Submission form: Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy

Your details

Name:	Damien Patterson
Organisation (if applicable):	Tenants Victoria
Position (if applicable):	Director – Policy, Advocacy and Engagement
Email:	[redacted]
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About you

Please tell us which best describes you:

☐ Victorian resident

☐ Victorian business owner/operator

☐ Industry professional

☒ Community organisation representative

☐ Local government representative

☐ State government representative

☐ Researcher

☐ Other (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.

Your focus areas

Select the topics or regions you are providing feedback on (select all that apply):

Topics	Regions
☐ Across sectors	☒ Regional Victoria
☐ Circular economy	☒ Urban growth areas
☐ Cities	☒ Melbourne
☐ Climate change	
☐ Community infrastructure	
☐ Education	
☐ Energy	
☐ Freight	
☐ Health	
☒ Housing	
☐ Infrastructure for Victoria's First Peoples	
☐ Transport	
☐ Water	

Your feedback

Add as many sections as you need to provide all your feedback in this submission.

Topic/area:	Social and transition housing
Recommendation name:	Build more social housing
Recommendation number:	1
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
2. Tell us why	We support the aim of investing in social housing on an ongoing basis so that Victorians on low incomes and/ or with complex needs can access safe, secure and affordable housing. We particularly applaud Infrastructure Victoria for recognising the importance of increasing the availability of social housing in Victoria by listing it as the number one priority in the draft plan. Victoria continues to experience a housing crisis, with intense affordability issues, particularly for low-income private renters. Currently, conditions in the private rental market are difficult due to high house prices, low rental vacancy rates[1] (2.1% in regional Victoria and 2.5% in Melbourne in February 2025), large rent increases and a high cost of living.[2] Renters, including those on middle incomes who previously would have moved into home ownership, are remaining in the rental market longer. Many Victorian renters are now being hit with large rent increases and experiencing insecure housing, and under current conditions, some face homelessness.[3] Some renters are having to make unfair sacrifices, such as skipping meals, and going without essentials like healthcare in order to pay rent. Others are having to stay in unsuitable and unsafe housing because it is all they can afford, which can have detrimental health effects.[4] These factors are making the private rental market more inaccessible for renters for whom the private rental market has proven unable to provide safe, secure and affordable homes. Many

[1] For comparison, a balanced rental market would have a vacancy rate of around 3%; Powell, N. (2025). 'Breaking point': Melbourne rents hit record highs – again. Sydney Morning Herald. Weblink.

[2] Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2024). Rental Report. Weblink.; Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) (2025). Residential Rental Market Snapshot – February 2025. Weblink.

[3] Anglicare (2024). Victorian Rental Affordability Snapshot 2024. Accessed 4 March 2025.; Pawson, H., Parsell, C., Clarke, A., Moore, J., Hartley, C., Aminpour, F. & Eagles, K. (2024). Australian Homelessness Monitor 2024. Sydney: UNSW City Futures Research Centre. Accessed 18 March 2025. Weblink.

[4] Parliament of Australia Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs (2023). The worsening rental crisis in Australia. Weblink.; Better Renting (2024). The Cost of Renting Report. Weblink.

	of these renters need public and community housing. Recent investments in social housing have been welcome, however, they have not been of the necessary scale to overcome decades of underinvestment in social housing, and waitlists continue to grow.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	**Rent increases** • According to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), rents rose across Victoria by 7.8% from September 2023 – 2024. • On top of this, rents in Victoria rose by 14.3% in 2022-2023 and 11% in 2021-2022.[5] **Rental affordability** • In September 2024, only 10.4% of new rentals across Victoria met DFFH's affordability criteria for low-income households.[6] • In Melbourne in 2024, just 5.1% of new rentals met affordability criteria and in regional Victoria 34.1% of new rentals met affordability criteria.[7] **Social Housing Waitlist** • As of June 2023, Victoria had 64,720 public housing dwellings and 16,363 community housing rental units.[8] • By September 2024, there were 53,554 applicants on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR), the social housing waitlist, and 29,060 (54%) of these applicants were priority or greatest need applicants.[9] These figures demonstrate the massive unmet need for public and community housing in Victoria.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Given the length of the Victorian Housing Register (social housing waitlist) and ongoing affordability challenges in the private rental market, the suggested potential target of 60,000 homes over 15 years is not sufficient. We recommend that the Victorian Government should increase social housing stock on an ongoing basis to match the national average proportion of total housing stock (around 4%).[10]

[5] Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2024). Rental Report. Weblink.
[6] Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2024). Rental Report. Weblink.
[7] Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2024). Rental Report. Weblink.
[8] Australian Government Productivity Commission (2024). Report on Government Services 2024. Accessed 12 March 2025. Weblink.
[9] Homes Victoria (2024). Applications on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). Accessed 12 March 2025. Weblink.
[10] Australian Government Productivity Commission (2024). Report on Government Services 2024. Accessed 12 March 2025. Weblink.

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