



## The Need for Further Housing Reforms in Victoria

Issued April 2026

The Uniting Church in Australia has understood that the Gospel calls us to seek the well-being and flourishing of all people and the natural environment.

Having a roof over your head is essential to well-being and flourishing. Housing affects people's ability to participate in their community. Access to jobs, education, and health care services is affected by whether a person has affordable, appropriate, safe, and secure housing.

In 2020, the Victorian Government announced \$5.3 billion for a Big Housing Build, which, as of January 2025, had built or is building 10,000 new homes.

In 2023, the Victorian Government committed to building 12,000 affordable and social housing dwellings. However, the definition of affordable housing does not mean people on low incomes can afford to buy or rent the homes. "Affordable housing" can mean the rent is 10% below market rates, which, for inner Melbourne, could mean rents that only those on higher incomes can afford.

However, Victoria continues to have the lowest proportion of social housing of any state in Australia, at only 2.95% of Victorian homes. The national average is 4.04%. "Social housing" means both government-run public housing and housing run by non-government community organisations.

In the last year, the Victorian Government cut social housing spending from \$2.36 billion to \$2.16 billion.

### Public Housing Towers

On 20 September 2023, the then Victorian Premier, Dan Andrews, announced that, between 2023 and 2051, the government would relocate the 10,000 residents living in 44 public housing towers. The sites will be used to build a mix of new private housing and housing run by community service providers. The new housing will accommodate 30,000 people, of which 11,000 will live in the community service provider housing. At this stage, only the public housing towers in Elgin Street, Carlton, will be rebuilt as public housing due to a \$2 billion Federal Government grant.



Rents for public housing are capped at 25% of the tenants' income, while rents in housing run by community housing providers are often set at 30% or higher. It is argued that housing run by community housing providers has advantages over public housing because it is GST-free, and tenants are eligible for Commonwealth Government rent assistance. Public housing supporters argue that public housing is more secure for tenants and targets lower-income people.

Community housing organisations can vary in the quality of housing they provide. In early 2025, Victoria's largest community housing organisation was accused by residents of failing to address maintenance issues, including broken windows, missing floorboards and dead possums left to rot.

The public housing towers have been allowed to run down over the decades due to underinvestment in maintenance and repairs. A report by the Victorian Parliament Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, released in December 2025, found that the Victorian Government had failed to conduct repairs and maintenance of the public



housing towers in a timely and adequate manner. The failure had become more pronounced since the announcement of the demolition of the towers in September 2023.

The Productivity Commission has found that Victoria has the lowest per-person spending on social housing maintenance in Australia. The Victorian Government has neglected public housing, with the number of public housing homes in Victoria growing by only 36 in the last decade.

The Victorian Parliament Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee found that the Victorian Government and the government's housing agency, Homes Victoria, had used significant coercion and misleading practices to relocate residents from the public housing towers within an arbitrary deadline, causing deep harm to the social, emotional and physical well-being of the residents.

On 30 January 2026, the Victorian Government announced the next seven public housing towers to be redeveloped. The seven towers are specialised in assisting older people. About 70% of the residents are aged 65 years old or older. The Government has stated that every household has been assigned a dedicated relocation officer who will work with the household to ensure their new homes suit their needs and preferences. Relocations from the towers will begin in July.

### What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters or emails to:

**The Hon Jacinta Allen**  
Premier  
1 Treasury Place,  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

**The Hon Harriet Shing**  
Minister for Housing and Building  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street East  
Melbourne VIC 3002

Salutation: Dear Premier

Salutation: Dear Minister

E-mail: [jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au)

E-mail: [harriet.shing@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:harriet.shing@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Points to make in your letters or e-mails:

- Welcome the Victorian Government's commitment to facilitate building additional homes in the state.
- Ask the Victorian Government to build at least 80,000 new social housing dwellings over the next decade for low-income people. A significant proportion of homes should be public housing to grow the public housing stock.
- Ask the government to increase funding for the maintenance of social housing so that properties are not left empty for unreasonable lengths of time awaiting repairs.
- Ask that, concerning the current public housing towers, the Victorian Government engage in a genuine co-design process with residents about their future.
- Ask for the redevelopment of the public housing towers to not result in any reduction in public housing units.
- Request that support workers for those people being relocated should be independent of Homes Victoria. As Homes Victoria is the landlord for these tenants, having the residents' support workers also be from Homes Victoria would be contrary to best practice.
- Seek assurance that residents of the redeveloped public housing towers will be provided with a legally binding Deed guaranteeing the same right of return to the redeveloped property as that guaranteed under the Public Housing Renewal Program.

Please send any replies to your letters to [jim@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:jim@victas.uca.org.au)