



## ORGANISE - COLLECTIVE - ACTION

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Tuesday, July 7th 2020

Renters And Housing Union (RAHU) VIC stands with residents and their demands, and denounces the unnecessary and dangerous police presence in these public housing flats.

RAHU will continue coordinating with the community for essential and vital material aid, and push for the demands of rent amnesty for all residents for as long as is needed.

RAHU Vic stands with residents and RISE in condemning the racist carceral response to a public health issue in the North Melbourne and Flemington towers. Such a heavy-handed response will hinder rather than help a humane containment of the virus, not to mention having profound impacts on the ability of residents to work, feed their children and maintain their physical and mental health. The lockdown is in breach of Article 9 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that *"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile"*. It is very hard to imagine a similar lockdown, in breach of international law, occurring in private apartment blocks in wealthy suburbs.

People in public housing live in well established communities who are already self-organising to provide resources that are desperately needed right now. In addition to supporting and empowering community-based mutual aid, the government should be providing a response with health care workers, social workers, and translators on the front lines, not armed police. Victoria Police have an appalling track record of racist violence in these public housing estates. It was only three years ago that riot police brutalised people at these flats after a nearby protest, and their CCTV-documented violence remains unaccounted for.

We trust the many residents' credible reports of Victoria Police denying residents food and medicine. This behaviour comes as no surprise - gatekeeping, harassment and culturally ignorant assumptions are part of the continuing structural racism that oppresses minoritised and marginalised people. This response upholds a racist tradition founded in colonialism and through the dispossession and incarceration of First Nations peoples, and has continued in offshore and onshore imprisonment of migrant communities for decades.

The recent actions by the Andrews government to incarcerate public housing tenants are part of the same paternalistic, punitive and carceral measures.

A carceral response is not the answer to a healthcare emergency.

Community, not incarceration.

No One Left Behind

Template letter written by a resident - contact Richard Wynne & Daniel Andrews:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HCPx7uCdphfiURupeqBwnaMMdSRKLZY03BlkXA84QPw/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR0ec6ATQznonifO19YfGvKBJ5Sn\\_gc4v85rMucHEtsoa8o63oEsYGX D3LE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HCPx7uCdphfiURupeqBwnaMMdSRKLZY03BlkXA84QPw/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR0ec6ATQznonifO19YfGvKBJ5Sn_gc4v85rMucHEtsoa8o63oEsYGX D3LE)

RISE Statement:

<https://twitter.com/riserefugee/status/1279556158819143680?s=20>