

Affordable housing project Common Ground Dickson due to be completed in mid-2022



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Community Housing Canberra chief executive Andrew Hannan. The organisation will manage properties at Common Ground in Dickson. Picture: Jamila Toderas

The first residents of the ACT government's affordable housing Common Ground project in Dickson could move into their properties in the coming months, as construction is due to be completed by mid-2022.

The 40-unit project will house people experiencing homelessness and will also have affordable rentals for low-income households.

ACT Housing Minister Yvette Berry has announced that local organisation Community Housing Canberra will manage the Dickson units.

The community housing provider will oversee the property management and will also work with YWCA Canberra to deliver on-site services. Community Housing Canberra chief executive Andrew Hannan said the organisation was delighted to be awarded the property and tenancy management contract.

"The integrated team understands the incredible impact that the Common Ground model can make on assisting those who have faced long-term homelessness and intend to further build upon the successes of the model elsewhere," Mr Hannan said.

"We look forward to working closely with ACT government stakeholders in delivering the contracted services and importantly working to improve the lives of the tenants who will form this much needed community."

Under the Common Ground model, which was first developed in New York in the 1990s, half the units are used to house people experiencing homelessness and the rest are for affordable rentals.

The Dickson complex is the second Common Ground in Canberra, there is also one in Gungahlin.

Common Ground Canberra chair of the board Stephen Bartos said he welcomed the progress being made at the site.

"A second Common Ground facility in Dickson will complement the one in Gungahlin that has been working well in that location," Mr Bartos said.

"Common Ground is a demonstrably successful approach to finding safe, permanent and high quality homes for people in homelessness - especially those who have been sleeping rough or in highly insecure situations who need onsite support services.

"We acknowledge though that the problem of homelessness is broader; to solve it we need a mosaic of services which includes not only Common Ground but also affordable housing, social housing and specialist services for people with specific needs."

Construction started on the project in 2020 and it was initially expected to be completed in 2021.

The project was approved in 2020 after Planning Minister Mick Gentleman used his controversial "call in" powers to approve the project, which meant it was able to bypass any appeals process.



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