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Frequently Asked Questions

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The redevelopment

What is the Kew Residential Services Redevelopment?

The redevelopment of KRS was announced by the Premier, Steve Bracks in May 2001. The Premier announced that the 480 people then living at KRS would move to new community homes in locations throughout Victoria, including around 100 who would live in an inclusive suburb to be developed on the KRS site.

Wherever his or her new home is located, each KRS resident will be able to:

- Have the care he or she needs (most need 24 hour care) while living with others with whom he or she is compatible
- Have his or her own bedroom and generous shared living areas in homely and attractively designed houses
- Live closer to their families, if they and their families wish it
- Have access to appropriate day activities and medical and specialist services
- Enjoy the everyday rhythms of life and be effectively supported by friends, peers, and support workers to participate as an accepted member of their community

The existing KRS site will be sold. The funds from the sale of the KRS site will be used to recoup the cost of building new homes for all residents. Any additional funds from the sale of the site will be returned to Disability Services to further enhance services to other people with a disability.

The Department of Human Services will continue to directly manage all new residential services established as a result of the Redevelopment, and the care staff who work at KRS will move to the new services to continue supporting the residents.

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disabilities in 16 residential units on a 27 acre site in Kew.

Most of the residents of KRS have lived there since childhood. The average age of Kew residents is now more than 44. Because of the inadequate and overcrowded conditions, there have been no new admissions from the community to KRS since 1986.

Why is Kew Residential Services (formerly Kew Cottages) being redeveloped?

The Government is committed to providing opportunities for all people with disabilities to participate in the community and have the quality of life that most Victorian citizens have come to expect.

Decent living conditions, which reflect this commitment, cannot be provided in the current institutional setting. The present services at KRS cannot meet key Disability Services standards in relation to privacy and dignity. Although there have been some reductions in the worst overcrowding in recent years, in many instances up to four or five people have been sharing a bedroom which is, in fact, a partitioned dormitory.

For more information download the brochure  [Better services for the residents of Kew Residential Services' an update \(July 2003\) \(PDF, 178KB\)](#)

How much is the Redevelopment costing?

The sale of the current KRS site will contribute to the overall cost of building 93 purpose built community houses for former KRS residents. When the redevelopment is completed, the new services established will cost an additional \$10 million more per year than it costs to run KRS. This will ensure that residents have high quality support in their homes and enable them to participate in community and recreational activities.

Would it have been better and cheaper to provide services on the current KRS site in a 'cluster' model?

The Government's commitment to closing institutions is not driven by economic concerns but by a belief, based on a significant body of research, that congregate care represents the least effective way to achieve a decent quality of life for people with an intellectual disability. When evaluated against today's standards, such as quality of life outcomes (sense of wellbeing, independence, involvement in the community, and so on), community houses are more effective and efficient in achieving these standards, making congregate care, in comparison, an expensive alternative.

How will the KRS Redevelopment affect the waiting list for disability accommodation?

It is anticipated that the proceeds of the sale of the land will recoup the cost of the purchase and development of 93 community houses across Victoria. These new houses will form part of the State's 'stock' of community houses to support adults with a disability in the future. If there are any additional funds from the sale of the site, these will be directed to Disability Services to support Victorians with a disability in the community. Future vacancies in the houses constructed during the KRS redevelopment will be available to people on the waiting list. This is in contrast to the situation at KRS, where vacancies arising are of no benefit to the community as there has been a policy of no new admissions since 1986 (a bi-partisan policy implemented because of the serious over crowding and poor conditions).

What is happening to the KRS staff?

Staff who were permanently employed at KRS at the time of the Redevelopment announcement (May 2001) are being redeployed to the new services, with extra support and training to assist them in making the transition. An industrial agreement relating to redeployment and training was reached with the Health and Community Services Union and ratified in the Industrial Relations' Commission. As part of the Redevelopment, staff will be given the chance to obtain a minimum qualification, if they do not already have one.

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Planning for the future of KRS residents

How are decisions made about where residents will live?

A Resident Assessment Consultation and Planning Team was established to manage the detailed planning for residents' future accommodation and other services. This team consulted extensively with families, residents, friends, advocates and staff about their preferences for where, and with whom, they would like their relative to live. The individual needs and personality of each resident have been a priority in determining where and with whom he or she would live.

What about the residents who are unable to take part in the planning for their future?

The planning is backed up by external safeguards including independent advocacy from the Office of the Public Advocate www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au (External link) and external scrutiny by an independent body, the Intellectual Disability Review Panel.

Can people choose to stay at KRS?

All residents, families and significant others have been involved in ongoing consultation throughout the Redevelopment process. Although KRS will close by November 2006 and will no longer exist in its current form, there are several houses which will be built on the current site as part of a new inclusive suburb. Those residents whose best alternative from the range of possible options is to live in one of the houses on the current KRS site have been offered this opportunity; however, no one can stay in their present unit as they are not considered adequate. KRS residents who will continue to live on the site are those:

- whose families live close by
- who have existing connections to the Kew community (for example attending a nearby day program) or
- those who do not have these connections but are compatible with a group of others who do.

How will KRS residents get health care in the community? Will it cost more?

Residents leaving KRS to live in community houses are referred to GPs who bulk bill or who charge the schedule fee, rebatable on Medicare. At KRS, visiting GPs are paid through Medicare. There is no cost to residents in either case.

People moving from KRS may be referred if necessary to specialists in public hospital clinics, where services provided are at no cost to residents, or they have the option to be referred to a specialist in the community. In the second option, if the specialist charges above the schedule fee, the extra

cost will need to be met by the resident. At KRS, these are the same options that are available, although visiting specialists at KRS will commonly charge the Medicare schedule fee. In summary, there need be no change in costs to individuals as a result of them leaving KRS.

What will happen to the residents who are used to walking safely around the KRS site?

For a small number of KRS residents, walking around the site is an activity of which they are physically capable and from which they get quite a lot of enjoyment. In consulting and planning with residents and those significant in their lives, strategies to ensure they continue this pastime will be developed as a priority. For some people who have already left KRS, they have discovered that they enjoy walking around their new neighbourhood just as much. Others have clearly stated that they had such strong links with Kew, that they preferred to live in one of the houses on the current KRS site.

How long can residents be sure that their new accommodation arrangements will be sustained?

Since the early 1980s, the trend of government policy, which has had bi-partisan support, has been towards community-style living. The graph below shows the continued growth in community based accommodation, a direction which has been recently re-affirmed in the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012.

Planning for the Kew site

What is happening to the KRS land site?

A new modern housing estate will be built, featuring a community leisure centre, parkland and purpose-built housing for around 100 people with disabilities.

On June 3, 2005, the Community Services Minister, Sherryl Garbutt, announced that Walker Corporation had been selected as the developer for the site. The housing development will be low density, and provide around 520 houses and apartments, the majority single or two storeys only. Included amongst the new houses will be 20 houses for residents of KRS.

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What will the new suburb be like?

27 per cent of the site will be new parkland, with ample public open space which preserves the character of the local neighbourhood. Features are:

- Ten hectares of the site will be used for housing up to three storeys. The majority of the housing will be single or double storey;
- Around 2.7 hectares of the site will be used for apartments, with a maximum height limit of five storeys;
- The creation of a linear park with a network of pedestrian and bike trails connecting to adjacent Yarra Bend Park;
- Retention of significant vegetation, avenues of trees and memorials;
- Retention of three heritage listed buildings, The Chapel, The 'STAD', and Unit 10; and
- A \$3 million community leisure centre featuring a 25 metre lap pool, a spa, hydrotherapy pool, gymnasium, consulting rooms for health practitioners, and community facilities.

See also: [Planning for the Kew site](#)

What is happening to the heritage buildings on the Kew site?

The Government is now proposing to preserve three buildings on the site following the heritage listing decision by Heritage Victoria earlier this year. The buildings to be preserved are the Chapel, the 'STAD' (Old Pharmacy) and Unit 10. The avenues of trees, significant vegetation and memorials are also being preserved.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has applied to Heritage Victoria for a demolition permit for the other three buildings.

How will the housing for people with disabilities be integrated into the new suburb?

The developer's plan for the site meets all the principles developed by the Kew Site Forum, in which all key stakeholders participated. The developer's plan has incorporated these principles and used features of the site such as the naturally occurring slope and the existence of so many mature and established trees, to create a plan in which the houses for people with disabilities will blend seamlessly with those of their neighbours, whilst ensuring the site is accessible to all people with disabilities.

Are the houses for people with disabilities who live on the Kew site different from the houses that have been built for them throughout Melbourne so far?

The houses will be built along a similar model, with 24 hour support from qualified carers. Up to six people will live in each home, and each will have their own bedroom and the same high standard of design, quality and comfort. The design of each house is individually tailored to the needs of the people who will be living there.

When will building work start?

Work is expected to begin on the KRS site in the middle of 2005, and continue progressively over the following seven years, with houses for KRS residents completed by the end of 2006.

How will the safety of KRS residents be ensured during the construction process?

The safety and well-being of KRS residents is a priority through the building work. Construction areas at any point will be fenced and inaccessible to residents. In the meantime, while the KRS units are still operating, all fire safety systems and services will continue to be maintained to at the same high standard.

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