

**Submission
No 78**

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

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Date Received: 12 June 2022

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12th June 2022

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

Endorsing NSW Ageing on the Edge Forum submission

I am a Lecturer at the School of Law, Western Sydney University. I have been closely following the policy initiatives of the NSW Ageing on the Edge Forum and, in particular, the launch of the policy report titled *Home at last: solutions to end homelessness of older people in NSW* in December 2021. At the launch of the report, I had the opportunity to listen to the lived experience of the older people and since then have been engaged in the policy discussion in this sphere. As an individual who has personally witnessed how homelessness could violate basic human rights, I support the submission by NSW Ageing on the Edge Forum.

I support the following recommendations of the NSW Ageing on the Edge Forum, calling on the NSW Government to –

- 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.

In addition, I support the recommendation that the NSW government –

- Adopt concrete measures to address ageism, sexism, gender and disability discrimination in government services, financial institutions, including banks, and private rental markets.
- Remove unnecessarily burdensome requirements, such as, completion of ‘seeker diaries’ to maintain temporary accommodation imposed on older people who are already in challenging housing situations.
- Increase transparency and accountability by increasing the availability of data, including –
 - Social and priority housing waiting list data broken down by age, gender, disability status and geographic area,
 - The number of social and affordable housing dwellings available in NSW, including age and gender breakdown of allocations,
 - The number of dwellings assigned under State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) (Seniors SEPP) and Public Housing Seniors Communities (PPOPH), and
 - The number of dwellings built under the commitments in different housing commitments, including the *NSW Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023*, Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) and Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF).

- Provide exemptions to strict documentary evidence for housing applications, including identity documents, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and older women escaping domestic and family violence to ensure equitable access for all older people.
- Adopt the new mandatory minimum accessibility standards contained in the revised National Construction Code for all future constructions in NSW.

I urge the committee to adopt these recommendations highlighted above.

Sincerely,