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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for State Development, Housing and Construction

First of a kind development improves housing security for older Tasmanians

Today's opening of the new 40-bed Wirksworth Integrated Aged Care facility in Bellerive is evidence of the Tasmanian Government's commitment to improve social and affordable housing in this State, particularly for older Tasmanians.

The Wirksworth facility is the first of its kind in Tasmania, providing affordable, high-quality care and accommodation for older Tasmanians who are financially disadvantaged, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The aged care centre and independent living units will be managed by specialist aged care provider Wintringham, which will deliver an integrated housing and support service tailored to older Tasmanians.

The development will provide a home for 50 older Tasmanians made up of 10 independent living units and a 40-bed residential aged care facility. The facility has been specifically designed and includes open transitions between buildings and small group units.

The independent living units were completed in December 2021 and are already being used to house Priority Applicants from the Housing Register, with today's opening of the residential aged care facility another significant step forward.

The total project includes:

- 16 high-care residential rooms
- 24 general-care residential rooms
- 10 Independent Living Units
- café, kitchen, dining, lounge and laundry communal building
- resident recreational and respite facilities, and staff facility building
- general office, dispensary and consultation building
- landscaping and roadway

The development has retained about two-thirds of the Wirksworth Estate site as public open space, and we will work with the local community to develop that into a space that will add value to the area.

The Department of Communities Tasmania has contracted Wintringham to provide tenancy management for five other public housing unit complexes in the greater Hobart area. Wintringham provide specialist place-based housing support to more than 200 older Tasmanians in need. The historic Wirksworth House has been repurposed as the office for outreach and support services provided by Wintringham for the elderly living in the community.

As part of our election commitments, we will spend \$20 million over four years to deliver supported accommodation facilities for older Tasmanians in the North and North-West of the state. Communities Tasmania has identified a site in Newnham, in Launceston, with preliminary plans to build a 35-bed aged care facility and 25 independent living units for older Tasmanians who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

Every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head, and we have a comprehensive and ambitious approach to addressing homelessness and housing stress. The cornerstone of our plan is the new statutory housing authority, Homes Tasmania, which will increase these types of partnerships and opportunities, leveraging its \$3.5 billion asset base to deliver 10,000 new social and affordable homes by 2032.

We encourage anyone who is homeless or who is at risk of homelessness to contact Housing Connect 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 1800 800 588.