

Dear Resident

As you may have heard, Waverley Council has deferred The Benevolent Society's development application for the Apartments for Life project. However, we remain convinced of its merits and its importance to the local Waverley community.

Government policies focus mainly on encouraging older people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible with support from their family members, and from formal community services. This policy assumes that they have suitable and secure housing. However, this is frequently not the case.

Sadly, unsuitable housing contributes to social isolation among people whose health is poor or who do not have access to transport. This group is extremely vulnerable.

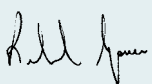
Research shows that unsuitable housing also contributes to premature, expensive and unnecessary moves to a nursing home or hostel.

The reality is, there are limited housing options for older homeowners on low or moderate incomes who wish to stay in the same area. As their health and circumstances change, many find that their home no longer suits them because of unsuitable design or location, but it is of insufficient value to enable them to trade down to more appropriate housing.

Cost benefit analyses confirm that insecure tenure and dwelling type can increase care costs, putting greater pressures on taxpayer-provided funding.

Apartments for Life is our solution to meeting the challenges older people face in ageing well and with dignity.

Yours Sincerely



Richard Spencer, Chief Executive Officer



Innovation is necessary for older people's accommodation

Kath Brewster, President of the Council on the Ageing (NSW), is a big fan of Apartments for Life. In her view:

“Innovative developments which can demonstrate they meet the wish lists of older people by combining the option to remain in their own home, with their ongoing welfare and well-being, have to be the way of the future.

“Research demonstrates that housing, both directly and indirectly, impacts on health, social support, quality of life, well-being and community participation levels.

“Policies that help implement the development of appropriate housing infrastructure and services are to be encouraged.”



Residents of Apartments for Life in the Netherlands

Local interest

A number of older people have contacted us to express their interest in the Apartments for Life project. Many of these people have grown up in the Eastern Suburbs, and they are keen to remain living in the area, where they can be close to family and friends. They all stress the importance of living in an area they know well and where they can arrange support services when and if they need them. Their comments include:

“Bondi is my home area...all my friends are here. I need to be where they are; that’s very important. I also need to be close to my grandchildren. And close to shops and services. I can’t drive anymore. I don’t want to be confined in some far away nursing home.”

“I want to have the opportunity to live somewhere where I can maintain contact with young people. They keep you up to date with what is going on in the world and that’s important in this world where everything is moving so fast and the technology is changing all the time. At the same time, I want the opportunity for independence.”

“I have lived in Bondi for 40 years and want to live out my life here. My community involvement is right here and I want to go on being involved. This project is right for me in so many ways. I don’t want to be anywhere else.”

“I have lived in the Bondi local area for many years and though still fit and active, I am looking for a comfortable environment that I can depend on for the years ahead. By comfortable environment I mean a place where there are opportunities for retaining links with the local community; where services and amenities are close by; and where care is available should I need it.”

Independence a keynote

A high level of independence, access to care when you need it and strong connections with the local community... these are some of the hallmarks of the proposed Apartments for Life scheme.

The model, as pioneered in Holland by the Humanitas Foundation, offers older people the chance to remain in their own home throughout older age and to avoid having to move when their health declines and they require increasing levels of care and support.

The model directly challenges the assumption that a move to a nursing home in later life, is inevitable.

For more information see www.bensoc.org.au and click on Apartments for Life at Ocean Street, or contact Lindy Ryan, The Benevolent Society: 9339 8000 or oceanstsite@bensoc.org.au