



20 June 2019

## **New technology-enabled home opens for people with an intellectual disability setting a blueprint for future housing**

**St John of God Accord, a leading support and accommodation provider for people with an intellectual disability, has today opened its new industry leading technology-enabled home for people with a complex intellectual disability.**

The five-bedroom East Brighton home, built on land generously donated by the Daughters of Charity, is equipped with the latest assistive technology to improve the quality of life for residents through providing more choice and controlled independence.

The home and its technology, developed in collaboration with HomeStay, is a blueprint for St John of God Accord's future accommodation for clients. The organisation will invest \$11.6 million to develop a further 10 houses for people with an intellectual disability over the coming years using this blueprint.

St John of God Health Care Group Director Community Services Kevin Taylor said the home set a new accommodation standard for people with intellectual disability.

"We are really proud and excited to welcome our clients into their new home this month and see the difference the design and technologies within the house have on their lives over the weeks, months and years to come," he said.

"The house design creates safe spaces inside and outside, incorporates assistive technology to improve the independence and dignity of each person, and enables the use of infrastructure to assist in supporting residents' long-term needs as they age.

"We're looking forward to seeing our residents' take control over their lives in ways not previously possible and experience greater choice and independence."

St John of God Accord has collaborated with HomeStay, and other technology partners including Samsung, Quantify Technology, BCDS Group, Philips Lighting, and WorkM8, to include tailored assistive technologies such as smart home innovations and access control to reduce restrictive practices, enable independence, and digitise work processes to allow greater one-on-one time between residents and carers.

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HomeStay Chief Executive Officer Philippa Lewis said HomeStay's Caring Intelligent Home system was helping provide residents with more independence and opportunities to reach their full potential.

"Technology was specifically designed to match the cognitive abilities of residents. Our Caring Intelligent Home system coordinates discrete sensors, an emergency hub, personal alarms and apps to offer residents increased choice, control and independence in their daily activities," she said.

"Residents can use the MyDay application, a simple and easy-to-use app, to manage their day with greater independence in line with their abilities by promoting decision making and mental stimulation, offering different methods of communication and reducing anxiety.

"The Carers' Companion app allows more efficient monitoring through coordinated access to information and data to authorised care professionals on an ongoing basis."

Five St John of God Accord clients, supported through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), will move from their current St John of God Accord house to their new home over the coming weeks.

The effectiveness of the technology and house design will be independently assessed by Deakin University to help inform future houses.

Planning is now underway to build an additional 10 duplex homes across five sites in Melbourne.

Mr Taylor said the planned new homes would help meet growing community demand for specialist disability accommodation.

"We know there is unmet need across the community, and this need will grow as families, particularly those with ageing parents, look to secure suitable long-term accommodation and services for their loved ones," he said.

"When built, these new St John of God Accord homes will not only help meet that demand but also offer new opportunities for people by providing environments where they can feel safe, reach their potential, and pursue their interests."

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## **About SJGHC**

St John of God Health Care (SJGHC) is one of the largest Catholic providers of healthcare services in Australia. Established in Western Australia in 1895, we are not-for-profit private health care group and a ministry of the Catholic Church. We employ more than 13,000 staff across Australia, New Zealand and the wider Asia Pacific region. We operate 24 facilities comprising 3,407 beds in Australia and New Zealand, as well as home nursing, disability services and social outreach programs.