

MEDIA RELEASE

13 January 2014



\$12 MILLION REFURB A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR ACTIVE SENIORS

A \$12 million affordable housing refurbishment in the heart of New Farm is set to provide relief for Brisbane seniors struggling to afford rising inner-city rents.

The plan to renovate a vacant 1960's building at 405 Bowen Terrace into 51 affordable, modern apartments is the result of a partnership between leading Queensland not-for-profit affordable housing provider BHC and iconic not-for-profit service provider Blue Care.

BHC CEO David Cant said the apartments would provide low and middle-income seniors squeezed out of the tight inner-city rental market with affordable housing close to medical services, shops and public transport.

"These are active seniors who have been a vital part of the community for many years, but are being pushed out of the inner city due to rising rents," Mr Cant said.

"This is their community, often where their family and friends are, and where they make a valuable contribution by supporting local businesses and community groups.

"The units will be rented at a maximum of 80 per cent of the market rate and help them remain part of their community."

Mr Cant said the partnership was a prime example of two leading not-for-profit organisations working commercially for the benefit of the community.

"BHC and Blue Care will share ownership of the apartments, while BHC will also ensure there is a level of control over the finished product in both its physical appearance and the management practices implemented," Mr Cant said.

"BHC will work with leading architects to ensure the refurbished apartments look fantastic, have strong environmental and liveability features, and fit the aesthetics of the local community.

"The core structure of the existing building will remain intact, internal renovations will result in high-quality apartments designed to blend in with the local area."

The apartments are being developed as part of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS or the Scheme): a long term commitment by the Australian Government in partnership with the States and Territories, to invest in affordable rental housing.

Blue Care Executive Director Robyn Batten said Blue Care would also provide community care services to the residents of Bowen Court as their needs changed.

“Blue Care has a 60-year history of supporting older people to live as independently as possible for as long as they choose,” she said.

“Affordable housing, which is physically accessible, is fundamental to older people remaining independent in the community.

Blue Care has provided housing for seniors at Bowen Court for more than four decades.

Partnering with BHC has enabled Blue Care to give Bowen Court a new lease on life, and for us to continue to our commitment to the provision of affordable housing for seniors in New Farm.”

BHC has the largest wholly-owned, purpose-built affordable housing portfolio in Queensland, providing specialist property and tenancy management services through a dedicated operations team.

Since its inception in 2002, BHC has helped more than 3000 households into more than 1500 brand new homes, across 35 key growth locations throughout Brisbane.

Blue Care began in 1953 and has become one of Australia’s leading not-for-profit service providers, with more than 12,600 staff and volunteers assisting 60,000 people and their families in the past year alone. Services are offered in people’s homes, in the community, in residential aged care facilities and retirement living villages.

Blue Care is a service group of UnitingCare Queensland, which is part of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

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