

Media release



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

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KEW COTTAGES REDEVELOPMENT COMPLETE

Premier John Brumby today joined former residents of Kew Residential Services, their families and friends to mark the completion the \$86.5 million redevelopment of Kew Cottages.

Mr Brumby said the project, one of largest for people with a disability in Victoria's history, would give all residents a better quality of life with their own rooms and specialised fitouts to assist carers.

"This Government is taking action to help Victorians with a disability by moving disabled people out of institutions and allowing them a more independent life" he said.

"This project is another example of our commitment to provide people with a disability the same opportunities to live in the community as other Victorians."

In May, 2001, the Victorian Government announced the redevelopment of Kew Residential Services as part of the *Victorian State Disability Plan*.

At the time of the announcement Kew Residential Services was the biggest institution of its kind in Australia. Over 480 people lived on the Kew site, most in outdated accommodation, and over 700 staff worked there.

The first residents moved into new community houses in 2002 and the last residents moved into their new homes April this year.

Most residents were relocated into 73 new community houses integrated across Melbourne and regional Victoria, giving them greater choice in where they lived. The Kew site redevelopment resulted in another 20 new community houses for 100 residents that are integrated with other private residential housing on the site.

Community Services Minister Lisa Neville and Major Projects Minister Theo Theophanous joined Mr Brumby on a tour of one of the Kew community houses today.

"The job of building a new life in the community for the 480 residents of Kew Residential Services has been a massive undertaking," Ms Neville said.

“This redevelopment is one of the most positive for people with disabilities in Victoria.

“All residents who have moved to the new community houses across Victoria now have the opportunity to be part of their communities. This is the culmination of the long-sighted vision to choose to close this outdated institution and provide better options for residents.

“The Brumby Government is committed to reinvesting all State Government profit from the redevelopment into services for people with a disability.”

Major Projects Minister Theo Theophanous said the completion of the first stage of the Kew Residential Services project represented a significant milestone.

"For the 100 ex-KRS residents who have moved into their new homes on site it means a much improved quality of life. The accommodation and the on-site facilities now available to them are worlds apart from the old Kew Cottages," Mr Theophanous said.

“The redevelopment has achieved its goal of creating a new, integrated neighbourhood with extensive open space that residents and the general public can enjoy.”