



MEDIA CONTACT

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Who we are

Women's Property Initiatives (WPI) is a not-for-profit, community housing organisation that provides long-term, affordable homes for women and children facing homelessness. We believe that every human being is entitled to a safe and secure home and that women face the greatest disadvantage in terms of their ability to afford one. Women have less access to employment opportunities and often have limits on their ability to work because they are primary care-givers. They also earn less. In fact, Australian women earn 16% less than men.

It is a terrible reality that only 6.4% of properties in the private rental market in Victoria are affordable for people on low incomes. The market is failing to meet the demand for affordable housing and often it is women (most low income earners are women) who are bearing the brunt of this failure. Crisis services and short-term housing providers are critical in sheltering vulnerable women and children in our community. However, these women need to move on so that others can be helped. In many cases there is no 'next step' towards a stable future. WPI wants to offer this next step.

Who we help

Homelessness has many different guises. It can happen to anyone. It includes the thousands of hidden Victorian women who live in unsafe and inappropriate housing.

The women we help are from all walks and stages of life. Women who have faced family violence or are migrants fleeing conflict in their country of origin. Older women who suddenly find themselves without the financial resources to own a home or pay market rents. Women who through circumstance find themselves living in a boarding house, with relatives or staying on a friend's couch – often with their children. So many women face homelessness or are forced to remain in violent situations because they have nowhere to go.

What we do

Over 21 years, WPI has provided women on low incomes (and in many cases their children) long-term housing solutions which allow them to rebuild their lives. WPI currently provides high-quality, long-term homes for over 200 women and children around Melbourne, with over 80 properties. Tenants pay rent, but it is no more than 30% of their household

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income, giving them the financial capacity to do more than just exist. Many women return to work or study. Others are able to focus on parenting their children who have suffered trauma due to family violence or the instability of their living situation. WPI's homes allow them to feel secure. They have the breathing space to overcome the anxiety that goes with not having a safe place to live. They can live with dignity and become involved in their communities.

Our housing stock has been established through a variety of innovative projects, co-operative partnerships in the public, private and community sectors and with the purchase of housing from private developers. All homes are owned and managed by WPI. Capital funding has been sourced from the Office of Housing, the Victorian Property Fund, the Nation Building Initiative, philanthropic grants, community organisations and borrowings from Bank Australia and NAB.

WPI works with local support agencies to ensure that women and children have connections, supports and links to their communities. This helps them address challenges in their lives, some of which may have contributed to them facing homelessness in the past.

Single women face the greatest disadvantage in accessing an appropriate and affordable home.

- Women represent 52.6 % of people living in poverty.
- Women earn 16% less than men in Australia.
- Only 6.4 % of private rental accommodation in Victoria is affordable for people on low incomes.
- 60% of low income earners are women.
- Over 80% of single parents are women.
- Women spend 2 to 10 times the amount of time per day to care for children, the elderly or the disabled that men do.
- Women are far more likely to experience family violence than men.
- Some 34% of single women over 60 live in permanent income poverty.
- By age 65, women retire with about a third of the superannuation that men accrue.