



# Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Victorian Public Tenants Association



# Who We Are

The Victorian Public Tenants' Association (VPTA) is the voice of public housing in Victoria.

As the peak body representing existing public housing renters and those on the waitlist, our goal is to provide advice to renters, and to improve and expand the public housing system in Victoria. Although not formally part of our role, we also assist community housing renters where possible.

We believe all social housing renters deserve a representative voice, regardless of their specific tenure type.

While our work is in Victoria – we are the only peak body in Australia which exclusively represents public housing renters or people who live in social housing.

We undertake systemic advocacy and provide policy advice to the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing ('the Department'), undertake community engagement work and operate a free and confidential telephone advice service. In the 2021-22 financial year we assisted more than 650 residents and applicants with in-depth advice and assistance and experienced a 30% increase in workload.

# Vision

Safe, secure, affordable and accessible public housing for every Victorian who needs it.

# Mission

To give voice and support to all people who live in public housing or need social housing assistance in Victoria, and advocate to improve and expand public housing so that everyone has a secure, livable home.

# Purpose

To provide benevolent relief and social welfare support services, including counselling, advice, referral, representation and advocacy, for public housing tenants and those on the wait list; to advocate on their behalf to improve and expand public housing for those who need it.

# Values

## Integrity

We treat all people with dignity and respect.

## Quality

We always strive to do our best and improve the way we do things.

## Collaboration

We work together to achieve optimal results.

## Responsibility

We commit to the actions we take to achieve the best possible outcomes for the public tenant community.

## Client Focus

We work towards improving the living environment for the public tenant community.



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023 - 2026



# Our Operating Environment

There have been substantial developments in public and community housing provision in Victoria since the VPTA's previous Strategic Plan was drafted four years ago.

The Victorian Government has commenced delivery of a \$5.6 billion 'Big Housing Build' which will grow Victoria's overall social housing stock profile by approximately 12,000 properties. Contrary to the VPTA's ongoing advocacy, all of these properties will be managed by community housing providers.

The VPTA estimates that when these homes are finished, one third of all Victorian social housing tenancies will be managed by the community housing industry - and be without formal representation.

This will create further inequities between public and community housing renters, and as such, the VPTA has been advocating to Government that the role of the organisation be expanded. This is in keeping with the recommendations of a Department funded Evaluation of the VPTA, conducted in 2018, as well as the Victorian Ombudsman.

An independent review into social housing regulation has also taken place, which included consideration of advocacy for social housing renters in its Terms of Reference. The sector is awaiting the release of the review's final report and recommendations.



Seek to actively and equally represent all Victorians who need, or live in, social housing.

1

- Increase public awareness of the different types of housing assistance, including the differences between them, and the importance of public housing as a resource worthy of protection.
- Seek a formal expansion of the role of the VPTA to include community housing renters by the end of the life of this plan.

#### Success indicators

By the end of this plan:



The VPTA has undertaken at least one public awareness campaign about the importance of public housing.



The VPTA has secured Government support and funding for the expansion of formal responsibility to include both public and community housing renters.



Further, the VPTA has an implementation plan for the expansion which includes operational matters, as well as ensures governance issues are addressed as necessary.

Secure appropriate resources to meet growing demand.

2

- Grow staff beyond the existing 6FTE as funding allows, to deliver services to more clients, more quickly.
- Continue to prioritise candidates at Board and Staff levels which increase the diversity and lived experience of those involved with the VPTA.
- Continue to seek additional funding from both Government and external sources to enable additional recruitment, and to maintain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advocate program.

#### Success indicators

During this plan:



Staffing does not drop below 6FTE for an extended period of time during the life of the plan.

By the end of this plan:



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advocate program has become ongoing.



The VPTA is sufficiently funded to allow for adequate staffing, greater community engagement work and long term planning.

### The VPTA is publicly accepted as the thought leader for all matters related to social housing.


# 3


- Grow community awareness, and brand recognition of the VPTA to increase the capacity of the organisation to directly influence decision makers.
- Social housing renters and applicants know about the VPTA, and how to access services.
- The VPTA is actively sought by media agencies to provide comment and expertise on matters related to social housing.
- Stigma facing public housing renters begins to reduce.

#### Success indicators

By the end of this plan:

 The VPTA maintains and further embeds its role advising and consulting with Government regarding social housing matters.

 The number of cases managed each year increases by 25% overall over the three years of the plan.

 The VPTA has strong brand recognition.

 Followers on social media channels and email subscribers increase by 25% overall over the three years of the plan.


### The VPTA is a safe, approachable and accessible organisation to work with, and for.

# 4


- The VPTA builds on existing work to deliver culturally safe services and environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by engaging in the Reconciliation Action Plan process with Reconciliation Australia.
- The VPTA's information (both hard copy and digital) is accessible to a wide variety of people.
- Renters have opportunities to engage with the VPTA both over the phone, digitally, and in person.
- Renters have opportunities to provide direct feedback to the VPTA, to the Department, and to other government bodies.


#### Success indicators


During this plan:


 The VPTA publishes and completes at least one RAP.

By the end of this plan:

 Information in the Tenant Resources Library on the website is available in a range of languages and formats.

 Flyers and promotional materials are available in commonly spoken community languages.

 The Tenant Reference Group continues to meet frequently and be renter driven.

 Community Engagement staff increase, and deliver more outreach, more frequently.



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