

PRESIDENT'S AGM REPORT
MYHOME IN CANBERRA
30 November 2023

This has been a very interesting year for the MyHome Board. We have had to continue to develop trust and relationships with the ACT Government, the Mental Health Policy Unit of ACT Health, and the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson, and other service providers in the ACT. We kept up contact with these people and organisations and fostered relationships with other members of the Legislative Assembly. We eventually had a meeting with ACT Housing to discuss funding for MyHome in Canberra.

We have continued discussions with Wesley Mission about the proposed development and provision of support services. I will speak about this in more detail below.

We helped with the promotion of Mental Health awareness and homelessness with the Eye Contact exhibition held in Parliament House.

We have continued to apply for grants to help meet our expected expenses, which may begin with support for potential residents in applying for NDIS funding.

Progress in the last year

A year ago David Cannings, the Chief Financial Officer of Wesley Mission, took part in our AGM by Zoom and told us Wesley Mission was interested in proposing a combined development of MyHome and affordable rental housing on the Uniting Church's site in Curtin. Since then

- Wesley Mission's interest has become firm. It submitted a proposal to the ACT Government, and followed up with a costing and a social benefit analysis for the Coordinator-General of Housing, Stephen Miners.
- This proposal is one of the first group of proposals for affordable rental housing on land zoned for community facilities which the Government has selected for consideration of funding from its \$60m budget allocation.
- Discussion of this proposal between Wesley Mission and the Coordinator-General has resulted in a "business case" which the Coordinator General will propose to ACT Ministers.

In short, we're not there yet with ACT Government funding for MyHome, but we have a good prospect of getting there later in this financial year and that is good news.

We have continued to work with Wesley Mission on the MyHome part of their proposal and how it would fit with the total development of the block. There will be a Zoom meeting later in this AGM with one of the Wesley Mission team to discuss progress to date. The Woden Valley Uniting Church has indicated ongoing support for the project and willingness to help finance community spaces (separate from MyHome) within the development.

We have continued liaison with agencies providing support for people with mental illness and we are heartened by their ongoing support and their encouragement to keep going as they agree the community needs this type of accommodation for people with an enduring mental illness.

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What's ahead for the MyHome committee?

It is clear that Wesley Mission is in the lead role, as the prospective developer and operator of both MyHome and affordable rental housing and will stay there. But Wesley Mission wants to work in partnership with the Woden Valley Uniting Church and the MyHome association to make this project happen.

We and Wesley Mission are agreed on the model of care for MyHome, but translating it into a successful collaboration with ACT providers of medical and social care, and then a co-design process with prospective residents, will require extensive liaison. We believe our role will be necessary and helpful in achieving the MyHome model of care.

Wesley Mission is satisfied about the long-term financial viability of operating MyHome, but we expect will want support, even if only of a contingent kind, from Canberra's big three philanthropic foundations and local businesses. We intend to accompany Wesley Mission in seeking that support.

The community of Curtin and the northern Woden Valley will want more information, both about how MyHome will select residents and provide care and support for them and about how affordable rental housing will fit into Curtin's landscape, infrastructure and community. We intend to accompany Wesley Mission in seeking community support, with our focus on MyHome.

An election for the ACT Legislative Assembly is due in October 2024. Wesley Mission's proposed dual development deserves all-party support, and we believe will have it; but this is not a foregone conclusion, and we shall keep working to establish that political support, again with our focus on MyHome.

Fund raising and community support for MyHome will be our major focus for the next few years. We are confident that Rotary and other organisations will support MyHome once the Government announces its financial support for the development.

So if you are wondering how you can help, then write to your members of the Legislative Assembly asking them to support funding the combined development in Curtin.

Looking further ahead, we hope there will be progressively less for a MyHome Board to do in Curtin, and more for us, our successors and other community groups to do in making Curtin a precedent for other developments of both supported housing and affordable rental housing on community-facility land, perhaps with a priority for young people's mental health.

Shukry Sahhar
President of MyHome in Canberra Inc.