

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

## **Government should heed inquiry recommendations and pause public housing redevelopment**

Inner Melbourne Community Legal welcomes the tabling today in the Legislative Council of the report of the Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers.

The report is an important document that exposes the flawed basis of this policy.

It raises further questions about whether the government has properly considered whether there are alternatives to the demolition of the 44 towers, the disregard of residents' human rights and the future of public and affordable housing in Victoria.

But among the 21 recommendations in the majority report there is an opportunity for the government to push the reset button on these plans. For this reason, it is disappointing that the government representatives on the committee have produced a minority report that fails to acknowledge or engage with many of the issues raised by submissions and reinforced in public hearings.

Given the ongoing failure to produce sufficient evidence why all 44 buildings must be demolished, IMCL urges the government to heed the committee's recommendation that it halt all work associated with the redevelopment program until it provides condition reports for each building, feasibility studies of alternatives to demolition, and cost-benefit analysis for each site.

To address the report's finding that there has been a loss of trust in Homes Victoria, the government should publish a case-by-case approach for the alternatives of demolition and refurbishment of each of the 44 towers.

The report found that the Government and Homes Victoria engaged in coercive and misleading practices which caused "deep harm" to the social and emotional wellbeing of residents. IMCL supports the recommendation to ensure that residents' wellbeing is prioritised and respected.

"This report shows that the government plan to demolish 44 public housing towers has been ill-conceived, will cause enormous disruption to residents' lives and has not been adequately justified," said Louisa Bassini, Managing Lawyer of Housing and Tenancy at IMCL.

"It blows big holes in the credibility of the policy by questioning whether the plans will deliver an increase in public housing and whether buildings need to be demolished at all or could be retrofitted at a lesser cost to the public purse.

“Evidence given by public housing residents was compelling and distressing, showing how they have been abandoned by Homes Victoria and the government. Communication with residents has been confusing and insufficient.

“These buildings are more than just a roof over their heads, they are communities of people who provide immense security and support to one another.

“Residents are to be commended for their courage in appearing as witnesses to the inquiry.

“At a time when there’s a housing crisis, demolishing buildings that make up 10% of the state’s public housing stock will only make it worse.

“This report now provides a full record of this bungled policy and future generations of Victorians will judge the state government harshly on the actions it has taken to date.

“The Government owes it to public housing tower residents to urgently address their concerns.

“It should release publicly all the information it relied upon to decide to demolish and redevelop the towers, and it must commit to legally binding guarantees of a right to return to public housing for residents who are required to relocate while their building is redeveloped.”

Stephanie Price, Principal Lawyer from West Heidelberg Community Legal as part of the Social Housing Legal Program, said the report also made important recommendations cautioning against the expansion of the community housing model in Victoria.

It found there was confusion about the differences between public and community housing and that the government had relied on the umbrella term ‘social housing’ to obfuscate the privatisation of state-owned housing.

“The report highlights the concerns many public housing residents and housing advocates have about public housing being replaced with community housing,” she said.

“Renters in community housing generally pay higher rents with less certain long-term housing security than those in public housing.

“This is an opportunity for the government to acknowledge these concerns and commit to expanding and not reducing public housing in Victoria.”

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