



COTA **NEW SOUTH WALES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSING POLICY MUST ADDRESS OLDER WOMEN'S RISK OF HOMELESSNESS SAYS COTA NSW

“A healthy pay-packet is no longer a barrier to homelessness for Australian women, even middle income earners, who are increasingly vulnerable to homelessness as they grow older. Policy needs to address the growing housing crisis that women face as they age,” says Ian Day, CEO of Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW).

“COTA NSW welcomes the federal government’s decision to extend funding to combat homelessness and the housing crisis, and views it as a step in the right direction. However it is crucial that older women’s vulnerability to homelessness be at the forefront of Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews’ commitment to overhaul housing policy in the long term future.”

“A growing body of research indicates that older women are increasingly at risk of homelessness. Women approaching retirement tend to have less superannuation and lower levels of savings than their male peers,” says Mr Day.

“These outcomes are often linked to the fact that many women spend considerable periods of their lives as unpaid carers. Soaring property prices mean that increasing numbers of women – including those who are currently middle-income earners – simply can’t afford to buy property on their own. Rising household expenses and rental hikes mean that such women face a real risk of homelessness once they retire.”

“There needs to be rigorous public debate about how to combat the financial vulnerability that Australian women face as they age. On 27 May COTA NSW will host a public forum at NSW State Parliament to discuss the measures we should adopt to ensure Australian women enjoy a more secure older age.”

The forum will be an excellent opportunity for the government and community sectors to explore pragmatic solutions for ageing Australian women.”

END

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