

Constituency Question Petition 8273

Reconsider the Barak Beacon development housing proposal

Council

Petition sponsored by Georgie Crozier

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council to the lack of community consultation regarding the redevelopment of the Barak Beacon public housing estate in Port Melbourne. The Government has reneged on the original low rise proposal and is now planning a private development with nine and 11 storey towers that will be harmful to both tenants and the community. Of the 408 units, zero will be public housing and only 130 will be privately managed social housing.

The population on this 2.095 hectares is likely to exceed 1,200 people. This will result in 15 times the annual population growth for Port Melbourne in a single block, in a single year.

In conjunction with the Fishermans Bend development, the local population will increase by about 80,000 within the next decade. The Port Melbourne population is currently 17,358. The Fishermans Bend Framework includes mandatory limits of six storeys and 174 dwellings per hectare adjacent to existing low scale development patterns in this part of Port Melbourne. The proposed Barak Beacon development of nine and 11 storey towers and 195 dwellings per hectare, which is equivalent to 408 dwellings in 2.095 hectares, is excessive by the Government's own standards.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to reconsider the Barak Beacon development housing proposal and the available facilities, amenities, road infrastructure, community welfare and building by-laws and confine the development to its original target of three and four storey towers to reduce the dwellings from 408 to 250 public housing homes.

[Tabled petition 8273 - Reconsider the Barak Beacon development housing proposal \(parliament.vic.gov.au\)](https://parliament.vic.gov.au)

Response

I thank the Member for the Southern Metropolitan Region for sponsoring the petition regarding the Barak Beacon housing development presented to Parliament on 19 June 2024.

I also understand that the Barak Beacon site has been an important part of the Port Melbourne community for many years, and I thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of Parliament.

As part of the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build, Homes Victoria is working to deliver more and better homes for more Victorians in well-connected locations where people want

to live. This includes communities like Port Melbourne that are ideally situated close to schools, jobs, shops, services and other amenities that support a growing community.

Building on the successes of the first Ground Lease Model project delivered at housing sites in Brighton, Flemington and Prahran, the Ground Lease Model 2 (GLM2) project includes the redevelopment of sites in South Yarra, Prahran, Hampton East and the Barak Beacon, Port Melbourne site. The redevelopment of Barak Beacon will deliver 408 well designed and modern social, affordable rental and market rental homes, providing housing supply for Victorians who need it and introducing additional diverse rental housing stock to benefit the Port Melbourne community.

Barak Beacon is being redeveloped under a Ground Lease Model where Homes Victoria leases the land to project partner, Building Communities, to finance, design, build, manage and maintain the homes for the next 40 years. Under this model, all the land remains in public ownership and all homes are maintained to a high quality. There is no sale of public land.

The Barak Beacon site was identified as having significant land capacity to provide additional housing to address the critical demand for rental homes in this well-served and high amenity inner Melbourne location. The 89 social homes that previously occupied the Barak Beacon housing site were aged, no longer fit for purpose, and required redevelopment to meet current design standards.

The 130 new social homes at Barak Beacon will result in a 46 percent uplift in social housing on the site to help more people on the Victorian Housing Register find a safe and secure place to call home. All relocating renters will also have the right of return to the site once the redevelopment is complete, based on their ongoing eligibility and needs. All homes at the site will be managed by a not-for-profit community housing provider, Community Housing Victoria Limited, who will be based at the site to provide support and services for renters. There will also be 82 affordable rental homes for low to moderate income renters and 17 Specialist Disability Accommodation homes for eligible participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

All the new homes will be designed in accordance with the Apartment Design Guidelines for Victoria, which ensure that the development will provide a high standard of amenity for new residents and will not adversely impact on the amenity of the surrounding residents. The new homes will also be less expensive for residents to heat and cool with a 7-star NatHERS average rating.

The redeveloped Barak Beacon site will better integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood. The new community infrastructure including landscaped open spaces, pathways through the site, a community garden, a playground, a multi-purpose community room and spaces for a café and social enterprise will provide tangible benefits for residents as well as the wider community. We have seen these benefits already on the recently completed Ground Lease Model 1 project sites in Brighton, Flemington and Prahran.

When the redevelopment of the Barak Beacon site was first being planned, an image of the development with buildings predominantly 4-5 storeys was depicted in a flyer

distributed by Homes Victoria to the community about the project. The image was marked for illustrative purposes only.

This project has been informed by two phases of community consultation, which are documented on the Engage Victoria webpage for the project.

Early planning for the site redevelopment involved Homes Victoria seeking feedback from the community between June and July 2022 on what was important to them, having regard to the site constraints and opportunities to deliver more homes for people who need them. In addition to community feedback, Homes Victoria and project partner Building Communities, had regard to advice from the City of Port Phillip, Office of the Victorian Government Architect, Department of Transport and Planning and other key stakeholders throughout the design process. Detailed technical assessments also informed the planning and design of the proposed development.

Between 5 February 2024 and 4 March 2024, residents, the broader community, City of Port Phillip and other key stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the proposed development plans for the Barak Beacon site (Stage 2 public consultation). The plans and supporting technical documents were made available for viewing on the Engage Victoria website. This stage of consultation involved an online briefing with members of the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association on 14 February 2024, community drop-in events on 20 February and 24 February 2024, and an online survey on the Engage Victoria website. The community was also encouraged to provide feedback through direct email to Homes Victoria.

The heights of the proposed buildings shown at public consultation in February and March 2024 have been determined through consideration of the site context and scale of surrounding developments. The northern portion of the site (approximately two-thirds of the area) will have three low-rise buildings, with heights of three to five storeys to respect the scale of the residential area on Barak Road, Howe Parade and Beacon Road. The buildings will also be reduced to two storeys at the street interface with Barak Road. The building in the southern third of the site is proposed to be between nine and eleven storeys high, which is consistent with the height of nearby apartment buildings along Beach Street. Overshadowing of the foreshore will be minimised and all buildings will be highly activated at street level and setback from the street to allow for landscaping opportunities.

I wish to thank the community members who provided feedback on the proposed development plans for the site.

Feedback received during the public consultation process for this project was included and responded to in a consultation report as part of the planning application. This consultation report will be shared with the community following the recent planning approval of the development.

The site is not located within the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area and as such is not subject to the same planning controls.

The development is subject to the requirements of Clause 52.20 of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. Clause 52.20 is a streamlined planning process that facilitates

development of new housing through the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build initiative. The planning approval for this project was received on 28 June 2024.

Additional information about the Barak Beacon housing project can be found at www.homes.vic.gov.au/barak-beacon-port-melbourne.



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Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing