

2024.11.11

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**THE RENTERS AND HOUSING UNION**



## **Renters and Housing Union response to “Streamlining ‘torturous’ townhouse rules will help, but won’t solve state’s housing crisis” - The Age - 10/11/2024 <sup>1</sup>**

Towards the end of the 1930s, the Australian state entered a period of population growth, exacerbated by the end of the Second World War, the Baby Boom, and an influx of European refugees brought in under the White Australia Policy.<sup>2</sup>

At this same time, Australia was in the throes of a Housing Crisis, with landlords renting out successively smaller, and poorly maintained private rentals.

In Victoria, the state government responded with the Housing Act (1937) and the Slum Reclamation Act (1938). Over the next several decades, immense public investment was poured into Public Housing infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

The Victorian Labor Government's proposals to relax building permit rules for 'Granny Flats'<sup>4</sup> and Subdivisions, while continuing with plans to demolish existing Public Housing, in favour of private 'affordable' 'Build to Rent'<sup>5</sup> houses are another step back into the past.

The Renters and Housing Union affirms our position, that Housing is a human right, and reiterate our demands that the Victorian State Government, and all State and Territory Governments nationally must legislate:

1. Affordable housing be based on income rather than market, where rent can not be more than 30% of income.
2. No grounds evictions be abolished in every state and territory.
3. Rent increases be frozen for 24 months.
4. Future rent increases be capped to the increase in minimum wage.
5. Public housing be built until the housing waiting list is empty.

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<sup>1</sup>Streamlining 'torturous' townhouse rules will help, but won't solve state's housing crisis. The Age. Published: 10/11/2024. Accessed: 10/11/2024

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/streamlining-torturous-townhouse-rules-will-help-but-won-t-solve-state-s-housing-crisis-20241101-p5kn2i.html>

<sup>2</sup> Refugees displaced by World War II . National Archives of Australia. Accessed: 11/11/2024.

<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/migrant-stories/refugees/refugees-displaced-world-war-ii>

<sup>3</sup> Reclaiming the Slums. Public Record of Victoria. Accessed: 11/11/2024.

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/provenance-journal/provenance-2022/reclaiming-slums>

<sup>4</sup> Small Second Homes. Planning Victoria. Accessed 11/11/2024.

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/strategies-and-initiatives/small-second-dwellings>

<sup>5</sup> Creating More Rental Housing Choices For Victorians. Premier of Victoria. Published: 12/10/2021. Accessed 11/11/2024. <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/creating-more-rental-housing-choices-victorians>

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**"Carlton. Slum pocket." [ca. 1930]  
Victorian State Library Photo Archive**



[Carlton. Slum pocket. \[picture\]](#) [ca. 1930]. State Library of Victoria. Accessed 11/11/2024

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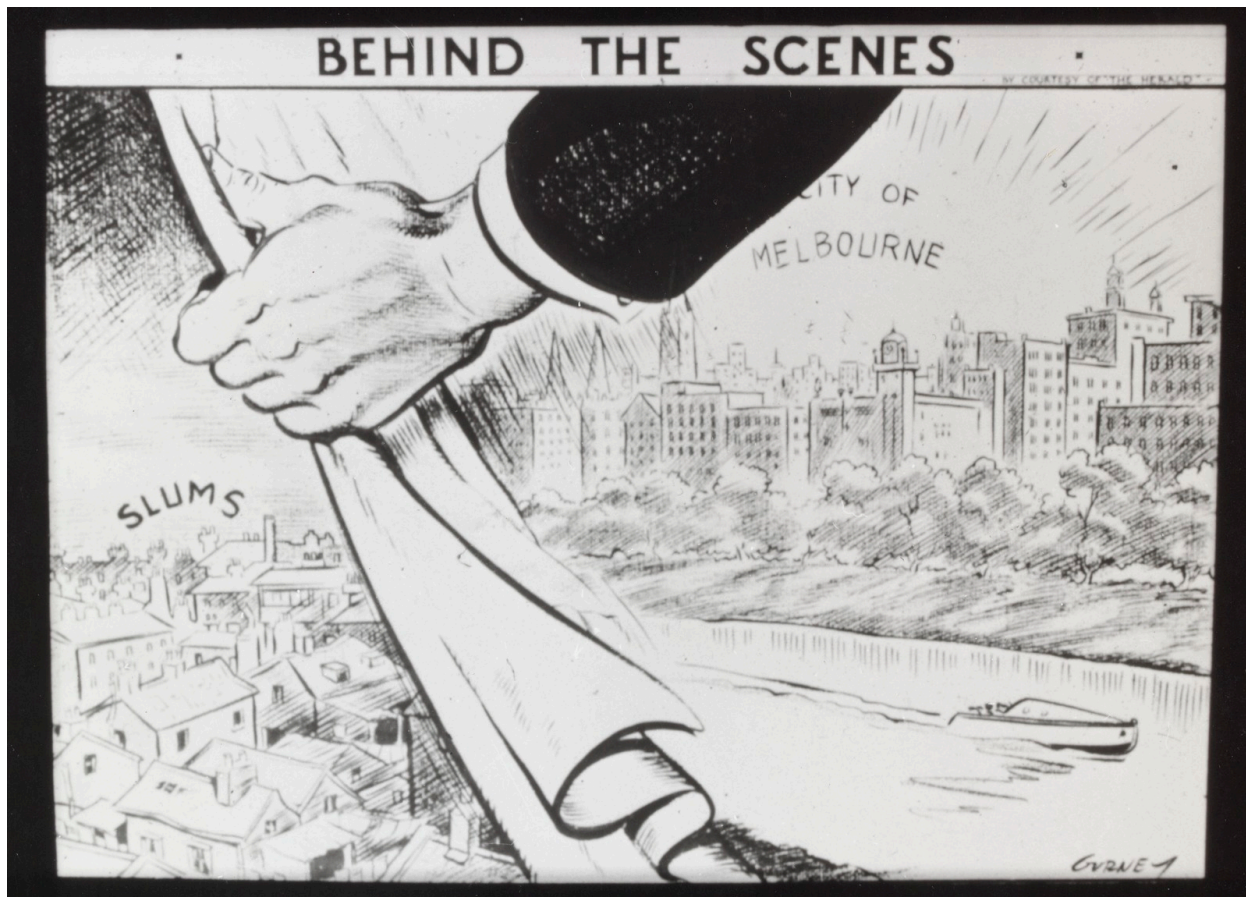
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[Behind the scenes \[flyer showing a hand pulling back an illustrated curtain to reveal the slums behind the public face of the City of Melbourne\] \[picture\]](#) [ca. 1935]. State Library of Victoria. Accessed 11/11/2024

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