



MEDIA RELEASE

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VCOSS supports calls from the Coroner for licensing and standards to protect rooming house residents

Today's findings by the Coroner into the deaths of a young couple at a rooming house in 2006 should be a call to action to the Victorian Government to better regulate rooming houses and protect the renters currently at risk of serious injury and death.

"Three years after the tragic deaths of Leigh Sinclair and Christopher Giorgi we still have vulnerable Victorians being exposed to harmful physical conditions and exposed to poor management practices in private rooming houses. A fitting legacy to these two young people would be for the State Government to immediately agree to implement the findings of this Inquest and to regulate for minimum standards in rooming house accommodation and a strong compliance and enforcement regime to weed out rogue operators," said Cath Smith, CEO.

"On the night of the fire a 7 year old child was also staying at this property and it is not uncommon for children to be living in rooming houses. The presence of children in rooming houses is a direct result of the lack of affordable housing for parents and not a result of their lack of care for their children- the Government must act immediately to ensure no children are in rooming houses by ensuring appropriate housing options are made available to their parents," Cath Smith said.

"We actively participated in the Rooming House Taskforce set up recently at the request of the Premier and continue to make strong representations to Government to invest in appropriate housing supply as well as stronger regulation of this housing tenure,"

"It is unacceptable that low income renters are being forced to pay high rents to rogue operators because a proper regulatory system and compliance and enforcement framework have not been put in place."

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