

Housing for the Aged Action Group

annual report

2015-2016



HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.
WWW.OLDERTENANTS.ORG.AU

WORKING TOWARDS HOUSING JUSTICE SINCE 1983

CONTENTS

2. Chairpersons Report
3. Who we are
4. HAAG Strategic planning
6. Committee of Management & Staff
7. HAAG Projects
12. Policy Work
16. Case work
21. Acknowledgments
22. Communications



2015 -2016 Committee of Mgmt (some absent)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As Chairperson of the Housing For The Aged Action Group Inc. it is my privilege to present this annual report for 2016.

The Committee of Management main focus this year has been on setting clear effective strategies, sound processes and directions to ensure we continue to deliver services to older people who are homelessness or risk of homelessness. We undertook important work to develop a three year strategic plan which was adopted in May 2016. HAAG remains in a good position to carry on with confidence the strategies needed to be effective in addressing the needs of older people in housing stress, as well as moving forward as an organization.

There are challenges ahead with an aging population and the changing demographics of homelessness, in an environment of government rationalization of public housing. We continue to advocate for increased affordable housing, and call for clear accountability for social housing providers.

It has been a very busy year with multiple government reforms and reviews underway, all of which our members and staff have contributed to. The organization has undergone some staffing changes this year. In January, we were excited to announce a successful five year project to expand our service nationally, via a Wicking Trust grant. This will be spearheaded by Jeff Fiedler, who as a result, stepped aside from his management role to allow a new manager Fiona York to commence. We are fortunate to have a stable and dedicated staff who continue to work together very effectively with our members and Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Committee and staff for their wonderful support to me during this year. Together as a team we are preventing and reducing homelessness for older Australians.

Daisy Ellery



HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

Housing

Whilst HAAG is not a housing provider we support eligible older people to find appropriate, affordable, secure housing that suits their needs, either through referral to an appropriate agency or through our own Outreach, Information and Advocacy services. We help tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and provide practical assistance.

Aged

Our organisation is led by older people, for older people. We understand the housing needs of our cohort and fight for the realisation of housing benchmarks that ensure a person ages in place with dignity, comfort and peace of mind.

Action

We encourage our members to be actively involved in HAAG by way of working groups, volunteering, forums, media opportunities and joining our Committee of Management. We campaign for social justice in the area of Housing and Older peoples rights and run various events throughout the year promoting the issues and seeking solutions.

Group

We began 30 years ago as a grassroots group of 4 older women who wanted to see better Housing conditions and security for people as they age. Today we have grown to a Not For Profit organisation of 15 staff with over 300 members but our community group heritage still runs strong in our veins. HAAGs workers and management are a dedicated working family, driven by the knowledge of members and the experience of clients, continuing to tackle housing justice issues.

OUR MISSION

HAAG STRIVES TO ENSURE THAT ALL OLDER PEOPLE HAVE
SECURE, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Homelessness Service Award winners

On Thursday 17th September 2015 HAAG's Home at Last service won a major award for Excellence in Ending Homelessness Amongst Older People. Held at the Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards Ceremony, as part of the Council to Homeless Persons Bi-Annual State Conference, the award was announced at a gala event that recognises the hard work of homelessness services in a range of categories such as families, youth and adults. Voted by a panel of experts from the homelessness sector

HAAG was delighted our Home at Last model was recognised for the hard work of the service and most importantly, successes in providing secure, affordable housing for older people at risk of homelessness. The award was also important in recognising the objectives of the Innovation Action Projects, early intervention and prevention of homelessness could be achieved. All six projects were successfully in demonstrating such support not only assists individuals but also assists Government with reducing crisis housing, health and aged care costs.

HAAG wishes to congratulate the other award nominees in the older person's category;

- Home Connect Partnership (VincentCare)
- Denise Lamble, Community Connections and Housing Support Case Worker, Quantum Support Services
- Dr Alice Rota-Bartelink, Research Manager, Wintringham
- Sampson House Project (Anchor)

Also a big thank you and well done to all our wonderful dedicated staff, management committee and members for this important recognition!

HAAG Strategic Planning

Early in the financial year, a strategic planning process was started to develop a plan for the organisation for the next three years. This was in recognition of increased and longer term funding following the successful "Save Home at Last" campaign. A consultant, Jen Scantlebury, was engaged to assist with the process. After detailed briefings with the managers, a series of facilitated workshops were held with both staff and members to better understand HAAG culture, priorities and to canvass opinions on the ways the organisation could be organised and managed.

A three year strategic plan was drafted and following consultation with staff and the Committee of Management, was endorsed by the Committee in June 2016.

Strategic Pillars/ Goals

Strategies to achieve the goals

Members/Older People Older people who are homeless or at risk are able to remain living independently in their community	Develop relationships and formal partnerships with housing providers, including those outside HAAG catchment, to enable clear referral pathways & successful outcomes
	Provide direct service, outreach, tenancy and retirement housing and casework to support clients
	Review policy and clarify client service practice, including intake, assessment, referral, including caseload numbers
	Client data and stories captured to inform client service development
	Client charter (rights & responsibilities) developed, including feedback /client evaluation mechanism
Leadership /Influence HAAG are national leaders in the housing & homeless sector, influencing policy, practice & building awareness & understanding within the community	Develop and implement a Lobbying plan to engage state and federal politicians and public sector representatives
	From the plan, develop and communicate Position Papers on issues of focus to government and the sector
	Specifically engage and formally collaborate with sector representatives to enable strong advocacy
	Review and enhance communication strategy to enable increased sector & community awareness, understanding and engagement
	Develop a national strategy and work to expand HAAG services and ways of working nationally
	Explore the option of an HAAG ambassador, clarifying the role of such a representative
People HAAG has high quality staff, members and a committee working together for common goals	Policies are developed, Position descriptions and performance plans support staff and ensure manageable workloads
	Committee of management is skilled and well equipped to contribute strongly
	Membership is increased and members are actively engaged as volunteers
	Professional development options are developed which support and enable staff, committee and members achieve success
	Candidates from diverse backgrounds are specifically recruited as HAAG staff, committee members or members
Relationships HAAG has formal partnerships & relationships with Government, the sector and other stakeholders to achieve good communication and better outcomes for older people	Retain, celebrate and communicate the uniqueness of HAAG
	Develop & implement a relationship development & management plan to engage State/Federal Government Public sector and Housing sector representatives
	HAAG staff and members are specifically trained in media communication
	Liaise and build connections with interstate agencies
Funding HAAG has ongoing secure funding from a range of Government & other sources	Develop documents necessary for accreditation
	Develop a plan to secure funding from Government, grants, philanthropic organisations and other fundraising initiatives
	Develop data and evidence to build a compelling reason to advocate for funding
	Grants worker leads a working party to explore and advocate for non-financial options
	Collaboration with other service providers to offer submissions for specific projects



HAAG COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Daisy Ellery (Chair)	Valerie Edwards	Helen Vallack
Gordon Beard (Vice Chair)	Bob Brooks	Phyll Williams
Maree Norris (Treasurer)	Vicky Gutsjahr	Sally Stabback
Sue Leigh (Secretary)	Bep Nickolson	Alicia Strobbe
Gerri McDonald (Acting Vice)		
Joane McKnight (Minutes secretary)		

HAAG STAFF & STUDENTS

April Bragg - Co-Manager
 Fiona York - Co-Manager
 Jeff Fiedler - Co-Manager/ National Project worker
 Crystal McDonald - Data, Communications and Reporting worker
 Gemma White - Community Education worker
 Shanny Gordon - Retirement Housing Information worker
 Shane McGrath - Tenancy Advice worker
 Melis Cevik - Housing Support worker
 Anne Maher - Housing Support worker
 Maria Cozzi - Housing Support worker
 Naomi Gebert - Housing Support worker
 Tegan Leeder - Housing Support worker
 Paola Posso - Housing Support worker
 Ani Lorient - Finance Worker
 Aoife Cooke - Project worker
 Kaye Trainor - Administration
 Lisa Coonan - Administration
 Ken Ko - Student
 Trang Le - Student
 Darwin Cheng - Student
 Rose Milton - Student

A home for diversity

The 'A Home for Diversity' project was a six month project that came about because we wanted to share what we had learned about working with CALD communities during our joint project with ECCV. We decided to develop and deliver training to other housing organisations to support them to work better with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

To develop the training, Community Education Worker Gemma White set up three groups to have input into what was covered. Two were 'Community Reference Groups,' one in Dandenong and one in Broadmeadows. These were made up of members from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and language groups, and met four times. Another was called the 'Housing and Homelessness Sector Reference Group,' made up of experienced professionals working in housing services: the Assistance for Care and Housing (ACH) workers; Victorian Homelessness Network coordinators; a Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health Co Manager; and Home at Last housing workers.

The Reference Group developed and implemented a survey for housing workers, with a fantastic 89 responses. Gemma also conducted three interviews with CALD service users. Gemma combined all the learning and ideas from these groups and worked with the Centre for Ethnicity and Health to develop a training course to address these issues. By the end of June, the development of the course was in full swing, and Gemma was making plans to deliver it to housing officers and staff from a range of organisations.

Independent Voices

In February 2016, HAAG began a 6 month research project called 'Independent Voices' to explore the experiences of residents of Independent Living Units (ILUs). We hired a new project worker for the task, Aoife Cooke.

Aoife worked with the ILU Working Group to develop communications materials and interview questions. She travelled to ILUs across the state to meet residents and record their stories, asking questions about what impacts on residents' well-being at home. The report and recommendations were released in July 2016.



Ageing on the edge

The Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project

In December 2015 Housing for the Aged Action Group was notified that we were successful in a funding submission to The J.O. and J.R. Wicking Trust to conduct a 5 year Australia-wide project addressing the housing needs of older Australians. Operating in conjunction with the University of Adelaide's Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP), the Project is being co-ordinated by Jeff Fiedler at HAAG to provide the community development role whilst Dr. Debbie Faulkner from CHURP will be conducting research.

The Wicking Trust is supporting the project as it fits very well with one of the Trust's priorities – assisting people to stay at home longer; including innovative models for supporting housing stability for older Australians at risk of homelessness.

We want a better housing deal for older people across Australia!

The project is being conducted in light of recent research that is warning of rapidly increasing housing problems facing older people. The three main factors are: An ageing population, reducing rates of home ownership and significant increases in older people relying on rental accommodation to age-in-place in retirement.

Women are particularly vulnerable due to low paid and interrupted careers, lower rates of savings and superannuation.

Most people affected have lived largely conventional lives but have, for a range of reasons, not aspired to or attained home ownership by the time they reach retirement. They need access to affordable housing to enable them to enjoy housing stability and affordability to ensure they can successfully age-in-place.

The project will:

- Increase awareness of older persons housing issues across Australia
- Improve older persons' access to housing
- Ensure better availability of services to help older people in housing difficulty.

These are some of the alarming trends that created the need for this project:

- Between 2011 and 2031 the number of Australians aged 65 years and over will increase from 2.4 to 5.8 million and represent 25% of the population.
- Between 2006-2011 people aged 55+ who own their home outright dropped from 63.8% to 60.5%. People 55+ with mortgages went up from 14.5% to 17.7%.
- Between 1996 to 2007 the number of affordable public housing properties shrank by 32,000 while the population grew by 2.8 million people. In 2011, there were 173,000 Australians on public housing waiting lists.
- Between 2006-2011 the numbers of people aged 55+ living in private rental housing increased by 44% to total 334,000. The private rental market is insecure, expensive and poorly designed for ageing.

Whilst the ultimate solution is more affordable housing, the project also aims to improve access to current housing options for older people.

- There are many affordable housing options for older people in Australia that could be better utilised with improved support, streamlining and co-ordination. For example supply options for older people include public and social housing, independent living units, rental villages, residential villages and group housing. However, information and access points and procedures are poorly co-ordinated.
- Accessing housing options needs a specialist service approach that understands the needs of older people. Older people are often facing homelessness for the first time in their lives and need assistance to navigate their way through the complexity of options to gain a housing solution.
- The Home at Last service in Victoria provides a one-stop shop housing information and support service for older people but it is the only service of its type in Australia.
- There are great specialist housing support services in Australia that can help older people at risk of homelessness, but they are fragmented and need to be expanded. For example, the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) Program provides one-to-one support for older people at risk of homelessness but it is poorly funded.

All of these issues will be raised across all states of Australia to create awareness and become a catalyst for action and change.

What the project has been doing in the early stages:

- Gathering research that describes the current housing situation in each state and territory.
- Focusing on areas where momentum for change is already apparent such as NSW where the problems are most acute due to the parlous state of private rental housing there; in South Australia where Council on the Ageing have organised a round-table of government and non-government agencies to address the problem; and Queensland where there are two separate government housing enquiries on older people are being held that the project has provided submissions.
- Investigating the development of a national focus of the HAAG website that will be an Australia-wide communications portal, research clearing house and HAAG national membership and campaign meeting point.
- Developing a national survey of Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) agencies to seek reform and expansion of the ACHA Program.

HAAG has developed an advisory committee of our members who meet monthly on the project. Thank you to Daisy Ellery, Gerri McDonald, Helen Vallack, Joane McKnight, Phyll Williams, Sally Stabback, Valerie Edwards and staff Gemma White and Tegan Leeder for your support and guidance.

Preventing Homelessnesss in Older CALD Communities

Community Education Sessions

1 July 2015 – 30 May 2016

Community/ Language	Sessions	Attendees
Chinese	14	318
Arabic	9	244
South Asian	13	202
Mixed Serbo-Croatian language groups	9	282
Serbian	12	441
Bosnia and Herzegovinian	7	157
Croatian	4	127
Total	73	1711

Preventing Homelessness in Older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities was a collaborative project between the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) and Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG).

This joint project identified communities that had high levels of older renters who were not accessing the service. Community Reference Groups were formed to give advice on how best to talk about housing issues with older people from these communities. Community Education materials were created in consultation with the groups. Home at Last brochures are now available in 9 languages: Arabic, Traditional Chinese, Tamil, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian.

The project trained bi-lingual workers to deliver housing information sessions directly to community members in their first language. Materials were produced to help bi-lingual workers to deliver information about Housing Options and Home at Last. Also, stories from each community were translated and can be used to help communicate the message about how Home at Last can assist older people.

A total of 64 information sessions were delivered by bi-lingual workers across the participating language groups as part of this project. 1611 people attended these information sessions. In addition, bi-lingual workers spoke on ethno-specific radio stations.

After the project ran, double the number of people from the targeted communities contacted Home at Last, with the number housed by Home at Last also doubling. The report on the project was launched by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs in November 2015.



PHOTO: Anita Hopkins (LMCF), Vicky Gutsjahr (HAAG), Marion Lau (ECCV), Hon. Robin Scott, Gemma White (HAAG), Eddy Micallef (ECCV).

Summary of reviews and policy advocacy work

This period contained a rich amount of policy advocacy work for HAAG to contribute to. The review of the General Exemption Order (GEO) that relates to embedded electricity networks began and HAAG provided a submission and attended a consultation session held by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The importance of this review specifically relates to the work that HAAG undertakes in relation to caravan and residential parks.

The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) review also began this period. This has probably created the most intensive work in relation to policy response that HAAG had in the past financial year with a total of 4 submissions being provided towards the review (with more to come ahead).

The Access to Justice review was also an important review that HAAG responded to through submission but also attendance at a consultation held by the Department of Justice. For HAAG this review was specific to retirement villages and the related avenues of dispute resolution.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into Retirement Housing also began this period, which is of great significance to a number of HAAG members (especially the ILU and CARPAV working groups). HAAG submitted a response to the first phase of the inquiry which was a major opportunity and undertaking. A number of HAAG members also contributed individual responses to the inquiry which was an amazing effort that HAAG is very proud of.



List of Submissions

July 2015 – Retirement Housing Background paper
(compiled by Shanny Gordon)

August 2015 – response to the review of the General Exemption Order (GEO) (compiled by Shanny Gordon)

August 2015 – response to the 'Laying the Groundwork' initial consultation paper for the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) review
(compiled by Shane McGrath, Jeff Fiedler and Shanny Gordon)

February 2016 – response to the 'Security of tenure' issues paper for the RTA review
(compiled by Shane McGrath and Shanny Gordon)

March 2016 – response to the Access to Justice review
(compiled by Shanny Gordon)

April 2016 – response to the 'Rent, bonds and other charges' issues paper for the RTA review
(compiled by Shane McGrath and Shanny Gordon)

June 2016 – response to the 'Rights and responsibilities' issues paper for the RTA review
(compiled by Shane McGrath)

June 2016 – response to the parliamentary inquiry into retirement housing
(compiled by Shanny Gordon)

Campaigns and Policy working group

The Campaign and Policy working group had a busy and productive 2016. We operated across a number of different issues that came up in the housing and older people policy arena. Perhaps the biggest being our involvement in the submission to the Residential Tenancies Review.

In addition to the RTA review the Campaign and Policy working group also provided feedback in to the establishment of the Older Persons Housing strategy, a strategy that we will continue to be involved in as it develops. Another large piece of work the group has been working on has been updating the HAAG Housing Charter and Manifesto. A lot of the groundwork for this update was done by Joane McKnight and we are very grateful for all of her research and background work.

Throughout the year the Campaign and Policy working group also developed links with other organisations, assisted with flyer development for demonstrations for the federal election and worked with the Communications group to update the HAAG brochure.



Forum: A Home to Age Well

Towards an older person's housing strategy

On Tuesday 19th April, HAAG partnered with Council on the Ageing (COTA) to hold a forum to develop an older person's housing strategy. The forum was held at Victoria University in Flinders Lane and was attended by close to 100 members of HAAG and COTA, as well as interested service providers.

Guest speakers for the event were Janet Wood, former President of COTA; Bryan Lippman, Wintringham CEO; Jeff Fiedler, Housing for the Aged Action Group; and Caroline Owen, Director Western Region, Department of Health and Human Services.

Participants were asked to contribute to the development of an older person's housing strategy by sharing their ideas and experiences in four workshops. The workshop topics were:

- "What affordable housing options do we need?"
- "What aged care services will I want later in life?"
- "What support services do people need to be housed securely?"
- "What kind of housing design do we need as we age?"

Information from the workshops were used to inform the development of an older person's housing strategy, due to be released in late 2016.

"It is so hard to navigate your way through systems, don't even know which ones exist? I try hard in rented accommodation paying 60% of my pension. Then I have to move all the time because the property is sold or the owners come back from overseas. Looks like I will have to move again, twelve-fifteen months after I have moved in this place. I am 72 years old. I have chronic fatigue and osteoporosis and cannot physically do this much longer. I am at giving up point. What can the system do for me?"

- Participant comment

CARPAV and ILU Working Groups

The Caravan and Residential Parks and Villages Working Group and the Independent Living Unit working group has had a very busy year, supported by Shanny Gordon.

A highlight early in the year was the announcement of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Retirement housing, following a Greens motion to parliament, and was the result of successful lobbying by the groups. Group members were involved in contributing to HAAG submissions into this review, as well as the Access to Justice and Residential Tenancies Act reviews. Individual members of the groups also submitted to the Parliamentary Inquiry.

CARPAV members (photo) began work with the Swinburne Centre for Design and Innovation on their residential parks project. The ILU working group worked alongside project worker Aoife Cooke on the Independent Voices project, to steer the project and work towards HAAG's broader policy work. The group has doubled in size over the last 12 months, which is exciting to see.

Both groups are an important part of HAAG's work towards true and effective reform, and the organisation greatly appreciates all the hard work of its members this year.



Housing Support Summary

One of the challenges faced by the Housing Support team this year has been people presenting with complex issues and needs. We find this is mainly in the older group of people who are in dire housing poverty and hardship, generally those who are not yet Age Pension age and who are trying to survive on Newstart.

It is often when people can't cope with their circumstances any longer that they finally present for help. Sadly though, often their situation is so bad by this time they are in need of specialist help that is not always immediately available. As a result our Housing Support workers have found themselves providing short term case management to stop a person's crisis from escalating. This is also the group with limited housing options particularly in the social and retirement housing sectors.

Like many groups in the housing, health and aged care sectors, HAAG is calling on both tiers of Government to provide increased income and housing availability for this group of people.

With no suitable housing crisis response, many in this group found themselves living in unsafe arrangements, such as rooming houses and shared houses. Many reported to us they were also experiencing first time health problems both physical and mental, a number stated they had been hospitalised and were receiving specialist treatment as a result. The other trend we saw with this group was inter-generational housing stress that prohibited them from being able to stay with family; many reported their friends were also in the same boat as them.

During the reporting period 1,010 people contacted the intake service for assistance, of this group 75% of people required urgent housing support; this is a sharp increase in the urgent housing need category and is a reflection of the current housing crisis in Victoria.

337 referrals were made into the HAAG Outreach program with 159 people successfully housed in long term housing. Confirmed funding enabled us to manage consistent referrals into the service throughout the year.

Once a housing outcome is achieved financial assistance is also provided to assist a person to establish their new home. During the reporting period all housed clients received some form of financial assistance and on average \$900.00 per household was spent. Financial assistance is a crucial element of ensuring people break the cycle of homelessness.

Housing Support - Case studies

A 63 year old woman self-referred to us on the advice of a former HAAG Client. Robin had received a verbal 60 day Notice to Vacate as the owner of the property she has lived in for the past thirty years had told her of his intention to renovate the small unit; she had not received anything in writing. Also the rent she was paying was quite high at \$700 per fortnight, or about 73% of her income. Robin was also in poor health, notably experiencing very high anxiety and agoraphobia, which meant the prospect of needing to leave her home was terrifying for her. In order to assist Robin quickly, and to ensure that she did not end up in homelessness Intake referred Robin into both Home at Last's tenancy service to test the legality of the NTV, and to Home at Last's outreach service. The VCAT challenge was successful buying the outreach worker a few more months to find Robin a long term housing outcome. Robin's ill health and frailty required intensive support from the outreach worker and included liaison with her medical. Applications for public and social housing, along with Independent Living Unit providers were completed along with support to get medical documentation to support Robin's need for a modified property and to stay within her current location. Robin's application for Social housing was accepted some six weeks after their initial meeting. Robin's move was traumatic for her but now 10 months on and she is settled in well and has joined in some of the community activities provided on the estate where she lives.

A 72 year old man living in regional Victoria contacted the Intake service for assistance after receiving a 120 day Notice to Vacate on his private rental property he had rented for 6 years. After receiving the notice he went into shock and denial and reported becoming extremely unwell during this time. His ill health meant he only sought help a couple of weeks before the notice was due to expire. He was referred into the Home at Last (HAL) tenancy service to check the validity of the notice, and if valid, arrange VCAT representation for a 30 day extension of time on the Order of Possession.

The Intake service researched what housing options were available in the area and then assisted him to complete a number of housing applications. An early housing, Segment 2, public housing application and two social housing applications were completed and lodged on his behalf, this was done by correspondence. HAL's tenancy service arranged for the local community legal service to represent him at VCAT and even though an Order of Possession was granted his legal representative did manage to negotiate a 30 day extension of time. The possibility of becoming homeless in 30 days became too much for the client and this resulted in him becoming hospitalised for a couple of weeks. During this time the Intake service linked him into the local Community Connections Program (CCP) ensuring there was some one local that could provide on the ground support. The CCP worker was able to follow up the local housing providers re. The applications and take him to all necessary housing and health appointments as well as assisting him to organise his move. Four weeks after commencing work with this client, and one week before he was to be evicted, he was offered a new long term social housing property in his preferred location. The property is modified and meets all his 'ageing in place' needs and he is now looking forward to a settled and financially secure future.

Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP)

The tenancy service and the retirement housing service are both a part of the Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) funded TAAP program.

Shane McGrath is the tenancy worker and Shanny Gordon is the retirement housing worker.

Over the 2015-2016 period the TAAP services provided assistance in 441 matters supporting 621 residents and tenants. 54% of these matters required information and advice only – but sometimes over long periods of time.

20% of people assisted came from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, 57% were female and 40% were in their 70's.

42% of people assisted lived in private rental, 15% lived in residential parks and villages and 15% lived in retirement villages.

Of the matters that came through the service 23% were in the 'other' category which meant they were provided with assistance for housing options or relocation support, 15% presented with notices to vacate and 11% presented about issues with management.

For the retirement housing service most of the support provided was information and advice, although many of the people accessing the service have been working with the service in an ongoing way over long periods of time. Within the matters that required more intensive support and negotiation there appeared to be more successful outcomes this period than in the past. There was also overall more willingness from residents to take more formal action towards seeking resolution so the number of matters taken to VCAT by the retirement housing service also increased this period. There were also a number of relocation matters this period, which unfortunately seems to be a trend, and more obvious issues around eviction especially for retirement village residents.

The tenancy service continues to deal largely with notices to vacate – in particular, for repairs and renovations, sale, and rent arrears. We maintain a very strong record when it comes to notices to vacate, with almost all clients with such notices successfully negotiating or challenging the notices to ensure they have sufficient time to find alternate housing. The service also supports a significant number of tenants to have their bonds returned,

Housing for the Aged Action Group

Tenancy and Retirement Advice Service 2015-2016

621

people

42%

Living in
Private tenancy

98%

Receiving
Centrelink Payments

1567

hours
INFORMATION
AND
ADVICE

66

Hours at Victorian Civil &
Administration Tribunal

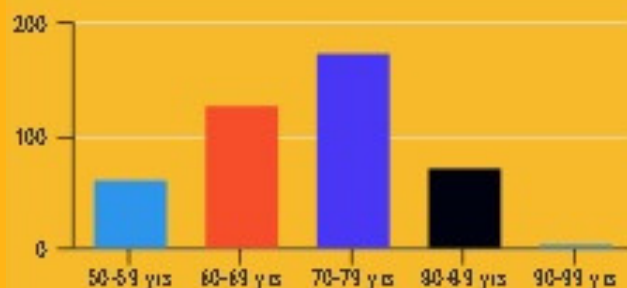
*Supporting older people to appeal unfair
and illegal actions, often by landlords*

241

Hours preparing for VCAT



- Notices to Vacate
- Repairs
- Rent Arrears
- Management issues

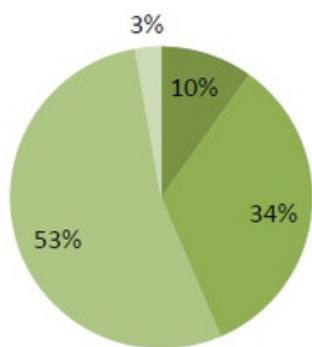


Home at Last
Tenancy and Retirement Advice
1300765178

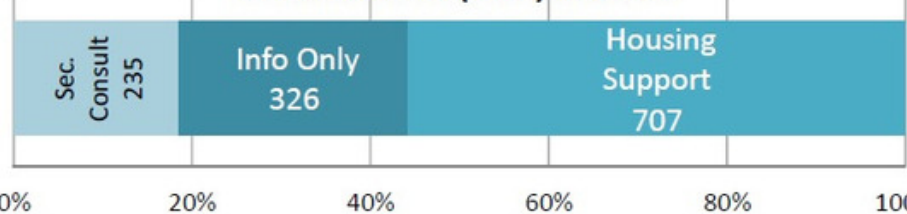


Client Age

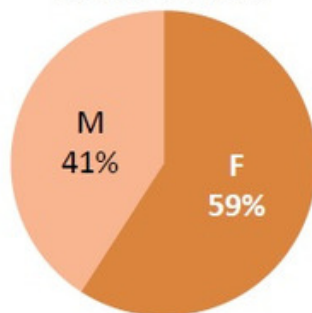
- 0-55
- 56-65
- 66-85
- 85+



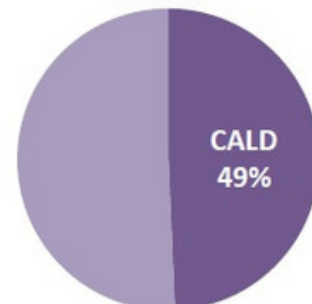
Home At Last (HAL) Intakes



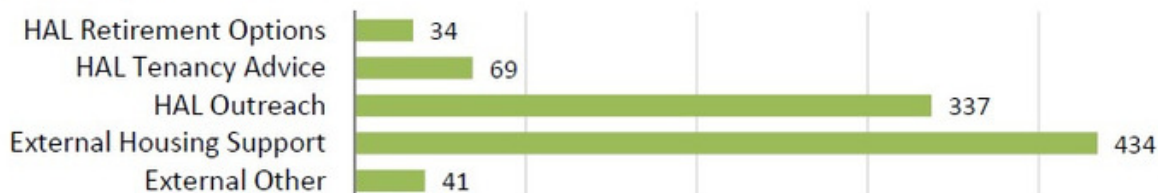
Client Gender



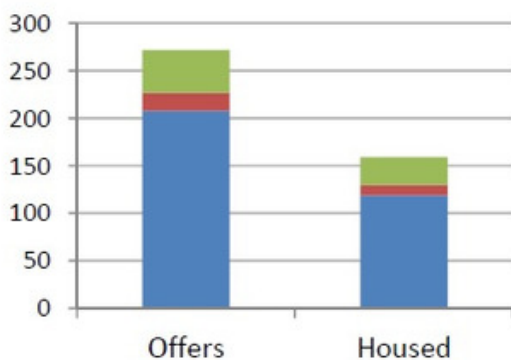
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients



Referrals by HAL intake

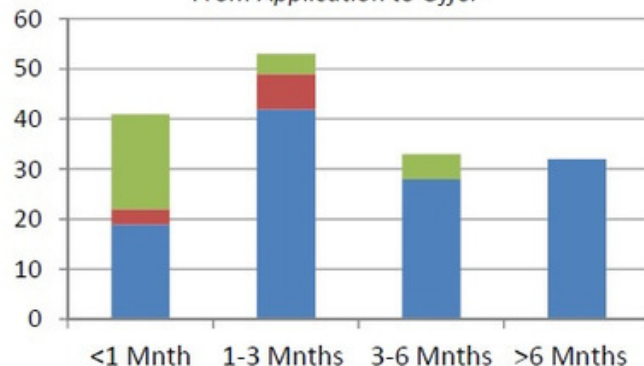


Housing Outcomes



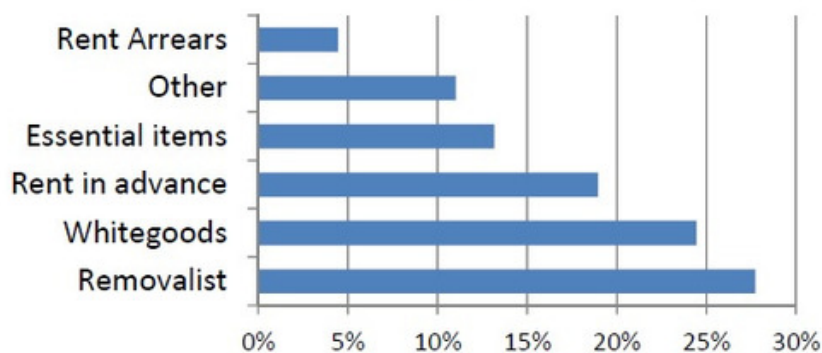
Timeframe to rehouse

From Application to Offer



Public Housing Social Housing Independent Living Unit

Brokerage



Main reason clients presented to service

Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions 38%
Housing crisis 27%
Housing affordability stress 15%

Manny thanks

Sincere thanks to our funding bodies for supporting our work:

The Department of Health & Human Services, Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Special thanks also to the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation for their support of our "A Home for Diversity" project, the Independent Living Unit research and, via Youth in Philanthropy, the "Providing the Basics" funding. Thanks to Wicking Trust for the "Ageing on the Edge" five year funding. Thanks also to Café Smart for supporting our clients again this year.

Thank you to our dedicated management committee who have provided endless support through their involvement with our day to day work, and their participation in sub-committees to assist with the running of the organisation.

A special thanks to our amazing working groups who continue to develop targeted campaigns in Independent Living Units and Caravan and Residential Parks and Villages. The dozens of members involved in these groups are 'lived' experts in their fields, and have been invaluable in the multitude of reviews and inquiries this year.

A very special thank you to all of our members who volunteer their time to support HAAG, be it with a mail out, a brochure drop or to lend their professional services- a special mention to Guruswamy Perumal for generously and beautifully photographing all of HAAGs events again this year.

communications

n. The art and technique of using words or some other medium effectively to exchange information or ideas.

The HAAG Communications group began in August 2015 after the Save Home At Last campaign. The intense and urgent nature of that campaign required us to be able to quickly reach our supporters and effectively broadcast our messages. It became apparent that the means in which HAAG used to do this were becoming dated and could benefit with review and improvement.

The Communications position was taken up by existing HAAG worker Crystal McDonald and a group of members and staff, using the HAAG manifesto as a working guide, got to work on HAAGs first Communications Strategy. AIM: To make the voice of HAAG clearer, louder, more accessible and well recognised.

Being so intrinsically linked with almost every aspect of the organisation, the Communications strategy helped inform the development of HAAGs overall strategic plan which began in late 2015.

After about 4 months of strategic planning the group began working towards the improvement of the HAAG website, Brochures, Newsletters, Annual Reports, Contact Management (database) and Media Relations.

The new-look website designed to better reach clients as well as members and industry was launched on 15th June 2016 and received positive feedback, as did the brochures and newsletters.

At the end of the 2015-16 financial year the Communications group reviewed their work to date and set future goals to begin looking again to the big-picture stuff. HAAG has now featured in several media reports on radio and Television with plans to continue to expand our media reach.

Crystal would like to thank the Communications group members: Daisy Ellery, Bob Brooks, Meredith Munro, Maree Norris and staff Gemma White, Tegan Leeder and Fiona York for their dedication and contributions to the group.



Organisations in line they await funding

by SIMON GARNER

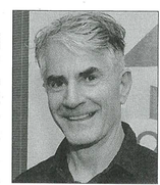
ORGANISATIONS providing vital support to homeless seniors in Victoria fear a bleak future.

It is uncertain whether the state government will extend Department of Human Services funding for Homelessness Innovation Action Projects.

Seven projects were funded in the previous government's 2014-15 budget, but there is no indication from the new government whether support for the projects will continue.

One of those funded until June 30 this year is Regional Outreach for Elderly Homeless, undertaken by Wintringham Specialist Aged Care.

Chief executive officer Bryan Lipmann said the project was running very effectively. "We reproduced a successful city model to regional areas to



JEFF FIEDLER

provide people with support," Mr Lipmann said.

"It's one of the most exciting projects for us in the past 20 years. It's extraordinarily cost-efficient and has had wonderful results."

"It's providing a service in the bush that didn't exist."

Services offered to homeless men and women over 50 include assessment, referral, advocacy assistance with day-to-day living and linking into community groups, recreational activities or arranging transport.

"We haven't been told there is no funding, we are just sure," Mr Lipmann said.

Jeff Fiedler from Housing for the Aged Action Group, whose Home at Last project funded under the program, said the uncertainty meant cut off new enquiries at the end of March.

"We have a substantial load of more than 300 people waiting," he said.

"Even for those we are waiting on now, three months stretching it to provide the support they need."

"We have been trying to meet with Martin Foley, but haven't been able to as yet."





HAAG on Social Media



@HousingfortheAgedActionGroup



@HAAGHomeAtLast

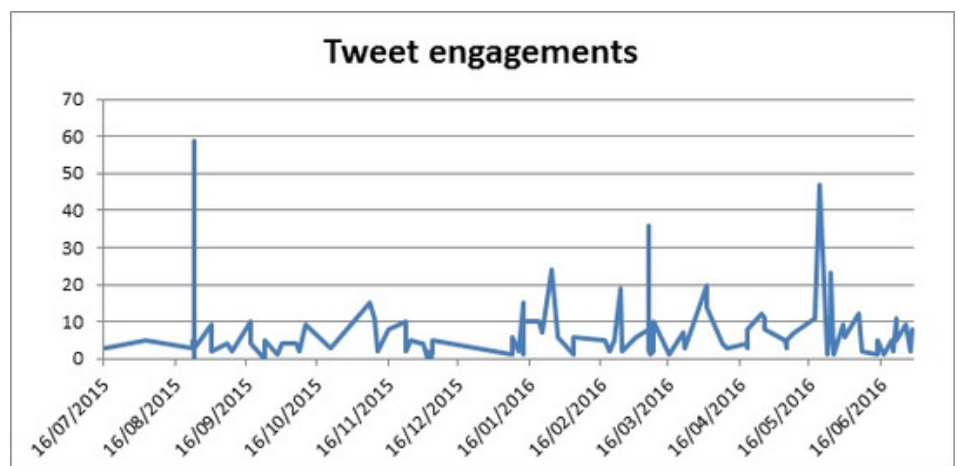
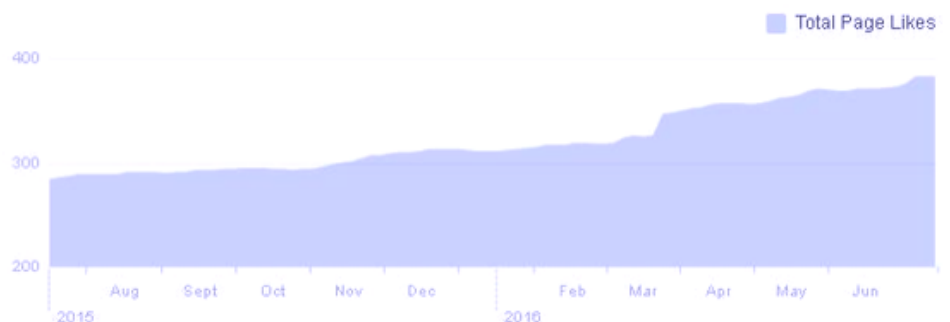
Most popular Facebook post:

It's 2016 and this is happening and it's sickening, if you're in this situation or know of an older person who is they can contact Home at Last for help:

LINK: "Forget the movies elderly people are living in cars near you."

Most popular tweet:

The private rental market is so tough for single women on low incomes, homelessness can literally happen to anyone
#TheFeedSBS



Engagements: Total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet. Clicks anywhere on the Tweet, including retweets, replies, follows, likes, links, cards, hashtags, embedded media, username, profile photo, or Tweet expansion

Housing for older people a right - not a privilege



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