



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

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HIGH SYDNEY HOUSING COSTS DRIVE OLDER PEOPLE TO HUNTER/ CENTRAL COAST

“One in ten people over 80 are renting in the private housing market,” says CEO of COTA NSW, Ian Day. “Older people on low or fixed incomes are increasingly moving from Sydney to areas like the Mid North Coast in the hope of obtaining affordable housing.”

“We surveyed thousands of people aged 50-plus about housing last year, and were alarmed to discover how many older people are struggling to keep a roof over their heads.”

“Our survey found 20% of people whose main source of income is the age pension were renting. This is extremely worrying, especially if they’re renting in Sydney, the world’s third most expensive city. In reality, these people will often be choosing between paying their rent, and paying for food.”

According to COTA NSW, many of these people are turning into reluctant sea- and tree-changers. “Older people on low or fixed incomes increasingly have no choice but to leave Sydney if they wish to obtain affordable housing,” said Mr Day.

Nearly 40% of respondents to our survey who were living in the Hunter/Central Coast were on the age pension. In contrast to Sydney, the region offers a wider range of affordable housing options, including residential parks and retirement villages.

“We found that over 30% of respondents who were living in retirement villages were from the Hunter/Central Coast and over 60% of respondents who were living in residential parks were from the region.”

“While residential parks and retirement villages can represent a wise choice for someone seeking affordable housing, it is alarming that many people on low and fixed incomes are facing a reality where they will in effect be ‘forced to move’ as they age because of the dearth of low-cost housing in the State’s capital.”

“Successive governments have failed to act to address the crisis of unaffordable housing in Sydney. Unless concerted action is taken to address this issue, we will see ever-growing numbers of vulnerable older people ‘migrating’ to the regions so they can keep a roof over their heads. Unfortunately, this is likely to put pressure on the stock of affordable housing in the regions, and we’ll see increasingly desperate competition for low-cost housing there.”

“We welcome the fact that all major parties contesting the election are recognising that we have a housing crisis in this State. Premier Baird’s in-principle support for a \$1 billion incentive fund to support new social and affordable housing investment would have a positive impact on the problem.”

“However, the issue is also one of planning. We need to see reform of the State’s planning regime so that more affordable housing round transport and service hubs can occur, not just in Sydney, but in major regional towns and centres.”

“For the next Government to meaningfully address this issue, we need to see committed, whole-of-government action across a range of portfolios, including Treasury, Planning, Fair Trade and Family and Community Housing. Almost 43% of all electors in NSW are aged 50 and over. We’re talking about nearly 2.5 million people. It’s time for the needs of older people to become a policy and planning priority.”