

Older Tenants' Voice

HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.



MARCH 2012

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

**HAAG IS
ON RADIO**

3CR

**'Raise the
Roof'**

**Wednesdays
once a month
at 6pm**

855

**On the
AM dial**

Next shows

28 March

25 April

23 May

IN THIS ISSUE:

Editors note **p. 2**

HAAG General Meeting notice **p. 3**

The closure of Bayside City Council's ILUs **p. 4-6**

Caravan and Residential Parks residents' committee
project **p. 7**

Retirement Villages—the topic of the moment **p. 8**

Photos and news **p. 9**

Park Profile **p. 10**

Next newsletter notice **p. 11**



EDITORS NOTE

So we meet again.

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2012.

We have had a busy few months and there are a lot of updates to give.

You will hear about the progress of the Caravan and Residential Parks Resident's Committee project (we found our project worker!).

We will also tell you about a campaign we have been involved with to keep some Independent Living Units (ILUs) open in Bayside.

Hopefully we can cover most of our news in this edition but take note there is also a General Meeting for HAAG members this month (details on the next page) to enable us to share even more with you.

In 2012 you will find we have introduced a new section in the newsletter called 'Park Profiles'. This provides an opportunity for you to describe the park where you live. We thought it might be a good opportunity to get to know the kind of landscapes people are living in.

As usual we still have our Working Group sections and Community Connections too, although this time around we could not muster enough contributions. Hopefully we have better luck next time.

Anyway we hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter.

We have enjoyed compiling it for you!

The HAAGies

Photo on front cover:

HAAGies XMAS lunch December 2011

Right to left: Ani, Kaye, April, Nini, Ena, Crystal, Shanny

HAAG

GENERAL MEETING

Date: Thursday 15 March 2012

Time: 11am - 1pm

Room: Hayden Ray Smith room
Fourth floor - meeting room 1

HAAG: 2nd floor Ross House
247– 251 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne

You are invited to attend our first
member's meeting for 2012.
Come and catch up with all the
latest HAAG news.
Light lunch provided.

BAYSIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS: KEEP THE UNITS OPEN!

Bayside City Council has made a decision to close their Independent Living Units (ILUs) in Beaumaris and Sandringham.

In late 2011 the residents received a letter stating that the units would close in June 2013.

There are 18 units in total and 14 are currently occupied, with a total of 15 tenants.

4 units are empty, and have been for some time. Although refurbished Bayside City Council decided the empty units would not be filled due to their decision to close. One ILU in Beaumaris has apparently been empty for 2 years.

HAAG first became aware of this situation after a resident living in the Sandringham ILUs called in distress about the prospect of the units being closed and the residents being evicted.

Bayside City Council told the residents their priority was to relocate them, with as much support as possible, into alternative housing that would be the same if not better than the ILUs. What they have failed to work out is how to do this and where to find the housing.

Naturally the residents do not want to move. There is a lot of fear and distress because of this decision made by Council without any community consultation.

The residents have built lives and communities in these areas and they have built homes in these units. For some these units provided a roof over their head when there were no other options available.

HAAG is currently campaigning, in collaboration with concerned Bayside community members, to support the tenants and keep the units open.

On Saturday 25 February 2012 a community BBQ was held on-site at the Beaumaris ILUs to show support for the tenants. It was organised by community members with HAAG's support.

Approximately 150 community members attended. Channel 7 filmed the event and featured it on the 6 o'clock news that same night.

The sausages, the barbeque on which to cook them and water were donated by very gracious community businesses.

Everything else was provided by a core group of community members that have tackled this situation with determination to overthrow Council's decision—and they are well on their way to making this happen. Continued over page..

It was an inspirational and powerful show of support by the community for these residents and it was an honour to be involved.

HAAG is now seeking wider support for these residents and the units, from both individuals and other organisations. We want Bayside City Council to investigate all options before deciding to close the ILUs.

In a housing climate where supply does not meet demand we cannot stand to lose anymore units, especially ones in perfectly good condition.



Above:

Sandringham ILUs

Right:

Beaumaris ILUs



If you would like to show your support, and fight to keep the units open, please contact us.

Caravan and residential parks residents' committee project

In November 2011 we received the exciting news that the Victoria Law Foundation had accepted our proposal to run a residents' committee project for caravan and residential parks residents, in line with the Part 4A changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.

This will be a 6 month pilot project focused on information distribution and resident support, to let residents know they have a right to form committees under the Act and to assist them to form those committees.

The project will concentrate its energies mostly within the Southern Metropolitan Region and the Gippsland Region.

This work will begin on Tuesday 13 March 2012, and brings the addition of a new HAAG team member for this project period.

Janet Reid will be the project worker for this 6 month project. We are very excited to welcome her to HAAG!

Throughout the following 6 months we look forward to keeping you updated on Janet's progress and the progress of the project.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

RETIREMENT VILLAGES - THE TOPIC OF THE MOMENT

The discussion around retirement villages, the need for reform and for more accessible information and advice, has been long awaited.

In October 2011 Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) released a Retirement Villages discussion paper, asking for submissions to comment on contract and disclosure options for villages. The intention is to undertake some regulation reform which is most welcome.

As a follow up to the discussion paper, and the many submissions received in December 2011, a consultation forum was held with key stakeholders on 22 February 2012.

In line with this topic the Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) held a discussion on 27 February 2012 about how they could best step into the arena of retirement village policy and advocacy, a very welcome addition in HAAG's perspective.

We are hoping that this line of thinking and investigating means some well-needed reform in this sector might be on the cards.

What it does, at least, is opens the way for a more honest and open discussion about the issues and concerns residents have within the Not-For-Profit Retirement Village sector (also known as ILUs).

We will keep you updated on the results of the discussions above.



Photo from left:

Hon Wendy Lovell, Denise,
Member for Bentleigh Elizabeth
Miller

Denise Muir, long-time member of HAAG, won the 2011 Penington Award for public and community housing tenants who have made an outstanding contribution to their community. Congratulations Denise!

Photo from left:

(Back): Ena, April, Crystal

(Front): Kaye, Nini,
Shanny



This photo was taken at Nini's birthday celebration, and farewell, in February.

Nini was with us on placement for several months and finished up at the beginning of February. Nini's contribution and hard work was very appreciated. As a result Nini had outstanding study outcomes.

Thank you Nini and good luck for the future!

Parks and villages residents' news

PARK PROFILE

Summerhill Residential Park

The park where I live.

A summary of the current landscape:

- Site leases are being offered for 3 years or less.
- Rents differ between residents, depending on when you entered the park.
- The park owner also charges \$30 per extra person staying over a period of 7 days in any calendar month.
- Residents must now pay deferred management fees.
- Residents do not have individual choice of utility suppliers as the park owner buys 'in bulk'.
- There is no on-site manager, although the contract, park brochure and council permit state there should be.
- Due to the park being built on a tip the roads have become undulated and are in need of repair, and some units have to be lifted.
- The park has only one entry/exit at the front, which in an emergency would not be appropriate, given emergency vehicles would be trying to enter and residents might be trying to exit at the same time.
- Management holds a residents meeting once every 6 months to air grievances.
- Although the garden and maintenance persons are meant to take care of the front gardens of each site, as well as communal areas, residents must make a request to the office to have their front garden attended to.

This is the park where I live.

Lionel Foster

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Older Tenants' Voice

with Parks and Villages residents' news
and ILU residents' news!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

We hope you can contribute to our June
2012 newsletter.

Send articles to:

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

Or email: shanny.gordon@oldertenants.org.au

HAVE YOUR SAY!

HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

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

Ph: 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.)

1800 637 389 (country)

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HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP

WHAT IS HAAG?

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

There are four main aspects to our service:

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



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

So ring us on (03) 9654 7389 (Melb. metro.) or 1800 637 389 (country callers)

Address: 2nd Floor Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne. 3000.

Email: haag@oldertenants.org.au web: www.oldertenants.org.au