



Pathways to Home

A guide for women aged 50+ and First Nations women aged 45+, who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing instability

SUPPORT SERVICES

EMERGENCY & CRISIS SUPPORT

HOMELESSNESS SAFETY

LOSING YOUR HOUSING

HOWSS
Housing Older Women's
Support Service

 **footprints
community**
BETTER TOGETHER



Acknowledgement of Country

Footprints acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and pays respect to Elders past and present, and thanks them for their wisdom and guidance.

Thank you

Footprints Community is proud to assume responsibility for this guide and build on the strong foundation from The Lady Musgrave Trust.



We express our sincere gratitude to women who participated in consultation sessions and provided valuable feedback to develop this guide. Your insight has made this guide possible.

Thank you very much to the Housing Older Women's Movement (HOWM) for your essential feedback. HOWM has informed the development of the guide.



We acknowledge and thank Zonta Brisbane Inc. for the financial support which has made printing and distribution of the guide throughout Queensland possible.



Pathways to Home

The Pathways to Home guide comes in 2 volumes:

- This volume (Volume 2) is for women who are homeless or experiencing housing instability, about to lose their housing, or currently without stable and secure accommodation and need support now.
- Volume 1 is available for women who currently have housing, but want to be prepared and understand their housing and financial options, should their situation change.

Access both these guides online at:
www.howss.org.au/pathways-to-home



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Housing Older Women Movement (HOWM) Statement

Don't blame yourself for housing insecurity; it's not due to personal life decisions. This issue stems from social and economic policies. Any shame or embarrassment is misplaced; many women, especially those born in the 1930s to 1960s, face housing-related stress due to these broader systemic issues.

Women over 50 are the fastest growing group experiencing housing insecurity, a problem not limited to Australia but also seen in countries like Ireland, the UK, Greece, Canada, and the USA. The key drivers are decades of public policy decisions to withdraw from the provision of public and affordable housing, lack of diverse representation in government, and underlying gender inequality.

Gendered experiences over our lifetimes include:

- *Leaving work when women married and became pregnant, with no maternity leave of any kind for many decades.*
- *The gender pay gap which still exists today, however, in recent years, it has reduced.*
- *Access to childcare being limited for many decades.*
- *Women continue to be the unpaid primary caregivers in families.*
- *Female industries were and continue to be insecure and low-paid positions such as hospitality, retail, childcare, aged care, and services for people with a disability.*
- *In 2010, Julia Gillard's government provided a 30% pay increase to address the gender pay gap, but many organisations in the Not-for-Profit sector did not have the funds to meet this change.*
- *Domestic and family violence legislation was not introduced until the 1990s.*
- *Mandatory child support from the other parent was not available until 1988.*
- *Superannuation was not mandatory until 1992.*
- *Inequitable divorce settlements with superannuation excluded in divorce settlements for many years.*

Economic policies emphasising free markets, deregulation, privatisation, and reduced government involvement have exacerbated housing issues. Queensland has the lowest levels of public housing, with only 3%, and the highest number of women over 55 experiencing housing insecurity in South East Queensland.

2021 Census data shows a 71% increase in Queenslanders over 55 living in private rentals in the past decade. HAAG research indicates a 63% increase in older Australians with mortgage debt in the last 10 years.

Decades of gender inequality and economic policies have reduced social and affordable housing supply. Ageism adds to this distress, particularly for those who have lived in single-income households over many years. This systemic issue led to the formation of the Housing Older Women Movement, aiming to bring about change for future generations of women to have better housing options and tenure models.

About HOWSS

Housing Older Women's Support Service (HOWSS) is a specialised housing and support hub for older women funded by the Department of Housing.

This Footprints Community service offers a Brisbane-based Hub, and a Queensland wide online navigation and support service that is inclusive of all older women experiencing housing distress or homelessness.

HOWSS provides a place where older women can receive:

- Help to find housing and support assistance
- Information and linkages to other human service support agencies
- Engagement and education sessions for older women, and the sector
- Volunteer peer support from people with lived experience
- Outreach services
- State-wide collaborative regional responses
- Face-to-face contact with skilled staff
- Telephone and online advice and advocacy.

Housing Older Women's Support Service (HOWSS) and Footprints Community developed this guide to support you or someone you know to navigate unstable housing.

We believe every person should have a place to sleep at night.

We are here to support you.

Contact us

- 🔍 www.HOWSS.org.au
- 🔍 www.footprintscommunity.org.au
- 📞 Call 1800 366 877



SUPPORT SERVICES

Hotlines

Homeless Hotline - 1800 474 753

Homeless Hotline is a phone information and referral service for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

The Homeless Hotline operates 24/7.

How does the service work?

Homeless Hotline will provide information about where you can find support, accommodation, meals or showers.

In some cases, you may be referred to other services to help you further.



What personal information will Homeless Hotline need?

Only personal information that is relevant to your situation.

To provide you with the right information, they will need to ask for your:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Gender and
- Location.

More information will be required to arrange a referral or an interview with a service.

Privacy

All personal information collected is confidential and will only be disclosed with your consent (or if the law requires it).

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Lifeline's 13 11 14 crisis support service is available 24/7.

Anyone in Australia can speak to a trained Lifeline Crisis Supporter over the phone, any time of the day or night.

Lifeline are a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

They are committed to empowering Australians to be suicide-safe through connection, compassion, and hope.

About the service

Lifeline offers confidential one-to-one, short-term support with a trained Lifeline Crisis Supporter for people who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.

How they can help

They listen without judgement and provide a safe space to discuss your needs, worries or concerns. They will work with you to explore options for support.

1800RESPECT - 1800 737 732

1800RESPECT is available for free, 24/7 to support people impacted by domestic, family, or sexual violence.

This hotline can also be texted on **0458 737 732**, which is also available 24/7.

About the service

When you call 1800RESPECT, you will talk to one of their counsellors who will listen and support you.

They will work with you to help you identify what you can do and to find the right services or support for you.

Everyone's situation is different, and no one knows your situation better than you.

DV Connect Womensline - 1800 811 811

Every person has the right to feel safe in their home, however, we know that for many people who have been impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence, home can sometimes be the most dangerous place.

About the service

DVConnect's Womensline is a free helpline for women and their children in Queensland who are experiencing domestic and family violence.

Womensline is available 24/7, 365 days a year and can provide:

- Emergency transport and accommodation
- Specialist crisis counselling
- Safety planning
- Information, referrals & support and
- Safe accommodation for pets through the Pets in Crisis program.



If you identify as non-binary or gender fluid, you can call the helpline you feel most comfortable calling (Womensline or Mensline).

Please call if:

- You feel unsafe at home
- You're unsure if what you are experiencing is abuse and
- You are worried that someone you know is experiencing abuse in their relationship.

Here's what to expect

- At first, you will hear a pre-recorded message and then a team member will answer your call.
- The crisis counsellor will ask you your reason for calling and any concerns you have around you or your children's safety.
- Depending on what you need, the crisis counsellor may help you with transport to a safe friend or family member's home, book you into accommodation if you have nowhere else to stay, or connect you with another service if they can't provide what you need.
- Your safety is DVConnect's priority and DVConnect can work with you, whether you are in a relationship, are thinking about leaving, or have already left.

1300 MH CALL - 1300 642 255

1300 MH CALL (1300 642 255) is a confidential mental health telephone triage service that provides the first point of contact to public mental health services for Queenslanders.

1300 MH CALL is available 24/7 and will link to the caller's nearest Queensland Public Mental Health Service.

About the service

If you need mental health support and have never accessed a mental health service before, please contact your general practitioner or 1300 MH CALL (1300 642 255).

The 1300 MH CALL service:

- Is the main point of access to public mental health services
- Can provide support, information, advice and referral
- Can provide advice and information in a mental health emergency or crisis
- Is staffed by trained and experienced professional mental health clinicians

- Will provide a mental health triage and refer to acute care teams where appropriate.

In an emergency always dial Triple Zero (000)

Privacy and confidentiality

All calls to 1300 MH CALL are recorded as confidential Queensland Health medical records.

Triple Zero (000)

The Triple Zero (000) service is the quickest way to get the right emergency service to help you.

You can contact Police, Fire or Ambulance in life-threatening or emergency situations.

Assess the situation

- Is someone seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help?
- Is your life or property being threatened?
- Have you just witnessed a serious accident or crime?

If you answered YES call Triple Zero (000).

Make your call

- Stay calm and call Triple Zero (000) from a safe place.
- When your call is answered you will be asked if you need Police, Fire or Ambulance.
- If requested by the operator, state your town and location.
- Your call will be directed to the service you asked for.
- When connected to the emergency service, stay on the line, speak clearly and answer the questions and
- Don't hang up until the operator tells you to do so.



Providing location information

You will be asked where you are:

- Try to provide street number, street name, nearest cross street and the area
- In rural areas give the full address and distances from landmarks and roads as well as the property name
- If calling from a mobile or satellite phone, the operator may ask you for other location information and
- If you make a call while travelling, state the direction you are travelling and the last motorway exit or town you passed.

Satellite phone services and Triple Zero (000)

All Australian satellite phone operators provide access to Triple Zero (000).

If your provider operates via another country, you may not be able to access Triple Zero (000).

Check with your satellite phone provider if you are unsure whether you can contact Triple Zero (000) from your satellite phone.

Please do not call Triple Zero (000) to test.

In an emergency, can you be found?

Make sure your phone address details are accurate — it could save your life.

Did you know that the address details you give to your phone company may be used to send help if you make a Triple Zero (000) emergency call?

Your phone company is required by law to provide your address to a secure database which is used for responding to emergencies.

When you call Triple Zero (000), the address details that are stored in the Integrated Public Number Database will automatically appear on the operator's screen and be passed on to the emergency service organisation you request (Police, Fire or Ambulance).

Instructions from the operator

The operator may ask you to wait at a pre-arranged meeting point to assist emergency services in locating the incident.

Text-based services

People with a speech or hearing impairment can use the One Zero Six (106) text-based service.

Other steps you can take

- Keep the Triple Zero (000) number beside telephones at home and work.
- Teach children and overseas visitors that the emergency number to call in Australia is Triple Zero (000).

13YARN - 13 92 76

13YARN (Thirteen YARN) is the first national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.

13YARN offers a confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who can provide crisis support 24/7.

13YARN empowers our community with the opportunity to yarn without judgement and provides a culturally safe space to speak about your needs, worries or concerns.



Support Services Directory

Emergency and crisis hotlines	
1300 MH CALL 1300 642 255 Access a confidential mental health telephone triage service.	
13YARN 13 92 76 www.13yarn.org.au This is a national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.	
1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au 1800RESPECT is a support hotline for people impacted by domestic, family, or sexual violence.	
DV Connect Womensline 1800 811 811 www.dvconnect.org This is a helpline for women and their children in Queensland who are experiencing domestic and family violence.	
Homeless Hotline 1800 474 753 Homeless Hotline is a phone information and referral service for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.	
Lifeline 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au 24 hours a day, 7 days a week crisis support hotline.	
Triple Zero Emergency Services 000	

Support Services Directory

Homelessness support services

Ask Izzy www.askizzy.org.au Ask Izzy is a website that connects people in need with housing, a meal, money help, family violence support, counselling and much more.	
DrugARM 1300 656 800 www.drugarm.com.au Provides support for people facing challenges with alcohol, other drugs or mental health.	
Homelessness Response Service (HRS) 1800 366 877 www.footprintscommunity.org.au/services/homelessness-response-service HRS provides mobile and outreach supports to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across the Redlands region.	
HOWSS (Housing Older Women Support Services) 1800 366 877 www.howss.org.au HOWSS offers a Brisbane-based Hub, and a Queensland wide online navigation and support service that is inclusive of all older women experiencing housing distress or homelessness.	
SUSO (Stand Up Step Out) 1800 366 877 www.footprintscommunity.org.au/services/stand-up-step-out-homeless-outreach SUSO provides a comfortable and safe environment to shower, access laundry facilities, and access to homelessness supports and services.	

Support Services Directory

Housing and rental support

Department of Housing, Local Government,
Planning and Public Works

13QGOV (13 74 68)

www.housing.qld.gov.au

Information and assistance with emergency accommodation options.



QStars

1300 744 263

www.qstars.org.au

Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service.



RTA – Residential Tenancies Authority Queensland

1300 366 311

www.rta.qld.gov.au

Provides tenancy information and support, bond management, dispute resolution, compliance and enforcement, and education services.



Tenants Queensland

1300 744 263

www.tenantsqld.org.au

Queensland statewide advice service for tenants.



Public library locations

Public Library Connect

www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/directory/libraries

Access a listing of all public library branches and Indigenous Knowledge Centres currently provided by local government councils throughout Queensland.



Support Services Directory

Legal Support

Legal Aid

1300 65 11 88

www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Legal Aid Queensland provides information, advice and representation in family, civil, and criminal law matters.



Women's Legal Service Queensland

1800 957 957

www.wlsq.org.au

Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) is a community legal centre offering free legal assistance to women.



Community centre locations

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

info@ncq.org.au

www.ncq.org.au/find-a-centre

Find a neighbourhood or community centre near you.



First Nations support

13YARN

13 92 76

www.13yarn.org.au

This is a national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.



Supply Nation

www.supplynation.org.au

First Nations peoples support services directory.





Support Services Directory

Financial Support

ASIC Money Smart

www.moneysmart.gov.au

Access free tools, tips & guidance to help take control of your money.



Good Shepherd

www.goodshep.org.au/services/financial-services

Australia's oldest and longest-running not-for-profit that specifically supports women, girls and families.



National Debt Helpline

1800 007 007

www.ndh.org.au/financial-counselling/find-a-financial-counsellor

Speak to a free financial counsellor.



Services Australia

13 23 00

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Services Australia - formerly Centrelink - for Government payments and services.



Employment support

Services Australia

13 28 50

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Services Australia - formerly Centrelink - for Government employment assistance and payments.



Workforce Australia

1800 805 260

www.workforceaustralia.gov.au

Search and apply for jobs or find more information on a pathway to employment.



Support Services Directory

Aged care and disability support	
Disability Gateway 1800 643 787 www.disabilitygateway.gov.au Information and services to help people with disability, their family, friends and carers, to find the support they need in Australia.	
Footprints Community 1800 366 877 www.footprintscommunity.org.au Access aged care, disability, homelessness, mental health and community, health & wellbeing services.	
My Aged Care 1800 200 422 www.myagedcare.gov.au This is a service for older people, their families, and carers to find information on government-funded Aged Care services in Australia.	
NDIS – National Disability Insurance Scheme 1800 800 110 www.ndis.gov.au The NDIS provides funding to eligible people with disability to gain more time with family and friends, greater independence, access to new skills, jobs, or volunteering in their community, and an improved quality of life.	
LGBTQIA+ support	
Q-Life 1800 184 527 www.qlife.org.au Q-Life is an LGBTQIA+ service support directory.	

Support Services Directory

Women's support services	
The Lady Musgrave Trust Handy Guide of Women's Support Services www.thehandyguide.com.au	
Women's Infolink 1800 177 577 www.qld.gov.au/community/women/support-for-women/womens-infolink Provides Queensland women and girls with access to information and services across Queensland.	
Women's Health and Equality Information Hub www.womenshealth.org.au Provides reliable and easily accessible women's health information.	
Older people advocacy support services	
Council on the Ageing – (COTA) 07 3316 2999 cota@cota.org.au www.cota.org.au Promotes, improves and protects the wellbeing of older people in Australia as citizens and consumers.	
Elder Abuse Prevention Unit 1300 651 192 www.eapu.com.au Promotes the right of all older people to live free from abuse.	

Support Services Directory

Older Person’s Advocacy Network (OPAN) 1800 700 600 www.opan.org.au Provides free, independent and confidential support to older people receiving government-funded aged care.	
Seniors Enquiry Line 1300 135 500 www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au Statewide information and referral service for Queensland seniors, families, friends, grandparents and carers.	



EMERGENCY & CRISIS SUPPORT

Emergency & Crisis Accommodation

Accommodation Options

Emergency and crisis accommodation options may vary depending on factors such as location, availability, and individual needs.

Here are some common types of emergency and crisis accommodation options that may be available for older women in Queensland:

Women's shelters

Women's shelters provide safe and secure accommodation for women and their children who are experiencing domestic or family violence. These shelters offer temporary accommodation, support services, and advocacy to support women to rebuild their lives.

Homelessness services

Homelessness services and shelters cater to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis.

These services provide temporary accommodation, case management, and support to access stable housing and address underlying issues contributing to homelessness.

Supported accommodation

Supported accommodation facilities offer temporary housing and support services for individuals who require assistance due to age, disability, or other access requirements. These facilities may provide assistance with daily living activities, personal care, and access to community resources.

Aged care facilities

Some aged care facilities may offer emergency or respite accommodation for people who are in urgent need of housing

due to homelessness or other crisis. These facilities provide residential care and support services tailored to the needs of older adults.

Emergency housing assistance programs

Government-funded emergency housing assistance programs may provide financial assistance, temporary accommodation, or support services to individuals and families in crisis situations.

These programs are administered by state or local government agencies, community organisations, or non-profit agencies.

Crisis accommodation shelters

Crisis accommodation shelters offer short-term housing and support services to individuals and families in immediate need of accommodation. These shelters are operated by government agencies, charities, or community organisations and provide a safe and supportive environment for people experiencing homelessness or crisis.

Referral and support services

Referral and support services, such as helplines, community centres, and outreach programs, can connect older women with appropriate emergency accommodation options and aid in accessing support services, advocacy, and resources.

Hostels and motels

Hostels and motels can be options, especially in situations where immediate temporary accommodation is needed. Here are considerations regarding the use of hostels and motels for older women in these circumstances:

Immediate shelter

Hostels and motels can provide immediate shelter for older women who find themselves without a place to stay.

Short-term accommodation

Hostels and motels offer short-term accommodation solutions, which can be suitable for women who need temporary housing while they look for more stable housing options.

Accessibility considerations

When considering hostels and motels, look at the accessibility features of the accommodation, such as wheelchair access, handrails, and other amenities that cater to the needs of older adults.

Safety and security

Ensure that the chosen hostel or motel provides a safe and secure environment for women.

Look for accommodation with security measures in place, such as locked doors, surveillance cameras, and staff availability.

Support services

Some hostels and motels may offer additional support services, such as case management, counselling, or referrals to community resources, which can be beneficial.

Cost considerations

While hostels and motels provide temporary accommodation, it's essential to review the cost implications.

Explore any available financial assistance programs or subsidies that may offset the accommodation costs.

Alternative options

Transitional housing programs, public housing, community housing, or supported accommodation are other options, which may offer more stable and sustainable housing solutions in the long term.

Social isolation

It's important to consider the potential social isolation that may occur when staying in hostels or motels.

Consider whether the hostel or motel is close to your family and friends or other supports you may need to access such as your GP.

Accessing emergency & crisis accommodation

Contact emergency accommodation services

Get in touch with emergency accommodation services in your local area or region. You can find contact information for emergency accommodation services by searching online, contacting local community centres, or calling helplines such as Lifeline (13 11 14) or the Homeless Hotline (1800 474 753).

Call 1800RESPECT

If you are experiencing domestic or family violence and need emergency accommodation, you can call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732), the national helpline for domestic violence support services.

1800RESPECT can provide information, support, and referrals to emergency accommodation services and other relevant support resources.

Contact Homeless Hotline

Call the Homeless Hotline on 1800 474 753 to speak with a trained professional who can help and provide referrals for emergency accommodation.

The Homeless Hotline operates 24/7 and can connect you with emergency accommodation options based on your location and needs.

Visit a housing support service

Visit a local housing support service or homelessness assistance centre in your area. These services provide support, information, and referrals for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing crisis.

Housing support services can provide you access to emergency accommodation, navigate housing assistance programs, and connect with other support services.



Contact Queensland Department of Housing

Contact the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works for information and assistance with emergency accommodation options.

You can call the department's Housing Service Centres or visit **www.housing.qld.gov.au** for information about emergency housing assistance programs and eligibility criteria.



Access crisis accommodation shelters

If you are unable to secure accommodation through other means, consider accessing crisis accommodation shelters operated by homelessness service providers.

Crisis accommodation shelters offer temporary accommodation and support services for individuals and families in immediate need of housing.

Stay safe and seek help

If you are in immediate danger or facing a crisis, prioritise your safety and seek help by calling Triple Zero (000) or contacting your local police station.

It's important to request help early if you are experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. Emergency accommodation services are available to provide support and assistance during challenging times.

Family and domestic violence crisis facilities

Ensure your safety

If you're in immediate danger, call emergency services by dialling Triple Zero (000) for police assistance.

If you're unable to speak freely, you can still call 000 and press 55 after the operator answers. This will indicate to the operator that you require assistance but are unable to speak.

Contact domestic violence helplines

Call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732), the national domestic violence helpline, for confidential support, information, and referrals to local services.

Trained counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support and connect you with appropriate services, including emergency accommodation options.

Access emergency accommodation

Women's shelters and crisis accommodation services offer safe and secure accommodation for women and their children who are experiencing domestic violence.

Contact your local domestic violence service or women's shelter for information on available emergency accommodation options and how to access support.

Develop a safety plan

Work with a domestic violence support worker or counsellor to develop a safety plan tailored to your situation.



A safety plan outlines steps you can take to protect yourself and your children from further harm.

This may include identifying safe places to go, arranging a code word with trusted friends or family members, and planning your escape if necessary.

Seek legal assistance

Consider seeking legal advice and support to explore your options for obtaining a domestic violence protection order (DVO) or other legal protections.

Legal Aid Queensland offers free legal advice and assistance to individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Access support services

Contact local domestic violence support services, community organisations, or women's health centres for additional support and assistance.

These services may offer counselling, advocacy, support groups, and practical assistance to help you navigate your situation and access the support you need.

Create a support network

Build a support network of trusted friends, family members, and professionals who can provide emotional support, practical assistance, and resources.

Let trusted individuals know about your situation and how they can support you during this challenging time.

Explore long-term housing options

Work with a support worker or housing specialist to explore long-term housing options, such as transitional housing programs, public housing, or private rental accommodation.

You may be eligible for housing assistance programs or financial support to help you secure stable housing.

Remember that you're not alone, and there are people and organisations ready to support you during this difficult time.

Emergency & crisis financial support

In Queensland, older women who are experiencing a crisis may be eligible for certain crisis payments provided by Centrelink to help with immediate financial needs. Here are some of the crisis payments available:

Crisis Payment

Crisis Payment is a one-off payment available to individuals who are in severe financial hardship due to specific circumstances such as domestic violence, natural disasters, homelessness, or other crisis situations.

Eligible older women in Queensland who are experiencing a crisis may receive a Crisis Payment to help with immediate expenses such as accommodation, food, clothing, or essential items.

Domestic Violence Crisis Payment

Domestic Violence Crisis Payment is a one-off payment available to individuals who have experienced domestic or family violence and need to leave their home to ensure their safety or the safety of their children.

Natural Disaster Relief & Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)

In the event of a natural disaster, such as a flood, cyclone, bushfire, or severe storm, older women who have been affected may be eligible for financial assistance through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

NDRRA provides crisis payments and support services to individuals and families affected by natural disasters, including assistance with emergency accommodation, food, clothing, and essential household items.

Emergency Relief

Emergency Relief is provided by community organisations, charities, and government agencies to individuals and families facing crisis situations, including financial hardship, homelessness, or other emergencies.

Older women in Queensland who are in urgent need of assistance may access emergency relief services for immediate support with food vouchers, fuel vouchers, utility bills, or other essential expenses.

These are some of the crisis payments and support services available to older women in Queensland who are facing crisis situations.

Eligibility criteria, payment amounts, and application processes may vary depending on the specific circumstances and the type of crisis payment.

It's essential to contact **Services Australia (Centrelink)** or visit their website for detailed information on available support and assistance with accessing crisis payments.



Additionally, seeking help from local community organisations, domestic violence services, or emergency relief agencies can provide additional support during times of crisis.



Applying for a Crisis Payment

To apply for a Crisis Payment from Services Australia (Centrelink) in Queensland, you can follow these steps:

Check eligibility	Ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria for the specific Crisis Payment you're seeking. Eligibility criteria may vary depending on the type of Crisis Payment and the circumstances of your situation.
Contact Services Australia (Centrelink)	Call Centrelink on their older Australians line at 13 23 00 or Visit your nearest Centrelink service centre. If you're unable to visit a service centre in person, you can also apply online through your Centrelink online account via myGov.
Provide information	When applying for a Crisis Payment, provide detailed information about your situation, including the nature of the crisis, any supporting documentation or evidence, and your personal and financial details.
Complete application	Centrelink will provide you with the necessary application forms or online portal where you can submit your application for the Crisis Payment. Fill out the application forms accurately and completely, making sure to include all required information and supporting documentation as requested.

Attend interviews or assessments	Depending on the type of Crisis Payment and your circumstances, you may be required to attend interviews, assessments, or phone appointments with Centrelink staff to discuss your application and provide further information. Cooperate with Centrelink staff and provide any additional information or documentation required.
Wait for the outcome	After submitting your application, Centrelink will assess your eligibility for the Crisis Payment based on the information provided and any relevant criteria. Be patient and wait for communication from Centrelink regarding the outcome of your application.
Receive payment	If your application for the Crisis Payment is approved, Centrelink will arrange for the payment to be made to you according to the payment method you have selected (e.g. direct deposit into your bank account). The payment amount and duration may vary depending on the type of Crisis Payment and your individual circumstances.
Follow up	Contact Centrelink to address your questions or concerns. Keep records of all communication with Centrelink, including application forms, correspondence, and receipts.

By following these steps and providing accurate and complete information, you can apply for a Crisis Payment from Centrelink in Queensland.



Emergency relief services

Emergency relief services can provide valuable support to older women who are at risk of homelessness by offering immediate assistance and resources to address their urgent needs.

Financial assistance

Emergency relief services may provide financial assistance to help cover essential expenses such as accommodation costs, utility bills, food, medications, or transportation expenses.

Food and clothing vouchers

Many emergency relief agencies offer food vouchers or grocery hampers to ensure that individuals and families have access to nutritious food during times of crisis.

Temporary accommodation

Some emergency relief services may provide temporary accommodation or referrals to emergency housing options, including shelters, hostels, or motels, to ensure that women have a safe place to stay while they work on finding more stable housing solutions.

Household goods and essential Items

Emergency relief agencies may provide assistance with essential household items such as bedding, kitchenware, toiletries, and other essentials to help set up a new home or to address immediate needs.

Information and referrals

Emergency relief services can offer information, guidance, and referrals to other support services, community resources, or government programs that may be able to assist with housing, financial, or other needs.

Crisis intervention and counselling

Emergency relief agencies have trained staff or counsellors who can provide crisis intervention, emotional support, and counselling to individuals facing homelessness or crisis situations.

This support can help address the emotional and psychological impacts of homelessness and provide coping strategies.

Advocacy and support

Emergency relief workers can advocate on behalf of individuals and families facing homelessness, helping them navigate the support system, access entitlements, and overcome barriers to housing stability.

Empowerment and empathy

Emergency relief services strive to treat clients with dignity, respect, and empathy, empowering them to make decisions and take actions to improve their situations.

Overall, emergency relief services play a crucial role in providing immediate support and assistance to older women at risk of homelessness, helping them address their urgent needs, access essential resources, and work towards more stable housing solutions.

HOMELESSNESS SAFETY

Sleeping in an unconventional space

If you're an older woman sleeping in an unconventional space due to homelessness or other circumstances, it's essential to prioritise your safety and wellbeing.

Choose safe locations

Prioritise safety by choosing well-lit, populated areas with minimal risk of crime or danger. Avoid isolated or poorly lit areas, especially at night.

Stay visible

Sleep in locations where you are visible to others, such as near well-travelled paths, public areas, or businesses with 24-hour operations. Being visible can deter potential threats and increase the likelihood of someone noticing if you need help.

Trust your instincts

Pay attention to your instincts and intuition. If a location or situation feels unsafe, trust your intuition and move to a different area.

Buddy system

Whenever possible, sleep in pairs or groups to increase safety and provide mutual support.

Keep valuables secure

Keep your belongings secure and within reach while sleeping to prevent theft or loss.

Stay alert

Always remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings.

Emergency contacts

Keep emergency contacts readily accessible, including numbers of local emergency services, crisis hotlines, trusted friends or family, and support services to assist you in case of emergencies.

Plan an escape route

Familiarise yourself with nearby exits, escape routes, or safe havens where you can seek refuge in case of danger or emergency. Having a plan in place can help you react quickly and decisively if needed.

Seek assistance

Seek assistance from nearby businesses, community members, or authorities if you feel unsafe or threatened.

Know your rights

Educate yourself about your rights as a person experiencing homelessness. Familiarise yourself with local laws, regulations, and resources available to protect your safety and wellbeing.

Your safety is paramount, and it's essential to take proactive measures to protect yourself while sleeping in unconventional spaces.



Sleeping in your car

In Queensland, people who are sleeping in their car are subject to certain rights and regulations, which may vary depending on local laws and ordinances.

Here are some general rights and considerations when sleeping in your car:

Public spaces

In Queensland, it is generally legal to sleep in your car in public spaces such as designated rest areas, parking lots, or roadside stops. However, in more populated areas, local councils may have specific by-laws or regulations governing overnight parking in certain areas.

Private property

If you're sleeping in your car on private property, such as a friend's driveway or a commercial parking lot, you must obtain permission from the property owner or manager. Trespassing on private property without permission is illegal.

Anti-nuisance laws

Some local councils may have anti-nuisance laws or ordinances that prohibit activities such as camping, loitering, or sleeping in vehicles in public spaces.

Safety regulations

While sleeping in your car, you must ensure your vehicle is parked legally and safely.

Police interaction

If approached by law enforcement officers while sleeping in your car, remain calm and cooperative. Police may enquire about your wellbeing or ask you to move along if you're parked in a restricted area or violating local regulations.

Discrimination protections

People sleeping in their cars are protected from discrimination under Queensland's anti-discrimination laws. You cannot be

discriminated against or harassed based on your housing status.

Access to services

Individuals sleeping in their cars still have access to essential services such as healthcare, emergency assistance, and community support programs.

Documentation

Keep documentation on hand, such as identification, vehicle registration, and proof of ownership or rental agreement, to demonstrate your legal right to be in the vehicle.

Be aware of your rights and responsibilities while sleeping in your car in Queensland.

If you have questions or concerns about your housing situation or legal rights, consider seeking advice from legal aid services, community organisations, or housing advocacy groups for assistance.

Sleeping in your car as an older woman can present unique safety challenges, but there are steps you can take to help ensure your wellbeing:

Choose safe locations	Park your car in well-lit, populated areas where there is a lower risk of crime. Look for designated rest areas, caravan parks, or other safe parking options. Avoid isolated or poorly lit areas, especially at night.
Stay discreet	Keep a low profile and avoid drawing attention to yourself while sleeping in your car. Use window shades or curtains to maintain privacy and minimise visibility from the outside.

Lock your doors	Keep your car doors locked at all times, even when you're inside. Use additional security measures such as steering wheel locks or car alarms to deter potential intruders.
Park strategically	Park your car in a way that allows for a quick exit if needed. Position your vehicle facing outward or near an exit to facilitate a speedy departure in case of emergency.
Stay alert	Remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings while sleeping in your car.
Keep valuables hidden	Avoid leaving valuables in plain sight inside your car, as this may attract thieves. Store valuables in a secure location, such as the boot or a locked compartment.
Emergency supplies	Keep emergency supplies on hand, including a charged mobile phone, torch, first aid kit, water, and non-perishable snacks. Having these items readily available can help you respond to emergencies effectively.
Communicate your location	Inform trusted friends or family members of your location and plans for sleeping in your car and check in regularly to let them know you're safe.
Know your rights	Familiarise yourself with your rights as a person sleeping in your car, including local laws and regulations governing overnight parking.

Seek alternative accommodation

Whenever possible, explore alternative accommodation options such as shelters, crisis accommodation, or community housing programs that may offer safer and more sustainable housing solutions.

Your safety is paramount, and it's important to prioritise your wellbeing while sleeping in your car. Seek support early.



Couch surfing

Here are some tips to help you stay safe while couch surfing:

Communicate boundaries

Clearly communicate your boundaries and expectations with your hosts. Let them know if there are specific needs or preferences you have, such as privacy, quiet time, or assistance with certain tasks.

Trust your instincts

If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any situation, trust your instincts and take action to protect yourself. It's okay to leave a situation that doesn't feel right or to seek help if needed.

Stay connected

Maintain regular communication with trusted friends, family members, or support networks. Let them know where you are staying and check in with them regularly to ensure your safety.

Keep valuables secure

Keep your personal belongings and valuables secure at all times.

Know emergency contacts

Keep a list of emergency contacts, including local emergency services, trusted friends or family members, and support organisations.

Plan your next steps

While couch surfing may provide temporary accommodation, it's important to have a plan for your long-term housing situation.

Explore alternative housing options, such as transitional housing, community housing, or emergency shelters, to ensure you have a safe and stable place to stay.

Seek support

If you're experiencing homelessness or housing instability, seek support from local community organisations, homeless shelters, or government agencies.

Practice self-care

Take care of your physical and emotional wellbeing during this challenging time.

Know your rights

Familiarise yourself with your rights as a tenant or guest, even if you are couch surfing temporarily.

Remember that your safety and wellbeing are paramount. Seek support early.

What are my options if I have pets?

If you're homeless and have pets, here are some steps you can take to ensure the wellbeing of both you and your pets:

Seek pet-friendly accommodation

Look for pet-friendly shelters, crisis accommodation options, or housing programs.

Some shelters and accommodation services may have facilities or policies in place to accommodate individuals with pets.

Contact animal welfare organisations

Contact local animal welfare organisations, animal shelters, or rescue groups for assistance and support.

Pet care essentials

Ensure that your pets have access to food, water, shelter, and any necessary medications or veterinary care. If you're unable to provide for your pets' needs, consider contacting animal welfare organisations or community support services for assistance.

Emergency accommodation

In emergency situations, some animal shelters or rescue groups may offer temporary boarding or foster care for pets belonging to people experiencing homelessness.

Seek support from community organisations

Contact local community organisations, charities, or social services agencies for assistance. They may be able to provide



information, referrals, or practical support to help you care for your pets while experiencing homelessness.

Safety for your pet

If you're unable to care for your pets due to homelessness, consider finding temporary foster care or rehoming options for your animals.

Look for trusted friends, family members, or community members who may be willing to provide temporary care for your pets until you're able to secure stable housing.

Legal protections for pets

In Queensland, pets are considered property under the law, and animal cruelty laws protect them from abuse and neglect.

If you're unable to care for your pets due to homelessness, surrendering them to a reputable animal welfare organisation or shelter may be the best option to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Remember that you're not alone, and there are resources and organisations available to help you care for your pets while experiencing homelessness.

When you're in crisis accommodation and unable to care for your pet, several temporary support options are available to ensure your pet's wellbeing:

Pet assistance programs	Animal welfare organisations, such as the RSPCA or local humane societies, may offer pet assistance programs designed to help pet owners facing temporary housing crisis. These programs may provide pet food, supplies, veterinary vouchers, or other support services.
Pet foster programs	Foster care programs for pets are offered by animal welfare organisations and rescue groups. Volunteers provide temporary foster care for pets until their owners can regain stable housing.
Community support networks	Contact local community networks, social services agencies, or religious organisations for assistance. They may be able to connect you with volunteers or resources in the community that can help care for your pet temporarily.

Temporary pet care services	Some community organisations or pet-related charities offer temporary pet care services for women experiencing homelessness or crisis situations. These services may include pet feeding, walking, grooming, or transportation to veterinary appointments.
Homeless pet ownership programs	Certain organisations specialise in supporting homeless pet owners by providing resources, assistance, and advocacy. They may offer temporary housing solutions, pet supplies, veterinary care, or referrals to pet-friendly services.
Pet boarding facilities	Some animal boarding facilities offer short-term boarding services for pets whose owners are experiencing temporary housing crisis.
Online pet care communities	Online platforms and social media groups dedicated to pet care may provide resources and support for pet owners in crisis situations. You can connect with other pet owners, seek advice, or ask for assistance in caring for your pet temporarily.
Pet-friendly crisis accommodation	Some crisis accommodation services may allow pets or have partnerships with local animal welfare organisations to provide temporary housing solutions for pets while their owners are staying in crisis accommodation.

Remember that your pet's wellbeing is important, and there are resources available to ensure they are cared for during this challenging time.

What are my options if I have dependants?

If you become homeless and have dependants, such as children or other family members who rely on you for care and support, it's crucial to prioritise their wellbeing and safety.

Contact homelessness services

Contact local homelessness services, shelters, or community organisations for assistance. They can provide information, support, and resources tailored to families with dependants experiencing homelessness.

Emergency accommodation

Seek emergency accommodation options for families, including shelters, crisis accommodation centres, or temporary housing programs. Many homelessness services offer family-friendly accommodation with facilities and support services for children and parents.

Family and friends

Reach out to trusted family members, friends, or relatives who may be able to provide temporary housing or support for you and your dependants. Consider staying with loved ones until you can secure more stable housing.

Temporary housing programs

Look for temporary housing programs specifically designed for families with dependants. These programs may offer transitional housing, supported accommodation, or rental assistance to help families stabilise their housing situation.

Government assistance

Explore government assistance programs and social welfare benefits available to families experiencing homelessness.

Programs such as the Family Homelessness Assistance Program (FHAP) or housing assistance programs administered by state or local governments may provide financial support, housing subsidies, or other forms of assistance.

School and childcare support

Ensure that your children continue to attend school or access childcare services, even if you're experiencing homelessness. Contact local schools or childcare providers to discuss support options, transportation assistance, or referrals to community resources.

Legal protections for families

Families with dependants are protected under Queensland's housing and tenancy laws. Familiarise yourself with your rights as a tenant and seek legal assistance if you encounter issues related to eviction, discrimination, or housing instability.

Community support services

Connect with community support services, family support programs, or parenting support groups for additional assistance and resources. These services can provide practical support, counselling, advocacy, and referrals to other support services as needed.

Create a support network

Build a support network of friends, neighbours, or community members who can help, provide encouragement, and practical support during this challenging time.

Long-term housing solutions

Work with homelessness services, housing agencies, or support workers to develop a plan for securing more stable and sustainable housing for your family in the long term. Explore options such as public housing, community housing, or affordable rental housing programs.

You are not alone, and there are resources and support available to help navigate through homelessness to secure stable housing.

What if I have my own care needs?

Here are steps you can take to address your situation:

Seek immediate assistance

If you're in crisis or experiencing a medical emergency, call emergency services Triple Zero (000) for immediate assistance.



Emergency responders can provide medical care, transport to hospital if needed, and connect you with additional support services.

Access healthcare services

Contact healthcare providers, including doctors, specialists, and mental health professionals, to address your physical and mental health needs.

If you don't have a regular healthcare provider, consider visiting a community health centre, hospital emergency department, or contacting local mental health services for assistance.

Inform support services

Inform support services and organisations about your health needs and homelessness situation.

This may include homeless shelters, community organisations, government agencies, or outreach teams.

They can help, provide referrals, and provide support tailored to your needs.

Contact mental health services

Mental health services or crisis support lines provide assistance with managing mental health challenges while homeless.

Organisations such as Lifeline (13 11 14) and Beyond Blue (1300 22 46 36) offer confidential support, counselling, and crisis intervention services.

Access homelessness support

Homelessness support services organisations can provide emergency accommodation, case management, housing support, and referrals to additional resources and programs.

Apply for support programs

Explore eligibility for support programs and financial assistance available to individuals experiencing homelessness or with significant health needs.

This may include disability support programs, income support payments, housing assistance, or health-related subsidies.

Stay connected

Maintain regular communication with trusted friends, family members, or support networks. They can provide emotional support, assistance with navigating the healthcare system, and help in accessing resources and services in your community.

Advocate for yourself

Advocate for your needs and rights as an individual experiencing homelessness and with significant health needs.

Seek assistance from advocacy organisations, legal aid services, or disability advocacy groups if you encounter challenges accessing healthcare, housing, or support services.

Develop a safety plan

Work with support services, healthcare providers, and mental health professionals to develop a safety plan to address any immediate risks or concerns related to your health and homelessness.

This may include identifying support networks, coping strategies, and crisis intervention measures.

Follow up regularly

Stay engaged with support services, healthcare providers, and other relevant organisations to follow up on referrals, access ongoing assistance, and monitor your progress in addressing your health and housing needs.

By taking these steps and accessing available support services, you can prioritise your health and wellbeing, address your immediate needs, and work towards stabilising your housing situation in Queensland.

You are not alone, and there are resources available to help you through this challenging time.

LOSING YOUR HOUSING

What is a 'Notice to Leave'?

In Queensland, a 'Notice to Leave' is a legal document that a landlord or property manager can serve to a tenant to request that they vacate the rental property by a specified date.

This notice is typically issued when there are grounds for termination of the tenancy agreement, such as non-payment of rent, breach of lease terms, or the expiration of a fixed-term lease.

The Notice to Leave must comply with the requirements outlined in the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (the Act) and the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009*.

These requirements include:

Grounds for termination

The Notice to Leave must state the grounds or reasons for termination of the tenancy, such as non-payment of rent, breach of lease terms, or end of the fixed-term lease.



Notice period

The notice must specify the period given to the tenant to vacate the property. The notice period varies depending on the reason for termination and the type of tenancy agreement (e.g. periodic or fixed-term).

Service of notice

The notice must be served to the tenant in accordance with the Act, which may include personal delivery, posting to the tenant's last known address, or electronic service if agreed upon by both parties.

Form of notice

The Notice to Leave must be in writing and in the prescribed form as set out in the Act or Regulation.

It should clearly state the details of the tenancy, including the property address, the grounds for termination, the notice period, and any other relevant information.

Consequences of non-compliance

The notice should advise the tenant of the consequences of non-compliance, such as legal action or eviction proceedings, if they fail to vacate the property by the specified date.

It's essential for both landlords and tenants to understand their rights and obligations regarding the issuance and receipt of a Notice to Leave.

Tenants who receive a Notice to Leave have the right to dispute the termination or seek advice from a tenancy advocacy service or legal representative.

It is important for landlords to follow the correct process. Failure to comply with the requirements for issuing a Notice to Leave, or unlawfully evicting a tenant without following proper procedures, can result in legal consequences for the landlord, including penalties or compensation payable to the tenant.

If you receive a Notice to Leave in Queensland, your next steps

will depend on the specific circumstances of your tenancy and the grounds for termination outlined in the notice.

Here are some general steps to consider:

Review the notice	Carefully review the Notice to Leave to understand the grounds for termination, the notice period given, and any other relevant information provided by the landlord or property manager.
Seek legal advice	If you're unsure about your rights or obligations regarding the Notice to Leave, consider seeking legal advice from a tenancy advocacy service, community legal centre, or legal representative specialising in tenancy law.
Respond to the notice	If you disagree with the grounds for termination stated in the Notice to Leave or believe that it was issued unlawfully, you have the right to dispute the termination. Respond to the notice in writing, stating your objections.
Negotiate with the landlord	If feasible, consider negotiating with the landlord or property manager to resolve any issues or concerns that led to the issuance of the Notice to Leave.
Comply with notice requirements	Ensure that you comply with the requirements outlined in the Notice to Leave, including vacating the property by the specified date, returning keys, and leaving the premises in a clean and undamaged condition.

Seek alternative accommodation	Start exploring alternative accommodation options, especially if you're unable to resolve the issues leading to the Notice to Leave or if you're unable to secure a new rental property within the notice period.
Attend tribunal hearing (if applicable)	If you dispute the termination and cannot reach a resolution with the landlord, you may need to attend a hearing at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) to present your case. QCAT can provide a forum for resolving disputes between landlords and tenants.
Document communication	Keep records of all communication with the landlord or property manager regarding the Notice to Leave, including emails, letters, and notes from any discussions or negotiations.
Consider financial assistance	If financial hardship contributed to the termination of the tenancy, consider seeking financial assistance or support services from government agencies, community organisations, or charities.
Seek support	Contact support services, tenancy advocacy groups, or community organisations for assistance, guidance, and resources to help you navigate through the process of receiving a Notice to Leave and securing alternative accommodation.

What happens after I have accessed crisis support?

Once you have sought emergency or crisis accommodation, there are several important steps to take to address your housing situation and ensure your wellbeing:

Assess your immediate needs

Take time to assess your immediate needs and priorities. This may include ensuring you have access to food, clothing, medication, and other essentials.

Explore long-term housing options

While emergency or crisis accommodation provides temporary relief, it's important to explore long-term housing options to secure stable and sustainable housing.

Consider contacting local housing support services, community organisations, or government agencies for assistance with finding affordable housing options, accessing rental assistance programs, or exploring alternative housing arrangements.

Develop a housing plan

Work with housing support services or case managers to develop a housing plan tailored to your needs and circumstances.

Access additional support services

Take advantage of support services available to you, such as counselling, financial assistance, employment assistance, or legal support.

These services can help address underlying issues contributing to your housing instability and help in navigating the housing system.

Connect with community resources

Explore community resources and support networks that can provide additional assistance and resources to help you address your housing needs. This may include food banks, clothing assistance programs, community centres, or local charities.

Address your health and wellbeing

Prioritise your health and wellbeing during this challenging time. Seek medical attention if needed, prioritise self-care activities, and access mental health support services if you're experiencing stress, anxiety, or other emotional challenges.

Stay informed

Stay informed about your rights and entitlements as a tenant or individual experiencing homelessness. Familiarise yourself with relevant housing laws and regulations, and advocate for yourself to ensure you receive the support and assistance you need.

Follow up regularly

Stay in regular contact with your housing support services, case managers, or support workers to update them on your progress, address any challenges or concerns, and access ongoing assistance as needed.

Create a budget

Develop a budget to manage your finances effectively and prioritise expenses related to housing, utilities, food, and other essentials. Seek financial counselling or assistance if you need help managing your finances or accessing financial support programs.

Stay positive and persistent

Securing stable housing may take time and persistence, but it is important to remain positive and proactive in pursuing your housing goals.

Celebrate victories and milestones and continue to advocate for yourself until you achieve housing stability.

You are not alone.

Connect with us

 www.HOWSS.org.au

 www.footprintscommunity.org.au

 Call 1800 366 877





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HOWSS

Housing Older Women's Support Service



Call 1800 366 877 to talk with the HOWSS team

Statewide telephone support is available:

Monday to Friday 8am – 4pm



Visit the Hub

31 Thomas Street, West End

Hub opening hours: Monday to Friday 10am – 2pm

By appointment only outside these hours



HOWSS@footprintscommunity.org.au



www.HOWSS.org.au



 **1800 366 877**

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