

There is real momentum for change to address older person's homelessness across Queensland and there were some positive outcomes after the last election to address some of these challenges. From last election we saw how powerful our voices are. People speaking out and asking decisionmakers for action can shift government policy to improve housing outcomes for older people as a priority.

We encourage you to contact your local federal representative and other local candidates to request meetings to talk about the issue of older person's homelessness and what needs to change. Local members are often available to meet their constituents, especially when there is an upcoming election. They are interested in local concerns and with the right information, encouragement and clear recommendations, you can be a champion for older people and their housing issues.

## Here are some tips for meeting with your federal representative

### 1. Find your local federal representative and other local candidates

You can find your electorate and local federal representative here:

<https://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/electoral-boundaries/where-is-my-electorate>

Contact details of the QLD parliamentary members are available

here: <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Members/Current-Members/Member-List>

Information about other candidates will be available on their

respective party/personal websites. Some key websites include:

Labor Party: <https://queenslandlabor.org/category/people/state/>

Liberal National Party: <https://www.lnp.org.au/our-team/state/>

Queensland Greens: <https://greens.org.au/qld/state-candidates>

Katter's Australian Party: <https://kap.org.au/candidates-mp/>

Once you have identified the representative or candidate, you will then need to search for their contact details, preferably an email address.

### 2. Do your research

Before you contact your local representative and candidates, find out some information about them. Check their website, social media and media releases to see what motivates and interests them, whether they are in government, opposition or an independent. Do they have ministerial responsibilities or a particular interest? Do you have any common ground or interests? The more you know about the local representative or candidate, the easier and more free flowing the conversation will be.

### 3. Requesting and setting up the meeting

We have a [template letter](#) that you can use to request a meeting. This can be found on our website.

About a week after sending the request, give the electorate office a call. These representatives and candidates receive a huge amount of correspondence, so calling to follow up can be effective. You will probably speak to a staff member rather than the representative / candidate themselves. They will be able to help you arrange the meeting. You may also have to call a few times if they are busy.

### 4. Be clear, prepared and briefed before you call

When you call your local federal representative or candidate's electorate office, introduce yourself and explain where you are calling from. Make it clear that you live in their electorate. Clearly explain the reason for your call, and that you would like to have a meeting with the representative or candidate to explain your concerns. Have the date and other information about the meeting request (letter or email) handy so the staff members can track it down in their correspondence records.

Consider your availability and preference for the meeting location before you call. It could be in person at their electoral office, a community hub/local service or online. You may wish to take along an advocate, friend or a family member. Let the person know about your preferences.

Give the staff member enough information to convince them that they should arrange a meeting for you. Offer to send through more information by email if that would help. Election times are particularly busy, and staff member deal with a lot of calls on a variety of issues. They will appreciate clarity and brevity. During the call, ask for the best email address and phone number to contact the staff member if needed.

### **5. Once you have arranged the meeting**

Following the call, be sure to email or write to the office to confirm the meeting details.

### **6. Meeting the representative/candidate**

See below for more information about how to prepare for the meeting.

### **7. Follow up promptly**

Make sure you follow up after the meeting by thanking the representative or candidate and their staff via email. Share relevant information (links to reports are available on the HAAG website). Maintain your relationship with the representative/candidate by keeping in touch about important new developments or issues.

## The meeting

You will probably have no more than 30 minutes for your meeting with the representative or candidate. Introduce yourself (any others accompanying you) and use your time wisely. Get to the point. Be specific and clear about the issue and what you want them to do. Try to cover these two main areas in your meeting:

### **1. How does the issue affect the representative or candidate's electorate**

If you are comfortable with doing so, share your housing challenges or experiences or consider asking another member of the community or a community advocate to the meeting to tell their story. Explain what you know about older people's risk and experiences of homelessness in the community. Personal stories make the issue relatable and harder for the representative to deny or downplay the importance of. Older people's experiences of housing stress and homelessness are the result of systemic and structural failures but the representative or the candidate may not know how it affects their constituents.

## 2. What are you asking them to do?

Consider the key policies you would like to see. For example, if your main concern is about lack of affordable housing for older people, ask them to commit to investing in social and affordable housing. HAAG is asking the Queensland government to take very specific measures.

- You can align your “asks” to HAAG’s policy recommendations (see below).
- You can ask that them to take housing policy commitments to the election with a clear focus on older people.
- You can also ask the representative or candidate to make a public statement about the need for polices that address older people’s homelessness.

## HAAG’s policy recommendations

Feel free to print this document and leave a copy with the representative or candidate. Broadly, HAAG is asking the decision makers to:

- Increase public and community housing stock across the state with 20% ringfenced for older people over 55 years.
- Increase ‘affordable housing’ that’s capped at 30% of the household income for older people on low incomes who are not eligible for public and community housing.
- Fund other below market rate housing options for older people including co-operative housing, low-cost retirement housing and other co-housing models.
- Embed voices of older people with lived experience and expertise into all government policy making processes.
- Increase funding and geographic spread of Housing Older Women Support Service (HOWSS).

## Links to some helpful resources

- [HAAG’s Decades of housing decline in Queensland research findings](#)
- [HAAG’s Ageing in a Housing Crisis Report](#)
- [Qshelter’s State Election Platform](#)