

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE PUBLIC HOUSING RENEWAL PROGRAMTerms Of Reference Item 1**“Adequacy of a proposed 10% increase in public housing on the sites, given the size of the waiting list for public housing”**

The population of Melbourne in 1960 was a little over two million people, and since then has almost doubled : there is not the slightest doubt that it will continue to grow steadily, and that is indeed the policy of the current government . In the more than 50 years since 1960 the public housing stock has not kept pace with population growth, and the demand for public housing, as is evidenced by the size of the present waiting list for such housing, and the number of homeless people .

The Victorian Government now proposes to make a small increase to the number of public housing dwellings, at several public housing estates, by the sale of those estates to private developers . Of course a direct outcome is that the Victorian Government, and future Governments, would lose the ability to add additional public housing dwellings at those sites in the decades ahead .

And if the current proposal were extended to more public housing estates in the future, then a ceiling would have been created for the stock of public housing dwellings on public land **despite the continuing increase in Melbourne’s population** .

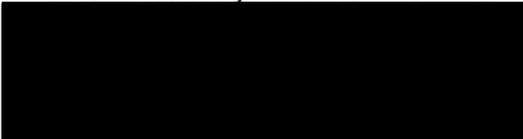
The recent negotiation of a long-term lease of the Melbourne port infrastructure resulted in a “windfall” of the order of \$9.7 billion . That is the monetisation of a part of the city’s birthright, and the Victorian Government has prudently begun to allocate a portion of those funds to provide long-term benefits to particular sectors of the community, and/or improve the broader economy . One example is the initiative to remove numerous railway level crossings, improving public safety, and considerably facilitating private and commercial traffic flow . No

doubt other initiatives will be announced in due course, to the long-term benefit of other sectors of the community - that is how a 'birthright' should be employed .

In that regard, I submit that a small proportion of that ' birthright' could and should be applied to public housing, for that constitutes a long-term advantage to a significant segment of the community, a segment which has been recognised as a responsibility by successive State Government over many generations .

I respectfully invite the Committee to consider including the concept in their list of Recommendations to Parliament . By way of example, the allocation of just (say) 2.5% of the funds from that long-term lease would amount to almost \$250 million : not only could a larger number of public housing dwellings be provided in the shorter term, but the public housing estates would remain in public hands, and available for the construction of further dwellings in the future, should that action become necessary . Surely this is a most appropriate employment of a small part of our birthright .

Submitted for your consideration .

  
Mr C O Haslam