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Property Lift out



PAGE 2

PAGE 31

SPORT

# Land of the free

By ALANA MITCHELSON

GROUND has been broken at the site of a new housing development designed to support independent living for adults with physical disabilities in Officer.

The twin residency home at 24 Harvest Road is due to become Cardinia Shire's fifth purpose-built home for adults with "severe and profound" physical disabilities.

The development would include the living units and a carer's quarters. It would also include tablet-controlled technology for features such as automated doors, lighting and temperature control.

EACH Infrastructure, Housing and Strategic Assets director Lesley Tarves said there was a "significant need" for disability housing in the Cardinia area.

"With the overall lack of disability housing, many people with high support needs are currently stuck in aged care facilities or living with their ageing parents," Mr Tarves said.

"In the southern region of Melbourne there is an estimated requirement for 280 new places.

"Having an independent living arrangement has not been common and will allow the tenants to live as normally as possible, which is supported by the very high level of technology being implemented for each of the units."

Future resident Kira Dixon attended the ground

breaking ceremony with her family on Monday 23 May.

The 24-year-old said she was excited about the opportunity to live independently.

"The unit's design is going to be accessible and so much easier. Everything is going to be levelled and adapted to the specific needs of my disability," Ms Dixon said.

"The door frames will be levelled with automated opening doors to make it more accessible to me so that I can move around the house with minimal effort for me and not need as much assistance from carers.

"My neighbour and I can also save on costs too because our overnight carer costs can be shared between us.

"I'm just excited in general to be living independently. I've always lived with my parents and never had the opportunity to move out of home. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Cardinia Shire manager of development and compliance services Debbie Tyson said the planning application had received 13 objections regarding concerns about the residents of the development, decreased property value, additional traffic and covenant concerns but was approved at a council meeting on 1 June last year.

The project was expected to be completed by November.



Each CEO Peter Ruzyla, future resident Kira Dixon and builder John Pendavingh examine the development plan. Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

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