

20 June 2018

The Hon Michelle Lensink MLC
Minister for Human Services
GPO Box 2832
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Via Email: michelle.lensink@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Minister Lensink

On 4th May COTA SA convened its 3rd Roundtable, a gathering of key researchers, providers, funders, policy makers and peak bodies to discuss the issues and potential solutions related to adequate housing solutions for a growing number of disadvantaged older South Australians. Please see attached a full list of Roundtable members.

This followed a letter sent to you on 6th April by COTA SA CE, Jane Mussared, which included a report prepared for the Roundtable in 2017 by Dr Debbie Faulkner from the University of Adelaide and Mr Jeff Fiedler from the Housing for the Aged Action Group. The report, titled "Finding a suitable home for people at risk of homelessness in SA" provides an outline of the situation in SA, along with recommendations agreed by the Roundtable last year.

According to 2016 Department of Social Services data, 4900 older South Australians are currently living in accommodation that can be described as creating housing stress because of its lack of affordability. More nuanced census data indicates this is a conservative estimate. For many this is likely to be private rental accommodation that will create real risks of homelessness because it is unstable because of short term tenures, physically unadaptable to suit needs relating to physical or health changes and unaffordable.

With increases in the rate of homelessness among older people growing by 40% between census periods and rates of homeownership rapidly declining, the Roundtable has been meeting to consider how we might tackle what is an already sizeable problem for a number of older South Australians.

At its May meeting, the Roundtable agreed on four priorities for action -

1. That we would work together to increase awareness of the fact that 4,600 older people are in housing stress right now and that this number is growing rapidly.
2. That the Housing Strategy being developed for South Australia include disadvantaged older Australians specifically and targets be set to meet the needs of those older South Australians living in housing stress.
3. That we would urge the funding of a service similar to the Home at Last service in Victoria that assists vulnerable older people to secure ongoing and appropriate accommodation.

4. That we would urge the continued support of exploration of innovative housing models that target disadvantaged older people such as shared equity schemes, co-housing and intergenerational models.

We, the undersigned, urge your attention to what is a largely foreseeable and preventable catastrophe provided we pay attention now.

We propose that a small delegation meet with you to discuss the report and the recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Anne Burgess
Chair COTA SA Housing Roundtable



cc Minister Stephen Wade

Signatories:

Dr Jane Andrew

Founding Director: Match Studio
Director Academic & Industry Engagement
Innovation & Collaboration Centre
School of Art, Architecture & Design
University of South Australia



Dr Alice Clark

Executive Director
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Victoria Cornell, PhD

Research Fellow
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Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning ,
School of Social Sciences
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Dr Debbie Faulkner

Deputy Director and Senior Research Fellow
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Jeff Fiedler

National Development Worker
Ageing on The Edge Older Persons Homelessness
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Vesna Haracic

Manager
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Executive Officer
Community Housing Council of SA Inc



Louise Miller Frost
Chief Executive Officer
Catherine House Inc



Matthew Woodward
Chief Executive Officer
Unity Housing Company Ltd



Jane Mussared
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