

redevelopment takes place, the housing and homelessness crisis continues to grow while resources continue to shrink.

In July 2018 The Age newspaper featured a story about a building in South Melbourne owned by a Nursing Home Operator due to be redeveloped, sitting idle due to red tape, which was rented to the YWCA for a nominal fee to become a pop-up shelter for 38 homeless women over 55.⁵ In 2019 in North Melbourne, 112 public housing dwellings stood empty. A proactive government, committed to addressing homelessness, could have found a creative way to utilise 112 empty dwellings.

There is a wealth of information available; one such report is by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI).⁶ The AHURI report details cost effective options for addressing the current low stocks of social housing and growth requirements for the future. It also refers to lessons learned from other countries who are addressing their own social housing challenges.

The 'Homes for Victorians Social Housing and Homelessness Reforms' initiative will not provide any solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis. Given the substantial size of the Government's financial contribution, there needs to be a legitimate form of accountability, and transparency, in relation to return on investment and what will actually be delivered at the end of the program. Without a robust and effective program to substantially increase desperately needed affordable housing stock over the long term, this ill-conceived initiative will ensure that homelessness issues will not be adequately addressed and will become increasingly arduous for a significant number of vulnerable individuals. Victoria will be confirmed in its current status of the lowest level of public (social), housing in the OECD.

⁵ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-20/melbourne-pop-up-homeless-shelter-launched/10013946>

⁶ Social housing as infrastructure: an investment pathway. From the AHURI Inquiry - Social housing as infrastructure.