

Co-working offices, now co-living

SINGAPORE'S largest co-living company, Hmlet, has entered the Australian market, keen to capitalise on the changing housing needs of 7.1 million people aged 18 to 34 years old.

The move into Australia is its second overseas location outside of the island city-state, as Hmlet is on track to quadruple its number of members to more than 2,400 across Asia Pacific by the end of 2019.

Hmlet will debut in Sydney, with the launch of two co-living properties in Newtown and Marrickville, with plans underway to expand to Melbourne and Brisbane.

Hmlet @ Newtown, which is among the first purpose-built co-living properties in Australia, will accommodate 20 members and will feature a co-working space, communal living and kitchen spaces, and a rooftop terrace. Located on Newtown's famed King Street, Hmlet @ Newtown will also house a new hospitality venue, which will open to the public later this year.

Hmlet @ Marrickville, one of the largest built-to-rent project in Sydney's inner-west, will become home to over 70 members and act as a cornerstone property for Hmlet's expansion in Sydney.

Founded in 2016 by Yoan Kamalski and Zenos Schmickrath, Hmlet has pioneered the co-living sector to meet the needs of today's millennial generation, by offering flexible lease options, fully furnished spaces and on-demand services. It has successfully transformed traditional residential real estate into dynamic technology-enabled environments to empower its members.

Today, Hmlet is the largest co-living operator in Singapore, having doubled its number of members in the previous six months. It has more than 15 locations across Singapore and Hong Kong, and soon to be Australia.

In November 2018, Hmlet secured a USD\$6.5 million Series A investment from Sequoia India, the Indian affiliate of US venture capital giant Sequoia Capital, to accelerate growth and facilitate expansion into new markets.

Kamalski said when assessing new markets for international expansion, Australia stood out with its population of 7.1 million people aged 18 to 34 years old and positioning as the third most popular destination for international students, as well as growing

rental costs, where millennials spend at least 30% of their take-home income on rent.

Millennials currently account for 29% of Australia's population and are set to be 50% of the workforce by 2020. During a recent survey conducted by Vice Media, 48% of millennials in Australia said they would rent for longer to be closer to the things they need, with many looking to lead a hassle-free life.

"Co-living is quickly emerging as a welcome solution to many of the problems associated with living and renting in Australia's cities. By offering affordability, flexibility, security and fostering a strong sense of community, Hmlet can cater to those who are moving to a new city or have left familiar surroundings," Kamalski said. "Changing the way people live around the world is our mission at Hmlet. With the growing demand for more flexible, community-based options of living in cities like Sydney, we felt that Australia was the next natural move for us.

"We are excited to be expanding our brand and look forward to welcoming many more people to experience Hmlet's community in Australia,"

Meanwhile Kamalski said following a recent tour across Australia's major capital cities, it is clear that build-to-rent will become an important part of the Australian property market and co-living helps to drive the momentum of the burgeoning build-to-rent sector.

"This adds to our conviction as to why Australia will become one of Hmlet's largest markets, and we see ourselves becoming the preferred operating partner for developers and investors seeking to enter the co-living and build-to-rent sector,"

Hmlet has brought over the founding team of Caper Co-Living, a start-up operator of co-living properties in Australia. It will look to build an expansive network of co-living properties in Australia with the target of reaching a portfolio of 1,000 members within the next 12 months.