality, design and environmental adaptability of public housing in Melbourne, whilst also recognising the risks and challenges associated with the redevelopment project. We caution that further work is needed to prevent and address negative consequences that may continue to be experienced by tower residents and community service stakeholders in implementing the redevelopment project.

In this submission, The Salvation Army focuses on:

- the role of Community Housing Providers (CHP) in growing social housing;
- engaging and consulting stakeholders.
- keeping communities connected; and
- equipping and resourcing community organisations to provide solutions

The Salvation Army has made **eight** recommendations for the Committee to consider. A summary of these recommendations follows on the next page.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

1.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise increasing the supply of social housing dwellings in the redeveloped Melbourne public housing towers.

Recommendation 2

1.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government leverage land, resources and expertise held by Community Housing Providers as a unique opportunity to provide medium to longer term housing solutions.

Recommendation 3

2.9 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise clear, direct and accessible communication and engagement about the redevelopment project with affected residents. This should include information about the project's timeline, relocation plan, supports available, and where to access further information and support if needed.

Recommendation 4

2.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government proactively and meaningfully engage with frontline organisations and community-based support services that operate within, or support residents impacted by the redevelopment project. This should aim to build trust, reduce uncertainty and contribute to the project's success.

Recommendation 5

2.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government ensure the redevelopment project develop and execute a comprehensive plan — in partnership with community organisation stakeholders — to ensure residents are supported to remain connected before, during and after relocation.

Recommendation 6

2.27 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise flexible funding and brokerage for existing support services, to ensure continuity of care for Melbourne tower residents.

Recommendation 7

2.28 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government ensures residents are relocated within proximity to their current accommodation and in areas with sufficient access to public transport and other infrastructure.

Recommendation 8

3.7 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government increases targeted, sustainable funding to better resource community organisations and existing programs that support the needs of residents before, during and after relocation. Operational funding should account for the increase in demand for service resources during the project.

1 Growing social housing in Victoria

- 1.1 Access to public and community housing remains a critical issue in Australia. Waiting lists for public and social housing continue to increase, with demand for low-cost social and affordable housing surpassing the supply. In 2024, there was an 8.4 per cent increase in the Victorian Housing Register housing waitlist with more than 55, 000 households waiting to access social housing as of December 2024.¹
- 1.2 In view of the critical shortage of social and affordable housing options for rising numbers of individuals and groups in the community, increased social housing must be prioritised in the redevelopment process. Increased social housing will go some way to mitigating the short and medium-term impacts the demolition and relocation project will have on public housing waitlists and crisis services. These services are already in high demand and would have even less ability to transition people out of crisis refuges.
- 1.3 Homelessness services can only function as designed when they are able to transition people out of crisis and supported accommodation into safe exit accommodation, whether that be social or affordable housing, or the private housing market. Without adequate exit pathways and transition supports, systems experience a backlog as they are unable to find adequate accommodation for community members out of immediate crisis. This has knock-on effects for all other homelessness services and precludes resources from assisting people who are newly experiencing homelessness.
- 1.4 A whole of system approach is needed to increase access to safe and affordable accommodation across the entire housing continuum. Governments at all levels must prioritise comprehensive housing strategies which encompass a variety of housing types and price points to allow access to housing that meets the diverse needs of their populations.
- 1.5 The Salvation Army is supportive of all efforts to grow social housing in the state, and we emphasise the need to position this redevelopment project as part of a broader social housing asset management strategy – to grow social housing.

“

“[There is] huge ambiguity over the past few years, losing stock because it is aged. Every time we [Victoria] lose [community housing] stock, we don’t get it back or we’re not topped up. It’s not just The Salvation Army [who is affected], but it’s also the continuity of services for the community member which is uncertain.”

”

- Salvos Housing Victoria State Manager, The Salvation Army

¹ Homes Victoria. (Undated). *Applications on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)*. <https://www.homes.vic.gov.au/applications-victorian-housing-register-vhr>.

“

“The demand and supply for public housing is under considerable strain.”

- Support in Public Housing Program Team Leader, The Salvation Army

”

Recommendation 1

- 1.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise increasing the supply of social housing dwellings in the redeveloped Melbourne public housing towers.**

Exploring the opportunities presented by Community Housing Providers

- 1.7 Community Housing Providers (CHPs) are an important part of the solution for the redevelopment project, and to the broader need for increased social housing, public housing asset management and renewal strategies.
- 1.8 As a provider of both homelessness services and community housing, The Salvation Army demonstrates the benefits of developing housing by CHPs alongside the development and redevelopment of public housing.

Increasing social and affordable housing supply

- 1.9 CHPs can help expand the overall housing supply during public housing redevelopment projects. While public housing redevelopment may result in temporary reductions in available housing, CHPs can help replace or exceed that loss by quickly developing affordable housing.
- 1.10 Governments can use land already held by CHPs to rapidly scale up social and affordable housing projects. CHPs are well-placed to maximise land usage for these purposes. By leveraging existing land, governments can significantly increase housing supply without needing to acquire more land or wait for new sites to be developed.
- 1.11 CHPs often have a better understanding of local housing needs and can focus on specific groups in the community — for example people who are experiencing homelessness, older people, people living with disability, and victim-survivors of family and domestic violence — ensuring that housing meets diverse needs.

Reduced barriers to development

- 1.12 Land acquisition and zoning can be some of the most time-consuming and expensive parts of housing development. By partnering with CHPs, governments can accelerate the development process, as CHPs often already have zoning approvals.

Integrated support services

- 1.13 Many CHPs are committed to more than just building homes — they also provide or engage support services. The support services integrated and co-located with community housing can include, but are not limited to:
- healthcare;
 - alcohol and other drug services;
 - tenancy support;
 - legal and employment support; and
 - childcare.
- 1.14 This integrated approach can provide better outcomes for residents, helping to reduce housing instability, poverty, and inequality.

Sustained affordability

- 1.15 When governments collaborate with CHPs to use land for social and affordable housing, the long-term affordability of the housing can be protected. As non-profit organisations, with a mandate to provide affordable housing, CHPs are well placed to ensure that rents remain affordable compared to private developers.
- 1.16 By leveraging land and resources held by CHPs, governments can achieve more efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable affordable housing development. CHPs bring expertise, community ties, and a focus on long-term affordability, making them ideal partners in achieving shared housing goals. This approach can ensure that land is used optimally to meet housing needs, foster economic development, and create stronger, more resilient communities.
- 1.17 A case study of The Salvation Army's Flagstaff property in West Melbourne serves to demonstrate some of these opportunities. This is discussed in Appendix A.

“

“If the Department [of Families, Fairness and Housing] fully invest in community housing, it can be used as a transitional solution. Once the final redevelopment is done and people move back, it creates another permanent resource of affordable housing.”

”

- Victorian Homelessness State Manager, The Salvation Army

Recommendation 2

- 1.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government leverage land, resources and expertise held by Community Housing Providers as a unique opportunity to provide medium to longer term housing solutions.**

2 The Melbourne public housing tower project

- 2.1 Whilst the redevelopment project aims to improve the living conditions of residents and communities, increase climate adaptability and expand social and affordable housing supply, the process is disruptive to residents. These disruptions will have a range of social, economic, and emotional consequences for both residents and communities.
- 2.2 It is important that the Victorian Government takes sufficient steps throughout the redevelopment project to prevent and address risks for affected residents and other stakeholders. This requires careful planning, robust and transparent relocation policies, adequate support services, and genuine engagement with all affected stakeholders and residents to ensure adequate protections are in place. Where risks are not adequately addressed and mitigated, the redevelopment project will exacerbate existing social inequality, deepen housing instability, and cause lasting harm.

Engaging and consulting stakeholders

“


“Consultation with residents [receiving support from The Salvation Army] has predominantly been received informally in their communities.”

”

- Support in Public Housing Program Team Leader, The Salvation Army

Community Members

- 2.3 Adequate, appropriate and accessible communication with tower residents and affected community members is vital to minimise unnecessary disruption and uncertainty throughout the redevelopment project. The Salvation Army is concerned that the communications provided to affected residents thus far have been limited, inconsistent across locations, and not sufficiently accessible.
- 2.4 The Melbourne public housing towers are home to diverse residents. Many have complex needs, including those with experiences of cognitive decline, living with disability or mental ill-health, or who have additional needs based on their individual experiences and background. These needs are not only applicable to the housing itself, but also to understanding what makes communication and engagement with the redevelopment project's process accessible.
- 2.5 The initial formal communication about the project was minimal and largely inaccessible to many residents. Residents who we support, and frontline staff members, have reported that information was provided on A4 posters with small print and positioned in common areas of the building. These posters were often inaccessible for older residents, residents with impaired eyesight, or those experiencing cognitive impairment or decline. Within the towers, just within The Salvation Army's Support in Public Housing Program, approximately 200 residents speak 42 different languages. Yet the initial correspondence and subsequent information was only available in English.

- 
- 2.6 Important information about the project was gleaned from media reporting and word of mouth within the building's communities. Some residents reported that this caused distress and anxiety due to the lack of clarity and transparency in communication from official sources, about how the project would affect them. Additional resident concerns centered around how and when relocations will occur, and whether their needs will be met in alternative accommodation.
- 2.7 Engaging with community members and their support people is essential to provide guidance, reassurance, and transparency about the project. It is also necessary to ensure residents can access suitable accommodation after relocation. For example, people living with disabilities or older persons may require home modifications to ensure the new housing is safe and appropriate. It is critical that every possible effort is made to engage directly with residents to prevent additional strain. This engagement should prioritise choice and flexibility, including residents' preferences and needs for relocation.
- 2.8 There is a need for increased effort and emphasis to be placed on direct communication between the Victorian Government and residents. This will alleviate concerns resulting from uncertainty and ensure the project is carried out in the least traumatic and most supportive way. Communication must be clear, visible and accessible to residents of all ages and cognitive abilities. Information must also be provided in-language or with access to translator services for residents for whom English is not their first language. We suggest the use of easy read guides and resources, avoiding jargon. Information should also be available in a variety of modes, such as visually or through interactive in-person and online forums where residents and their support people have the opportunity to raise questions and concerns.

“There is a common theme with people in culturally and linguistically diverse communities...some [residents] have fled from government persecution. This [forced relocation] might bring up things that they don't have control over. When you apply for housing, you have the free will to apply, and yes circumstances are hard but there is a level of choice involved in applying for housing. This [redevelopment project] is more of a tight situation and if they're directed to [move]...you can imagine the psychological impact.”

- Tenancy Plus Support Worker, The Salvation Army

Recommendation 3

- 2.9 **The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise clear, direct and accessible communication and engagement about the redevelopment project with affected residents. This should include information about the project's timeline, relocation plan, supports available, and where to access further information and support if needed.**

Frontline Organisations

- 2.10 Transparency is foundational to building trust. Strong and transparent engagement between governments and frontline community organisations is critical to enable stakeholders to build ‘*confidence in government’s ability to act honestly, fairly and in the public interest*’, enable scrutiny of decisions, and hold decision makers to account.² We are concerned that engagement and communication with community organisation stakeholders to date, about the redevelopment project and potential alternative options to redevelopment, has been limited.
- 2.11 Ensuring all parties are informed and can contribute additional expertise and insight will alleviate the uncertainty of the project for residents and support organisations, and increase trust in the project’s benefits. It will allow diverse perspectives to be represented and heard, prevent eroding trust in government, and will contribute to ensuring the project is a success.

“

“As a sector, [the project] is easier to support when we have evidence [presented to us].”

”

- Victorian Homelessness State Manager, The Salvation Army

- 2.12 In the context of the redevelopment project, transparency should involve robust engagement with the frontline service sector — specifically those operating within or supporting residents who live in the Melbourne public housing towers. Meaningful collaboration should involve open conversations and shared information, with government to engage and partner with relevant stakeholders. This could occur in the form of a stakeholder roundtable or intentional stakeholder networks.
- 2.13 Beneficial collaborators could include the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), tenancy managers, the redevelopment project relocations team, local healthcare providers, community services and lived experience representatives. Facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement should aim to:
- **provide a sense of safety and stability** for residents to ease the transition process;
 - **maintain access to necessary services** and support programs without interruption for residents, before, during and after relocation;
 - **equip frontline workers and support services** with clear information to provide consistent responses to community members they support;
 - **communicate timelines and potential delays** related to project milestones; and
 - **allow for organisations to plan for disruptions** in service delivery, including possible relocation of service due to redevelopment, and fluctuations in demand for the duration of the project.

² Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner. (2022). *How transparency and privacy build trust in government*. <https://ovic.vic.gov.au/newsitem/how-transparency-and-privacy-build-trust-in-government/>.

Recommendation 4

- 2.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government proactively and meaningfully engage with frontline organisations and community-based support services that operate within, or support residents impacted by the redevelopment project. This should aim to build trust, reduce uncertainty and contribute to the project's success.**

Keeping communities connected

- 2.15 Relocating accommodation can be stressful and destabilising, particularly when relocation is mandatory. In our experience stress and anxiety is amplified where there is a sense of uncertainty surrounding the new location, living conditions, access to support services, and the challenge of integrating into a new community.

Social connection

- 2.16 Physical displacement can result in individuals losing important and deep-rooted social ties, community networks or systems that they rely on, and which make up their fabric of social support. Without an active plan to keep residents connected to their communities and establish new connections, there is a risk that individuals may become isolated. This is a particular concern amongst individuals and groups who face additional barriers or risk factors such as mobility, or experiences of disadvantage.
- 2.17 For many, neighborhood is a significant part of identity and culture. The disruption of community networks through relocation can result in cultural and identity loss, as the familiar faces and shared experiences that once defined their community are fractured. Where there has been a low rate of movement amongst residents and communities are tight knit, such as observed within some of the Melbourne towers, the impacts may be further exacerbated.

“

“The key to a successful tenancy is about settling into a community.”

- Manager Homelessness Victoria West, The Salvation Army

”

“

“Some of the people in the towers have been there for 30 years. It might be a good thing in some ways, you know...neighbourhood fatigue...but the reality is you're also moving neighbours that have been next to each other for a long time, that they [residents] rely on to mind their children, to bring in washing. It's really going to impact on people's daily life.”

- Homelessness Manager, The Salvation Army

”

Recommendation 5

2.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government ensure the redevelopment project develop and execute a comprehensive plan — in partnership with community organisation stakeholders — to ensure residents are supported to remain connected before, during and after relocation.

Access to services

- 2.19 Continuity of care, specifically in healthcare services, is associated with improved outcomes, greater patient satisfaction and positive patient experiences.³ The Salvation Army observes a similar experience in the stability of support for community members within other frontline services.
- 2.20 Smooth and timely transition to new services, if needed, is critical to minimise disruption. It is difficult for community members to try to shift support and maintain connectivity within a service system that is already stretched and where there are lengthy waitlists for 'new clients'.
- 2.21 Many residents rely on services for maintaining their health and wellbeing. For public housing residents being relocated to new accommodation, staying connected to essential services without interruption is critical. This includes:
- local community programs;
 - health and allied health services;
 - disability supports;
 - aged care services; and
 - government and other social services.
- 2.22 The Salvation Army is concerned that residents who are not adequately prepared to relocate under the redevelopment project will experience challenges in ongoing access to their established service supports, limiting the opportunity for continuity of care and resulting in care instability.
- 2.23 In our experience, a lack of funding flexibility for some community-based support programs can compromise access to services. For example, we are concerned that strict service catchment areas may prevent already engaged services from being able to continue support for residents throughout the transition if they are relocated to a place which is 'out of area'.
- 2.24 Allowing residents to remain connected to their service providers throughout their move requires flexibility to be embedded within funding arrangements. This must include additional operational funding so programs can provide extended periods of flexible support to allow residents to settle into new locations or to adjust following a transition to new support services.

³ Jackson, C. & Ball, L. (2018). Continuity of care: Vital, but how do we measure and promote it? *Australian Journal of General Practice* 47(10). <https://www1.racgp.org.au/ajgp/2018/october/continuity-of-care>.

- 2.25 Funding should be reflective of the increased and evolving needs of residents throughout the project. The Salvation Army recommends that funding could also factor in additional brokerage allowances to allow services to provide support, such as transport and additional moving related costs, to ensure residents are sufficiently supported throughout the transition.
- 2.26 Relocating residents within proximity to their current accommodation, and in areas which have good access to public transport and other infrastructure is critical. We are concerned that failing to do so creates additional barriers, such as lengthy or difficult commutes, which risks residents' ability to remain connected with vital support services. Relocating residents who face additional barriers to accessing services requires additional planning and care, particularly older persons and those who have mobility issues, or chronic health conditions.

“*[There is] trauma attached to changing case management and every program and different area has different working processes. How can people adapt [after relocation] and be supported to feel safe in that transition process?*”

- Homelessness Manager, The Salvation Army

Recommendation 6

- 2.27 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government prioritise flexible funding and brokerage for existing support services, to ensure continuity of care for Melbourne tower residents.

Recommendation 7

- 2.28 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government ensures residents are relocated within proximity to their current accommodation and in areas with sufficient access to public transport and other infrastructure.

3 Equipping and resourcing community organisations to provide solutions

“

“We see clients who are experiencing hardship having to retell their story to many different services. This is traumatic and can lead to disengagement and further isolation.”

”

- Support in Public Housing Program Team Leader, The Salvation Army

- 3.1 Frontline organisations that provide housing and homelessness support should be viewed as a key asset in ensuring communities remain connected prior to, during and after the relocation process for Melbourne tower residents. A success factor in relocation is ensuring support services can identify and meet individual needs. We suggest that programs whose staff have established, trusting relationships with communities already are well positioned to provide transition support solutions to affected residents. Such as in the Miners Rest Caravan Park Capital Motel Transition project, detailed in Appendix A. Existing services could work with relocation workers to ensure a more trauma informed response that prevents residents having to retell their story and familiarise themselves with another support person in the interim.
- 3.2 The following examples are existing services which, with adequate resourcing, could provide increased support to residents within the Melbourne housing towers for the duration of the project.
- **The Salvation Army’s Support in Public Housing (SIPH) program**, otherwise known as the Older Persons High-Rise Support Program, operates directly within eleven older persons’ high-rise public housing estates in inner Melbourne. The program, detailed in Appendix A, supports tenants who are isolated, lack support from family and friends and may not be well linked with health and community services. The SIPH program has strong sector relationships, and plays an integral role in providing information, education and equipping residents with an understanding of their rights as a resident. The program already acts as the link between residents, DFFH and other stakeholders.
 - **The Salvation Army’s Tenancy plus program**, previously known as the Social Housing Advocacy Support Program (SHASP), aims to prevent homelessness and support renters to stay in housing. The program, also detailed in Appendix A, supports renters including those on the Victorian Housing Register, through advocacy, education and community linkages. We believe that this program, or other similar programs, could play a key role in the relocation and transition of current residents under the redevelopment project, such as by linking residents with other supports or services they require before, during and after relocation.

- 3.3 Within meeting the additional needs of residents during the relocation process, there becomes an inevitable increase in demand for service resources. The Salvation Army calls on the Victorian Government to commit to adequately fund existing frontline services to ensure programs are well-resourced to provide support to residents for the duration of the project, including before, during and after relocation. Funding should be flexible as outlined in the discussion above (paragraph 2.24) to ensure that services can ensure a smooth transition for affected residents, whilst avoiding being overburdened.


Implementing transition support solutions

- 3.4 Our frontline teams have experienced an increase in residents seeking further information about the redevelopment project and how this will impact them. We have seen the benefit of direct engagement with DFFH to seek answers and information for residents we support.
- 3.5 The SIPH program employs three part-time team members who have positive relationships with community members already. With additional resourcing to match the additional demand, this program could expand and provide support to a larger number of community members for a longer period. Immediate support could occur in the form of direct engagement with residents, providing information and support about the project, timelines and relocation logistics. This could be done alongside DFFH and other relevant stakeholders as needed. Transition support may include providing transport to residents to view new properties, navigate the relocation process, attend appointments with new services to share information, and provide assertive and proactive outreach.
- 3.6 The strength of the Tenancy Plus program is advocacy and education, including supporting people so that the trauma and pressure of the situation does not put them at the point where they might risk their tenancy. It is critical that the redevelopment project actively addresses impacts which risk putting people into homelessness. We suggest that the program, with additional resourcing to match the increased demand, is well placed to holistically provide the following additional targeted support to residents, surrounding relocation:
- **providing information, linkages and warm referrals** with local services and supports;
 - **distributing brokerage** to assist residents with additional relocation related costs; and
 - **engaging with the DFFH and other stakeholders** to discuss and plan for relocations, determine and communicate timelines, and develop transition plans with residents.

Recommendation 8

- 3.7 The Salvation Army recommends that the Victorian Government increases targeted, sustainable funding to better resource community organisations and existing programs that support the needs of residents before, during and after relocation. Operational funding should account for the increase in demand for service resources during the project.**

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Salvation Army thanks the Victorian Legal and Social Issues Committee for the opportunity to provide a written submission.
- 4.2 The Salvation Army would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of this submission should any further information be of assistance. Further information can be sought from 

The Salvation Army Australia Territory

March 2025

Appendix A The Salvation Army's Footprint

Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation – a development opportunity

The Salvation Army's Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation is a state-wide residential service providing short-term crisis accommodation for 64 single men with a chronic experience of rough and street sleeping, and primary homelessness. Residents can stay for up to 13 weeks and are provided with three meals per day and intensive case management supports.

On site services include Alcohol and Other Drugs counselling and Community Engagement & Client Participation program as well as Bolton Clarke Nursing Services, which provides a co-located Community Health Nurse five days per week. Other visiting professionals provide a range of other specialist services to residents with complex needs.

Flagstaff was last renovated in 1998 (25 years ago) and currently provides single rooms with a TV, ensuite bathrooms, shared lounges, library, games room, a sacred space (chapel) and communal dining room.

Located at 1-37 Roden St, West Melbourne, the property is a 5,600sqm, irregular shaped island site currently occupied by The Salvation Army's Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation. The current facilities provide a greatly needed community service. The site represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment and provision of community housing to maximise its utility.

Under a hypothetical development scenario produced as part of a property feasibility analysis, options related to a redevelopment of the site found that the following could be achieved:

- 114 units of crisis accommodation;
- 104 units of community housing;
- designated accommodation for onsite support and ancillary services;
- 110 car parking spaces; and
- office and retail spaces.

Located in a mixed-use area, near open space and a high level of accessibility to public transport, funding for the redevelopment of the Flagstaff would represent a significant contribution to addressing the social housing shortfall and the integration of housing and homelessness services.

The Salvation Army's Miners Rest Caravan Park Capital Motel Transition Project

The Miners Rest and Capital Motel Transition project started in October 2019 when the site was purchased for redevelopment. This forced many community members being supported by The Salvation Army to relocate.

Residents were notified that the site had been sold, and a series of information sessions took place. A reference group was established, a project coordinator appointed, and a project plan endorsed.

The project started with 67 tenancies and approximately 92 residents. Milestones were established to assist in tracking the project and at the time of this report there are no residents remaining on site. Of the 67 tenancies, 60 residents engaged in support and 53 detailed assessments were completed, with 46 successful in attaining long term, sustainable housing outcomes. These outcomes varied between private rentals, public housing and caravan parks.

To assist with facilitating this transition \$30,000 in project brokerage was provided by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), with an additional \$6000 from the developer to assist residents with obtaining alternate housing that is long term and sustainable. In addition to this brokerage, a further \$5,000 was contributed by DHHS to facilitate re-engagement, post-project to ensure residents have the supports they need to maintain their housing.

Of the total brokerage allocated, about \$37,000 has been expended and there is about \$4,000 remaining to continue re-engagement work.

As this project comes to a close, it's important to note that work continues to address the housing crisis and replace the accommodation lost through this development. An infrastructure working group has been established to aid in facilitating future infrastructure projects that will increase the number of safe, secure and sustainable accommodation options in the area.

The Salvation Army's Tenancy Plus Program

Tenancy Plus aims to provide support and advocacy to social housing renters, those in community and public housing, to help establish and sustain tenancies and reduce the risk of homelessness. The service works with tenants on issues that place their tenancy at risk of breakdown.

Tenancy Plus provides supports to those living, or who will be living, in social housing within the Brimbank, Melton, Hobson Bay and Wyndham Local Government Areas. There are no marked properties in these areas for the relocation project.

The Salvation Army's Support in Public Housing Program

The Support in Public Housing Program, aligned with the Healthy Ageing Program, focuses on enhancing the independence of individuals over 55, particularly those in high-rise public housing.

The onsite team of case workers supports residents by providing access to health services, community groups, and housing support. Ongoing physical activities to reduce isolation, build community and remain healthy are provided for residents to maintain independent living.

Working alongside DFFH and tenancy managers, the team helps clients sustain their tenancy and reduce the risk of homelessness. The program also assists with applications for Victorian Housing Register transfers and engages with Aged Care supports when required.

Currently, this program is not on the relocation list.

Salvation Army Housing

Salvation Army Housing provides tenancy and property management to community members. Recognising the intersecting nature of The Salvation Army's service domains with housing, a housing entity was established in 1995.

Salvation Army Housing exists to address the housing needs of people at all stages of their life. This includes early intervention to avoid a slide into homelessness, emergency accommodation and crisis responses, transition to more stable accommodation and enabling clients to sustain a tenancy.

Salvation Army Housing is a separate legal entity with its own board of directors, funding and personnel who, along with The Salvation Army Homelessness Streams, have long-standing partnerships across various programs, including Transitional Housing Management supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In Victoria, the properties are owned by DFFH. The properties comprise a diverse portfolio, including standalone dwellings, high-density residences such as apartment blocks, and high-rise towers earmarked for redevelopment. Salvation Army Housing manages a few properties within the high-rise towers considered for re-development.