



# older tenants voice

Housing for the Aged Action Groups Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2019



**HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP**

**FIGHTING FOR HOUSING JUSTICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1983**





Hello dear members,

Once again we are focussing on Public Housing... and the tremendous lack of it. The Coalition has been re-elected without making any commitments to important policies that might deliver solutions to housing needs, Aged Care and the risk of homelessness for older people.

If you signed a petition, contacted you local candidate, checked out scorecards before voting, used Facebook or Twitter... well, you played a part in changing the way major parties think and talk about housing and homelessness - especially for elderly people at risk. Good on you. NOW we look to the next 3 years and our fight goes on.

I have a monster sized book at home written by Professor Stuart Macintyre of Melbourne Uni called Australia's Boldest Experiment, War and Reconstruction in the 1940s. It is big bundle of fascinating history, particularly of Melbourne in those times. The book details the start of public housing in Victoria, this state which showed the most acute problems of the fastest growth of all states in the post war years.

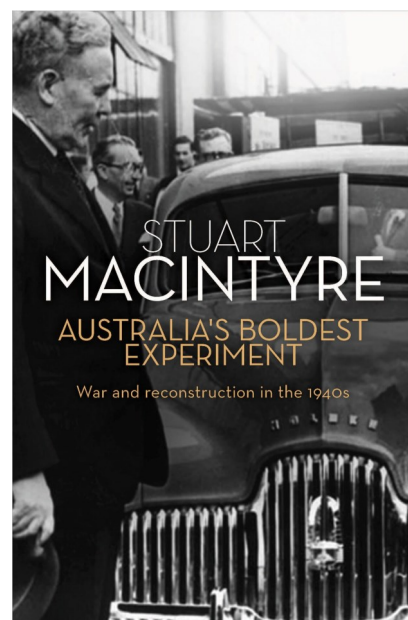
I want to share with you all just how responsive the politicians were in those days when seeing the need to manage the vast slum clearances and to fix the deeply ingrained poverty left over from WW1 and the 1930s Depression. First they saw the need and identified the problem, then interviewers were sent out to meet with slum dwellers and ended up in tears day after day. They saw hovels with no water, electricity, gas, holes in roofs, bed bugs and rats, just to name some of the problems. A majority of dwellings had no kitchens or bathroom and hessian or plywood were wall divisions.

The results meant politicians talked, ranted and raved with administrative organisations of the times for months and months while WW2 crept up on them as they tried to find a plan. Finally, in the midst of war concerns Reconstruction then became the inescapable consequence of that war. Powerful ministers in Australia beginning with Ben Chifley headed up the Department of Post War Reconstruction to follow their May 1942 social security proposal and set out an ambitious program of PUBLIC HOUSING.

Not just any old public housing either but dwellings built more efficiently to proper standards and let at subsidised rents. In 1941, 28,751 places were built, but due to the war moving closer only 3548 were built in 1942 because manpower and materials were needed elsewhere. By then all parliamentary committees agreed that housing was a crucial component of public welfare.

Their argument too was the cost of subsidised public housing would be made good by savings in expenditure on so many other areas like sanitation, health, and the police.

They agreed on a new governing arm called the Housing Commission whose fulsome research and investigations were



## CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME

summed up by the statement: 'A dwelling of good standard and equipment is not only the need but the RIGHT of every citizen'. Still public housing to be built was again delayed by immense political wrangling and bureaucratic time wasting... lots of it!!

That was the beginning and is now the past. How much do Australian Governments now consider they need to assist with public housing? We need 500,000 new public and affordable homes built to match demands. Our fight goes on.

Yours truly

Phyll Williams

## STRATEGIC PLAN

We are very close to having a new strategic plan for the coming three years! With so much change and growth in the organization, its been important to take the time to consider new directions, and take into account the impacts of growing homelessness amongst older people, less affordable housing, and the pressures on small services like ours to keep up!

The strategic plan is likely to focus on these five themes:

- ⇒ How HAAG changes lives (service delivery)
- ⇒ How HAAG changes the rules (advocacy and campaigns)
- ⇒ How HAAG builds the system (networks and alliances)
- ⇒ How HAAG remains true to its values (honouring our heritage)
- ⇒ How HAAG meets demand and remains a great place to work (organizational strength)

In developing the strategic plan, we have consulted with our members a number of times including at the most recent General Meeting. We were pleased to hear that members enjoy coming to meetings and want us to continue to be politically active as well as to provide opportunities for members to catch up with each other and hear about the latest news from HAAG.

Thanks to everyone who gave us their ideas and feedback, it has been used in our planning and will influence the direction of the next strategic plan. Thanks also to Rebecca from ThinkImpact who has worked hard in assisting us over the last couple of months. We have one more session with workers and the Committee of Management in late September and after that the plan will be finalized and released.

## HAAG is updating our constitution!

An organisations constitution is very important. It lays the foundations of how we manage our affairs, including membership, the Committee, decision-making as well as our guiding direction. The HAAG constitution was written quite a while ago, and it has some confusing things in it. We want to make sure that our constitution will work for us in the future – that we have a strong guiding that allows us to grow and thrive.

Our governance sub-committee has been looking at updating our constitution, and comparing it to the Consumer Affairs Victoria model rules. We don't want to change our aims and objectives, but we want to make some things clearer, for example, how meetings and membership is organized. We also want to make sure we can expand interstate, and that our Committee is as strong as it can be.

We have been talking to Justice Connect's not-for-profit service and they have found us some free lawyers to help us. DLA Piper, a big law firm, is having a look at our proposed changes and checking that we are complying with the law as well as providing some information on "best practice".

For us to change the constitution, we need members to vote at the Annual General Meeting in November. If you are a current member, you will be receiving information in October about the proposed changes. Its really important that you read this information, and if you can, come to the Annual General Meeting in November to vote on the motion.

Even though we are not changing our aims and objectives, we are proposing changes about how the Committee is chosen, the length of tenure for the Committee, how membership is renewed (opt out instead of opt in) and how decisions are made.

Please keep an eye out for this information, and make sure you let us know if you have changed your details. Contact the office to check your membership and your personal details, and if you have any questions, feel free to speak to a member of the Governance sub-committee (Phyll Williams, Maryanne Wright, Maree Norris, Maeve Browne-Cooper, or Pam Young) or to Fiona York.



As mentioned on the previous page this AGM will be really important for HAAGs future constitution and strategic plan. We'll send out another notice but remember this date:

**Thursday 21st of November**

11am to 1pm

Hayden Raysmith Room

Level 4, Ross House

247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne

Rsvp to [haag@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:haag@oldertenants.org.au)

## RAISE THE ROOF

Do you listen to our 3CR show Raise the Roof at 5.30pm every second Wednesday? Have you listened to our latest podcasts?

Check them out via the 3CR website here: <https://www.3cr.org.au/haag> or subscribe to "Housing for the Aged Action Group" via your podcast app.

### Latest Episodes include:

**All at sea – navigating the aged care system** – Fiona and Pam interview our volunteers Susan and Margaret who explain what services you can get in the home, as well as how to get onto My Aged Care

**Elder Abuse and Housing** – Shane and Fiona interview the principle lawyer at Seniors Rights Victoria, Rebecca, about elder abuse and what you can do to protect yourself.

**Peer Pressure** – Fiona and Shane interview Maryanne, one of our peer educators, about her experience of being at risk of homelessness and how finding HAAG turned her life around. Now she is a peer educator so that she can help other people in similar situations.

**Fear of Committee-ment** – Shane and Pam chat with Fiona Waters about how to start a residents committee, and how they can assist residents assert their rights

### Plus lots more!

If you think our radio show and 3CR are a great way for community voices to be heard, you can help keep us on the air by donating to 3CR at [www.3cr.org.au/donate](http://www.3cr.org.au/donate) - they are trying to reach their Radiothon target and are \$18000 short! Every little bit helps, so if you have any to spare, all donations over \$2 are tax deductible

The Aged Care Navigator- In-Office service is a volunteer/peer operated service where people can make an appointment to come into the HAAG office and chat about Aged Care options. The Volunteers are semi-retired professionals who worked for many years in social services. Some of the things the In-Office Navigators can do are:

- ⇒ Talk about what Aged Care is and how it works
- ⇒ Help you to register for My Aged Care by sitting with you while you are talking to them and if need be, advocate for you
- ⇒ Ring My Aged Care to check on any issues you might be having

We also have a Home Visitor program which links up people who have been at risk of homelessness with assistance to get Aged Care in their home. Most people who are accessing this service are from Culturally Diverse backgrounds and we try to match the person with a Bi-lingual worker who speaks their language.

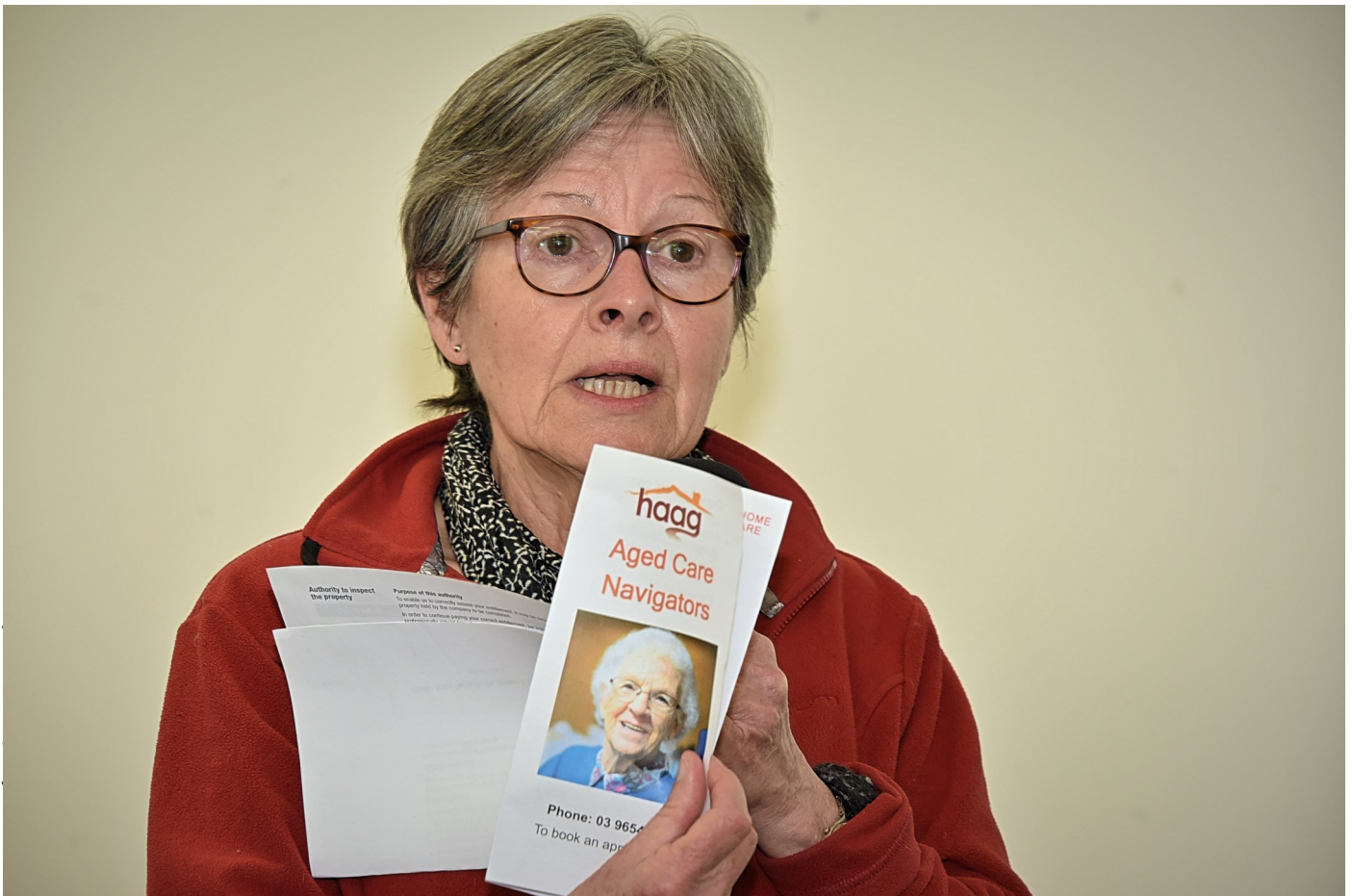
### CASE STUDY:

\*Jill lives in private rental and is a HAAG member, waiting for public housing. She came to see one of the Navigator Volunteers wanting to know about Aged Care options. Jill is 76 and was managing well on her own until she had a fall and broke her shoulder. When she came home from hospital she has had a few services come to her home like physio and occupational therapy, but was confused about who they are and which service they came from. Jill was also unsure if the services would continue once her shoulder had recovered.

Jill spoke to Susan, one of our volunteers, and they call My Aged Care together. They found out which services she was receiving and which she had been referred to and was still waiting for. There were some services, like cleaning, that Jill had asked for but she hadn't received, so they reiterated Jill's need for these services. The My Aged Care call centre worker said that she wouldn't have got the cleaning had they not rang up as the referral wasn't there.

Overall Jill was happy that her services had been sorted out and she was relieved to have someone explain the system and what she was entitled for.

If you would like to book an appointment to see a navigator call **9654 7389** or visit [www.older tenants.org.au/aged-care](http://www.older tenants.org.au/aged-care)



## CASE STUDY:

Asha suffers from a number of chronic physical and mental health problems. She needed help with cleaning, meals and getting to health appointments as well as some advocacy in terms of her health needs. She also wanted to go to some groups for social support.

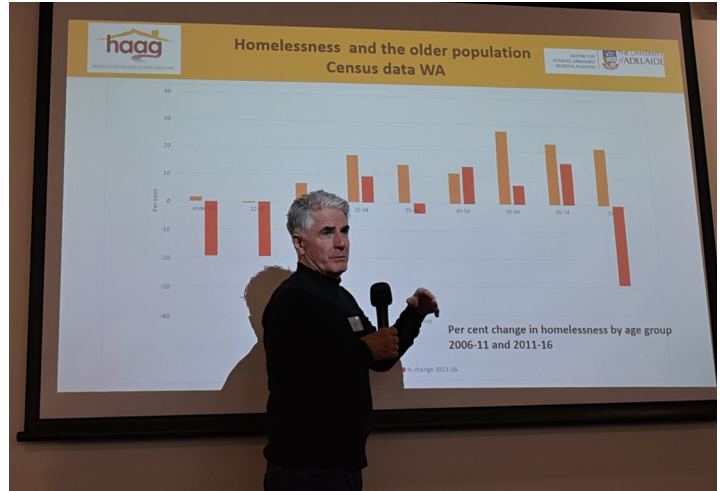
The bi-lingual worker came to Asha's house and spoke to her about what Aged Care services she could possibly get. She explained what My Aged Care is and that calling them to register will most likely mean an assessor will come out to see what Asha needs.

The visit went well and they were able to register for My Aged Care and an assessor was organised to come and assess Asha for a Home Care Package.

The home visitor also spoke to Asha about making a referral to an Access and Support worker who can help her along the way, whilst going through the process of getting aged care.

If you are someone, or know of someone who would benefit from having a volunteer come to their house to help them to access Aged Care services call **9654 7389** and speak to Gemma or Rebecca

Our General Meeting on the 22nd of August was key to coming up with and consulting about our Strategic Plan for the next 3 years. We heard from Jeff Fiedler about the situation for Older Renters in Western Australia. We also enjoyed a smorgasbord of soups prepared by HAAG staff. By popular demand we include Libby's lentil soup recipe below.



## LIBBY'S LENTIL SOUP

8oz (1 cup) red lentils  
2 pints (5 cups) water  
1 Tbsp butter  
1 Tbsp brown rice  
1 onion  
1 garlic clove  
2 Tspn ground curry powder – I choose 1 tspn cumin, ½ tspn turmeric and ½ tspn coriander seed.  
¼ tspn cinnamon  
¼ tspn chili powder  
Juice of 1 lemon  
2 Tbsp chopped parsley or coriander  
Salt and pepper

Chop onion and garlic and sauté for a few minutes in butter. Stir in the spices, then add lentils (rinsed first), rice and the water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 45 minutes  
Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Garnish with parsley or coriander.  
\* I add chopped spinach or greens towards the end of cooking, and serve with plain yoghurt.





Phil Mandanici and Ray Clements have been long time members of HAAG and have contributed to many working group meetings over the years, as well as to numerous submission processes and the 2015 Parliamentary Inquiry into Retirement Housing. They are pictured here with their 2019 Volunteer Appreciation Awards.

They are both ardent believers in the need for a Retirement Housing Ombudsman to be established to assist in the affordable, timely, fair and accessible resolution of disputes for people living in retirement housing in Victoria.

In the last *Older Tenants Voice* there was about Deferred Management Fees (DMFs) in Part 4A housing contracts. Phil and Ray made contact with HAAG and asked for a Retirement Housing worker to come out and speak to some residents at their Village interested in understanding the DMFs in their contracts better. Fiona Waters went out to visit, and compiled some information for the residents to look over together and share with any other park residents who may be interested. If you are interested in being a part of the working group RAAG, or having a worker in the retirement team come and speak to you and fellow residents about shared concerns, then get in touch with the retirement team on 9654 7389 (option 2) or [retirement@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:retirement@oldertenants.org.au)

### **Do you live in a retirement village? We want to hear from you!**

We are working with researchers from Melbourne University, led by Dr Sue Malta, on a project examining choice in retirement housing. Sue worked with us earlier this year on the National Homelessness Action Plan. This new project is funded through the Consumer Policy Research Council, who we worked with earlier in the year on “the rental journey” research. We are again working with our long-time partners in retirement housing advocacy, Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria (RRVV) and Council on the Ageing Victoria (COTA Vic). We are wanting to know about how people find out about retirement villages, how they choose which one to move into, and what they wish they had known before they moved in.

How easy or hard was it to make a choice and compare villages? Where did you get your information? What helped you decide?

We have a survey that will be distributed to our members, as well as the members of RRVV and COTA Vic. We have formed a small reference group who has had input into the survey questions.

The research will be finished before the end of the year, and we are hoping it will feed into the review of the Retirement Villages Act.

### **Are you an aged care assessor? We want to hear from you too!**

We have started a new research project, funded through the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Trust, working with Deakin University and the National Ageing Research Institute. We are asking Regional Assessment Staff and Aged Care Assessment Teams working in the northern and western regions to view a training video. The training covers the trends and drivers of homelessness amongst older people, what to look out for when assessing your clients, and what you can do to help.

We know that aged care assessment staff will be seeing older people at risk of homelessness. Anyone on a fixed income living in private rental is likely to be at risk. We are asking assessment staff to look out for this when they visit older people, and make an early referral into our Assistance with Care and Housing program, via My Aged Care.

We will then be following up with clients after 6 months and 12 months to measure their health and wellbeing, and also the cost effectiveness. We’re hoping that by taking an early intervention approach we can prevent older people from becoming homeless.

We know that the aged care assessment is going through a period of change and there is uncertainty around the future of assessment, especially in the Commonwealth Home Support Program. We’re hoping that despite this uncertainty, aged care assessors will be interested in the training and in helping their clients avoid homelessness. Our worker Anne Maher is excited to be back at HAAG working on this project, and we hope to hear from you. The training is available online at: <https://vimeo.com/355915750>

## LGBTI Elders Housing Project

In response to our commitment to inclusive practice and diversity, HAAG has begun work on a project to find out about the housing circumstances for older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, their knowledge of what options are available and what their future needs may be in relation to safe and affordable housing.

We have been conducting a survey as well as interviewing members of the LGBTI community that are over 50 about their experiences with housing. So far we have completed 146 surveys and 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, almost one third of participants who are renting stated that they are unable to afford the rent and those who reported being at risk of homelessness were significantly more likely to be renting compared with those who own their own home. The research has also found that LGBTI elders face additional barriers and challenges when accessing affordable and secure housing, for instance half of all 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.

We expect that research collected from this project 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.

If you identify as LGBTI and are interested in sharing your experiences of housing and their understanding of housing options and issues for older LGBTI people.

If this sounds like you, or someone you know, please contact our project worker Rebecca Walton on 03 9654 7389 or email [rebecca.walton@oldertenants.org.au](mailto:rebecca.walton@oldertenants.org.au) – she would love to have a confidential chat with you!



There are so many inquiries at the moment its hard to keep up!

### **Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness**

Submissions are open into this inquiry into state of homelessness in Victoria, in particular, to:

- ⇒ provide an independent analysis of the changing scale and nature of homelessness across Victoria;
- ⇒ investigate the many social, economic and policy factors that impact on homelessness; and
- ⇒ identify policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to the homeless.

Submissions can be made online and are due by 1 January 2020.

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lcic-lc/inquiry/976>

### **Rental Reforms**

Over the last few years, HAAG's Retirement Accommodation Action Group (RAAG) has been guiding our contributions to the state government's rental reform process. This has led to landmark improvements in renters' rights through the Residential Tenancies Amendments Act, which includes better security of tenure, minimum standards for rental housing and much more (see previous issues for more info).

Even though the major amendments passed last year, HAAG remains involved in consultations and advocacy on a range of issues for older renters. Over the next year we expect to see the government looking into caravan and residential park standards and a range of regulations for residential tenancies covering things like bond recovery, property standards, rules for eviction and more.

### **Retirement Villages Act review**

The state government has also promised that its review of the Retirement Villages Act will start later this year. HAAG will definitely be making sure that our members' views – about things like exit fees, management standards and the need for an Ombudsman – are strongly represented.

**hagg** Housing for the Aged  
@HAAGHomeAtLast

We're at the National Housing Conference in Darwin, with 1100 delegates, hoping for a focus on older people and housing - stay tuned for updates over the next couple of days #NHC2019 #nhcdarwin



**hagg** Housing for the Aged  
@HAAGHomeAtLast

Private rental is the solution preferred by policy makers - but it's not the answer. Private rental is unaffordable, unavailable, often poor quality. We need more safe, affordable, long-term housing. Kathleen Flanagan from @UTAS\_ #NHC2019 #NHCDarwin



**hagg** Housing for the Aged  
@HAAGHomeAtLast

Yet more evidence: stable housing AND support fosters good mental health. Public housing helps mental illness recovery, transitional housing is stressful and no options for people on Newstart. Dr Sarah Pollock from @mindaustralia #NHC2019 #NHCDarwin



**Kate Colvin**  
@ColvinKate

"There is a glaring need for public investment of at least \$5 billion a year to meet the urgent housing needs of people on the lowest incomes" says @MaresPeter

Check out this super summary of the state of play in housing policy #NHCDarwin #EverybodysHome [insidestory.org.au/plenty-of-idea...](http://insidestory.org.au/plenty-of-idea...)



Housing: plenty of ideas, not much money | Peter Mares  
[insidestory.org.au](http://insidestory.org.au)

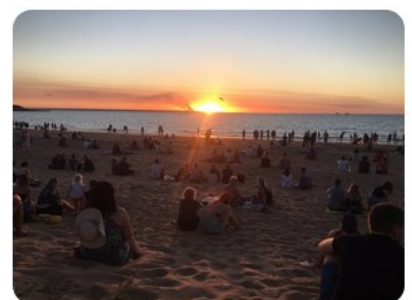
**StJohnsYouthServices**  
@SJYSAdeelaide

As #NHCDarwin wraps up we leave knowing the people in the NT suffer the worst housing standards, homelessness & preventable health problems while the rest of us fail to care. Let's back the people of NT, in the regions, on the lands & the islands in their fight for justice.



**AHURI**  
@AHURI\_Research

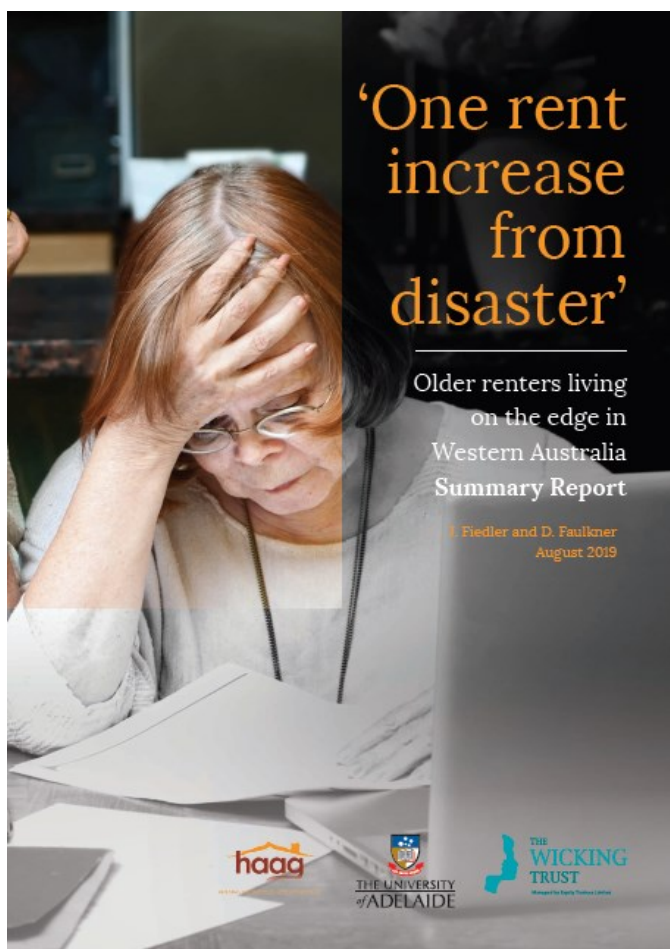
The sun has set on another National Housing Conference. Thank you to all delegates for attending #NHCDarwin. It has been an inspiring week of debate and discussion, knowledge sharing and new connections. Recordings and slides will be available from the AHURI website shortly.



Follow HAAG on social media for the latest updates:

@HAAGHomeAtLast

HousingForTheAgedActionGroup



On Thursday 15 August 2019 the national Ageing on the Edge Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project released its summary report 'One rent increase from disaster – Older people living on the edge on Western Australia'. The Project is a partnership between Dr Debbie Faulkner from the University of Adelaide and Jeff Fiedler from HAAG and funded by The Wicking Trust.

The report was widely covered by the ABC in WA including two online articles, Perth radio news, interviews in two WA regions, one national radio program and the evening television news. The Seniors newspaper also produced a feature story that also sought interest from older people to make contact with the project as potential members for the National Alliance of Seniors for Housing (NASH).

This was followed by a report launch on September 10 by the Minister for Community Services, the Hon. Simone McGurk at Parliament House attended by 50 agencies and government representatives including WACOSS, Shelter WA, The WA Alliance to End Homelessness and the Tenants Action Group WA.

Produced in collaboration with Council on the Ageing WA and a Reference Group of key WA agencies and individuals, the report highlights the rapidly growing problems facing many older people in WA. The report also identifies solutions to address the vital housing and service responses needed to help older people in WA who are struggling in poverty, hardship and at constant risk of homelessness.

The research has found that there are many older renters struggling to the extent that they are doing without the daily essentials of life such as food, heating, medications and aged care services to ensure they keep a roof over their head. They are a hidden group that are putting up with enormous hardship while constantly under the stress of being, as an older person interviewed stated, 'one rent increase from disaster'. Older women who have experienced gender disadvantage due to discrimination and lower levels of savings are particularly impacted.

Homeless 

**1,500**

people aged 55+ are homeless - 617 are aged 65+

**16% increase**

for those aged 65-74, the highest increase of all age groups. This is occurring at a time when the rate of homelessness for children and youth has declined

Marginally housed 

**1,186**

people aged 55+ are marginally **housed without basic facilities** in boarding houses, caravan parks, hotel, other temporary dwellings

---

**12,136** older people are in **housing stress**  
– on lowest 40% of incomes and paying 30%+ in rent

Of those in housing stress

**9,029 or 74%** are in **severe housing stress** – on lowest 20% of incomes and paying 30%+ in rent

**struggling**  
to pay rent, bills and buy food

**4,395 or 36%** are in **extreme housing stress** – on lowest 20% of incomes and paying 50%+ in rent

**imminent risk**  
of eviction, debt and food deprivation

**35% or 1,534** of those in extreme housing stress are **aged 75+**

**increased risk**  
of illness, disability and premature entry into residential aged care

Recommendations were developed to address these problems such as the need for more housing suitable for older people, better information to help older people navigate their way to housing solutions and the need for a specialist older persons housing service.

The WA Government is currently developing affordable housing, homelessness and seniors housing strategies and the Ageing on the Edge Project will continue to work with the government and community agencies to see the implementation of the key recommendations from the report.

The report and infographics are available on our website at [www.older tenants.org.au/wa-report](http://www.older tenants.org.au/wa-report)



Franco and Joyce, a couple in their late fifties, were referred to Home At Last for housing assistance after receiving 60 days Notice to vacate from their land lord.

*“Renting a property in the private market is extremely unaffordable for people like us who are on Centrelink income which is very low and it often means that we need to sacrifice other essential needs such as food and heating”.*

Following their referral, Outreach worker conducted an urgent housing assessment. At the time of the assessment, they appeared to be quite distressed with receiving Notice to Vacate which was causing them severe anxiety and stress, in particular, the worry of not being able to get an affordable and secure home and the possibility of becoming homeless. They were also worried about facing discrimination in the private rental market due to being from South Sudanese ethnic background. Franco stated that:

*“The South Sudanese families living on low incomes are not able to afford to rent. We also face discrimination in the private rental market”.*

We completed “Homeless with Support housing application” (Seg 1) which was approved but we were not sure when a property would become available and offered to them.

As they were flexible about which suburb they lived, we contacted social housing providers on a weekly basis in order to advocate on their behalf for urgent housing offer. One of the social housing providers stated that they do have a vacant property and we organised an interview. They were offered a property which is a 2 bedroom town house property in a suburb that they already have had some social networks. Franco and Joyce moved in to their new property in July 2019 and settled in well.

*“Our health dramatically improved for the better and we feel very secure and happy”.*





Friday 20 September is the Global Climate Strike. Led by school students around the world, this time the strike is expanding to all sections of society. The impact of climate change on older people, especially people with low incomes and no assets, is going to be big.

Join the Retirement Accommodation Action Group at 11am to paint a banner for the march, or join with the contingent of HAAG members and staff at 1:45 pm on Level 1, Ross House.

## HAAG's NEW HOME

HAAG has new home in Warrnambool!

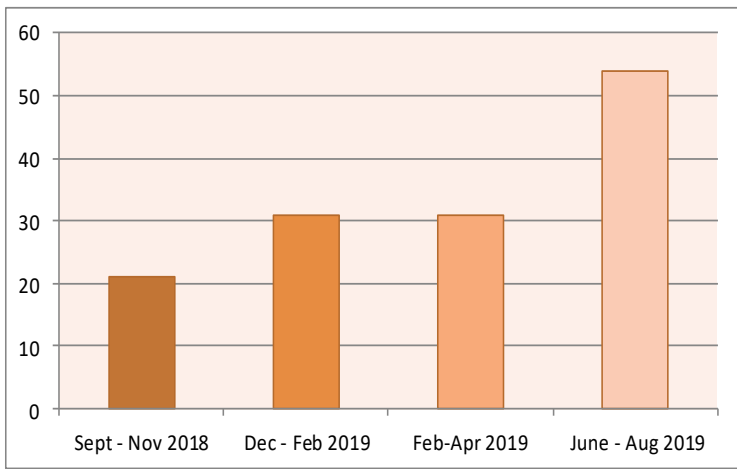
Paola Posso has set up shop at the RG Graham Centre, a hub for older persons organisations and services, where she is working 2 days each fortnight.

Paola is busy networking with other services and reaching out to people in the Barwon South West region.

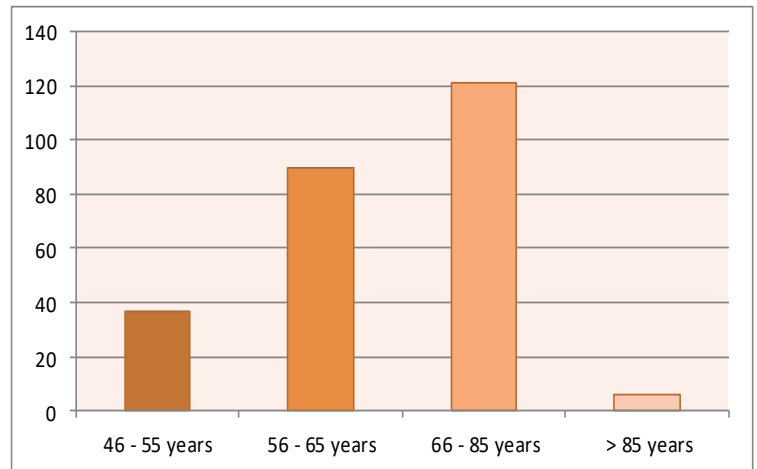


# HOME AT LAST WINTER DATA 1st June - 31st August 2019

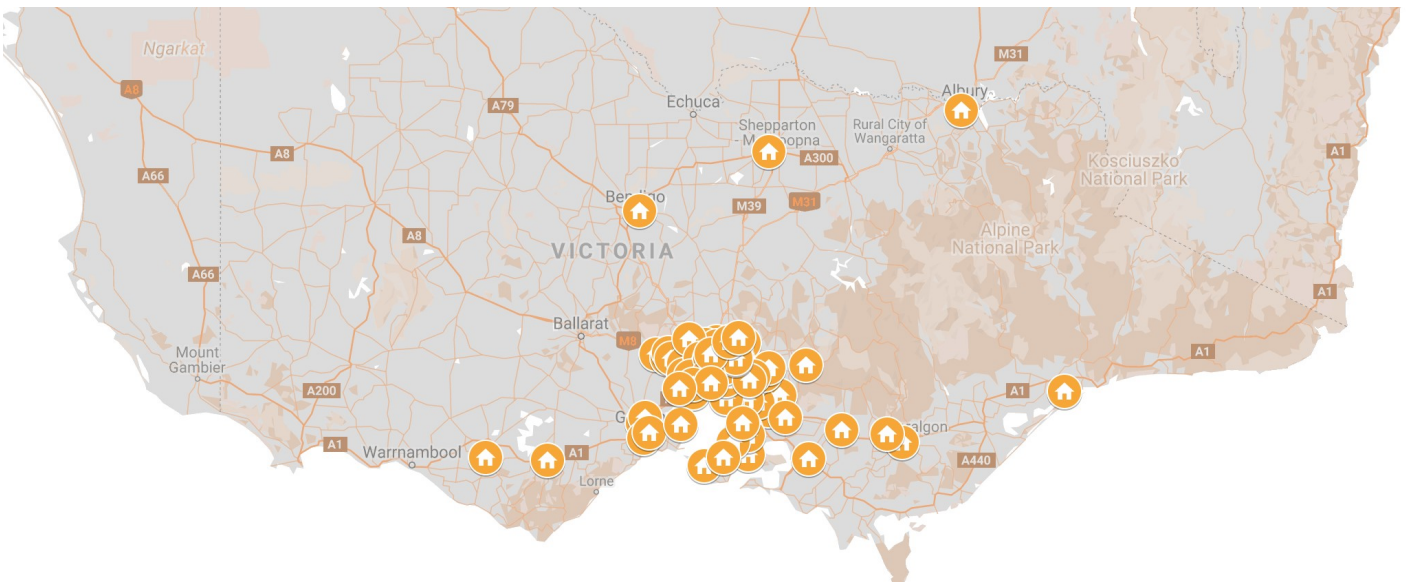
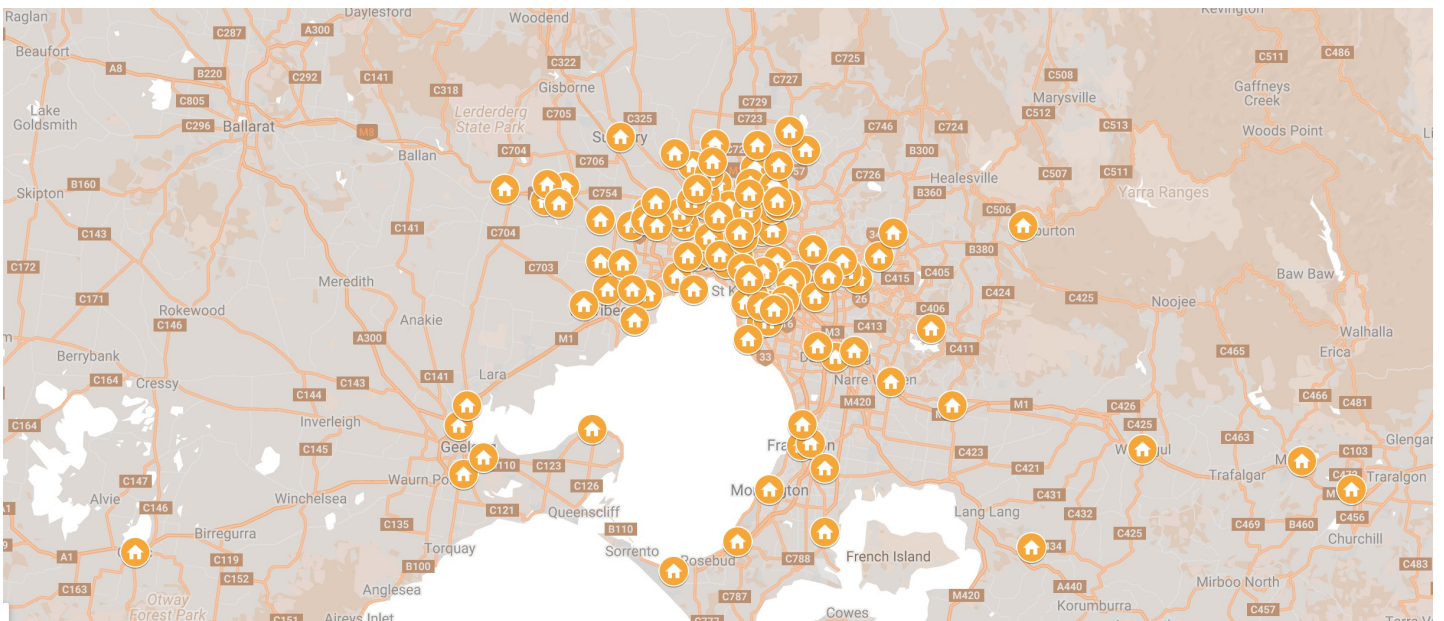
## People housed in 3 month periods



## Age of clients

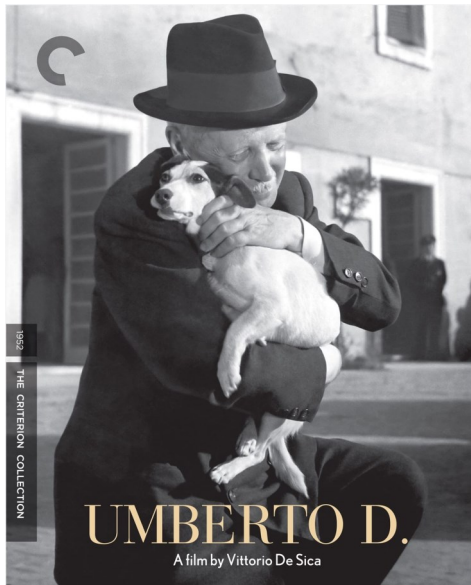


## What towns and suburbs do people call from? (in the last 3 months)





Welcome to the HAAG movie corner! Starting with this issue, each newsletter will include a review of a movie that touches (directly or indirectly) on older people's housing issues. We'd love to get your feedback about whether this is something that interests you, and whether we should expand the movie corner – should we organise screenings? Get copies of the DVDs for members to borrow? And what are some movies you'd like to see us discuss?



With its elderly protagonist facing homeless, *Umberto D* (Italy 1952) might be the HAAG-iest movie imaginable. We meet the title character at a protest in favour of raising the aged pension, and when the police break up the rally we see that this barely registers as a disappointment because life has already sucked so much of the hope out of him. He returns home to a boarding house where an unfeeling landlady tells him he'll be evicted at the end of the month if his rent isn't paid. The rest of the movie follows his desperate attempts to keep a roof over his head.

Umberto has only one real companion – his dog, Flike. They share whatever food Umberto can afford, and Umberto doesn't seem nearly as concerned about his own impending homelessness as he is about what it means for Flike. The most suspenseful scenes in the movie come when Flike is in danger – for example, when we watch Umberto visit a pound where the dog may already have been destroyed. His rising despair as he faces the possibility that he can't keep both himself and Flike alive is as painful as movies get.

Obviously, this is not an especially cheerful movie – and may be too close to home for some. Umberto's plight was meant to symbolise the social conditions of postwar Italy, but watching from our perspective, it's fascinating to ask what does and doesn't resonate with today's Australia. Pensions too low? An older man and his dog facing eviction? Social isolation? Inadequate social services? The issues the movie raises have probably all gotten both better and worse for us than they were then, and that can be important to think about.

*Umberto D.* can be gruelling, but never wallows or indulges in sadness for its own sake. A cast of mostly nonprofessional actors keeps the movie grounded and realistic, and De Sica has a great eye for those little details that make everyday life beautiful even in the midst of painful realities. Get the tissues ready and check out one of the most powerful movies of all time. And let us know what you thought!

## Housing for the Aged Action Group

Level 1, Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane,

Melbourne 3000

ADMIN: 9654 7389

Print Post Approved

100002348

SURFACE

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

[www.older tenants.org.au](http://www.older tenants.org.au) 1300 765 178 [haag@older tenants.org.au](mailto:haag@older tenants.org.au)



Fighting for Housing Justice for older people since 1983

HAAG offers FREE confidential advice, housing and support to over-55's



Chris, Darwin and Fiona enjoying Libby's famous lentil soup at the August General meeting

- Housing Options Information
- Outreach Housing Support
- Retirement Housing Advice & Support
- Research & Policy Development