

A Subud Project to Tackle Australia's Housing Crisis

Irwan Wyllie – 20 April 21

Australia has some of the most expensive housing in the world. Recent surveys reveal there is virtually no affordable housing for those on low incomes or on the old-age pension. If a pensioner does find housing, it means a descent into poverty - making difficult decisions between food, heating and medications. It is a national crisis that governments here are not adequately addressing.

Dharma Care is a registered charity in Australia. It has operated since 1981. For the last four years, it has been researching how it might provide quality, but affordable, housing for Subud members wanting to retire and downsize, or live in a community.

The aim has been to implement advice from both Bapak and Ibu Rahayu that we should provide for our older members so they can retain access to latihan facilities, stay connected with their Subud brothers and sisters, and enjoy a community lifestyle.

After first researching retirement villages, the Manufactured Home Estate (MHE) model has been identified as the best model for what we want to do. It is a simpler legal arrangement and provides lower cost housing than a retirement village. A manufactured home can be up to 35% cheaper than the local median house price.

Manufactured homes are built off site and then erected on land that is rented on a long-term basis from the housing estate owner – in this case Dharma Care. Manufactured homes can be very luxurious or very simple. The estate includes a range of community facilities that many private homeowners and renters can rarely afford – swimming pools, tennis courts, meeting spaces, cafes and the like. The homeowners' rent covers access to these facilities as well as the land rental.



Manufactured Home Estates can be very luxurious or very simple.

An MHE also has some particular advantages for those on low incomes. It provides homeowners with access to government health and financial support programs. However, if you are financially well off and you want a more expensive home, that is also possible.

Another appealing aspect of this model is that, unlike retirement villages, it can accommodate younger people as well. This was one of the concerns of members when we canvassed their views a few years ago. Older people do not want to be stuck with a bunch of older people.

Our goal is to create an MHE that would cater for both Subud members and the general public. We felt this was important not only to ensure financial sustainability, but also to offer a quality facility to other members of the community struggling with housing affordability. We are aiming at a Northern New South Wales location – a very beautiful part of the world and the base for a largish Subud group.



Last year we spoke to many consultants to get a better picture of what would be involved in terms of timeframes and costs. Some of that information as it relates to homeowners is summarised in a document entitled **“A Housing Development”**.

We are now in the process of conducting a survey among Subud members, both here in Australia and overseas, to see what level of interest and support is out there.

The survey's aims are:

- To better understand the intentions and level of commitment of Subud members for this type of community housing,
- To understand the level of investor or donor support for such a project,
- To understand what skills may be available to assist in the project.

So, If you fall into one of the following categories, please get in touch by emailing us at info@dharmacare.org.au:

- considering retirement or already retired and wanting to downsize,
- interested in community living,
- a potential investor in, and donor to, this project, or
- interested in contributing your expertise to the project.

Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire online using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/jq8JDT5m7z6j98yB8>

We are still in the early stages of this project. It may take three or four years to complete. We are doing our homework, getting advice from experts, and wanting to keep our Subud community informed – as well as seek their assistance and guidance wherever possible.



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