



MEDIA RELEASE

NEW SOUTH WALES

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PAYING THE PRICE FOR A LIFETIME OF CARE

“Homeless amongst older people is on the rise. Strikingly, many of the older homeless are women,” says Ian Day, CEO of COTA NSW. “In the wake of the Federal Budget we’ll be holding a Forum at State Parliament House on Tuesday 27 May 2014 to identify solutions to this mounting crisis.”

“A growing body of research demonstrates that women are at particular risk of homelessness in older age because of a number of inter-related factors, the key one being their involvement in unpaid care. Women continue to provide the bulk of care to their children and they also provide much of the care required by ageing parents or spouses.”

“As a result, they spend less time in the paid workforce, often in lower paid positions than their male counterparts. They have less superannuation and fewer savings than men once they hit retirement age. If they’re not lucky enough to own their own home, they have little hope of staying afloat in a big city’s private rental market once they retire.”

“Most people will tell you that the care a mother provides to her children is incredibly valuable. But the reality is the people who offer care are penalised for it.”

The COTA NSW Parliamentary Forum will assemble an expert panel who will outline the steps that can be taken to ‘pay women back’ for a lifetime of care. “Governments of all stripes have ignored this issue,” says Mr Day. “We seem to be going backwards when it comes to valuing the contributions older people make.”

“In the lead up to the Federal Budget we’re seeing politicians suggest that the age you can access the age pension has to keep increasing. But the research we’re looking at tells us some older people are experiencing real poverty long before they’re eligible for the pension as it currently stands.”

“What’s more, our own consumer research shows older people believe it’s harder to remain in the workforce as they age due to discrimination. High levels of under- or un-employment amongst older people are a reality. Unless we attack age discrimination in the workplace we’re going to see more older people falling into poverty and homelessness as the pension age rises.”

The COTA NSW forum will be opened by the Honourable John Ajaka, Minister for Ageing. Speeches will be given by Ben Spies-Butcher; Felicity Reynolds; Helen Conway; Jane Counsel; Alison Aggarwal and Rafal Chomik.

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