



## Helping older women to find their home

Every Queenslander deserves to find affordable, accessible, sustainable and secure housing. However, we know some Queenslanders face significant challenges and barriers to achieving this, including older women. The reality is older women are the fastest-growing group of Australians experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

A home that makes it easier for older people to connect with family, friends and social activities brings benefits to individuals and whole communities. Older Queenslanders need to access and sustain appropriate housing while being supported by the health and aged care services they might need to be safe and independent. Older people often struggle with the high cost of housing and homeownership, and reduced incomes, so many are at greater risk of financial insecurity.

This can result in homelessness, particularly if their circumstances change and they need to rely on income support as a single person.

Women over 55 years face other risks to their financial security from:

- being more likely to work part time and in lower paid jobs to balance caring responsibilities
- taking time out of the workforce to care for family, meaning less superannuation
- gender wage inequity
- age discrimination preventing access to work
- financial impacts of life events such as illness, death of a spouse, or divorce.

As the demand for housing for older women increases, it's important that the service system is accessible and responsive to the unique needs of older women. We know that many of these women just need help to navigate through existing services and supports and to feel welcome and heard by someone who understands their lived experience. We know the sooner assistance can be provided the better the chances a person has of maintaining independence and prosperity.

The Queensland Government made an election commitment about improving housing options for older women.

Under the *Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025*, we will deliver housing with support for older Queenslanders experiencing or at risk of homelessness including responses for older women, working with the aged care, health and disability sectors.

We've consulted with a range of people and organisations, but most importantly, with women across Queensland, who have been homeless. We've heard and listened to the perspectives and insights of older women, who require assistance to access and sustain housing, to develop a plan that responds to their unique needs and aspirations and to the additional barriers First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and LGBTIQ+ older women experience.



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## A new housing older women advisory group

We have established an advisory group to oversee the implementation of this response. The advisory group is made up of older women and key stakeholders. Their role is to collaborate with and advise government and non-government partners, identify and prioritise key issues, co-design initiatives and facilitate improved housing outcomes for older women. Group members will be a voice for older women, their needs and solutions that work.



## New housing and support hub and regional service responses

A new housing and support hub model will be developed to assist older women. Based in Brisbane, and run by a specialist organisation, it will work with local partners, including Housing Service Centres, aged care, and the health and disability sectors to support older women.

The hub will be a single-entry point, connecting women to specialist homelessness services, and renting, health and financial support.

It will be a welcoming and warm space that women can access in person, by phone, online or through outreach. Trained staff and volunteers, who have shared experiences, will be available to provide advice and advocacy and guide women towards the specific services they need.

Women can receive early intervention and assistance to avoid homelessness, navigate available services and access coordinated housing and support options.

In addition, consideration will be given to how local and place-based services can be established through existing community infrastructure for women to receive early intervention and support in their own communities.



## Improved housing and support services for older women

We are reviewing existing housing options, products and services – such as social housing, specialist homelessness services, bond loans, and RentConnect services – to ensure they meet the needs of older women, are coordinated and accessible and enable older women to access housing and support services as a priority group. This review will enable us to consider additional options and enhancements to provide social, affordable and private housing options, seniors housing developments and other tenancy models.



## Creating more housing options through better planning

Working collaboratively with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning we are exploring opportunities to improve planning settings that grow the supply of social and affordable housing and generate better outcomes for older women.

These include:

- delivering social and affordable housing in new growth areas including affordable by design principles and planning incentives
- investigating the introduction of inclusionary planning requirements into the planning framework
- looking into mandating social and affordable housing as part of Priority Development Areas, infrastructure initiatives and the development or sale of state-owned land suitable for large scale residential development
- reviewing the planning framework's approach to regulating residential development.



## Designing housing options to meet the needs of older women

We heard older women want choice and options for their housing outcomes. This requires improving the design and construction of housing so we will identify options to develop and deliver:

- new social and affordable housing for older women, under the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative (QHIGI)
- seed funding to support the design of an innovative private housing development, showcasing affordable housing for older women
- creating housing design principles for older people, incorporating best practice architecture and urban design principles.

