

10 August 2018

OLDER PEOPLE AT INCREASING RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

In Homelessness Week 2018, spare a thought for older people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) said that with the rapid ageing of the population in coming decades, and the number of Australians aged 75 years and over expected to increase three-fold over the next 20 years, we need a range of solutions to ensure that older Australians have safe and secure housing.

“Homelessness among older women is increasing. In 2015-2016, about 12,000 women aged 55 and over sought homelessness services in Australia, a 52% increase since 2011–12,”¹ Ms Sparrow, ACSA CEO said.

“During Homelessness Week we pay tribute to not-for-profit aged care providers who do invaluable work providing aged care services for those disadvantaged members of the community who might otherwise have no access to housing, let alone aged care services,” Ms Sparrow said.

“Not only are members providing ongoing care and support but also innovative temporary solutions by utilising their property to provide ‘pop up’ housing for older women at risk of homelessness while they redevelop sites.²

“As a group homeless people exhibit more challenging needs requiring more resources to provide adequate support. While there is currently a homelessness supplement for residential aged care it requires a further injection of funds to ensure a homeless person is able to receive safe, secure and compassionate care and support at the end of their lives.

“For an additional \$10 million a year 1,700 formerly homeless aged care residents in Australia would be better supported. This is a small cost for major impact.

“Homelessness Week this year has the theme ‘Ending homelessness together’ ACSA would encourage all levels of government to develop and adopt a cohesive National Older Persons Housing Strategy.

“Such a strategy would focus on enabling older people to access secure and affordable housing and make housing adjustments and choices that enhance ageing in place, wellbeing and lifestyle.”

Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) is the leading aged care peak body supporting over 700 church, charitable and community-based, not-for-profit organisations. The aged care industry provides care and accommodation services to 1.3 million older Australians. ACSA represents, leads and supports its members to achieve excellence in providing quality affordable housing and community and residential care services for older Australians.

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¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Welfare*, 2017.

² http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-20/melbourne-pop-up-homeless-shelter-launched/10013946?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%3a8935&user_id=9b2ae20cab72fe95570affc1502c8177d3faab1ff2553b287f1e92e0b62b37b9&WT.tsrc=email&WT.mc_id=Email%7c%7c8935&utm_content=ABCNewsmai_topstories_articlelink

ACSA is the peak body for Australia's not-for-profit, church, charitable and community-based aged care providers.