
Renting in Australia – challenges and reforms

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Keynote Address

Heather Holst,
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Renting in Australia: Challenges and Reforms

Dr Heather Holst
Commissioner for Residential
Tenancies, Victoria



Law reform



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In October 2017, the Victorian government announced an initial package of reforms, with a focus on 'strengthening tenants' rights, to provide those who rent with a sense of security and support.

State Government of Victoria (undated) '[Making renting fair](#)', Rent Fair Victoria website.

In the government's media release, the Premier stated that the proposed package of reforms 'gives tenants more rights, helps them stay on longer leases, makes bonds smaller and fairer, and cracks down on dodgy landlords'.

Premier of Victoria [Andrews Labor government will make renting fair](#), media release, 8 October 2017.

Some unanticipated events



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COVID crushes rental affordability in the regions as Melbourne looks for room to breathe

The rental affordability situation in regional Victoria has reached crisis point, with Melbourne residents relocating after the COVID-19 lockdown, according to [Anglicare Australia's 2021 Rental Affordability Snapshot](#).

The snapshot analysed 33,710 Victorian rental listings from 27 March 2021, finding that less than half the number of rental properties were available in regional Victoria compared to the same time last year. Fewer than 10 per cent of these were suitable for any type of low income household without putting them into housing stress.

Anglicare Victoria CEO Paul McDonald said rental affordability continues to drift out of reach of our lowest income earners.

"Real action is needed from the Morrison Government to address the affordable housing crisis in Australia. Federal policy intervention such as a national affordable housing strategy or summit is becoming critical," Mr McDonald said.

"This research shows that many families on low incomes have been left high and dry as rents in the regions ratchet up, driven by the competition from those moving out of Melbourne. Only 2 per cent of the available rentals are suitable for those on income support without sending them into housing stress or overcrowding.

'I'm not leaving': Rochester renters sent eviction notices after floods are hitting back

Property management company says it's legally required but tenants such as Tammy Gavin, and her four children and grandson, just want to be home

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📷 As the clean up in Rochester continues, tenants issued with an eviction notice say their houses are still livable. Photograph: Cait Kelly/The Guardian

At least 160 renters in the Victorian town of Rochester, whose homes have been destroyed by major flooding sweeping Australia's south-east, have now been served with eviction notices.

International Students in Victoria in 2019

1 in 20 of our entire
population in Victoria

A population equal to
that of Geelong

1 in 5 of the
residents of the
City of
Melbourne

A closer look at some of our work



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FOR VICTORIA TRE

Treaty is our opportunity to make sure we – the Traditional Owners of these lands – always have the freedom and power to make the decisions that affect our communities, our culture, and our Country.

Royal Commission into Victoria's
Mental Health System

Final Report



Watch video



Download report



Royal Commission
into Family Violence

Summary and recommendations

March 2016

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AFFAIRS VICTORIA

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Housing

Renting

Rental agreements, applying for a lease, or ending a lease, repairs, tenancy, landlord, manager, renting guide

Buying and selling property

Planning, understanding private sales, settlement, contracts, underquoting, data

Building and renovating

Plan and manage your project, defects, delays, insolvency, building contracts

Owners corporations (strata corporate)

Meetings and committees, maintaining common property, disputes, search

Retirement villages

Guide to choosing, living in a retirement village. Fees and costs

Residential parks

Renting

Changes to renting laws

Victoria's renting laws have changed. See the list of changes and find out about support for industry and community groups.

Starting and changing rental agreements

Understand different rental agreements (leases); how to apply for or renew an agreement; move in and out of a property; access resources and guides.

Rent, bond, bills and condition reports

Find out about rent and bond payments; rent increases; use our rent calculator; paying for utilities; using condition reports.

Repairs, alterations, safety and pets

Minimum standards for rentals; repairs - urgent and non-urgent; renters changing the property; keeping the property safe; pets.

Family violence when renting

Changing the rental agreement because of family violence

Changing the locks because of family violence

Installing security devices because of family violence

Repairs after damage due to family violence

Removing your name from renter databases (blacklists) because of family violence

Support for people experiencing family violence

Information for excluded renters or residents

Rooming House Lived Experience Project



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Findings

Despite a significant period of rooming house reform, there remains ample evidence that further work is required in the rooming house sector to ensure safe, secure and decent housing.

Councils are struggling to ensure compliance with the public health requirements for rooming houses, particularly with identifying and responding to a large number of unlawful rooming houses.

There remains some confusion about the definition of a rooming house, particularly where operators are using arrangements to obscure the true use of the premises.

Living in Residential Parks



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Aboriginal Private Rental Access Project



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Aboriginal Victorians persistently report discrimination in the private rental market as a significant access barrier to housing.

This project arose from *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort*, recommendation 3.1.1:

Work with the Commissioner for Residential Tenancies to investigate apparent discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market.

Aboriginal Housing Victoria – Self Determination in Action

<https://www.vahhf.org.au/>



We partnered with Aboriginal Housing Victoria,
Victoria Legal Aid and Consumer Policy Research
Centre (CPRC).

We put together support, funding and governance.

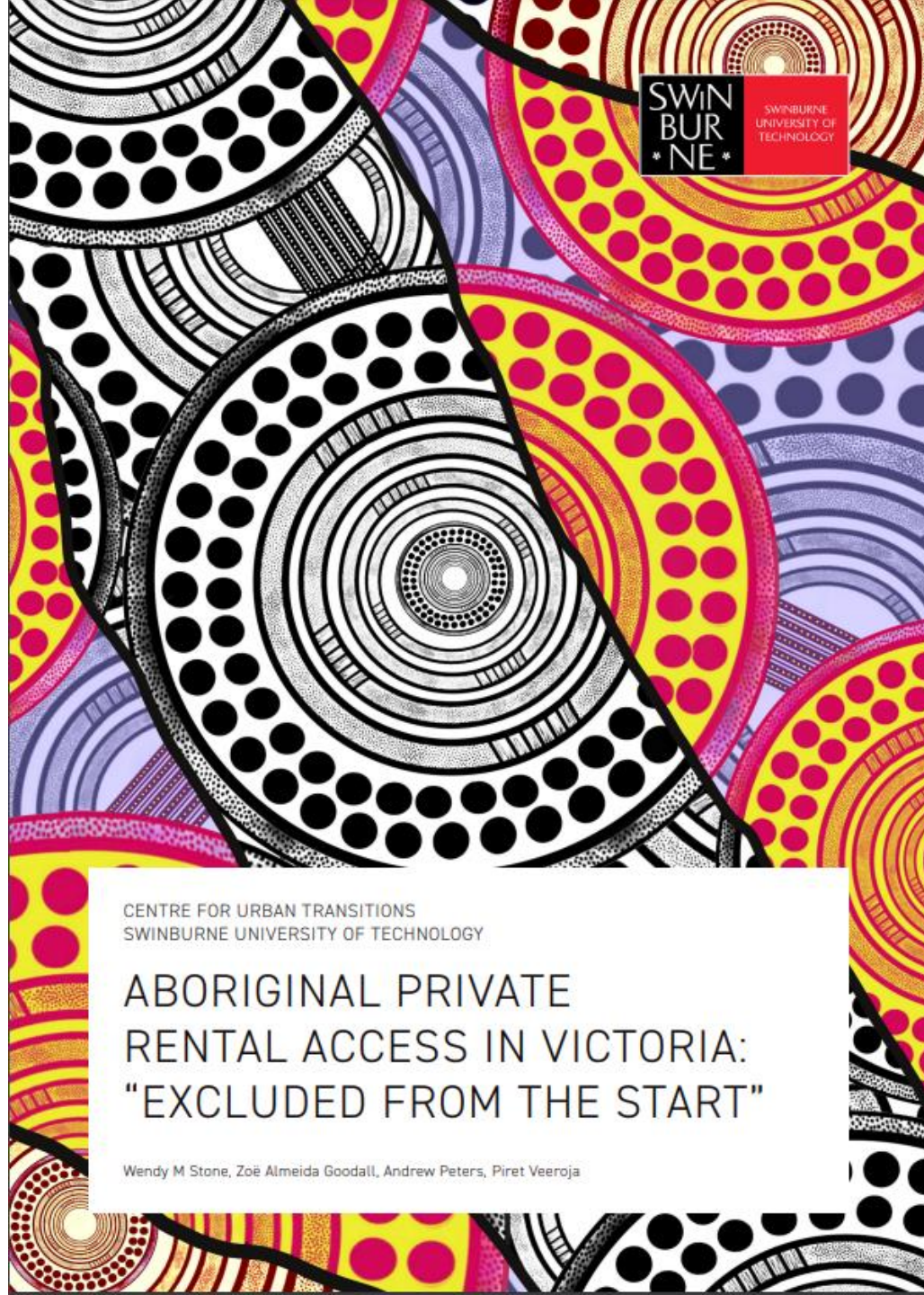
Stage 1: Research conducted by Swinburne University with oversight by CPRC:

Aboriginal Private Rental Access in Victoria: "Excluded from the Start" by

Wendy M Stone, Zoë Almeida Goodall, Andrew Peters and Piret Veeroja.

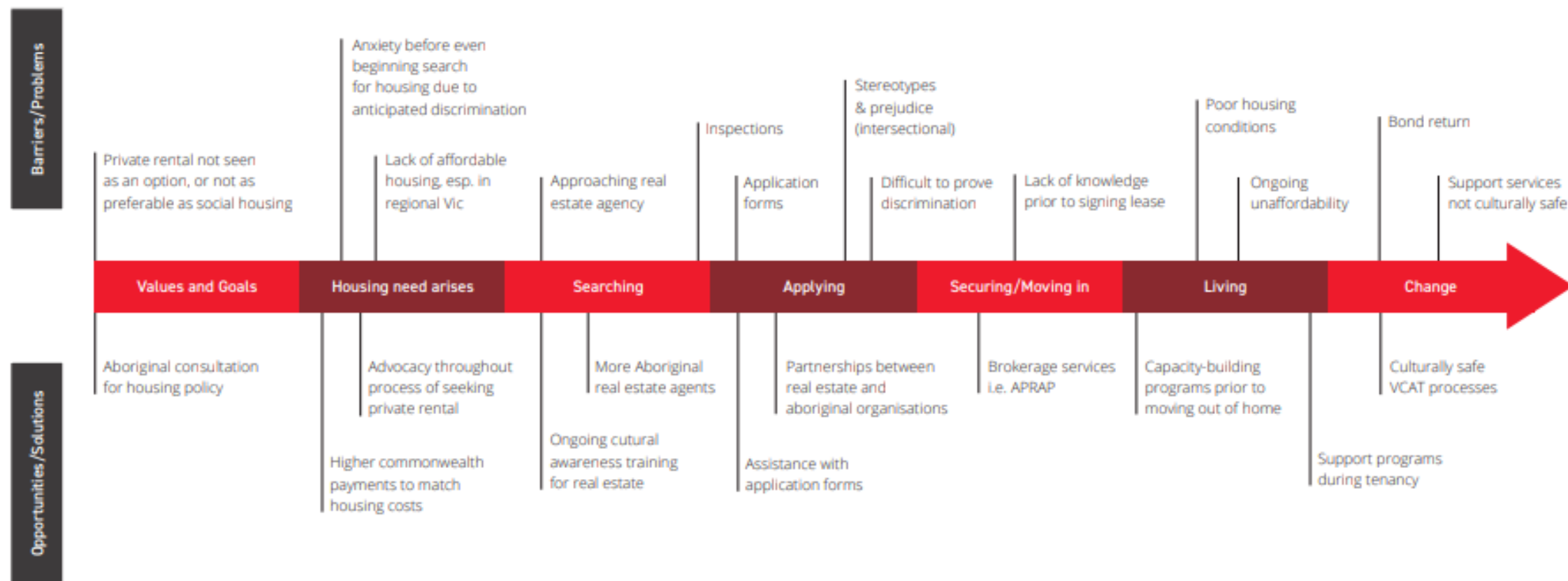
Stage 2: Policy recommendations flowing from the Swinburne report. Process of refinement of recommendations with ACCO's via the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum.

Stage 3: Implementation.



The report and recommendations can
be found at:
www.rentingcommissioner.vic.gov.au

Summary figure: Barriers/problems and opportunities/solutions for Aboriginal Victorians seeking housing in the private rental sector, mapped along the Renter's Journey



Looking forward



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LongView is working to transform the Australian housing landscape.

We'll do so by making homeownership more accessible, empowering buyers with expertise, and improving the renting experience for landlords and tenants, while delivering superior investor returns.

We go hand in hand with you to provide:

YourHome Deposit Boost

Your stepping stone to a better home,
sooner

Property Management

Protecting your investment and securing
income with peace of mind

Buyer Advisory

Enabling you to find & purchase the right
properties with confidence

Funds Management

Accessing institution-grade products in
Australia's largest asset class

Google Rating 4.4 ★★★★★



Hi, welcome to LongView.
help?


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Big housing build

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We're building thousands of new homes for Victorians in need and creating tens of thousands of jobs to support Victoria's recovery.

Strategic partnership projects

We are working with the community and private housing sector on projects across Victoria.



Streamlined planning

The planning system will be streamlined - prioritising social and affordable housing developments to accelerate approvals.



Regional investment

The Big Housing Build will invest 25% of the total \$5 billion program across regional Victoria. This will provide \$1.25 billion across regional Victoria.



Why the Big Housing Build?

Social housing provides Victorians with a vital safety net, offering people the dignity, stability and opportunities they need to fully participate in their community and improve their lives.



Ground Lease Model

Grants, tenders and EOI

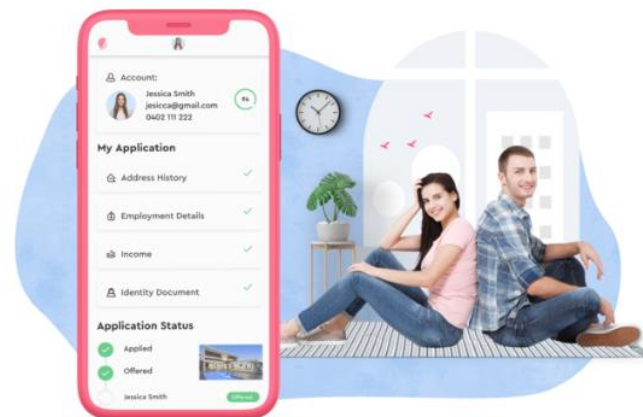
PROJECTS

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Online rental applications trusted by over 61,000* property managers

[Manager – Learn More](#)[Renters – Apply](#)

Key problem areas

Cost – rent, utilities and bond

Property condition

Sense of home and belonging - certainty of tenure and privacy

Resolving disputes

Discrimination in access

Sharing not well covered by law

Overcrowding

Opportunities for change

We have to change the conversation about renting (it's slowly happening).

And work towards:

- ☑ Renters' rights are protected and strengthened
- ☑ Renters understand their rights
- ☑ Renters exercise their rights