



Ozanam House Redevelopment Project

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Ozanam House Redevelopment Update

The latest updates from the new world class Homeless Hub and Resource Centre in inner-Melbourne, Ozanam House – due to open in March 2019. This month we showcase some of this project's unique and innovative features and programs, with a particular emphasis on sustainability and efficiency. Find out about how VincentCare and partners are putting energy to good use, to support Victoria's most vulnerable and marginalised people, while creating something truly inspiring and life changing.



VincentCare
Victoria



Welcome from the CEO

I am pleased again to be bringing you our latest update on the Ozanam House Redevelopment. There has been considerable progress with construction across all floors and zones, alongside the ongoing hard work of our staff, who are preparing themselves and our clients for transition. While these preparations continue, we are proud to present to you some of the unique features of this site – innovatively and sustainably designed for purpose and efficiency.

This new, world class Hub will not only transform the way in which we provide homeless accommodation and wrap-around services, but will also demonstrate a modern, highly efficient and sustainable approach to building development and use.

You will see from our cover photo that solar panels have been installed on the roof. A key priority is now to gain full, permanent power access. Power that will be used to run elements such as: internal and external lights; safety and security systems (locks, alarms and CCTV); the lifts that carry staff and clients from floor to floor; appliances in our commercial kitchen and café; hot water in bathrooms, laundry and kitchens; technology that enables our work (telephony, internet and computers); digital and audiovisual tools for training and therapies; and treatment tools within our clinic rooms, where health and allied services will be provided. This is no small energy requirement and we have looked for options to power the accommodation Hub and Resource Center in an efficient and sustainable way.

Energy and our ability to power our everyday living devices, and even our entertainment, is something that we might at times take for granted in our homes. We are now in the final month of a long and cold Victorian winter, and I imagine that many Melbournians have been running their heaters overtime and brewing a nice hot coffee in the mornings. For homeless people – particularly those sleeping rough – having access to power for even basic warmth, nutrition and hygiene purposes is a major struggle. The Hub and Resource Centre, with our client-centred care approach, will provide homeless men and women with the amenities they desperately need, in a way that also reinstates safety, personal care, dignity and a sense of home.

I would like to this month acknowledge and thank our latest corporate funding partner EnergyAustralia. They are a fitting collaborator for this inspiring and innovative project. I invite you to read on and find out more about our innovations in design, development and delivery.

John Blewonski
CEO
Vincent Care Victoria



Designed to reconnect



No major rebuilding project is too daunting when creative, sympathetic architects are on the job.

When VincentCare approached MGS Architects to redevelop its Ozanam House site, Joshua Wheeler immediately connected with the ambition. Joshua, a director at MGS, remembers thinking of it as “a one-off, landmark building and an innovative program”. He wanted it to “become part of Flemington Road’s gateway to Melbourne”.

He knew 179-191 Flemington Road, North Melbourne, was already well known as the site where the original Ozanam House was established in 1953, as a shelter for men in crisis. That building, once hidden behind a high wall, was no longer enough to serve its purpose. It needed to be razed.

In its place now stands an 11-storey building that is being transformed into a new, purpose-built homeless hub and resource centre. A building that will not only provide maximum amenity and support for thousands of homeless people in inner-Melbourne into the future, but that will integrate with the surrounding community and neighbouring environment.

“We put the resource centre at the front of the space on the ground floor to create a place of welcome for people facing homelessness, and for the wider community, to both promote the services and connect the centre with the city,” Joshua says.

Inside the centre is a secure central courtyard, landscaped to create respite. A vertical garden climbs up seven storeys.

“We created a relationship between the green spaces on the site and adjacent Royal Park and other large green park assets that are close by.”

The facilities include 60 crisis accommodation rooms, 48 transitional rooms, and 26 self-contained apartments. On the Flemington Road frontage, to the north of the site, a café offers easy access to the general public and people who work at, stay at or visit the site. Through the public entry are the health clinics, activity areas and various multipurpose rooms.

“It was very important to VincentCare that the residential apartments had their own street address. We didn’t want the residents feeling that they were living above a resource centre, so the centre has a green roof to the rear of the building. This ensures that if you are in an apartment you will look down on green spaces and tree canopies, and then across to parkland.”

With more than 250 people expected through the doors each day, the building needed to be welcoming, robust and stand the test of time. The building’s innovative approach is not necessarily in each individual component, but rather in the various and sometimes competing elements that come together in a practical sense.



“There were no examples we could take from. It was a challenging building to put together. There is a commercial kitchen in the basement to use the natural slope of the land, there are office spaces, program rooms and health care facilities. Everything has quite different functional requirements.”

A key challenge for the architects was how to plan for a large facility on a small footprint that fitted neatly on Flemington Road - with the Children’s Hospital on the opposite side of the road and Chapman Street to the rear, which is small-scale residential. There was also limited vehicle access, so the phasing of the building work had to be meticulous.

Security and accommodation amenity for the short and medium-term accommodation floors also had to be considered, with the layering of security in the building strong, “but not too evident or imposing”. One of the requirements was to have a single-corridor interface in the short and medium-term accommodation floors. There were to be no hidden nooks and no long institutional-style floorplan. The building’s five lifts service separate areas and some have been used to break up the floors, along with communal lounges. The floorplan has taken a human-centric and social approach which embraces VincentCare’s model of client focused care.

“We have created neighbourhoods. By understanding how many people it is appropriate to have on a floor, we have created smaller cohorts. Each floor is like a small city with two little streets on either side of the lift. Each street is a neighbourhood that has light-filled, semi-shaded communal areas that look out through the green wall into the courtyard.”

Not surprisingly, MGS and VincentCare have created a five-green-star building by working through the green-star assessment process. It was not only the building costs that were put to the test, but also the future running costs and long-term sustainability.

“The detailed building management systems will make sure clients and staff can watch the energy use, and ensure it is all finely tuned. All apartments also have mechanical ventilation with heat exchange, so air quality and temperature control are very high - providing a high level of comfort. Many people coming into the centre will require respite, so they don’t need the extremes of temperature to be a factor. It is a wellbeing element that is hidden in the building.”

The façade will be far from hidden. As the scaffolding comes down in the next few months, those entering the city from Bolte Bridge or passing by on Flemington Road will see a big difference.

“The green is bold. It is shrouded by a big, bronze, perforated screen shaped like dragon scales. The hooded screen has a level of translucency that allows the green to seep through differently at different times of the day. It quite literally continues that green language.”

Like the staff of VincentCare, Joshua and the MGS Team have worked hard on this initiative, and view it as a project to be proud of. He echoes the sentiments of his team; “This is why we come to work each day. We are strong advocates for social and community housing, and this project will create a social uplift with a building that is truly unique.

Energy and efficiency features:

- 5 Green-star rating
- Long-term energy cost reduction
- Insulation
- Double glazing
- Solar panels
- Innovative air filtration
- Floor plan and windows that maximise natural light
- Adaptable climate control



Living at Ozanam House - another insight into life and care in our new facilities

Depending on individual circumstances, clients may find the need to transition from crisis care or other external situations to medium stay accommodation. These rooms will complement a Recovery Transition Program - integrating room amenities, case managed support and individual client capacity building. This approach aims to maximise a person's progression towards an exit from homelessness.

Medium term accommodation

The new Hub will include 48 transitional, medium stay rooms. Residents who are offered a place in these rooms will generally be provided with 16 to 24 weeks of accommodation and Recovery Innovation Support. Eligibility and timing will depend on individual circumstances, the duration of their homelessness, and pathways to an exit from homelessness.

People who have experienced homelessness for between 1 and 5 years may find themselves without ongoing accommodation for a diverse range of reasons. Without intervention, this can become long-term. These clients will often require several attempts to exit homelessness before they are able to find a permanent solution and access to ongoing housing. Those who have been homeless for more than 5 years may commonly be experiencing multiple, complex support needs. By providing access to accommodation for a medium duration, alongside complementary wrap-around support services, VincentCare can ensure that stability is provided while a recovery transition plan is considered.

People who are accepted into the new medium term accommodation facilities can expect a welcoming and secure environment with a level of amenity that allows comfortable and safe living. A dedicated 24 hour entrance will be kept separate from short term crisis facilities. The accommodation will have its own address so that is distinguishable from the nearby Resource Centre. As residents enter, the foyer will present a space to 'meet and greet' where they will have line-of-sight and direct access to VincentCare

staff. This ensures that the space facilitates a strong, personable link with clients, providing accessibility and assurance. Storage of larger personal belongings will be given a secure place in the basement storage area, to maximise the living space in the rooms, while respecting personal property. Round the clock access to communal areas such as courtyards, laundry and bicycle storage, as well as break out spaces and other comforts, will give residents a sense of freedom, respect and autonomy. These facilities will aim to support the stability and confidence that will be needed as residents work towards regaining control of their living situations.



Artists impression of a medium stay room

Residents will be provided with access to three meals a day, utilising a voucher system and provided meals for breakfast and lunch within a dedicated medium-term dining hall. Residents will also be given the option of 'cook and chill' dinner meals that can be collected and consumed in-room. Common rooms will allow spaces for socialising and relaxing, with entertainment such as televisions. CCTV security and access to staff will support safety.

While staying at the Hub, medium stay residents will receive planned access to various supports including: a case manager; therapies and counselling; health care; and access to other training and education support. It is our aim to transition these clients out of homelessness and to more sustainable housing options, in a respectful and empowering way that addresses their circumstances and needs, while harnessing their strengths.



Urban agriculture and sustainability

Throughout history, gardens and outdoor spaces have been used to create calm and tranquil environments. Access to natural surroundings – especially in city or urban environments – encourages people to spend time outdoors. This is an organic way to increase immunity; boost mood; improve emotional health and reduce the symptoms of depression.

For people who are experiencing homelessness or disadvantage, spending time in the outdoors can improve their health and wellbeing, and help them reconnect with society and the world around them.

VincentCare's community garden is located in an industrial strip in North Melbourne and is thriving. Established within the principles of urban agriculture and sustainability, excess scraps and soil are mulched and reused for planting new crops. This different way of planting has resulted in an abundance of continuous produce, as well as reducing inputs and eliminating the need for pest control.

"For people involved with the garden, its built confidence, knowledge and skill exchange while cultivating self-empowerment and highlighting the importance of sustainable and healthy living," says Pandeli Laskeris, Senior Participation Activity Group worker.

Teresita is an advocate for the benefits that green spaces can bring. When she came to VincentCare, she was in ill health, and on the verge of becoming homeless. VincentCare helped her to find affordable housing and invited her to participate in the garden project.

"I've been involved with the garden for almost two years now. Going there gives me great happiness. Depression and illness isolates you, but knowing that the plants need watering, and that your friends are there...it gives you purpose and motivation.

"Being outdoors is a form of therapy for many of us. It helps with stress relief, mobility and weight loss – all the digging and moving around. Plus the fresh air and sun improves your mood."



Teresita, urban garden enthusiast and VincentCare client

Those involved with the project speak highly of the social, health and recreational benefits they receive from the garden. For Teresita, involvement has been positively transformational.

"The garden is the best thing that's happened to me since I got sick. It helps me to be strong and confident, and I've made friendships. There is a lot of variety in the garden crops and we all pick produce to take home and make healthy meals for ourselves.

"I visit two to three times a week to water and weed the plants. Sometimes I go with the group, sometimes it's just me and my green tea. On those days, I just sit, breathe the fresh air and enjoy the peace and tranquillity."

The community garden project is just one of the ways that VincentCare is embracing the benefits of the environment and well-planned outdoor spaces in recovery. The Hub and Resource Centre will be capturing similar elements in its outdoor and landscape design.

Changing spaces



Team member in focus

Doug Harding, Senior Practitioner, VincentCare Victoria

If a building could speak, what would it say? If it could welcome you, what would it do? If it could make you feel safe, what would it provide? If you were sleeping on Melbourne's unforgiving streets, what would you need?

These were among the questions the VincentCare team, including Senior Practitioner Doug Harding, posed when planning for the site on Flemington Road commenced. They sought the answers from past and present clients, alongside client-focused research. Doug explains some of the approaches that consultation allowed for.

"Considerations such as softening the built environment, using different building materials, furniture and artwork to create a welcoming space, rather than one like an institution.

"There are non-verbal cues that people in crisis will pick up on, so the physical environment is really important. We are trying to integrate psychologically-informed environments. We are aiming for the space to feel dignified, calm and safe."

"The first five minutes are where impressions are commonly formed, so we want to get that right." This will mean that vulnerable people will not need to wait for contact or repeat their story as they are directed to care. Other ideas such as integrating a café on the ground floor enables the space to feel hospitable, rather than clinical or institutional."

There are a many firsts and innovations within the redeveloped site that will maximise the positive experience for clients depending on their needs, goals and interests. Some of these include: an arts therapy program; dedicated learning and training space; counselling and therapy programs e.g. drug and alcohol intervention; and a purpose-built super clinic for health and wellbeing services. Importantly, there will be dedicated staff support to pull it all together to create a collaborative mix of service and care within one system.

The team at VincentCare have now turned their minds to the interior design, including a newly commissioned Indigenous artwork that will feature prominently. This work will ensure VincentCare creates a sense of connection and cultural safety for the First Nation people.

While there will be many new features and ways of working at the new site, one thing that Doug wants to stress is that VincentCare's Homeless to Recovery model will not change. "Having a unified service model with staff all working under the one client-focused practice framework is really important."

Doug and his team will continue to conduct client consultation as the project enters the transition stage in late 2018. It is inspiring to witness their dedication to ensuring that the new facilities take into account the needs and ideas of the very people they will be supporting.

Welcoming our newest Redevelopment Major Partner - Energy Australia

VincentCare is delighted to welcome EnergyAustralia as our first major corporate partner for the Redevelopment. Our new partnership is an important part of EnergyAustralia's commitment to its vulnerable customers and builds upon its earlier work with VincentCare - including 'Bring Your Bills Days' with the Hume Hub, and the Every Goal Every Game AFL Finals campaign which ran in 2017.



EnergyAustralia staff at the recent VincentCare partnership announcement



EnergyAustralia will be funding the full purchase and installation of air conditioning throughout the redevelopment. EnergyAustralia will also provide cutting edge demand response services to Ozanam House as part of a nationwide initiative to reduce power consumption. This will mean effective temperature controls throughout the facility and ongoing operational energy cost savings for VincentCare.

We look forward to sharing more information about EnergyAustralia's partnership involvement in the Redevelopment in our next newsletter issue.

Funding and partnership update



VincentCare is continuing to raise funds from the community and develop relationships with major partners that share our vision and commitment to delivering innovative and sustainable housing and support services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. If your organisation is interested to partner with VincentCare to deliver this significant response to homelessness in Melbourne, contact: Shannon Anderson on (03) 9611 9257, or email: shannon.anderson@vincentcare.org.au

We would also like to acknowledge the support of our current redevelopment major partners:



Can you support our major response to homelessness in Melbourne in 2018?

Please donate



Visit www.vincentcare.org.au

To fundraise or for more information, contact VincentCare's Fundraising Team:

Email fundraising@vincentcare.org.au or

Phone 03 9611 9257

Donations to VincentCare Victoria are tax deductible.