

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 75a

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

**Organisation:** Age Matters

**Date Received:** 26 May 2022

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

## Endorsing NSW Ageing of the Edge Forum submission

Age Matters is an initiative of IRT Group, delivering support services for older people in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions of NSW who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Our organisation is a member of NSW Ageing on the Edge Forum, and collectively we are working towards ending homelessness of older people in NSW. As a coalition are 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, we are recommending that NSW government –

- Adopt concrete measures to address ageism, sexism, gender and disability discrimination in government services, finance 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 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.

We will also be forwarding our own submission to the inquiry based on our experiences as a regional provider of assistance to this specific cohort. It is of particular importance to us that flexibility in support allows for geographic nuances across the state, given particular challenges regions may be facing. Geographic differences across the state may be related to incidences such as floods or fires, the rising cost of housing, or a consideration of the attachment to communities or place that can make a significant impact into the wellbeing of older people.

We urge the committee to adopt these recommendations highlighted above and welcome the opportunity to engage with the inquiry process where possible.

Sincerely

Manager – Age Matters