

PROVIDENCE FINALLY APPROVED FOR OVER-50S AT BASE OF PERTH HILLS

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A \$190-million over-50s village planned for more than a decade at the base of the Perth hills has been approved with a little help from a state member of parliament.

Last month, Western Australia's metro outer development assessment panel unanimously approved the village—by WA land lease operator Providence Lifestyle Group—for a former polo paddock at 32 Gavour Road, Wattle Grove, about 15km south-east of the CBD.

Of 63 public submissions on the project, 35 were objections.

But in a supportive oral submission to the panel, Perth Hills resident and Liberal member of WA's upper house Phil Twiss said the ability of ageing residents of the hills to downsize was becoming "constrained".

"When we look at this development that is near ... to the hills, near to the families of the people who have grown up there, it provides quite the opportunity for [them] ... to take a lower maintenance place that's been set up in a way that is suitable for their lifestyle, their time of life; the ability to sell their properties and then to go and lease and buy these properties in this development," he said.

"The other side of it ... is that as those people move out of those properties, then the ability for younger families to move up into the hills and take over those larger properties ... opens up and it's going to play its part in solving this significant housing crisis that we've got."

Former Kalamunda resident Jenny Sage told the panel that "more than 15 years ago", before she downsized and reluctantly moved from the hills due to a dearth of lifestyle villages, she had advocated for such an establishment that had been proposed for the Wattle Grove site.

"It is deeply concerning that this vital 15.5ha project has still not materialised," she said.

"The City of Kalamunda houses a higher percentage of senior citizens than almost any other metropolitan area [of Perth].

"In some [Kalamunda] suburbs, seniors over 65 make up more than a quarter of the population."

Planning for the project has been protracted, with the city adopting an amendment for the site to allow an aged care facility as far back as 2015.

Speaking on behalf of four residents who agreed to buy homes in the development, subject to approval, Corina Johnson read a letter from two of them.

"We acknowledge there will always be resistance to change, evidenced by some of the depositions today, but the hills community have waited so long that many have had to move elsewhere, or have passed away waiting," the letter said.

After approval was granted, Providence Lifestyle Group managing director John Wood said site works for the \$190-million project would start in coming months.

"With high demand for housing in Perth, and strong interest from our early market testing from locals in and around the foothills, this development will provide 190

architecturally-designed homes in a thoughtful next generation community for active over 50s," he said.

The village is planned to include one, two and three-bedroom homes with solar panels and battery storage. A clubhouse, bowling green, sauna, dance floor, gym, vegetable garden, workshop, cinema, music room, indoor heated pool and pickleball courts are also on the cards.

Providence operates villages at Piara Waters in Perth's south-east, Henley Brook in the city's Swan Valley wine region and in the retirement Mecca of Mandurah south of the WA capital.



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A state MP and other advocates spoke in support of Providence's project at Wattle Grove.