

OFFICE  
Freedom of Information Request Summary  
14.08.2025

F23/2010

**On October 10th 2023 we submitted a request (F23/2010) requesting documents pertaining to the refurbishment potential of the 44 highrise towers that are slated for demolition.**

This was deemed too expansive a request, and after two rounds of revisions, were reduced to:

- most recent structural assessment which assess the structural condition of the building/s listed below (see list at end).*
- most recent maintenance reports and services assessments, which assess the condition of the building/s listed below. These reports identify any maintenance and service issues such as water, power, and sewage.*
- Public Records of Victoria Index number for the original architectural and structural drawings for the buildings listed below.*

*The document requests are for the following buildings*

*120 Racecourse Road, Flemington, VIC  
33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne, VIC*

In December we extended the date by 30 days, and in March submitted a complaint to OVIC. On April 12th I was provided 37 redacted pages of a visual site assessment, asset records, and maintenance visit records.

I was provided the public records office contract number for the architectural and structural drawings of the two sites. However PROV informed me that 'the numbers do not appear in the sequence. There is an indication that these two contracts/drawings were never transferred to PROV.'

PROV advised that they may be with the Department of Human and Health Services, so I requested access directly, as a follow up to the redacted documents provided. I was informed:

*'Please note that our department has conducted a search for these documents and they have not been located.*

*Unfortunately, we are unable to assist you further in relation to these documents.'*

**It is concerning that the Department is unable to locate the original architectural and structural drawings for these buildings.**

F23/2248

**On November 1st 2023 we submitted a request (F23/2248) for the following documents:**

*The asset management work that details the governments review and costings for the 2.3 billion for maintenance and upgrades, including details of what that 2.3 billion would cover (e.g painting, renovations). (Referenced by Simon Newport on p.78 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*Details of the current energy efficiency ratings of the Flemington and North Melbourne public housing towers ((Referenced by Simon Newport on p.81 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*The number of currently vacant public housing tower dwellings, in non-vacated towers (Referenced by Simon Newport on p.81 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*Government costings for the temporary relocation of public housing residents, including translator fees, cleaning fees, removalists, and private-rental costs for any residents not accommodated in alternative public housing (Referenced by Simon Newport on p.79 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*Documents of the level of government investment, built outcomes and ongoing maintenance budgets for the recently renovated North Richmond and Collingwood public housing towers (as mentioned by Simon Newport on p.84 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)"*

When I chased the request in January 2024, I was advised that: 'Due to the number of points of this request, these enquiries are taking longer than anticipated.'

I approved the recommended change of scope suggested by the Agency on the 19th March (in response to their email to me on the 14th March). In addition to accepting their proposed changes, I also suggested reducing the request from North Melbourne and Flemington related documents to exclusively Flemington - in the interest of speeding up the process.

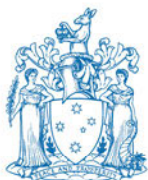
In April I lodged a complaint with OVIC due to the lack of information provided, and the failure of the FOI Unit to provide updates or requests for a 30 day extension.

June 11th, OVIC informed me there were ongoing delays due to ongoing consultation with many internal stakeholders and no estimate of when the request for the documents could be finalised.

July 26th , received a Notice of Decision stating:

*I assessed the documents in accordance with the Act and have decided to deny access in full to the documents, while granting access to the figure produced in response to the third point of your request (as provided in the above paragraph).*

I have attached this letter in full for your information.



## Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

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Telephone: 1300 475 170  
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Melbourne Victoria 3001  
[www.dffh.vic.gov.au](http://www.dffh.vic.gov.au)

Our ref: F23/2248

Miriam McGarry

Sent via email to: [mim.mcgarry@gmail.com](mailto:mim.mcgarry@gmail.com)

Dear Ms McGarry

### **NOTICE OF DECISION FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

I refer to your application made pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) cited below and re-scoped in writing on 19 March 2024:

*"In response to the recent announcement by the state government to demolish all 44 public estate towers due to refurbishment being unviable, I am requesting the documents below that support these claims, and of which are not currently publicly available.*

*This information is reference to Simon Newports responses during the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria Melbourne Tuesday 10 October 2023.*

*These requested documents are:*

*The asset management work that details the governments review and costings for the 2.3 billion for maintenance and upgrades, including details of what that 2.3 billion would cover (e.g painting, renovations).(Referenced by Simon Newport on p.78 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*Details of the current energy efficiency ratings of the Flemington and North Melbourne public housing towers ((Referenced by Simon Newport on p.81 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*The number of currently vacant public housing tower dwellings, in non-vacated towers (Referenced by Simon Newport on p.81 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)*

*Government costings for the temporary relocation of public housing residents, including translator fees, cleaning fees, removalists, and private-rental costs for any residents not*

*accommodated in alternative public housing (Referenced by Simon Newport on p.79 of the Transcript for the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria)"*

I apologise for the delay in finalising your request and thank you for your patience.

### **Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)**

The Act establishes a general right of access to documents held by the department. To protect essential public interests and the private and business affairs of individuals, the right of access does not apply to a document identified in the Act as exempt. A fact sheet is enclosed which briefly describes the available exemptions.

If a document contains exempt material the Act allows for an edited copy to be released after the exempt matter has been deleted and where it is practicable to do so.

### **Documents**

On the basis of points one and four of your request, Homes Victoria conducted a thorough and diligent search and located 580 pages of relevant documents, including analysis reports, correspondence and Excel spreadsheets.

In response to the second point of your request, for documents containing the current energy efficiency ratings of the two specified buildings, no relevant documents were located.

In response to the third point of your request, no document existed in discrete form containing the number of currently vacant public housing tower dwellings in non-vacated towers. As required under section 19 of the Act, Homes Victoria produced the requested figure from the Housing Integrated Information Program Datamart system. I am advised that there were 513 vacant public housing tower dwellings in non-vacated towers as at 8 October 2023 (noting that the hearing date referenced in your request was 10 October 2023).

### **Decision**

I assessed the documents in accordance with the Act and have decided to deny access in full to the documents, while granting access to the figure produced in response to the third point of your request (as provided in the above paragraph).

Material withheld from you has been removed on the basis of the following exemptions under the Act:

#### *Cabinet-in-confidence documents*

Section 28(1)(ba) provides that a document is exempt if it is a document that is prepared for the purpose of briefing a Minister in relation to issues to be considered by the Cabinet.

This exemption has been applied to the documents that were prepared for this purpose.

### *Internal working documents*

Section 30(1) exempts from disclosure documents that are internal working documents. For this section to apply, the documents must:

- disclose an opinion, advice or recommendation prepared by an officer, or relate to a consultation or deliberation that has taken place between officers and/or a Minister, in the course of, or for the purpose of, deliberative processes involved in the functions of an agency; and
- release must be contrary to the public interest.

An 'officer' includes an independent consultant or contractor engaged to provide opinion, advice, or recommendation.

This section has been used to exempt advice, opinions and recommendations intended for deliberative processes only. It is considered that the release of the material would be contrary to the public interest as the release of the material could lead to ill-informed debate among the public.

### *Personal affairs information*

Section 33(1) exempts from disclosure any document (or any part thereof) that would unreasonably disclose information relating to the personal affairs of another person (including a deceased person).

For this exemption to apply to a document, two parts must be satisfied:

- the information contained in the document must relate to the personal affairs of a person; and
- the release of the information would be an unreasonable disclosure.

Section 33(9) defines 'information relating to the personal affairs of any person' to include information that identifies any person or discloses their address or location, or information from which any person's identity, address or location can reasonably be determined.

This section has been used to remove personal information including names, positions and contact details of departmental employees and third parties, as well as information from which their identities could be ascertained. In this instance, it was deemed unreasonable to release this information and impracticable to consult with the third parties.

### *Business, commercial or financial information of the department*

Section 34(4)(a)(ii) provides that a document is exempt if its release would disclose information that relates to matters (other than trade secrets) of a business, commercial or financial nature of an agency and the disclosure would be likely to expose the agency unreasonably to disadvantage.

Business, commercial and financial material has been removed using this section on the basis that the release of this material would expose the department to unreasonable disadvantage in relation to its ability to receive competitive pricing.

### *Exempt or irrelevant material*

Section 25 allows the removal of material that would disclose information that would reasonably be regarded as irrelevant to the request.

This exception has been applied to information which does not meet the terms of the request.

### **Charges**

Please note that access charges have been waived in this instance.

### **Review rights**

If you are not satisfied with my decision you have the right to apply to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner for review. This request needs to be made in writing within 28 days of the date you receive this notice of decision.

You can also complain to the Commissioner if you are dissatisfied with any part of the processing of this request, or if we have been unable to locate the documents you seek.

The enclosed fact sheets contain more information about these processes.

Yours sincerely



**Claire Coghill**

Director, Access, Feedback and Parliament

26 / 07 / 2024

Enc.

1. Fact Sheet – Exemptions
2. Fact Sheet – Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner – Review
3. Fact Sheet – Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner – Complaints