

Monday, 27 May 2019

A BUDGET THAT BEGINS TO ADDRESS OUR GROWING HOUSING CRISIS

The Victorian Public Tenants Association (VPTA) today thanked the Andrews Government for keeping its election promise to build 1,000 new public housing properties by 2022 via the 2019/20 State Budget.

Mark Feenane, Executive Officer of the VPTA, said that the **\$209 million** investment will help save lives and give some of the most disadvantaged Victorians the security and stability they so desperately need to get on their feet.

“We’ve wanted to see a capital build like this for a long time and know that it will have a positive impact on thousands of Victorians, not just now but well into the future.”

As part of today’s State Budget, the VPTA was also pleased to see:

- **\$50.4 million** for homelessness services which will include more on-site treatment services in crisis-supported accommodation, private rental assistance for over 6,000 Victorians who need it, and the continuation of state-wide homelessness after-hours crisis services;
- An additional **\$23.9 million** to prioritise women and children escaping family violence and ensure they continue to receive the housing support they need;
- A further **\$8.9 million**, in addition to the **\$21.9 million** already funded, to continue to replace gas heaters in public housing properties, and;
- **\$28.7 million** to give more than 7,000 people access to earlier care through additional clinical mental health services in the community

Despite positive steps to begin building more public housing after twenty years of no growth, Mr Feenane stressed that Victoria still has the lowest proportion of public housing in the nation, with an average spend of \$82.94 per person compared to the national average of \$166.93.

“Beyond the 1,000 new homes committed to, we have no certainty the government will build any more properties into the future to address the serious backlog.”

“Today’s State Budget doesn’t guarantee a pipeline of public housing construction projects beyond 2022. Nor does it try to include public housing properties in new developments, or give tenants the same solar options that 700,000 homeowners and private renters have received to reduce their energy bills.”

“We can’t afford to wait another budget cycle to find out if more public housing properties may or may not be built beyond the 1,000. With a growing wait list and the government’s own infrastructure advisory body stating we need 3,000 new properties a year to keep up with the demand, much more work needs to be done.”