

JINGERI EXEMPLIFIES WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED AS CALLS GROW FOR A SOCIAL HOUSING-LED POST COVID-19 RECOVERY

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Social and affordable housing construction could lead Australia out of recession and into recovery post COVID-19, with a Queensland apartment complex that challenges perceptions about housing for people living with a disability hailed as an example of what can be achieved.

Affordable housing provider Brisbane Housing Company's (BHC) Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Oelkers said the modern units challenge preconceptions about what accessible housing looks like, while changing lives by providing a place to call home for people living with disabilities and peace of mind for their ageing adult carers.

BHC developed the \$4.1 million, three-storey, 10-unit complex called Jingeri at Glenalva Terrace, Enoggera, Brisbane. It won an Urban Design Institute of Australia (UDIA) Wingate national award in the affordable development category on Wednesday, May 13.

Joe Jackson was one of the first tenants, moving into Jingeri in December 2018.

"When I found out about this place I was on a high. I didn't think living independently was ever going to be possible for me," said Joe, 38, who has cerebral palsy.

Joe's mother Rosemary said living independently had turned her son's life around.

"He has flourished since he's been there. He is really enjoying his independence," said Mrs Jackson.

Jingeri was designed by Brisbane architecture firm KO & Co and funded by BHC, in partnership with the Queensland government's Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Initiative (EPCII). Communitify Qld helped residents move in and continues to support them to maintain independent living.

Ms Oelkers, who is also the deputy chair of the national Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), said the win exemplified what could be achieved by social and affordable housing providers, in a climate where calls had been made for governments to invest in stimulus that could lead Australia out of recession and into economic and social recovery.

She said all people deserved safe, affordable housing, and a stimulus program to construct new social housing was the best way forward.

"The COVID-19 health crisis has now more than ever illustrated the importance of a roof over your head, for people like Joe at Jingeri, but also for the many thousands of Australians who are vulnerable and at risk of homelessness. It has highlighted the sanctuary a home provides, not only from an emotional and well-being perspective, but from a safety perspective, keeping both individuals safe and the broader community," said Ms Oelkers.

"Having advocated for more social and affordable housing in Australia for a long time, a positive we could see emerge from the COVID-19 health crisis would be to see an increase in the construction and delivery of social and affordable housing for Australian's most vulnerable and for key workers.

"The demand for this housing was already significant prior to COVID-19 and we can expect demand to continue to increase after the crisis with additional need coming from new groups, for example, those in the private housing markets who lose jobs and homes.

“Social and affordable housing projects would be able to be rolled out at scale across Australia, not only in capital cities but also in regional areas. This kind of stimulus is able to provide economic benefits across a range of locations, as well as address the very real housing need being experienced by thousands and thousands of people across Australia.

“Construction would be able to ramp up quickly to kick start the economy, with the spinoff impacts bringing employment opportunities for a range of people across the building and construction sector.”

“Looking back, the government will have delivered an important legacy project that would place it firmly at the forefront of global responses to this pandemic”.

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