

Housing options for older residents

Building of a residential village in Warragul for people aged 50 and over would add another dimension to housing options for older residents.

A development plan of the project reveals it would include about 200 single storey dwellings built in a high-density configuration around a central community centre, bowling greens and tennis, badminton, volleyball and bocce courts.

Proposed for a site at the corner of King St and Warragul-Lardner Rd and about 700 metres west of the West Gippsland Hospital the village would be comprised of, what the developer describes as, "unregisterable moveable dwellings".

Developers plan to start work on the village in the first half of next year, progressing in a series of stages over three to four years.

Houses would range from eight to 12 squares in size, each with an open carport and be of one, two or three bedrooms.

Residents would enter into a "tradeable" long term lease - 90 years - for the site.

One of three partners of the developers Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd James Kelly said he expected prices for the Warragul houses to be in the range of \$150,000 to \$180,000 with lease costs varying for one or two occupants.

He described it as a lower cost option for many people seeking a change of lifestyle that did not require maintenance of a large residential block.

Houses include carpets, blinds, lighting and stainless steel dishwashers, cook tops and ovens.

Each is also provided with an external garden shed.

Leases cover outgoings such as water, sewerage and municipal rates as well as operation and upkeep of the community centre with residents responsible only for their direct services charges for water, electricity and telephones.

Mr Kelly said the weekly lease fee would be \$126 for couples and \$116 for singles, but reduced to \$86 and \$65 respectively if residents had access to pensions qualifying them for Government rental assistance.

The development plan is now available for inspection at the Baw Baw shire's customer service centre in Warragul.

It includes photographs of a similar village already built by Lifestyle Communities at Melton west of Melbourne.

Mr Kelly said many of the people that had bought at Melton liked to travel regularly, especially by caravan, but retain a home base.

This has been noted in the Warragul proposal that incorporates a dedicated area for caravan parking.

Mr Kelly said houses were built on a steel base not a concrete slab and steel was prominent in the structure for sub-frames and roofing with a "weatherboard type" product for external wall cladding to provide low maintenance houses.

The construction method meant they are classified "moveable" by Victoria's Building Commission even though they are independent buildings connected to all services such as water, sewerage and electricity.

In the application Lifestyle Communities said a village development provided increased residential densities in reasonable proximity to the town centre and local facilities and services.

The village would have a full time on-site manager.

The community centre includes a lounge, cinema, games room, library, gymnasium and pool.

He said a planning permit application would be made to Baw Baw shire if the development application is approved.

Lifestyle Communities has options over the 14.3-hectare site, part of which it proposes to sub-divide into low-density residential blocks.

The development plan is on exhibition until October 24.