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ACTION NEEDED TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO AGE IN PLACE SAYS COTA NSW

“Data released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows 90% of older people want to stay in their own home,” says Ian Day, CEO of Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW). “But when you dig deeper, it’s clear older people are actually saying they want to continue to live in their own communities. They may be happy to downsize, but they don’t want to leave their community. They don’t want to move into ghettos for the aged.”

“The findings released by the AIHW confirm the findings of our 2012 COTA NSW Survey. We also convene Consumer Reference Groups across the state every year and people who attend them tell us that staying in their own communities is vitally important.”

“But if people are going to be able to stay in their communities we need to see concerted whole of government action.”

“The state’s planning regime needs to be reformed so that people get critical services where they’re already living. And if home-owners downsize, they need to be able to move into alternative housing that’s located in their existing communities. For this to occur, we need planners to allow more in-fill development, rather than development at the under-served edges of our cities and towns. Local government also need to have the capacity to serve older people where they live. Our Liveable Communities program contributes to this outcome, but we need to see many more initiatives like this.”

“Today’s AIHW data also tells a story about a looming crisis. While many older people currently own their own homes, home-ownership rates are falling. The AIHW research shows there’s already a group of older people – predominately single or divorced women who’ve spent time out of the paid workforce – who lack the resources to stay in their communities. Once they retire, they don’t have enough money to rent in the private market and they end up experiencing severe social isolation, even homelessness. This group is set to grow.”

“43% of the NSW adult population is over 50 right now and this proportion is growing fast. If we can’t say we’re meeting the needs of this huge group, then whose needs are being met?”



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