

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Ms Jan Lacey

Organisation Name:

Your position or role:

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::

Public housing, Housing affordability, Services, Mental health, Employment, Rough sleeping, Indigenous people, Family violence

What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :

Concerned citizen

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS IN VICTORIA 2 February 2020

I live in North Melbourne. Many of my 'neighbours' are homeless. I also live opposite what was the Abbotsford Street public housing estate.

Under the Public/Social Housing Renewal Program public housing estates across Melbourne, and eventually in regional areas, are to be bulldozed and replaced by a mix of private and community housing. Community housing providers charge higher rents and fees than public housing tenants pay. This disadvantages those on welfare or intermittent or insecure employment. And the number of bedrooms available in the community housing that is planned will be only slightly more, or even less, than were available in the public housing that is being replaced. That is, it will not house appreciably more tenants than exist today, despite the disruption to the lives of tenants forced to relocate.

If you want to solve homelessness, build more affordable homes. And the most affordable homes are in public housing. It also provides security of tenure so that those with special needs can be helped and supported for the time necessary. Community housing, as well as being more expensive, is less secure. Anglicare's Rental Affordability surveys remind us regularly that there are virtually no homes available to rent for anyone on welfare – particularly Newstart - and those working but on a low income who find somewhere to live generally suffer rent stress, paying more than 30% of their income on rent.

The Legislative Council Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program reported that at 31 March 2018 there were 82,499 individuals on the waiting list for public housing. The numbers on the Victorian Housing Register, incorporating the lists from community housing, is even higher, and growing. The government needs a plan to reduce the waiting list – urgently - or nothing will change.

The recent Productivity Commission Report on Government Services reveals that Victoria's spending on social housing, including public housing, is \$92.02 per person compared to the national average of \$159.10. Until the Victorian government funds housing that is affordable for those who are homeless, nothing will change. Yet while the cost of building public housing is carefully costed, the costs of homelessness are ignored. Mental health deteriorates, the cost of this and other health conditions grows, you cannot work if you do not have a home base that enables you to manage your hygiene and keep up appearances, and children miss school and become part of a cycle of homelessness for which they pay and society pays. To reduce homelessness in Victoria the government must:

1) cancel the PHRP and instead utilise the land on which public housing estates exist to redevelop and

expand public housing;

2) utilise excess public land to build more public housing;

3) cease any further sales of public land until it has been audited and assessed as a site for public housing;

3) give councils the legislative power to make inclusionary zoning mandatory, not voluntary, in appropriate developments;

4) conduct independent research about the causal links between homelessness and lack of public housing;

5) adopt housing first principles to support public housing tenants so that tenancies are enduring.

Jan Lacey

[REDACTED]

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

Fundamental to the issue of homelessness is affordable homes. The state can find money for roads and other infrastructure. Public housing is essential infrastructure too as should be funded as such.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1: [5e3652d0f0493-Submisson Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria.docx](#)

File2:

File3:

Signature:

Jan Lacey