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**Darebin City Council Submission in response to:**

The Victoria Government discussion papers: *Pathways to a fair and sustainable social housing system & Options to improve the supply of quality housing*

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## Contents

Acronyms .....	2
1 Introduction .....	3
2 Local Government Context .....	4
3 What is the role of government? .....	6
4 How could the allocation of public housing & tenancy be made fairer? ....	7
5 How could the public housing system be more flexible?.....	8
6 How can public housing be made fairer for tenants and the community? .	9
7 How can we encourage good tenant behaviour?.....	11
8 How can the supply of quality social housing be improved? .....	12
9 Conclusion .....	13

**Appendix one:** Resident feedback and article written by a Northcote resident Eileen Artmann published in the Age on 30/06/2011, page 22.

**Appendix two:** Case Study - United Kingdom public housing system

## **Acronyms**

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)

Darebin City Council (DCC)

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)

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# 1. Introduction

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The City of Darebin welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to *Pathways to a fair and sustainable social housing system* and *Social Housing: A discussion paper on the options to improve the supply of quality housing and Social Housing – a Discussion Paper on the Options to improve the Supply of Quality Housing*.

Local Government has two complimentary roles in the provision of housing: one as a planning authority to facilitate the provision of housing, and the other as a community representative expressed through housing related advocacy, services and facilities. This submission is developed through a lens that captures both of these roles. This submission is informed by a number of local documents, including the Darebin City Council *Responding to Housing Stress – A local Action Plan 2010 – 2013*.

This submission provides a response to both discussion papers, released April 2012 and will respond to the following questions:

- What is the role of government?
- How could the allocation of public housing & tenancy be made fairer?
- How could the public housing system be more flexible?
- How can public housing be made fairer for tenants and the Victorian community?
- How can we encourage good tenant behaviour?
- How can the supply of quality social housing be improved?

The submission has given a combined response to questions relating to the allocation of housing and tenure, and to questions making housing fairer for tenants and community.

In response to discussion paper number one, *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* the submission identifies the following key considerations that are vital to improving the public housing system, and the impact on tenants and the wider community:

- models that support limited tenure are detrimental to tenant's health, wellbeing and economic participation and are not substantiated by a local evidence base.
- programs that support economic and social participation among public housing tenants are crucial to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for residents. Pathways out of public housing are only achievable if residents are provided with ongoing, appropriate support services.
- public housing tenants are part of the Victorian community. Improving education outcomes and living conditions for public tenants will create a fairer system for both tenants and the wider community.
- initiatives that encourage good tenant behaviour must address the cause of this behaviour, not just the symptoms

In response to question posed for discussion paper number two, *Social Housing – a Discussion Paper on the Options to improve the Supply of Quality Housing*, the submission identifies that models of redevelopment should focus on increasing and renewing existing public housing stock, with an emphasis on facilitating partnerships

with the private development industry. This will introduce a mix of public and private houses where appropriate that take into consideration the diverse communities and needs that may exist within each municipality.

Furthermore, it identifies that before any model is adopted, the social, environmental and economic implications must be further considered and any limitations mitigated through an asset management perspective that holds a strong focus on achieving outcomes that address people's need to access appropriate, secure and affordable housing.

Improving the public housing system and outcomes for tenants and the wider community requires committed partnerships between state, local government and community organisations. Darebin City Council is committed to working collaboratively in this process to create a model and a system that will increase the supply and improve the quality of social housing across the state and to improve the health, social and economic outcomes for both people living in public housing and the wider community.

## 2. Local Government Context

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The Darebin Community Health and Wellbeing Plan – 2009 – 2013 identifies housing as a key determinant to health and wellbeing, as outlined in Priority Three: Creating a Safe, Supportive and Sustainable Environment, Objective 3.7: *Respond to housing stress and the needs of people in insecure housing in the City of Darebin.*

This objective is implemented through Darebin City Council's strategy on homelessness, affordability and housing stress; "Responding to Housing Stress – A local Action Plan 2010 – 2013" highlights the following key findings:

- nearly 7,700 people were on public housing waiting list as of 2010
- over 5,100 households were at risk of rental stress in 2010
- approximately 10,379 households were at risk of housing stress (mortgage repayments)
- 564 people are estimated to be homeless on any given night <sup>1</sup>

Housing is a critical issue at Darebin and there are several initiatives in place to help guide and steer Council's response to the challenges. Affordable housing is defined as that which costs no more than 30% of the income households who earn less than 80% of the median.<sup>1</sup> The definition relates to housing costs irrespective of whether they are derived from home ownership, rental or social housing provision. Affordability is essentially a result of the gap between household income and the prevailing market conditions affecting house prices.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the contributing factors to housing affordability are:

- building of new houses is not able to keep up with demand/population growth and there is therefore an increasing gap between housing supply and housing demand
- the private rental market is becoming increasingly inaccessible to low income households, and
- housing costs are rising faster than incomes

Council has two complimentary roles in the provision of housing: one as a planning authority to facilitate the timely and orderly provision of housing, and the other as a community representative expressed through the provision of housing related advocacy, services and facilities. In order to undertake both these roles effectively Council has a responsibility to constantly understand and monitor the housing market, building industry, housing needs of its residents and future residents, and the future directions of key stakeholders, such as tertiary institutes, government agencies, community housing groups and the state and federal governments.

As a planning authority, Council can play a proactive role in facilitating and encouraging certain types of housing to meet specific needs of its community. Council plays an important role in improving resident's health & safety and linking low-income renters and people in insecure housing to the community. Alongside efforts to increase affordable housing, activities that support people in housing stress and insecure housing and build community capacity and resilience are vital.

The 2011 Census indicates that Darebin's population is 136,474; this is an increase of 8,387 people since the 2006 census. This increase indicates that more people have settled in Darebin and more are seeking to secure housing in the municipality. Housing shortages, continued population growth, financial market and economic volatility (combined with the prospect of rising unemployment), relatively low-income levels (compared to prices) suggest affordability will remain a significant challenge. Current forecasts suggest that public housing demand in Darebin for example will increase from around 7,690 in 2010 to around 9,360 in 2031, an annual average increase of +2.4% or over +3,360.<sup>1</sup>

In line with similar municipalities, housing in Darebin is becoming increasingly unaffordable to people on low incomes and likely to remain so without significant intervention from all levels of government. Darebin rates as the fifth most disadvantaged Local Government Area in metropolitan Melbourne on the index of relative social disadvantage. Darebin has areas that rank as the least disadvantaged on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) such as Alphington and Northcote (West) and some of the most disadvantaged pockets in the state, generally clustered in East Preston and East Reservoir.

Council recognises that there are challenges associated with population growth and the deterioration of housing affordability and as such has sought to respond to the issue with the development of a Housing Strategy to manage these impacts. The housing strategy has the following objectives:

- identify current and future housing needs
- explore Darebin's housing opportunities
- recognise the associated constraints; and
- inform and allow Darebin Council to efficiently manage the current and future housing supply to meet the communities' needs including facilitating the development of affordable housing

The completion of the housing strategy will mark the advent of a planning scheme amendment to introduce key housing objectives into the Darebin Planning Scheme.

### 3. What is the role of government?

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No individual reform is sufficient to address housing affordability. Council welcomes and encourages an ongoing, coordinated response across all tiers of government improve the supply of supply of affordable housing in a consistent, efficient and effective manner.

#### **Federal**

In late 2000's three housing initiatives; "The Road Home": A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness', formation of the National Housing Supply Council and the release of the National Urban Policy were implemented to provide a more integrated and coordinated response to housing across the three tiers of government.

The Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan is a key federal Government's response to address housing affordability. Funding of \$5.238 billion was allocated to the Social Housing Initiative over three and a half years from 2008-09 to 2011-12 for the construction of new social housing (in two stages), and a further \$400 million over two years for repairs and maintenance to existing social housing dwellings.

While this is a significant investment, the 2011 report by the National Housing Supply Council (NHSC) reveals that Australia and its capital cities continue to face a severe and growing housing supply shortage, with social housing only making up approximately 5% of all private dwellings.

It is quantified that in order to address this shortage the percentage of social housing stock in Australia will need to be increased to between 10% and 15% from current levels. To achieve this it requires an annual investment by the Federal Government of \$19 billion per year for the next 10 years. <sup>2</sup>

#### **State**

The State Government must focus on increasing, maintaining and upgrading existing public housing stock, with an emphasis on now including the facilitation of partnerships with the private development industry to introduce a mix of public and private houses where there are opportunities. Furthermore, Ste Government support public housing tenants through funded partnerships with Local Government and community agencies

2012-13 State Budget makes cuts to homelessness assistance and social housing, including a \$3.3 million reduction in funding for Housing Support and Homelessness Assistance State Government must commit resources to housing associations to increase their stock to meet the needs of a different client base that sits between public housing type tenants and private homeowners.

State Government strategy and policy development provides direction on housing related issues to Councils across Victoria, which have subsequently been interpreted into land use planning policies and implemented into the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF). As Councils are required to operate under the policy frameworks set by the state, the State Government needs to empower local councils to play a more effective role in influencing a diversity of housing stock in their cities.

## Local

The Department of Human Services (DHS) – Office of Housing is a major land owner in Darebin. There are strong concentrations of public housing distributed in East Reservoir and East Preston while the distribution patterns are sparser to the south of Bell Street and to all suburbs west of High Street. Just over 2,300 households live in public housing in Darebin, representing around 5% of all Darebin households. Public housing stock is managed by three different areas: Broadmeadows, Preston and Collingwood.<sup>1</sup>

Office of Housing properties are prevalent within the most socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Darebin. Public housing estates and the residents that reside in them are generally stigmatised by the wider community, therefore plans to renew these areas with an objective of increasing the supply of public housing may encounter strong community opposition.

Local government manages a range of functions that can influence local housing outcomes. These roles include:

- facilitating the provision of housing appropriate to local needs through urban planning
- regulating development including planning schemes, infrastructure planning and charging, building codes
- Local Laws regulating amenity, health, safety, streets and parking, waste management
- initiating and supporting urban and neighbourhood renewal projects
- property rating and levying
- collecting and analysing housing related information (e.g. building approvals and commencements, demographic projections)
- community grants (e.g. to community services and organisations); and
- providing funding and land for affordable housing

People who live in public housing come from a range of different backgrounds: long-term unemployed, people with little or no job training and work experience, Aboriginal people, newly arrived refugees and migrants, people with mental health issues, older residents, people with disability, and people who have exited the criminal justice system. The Darebin City Council *“Equity and Inclusion Policy (2012- 2015). A Rights-based Approach to: Valuing and Responding to Our Community’s Diverse Needs”* identifies all of these groups as being at risk of social exclusion if their needs are not addressed by policy makers at the state and local government levels.

Council is committed to supporting the provision of secure and affordable housing to improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable community members and promoting their equal participation in the community.<sup>1</sup>

## 4. How could the allocation of public housing & tenancy be made fairer?

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**Key consideration:** *Models that support limited tenure are detrimental to tenant’s health, wellbeing and economic participation and are not substantiated by a local evidence base.*

Increased demand and reduced growth of public housing stock has resulted in housing authorities exploring a variety of measures to increase exits from public housing, including the Victorian government's proposal of ending 'tenure for life.

Discussion paper number one, *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* proposes changes to tenure policy and facilitating tenants' transition from public housing into other accommodation to make the allocation and tenure fairer. It is suggested that such reforms could "enhance the possibility for tenants to transition from public housing to community housing and then from community housing to the private rental market".<sup>3</sup>

The AHURI study, *How does security of tenure impact on public housing tenants?* indicates that caution should be taken regarding models that support limited tenure, as it increases the risk of homelessness and negatively affects the health and wellbeing of vulnerable families and individuals.<sup>4 5</sup> Conversely, this research identified that secure tenure has positive flow-on effects to tenants in terms of health and wellbeing, family stability, education, employment and social cohesion.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, there is no comprehensive local Victorian data available on the support needs, affordability gaps, health and wellbeing and housing outcomes of existing and future public housing tenants to determine how a limited tenure transitional model would affect the Victoria Public Housing system.

Limited tenure models should not be the only model to promoting a fairer allocation and tenancy system for public housing due to proven negative impacts on health and wellbeing and the lack of a local evidence base to support this model. There are many forms of affordable housing options with varying levels of subsidy, time-limits, security of tenure and links to community-based resources.

To address housing stress and make the allocation of housing and tenancy fairer, housing responses must be evidence based, specific to the needs of different cohorts and sufficiently resourced. Models for increasing affordable housing that will make allocation of public housing and tenancy fairer are discussed in a number of sections in this submission.

## **5. How could the public housing system be more flexible?**

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**Key consideration:** *programs that increase and support economic and social participation among public housing tenants to promote independence must be supported and adequately resourced*

Discussion paper number one, *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* identifies that the current allocation, eligibility and tenure system are not flexible or adaptable to tenants' changing needs and that "A fairer system could encourage tenants to participate in the economy and society, whilst also considering their individual needs and characteristics."<sup>3</sup>

Programs that support economic and social participation among public housing tenants have been proven to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and build their capacity for independence.<sup>6</sup> However, to make this sustainable and achievable requires ongoing support to not only link tenants with training and employment, but to address the barriers preventing their economic participation, such as poor health, family violence, low education, mental health issues and disability.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the provision of affordable housing and security of tenure are paramount to promote economic participation amongst tenants and reduce the barriers restricting their participation.<sup>6</sup> Research indicates that fixed tenure and transitional models will be detrimental to the capacity of tenants to engage in ongoing economic participation.<sup>4</sup> However, as tenants' circumstances change in terms of increased number of household members, or decrease, or acquired disability, the system needs to be flexible to respond to such changes in a timely manner.

The Darebin Council Plan outlines Council's commitment to delivering services that address the challenges faced by Darebin's most disadvantaged. Whether this disadvantage is manifested in a low disposal income, aboriginality, a high level of disability, poor literacy, new settlement in the country or another complicating factor, Council makes clear a commitment to total inclusiveness in service provision."<sup>7</sup>

Council is currently working with people living in public housing, community organisations and the office of housing to provide a range of services that support residents living in public housing to access health and family support services, education and training, participate in community reference groups and work with Council to improve their own and their communities' wellbeing.

Council's work through the East Reservoir Neighbourhood Renewal program provides models for supporting people living in public housing to participate in advocacy & reference groups, link tenants to the wider community and create pathways to ongoing employment.

If the new model for public housing seeks to create a fairer system that encourages independence through social and economic participation it must include ongoing and appropriately resourced programs which understand and address individual needs and the barriers they face to sustainable employment and independence from public housing.

## **6. How can public housing be made fairer for tenants and the community?**

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**Key consideration:** *Public housing tenants are part of the Victorian community. Improving education outcomes and living conditions for public tenants will create a fairer system for both tenants and the wider community*

Discussion paper number one, *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* identifies that current public housing rental policies and subsidies can create disincentives for public housing tenants to improve their circumstances and participate in work. This creates a cycle of dependence that can reinforce disadvantage among tenants and impact negatively on the surrounding community through higher rates of crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

Public tenants are part of the wider Victoria community. While public housing tenants have specific needs associated with their housing status, housing is a whole of community issue.<sup>1</sup> Creating a fairer system for tenants that increases participation in the wider community will consequently result in a fairer public housing system for the Victoria community. It will increase tenant's health, employment and education outcomes, and thus potentially reduce the stigma and negative behaviours linked to the cycle of disadvantage associated with the current public housing system.<sup>1</sup>

Research shows that locating more affordable housing in areas with job growth can encourage lower income households to participate in the labour market and thereby reduce welfare payments required of governments.<sup>1,8</sup> As identified previously in this submission, economic participation is only achievable when the barriers to employment are identified and reduced.

Empowering the transition to independence is enhanced by including tenants in decision-making processes that affect their personal circumstances. Paramount to this is open and transparent communication between tenants and housing providers, based on mutual respect and an understanding of the barriers to participation.<sup>9</sup> Supporting tenant-led community reference groups at public housing estates and the provision of interpreters, translated and accessible materials and information are basic but important factors to building resident's participation and capacity and prepare them for ongoing training and employment.<sup>1,9</sup>

Local Government plays a key role in addressing issues associated with antisocial behaviour and crime in areas of localised disadvantage. In Darebin, the East Reservoir Neighbourhood Renewal project and the Darebin Yute Crew Mobile Outreach program<sup>10</sup> are local models where both public housing tenants and the wider community have benefited from reduced crime, improved amenity and stronger community connections. These programs provide a range of initiatives that address localised disadvantage, by understanding individuals and communities needs, including them in the solution and consequently improve living conditions for the entire community. Investment in these models from a state level will create a fairer system for the entire Victorian community.

Council acknowledges and commends the State Government's movement in providing a mix of public and private housing in new developments to disperse the concentration of disadvantage. There is extensive research that highlights the issues associated with creating a new area that completely comprises of public housing, including stigmatisation, social exclusion and increased rates of crime and antisocial behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Objective two in Darebin City Council's, *Responding to Housing Stress – A local Action Plan 2010 –2013* identifies that Council will work with registered housing agencies to encourage private developers to include social housing in new developments in key areas, close to transport, services and employment.<sup>1</sup> Council identifies that this a key strategy to improve the impact of the public housing system for tenants and the wider community.

Discussion paper number one also identifies that the system could be fairer if public tenants seek to improve their own circumstances and contribute to the community and economy that supports them as a good neighbour, maintaining their public housing property to an acceptable level.<sup>3</sup> This principle must also apply to the maintenance of existing stock by housing providers, which in many cases is run down and in need of significant upgrades.

Poor maintenance and design of properties contributes to negative perceptions of safety, leading to poor community participation and can attract crime and antisocial behaviour.<sup>11</sup> When acquiring new buildings, the cost of maintenance and repairs, and alterations needs to be included in the initial capital investment. Similarly to investment in tenants wellbeing, this early investment in properties will help reduce the negative impact that some public housing properties have on the amenity of the neighbourhood they are located in.

## 7. How can we encourage good tenant behaviour?

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**Key consideration:** *initiatives that encourage good tenant behaviour must address the cause of this behaviour, not just the symptom.*

Discussion paper number one proposes the implementation of a bond collection scheme for public housing tenants as an incentive to maintain their properties and act as 'good neighbours' throughout their tenure, as defined in the Residential Tenancy Act 1997.<sup>3</sup>

Understanding the cause of antisocial and criminal behaviour amongst any community is key to the prevention and reduction of this behaviour.<sup>11, 12</sup> Anti social behaviour and crime is best prevented through a framework that identifies the Criminal justice, situational, social and developmental approaches to crime prevention.<sup>12</sup> In the context of encouraging good behaviour amongst public housing tenants, the process should be no different. Research suggests that while bonds and incentives may encourage some residents to modify their behaviour, in many cases it fails to address the underlying cause of this antisocial behaviour.<sup>13</sup>

The challenging behaviours displayed by some tenants are in many cases a symptom of underlying issues that need to be addressed through a holistic and coordinated approach with appropriate support services. Tenants facing complex problems need early intervention and ongoing assistance so that their behaviour does not undermine their own tenancies and the wellbeing of other residents.

In addition to addressing the causes behind antisocial behaviour, to encourage good tenant behaviour it is vital that their basic needs and rights are met and maintained to promote respect, and mutual obligation between tenants and housing providers. Residents have identified lack of timely property maintenance as a key source of frustration and conflict between tenants, public housing providers and the wider community.<sup>9</sup> To avoid conflict and to encourage tenants to keep their properties in good condition, their basic maintenance requests must be met to promote reciprocal responsibility for property amenity and maintenance. Furthermore, research suggests that less punitive measures to promote maintenance, such as neighbourhood agreements and garden competitions in public housing communities are more effective in resident ownership and pride in the maintenance of their property.<sup>13</sup>

Further to maintenance requests, a consistent and timely approach must be taken when a tenant makes a complaint of anti-social behaviour. This requires a coordinated approach between services to ensure that the appropriate action is taken against the perpetrator to reduce recidivism and ensure any victims of this behaviour receive the appropriate support.

State, local government and community organisations can all play a major role in addressing antisocial behaviour and promote good tenant behaviour at various levels of intervention. Darebin City Council is committed to working with public housing and would welcome the implementation of best practise initiatives to promote good tenant behaviour that address the cause of this behaviour, and not just the symptoms, using a framework based on criminal justice, situational, social and developmental crime prevention can be considered

## 8. How can the supply of quality social housing be improved?

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**Key consideration:** *Models of redevelopment should focus on increasing and renewing existing public housing stock, with an emphasis on facilitating partnerships with the private development industry to introduce a mix of public and private houses where appropriate*

There is a deficit of affordable housing in Victoria, and a shortage of social and public housing as reflected in the approximate 21,000 Victorian sleeping rough on any given night.<sup>1</sup> Breaking down the barriers to housing affordability, and creating the kinds of neighborhoods with a mix of housing, of incomes and family types, requires commitment, collaboration, effort and creativity from developers, community agencies, and policy makers.

Discussion paper two, *Social Housing – a Discussion Paper on the Options to improve the Supply of Quality Housing*<sup>14</sup> explores some of the options and supply-side mechanisms. The transferring of public housing stock to private and community housing sectors proposed in this paper has its challenges and limitations. More research must be conducted to assess the long-term social, environmental and economic implications of the proposed models. The models that propose a transfer of stock (transfer of title) from the government to private and community housing providers have potential to restrict the government's flexibility to respond to fiscal changes in the future.<sup>15</sup> The withdrawal of government support presents challenges around ongoing maintenance, planning and development for future needs.<sup>15</sup> These limitations are touched on in the KMPG discussion paper, but the impact it would have on the security of tenure is not considered. The research will need to take into consideration what impact changes in taxation and raising interest rates can have on the private and community housing sectors.

Objective: 1. in Darebin City Council's, *Responding to Housing Stress – A local Action Plan 2010 –2013* outlines Council's commitment to increase the supply of public housing by working in partnership with community, Federal & State government, private developers and the community housing sector to build diverse, well-constructed, sustainable, and affordable social housing in Victoria.<sup>1</sup>

The action plan aims to influence the quality and supply of local housing outcomes through the following strategies:

- supports a continuous increase in public housing stock through spot purchase and larger programs to a level sufficient to meet rental-housing demand for low-income earners
- planning policy initiatives such as inclusionary zoning, which would require developers to include a certain number of below-market units in any housing development, sometimes in exchange for added density or other incentives
- encouraging and support housing redevelopment on Council and State Government owned land.
- having the relevant local planning policies in place to ensure future social housing developments are built to the highest standards and located in serviced areas.

- incorporating ecologically sustainable design in all future housing developments to improve comfort of living and addressing ongoing affordability.
- providing universal accessible design for those who have a physical disability and promote the concept of 'ageing in place'.
- working with the private development industry, state government, and not-for-profit housing sector to initiate public-private-partnerships. Private developers account for the bulk of all residential developments in Australia and are a formidable force – they need to be included in this discussion. Until legislation is changed to facilitate inclusionary zoning, Council has to facilitate these partnerships.
- continue supporting and resourcing housing associations to increase their stock. The housing associations cater to a different client base that sits between public housing type tenants and private home owners. Such clients' needs are met and suited to social housing as they would be otherwise totally excluded from any housing support and cannot afford to own their own home.

Neighbourhood Renewal programs have been very successful in bringing together tenants and key stakeholders to work on issues effecting public housing tenants. There are clusters of properties in Darebin that present significant opportunities to deliver neighbourhood renewal programs in partnership with the State government and presents opportunity for increasing public housing stock within Darebin.

Before any model is adopted, the social, environmental and economic implications must be further discussed and any limitations mitigated through an asset management perspective with a strong focus on achieving outcomes that provide people with access to appropriate, secure and affordable housing.<sup>15</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

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Darebin City Council welcomes the opportunity to be part of the consultation process and reiterates its commitment to working in partnership with all of the stakeholders in the development and implementation of the solutions.

Darebin Council is cognisant of its Community's appreciation of the diversity that makes up the Darebin community and such diversity includes cultural and socio-economic status. The gentrification creep that now characterizes the southern part of Darebin has eroded the diversity of the community with low socio-economic background residents or want-to-be residents pushed out further north and in many cases outside of Darebin altogether due to unaffordable housing. Darebin Council wishes to remain home to a mixed economic-status population and does not strive to be a city for the rich and affluent only.

To enable this mix there is a need for a whole of government approach to improving social housing that focus on increasing and renewing existing public housing stock, facilitating partnerships with the private development industry. This will introduce a mix of public and private houses where appropriate that take into consideration the diverse communities and needs that may exist within each municipality.

Alongside of this there is a need for a greater emphasis on funding effective partnerships and service delivery models that support the health, wellbeing and

independence of people who live in public housing and building stronger public housing communities and stronger ties to the wider Victoria community.

Having a home is a basic human right and having a home close to support services, networks, public transport and well maintained infrastructure is a hallmark of a society that values and respects its citizens. Darebin City Council looks forward to working in collaboration with all key stakeholders to ensure that all residents have access to affordable and appropriate housing in the City of Darebin and across Victoria.

DRAFT

**Appendix one:** Resident feedback and Article written by a Northcote resident Eileen Artmann published in the Age on 30/06/2011, page 22.

## These are our homes

I HAVE lived in public housing for almost 33 years. I was able to raise my two children, very successfully, and we survived living from week to week, for years. I still live in my flat, which is solid stark accommodation, made into my home.

I am almost 69 and fear for the future of public housing — “Housing Minister in public stoush” (*The Age*, 27/6) — a vital need in our society. It belongs to the community/ taxpayers, and should not be handed over to so-called associations or privatised. Forward planning has been lacking for years, not to mention poor management. The current residents should not be punished for this failing. Clearly we need more properties built to suit an ever growing, changing population.

**Eileen Artmann, Northcote**

In the process of writing this submission Council has consulted with tenants, these were their recommendations:

1. That security of tenure for long term residents be maintained to ensure confidence and certainty for tenants of public housing
2. That rental for public housing is to be maintained at the current affordable levels (generally at around 25% of income) and
3. That the future support for Housing Associations should not be at the cost or detriment of public housing in the State of Victoria
4. That No transfer of Public housing stock to social / community Housing

### **Appendix Two:** Case Study - United Kingdom public housing system

The British public housing system has a similar history of development and management to that of Australia. The current British government notes that improving partnerships and community involvement in programs are important, but also

required are fundamental changes in the culture of public housing organisations and economic development strategies.

The Public Housing Estate Renewal in Australia, Australian Housing Research Fund paper written by *Spiller Gibbin Swan Pty Ltd* (2000) notes that 'Bringing Britain Together' highlights a range of learnings from the UK's past practice in public housing provision. These include:

- mainstream housing policy has so far failed to make any lasting, positive impacts on social disadvantage
- public spending is aimed at addressing symptoms and not causes;
- 'Verticality' of government is restrictive creating a lack of joint, cross sectoral approaches to funding and policy
- local co-operation at government level is limited, and the success of vertical government partnerships is questionable
- fragmentation and disunity of a broad range of programs
- too many rules create inflexibility
- emphasis placed too heavily on physical and not social policy; and
- area-specific approaches are not integrated with each other (p.17)

Australian policy should reflect an awareness of these issues. The provision of social housing in the future will need the three tiers of government, community housing organisations, and private developers to intersect to improve the system and deliver better housing outcomes for the community.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Darebin City Council, *Responding to Housing Stress – A local Action Plan 2010 – 2013*

<sup>2</sup> Spiller, M 2010, 'Social Housing – a vision and a plan', The Fifth Real Estate V – Our Planet Our Real Estate, 9 March, accessed 10 May 2010.

<sup>3</sup> State Government of Victoria (2012), *Pathways to a fair and sustainable social housing system: Public Consultation Paper*

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, Jeanette 2006, *Policy Bulletin: How does security of tenure impact on public housing tenants*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne.

<sup>5</sup> Shin, Mary Beth, Dennis Culhane, Debra Rog 2005, 'Family Homelessness: Background Research Findings and Policy Options' *Departmental Papers (SPP)*

<sup>6</sup> Wood, Gavin 2009, *Research & Policy Bulletin: What can be done to improve employment outcomes among people receiving housing assistance?*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne

<sup>7</sup> Darebin City Council, Council Plan 2009 –2013

<sup>8</sup> City of Darebin, *Housing Opportunities Report*.  
[http://darebinhousingstrategy.com.au/docs/Housing\\_Opportunities\\_Report.pdf](http://darebinhousingstrategy.com.au/docs/Housing_Opportunities_Report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Jika Jika Community Centre (2011), *Walker Street Housing Estate Community Survey*

<sup>10</sup> Darebin City Council, (2009) Evaluation of the City of Darebin's Y-Ute program  
[http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/6April2010\\_Item\\_7.5\\_Appendix\\_A\\_The\\_Y\\_Ute\\_Program\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/6April2010_Item_7.5_Appendix_A_The_Y_Ute_Program_Evaluation.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Darebin City Council (2012) Community Safety Strategy 2012 – 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Australian Institute of Criminology, *National Crime Prevention Framework*

<sup>13</sup> Jacobs, K, Seelig, T, Easthope, H, and Slatter, M (2005), *A review of housing management tenant incentive schemes*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne

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