HAZELWOOD HOUSE RELOCATION

QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE CHURCHILL AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

18 March 2019

Updated: 25 June 2019

1. Why has Benetas decided to close Hazelwood House?
   After careful consideration and assessment, Benetas has made the decision to relocate Hazelwood House residents to the newly refurbished aged care apartments at Dalkeith Gardens in Traralgon, to ensure we continue to provide the best care possible for those in our care.

   Dalkeith Gardens is now providing care to residents under our new model of care. This means smaller apartments with only eight residents to each apartment, all with their own kitchen, dining and lounge room. The same dedicated care workers are rostered on for each apartment, ensuring the carers get to know intimately the residents and their families. Plus a 24 hour Registered Nurse is based on site.

   For more information on our model of care please visit the Hazelwood House relocation information page at https://www.benetas.com.au/residential-aged-care/hazelwood-house-landing-page

2. What, if any, options were explored by Benetas to keep Hazelwood House open?
   Benetas did not make this decision lightly. We understand Hazelwood House has a strong connection with the Churchill Community and is much loved. However, we could not support the new model of care in Hazelwood House and we are committed to providing all of our residents with the best care possible. In addition, after careful analysis, we came to the conclusion that a facility in Churchill will not be sustainable long term for Benetas.

3. What would it take for Benetas to keep Hazelwood House open? Would the facility remain open if additional funding could be sourced to upgrade the premises?
   The decision to relocate Hazelwood House residents has been made based on a number of factors. In the first instance the facility has been running at a loss for the last three years, despite having injected over half a million in the facility. After extensive research and detailed assessment, a decision was made by the Board that Hazelwood House would not be sustainable long term.

   In addition Benetas is investing more than $30 million into Dalkeith by way of the expanded and renovated aged care facility as well as an expanded retirement village and supporting amenities. It made sense to support this investment and enable all of our residents to experience the best care possible by way of our new model of care.

   Benetas has not made a decision on the future use of Hazelwood House and is open to discussing options.

4. Is Benetas aware that this community raised over three-quarters of a million dollars towards the construction of said local facility to service our community?
Yes, Benetas is aware of the history and the efforts of the community to raise the funds to build Hazelwood House, which has served the community well for over 20 years. We can appreciate how much the home means to the community. However as we advised, over the years, the need for aged care has dwindled in Churchill and the surrounding areas while it is growing in other areas. We have a responsibility to place resources where they are most needed. The new home co-located with Dalkeith Heights Retirement Village will serve several areas, including Churchill and surrounds.

5. What does Benetas propose to happen to the site once vacated? Is Churchill to be left with a vacant and potentially derelict building on this site?
Benetas’ current primary focus is to support residents, families and staff in their relocation to Dalkeith Gardens. Representatives from Benetas have been meeting with your local Council and local Members of Parliament to discuss the future of the site. The Council does have ‘first right of refusal’ on the property and is currently considering its position. We don’t have a definitive answer as of yet, however, we share the community’s sentiments and would like the building to benefit the community if possible.

6. Is Benetas aware that Council purchased the land for this facility from the State Government and donated it to the project? Is Benetas now suggesting, as per the caveat on the land, that Council can buy it back?
Yes, Benetas is aware of the circumstances. As per the Terms of Agreement, Council has ‘first right of refusal’ to buy back the property, however no decisions have yet been made.

7. What assistance will Benetas provide to revive or re-purpose the site in order to ensure this community is not left with a derelict facility?
Benetas will support the local community to help determine a possible use for the site in the future. At this point, there have been no decisions made, however, we have commenced consultation with Council, local Members of Parliament and community representatives and will work in partnership with Local Council to find the best solution. We would in no way like to see the facility left derelict in the future.

8. Will Benetas continue to maintain the grounds once residents have been relocated until a new owner is found?
Yes, Benetas will maintain the grounds following the relocation of Hazelwood House residents until the future of the site is determined.

9. How will Benetas assist local families, friends and volunteers currently visiting residents at Hazelwood House cope with the increased time and travel expenses involved in accessing residents at the facility in Traralgon?
Benetas is happy to talk to any family members, friends or volunteers regarding the relocation of residents to the new Dalkeith Gardens and the implications it may have on them regarding travel. We are certainly open to discussing ways in which we can minimise the impact on them as much as possible.

10. How will Benetas support those Churchill residents who have chosen to reside in our local aged care facility maintain their connection to the Churchill community?
We understand that many residents have lived in Churchill for a long time and we are keen for them to maintain this connection. Hazelwood House staff will also be relocating and we will be encouraging them to facilitate group outings for the residents to maintain that strong connection.

11. What will the Hazelwood House mini-van be used for once Hazelwood House is closed?
The Hazelwood House mini-van will continue to be used for residents, the need for transportation still exists once our residents move to their new home.

12. The media release from Benetas claimed that residents will benefit from the relocation to a newer facility – what are these ‘benefits’ and in exactly what way will such ‘benefits’ be delivered and assessed?

The new model of care allows for more dedicated person centred care for residents. The small apartment style living of only 8 residents with dedicated care staff means that staff will get to know residents intimately. They will know their likes and dislikes and can accommodate more choice and flexibility into the residents’ daily lives. Residents can eat when they want, they have more flexibility with activities and their living quarters are more private and home-like, with their own kitchen, dining room and lounge room. There will also be a 24 hour registered nurse on site.

Clustered living environments have been researched extensively, internationally and within Australia, and have been proven to improve the quality of life among elderly residents in such environments. Much of this improvement is social, which in turn has a positive impact on their outlook, health and living situation. The refurbishment will also mean an upgrade in amenities and furnishings, all chosen specifically to ease movement and ensure comfort.

In addition, the new model includes 24 hour registered nursing support. So as residents’ clinical needs change, we can better support them.

13. Will all staff and visiting services currently at Hazelwood House continue to service residents relocated to Traralgon or will there be further disruption and new faces to adjust to?

Benetas is encouraging all staff to move, along with the residents, and we are working with each staff member one-on-one to discuss their preferences. However, there may be staff that do not wish to relocate. Many of the visiting services will remain the same and we will be doing all we can to ensure GPs also continue to visit our residents in their new home.

14. If a local GP currently visits a resident of Hazelwood House but is unable/unwilling to visit the Traralgon site, how does Benetas propose to ensure continuity of care?

Benetas will be speaking with GPs who will hopefully take no issue in the relocation of their patients. If a resident is affected by this, Benetas will work with them to find the best solution for their needs.

15. Does Benetas accept that “familiarity” is an essential part of care-plans for dementia patients and that major changes, such as relocation to unfamiliar settings, may cause set-backs and/or deterioration in dementia patients?

We absolutely understand that familiarity is important to all our residents and their families, and will do our utmost to ensure residents feel at home in their new environment. Residents from Hazelwood House will be placed in apartments alongside their friends and cared for by familiar staff who have relocated with them.

Residents will have a chance to view their room before moving and will have the opportunity to take personal items across to Dalkeith to help personalise their rooms. Benetas has relocated residents from existing Benetas facilities to new facilities that support our new model of care, on three previous occasions. During this process we have been able to really understand the requirements and support their needs to ensure this
transition is smooth, while also acknowledging that any form of change can be challenging.

16. How does Benetas propose to effect the transfer of residents with minimal trauma and distress, given that Hazelwood House is “home” and it is well known that moving to a new home is a majorly stressful life event?
Once again, residents will be moving alongside their friends and familiar staff. A smooth transition for residents is our utmost priority and we will be working hard to ensure this occurs. As mentioned, we have conducted this process a number of times before and learnt a lot about the types of things that can help. There will be a number of additional staff supporting the transition process and we are always keen to hear if there are any problems or difficulties being faced so we can work to alleviate these.

17. Why did Benetas choose not to discuss issues with keeping Hazelwood House open with the local community or inform anyone until after the decision was taken and presented as a “fait accompli”?  
We understand this decision is difficult for the community and we want to affirm that the decision was not made lightly. It was based on extensive research, numerous reports and detailed discussions which highlighted that long term, with continued losses being made at Hazelwood House and reduced demand expected in the future, the facility would not be viable into the future.

This decision was ultimately made at Board level and we feel strongly that we have made the right decision for our residents at Hazelwood House, the broader Latrobe community and Benetas to ensure the best care possible over the long term as well as the sustainability of the service.

18. Is the decision by Benetas to close Hazelwood House an economic decision to reduce costs and fill empty beds at Traralgon whilst continuing to retain funding for its aged care beds in Latrobe?
Benetas’ decision was influenced by the potential unsustainable longevity of Hazelwood House in the current environment. The present landscape of the aged care industry is changing and data shows that, in Churchill, the service will not be viable in the medium to long term, especially as it is essentially competing with Dalkeith Gardens, only 15 minutes away.

19. Will Benetas now attend a public forum (which could be hosted and Chaired by CDCA), consult with this community and respond to the many questions being asked?
Benetas is and will continue to engage with the local community in regards to the relocation, however we feel smaller community meetings are more beneficial and offer more opportunity for questions to be heard, than a broader community forum. We would like to encourage anyone interested to please contact Benetas on 8823 7900 if you would like to arrange a meeting.

For more information please visit: