

Walker Street, Northcote redevelopment site

Newsletter

The redevelopment site at Walker Street will offer increased housing opportunities for more Victorians than ever before with a range of new and improved housing solutions being delivered in Northcote.



The Victorian Government is working with our partners, MAB Corporation and HousingFirst to redevelop the public housing site at Walker Street, Northcote replacing ageing public housing stock with modern, new homes that meet the needs of all Victorians. The redevelopment of the site is guided by a set of development criteria that require:



new and increased social housing that meets modern environmental and accessibility standards and delivers the homes our tenants deserve



innovative and integrated outcomes that will deliver a mixture of social and private housing creating diverse, inclusive, and active communities - rejuvenating the social fabric at the Northcote redevelopment site



options for Victorians on lower incomes, including first home buyers to access affordable housing



natural and heritage aspects of the sites to be respected and retained, where possible



new community assets including community rooms, artists' studios, active open spaces and community gardens

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Project deliverables

The public housing homes at Walker Street are aged and in need of replacement. The redevelopment site at Northcote will deliver approximately 250 new homes that will include:

- approximately 106 new social housing dwellings - an increase from the existing number of units at the redevelopment site
- the delivery of much needed private housing with a percentage prioritised for First Home Buyers
- shared spaces including; an artist studio and community meeting room
- all dwellings to meet the current Better Apartment Design Standards. Developing homes that are; built to much higher environmental standards, are more cost-effective to live in and that minimise energy costs
- a guaranteed right to return for former tenants to the redeveloped site should they wish to return



Redevelopment timeline



Demolition process

Demolition of the existing properties will take place throughout 2020 following the successful relocation of all tenants to new alternative homes. The department will work with demolition specialists to ensure that impacts on neighbouring communities are effectively managed to minimise disruption.

- 1 site establishment: the contractor will be given access to the site to set up site offices, construct temporary fencing and commence assessment activities
- 2 services abolishment: all gas and electricity services to the estate will be removed to enable the work to be carried out safely
- 3 hazardous material removal: after careful assessment, any hazardous building materials such as asbestos, will be removed by specialist contractors in accordance with environmental and safety regulations
- 4 real time monitoring: during removal of hazardous building materials, real time air monitoring will be undertaken to ensure no airborne particles are present on site
- 5 building demolition: the structures will be demolished using machines and hand tools
- 6 following demolition: the site will be left clean, fenced and grass-seeded to minimise dust

Relocations

Relocation update

Moving home can be a big change for many tenants and the department is committed to helping tenants transition smoothly and comfortably to their new housing. This includes identifying accommodation suitable to tenant needs close to family and support services. The department has covered relocation expenses and provides broader support for any unforeseen issues.

The department will keep relocated tenants updated on the progress of the redevelopment and when they can move back.

The department is close to successfully relocating all tenants at our Preston and Northcote sites, while the sites at Prahran, Heidelberg West and North Melbourne have been fully vacated.

As with all relocation efforts, tenant welfare is paramount. Our objective is to relocate each tenant to a new home that better suits their current needs while providing them the security of a right to return to the redeveloped site upon completion.

One example of tenant relocation is a story from a former tenant of the Preston estate (see their story on the back page).

Meet our partners

Working with the best of Melbourne's development and social housing management talent to deliver the best for Victorians:



The Department has gone through an extensive procurement process to ensure that the redevelopment sites are delivered and managed by appropriately qualified and skilled partners capable of producing outstanding results. We are proud to be working with some of the best in the industry.

The award winning MAB Corporation is one of Australia's leading developers with 25 years' experience of creating master planned communities and public and affordable housing developments. MAB will manage a range of specialists including architects, landscape designers and traffic engineers to produce new developments that communities can be proud of.

HousingFirst will manage the social housing on the redevelopment sites on behalf of the Director of Housing who will continue to own the properties. HousingFirst's holistic and locally focussed approach leads the way in how social housing is designed, financed, built and managed.

Consultative Committee

Community engagement is a key element of public housing redevelopment. A Consultative Committee has been established for the redevelopment of the Northcote site.

The Consultative Committee, chaired by Kat Theophanous MP - State Member for Northcote, brings together key community members and representatives of local organisations to ensure effective communication throughout the redevelopment process.

It enables ongoing and two-way feedback through an active participatory approach with stakeholders and the community.

Members of the committee have the opportunity to provide feedback on redevelopment plans and identify local issues and matters of concern as they arise.

Members will provide input and effectively communicate back to their communities to support the successful delivery of the project.



Meet the Chair

Kat Theophanous MP

As the State Member for Northcote, I know how important the redevelopment of the Northcote site is to my community and how crucial it is for every person to have a safe place to call home.



Across Victoria, our public housing stock is tired and no longer meets the needs of residents. We have a responsibility to provide homes to those residents that rely on public and community housing that is affordable, comfortable and accessible.

From my work in the past with migrant communities and in family violence prevention, I know how vital safe and secure housing is. Whether it's breaking the cycle of disadvantage or giving children the opportunity to reach their potential - it all starts with a roof over our heads.

I am genuinely excited about the outcomes of this project - bringing modern, safe, energy-efficient homes to our neighbourhood. Residents will no longer need to put up with homes that are cold in winter and hot in summer - or that are not accessible. On top of that, this project will dramatically to increase the number of houses available to vulnerable members of our community.

And while rebuilding these estates does mean that the existing residents have had to move homes - which can be a source of frustration and anxiety - I know that what they will return to will soon become a much-loved home.

Should you wish to contact my office regarding the progress of the Northcote redevelopment sites you can call (03) 9481 5777 or email kat.theophanous@parliament.vic.gov.au.

Case study

New home, new beginnings, thriving family

A mother and her family were successfully relocated to a new home that better suits their needs.

The large family were living in a small 1940s semi-detached unit in Preston.

Their home was too small for their needs but like many vulnerable Victorians they were happy to have a roof over their heads.

In 2019, our dedicated Client Engagement Team relocated the family to a house close to their old home.

The family are now living in a house that allows the entire family to lead a more fulfilled life, undoubtedly a relocation which has changed their lives dramatically.

The new family home, in a neighbouring suburb, not only accommodates the whole family, but also, provides a more suitable space to care for a disabled family member.

We wish the family all the best with their future endeavours of home care, employment, schooling and happiness.

The next CC meeting

As a result of COVID-19 all Consultative Committee meetings have been postponed indefinitely.

Find out more

Further background and information about this project is available on the DHHS website. Please visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/public-housing-renewal-program to find out more.

To receive this publication in an accessible format email [<estate.renewal@dhhs.vic.gov.au>](mailto:estate.renewal@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

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