



MEDIA RELEASE

Policymakers and citizens urged to consider positive impact of more urban affordable housing on future generations

Expert says society benefits from stable homes for children

Sydney, Australia - 20 June 2019 - Young children and teenagers who live with one or both parents occupy more than half the affordable housing apartments supplied by City West Housing in the City of Sydney, according to a recent tenancy survey by the not-for-profit NSW affordable housing provider.

First established in 1994, City West Housing is using its 25th anniversary to highlight the positive intergenerational impact that stable, affordable housing has on families and children in urban centres like Sydney. It hopes its success will inspire policymakers, other community housing providers, and people living and working in cities across Australia, to embrace more affordable housing for very low- to moderate income earners.

"It's critical we listen to the stories of children as we discuss, debate and plan for more urban affordable housing in our cities. People tend to think you don't get families living in the inner city, but obviously you do, and as Nelson Mandela said, how we treat children reflects our soul as a society," said **Leonie King, CEO of City West Housing**.

"We manage more than 700 properties across the City of Sydney today. Our most recent tenant survey indicates 54 percent of our residents have children and teenagers living with them. We're thrilled to be providing all of our residents a stable home and our families with much needed peace of mind. We've seen that removing housing stress is immeasurably important to a family's balance and security" she said.

One of those teenagers is **17-year old Kyle**. He was seven years old when he first moved into the City West Housing 3-bedroom apartment in Pyrmont where he still lives with his younger sister and mum, Danielle. He's never known any different. "Kyle is a normal teenager. That fact alone is newsworthy, given the instability his family overcame prior to moving into the City West Housing apartment," Ms King said. [Click here](#) to **watch a new video called "New Possibilities"** featuring Kyle, other City West Housing residents, and experts.

Unlike many children of very low- to moderate income families who are forced to move regularly due to housing stress, unemployment and/or increased rent, Kyle was at the same primary school from kindergarten to year 6, and is about to graduate high school alongside friends he's had from Year 7 until now. His family eats dinner together most nights.

Collett Smart, child and adolescent psychologist, author and parenting expert, says the type of stability Kyle has experienced since childhood bodes well for his future.

"Once children move with their families into affordable housing, there is a wonderful long-term knock-on effect on the whole family's well-being. We see parents less stressed because they can now afford to pay for things that used to be luxuries like new school shoes, nutritious food, or kids' sports gear. With shorter commutes to and from work, mum or dad are much more likely to be home in time to make and enjoy a family meal together, or attend school events.



"Children do better because mum and dad are less stressed, and they are more confident to get involved in school life knowing they're not likely to up and move again -- which means stable friendships, and stable relationships. This all works to create cohesion in the family, and a stronger sense of belonging, which are so critical to a child's development," Dr Smart said.

The **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare** is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency which states in its 2010 report on 'Shelter' and its impact on childhood development, "Access to stable, adequate shelter plays a major role in the health and wellbeing of families, and in particular children, by providing a safe environment, the security that allows participation in the social, educational, economic, and community aspects of their lives and the privacy to foster autonomy as an individual and a family unit."

Leonie King says she's committed to advancing the not-for-profit organisation's founding vision of building healthy urban communities where people of all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds can live and work together.

"Over the last 25 years we've had the privilege of providing quality, affordable homes to thousands of people working and living in the City of Sydney. As we look ahead to the next 25 years we want to remind people that stable homes, stable lives, and stable access to schools, workplaces, retail and community facilities are important. This stability creates new possibilities for health and wellbeing, employment, education, nutrition and diversity that impacts individuals and society today, and importantly, future generations as well," she said.

City West Housing residents do not pay more than 30 percent of their household income on rent. There is no time limit on how long eligible City West Housing residents stay in their homes. Eligibility is based on income and a residents' connection to the City of Sydney, including through employment.

For more information about City West Housing visit www.citywesthousing.com.au

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MEDIA INFORMATION. To arrange an interview, video footage, images or more information:

Julie Fidler Senior PR Manager Filtered Media m: 0419 600 555 e: julie@filteredmedia.com.au	Stacie Hickey PR Executive Filtered Media m: 0413 292 421 e: stacie@filteredmedia.com.au
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