

Affordable Housing Project Shines New Light on West End New Homes for Older People in the CBD

Adelaide, March 5, 2019 - A unique, \$25m architect-designed affordable housing development is underway in Light Square.

Officially launched (at 2.30pm) today by Minister for Human Services, the Hon. Michelle Lensink MLC, *Spence on Light* is the result of a new partnership between the State Government, the South Australian Housing Authority, community housing provider Housing Choices South Australia (Housing Choices) and not-for-profit community organisation, ACH Group.

The modern 13-storey residential building preserves the superb façade of the Heritage-listed Mission Hall building (formerly Regine's) at 69 Light Square and will include 75 brand-new, accessible, one and two-bedroom apartments, in a blossoming residential area of the CBD, on a site that has sat empty for years.

Spence on Light will be project and property-managed by Housing Choices, a highly-experienced property and tenancy manager for low-income and vulnerable people. Housing Choices owns and manages over 1000 dwellings in SA, including three residential buildings in Franklin Street, Light Square and Mellor Street, as well as an established community services hub in Light Square that will provide residents with access to support services and health and well-being programs.

Both the SA Housing Authority and ACH Group have purchased apartments off the plan to be part of a mixed-tenure development that will include 53 affordable and social housing apartments, 16 unique apartments for older people requiring support as they age, and 6 apartments suitable for South Australians living with a significant disability.

The homes will be made available to people on existing housing waitlists, older people with care needs and limited housing options, or to SA Housing Authority and Housing Choices' residents looking to move out of old dwellings that are expensive to heat, cool and maintain, into new homes that will allow them to comfortably age in place.

These transfers will in turn create vacancies in the Housing Choices and SA Housing Authority portfolios that can be allocated to larger families in need of additional space, or in some cases free up older properties for upgrading work or redevelopment into homes better-suited to the needs of residents on the waitlist for housing.

The SA Housing Authority had identified a need for additional purpose-built housing in the CBD. Housing Choices was able to meet this need, offering housing stock for purchase in its first major development project under the State government's social housing transfer program.

The building is named in honour of Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910), a renowned Adelaide suffragist and social reformer whose bronze statue sits opposite in Light Square. Designed by Adelaide-based architects Tectvs, builder Hindmarsh Construction has commenced work on the building and project completion is expected by May 2020. Building plans include provision of a ground floor space directly open to Light Square that can be developed into a community café for residents and visitors to meet and relax, in the carefully restored heritage frontage of the former City Mission Hall.

QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE

Michael Lennon, Managing Director Housing Choices Australia group:

“People living in or in need of social housing are older, frailer and experience higher levels of disability than other population groups. Our aim, in this truly collaborative project, is to deliver new housing that better meets the long-term housing and support needs of low-income South Australians.”

“With this development, we deliberately set out to create a high-quality building that will provide affordable secure housing, suited for people living with disability, and for those seeking a place suitable to age in place, in a vibrant community.”

“*Spence on Light* is going to be a really great place to live.”

The Hon Michelle Lensink, Minister for Human Services:

“As people age, we know that it can become increasingly difficult to maintain affordable housing and to remain in the community and it is particularly challenging for people living with disability.”

“This innovative collaboration between the Liberal Government and the housing sector addresses some of that need.”

Frank Weits, Chief Executive Officer ACH Group:

“There’s a real lack of affordable housing for older people, particularly women, in the inner-Adelaide area. Consistent with our long history of supporting vulnerable people in South Australia, we set out to change that through our collaboration with Housing Choices.”

DROPBOX LINK TO HIGH RES. BUILDING RENDER

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