

FIXING

OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING

Increase public and community housing to 10% of the total housing stock by 2050 and set aside some for people over 55 based on area and need.

Make 'affordable housing' truly affordable by legislating a definition in HAFF to cap rents at 30% of income for people on the lowest incomes.

Implement a fairer tax system to recognise housing as a human right.

Provide more support for older people at risk of homelessness by funding specialist support services for those who can't access aged care support due to insecure housing.

Make homes climate safe for older people by prioritising retrofitting of public and community housing to withstand extreme weather events.



CLAIRE'S STORY

Claire* is an older woman in her early 70s experiencing homelessness in NSW who has been fighting for social housing for years. She has worked for both Federal and State governments in management level jobs for most of her life. She lost her job when she was 63 years and she struggled to find a suitable job and was discriminated against due to her age. She was then forced to draw on her superannuation to pay for living and health expenses. Claire is currently living in a caravan in regional NSW due to a severe lack of affordable housing choices.

“I think we are the new face of homelessness and government policies are not responding to needs of people like me.”

Claire can only live in her caravan for 180 days a year so she sits in Sydney or Canberra the rest of the time. Her battle to access social housing has been a long, unnecessarily complex and stressful one. She first applied for social housing in 2018 and battled bureaucracy for many years. She had to jump through many hurdles to get her priority application approved and she has been on the priority waiting list for over 18 months now.

When she first applied she was told she could find a private or affordable rental for \$300 per week. Even if it were possible to find a rental at that price, it would leave her with just \$200 a week for living costs. That's not enough to afford the essentials like food, clothes and medicine, let alone additional expenses like utility bills, transport and so on. Since she first applied for housing, her health has deteriorated but she has been told that she may have to wait years on the priority list before a property becomes available to her.

She feels isolated and unable to build a network where she lives because of the remoteness of the location and she has lost many of her friends after having to move from Sydney. Claire's challenges are a direct result of years of underinvestment in public and community housing.

*name has been changed for privacy

