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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **HUME COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICIALLY OPENS OFFICE IN MAITLAND**

Hume Community Housing, one of the largest housing providers in New South Wales, officially opened our office in High Street Maitland today at an event attended by more than sixty guests, including Maitland Mayor Cr. Loretta Baker and senior representatives from the NSW Department of Communities. The opening was celebrated with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by elder James Wilson-Miller to recognise the transfer of around 2,200 homes and around 4,000 customers across Maitland and Port Stephens from the Department of Family and Community Services (DCJ) to Hume.

Nicola Lemon, CEO of Hume Community Housing, thanked the community for warmly welcoming Hume into the region and acknowledged the support of customers, partners, and DCJ in ensuring Hume was ready to open on time. “Today is the culmination of more than 18 months of intensive planning as we have readied Hume to double in size to accommodate our Hunter customers. Since we were awarded the transfer, we’ve been actively building relationships with community groups and local businesses. In May, we were able to commence meeting our customers, often in their homes to understand their needs and to ensure their transition over to us was a smooth one”, said Ms. Lemon.

Hume’s entry into the region has already delivered a boost to the local economy through the creation of 45 employment opportunities and the establishment of two offices – a second office in Raymond Terrace was announced last week. Hume has established working partnerships with a number of local service providers including Maitland Interagency Group, Department of Communities and Justice District Team, Hunter New England Mental Health Service, Maitland City Council, The Smith Family, Woodberry Family Centre and Port Stephens Council to support the delivery of services to customers.

“There’s a genuine sense of optimism throughout the communities we are serving including Rutherford, East Maitland, Woodberry, and Raymond Terrace, with customers telling us they’re looking forward to having Hume partner with them. We provide opportunities for people and communities to prosper and we’re passionate about delivering results for the people of the Hunter,” Ms. Lemon said. Ms. Lemon outlined how Hume will begin to introduce some of their award-winning programs into the Hunter, stressing that local needs and customer participation will determine which programs and supports are most needed.

As the third-largest Tier 1 community housing provider in Australia, Hume secured the largest social housing transfer in NSW in 2018 under the Social Housing Management Transfers (SHMT) program, part of a broader program of around 14,000 properties across NSW transferring from DCJ to nine registered community housing providers. Hume worked closely with the NSW Government to deliver a seamless transition for new customers.

Paul Vevers, Deputy Secretary from the Department of Communities and Justice said: “This is a new era for social housing tenants in the Hunter. The extra funds which Hume Housing receives will really help to provide a better service for people in need of assistance with their housing. I am delighted at Hume Housing’s success in taking over management of these properties and am confident tenants will be just as delighted”. Providers were selected following a rigorous evaluation of their capacity to deliver good outcomes for social housing customers.

“The transfer of management to community housing providers such as Hume Community Housing means over \$1 billion of additional funding can be harnessed over 20 years to improve the experience of people living in social housing.”

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