

Elderly residents fear the end of a rental affordability scheme will force them out on the streets

An elderly resident fears she will be forced to live in her car when a national rental affordability scheme comes to an end.

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The Mercury

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AN elderly resident of an 11-unit village in Kingston says she fears she will be forced to live in her car next year when a national scheme that subsidises her private rent winds up.

Hundreds of private renters are facing an uncertain future as the end of the scheme looms and Tasmania's rental squeeze worsens.

Three hundred Tasmanians rent through the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which subsidises more than 20 per cent of an individual's private rent.

The scheme ends in June and the toughest rental market in the state's history shows no sign of calming.

Addrienne Stephenson, who lives in Redwood Village at Kingston, said residents were scared they would not have accommodation security if their rent was no longer subsidised.

"We were told we would be looked after and not to worry about it. Now all we do is worry," she said.

"We are not being told anything. It is like we are nobody."



Judy Cooper, Addrienne Stephens and Jean Kingston are uncertain what the future will hold once the National Rental Affordability Scheme comes to an end. Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones

Jean Kingston said she had no family to rely on and those who lived at the village all looked out for each other.

“The only alternative I can see is living in my car. Private rent is more than \$400 a week and that is more than my pension,” she said

Judy Cooper, who also lives at Redwood Village, said she had no idea what they were going to do.

“We can’t possibly afford the current rental market. What are we meant to do?” she asked.

Labor housing spokeswoman Ella Haddad said she was hearing similar stories from others in the same position.

“These people are under considerable stress and facing potentially having to find somewhere else to live right as the rental and housing market is exploding,” Ms Haddad said.

“The renters here at Kingston have been renting through this scheme for nine years and were told they would be looked after when the scheme ended. But they have been given false hope.”



Labor housing spokeswoman Ella Haddad and Labor Franklin MP Dean Winter at Redwood Village in Kingston. Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones

Housing Minister Roger Jaensch said it was well known the 10-year scheme was ending next year and tenants could qualify for help through the private rental incentive scheme or get assistance in other ways.

Mr Jaensch said affected tenants should also call Housing Connect.

Tasmania’s public housing waiting list now sits at 4468 with an average waiting time of 79 weeks.

Labor Franklin MP Dean Winter said the affected Redwood Village residents were mostly in their 70s and 80s.

“The owners of these units have told tenants they should just register for public housing but because they have not been given notice and they are currently housed, their applications will not be treated as high priority,” Mr Winter said.

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