Sustainable Supported Living for our aging population

*Pre-Budget Submission 2019-20*

Provision of supported living to vulnerable members of our rural community, a sustainable model of care which addresses homelessness amongst the elderly in rural communities



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# Executive Summary

Nagambie HealthCare (NHC) is a NFP community owned organisation which provides service provision across the domains of Hospital, Aged Care, Community Care and Independent Living Accommodation services for those with limited means. This model of service provision offers a seamless transition across the continuum of care and enables an intimate knowledge of the needs of our aging community.

NHC services the catchment of Strathbogie Shire, which geographically is located on the 2018-19 ACAR Map in the Upper Goulburn Valley, Victoria. This geographic area is considered as a Cat 1 – high need area with key issues of dementia and housing insecurity amongst the elderly. Data analysis of the Strathbogie Shires population health statistics and demographics (<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/hume/toolkit.htm>) highlights that 25% of the total population is over 65, and on current projections by 2021, 32% of the Strathbogie Shire population will be 60 years or over compared to 24.7% for all Victoria. Data also reflects that 20% of the population over the age of 85 live alone, compounding the issues of both geographic and social isolation.

As identified through the *Commonwealth* *Aged Care Reforms*, there is a preferential focus on supporting people to remain at home as they age. For those in rural areas with limited assets and low incomes, there are limited supported living options available, with community members (in particular Veterans) being forced to leave their rural community networks to access supported living accommodation in metropolitan areas or, as is increasingly the case in the Nagambie region, they are gravitating to sub-standard boarding houses, caravan parks or becoming homeless.

Through a small pilot program of developing sustainable supported living for aged members of our community experiencing housing insecurity, Nagambie HealthCare has established a local and viable solution to addressing the issue of inadequate supported living, one which is self sufficient and not reliant on recurrent funding. To meet the current and future demand for low income supported living, we seek through the pre-budget submission opportunity, a one off allocation of funding to enable the further development of our supported living program. A development which will not only address current issues of housing insecurity for the elderly, but will also serve as a self-sufficient model of aged care service provision for other rural communities.

# Current supported living model:

In response to an identified community need for low income supported living options for vulnerable aging members of the Strathbogie Shire, Nagambie HealthCare purchased six vacant and derelict units on a large parcel of land previously owned by the Strathbogie Shire Council. Through a self funded project and with the assistance of community donations the units were refurbished to meet the design requirements for independent aged care living. As the units and land are in close proximity to the health service, home support packages were offered to the residents as part of a low cost rental arrangement. Residents initially received support visits and care on a daily basis with this care provision increasing through Commonwealth supported Home Care packages. The economy of scale in having care staff employed by Nagambie HealthCare managing and delivering care to these units enabled a level of self sufficiency in that minimal government funding was required to maintain service provision and an anticipated return on investment for the purchase and refurbishment of the units within 5 years.

Through a broad community consultative process in 2016 it became evident that community members had a preference for being supported in their home as they age, from this Nagambie Healthcare broadened its home care service provision with many community members on the residential aged care waiting list no longer requiring entry into aged care due to enhance support at home. Unfortunately lack of adequate accommodation for those in the community who are aging and on low incomes has seen admissions to residential aged care which could have been avoided had appropriate low cost supported living been available. Unfortunately an issue of housing insecurity has also seen a gravitation of community members seeking accommodation in substandard caravan parks or boarding houses.

To address issues of housing insecurity and in response to community demand NHC worked collaboratively with the local RSL, Shire Council and architecture firm ( NEAD pty ltd) to develop a Master Plan for further development of the low cost independent living units and with emphasis on creating a supportive and sustainable community village based on best practice design standards for support .

The Master Planning process is complete with community and local government fully endorsing the proposed Master plans which are attached to our pre-budget application.

# Proposed Development:

Collocated to the NHC independent living units and land is the RSL and Senior Citizens function rooms, Local Library and Nagambie HealthCare’s Community Care Hub which provides a range of allied health and supportive services to community members. NHCs Master Plan for the independent living units incorporates all adjoining amenities with the focus of creating a ‘village like ‘ atmosphere with supported assistance from not only NHC but the broader community. Local schools have expressed a keen interest in contributing to the independent living project assisting with a community garden for residents with the local library and Strathbogie Shire endorsing the creation of civic plaza space for community gatherings and recognition of anniversaries such as ANZAC day and Australia Day.

As a local provider of care services to our community we are at the forefront of understanding local healthcare needs and we strongly believe that a one off allocation from Treasury will build the foundations for future supported living for our aging community members through a self managed and self-funded model for supported living, one that can stand as a proactive show case for creating a lateral and relatively low cost approach to meeting community need.

**Recommendation**

Treasury allocate for a one off provision of funds of funds to enable the provision of sustainable supportive accommodation

**Supported living community**

**Funds sought from treasury**

* units $1,924.5K
* community facility $541K
* landscape, parking roads and paths $407.5K
* gen site demolition $13K

 **SubTotal $2886 K**

 **NHC and Community Project funds Contribution**

* community garden $137K
* RSL / Senior Citizens refurbishment $250K
* Community Hub development clinic $100K
* Library development $96K
* associated landscape, roads and paths $343K
* site demolition $12K
* professional fees $494K
* authorities fees $41K
* furniture +equip $300K
* construction contingency $206K

  **Total Project Costs $4,659K**