

Units set to change lives

Emma-Jayne Schenk

PROJECT WILL KEEP YOUNG OUT OF AGED CARE

PEOPLE with severe and profound disabilities will be allowed an independent life, thanks to an unprecedented project in Maroondah.

EACH Housing will build six units in Ringwood to house young people with disabilities, otherwise forced to live in aged care or with their parents.

Chief executive Peter Ruzyla said units would be custom-built to suit tenants' needs.

He said advanced technology was pushing the boundaries of what was possible and allowing more people to live independently.

"These people have never lived independently so this will allow them to resume an ordinary life, not defined by their disability," Mr Ruzyla said.

The units will have adjustable benches, specialised furniture and equipment and electronic devices to help people operate things with the blink of an eye or movement of their hand.

A carer will also live on site to cater for the six residents.

Strategic Assets and Property Development director Lesley Tarves said the units

would help ease the demand on other services.

"There are about 7000 young Australians right now, currently living in aged care, which is just not appropriate for them," she said.

"This will help them blend in with the community."

A severe or profound disability is one that impairs cognitive abilities, adaptive skills, and life functioning. It may also be associated with behaviour problems.

The tenant selection process is under way and is open to people with Parkin-

sons, MS, an acquired condition or physical impairment such as spina bifida or cerebral palsy.

The project has been made possible through a \$2.5 million Federal Government grant, which will enable construction on EACH's existing land in Ringwood.

Further EACH Housing facilities will be built in South Gippsland and Pakenham.

The units will share a common area, and automated doors to apartments and balconies will allow greater mobility.



John Pendavingh, boss of builder Jorant Pty Ltd, and Caz Evans at EACH's new development. Picture: DANIEL MEREI