



Dear Mr Barr,

I write on behalf of the Board of MyHome in Canberra Inc. (MyHome) to put forward a proposal for the 2018-19 Budget. This submission has been prepared in consultation with St James Uniting Church, Curtin on whose land we plan to build our residential facility.

MyHome's submission proposes an innovative strategic public/private partnership to facilitate the ACT Government's investment in social and affordable housing and to improve the delivery of supported accommodation and support services to people in Canberra with enduring and serious mental health issues who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Our Project Request

The MyHome Board request a dialogue with you and relevant Ministers and Directorates of the ACT Government to progress the Government's commitment in the 2016 Parliamentary Agreement to design and construct purpose built accommodation for people experiencing enduring mental health concerns and housing difficulties, utilising the 'MyHome in Canberra' project plan.

We propose that this dialogue would:

- Proceed on the basis that the facility is located on Uniting Church land in Curtin and that it be developed as part of a larger integrated affordable housing development on the site as has been proposed by the church.
- Identify a funding source for the construction of the MyHome facility.
- Agree on a strategic process and timetable for implementation.

The Board is keen for this dialogue to commence as soon as possible.

In line with our long term vision, My Home intends to investigate and identify a number of other suitable sites in Canberra with a view to building additional My Home supported facilities within 5 to 10 years. It is considered that one facility could be built specifically for women in the community experiencing enduring mental illness and who are either homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

The 2016 Parliamentary Agreement

This submission has been developed to incorporate the following key elements of the 2016 Parliamentary Agreement signed between the ACT Greens and the Labor Party:

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens agree that improving housing affordability is essential to ensuring secure accommodation is available to all Canberrans, and home ownership remains a realistic goal. To meet these aspirations, the parties agree to:

1. *Continue the five year program of public housing renewal;*

2. *Develop a new Affordable Housing Strategy to deliver more affordable housing options;*
7. ***Work with community and business partners to construct purpose built accommodation for people experiencing mental health concerns and housing difficulties, utilising the 'MyHome for Canberra' project plan;***
8. *Grow and diversify the not for profit community housing sector, through a combination of capital investment, land transfer and other means;*
10. *Convene a homelessness summit in 2017 bringing together all key stakeholders to develop innovative proposals to combat homelessness.*

The Parliamentary Agreement gives strong support and commitment to the design and construction of the MyHome in Canberra supported accommodation project. MyHome is an innovative community initiative which aims to provide safe and affordable supported accommodation and high quality care for vulnerable people in Canberra experiencing mental health issues. MyHome is also a model that could be worth consideration for replication or further study. It is estimated that the operational and recurrent costs will be around \$200K per annum to support 20 people. That equates to \$20K a year per person. This is considered to be cost effective and very cheap given that the MyHome model is likely to keep residents out of the of the Mental Health Unit at the Canberra Hospital which costs over \$1k per bed day. This recurring cost will be met through the development of the Curtin site for affordable and market value housing and the implementation of an innovative marketing and fundraising strategy.

MyHome in Canberra's Project Plan

MyHome in Canberra Inc. is a not- for-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not- for Profit Commission (ACNC). MyHome's vision is a safe, supportive home for people with mental illness who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. The proposal is for a residential housing and complex on Uniting Church land in Curtin, providing long term supported residential accommodation and care for people with enduring mental illness MyHome's supported facility will be designed to provide local people suffering mental illness a place where they can live independently, while having access to the assistance they need to live an independent and fulfilling life. Although MyHome is modelled on the concept of HOME in Queanbeyan, it will be tailored to meet the special needs of the Canberra community and ACT Mental Health legislative requirements. MyHome will comprise important community facilities. The MyHome model and program on the Curtin site will assist with community development and social inclusion initiatives and will benefit the whole community it is built in, not just the 20 residents.

MyHome in Canberra has an agreement with the Uniting Church to use church land opposite the Curtin shops for its project, subject to MyHome being able to demonstrate its access to adequate capital funds and viability as an ongoing concern. The land in question (cnr Theodore and Carruthers) is a large block of land of which MyHome would need only about half. The block has been identified in the draft Curtin Group Centre Master Plan as suitable for housing and as a priority for development. The Uniting Church is of the view that the land be developed to include the MyHome social housing concept as part of a mixed use housing development, which may include affordable housing and market value housing, such that the maximum yield of the block be realised for the benefit of the whole community and to enable economic sustainability.

An integrated approach to the development of the block is likely to offer considerable advantages to MyHome, for example in terms of construction cost and in supporting its future operations.

MyHome's top priorities and ideas for consideration in the budget development process are:

- In accordance with the Territory plan to improve affordable housing, investment in the MyHome project supports sustainable housing options for people with mental illness and supports the growth and diversification of the not for profit housing sector.
- Increased investment in supported housing for people with an enduring mental illness- an important element of our social infrastructure;
- A funding strategy based on a community and public/private partnership model to fund design and construction and provide purpose built supported accommodation services for people with enduring mental illness;
- Improved delivery of services and enhanced job opportunities for people with a mental illness.
- Safe and appropriate supported housing will increase opportunities for social participation in the community, as well as their recovery journey.
- Housing model that assists people to develop capacity to sustain tenancies
- Provision of a cost effective housing and development model that provides a viable housing alternative to public housing models.

Safe, affordable and appropriate housing is critical for recovery of people with an enduring mental illness and their better integration into the community. There is an acute shortage of this type of supported housing in the ACT. Single site accommodation, where the level and type of supports are determined in accordance with the person's needs and preferences, can offer security and a sense of home as well as both independence and connection with the community. These are all important elements contributing to recovery.

MyHome believe the situation demands urgent community and government action and in consultation with the Board of HOME in Queanbeyan and the mental health sector in Canberra has developed an innovative solution and plan to address the accommodation and support needs of this group of people in Canberra with serious and enduring mental illness.

An overview of the MyHome concept and proposed public/private partnership model, project planning, timeframe and estimated capital cost requirements to build a proposed MyHome facility are included in the attached Project Plan. A copy of the Strategic Plan for MyHome in Canberra is also attached.

The Board of MyHome believes that investment in this type of housing and the provision of continuing support services would align with the Government's strategic affordable housing and health priorities.

A draft Model of Care (MoC) to ensure high quality care and support to the potential residents of MyHome has been developed and is available for discussion. Appropriate policies and procedures will be developed to underpin the MoC. The MoC will also inform our architectural design team on the design and accommodation requirements for MyHome.

MyHome believe the Project Plan aligns well with the Government's fiscal strategy:

1. Construction costs would be much lower than for a comparable commercial project:
 - zero land acquisition costs
 - design and construction costs will be reduced on account of expected pro-bono service provision, in kind support and at-cost construction as was the case with HOME in Queanbeyan.
 - The use of part of the land for affordable and market value housing will provide some ongoing financial support without the need for the ACT Government to top up my Home operations.

Updated project costs (to feasibility stage) have been provided and are available for discussion.

2. Once operational, we expect MyHome to be largely self-sufficient financially:
 - Residents will pay rents.
 - In addition, we will explore the scope for families, where they are able, to make contributions to costs.
 - MyHome will also have its own sources of income from fundraising activities, private donors, businesses and community organisations.
 - We expect to have a significant number of community volunteers.

This type of investment will produce broader community, health and economic benefits because, to the extent it assists with recovery, it has significant potential to decrease other health and social spending such as hospital admissions and to reduce peoples' contact with the criminal justice system.

3. The complex will be a valuable addition to Canberra's housing, social inclusion and health infrastructure. While the units will be designed for the needs of residents, they will not be overly specialised and hence they will have considerable alternative use value.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the 2018-19 ACT Government Budget.

Yours sincerely,

John Tucker

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