



Media Release

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McAuley expands affordable housing options for women and children, opening Wilma's Place

McAuley Community Services for Women has today announced the opening of Wilma's Place, a newly completed social housing development in Melbourne's West for women and children who have been homeless. The development, opened by Victoria's Minister for Housing Colin Brooks, continues the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy, who opened Victoria's first 24/7 crisis accommodation in 1988.

Delivered in partnership with the Victorian Government's \$2.7 billion Building Works Stimulus Program, with an additional \$500,000 funding from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, the 12 architecturally designed one, two and three-bed apartments will provide modern and accessible, long-term accommodation options for households headed by women.

With family violence the biggest, and growing, cause of homelessness in Victoria, McAuley CEO Jocelyn Bignold OAM, said creating accommodation options like Wilma's Place are more important than ever.

"Wilma's Place is a very special project for us," said Jocelyn. "It is an exciting addition to the range of accommodation we can offer, expanding beyond crisis and supported accommodation to provide quality long-term homes that enable women and children escaping family violence to settle and thrive".

Available for women and children on the Victorian Housing Register, each family apartment has an open plan fully appointed kitchen and dining area, as well as secure entry and intercom systems, six-star energy rating, heating and cooling throughout and a balcony with views of Maribyrnong and surrounds. The development is centrally located, close to walking trails, major shopping centres, schools and public transport.

Wilma's Place is named in honour of Sr Wilma Geary, a Sister of Mercy, who alongside Sr Sheila Heywood, founded Mercy Care (now McAuley Care) in 1988.

"We are delighted to be able to continue the pioneering service the Sisters of Mercy began on this site over three decades ago," said Jocelyn. "Wilma's Place celebrates their legacy, affording those families most at risk of homelessness the security and stability of their own home as they continue to rebuild their lives."

Last year 31,019 adult women and 14,757 children presented to homelessness services in Victoria as a result of family violence.

Expanding appropriate accommodation options for women and children who are exposed to violence and homelessness is a core strategic pillar for McAuley. Wilma's Place follows the launch of McAuley's critical crisis accommodation, Heywood House, in October last year which further expands McAuley's extended services, including legal, financial and

employment support as well as specialised children's programs.

ENDS

[Further information on rental eligibility for Wilma's Place can be found below.]



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Wilma's Place – rental eligibility

Rental eligibility is determined by a range of factors including:

- Women headed households only.
- Accepted on the Victorian Housing Register under a priority application.
- Must be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident.
- Must provide all income statements for the purpose of rent assessment.
- Independent with supports already in place, i.e., NDIS.
- Financially independent.
- Independent skills for life, i.e., cooking, cleaning, managing a household.
- Does not own all or part of a piece of real estate (except in circumstances where they can't make of effective use of the property)