



## **Senator the Hon Santo Santoro Minister for Ageing**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Funding boost for age-friendly communities**

The Minister for Ageing, Senator Santo Santoro, today announced initial funding of \$250,000 to boost Australian Government and industry action to help develop “age-friendly” communities.

Senator Santoro announced the funding when launching the report on the National Speakers Series, the program of seminars and workshops held over the past nine months to highlight the links between built environments and the health and wellbeing of older Australians. The series took *A Community for All Ages, Building the Future* as its theme.

“Good housing and urban design can play a major role in allowing older Australians to age in place and remain active,” Senator Santoro said. “They are important keys in creating age-friendly communities.

“We hope this work will encourage builders, urban designers, architects and local government authorities to create housing and community environments that allow older people to be socially and physically active.”

Senator Santoro said it was well-known that, in their desire to stay independent, older people preferred to remain in their homes, or at least stay in familiar, comfortable surroundings.

“Good planning and design can help us to meet their needs,” he said.

“It is also true that inappropriate housing or poorly designed communities are factors in people having to move prematurely into residential aged care.

“The funding I am announcing today will enable the Government to work in partnership to implement the recommendations of the Series. These recommendations propose further research into the cost benefits of adaptable housing, education for consumers, and training and awards for industry.

The Government’s partners in the National Speakers Series included the Master Builders’ Association, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia, the Independent Living Centres, the Building Designers Association, the Australian Local Government Association, as well as other Australian Government agencies.

“I urge the relevant professions and all levels of government to progress the work done in the National Speakers Series,” Senator Santoro said. “It represents a highly significant step in creating an Australia for all ages.”

Ita Buttrose, the businesswoman, author, media personality who is a strong advocate of healthy and active ageing issues, said: “Much more thought and consideration needs to be given to the built environment when it comes to the health and welfare of older Australians. This is a fantastic initiative.”

Senator Santoro acknowledged the contribution of National Speakers Series facilitator, well-known social commentator Dr. Keith Suter.

**Media contact: Malcolm Cole 0408 612 603**

**For copies of the report:**

**e-mail [natspeakersseries@health.gov.au](mailto:natspeakersseries@health.gov.au)**

**or phone (02) 6289 5685**

**For more information on the National Speakers Series initiative, go to**

**[www.health.gov.au/communityforallages](http://www.health.gov.au/communityforallages)**