

**Submission
No 62**

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

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Chair,
Standing Committee on Social Issues,
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Sydney NSW 2000
Via email: socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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Endorsement for the submission provided by the NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum

Dear Committee Chair

I write as Associate Professor in Human Rights and Socio-legal Studies, Sociology and Criminology, The University of Sydney, in relation to the Inquiry into Homelessness amongst older people aged over 55 in New South Wales. I have research expertise in the human rights of people with disability, with a particular focus on violence prevention. I write to provide an endorsement for the submission provided by the NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum to this Inquiry.

As you are aware, homelessness is a serious issue impacting older people; and this is an issue of increasing prevalence in Australia. I note in particular that older people with disability comprise a notable proportion of older people who are homeless in Australia; for example, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare research indicates that clients of specialist homelessness services ‘with disability are more likely to be older than clients without disability’ (AIHW 2020). Homeless people with disability face a number of unique barriers. The NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum submission discusses numerous barriers faced by older people with disability, including in attaining affordable accessible housing. Further, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has highlighted overlaps between violence and the experience of homelessness by people with disability (DRC 2022).

Australia has obligations under Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities, including Articles 19 and 28, which highlight the right of people with disability to be supported to live independently in the community on an equal basis with others, a right to public housing, and rights ‘to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.’

The NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum have made a number of recommendations which would go a long way towards reducing the incidence of homelessness amongst older people,

including older people with disability. In particular, the NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum have recommended that the NNSW Government:

- Fund a specialist older person's housing information and support service that comprises both an early intervention and crisis response, similar to the HAAG 'Home at Last' model in Victoria.
- Lower the priority age for social housing eligibility from 80 years as a matter of urgency.
- Build 5,000 social and affordable homes per year for 10 years, at least 20% of which should be dedicated to older people.

The above measures would certainly help to reduce homelessness amongst older people, and would go some way towards meeting our human rights obligations. In addition, the NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum have recommended that concrete measures be adopted to 'address ageism, sexism, gender and disability discrimination in government services, finance institutions, including banks, and private rental markets'; that the NSW Government reduce administrative requirements that create barriers to people experiencing homelessness accessing support; and the Government work to promote of increased accessibility of housing stock through revised National Construction Codes.

I urge the committee to adopt the above recommendations. I would welcome the opportunity to engage with the inquiry process where possible.

Yours sincerely

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