



New Funding for Seniors Housing



Housing affordability is at an all time low in Australia. Affordability problems that are particular to older people are set to worsen over the next two decades due to:

- the dramatic increase in the number of older people in Australia;
- residential care being targeted to people with higher and more complex needs;
- public housing focusing more on younger people and families; and
- the increasing rate of older people retiring without owning a home.

Do you see a future for your organisation in seniors housing?

Are you thinking about redeveloping your independent living units or retirement village?

On 24 July the Federal Government announced the call for applications for its new *National Rental Affordability Scheme* (NRAS). The Rudd Government has allocated \$623 million over the next four years to NRAS with the states providing over \$200 million in cash or in kind.

As a key part of the NRAS initiative, the Federal Government has recognised the potential the aged care and retirement sectors offer in the development of affordable housing. They have funded ACSA to undertake a Partnership Facilitation role to assist organisations develop NRAS funded affordable housing for older people. The sector is well placed to win NRAS support; many organisations have a commitment to providing older peoples' housing and have the organisational infrastructures to develop projects that include a component of rental housing.

Roland Naufal has been contracted to work alongside ACSA staff member Lesley Dredge to undertake the 12 week NRAS facilitation role. Roland is a consultant and former CEO of Villa Maria and since late 2007 has been working with the Brotherhood of St Laurence on affordable housing for older people. His career in the housing sector has ranged from leading a youth homelessness peak body to board membership of community housing associations.

NRAS is an exciting opportunity for organisations to diversify their service models, funding streams and property portfolios. At a time when there is a policy push for separating care from housing, the scheme offers incentives to build new affordable homes for older people at rent 20 per cent below market levels. The Australian Government's incentive for the scheme will be \$6,000 per dwelling per year for 10 years. State and Territory Governments have also committed to providing at least \$2,000 per dwelling per year.

This is a subsidy of about \$90,000 per unit paid over ten years.

The timelines for NRAS application are very short. FaCHSIA will be holding information sessions in all capital cities and a number of regional locations from 1 – 15 August. Details of the scheme, including the prospectus, and the information sessions can be found at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/housing/nras.htm>

This is a unique opportunity, early in the life of a new government, to participate in one of the most significant housing funding initiatives in decades. The ACSA Partnership Facilitation project will be travelling to all states to provide further information and generate proposals for the scheme.

If you want to discuss NRAS and how you could participate please contact Lesley Dredge at ACSA on 03 9686 3460 or ldredge@agedcare.org.au to find out when the team will be in your state or to make an appointment with Roland.