

Media Release

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Innovative project to provide housing for 18 women

Funding has been secured for the construction of 18 prefabricated homes in North Fremantle for older women who are experiencing homelessness, a first in the provision of social housing in the metro area.

The homes will be built on vacant rail reserve land, leased on a peppercorn basis from the Public Transport Authority (PTA) through the Department of Communities.

WA has experienced pressure in the housing market since the advent of COVID-19, and there is significant demand for social housing options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This project is a partnership between My Home Australasia Limited ("My Home") and St Patrick's Community Support Centre Limited (St Pat's), and has been enabled with support from Lotterywest and the Minderoo Foundation.

"My Home" is a charitable organisation which facilitates housing and land developments to accommodate disadvantaged people experiencing homelessness. "My Home" secured the site, designed the dwellings, will project manage the development and own the homes.

St Pat's has worked alongside "My Home" to secure funding for the project and will manage the housing and assist tenants to access support. St Pat's is an experienced registered community housing provider that has provided specialised services and supports for people experiencing homelessness for almost 50 years.

A range of other individuals and groups have contributed to making this project a reality, including Rotary which will provide \$100,000 in homewares, furnishings, and landscape supplies.

The Sisters of St John of God have also supported the project financially and they are delighted as it aligns with their passion for supporting people experiencing homelessness, particularly women and children.

St Pat's CEO Michael Piu said that an increasing area of need exists among older people experiencing homelessness, particularly older women.

"The 2016 Census revealed there was a 31 per cent increase in the number of older women (aged 55 and over) who were homeless compared to the previous Census," he said.

"St Pat's core mission is to work towards ending chronic homelessness in our community, and the State Government's landmark Housing First Homelessness Initiative, is an important commitment to achieving this outcome. "My Home" North Fremantle will compliment this initiative by providing additional longer term housing options for older women exiting homelessness."

"This project supports the Housing First approach to ending homelessness as it centres on moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and longer term secure housing as a first step," Mr Piu said.

Chair of "My Home", Michelle Blakeley, said that the funding was confirmation of the confidence in the My Home housing model.

"The North Fremantle site is the first of many sites," she said.

"As long as we can secure land at a peppercorn lease, we will continue to build homes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness."

Louise Olney leads Minderoo's work in communities and she is pleased to support the "My Home" project in North Fremantle.

"Minderoo is delighted to support this project," Ms Olney said.

"It addresses an urgent need in our community, for quality sustainable housing, and we're looking forward to watching the project unfold."

"My Home demonstrates that great outcomes can be achieved through collaboration between government, philanthropies, and the commercial and not-for-profit sectors."

Once work can begin on site, the homes should be ready for tenants to move in within eight months.

My Home facts:

- Delivery of 18 self-contained, longer term tenure, affordable homes for older women who are experiencing homelessness.
- The site in Congdon Street, North Fremantle has been leased from the PTA.
- Individual homes are 30 square metres, with a bedroom, kitchen, living and bathroom space plus a verandah to enable independent living
- The homes were co-designed with people who have lived experience of homelessness and are designed on passive design principles meaning they are more sustainable and energy efficient.
- Shared facilities including outdoor living spaces, storage, vegetable gardens and car parking.
- House construction demonstration video <https://myhomehousing.org.au/>