

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Mercy House Opens in Beaudesert to Support Older Women Facing Homelessness**

**A new refuge for older women experiencing homelessness has opened in Beaudesert, offering not just shelter but a fresh start. Mercy House, launched this week by Centacare, will provide short-to-medium-term accommodation and support for women aged 50 and over, the fastest-growing demographic facing homelessness in Australia.**

*Centacare*, the social services agency of the *Archdiocese of Brisbane*, has this week opened *Mercy House* in Beaudesert — a new, safe haven for older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The house, which was officially opened on Tuesday 25 March, will offer short-to-medium-term accommodation for women aged 50 and over, a demographic that is now the fastest-growing group of people facing homelessness in Australia.

“Most of these women have never experienced homelessness before,” said Centacare Executive Director Debra Clark. “They might be staying with children, sleeping in their cars, or house-sitting between temporary arrangements. What they have in common is that one life event, the death of a partner, an illness, or a separation, has tipped the scales. And suddenly, there’s nowhere to go.”

Mercy House is more than a roof over someone’s head. Centacare teams will work closely with women to build rental history, find stable income, access legal and financial advice, and connect them to long-term housing pathways. Stays can range from three days to three months, depending on each woman’s unique situation.

“This is housing with heart,” said Ms Clark. “We’re not just offering safety and shelter, we’re walking alongside women as they rebuild, regain independence, and reimagine what’s next.”

The service has been made possible through the generosity and trust of the Sisters of Mercy, who have long served the people of Beaudesert with humility and compassion.

“This house carries their legacy,” Ms Clark said. “It’s our privilege to carry that legacy forward and to honour it by continuing to serve women with dignity, respect and care.”

Beyond accommodation, Centacare hopes Mercy House will become the cornerstone of a broader housing support service for women in the Scenic Rim region. The service aims to help women stay in their current homes when possible safe, offering practical help to navigate rental stress, breach notices, or landlord negotiations in an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

Homelessness can feel invisible, especially for older women. But the need is growing, and it’s happening right here in our communities,” Ms Clark said. “Mercy House is our response: local, compassionate, and focused on lasting outcomes.”