

Five-star move for homeless

Tenant describes her fear and shame

Housing | Nic Price

MORE than 200 homeless and at-risk Victorians will be given a new address and a new chance when a \$47 million supportive housing development opens in Melbourne this month.

At 660 Elizabeth St, the building includes 131 studio apartments and 30 two-bedroom apartments to house a mixture of formerly homeless tenants and low-income earners.

The building has a five-star energy rating, on-site support, health services, 24/7 security and a rooftop garden and playground.

It will be owned and managed by Yarra Community Housing, with support services and tenants provided by HomeGround Services.

Yarra Community Housing board chairwoman Linda Hoskins said it would have "a potentially life-changing impact on thousands of people over the coming years".

Premier John Brumby and fed-

eral Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek officially opened the project last Tuesday.

Based on a housing model from New York City, the development has been bankrolled by \$34.5 million in State Government funding and \$12.3 million from the Federal Government.

Developer Grocon absorbed \$9.7 million in design and building costs. Grocon chief executive Daniel Grollo said employees had learned a lot from the experience and were proud to have created a quality environment for neglected people.

One tenant, identified only as Suzie, wept on a video shown at last week's launch as she described the fear and shame of being homeless and "sleeping on bloody railway tracks on cardboard boxes".

► Are governments doing enough to tackle homelessness in Melbourne? Email us at melbourne@leadernewspapers.com.au