



In limbo: ‘I don’t think they have

Clay Lucas
City Editor

Eileen Artmann moved into her public housing estate in Northcote 39 years ago.

The estate’s 87 apartments now face demolition – so long as the developer that gets control of the prime site overlooking the Merri Creek can rebuild 96 new public housing units among a private development.

Ms Artmann has been assured

she can come back to the estate when it is rebuilt, and was told she would have to be out of her apartment by Christmas. This now appears uncertain.

“They [the Office of Housing] think they have nowhere to put us. We’re living in limbo,” said the 74-year-old. “They are telling us they will find us a nice place but I don’t think they have anywhere for us to go.”

Ms Artmann raised a son and a daughter on the estate. Both had

graduated from university and now had good jobs, she said. Far more public housing was needed, not the “tiny amount” being added by the government’s plan, she said.

“I’m grateful for public housing because it got me there with my children; I got them educated.” Many more were in a situation similar to hers when she sought public housing, but were now unlikely to be as lucky, Ms Artmann said.

Under the plan, Ms Artmann has been told, her estate would be



Eileen Artmann feels like she’s in limbo as demolition date nears.
Photo: Scott McNaughton

anywhere for us to go’

carved into “80 per cent private housing and 20 per cent public”.

“That’s not fair – once we’ve lost our public housing land, it’s gone forever,” she said.

“This block should be redeveloped for 100 per cent public housing.”

She also argued it was unnecessary to knock down the Northcote block – a refurbishment was all that was needed, and some of the estate’s spare land could be used to create more public housing.

But Housing Minister Martin Foley said the government had set a 10 per cent increase in social housing units on estates like Northcote as a minimum requirement. “The Victorian government will view favourably proposals that will deliver more than a 10 per cent increase in social housing,” he said.

And he said he had “signed a pledge personally guaranteeing that every tenant has the right to return to a new, improved home once the project is completed”.