



VICTORIAN PUBLIC  
TENANTS ASSOCIATION

# Inquiry into the Redevelopment of Melbourne's Public Housing Towers



## Acknowledgement of Country

This submission was prepared at the VPTA office, on the lands of the Wurundjeri people in Na'arm.

The VPTA team is privileged to work across Victoria. In all places, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country. We offer our respect to Elders and their ancestors who have cared for the land, sky, and waters for tens of thousands of years.

## Who we are

The Victorian Public Tenants' Association (VPTA) is the voice of public housing in Victoria.

As the peak body representing existing public housing renters and those on the waiting list, our goal is to provide advice to renters, and to improve and expand the public housing system in Victoria. Although not formally part of our role, we also assist community housing renters where possible. We believe all social housing renters deserve a representative voice, regardless of their specific tenure type.

While our work is in Victoria – we are the only peak body in Australia which exclusively represent public housing renters or people who live in social housing.

We undertake systemic advocacy and provide policy advice to the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing ('the Department'), undertake community engagement work and operate a free and confidential telephone advice service.

In the 2023-24 financial year we helped more than 1,300 residents and housing applicants. The VPTA's workload has more than doubled since 2020, and demand continues to grow.

### [The VPTA's position on tower renewals](#)

The VPTA will always be supportive of safe, affordable, and healthy housing for public housing renters.

Our staff are aware of a number of issues in the existing buildings which appear to be irresolvable while maintaining renters in their current homes. These include safety issues occurring because of building layout, specifically the shared laundries, and serious health and safety issues presented by failing sewer stacks.

Given the urgent need for additional public housing in all areas of Victoria, an opportunity for more homes to be delivered on these sites for the Victorians who need them is highly valuable.

For these reasons, the VPTA has not wholesale opposed the High Rise Renewal Program.

Nonetheless, the VPTA does have serious reservations about the program design and relocations practise to date which the organisation has consistently raised with the Government.

The VPTA continues to argue:

- The existing uplift commitment of 10 per cent social housing across the sites show insufficient ambition, given the scale of the renewal project and the scale of housing need among the lowest income Victorian households.
- The Victorian Government must commit to a 100 per cent uplift in public housing on the sites, with any additional density to be made up of social housing or genuinely affordable housing for key workers.
- A need for the Government to rule out the sale of any public land that is currently the site of a public housing home.

The VPTA first formally made these arguments in an open letter addressed to the Premier and the Minister for Housing in April 2024. The open letter has been signed by 20 of the VPTA's community sector colleagues, including other housing organisations, community legal centres, neighbourhood houses, unions, community health centres, and others.

While a response to the letter has been provided, there has been no formal response to any of the VPTA's policy positions.

A copy of the text of the letter is included at Appendix A.

## Maintaining public housing and public ownership

The VPTA appreciates that both public and community housing have roles to play in a holistic social housing system. The scale of housing need for the lowest income Australians means that Government must pull every possible lever to create more housing options – including by supporting a diverse social housing system.

While there are similarities between public and community housing, there are many differences.

These differences can be most briefly summarised as primarily relating to affordability, equity of access, and access to complaints mechanisms and independent advocacy. In all of these areas, public housing outperforms community housing.

Public housing rents can be more affordable than community housing rents, and public housing generally offers greater security of tenure. Researchers at RMIT University have found that it is public housing which has the greatest protective factor against homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the generalised need to ensure that the public housing stock profile remains strong and accessible for Victorians in all areas of the State – including inner city Melbourne – there is a strong preference for public housing over community housing by renters themselves.

The VPTA coordinated an in-depth engagement process with the first renters to be relocated under the High Rise Renewal Program at North Melbourne and Flemington.

Participants told the VPTA and peer facilitators very clearly that they want to return to new public housing on the sites.<sup>2</sup>

This report was provided to Government in 2024. Despite this, Government has nonetheless decided to include no new publicly managed housing on either the Flemington or North Melbourne renewal sites.

One renter that the VPTA spoke to regarding this decision said;

“Our people are suffering in community housing, their energy bills have gone up...we met with the Minister, and we thought she understood why public housing is important to us. Government are playing a game, why would they make this big mistake?”

---

<sup>1</sup> Johnson G, Scutella R, Tseny Y, and Wood G, *‘How do housing and labour markets affect individual homelessness?’* Housing Studies, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2018.1520819>.

<sup>2</sup> Cook A, Butterss K, and Hooper M, ‘Victorian Public Tenants Association (VPTA) engagements about public housing redevelopment,’ Appendix B, see pg 18 – 19, for example.

More broadly, experienced social housing renters in Victoria also indicate a preference for public housing over community housing, with 43 per cent of transfer applicants only willing to consider a move to a public housing property, compared to just two per cent who would only consider a community housing placement.<sup>3</sup>

The VPTA also maintains that the history of the sites in question demands the re-establishment of public housing. Prior to the construction of the current high-rise buildings, these sites have always been home for those that were otherwise locked out of the housing market.

This land has always been shared by everybody, to be inhabited by those who need them. We should not turn our backs on this strong tradition.

As has been pointed out countless times, these sites are well located and there is no equivalent land in the area that Government could possibly acquire in their place – either from a cost or a size perspective. If we lose these incredibly high value sites now, they will never again be in public hands, nor will sites of their equivalent value.

### Relocations

Throughout this process, the VPTA has held concerns about how relocations are being managed. We acknowledge the best efforts that Homes Victoria staff have provided, but the issue remains that they are not properly equipped with sufficient information to answer questions from renters in detail.

At times, this has resulted in a further, unnecessary, deterioration in trust from renters towards Government.

In previous renewal programs, such as the Public Housing Renewal Program (PHRP) and Ground Lease Model developments (GLM), renters have benefited from a guaranteed right of return to the original site, as well as a guarantee that the future community housing manager of that site will manage their tenancies according to public housing policies, procedures, and rent calculation rules – with the addition of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment. Importantly, there has also been an historical promise that relocating renters will experience no diminution in their security of tenure.

The VPTA has not been able to locate any such guarantees for renters impacted by the High-Rise Renewal Program.

Instead of using the more recent operational guidelines for relocations from the PHRP, Homes Victoria is using an earlier operational guideline, parts of

---

<sup>3</sup> Homes Victoria, 'Applications on the Victorian Housing Register: Preferred social housing provider – transfer applications only', <https://www.homes.vic.gov.au/applications-victorian-housing-register-vhr#transfer-applications-on-the-vhr>, accessed 31 October 2024.

which date to 2015.

Although Government has confirmed a right of return exists for renters at Flemington and North Melbourne, the policy relied upon is less clear, stating:

“Tenants can choose to remain permanently in their relocation housing, or may move back to the redeveloped site if they meet the Department of Health and Human Service’s (The Department’s) eligibility criteria.

Where the tenant is eligible to move back and there are sufficient redeveloped properties available, the Department undertakes to move tenants back to the redeveloped housing.

Where there is insufficient redeveloped housing to be offered to tenants, they are offered the next vacancy at the site or a property in close proximity to the site where such a property is available. Where an appropriate property is not available to the site or nearby, alternative locations are discussed and agreed with the tenant.

Registered Housing Association (RHA) [Community Housing] policies apply to tenants who move to housing managed by a RHA.

Where tenants wish to return to a redeveloped public housing site that is solely managed by a RHA, the Department will undertake negotiations with RHA’s to achieve similar rent conditions to Departmental tenants (after allowing for Commonwealth Rent Assistance) on a project to project basis.”<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added).

Renters who are currently being relocated, and those who have already moved, are covered by this document, which falls short of guaranteeing a right of return and no changes to rent or tenancy management policies.

Additionally, the nature of the North Melbourne and Flemington neighbourhoods is such that, if there are not enough new dwellings to return to, the local vicinity is highly unlikely to be able to provide a suitable public housing home either. Therefore, without a guaranteed right of return, there is no concrete basis for households to rely upon. A guaranteed right of return is therefore critical to ensuring that sufficient properties of the right size are built in order to be able to facilitate the commitment.

The VPTA understands that Homes Victoria staff have been describing the right of return in the following terms:

“In relation to returning to the redeveloped site, renters will have a right to return to their current neighbourhood when the redevelopment is complete based on their ongoing needs, eligibility, and the suitability of new homes.”

---

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services, “Relocation Manual, Ch 3: Move Back, October 2017”, page 4, accessed online 19 March 2025.

In addition to the dated Relocations policy, this wording is unclear, and falls short of the certainty renters require in order to have confidence that their future housing needs will be met.

Further, the VPTA has sought confirmation from Homes Victoria as to what will happen to the tenancy arrangements of households who have been temporarily relocated to a community housing managed home, under public housing policies and rent calculations, in the event that they do not exercise a right to return or are unable to. In short – will their status as public housing renters be maintained, or will their tenancies revert to the policies and procedures of their community housing rental providers?

We have not yet received a definitive answer.

It is unacceptable that renters have been entering into Relocation Agreements when these important matters have not been settled.

### Engagement Project

In recognition of both the great opportunity to grow and improve the quality of Melbourne's public housing presented by the High-Rise Renewal Program and historical deficiencies in renter consultation, the VPTA partnered with Dr Andrea Cook of Red Road Consulting to conduct an independent, in depth engagement with residents at the Flemington and North Melbourne sites.

We sought to speak with renters clearly, in an approachable way, so that we could learn about their ambitions for new homes on the sites and then incorporate those views into the VPTA's advocacy about the project.

We began from the position that the people who currently live at the renewal sites, and who have indicated a strong desire to return to them, are the subject matter experts on their own housing needs and desires, the strengths and weaknesses of the sites as they currently are, as well as the community.

The engagement involved:

- Training and employing three peer facilitators (one from each of the impacted buildings) to help attract participants to the engagement, and also to act as in language facilitators at engagement events.
- Two pop up events that allowed for informal, drop in engagement, on the households own terms, and which included activities that were accessible to both adults and children, to capture the broadest possible range of viewpoints.
- An online survey, so that people who could not, or did not want to, attend a drop in pop up event, could still participate.

We had strong participation from the community, with around 100 households attending a pop-up event at either North Melbourne or Flemington. Across

the three impacted buildings, there are 503 properties.

The entire report, including its recommendations, is included as an addendum to this submission.

In short, participants indicated strong preferences for new homes to feature:

- Larger rooms, with more built in storage,
- For homes with more than two bedrooms, the toilet in a separate room to the bathroom,
- A separate kitchen, not open plan,
- In-unit laundries, not shared,
- Areas for young people to study, which could be in a common area if not within the homes themselves,
- Security doors with peepholes,
- On site security staff, and
- More car parking.

Although the topic of the engagement was not the relocations process, the peer researchers and VPTA staff still received many comments and complaints about the relocations, which were mixed in with other comments about the new homes.

Comments from participants included:

“My priority for home is bigger rooms, storage, not open plan (keep the cooking smells in the kitchen and is more culturally sensitive) a good living room and a good kitchen, disability access especially for the bathrooms.” Woman, 41.

“...a spacious living room that can fit a 7 seater couch/lounge and a closed kitchen with spacious storage and enough fridge space.” Woman, 68.

“With the relocation move we are losing relationships and community we have built for more than a decade. We would like to re-establish those connections in our new home.” Male, 25-54.

“My priority for the community is to take care of older people who can be isolated because of language. Older women in particular are alone a lot because they are widowed or separated with husbands going back to Africa to marry younger wives, so it is very important for this group to have friend networks.” Woman, 41.

“We want the right of return and come back to public housing, we need something in writing no one believes what [Homes Victoria] is saying. We need a document otherwise we all feel very nervous.” Male, 40s.

“...We were only given two choices for relocation and there was a threat to remove people from the list if they didn't take one of the two places. This is causing people to panic.” Woman, 41.

“I don't mind to move but people are very sad...My neighbour, I help her, but if



she didn't have me who will help her? She doesn't have family." Woman, 50s.

The final report includes 20 recommendations, presented in the following sub categories:

- Setting communities up for successful relocations
- New homes
- New buildings and surrounds
- Re-establishing communities
- Continuous Improvement

The VPTA has ambitions to repeat this process at each of the sites, and would be eager to conduct this engagement with renters in Richmond and South Yarra in the 2025-26 Financial Year if funding can be secured.

We believe that combining the use of peer facilitators and an independent voice allows for deeper engagement with renters, and clearer feedback for Homes Victoria, which can be used to strengthen the delivery of the High Rise Renewal Program overall. Our recommendation for continuous improvement seeks funding for the VPTA to be able to continue these engagements.

The engagement report was provided to the Government and to Homes Victoria. The recommendations were also reproduced in the VPTA's 2025-26 State Budget Submission, given that the High Rise Renewal Program will require allocations in decades to come.

In recognition of the best practise nature of this consultation, Dr Cook will be presenting a workshop on the method (with assistance from VPTA staff) to the national conference of the Planning Institute of Australia.

### Survey results

When this Inquiry was announced, the VPTA's Community Engagement team visited every high rise to conduct pop up surveys with renters to hear their views about the program.

Staff did not approach renters specifically with regard to the Renewal Program, but when they were approached on the topic, staff would seek permission to use the survey to guide the conversation, with a view to including anonymous responses in this submission.

The survey was also available online. It received 63 responses with all but one participant agreeing for their responses to form part of our submission.

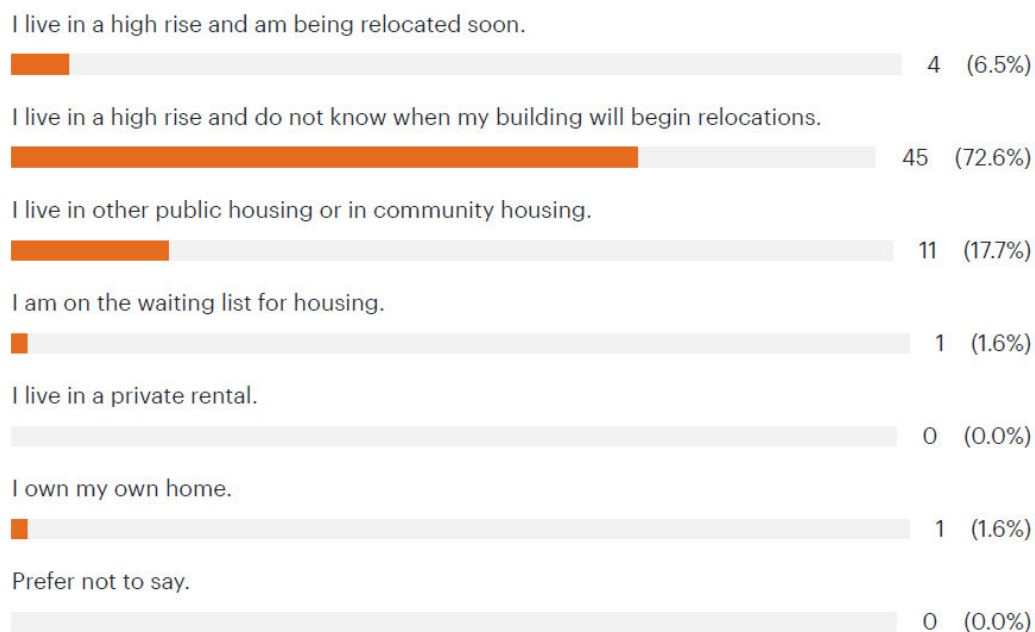
The respondents had mixed views about the existing high-rise buildings, as well as the Renewal Program.

The charts, as well as representative samples of written responses to questions are included below. To maintain the anonymity of respondents,

administrative questions are excluded.

The results of the survey support the VPTA's broader advocacy following the engagement project and the open letter – calling for replacement of public housing with new public housing and improved relocations processes with greater clarity.

### Q1. Please choose the option which best reflects your housing situation.



### Q3. What would you like to tell us about homes in the high rises currently?

- “Moving this week to North Melbourne and very excited. Worried about not having laundry and having to buy a washing machine or not being close enough to a laundrette and how expensive that will be. Rejected first offer of unit as it was between two buildings and felt very claustrophobic no view. North Melbourne was much better apartment. Would have preferred to just stay here but am excited by new balcony.”
- “The buildings are so badly built, solid concrete, they are freezing in winter and take days to cool off when its hot. I have a new air con but haven't tried it yet. My heating is rubbish it doesn't work well. Lots of young people moving in, they take drugs and drink. This space outside is like party central, people sit here at night and are so loud. People ring the buzzers at night every apartment to try to get in, there's always graffiti everywhere and shattered glass on the doors. There's always doors and glass being replaced. One evening I saw security there asked them could they not help as people were having a very loud party outside and they

said no, they are pointless. We reckon about 20% of the building is not over 55 now, they all came in covid. One man he yells at night about how much he hates all Aussies, screaming at the top of his voice, sometimes the daytime too. The housing office do nothing. I've been here 10yrs [sic] it used to be much better. Not even people here that are problem its all their friends. Community room is so restricted we can only go there sometimes."

- "I've been living here a while [sic] now and it is way different and there is a lot of people fearful and scared in the building. I already had a transfer application as I am over living in this building, I want somewhere safer for my family. Sometimes I just don't want to go home and have a difficult night after having a difficult day at work. To get a priority transfer is so hard you have to prove so much. Neighbours are for the most part great, many very friendly people from all over. We look out for each other. Staircases are very scary it would be awful if there was an emergency there are so many people there doing drugs. They find any quiet spaces laundries often used for drug taking. Few times I have found collapsed people in the corridor and stayed on the phone to ambulance but scared to touch them, when the ambulance people asked me to. Security takes a long time to help, so do ambulances and police it's like they don't care about us because of where we live. Lots of cars get broken into at the carpark. Sometimes it feels like the HSO's talk to us in a certain way very rude because we live in the high rises they don't expect us to work. I get talked to differently as a tenant than I do when I ring helping others from work."
- "Like the building, near hospital and trains, neighbours are mostly great. Complicated by some neighbours keep getting visitors late at night that are very noisy and keep leaving large items in the hallway in the way, which is dangerous. Pigeons are a big issue, they poo all over windows and floor and if report to housing they say its council's problem then council say its housings problem and people just keep feeding them, its disgusting. I volunteer at [redacted] which is very close."
- "Place is ok and good location and near transport. Major issues with some residents having mental health issues and drug taking mostly newer people to the building and suspected not over 55's. Many people especially women are feeling very unsafe, security only walk through occasionally. Police come regularly but don't do much. Post office will not deliver to the building and intercom doesn't work (about 8 months) Bin fires and rats, mice and cockroaches, cleaning is not adequate. Squatters live in laundries from outside and leave drug paraphernalia, often use laundry on different levels to avoid. BHN (Better Health Network) are fantastic and often do more to help us than in their job descriptions, we can only use the community room when they are there though. Community gardens are great too. This building isn't a great design it's a bit like a jail feel a bit oppressed here."
- "Great place. Co Health good. Community rooms very important, I am currently

going to a diabetes group for Chinese speaking people and learning how to speak Chinese. There is a food forest nearby but I don't know how to get in there or who it belongs to."

- "It [the Renewal Program] will take a long time, hope they don't do this one everyone likes the building. We can't get air-con's as the electricity needs upgrading. This building did great in the earthquake I was right up the top and it was scary but not even any cracks. Co Health and community tm [sic] is great, its really important for us to be together. Veggie patches recently replaced but here before too and lovely outside place to sit. The new building nearby has created a wind break so its even better here now."

#### Q4. What is important to you for the future of the high rise sites?

- "Buildings that go back should be public housing and all the same quality. Over in Victoria St the apartments are different some are better than others they should all be the same quality not worse ones for Community Housing. Community housing is too confusing all having different rules and rents it should all be the same. Car parking is really bad, they do it much better in Europe, they should do storage units too so we can store things. Also better storage in the apartments, so can put away winter stuff and get it out again when needed. Community rooms are important, for groups and connection. Love the idea of a balcony for proper fresh air but needs to be big inside too. The places they build have to be better for the people not just new."
- "Community, as multicultural as possible, was great when the cultures in the building were more varied. Since 2000s areas has not ben as safe lots more drugs and not a safe place for younger people (teenagers) as there are bad influences. Debney Meadows is great and supports women/mothers to learn and meet, this needs to stay. Parking is a major issue, a major reason not to return will be because of parking. Need bigger apartments than the ones in Victoria Street, they are small they should be the same size as they are now as the rooms are a good size."
- "Needs to be back to only over 55's. Better insulation so we don't freeze and bake. Better heating. Being allowed to use the community room more often. Get the old workers back from Start Health they were good, they knew everyone and care for people properly, supported the people who lived here."
- "They build too many units in one block. The flats are not family friendly, if they are putting families in then build for that. Would like cameras in the corridors and laundries. Would like our own laundries that would be great! But keep both options for some people. Car park that is secure and safe. Balconies are great for airflow but scary for families with little kids. Allocations can be very bad, don't put single men that might take drugs with families."
- "Size is ok build them the same size. New playgrounds need a fence, if people aren't watching its very dangerous for little kids running off. I would want to come

bask as I like the area a lot and have always lived her [sic] since I arrived from China 2015. Community rooms are important as a meeting hall for people."

- "Would be great if kitchen was separate not part of living space and a lot bigger counters for preparing meals. Keep the Youth Club and community rooms. Cameras everywhere every door covered! Security guards who can actually help."
- "We would prefer them just to renovate, recently did a lot of structural works so hopefully that puts us lower down on the list, engineer said building should be good for 30 more years. Whole project is bloody ridiculous building's ok just needs tidying up a bit. Keep the building to older people it's the younger ones that are new that are causing issues used to be just fine here. BNH [sic] have to be here, but much more would like 24 hour social workers. Would like access to community room more hours. Would like more cleaning everywhere especially in the bins. Security permanent all the time and cameras. Balconies would be good."
- "It is important that the future of the high rise sites are safe, inclusive, sustainable, clean, and affordable as well as being a place that people can call home that they don't feel that they can't walk outside of their homes at night time because of the danger of some of the people in and around housing estates."
- "Community rooms very important! Tower should be for older people still but invite young people in to teach us how to use our phones, cooking and skills they know from internet land. We need a kitchen, veggie patches and a food pantry."
- "Don't mix with other social housing, keep public housing and only old people. Air conditioning. Want the walls like they are here sold concrete not like the hollow ones they build now. Keep Co Health, community rooms, veggie patches, everything."

#### Q5. How do you think this project could be better for residents?

- "Choice of washing machine rather than dishwasher."
- "Relocations have been good, haven't found anywhere but they are checking in."
- "Homes Vic [sic] need to listen to the people and what they want to have rebuilt talk to people who live in the buildings. Forms are an issues they are not letting us even read the relocations form they just make us sign it. When I did my relocations form they were funny about transferring all my special accommodation requirements from my current transfer application. They just want to rush it all through and make us sign trying to make us sign for community and public housing not explaining it."
- "Need to communicate in a meeting with interpreters at least in Chinese and Vietnamese. Written information in languages too to look at."
- "COMMUNICATION!"

Meetings are Q&A but very few answers available and no delivery on commitment to bring answers in later.

Failure to provide translators – they said they would come back with another meeting and then failed to do so, saying a resident had volunteered to interpret.

Not taking issues that are raised seriously and then no longer feel comfortable to raise anything as felt her concerns were gaslit by the person who offered to speak to her about it directly. Impact of the uncertainty on people's mental health and ongoing stated of heightened anxiety and hyper vigilance.

In theory the face to face meetings would be better than posters and emails because of the over 55's cohort but the meetings have been vague and unhelpful.

Every tower is different and the community is different. Consultations have been had at towers that have already been announced -what's the point at that stage?

If they are letting us down at this stage, how much faith can we have in the whole process?

Want to see the human aspect taken into consideration, not just the transaction of demolishing and rebuilding a certain number of apartments."

- "Better communication, proactively shared – don't wait until our tower gets announced, just keep us informed along the way."
- "Think about renovation and how it could look nicer. Homes Vic [sic] came out, it was ok, they answered questions ok, but don't do anything."
- "A united voice for community housing tenants."
- "It's crazy, they need to be more organised in their planning. They shouldn't just show us imaginary pictures of not real places we are going to be moved to. They need to ask us for input what we want."
- "I'm not leaving I'll be the last one in the building! Will we have the right to move as a group? We could accept moving if we could all be moved in one go to the same floor in a new place. They are making a lot of mistakes and it's causing a lot of stress. They need to build first then move us. I bet they will just sell this land."
- "Where's the public housing for this area, can only see community housing where could we be moved to? When people (Homes Vic [sic]) come out they just stick to the press release and are not listening to us. This project is very bad for our mental and physical health dealing with all the uncertainty. It's disruptive, we don't know what's happening but they feed us lines of it's all going to be hunky dory. I've stopped coming to meetings with Homes Vic [sic]."
- "Homes Vic [sic] communication about demolition project is impersonal and degrading how they talk to us with no answers."

#### Q6. How old are you?



#### Conclusion

The VPTA continues to believe that the High-Rise Renewal Program holds promise.

The Program is a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve and grow the quality of public housing on well-located sites. However, the roll out to date has not met the expectations of renters, the community at large, or advocates.

There is an urgent need to reform the delivery of the High-Rise Renewal so that it can deliver on its early promise.

## Recommendations

1. Commit to a 100 per cent uplift of the number of public housing dwellings on the high rise sites, with the balance to be community housing properties and genuinely affordable housing for key workers.
2. Rule out the sale of any public land that is currently the site of a public housing home.
3. Urgently revise and update the Relocations Operational Guidelines, in consultation with public housing renters, the VPTA, and the community legal sector. The Victorian Government must pause any future relocations work until this has been completed.
4. For renters who have already been relocated, immediately confirm in writing:
  - a. An unqualified right of return,
  - b. That returning renters will continue to pay rent consistent with public housing rents regardless of the management of new buildings,
  - c. In the event that renters return to a building managed by a community housing provider, that their tenancies will be managed according to public housing policies and procedures indefinitely, and
  - d. For renters who have temporarily relocated to a community housing managed home, the status of their tenancies in the event that a right of return is not (or cannot be) taken up.
5. For the North Melbourne tender process, include the stated goals of renters for new homes, as outlined in the recommendations from the VPTA's engagement report.
6. For the Flemington development, ensure the chosen consortium factors the recommendations from the VPTA's engagement report into their designs for new buildings.
7. Fund the VPTA to repeat the independent engagement process at each new tower site as further renewals are announced.



## Appendix 1.



Premier  
1 Treasury Place  
Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

And to: [Redacted] MP, [Redacted]  
[Redacted]

Dear Premier

Access to housing is undeniably a human right. This letter is a united call from organizations supporting the Victorians in most urgent need of housing. We ask that you:

1. Commit to a 100 per cent uplift of the number of public housing on the sites with the balance to be community housing properties and genuinely affordable housing for key workers.
2. Rule out the sale of any public land that is currently the site of a public housing home.

A number of the commitments contained within the Victorian Government's recently released Housing Statement are unequivocally welcome, including:

- An end to rental bidding;
- A 7.5 per cent levy on short term accommodation;
- The introduction of a rental bond portability scheme, banning landlords from raising rents for 12 months after evicting the previous tenant at the end of their first fixed-term lease, and
- Extending notification periods of rent increases from 60 to 90 days.

However, with more than 100,000 individual Victorians with nowhere to call their home or living in unsafe or unaffordable conditions, there is more work to be done.

The harsh reality is that Victoria is lagging behind. Only 2.9 per cent of all dwellings across the State are social housing.

We appreciate the need for renewal of the existing high-rise buildings. We are aware of substantial maintenance and safety issues which make these buildings no longer fit for purpose.

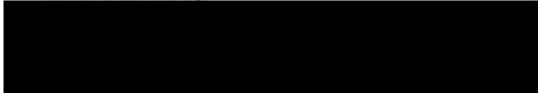


The management of the new public housing units is not clear. Public housing tenants do not want government to abrogate their responsibility to the ongoing management of public assets. Further, beyond Victoria's urgent need for additional social housing, working class Victorians are also in desperate need of genuinely affordable housing options that are close to where they work.

The high-rise sites are well located, close to education and work opportunities, hospitals, and public transport. These sites are incredibly valuable, and they have a strong legacy of providing homes for people who might otherwise be experiencing homelessness.

Once they leave public hands – they will never come back.

Yours sincerely



Katelyn Butterss  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
Victorian Public Tenants Association

10 April 2024