

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Joseph Edmonds

Organisation Name:

Your position or role:

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::

Public housing,Services,Rough sleeping,Mental health,Employment,Indigenous people,Family violence,Housing affordability

What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :

An advocacy body ,Other (please describe)

20 Years working as a volunteer in providing assist public housing tenants and for those in need of public housing and my interest in good government administration and emergency services

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

Protection of existing government assets and government services for providing mor public housing

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I wish to advocate for much greater investment and protection of existing PA stock.

See my submission attached

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

No

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1: [5e322b4df3c56-PH Submission.docx](#)

File2:

File3:

Signature:

J A Edmonds (unable to provide a digital signature or other copy of my submission)

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY ON HOMELESSNESS IN VICTORIA

“Homelessness” can only be addressed by a drastic increase in public housing (“PH”). **Homelessness can only be properly addressed if enough PH is made available for those suffering homelessness.**

My experience as a lawyer for a Victorian Statutory Corporation and my many years working as a volunteer for the St Vincent de Paul Society Inc. assisting persons and families living in public housing, have made me proud of my association with the PH Networks which champion the need for urgent investment in PH as the major solution to the heart-ache and injustice of homelessness. I have therefore adopted the recommendations advanced by them in their submissions to this Review.

I cannot endorse more fully their advocacy in favour of PH as the answer to and proven model for reversing the harm we have caused by our inaction and lack of success, inadequate investment and misuse of government resources in meeting the challenges of homelessness.

Public Housing means housing that is owned and managed by Government. PH does satisfy the needs of the homeless and those vulnerable to homelessness because rents are fixed at 25% of tenants` income, they have security of tenure, and all those on low incomes are accepted.

State Governments have instead for the past 30 years been handing over the management and/or ownership of their housing to private Housing Associations, also known as Community Housing. As well, State and Federal Governments have provided those Associations and private investors with other subsidy and financial support to provide what they mistakenly call “affordable housing”, which in any case is well beyond the financial means of the homeless and those vulnerable to homelessness. The Housing Associations charge well above 25% of the tenants` income, do not give security of tenure, and cherry-pick those they want, leading to many higher income tenants being given priority over those on lower incomes.

Adding to the problem, Government-owned land has been sold off to private investors, and 100% PH estates demolished, to be replaced by a combination of private housing and Housing Association-managed and/or owned properties.

The solution to homelessness is therefore:

1. Keep management and ownership of existing Public Housing in the hands of Government- no more give-aways or sale to private ownership, including Housing Associations.
2. Build as much Government owned and managed housing as is needed as soon as possible- in Victoria we need at least 40,000 new units to provide for those on the PH waiting list, but more would be on the list if the wait weren't so long, and the list will probably increase in number because of the likely increase in house prices and rents and economic hardship.
3. Retain as much Government land as is needed for current and future PH, and re-development to be 100% PH until all PH needs are met
4. Government funding for housing to be exclusively for PH until the waiting list is cleared, then only for non-PH after all PH needs are met into the future.
5. There is probably no need to demolish current PH Estates which are capable of being renovated. There is probably enough land and money to satisfy PH requirements, and demolition unnecessarily disrupts tenants' lives and destroys established communities, as well as wasting resources and disrupting surrounding neighborhoods.
6. The current Social Housing Renewal Programme of the State Government actually violates many of these principles and should be scrapped.
7. An additional point to consider is that with all the building required, it would make more financial sense for the State Government to re-establish a Housing Construction Department, to build the PH directly, rather than its current policy of Public-Private construction, where the Government provides the funding, and the work is done privately and for profit.