



Media release

Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Government must release public housing tower documents, Committee finds

The Victorian Government cannot publicly justify its plan to demolish and replace Melbourne's 44 public housing towers due to its refusal to release the technical evidence underpinning the decision, a report tabled in the Legislative Council has found.

In September 2023, the Victorian Government released *Victoria's Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2034*, in which it announced its intention to progressively 'retire' and redevelop all 44 towers by 2051.

In November 2023, the Legislative Council ordered the production of all documents relating to the redevelopment, however the Government only produced 12 of those documents and claimed Executive Privilege over 146 others.

"Despite repeated attempts, the Parliament has not received the documents required to properly scrutinise this policy," said Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee Chair Joe McCracken.

"The Government's justification for this is simply wrong. The Victorian Constitution clearly gives Parliament the power to demand documents. The Government is not and cannot be the sole judge in deciding when Privilege applies."

The Committee has recommended that all documents that have a claim of Executive Privilege be submitted to an independent arbiter to determine whether a legitimate claim of Executive Privilege exists in accordance with the relevant Legislative Council Standing Order.

"This issue extends beyond parliamentary procedure," Mr McCracken said.

"Residents repeatedly told the Committee that they simply want to see the evidence about the buildings they live in. These technical assessments should not be secret. The Government has no legitimate basis for withholding them, and stakeholders rightly expect the Legislative Council to continue demanding the documents until the Government does what is required."

The inquiry found there had been significant trauma, distress and anxiety experienced by many residents of the public housing towers due to poor communication following the program's announcement.

"One message was consistent: these towers are more than buildings—they are communities," Mr McCracken said.

"Homes Victoria recognises this, but significant work remains to rebuild trust. While consultation has occurred, the quality of engagement has too often been poor. In the early stages especially, inadequate and inaccurate communication allowed confusion

and anxiety to spread. There have been some improvements, however more needs to be done,” he said.

The inquiry received more than 800 submissions and held five days of public hearings, including at or near the towers in Flemington and North Melbourne, South Yarra, and Richmond.

The Committee has made 36 findings and 21 recommendations.

The report is available on the Committee's [website](#).

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