



EXPAND RENTAL SUPPLY CONFISCATE VACANT HOUSES OF THE ULTRA-RICH!

21 February 2025 – Rents are crushing working class people in Australia. Even in Western Sydney’s Auburn, the median asking rent for two bedroom units is now \$600 per week. That is two-thirds of what a worker on the minimum wage gets if they are lucky enough to have a full-time job! No wonder millions are skipping meals to pay rent. The shortage of low-rent housing is caused by developers and rich investors who know that they can extract more money building homes that can be sold for high prices rather than providing homes with rents affordable by lower income people. Look at Paddington’s Selywn Street. There a developer who bought boarding houses that housed 32 people is evicting elderly tenants so that he can turn the place into luxury units intended for just eight people. This is the capitalist “free market” at work!

That is why we need more low-rent public housing. But state and federal governments of all stripes have instead been selling off public housing. We must reverse this! **Let’s stop all sell-offs of public housing! Let’s also resist any moves by developers to turn low-rent boarding houses into higher-cost accommodation. Instead, let’s actively fight for a massive increase in public housing!**

The rental crisis would be over if we turned this country’s one million vacant dwellings into low-rent public housing. Many of these dwellings are the ultra-rich’s holiday homes or homes that they hold for speculation. We demand that any dwelling that is unoccupied for more than two months of a year and which is owned by people with more than five million dollars of property assets be **confiscated and turned into public housing**. The ruling class say that such methods are not economically “rational”. But that is a lie! For in the country with the world’s fastest growing economy, China, they are increasing public housing and curbing speculation. So in China’s biggest cities, Shanghai and Beijing, families are banned from owning more than two homes. Instead of privatising housing, China is doing the very opposite. Governments and state-owned firms there are aggressively buying up private housing and converting it into low-rent public housing. Through such policies, about 25% of homes in their cities are public housing – ten times the ratio as in Australia. No wonder the proportion of homeless people in China is much lower than here! We demand that the government here, instead of always attacking China – just because her toiling classes dared to take over that country in a 1949 revolution – start applying China-style, pro-worker housing policies in Australia.

China can provide abundant public housing because under her socialistic system not only are key developers state-owned but so are her most profitable sectors. These provide the funds for public housing, cheap education and other programs to meet the real needs of youth and the elderly. **We badly need to seize the most lucrative sectors here too and put them into public hands – starting with mining!** Over the last year, gross profits in the Australian mining sector were more than \$224 billion (!!) **– much of it going to local billionaires like Gina Rinehart, Andrew Forrest and Clive Palmer. That’s 27 times** the combined amount that all Australian states spend on all forms of social housing!

But who will implement the measures that we need? The ALP’s “affordable housing” pledges are so paltry that they don’t even meet the new additional demand for low-rent homes. Meanwhile, the Liberals hate public ownership while the far-right parties are downright hostile to public tenants. The Greens do promise more public housing. But most of their promises are not for public housing but for “affordable housing” that involves subsidising landlords; or for privately run “community” housing. Moreover, because the Greens must accommodate their capitalist and many upper-middle class members, they never deliver on their better promises. When they were in coalition with Labor in government in Tasmania and federally from 2010, they were complicit in undermining public housing. So we cannot rely on any of the parties currently in parliament. Instead, **we need industrial action, occupations of vacant homes of the ultra-rich and other mass actions to force the rulers to accede to our demands. Let’s build these struggles by uniting the fight for public housing with the struggle to reverse the plunge in real wages and the fight to throw back Albanese’s attack on the CFMEU union. The more that working class people realise that nothing good will come from voting for any of the current parliamentary parties, the more that they will join the struggles that we need regardless of who wins the next election. So, convince your friends not to vote for any of the parties now in parliament! And fight to build the strikes, occupations and rallies necessary to win what the masses need and the organisation needed to promote such resistance.**

To build this resistance, **we must oppose the ruling elite’s campaign to blame migrants and foreign buyers for high rents.** Migration has absolutely zero to do with the high rents and foreign investment very little. Migrants live in homes but build them and pay taxes too. **The fastest rate of rent rises was in 2021, when there was no migration whatsoever** (due to the pandemic)! And foreign purchasers buy just 1% of all homes! Let’s expose these truths so that we can defeat all attempts to divide us by the rich capitalists who truly cause the rental crisis! We must also demand that all visa workers, refugees and overseas students be granted the rights of citizenship so that they can feel confident enough to join in the mass struggles that we all need.

Let’s smash anything that harms the struggles that we need to increase the supply of low-rent housing and advance workers rights! Fight for a huge increase in public housing! Fight to transfer the vacant houses of the ultra-rich into public hands!

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