



## Housing for the Aged Action Group

ABN: 80 348 538 001 Reg: A0017107L

Postal address: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Ross House  
247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

Phone: 9654 7389 Fax: 9654 3407

Home at Last service: 1300 765 178

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

Website: [www.oldertenants.org.au](http://www.oldertenants.org.au)

### Abbott Government Budget threatens to hit older renters hard

New data just released by Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) has found that there are thousands of older people struggling under the pressures of living in the private rental market. Abbott Government announcements to reduce the age pension will be the tipping point for many who are struggling.

April Bragg from Home at Last at HAAG said today “The recent budget will make things worse for two reasons: Firstly, reducing the rate of the aged pension means less income and secondly, there is no additional funding announced for public housing. As a society we need to decide if it is fair that older people should be exploited, living in poverty and in poor health in the private market, or should we ensure that they can assert their right to good quality, affordable housing as they age”. HAAG’s Home at Last service, funded by the Victorian Government Department of Human Services, is the first service in Australia established to assist the ‘new homeless’: The growing numbers of ordinary older Australians living in housing poverty and at risk of losing their home.

This information will be discussed in detail at a Forum this Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014 called **Surviving or Thriving? – Older Victorians at risk of homelessness** being held at **Victoria University in Flinders Street Melbourne**. Information at the forum includes alarming data from Home at Last and the latest research by Dr. Maree Petersen from the University of Queensland.

From 1000 Home at Last clients assisted 33% had been served with a notice to vacate by their landlord and another 30% had to leave their home because they can’t afford the rent and bills. This problem is escalating fast as Dr. Petersen’s research shows there has been a 44% increase in the numbers of older people living in the private rental market over the past 5 years. This is caused by lower rates of homeownership and a lack of government funded affordable housing.

Jeff Fiedler from Housing for the Aged Action Group said today “The future of homeownership as a secure base for retirement is fading fast. Less older people own their own home, more have mortgages in retirement and others are falling out of home ownership and are forced to survive in private rental housing. Our new service has been inundated with requests for help from people who are the new face of homelessness: older people from typical middle class families”.

Women are particularly affected due to lower retirement saving. Alma Dri-Paterson, a 69 year old retiree said today “I never thought this would happen to me. I had owned my own home and had to sell it when my marriage broke down. After the mortgage I didn’t have much left. Then I stayed with my daughter and her family for three years but it didn’t work out as they had a growing family. From here the downward slide really happened fast and when I found myself sharing a rental house with two men I started to feel really scared and vulnerable for the first time in my life. I panicked and didn’t know what was going to happen to me”.

For more information contact Jeff Fiedler on 0417117232 or April Bragg on 0417581510.