

# NOPHN



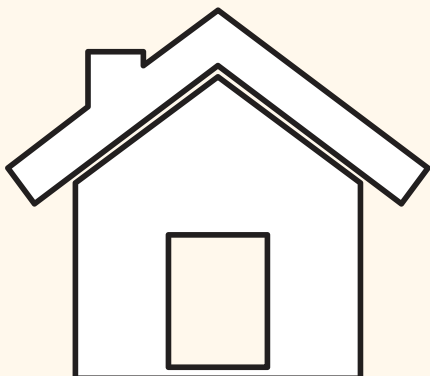
NATIONAL OLDER PERSONS HOUSING  
NETWORK(NOPHN) MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER;  
HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP  
(HAAG)



## Welcome to the 1st NOPHN e-newsletter

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### LEONIE BESSANT NEWSLETTER EDITOR & NOPHN COORDINATOR

Special welcome to NOPHN members beyond the Organising Committee. You have not heard from us for a while but we have all been working hard to develop a network that can deliver positive outcomes for seniors experiencing housing distress.

Delivering monthly or bi monthly newsletters through email we hope will be a great way to keep you in touch with us here at HAAG, to further the goals of NOPHN, and facilitate communication within the group. This will be your space. In addition to regular items such as the Coordinators Report and Housing News, we hope the newsletters will be full of your contributions: ideas, readings, stories, anything you want to share.

# Coordinators report

LEONIE BESSANT

The first teleconference meeting of the NOPHN organising committee (OC) for 2019 was held on the 30th of January. Jeff Fiedler chaired and I took minutes and learnt the teleconference ropes. The meetings take place at HAAGs office in the Melbourne CBD and are attended in person by some OC members, and every one else phones in from all over Australia.

Items covered in the meeting included;

- The finishing touches on the draft Log of Claims
- Ideas for a snappier name for the group
- Member stories & sharing
- Future strategies & actions
- The next meeting of the NOPHN organising committee will be on Wednesday the 27th of February

Leonie has taken over coordination of NOPHN but Jeff Fiedler will continue to have a close involvement with the network. On the following page Jeff has information about all the work he is currently doing.

Leonie will be working one day a week in the HAAG office, generally Tuesdays and Friday afternoons, so if you would like to ring those days are best but feel free to ring when you can.



To contribute to the newsletter  
or contact Leonie  
(yes that is me waving)  
please email  
[leonie.bessant@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:leonie.bessant@oldertenants.org.au)  
or call on  
0408455418,  
or text me and I will call you  
back.



# Report from Jeff Fiedler

Hi Everyone

Here's an update on three current areas of my work across Australia for our Ageing on the Edge Project in partnership with Dr Debbie Faulkner at the University of Adelaide.

## Aged Care Homelessness Action Plan (ACHAP)

HAAG has been contracted by the Federal Department of Health to develop an ACHAP. We have employed Dr Sandra South who has been conducting surveys, interviews and face-to-face discussions with older people and services across Australia. This work is significant because it means that the Government has finally realised that having a decent home is a vital part of an older person's aged care. Of course this is not a housing plan but aims to improve the way aged care services help older people at risk of homelessness and making sure that older people get housing assistance when they need it. We hope, amongst other actions that will arise from this work, that there will be a significant increase in funding for services such as the Assistance with Care and Housing Program.

## NSW State Election

The Ageing on the Edge Forum is a group of community agencies in NSW that are working together to improve housing for older people in NSW. The Forum has launched a list of demands of the political parties leading up to the NSW State Election on the 23rd March. The three key demands are:

1-Establish a state-wide housing information and support service for older people that will help older people plan for their retirement housing and assist those at immediate risk of homelessness

2-Develop an older peoples housing strategy with clear social and affordable housing supply targets accompanied by an initial five-year funded action plan.



3-Support accessibility and adaptability by strengthening requirements for new homes to meet universal design standards

Also an exciting development is that a large agency in NSW called Uniting has committed to help fund a Seniors Housing Gateway service for NSW. This is a service concept we have developed, based on HAAG's Home at Last service, that aims to provide a one-stop shop of housing assistance for all older people on low incomes in NSW and we are encouraging the development of similar services in every State. If you would like a copy of the proposal please let me know and I can send it to you.

Jeff.Fiedler@oldertenants.org.au

## The State of housing and homelessness for older people in Western Australia

Dr Debbie Faulkner and I have been working on a report about housing and homelessness for older people across Western Australia. We have almost finished the report and hope to launch it in April this year. The WA Government seem very keen take on board the issues we are coming across as they are working on a number of strategies at the moment including a Seniors Housing Strategy (the only one in Australia at present). We also hope to have significant media coverage when we launch the report and we will ensure you get a copy!

# Writing member stories

Stories of NOPHN members lived experience of housing distress are an important part of the larger project of getting the message out about the crisis in housing for senior Australians. They will be used in different materials we produce and in campaigns. If you need some ideas on where to start, below are some prompts for narrating your housing story. Alternatively, if you would like Leonie to interview you and narrate your story for you, contact her on [leonie.bessant@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:leonie.bessant@oldertenants.org.au)

What are the life chapters that have led to your housing situation?

Where do you think it started?

What are the key events that you think have led you to this point in your life in relation to your accommodation?

Does your housing situation affect the way you think of yourself, your life?

Can you describe an average week, what sort of things do you do, how does your housing difficulties affect the things you can do?

What role, if any, have significant others played in your life story in relation to your housing position?

What essential beliefs, values or central themes in life do you have?

What future plans and dreams do you have?



Your stories can be confidential, where we remove both names and identifying place names. It is up to you. Some people like to be identified. You may want to provide a photo of yourself or something significant to you to accompany your story.

# Members Stories



## Ida's \* story

Here I am close to mid 70's, without a home, no funds to buy one, reliant on the pension and using nearly 70% of it on rent. Always stressed but know I am not alone.

In 2010, after working as an English Teacher in China for 5 months, I returned to Australia to find my husband had sold my car (he needed the money), our house was about to be repossessed and he lied about the situation.

Someone asked me to house sit for her – so I packed my suitcase, grabbed my computer and phone and left, never to return. I had been married for 43 years, and we have two (now adult) children. I have lived in X\* for 45 years and have no family here.

People ask me why can't I live with my children. Neither have a spare room for starters. And it wouldn't work.

Eventually I divorced and was soon to learn that my now ex-husband was a gambler and alcoholic. He died in 2018, and I helped out the family financially during his last days. Does anyone help me? Nope.

After house sitting on and off for quite a few years, I am now renting again. Pension is \$1052 and I pay \$660 in rent. I have phone, internet, electricity etc to pay. On good weeks I can save a few dollars, but mostly I don't. I have a car, spend a lot on petrol, insurance, car expenses, electricity, medical and general living.

I have not been out at night to a show or dinner for years. I do have lunch with friends – probably three times a month, and generally help out a son who has financial challenges.

My spare time is taken up reading and writing. Occasionally I earn about \$50 for some writing. Rarely, actually.

I am looking for a "forever home" – with no steps as I can't walk up or down steps, that is affordable, and that is safe.

There are women, like me, who wish to live with other women in a housing community, where my neighbors are friends, but Australia is very slow to catch on to this model.

Getting any help is most difficult. I have applied for Public Housing without success, have made contact with many organisations to no avail. I don't qualify for emergency housing and some housing I have been offered is in the city and there was no car parking.

(\*pseudonym)

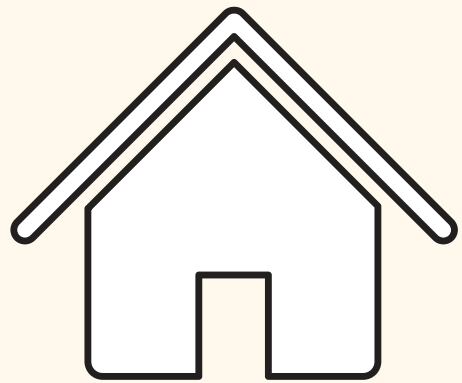
# Changing NOPHN's name

The idea of a new, snappier, name for the National Older Persons Housing Network (NOPHN) has been on the agenda for a few months.

During NOPHN's most recent meeting of the organising committee (OC) (30/1/19), Greta Angel and Marie Sillars proposed a new name for the network. It was finally tweaked to be;

## The National Alliance of Seniors for Housing (NASH)

This name has to date received unanimous support from members and clearly indicates that this is an organisation run by seniors, not just for seniors. The acronym NASH is memorable; easy to say and remember. The OC will confirm the adoption of this new name at the February meeting.



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## The Log of Claims

The NOPHN organising committee has completed the working version of the Log of Claims. Jeff and Leonie will begin to develop it into a completed document that will be used to forward the goals of the network. A draft of the new document will be circulated to members for comment before it is finalised.



# Housing News

-Bridge opens new social housing for seniors in Glebe

<http://housinginfo.com.au/bridge-opens-new-social-housing-for-seniors-in-glebe/>

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-New Productivity Commission report on Housing and Homelessness. Amongst other things, busting the myth that Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is solving the problem of unaffordable rents "Of Low income households that were CRA recipients in June 2018, 68.3 per cent would have experienced rental stress without CRA. With CRA, 40.3 per cent still experienced rental stress ."

<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2019/housing-and-homelessness>

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Article in the The Conversation on social housing; is it essential infrastructure? How we think about it does matter - if social housing was recognised as essential as transport, school and hospitals, not properly investing in it would be unthinkable.

[https://theconversation.com/is-social-housing-essential-infrastructure-how-we-think-about-it-does-matter-110777?fbclid=IwAR1deo9h\\_kLtWR2T4uB5ZbeMOADjVvBUTHkDOI7i353niPYYFnSYuNyQz1c](https://theconversation.com/is-social-housing-essential-infrastructure-how-we-think-about-it-does-matter-110777?fbclid=IwAR1deo9h_kLtWR2T4uB5ZbeMOADjVvBUTHkDOI7i353niPYYFnSYuNyQz1c)

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Interesting report from Finland, the only European Union country where homelessness has decreased "You cannot have Housing First without having housing...first"

<https://buff.ly/2E7mvhF>