



older tenants voice



HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP

JUNE 2017 | WINTER EDITION

MANAGER'S REPORT

Welcome to the winter edition of Older Tenant's Voice! The past months here at HAAG have been a time of upheaval and uncertainty, however, I am pleased to report that things are improving.

Following the sudden resignation of the Committee of Management in May, members have now elected a new Committee of Management which will bring some much-needed stability and an improved relationship with staff.

April Bragg, who was dismissed by the former Committee at the end of March, was reinstated in her role in accordance with a resolution reached by the Fair Work Commission on 16 June 2017, and we happily welcome her back as co-manager.

Consultant General Manager John Devine resigned from his position on 6 June 2017. To provide consistency throughout this period, I have spent much time working with staff, the new Committee, funders and our accountants to ensure the stability of the organisation, and thank the staff and the new Committee for their support.

As this newsletter goes to print, the organisation is undergoing a performance review by major funders the Department of Health and Human Services, who fund the majority of the Home at Last service. The final report is due at the end of July and although it may recommend some changes, we are confident that our record of quality service delivery that puts older people first, and achieves great outcomes for clients will hold us in good stead for the future.

There have been a number of exciting developments over the last couple of months, including a highly successful Retirement Housing Forum on 1 May with our partners Consumer Action Law Centre, Council on the Ageing Victoria and Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

We are proud to announce that we have achieved four years of funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria for a Retirement Housing Advice Service, building on HAAG's work over many years in the retirement housing area. With the Parliamentary Inquiry into Retirement Housing and recent national media attention pointing to the need for reform of the sector, this expanded service couldn't have come at a better time.

Unfortunately, the new funding comes at the expense of our tenancy advice service, which ended on 30 June. We pay tribute to this long-term work of HAAG, and welcome Shane our tenancy worker into his new role in the Retirement Housing service.

Our national project work continues, with Jeff Fiedler making some great progress towards housing justice in other states, with the assistance of Reuben Endean the Digital Communications worker.

As always, the staff at HAAG are committed to quality service delivery and working together with older people to achieve incredible results, which you can read about in the following pages. I hope you enjoy this edition of Older Tenants Voice.

Fiona York, co-manager.

CHAIRPERSONS WELCOME

As your new Chairperson for the new Committee of Management (COM) for HAAG I welcome you all to this newsletter bursting with news of so many good things: Welcome back to April and Shanny, the Retirement Housing forum and new Retirement Housing Advice Service (RHAS). New funding to extend the ACH program to the Barwon region and Jeff's wonderful successes promoting HAAG in other states of Australia.

It has been a busy and difficult time over the last three months. We've weathered it and now look forward to getting into gear and doing what HAAG does best for the older people at risk of homelessness.

I'd like to thank some people for their support over this time:

Steve Hyndes who stepped up to for three weeks as Interim Secretary as per the HAAG Constitution, after the resignation of the previous COM. Steve has experience of industrial matters and calm delivery of the facts in a very difficult environment.

Retired Constitutional Lawyer Ian Cunliffe also deserves a medal for his wise, appropriate and timely advice and support.

RADIO 3CR:

City Limits-3rd Wed of Month - 9am

Raise the Roof- 4th Wed of Month - 6pm

We love sharing our member's stories.

Want to be our next member in the spotlight? Or do you have something to say on radio?

Contact Shane on 03 9654 7389



The Members of HAAG who responded promptly to our initial phone call rally for support and attended the SGM or simply offered their support. We are so thankful for your commitment to HAAGs values and your dedication to the continuation of this wonderful service.

A special mention goes to the staff of HAAG who, under the most difficult of circumstances, continued their duties with their usual care and gentle attention to all the older persons who approach them. They did this without their usual mentor and manager friend, April Bragg at her desk to provide the support and direction they value so much. To all, thank you. With the whispers of fraud and corruption proven to be incorrect, we are happy to all be moving in the right direction again!

Sincere thanks must also go to the members of the new COM who have stepped up to support HAAG in an unprecedented environment. They are men and women of much consideration for our fellow citizens, coming from a variety of backgrounds. See page 9 for more on the COM.

Finally, I'd like to ask any of you interested in becoming more active in HAAG and its successful working groups working towards housing justice to please contact the office 03 9654 7389. We need more people to help us push for policy reform and such things as MORE PUBLIC HOUSING, just for starters.

It goes on and on...and so shall we for HAAG and for making life easier for older persons.

-Phyll Williams - Chairperson of HAAG

COVER PHOTO (AND OTHERS) BY GURUSWAMI PERUMAL

HAAGs' new committee of management. L to R: Mary, Vicky, Kris, Phyll, Ena, Richard, Peter, Kathy, Elias, Terrance. Missing: Kate and Sue. See page 9 for more on the COM

ACH GROWTH FUNDING

In March of this year HAAG successfully tendered for ACH Programme growth funding in the Barwon region. The programme, formerly known as ACHA, was established by the federal government in 1992 and until transferring to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) in July 2015, really struggled to assist the large and ever increasing numbers of older people in need of secure housing and community care. After many decades of lobbying for the value of the programme, along with increased resources, we are delighted the programme now has a secure future within the aged care system.

WELCOME BACK SHANNY

We are very happy to have Shanny back after her maternity and personal leave. Shanny's work has been greatly impacted by recent events and we know she is keen to get the CARPAV and ILU groups up and running with new members as soon as possible. We wish her a smooth and enjoyable transition back into work. For more information on the CARPAV and ILU working groups see page 17.



CONGRATULATIONS NAOMI

Only 6 months ago we were celebrating Naomi and Evans' wedding day and now we have the exciting news that they are going to be parents! The 5th HAAG baby is due to arrive in November.



HAAGs GUIDING VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Inclusiveness – of all ages, abilities and cultures
- Commitment – to always working towards the vision and mission of HAAG
- Respect – for each other and the people we assist and represent
- Integrity – in our words, our work and actions
- Solidarity – with each other and all people working towards common aims
- Equity - drives our dealings with all people towards our vision



PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY FORUM

On the 1st May, a group of 140 residents of retirement villages, residential villages, caravan parks and independent living units came together at a Retirement Housing Forum at Victoria University to ensure the recommendations from the recently released Parliamentary Inquiry are acted upon urgently to address serious concerns.

The forum was supported by Housing for the Aged Action Group, Consumer Action Law Centre, Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria and Council on the Ageing as part of an ongoing collaboration on issues facing residents of retirement housing.

The group were addressed by experts in the field; Katherine Temple from Consumer Action Law Centre, Rhonda Held from Council on the Ageing, Lawrie Robertson from Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria and Fiona York from Housing for the Aged Action Group.

After much discussion, the resident's group identified the top five areas for urgent action. These are:

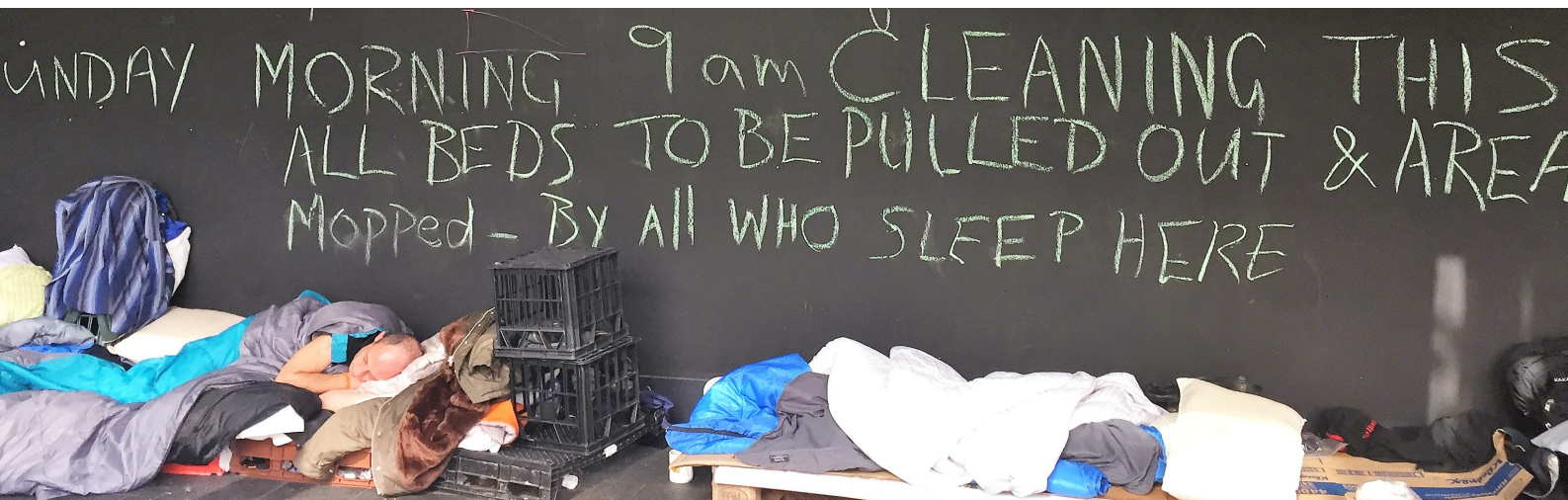
- An alternative dispute resolution process, such as a Retirement Housing Ombudsman
- Appropriate training for managers of retirement housing
- A process of accreditation for all retirement housing providers
- A review of the Retirement Villages Act 1986
- Clarification of deferred management fees and clearer contracts

The group hopes the Government will act swiftly to make the reforms necessary to make living in retirement housing a safe and secure option for all older Victorians.

HOUSING POLICY UPDATE

Public awareness of Australia's housing affordability crisis has been building momentum over the past year. We are hearing more and more about unaffordable rent, first-homebuyers struggling to get into the market and the growing issue of homelessness that has visibly spilled over onto the streets.

Services have been telling government for years that their lack of investment in public housing will lead to an absolute homelessness crisis- but to date the response has been weak.



Governments are being pressured to respond but continue to dance around the simple, and perhaps only, solution- building more public housing. In the 2017-2018 Budget, the Victorian State Government takes a step closer to shifting responsibility for social housing to the private sector.

A large amount of public housing stock is to be redeveloped using private-public partnerships. A significant amount of public housing land is going to be offered to private companies as compensation for them to build higher density public housing on each site that has been identified. This will begin with 1100 properties across nine sites including 12 inner-Melbourne housing estates. The government states that this will increase the social housing stock by 10%. Once the housing is built, decisions will also be made to transfer most of the housing to non-profit companies to manage.

As justification, the government claims that it is poor at managing housing, and the private sector would do a better job. An odd claim, given all the major portfolios the government manages so successfully (health, education etc). Successful management of housing stock simply comes down to a willingness to spend funds in this area - something the government is trying to wriggle out of.

Another rationale for handing over housing stock is that it "improves the social mix" in housing estates. As part of their business model, social housing providers allocate a proportion (often significant) to private tenants and purchasers. >

< HAAG believes that public housing estates often foster a sense of community that can be missing in the broader community. And whilst there may be very large estates in other countries, in Victoria, public housing estates are relatively small and surrounded by private housing which in itself creates a “social mix”.

This concern is also supported by recent research by Kate Shaw from the University of Melbourne who has found that past redevelopments have in fact caused segregated estates as the up-market developers have preferred to offer distinctly separated housing, presumably to maximise the sale price.

Most concerning to HAAG however is that private-public partnerships diminish the available land that should be used to maximise much-needed increases in public housing. There are 35,000 households on the public housing waiting list with thousands more who do not even bother to apply. In a press release about the Housing Renewal Project, Martin Foley said “We can’t condemn another generation of Victorians to live in housing poverty – we want to create better living conditions and encourage our tenants to be active members of vibrant communities.” Will an increase of 10% social housing really solve this problem?

Another significant step towards a market-lead model is a new government initiative offering to make \$1 Billion available for private companies and social housing providers to borrow government guaranteed funds on the basis that a proportion of the housing is available as social housing, mainly through the provision of inclusionary zoning.

HAAG believes that money would be better invested directly into building public housing, where 100% of the housing goes to the people who really need it and the government can keep the profits from its asset and re-invest in more public housing.

HAAG will continue to work on this issue and future actions will be discussed at our upcoming General Meeting on 26th July 2017.

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGNS AND POLICY WORKING GROUP

Join HAAGs Campaigns and Policy working group where members meet monthly to plan and run campaigns to improve the housing outcomes for older Australians. We look into issues such as:

- The changes to social housing policy
- The recommendations into the reform of the retirement housing sector
- The recent and continued wave of caravan park closures
- The review of the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)

If these issues interest you please contact Shane or Tegan at HAAG on 03 9654 7389 or haag@oldertenants.org.au

BROKERAGE SPENDING

We have been lucky enough to be the recipient of a number of grants from StreetSmart, a charity that raises money for local organisations to fight homelessness.

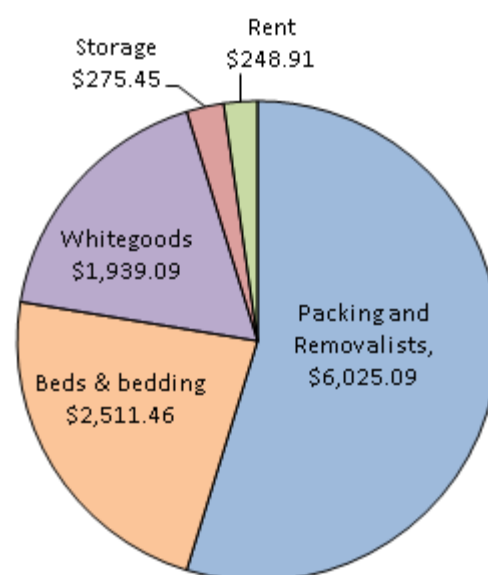
Their Café Smart and Dine Smart programs raises money by putting a percentage of money raised from coffee and meals sold at participating cafes and restaurants.

HAAG uses this money to support older people to move into their new long-term and secure housing.

Often after experiencing a housing crisis, people are left with nothing.

After Home at Last finds them a home, the service also provides essential items like beds and fridges as well as assistance to pack and move belongings.

Occasionally, the service may also pay a person's first two weeks in their new home. This means our clients will be starting their new life secure and debt-free. We thank StreetSmart for their ongoing support of our clients.



COTA FORUM

On the 22nd June Council on the Ageing held a forum on housing at the National Press Club in Canberra. The forum is part of a major campaign by COTA to tackle the wide range of housing problems affecting older people in Australia.

Pleasingly, COTA has included a major focus on the problems facing older people at risk of homelessness. HAAG's Ageing on the Edge national project worker Jeff Fiedler gave a presentation on older renters and the need for improved service supports for older people. HAAG will continue to offer our support to COTA both in Victoria and nationally to achieve housing justice in these areas.

HISTORY PROJECT

Have you collected clippings, photos or other memorabilia from HAAGs colorful history?
Maybe some old campaign material?

Do you have a story you would like to tell about the past? Please contact Royal at the office on 03 9654 7389 or send him an email at rabbott68@yahoo.com



WELCOME TO HAAGS NEW COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

On 7 June 2017, a new Committee of Management was elected by HAAG members. This group of people are committed to the values and vision of the organisation, and are a great mix of people with professional experience in the sector as well as with life experience as private rental tenants and residents of retirement housing. We are very happy to be working with them.

Phyll Williams, Chairperson - Phyll has a background in education and is a former university lecturer. She has been a member of HAAG for seven years and has remained active in the Independent Living Unit working group, Campaign and Policy Group, the Strategic Planning Group, and the Ageing on the Edge National Project Group as well as serving as a member of previous HAAG Management Committees.

Elias Tsigaris, Vice Chairperson - Elias has 25 years experience in working in the community sector, is currently a manager at MiCare and formerly, a deputy director of the New Hope Foundation. He has many years experience on boards in the multicultural sector, and is committed to ensuring that migrants and refugees have a voice and are able to advocate for services that meet their needs.

Peter Sibly, Treasurer - Peter has worked for the majority of his working life in the not for profit sector and is currently the General Manager of the United Housing Co-operative based in Yarraville, which manages a number of long-term social housing properties.

Vicki Gutsjhar, Secretary - Vicky has had a varied work life and has been a member of HAAG for six years, three of which have been on previous HAAG Management Committees. Vicky wants to ensure the caring and wants to preserve the personal, caring environment that has typified HAAG.

Kate Incerti - Kate has been a social worker for 35 years, spending the last 20 years delivering a housing information and interim case management service to people aged 50 and over at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Kate has closely partnered with HAAG throughout these two decades.

Ena Ahern - Ena is a social worker and former Assistance with Care and Housing worker at HAAG, who now volunteers with Sunbury Police Community Register and at St Vincent DePaul.

Mihriban (Mary) Astore - Mary has been a member of HAAG for the past 4 years and first joined when she needed help with her own housing. She has work experience in the family violence field. >

< Kathy Barnes - Kathy has been a member of HAAG for approximately 4 years and has been involved with the Independent Living Unit working group, lobbying government for change.

Sue Marino - Sue has recently retired having been the Business Manager at the North Fitzroy Primary School for the past 35 years, where she was actively involved in Finances and Human Relations. She has had an ongoing interest in HAAG since its inception through her mother, Molly Hadfield, one of HAAG's founders.

Kris Spark - Kris has been involved with Housing for the Aged Action Group for over 15 years when she began working for Seniors Information Victoria, where she was a Manager for a number of years.

Terrence Thomas - Terrence is a former client of HAAG's Home at Last service who has recently been housed in public housing after a long period of housing insecurity. He brings a tenant's perspective to the Committee and wants to give back to the service that assisted him for so long.

Richard Tate - Richard has a long history of fighting for social justice issues and has held various Committee of Management positions in community organisations over many years. He was also involved in establishing the retirement housing service at HAAG. He is very happy in his public housing unit, which is appropriate for his needs as he gets older.

SO, HOW ARE HAAG TRACKING?

We are one year in to our three year strategic plan, and despite recent events, we are well on track to achieving our aims.

One of the key parts of this work has been working with culturally diverse communities.

Due to our targeted community education, we consistently have over 50% clients from a CALD background. Our strategic aim is to also increase the number of culturally diverse people as members, staff and on the Committee.

This will be greatly assisted by the recently announced \$4900 small grant from the Participation for CALD Seniors funding, administered by the seniors branch of DHHS. The money will be used to re-engage our bilingual educators to reach out to older renters from our target communities (using the films we have developed) and to engage CALD former clients housed by Home At Last to join the organisation. The project came out of research to identify barriers for CALD people to become members of HAAG, as well as our desire to better utilise the great films that we have made.

Gaining increased funding from DHS to expand the ACH service into the Barwon Region, and from CAV to expand the Retirement Housing Advice Service has been a great success for the organisation and certainly shows progress towards achieving our strategic aim to increase funding.

Another key part of the strategic plan is to utilise client stories, combined with data, to illustrate the issue of housing and homelessness for older Victorians. This can be clearly seen in our recent publication celebrating the housing of our 500th client.

We hope to continue to expand this work so that these powerful stories will inform funding proposals, education and media. We also aimed to raise the profile of older people's homelessness issues in the public domain, and this year we have had an unprecedented amount of media coverage, especially in the area of retirement housing.

With a Digital Communications worker now employed on the national project, we hope to expand the reach of the organisation across the country.

HAAG SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

On 7th June a Special General Meeting was held to elect a new committee of management following the resignation of the old Committee of Management (COM). 69 Members attended the meeting facilitated by Kevin Healy from 3CR.

Kevin introduced the candidates standing for election and they each gave a short speech. Following this, interim secretary Steve Hyndes, gave his report on recent events. He explained that he was appointed by a group of HAAG members to represent HAAG until the new COM was elected. This involved meeting with funding bodies to address the concerns raised by the ex-COM. Two funders were reportedly happy with HAAG's service but DHHS required a performance review be conducted. The report of this review is due 31st July 2017.

Steve confirmed that 5 reviews of HAAG's finances have been carried out and none found evidence of fraud or corruption and that HAAG's balance sheet is strong. However there are recommendations from audit reports that HAAG should implement.

There was also a lot of concern from members around the treatment of staff by the ex-COM. A few members wanted to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of staff throughout this difficult period. Some staff also spoke up and explained that it was very hard to move on from how they were treated by the ex-COM.

The election of the new committee >



COM member Sue Marino, daughter of HAAG co-founder Molly Hadfield



HAAG Volunteer Royal offering the customary 'HAAG hospitality'



HAAG COM member Kate with sector worker and HAAG member Kerol

< commenced and upon learning that there were 10 candidates for 9 positions Bob Brooks withdrew his nomination and wished HAAG all the best. David Martin, independent returning officer read the list of nominees and seconders and declared all committee positions filled.

Steve Hyndes, Ian Cunliff (pro-bono lawyer), Kevin Healy and David Martin were all thanked by new Chairperson Phyll Williams and to close the meeting Joan Lansbury called for three cheers for staff.

For a copy of the minutes please call 03 9654 7389 or haag@oldertenants.org.au



Long time HAAG members,
Frances and Feng

INTAKE CASE STUDY

Heather rang HAAG for advice regarding housing options upon discharge from hospital. At the time of first contact, she was in the sixth month of an ongoing hospital stay for myeloma treatment and rehabilitation. At 58 years old, she had no specific age related health issues but was very unwell due to her cancer. As she was looking at another two or three months in hospital at least, she asked only for advice and general information on housing. Heather and the HAAG worker exchanged emails about housing options, and she was sent hard copies of HAAG publications such as the Home at Last Finding a Home booklet.

In June 2017, after eight months in hospital, Heather rang worker and informed them that she was ready to receive housing support as she anticipated being discharged from hospital in the near future. Her rehabilitation had progressed very successfully and she was able to walk with the assistance of a frame, which she had not done in almost a year.

At the point of requesting housing support, Heather's main presenting issue was her impending homelessness. Prior to going into hospital, she had been in private rental in an outer part of Melbourne with very limited medical supports. Her name remained on the lease and she spent eight months paying the rent while in hospital, but could not return to the property due to its distance from medical and family supports, and its physical unsuitability with stairs and no grab rails. Heather's primary need was a suitable rental property into which she could be discharged. As her rehabilitation was proceeding so well, Heather expected to be able to live fully independently and wanted her own independent housing. >

< She was referred by worker into her local housing support provider, in the hopes that an early housing application would be submitted for public housing on Heather's behalf, or that social housing could be found.

Upon following up a few weeks later, worker was informed by the local housing support provider that Heather was to enter permanent aged care and no longer needed housing support. As this seemed to be contrary to Heather's wishes, worker rang Heather's ward phone number in hospital – the contact number always used to contact the client. Nursing staff in hospital advised that Heather had in fact been moved into aged care, and provided the phone number for the facility. Worker then rang the facility and after being put through to several different desks, was eventually able to leave a message for Heather to ring back. When Heather rang, she was very surprised to hear that her local housing support provider had been advised she no longer needed housing support. No verification of this information had been sought from her, and in fact she had never spoken to her local housing support provider. She was angry that information about her case had been discussed between workers against her will, and without consulting her.

Worker spoke to the client for a long time and ascertained the full detail of the situation, which was that she had been discharged into aged care by force as the hospital had no room to keep her. However this was always considered by her to be a short term respite option, as her health improved by the day and she was ready for independent living. Heather and the worker agreed that because of Heather's complicated circumstances and unnecessarily long wait time for housing assistance so far, she could be referred into HAAG's housing support program despite being out of our outreach catchment.

OUTREACH CASE STUDY:

June, aged 73, was referred to Home at Last in 2016 by her son due to highly unsuitable living conditions. June had made arrangements to live in her daughter's granny flat for \$230 per fortnight; however the 'granny flat' was actually a shed at the rear of the property.

The shed did not have access to water, heating or cooling. June wasn't given a key to the main house so she was only able to access the bathroom facilities when her granddaughter was home to let her in. When her granddaughter wasn't around she used a bucket as a toilet. The shed had a flimsy entrance door, was damp and had very low ceilings. Also, the windows had to be kept open during the day because of the sewerage system contained inside the shed had a very overpowering smell.

She set up her own kitchen facilities with a camp stove top and a bucket for washing her dishes, and made the poor conditions as liveable as possible. However she was constantly ill from the cold and the damp and at one point ended up hospitalised with blood poisoning from an infection. It was at this point that Home at Last became involved.>

SWINBURNES WORK WITH CARPAV

A joint collaboration between the Future Self and Design Living Lab, hosted by the Centre for Design Innovation at Swinburne University of Technology and Housing for the Aged Action Group has revealed insights into the complex landscape of Caravan Parks and Residential Villages in Victoria. Over a six-week period, 8 volunteer members of Housing for the Aged Action Group acted as domain experts in several workshops, designing conceptual services around dispute resolution and accessibility in their parks. Using service design tools and methods, the volunteer members of HAAG addressed the fundamental systems dynamics that currently hinder desirable experiences occurring in their parks. Here, the members demonstrated the need for improved park management procedures and stronger links between city councils, health practitioners and architects who are experts in ageing-in-place. The workshop identified potential design interventions that highlighted the need for greater resident autonomy in making decisions about their homes and the individual and communal wellbeing. The results will be compiled in a report where a number of design recommendations will address the need for greater innovation and service standards in the caravan park and residential village retirement sector. For more information contact Dr. Alen Keirnan at akeirnan@swin.edu.au or Mark Strachan at mstrachan@swin.edu.au.

< The Intake service completed an assessment with June over the phone; she was deemed eligible for priority public housing applications and was offered a referral for crisis accommodation but she declined as she would not be able to take her small dog. An urgent outreach appointment was made and a HAL Outreach worker went out to visit June and completed a Homeless with Support application. She was approved within a month and waited for an offer. In the meantime June continued to live in the shed where her relationship with her daughter went from strained to verbally abusive. HAL's outreach worker attempted to source long-term accommodation from social housing providers but none were available.

Finally a few months later June received an offer of public housing and she accepted it immediately. June was assisted at sign up and to move into her new home.

The outreach worker visited her a week later and she was a completely different person; she was happy and bright and her health was already improving. June looks forward to getting her health back on track, setting up her new home, and having a place for her grandchildren to come and visit her



Community Garden at North Melbourne

NATIONAL PROJECT: AGEING ON THE EDGE

Over the past few months the national Ageing on the Edge Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project has been progressing in a number of states of Australia. Ageing on the Edge is a partnership between HAAG and the Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP). Our key partner at CHURP is Dr Debbie Faulkner.

Now into its second year the project has an overall aim to increase awareness of housing issues for vulnerable older people across Australia; establish the range of housing options that currently exist; find out how older people can access housing; and, what services exist that can help older people to find housing that enables them to age-in-place.

The project also has a specific focus on ensuring that housing services exist in every state to be able to help older people in need. Services need to understand the concerns of older people and also find the types of housing options that older people need and help them to be housed quickly. Therefore the project is promoting better specialisation on older people amongst generalist housing and homelessness services as well as encouraging the development of one-stop-shops like HAAG's Home at Last model as we are unique in Australia.

The project is currently ramping up its work after the first year focused on developing the broad foundations for the project. A great deal of work has been done in South Australia where we have just finalised a major report that gives a clear picture of the housing problems facing older people in that state.

For example, the report shows us the scale of housing poverty amongst older renters across Adelaide as 27% of private renters aged 65+ were paying more than 30% of their income

in rent (30% is generally seen as the limit of affordability). More worrying is the fact that 19% are paying more than 50% of their income in rent. Even worse, we found that over one-third of these people (in the categories paying more than 30% and 50% of their income in rent) were aged 75 or over.

There are more than 4500 people aged 55+ on the public housing waiting list in South Australia and about 600 are aged 75 or over. There are nearly 100 people aged 85 or over waiting for public housing which is very disturbing..

More details about the South Australia report will be released shortly whilst we are now focusing our research in New South Wales, with Western Australia the next state where we will be working.

Just a quick bit of information coming through on our research in NSW is that in Greater Sydney (Sydney and all suburbs) 80% of people aged 65 and over are paying more than 30% of their income in rent. This is the beginning of the terrible story we are planning to expose in NSW and then demand action.

If you would like more information about HAAG's national project please contact Jeff Fiedler on 03 96547389 or email jeff.fiedler@oldertenants.org.au



Jeff Fiedler with Robert Mowbray from the Tenants Union of NSW, working on the NSW project research.

HAAG'S RETIREMENT HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE (RHAS)

HAAG is excited to announce they have been successful in securing funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) for the Retirement Housing Advice and Advocacy Program (RHAAP). This 4 year funding for a Retirement Housing Advice Service (RHAS) will enable HAAG to expand their current service to assist more retirement housing residents across Victoria living in caravan and residential parks and villages, retirement villages and rental villages.



Shanny



Aoife



Shane

HAAG has been assisting residents in retirement housing for a number of years but this is the first time a specific program has been provided by government especially for retirement housing residents. HAAG's knowledge and expertise gained over 15 years of working directly with residents have made it an ideal organisation to take on this expanded program. The new RHAS officially begins on 3 July 2017 and will see Shane, Aoife and Shanny share the 2 full time retirement housing worker roles now funded at HAAG.

The RHAS can provide information, advice and advocacy for residents living in caravan and residential parks and villages, retirement villages and rental villages. Resident must be 55 years of age and over with some form of financial disadvantage which includes receiving a Centrelink benefit.

The RHAS also offers a workers advice and information line for community worker's who may have clients that live in retirement housing or that are interested in moving into retirement housing. We can also work with groups of residents and can provide information sessions.

This funding comes at an important time for HAAG and its members, because we are in the midst of some critical policy and legislative reviews within the retirement housing sector.

The added resources enable us to provide more time assisting residents directly with their concerns but also allows us to focus more time towards policy and law improvement to ensure residents interests are properly considered throughout government reviews and responses.

The RHAS will be available 5 days a week from 10am to 4pm on 9654 7389 or retirement@oldertenants.org.au or by contacting Shane, Aoife or Shanny directly.

AFTERNOON TEA FOR WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Whether you're a long-time working group member or brand new to the organisation, we are seeking people for our CARPAV, ILU and Campaign and Policy working groups.

If you are interested in making a difference in housing issues related to older people OR if you are a resident in a caravan park, residential park/village, Not-For-Profit retirement village (or Independent Living Unit) and are interested in becoming involved with campaigns focused on improving your particular forms of housing, then this event is for you.

We are seeking people who want to be actively involved in a group which would mean attending regular monthly meetings and undertaking various campaigns and projects. We are also seeking your ideas and suggestions about what issues need to be addressed in the coming months.

We look forward to having you along and chatting further about what we can achieve together.

AFTERNOON TEA

When: Tuesday 8 August 2017
1pm to 3pm

Where: Ross House,
247 Flinders Ln, Melbourne
Level 4, meeting room 1

RSVP Tuesday 1st August
retirement@oldertenants.org.au
03 9654 7389

HAAG TENANCY SERVICE ENDS

HAAG has been funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria to provide a tenancy advice service for 29 years. Jeff Fiedler was HAAG's first Tenancy worker and laid the foundations of this successful service. He was followed by Marc Wesley and more recently, Shane McGrath. Over time HAAG's service began to assist greater numbers of residents living in retirement housing. This resulted in CAV funding the organisation in 2009 to employ a retirement housing information worker (Shanny Gordon).

The advantage of HAAG having its own tenancy worker was that it not only helped people with their eviction notices and issues, it allowed them to access the Home at Last service for more suitable long-term housing at the same time. This meant that people could get help before they were evicted, and having the two services working together under the one roof is part

of what makes our service so special.

With changes to the way that CAV funds their state-wide tenancy advice program, HAAG will no longer be funded to provide specialist tenancy advice as of 30 June. Instead, we will have to refer older people with tenancy problems to their local Tenancy Advice Service.

We do have some concern that the new tenancy advice service model does not assist people living in social housing. With increasing amounts of public housing being transferred to social housing, there are more and more social housing tenants who will have nowhere to go if they have issues with their landlords.

Although we are thrilled with our retirement housing service funding, we are disappointed to lose our vital tenancy advice service. Thankfully we won't be losing Shane McGrath, our tenancy worker for the last five years, as he will be taking up one of the new retirement advice roles.

CASE WORK SUMMARIES

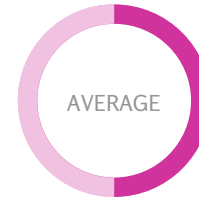
RETIREMENT HOUSING ADVICE SUMMARY

Greatest Success

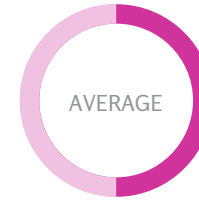
A residents' committee of a large caravan park where residents are being evicted, negotiated a better deal and increased supports to transition to new homes.

Greatest Challenge

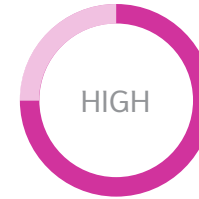
Trying to negotiate with rental village managers who repeatedly refuse to apply the law and are intimidating vulnerable residents into withdrawing VCAT applications.



CASE LOAD



PAPER WORK



CASE COMPLEXITY

HOUSING SUPPORT SUMMARY

Greatest Success

A huge number of property offers received this quarter, most clients accepted offers and are very happy in their new homes, and having April back as housing support manager is making our jobs a lot easier

Greatest Challenge

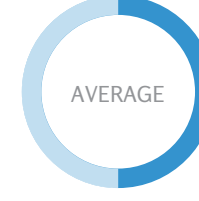
High data and case loads as usual however we are managing to keep on top of it all



CASE LOAD



PAPER WORK



CASE COMPLEXITY

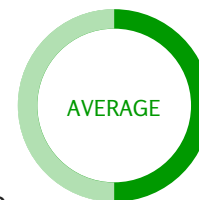
TENANCY ADVICE SUMMARY

Greatest Success

Combining advocacy at VCAT with strenuous negotiations behind the scenes to prevent the eviction of a 70-year-old public housing tenant whose housing was placed at risk due to family violence and elder abuse.

Greatest Challenge

The biggest challenge has been the closure of the service due to loss of funding from Consumer Affairs. This meant striving to close off as many matters as possible as well as negotiating an inscrutable, Kafkaesque maze of referral pathways to arrange ongoing support for those needing it.



CASE LOAD



PAPER WORK



CASE COMPLEXITY

HAAG Communications

The communications team, along with the retirement housing advice team have been very busy responding to and initiating media around Retirement Housing, particularly the Parliamentary Inquiry, the forum held on 1st May, and the launch of HAAGs new Retirement Housing Advice Service (RHAS). The Four Corners/Fairfax investigation into dodgy village operators also sparked a lot of interest in this line of work that HAAG pioneered over 6 years ago.

We continue to improve our website to enable better access for all people and we are also improving our membership database. If you have experienced any change to the way you receive communications from us, please let us know on 03 9654 7389. We apologise for any inconvenience and appreciate your patience as we update our systems.

Your HAAG Membership

Enclosed in this newsletter is a membership form- please complete and return to the office by post (or email) to renew your membership with HAAG for the 2017- 2018 financial year. Membership forms are also available on our website or can be picked up from our office. Memberships are annual and based on the financial year, although we give you a few months grace to renew.

Your membership is so important; as a member-driven organisation it is your vote and voice that help keep HAAG true to its values and purpose. We need you to keep fighting with us for social justice, for better housing for older people. Please contact us to discuss how you can become more involved with HAAG.

HAAG SERVICE DATA 01 MAR - 31 MAY 2017

Total new Clients	271
Needing Housing support	232 (85%)
Needing Information Only	39 (15%)

Main reason for seeking assistance (top 3)

Inappropriate/Inad. Housing	110 (41%)
Housing Crisis eg: NTV	76 (28%)
Housing Affordability Stress	33 (12%)

Client Demographics

Average Age	66
Predominate Gender	Female (60%)

Referrals to Housing Support/Information

HAAG Services	90
External Services	140

HAAG Housing Outcomes

Clients Housed	28
Offers made	33
Average time to Rehouse	3-6 months

Tenancy Service data

Tenancy Clients	10
Top issue (30%)	Retrieve Bond
VCAT representations	5

Retirement Info Service data^

Retirement Info Clients	237
Average Age	70
Predominate Gender	F
Residents at Info. sessions	60

Secondary Consultations*

Total	18
Total hours spent on SC	2.5
Consult. requested by other agency	11%

*Cannot be counted as clients due to eligibility etc.

^Retirement Info data 01Apr-30Jun2017



twitter.com/HAAGHomeAtLast



[facebook.com/HousingfortheAged
ActionGroup/](https://facebook.com/HousingfortheAgedActionGroup/)



www.oldertenants.org.au

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SURFACE

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AUSTRALIA

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Fighting for Housing Justice
for older people since 1983

HAAG also offers FREE confidential advice and
support to over 55's

Housing Options Information

Outreach care and housing support

Retirement housing advice and support