

We are practitioners, academics and advocates who wrote to the Victorian Premier, Treasurer, and Ministers for Housing and Planning, on behalf of attendees of a University of Melbourne forum titled *Maximising the Benefits of Public Housing Renewal*, in December last year. The majority of the over 150 participants in that forum called for a moratorium on the roll-out of the Public Housing Renewal Program until alternatives to the current approach could be discussed.

We have communicated this resolution to other relevant Members of Parliament, government officials overseeing the renewal program, and the staff of peak bodies representing organisations working in housing and social justice. From these efforts it has become clear that the government is too committed to the current approach, and that the key peak bodies and housing providers are too vested in small gains from community housing stock transfer and government funding to challenge the existing program. This is despite the vast majority of individuals agreeing with our critique of the current approach; there is a tragic sense of powerlessness and forced compromise from people in important positions who know Victoria could do better.

In the face of this crippling self-defeatism we call on all people within and without government to resist the sell-off of public land for such a paltry gain of a 10 percent increase in social housing. Many sound alternatives exist: from simply increasing government funding for public housing upgrades, to various leasing arrangements that would enable public, private or not-for-profit construction of build-to-rent or long-term-lease to bring in revenue and maintain government control of the underlying land. These mechanisms are outlined in the short, attached document. All of them would enable continued public use of this land for future generations when the buildings produced through the current renewal program reach obsolescence.

We encourage people to organise within their communities in whatever ways they can to prevent these land sales. This is a broad-based coalition – there are no leaders.

Those residents facing relocation have human and legal rights. If you are uncertain about your options or need legal advice, please contact:

- Mooney Valley Legal Service (Ascot Vale): admin@mvl.org.au
- St Kilda Legal Service (Brighton; Prahran): st_kilda_vic@clc.net.au
- Fitzroy Legal Service: enquiries@fitzroy-legal.org.au
- Darebin Community Legal Centre (Northcote): enquiries@darebinclc.org.au
- Northern Community Legal Centre (Brunswick; Clifton Hill): admin@northernclc.org.au
- Eastern Community Legal (Hawthorn): eclc@eclc.org.au
- West Heidelberg Community Legal Service (Heidelberg West): (03) 9450 2000
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal (North Melbourne): (03) 9328 1885
- Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre: fklegal@fkclc.org.au

Meredith Gorman, Homelessness Networker, Northern Metropolitan Region

Dr Kate Shaw, Future Fellow, School of Geography, University of Melbourne

Chris Chaplin, co-author, Kensington estate redevelopment evaluation report

David Kelly, PhD Candidate, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University