

6 December 2024

World-class retirement precinct rises to the top

VMCH – in partnership with builder Hacer Group – has celebrated a significant milestone in its highly-anticipated, world-class retirement living precinct, St. Clare.

A Topping Out Ceremony was held at the landmark Studley Park site in Kew on Thursday 5 December, marking the completion of the frame of all four residential buildings. This is a celebratory rite of construction, acknowledging the hard work of those who contributed.

The \$250m project will offer a new standard of living for over 55s within its 103 premium apartments, with innovative architecture, expansive green spaces and breath-taking views.

Around 80 guests attended the event, including representatives from builder partner Hacer Group, architects Woods Bagot, the St. Clare project team, members of the VMCH Board and Executive, Mayor of Boroondara Cr Sophie Torney, and the Member for Kew, Ms Jess Wilson.

Wurundjeri elder Colin Hunter performed a smoking ceremony, smouldering native plants to cleanse the space, as a way of connecting with and acknowledging the Aboriginal heritage of the land being built on.

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart said the organisation was delighted with Hacer's construction progress of St. Clare, on track for completion at the end of 2025.

She added St. Clare has broken all records for retirement off-plan sales, with 70% of the apartments – which range in price from \$1.3m to \$4.7m – now reserved.

“St. Clare is not only the biggest project our organisation has undertaken in more than a century, but it’s tipped to be the most premium precinct in its class in Victoria.”

Ms Smart added the project meets a vital gap in the local market for premium retirement living.

“By 2035, 17% of people in the local catchment will be aged over 65, with many seeking accommodation designed for ageing in place. VMCH has a long history with the Studley Park site, and we are thrilled to continue providing services of need in the community for generations to come.”

St. Clare’s design will be sympathetic to the site’s unique past, with two historic mansions currently being brought back to their former glory and re-purposed into shared spaces, including a pool, wellness centre, gym, cinema, restaurant, bar and library.

Hacer Director General Manager Mark Lewis said: "Today we celebrate a milestone of vision, teamwork, and determination. The structure top out marks the culmination of countless hours of dedication and collaboration; working in partnership with VMCH, together we are building a place where comfort, care, and community will thrive."

VMCH Board Chairman Julien O'Connell AO said retirement living projects like St. Clare helped VMCH to generate vital capital to deliver on its mission-based projects, such as affordable homes.

"I'd like to thank those future St. Clare residents, whose decision to make St. Clare home is a philanthropic one, leaving a lasting legacy for vulnerable people in our community."

Boroondara Mayor, Cr Sophie Torney, described Boroondara as an "age-friendly city". "We recognise that retiring doesn't mean missing out. You can still be active, socialise, connect with nature and learn new things. St. Clare will offer all these opportunities and more, with features that support positive ageing in place."

At its peak, St. Clare is expected to generate over 300 jobs, and by its completion, more than 2,000 people will have contributed to various stages of the development – a big win for the economy.

St. Clare is expected to be completed in late 2025.

Media enquiries

Cassie Zlonzak, Communications Manager, 0402 422 852, cassie.zlonzak@vmch.com.au

About VMCH

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at home aged care.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

About Hacer

Over 23 years, Hacer Group has built successful partnerships with its clients through a fully integrated design and construct service – delivering exceptional project value and helping clients maximise opportunities and develop properties to their full potential. With offices in Melbourne (Wurundjeri land) and Sydney (Gadigal land), Hacer Group continues to grow a reputable portfolio of work across a diverse range of sectors. With a strong emphasis on quality, we deliver long-standing developments as well as long-standing relationships.