

HORNSBY

First look at state-of-the-art Mt Colah disability housing

A multi-million development in Mt Colah designed for people with high disability support needs is under construction, as the community call for more projects to promote accessibility.

Madelaine Wong, Hornsby Advocate

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 Good Housing presents artist impressions “Oak Tree” disability housing in Mt Colah. Picture: supplied

New artist impressions have been released, depicting the final product of a multimillion-dollar development supporting disability needs in Mt Colah.

It comes as the community advocates for more accessible housing and infrastructure in the Hornsby Shire.

The development named “Oak Tree” is currently under construction.

It includes a two-bedroom house and a one-bedroom villa with wide doorways and circulation space to suit people with motorised wheelchairs. The homes will also feature adjustable cabinetry in the kitchen; accessible bathrooms; hoists; grab rails and smart technology to control lighting, doors and blinds.

The developer Good Housing has partnered with The Summer Foundation which will provide a tenant matching service.



 Artist impressions of Mt Colah’s Oak Tree interior. Picture: supplied

Both companies share a similar vision – to stop young people with disabilities from being forced to live in nursing homes.

Summer Foundation house matching general manager Alecia Rathbone said there's big demand for disability housing.

The properties will be available to people who are eligible for Specialist Disability Accommodation funding in their NDIS plan.

“People with complex disability support needs have traditionally had very limited options when it comes to housing that meets their needs. This home is changing that,” Ms Rathbone said.

“There is a strong need in the community for housing that meets the needs of a wider range of people. Around 15 per cent of the population have some form of disability.”

Berowra resident Sue Lindsay said her family's life changed when her grandson Stephen Ralph became a quadriplegic two years ago after diving into a pool and fracturing his neck.

“Once he was out of rehab, we asked the question – what are options now and it was absolutely horrific. It was either put him in an apartment where he wouldn't be able to survive by himself or a nursing home,” Mrs Lindsay said.

“I said over my dead body, he's never going to go in a nursing home. It was so disappointing and devastating.

“It was just lucky that I had a home that he could live in because it had large bathrooms and space and we had ramps put in.”

She said Stephen has his own home now which was built next door to his parents.

“It's not until something happens to you that you realise the situation other people are in.

“There should be at least one or two good accessible units as part of all new developments so people can buy into them.”



 Hornsby Cr Nathan Tilbury. Picture: Rafal Kontrym

Hornsby Shire Cr Nathan Tilbury said he's had strong feedback from the community supporting projects like Mt Colah's Oak Tree housing.

“I think we need more developments like this,” Cr Tilbury said.

“Another problem I've been told is half of Mt Colah does not have accessible streets and the station is not wheelchair accessible.”

Good Housing and the Summer Foundation declined to provide Oak Tree's address because of concerns “for the privacy of the people who will live there”.

More information is available [online](#).