

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW RENTER RIGHTS SERVICE FOR OLDER VICTORIANS WELCOMED

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) welcome the announcement by the Victorian Government of a suite of new renters' rights service for older Victorians. The Older Persons Housing Rights Service will be assisting people aged 55 years and older to understand and exercise their rights as renters and residents of retirement villages and residential parks. HAAG will partner with Tenants Victoria to provide legal and non-legal advice and advocacy to older people who may struggle to access other renter services, or face additional barriers due to their age or housing circumstances.

Tenants Victoria has been confirmed as the successful provider for two of the four statewide services under the Victorian Government's new Victorian Renter Rights Program (VRRP) – the Renting Central Service and the Victorian Renters Helpline. The Renting Central Service provides training to renter support agencies, policy, advocacy, campaigns and media on behalf of Victorian renters, and legal support for complex renting matters.

The Victorian Renters Helpline, a statewide phone and web service, acts as the first point of contact for any Victorian renter seeking advice.

"We are thrilled that the Government has recognised the need for a specialist service to assist older renters. In ten years, there has been a 76% increase in the number of older people renting, and many of them are in households with low and very low incomes. Many older people face digital exclusion, and struggle to navigate the complex housing systems. Every day we assist older people with eviction notices and rent increases, helping them to avoid homelessness. Many have never accessed services before and have no idea where to start," said Housing for the Aged Action Group's Executive Officer Fiona York.

"For many years we have assisted residents of retirement villages and residential parks to exercise their rights, challenging unfair fees and confusing contracts, and advocating alongside residents for law reform. This is a little-known area of housing, and older people across Victoria will benefit from the boost to legal support this new service will provide. We look forward to working alongside Tenants Victoria to improve the lives of residents of this type of housing," she continued.

HAAG also welcomes the announcement that the Rental taskforce is to become permanent, with expanded resources to uphold Victoria's renting laws.

"The Rental Taskforce is an important part of stronger enforcement of Victoria's rental regulations, and we are pleased to hear that it will become permanent. Our service has worked closely with the Taskforce in the [Ingenia Gardens](#) case, and more broadly to ensure that older, vulnerable renters are living in appropriate housing that meets minimum standards. Enforcement actions like this builds confidence for older renters to exercise their rights."

Tenants Victoria CEO Jennifer Beveridge said these appointments reflect the organisation's role at the centre of Victoria's renter support system and build on the momentum of recent rental law reforms.

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“New laws only help renters if there's a strong, well-resourced support system behind them. This funding means we can keep building that system so that Victorian renters experience dignity living in safe, secure and affordable homes.”

Older tenants available to interview on request.

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