

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

South Yarra – Tuesday 1 July 2025

MEMBERS

Joe McCracken – Chair

Michael Galea – Deputy Chair

Ryan Batchelor

Anasina Gray-Barberio

Renee Heath

Ann-Marie Hermans

Rachel Payne

Lee Tarlamis

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Melina Bath

John Berger

Georgie Crozier

Jacinta Ermacora

David Ettershank

Sarah Mansfield

Tom McIntosh

Aiv Puglielli

Sonja Terpstra

Richard Welch

WITNESSES

Lloyd Murphy, Housing Justice Lead, and

Jess Richter, Legal Director, Southside Justice.

The CHAIR: Welcome back to the Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into the redevelopment of housing towers in Victoria. I welcome you here today and thank you very much for appearing. We are going to go through and introduce our committee. I am Joe McCracken, and I am Chair.

Michael GALEA: G'day. Michael Galea, Member for South-Eastern Metro.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Ryan Batchelor, Member for Southern Metro.

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

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Good afternoon. Aiv Puglielli, North-Eastern Metro.

Renee HEATH: Renee Heath, Eastern Victoria Region.

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

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Ann-Marie Hermans, South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

The CHAIR: Thank you. 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 you provide during these hearings 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 thing, those comments may not be protected by that same privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence you give today is being recorded, and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Ultimately transcripts will be made public and put on the website.

For Hansard, are you able to say your full name and the organisation you are appearing on behalf of, please.

Lloyd MURPHY: Lloyd Murphy from Southside Justice.

Jess RICHTER: Jess Richter from Southside Justice.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much. I understand that you would like a few minutes to give an opening statement, and then we will go to questions from the committee from there. I will hand it over to you, Lloyd, and we will go from there.

Lloyd MURPHY: Wonderful, thank you. Good afternoon and thank you, committee, for giving us the opportunity to speak today. As already recorded for Hansard, my name is Lloyd Murphy from Southside Justice. I am the Housing Justice Lead lawyer there. I would like to extend the committee's acknowledgement from this morning and acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin nations on which Southside Justice works and operates. I would like to pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Southside Justice is a community legal centre. We provide legal support and assistance to low-income individuals across the cities of Port Phillip, Stonnington and Bayside. Our catchment includes approximately 23 per cent of all of Victoria's high-rise public flats, at least a fifth of the properties that are being affected by this redevelopment plan, approximately 1900 homes. Since the announcement of the demolition plan for 259 Malvern Road, we have worked closely with the South Yarra Public Tenants Association, which we shorten to SYPTA to support residents through this period of uncertainty. Together in this very room with SYPTA we have hosted public meetings as recently as yesterday. We have provided legal advice to residents who wanted to attend and speak to us one on one, and we have listened to the concerns of residents who have been asked to leave their homes, many of whom have lived here for decades and feel very supported within a close-knit community.

The work that we have done since the announcement has informed our submission that was mailed to the inquiry in March, and I wish to highlight five key areas that Southside Justice believes require the committee's consideration. Firstly, the issue of transparency and accountability: residents feel that they have been left out of this decision-making process and that there are not clear answers. Many still do not understand why their houses are being demolished as opposed to being upgraded. The decision-making is not clear either way. We would encourage the government to consider releasing all documents that have informed this decision so that we can have a clearer and more open discussion around the decision-making process.

Secondly, the issue of clear public relocation guidelines: relocation is a life-altering process. It is one of the top five most stressful things anyone does, moving property. Yet the residents are being asked to make decisions without publicly published relocation guidelines. Many do not know what their rights are, and that is the work that we have been doing to try and communicate these rights and issues for residents. We encourage the government to publish and distribute these clear relocation guidelines to ensure that residents are able to have a clear and fair process in this relocation.

Thirdly, we strongly advocate for a 'one relocation only' approach. We are seeing residents offered and moved from 259 Malvern Road into nearby towers in King Street or Windsor. The other issue that has come up is that residents who have moved from the old walk-ups on Simmons Street were relocated into 259 and are now again being subjected to another relocation process – so that doubling-down of the relocation. We would be asking for an approach, essentially one relocation, where that person, if they wish to return to the estate, can return to the estate, but they are not going to continue to have a threat of relocation hanging over them again.

Fourthly – and hurry me up if I am talking too much – the public housing needs to be retained and expanded. Southside Justice believes in public land as a public asset, and we should be using it to build public housing, not just community or private rentals or private properties. Public housing provides stronger legal protections, including lifelong leases and lower rent caps, which are essential for those most impacted by housing inequality. We urge the government to commit to retaining and expanding public housing, particularly within the inner cities, where access to services and community supports is critical. Our catchment reports that people travel on average 75 kilometres to access services within City of Port Phillip, so maintaining public housing within the inner city is key to accessing services for residents.

Finally, we would advocate that no resident should be worse off because of the relocation. Relocation should not come at the cost of the residents' health, wellbeing or financial security, yet we are seeing residents forced to replace furniture, pay higher rents through additional property charges and lose access to essential services. I do not think that I can speak any better than Maurya spoke this morning around the experiences of residents who have been relocated into community housing properties. But definitely these are concerns and issues that we have heard from community members, and we encourage the government to address people's financial, social and emotional wellbeing and respect that people's special accommodation requirements and needs are considered properly and that the rent remains affordable and fair.

In closing, we want to be clear that investing in public housing is an investment in social stability and community wellbeing. It creates stronger, safer and more connected communities, but that can only happen for residents if they are treated with dignity and included in the decision-making process, which we would say has not occurred on this occasion. My boss, our Legal Director, would also like to just add a little bit.

Jess RICHTER: Thank you, committee. I just want to add to our submission and Lloyd's comments so far. Our focus has been on our experience working with the residents of 259 Malvern Road, but I want to more broadly add that Southside Justice is a member of the Port Phillip Zero executive. We were watching on the live stream the contribution of Maurya and representatives of Port Phillip and Stonnington Zero and the Southern Homelessness Network, and I would like to endorse their comments and add that we share their concerns about the capacity for non-government community housing to provide adequate access to housing for all the diverse cohorts of people, both those who need to be relocated but also those who are currently experiencing primary homelessness and on the VHR waiting list, which I think George spoke to really eloquently in previous comments. Thank you for your consideration of these issues, and thank you for having us here today.

The CHAIR: A pleasure. Thank you for appearing as well. I will start off with questions, and then we will go back and forth between committee members. The first one I have is for you, Lloyd. It is about a comment

you made, and I know it is in your submission, about retention and protection of public housing. Do you mean specifically about the towers and retaining them in the form that they are in? No? Not the form that they are in but refurbishing them – or are you supportive of them being knocked over and being rebuilt?

Lloyd MURPHY: This is an issue that is essentially at the heart of this committee and the decision-making.

The CHAIR: Yes, exactly.

Lloyd MURPHY: Our position is that we do not have enough information, and there has not been enough information communicated publicly, to really be for or against. We do not have the information. I know that there are residents here who want to stay, who believe it can be upgraded. There are residents here who believe that the place should have been knocked down a decade ago. That is the spectrum in terms of the residents.

The CHAIR: It is mixed.

Lloyd MURPHY: Definitely we have a lot of issues with maintenance and having maintenance addressed within the towers. Whether or not those are at a point where they need to be demolished is not something that we have clear enough sight or information over.

The CHAIR: That is fair enough. I know in your opening before you said that you and perhaps a number of others felt like they, and I am paraphrasing here, had not been brought along on the journey – were not informed, were not engaged to a level that you think you should have been. Do you think if you had had a better level of engagement that you might, obviously, have been in a position to give, I would say, a more informed response to the overarching question of why we are here?

Lloyd MURPHY: I do not know if – unless there was more information shared in terms of documents –

The CHAIR: The point I am making is you feel as though you have not had that information shared with you.

Lloyd MURPHY: I do not think it is necessarily about just us at Southside Justice. I think it is the information that is available publicly, and that goes back to our recommendation around transparency. I know that there are lots of concerns about information that is being shared around this. The reflection is that in a space where there is less information, or limited information on decision-making, it provides an opportunity for –

The CHAIR: Those gaps to be filled in other ways.

Lloyd MURPHY: those gaps to be filled up in different ways.

The CHAIR: That is fair enough. You also talked about genuine consultation and the fact that that may not have necessarily been present. What are you hearing in terms of what the consultation has looked like so far? My second part to that is: where should it be, in your view?

Lloyd MURPHY: In terms of prior to the announcement or since the announcement?

The CHAIR: All through the process.

Lloyd MURPHY: I do not believe prior to the announcement – and this even is a reflection upon the initial announcement with the North Melbourne and Flemington towers – that there was sufficient communication with residents. To have residents express to us when 259 was announced as being relocated that they were finding out about it on the news as opposed to having been communicated with directly from housing support workers was disappointing. It is not where you want your quality engagement with community to be at.

In terms of actually working with community and informing communities and engagement, there was a lot of reflection last week around working with members within community, engaging with members and community that are on staff with Homes Victoria that can actually really communicate with clients in language in a manner that allows them to bring them along and be engaged and involved in the conversation.

The CHAIR: That is fair enough. I appreciate your response. My time has unfortunately expired, so I am going to pass over to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you both for joining us today. You just mentioned before in response to the Chair that you do have a lot of issues with maintenance that are reported to you. I could not see any discussion of that in your submission, so I am curious as to what some of the key maintenance issues that you encounter are, particularly with 259 but more in general too, and what sorts of significant major issues are your residents experiencing that you represent?

Lloyd MURPHY: Our housing justice portfolio started in May last year, and one of the key focuses was to engage with the public housing residents within these towers. So working with SYPTA, even prior to the announcement of 259, we had decided that we would be running a session around mould within the properties. In between booking that date and doing the session, the relocation was announced. So that was a bit of a change in topic, but mould is one of the key issues – and repairs in general. There are a lot of leaks; there are a lot of cupboard doors that are not being used as cupboard doors anymore. The problem, particularly around the mould, is that there are issues with – particularly living next to a construction site – leaving your windows open. It has been quite a long period of time for, particularly, 2 Simmons Street. They have been living next to this construction site where when they raise issues about mould, they are told to open their windows to have ventilation come through.

Michael GALEA: Just on that point, if construction is in the nearby vicinity, basically residents cannot open their windows – is that what you are saying – without the mould issue increasing?

Lloyd MURPHY: Well, if the response from Homes Vic to a mould issue is to open your windows and you are living next to a construction site, there is going to be a lot of dust.

Michael GALEA: We are not talking about ‘This can be fixed with a lick of paint’ or something, are we, with these mould issues? We are not talking about ‘A quick lick of paint can fix this’ – it is much more serious with these issues?

Lloyd MURPHY: We do not really know, because when we do engage with a client, the access to the specialist mould reports – we do not have them. The Homes Vic department – they obtain these reports; they do not share them. We have no real insight as to the I guess significance of any mould infestation.

Michael GALEA: Sure. And in representing your clients, you have mentioned the mould issue. Have you ever advocated for them to be moved to newer apartments on the basis of mould in their apartments?

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes. Absolutely. Yes. We have been advocating quite strongly for a family to be moved out of 259 because of significant mould.

Michael GALEA: Okay. Yes. Is that still underway, or is that resolved?

Lloyd MURPHY: That client – it was all too much. She had fought for three years to try and get the property free of mould, and she was done with it. So she stopped engaging with the service on mutual terms. It was not that she went missing, but she was just finished with trying to deal with the Department of Housing to have a mould-free home.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

The CHAIR: I will pass it over to Ms Gray-Barberio.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Lloyd. In your statement you spoke about how the residents that you have been able to support have talked about signing relocation papers on the spot without fully understanding the extent of it, and we heard similar accounts from residents in Flemington last week at the first public housing hearing. How widespread do you think this practice is?

Lloyd MURPHY: I would suspect that the intention of each meeting from Homes Victoria staff is to have the form signed.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And do you think this practice is legal?

Lloyd MURPHY: I think that whether or not it is legal and whether or not it goes into a human rights discussion – I am not sure, but it is definitely –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And just speaking about human rights, do you think human rights have been breached here, in this context?

Lloyd MURPHY: I do not believe that we have a position on that. Obviously there is a class action appeal from Inner Melbourne Community Legal that is currently underway, and we have been watching that over the last 18 months with quite a bit of interest in that.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Okay.

Jess RICHTER: Whether or not there is a charter issue – sorry to jump in – has to be addressed on a case-by-case basis based on really specifically what has happened.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: But is it widespread –

Jess RICHTER: I think Lloyd has given that –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: or is it nuanced?

Jess RICHTER: I am not going to use the word nuanced, but I think Lloyd has provided the answer that –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: That is fine. That is fine. We will move on.

Jess RICHTER: Look, I think it is nuanced. I think Lloyd has provided the answer that he can.

Lloyd MURPHY: That we can, yes.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: In your submission you spoke a lot about the residents of 259 Malvern Road who have relocated to community housing, and a lot of them are reporting that they are having to pay more in rent and do not really understand the reasons for this increase, given that they have come from public housing and they have now gone to community housing. Do residents understand the distinction between public housing and community housing?

Lloyd MURPHY: No.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Sorry, can you just repeat that so we can hear?

Lloyd MURPHY: No, I do not believe the residents understand the difference between public housing and community housing. It is something that has been a key discussion point for us at all of our resident meetings, to discuss that topic. Do I think now that there are residents within the tower who understand that? Yes, because we have done a lot of work on that issue, but at the time of these forms asking people to choose or tick a box in their relocation form that would have been public and/or community housing and tick however many you would feel open to accepting offers of, the majority of the clients would not have.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: So the current public housing residents that are still there now that you are saying are a bit more clear about it, are they clearer about it because Homes Victoria are doing their job to make sure that residents understand, or is this the work that your organisation is doing?

Lloyd MURPHY: I would happily boast a little bit that it would be our work and not Homes Victoria's work.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: It is not boasting if it is telling the truth, Lloyd, so thank you. Can you tell me –

The CHAIR: That is time, I am afraid.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Time goes by so quickly. Thank you.

The CHAIR: I will pass over to Dr Heath.

Renee HEATH: Thank you so much for your submission and for coming in today. Lloyd, you spoke about the need for documents. What information are you after that you need to come to a clear position on whether you support the demolition or you do not, and what sorts of actions have you taken to secure those documents?

Lloyd MURPHY: We have not done anything to obtain documents.

Renee HEATH: Okay.

Lloyd MURPHY: It is my understanding from the class action that a lot of those documents from the decision-making are under cabinet privilege. I may be making that up, but it is my understanding that that was the argument.

Renee HEATH: Do you feel like they have been blocked – hidden?

Jess RICHTER: I think that we do not really regard it as our role as a local community legal centre to try to get and assess all of the information about the feasibility of the demolition versus refurbishment or any of that. I think what we are saying is that that is information it would be useful for the public to have had, not necessarily us, because even if it was released, we are not necessarily the people with the expertise to understand all of that information and take a firm position on it. It is not really our role.

Renee HEATH: So your clients – there have been a lot of things, obviously, people have said about the building not being fit for purpose, and one of the issues is around the number of bedrooms. How many of your clients have cited not enough bedrooms as an issue, or is it not an issue?

Lloyd MURPHY: I am reflecting on the bedroom issues from this morning. I think on a grander scale the concept of how many bedrooms are actually being replaced is something that is not publicly available. We know that across the way there is going to be 34 per cent more community housing, but we do not know what that actually translates to in terms of how many rooms. So you could have taken four-bedroom properties there and that consideration is then calculated with one-bedroom properties later on, but you have lost however many rooms in that process.

Renee HEATH: Another issue in terms of assessing whether something is fit for purpose has been access to public transport infrastructure. Yet knocking down 44 towers is not going to improve transport infrastructure. What are the issues your clients have faced around this? Are they happy where they are? Do their homes meet their current needs?

Lloyd MURPHY: There is a large cohort within particularly 259 and across the Horace Petty estate that wants to remain on the estate. They want to remain nearby to the Prahran Market and Prahran Central. Their GPs are here. There are multiple tram tracks. They can get themselves to the train line quite easily if they do want to go further. Also, the Alfred is at the end of the street. So there are a huge amount of resources available here to people. I think of main concern for other residents with the demolition of 259 is the removal of the Prahran housing office from site. There is no discussion about whether or not there will be temporary offices set up here, which without information leads us to then make a conclusion that potentially those staff members are going to be relocated to the South Melbourne office, which is two tram rides and 35 minutes, according to Google Maps.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Lloyd. Mr Batchelor.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Thanks, Chair. Thank you both for coming in. What do you think Homes Victoria's, or the state's, primary duty of care is to the residents of these 44 towers?

Lloyd MURPHY: To provide a fit-for-purpose home. Sorry. I think that the state needs to provide safe and secure housing. I know that housing is not considered under our charter of human rights, but it is something that is so fundamental that we need to actually be ensuring that people have fair and equitable access to it, and hopefully with public housing.

Ryan BATCHELOR: How do you think the state should balance an individual's need with a collective need? We heard today that there is a need for more social housing to be built. How does the state balance an individual's views about their own home and the collective responsibility that it has to provide more housing,

particularly when we have got locations that you have just said are a very good spot to have that type of housing? How does the state balance those? Do you want to say anything?

Lloyd MURPHY: If we are talking about the 10 per cent uplift and addressing the kind of increase –

Ryan BATCHELOR: It is not just the 10 per cent uplift, though. Isn't it a fundamental question about –

Lloyd MURPHY: Increasing housing?

Ryan BATCHELOR: Yes.

Lloyd MURPHY: I think that percentages for increasing social housing across the different sites are all things that on paper are very great. What those figures can hide is the impact on residents in terms of being displaced from their homes, the impact that a bedroom count can actually have and whether or not there is actually a functional increase in property.

Ryan BATCHELOR: I do not want to cut you off, but it does not really go to the question that I asked. Do you want to say anything, Jess?

Jess RICHTER: I think it is a false dichotomy to say that you are having to balance duty to the individual against the state's duty to provide for the whole community and to provision and resource many needs across the whole state. The reason is that I think these decisions go beyond impacting individuals, and what our submission seeks to get at is that there are much broader social fabric ripple effects to the decisions that are being made that will impact all of our government-funded services and other government departments beyond housing. There are health impacts to a person –

Ryan BATCHELOR: My time is just about to run out. On that particular question, should the government never make a decision to rebuild housing that is no longer livable?

Jess RICHTER: That is certainly not what we have said. We have said that the real impact, the breadth and the depth of the impact for communities, which actually does affect the state government and its pocket, has to be really deeply considered. As I was about to say, the health impact for an elderly person being moved from two-bedroom public housing to a one-bedroom who previously had a family member living with them as a carer, and then they are moved to an area that is no longer accessible to the key services that they are used to using – that impacts our social fabric; that impacts our whole society. That is not the individual versus the collective.

The CHAIR: I have to move on, Mr Batchelor. I will pass it over to Mr Puglielli.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon. Can I ask: in your assessment, have Homes Victoria been responsive in maintaining and upgrading the public housing towers?

Lloyd MURPHY: With clients that we work with, getting maintenance to be undertaken is a challenge.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Can I ask: is it your view that the state government has been engaging in a program of managed decline of the towers by not properly maintaining them?

Jess RICHTER: I do not know that we have the breadth of experience in working with the residents of the towers given the length of our housing justice program's focus on working with public tower residents. But I would just reiterate and emphasise Lloyd's previous answer. It is a challenge.

Lloyd MURPHY: I do not remember the report, but there may actually be a report that suggests there has been less investment compared to other states. That report might exist; I do not know the name of it, and please do not –

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. That is something to look into. If the government cannot provide any evidence that demolition is necessary, do you think they should proceed with the demolition plan? I mean, if there is no evidence, should we do it?

Lloyd MURPHY: It is difficult to make a decision when there is not evidence.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Your submission notes residents with special accommodation needs have had inappropriate relocation offers that have not met those needs. Can you share some examples of this?

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes. There is the client that Jess just discussed, a client with essentially a full-time carer who was being forced to relocate into a one-bedroom. We have also seen with a number of older residents who are reliant on mobility aids, walking frames – the concept of the space that these items take up in properties – requesting an additional room to actually house these has not been considered within the allocation of rooms.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Can you share with us some experiences of relocated residents where they have been relocated into community housing? Have there been any recurring issues that you have seen?

Lloyd MURPHY: We have seen a number of residents who have moved quite early on from 259 into Bangs Street. A lot of people love Bangs Street, but with that comes the risk of increased rent and also additional property charges. It is my understanding that Bangs Street is also on an embedded electrical network, so you lose that ability to choose your electricity provider within those properties. I think the key difference is the additional property charges that community housing providers seek to actually charge residents on a weekly basis, so it exceeds the charges that they would ever be paying in the towers.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Do I have one more?

The CHAIR: Time is up. I am really sorry.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Mrs Hermans, it is over to you.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Thank you. I do have a few questions for you. Some of them are a little bit basic, but in terms of relocation guidelines that your clients have found readily available, what are they and what in particular is missing? I have got a bunch of these, so if we can go quickly.

Lloyd MURPHY: They are not on the website.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: There is nothing on the website that they can access and where they can find out what they need? So they are feeling like they have got nowhere to go and no understanding of what is going on?

Lloyd MURPHY: On DFFH's website there is a section saying that the public housing renewal program or the tower relocation guidelines are being reviewed and will be made public when reviewed – something along those lines.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Great. Thank you. What special accommodation requests regarding bedroom allocations have been ignored, in your observations? If we could keep this one quick too.

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes, so mainly the two issues that we have just discussed before of the carers –

Ann-Marie HERMANS: With the elderly?

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes, older residents.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Are you finding that there is more than one case of that, where elderly people are being separated from family members that would otherwise be able to assist them – or disabled people?

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Thank you. What discussions, are you aware, have been accurately documented, and what sorts of discussions and their contents or issues are not being accurately documented or communicated? You have made that request for that transparency, and we are aware of some of it, but I just wonder if there is anything extra you want to add to that.

Lloyd MURPHY: In terms of what is publicly available or the –

Ann-Marie HERMANS: You talked about discussions that have been taking place between the department and your clients.

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes. A lot of issues initially at the start were when residents from here would be going into the local housing office, as the relocation team, and particularly when the announcement first occurred I think there was one staff member there once a week. So communications and forms – relocation forms and special accommodation requirement forms – that were being handed into that local office were reportedly not then making their way to the relocation team. A lot of issues with the relocation team from residents have been addressed more recently. There has been investment in staffing onsite to address a lot of residents' issues with that, so that has improved.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Okay. The outcomes of not having those questions answered initially caused what sorts of disruptions for people, and what are the implications for that now with the changes? Are there still senses of uncertainty or anxiety? Could you please just perhaps fill in a little bit more of the blanks there for us? Thanks.

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes. I mean, we see plenty of residents who have filled out their forms and have got their allocation, but they do not know what is next, and they are just kind of staying here until an offer is made. So there is no immediate certainty. I mean, we understand that the relocation is due to be complete within nine months from February next year, but other than that there is not that much more clarity for residents.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: How regular is that communication, do you feel? Is it still once weekly? Is that adequate? Is it enough? Does it need to increase? Could improvements be made?

Lloyd MURPHY: I think that more communication would be always appreciated. I do acknowledge Homes Victoria have of recent months placed more investment in the relocation team onsite, and that that has improved.

The CHAIR: Time is up, unfortunately, Mrs Hermans. I will now hand over to Mr Tarlamis. Over to you.

Lee TARLAMIS: Thank you for your submission and coming along today. Just picking up on that last point, you mentioned that the engagement from the relocation teams has improved. Is that correct?

Lloyd MURPHY: Yes. From reports from residents, yes. It is my understanding that when the relocation was initially announced there was approximately one staff member one day a week at Prahran, and that now is in a situation where there are three staff members here three days a week. So that is definitely wanting to reflect that residents are seeing a much greater improvement within those communication lines with the relocation team because of that.

Lee TARLAMIS: From what you are hearing from your clients, are there other ways, in addition to that additional provision of service, in which there could be improvements around that relocation process?

Lloyd MURPHY: It comes down to the decision-making on a lot of the forms and where that comes back to. I think that we are seeing a point now where residents are kind of allotted what they have been allotted and they are not too sure what to do with that, so we are seeing more and more clients coming to us being like, 'This is what they've approved me for in my transfer, and I'm not happy. I need these other things.' We are starting to see more of that, yes.

Lee TARLAMIS: Given the condition and the issues at many of the housing towers and that they would actually require some form of relocation regardless of how you address that, if you are able to replace the existing housing, while they are relocated, with fit-for-purpose housing that is safe and secure and has the mix of housing that is required on those sites that we know are located at close proximity to their needs and services, as part of the relocation process, and provide a new facility addressing those issues and also with that additional uplift, which does provide capacity to have that diversity of bedrooms as well, do you agree that that is a good thing and would help with the housing situation?

Lloyd MURPHY: I think that for these local residents on the Horace Petty estate, the best outcome for the majority facing relocation, who want to stay in the nearby area, would be to delay the relocation until the

Simmons Street constructions are finished or the Essex Street constructions so that they can be placed into these new constructions and remain a community.

Lee TARLAMIS: Despite some of the issues with the conditions in their current dwellings?

Lloyd MURPHY: If the demolition and relocation are proceeding, I believe that their ability to remain on the estate and connected to community and services should be one of the key considerations, because a lot of people will want to stay onsite.

The CHAIR: That brings an end to the questions. I just want to thank you both for your time and appearing here today. We will bring this session to a close.

Witnesses withdrew.