

From: Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 3 November 2017 5:01 PM
To: phrp
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program

Ms Meredith Kidby

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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State Government communications around the Public Housing Renewal Program (PHRP) appear to include a deliberate strategy of misleading the public by blurring the difference between Public Housing and Social Housing. I had no idea until recently that the proposal involved selling off public housing land. Public Housing is the only housing type where government representatives can be held directly accountable for the quality of housing management and rent levels. Without the safety net of public housing, tenants are left exposed to the private market.

Limiting the increase in public housing in this project to a mere 10% is appalling, in the face of growing need for public housing. The claim that a greater social mix is needed is not supported by research or by our local experience in North Melbourne, where the Abbotsford Estate is well integrated into the local community.

North Melbourne doesn't need more pricey apartments, but could well absorb more public housing tenants, especially if greater provision was made for schools. The State Government's current policy will actually reduce diversity in our area by pushing low income households (and especially families) out to areas where housing costs are lower – partly because of distance from employment centres and lack of amenities. I don't believe that desirable housing areas should be reserved for private tenants and homeowners.

Government planning should be looking to the future, when the housing needs for low-income tenants will be even greater. All land currently used for public housing should be retained, and if any land needs to be sold, the profits should only be used to help fund maintenance programs.

The PHRP seems to be going ahead without any clarity about the standard of housing that will result. Why can't the government publish the actual square foot increase of public housing rather than just the number of units? We're being told that a limited number of 3 bedroom units will be provided, because there is more demand for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. At least one family that I know of on the Abbotsford Estate has been told that they may not be able to return after the redevelopment because there will be a limited number of 3 bedroom units. Again, this approach runs counter to the government's own statements about social mix. And I can't believe that there are so few low-income families on the public housing waiting list, that this approach can be justified.

Other models could be used for dispersing public housing amongst private housing without lining the pockets of private developers.

The removal of planning controls from local councils and loss of third party appeal rights is also very wrong. The current proposal is for a very dense redevelopment. This is hardly likely to create good relationships between the new residents and their neighbours.

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File1:

File2:

File3: