



## Housing for the Aged Action Group

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# Annual General Meeting

## Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Meeting commenced 11.13am

1. Ena Ahern, Maree Bellett, Pat Black, April Bragg, Bob Brooks, Kerry Byrne, Elisabeth Coldicutt, Joan Connel, Bill Crombie, Amy Duncan, Gary Ferguson (guest speaker), Jeff Fiedler, Lois Frank, Curtis Greenwood, Betty Harrison, Sue Healy, Mari Heazlewood, Carol Kutlesa, Pearl Lay Lim, Gladys Maher, Roma Martin, Joan Maxwell, Carmel Mc Mennemin, Ruth Mueller, Denise Muir, Sivarasa Nallaratnam, Sahndra Nelson, Marea Norris, Helen Ohlhoff, Carmel Picone, Robert Purves, Doreen Rushby, Dalene Salisbury, Bharpur Singh, , Gwen Sparkes, Joannah Tierney, Kaye Trainor (minutes), Vi Walton, Deane Welsh AIWCW (returning officer), Judith Wernas, Feng Yin Xia

Apologies from the floor: Jack Charles, Indigenous Leader.

Apologies: Wyn Stenton, Marian Harriden, Jenny Macaffer, Betty Dodd, Sally Stabback, Guena Gasco, Evie Wallace, Wendy Cotton, Bob Newry, Jenny Stewart, Frank McCoan, Frances Swann, Molly Hadfield, Peter Soper, Anne Sgrò, Sarah Lawrence, Max Penaluna, Brian Evans.

Doreen welcomed all those present – members and guests - and thanked them for attending.

Doreen noted that, thanks to the stalwart efforts of many of those present, HAAG had been going for 25 years and that all present should congratulate themselves for the sterling efforts of our long serving members. Doreen gave special thanks to the hardworking staff that often work under trying conditions yet manage to carry the work load. A special thanks was made to Bill, the HAAG book-keeper, who manages the finances and has kept us operational. Doreen spoke of how April and Jeff frequently represent HAAG at meeting with bureaucrats and politicians and always leave a good impression of the organisation. Doreen also thanked Kaye for keeping the office running.

Doreen spoke of how banks and major building companies have been able to lobby successfully so that government assistance appears to favour the private sector. This has led to a relatively few people wealthy at the expense of those members of society who are disadvantaged socially and economically. The Commonwealth spends two billion dollars annually in rent subsidies. This benefits investors but at the expense of those people waiting for tenancy in public housing. That same two billion dollars would see a big increase if invested in public housing units.

HAAG would continue to lobby to ensure that a reasonable proportion of public housing units are set aside to meet the needs of older citizens.

- 2a Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting held 11th October 2007.  
MOTION: to accept the minutes for the AGM held 11<sup>th</sup> October 2007  
MOVED: Joanna Tierney      SECONDED: Helen Ohlhoff

- 2b Business arising from the previous minutes:  
NONE

4. Finance Report 2007 – 2008

Maree Bellett, Treasurer, thanked Bill for doing a great job for the past year. She noted that the organisation had survived another hard year and that Bill is paid for only eight hours Financial Management a week. Maree said that HAAG hoped to survive another year.

Bill Crombie, HAAG Finance Manager, asked people to look at the accounts – as distributed. He said each year is difficult and there were always efforts to obtain more funding. In the past year, some \$16,000 had been spent on relocation costs alone. This money had come from trust monies raised.

He asked that any members who had ideas of fund raising to bring them to the attention of the committee for another 25 years of HAAG. Whilst funding allocations from Government sources had increase 2.4%, the CPI was much higher than that. For the previous year, HAAG had survived on income only from Government funding, Philanthropic Trusts and miscellaneous sources. Bill was available on any Thursday to answer financial queries from members.

MOTION 2: to accept the financial report

MOVED: Maree Bellett      SECONDED: Dalene Salisbury

Dalene added to her seconding, thanks to Bill for his input into the financial accounts.  
CARRIED

3. Annual Report 2007 – 2008

MOTION 3: Congratulations for a great report, especially the photographs.

MOVED: Elisabeth Coldicutt      SECONDED: Vi Walton

4. (resumed)

With regards to the appointment of an auditor for 2008 – 2009, Bill and Maree wanted to appoint a different auditor but they hadn't selected one yet.

MOTION 4: to defer the appointment of an auditor for 2008 – 2009

MOVED: Dalene      SECONDED: Pat Black      CARRIED

5. Election of Management Committee

Doreen declared all positions of the Committee of Management vacant and she stood down to allow the Returning Officer, Dean Welsh from AISWCW to proceed with the election of Office Bearers.

**Chairperson**      There had been one nomination received and **Doreen Rushby** was declared elected to the position.

**Vice Chairperson**      There were no nominations received for the position of Vice Chairperson. In accordance with rule 15.2 of the constitution,

Dean called for nominations from the floor for this position. Any person who had nominated for any other position on the committee – either as an officer of the association or as one of the ordinary members was eligible to nominate for the vice chairperson position. Dalene Salisbury was nominated. No other nominations were received. **Dalene Salisbury** was declared elected to the position.

**Secretary** There had been one nomination received and **Sarah Lawrence** was declared elected to the position.

**Treasurer** There had been one nomination received and Maree Bellett was duly elected to the position.

**Public Officer** There had been one nominated received and Helen Ohlhoff was declared elected to the position.

**Committee Members** There were originally nine (9) nominations for the eight (8) ordinary positions. However, since Dalen Salisbury was elected to the position of Vic Chairperson, the number of valid nominations received was equal to the number of vacancies to be filled. The following persons were deemed to be elected as the eight (8) ordinary members on the committee:  
**Pat Black, Bob Brooks, Amy Duncan, Molly Hadfield, Joan Maxwell, Robert Purves, Sivarasa Nallaratnum, Wyn Stenton.**

- All of the newly elected Committee of Management were asked to stand to identify themselves to members and guests.

6. Guest Speaker, Gary Ferguson, Community Education Officer, Seniors Rights Victoria was introduced.

Gary congratulated HAAG for its 25 years of existence – a great achievement. He had heard of HAAG only recently when asked to be the guest speaker at the AGM but had since learnt much about the organisation by looking at the issues and detail on the HAAG website.

Gary distributed copies of his PowerPoint notes to assist people with following his presentation.

Gary introduced himself from Seniors Rights Victoria, a new Organisation operating since June 2008. He acknowledged the traditional land Owners and Elders, past and present of the Aboriginal Community of the lands on which we stood.

Gary gave figures for the ageing population in Australia and how it would increase in decades to come. He defined Elder Abuse as primarily an older person being abused by someone with whom they have a relationship of trust.

His very interesting and informative talk is appended to these minutes: APPENDIX i

At the conclusion of his talk, Doreen presented him with a small gift and a copy of the HAAG Housing Manifesto.

7. Molly Hadfield, founding member of Housing for the Aged Action Group, was unable to speak on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the organisation as she was ill. Best wishes were sent to Molly, one of the stalwarts of HAAG. Dalene Salisbury noted that Molly had been a mentor to her for many years.

Dalene read out the statement Molly had prepared for the occasion:

Her speech is appended to these minutes: APPENDIX ii

At the conclusion of reading Molly's speech, Dalene noted that Curtis Greenwood, one of the very early members and workers of HAAG, was present at the meeting. Dalene also noted the continued support of the ACHA workers who had remained active with the organisation over many years – April Bragg, Jenny Stewart and Ena Ahern.

Tributes were paid to long standing members who had deceased recently – John O'Dea (past President) and Wilfred Wilson. The slide show created by April screened images of many members who had been involved with HAAG over the years but sadly a few of these people had since passed away.

Carmel McMennemin, a founding member, rose to cut the birthday cake celebrating 25 years of Housing for the Aged Action Group.

Doreen closed the meeting asking members to always mention PUBLIC HOUSING and to put one's hand out asking for MORE MONEY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING.

Meeting closed at 12.24pm.

#### **APPENDIX i**

Talk and PowerPoint presentation by Gary Ferguson, Community Education Officer, Seniors Rights Victoria.

#### **Ageing in Australia**

In 1999, 2.3 million people were aged over 65 years

By 2051, 6.4 million people would be aged over 65.

In decades to come, older people will be more active, healthier, and continue to contribute.

#### **Council on the Ageing (COTA)**

COTA promotes that older people have rights

It is NOT OK to abuse or mistreat older person

Older persons should be able to live in safety and dignity

Older persons should feel and be safe and secure.

#### **Elder Abuse Defined**

Elder Abuse is several forms of mistreatment of an older person that is committed by someone with whom the older person has a **relationship of trust**, such as a partner, family member, friend or carer. The appointment of a Power of Attorney often led to abuse despite the appointment being made initially in the persons best interests.

Examples given by Gary of Elder Abuse all had the basic element that there was a **relationship of trust** between the older person and the abuser.

#### **Types of Elder Abuse I**

- Physical – any action that may cause an older person physical hurt, pain or injury.
- Sexual – any form of sexual behaviour or intimacy that is perpetrated without a person's consent.

#### **Types of Elder Abuse II**

- Financial – illegal or improper use of monies, assets or property
- Psychological or Emotional – occurs when a person suffers mental anguish as a result of another person’s actions
- Neglect – depriving a person of the necessities of life
- Social – preventing a person from having or maintaining social contacts and/or activities.

**Risk Factors**

- Increase in dependency
- Family dynamics
- Changing ageing population
- Isolation
- Lack of services

**Barriers to Disclosure**

- Private domestic settings
- Fear of isolation
- Unwritten family codes
- Disbelief and dismissiveness
- Stereotyping

**Perpetrators of Elder Abuse**

- Usually adult children
- Live with older person
- Partners, spouses, relatives, friends, neighbours and carers.

**Prevention and Assistance**

It is important to:

- Plan for the future
- Remain active in the community
- Be independent
- Plan to be and feel safe
- Talk about problems of concern you have with people you trust
- Maintain social contacts and networks

**History of establishing Seniors Rights Victoria**

In March 2005, the Elder Abuse Prevention Project Advisory Committee chaired by Senator Barney Cooney  
 December 2006 “Supporting the Safety and Dignity of Seniors Victoria”  
 April 2008, Minister Lisa Neville launches Seniors Rights Victoria  
 June 2008, Helen Szoke, HREOC, opens SRV  
 Partnership between COTA, Eastern Community Legal Centre, Loddon  
 Campaspe Legal Centre and Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH)

**Seniors Rights Victoria**

Telephone help line: 1300 368 821

Offers:

- Specialised Legal Service,
- Advocacy
- Community education program
- Professional education programs
- Local agency networks
- Probono clinics

**STATISTICS:**

**Profile of calls**

- 480 calls in 16 weeks
- 30% Referral and Information
- 30% Community Education general enquiries
- 40% referral to legal service

**Elder Abuse reported**

- Financial abuse 38%
- Emotional and Psychological 27%
- Physical Abuse 12%
- Neglect 9%
- Social Abuse 8%

- Sexual abuse > 1%

### **What Seniors Rights Victoria can offer public housing residents**

#### Advocacy

- Assistance in applying for intervention orders
- Advice re matter related to abuse
- Assistance in making application or attending the Residential Tenancies Tribunal

## **APPENDIX ii**

Statement from Molly Hadfield as read by Dalene Salisbury

Out of an expressed need for public housing for older people living in the Westernport region, Housing for the Aged Action Group had its beginning. At the initiative of a group of older private tenants, the Westernport Regional Housing Council and concerned individuals, our group began meeting on 21st July 1983.

Following numerous attempts to secure funding the group eventually received a small grant of \$5000 from Community Services Victoria to employ a one day a week worker to extend the functions of the group. Then in 1988, after increased participation from tenants, we successfully applied for funds from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and employed a worker for 12 hours per week.

In 1991 we secured funding to provide a state-wide tenancy service for older renters with a worker employed for 32 hours per week. Since 1998 the position has been full-time.

During 1995 we extended our services by securing funding from the Federal Department of Health's Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) scheme to assist frail older tenants in housing difficulty.

We are still funded today from those two government departments: Consumer Affairs and the Department of Health and Ageing.

However, to lose the grant to assist public housing tenants a few years ago was a devastating blow as public housing today for older people is just as urgent as it was in the 1980's when we established a

#### **Housing for the Aged Action Group.**

Governments and the community must work together to bring back public housing as the older people can be provided with security and tenure and affordable housing.

I would like to thank the people who gave so much of their time and hard work to the development of Housing for the Aged 25 years ago

Also, I would like to thank all the workers and volunteers for their dedication and tireless hours of work over many years.

And I'd like to thank the government departments who continue our grants, although each year we never know if our grants will continue.

May Housing for the Aged Group be able to continue its work further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with all the changes that are occurring in housing for older people.

Congratulations for your 25th birthday HAAG

Love Molly

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