



# older tenants voice

Housing for the Aged Action Groups Quarterly Newsletter Autumn 2026



**HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP**

**FIGHTING FOR HOUSING JUSTICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1983**



## CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME



Pam and Lyn at the HAAG's volunteer end of year party in December 2025.

Dear members and supporters,

It has been great to see so many of you out at events over the past months, which we've shared some pictures from in the following pages.

Our front cover for this edition shows two HAAG members Mohammed and Salwa at our February General Meeting, sharing the message "Nobody chooses homelessness - but together we can choose to end it".

Never a truer message has been said. Unfortunately though, it's a message that many in our society choose not to understand. Instead of seeing homelessness as a result of unaffordable housing, they see people who have just made 'bad choices'. And instead of seeing the very real solutions to homelessness - public housing, and services to help people access it, they instead accept the problem as intractable, just an unavoidable part of life.

HAAG's job is to show people and politicians that we could, should and must do better.

We can end homelessness! People's lives improve immeasurably when they have access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

We have the solutions, we just need politicians to make them a reality, and that's where you come in! HAAG is looking for a group of members to participate in our Housing Champions program. The Housing Champion program will provide training to champion solutions to older people's homelessness ahead of Victoria's state election in November.

With a group of champions like you, we believe we can make a real difference in Victorian's lives. And if the program is successful, we hope to expand it to other states and territories too, so all members can participate.

So I strongly recommend to get involved with our Housing Champions program, with a group of other lovely legends like yourselves.

Read more on page 5, and I can't wait to see you championing the cause of housing soon!  
Warm regards, Pam Young, Chairperson.

## WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

Nese Duran is recovering from an injury and Nyunkia Tauss is filling in for her. Wishing Nese a speedy recovery!

Janet McIntyre joins our care finder team in the South East. She brings 13 years experience working at Wintringham in a similar role, and has a deep understanding of the needs of older people who have experienced disadvantage and barriers to accessing aged care and housing.

Kim Henderson also joins our care finder team in the South East. She was previously a care finder working in the Frankston and Peninsula region, providing advocacy and outreach to older people and assisting them to navigate the complexities of the aged care system.



Kim loves her time on weekends down at the farm with her beloved steers.

# SUMMER EVENTS



Members Lyn and Mr Mouse gathered at our February Pride themed General Meeting, led by members of our LGBTQIA+ working group.



Garry White presented the activities of the LGBTQIA+ group



Kris, Shane and Vicki sharing the message "Nobody chooses homelessness - but together we can choose to end it" as part of Council to Homeless Persons campaign on World Social Justice Day



We got the chance to visit our sister organisations in Queensland. The Housing Older Women's movement are in the construction phase of their first cooperative housing, while Footprints is delivering their service for older women with community outreach across the state.



Garry, Veda and Shane also competed in Richmond Union Bowlers Club Pride Cup with a hundred rainbow-clad bowlers competing across 12 rinks, generously raising money for HAAG's LGBTQIA+ Reference Group.



Our Multicultural & Multifaith working group also led a celebration of Cultural Diversity Week, sharing a lunchtime feast with members and staff.



# House Chats

**WHEN:** Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April  
**WHERE:** HAAG's office, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
**TIME:** 11AM-12PM  
**RSVP:** haag@oldertenants.org.au or 9654 7389



Please join us for a cuppa and a chat  
 Morning tea for HAAG members  
 held on the second Monday of each month

# DRAG BINGO FOR HOUSING JUSTICE!

Sharing stories of housing struggle, survival & connection across generations, led by LGBTQIA+ older people

**NEW DATE!**

6PM TO 8PM

THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup>

MAY 2026

EVIE'S DISCO DINER

230/232 GERTRUDE ST, FITZROY VIC 3065

Free Entry  
 Bookings Essential!  
[oldertenants.org.au/events](http://oldertenants.org.au/events)



## May General Meeting marking volunteer week 2026

Thursday 21st May

11am - 12:30pm

in person at 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

online at [oldertenants.org.au/maygm](http://oldertenants.org.au/maygm)

RSVP on (03) 9654 7389 | [oldertenants.org.au/RSVP](http://oldertenants.org.au/RSVP)

Victoria will go to the polls to elect a new parliament on **November the 28th this year.**

With Melbourne's dedicated older person's high rises set to be replaced with private, community and "affordable" housing", the election campaign will be a critical moment to pressure politicians to take real action and support older people's housing.

## Housing Champions

HAAG's new Housing Champion program is a great way to get involved and channel your passion for improving housing for older people in Victoria into effective political action.



Do you have a personal story about housing insecurity or homelessness – either your own or of someone you know – that you're willing to share?

Are you keen to talk to your community, politicians, election candidates (and even the media) about why housing for older people is important?

HAAG's Housing Champion training program might be for you!

The Housing Champion program will train older people to speak about housing as part of our advocacy for the Victorian Election in November this year.

HAAG aims to train a diverse range of Housing Champions - different genders, cultural backgrounds, ages, and across different electorates across Victoria - so we may not be able to include everyone who is interested in this first program.

### About the program:

The Housing Champion program will train older people to speak about older people's housing as part of HAAG's advocacy in the lead up to the Victorian Election in November this year.

- 4 - 5 sessions of approximately 3 hours
- Commencing June 2026
- In person at Ross House, Melbourne, or online via zoom.

### What we ask of you:

- A commitment to meeting with politicians, candidates and/or speaking to community groups in Victoria
- Willingness to share personal stories
- Attending training sessions
- Agree to support relevant HAAG policies and positions.

### What we'll provide

- Information and training about the housing and homelessness issues facing older people; effective advocacy; how to tell your story; speaking to the media (if you want to!); and more.
- Ongoing support as you meet with politicians and engage with the community
- Payment for training sessions

### I'm keen - what's next?

Complete the expression of interest form at [oldertenants.org.au/housing-champions](https://oldertenants.org.au/housing-champions) or talk to Jane at [jane.stanley@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:jane.stanley@oldertenants.org.au)

## Public housing demolition

In January, the Victorian Government announced the redevelopment of another seven public housing towers across inner Melbourne, all of which are Older Person's High Rises and home to residents who are over 55 years old. Relocation of residents will begin in July this year. The estates affected are in Kensington, North Melbourne, Prahran, St Kilda and South Melbourne. There are 13 older persons high rises in total, with this announcement affecting over half of them.

Many residents have lived in these sites for decades, with some in their 80's and 90's, and many with chronic health and age-related conditions. The impact of relocations on people in this age group cannot be underestimated. The announcement was a big shock for people, who were under the impression that the older person's high rise redevelopment would be some years down the track.

HAAG put out a [statement](#) outlining our concerns and spoke to the [ABC](#), [The Age](#) and [The Guardian](#). We called on the Victorian Government to:

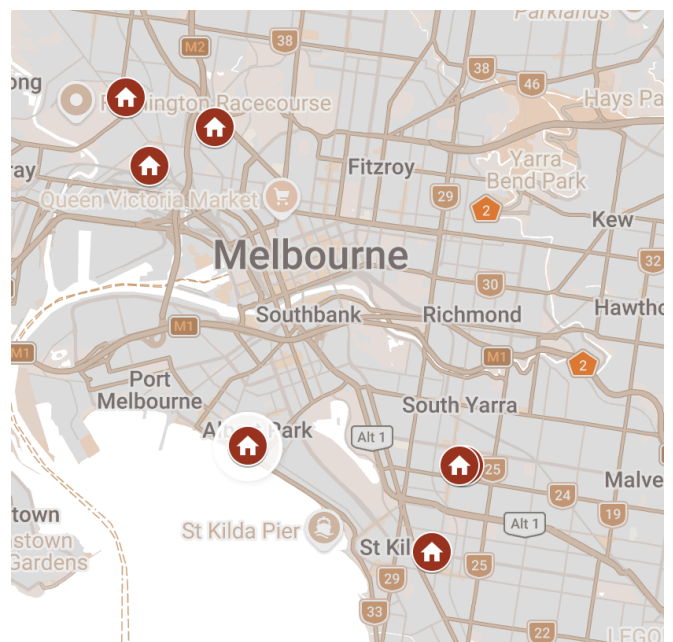
- Invest in and grow public housing stock. There should be no reduction of public housing on the renewal sites as a result of the redevelopment.
- Retain and grow dedicated older persons' public and community housing, recognising the specific needs of older people.
- Fund independent and specialist relocation support to older residents, to assist them to understand their rights, and access support services as required.
- Ensure the rights of residents are retained in any new tenancy, including rent setting,

home modifications, bills, repairs and maintenance, and complaints.

- Prioritise maintaining older people's connections to family, community and essential health and care services.

Soon after, HAAG and a number of other organisations were invited to a roundtable with the Minister for Housing, Harriet Shing and Homes Victoria. At that meeting, we presented a [joint statement](#), which showed strong support for retaining 55+ dedicated housing and supporting older residents.

Since January, we have been meeting regularly with Homes Victoria, the Minister's office and other groups to continue to strongly advocate for public housing, older people's dedicated housing and support for residents. We have attended a number of onsite meetings at the towers, both in our capacity as an advocacy group and as a care finder for those in the north western region. Our Older Renters Working Group has a number of members who are in living in the towers, and we welcome more to join.



Map shows the 7 older persons high rises (two in Prahran) that are planned to being emptied this year to make way for demolition. View the full map of planned demolitions at [oldertenants.org.au/44-tower-map](http://oldertenants.org.au/44-tower-map)

## Ending handouts for house-hoarders

Housing is getting more expensive every year, meaning more and more people who don't own a home can't afford rent, while people who own multiple homes make bigger profits.

Negative gearing and the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) discount - tax concessions for wealthy housing investors - are multiplying this inequality. People who own multiple homes are rewarded while people who don't own any home are locked out of ever owning one.

HAAG is supporting calls to scrap the tax handouts. You can join the movement by [sending a message to Federal politicians here](#).

We made [a submission to the Inquiry into Capital Gains Tax Discount](#) recommending to phase out the handouts and reinvest the savings from these reforms into public and community housing.

The Inquiry delivered their [final report](#) on 17 March 2026. There are a number of references to HAAG submission.

## Changes to the Retirement Villages Act

Do you live in a Retirement Village? HAAG's Retirement Accommodation Action Group (RAAG) wants to hear from you!

Changes to the Retirement Villages Act will come into effect on 1 May and we're keen to see how Retirement Villages implement these changes. The changes, to be discussed at the upcoming HAAG General Meeting on Thursday 21 May, include

- standard contracts
- greater respect for residents' rights to

remain in a village (ie, more barriers on evictions)

- strengthened dispute resolution in villages
- a new conciliation and complaints scheme,
- expanded VCAT powers to hear disputes about significant financial matters and
- mandatory Retirement Villages Code of Practice

If you live in a retirement village, we'd love you to join RAAG. RAAG members provide input to the policy and advocacy work of our Tenancy and Retirement Team and assist one another to work through issues in their own retirement accommodation.

RAAG meets on the fourth Thursday of every month 2pm via Zoom as well as in person , and members receive and attendance fee.

For more info call (03) 9654 7389 (line 2) or email [retirement@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:retirement@oldertenants.org.au)

## Energy bills not what they should be?

Are you a resident of a Residential Park or Retirement Village and having issues with inappropriate energy billing?

RAAG is hearing about unit owners in residential parks being charged a fortune for meter reading fees and other energy-related costs that seem excessive. RAAG has heard about residents of residential parks installing solar panels then being unable to reap the economic benefits due to a lack of control over billing.

If you have similar stories, we'd love to hear from you. Phone (03) 9654 7389 (line 2) or email [retirement@oldertenants.org.a](mailto:retirement@oldertenants.org.a)

## Renewable and Affordable Energy in Apartments

HAAG hears from lots of older Victorians experiencing homelessness or housing stress, living in private rental apartments, public and community housing apartments, residential parks and retirement villages and caravan parks. More and more older renters are telling us they are struggling with energy costs. Those in most need of lower cost electricity are least able to obtain it.

Affordable, renewable energy is not a privilege of home ownership. It is essential infrastructure for health, dignity, and the right to age safely in place.

Recently HAAG made a submission and gave evidence at a Parliamentary Inquiry into Renewable and Affordable Energy for Apartments. We urged the Inquiry to ensure that older people - particularly renters - are placed at the centre of Victoria's energy future.

Embedded networks are a significant concern for older people living in community housing and retirement housing, preventing them from being able to access the energy market and choose the lowest cost provider.

*‘ Lots of residents in the village don't believe the electricity charge is equal to the VDO [Victorian Default Offer]. There's no way of knowing if the rate is at the VDO level ’*

*Retirement Accommodation Action Group (RAAG) member.*

Older people also report significant difficulty obtaining the energy concessions they are entitled to in settings with embedded networks. They have to pay the full amount upfront, then undertake a convoluted process of an annual concession application. Older residents, particularly those with limited digital access or English as a second language, are disproportionately affected by complex contracts and opaque billing practices, despite being one of the groups most in need of affordable energy.

*‘ I live in one of the older person's high rises that is being demolished, and they are suggesting we move into [nearby community housing]. But with it comes the news that it has embedded electricity and they told us that our bills will be going up significantly...Already half the people here don't use air conditioning in summer because of the cost ’*

*Older Renters Working Group member*

Older private renters have almost no control over energy efficiency or renewable energy access. Even when government incentives exist, renters require landlord consent, which can be refused or ignored. This power imbalance effectively excludes older renters from Victoria's renewable energy transition.

To read our submission, go to [oldertenants.org.au/energy-in-apartments](https://oldertenants.org.au/energy-in-apartments)



Care finder team leader Sarah Harris gave a detailed speech about the positives and pitfalls of the shift to the new "Support at Home" program at the February General Meeting

## The shift to the Support at Home Program

### What's changing in the Aged Care system?

Major reforms to Australia aged care system are taking place. HAAG's care finder service continues to support people to access care in their home, but the process of applying for care, and the care that can be provided is significantly changing.

The Single Assessment System has brought together and replaced what was previously called the Regional Assessment Service (RAS) and Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) with the new Support at Home program

From July 2027 (or later), Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) will merge into the Support at Home program. Until

then, CHSP will remain a separate program for current and new clients with low-level needs.

### What is the new Support at Home program?

The new Support at Home program aims to ensure 'a simpler and more equitable system for older people that helps them to stay at home for longer'. Support at Home will provide upfront supports to maintain independence, such as allied health, assistive technology, and home modifications.

While HAAG supports this vision, we hold grave concerns about whether the implementation of the program's ability to meet the needs of older people in precarious housing.

We'd like to see more protections for vulnerable older renters, further improvements to the assessment process and improved transparency and service delivery, which we've detailed in [this submission](#).

### How do I get Support at Home?

If you or a loved one needs aged care you can apply to My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or online at [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au).

If you need support with the application process you can call our care finder service on 1300 765 178.

*Our Communications Worker, anxious about losing his profession to Artificial Intelligence, writes in about how AI is changing what he sees on HAAG's social media feed.*

### **Hope and hate, is it all feeding the same machine?**

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence we've been seeing more and more fake news stories about homelessness going around on Facebook. Many seem harmless. Homeless Germans are being housed in engineered sleeping pods stacked in abandoned subway stations. French men are sleeping in homeless shelters that look like beautifully designed children's bedrooms. Norwegian rough sleepers are being provided with glow in the dark blankets so that they don't get run over in the night!?



These type of posts are designed to inspire 'hope'. It doesn't matter to the AI's human directors whether these innovative 'solutions' are actually real. It doesn't seem to matter to the

consumers of the hopeful posts that a lot of them are actually quite dark and dystopian – are sleeping tubes for homeless people really what we are hoping for? But we can rest easy with the feeling that *something is being done*.

This comes along with another type of post designed to inspire hate. A young woman is outraged by immigrants coming to take Australian's houses. A young woman is crying surrounded by menacing Muslim men. The Bondi gunmen are portrayed meeting an Indian diplomat. Posts like these inspire the feeling something must be done and

motivate people to support racist hatred. They can be used to fabricate myths that are hard to dispel – even as one story is disproved, thousands more are generated. AI has greatly accelerated Donald Trump's marketing strategy to 'flood the zone with shit' – truth doesn't matter, tell so many lies that there's no time to prove or disprove them, but the ideas stick around like a bad smell.

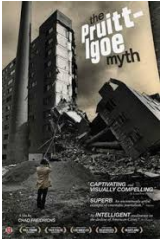
Does it matter whether AI posts are designed to generate hope or hate? When we can no longer tell fact from fiction, it's increasingly easy for people to be manipulated to believe false narratives like blaming immigrants, and to lose focus on calling for real solutions to the housing affordability crisis.

I could provide tips about how to spot AI generated content, and I encourage you to search "[how to spot AI disinformation](#)". But with these systems rapidly improving, finding news sources that can be trusted is the best bet.

I aim to keep this newsletter and everything that HAAG shares as a trustworthy news source for everything related to older people's housing and homelessness. I do sometime use AI generated images, for example the "housing champion" trophy on page 5. That image is illustrating a concept (come and be a housing champion advocating for older people's housing) but it's not pretending to represent reality.

*How are you using AI? Do you think it will impact older people's housing issues in other ways, positive or negative? Write in to the editor at [haag@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:haag@oldertenants.org.au)*

### The Pruitt-Igoe Myth (2011)



It's 1954 in St Louis, Missouri. The city is booming, but downtown is controlled by slumlords, keeping the mostly black urban poor living in intolerable conditions.

City traders want them out of their unsightly homes, so Pruitt-Igoe is constructed, a massive Public Housing estate promising dignity and equality for the city's workers.

But it was set up to fail. No maintenance budget, an economic downturn, suburbanisation, racist paternalism, segregation and stigma meant that the estate quickly deteriorated into horrific conditions.

By 1972, the demolition of the estate was broadcast live on national television, telling a story of the failure of the Public Housing experiment. The United States began its neoliberal turn, and the rest of the world was dragged behind in its dark shadow.

Australian's will recognise much of our story of Public Housing, both in the hope of a post-war egalitarianism as well as its abandonment. Still much of the extreme poverty and racism will shock viewers.

The documentary features older people who grew up as kids on the estate, recounting their sense of community and love for the place, as well as the violence and dereliction.

It briefly covers how the residents organised to save the estate, with a rent-strike withholding rent for maintenance, working together to maintain the buildings for themselves, fighting for and winning the 25% rent-cap that we now take for granted.

Well worth a watch as we take on our own massive demolition of Public Housing in

Victoria, and challenge the myth that Public Housing is the cause of its own failure.

☆☆☆☆ - RE

### Movie Giveaway!

One of the criticisms of our review column is that it can be hard to find the books and movies we cover.



So we're delighted that *Careless*, the movie covered in the previous edition, is now **available to stream on Netflix**. If you have access to an account we can't recommend this doco enough.

And for the first time ever, we are excited to offer a special movie ticket giveaway!



*Calle Malaga* is the story of Maria (Carmen Maura), an older woman defying her daughter's decision to sell the home she lives in. Determined to stay, she does everything she can to keep her home and reclaim the belongings of a lifetime. Along the way, she rediscovers love and desire.

The film is a sun-kissed love letter to Tangier, and to those who age with heart, and we hope it will resonate with members.

Courtesy of Potential Films, we are giving away 1 complimentary double pass and 3 "Buy One Get One Free" passes to see *Calle Malaga* in select cinemas.

To enter the draw go to [oldertenants.org.au/filmgiveaway](http://oldertenants.org.au/filmgiveaway) or call HAAG on (03) 9654 7389

*Bay Views for All*, the documentary covering the demolition of the Barak Beacon public housing estate in Port Melbourne, is **screening at the Eclipse Cinema in Collingwood, Melbourne, on May 12th.**

## Housing for the Aged Action Group

Level 1, Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane,

Melbourne 3000

ADMIN: 9654 7389

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[www.older tenants.org.au](http://www.older tenants.org.au) 1300 765 178 [haag@older tenants.org.au](mailto:haag@older tenants.org.au)



Fighting for Housing Justice for older people since 1983

HAAG offers FREE, confidential advice, housing and support to over-50's



Richmond Union Bowling Club Pride Cup.

- Housing Options Information
- Outreach Housing Support
- Retirement Housing Advice & Support
- Research & Policy Development