

Human Rights Council – 41st Session

Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women
Panel 2: The rights of older women and their economic empowerment

28 June 2019

Australian Statement

We thank the panellists for their presentations.

Australia is strongly committed to upholding the rights of all women. We welcome the focus of today's discussion on the intersectional disadvantages experienced by older women and the impact on their economic empowerment.

A lifetime of gender inequality can have a cumulative effect on older women. Higher rates of domestic violence, often experienced by women throughout their lives, further impinge on women's human rights and opportunities for their economic empowerment. For women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, the consequences are even more significant.

Addressing structural and cultural barriers to gender equality is critical to realising the rights of older women. Policies need to work to eliminate gender bias and combat prejudice against older women in the workforce and close the gender pay gap. These actions can contribute to addressing the gendered disparities in incomes and retirement savings, which undermine women's economic empowerment over the course of their lives.

In Australia, we are grappling with rising rates of homelessness among older women. The underlying causes for this are complex and can accumulate throughout a woman's lifetime. Solutions need to respond to this complexity.

We welcome the panel's views on best practice in adapting housing and homelessness programs to support older women, and best practice interventions at critical milestones earlier in life to prevent or address homelessness for women later in life.

[230 words]