

MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Housing Reform must focus on building capacity of vulnerable tenants

Jesuit Social Services has outlined ways that Victoria's public housing system might better realise the hopes and aspirations of public housing tenants and the broader community.

Releasing Jesuit Social Services' [submission](#) to the government's public housing consultation, Jesuit Social Services CEO, Julie Edwards, said, "Public housing protects many of the vulnerable and disadvantaged people that Jesuit Social Services works with from homelessness. As the government embarks on reforms to the public housing system, it must accept that it has an ongoing role to play in protecting the housing rights of Victorians by providing social housing and implementing equitable housing policies."

The government's consultation paper *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* outlines a wide range of potential reforms to Victoria's public housing system. It considers how reforms to social housing provision, allocation, tenure, and management might result in a fairer and more sustainable system.

"These reforms must respect the basic housing rights of individuals. The government needs to accept the fact that many public housing tenants have multiple and complex needs, and provide support so that these individuals can realise their hopes and aspirations. Unrealistic expectations and punitive measures will not achieve this.

"Any reforms that put the housing rights of tenants at risk need to be carefully considered, in particular we believe that there needs to be further research and consultation around possible reforms to public housing tenure, allocations and rent policy."

Ms Edwards welcomed the focus in the consultation paper on providing more integrated and effective services for public housing tenants. "The government has correctly identified the need to provide more holistic support to tenants so that they can engage in education, employment or training. Support for public housing tenants must be holistic, ongoing and well resourced. There must also be a renewed focus on building the capacity of public housing communities through innovative engagement with public services, the community sector and private sector."

Noting the need for broader housing reform, Ms Edwards said, "In order to improve the fairness and sustainability of public housing there must also be wider housing reform. We need to see action to increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce the burden of rental costs on households with low incomes."

"A fairer housing system combined with high quality social housing will deliver better outcomes for all Victorians."

View Jesuit Social Services' submission by [clicking here](#).

Jesuit Social Services is a not-for-profit organisation which works to build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged young people, families and communities.

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