



A safe, supportive and caring home for people with enduring mental illness

President's Report for MyHome in Canberra AGM 22 November 2022

Welcome

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay respects to their elders past and present. I would also like to welcome everyone and thank you for attending.

Firstly thank you to all the Board members for their support and their contributions during the past year. I acknowledge the close links with the Woden Rotary Club (now the Murrumbidgee Rotary Club), the Woden Valley Uniting Church, HOME in Queanbeyan, Woden Community Service and members of the Canberra community for their continued support.

The Year in Review

Our goal is to provide a safe and secure home and community where people can receive support to manage their medication, have someone to share stories with and to support them while they stay and if they choose to leave. We aim to encourage recovery and autonomy.

Indicative Development Plan

At our previous AGM in December 2021, we discussed an Indicative Development Plan for the Curtin site which had been funded by MyHome, the Woden Valley Uniting Church and Community Housing Canberra (CHC), and prepared by Cox Architects and Purdon Planning. That plan has proved a great investment, to show people both how the MyHome development might look and how it might be combined with an adjacent development of affordable rental housing. We have used this plan to keep the Curtin Residents Association informed, and shared it with several Rotary Clubs to gather support.

ACT Government

Last year the Minister for Mental Health directed her officials to work with us on two aspects – defining further our target cohort of residents, and showing how we would fund the ongoing operating costs.

- After discussions with service providers in the mental health field and officials of ACT Health, we provided early this year a paper on our target cohort and, therefore, what MyHome's place would be in the range of service and accommodation providers for people with mental illnesses. We've not yet had any substantive feedback on this paper.
- As for funding MyHome's operating costs, we have made a series of efforts to clarify the most difficult area – what NDIS funding MyHome residents might have and choose to

allocate to the in-house provider of services at MyHome. We have improved our knowledge of NDIS packages and the associated estimate in our financial model, but not yet as much as we'd like.

Our proposal that the Government provide \$1M in this current year's budget for detailed design of MyHome was not accepted, although this makes it unlikely that construction can be achieved within this Government's term of office. More positively, the Budget Review Committee of the ACT Legislative Assembly recently asked the Government to advise the timing and budget for MyHome in Canberra.

Fund-raising

We were very fortunate to have the Austrian Ambassador, His Excellency Lukas Strohmayer, support our cause with fund-raising at his Residence in Forrest. The program was called the Friends of the Apple Strudel and was a fun and successful evening. The Turkish Ambassador, His Excellency Korhan Karakoc, held the next function and again it was well supported and a fun evening. Ms Teresa Zarlenga heard our media coverage and volunteered to hold an opera night in the Turkish Embassy. This too was a great success and a significant fund-raiser for MyHome.

These functions created a lot of media coverage and this has demonstrated to all that this is a serious project.

The Antique and Collectable Fair held by the Murrumbidgee Rotary Club resulted in MyHome receiving a further donation. We are well supported by the Murrumbidgee Rotary club, and we are grateful to them.

We have had discussions with other Rotary clubs and with Hands Across Canberra to develop our fund-raising capability. This will be much easier once the ACT Government commits funding for MyHome. We have purchased a square reader to make the collection of electronic funds easier. We have more fund-raising events planned for next year.

Wesley Mission

We have been in dialogue during this year with the senior officials of Wesley Mission, the social-services body of the Uniting Church, and they are considering whether to propose a development of the Curtin site which would include both MyHome and some affordable rental housing. These two parts of developing the site could be proposed and undertaken separately, or jointly.

While these two parts of developing the site could be proposed and undertaken separately, from meetings which we and Wesley Mission have had with Minister Davidson and ACT officials we understand they are attracted to the idea of MyHome being integrated with a development of affordable rental housing, although how this can best be done will need further work.

We hope that later in this AGM we shall hear about Wesley Mission's current thinking in a Zoom session with the Chief Finance Officer, David Cannings.

Conclusion

In summary, we have worked tirelessly over the last year to establish our credentials with other service providers and with the ACT Government, and we have made considerable progress in our fund-raising activities.

So we hope the ACT Government will fulfil their promise to get MyHome built in Curtin. What we need most is that initial financial commitment by the Government to fund the project.

I am sure that, with the ongoing support of Rotary, the Woden Valley Uniting Church, Wesley Mission, our other Church neighbours, the Curtin Residents Association and the Canberra community, we are much closer to achieving our goal of having supported accommodation built for people with an enduring mental illness.

I would like to thank you for attending the AGM and your continued support of My Home in Canberra.

Shukry Sahhar

President of MyHome in Canberra Inc.