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MEDIA RELEASE

National Homelessness Week: retirement living industry “ready, willing and able” for achievable solutions

With women over the age of 55 the fastest growing cohort of homeless Australians, the Retirement Living Council (RLC) stands “ready, willing and able” to work with the new Minister for Housing & Homelessness, Hon Julie Collins MP, and State governments to reduce the impact of homelessness on older Australians, especially women.

National Homelessness Week is a timely reminder that the Australian retirement living sector is part of the solution for older Australian women at risk of homelessness.

The RLC released a landmark report earlier this year, the ‘Retirement Living – A Solution for Older Women at Risk of Homelessness’, which provided a set of clear recommendations outlining practical and cost-effective ways that retirement living communities can further support governments to address this growing issue.

The report makes six recommendations, which are designed to raise awareness, increase accessibility and lower financial barriers for older women at risk of homelessness.

Older women in Australia are increasingly at risk of homelessness due to a range of factors, including Australia’s ageing population, housing affordability and the gender-based differences in wealth accumulation across a working lifetime.

RLC Executive Director Ben Myers said that retirement living operators stood ready to help with “people ready” not “shovel ready” homes for people in need.

Mr Myers said the design, structure and form of age-friendly homes combined with greater accessibility to community and care networks provided the best way to significantly reduce the two biggest risk factors leading to the illness and hospitalisation of older Australians (ie, falls and depression).

“Community engagement, security and support are critical design elements that are deliberately designed and built-into age-friendly communities. It’s why they can also make ideal homes for older women at risk of homelessness,” he said.

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