



haag

Housing for the Aged Action Group

Annual Report
2018-2019

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT



This annual report is again filled with activities and achievements of the HAAG people of which I am so proud. The HAAG mission and vision is valued and constantly at the forefront of what HAAG demonstrates daily for the older Victorians at risk of or already homeless and to the public in general. I often think it would be such an event if every older person housed by HAAG workers over the years - and there have been at least 600 of them - were to gather together to catch up and tell of their life these days, what a lot of lovely stories we'd hear.

Imagine for instance the older persons of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) who not only have been housed by our workers into safe and secure housing for the rest of their days, but have formed a strong sub committee of interpreters and welcoming agents to new tenants, led by HAAG's Gemma White.

Another group of older persons at risk of homelessness are LGBTI communities. HAAG is reaching out to LGBTI people to ensure they will not be homeless if and when a Notice to Vacate arrives in their mailbox after many years of private rental, as is the case so often for older citizens whom landlords and real estate agents view as an obstacle to larger rental returns. Anyone with just a pension to live on is at risk in fast rising private rentals these days.

We need to keep reminding the people who

make the rules that being older does not mean being just a number and apparently invisible as a person. Fiona, HAAG's excellent EO, made that quite clear to the Royal Commission Enquiry.

The unique organisation that is HAAG, is now notably Australia wide as Jeff continues to go on spreading the word so well in all other states. Many people have shown keen interest in the Home At Last part of HAAG's achievements and wish to replicate it. The National project called Ageing on the Edge shows the need of suitable housing for older persons throughout Australia is massive and deserves to be addressed at the highest level.

The volunteers at HAAG have been turning in a sterling effort in the last financial year and onwards. HAAG could not manage without the volunteers and their skills, from the Committee of Management (CoM) who give their time and their expertise always, plus the many administrative workers and the peer educators who make themselves available for many tasks related to welcoming new applicants to HAAG. The peer educator's role is doubly of note in that they are all previous applicants themselves once at risk of homelessness but found HAAG and a home instead.

The students who do work placement at HAAG from their university studies are also a skillful number of youngsters. Each year the young people seem able to instantly grasp the task in hand and augment the classroom theory with real life situations.

You will be able to read further in this report so much of the daily activities and achievements of HAAG's small band of willing workers. I thank each of them and I thank all the members of this member driven unique organisation, which exists only to do good for older persons. Long may it be so.

Yours truly,

Phyll Williams

HAAG'S MISSION

HAAG strives to ensure that all older people have secure, safe and affordable housing

Housing

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.

for the 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 four 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 20 staff with 430 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.

THE PEOPLE OF HAAG

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Ena Ahern	General Member	Retired Nov 2018
Maeve Browne-Cooper	General Member	Current, elected Nov 2018
Victoria Gutsjahr	General Member	Current
Jodie Henry	General Member	Current, elected Nov 2018
Sue Leigh	General Member	Retired Nov 2018
Sue Marino	General Member	Current
Maree Norris	General Member	Current
Chen Su Ooi	General Member	Retired, Nov 2018
Guruswamy Perumal	General Member	Current, elected Nov 2018
Peter Sibly	Treasurer	Current
Kris Spark	Deputy Chairperson	Current
Cassandra Williams	General Member	Current, elected Nov 2018
Phyll Williams	Chairperson	Current
Mary-Anne Wright	General Member	Current, elected Nov 2018
Pam Young	Secretary	Current

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Familiar faces	Welcome on Board	Homelessness Action Plan	Farewells
Christopher Kadira	Anne Maher	Bradley Foster	Ani Lorient
Darwin Cheng	(Welcomed back)	Sandra South	April Bragg
Libby Heath	Christine Stapleton	Susan Malta	Crystal McDonald
Emily Connolly	Joanne Maguire		Tegan Leeder
Fiona Waters	Leonie Bessant		
Fiona York	Nese Duran		
Gemma White	Rebecca Walton		
Paola Posso	Sotiria Nika		
Jeff Fiedler			
Maria Cozzi			
Melis Cevik			
Naomi Gebert			
Reuben Endean			
Shane McGrath			

430 + 1091

HAAG members

Clients in contact



This year saw some new faces join our team, as well as farewelling some of our long-time workers.

Hello!

Christine Stapleton joined the team as Client Services Manager. **Nese Duran** and **Sotiria Nika** joined the Housing support team in outreach and intake roles. **Rebecca Walton** joined the Aged Care Service Navigator team as a volunteer coordinator, as well as working on the LGBTI elders housing project. **Leonie Bessant** commenced her role as the National Alliance of Seniors Housing coordinator, part of the Ageing on the Edge national project. We employed three new staff for six months to conduct the Homelessness Action Plan – **Dr Sandra South**, **Dr Sue Malta** and **Bradley Foster**.

Goodbye

After 19 years of service to the organisation, **April Bragg** announced her resignation, leaving us the fantastic legacy of our unique Home at Last Service, which she worked so hard to achieve over many years. For over 30 years in the housing sector, April dedicated herself to the needs of tenants and housing issues, including working with the public tenants movement during the 1980's and 1990's on issues like unfair evictions, fair rents, energy action and improvements to the design of housing on public housing estates across Victoria. During her time at HAAG April played a major role in organising forums, actions and events highlighting the problems of older people in housing poverty and the need for more public housing. Some of these included the Having Our Say Forum at Melbourne Town Hall in 1999, Having Our Say Again in 2002, Back to the Future in 2004, Ageing In Place? in 2008, Ageing on the Edge in 2011 and Home at Last in 2013.

April achieved through extensive lobbying the ground-breaking policy reform by the Victorian Government to provide priority housing access at 55 years of age, and had a considerable impact on the lives of so many older people at risk of homelessness. In many ways Home at Last is the culmination of a 'job well done' by April. We farewelled April in August, and bid her all the best for her move to new challenges and spending more time with her family.

Ani Loriente resigned in January, after being our finance worker since 2003. After working for Ross House, she joined HAAG and saw the organisation through its rapid growth from a small grassroots organisation through to getting the Home at Last funding in 2012.

Tegan Leeder worked in our intake team since the commencement of the Home at Last service and left the organisation in August to move onto other challenges.

Crystal McDonald worked for HAAG over a number of years in Data and Communications where she was instrumental in providing data to support the ongoing funding of the Home at Last Service, as well as producing publications for the organisation. She left in September, to explore other opportunities

Goodbye and Hello Again!

Anne Maher worked in outreach for HAAG since 2013 and left the organisation to find work closer to home. After 8 months, she returned to HAAG in a new role that utilises her aged care case management experience.



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT & FINANCE TEAM

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & COMMS

RETIREMENT HOUSING TEAM

HOUSING SUPPORT TEAM

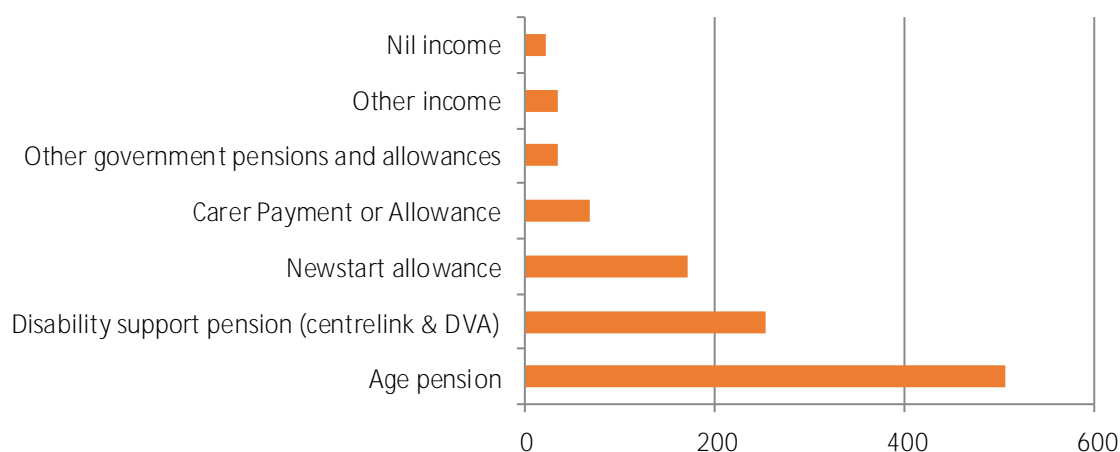
Professional Development

As part of continuous improvement, we are committed to learning new things and honing our skills. 26 professional education opportunities were attended by our 21 staff members and 4 Committee members. 100% of staff have completed some professional education.

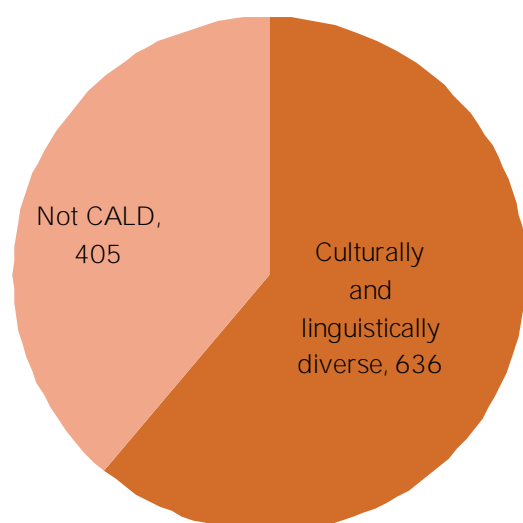
- ◆ Governing quality for clients in community service organisations
- ◆ Privacy Law for Not-for-Profits
- ◆ Homelessness Conference
- ◆ Living Loving Diversity Conference
- ◆ Finding Solutions: National Council of Women's Triennial Conference
- ◆ LGBTI Age and Ageing Training
- ◆ Payroll Webinar
- ◆ Excel Intermediate training
- ◆ Risk Register Training
- ◆ We're all in this together – Employees, Volunteers and the Law
- ◆ Suicide alertness for everyone
- ◆ LGBTI Age and Ageing Training
- ◆ Preparing your not-for-profit for the upcoming election
- ◆ Credit, Debt and Older People
- ◆ CPR First Aid
- ◆ Suicide alertness for everyone
- ◆ Tenants Advocates training
- ◆ Calculating Compensation Orders
- ◆ VCAT training
- ◆ RTA Amendments Review
- ◆ CPR First Aid
- ◆ Suicide alertness for everyone
- ◆ LGBTI Age and Ageing Training
- ◆ MARAM Family Violence Risk Assessment training
- ◆ Social Work Supervision Course
- ◆ Social Work Field Educators Training
- ◆ Mental Health First Aid
- ◆ Open House Orientation – Homelessness Services
- ◆ Credit Debt and Older People
- ◆ Identifying Family Violence
- ◆ World Social Work Breakfast
- ◆ Suicide Risk assessment Workshop



MAIN INCOME SOURCE WHEN PRESENTING



CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS



CLIENTS COUNTRY OF BIRTH



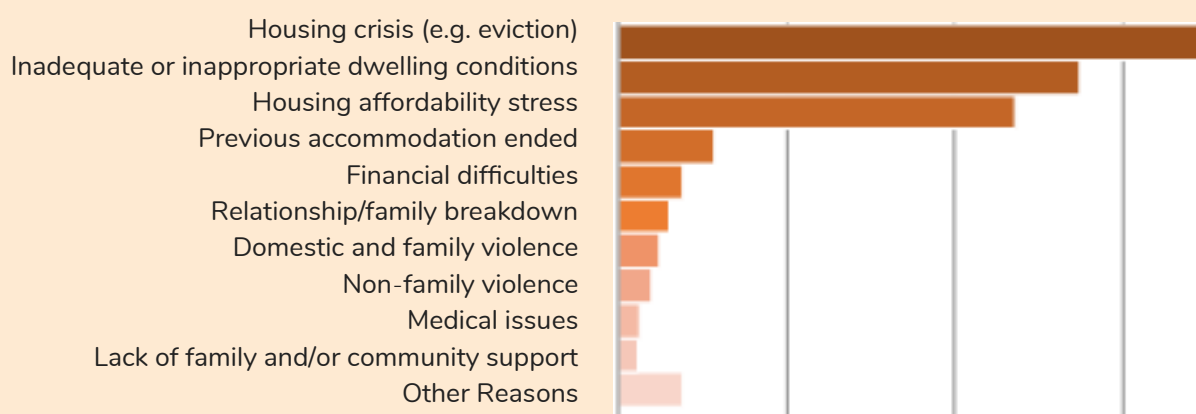
The HAAG Home at last Housing Support Service provides housing information, referral, advocacy and case management services to people aged 50 plus, who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. The Housing Support team consists of intake and referral services and case management housing support/outreach services.

The housing support team find housing outcomes, as well as solutions to the myriad of problems that arise or are exacerbated when people experience homelessness, ranging from practical problems with Centrelink payments, finding storage solutions to their valued belongings, to securing assistance to help with more complex matters including managing mental health issues and elder abuse.

Importantly the workers provide a great deal of empathy and support in listening to the fears and concerns that people face with the prospect of being unable to secure affordable housing that enables them to maintain their dignity and independence as they grow older.

Unfortunately the demand from people seeking housing assistance has continued to increase over the past 12 months with the amount of people referred by HAL intake for housing support, far outweighing the capacity of both the HAL service and other ACH programs and housing support services.

The HAL service data from the last 12 months clearly illustrates that the primary issue facing older people on low incomes is access to affordable and appropriate housing. The main presenting reasons why 84% of people seek assistance from HAAG are housing crisis, inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions and housing affordability stress.



While there are other issues that contribute to older people's housing difficulties - including elder abuse, family breakdown and health and mobility issues - it is evident from HAAG's considerable experience of providing housing assistance to older people that these issues become more manageable once people can access secure, affordable housing. Unfortunately the increasing demand not only demonstrates the need for our service, and for increased resources, but highlights the lack of will in government – State and Federal - to substantially address the provision of affordable and secure housing in the long term.

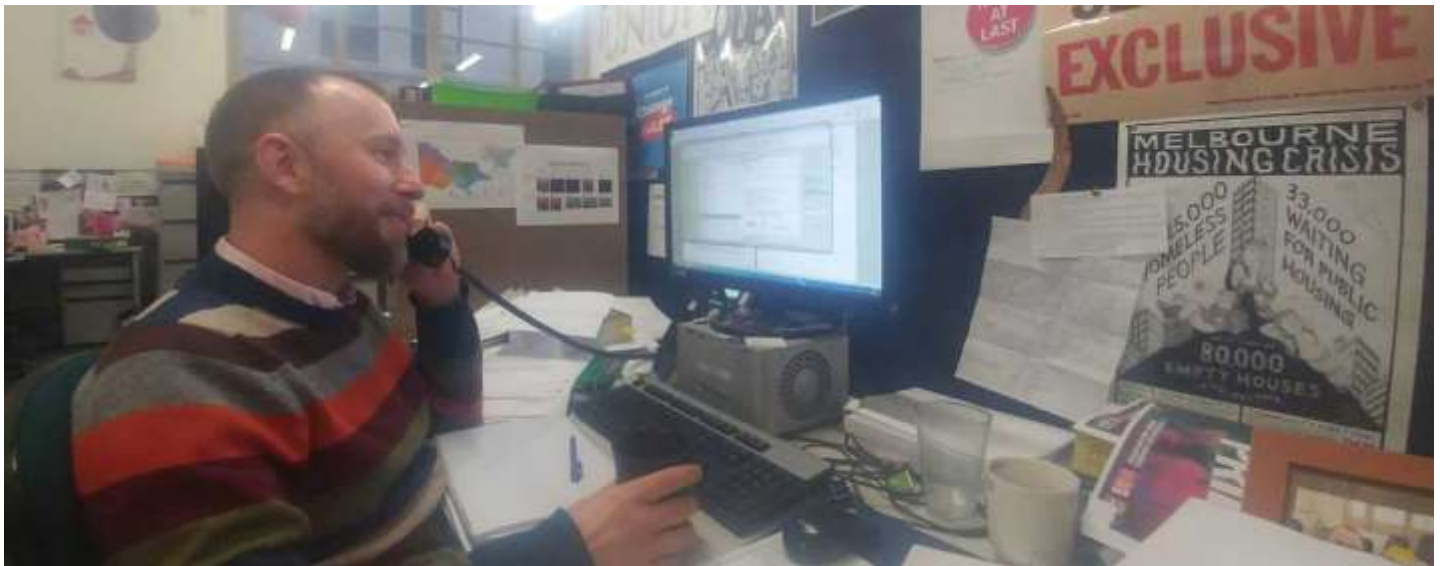
The Barwon-South West ACH program that was established in early 2018 with CHSP growth funds has been steadily developing with considerable work going into establishing contacts with homelessness, housing and aged care services across the region. In May 2019 HAAG secured office space for two days per fortnight in Warrnambool to assist with establishing the ACH service in the south-west region. The office space is in the Archie Graham Centre, a community centre for older people, where a number of Aged Care, health services and community organisations are located, providing a great co-location for the Barwon-SW worker to see clients, network and promote HAAG to improve access to the service for people in the region who need housing assistance.



NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Aged Care Sector Diversity Sub-Committee	Elder Abuse Round Table
Specialist Homelessness Service Executive Advisory Group	Homelessness Sector Reform
Victorian Community Care Alliance	LASN (Local Area Service Network)
Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) Consumer Forum	Retirement Advocates Meeting
Residential Tenancies Stakeholder Reference Group	Whittlesea Community Futures (WCF) Partnership.
Retirement Villages Act Stakeholder Reference Group	H3 (Housing, Homelessness and Health)
Assistance with Care and Housing Victoria Network	Wyndham Alliance
	ASU Homelessness & Housing Network
	Darebin Res Parks Network
	Senior Women's Financial Capability Reference group



Over the last year, HAAG's retirement housing project (including staff and working group members) scored some big wins for residents' rights. Here are some highlights from the last year.

The Residential Tenancies Amendments Act:

The Residential Tenancies Act sets out the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants in regular tenancies as well as many rental villages, ILUs and caravan and residential parks. For many years, HAAG has been saying that the Act doesn't work for older renters – failing to provide security of tenure, affordability, or the capacity to modify a home as needed to age in place. In 2015, the state government began a major review of the Act that took in these and other important issues. After years of submissions, issues and options papers, consultations, stakeholder meetings, etc and etc, 2018 saw the release of the Residential Tenancies Act Amendments Bill - a big win for tenant rights across the board. We saw improvements on a range of major issues - the abolition of no-reason notices to vacate and a requirement that evictions be 'reasonable and proportionate', rights for tenants to carry out reasonable disability modifications, compensation for residents of parks that close, and more. But we also saw lots of smaller scale gains with big effects on tenants' quality of life – the right to put picture hooks on the wall, say, or keep a pet. When the legislation threatened to stall in the upper house, HAAG identified conservative member of the legislative council Rachel Carling-Jenkins as our best chance to find a politician outside the major parties willing to support the Bill. When she eventually voted to pass the law, she quoted our lobbying, along with support from other organisations:

"I found a really interesting submission to me from the Housing for the Aged Action Group that I found very informative... They said: Over-55s are the fastest growing segment of the Victorian rental market, and these changes... will help ensure pensioners are able to age in place, preventing premature entry to residential aged care. I thank them for their submission."

vcvfff Rachel Carling-Jenkins MLA

Without her vote, the law would not have passed. The rollout of these important laws is ongoing – but the passage of the bill marked a huge advance for Victorian residents.

Bik v Peninsula Parklands

A common issue in many kinds of retirement housing is the Deferred Management Fee (DMF) – an amount generally paid by outgoing residents as a percentage of the sale price of their dwelling. It can be as much as 40%, and often seems to represent little more than a cash-grab by park and village operators rather than a reasonable price for specific services offered. They can also trap residents – if you lose a big percentage of the sale price when you move, you probably can't buy in to a comparable alternative. In 2018, we worked with a couple who had been told by their doctor that they needed to move for health reasons, but couldn't afford to do so if they paid the DMF. When negotiations failed, we assisted them to argue at VCAT that the DMF in their contract was not only unfair, but unlawful. VCAT agreed, and ordered that he should not have to pay the fee – a saving of tens of thousands of dollars. Another positive aspect of this case was that we developed strong partnerships with other organisations interested in challenging the legality of DMFs. We hope to assist many other residents to escape unfair and unlawful fee



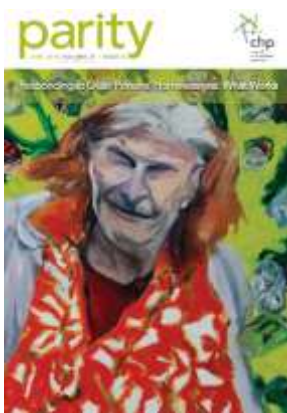
Image from Les Scobie retvill.net

Everyday casework

Over the course of the year, we talked to 156 people about their housing situations, and while big wins are important, the lifeblood of the service is still the less remarkable everyday casework that helps make life better and more liveable for retirement housing residents. This year we helped people find suitable housing, dealt with bullying managers, clarified contract terms, de-escalated conflicts, prevented or delayed evictions for people who needed time to find new homes and negotiated practical solutions to all kinds of retirement housing disputes. We look forward to continuing to help make life safer, fairer and easier for retirement housing residents over the year to come.

The Ageing on the Edge national project is in its fourth year of a five year project. We continue to be very grateful for the support of The Wicking Trust in funding the project and the partnership with Dr Debbie Faulkner at the University of Adelaide has been so valuable in marrying research with our HAAG role of community development and activism.

Befitting the fact that the project is moving into its latter stages, there was much action at the national level. The project developed a national model of housing assistance for older people, based on HAAG's Home at Last service, called the Seniors Housing Gateway that was launched on October 14 2018. This has been developed after our research across all states found that there are very few housing services for older people and the need in particular for every state to have a one-stop-shop of housing assistance for older people. The project has been promoting the Gateway as a potential Federal Government program that could be rolled out across Australia. Along with the development of the model concept the project has been in discussions with the Federal Government and the Labor Opposition to gain support for the proposal.



HAAG and the project partnered with Council to Homeless Persons, Wintringham and The Salvation Army to sponsor a special older persons edition of the national Parity Journal which promotes discussion and innovation on housing and homelessness issues. The journal was launched on July 16 2018 and featured Jeff and Debbie's latest national research and also articles by HAAG's Gemma White and Fiona Waters. Fiona York gave a presentation at the Journal launch along with Debbie, Bryan Lipmann and guest speaker The Hon. Doug Cameron, Federal Labor Housing and Homelessness Spokesperson.

The project was a partner in the Older Womens Housing and Homelessness Working Group that brought together key agencies across Australia to create action addressing the increasing problem of older women at risk of homelessness. The working group's activities culminated in the launch on August 23 2018 at Parliament House in Canberra of a report titled 'Retiring into Poverty – A National Plan for Change: Increasing Housing Insecurity for Older Women'. This policy report lays out the fundamental areas of reform that governments and the community need to develop to tackle this growing problem.



Some other areas of work by the Ageing on the Edge Project included:

- Homelessness Action Plan (see next page)
- Collaborating on a national research project and report by the Australian Association of Gerontology called 'Collaborative papers on Older Women experiencing or at risk of homelessness'.
- Organising an older persons session at the National Homelessness Conference 6-7 August 2018;
- Presenting at the Aged Care Services Australia national Establishing the National Older Persons Housing Network and employing Leonie Bessant as co-ordinator in December 2018 and the group developed into the National Alliance of Seniors for Housing (NASH)
- Working with agencies in New South Wales to establish the ongoing Ageing on the Edge Forum that grew from the project's research reference group
- Getting research and development underway in Western Australia with key partners Council on the Ageing WA and a reference group of key WA agencies whilst early progress began in Tasmania and Queensland
- Instigating engagement with the Department of Health and Human Services in December 2018 and Council to Homeless Persons in Victoria in January 2019 to promote that older people be included in the development of homelessness sector reform.
- Participating in the Council to Homeless Persons co-ordinating committee for the upcoming Victorian Homelessness Conference
- Discussing with Social Ventures Australia towards ongoing support into the 2020's for the development of Seniors Housing Gateway services across Australia



Brian Lipmann, Hon. Ken Wyatt MP Minister for Ageing, Jeff Fiedler and Doctor Sandra South

In November 2019 HAAG was contracted by the Federal Government to develop a draft Aged Care Diversity Homelessness Action Plan. This was a new area for us, and we jumped at the chance to bring a housing perspective into the aged care sector. After all, it is very difficult to deliver aged care in the home without safe and affordable housing!

‘For older people to age well, they must be housed well’

Prof. Andrew Jones

So over the six month period January-June 2019 HAAG employed Dr Sandra South, Dr Sue Malta and Bradley Foster to develop the Homelessness Action Plan. Their work has been directed by a Homelessness Action Plan Reference Group and has involved conducting surveys, interviews and face-to-face consultations with older people and aged care services across Australia to find out what needs to be done to improve aged care services and assistance to older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Jeff and Sandra conducted an extremely comprehensive consultation, including a massive 45 site visits across the country, visiting residential care and Assistance with Care and Housing services, over four short months. In addition, there were 488 surveys of service providers, 122 surveys of older people and 25 interviews with managers. This painted a very interesting picture of what is occurring across Australia, in cities, suburbs, regional towns and remote areas, for older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and trying to access aged care.

Three draft plans were developed – one for the government, one for aged care providers and one for older people to help them access the services they need.

The recommendations that we proposed were to improve services for people trying to access aged care, to improve and expand the Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) program, and to improve residential aged care services for older people who have been homeless.

We delivered the draft action plans to the Commonwealth government in May 2019. We are now represented by our Executive Officer Fiona York on the Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group, which has previously developed action plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people. This group is appointed by the Minister for Ageing and is now working towards ensuring that these plans are adopted by the aged care sector.

We would like to thank the members of the Homelessness Action Plan Reference Group for their great support and guidance over the six months of the project:

Dr Debbie Faulkner, University of Adelaide, Jeff Fiedler and Fiona York (HAAG), Michael Fotheringham (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute), Digby Hughes (Homelessness Australia), Bryan Lipmann (Wintringham), Cherylee Treloar (Footprints), Ms Mary Patetsos (Federation of Ethnic Communities Council) and Judy Gregurke (Council on the Ageing).

As part of the Ageing on the Edge Project, a call-out to 'share your story' by Jeff Fiedler was published in The Senior Newspaper in 2018. As a result of the tremendous response, a new body, the National Older Persons Housing Network was formed to bring together seniors with lived experience of homelessness, risk of homelessness or those wanting to contribute to preventing homelessness. The group's mission was to highlight senior housing distress and unite seniors from across Australia in a campaign of national action. Sahndra Nelson coordinated the group in its early phase by documenting the interests and housing needs of the respondents.

The group developed an organising committee of approximately ten seniors from Victoria, NSW, SA, WA and QLD. At the beginning of 2019 Leonie Bessant began to coordinate the group one day a week. The group renamed itself The National Alliance of Seniors for Housing (NASH) and now meets once a month via a phone conference. NASH issues a monthly/bi monthly newsletter that has to date focused on the individual states in turn; with members and others lived experience stories, articles on state specific housing issues, reports of actions taken by members and general housing news. The NASH newsletter can be viewed at oldertenants.org.au/nash



The NASH organising committee has also developed a Campaign Policy Statement. The text of the statement, including a 12 points action plan, is completed. It is currently being developed into a booklet by a graphics firm to give it consistency with other Ageing on the Edge Project publications. Once completed, it will be widely disseminated to politicians and stakeholders to publicise the existence and aims of NASH.

Following the 'announcement' of NASH's presence using the Campaign Policy Statement, an action to Parliament House Canberra involving the organising committee members is planned for the 1st parliamentary sitting of 2020.

Future plans include recruiting organising committee members from Tasmania and the Territories and expanding general membership.



Some of the Aged Care Navigator Volunteers at the Training in March 2019

In January 2019 HAAG began delivering a service delivery trial called the 'Aged Care Navigator' trial. This is one of 30 organisations delivering 60 trials across the country, with the aim of assisting people facing barriers and vulnerabilities to access aged care. The trial runs for 18 months.

Many people who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness are forced to put their health and well-being last, due to the ongoing stress of their housing situation. Many also believe they are unable to receive assistance in their home, when their home is temporary, unstable or overcrowded.

The trial, funded by department of Health, aims to support people to access aged care services, including registering for My Aged Care and receiving information about services that are available in the home such as cleaning, meals, disability modifications, physiotherapy, personal care and so on. During 2018-19 we provided:

19 Home Visits by Bi-lingual Workers

Bi-lingual workers have been trained to deliver information and register people for My Aged Care. The bi-lingual workers do home visits to people from their community/language group to help them to register for an aged care assessment.

4 Drop-In sessions

This service is available to ANY OLDER PERSON (not just those experiencing housing issues).

The two volunteers who work as part of this service can explain My Aged Care and the Aged Care system and process. They can help the person to register for My Aged Care.



Arabic Speaking Volunteer, Hoda, delivering information in Arabic about Aged Care services.

3 Information Sessions

HAAG bi-lingual workers have been running information sessions for their community about how to access and what to expect from Aged Care.

CALD Diversity Reference Group

The HAAG Cultural Diversity Reference Group has been running since June 2018. The group is made up of members from Arabic speaking, Assyrian/Chaldean, Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian, Chinese and Indian communities

Key achievements of the group have been:

- Providing essential **advice and guidance on the Aged Care Navigator Trial**
- Being selected for consultation by researchers looking at issues for older people from CALD backgrounds
- **Developing policies**
 - (1) The group have assisted in the development of a number of policies including the home visit policy for the Aged Care Navigator
 - (2) Providing feedback into HAAG's assessment waitlist policy
- **Advocating for the community**
 - (1) The group have made suggestions to Home at Last management about how the service could be more access able for those from CALD backgrounds
- **Upskilling**
 - (1) The group have been visited by Seniors Rights Victoria and various HAAG workers who have been providing information about Housing, Homelessness and elder abuse to increase the knowledge of the group.
 - (2) Peer Support- many of the group's members are also part of our Aged Care Systems Navigator project and receive support and opportunities for debriefing as part of this group.

Delivering information about HAAG and Home at Last to the Community

Information sessions were hosted by the following groups:

- ⇒ NARISA- Northern Region Indian Seniors Association, Northcote
- ⇒ Southern Migrant Resources Centre, Seniors Leadership Forum, Lynbrook
- ⇒ Aged and Disability Forum St Albans Community Centre
- ⇒ Serbian Pensioners group Keysborough
- ⇒ Salvation Army, Dandenong
- ⇒ Casey North Community Information and Support Centre
- ⇒ Information stand at the Seniors Festival, Town Hall
- ⇒ St Anthony Seniors Club, Thomas Town (Arabic Speaking)
- ⇒ Hume Hub, (Assyrian Chaldean) Group



HAAG volunteers at the Southern Migrant Resource Centre

Focus on Geelong

Given that we now have an outreach worker covering the Barwon region and that over 90 of HAAG's members are from Geelong and surrounds, we decided to have a HAAG community meeting in Geelong.

The meeting was held on the 3rd of April and was attended by 12 HAAG members and interested community members and a representative from the local State Labour MP. We also gave the members the opportunity to provide information to their contacts by providing them with brochures and posters.



On-Demand Community Education

General Community Education this year has been largely a response to requests, with some additional focus on the areas of Wyndham and Whittlesea which saw a huge jump in the number of older renters between 2011 and 2016. (ABS)

A special thanks to Kris Spark who volunteered to assist us with delivering some of the Community Education talks this year.

Webinars

Something new for HAAG this year has been doing webinars for professionals in the sector. Jeff and Gemma delivered a Webinar on Homelessness for Older people for the Australian Association of Gerontologists on the 24th of October 2018.

Fiona and Gemma then delivered a talk for the Victorian Community Care Education and Training Service as Part of a Webinar series for Aged Care workers and managers.

Peer Education

The Peer Education program begun in January this year and the Peer Educators are now in high demand! Peer educators have lived experience of homelessness or being at risk of homelessness and want to help others in similar situations by getting information to them before they are in housing crisis.

The Peer Education group began with a 4 session training program about Home at Last, HAAG and speaking to groups.

Since then we have been involved in the below work:

- Consultation for the Consumer Policy Research Centre- 'Renters Journey' project
- Council For Homeless Persons consultations on changes to the homelessness sector
- Speaking on 3CR Community Radio
- Federation of Community Legal Centres Humans of Public Housing project
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program- speaking to young people about homelessness for older women
- Residential Tenancies Commissioner's tenant's advisory group
- Developing a promotion strategy for mail-outs and talks

As part of our commitment to inclusive practice and diversity, HAAG is working with a group of LGBTI organisations on a project to support older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. The project has been possible thanks to a small grant from StreetSmart and has an overall aim to use early intervention methods to improve the ability of older LGBTI people to navigate the housing and homelessness system to avoid housing crisis.

An important outcome of the project has been making networks and connections. We have successfully developed a steering committee comprised of key LGBTI organisations; Switchboard Victoria, Val's LGBTI Ageing and Aged care, Australian Association of Gerontology, Transgender Victoria, Thorne Harbour Health and Silver Rainbow. Partnership with these organisations will ensure expertise on best practices in working with LGBTI communities and provide HAAG with advice on community engagement strategies from an agency perspective.

The project has a specific focus on identifying the current housing situation of LGBTI older people and their level of awareness of support services and risk factors for homelessness. The project has therefore been conducting a survey as well as interviewing members of the LGBTI community that are over 50 about their experiences with housing.

The trends we are seeing indicate that the LGBTI community faces many of the same housing related challenges that are experienced by the older population as a whole, such as high cost of living and insecurity of tenure in rental properties. In fact, 34% of participants who are renting stated that they are unable to afford the rent. The research has also found that LGBTI elders face additional barriers and challenges when accessing affordable and secure housing, for instance 60% of respondents do not know what services could help them if they felt they were at risk of becoming homeless and a significant number of participants have felt discriminated against when trying to find housing.

As there is a lack of research in this area, our findings will provide rich anecdotal and qualitative data that can be shared with the LGBTI sector, the aged care sector and the housing and homelessness sector. The research will also help inform housing related community education material and resources tailored to the LGBTI community.



First LGBTI Steering Committee Meeting with Rebecca Walton Pauline Crameri, Meredith Butler, Tonye Segbedzi & Fiona York

2018
-
2019

July



16

HAAG ACTIONS AND EVENTS

Launch of Parity Magazine Special Older Persons Issue



Jenny Smith, Fiona Waters, Jeff Fiedler, Dr Debbie Faulkner, Fiona York, & Tegan Leeder attending the Launch at Wintringham. See Page 12 for details

Stall at Southern Migrant Resource Centre

July



10



National Homelessness Conference

August



16



Protestors to protect Public Housing outside the National Homelessness



Jeff Fiedler presenting at the older persons session of the conference

General Meeting - Launching our Election Platform

August



23



Generations of HAAG Staff, Committee Members and kids

Annual General Meeting

November



22



Introducing the new committee at the AGM

National Council of Women Conference, Canberra

December



11



Phyll Williams presenting for HAAG

End of Year Volunteer Celebration

December



13



November



22



Midsumma Festival Stall

January



22



Fiona Waters, Emily Connelly, Christine Stapleton survey to crowd at Midsumma



Gerard Mansour, Gemma White and Fiona York making a meme.

Molly Hadfield and Frances Pennington Awards

February



27



Jennifer Martin and Vanessa Heart nominees for the Social Housing tenants awards

Consultation on Royal Commission into Aged Care

February



28



Launch of Aged Care Service Navigator Trial

April



5



Change the Rules Rally

April



17

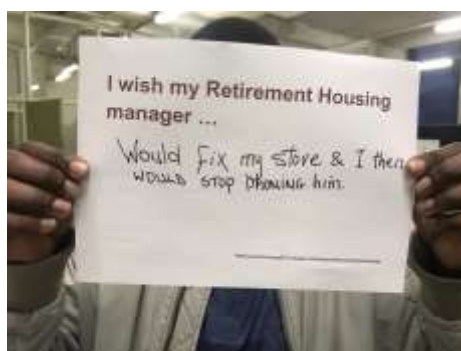


Retirement Housing Day of Action

February



28



HAAG has continued to participate in and conduct research to build the evidence base for improving services and the system. We bring a lived experience to the research through our members and former clients. This year we have participated in the following pieces of research:



Tegan Leeder presents her research findings at our AGM

Victorian Housing Register—is it working as intended?

One of our intake workers, Tegan Leeder, conducted some research into the Victorian Housing Register, also known as the common wait list, to see if it is working as it intended. This research was launched at our AGM in November. The main findings were that housing offers were still coming directly from the housing provider, rather than via the VHR process,

and that some housing providers still require an additional application to be completed (not what the VHR intended). However, the offers that did come directly from the housing provider were often significantly quicker, sometimes less than a month, whereas those through the VHR were often around 12 months.

The Renter's Journey

The Consumer Policy Research Centre conducted research on the private rental market from a renters perspective, and HAAG was on the reference group overseeing the research. We recommended that one of their focus areas be older women, and brought together a group of older women to participate in a focus group about their experiences. This workshop informed the research report – *The Renters Journey: A consumer-centered approach to understanding the dynamics of Australia's private rental market* – which was launched in February.

Big thanks to Gemma White, our community education worker who is quoted in the report, and the participants in the workshop who willingly shared their experiences of the private rental market.



The Renter's Journey

A consumer-centred approach to understanding the dynamics of Australia's private rental market
(Dr Steven Lury)



Leonie Bessant presents her research findings at our AGM

Experience of clients accessing retirement housing information

Leonie Bessant conducted research as part of her Psychology PHD looking at retirement housing information to see how useful it was for people trying to find housing. Those who lacked confidence, lacked computer literacy or had health issues were unlikely to be able to follow up with retirement housing providers, who often had long waitlists and unclear application processes. This indicates that

there is a need for intensive housing support for people to access retirement housing.

Early Intervention to Prevent Homelessness

We partnered with the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) and Deakin University to conduct research, funded through The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust, to measure the impact of improving training for aged care assessment staff. This involves delivering online training about the warning signs that may lead an older person to homelessness and how aged care assessors can make referrals to the Assistance with Care and Housing program. We will then be measuring the health outcomes for clients over 18 months, as well as the cost benefits, of making an early referral. By measuring the effectiveness of this training and referral protocols we hope to be able to advocate for systemic change across the aged care sector nationally.

Research Library

Over the last year, the Ageing on the Edge national project has been developing an online research library to collate as much research as possible on the topic of older people and housing. Developed by Reuben Endean and supported by our volunteer Megan, the research library now contains over 500 pieces of research from across the country and internationally. For the first time, all the research that we can find is stored in one place and able to be searched by topic, location, author and publisher. This research is freely available and not behind "paywalls", as many academic journal articles tend to be. Another great feature of this research library is that anyone can submit articles to it, including members of the public.

All of the research mentioned in this report can be accessed by visiting

oldertenants.org.au/research-library

Victorian State Election

Prior to the election, we lobbied hard for a retirement housing ombudsman, and with our retirement housing partners, met with Heidi Victoria (Lib), Margaret Fitzhibert (Lib), Daniel Mulino (ALP), Samantha Ratnam (Greens), Marlene Kairouz (ALP) and Martin Foley (ALP). The Liberal Party and the Greens committed to establishing an ombudsman, however, the ALP did not and they were returned to Government at the election.

Federal Election

VICTORIA VOTES 2018

Where do Victoria's parties stand on a Retirement Housing Ombudsman?

	LABOR	LIBERAL	THE GREENS
Establish an Ombudsman for Retirement Housing complaints	?	✓	✓
Free for residents	?	?	✓
Makes binding decisions	?	✓	✓
Will cover Villages, Parks and other forms of Retirement Housing	?	✓	✓

[1. https://www.thethirdsector.org.au/health-retirement/victoria-retirement-housing-ombudsman](https://www.thethirdsector.org.au/health-retirement/victoria-retirement-housing-ombudsman)
[2. https://pdp360.org.au/retirement-housing-ombudsman](https://pdp360.org.au/retirement-housing-ombudsman) (MGP Housing Ombudsman @PDP360)





WE BRING ABOUT THE AGING ACTION COALITION

Address homelessness and rising housing stress among older people with major investment in affordable housing. Visit everybodyshere.com.au

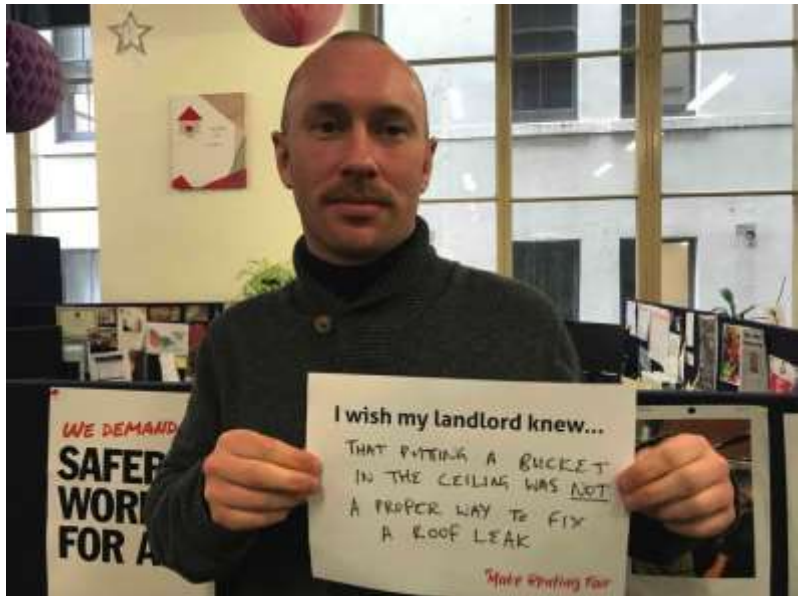
Address poverty among older people in Newstart Allowance by raising the rate of their entitlements. Visit rebutethere.org.au

Appropriate support services for older people to navigate housing, health and aged care systems. Visit olderbetrans.org.au/aging

<p>A rapidly increasing number of older Australians are facing an uncertain housing future.</p>				
		* \$90,000 over 10 years & 4 years more income	* Raise the rate of Newstart Allowance by 250 per week	* Find a local independent support group (07 5511 0111 or 13 11 14)
<p>At the federal election on May 18th, we need to elect a Federal Government who will implement a National Older Persons Housing Strategy to keep older Australians healthy, housed and at home.</p>				
		* \$50,000 over 10 years & 4 years more income	* Reduce the rate of Newstart Allowance	* Find a local independent support group (07 5511 0111 or 13 11 14)
<p>Consult this checklist to see where the parties stand on the issues that matter for older people in housing stress.</p>				
		* No commitment to lift the aged care waiting list	* No plan for the 200,000	* No specific policy commitments for housing, aged care, transport, health

Consultations with Government

We contributed extensively to the Residential Tenancies Act reform, which you can read about in the retirement housing service part of this report. This involved supporting the Make Renting Fair campaign, led by the Tenants Union, and working with other tenant advocate groups to ensure a good outcome for older tenants. We were pleased to see some good results for caravan park and residential park residents, including compensation for park closures.



Our members participated in a consultations with the Department of Water, Land, Environment and Planning about Caravan Park regulations.

We also participated in the Homelessness Sector reform, attending a number of workshops during the year about the future of the homelessness system, and are now represented on the Executive Advisory Group, led by Council to Homeless Persons on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Submissions and non-government consultations

- Staff and members attended a consultation on designing an effective homeless system for older people, run by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)
- Staff attended a consultation on developing a national Elder Abuse knowledge hub, run by Elder Abuse Action Australia
- We made a joint submission with Consumer Action Law Centre, Council on the Ageing and Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria on the Property Council's Retirement Living Code of Conduct for operators
- We made two submissions to the terms of reference for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- We made a submission to the Streamlined Consumer Assessment for Aged Care

Housing for the Aged Action Group Inc

ABN: 80 348 538 001

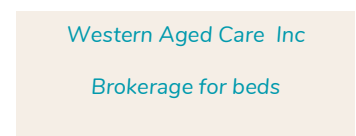
Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Total Income	2,448,852	2,045,175
Expenses		
Employee benefits expense	1,600,745	1,465,471
Depreciation and amortisation expense	24,330	32,230
Client Brokerage	279,520	226,669
Rent	63,005	57,164
Office expenses	75,181	60,920
Motor Vehicle Expenses	46,538	45,450
Accounting & Consultancy fees	72,601	103,194
Travel and Accommodation	63,914	19,057
Training & Development	20,266	36,548
Meeting expenses	13,918	11,032
Other expenses	34,470	20,503
Total Expenses	2,294,488	2,078,238
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	154,364	(33,063)

The Committee of Management is pleased with the financial outcome of the 2018-2019 financial year. With a net surplus of over \$154,000 we have made a significant contribution to our financial viability for the years ahead.

We received \$2,448,841 in revenue this year, an increase of 19% when compared with the previous financial year. Most surplus income came from non-recurrent project income. HAAG successfully partnered and/or received grants from the following organisations:



HAAG received nearly \$54,000 in donations in the 2018-2019 financial year. Our thanks go to the following non-member organisations for their generous support for our organisation:

- The Ducas Paul Foundation
- Staff at the Northern Victoria Zone of the Australian Government Department of Human Services (funds raised by a casual clothes day at Centrelink offices)
- CWA, Sydney Road, Brunswick Branch
- The Channel Giving Circle – towards the LGBTI Elders project

A very special thank-you to our members – too many to mention here - for providing us with financial support; your contributions are gratefully received.

We continue to have ongoing financial stability with recurrent funding provided by the state government (Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Justice (Consumer Affairs Vic) and the federal government (Department of Health and Ageing).

Expenditure increased by \$216,248, mostly due to increased project activity. As the grant income was substantial, it easily covered the increased expenditure.

At year end, our retained earnings has risen by \$154,000 and HAAG has a total equity of \$616,392.

The Committee believes this provides a good level of security for HAAG to enable the staff team to continue to provide high level delivery of services and important advocacy and community development for and with low income older people.

Thank you to all those that have assisted in keeping the HAAG finances in check!



Congratulations Treasurer Peter Sibly on your nomination for the Commonwealth Bank Treasurer of the Year Award.

Given our current outstanding financial position despite many challenges, we'll be nominating you again in 2020!

Increasing our digital reach

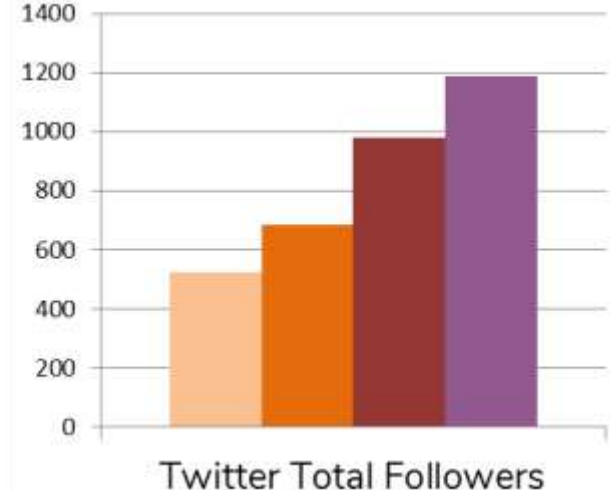
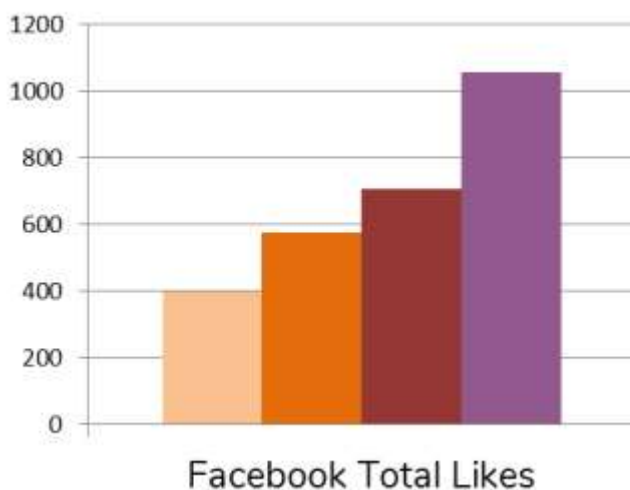
Our online platforms help grow our campaigns and let people know about our services. Our Facebook follower numbers are catching up with our Twitter followers, which we believe represent more community members learning about the service than sector workers and academics. The number of unique visitors to the website each month demonstrates this increased reach.

2015-2016

2016-2017

2017-2019

2018-2019



oldertenants.org.au



HousingfortheAged
ActionGroup



@HAAGHomeAtLast



3CR 855 AM

Every second Wednesday 5:30pm to 6:00pm

oldertenants.org.au/podcasts

HAAG in the News

Our projects have also been making headlines around the country, here are just a few news stories from the year-that-was.

July 2018

The Senior News

Long, long wait for public housing

by SHAWN GARRICK

MELBOURNE based over the housing support service team at Last is appalled at the findings of the inquiry into the Public Housing Review Process.

The inquiry report, which is a state parliament, revealed that a redevelopment in Kensington, which was a model for the rest of the state, reduced the total number of public and community houses by 30 per cent, and the number of bedrooms by 54 per cent.

Public housing was sold off for 5 per cent of its market value.

Those at last client service manager April Briggs described the findings as "outrageous".

"We have over 62,000 people on the public housing waitlist, growing by 10,000 every month, and all the government has effectively done is make the waiting even longer," she said.

"We absolutely support the intention of the government to make the public housing system more efficient, but it's not about making the number of affordable homes and bedrooms while public housing is being sold off. That's the problem."

The House of Last senior, which serves more than 1000 cars from older people in housing stress every year, is frustrated by the waitlist. The report says it is due to poor management of the waiting list of public housing.

"We have a 60-year-old grandfather with a wife whose husband has sold off and she has to sleep in her daughter's room for the next year," Mr Briggs said.

"We also have several men in their late 80s sleeping in their cars for the last 10 to 15 months, still waiting for a house, and we're still waiting to see the benefits of this scheme."

The report says the public housing system has been able to house up to 10 million older people every month. Since the redevelopment began, waitlist has increased. Last month it was down to four.

"We had high hopes the scheme would result in lower older people in housing stress, but this program and its poor planning has made the situation worse," Mr Briggs said.

"I need to take one to three months to house our clients. Now the average waitlist for the highest priority group is over 12 months. It's not good enough."

Mr Briggs said.

www.oldernews.org.au

article 2532

System in stress

The report points a grim picture of a program falling on already stressed in-house public housing system.

The consultation with community organizations has been flawed and confusing, with many programs outcomes unclear. Chief Margaret Pittsford said for more transparency is needed to be able to know whether it is achieving its objectives.

The report considers the program's first stage, the sale of land at state Melbourne public housing estates to developers who will replace existing stock with a mixture of public housing and private dwellings.

It notes the number of people on the Public Housing Register grew by 1000 in the first three months of this year alone. Yet through the current program, while the number of dwellings with this, the number of last people will actually decline.

The report also looked at previous criteria on land sales, including instances where public land had been sold to developers for a fraction of its market value. It made 28 recommendations, focusing on community consultation, better to transport, planning issues and reporting of outcomes.

Download the report: www.oldernews.org.au/last/article/2532

"OUTRAGED" - This is how home at last describes the ever-increasing wait for public housing.



Retirement village residents unhappy about complex contracts and fees

PJ30, By Lachlan Day
Posted 20 Jun 2018, 3:00pm



VIDEO: The cost of getting out of a retirement village. (7/30)

The aged care royal commission has uncovered some shocking stories about the treatment of older Australians. But the housing that many older Australians depend on, retirement villages, falls outside its scope.

RELATED STORY: What have we heard at the aged care royal commission so far?

RELATED STORY: Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety: How did we get here?

RELATED STORY: Home care industry faces crackdown amid

System failing older renters as homelessness threatens

Elaine Ward

26 Jun 2019, 6:47pm

Latest News



HOMELESSNESS: An increasing reality for older Queenslanders. Action group want to hear your rental crisis story.

BUSINESS, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, RETIREMENT LIVING

Retirement village operator charged after abandoning residents

By Adele Ferguson & Sarah Dennerst
August 7, 2018 - 3:07pm

Facebook Twitter Email Print

View all comments

About a year after state authorities severely intervened in and then shut down Berkeley Living, where bedridden residents were left to fend for themselves in the wake of a staff walkout, Consumer Affairs Victoria has begun criminal proceedings against the man operating the retirement village.

In a media statement, Consumer Affairs Victoria alleged Stephen Snowden operated the retirement village in Patterson Lakes between July and September 2017 when he was not permitted to do so.



THE QUESTION

We asked three industry figures:

How can we improve access to secure permanent housing for older people in need?

Assessment and assistance programs need reform to better respond seniors at risk of homelessness

I AM WORKING on the Aging on the Edge Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project, which was launched in response to recent research warning of rapidly increasing problems facing older people on low incomes in Australia.

Senior represents the so-called new face of older people at risk of homelessness in Australia (see business below). This story is typical of more than 172,000 people in Australia aged 65-plus who desperately need good rental housing to enable them to age well.

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

Many people affected have lived largely unexamined lives but have, for a range of reasons, not applied for or obtained home ownership for 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 is working in partnership with a range of community agencies across Australia to increase awareness of older persons housing issues, improve older persons' access to housing, and ensure better availability of services that can help older people in housing difficulty.

Vulnerable older people need help to access housing, including: the provision of services to help older people in housing difficulty; the provision of services to help older people in housing difficulty; the provision of services to help older people in housing difficulty.

Key aged care assessment services do not know how to effectively assess and refer older people at risk of homelessness to services that can help.



Jeff Carter

- The Assistance with Care and Housing (AWCH) Program funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program provides one-to-one support for older people at risk of homelessness but it needs more government support to operate adequately.
- There is a lack of service response to the homelessness issue as there are only three older persons homelessness services out of 5,518 agencies in Australia.
- While our last service program in Victoria provides a state-wide one-stop shop of housing information, support and referral for older people based and working in cooperation with the aged care and homelessness sectors, it is the only service of its type in Australia.
- Each of these areas would have a significant impact to help the thousands of older people who need decent, one-time assistance to enable them to transition into affordable housing. Once housed, they can generally go on to live happy, healthy and productive lives with minimal ongoing support needed.
- As well as achieving wonderful outcomes for all older people, assisted, government involvement in these areas is very cost effective as it provides one-off expenditure to help older people transition into secure housing. This compares favourably with the current outcomes that under the provision of crisis housing, health decline including hospitalisation and premature entry into residential aged care accommodation.

Jeff Carter is national development worker at Housing for the Aged Action Group and co-leads on the national Aging on the Edge Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project.

Cultural Diversity Week shines light on housing struggle

With the increasing population putting pressure on the housing market many older Australians are facing the prospect of living on the streets.

Posted 7 months ago by Nicole Pope

CONSUMERS CULTURE AWARENESS, HOME & COMMUNITY, HOUSING

This struggle is even more daunting for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and is an issue that's been highlighted at Cultural Diversity Week, Victoria's largest multicultural celebration running from March 16-24.

Studies from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have shown more than





HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

www.oldertenants.org.au

Phone: 03 9654 7389

Freecall: 1300 765 178

Fax: 03 9654 3407

1st Floor Ross House

247 - 251 Flinders Lane

Melbourne Vic 3000

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