

MEDIA RELEASE | **for immediate release**

Healthcare not paternalism is needed to support residents living in apartment buildings

The Victorian Government has announced that 8 out of the 9 housing blocks will move to stage 3 restrictions, bringing them in line with the rest of Melbourne's restriction levels.

Racial and economic justice and advocacy organisation Democracy in Colour welcomed this announcement but are calling for law enforcement to be removed from the public housing blocks.

Neha Madhok, co-Director of Democracy in Colour says, "This has only happened because the community has rallied around residents and the resilience from these residents and the broader community around them shows how powerful we all are when we stand together against clear injustices.

"There is no excuse for such punitive discrimination and racism, especially when we know that the impacts of this pandemic have already disproportionately affected marginalised communities.

"The over-policing of the homes of over 3,000 people was unnecessarily harsh. It targeted already marginalised groups such as Indigenous people and communities of colour, refugees and working class households.

"It's great to see that the nine housing blocks are finally going to be under the same restrictions as the rest of Melbourne, but it's completely unnecessary to maintain the police presence now.

"Maintaining a police presence in the public housing blocks is paternalistic and insulting. Are private apartments going to have the same level of police presence surrounding them?"

"We have seen time and again that marginalised communities know what they need and know how to look after one another. The residents of the 9 blocks don't need paternalism, they need healthcare," said Ms Madhok.

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Democracy in Colour is a national racial and economic justice organisation led by people of colour. It runs campaigns that tackle structural racism and build the power of people of colour to shape the critical issues that affect our lives.