



**WINTER June 2012**

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

# ***Older Tenants' Voice - Since 1988***



Above: Molly and Amy for International Women's Day

**HAAG IS ON RADIO 3CR**

**'Raise the Roof'**

Wednesdays once a month at 6pm

855 on the AM dial

Next shows: 27 June 25 July 22 August

Welcome to the June edition of Older Tenants' Voice.

We have an exciting newsletter this quarter with news of our recent success in funding for a new service, article by Jeff Fiedler on pages 4 & 5.

Janet Reid our project worker has written an article, featured on pages 6 & 7, about our residents' committee project funded by the Victoria Law Foundation. The project is at the half way point and so far has produced some fascinating information.

We have news about our upcoming forum in July on page 8 and as always our working groups have contributed articles for you to keep up to date with their work.

A member of our Caravan and Residential parks and villages working group has written a profile on her village, featured on page 9.

Independent Living Units working group member Sally Stabback has written an article on page 10.

We also have a contribution for our community connections section, written by Debra Parnell of Council on the Ageing, on page 11, as well as a contribution by Colin Hiscoe of Reinforce.

We hope you enjoy the June edition of the HAAG newsletter.

Thank you for all of the valuable contributions—it is your voice that makes our newsletter informative and inspirational.

The HAAGies!

### **Research projects**

HAAG is currently involved in two research projects. Firstly, we have combined with the Chisholm Institute's community development course by hosting two students-on-placement, Mary Morrissey and Liza Lucas. Mary and Liza are developing a qualitative research questionnaire that they will use in interviews with approximately 10 HAAG clients who have been at risk of homelessness. The aim of the research is to get an understanding of the reasons why older people may have reached a point of housing crisis. The analysis will develop an understanding of the person's housing history to determine what led them to be living in vulnerable housing circumstances, as well as document the crisis experience and the eventual housing outcomes. So if you have had such an experience yourself and would be interested in being involved in the research please get in touch with us at the office. Your personal details will be kept completely confidential. This project will run from June to September 2012.

HAAG is also collaborating with Hanover Welfare Services to conduct research to discover whether gender and location are factors that cause or contribute to older people experiencing homelessness. This research is a follow up on previous work conducted by Hanover researchers Dr. Shelley Mallett and Trish Westmore with their landmark report Ageing in What Place that was released at HAAG's Ageing on the Edge Forum in June 2011. A number of HAAG clients and members are contributing to this study and the work will be another valuable contribution to gaining a better understanding of the housing issues affecting older people on low incomes in Victoria. This research is gratefully funded by The Mercy Foundation.



International Women's Day  
From left: Ani, April, Amy, Ena, Kaye and Shanny  
Purple haze!



Pick the HAAGie....  
Photo from the 'unofficial' launch of the Retirement Villages protocols with other  
fellow roundtable participants and Minister of Consumer Affairs Victoria -  
Michael O'Brien.

## HOME AT LAST !

In perhaps the biggest service advancement in HAAG's history we are pleased to announce that we have been successful in obtaining funding for one of ten projects under the Homelessness Innovations Action Projects as part of the Victorian government's Homelessness Action Plan. The ten projects are initiatives that aim to provide innovative ways to address homelessness with a focus on prevention and early intervention strategies.

HAAG's project is called Home at Last – Older persons homelessness prevention and re-housing service and we aim to greatly expand our services to be able to help any older person in Victoria who is at risk of homelessness.

### **Homelessness tragedy**

As all our members know, homelessness has been a major social problem for many years. The government definition of homelessness includes people who are sleeping rough, as well as people staying in temporary, unstable or substandard accommodation and there are about 105,000 people homeless on any given night in Australia.

### **Government strategies**

Homelessness strategies started from the Rudd Government and many HAAG members will remember that the first directive by Prime Minister Rudd when they were elected was to send all MPs to homelessness shelters to witness this modern tragedy in our society. Since then the Commonwealth government has been working on a strategy to halve homelessness by 2020. This was documented in the report called The Road Home. The Road Home took steps to address the needs of older rough sleepers and organisations like Wintringham services were funded to establish aged care supported housing. The government also amended the Aged Care Act that now provides priority access for older people needing residential care.

### **Older renters not acknowledged**

While The Road Home was a landmark report HAAG was critical of one major omission. It failed to acknowledge what we see as a high need and neglected group – older people at risk of homelessness due to the threat of eviction, particularly in the private rental market. Why have older renters missed out in government plans? Well, we know that our society has quite polarized views of older people. On one hand older people are primarily seen as home owners and therefore have housing security, or, older homeless people are only recognised as those mainly male rough sleepers who have multiple problems that cause their homelessness such as alcohol/drug abuse, mental illness etc.

It has also been difficult to prove our argument about the needs of older renters when older people rarely go to homelessness crisis centres through fear of being offered short term and sometime dangerous situations in which to live. Only 1.7% of clients who are assisted by such services are over the age of 65. The only specialist service for older people, the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) Program is pitifully funded at \$4.6 million nationally and has not documented the problems faced by the clients who they assist.

As we have shown on many occasions, older private renters do not have security of tenure, private rental housing is unaffordable, housing conditions are often very poor, and it is often impossible to get landlords to agree to aged care modifications when needed.

HAAG estimates that there are up 120,000 people over 55 years of age in this situation at present. The future also looks bleak with the Australian Housing and Urban research Institute (AHURI) estimating that growth in the number of people over 65 in need of low cost rental housing is expected to increase from 110,800 to 243,600, an increase of 120 per cent, from 2001 to 2026. Approximately two-thirds of these households will be sole women.

### **Breakthrough in government response**

Thankfully the Victorian government has been more forward thinking. Firstly, the Brumby government produced a report called Homelessness 2020 that finally acknowledged older people as a distinct high need group. The Baillieu government then followed up with a Homelessness Action Plan that importantly has had a focus on prevention and early intervention strategies to end homelessness.

### **HAAG campaign**

So HAAG has entered this debate and has been campaigning for the last three years to highlight the needs of older people in the private rental market. We have given presentations to a number of conferences, collaborated with AHURI on research (which is continuing) and our actions culminated in our national Ageing on the Edge Forum in June 2011 where concerned agencies from across Australia came together to take action. This also combined with our latest film on the issue that is still available to view on our website at [www.olderrentants.org.au](http://www.olderrentants.org.au).

### **What will the Home at Last service provide?**

The proposed service will be fully operating from July 2012 and has the following integrated components: Home at Last will develop an information strategy that will promote housing options to daily community contact points and conduct promotion activities and publicity across a wide range of media.

Secondly Home at Last will introduce a referral system with a wide range of government and non-government agencies that are in contact with older people at risk of homelessness.

Most importantly the service will offer an assistance, support and re-housing process that will assess the needs of older people who make contact with the service and link them into HAAG's existing services, including our tenancy advice and retirement housing services, as well as a wide range of external agencies who can assist to house vulnerable older people. Once housed, HAAG or the local agency will ensure that the client is linked into the community service supports that they need.

So, if we are going to increase our services then where will all these people be housed? This of course is the real problem that needs to be addressed by government. While the Home at Last service will use every advocacy 'trick in our book' to try to find positive housing outcomes, we will continue to lobby hard to get increases in housing supply. To this end we are also partnering with Professor Andrew Jones at Queensland University to develop a comprehensive data collection system so that we can document the scale and detail of the housing problems faced by older people at risk of homelessness in Victoria.

Please drop in anytime and see us at our new office on the first floor at Ross House.



April and Kaye compiling the submission and Jeff heading off to deliver the final copy.





# Caravan & Residential Parks Residents' Committee Project

## Mornington gardens new residents committee

### Milestone Report

**PROJECT BRIEF-** Early this year HAAG was successful in obtaining a grant from the Victorian Law Foundation to run a project called Caravan & Residential Villages Resident Committees Project. The main aim of this project is to identify the value, barriers, stages and resources needed for residents committees of permanent residents in a caravan or residential park.

A steering committee of Jeff Fiedler, Shanny Gordon and Wynn Stenton was formed and on March 13, 2012, Janet Reid began as the Project Worker for the project. Janet brings 20 years experience of working in the community sector particularly with the homeless. She has a background in administration, training and project development and has been working

### MAIN OBJECTIVES:

Research Residents Committees

- The value they bring
- The barriers to forming, running effectively and/or maintaining
- Resources needed to support residents
- Identify the stages of a residents committee

Mapping of all Caravan & Residential Parks in the Gippsland and Southern Metropolitan Region with permanent residents.

Working with key stakeholders to develop resources for Residents Committees

The project will run for 4 months providing much needed research, resource and recommendations for residents committees and those working with them.



Janet Reid  
Project Officer



Shanny Gordon  
Retirement Housing Officer

*"You have to weigh up the benefits of a residents committee with the effort of resistance"*  
*Resident in a Residential Village*

**Victoria Law Foundation**

# Meeting Residents .....

One of the main objectives of the project is talking to residents asking them about residents committees, barriers to starting one and what resources are needed to support residents. Visits were made to the following parks/villages:

## GIPPSLAND REGION

Green Acres Relocatable Village, Traralgon  
Mayfair Gardens Relocatable Village, Traralgon  
Lakes Entrance Relocatable Village, Lakes Entrance

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA REGION

Marina Van View, Hastings  
Mornington Gardens, Mornington  
Dromana Holiday Village, Dromana  
Willow Lodge, Carrum Downs

So far the visits have shown residents like where they live and like the people in the park/village. Some of the main issues for residents were having security of tenure and communication pathways with management.

## Working with Parks & Stakeholders

Park Owners and Managers are a key stakeholder in the life of a residents committee and speaking to them was a great insight into the thoughts and processes of park management. The project will focus more on this part in the second half.

Engaging with key stakeholders was important to get a holistic view of residents committees and meetings were held with the following stakeholders:

- Vic Parks
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Mornington Shire
- Tenants Union Victoria
- Lifestyle Communities
- Lifestyle Villages

## Mapping the Parks/Villages

Identifying where permanent residents in caravan and residential villages are. Is important part of the project. This will help in distributing information and vital support. In 2008 HAAG produced a Caravan Park and Residential Villages Directory and using that as a starting point, plus information provided by Vic Parks, Seniors Information Victoria and Mornington Shire the list of all current Caravan Parks and Residential Villages will be updated reflecting the type of park as Holiday, Annual or Permanent Resident or a combination of any/all. Due to the timeline of the project the Gippsland and Southern Metro region will be the key focus of the project.

### RESIDENT QUESTIONS:

- What is the benefit of a residents committee?
- What are barriers to starting a committee?
- What has worked and what hasn't worked?
- What advice would you give another group looking to start a committee?
- What resources do you need to start a residents committee and to keep it going?

### STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS

- What are your thoughts on residents committees?
- What are the barriers for residents committees?
- What are the resources needed for residents committees?

*"Having a Residents Committees is just good business, we make it part of our community development plan"*  
*Owner of Residential Village*

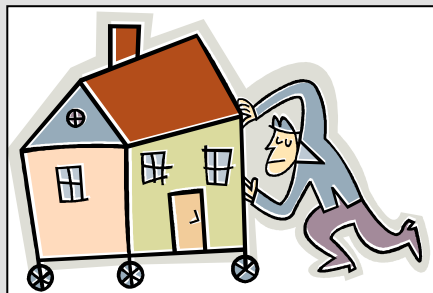


## *Housing for the Aged Action Group 2012 **FORUM***

### ***Securing Our Future:***

### ***Retirement in Residential Parks and Villages in Victoria***

*Security of tenure and resident/management relations focusing on regional and rural Victoria*



Date: 12 July 2012  
Time: 10am to 4pm  
Venue: Multicultural Hub - Blue Room  
506 Elizabeth St, Melbourne  
(opposite Queen Victoria Market)  
Cost: \$10 at the door

**Guest Speaker:** David Michael Bunce

University of Adelaide—Masters by Research in Relocatable Homes, currently undertaking a PhD in Housing co-operatives including residential parks co-operatives.

**Participation by:** Vic Parks, Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Tenants Union of Victoria.

**Forum launch:** Minister for Consumer Affairs (to be confirmed)

If you are a caravan or residential park or village resident and you would like to attend the forum please contact HAAG to register your attendance  
by **29 June 2012**.

**If you would like to let us know about your park or village, or you have a story or experience to share in relation to your housing, please send us your contribution for our Spring newsletter.**

**NEXT NEWSLETTER:** SPRING EDITION — September 2012  
Articles due 24 August

Send articles to: 1st floor, Ross House,  
247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000

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



For a while now many of you have probably had the luck of calling HAAG's office and speaking to Ena Ahern, our long time Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) intake worker with a glorious Irish accent.

Well we must share with you that Ena has recently retired from her position and we would like to take this opportunity to honour her hard work at HAAG over many years.

Ena began as a student on placement, went on to volunteer her time with the organisation and then moved into a permanent role as the Victorian intake worker for the ACHA program. Ena established a wonderful intake system and had an amazing flair for creating referral networks.

We thank Ena for her valuable contribution to HAAG where she will be always be welcomed as a HAAGie.

May the road ahead be filled with much joy and love for you Ena!



Hello members and readers alike of this edition of the "Older Tenants' Voice". We are fast approaching the time of year when memberships are due for renewal. The membership year runs from 1st July to 30th June each year.

All memberships are due for renewal. If you have received this newsletter through the post and there is a membership form and return address envelope enclosed, we ask that you check the mailing address, complete the form, pop it in to the envelope, add a stamp and post it back to us.

We look forward to your support as we grow our membership.  
Thank you. Kaye

## **Parks and villages residents' news - VILLAGE PROFILE**

Federation Village Werribee  
The Village where I live.

I would like to write about the village where my husband and I have lived for the past 8 years. We can't speak highly enough about our lovely village.

We feel as though we are on a permanent holiday with the lifestyle we enjoy - our facilities and gardens are wonderful.

We have made many new friends and thoroughly enjoy the many activities put on for us by our social club.

We are also very lucky to have the managers we have. We wish all village people were as happy and lucky as we are.

Marion Daye

## INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS SUB-COMMITTEE

We had a change of focus at our April meeting. We seemed to have been floundering for direction for a while and with Jeff's help we are suspending meetings for a couple of months and having forums as there is a great deal of confusion surrounding just the title of Independent Living Unit (ILU). It means different things to different people and there are an awful lot of different ILU's as follows –

Rental units

Residential Parks

Group Housing

Rooming Houses

Older persons Units in social housing

Pension Plus SR6

We started the day by looking at the Humanitas project started by Hans Becker in Holland which is basically “vertical villages” with a mix of owned and social housing, as well as shops and restaurants on the ground level accessible to the wider community to allow for increased social interaction. This housing has a “yes culture”. If a problem arises – lets find a “yes” answer to it rather than “no”. A resident may have 6 dogs – all a bit much for a small unit so that resident may be prepared to share her animals with residents who don't have one at all.

We will be looking at all the common elements of older persons housing and where there needs to be reform and protection. There is a multiplicity of legislation which we will separate into different aspects (eg., tenure, services, notices, financial, management/resident relationships and so on) and then go on from there.

We are feeling revitalized and refreshed and feel we have something to get our teeth in to.

The day after the April meeting I went to a talk by Dr. Alex Kalache who is the resident Thinker in South Australia and the founder of Age Friendly Cities movement. This concept is based on Copacobana in South America where he grew up – again mixed housing with facilities which can be walked to. He made many interesting points about housing and transport which is - what is suitable for the elderly has benefits for everyone. Homes with doors wide enough for wheelies and scooters are good for prams and disabled people as with ramps and so on. We are living in an unprecedented time in history because of the increased numbers of older people. The baby boomers will age loudly and with solidarity. Mr Kalache says Australia is not an ossified country as are many others and as a society we are creative, flexible, wealthy and privileged.

(He also informed us that the “The Girl from Ipanema” who we all remember is now an old lady!!!!)

Sally Stabback

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

*a chance for other hard working individuals to share and promote the work they do.*

COTA (Council on the Ageing) is the peak body in Victoria representing the views and interests of Senior Victorians. COTA has a long history of ensuring older people's voices are heard in the development of public policy. We think it is important to consult with the community so that our research and policies focus on the issues of greatest concern to older Victorians. We work towards positive change by advocating to governments, departments, services and organisation, the media, and the public in general.

Our policy work covers a wide range of issues – from Ageism to Volunteering and a myriad of issues in between!

Recently our work has focused in particular on the issues of

Rights of Older people - we have been working with Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission on this issue, and have recently conducted a survey on the experiences of older drivers in relation to licensing practices.

Aged Care Reform – we have been holding discussion forums across the state on what people want in an aged care system and the recent proposals for reform

Climate change – older people are concerned about the environment and the future we are leaving our children and grandchildren. Older people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but are also a resource in addressing these issues. We are building a network of older people who are, or who want to be active in this area.

For more information on the range of issues we are working on, and how you can be involved visit our website – [www.cotavic.org.au](http://www.cotavic.org.au) Or contact Debra Parnell, Manager of COTA's Policy Unit on 9655 2106.

### **REINFORCE — EXCITING NEWS**

Reinforce has produced a new training package called:

***My House, My Home, My Rights in a Community Residential Unit (CRU)***

This is a training package about rights and creative solutions in CRU's. It is a guide for running training sessions for CRU staff and there is also a manual for CRU residents.

Each manual has a checklist to follow as you prepare for sessions, handouts for each session to photocopy and two hour session plans.

The package has four tools:

- Training manual for residents
- Training manual for staff
- A DVD with 2 films
- A folding card with a summary of rights and contacts.

For further information please contact training officer Colin Hiscoe on 9650 7855.

HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

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Melbourne 3000.

Ph: 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.)

1800 637 389 (country)

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HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP

## WHAT IS HAAG?

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

There are four main aspects to our service:

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



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

So ring us on (03) 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.) or 1800 637 389 (country callers)  
Address: 1st Floor Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne. 3000.  
Email: [haag@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:haag@oldertenants.org.au) web: [www.oldertenants.org.au](http://www.oldertenants.org.au)