

Public housing renewal

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

In December 2016, Council welcomed the State Government's announcement to increase its public housing stock by launching the \$185M *Public Housing Renewal Program (PHRP)* to redevelop public housing sites across Melbourne.

With 35,000 Victorians on the waiting list for public housing, the renewal program takes a short-term approach, with long-term implications. Existing public housing land in Stonnington should be maximised to create more public housing stock, not private development. As inner city land becomes scarcer, the PHRP presents a 'once in a generation' opportunity to meet the growing housing crisis demand and to cater for a wider range of housing options close to jobs, transport and services.

The 10 per cent increase in public housing stock envisaged by the PHRP is not enough.

There are 1,867 social and public housing dwellings in Stonnington and the PHRP will deliver 178 new dwellings. However, our research tells us that 2,558 dwellings are expected to be needed in 2022 – resulting in a shortfall of 513.

Developers will make massive profits by cramming in thousands of private apartments on public housing land and in return they will build only a small number of new public housing dwellings.

There is significant disconnect between Council's adopted *Chapel reVision* and the *Prahran Development Plan*, especially the inconsistencies on built form and amenity. The proposed heights are grossly excessive and out of character for the area. The adopted and government

approved policy allows for five storeys and this program proposes 12 storeys.

The Minister for Planning breaches the State Government's own planning controls while doing little to respond to the housing crisis. It is improper and a conflict of interest that the Minister for Planning has made himself the responsible authority for the site and removes any third party rights to object or appeal. This process excludes Council and the community from the normal, transparent planning process.

Councils are being removed as the responsible planning authority. The PHRP fails to follow the usual, transparent planning process where the local Council is the responsible authority and third party rights for the community are preserved.

What needs to change?

- » Existing public housing land must be maximised to create additional public housing stock nearby jobs, public transport and services.
- » The 10 per cent increase in public housing stock and significantly limited housing choice is entirely inadequate to meet the growing housing crisis.
- » It is improper and a conflict of interest that the Minister for Planning makes himself the responsible authority for the site and removes any third party rights to object or appeal. This process excludes Council and the community from the normal transparent planning process.
- » It is imperative that the PHRP integrates and is consistent with the City of Stonnington Planning Scheme and gazetted *Chapel reVision*.
- » Redevelopments must achieve quality public realm and urban design outcomes that are respectful of neighbourhood character.
- » Where private stock is incorporated, integration of public and private dwellings is essential to reduce marginalisation of those living in public dwellings.

Council action

Council has:

- » written to the Minister for Planning and Housing on several occasions
- » made a submission and presented to the Parliament Inquiry into PHRH, and
- » partnered with Bayside City Council and the City of Boroondara to research future public housing demand within the region and form an advocacy alliance 'People Before Profits' campaign to advocate for increased public housing in our communities that follow proper public processes.