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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Planning Ahead - Building Better Futures

Seniors' peak organisation Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland has welcomed the passing of the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill.

The Bill amends the Housing Act 2003, Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003, Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002, Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, Retirement Villages Act 1999, and a consequential amendment to the *Building Act 1975*.

The reforms of the Bill are a result of extensive consultation with industry and consumer stakeholders through the *Queensland Housing Strategy*, the Ministerial Housing Council and stakeholder consultations.

“Amendments to exit fee and unit resale arrangements under the Retirement Villages Act should provide assurance to both current and future residents. The introduction of the eighteen-month limit for the payment of the exit entitlement which will be made retrospectively is welcomed. However, it is noted that New South Wales has a twelve-month timeframe and South Australia requires finalisation within six months. We will continue to advocate that the payment for the exit entitlement for retirement village residents should be brought into line with other states” COTA Queensland Chief Executive Mark Tucker-Evans said.

COTA Queensland has advocated for age friendly cities and communities for over a decade. Age-friendly cities and communities promote health, wellbeing, and community participation.

“Housing is a key issue, and it has significant implications for many aspects of older people’s lives. Planning ahead is critical. Housing decisions are complex, often have emotional implications and for some older people decisions may be made under stress. Many older people are overwhelmed by the challenge of finding and processing the information they need.” said Mr Tucker-Evans

“Seniors cannot afford to jeopardise their futures through a poor housing decision.

The government has committed to supporting the Housing Strategy beyond legislative changes by providing practical help to improve people’s experiences in retirement villages, manufactured home parks and boarding houses.

\$1M has been committed to five key organisations to strengthen advocacy and support services; to ensure Queenslanders can access information and advice that supports their important life and financial decisions, while protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Joining COTA Queensland, recipients include:

- Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages (ARQRV)
- Associated Residential Parks Queensland Inc (ARPQ)
- National Seniors Australia (NSA)
- Tenants Queensland (TQ)

“This funding will enable COTA to extend our *Planning Ahead: Let’s Talk ...* series. We will be building the capacity of older Queenslanders to make informed decisions about their housing through facilitating face-to-face peer-led interactive education sessions. These sessions will be provided by older people trained in the topic to facilitate open and honest discussion about housing needs in a safe and supportive format and environment.” Mr Tucker-Evans said.

**END**