

Parliamentary Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Public Housing Renewal Program.

This submission is in relation to the **Social Housing Pipeline Program** at the Flemington estate, which has been inaccurately lumped in with the nine sites in the Stage 1 Public Housing Renewal Program.

- i. the adequacy of a proposed 10 per cent increase in public housing (or 1,100 public units) on the sites given the size of the waiting list for public housing;
 - 10 per cent sounds so small and mean and token
 - Personally, I expect more from elected representatives and government employees working in housing
- ii. the ability to cater for all demographics including families, couples and singles with the proposed housing mix;

In the proposal for the Flemington estate:

 - one and two-bedroom apartments are promoted as opposed to three and four, which factors out of the equation families with more than two children and those who have extended family members living with them – the Flemington community could in fact be over-supplied with one and two-bedroom apartments given the proliferation of apartment buildings and proposals in the area
 - one bedroom apartments encourage people to live alone, which suits some but can be isolating and risky for people with high support needs – there appears to be no innovation in how people living in one bedroom apartments will be supported
- iii. the effects on current public housing tenants, including:
 - a. whether they will be moved to accommodation that is secure, stable and fit for purpose;
 - b. whether they will be moved to accommodation that is close to existing social support networks, educational, health and welfare services;
 - c. whether current tenants will be able to return to the estates;
 - for Flemington, the proposal is for current public housing tenants moving out of the walk-ups to be looked after ... the walk-ups are uninhabitable ... so improvements are anticipated
 - what seems to have been over-looked is the impact of the proposal on the tenants remaining in the four high-rise towers who will still be in the high-rise towers
- iv. the allocation of parts of the sites between the proposed new public and private housing units;
 - information I have read uses language incredibly loosely – it says that private housing will be 'introduce private housing on the site' BUT when you look into the numbers, it's practically a takeover with the proposed private housing dwelling numbers being just under half of the total dwellings on the estate
 - the proposal allows private housing to dominate the site and changes the site totally and irrevocably into something that the Flemington community rejects – in every forum I have been to, the community supports social housing and public housing BUT NOT private housing on public land and not private housing abutting public housing in so brutal a fashion as the proposed scenario – the proposal to have different car parking allocations for private and public homes on the estate clearly highlights the difference between the two (and does the exact opposite of a 'tenure blind' approach)
- v. the lack of public condition assessments of the estates or alternative options such as refurbishment of all or part of the existing housing units;
 - when the walk-ups were new, they looked fabulous but they have clearly been neglected and not maintained over the years to the point where refurbishment is not feasible

- vi. the proposed significant increase in density and heights and any local environmental impacts, such as the loss of open space and mature vegetation;
 - the increase in density is of great concern particularly given the site's closeness to major roadways, which will increase traffic in a small space and the over-crowding on public transport now
 - any loss of open space and mature vegetation will be keenly felt by estate tenants and surrounding residents as we generally live on small blocks of land with small yards and no nature strips/verges in the streets

- vii. the removal of planning controls from local councils, and planning implications surrounding communities including existing neighbourhood character, traffic flow and provisions of services;
 - local councils can access local knowledge and thereby improve solutions to local problems
 - existing neighbourhood character will be further eroded without Flemington residents being directly involved in the process
 - traffic flow is currently a disaster, the car queue on Racecourse Road will only get longer earlier

- viii. the proposed loss of third party appeal rights;
 - this is extremely worrying, particularly as the proposals are just that – without third party rights anything can happen (and will)
 - the community needs to be listened to and heard throughout the process, and taken seriously

- ix. the transparency and genuine community consultation with affected residents, neighbouring communities and the broader Victorian community regarding the short, medium and long term implications of the PHRP model as currently proposed;
 - the communication with estate tenants and local residents has been very disappointing to date
 - different information has been available on different websites (council and government departments) so people are not genuinely aware of the extent of what is being proposed

- x. public housing estates where similar models are envisaged or underway, including —
 - Markham Avenue, Ashburton;
 - Koolkuna Lane, Hampton; and
 - the corner of Stokes Street and Penola Street, Preston;
 - I am not aware of these sites and models

- xi. previous Victorian public housing renewal projects, including but not limited to the Kensington, Carlton and Prahran public housing estates;
 - have all evaluations/reviews for the Kensington and Carlton projects been looked at?
 - the turmoil that ten years of building will bring needs to be well-managed

- xii. best practice models for the provision of public housing from within Australia and overseas;
 - best practice models say that if you want to build community you have low rise ... if you want to pack as many people as you can into a space you have high rise
 - the Flemington estate is favouring high-rise

- xiii. and any other matters the Committee considers relevant.

- At the risk of stating the obvious ... once you sell off public land it's gone forever; once private developers get their hands on public land, land becomes a commodity, a transaction rather than something to be tended and looked after for now and the future