

# Older Tenants' Voice

July

2011

HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

**HAAG IS  
ON RADIO**

**3CR**

**'Raise the  
Roof'  
Wednesdays  
once a month  
at 6pm**

**855**

**On the  
AM dial**

**Next shows**

**27 July**

**24 August**

**28 Sept**

**HOUSING -  
A RIGHT,  
NOT A  
PRIVILEGE**



HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

***IN THIS ISSUE:***

**HAAG FORUM and  
NATIONAL ACHA MEETING**

***Working towards an older persons  
housing strategy***



## WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to our special forum newsletter.

The HAAG forum, on 30 June 2011, is the focus of this edition. The issue is older Australians at risk of homelessness and how we can work towards an older persons housing strategy. The forum aims to address the above by bringing together relevant stakeholders within the housing sector, most importantly older residents themselves, to discuss how we can achieve better outcomes in housing for older people.

The newsletter will also include parks and villages news, ILU residents news and HAAG worker news.

### *Forum and Worker News:*

**Housing for the Aged Action Group** history **pages 3 & 4** and services **page 5**

**Jeff Fiedler** shares an abridged version of his article contribution for 'Parity: Preventing Elderly Homelessness' edition **pages 6** and includes a resident's story to highlight private rental issues **page 7**

Jeff also shares a visual representation of the variations in housing he has been exposed to by assisting older tenants **page 8**

**April Bragg and Ena Ahern** provide a summary of the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) program and provide an update on the current service outcomes **pages 9 & 10**

**Shanny Gordon** reflects on her experience attending a workshop about 'Apartments for Life', a housing model for older people founded by Dr Hans Becker **page 12**

### *Other News:*

**ILU working group** **page 15**

**The Caravan Parks and Residential Villages working group** **page 16**

**HAAG membership form** **pages 17 & 18** (tear out and fill in)

**Community Connections** **page 19**

Cover photo: A client before HAAG re-housed him.

# Housing for the Aged Action Group Inc.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

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.

Initially, the group concentrated on the following:

- the chronic shortage of elderly person units in the region
- the Ministry of Housing's one bedroom policy which was seen to be unfair and impractical for many older couples housing needs.

In 1984 the group published its first booklet entitled 'When the Buck Stops', which was based on research commissioned by the group. The booklet included housing profiles of people in housing difficulties and drew public attention to the desperate shortage of public housing.

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. A Constitution was formed and we became incorporated in 1988. During that year we published our second booklet entitled 'The Buck Ain't Stopped' which was based on further research commissioned by the Westernport Regional Housing Council.

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. Short term funding from the Stegley Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund, and The Lance Reichstein Foundation was also provided to establish a Housing Options Service, an indispensable link between other funded services at HAAG. This has continued to be provided by our organisation on a voluntary basis.

In 1996 HAAG launched a publication called 'Community Housing and Older People' that was the culmination of six months research into the preferred community housing options of older people, funded by the Department of Human Services.

In 1997, in conjunction with the City of Moreland, the Public Tenants Union and the Brunswick Progress Association, HAAG organised the 'Housing People' photographic exhibition of inner Melbourne slum housing during the Great Depression.

In 1998/99, for International Year of Older Persons, HAAG organised the 'Having Our Say' Forum at the Melbourne Town Hall, and released a report about the housing concerns of older tenants.

In 2001 HAAG secured funding for a full time position from the Office of Housing to provide a public tenants advice service under the Public Housing Advisory Program (PHAP). HAAG also held a Health, Aged Care and Housing Forum to help workers in these fields to better integrate their services.

In 2002 HAAG organised another successful statewide forum called Having Our Say 2002 which is part of a strategy to develop a Rural and Regional Older Tenants Network.

In 2003 100 tenants attended our AGM to endorse HAAG's Older Tenants Housing Charter and accept a report called Older Australian's Experience Living in Insecure Tenancies. HAAG also produced a report called 'Older Tenants Experience Living in Insecure Tenancies' that documented the wider impacts of the threat of homelessness and relocation on older people.

In 2004, in conjunction with the Victorian Public Tenants Association, HAAG held a forum called Back to the Future at ACMI, Federation Square. Attended by 200 people, talks and films depicted the fear that affordable housing is heading back to the days before the Housing Commission where older people had to rely on private landlords for their housing.

In 2005, HAAG held two significant forums: A Housing is a Health Issue regional forum in Benalla, and a Caravan and Residential Park Residents state wide Forum, with a report launch by the Minister for Consumer Affairs in 2006.

In 2007 HAAG presented a major submission to Consumer Affairs' Residential Accommodation Strategy that aims, amongst other plans, to provide improved security of tenure for older people living in residential parks.

In 2008 HAAG held two major forums: Ageing In Place? on the struggles faced by older people in the private rental market, held at the Melbourne Town Hall; and Caravan Parks or Villages? on the changing landscape of caravan and residential parks held at ACMI in Federation Square, Melbourne.

In 2009 HAAG conducted a major state wide consultation with older people living in caravan and residential parks that was compiled into a report to advise the State Government on the need for law reform to support this form of accommodation as an emerging form of retirement housing. This culminated in the passing of the new Part 4a of the Residential Tenancies Act in 2010 that specifically addressed the needs of this group.

In 2010 HAAG introduced two major enhancements to our services: 1. HAAG restructured its housing and homelessness services to better address the increasing vulnerability of many of the 40,000 older Victorians living in the insecure private rental market. The Older Persons Housing Options Information and Referral Service provides a vital service access point between vulnerable older renters at risk of homelessness, the community links where they may present with their problem, and housing services that provide appropriate responses tailored to their needs. 2. HAAG obtained additional funding from Consumer Affairs to establish a Retirement Housing Information and Support Service that assists vulnerable older people living in low income retirement housing.

Overall, HAAG provides housing services, holds regular general meetings, an annual statewide forum, visits older people in country regions of Victoria, organises exhibitions, conducts research, runs campaigns, forms working groups on particular issues and lobbies the State and Commonwealth Government on critical housing issues for older people. For more information please contact us on 96547389 or 1800637389 (free for country callers).

# *What is HAAG?*

Housing for the Aged Action Group offers free, confidential and quality advice to older people who need information and support about accommodation issues or who may have a housing problem.

*There are 4 main services offered:*

- **Housing Options**
- **Private Renters Assistance**
- **Outreach Care & Housing**
- **Retirement Housing Advice and Support**



## **Housing Options**

We provide information on housing options for older people who need to find better, more affordable and secure accommodation. We have a register of housing providers and information on how to access these options such as Independent Living Units, Retirement Villages, Public Housing, Residential Parks, Movable Units.

## **Private Renters Assistance**

If you rent from a private landlord or real estate agent and are having difficulties such as struggling with your rent, your housing is in poor conditions and needs repair, or you have received a legal notice, then we are here to help.

## **Outreach Care & Housing Service**

This service helps people maintain their independence, linking them to relevant care services, community groups and health services, as well as assisting them to access appropriate housing options where possible.

## **Retirement Housing Advice and Support**

Specialist assistance is available to older people living in retirement villages, rental villages, residential parks and permanent accommodation in caravan parks. We can help you understand the laws that cover your accommodation, help negotiate a problem, or assist you to apply to Consumer Affairs or the tribunal (VCAT).

*HAAG receives funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing.*

Housing for the Aged Action Group's philosophy is that older people should have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. We also advocate that, based on their wealth of life experiences, older tenants have a right to be involved in the development of ideas, plans and decisions about their housing. To this aim we are a member based group.

Our Management Committee and general members consist of older people who are involved in housing and housing related areas. We work as a group towards fair policies and laws which will provide long term, secure, and affordable housing tenure.

*Interested tenants and people working in the areas of older persons' housing issues are encouraged to join Housing for the Aged Action Group.*

Members receive our quarterly newsletter and can attend our housing forums on the issues affecting older tenants and residents. Members can also be nominated for the Management Committee. Throughout the year HAAG members are invited to participate in our many other activities and events.

To join our organisation please see membership and working group forms within this newsletter.

Image above from The Melbourne Times, April 26 2006. Cartoon by Matt Golding

## Better Help for Older People Needed

For 16 years Housing for the Aged Action Group has provided a homelessness outreach service to older people through the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) Program. ACHA provides one-to-one intensive support to older people threatened with losing their accommodation, particularly in the private rental market. Funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, it is primarily viewed by government as an aged care support scheme that ensures older people are well housed to be able to receive the care that they need. For this purpose the focus is on assistance to the frail aged with many clients over 80 years of age.

ACHA has been recognised universally to be the right model of assistance for vulnerable older people because it provides the medium term personalised assistance that suits the needs of a target group that is often unable to act independently or is reluctant to seek help. The ACHA model provides great outcomes because ACHA workers sort out all the nitty-gritty problems that can arise when an older person has rented their accommodation for 20 years and then, for example, receives a 60 day Notice to Vacate because the landlord decides to sell their property. ACHA workers assist their client to sort out their personal belongings, find them stable and affordable long term housing and link them into their new community with all of the necessary supports, including aged care, which they require.

Sounds great doesn't it? The only problem though is the ACHA Program is very poorly funded, and is not integrated with other homelessness and aged care programs. Funding, at \$4.6 million nationally, appears tokenistic and has not grown since it began as a pilot program in 1995. With some reasonable government support it could be doing so much more. Geographically, ACHA services are only able to cover small parts of each state, there are no brokerage funds to help older people with removalist costs and other moving expenses, and ACHA services operate as unintegrated stand-alone agencies doing the best they can on shoe-string budgets.

However, HAAG has a vision for ACHA that could transform it from a piecemeal approach to become the national model of homelessness prevention for older people. HAAG has recently established a pilot project that aims to provide a significant contribution to the overall homelessness service response to the needs of older people who are at risk, or who are being threatened with, homelessness. This has been developed in response to unprecedented demand from older private rental tenants who are at risk of losing their homes. Working towards the eventual development of an Older Persons' Homelessness Prevention and Re-Housing Service, we have transferred some of our scarce resources from our ACHA Outreach Service to establish a Victoria wide ACHA intake, assessment and referral process.

The response from older people since the pilot was established has been staggering. In its first year in 2009-2010 we assisted 2,500 older people with housing enquiries and 727 clients were provided with more intensive support through the ACHA intake process. The service is on track for the 2010-2011 year to reach more than 1000 clients, an increase of 37% in one year. This boost in client numbers has been achieved without the resources required to effectively promote the service and establish the necessary agency networks needed to maximise comprehensive assistance to all vulnerable older renters. While other agencies are also reporting greater demand from vulnerable older people in the private rental market, HAAG is trying to highlight the importance of a specialist systematic response to ensure that the most effective services are available.

Jeff Fiedler  
Tenancy Advice/Policy Worker

## **Jean's story:**

The experience of a current HAAG client illustrates the factors that older people are facing in the private rental market, the barriers to seeking help and the reasons why we desperately need an effective response to this issue from state and commonwealth governments.

*Some time ago I made an appointment to meet Jean, a new HAAG client, at her home. Over the phone she said she had some minor maintenance problems that she wanted some help with. When I arrived at her place and knocked on the door there was no answer. I could see a light on inside and kept knocking but I soon realised that Jean had changed her mind about seeking help at this time, so I left my business card and HAAG brochure with the hope that Jean might decide to call our service again.*

*Six months later Jean summoned up the courage once again to make contact about her maintenance problems say she had some minor maintenance problems. This time she wanted to know what action we would take if we were able to help her and what reaction she might expect from the landlord. It transpired that her 'minor' problems included a heater that had not worked for five years, water leaking down her walls when it rained and a stove that had been broken for six months (the landlord had told her not to complain as she could still use her microwave oven for cooking). On top of this Jean is paying \$1350 a month in rent, or about 80% of her income, and yet she has never missed a rent payment.*

*I mentioned that our standard procedure was to serve a legal notice on the landlord to demand that the repairs be done. Further, if the work was not attended to, we would involve Consumer Affairs Victoria and assist with an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) if negotiations were not successful. Jean said she didn't want to 'rock the boat' and she asked me two questions: If I ask for repairs to be done can the landlord evict me and, if they do the repairs is there anything to stop them putting up the rent? Unfortunately I could not offer her any comfort as a landlord can serve a 60 day notice to vacate on a tenant on any number of grounds that can only be challenged after a tenant moves out, such as if a landlord says they want to move into the property. Secondly, landlords often respond to residents who stand up for their rights by increasing the rent, or inform the tenant that the rent will have to go up to pay for repairs. This has become a major method of evicting older people as landlords are aware that escalating rents in recent years have priced out aged pensioners and that a steep rent increase is as good as an eviction notice.*

*To create the environment that would encourage Jean to take action, a number of obstacles had to be removed so that she would have the courage to proceed further. Jean wanted a guarantee that if she acted to get repairs done that we would be able to assist her to find alternative housing in case she was given an eviction order. Without being able to give a cast-iron guarantee I referred Jean to our Housing Options Intake Service where she was offered a range of housing alternatives that, if successful, could offer her not just a better designed place to live, but even better, a home where her rent would be significantly less and she would have security of tenure for the rest of her life.*

*Our services are now in the process of assisting Jean to apply for a number of housing options such as early entry to public housing, social housing, not-for-profit independent living units and other specialist housing types such as Abbeyfield Housing and movable units.*

*Our staff are actively advocating for Jean and lobbying for a quick outcome based on her urgent need.*

## *Private Rental Nightmares*



## **Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) program in HAAG.**

The *Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program* is funded by the Commonwealth government's Dept of Ageing. The program commenced in 1994 and its function is to be a flexible, assertive outreach program for older low income private renters.

The ACHA program consists of the *Intake, Referrals and Housing Options program* and the *ACHA Outreach program*. The aim of ACHA is to provide assistance to low income older private renters. This assistance varies from giving housing information, housing options, referring people into appropriate housing and care supports in their local community, to supporting them through the maze of requirements and application forms needed to get them on the Office of Housing (O.O.H.) waiting lists.

Outreach worker April Bragg visits people in their homes, assists with their application to O.O.H.; assists in finding a secure, low income Elder person's O.O.H. modified unit; an Independent Living Unit; a social housing unit or a movable granny flat which can be put in a relative's back yard.

Once an offer of an appropriate potential home is made April then co-ordinates the packing up, cleaning out the unit, organising the removalists (some times funding the removal totally), and settling them into their new home. During this time, if required, April links them into local Home and Community Care services, or organises an Aged Care Assessment which enables them to avail of respite or a Community Aged Care Package and a case manager. These supports assist an older frail person to remain living independently in the local community and prevents early admission into a hostel or nursing home.

Being on the O.O.H. list means a greater increase in housing options of older persons housing. Many Independent Living Units (ILU) – rental only not for profit retirement villages – require a person to be on this public housing waitlist. Also, some social housing providers require the O.O.H. application number before they will place an applicant on their waitlist. Many ILU and social housing organisations have different types of application forms which can be very difficult for older people to deal with. Many applicants are confronted with perhaps 3 to 4 different types of application forms which can be very confusing.

Ena Ahern is the *ACHA Intake, Referral and Housing Options* worker. Ena's role is to take incoming calls and assess how best to assist the caller. This entails gathering as much information as possible about the caller's social, financial, health and current supports information. Based on this data Ena then either assists with application forms, if the caller is mobile and can attend at the HAAG office. If not mobile and living in HAAG's ACHA catchment area the information is given to April to take over and assist. If outside the HAAG ACHA catchment area then a referral is sent to the local ACHA program in the area the person lives in. If the private renter is experiencing difficulties with the real estate agent, or having difficulties getting repairs to their appliances then a referral is given to the CAV (Consumer Affairs Victoria) funded Tenancy Advice worker Jeff Fiedler who investigates and assists with negotiations with the estate agent and the owner. If necessary he lodges applications to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) on behalf of the tenant.

## **ACHA program update**

Both the *ACHA Intake, Referral and Housing Options Program* and the *ACHA Outreach Program* have had another very busy year.

There have been almost 900 calls to our program for issues as far reaching as planning for retirement – ‘what are my best options in housing as I get older and am considering downsizing?’ to imminent loss of their rental property home. We have also had Elder abuse cases where family members are financially, emotionally and psychologically abusing their parent. Hospital social workers also call for assistance on behalf of hospital inpatients that are at risk of losing their private rental home. These hospital social workers are working in general hospital departments such as Emergency, Medical Units and Surgical units. HAAG has also had a call this year from a Maternity hospital on behalf of a new mother who had recently become homeless at the time of delivery of her baby. The aged psychiatric assessment social worker also contacted HAAG as she attempted to support her client’s rental housing which they were at risk of losing due to their illness. Jeff Fiedler assisted with VCAT hearings on behalf of these patients. Also there have been calls from Peter Mac hospital on behalf of cancer patients also at risk of losing their private rental homes whilst undergoing radical chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

During this busy time HAAG also had two young social work students from Latrobe University on placement for almost 3 months. Isabelle Watson was a final year Bachelor of Social Work student on her last placement before graduating. We wish to thank Isabelle for her hard work in assisting with the CAV community development research, for her support in the *ACHA Intake* role and also her assistance with the *ACHA Outreach program*. Isabelle also assisted with some of the monthly meetings.

Isabelle has now graduated and is working with SCOPE – an organisation that supports people living with Cerebral Palsy. We wish Isabelle all the best in her career as a Social worker.

Our other social work student from Latrobe University was Carmel Willison. Carmel is a Masters Entry level into the social work course as she previously has graduated with a BA degree. Carmel was on her first social work student placement and worked hard to understand what HAAG did, what community development was and how non-government organisations functioned. At all times Carmel was enthusiastic and anxious to learn. She was ably assisted by many of HAAG’s members during her time with us. As an organisation we miss their cheery manner and willingness to assist at all times.

To comply with their education needs from University Ena, also a social worker, was required to supervise and guide Isabelle and Carmel daily and give structured supervision once a week of 1.5 hours. Their academic theory and frameworks had to be put into practice on a daily basis so that they seamlessly absorbed practical experience and integrated this learning with their education and placement requirements. Both were successful on their placement with HAAG and the university wishes to continue this level of support for other social work students by having HAAG extend placement support during the academic year.

Ena Ahern - ACHA Intake, Referral and Housing Options worker

April Bragg - Outreach Worker



## *Housing Information Centre - Opening Day!*

*Below: Jeff, Molly, Dalene*



## *HAAG Social Work Students*

*Isabelle and Carmel*

## The Art of Facilitating Happiness

As human beings, no matter our background, beliefs or idiosyncrasies, we all strive to be happy in life.

The happiness we seek in our 30's might appear to be different to the happiness we seek in our 80's but if we looked deeper we would see it was basically the same at the core.

I attended a workshop on 10 June 2011 to hear Dr Hans Becker speak about a model of housing for older people that has at the centre of its philosophy the facilitation of happiness, and what Becker calls the 'Yes culture' to achieve this.

Becker is the chairman and CEO of Humanitas Foundation in The Netherlands.

The model of housing he has created is called 'Apartments for Life', which says it all.

The concept is based on supporting people to age in place, in their community in adaptable, well designed and affordable housing.

Becker came up with the idea after working as the managing director in the Humanitas nursing homes, which were modelled on the medical approach to aged care with staff in white coats and clinical surrounds. Families did not want to visit and older residents did not want to live there. Becker questioned what their core business was and why they did what they did, and the answer he came up with was they wanted to make life better for older people. With this in mind he decided their core business would become human happiness.

Becker then set about trying to find out what happiness is and concluded it looked different for everyone.

The core philosophy of 'Apartments for Life' comprises 4 main factors:

- Autonomy- people want to be the boss of their own life.
- Work- people want to contribute and be involved.
- Family- people want to belong.
- Yes Culture- anything should be possible.

For Hans Becker "happiness is cheap", "no is unacceptable" and people must be pushed to live "to the threshold of pain" as his father used to tell him.

Becker also believes involving the community, by creating spaces for engagement (restaurants, shops, gardens), removes the institutionalised feeling often connected to aged care homes.

Becker believes to make it work you have to take risks, be creative, empathetic and have a strong, broad vision. He believes in the model so passionately he has been living in one of his own apartment complexes for 10 years.

Becker encourages people to change their mind set and think about possibilities differently. He supports a "do society" where people make things happen rather than waiting for them to happen.

Becker's motto is "too much care is worse than too little" and you must "use it or lose it".

The workshop inspired me to think differently, in my work and my life. The hope is that this concept inspires more people, in the older person's housing sector, to push the boundaries, think outside the square and be innovative in their approach.

After all the path to happiness exists for all of us and, as Hans said the goal is "to make life good again" and there is no better time to start than now!

Shanny Gordon  
Retirement Housing Information Worker



## **HAAG General Member meeting**

Housing for the Aged Action Group will be holding a **GENERAL MEETING**

**When: Thursday 11 August 2011  
1pm - 3pm**  
**Where: Ross House**

All of our members are invited.

We will present the overall themes of the recent forum "*Ageing on the Edge – Older Australians at risk of Homelessness*" along with screening our specially commissioned film featuring several of the clients we have assisted into housing.

Put a mark in your diary, we will send a reminder notice to you at the end of July and ask you to RSVP at that time.

The meeting will commence at 1.00pm and conclude at 3.00pm.

We will provide a light afternoon tea for you to enjoy.

***We look forward to seeing you on this special member's day.***

**NEXT NEWSLETTER**

# ***Older Tenants' Voice***

with Parks and Villages residents' news!

Distribution date:

Monday September 26th

We need your stories, news and  
information!

If there is something of interest to you, or you have had an experience in your retirement housing that you feel others will benefit from hearing about, we would love your contribution!

Articles due: Monday September 12th

Send to: 2nd floor, Ross House,  
247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000

Or email: [shanny.gordon@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:shanny.gordon@oldertenants.org.au)

***HAVE YOUR SAY!***

# ILU RESIDENT NEWS

## The voice of the Independent Living Units working group

In April 2011 HAAG arranged with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) for members of our group to meet with a senior policy advisor and other staff who work in the area of retirement villages and residential tenancies, to hear what we had to say about this area of retirement living. We each chose a topic to speak about and present to CAV.

The Staff of CAV were highly attentive and interested in what we had to say and were at times shocked and bemused by some of our stories. Topics ranged from difficulties when villages change ownership and the impact on residents, siphoning of village money to other programs and not being put back into the village, poor condition of units, long waits for repairs, and last but not least, bullying of elderly people who ask for basic repairs or stand up for themselves and others in their village. This has been known to cause isolation, with residents being labelled as troublemakers.

The demand for more money for maintenance and deferred management fees is a concern for residents who paid an ingoing fee.

Where retirement village units are rented those residents are made to feel they have less power or value than those who have paid an ingoing fee.

In these villages, as the rent is small, residents feel they should be grateful and there is a patronising and paternalistic attitude.

We were happy to be listened to, at CAV, and we hope we have made a difference although I have no doubt it will take time.

Another point raised at our meeting was about “duty of care” by owners of villages. The 2 most vulnerable groups in our society are the young and the elderly, and there are lots of businesses out there willing to take advantage of the latter.

It is well known that older people look after properties well, pay their bills and are generally good to have around as they live quietly.

The owners of any type of village need to be aware they have some frail residents and they have an obligation, as owners, to “keep an eye out”. It is not good enough to say “someone else will do it, it is independent living” – we all have an obligation to our fellow human beings.

Owners also have a “duty of care” to keep their villages habitable and in decent order. A clean home in proper condition which is safe is all we ask for.

The external environment must be safe also – no uneven paths for tripping, external lighting at night and safe car parking.

Concerns also extend to where responsibility lies with gutters, cleaning of windows and gardens, if the resident is too elderly and who checks to see if a resident is ok???

A “duty of care” for the residents of villages is good business and one is always reminded that “what goes around comes around”.

Watch out owners when the baby boomers hit your villages.

Sally Stabback

Working group member

## **Parks and villages residents' news**

### **ATTENTION CARAVAN AND RESIDENTIAL PARK/VILLAGE HAAG MEMBERS**

During July and August Shanny and Jeff will be conducting a number of meetings across Victoria to inform caravan and residential park/village residents (with a focus on our members) about the upcoming changes to the Residential Tenancies Act, the introduction of Part 4A, that will provide improved rights for residents.

This is the Part 4A information roll out to prepare residents for the proclamation date of the changes, being September 1st 2011. These sessions will be an opportunity for residents to ask questions, and gain a better understanding, about how the changes will affect them.

If you live in a caravan park or residential park/village and you would like to confirm that we are headed your way please call HAAG on 9654 7389 or 1800 637389 (free call for country residents)

### **THE CARAVAN AND RESIDENTIAL PARKS/VILLAGES WORKING GROUP IS CHANGING!**

*The group is currently undergoing some changes to their structure and frequency of meetings.*

*This message is to inform you that you may find your monthly mail out of working group information ceases for a short time, as the group tests out some new strategies relating to accessing and engaging with parks and villages residents.*

*If you have any questions please get in touch with us!*



**Housing for the Aged Action Group**

ABN: 80 348 538 001 Reg: A0017107L  
Postal address: 2nd Floor, Ross House  
247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000  
Phone: 9654 7389 Fax: 9654 3407  
Country callers: 1800 637389  
Email: [haag@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:haag@oldertenants.org.au)  
Website: [www.oldertenants.org.au](http://www.oldertenants.org.au)

**Application for MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL 2011 – 2012**

(Please print name)... I.....

REPRESENTING SELF or ORGANISATION.....

ADDRESS.....

SUBURB.....POSTCODE.....

PHONE CONTACT.....

EMAIL ADDRESS.....

I wish to become / continue as a member of Housing for the Aged Action Group in Victoria. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules and objectives of Housing for the Aged Action Group Inc.

Signature of Applicant .....Date.....

- Pensioners - no charge
- Other individual members - \$5.00
- Organisations in receipt of less than \$25,000 - \$25.00 membership fee
- Organisations in receipt of more than \$25,000 - \$50.00 membership fee
- I wish to receive a quarterly newsletter *Older Tenants Voice*
- I would like to make a donation** \$5.00 \$10.00 OTHER (show amount) \$.....

Payment is by: Cheque  Money Order  Credit Card  (tick one)

Total amount being paid \$.....

Visa / Mastercard No: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholders Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible**

Memberships are due from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. We value the support of our members. Please complete the application form to become a member. Enclose fee if applicable and post to us at: Housing for the Aged Action Group, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000. *Thank you.*



**Housing for the Aged Action Group**  
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Phone: 9654 7389 Fax: 9654 3407  
Country callers: 1800 637389  
Email: [haag@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:haag@oldertenants.org.au)  
Website: [www.oldertenants.org.au](http://www.oldertenants.org.au)

## Expression of interest

I am interested in joining a working group on:

- Residential Villages and Parks  
( CARPRA - Caravan and Residential Parks Residents Association)**  
This working group is made up of caravan park, residential park and residential village residents from across Victoria.  
The group focuses on increasing resident knowledge and understanding of the issues in this sector and seeks to lobby for more community and government action, as well as law reform.
- Independent Living Units (ILU's)**  
This working group aims to identify the main issues affecting residents in not-for-profit retirement villages and works towards a source of action to improve the conditions of this much neglected housing sector.  
The idea is to inform residents about their rights and increase understanding about this housing type. It is a fairly new group and we are looking for more ILU residents to become involved and have their say.

(Please print name).....

ADDRESS.....

SUBURB.....POSTCODE.....

PHONE CONTACT.....

EMAIL ADDRESS.....

Signature of Applicant .....Date.....

**We would also encourage you to take out membership to Housing for the Aged Action Group Inc and further support our mission to work towards the alleviation of housing related poverty for older Australians. Membership to HAAG is of no charge for Pensioners. Please complete the membership form overleaf and return to us.**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### **Elder Abuse – coming out from under the carpet!**

The Eastern Community Legal Centre, in partnership with Inner East Primary Care Partnership and Seniors Rights Victoria, is supporting an Elder Abuse Project aimed at raising awareness about elder abuse in the eastern region.

The project co-ordinator, Kaz Mackay, has re-established an Eastern Elder Abuse Network (for professionals who work with older disadvantaged people) and is delivering a broad range of information sessions and presentations for professionals and the general public.

The information sessions are free and can be tailored to suit existing seniors groups or to fit in with professional team days.

**For further information contact Kaz Mackay on 9285 4822 or email [kazm@eclc.org.au](mailto:kazm@eclc.org.au)**

When **Council on the Ageing Victoria (COTA)** set out to expand its information service from a small office in the Block Arcade to an easily accessible shopfront, **Kris Spark** became **Seniors Information Victoria's manager**. With support from the Victorian government, SIV has been a thriving resource for older Victorians - celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday this year!

“Good information makes for good decisions,” says Kris. SIV provides free, independent information, with no topic left uncovered - from accommodation options and concession entitlements to lifelong learning, health/wellbeing, transport, and more.

“We hear from older people in housing stress and always let them know about the assistance provided by HAAG.”

The challenge can often be to find a starting point for gathering information. Kris explains: “SIV can be the first point of contact, or for clarifying information from other sources.”

“*It's a real person!*” is a frequent comment from callers. People appreciate “not having to *press buttons*.”

**Drop in at 247 Flinders Lane to speak to an information officer, browse the range of printed material, or pick up the current seniors' newspapers. IT'S ALL FREE! Seniors Information Victoria, available throughout the State for the cost of a local call on 1300 135 090**

*This part of the newsletter provides a chance for other hard working individuals to share what their roles are in relation to older people and housing, as well to promote the good work they do.*

HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

2nd Floor, 247-251 Flinders Lane,  
Melbourne 3000.

Ph: 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.)

1800 637 389 (country)

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HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP

## WHAT IS HAAG?

**Housing for the Aged Action Group offers  
Free and Confidential Advice to older people renting their home.**

There are four main aspects to our service:

- *Housing options*
- *Private renters assistance and tenancy advice*
- *Outreach care and housing*
- *Retirement housing advice and support*



HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

Interested tenants and residents are encouraged to join  
Housing for the Aged Action Group  
**Pensioners No Charge**

So ring us on (03) 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.) or 1800 637 389 (country callers)  
Address: 2nd Floor Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne. 3000.