



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

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

Hearing date: 1 July 2025

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Southern Homelessness Services Network, Ruth Gordon

Received date: 17 July 2025

1. Lee TARLAMIS, p.27

Question asked:

Ruth, you mentioned a little bit earlier about discrimination against low-income tenants. Would you be able to, on notice, provide some examples of that so that we can get a better understanding of any evidence?

Ruth GORDON: I think it is probably quite subtle, so I do not know if I would be able to provide any examples. I can try and do that, but I think that it is like you get the list, the VHR, and people go, 'Okay, well, there's plenty of people on there to choose from. We'll just choose the people that are on disability support pension or age pension.' So I think it is quite subtle, rather than people being actively or overtly discriminated against. It is systemic. It is built into the system, if you like, by the financial modelling. But I can try.

Response:

In response, I sought advice from SHSN member, South Port Community Housing, who provide community housing in the Inner South of Melbourne and are responsive in accommodating people on the lowest incomes in community housing.

The response was as follows:

There are clear "financial disincentives built into the community housing funding model" – namely the way that rents are pinned to Centrelink values. The rent we can charge as a Community Housing Provider is \$34.44 more per week (\$1,790.88 per annum) for a DSP renter v a Job Seeker renter.

However, these disincentives become rather academic where the Community Housing Provider adheres to an intake process which is

“agnostic” to these disincentives and the Centrelink status of prospective tenants in their intake process.

South Port has 37% DSP, 36% Job Seeker and 17 % AP with 10% Others and I can confirm that this mix of tenants is not by design – it is simply a result of our values driven assessments of the referrals as they occur off the VHR.

South Port Community Housing Group Acting CEO, Steve Timmerman, is happy to be contacted if you require further information - Steve Timmerman