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**Q1**

Name of organisation

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria

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**Q2**

Your name

Peter Cahill

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**Q3**

Position

President, Berwick Conference

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**Q10**

Describe the experiences of people struggling to access affordable and suitable housing in the context of your organisation's work.

In the last 12 months, we at SVDP have noticed a big increase in the number of families asking for rental assistance. Often the amount requested is high, for example 500 to 800 dollars. It's very easy, sadly, for many families to get behind with their rent. This, in turn, leads to a great deal of anxiety for many of our families and feelings of insecurity.

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**Q11**

Describe the flow-on impacts of the housing crisis in the context of your organisation's work.

We are directing a lot of our funds and mental and physical energy towards supporting families with housing 'issues'. Sometimes, rental costs will increased suddenly and significantly. Our Conference and several other conferences in our region operate in an area where the population increases significantly with each WEEK.

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### Q12

Describe how current policy settings impact housing affordability and access to housing from your organisation's perspective.

1. There just isn't enough public housing.
  2. Due to negative gearing, several landlords' motivation seems to be simply to make as much money as possible, whilst acquiring two or even three properties.
  3. Centrelink does a very good job but some of the pensions need to be increased, not only due to rental increases but also due to the increase in the cost of food and utilities.
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### Q13

Describe what actions your organisation believes should be taken by governments to most improve affordability and access to housing.

1. Devote a lot more of Govt budget to public housing.
  2. Abolish negative gearing (this is NOT, necessarily, an SVDP policy.)
  3. Improve public transport. Poof families find the cost of running the family car a real challenge but in the outer suburbs public transport leaves much to be desired. Thus, money which could be spent on rent goes towards the car, for example driving the children to and from school because of inadequate bus services.
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### Q14

Is there anything else your organisation would like to share with the Commission?

I reiterate, on behalf of my conference and other nearby conferences, that 'just getting by' is a daily struggle for many, many families. A VERY HIGH significant percentage of their income (and many of our 'clients' are unemployed) goes on rent. It's almost at crisis point (some would argue that it is!)

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