

MEDIA RELEASE

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COTA SA warns of older homelessness ahead of state election

Act now or put thousands of older South Australians at risk of homelessness, COTA SA has warned the incoming State Government ahead of next year's March state election.

The peak body for older South Australians has made preventing homelessness for older people one of the key priorities in its 2022 State Election platform.

"Right now, almost 10,000 older South Australians are in housing stress," said COTA SA chief executive Jane Mussared.

"They have a low income, they don't own their own home, and they don't have access to affordable, ongoing housing as they age.

"Older people in housing stress spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, which severely restricts their budget for essentials such as food and health care.

"For many, public or social housing is their only option, but with greater demand than supply, a growing number will be at real risk of homelessness.

"Of concern to COTA SA, is the increasing number of older women among this group. For them, lifetimes of care responsibilities, discrimination, and lower wages, along with minimal superannuation, continues to have an effect.

"Housing stress for a growing group of older South Australians is compounded by ageism, poor health and long periods of underemployment prior to age pension eligibility."

In its 2022 State Election Platform, COTA SA recommends the incoming State Government increases the quantity of public and social housing available to older people by at least 100 homes per year.

"For many older people, it will be their first experience of needing support," Ms Mussared said.

"Interstate evidence indicates that timely help will prevent housing stress from becoming homelessness.

“We therefore urge the State Government to establish a service that supports vulnerable older people to secure ongoing, affordable accommodation.”

COTA SA also recommends that older people are prioritised for public housing.

Rates of home ownership by retirees are dropping rapidly, with the rate of older households (55+) still paying off a mortgage tripling from 7% to 21% in the past 20 years.

The 2022 State Election Platform by COTA SA, which represents the rights, interests and futures of more than 633,000 older South Australians, contains 18 recommendations centred around seven key priorities which have been informed by the community through consultation, surveys, conversations, social media, letters and emails.

For the full report and to visit the 2022 State Election page on the COTA SA website:
<https://cotasa.org.au/policy/elections/2022-state-election-platform.aspx>

COTA SA is an older people’s movement and the peak body representing the rights, interests, and futures of more than 633,000 older South Australians aged over 50.

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