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A home is a human right: Philanthropists and charities helping older Australians access the basics

December 10 marks Human Rights Day and this year's theme of "Our Everyday Essentials" highlights the fact that not every Australian has access to adequate housing – with a growing number of older people falling through the cracks and in need of support.

Older Australians at risk

Housing affordability for younger people attracts a significant amount of attention, but what is often overlooked is that older Australians are being increasingly affected by the country's worsening housing crisis – with an alarming number falling into poverty and homelessness.

The number of older Australians living in private rentals has risen 73% over the past decade, reaching an estimated 700,000 across the country, Housing for the Aged Action Group figures show¹. Meanwhile, the median cost for rental homes has risen by 43.8% over the past five years alone, according to data from Cotality².

Many older people are under incredible strain to meet the rising cost of housing, with many women in particular who have worked and raised families now finding themselves on the brink of homelessness. In the 2024–25 financial year, around 31,700 people aged 55 years and over, sought help from a government-funded specialist homelessness service, up from 29,500 the previous financial year³.

But while both state and federal governments have begun tackling the problem, there is still a long way to go before this growing crisis is fully addressed. The solution will require cooperative efforts from government, private industry, philanthropy, charitable organisations, and society.

Equity Trustees is playing its role by facilitating the distribution of funds to charitable organisations and initiatives that provide services to vulnerable Australians, including older people facing insecure housing and homelessness.

Susie Meagher, Grantmaking and Social Impact Specialist at Equity Trustees says The Wicking Trust, managed by Equity Trustees, is one example of a philanthropic trust that has identified issues facing older Australians as a priority for funding.

"Our role at Equity Trustees is to ensure these worthy initiatives receive the support they need – in accordance with philanthropists' wishes," Ms Meagher says.

Trusts administered by Equity Trustees support several charitable initiatives that aim to address the issues faced by older people at risk of homelessness in Australia. These include:

- Wintringham, a non-profit organisation that's been serving people aged 50-plus who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness for more than three decades

¹ [Why many older Australians are also victims of the housing crisis | Equity Trustees](#)

² [Rental growth re-accelerates amid tightest vacancy rate](#) – Quarterly Rental Review (October 2025)

³ [Specialist homelessness services annual report 2024–25](#)



- The Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project, a partnership between Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) and the University of Adelaide's Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP)
- Women's Property Initiatives (WPI), a not-for-profit, community housing provider, creating new beginnings for women and children at risk of homelessness with permanent and affordable homes.

"By honouring philanthropists' wishes and helping to ensure these organisations receive the funding they need, Equity Trustees is supporting these organisations to continue doing their essential work in helping older Australians access secure housing – an everyday essential human right," Ms Meagher says.

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