

## ***National Housing Conference 2005***

### **Housing and the disability support pension**

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Considerable policy attention is being paid to reducing the rate of increase in the number of working age people receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP) as their primary source of income. Analyses of DSP recipients indicate that labour market changes, such as change in industry structure, increases in precarious work and decline in public sector work, are closely related to increases in the number of people receiving DSP as their primary source of income. The principle groups in this population of recipients are older men and women who are coming off parenting payments. This DSP history is well known and associated policy debates well rehearsed. However, little research attention has been given to the housing circumstances of DSP recipients. This could be important, particularly when we note the increasing incidence of working age people receiving DSP in the private rental market and public housing. For public housing tenants the incidence has increased from 7 – 25 percent between 1981 and 2000. This paper will seek to answer the question ‘What are the changing housing circumstances of those people receiving DSP as their principle income source and what are the likely consequences of announced program changes aimed at increased labour market participation of DSP recipients?’ The paper will present the analysis using both snapshot and longitudinal data sources. Two issues will be considered. First, there are the circumstances faced by the next generation of people seeking DSP who are likely to experience a decline in entitlement compared to earlier cohorts. Of particular interest are the implications of this change for housing affordability in the private rental market. Second, there are the implications for public housing provision, especially in the context of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement provision that state housing authorities increase the level of economic participation of public housing tenants.

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