

From: Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 13 October 2017 2:13 PM
To: phrp
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program

Ms Sue Burman

T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Victorian Parliament - Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal program

I am writing to out of huge concern over what I consider to be the shameful behaviour of the Victorian state government in selling off our public housing land to private developers for only a fractional increase, if any, in public housing dwellings.

I am hoping that as well as considering the legal and social issues, your committee can also consider this moral issue of the Public Housing Renewal Program.

Terminology

I think the program needs to use clear definitions of the terms:

- Social housing
- Public Housing
- Community Housing

The Inquiry is about public housing, but I note the Committee Chair has talked about community concern about social housing.

The Project is about Public Housing renewal, and this is what should be addressed, ie. Housing that is owned and managed by the State is for people on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs.

Any plans need to be clear and transparent about the use of these term.

Terms of reference:

My major concern is about the inadequacy of the proposed 10 per cent increase in public housing. This is catastrophically inadequate in view of the need, and the capacity available.

1. The plans need to be clear about both the current number of dwellings and number of people accommodated, as well as the proposed number of dwellings and people, so any statements about increases of numbers can be seen in context. For example: will the proposed increase of 10% in dwellings correspond with a 10% increase in the number of people accommodated?

2. If the purpose of this project is genuinely about increasing public housing, then I see no reason that the whole project cannot be 'not for profit' – ie. The cost of the development can be recouped by selling some private dwellings – but no extra income should remain.

I will use the Bills St. development as an example. Apparently the local council gave the land to the Department of Housing in ?? 1930s for use of homeless women. It is an asset of the community that we hold in trust to care for the most vulnerable people in our community.

- The current public housing in the estate: 55 dwellings
- 'Social' housing in proposed development: 55 dwellings (?public housing)
- Private housing in proposed development: 345 dwellings

Given the current cost of housing in East Hawthorn, we could estimate that sale of a private apartment would be \$500,000+.

- Potential value of the current proposed 400 dwellings: \$200,000,000 = \$200million
- Potential costs per unit to build: ?? \$200,000 (I have no idea- but have been generous to include cost of infrastructure)
- Cost to build 400 apartments: ?? \$80 million
- Cost recouped from selling 200 apartments privately: \$100 million

This very simple, rough calculation suggests there could be, at minimum, a 100% increase in current dwellings, as opposed to the proposed 10%.

The facts as I understand them (may not be correct):

- There is ever increasing and unmet demand for public housing, and a huge increase in homelessness
- There is a need to better use existing 'public housing' land – to increase capacity and improve the environment and facilities
- The Victorian Government is selling off large parcels of public housing land to private developers – with minimal retention of public housing within the new developments

To me, this is an outrageous situation. There is a potential for 400 public housing dwellings on the Bills St. estate – and, at best, there will be 55, and at worst, none – if they are converted to 'social housing'.

If funds are essential for the development of additional public housing, then make it 200 public and 200 private dwellings.

It seems that this process is being repeated all around Melbourne. It seems criminal to me that the government can sell off our very precious public housing land for, I imagine, a windfall profit, and that once sold, this land, or equivalent, can never be recovered.

I don't know if it is too late to save any of the estates, but we have to try to save this irreplaceable asset to provide accommodation for the most vulnerable people, in our community.

Thank-you for your consideration

Sue Burman

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Ph: [REDACTED]

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File1:

File2:

File3: