

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Ms Jacqueline Whittaker

Organisation Name:

Your position or role:

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::

Public housing, Housing affordability, Mental health, Services, Rough sleeping, Indigenous people, Family violence, Employment

What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :

Concerned citizen , Currently or have had a lived experience of homelessness

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I live with two of my adult children. We all have complex mental health issues and two of us also have complex physical health issues. Myself and my son are on a disability pension and he is also on NDIS. He also has autism and some cognitive impairment. My other son is my carer and on a Centrelink benefit. We are significantly disadvantaged when it comes to finding suitable housing. It must be on the ground floor and have air conditioning due to my health conditions. It's near impossible to find suitable housing that is affordable. We have had to move a fair distance away from our home town where our family supports and all our doctors and specialists are, just to find somewhere to live. I am 58 and can not work due to my conditions. My son might be able to work part time in the future, but that will take a lot of help to get him to that place in his life. The upheaval and stress of constantly having to move just puts all that on hold. Most people assume we would be high on the priority list for public housing and are surprised to hear that we are not on the priority list at all. There is no priority for the disabled. If I lived on my own, I'd qualify for the short list due to my age, but because my carer and my disabled son live with me, I don't. There's no common sense in that criteria.

I have been on the public housing wait list for eight years and in that time we have had to move, through no fault of our own, six times. Six times we have had to find the money for furniture removal and all the other cost of moving a house. Six times we have faced possible homelessness and all the stress that entails until we found another place to live. It was sheer luck and that we found anywhere. We are not in the income bracket of the average landlords choice of tenants. We had to fudge the numbers to get a look in.

The rental market is not set up for long term tenancy. Most of our homes were sold, one turned out to be highly contaminated and unsafe. All this caused our mental health to deteriorate. We never feel settled because we know we are at the whim of the next house sale and can be thrown back into potential homelessness at any time.

I can't fathom why the disabled and particularly the mentally ill have been overlooked for qualifying to be put on the priority list. It should be recognised that it's so much harder for disabled and mentally ill people to find housing. It physically hurts me, a lot, to attend all the open houses, not to mention what happens each time I have to pack.

It's my number one life stress.

I believe there needs to be a lot more done for disabled people on low incomes to access secure long term housing. Many of us don't qualify for NDIS supported housing, but still face severe disadvantage when

finding secure housing.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

Due to the nature of my illnesses, I might, or might not be able to attend.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

Signature:

Jacqueline Whittaker