

New possibilities in a beautiful village



Lindy Cooke in her courtyard at the community housing village on the Old School site.

Lindy Cooke has not had it easy. She was once a successful administrator and property manager for a real estate business. A stroke in 2008 ended all that. But Lindy sees life in a positive way. When doctors advised that she'd spend the rest of her life in a nursing home, she was determined to prove them wrong. Now she's a proud resident of the new community housing village in Dorset Road Ferntree Gully. Her unit is warm and cosy, an expression of her genial nature.

She worked hard to get here. She poured commitment and optimism into her rehabilitation and with the support of the Angliss physios she was 'deemed safe' to live independently. Rightly proud of her achievement she announces it with delight and appreciation for all

who supported her.

It was during her rehabilitation that she learnt about community housing. She submitted her application. After consideration and interview by the Community Housing team she was accepted.

'Living areas are selected according to an applicant's needs,' she explains. She adds happily, 'I can't climb stairs so I was allocated a ground-level unit.' She is still unable to use fully the left side of her body but she doesn't let that deter her.

Her inner living space opens to a small inviting courtyard where she enjoys the sun, plants and fresh air.

As with all the units, Lindy's unit opens onto the

communal area. Its calm ambience, gardens and walkways offer the perfect place for pleasant strolls. Outdoor tables provide space for rest and picnics. Raised garden beds are ready to be planted with vegetables and there's a small orchard of olive and fruit trees with lemons already in fruit. These will provide fresh fruit and vegetables for the residents while large tanks capture and provide water.

The Community Housing Village complies with Knox Council's Affordable Action Plan, the consequence of Council's years of investigation into the housing needs of Knox residents. The plan recognises that a safe, healthy and viable community is reliant on housing appropriate to the needs of residents. The housing is managed by Community Housing Vic Ltd, a not-for-profit organisation, which aims to provide housing for low-income people. The 79 apartments on the block are home to families, singles, old people and those living with disabilities.

Lindy speaks with gratitude for the opportunity that her new home offers. 'It's given me quality of life. I can be a mother and a grandmother. I feel like I'm contributing to the community.' And she is. She derives much satisfaction from her voluntary work with the stroke survivors.

She speaks of the other residents with affection. 'We all get along together. We look after each other,' she says. 'It's a beautiful village.'

Teresa Cannon

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