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Victorian Laws Fail Couple in Wrong-Block Home Dispute

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A Victorian couple faces losing their home after building on the wrong block, with outdated laws favoring landowners and leaving courts unable to deliver fair outcomes.

Melanie and David Moor, a couple from south-west Victoria, are entangled in a legal battle to keep their relocatable home after mistakenly placing it on a neighboring block in Camperdown, as reported by ABC News on August 5, 2025. Having spent over \$500,000 on the 2-hectare property purchased in 2021, the Moors secured permits, built a driveway, and installed utilities, only to discover in August 2024 that they owned the adjacent lot. Victorian law, under the Property Law Act 1958 (Vic), deems improvements like their house as belonging to the landowner, leaving the Moors at risk of losing their life savings. The couple was issued a 14-day notice in July 2025 to remove the house, which

they cannot afford, and their contractor warned it may not survive relocation, per The Sydney Morning Herald.

The landowner, an interstate resident who inherited the block, rejected a proposed land swap, citing differences in block views and an easement on the Moors' property, according to a legal statement reported by RNZ News. Negotiations have stalled, with the matter now before lawyers, as confirmed by a July 22, 2025, legal letter seen by ABC News. The Moors, who sought an extension to the 14-day notice, expressed despair, with David Moor stating the house might need to be demolished as their only affordable option, per The Guardian. The Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC), in a 2023 review, criticized Victoria's laws as outdated, noting that states like New South Wales allow courts to adjust property boundaries or order compensation for such errors, promoting fairer outcomes.

Shadow Attorney-General Michaelia Cash criticized the Australian Labor Party government's inaction on law reform, arguing it leaves vulnerable citizens exposed, per Sky News. The VLRC's recommendations, yet to be adopted, could grant courts discretion to resolve such disputes equitably, per a 2023 Issues Paper. The Moors' case highlights a systemic gap in Victoria's legal framework, undermining property rights and leaving ordinary Australians at risk of financial ruin over honest mistakes.