



Housing for the Aged Action Group

ABN: 80 348 538 001 Reg: A0017107L

Postal address: 1st Floor, Ross House

247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

Phone: 9654 7389 Fax: 9654 3407

Country callers: 1300 765 178

Email: haag@oldertenants.org.au

Website: www.oldertenants.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN VICTORIA September 2012

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) launches its new service.

Home at Last, funded by the Victorian Government as one of 11 Innovation Action Projects under the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan, is the first homelessness prevention service for older people in Australia. It aims to help some of the 120,000 Victorians over the age of 55 who are currently struggling to cope in rental housing.

April Bragg, Manager Housing Support said today “Already in the short period that **Home at Last** has been in operation we have uncovered a significant level of hardship and housing need. Many older people are existing in terrible housing conditions, living without adequate food and doing without essentials like heating. Older people are so stoic that they put up with hardship and don’t complain. **Home at Last** plans to change that situation by encouraging older people to make contact and get help”.

“Many clients coming to **Home at Last** are paying most of their pension to keep a roof over their head. Home at Last is not surprised at these findings as recent government statistics show that 35% of older renters over 65 are paying more than 50% of their income in rent.” Ms. Bragg said.

Jeff Fiedler, Manager, Education & Housing Advice at Home at Last said today “Older people are putting up with these conditions in the hope that the landlord will keep rents down. But more and more are being evicted because they can charge more if they turf pensioners out and rent to wage earners. Others are being evicted simply because a landlord decides to sell their property. Most of our clients have never faced homelessness before and they are shocked to find themselves in this predicament”.

Home at Last is helping vulnerable older people to get on the road to long term affordable housing. It provides practical help to assist vulnerable older people to apply for public and social housing, pay off their debts and even cover the cost of relocation.

For more information call Gemma White (0424 259 009) or Fionnuala Spillane (0450 773 212) or at the office (03) 9654 7389.

- Older private renters spent the highest proportion of their income on housing costs compared with households of any age group or tenure type (AIHW 2010)
- The most recent DHS Rental Report (September Quarter 2012) states that the median rent per week for a one bedroom apartment in metro Melbourne is \$350 per week, which is 67% the aged pension (including rent assistance and pension supplement).
- The number of private renters is predicted to increase by 115% from 2001 to 2026 (Jones, Andrew 2011)