



A Home for Life



Women's Housing Company (WHC) is the preeminent provider of community housing for women in the Sydney metropolitan area.

This document highlights WHC specialisation in the provision of housing for women with a focus on the particular needs of older single women.

Older single women are particularly vulnerable in the housing market. WHC has developed a deep understanding, and knowledge, of the needs of older single women over its 35 years of operation. WHC brings organisational excellence, a solution focus and they are uniquely placed to provide older single women with a Home for Life.



- *65% of our tenants are aged 55 years +*
- *16% are over 80 years old*
- *Almost 50% are from CALD*

Why partner with WHC?

As the only specialist provider of community housing for women in Sydney WHC currently manages around 750 properties across 24 local government areas in Sydney. We own 105 properties with a market value of over \$40m.

- We bring:
1. Organisational Excellence
 2. A Strong Women-Friendly Metropolitan Housing Portfolio
 3. A specialisation in Single Older Women
 4. Real Solutions to Women's Needs

The WHC housed over 915 women in its properties last year (both capital, leasehold, transitional and crisis). We manage the Women's Homelessness Support Service (WHSS) in South Western Sydney.

Why women?

20%

20% of people on the Social Housing waiting list are single women

Women are at increased risk of insecure housing and homelessness as they age. There are a number of reasons for this.

Women experience a life-time of employment discrimination:

- Lower rates of pay
- Employment breaks due to child-rearing and caring responsibilities
- They retire with much lower levels of superannuation than men

Additionally, there are social and associated economic impacts:

- Divorce and separation
- The gendered aspect of ageing, means more women living longer in single household than men
- 63% of people aged 85 and over are women

The NSW Social Housing Register statistics show that:

- Over 55% of the 60,000 approved applicants are women
- The number of older single women who apply has grown every year from 2012-16

*“Thank you WHC for security
and a dignified life!”*

Organisational excellence

WHC demonstrates organisational excellence in the following ways:

Specialisation based on experience

- 35 year track record in women’s housing and property management
- Expertise in housing the SAHF 2 priority group of older single women
- Acknowledged leadership in the field
- Knowledge of women’s housing needs and how to provide a suite of solutions
- Design leadership in the delivery of housing solutions for older single women
- A focus on safety and security and aging in place in design

Strong governance

- A skills-based Board of Directors with broad range of relevant expertise:
 - Urban development, planning, finance, government, public relations, and social welfare
- Expert highly skilled management team and specialised staff
- Fully compliant Tier 2 Registered Housing Provider

Financial stability and efficiency

- Generated a net profit of \$2.07 million dollars in 2016/17 financial year
- Value for money in the delivery of services to tenants

A proven track record in effective partnerships evidenced by recent successes:

- The NSW Social Housing Management Transfer Program with Bridge Housing
- Management of the Woolloomooloo Older Women’s Housing
 - Delivered in partnership with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

- *85% overall tenant satisfaction level*
- *87% are satisfied with how they are treated by us*
- *85% are satisfied that their rights are upheld*

WHC
facts

*“So, this is the home I can
live in till I die?”*

Our solutions

With over 35 years of experience in providing homes for women, WHC have developed a unique approach to the way we build, design and manage our properties and how we support our women tenants.

When we asked older single women what they want from 'home' they told us that the following elements were important to them: 1. Safe and secure housing 2. Connected neighbourhoods 3. Women friendly design 4. Engagement and communication processes that are varied and regular.

We developed housing solutions informed by this evidence which integrate these four elements. These solutions affect how we design and deliver all our services to women – not simply our properties – but also our support services and engagement strategies.

“WHC is great and has given me the longest period of home stability and security of my adult life!”

1. Safe and secure housing

WHC offer women safe and secure housing through our long-term lease arrangements and our policies on asset management and home safety and security. Women who have experienced homelessness want to be able to maintain a secure long-term affordable tenancy.

- 98 older women tenants have lived in their current home for between 15 to 20 years and 22 older women tenants have lived in their current home for over 20 years

Our housing policies and procedures are tailored to promote women's safety in their homes.

- Our buildings can accommodate only women
- We use video intercoms in our new premises
- Women's need for privacy is secured
- We notify tenants when contractors /maintenance works are planned
- Our relationships with contractors and suppliers prioritise the importance of privacy and safety to older single women
- Follow up to ensure completion and satisfaction with contractor service
- Our homelessness services put women's safety first

15yrs+

Over a quarter of older single women have lived in their current WHC home for 15 years or more

2. Connected communities

Our housing promotes access, connectedness, inclusion and wellbeing for women across 24 LGAs in Sydney. Our tenancy support staff work to connect older women tenants with local community and government delivered services and programs. We focus on effective communication and linkages to culturally appropriate services. We also offer a range of activities targeting older single women that keep them active and connected:

- Workshops in Digital Skills, Smartphone Skills and Women Staying Well
- Exercise and art classes including Tai Chi, Art Therapy and Jewellery
- Events like the annual International Women's Day Picnic
- Regular Volunteer Home Visits

86%

*Satisfaction with their neighbourhood
as a place to live*

3. Women friendly co-design

We have invested significantly in developing housing products that are designed to address the specific needs of older women. Our goal is to increase older women's agency by engaging them in the design process. Our design principles promote a 'home for life' for older single women:

- Allow women to age in place
- Incorporate universal design principles
- Offer built-in safety features such as video intercoms and blinds
- Accommodate their preference for 1-bedroom dwellings where the bedroom is separate and promote positive interactions with guests while maintaining privacy
- Offer 2-bedroom dwellings for women who require live in carers
- Maximise access to open space, community gardens, courtyards and communal spaces to encourage connection and wellbeing

90%

Satisfaction with the suitability of their home

4. Engagement and communication

Women like to communicate with us and one another. Our tenant engagement activities that are varied and regular and include:

- Monthly Tenant Advisory Group and Quarterly tenant newsletter
- AGM with over 100 tenants attending for year-end celebration
- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Regular Client Visits by WHC staff
- Consultations and co-design workshops to shape services
- Annual Mid-Winter WHC Luncheon Celebration

Case study

Woolloomooloo Older Women's Housing and Hub

Opened in late 2017, the Woolloomooloo Older Women's Housing and Hub:

- Provides 20 universally designed units
- Purpose built for older single women
- Has been designed to allow women to age in place – 'a home for life'
- A partnership with WHC and the NSW Land and Housing Corporation
- Seamlessly integrated into the local community
- Offers units designed to balance women's privacy and opportunities for increased community connection and wellbeing
- Has a ground floor community room which is being established as a Hub offering onsite services, workshops and programs for women tenants and others in the community
- Provides safe public spaces and good visibility for tenants
- Has video intercoms for all 20 units



Woolloomooloo Older Women's Housing and Hub