



## **Fact Sheet: Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project**

St Vincent's Health Australia and CatholicCare have joined together to help settle and support vulnerable refugees from Syria and Iraq – with priority given to women and children.

The refugees will be provided with medium-term rental accommodation in 60 units on the site of St Vincent's Care Services Eltham. These units are stand-alone and separate from the residential aged care and independent living facilities on site.

The 60 units have been vacant for a number of years and have been refurbished by St Vincent's Care Services to make them liveable.

The refugee housing project will run for two years and then the accommodation will be transitioned to be used as affordable housing for seniors.

There will be no impact on the residential aged care or independent living residents who live at the Eltham site.

### **Why are St Vincent's Health Australia and CatholicCare doing this project?**

Housing is a major issue for recently arrived refugees in Australia. They are particularly vulnerable in the high cost and competitive private rental markets of our major capital cities. Many end up living in insecure housing.

By providing this accommodation, our aim is to help recent arrivals adjust to their new home, establish positive community links and rental history, and secure employment so they are better equipped to move into the private rental market and become members of the local community.

### **When will the refugees move in?**

The new residents will start moving in progressively over the coming months.

### **How many refugees will move into the units?**

There will be no more than 120 people (including children) accommodated at any one time.

### **What sorts of families will be moving into the units?**

The residents will be a mix of single women, single mothers with children, and couples with one child.

There will be no single men moving into the accommodation.

### **How long will refugees be accommodated at Eltham?**

The project will run for two years before the units transition to be used as affordable housing for seniors.

### **What is the impact on aged care and independent living residents at the Eltham site?**

There will be no impact on the residential aged care or independent living services at St Vincent's Care Services Eltham.

The Eltham site is very large (17 acres) and the units to be used for the refugees are stand-alone and separate to the residential aged care and independent living facilities on site.



No resident will be displaced and there is no impact on waiting lists for residential aged care.

When St Vincent's Care Services took ownership of the Eltham site, the units had fallen into disrepair and were not fit for residential use. They have been vacant for a number of years.

The renovation of these units will add new stock to the affordable housing market for seniors from 2018.

### **Who is funding the project?**

This project is fully funded by St Vincent's Health Australia and CatholicCare in line with our missions to care for those in need, particularly people who are disadvantaged and vulnerable.

St Vincent's Health Australia is investing \$6m into renovations at St Vincent's Care Services Eltham. Improvements are being made, not only to the 60 units to be used by refugees, but also to another 56 units to provide independent living for seniors. The two residential aged care facilities, Eltham Lodge and Willandra are also both undergoing significant refurbishment works.

CatholicCare have received generous donations to provide support and services to the refugees as part of the project.

### **Will the refugees be paying rent while living on site?**

Yes.

As humanitarian entrants, refugee families are eligible for Centrelink payments and they will be paying an affordable level of rent.

Establishing a rental history and support to understand tenancy rights and responsibilities is a key feature of this program – making it easier for tenants to transition to employment and longer-term housing options.

### **What support and services will be provided for the refugees?**

CatholicCare has employed an on-site Case Manager, and part-time Tenancy Support Worker along with a volunteer live-in Lead Tenant.

CatholicCare has also received considerable support from members of the community who have been keen to help by donating funds, skilled volunteer time, furniture and other household items to assist in the settlement of the refugees.

### **Who can I contact for more information?**

St Vincent's Care Services                      03 9431 0100

To register interest in volunteering or supporting the project please email  
[elthamproject@ccam.org.au](mailto:elthamproject@ccam.org.au)