



Australian Housing  
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Senator the Hon Rachel Siewert  
Chair  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 260

Dear Senator Siewert

On behalf of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), I wish to make a brief submission to the Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Planning Options and Services for People Ageing with a Disability.

AHURI is a national, not-for-profit organisation that funds, conducts and disseminates high quality research on housing, homelessness and cities (see: <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/>). Established in 2000, AHURI is a unique national venture that demonstrably delivers high quality research and timely research. Our main research is funded through the National Housing Research Program, which the Australian Government (FaHCSIA), all State and Territory governments, and ten participating universities nation-wide contribute funding.

Disability has a significant presence within the population occupying housing in Australia, with one in five households reporting that at least one member of the household has a disability. However, relatively little has been written about housing, housing assistance and disability in Australia, with the notable exceptions being work completed as part of AHURI's National Research Venture 2 (NRV2): 21st century housing careers and Australia's housing future and other AHURI funded research projects.

Research funded by AHURI shows how housing is an integral component for the continued quality of life for people with a disability as they and their carers age [Inquiry term (c)]. AHURI research also highlights a range of housing options and services that could be developed to help people with a disability and their carers to plan for the future [Inquiry term (d)].

The disability component of National Research Venture 2 (NRV2) on 21st century housing careers (Beer & Faulkner 2009) focused on the housing needs and experiences of persons with four types of disability: mobility impairment, psychiatric disability, cognitive impairment and a sensory disability (see: <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/search.asp?sitekeywords=disability&CurrentPage=1>). In particular, the research examined the issues and processes that shape the housing careers of people with a disability including housing affordability, the accessibility and suitability of the housing stock, and the impact of government assistance.

The research shows that the housing careers of persons with a disability are flatter and more restricted than those of the population overall. In addition, it showed that the housing careers of

carers and persons with a disability alike are changing in these first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This change is a consequence of shifts in the ways support services are provided, because of impediments to movement through the housing market, because of reducing access to home purchase and as a result of trends in the incidence of disability.

Research by AHURI by Tually and Beer (2010) also points to the connection between housing, disability and social inclusion see: <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p40585>). People with disabilities experience social exclusion and are confronted by multiple processes that remove or limit their capacity to participate fully in society:

- while there is a *need for housing that is accessible to public transport*, well-located housing is often relatively expensive and/or the housing form not suitable for a person with a disability;
- *rental housing is often seen to be inaccessible to people with disabilities*, both because of the high cost of renting privately and the physical characteristics of the dwelling stock;
- *home purchase is seen to be too expensive and beyond the reach of many households affected by disability; and*
- *many people with disabilities are reliant on public rental housing* and this dependence reduces their options within the Australian housing system with people with disabilities significantly over-represented in the public housing system and this outcome reflects contemporary public housing entry processes.

I am happy to discuss further any of the issues raised above and look forward to the outcomes of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

(...)

Dr Andrew Hollows  
**Deputy Executive Director**