



## Media Release

18 September 2019

### **The sod turns on purpose-built housing for people with disabilities**

The first sod has been turned on a purpose-built accommodation complex which will help more people with disabilities have access to appropriate housing on the Darling Downs.

The single-storey complex, located in Centenary Heights, will include four fully customised units which will meet individual needs, include assistive technology, and help empower residents to lead more independent lives.

One of the three-bedroom units will be owned by YellowBridge QLD thanks to a generous donation from Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland.

YellowBridge received \$450,000 from the Masonic charity to construct and manage the unit which will accommodate two people with disabilities and a carer.

YellowBridge QLD Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said it was exciting to finally see construction commence after 12 months of planning and building approvals.

"We are in the midst of a disability housing crisis on the Darling Downs, where people with disabilities, especially those whose ageing parents can no longer look after them, have no-where to go," Penny said.

"We know of 40 people in this position. While many have the means to buy or rent their own place, there is simply no suitable housing for them in the region," she said.

"A few will never have the means to pay for a place to live."

"Having access to appropriate housing is an important part of the equation for improving the overall quality of life of people with disabilities."

Hand Heart Pocket Chief Executive Officer, Gary Mark, said the local Freemasons were vocal supporters of YellowBridge QLD, due to its proven record of supporting more than 4,000 people to lead more meaningful and connected lives each year.

"Our purpose is to provide sustainable support that delivers positive outcomes; to provide a hand up to communities, charities and individuals that have limited access to other funding sources," Mr Mark said.

"Alleviating the stress on ageing parents who care for their disabled children - through the provision of innovative purpose-built housing - aligns with our values of equipping people to lead better lives," he said.

"We are delighted to partner with YellowBridge QLD on this important initiative and know it will be a catalyst for changing the landscape of disability housing in the region."

The units are being built by local construction firm, Enabled Living, which specialises in custom-built housing for people with a disability. They are expected to be completed by early 2020.

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### **About YellowBridge QLD**

YellowBridge QLD is a local, independent and not-for-profit organisation based in Toowoomba, Queensland. Each year it helps more than 4,000 people access housing, disability support, youth and home services so they can lead independent and rewarding lives. It has a forward-thinking partnership model which sees it proactively pursue opportunities for important community change by working with government, private and community partners.

**For more information about YellowBridge QLD, visit [www.yellowbridgeqld.com.au](http://www.yellowbridgeqld.com.au)**

### **About Hand Heart Pocket**

As an independent charity founded by the Freemasons of Queensland, Hand Heart Pocket helps in areas of state-wide and local need that have limited access to other funding. We work with other charities to identify and fund initiatives that have real, life-changing potential. We also collaborate with Masonic Lodges across Queensland and help individuals in times of extreme need to get them back on their feet. We use our funds wisely to give a hand up - to build potential, not encourage permanent dependence.

**For more information about Hand Heart Pocket, visit [www.handheartpocket.org.au](http://www.handheartpocket.org.au)**

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