



# Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

**Hearing date: 20 August 2024**

**Question taken on notice**

**Directed to: Uniting Victoria and Tasmania**

**Received date:** 6 September 2024

## 1. **The Chair, p. 46**

### **Question asked:**

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. I will go to buy now, pay later in a minute. The reason I want to ask how many of your clientele are in social housing and how many are in private rentals is because at the moment the government are trying to address this social housing aspect. That is why I want to ask: besides housing, is there something to address separately? I just want to see how many of your clientele actually do access social housing and what percentage roughly are private renters.

**Warren ELLIOTT:** I would have to take that on notice and get those figures. I do not have those in front of me at the moment, but certainly we could attempt to provide those figures for you.

**Jerry HAM:** Yes, and I would do likewise.

**The CHAIR:** We are looking at a low- and no-income cohort, the clientele you represent. I am hoping they have good access. It will be a higher percentage of those who have access to social housing. That is why I was looking at that particular cohort.

**Jerry HAM:** Uniting, across the state, as a housing provider runs about 700 social housing tenancies, so we certainly recognise that cohort. Many of the people who come in to us are experiencing homelessness, and they are also in social housing with other providers. It will make up a large percentage of the clients that we see. But, like Warren, I would take it on notice, to come back to you with the exact figures.

### **Response:**

Trends in people's housing situations can vary across locations for Uniting's Emergency Relief services. For example, the table below outlines the proportion of consumers that were in social housing, private rentals, or

experiencing homelessness for three different Uniting Emergency Relief sites, between 1 January 2024 to 30 April 2024:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Percentage in social housing*</b>	<b>Percentage in private rental</b>	<b>Percentage experiencing homelessness</b>
Broadmeadows	13%	49%	6%
Prahran	35%	10%	3%
Wodonga	39%	28%	9%

*\*includes community housing and public housing.*

The overwhelming majority of people accessing our Emergency Relief services report government payments as their main source of income, which are insufficient when covering an individual's or family's most basic needs. Those renting privately are often spending a significant portion of their income on rent while waiting for more affordable housing options. The severe shortage of social housing, combined with unaffordable private rentals, needs to be addressed for this cohort to eat well.

While the contribution of housing cannot be overstated, many other factors also affect a person's financial circumstances and subsequent experiences of food insecurity. In 2022, we heard from consumers about the impacts of the rising cost of living across several of our services, including fifteen Emergency Relief sites, two Meals Programs, and two housing and tenancy programs. Our research found that consumers were experiencing a range of pressure points, which need to be addressed to reduce the number of people choosing between food and other essentials:

