

T R A N S C R I P T

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Redevelopment of Melbourne's Public Housing Towers

Flemington – Tuesday 24 June 2025

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WITNESS

Alamin Ramadan.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I declare open the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into the Redevelopment of Melbourne's Public Housing Towers. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I will introduce myself first. My name is Michael Galea. I am the Deputy Chair.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: I am Ann-Marie Hermans, Member for the South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Alamin RAMADAN: Nice to meet you.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Ryan Batchelor, Member for the Southern Metropolitan Region.

Lee TARLAMIS: Lee Tarlamis, Member for South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Good afternoon. Anasina Gray-Barberio, Northern Metro Region.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Afternoon. Aiv Puglielli, North-Eastern Metropolitan.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information that you provide during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded, though not broadcast. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website. For the Hansard record, could you please state your full name.

Alamin RAMADAN: My full name is Alamin Ramadan.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you very much. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement of around 5 minutes.

Alamin RAMADAN: Just to talk about the demolition, is it, or –

The DEPUTY CHAIR: To talk about what you want to tell the committee today.

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. I just disagree to the demolition. I do not agree like that. It should stay like that, you know. The building has been locked up for quite a long time, so it is stressful. I am just angry, you know.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: No problem. Do you have any further statements you would like to make or are you happy for us to go to questions?

Alamin RAMADAN: That is all.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: No problem. We have a further witness and a translator joining us as well. Please bear with us. We will take a brief break in proceedings.

Hearing suspended.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We will now resume the hearing. Thank you for bearing with us, Mr Ramadan. We will now start with some questions from the committee based on the information that you have provided to us. If I can first ask you – and thank you for appearing today – what do you most enjoy about your current living situation in the public housing towers, what do you most have an issue with and what would you like to see changed?

Alamin RAMADAN: We have been here, living, for quite a long time, so we got used to it, you know? It is good. For me everything is okay, you know. I mean, I do not agree to the demolition, so it should stay as it is. It is just, like, there is nothing wrong with it. It is all good. It is a good area, a good building. So I do not agree to the demolition. It should stay as it is.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Sure. I do not believe we have a submission from you. If you are comfortable to share – only if you are comfortable – which tower do you live in?

Alamin RAMADAN: 130.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. How long have you been living in 130 for?

Alamin RAMADAN: Quite a long time, around 25 years – long.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: And are there particular social aspects that you particularly appreciate where you live here?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. It is good.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I know that change can be stressful. What is concerning you personally the most, and what can we do as a committee to recommend to the government that they do things better so that it is less of an impact on you?

Alamin RAMADAN: I mean, it is everything. If they want to fix it, they should do, like, more renovation.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: So the building is not up to standard?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Not up to standard?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Do you have concerns about overheating in summer?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes, that is all. Yes. That is the only – they should do renovations, like, every apartment should have air conditioning. When it is summertime, it gets very hot. That is the only reason.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: And is it too cold in winter as well?

Alamin RAMADAN: In winter it should be okay.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: It is not too bad? Mainly summer, it is too hot?

Alamin RAMADAN: But the summer, that is all. Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you. I will now pass to Mrs Hermans.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Thank you for coming in today. I believe you have raised your family in the towers. What was it like to raise a family in the towers? Just a very short answer. Did you find it was a good family environment, to raise them in the towers, or was it difficult?

Alamin RAMADAN: It was all right. It was good. I will say it was good, yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: It was good? What did you enjoy most, as a family, growing up and raising your family in the towers?

Alamin RAMADAN: It was good, it was all right. I do not have any complaint with that.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: No complaints.

Alamin RAMADAN: No complaint.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: But was there anything special about living there, for your family?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. It is good. Yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: What was good?

Alamin RAMADAN: Because it is more like social life.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Social life?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. The kids, when they have free time, they can play together, you know, at the park or wherever.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Can I ask, with the children, were there kindergartens? Like when they go – the three-year-old, four-year-old, is there anything close by for families for kindergarten?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Yes – but not provided in the building?

Alamin RAMADAN: Not in the building, just like – because we all live together at the same, you know, everyone lives close to each other. So kids, they can play at the park, they can see each other. So it is more like a social life.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Yes. If the government had provided opportunity for kindergarten and for child care or childminding in the building, would that have helped a lot of families?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes, yes. It should be, yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Okay. And heating is a problem – were the houses up higher obviously a lot hotter than the ones down lower? Whereabouts were you? When you were living in the towers, were you very high up, or –

Alamin RAMADAN: No, just in the middle.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: In the middle?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Did you know anybody that lived up high – was it much hotter up there for them, or when they had the open balconies, was it better?

Alamin RAMADAN: It depends, in every unit. Some should be all right but in some they do not have – like, it is very hard to get the air. It does not matter how you open the window or – you do not get it.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: So it just depended on which part of the building you lived in?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes, maybe the one in the corner a bit better, but the one in the middle was just –

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Okay. Good to know, thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Ms Gray-Barberio.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thanks very much, Deputy Chair. Thank you, Mr Ramadan, for being here. Can you tell the committee about your public home? And what I mean by that is, were there any repairs and maintenance that were carried out regularly?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. Just sometimes, the laundry and – now, right now they do not have a good cleaner. They do not do good cleaning now, so it is all messed up, the building, in every building, if you see, especially 130. It is just rubbish everywhere. It is the cleaner. They do not do the good job like it used to be before. They are not cleaning good, you know? They do not do the job properly.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Mr Ramadan, did you get a letter from the government on the day the government announced the demolition, in September 2023?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: You did receive a letter?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. I did receive, yes.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And what was your reaction to that, upon receiving that letter?

Alamin RAMADAN: I was not agreed with that. I was not happy about it.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And has Homes Victoria made any relocation offers to you and your family?

Alamin RAMADAN: Home?

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Homes Victoria.

Alamin RAMADAN: Maybe, but I do not know. I have not seen anything, a letter.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: So they have not tried to contact you by phone or other ways?

Alamin RAMADAN: No. No contact. I did not get any contact.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Okay.

Alamin RAMADAN: But they sent a letter. We have the letter. I thought it would be about the building, about the demolition. So I was not concerned about that a lot, as I know they are going to demolish us.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: What were you and your family most concerned about?

Alamin RAMADAN: Because sometimes they send you everywhere. You do not want to go to where they send you. People get used to this area, have been living here for quite a long time.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And were you given one or two options for relocation, Mr Ramadan?

Alamin RAMADAN: Location for?

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Were you given one or two options for relocation?

Alamin RAMADAN: No, because right where we live now is 130. I heard some people say they might knock it down after five years or 10 years. So this is where I live now, 130.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Batchelor.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Just to clarify for the committee, the building you are in is not currently scheduled to be part of the current demolition – that is right, isn't it? At the moment, you are not personally going through the relocation process, but you know other people who are.

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes.

Ryan BATCHELOR: That is right. So your building is one of the ones that will happen in the future but not right now?

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes. Not right now.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that for the benefit of the committee. Having seen your friends in the community in the towers that are going through the relocation now, what things do you think, from your observation of what has happened to others, the government should improve for the future? When it

comes time in maybe five years or maybe 10 years to get to the building at 130 where you live, what would you like to see improved in the way it happens?

Alamin RAMADAN: Well, you do not have a choice if they want to knock it down, so you have to accept it, you know. I mean, what are you going to do? You cannot do nothing about it.

Ryan BATCHELOR: But the government will still go through a process.

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes, a process.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Based on what you have seen, how do you think that could be made better?

Alamin RAMADAN: Process, like what do you mean?

Ryan BATCHELOR: The relocation process, the alternative housing options – what do you think?

Alamin RAMADAN: It should be the same. You are living in public, so it should be exactly public housing – we are the same.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Have you had the opportunity – the current redevelopments at Holland Court will occur over the next few years. If there was an opportunity to move into one of those new apartments when they are completed, would that be something that you or other members of the community would be interested in?

Alamin RAMADAN: It should be public housing, because I think some of them are community housing, so a bit different than the public.

Ryan BATCHELOR: What do you think those key differences are between public and community housing, from your point of view?

Alamin RAMADAN: Everything: the bill, the rent is a bit higher. They are not the same.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Not the same. I think my time is up. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes, it is. Thank you, Mr Batchelor. Mr Puglielli.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Good afternoon. You just said before that you do not have a choice whether the towers are to be knocked down or not. Do you think that is fair, given that you live there?

Alamin RAMADAN: Well, they should care about people. The people do not accept it or do not agree with it. They should leave it as it is. Why would they knock it down without people's permission? People do not accept it, so they should leave it as it is. Yes, they should not be knocked down. When people say no, they should leave it as is. You are taking away the freedom of the people.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Do you think the government invests enough at the moment – or in the past, even – into the public housing towers? You spoke about the cleaning services earlier. Is the government investing enough to make sure that these are kept up to scratch, that you have got services that you need?

Alamin RAMADAN: The services are the same as before, but the thing is with this cleaning they are not doing a good job. We have been living there for quite a long time, and we can compare. They are not doing a good job. They are not cleaning properly. You see on every floor that there is a mess. They are not doing cleaning; they are not doing a good job. I will say that they are just working for money. They do not care about the job. If you see the lifts and every floor, it is not a good job. They come, they do the job, but the job has not been completed. They are not doing a good job.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Can you tell us what is special about your local community? What makes the community of the tower that you live in special?

Alamin RAMADAN: What do you mean?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: The community around you – what is special about it?

Alamin RAMADAN: The community where I live now?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Yes.

Alamin RAMADAN: We are all immigrants, or most of us. We all live here, and people live here for quite a long time. People enjoy it and like it because it is good. We all know each other, you should not be surprised: we are African people, so we have got a social life.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: And to stay together, I think is what you are saying.

Alamin RAMADAN: Yes, we stay together as a family. Family, kids, children, whatever – we always connect together. We like to stay together.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Is that my time, Deputy Chair?

The DEPUTY CHAIR: On the dot. Well done.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: On the dot. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Puglielli. I understand Mr Tarlamis does not have any questions, so that brings us to the end of this hearing.

Thank you very much, Mr Ramadan, for your time today. We appreciate you coming and giving your evidence.

Witness withdrew.