

23 August 2023

MEDIA RELEASE

New affordable homes for women aged 55+ to open in Rockhampton

Innovative national aged care provider Apollo Care Alliance and Central Queensland collaborative The Shelter Collective will celebrate the opening tomorrow of the first four of 10 affordable homes in Rockhampton for women aged over 55.

The organisations teamed up for the 'Arc-20' project to renovate 10 cottages on the grounds of Apollo Care's PresCare Alexandra Gardens aged care community.

"We're looking forward to welcoming tenants very soon to our first four cottages," says Apollo Care's CEO Stephen Becsi OAM, "and we're on track to open the remaining six cottages by 31 October 2023."

In addition to affordable housing, tenants are being offered training and employment opportunities as care workers, cooks or cleaners at the adjacent PresCare facility. This offers an extra level of financial security and independence to the tenants while also addressing the number one issue in aged care – staff attraction and retention.

Tenants hoping to become carers are being assisted by Apprentices and Trainees Queensland (ATQLD) to obtain a Certificate III - Individual Support Ageing. This involves 120 hours of clinical placement plus self-paced theory and will take two to three months to complete. Tenants interested in cleaning and other support service roles are being supported by Blue Stone Medical and Professional training agency to obtain a Certificate I or II in a relevant field.

"We're proud to support The Shelter Collective and be part of this worthy project," says Stephen Becsi. "Apollo Care has the means and the desire to contribute to the Rockhampton community – it's simply the right thing to do."

Sandra Thomson, Residential Service Manager at PresCare Alexandra Gardens, says attracting workers from the local community is a win for everyone. "We welcome the new tenants to our community and hope they will join our workforce. Like our residents, these ladies are acutely aware that feeling at home here is crucial to wellbeing."

The Shelter Collective is a community-driven group of organisations working together to solve the critical shortage of affordable housing in Rockhampton.

Its Executive Founding Members are Chairman Dave Grenfell OAM, Executive Manager of ReeFell Pty Ltd; Adam Klapproth, Manager (Housing and Homelessness) at AnglicareCQ; Michael Walz, CEO of Apprentices and Trainees Queensland (ATQLD); and Michelle Coats, General Manager of Roseberry Queensland. They are supported by founding community members Donna Kirkland and Grant Mathers.

"It clearly takes a community to build a village," explains Dave Grenfell OAM, "and the Arc-20 project is a great example of our strong community working together to solve its own issues."

Apollo Care is leasing the land and cottages to The Shelter Collective at a nominal rate, while The Shelter Collective is raising money and in-kind donations from the local community and coordinating the goods, services and labour needed to transform the cottages on a tight budget in a short time-frame.

“Today is a huge day for the Arc-20 project,” says Dave Grenfell. “We’re celebrating the enormous contribution of so many local individuals and organisations who continue to donate time, money, goods and services to the project.”

“Every donation or assistance – small or large – has been an enormous help,” he says, “but we’re still in great need of further support.”

In addition to facilitating training for tenants, ATQLD is supplying and coordinating trainees and other labour on the project, and sourcing goods and services at a reduced cost so the project is delivered on budget and on time. It has supplied two full-time trainees (one of whom identifies as First Nations) for the construction program, collaborated with Multicultural Australia to provide 12 trainees to build furniture and screens for the cottages, and worked with Youth Justice to supply participants and their supervisors for construction and landscaping works.

“We’ve designed the Arc-20 project to provide a safe, reliable and controlled learning environment that offers a pathway for trainees into the construction industry,” explains ATQLD’s Michael Walz.

Meanwhile, AnglicareCQ is operating and managing the newly renovated cottages for 10 years and providing maintenance, insurance and other services. In liaison with PresCare’s Sandra Thomson, Adam Klapproth and his team are also identifying tenants who will benefit most from the combined housing, training and employment opportunity.

The Arc-20 project began when Dave Grenfell identified 20 underutilised cottages on the grounds of PresCare Alexandra Gardens. When he approached Stephen Becsi to discuss The Shelter Collective’s vision for affordable housing, he discovered the organisations shared similar values and that Stephen Becsi had an impressive background in affordable housing.

Like The Shelter Collective, Apollo Care’s operating model is based on an alliance of experts who deliver large-scale efficiencies and specialist expertise at a local level. “At our core,” says Dave Grenfell, “we’re both focused on caring for people – our workers and our residents – while meeting financial and regulatory goals.”

Given the confluence of values, experience and opportunity, Stephen Becsi happily agreed with Dave Grenfell’s request: “We both believe in the power of collective effort and commitment, and the importance of secure and stable housing. Add to this the opportunity for tenants to receive training and employment, and it is unequivocally the right thing to do.”

“Prior to the agreement, the cottages were all earmarked for demolition to make way for additional residential aged care facilities. Now, 10 of the cottages have found a second life, we still have enough land for expansion, the construction trainees have been provided a career pathway, and the women who needed secure housing and employment have been provided a life-changing opportunity.”

-ends-

CONTACTS

Nicolee Simpson, Senior Consultant, The SAS Group
M 0406 038 117 | E nicolee.simpson@sasgroup.net.au

Stephen Becsi, CEO, Apollo Care Alliance
M 0417 183 864 | E Stephen.becsi@apollocare.com.au

Dave Grenfell, Chairman, The Shelter Collective
M 0418 143 409 | E dave.grenfell@atqld.com.au

Adam Klapproth, Manager (Housing and Homelessness), AnglicareCQ
M 0466 796 183 | E aklapproth@anglicarecq.org.au

Michael Walz, CEO, Apprentices and Trainees Queensland (ATQLD)
M 0455 279 121 | E Michael.walz@atqld.com.au

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Apollo Care Alliance

Apollo Care Alliance is an innovative national aged care provider committed to rescuing distressed aged care communities in regional Australia and rapidly turning them around in terms of financial performance and achieving full compliance and accreditation.

It was built from the ground up three years ago by a team of four industry veterans with a cumulative 85 years' experience: Stephen Becsi, formerly CEO of Bethanie, WA's largest NFP provider; Barry Ashcroft, former CEO of Domain Aged Care, now Opal; Kylie Radburn, former National Care Governance Manager at Aveo; and John Young, a leading equity capital specialist.

To date, Apollo Care has acquired seven facilities and is in advanced negotiations to acquire significantly more. This will increase the number of beds and retirement village units in the Alliance. This is truly radical in the Australian aged care sector where approximately 70 per cent of facilities are operating at a loss.

Apollo Care achieves this by replacing the traditional head office with an innovative virtual networked operating model that increases productivity, profitability and quality of care, supported by best-in-class Alliance partners and cutting-edge technology.

It also takes on each facility's care, governance, administrative and financial burdens while guaranteeing preservation of brand and connection to community. It's embedded in the constitution of each of its not-for-profit facilities, along with two more layers of board oversight.

Each facility operates like an independent provider, but with the security and operational and financial support of the Alliance behind them. Apollo Care doesn't overlay a generic brand; it knows that maintaining identity and purpose is as important as survival to aged care communities.

It has also created a bespoke, cutting-edge technology platform that is flexible, scalable and provides for real-time decision making, enabling it to predict future care needs, drive efficiencies and free up capital for operational improvements.

Apollo Care's innovative, proprietary, cloud-based QMS is revolutionising care governance, leading to increases in productivity and care delivery, plus faster achievement and maintenance of full accreditation.

Apollo Care is also seeking innovative ways to address the tight labour market in Australia. Attracting and retaining staff is a significant challenge and Apollo Care is constantly investing in its workforce. This includes deploying cutting-edge technologies, such as hand-held mobile devices for every care worker, and measuring job satisfaction and productivity across the organisation via its proprietary dashboard.

The organisation has also led the early adoption and deployment of the 'Age-Rite' technology platform which enables it to constantly update and analyse data that increases productivity; creates better leaders; increases staff engagement; improves efficiency through better use and planning of resources; and improves quality of care and life for residents.

Apollo Care is highly focused on linking culture to performance. It has developed and applies a unique 'culture lens' to how it collects, assesses and translates data into meaningful, real-time information that facilitates best-informed decision.

Notes

- **Stephen Becsi has a distinguished track record in affordable housing.** It began years ago when he was the first CEO of Bethanie Housing Ltd, part of one of WA's largest not-for-profit aged care, retirement living and affordable housing organisations. In his role, Stephen Becsi led Bethanie Housing's provision of hundreds of affordable housing options to senior West Australians in housing distress, resulting in his Medal of the Order of Australia.
- **Apollo Care Alliance purchased Alexandra Gardens from PresCare (the Presbyterian Church) in mid 2021,** along with PresCare Yaralla and PresCare Groundwater Lodge. The grounds of Alexandra Gardens included 20 original cottages, each 72m² and requiring significant renovation.

The Shelter Collective

TSC is a community-driven group of organisations working together to achieve realistic and accessible housing solutions. Its Executive Founding Members are:

- Chairman **Dave Grenfell OAM**, Executive Manager of ReeFell Pty Ltd, Chairman of Apprentices and Trainees Queensland (ATQLD)
- **Michael Walz**, CEO of ATQLD
- **Adam Klaproth**, Manager (Housing and Homelessness) at AnglicareCQ
- **Michelle Coats**, General Manager of Roseberry Queensland.

They are supported by founding community members Donna Kirkland and Grant Mathers.

Michelle Coats is involved with management of The Shelter Collection, including fundraising for the Arc-20 project and managing the '**Dignity Coach**' project. The Dignity Coach was donated by the local Rothery family and will undergo a \$245,000 renovation including air conditioning, laundry facilities, an interior kitchen for food preparation, and an external kitchen to serve breakfast and provide food parcels. It will also have a self-sufficient trailer with showers and toilets and will be capable of being despatched for emergency situations such as bush fires and floods. Once rebuilt, Roseberry Queensland will operate and manage the coach.

TSC is also hoping to raise funds to build additional '**Shelteristic Villages**', a concept originated by Michelle Coats and her team a Roseberry Queensland. This project is similar to the Arc-20 project but it will provide new homes and a 24/7 wrap-around service for tenants.

The Arc-20 project

Financials

- 100% of money raised goes directly to the Arc-20 project.
- At market cost, the average renovation cost per Arc-20 cottage would be approximately \$130,000. However, TSC is spending significantly less because of contributions from local businesses and the public. There is no government funding at any level to date.
- At completion, the total investment in renovation and refurbishment of the cottages will be approximately \$1.3 million.
- The Shelter Collective has raised \$590,000 so far and is still in need of significant financial and in-kind contributions.

Corporate and community contributors

Collective Champions:

- **NRG Industrial** adopted the first cottage and paid for its entire renovation and refurbishment, including bedding, landscaping, security screens, fridge, etc. As thanks, the cottage is named 'Positive NRG Cottage'. TSC has entered into a memorandum of understanding with NRG Industrial to complete renovation of the remaining nine cottages.
- **Apprentice Training Queensland (ATQLD)** is supplying and coordinating trainees and other labour.

Collective Platinum Donors:

- Haymans **Electrical** made a substantial contribution with cash and in-kind products.
- **Holcim Humes** provided cash, material and volunteers.
- **SMW** contributed substantial labour, material and machinery.

Gold, Silver and Bronze Donors:

- Many smaller companies and members of the public donated or discounted trees, plants, furniture, soft furnishings, labour, etc and/or made cash contributions.

The social value of the project is invaluable. "Bonds are built in collaboration, says Michael Walz. "People are onsite, rolling up their sleeves, including CEOs who are getting on the tools."

Training and employment for tenants

- Stephen Becsi and The Shelter Collective identified an opportunity to provide tenants with training and potential employment at the adjacent PresCare facility as care workers, cooks or cleaners.
- This provides an additional level of security and independence to the tenants and addresses the number one issue in aged care – staff attraction and retention.
- Aged care certificate courses will be delivered through ATQLD and comprise 120 hours of clinical placement plus a self-paced theory section. This usually takes two to three months to complete.
- Cooking, cleaning and other support services training will be delivered through Blue Stone Medical and Professional to obtain a Certificate I or II in a relevant field.

BIOS



DAVID GRENFELL – OAM

Chair of Apprentices and Trainees Queensland; Chairman of The Shelter Collective

Dave has over 40 years' experience in the building and construction industry with a focus on the power, chemical and process plant sectors. He has been involved with major infrastructure projects across Australia and has significant experience in project management and business operations. David has a list of achievements and roles including: Chairman of the Board, Apprentices and Trainees Queensland; Director of Roseberry Queensland; Founding Member and Chairman of Fitzroy Industry Regional Skilled Training (2002–2008); recipient of the Queensland Training Awards for Medium Business (2006); member of the Queensland Manufacturing Futures Program initiative, funded by the Queensland State Government; and he initiated the 'Engineers for the Future' program with Central Queensland University and industry. Dave became an executive founding member of The Shelter Collective because he believes in finding community solutions for the Rockhampton community's problems with rough sleeping and a lack of safe shelter as a result of inadequate social and affordable housing. During his childhood, Dave's mother was the victim of domestic violence. He, his brother and their mother had to flee to safety and hide from their father, a situation that is not uncommon 60 years later. This, says Dave, has to stop and compels him to push forward with The Shelter Collective.



STEPHEN BECSI OAM

Chief Executive Officer, Director and Co-founder, Apollo Care Alliance

Stephen co-founded Apollo Care Alliance in 2017 following a distinguished career as CEO of the Bethanie Group, one of WA's largest not-for-profit providers of aged care services, including residential aged care. Under his leadership from 2000-2014, Bethanie achieved top-tier standards of performance, an achievement acknowledged in 2013 when Stephen won the 'Aged Care Industry Most Influential Business Leader' and numerous other awards including runner-up CEO of the Year at the Australian Human Resources Institute. Stephen also served as President of Leading Aged Services Australia in WA and, in 2015, he was awarded an OAM for Services to the Aged Care Industry. Prior to his time at Bethanie, Stephen served in the Royal Australian Navy, retiring as a Captain. He returned to the Navy on secondment from 2009-2011 as Director of its Strategic Reform Program, part of a Federal Government Defence Strategic Reform Program initiative to deliver \$20 billion in operating savings to redirect to capital spending.



ADAM KLAPROTH

Manager (Housing and Homelessness) – Anglicare

Adam has over 15 years' experience across the social housing and community sectors. He has worked in complex policy development and implementation, housing and community support service delivery and management and has worked closely with peak bodies at state and national levels around reforms of social housing. Currently Adam sits as the Central Queensland representative for QShelter. He is responsible for Anglicare Central Queensland's Housing & Homelessness portfolio, including management and performance.



MICHAEL WALZ

CEO, Apprentices and Trainees Queensland

Michael is CEO of not-for-profit Apprentices and Trainees Queensland, with a diverse background that blends the expertise of a skilled tradie with over 20 years of experience in business. Michael is passionate about sustainability and making a positive impact on society. He is involved in community initiatives like the 'Mentoring for Growth' Program, The Carbon Neutral Project, and The Shelter Collective, and inspires others to create change in their communities.



MICHELLE COATS

General Manager, Roseberry Qld

Michelle has been General Manager at Roseberry Qld since 2021 and leads its mission to assist people across all demographics and ages by strengthening families and providing homes and supportive pathways to stability and security. Roseberry's suite of programs include tenancy management for social and affordable housing, youth shelters, youth support, family services, Headspace, ParentsNext and transition to independent living programs. It is also building a dignity shelter in Gladstone and managing 'Jacks House' in Rockhampton.

Michelle's goal is to use her qualifications in Social Policy and Development Economics to make a real difference in regional and remote Australia. With a Masters in Commerce (Social Policy & Development Economics), CPA qualifications and 18 years in Local Government/Not for Profit Sector, she has broad skills and experience in strategic social and economic development.

