

**Submission  
No 17**

**INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS AMONGST OLDER  
PEOPLE AGED OVER 55 IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** CatholicCare Wilcannia Forbes

**Date Received:** 25 May 2022

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Please consider the following responses to the terms of reference:

- a) Our organisation has the specialist homelessness contracts for Parkes/Forbes and Bourke/Cobar. We are consistently seeing case numbers upwards of 2.5 x our funded numbers. This financial year alone we have assisted 71 people 55 or older which is a 22% increase from the same period last financial year.
- b) In our region, we are seeing an ongoing affordable housing crisis with limited affordable private rentals and a lack of social housing options. Increased demand for private rentals has seen many of our clients priced out of the market and resorting to living in overcrowded residences or seeking other short term options such as refuges.
- c) Early interventions to prevent homelessness centre around education pertaining to domestic and family violence, engagement with tenancy support groups as well as addressing any issues that may arise with an existing tenancy to prevent eviction.
- d) Our service provides assistance and we engage with local social housing providers including DCJ, Community Housing and Aboriginal Housing.
- e) Not so much navigating our service, but certainly issues for older clients when they are placed in single bedroom accommodation as these are often in blocks of units with inherent social issues. Older clients are less likely to find employment which restricts their options as well.
- f) AHURI have relevant literature to addressing this
- g) Intensive case management needed, especially when it involves women experiencing domestic violence. Programs such as Staying Home Leaving Violence are critical. h) Data capture in CIMS is adequate.
- i) Impact is immense given a lifetime has passed and then suddenly finding themselves in this situation. Mental health severely impacted.
- j) Older women tend to come from homes where the men were the primary money makers which means that if a relationship fails, the woman is usually at immediate risk due to financial pressures.
- k) Older people in our community at risk due to lack of safe affordable housing options and being forced to accept properties in areas with high social issues.