

Many of us are looking for a place to rent.

But there is little available that we can afford!

And when any of us find something affordable, there are dozens of others of us applying to lease the same dwelling. We're sick of greedy developers mainly building homes for millionaires ... when most people are not millionaires!

But grumbling won't change things. It's time to get organised, united and active!

Let's Rally to Demand:

**STOP HOUSING BEING BUILT ONLY FOR THE RICH!
PROVIDE PUBLIC HOUSING
FOR THE WORKING CLASS!**

**China Is Doing That in A Huge Way -
We Demand The Same Here!**

And let's demand too that those who do get public housing in Australia start to get treated with dignity – instead of being refused repairs or hit up with water charges.

RALLY 5:30PM, MONDAY MAY 7

**Parramatta's Church Street Mall
(Railway Station end – corner with Darcy Street)**

Supported by: Social Justice Network, Trotskyist Platform

For information call Trotskyist Platform on 0417 204 611

Several greedy property developers have become billionaires. They have done that by building lots of expensive homes for the rich. The rich for their part often buy several homes, many of which are vacant for most of the year. However, because most of the resources are going to satisfy the wishes of the wealthy, working class people are not being provided with housing that they can afford. The latest available figures show that there are nearly half a million less rental dwellings available and affordable to people on lower incomes than what is needed.

One of the many effects of this shortage is that women suffering in violent or abusive relationships with male breadwinners are presented with the agonising choice of either risking homelessness or remaining in the oppressive relationship. Another effect is that landlords know they can get away with putting up rents even further. The median rent in Sydney is now \$480 a week. That is only \$100 a week less than the official minimum wage (before tax) of a full-time worker! So imagine that: you toil away full-time and at the end of the week you have to pay out more than four out of every five dollars that you earn as rent!

So what is the solution? Clearly, private sector developers, driven only by profit, are not going to build affordable accommodation for the masses when they can get more profits building expensive homes for the rich. That is why governments must step in and massively increase the amount of low-rent public housing available. However, what governments in Australia of all persuasions have been doing is the exact opposite. They have been selling off public housing.

In the meantime, capitalist politicians are disgustingly trying to blame the most vulnerable for the lack of affordable housing. They are blaming immigration and refugees for the crisis. The truth is, however, that there is not enough affordable accommodation because so much of this country's available resources are owned and controlled by a super-wealthy few. Last financial year, Gina Rinehart, Clive Palmer, James Packer, Andrew Forrest and the rest of the 200 richest people in Australia **increased** their total wealth by over \$31 billion! Just that *increased* wealth alone is enough to purchase public housing units to accommodate another 350,000 people. That's more people than there are on the official public housing waiting list!

To see what is possible when resources are actually utilised for the benefit of working class people we should look at what Australia's biggest trading partner – the People's Republic of China – is doing. Last year, China started building (or took over from private housing) well over ten million public housing dwellings – mostly ultra-low rent units. This year, the program has intensified further. As a result, by the end of the year, China's biggest city, Chongqing, will enable about one out of every three of its residents to live in public housing. Yet here in Australia, just one out every 25 people get access to public housing. Furthermore, while public housing tenants here have to pay *at least* 25% of their income on rent (plus water charges), in China they typically only pay between 5% and 17% of their income on rent.

What the Chinese state is also doing is stopping housing from being built mainly for the rich. It's achieving that by simply banning families in most urban areas from buying more than two homes and making it hard for affluent families to even buy a second home. It's about time that we have such restrictions on the rich here too, instead of restriction after restriction on the poor. And it is about time we get a massive increase in the amount of public housing! And that's not only through construction of new public housing but also through the takeover of existing private dwellings. In Sydney alone, over 122,000 dwellings are unoccupied – many owned by wealthy investors seeking tax benefits.

However, we are not going to get all this through the good graces of the current parliamentary parties. They are all, in the end, beholden to the wealthy ruling class. If we want there to be low-rent public housing for the masses then we are going to have to fight for it. So let's get organised, let's get united and let's work hard to build the May 7 rally to demand a massive increase in public housing now.