



COTA **NEW SOUTH WALES**

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 15 July 2015

STRATA REFORM BILL HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR HOUSING MINISTER

“Today’s release of two Strata Reform Bills highlights the need for NSW to appoint a Minister for Housing. The bills pave the way for major changes to strata title. If passed, they would allow a strata title unit block to be sold to a developer when 75% of owners agree to the sale, as opposed to 100%” said CEO of Council on the Ageing (COTA NSW) Ian Day.

“While Fair Trading assures us they will provide support to owners who are in effect ‘forced to move,’ these bills - if passed - will have negative unintended consequences for renters, who number about 50% of occupants in older strata title dwellings.”

“The strata title unit blocks likely to be affected by these laws are among the few remaining affordable housing options in Sydney, the world’s third most expensive housing market. One in five pensioners rent. It seems that the Government has given no thought to what will become of them once these bills hasten the process of selling old unit blocks to developers for renewal.”

Mr Day argues that the State Government urgently needs to begin co-ordinating the portfolios that have a stake in the NSW housing system.

“It’s likely these bills will not come into effect for a year. Until now, the Government has taken a completely piecemeal approach to housing. This has to change. We need to see co-ordination between Fair Trading, Planning, Local Government and Family and Community Services.”

“Ideally, the Government would appoint a Minister for Housing, who would have to ask the obvious question about the fate of the renting pensioners – and all other renters – affected by these bills. They would need to address the lack of planning to create infill developments in metropolitan areas, they would need to look at whether the State’s social housing capacity can handle the influx of people displaced by these bills, they would need to provide protections for people in other forms of affordable housing, like residential parks and granny flats, and ensure that there are mechanisms to promote the rapid development of affordable housing in the private market.”

“This Government has a vision for renewing the State’s infrastructure to cope with NSW’s growing population. It beggars belief that there is no vision to address the State’s housing crisis. The Government has a year to implement one, or risk making the dire situation of the renting population even worse.”

END CEO, Ian Day, is available for interview: 0417 210 234