



SEQUAL – Available for Comment

Australia is well-placed to deliver an ethical and efficient Seniors Equity Release Market –Just when it is needed most!

SEQUAL has exercised its international reach to deliver a fully-informed view of the important role Equity Release can play in meeting the increasing need for Senior Australians to access effective retirement funding solutions.

Sydney, 3 October 2008 – SEQUAL, the industry body for Australian Seniors Equity Release, has announced the visit from the USA of Tom Scabareti, Committee Vice Chairman of National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (“NRMLA”).

SEQUAL is offering the opportunity for market practitioners and other stakeholders to participate in a series of market briefings to be delivered by Scabareti in order to provide a fully-informed view of the broader issues that can impact the opportunity to assist Senior Australians to meet the challenge of Living Longer and Living Well in retirement.

Scabareti believes that the Australian Seniors Equity Release market has delivered world-class product design and distribution practices. However, he warns that lessons learned in other markets should guide Regulators and Government in this country to have proper regard for the high standards of practice that have been established in the Australian Senior Equity Release market.

“Significant consumer benefit can arise when the impact of regulatory change is carefully considered and industry bodies like SEQUAL have the opportunity to guide the development of the market but there is always the risk that consumers can be deprived of important choices if the balance between regulatory intervention and market self-regulation is lost”, said Scabareti.

“From what I can see, Australian consumers appear to be well served by the role that SEQUAL has played in this market and as more Senior Australians face the challenge of funding their retirement, the existence of an ethical and efficient Senior Equity Release market is critical”, he added.

“As the Australian population ages, the direct financial costs to governments are expected to rise due to the income support and health costs associated with an older population. This similar dynamic in the United States market has led to the growth of the equity release industry focusing on the needs of Seniors”, commented Scabareti.

Scabareti emphasised that “Providing trust and security is critical for the senior population and SEQUAL has taken a leadership role in establishing an educational based, best practice skills training program for the equity release market practitioners.”

The Australian Equity Release market is growing rapidly as the largest generation within the Australian population confronts the challenge of facing retirement “Asset-Rich but Cash Poor”. According to Kevin Conlon, CEO of SEQUAL, “Many Senior Australians are poorly prepared for retirement yet they can expect to live longer than any generation before them and intend to live well. Compulsory Superannuation is a good idea that came too late and it seems quite clear that the pension is not going to be the answer”.

“The good news is that a large number of Senior Australians have achieved significant personal wealth through property ownership and this may provide the solution. Equity Release is a clear option for them to enjoy retirement without having to sell their home and move away from their network of friends and family,” said Conlon.

As the industry body for Seniors Equity Release SEQUAL is committed to ensuring retirees are well placed to make informed decisions when considering all the options for funding their retirement.

ENDS

Tom Scabareti and Kevin Conlon are available to discuss:

- Asset-rich cash-poor retirees
- The financial stress those approaching and deep in retirement are facing
- The financial options available to retirees
- SEQUAL research which found the majority of retirees wealth is tied up in their home, but they rely on the aged pension to fund retirement
- SEQUAL’s commitment to ensuring retirees can easily identify and access properly-trained market practitioners to assist them to carefully consider all the options

Note to Editor: A reverse mortgage is a loan to senior homeowners that allows them to access a portion of the equity value in their home. No repayments are required whilst the borrower(s) remains in their property. Interest and fees accrue on the loan and the loan is repayable in full when the last surviving borrower permanently vacates the home or the home is sold.

Kevin Conlon is highly regarded for his ability to combine technical knowledge with strong communication skill. He holds a Master of Finance degree and has broad experience in both domestic and international financial markets. Kevin is an acknowledged expert in Australia's rapidly-growing Equity Release market.

Tom Scabareti is a reverse mortgage veteran having held senior positions with major Reverse Mortgage providers. An active member of The National Reverse Mortgage Lender's Association (NRMLA), Scabareti is a recognised national speaker on reverse mortgage marketing at their national conferences and currently serves as Vice Chairman of the NRMLA Consumer Issues committee. As a Certified Senior Advisor, he has contributed to the implementation of National Aging in Place Week in conjunction with the department of gerontology at the University of Southern California. Tom is a published author and has contributed content for several books on reverse mortgages.

To arrange an interview with either Tom Scabareti or Kevin Conlon please contact Kevin Conlon on 0411 094 495 or Pauline Negline at SEQUAL Media on 0407 700 653