

# tenant

Park Towers Tenant Management Inc. Newsletter Dec 2018



**PTTM Inc.**  
Ground Floor  
332 Park Street  
South Melbourne VIC 3205

ABN 71 451 301 904

**Ph:** (03) 9696 6165  
**E:** [pttm.inc@gmail.com](mailto:pttm.inc@gmail.com)  
**W:** [www.pttminc.com](http://www.pttminc.com)  
**f** [facebook.com/PTTMInc](https://facebook.com/PTTMInc)

A0015872W



## OFFICE BEARERS 2019

President: John Lowndes  
Acting Secretary: Mohamed Farrag  
Treasurer: Maria Szatmary

## Committee Member:

Shlomo Nathanson

## Office Hours

Mon-Thu 10am - 1pm  
Fri 10am - 12pm

# Friends of PTTM Inc.



# Now What? 11-Storey Building on top of the Telstra building!

Telstra has sold the air rights on top of their building, the South Melbourne telephone exchange right next door to Park Towers, to Grocon one of Melbourne's largest developers and definitely not known for being warm, cuddly or caring.

So, what does this mean for Park Towers, well they have applied for planning permission for an 11-story block of flats including car parking on top of the existing structure and retail outlet on the ground floor just what we all need, more retail.

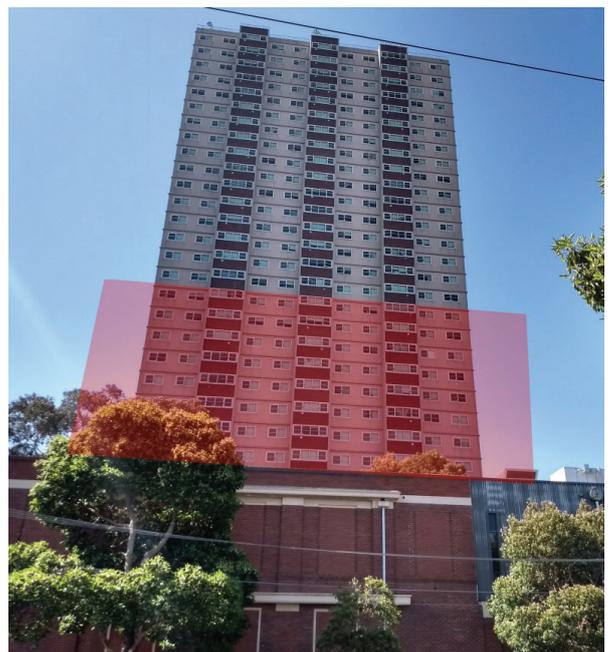
Yes 32 metres all up, now we estimate that will block the views up to the 13th floor of Park Towers and in the winter when the sun is low in the sky turn them into dark and dismal places to survive in especially those who are house bound because of age or mental or physical illness.

The parking in Bank Street is already to the brim then added all the extra vehicle movements to the flats and shops.

It would be terrific if tenants on the north side who will be affected can make a written account of how it will impact on them to lose their view and sun light and warmth during the winter.

## Farewell

Felice Vaiani, our secretary of 18 months has resigned due to serious health problems. She did as much as she could for as long as she could. We all truly wish her well.



*Levels potentially affected by the new building*

# What can we look forward to or dread?

Well apart from having another useless foyer upgrade forced upon us without any consultation, there were other things going on the estate. I had suggested over 10 years ago a plan for the estate. When I brought it up at the community meeting, Martin Foley screamed me down. Well some things never change.

Part of my idea was to rip down the car park at the back of the building creating more parking tenants.

This would be great for some many of those who have been living in the area for 40 or more years. They are asset rich but cash poor as they would sell and move somewhere closer to where they have always lived. Similarly, with public housing, tenants would be able to move out of their house or large flats and still be close to their friends and familiar facilities.

The car park had surveyors assessing it last summer and you will see in the rock core samples that it looks very good for the possibility of going down three more levels. A car park and a new building on top of course is possible, the new structure must not block and views from the flats on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd floors etc.

I feel very sorry for those in the Victoria Street block who had their views blocked by a luxury block of flats. Our views are often the only thing that keep one's mental health buoyant.

This is especially true for those who are house bound.

The air space on the light rail is begging to

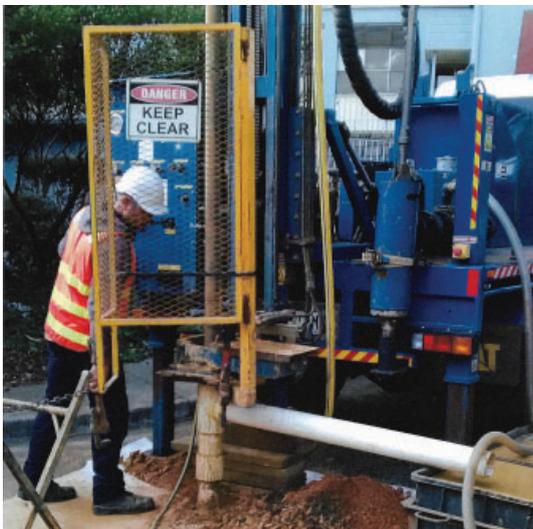
have a block of flats over it. God knows all the air space over rail lines all over Melbourne are begging to be built over with medium to high density dwellings and of course at least 25% public housing as in cities like New York.

Now we must be vigilant as Martin Foley has lied to us and sold off millions of dollars of public housing to build infrastructure. However, any thinking person knows that the most important infrastructure shopping list goes like this: good quality affordable urban and suburban housing, good public schools and public hospitals minutes away from home, rapid frequent public transport, cheap reliable energy, great public parks and gardens, swimming pools and playgrounds for the young and old, oh and then good roads.

You will have heard the acronym PPP - public private partnership - which means corporate welfare do watch out for those economic government weasel words.

Well now there's an update to this story, as of last week surveyors have been at it again all over the estate taking total coverage photos. I asked them why and they said there was going to be major landscaping occurring on the estate.

Well of course PTTM and our tenants are not being consulted let alone informed once again. I will be writing a letter to the powers that be and asking for full disclosure but I'm not holding my breath so neither should you.



*Workers drilling on site*



*Surveyors on site*



## Multicultural Home Care & Other Support Services



Australian Multicultural Community Services Inc

We care, we support and we empower

03 9689 9170  
info@amcservices.org.au  
www.amcswervices.org.au



### Multicultural Meet a Lifeguard Program

This program is an interactive session designed to educate multicultural students and community groups about how to be safe around water.

### Multicultural Beach Program

This program practically educates participants on life saving techniques and water safety measures.



If you are interested in the Life Saving program please come and put your name or your child's name down as soon as possible. There are only a few dates left in February 2019 - it's free of charge, lots of fun and may save your or someone else's life.

The office will only be open between 10am and 11am Monday to Friday.

# Next Year we turn 50!

2019 is our 50th anniversary and I have also applied for grants for events, arts projects and an historical exhibition.

We will be doing a smaller re-boot or K9's for Kids day including an art event which we will disclose closer to the date.

We have been telling tenants for years to come to us as an individual or a group if they think they have an idea for a project and a grant that they would like to apply for and we can help them apply.

We will be working with Port Phillip Heritage to create an exhibition this winter about the history of Park Towers and the history of the land it is built on.

So, if you or anyone you know have photos or moving film taken of Park Towers, we would love to see them. We would also like to hear from people who have great stories of how they came to be here.



*These images are from an Open Day at Park Towers in 1969. The man outside is protesting against high rise, high density housing, comparing people and sheep. Gosh things have changed. If he is still with us today and we would love to hear what he thinks of the canon of high rises down City Road.*

Images from State Library of Victoria.

## To the future

We have raised money and have had a generous grant from the City of Port Phillip's Small Poppy Neighbourhood Grants program to cover one of the trees in the courtyard with fairy lights.

This will, especially in winter, bring up the amenity of the courtyard which often resembles a prison yard.

The expected life span of these LED lights is 15 years and we believe they will bring a little

bit of joy to children and adults alike as well as adding another greatly needed light source.

I have applied now for 2 grants for rejuvenating the entire courtyard which would include tables, seating and a stage and have the rocks reworked with a stainless-steel sculpture.

All of this would require a lot of tenant participation in the design stage and maybe even in the execution.

# ALL NON-PROFITS ARE NOT CREATED EQUALLY

As you will all know, Martin Foley and the Father Bob Foundation took our facilities away from us this year. It was a ruthless and disgusting act for one non-profit to usurp another non-profit's facilities because they are losing theirs and can't afford to rent or buy anything else in the area.

Officers from the DHH said they were bringing Park Towers into line with other estates, while that may have been the outcome it was not the reason. The letter from Kathleen Alonso on page 9 of this article, was a load of tosh to satisfy her boss, Minister Foley.

We had a lease agreement with the City of Port Phillip which was paying us \$10 an hour to run several old aged groups while their facility was being renovated across the road. It would have made us \$1800 to put towards a party for the tenants in December.

It should be noted that all other estates regularly have their community rooms vandalised and/or left in filth. Our community room has never suffered this because the tenant's organisation has always managed it.

In fact, the OoH was not even consulted about taking over the management of the community room and computer room. It was really the last thing they wanted as the battle to manage their other tenancies as they are so under staffed.

Unlike the higher ups it seems to me that

there are several directors etc. just for the Southern Region all on six figure salaries with company cars, lap tops and phones. I think that housing officers at the coal face should have the better cars, laptops and phones. Too many chiefs and not enough Indians if you like.

The open letter you will find on page 8 of this newsletter was placed up in our foyer, we were told to take it down even though there is no legal reason for doing so. It turns out the DHH's head office told the local office to photograph everything we put up in our display cases and send to them. Yes, we are being surveyed.

There is only one thing that I did not recount in my open letter to Father Bob and that was what was said at the end of the call.

And that's because I was embarrassed and felt belittled. The conversation went like this: I told Mr. Meme Rivers how I thought that he was unfit to run any kind of non-profit care organisation and that we were volunteers and he was paid. I was going to continue to say because we are volunteers our only motivation was to make our home better and safer for us and our fellow neighbours. Before I could, Mr. Meme Rivers growled at me "GO AND GET A JOB THEN!".

I then said I was hanging up and did.

It's my understanding that Mr. River's story is that Father Bob found him on the streets, well I would suggest that maybe it would have been better for all if he had left him on the streets.

I have also heard that Mr. Rivers calls himself a filmmaker, really? I don't think so. No one I know in the business has ever heard of him. Having worked in the film and TV industries through my 10's and early 30's producing national TV, having films in the Melbourne Film Festival and completed a post grad degree from Swinburne Film and TV school during its peak of success, I can safely say that I was a film maker until we had to have the recession we had to have.

For someone who has had to change careers many times in his life and has, like so many men and women, been denied work to be told and go and get a job by a job that is nothing but a talentless bully, did I confess cut deeply.

However, after speaking with so many who work for non-profits in the City of Port Phillip, they encouraged me to speak out about it as they were appalled but not surprised at the FBF tactics.

One of our local councillors contacted Martin Foley about him handing over our

facilities to FBF and he told the councillor to ring the FBF. The councillor told me that a spokesperson at the FBF told him that we at PTTM and our tenants never used our community room or computer room, so they should have it.

Of course, this is outrageously untrue or to put it more plainly a damn lie, one also perpetuated by the DHH with weasel words “and now terms” like capacity building which in plain English just means doing more.

Well PTTM will endeavour to keep doing more despite being nobbled.

Well what a year 2018 has been. To quote the Queen, “it’s been an anus horribillis”, “a horrible year”, for PTTM, all of us volunteer and all of us collectively at Park Towers.

The way we have been treated so appallingly by our local member, Minister Martin Foley and the Office of Housing (OoH).

We were kept out of the fire upgrade plans since last year and found ourselves with a screw up in a grand way in regard to the smoke

and couldn’t find anything that they could afford to lease or buy so they were given ours.

Why? Because they didn’t want to partner with us and they didn’t want to pay us as little as \$5 an hour, less than any other organisation and monies which would be used for tenant celebrations during the year and at the end of the year.

We wrote an open letter to Father Bob to make sure that it wasn’t kept from him by the people who do these terrible things in his name, unfortunately we have heard nothing from Father Bob so we can only conclude that he is fine with usurping another non-profit organisation’s facilities to better his, a sad thought but not all non-profits are created equal.

We beg them not to have their dreadful BBQs and events that attracted the most appalling people. You can read the open letter and correspondence between us and them on pages 8 and 9.

We took Martin Foley to VCAT, he made sure that the OoH hired a very expensive

## ***... PTTM will endeavour to keep doing more despite being nobbled.***

doors being the wrong ones and more likely to trap people than aid their escape.

We didn’t get the vandal proof pop down sprinklers; too expensive we guess.

We have also been kept out of the process of the foyer upgrade by the Minister Martin Foley.

I have been personally attacked by the department, DHHS officers and by Martin Foley and his staffers, any of you who attended our tenant meeting recently will have seen and heard it for yourself.

These staffers had full access to your mail and mine and PTTM’s, this is outrageous - the politicisation of OoH staff. And it doesn’t stop there, we will be drilling down on this in the future after receiving legal advice. We can say that door to door canvassing is not allowed and one political party is registered with the OoH to have OoH let only staff into our mailing room.

The CEO of the Father Bob Foundation (FBF), Mr. Meme Rivers and Martin Foley directed the OoH to take the management of our computer room and our community room away from us, this is because the FBF are losing their facilities

law firm and at the hearing his political adviser was in constant contact with a barrister at ever break out side the hearing.

We were lucky to have the help of Legal Aid, we didn’t lose the hearing, but we didn’t win however we have the ability to go back to the Human Rights division of VCAT with individual forms filled out by you telling us briefly as to how the rear door closure will affect you.

We still are not sure how trades men and women are going to access the building as they have to park on the north side of the building and then walk almost 200 metres to the new rear entrance and believe me, they are not happy nor are the cleaners.

The department’s answer when I pointed out that this will cost tens or thousands of dollars more a year and slow down maintenance to the entire building, I was told we’re paying for it.

Remember the last foyer upgrade that cost \$1.2 million almost 9 years ago and since then hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent correcting the faults.

*Continued on page 9*

# Open letter to Father Bob

18 September 2018

Dear Father Bob,

I'm making this letter to you an open letter for two reasons. The first is I want to make sure you get to read it and second, I think everyone should know how the staff for the Foundation that bears your name behave.

Your CEO Mem Rivers approached us some months ago and wanted to see our facilities, with the view of holding some training courses and maybe holding some dinners. He was so excited about our community room and kitchen.

Little did we know then what his and Martin Foley's designs on our community room and computer room were.

He wanted to put on a large event on Park Towers Reserve something I have done twice. I explained that he could not just show up on the day. He said oh it'll be fine these people bouncy castle and VR people entertainers were all professionals and they would work it out.

It doesn't work like that his laissez-faire she'll be right attitude shocked me. I offered my service and the intellectual property to do it correctly abiding by OH&S in regard to running power, how and where. How to bump in trucks and bump them out safely. For that, I asked a fee to be paid to our organisation of \$500, as we only receive \$4,083 a year from DHHS. We have to apply for grants or raise money via our facilities for anything else.

Like many organisations in the City of Port Phillip we were shocked at the amount of money that your Foundation had received, when there are so many groups in the area who have been doing the things that you have not done for years.

So, I thought my expertise was valuable and you rang me and seemed happy with our request and wrote a cheque to PTTM for \$500.

I mapped out the area with all the required information and would have supervised all the logistics of the day, if it hadn't been a huge rain storm so everything moved into our community room. I served chicken wings to substance abusers and rude aggressive people.

We had been warned by the police that wherever the Father Bob name goes, every undesirable follows for miles around and it was true. Our tenants were too scared to come and the few who did, grabbed some food and took it home. We don't want this to happen again.

Our tenants have to endure alcoholics, drug users and people off their medication every day. We have over 100 children under the age of 10 and many from 10 to 15 years old. There are over 300 people aged from 65 to 90 years old and people with mental health problems that are vulnerable so we don't want more of those kind of people here during events. It's bad enough having the ones who live here and the creeps that come to visit them to buy drugs or mug people.

We don't care if that is not PC; our tenants have enough of these people and their vile behaviour.

The police were right, other non-profits were right when they told us that the Father Bob Foundation just rolls in and over other organisations.

As you will see in the emails attached, we were keen to work with you in a partnership.

One day out of the blue your CEO rang me he was not happy and asked to meet the next day. I said sure and he brought a young man who you had just hired as a youth worker.

Then he began, saying he was angry that when contacting the local office to get keys for our facilities behind our back and they told him that he has to deal with us.

He was furious at this but I tried to reason with him. I said that we usually asked for a deposit of %50 for damage or cleaning if things are left unclean and in your case \$5 an hour. You had plenty of funding but if you were from an organisation that we had invited in like Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre to carry out computer lessons and ESL classes we charged nothing.

We know they only have two paid positions, one full time and one part time.

We charge our tenants the same amount if they want to have a large celebration. If they are just having a games night playing cards and pool, we don't charge them anything. After they have proved that they are reliable tenants, we would sign a key out to them.

Your CEO was belligerent and goading me saying he didn't understand what I was saying so I thought I would push down and put it in more base terms that he may be used to. It seemed to work and I suggested he write to use saying what he wanted to do specifically and we would write back with a positive response.

However, your CEO is clearly a "his way or the highway" sort of guy and when I didn't hear from him for a week I rang you and left a message for you to call me.

I got a call back some hours later from your CEO saying, "Don't ring Father Bob, he doesn't want to talk to you. I'm the CEO, you speak to me." He went on, "I've spoken with Martin Foley and he said that I don't have to deal with you." Meaning PTTM and that we would be getting a letter. We got two letters, one from Paul Bolt which you will find attached and another accusing me of everything but the JFK assassination. Bolt's letter told us that us that after 24 years we would be losing our community room and our computer room. As the community room is very heavily booked up until Christmas and there are some dates with the City of Port Phillip, we would lose substantial revenue.

The letter said that they were just bringing us into line with other estates, this is of course a gross untruth. It was your CEO and Foley who has it out for us because we have been fighting his terrible plan for our foyer and he has reneged on giving us the daytime security that he promised in February.

In my dealings with you, you seemed to be a nice chap, but I'm afraid your staff are anything but. I could go on about some of your other people but really as far as I and our organisation cares about is getting management back of our facilities that your Foundation took away from us. Please do not come back to me and say that your CEO was not responsible because that would be insulting. We knew you were looking for new premises that you could afford to rent or buy and now you have taken ours for free.

*Continued on page 9*

Continued from page 7.

Now it's being ripped apart again, we wanted it to be done right once and for all and save this outrageous waste of money just, so the Minister can say look what I did just before an election.

Similarly, we could have had security 6 months ago but he wanted them to appear just for the election, so he could get an electoral bump out of it.

People have said don't be hard on him as the conservatives will be a lot worse and most of them would.

I think we are all so tired of low calibre politicians in this country, either corrupt banks and other businesses that we shrug and go for what we think is the least bad option.

When we should be holding the collective feet to the fire.

There was an unexpected poly that didn't make our voices heard in parliament, that of Margaret Fitzhurbet, a conservative. The Greens were completely missing in action, maybe they are playing at the bottom of the garden Demarcates.

With any luck we will get our rear door access back, of course then we will be blamed for any security shortfalls when in actual fact it was Minister Foley going for a cheap option.

In the meantime, we understand that the foyer, courtyard and every lift foyer up 30 floors are going to become a dumping ground for lazy tenants who don't want to take their hard rubbish out and then get locked out.

And of course, the aged, disabled and parents with young children will have to walk so far and near a busy road.

Putting them in a stressful and dangerous situation.



## Open letter to Father Bob

Continued from page 8

Next year is our 50th anniversary and we really do not want any Father Bob Foundation branded events on Park Towers Reserve or anywhere else. We have worked hard to break the barrier between public housing and private residents by having events there.

This is so kids living here can ask their school friends to attend events and the parents would let them.

I fear that if you are involved, every reprobate will come and ruin everything for our residents.

I hope you can respect our wishes. It is the very least you could do after the personal attacks on me and then us losing our facilities.

We look forward to a prompt response to this letter so we can resolve this.

Regards,  
John Lowndes  
President.

# Who are you serving when you self-serve?

I don't know about you but I'm not a fan of self serve in supermarkets I think if you use a self serve check out all you are doing is work for free for a multibillion dollar corporation and put people out of work.

But supermarkets from inception were all about self serve rather than going to a shop where you asked for something and they got it for you.

Of course, there are areas like the deli section of supermarkets where you are served as it would be unhygienic to do it any other way.

But then the way you buy your nuts, weigh them and price tag them it seemed ok from a hygiene point of view. They are fixed to the wall in clear Perspex boxes with a hinged lid and their own scooper.

Then one day I saw a woman scoop and then put her hand into one of the boxes and nick a nut and that was the end of self-serve nuts for me as far as I was concerned, she may as well have been Typhoid Mary.

Really, I'm not a germ freak, I'm big on hand washing and I would never stick my hand into a bowl of anything first because I would feel like I was stealing and second because it's a dirty thing to do.

So, a couple of years ago when Coles in South Melbourne opened their serve yourself olive bar, all I could see were big petri dishes.

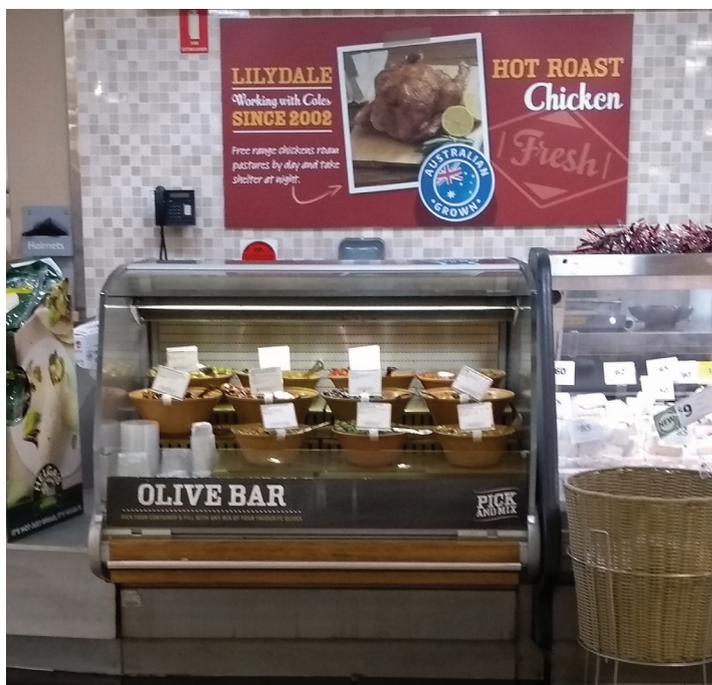
I did say something at the time to a manager and was told to call head office blah blah but who does that? Well I have, I once called about something else entirely. What happened? Nothing.

Now I will on the odd occasion buy some olives at Coles in Prahran because their olives are well under glass and assistants have hair nets and gloves on etc.

However, even if I needed an olive for life or death reason, I would not scoop up an olive at the South Melbourne Coles or their other branches that have open olive self-serves.

And yes, I have seen two women put there dainty and not so dainty digits into the olive bowls at Coles South Melbourne.

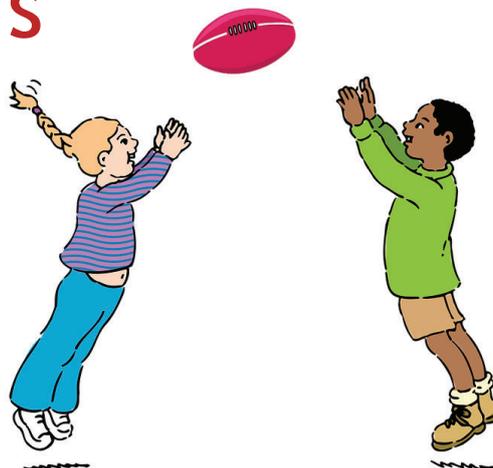
Then when someone sneezes do you know how far sneeze travels or a cough? And I know when we are being affectionate, lustful and/or in love with another person we exchange all sorts



## AFL comes to Park Towers

The AFL will be running a promotional mixed under 10's football training session lead by two AFL coaches. The football program will be happening on February 6th, 2019 at 3.45pm.

We will remind you again closer to the date.



# AGM

The reason for the AGM being delayed until the 25th February is a long one. Essentially, we inherited rules called “The Model Rules” that are really not suitable for our purposes. The previous Committee Secretary and President, pre 2017, completely ignored them when we took over and our first Secretary, Fabia Paull was stickler for doing it by the book and we did, silent voting, doing proper accurate financials, using president as an honorific instead of chairperson and much more.

We wanted to change our rules so that anyone standing for office or as an ordinary Committee Member or non-Committee volunteer would have to have a police check and Working With Children card.

So, we rang CAV and told them that we worked by the Model Rules and they told us that we had to have a majority vote of the Committee vote for the change and then send minutes and the money in.

We did what they asked, and they gave us the change, now what we think happened then is that someone from the bad old Committee could not obtain a Working With Children card because of his or her criminal record.

So that person with help, combed through the Model Rules and pulled out the membership clause you see just signing a book at the office or at the door of the AGM is not enough to make you a member. We knew this however the massive task of getting all of you to fill out membership forms to apply to members so as you can vote we though would be Herculean.

We still do; however, we have been given no choice it seems that the CAV doesn't care that the previous group broke the rules by falsifying their last AGM financial report.

Nonetheless, soon you will be able to fill out a membership application so as you can vote at the AGM next year.

Until then we will still be asking people to obtain a police check before becoming a volunteer and a Working With Children card if dealing directly with children on our behalf and we will add in the matters and will cost noting to any prospective volunteers whether be tenants/ members or come from outside Park Towers.



## He's Back!

Yes, Richard Wynne is back as Minister for Housing he is also the Minister for Planning which is a good fit.

We hope this means that we will have a voice again and will not be threatened and treated with condescension and contempt by staffers.

And yes we have already informed Richard of our rear door being closed and the calamity which it has caused.

We have not received a response before going to print.



Park Towers  
Tenant Management  
Inc. Supports

Skinner's  
Adventure  
Playground



211 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne

For more information:

03 9209 6221

[haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au](http://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au)

have your say

Essential Assistance provides accurate and prompt bookkeeping services to businesses all over Melbourne. With over 20 years of experience, we understand the needs of your business and deliver results.



**essential assistance**  
accurate & efficient record keeping systems



PO Box 58 Elwood, VIC 3184  
T: 1300 799 347 F: 03 8080 0759  
[www.essentialassistance.com.au](http://www.essentialassistance.com.au)