

Submission No.3
(homelessness legislation)
Date: 12/8/09

A.O.C.



PO Box 605, Rosny Park, 7018 TAS
Ph: +61 3 62448288 Fax: +61 3 62448255
ABN: 23 627 650 121
Email: wwda@wwda.org.au
Web: www.wwda.org.au

Chair
Inquiry into Homelessness Legislation
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

July 3, 2009

Dear Ms Ellis

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), the national peak body representing women with disabilities in Australia, is pleased to provide the enclosed WWDA Submission for consideration of the Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth in its *Inquiry into Homelessness Legislation*.

The enclosed WWDA Submission, entitled '*Shut Out, Hung Out, Left Out, Missing Out*' was prepared by WWDA as part of our organisations response to the Australian Government's Green Paper '*Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness*' (June 2008). WWDA's Submission addresses a number of issues, key strategies and recommendations which are particularly relevant to the current *Inquiry into Homelessness Legislation*.

Women with disabilities remain over-represented in the main factors that lead to homelessness, or the risk of homelessness. Their exclusion from SAAP funded services throughout the country has been documented for more than two decades, yet despite this, women with disabilities have been excluded from all levels of the primary policy and program response designed to address homelessness in Australia.

Research conducted in Australia has clearly shown that for people with disabilities (a high percentage of whom are women with disabilities) the level and nature of exclusions in SAAP are extensive, unreasonable and in contravention of SAAP and antidiscrimination legislation, as well as SAAP standards and guidelines.

The *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, along with the SAAP Multilateral Agreements and strategic and administrative frameworks as detailed in the various SAAP five year plans, have in practice, had little bearing on improving the situation of women with disabilities with regard to their access to safe, available, affordable, habitable, accessible and inclusive housing. In fact, women with disabilities in Australia continue to experience serious violations of their human right to adequate housing, as well as failures to promote and fulfil this most basic human right.

WWDA's enclosed Submission recommends, for example, that the legislative, policy and practice framework of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) be developed and/or re-developed within a human rights model. This would include the need for SAAP legislation, policy framework, service standards, accountability frameworks, codes, and guidelines to include in a measurable way, implementation of relevant human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

WWDA trusts that the Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth in its *Inquiry into Homelessness Legislation*, will give thorough consideration to the issues and recommendations raised in WWDA's Submission *'Shut Out, Hung Out, Left Out, Missing Out'*.

WWDA thanks the Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth for the opportunity to provide input to this vital Inquiry.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CF', followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a small upward tick.

Carolyn P Frohmader
Executive Director