



Ageing on the Edge

NSW COALITION

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence before the Committee on 2nd of August 2024. This supplementary submission addresses the questions on notice in relation to data in the Ageing on the Edge Coalition submission.

We are encouraged by the NSW Government's steps to introduce legislation to abolish no grounds evictions since making our initial submission, and hope that the Committee members and the Government will include us in consultations and initiatives which relate to alleviating challenges in the rental market that are specific to older people.

Data clarification

The Ageing on the Edge Coalition submission referred to data from the **Decades of Housing Decline** report¹ that found 240,000 older renters in NSW. This figure refers to individual renters over 55 who indicated they were renting from a private landlord. This could include people sharing a tenancy, but the data reported by the ABS refer to the number of individuals. For further information about the data analysis, please refer to the **Ageing in a Housing Crisis: Older people's housing insecurity & homelessness in Australia** report.²

Comparison of housing price increases and age pension, including housing supply

Our research identified that older people over 55 in the lowest income households (quintile 1 and 2) are increasingly struggling in the private rental market. It was also evident that a large proportion of this cohort were older women. In addition, compared to 2011's census data, the 2021 census saw a 74% increase in older renters in NSW.

There are no market-based rental solutions that are affordable for this cohort of older people in the lowest income quintiles, particularly income quintile 1. As older people age, they are also less likely to find alternative income streams to increase their household income or supplement their income support payments. There are no market-based solutions that are affordable for this cohort.

For many single older people relying solely on income support payments such as the Age Pension, the maximum payment they are eligible to receive is approximately \$1,116.30 a fortnight.³ The maximum

¹ Housing for the Aged Action Group, Decades of Housing Decline in NSW: 2011 and 2021 Census data analysis, 2023, accessible at:

https://www.older tenants.org.au/sites/default/files/decades_of_decline_-_nsw_census_data_insights.pdf

² Housing for the Aged Action Group, Ageing in a Housing Crisis: Older people's housing insecurity & homelessness in Australia, 2023, accessible at:

<https://www.older tenants.org.au/publications/ageing-in-a-housing-crisis-older-peoples-housing-insecurity-homelessness-in-australia>

³ Typical total rates include Pension Supplement and Energy Supplement.

amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance they are eligible for is about \$188.20 a fortnight,⁴ bringing the total fortnightly income to approximately \$1,304.00. Based on this, the highest amount of rent they can pay is approximately \$400 a fortnight (ie \$200/week) to avoid being in rental stress. There are very limited options in the private rental market that are affordable for older people who are less likely to find alternative income sources. This dire situation is outlined in the **Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot** for the period 16th - 17th March 2024 revealed that there were only 4 homes in all of Greater Sydney and the Illawarra which are affordable to a single person on the Aged Pension.⁵

NSW Ageing on the Edge Coalition includes older people with lived experience who were affected by eviction notices who struggled with finding alternative affordable housing options on a limited income. Competing in a very tight rental market, often as a single older person on income support payments can be a significant challenge even when they have 90 days to find suitable and affordable accommodation. This is especially the case in a market situation with extremely limited options for people on fixed incomes.

In addition, the cost and stress of moving adds to the pressure on older people. Ending no grounds evictions is a critical measure that will provide much needed safety and reduce stress and costs for renters.

Although outside the scope of the no grounds evictions inquiry, while longer-term solutions such as increasing stock of public and community housing is brought to a level that meets the needs of older people, we urge the government to consider additional measures that can be implemented to alleviate the immediate pressures faced by renters. This could include:

- Greater stability and security for people who rent their homes including long-term leases
- Fair limits on rent increases which is regulated by the Rental Commissioner
- Safe and healthy homes for renters, including mandatory minimum standards
- Better enforcement, oversight, and accountability so that compliance is the norm
- Access to free advice, assistance and advocacy, and
- Substantial investment in social housing from both federal and state governments.⁶

⁴ See further: Services Australia, Payment Guide, accessible at:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/co029-2407.pdf>

⁵ Rental Affordability Snapshot 2024: Greater Sydney and the Illawarra, ANGLICARE Diocese of Sydney, 2024

https://assets.anglicare.org.au/m/5aa9e45aaa421009/original/Sydney_RAS_Report_2024.pdf?v8976190134

⁶ Statement on the Worsening Rental Crisis in Australia, 2023, accessible at:

https://files.tenants.org.au/policy/2308_Joint_statement_worsening_rental_crisis_Australia.pdf