



MEDIA RELEASE

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SENIORS CELEBRATE FIRST YEAR IN INNOVATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Michele Cooper was first in line to help blow out the candles when a vibrant New Farm affordable housing village for over 55's celebrated its first anniversary today.

Michele, 63, was one of the first residents to move into Bowen Court, a former retirement village that was completely refurbished thanks to a unique partnership between leading not-for-profit housing provider BHC and Blue Care.

Under the partnership, Blue Care provided the building while BHC secured funding and undertook the \$7M renovation.

The resulting 51-unit Bowen Terrace complex now provides 54 low and middle-income seniors with affordable, modern and accessible apartments close to medical services, shops and public transport.

The development was a blessing for Michele, who had nowhere to go after divorce and cancer treatment exhausted her finances.

"I feel like the luckiest woman on earth really," Michele said.

"I was in Teneriffe previously and my friends live in New Farm, but couldn't afford to move near them after the life changes I experienced.

"Then this opportunity came along. To have that worry of where to live lifted from my shoulders is just wonderful. I absolutely love it here."

Blue Care Executive Director Robyn Batten said the project exemplified how innovative partnerships were an answer to the challenge of providing affordable housing for seniors.

"The apartments are an example of a new kind of thinking when it comes to affordable housing for older people," she said.

"With them we are delivering secure living spaces with characterful, thoughtful and accessible design, with Blue Care home support services just a call away if they're needed."

BHC CEO David Cant said developments like Bowen Court were vital with many older Australians facing acute housing stress.

“Trying to afford private rents on an aged pension is just not possible for many seniors, and there are few other housing options if you don’t own your own home,” he said.

“Unfortunately there are now fewer sources of financial support for affordable housing than at any time in the 20 years I have been in the industry here in Australia.

“With the aging profile of Australia’s population, we simply must be more innovative in developing new funding initiatives.

“The partnership between BHC and Blue Care is a good example of how thinking outside the box can help build the supply of affordable housing.”

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