

Call this a home?

A case work and campaigning success story

Toby Archer, Policy Worker

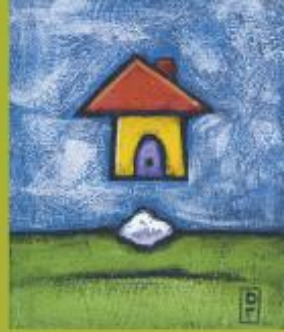
NACLC National Conference 2011

October 2011



Context

- Rooming house sector changed 2004/5
- Sydney Road deaths 2006
- Regulatory failure
- No political constituency
- Strong campaign resources
- Internal resource constraints

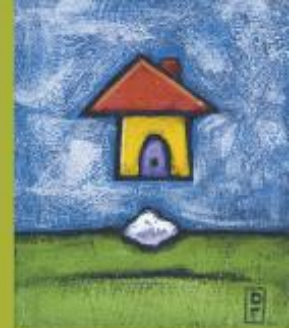


Strategy

- **Alliances**
- **Adapted outreach service work**
- **Strategic case work**
- **Leverage legal practice**



Call this a home?



FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT PRIVATE ROOMING HOUSES IN VICTORIA

CALL THIS A HOME ?

Campaign for safe rooming houses in Victoria

FIVE POINT PLAN

To make all rooming houses safe, secure and affordable, the Victorian Government must:

- 1 **DEVELOP** a set of comprehensive minimum standards to ensure the basic needs of all rooming house residents are met
- 2 **INTRODUCE** more effective registration, monitoring and enforcement to bring hundreds of unregistered private rooming houses into the system and ensure compliance with standards
- 3 **ESTABLISH** a licensing system to regulate the management of private rooming houses, to prevent exploitative practices
- 4 **ENFORCE** compliance with serious penalties for breaches
- 5 **UPHOLD** residents' rights, including an increase in outreach support and better access to information on consumer rights

Call This A Home?

is a coalition of peak bodies, organisations and individuals committed to safe rooming houses in Victoria. We believe every Australian has a fundamental right to safe, secure and affordable housing.

Call This A Home?

is supported by the Tenants Union of Victoria, Council to Homeless Persons, Victorian Council of Social Service, Community Housing Federation of Victoria, Anglicare, Eastern Access Community Health, Eastern Health, Family Support and Carer Respite Program, Hanover, Box Hill TAFE, HomeGround Services, Melbourne City Mission, Neami, North East Housing Service, PILCH Homeless Persons Legal Clinic, RMIT Human Rights Campaign Workshop, Rural Housing Network, Sacred Heart Mission, The Salvation Army, St Mary's House of Welcome, St Vincent de Paul, Wesley Mission, Westcare, Wintringham, Women's Housing, Yarra Community Housing and Youthlaw.

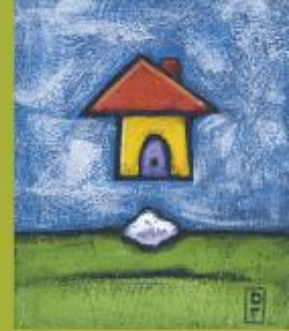
Call This A Home?

AIMS TO CHANGE THE WAY SUB-STANDARD ROOMING HOUSES OPERATE IN VICTORIA AND MAKE THEM SAFE, SECURE AND AFFORDABLE FOR RESIDENTS

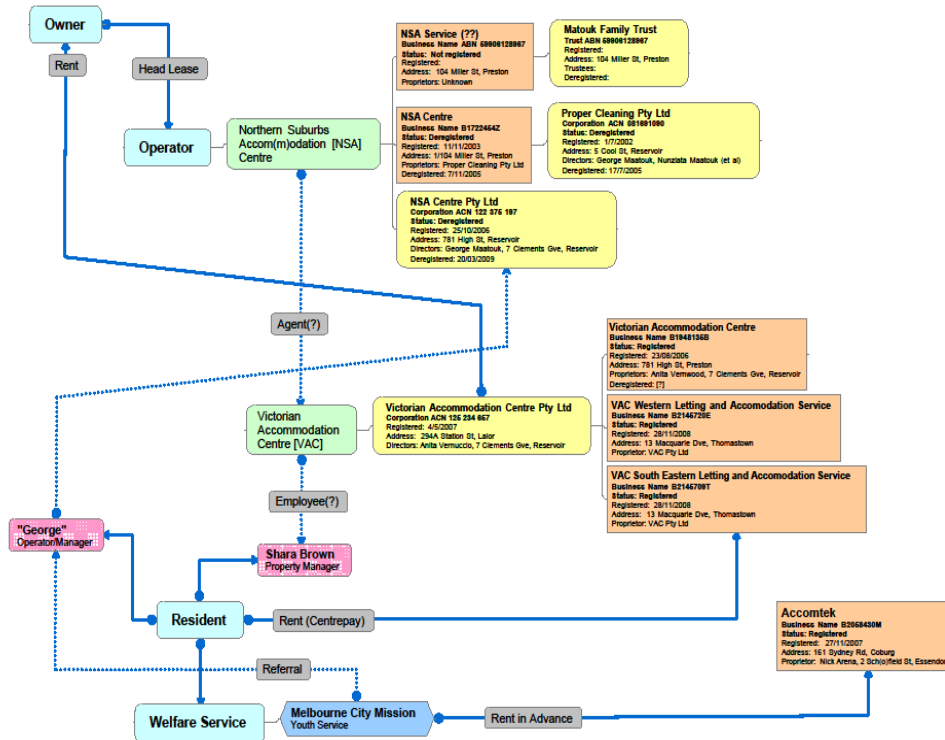


TENANTS UNION
of Victoria Ltd

Strategic case work



Rooming House, Clayton



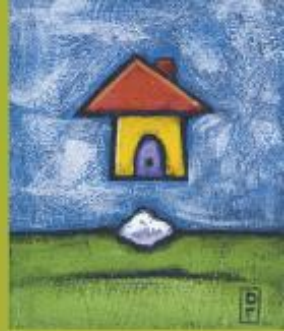
You've got a problem

Our slumlord millionaires

Housing rogues untroubled by watchdog

Coroner calls for extensive tenancy reforms following two tragic deaths

In tenant-eat-tenant world, desperate times call for desperate measures



You've got an even bigger problem



Not everything escapes a rooming house fire with a smile



**The Victorian Government must act on
substandard private rooming houses now.**

Visit callthisahome.net



Endorsed by the Tenants Union of Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Services, Community Housing Federation of Victoria, Council for Homeless Persons and the Services of Lady Franklin and Gladys Bryant who died in a morning house fire in 2020. Authorised by John's Office of the Information Commissioner 2020.

We can fix it



	NON-REGULATORY OPTIONS	REGULATORY OPTIONS
REGISTRATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage community sector et al in identifying unregistered private rooming houses 2. Implement cross departmental protocols in local government. Appropriate referral of enquiries at first contact 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Enhanced registration conditions for private rooming houses inc. requirements for building/ fire safety certification [HA, H(PA)R] 14. Clarify public status of registration [HA, H(PA)R]
COMPLIANCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Enhance the role of the OLG to provide coordination and advice on best practice compliance measures 4. Enhance information exchange between local government and CAV 5. Develop information campaign for owners and agents of premises operating as private rooming houses 6. Simplify statement of Rights & Duties for residents (A3 poster) and ensure display in all rooms [RTA s124] 7. Establish program rules to proscribe HEF payments to operators of unregistered premises 8. Establish local government protocols with community services for rooming house closure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Establish no-fee licensing scheme for private rooming house operators [RTA] 16. Increase penalties for operating unregistered premises [HA, H(PA)R] and consumer protection breaches [RTA] 17. Clarify CAV Director power to initiate breach or compliance action in own right [RTA/ FTA] 18. Establish clear right for representative actions by third parties e.g. TUV et al. [RTA/ FTA] 19. Investigate and rectify any discrepancies between the RTA definition of rooming house and building and planning regulation inc. the “change of use” trigger
STANDARDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Establish loan program for RH operators to upgrade to “decent” standard 10. Establish REV code of practice to not rent below “decent” standard inc. unregistered premises 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Establish minimum rental housing standards for all rental premises inc. rooming house gaps [RTA] e.g. <i>specify one handed fire approved locking devices for all room doors in Class 1b and 3 buildings</i>
SUPPLY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Establish real level of housing supply type and demand e.g. <i>head lease or construct</i> 12. Provide adequate funding to achieve supply requirements within specified period 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Provide sub-residency protection for head lease default as per s231 [RTA] e.g. <i>If head tenancy is terminated, property owner becomes the RH operator until termination in accordance with RTA</i>