

# Apartments for Life at Ocean Street Community Newsletter



Issue No. 20 November 2009



## Dear Resident

The Benevolent Society remains fully committed to our Apartments for Life project and, as a result, has decided to ask for a hearing in the Land and Environment Court.

We believe this is a responsible and transparent way of achieving certainty about the future of this innovative project.

At the hearing we will be seeking endorsement of the Society's revised development plans that were lodged with Waverley Council in March this year and deferred by Council in August.

We have worked hard to minimise the impact on neighbouring buildings. We believe our design strikes the right balance between containing the impact as much as possible while including substantial public benefits such as affordable housing, open space, community facilities and restoration of Scarba House.

This is a not-for-profit scheme carefully designed to enable older people to remain in the neighbourhood of their choice, retain a level of independence and draw on care services as needed, in an apartment which will suit them 'for life'.

The design has been guided by the need to make the most of residents' social interactions and networks, avoid social isolation, boost the efficient use of community care services, promote independence, and include a substantial number of affordable and social housing apartments.

The Society is committed to spending more than \$60 million on bringing the project to fruition, including some \$5 million on fully refurbishing the heritage-listed, Victorian-era Scarba House and preserving the site's historic fig trees and gardens.

The Society has been in discussion with Waverley Council since late 2007. The original Apartments for Life Development Application was lodged in May last year.

The site in Ocean Street, Bondi has been part of The Benevolent Society for many decades. This project is a much needed new model of accommodation and care for older Australians.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Spencer, Chief Executive Officer

## Diana's story

My longstanding and extensive academic research over the past five years with older people reveals that as people age, an important priority for them is to 'age in place'. But surprisingly it is not necessarily that they wish to remain living in the family home. Rather they wish to remain in the same locality, close to friends and family who live nearby and to the familiar surroundings of their local community.

Interestingly I find as I age myself that my strong desire is to remain living in the Bondi area. I grew up in Coogee and I have lived in Bondi for 36 years. Here I have all my supports – the doctors, the dentists and the podiatrists I know who have been looking after me for so long.

As well I know I am not far from excellent hospitals, and I am within a walk or a bus ride to Bondi Beach and to Bondi Junction.

Even when I can no longer drive, I can walk or catch local transport to all the places I wish to go. You will never take this Bondi girl out of Bondi!! And if I get to the stage where I can no longer use public transport, at least I won't be far from people who can give me a lift. There will always be an accessible outing available for me, and people of my own age group that I can chat to or visit.

My research showed that if older people can remain in a supported environment, yet with a sense of their own independence and control, they can live more productive healthy lives as they age.

This of course presents not only significant advantages for the older person and their families, but also lessens the fiscal burden on governments at all levels in terms of provision of costly support welfare services.

Older people wish to remain autonomous and independent. It is up to society to assist them to enjoy those privileges to the end of life.

Dr Diana Olsberg, aged 67, retired academic and Bondi resident for 36 years.



## Community Benefits

Apartments for Life will have many benefits not just for its residents, but for the wider Bondi and surrounding community.

We know there are over 350 people over the age of 65 who live within easy walking distance of the Apartments for Life site, who will all be able to enjoy the beautiful gardens and open space on the site, as well as use the facilities and participate in the various activities such as:

- Dementia day centre
- Café
- Men's Shed
- Visiting health professionals at Scarba House
- Exercise classes such as Tai Chi
- Internet kiosk
- Community bus trips and outings
- Community vegetable garden
- Meeting rooms at Scarba House for clubs and events

**For more information see [www.bensoc.org.au](http://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](mailto:oceanstsite@bensoc.org.au)**