

8.2. Mayoral Minute - 26/04/2021 - Lithgow Aged Care

Report by Mayor – Councillor Ray Thompson

Commentary

Since the announcement in February that Lithgow Aged Care (LAC) would not be able to operate as an accredited aged care provider beyond April 2021, Council has been working tirelessly making representations to our local Federal Member, the Commonwealth Department of Health, the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency, and the Lithgow Aged Care Board, seeking to achieve a very different outcome.

During this time the primary objective of Council has always been to:-

- Ensure the on-going safety and wellbeing of the residents
- That LAC residents remain housed close to their established support networks in Lithgow
- And that the LAC employees retain their jobs and entitlements.

In February 2021 Council was advised by the Australian Government that the decision to not renew Lithgow Aged Care's accreditation was made on the basis of 38 non-compliances out of 42 conditions. This decision was obviously going to impact a significant number of our community members including the 70 plus residents and their families, the staff and their families, and the long term future of Lithgow.

Council's General Manager initially wrote to the Chair and CEO of Lithgow Aged Care (LAC) to encourage a strategy beyond their appeal of the decision. Council also commenced advocating for Lithgow Aged Care with representations to the Hon Andrew Gee MP, Senator Tony Shelton, and representatives of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Thankfully on 16 April 2021 it was announced that the long term future of the Lithgow Aged Care Facility had been secured with the ownership being transferred to 'Respect', a not-for-profit aged care provider, with aged care homes in New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania.

With the transfer of ownership to Respect, all existing residents and staff will remain in place as the transfer occurs.

I am confident that Respect understands the challenges LAC has faced and by taking ownership and responsibility, Respect will use their expertise to maintain and improve the facility. Already the new owners are making changes with significant improvements made to maintain full accreditation and rectify all non-compliant requirements. Once the facility is compliant and full accreditation is

achieved, Respect have given an undertaking to develop the site, expanding the number of rooms as well as the construction of a specialist dementia care unit.

Council's General Manager has reached out to the new owners to thank them for their investment in the city and to offer a working relationship.

I am personally thrilled with this very favorable outcome and appreciative of the support provided by The Hon. Andrew Gee, Senator Tony Shelton and the Commonwealth Department of Health. On behalf of Lithgow City Council and the entire Lithgow Council community, I wish the new owner a long and flourishing future in Lithgow. I also thank the residents, staff, and their families for having faith in our city.

I am very pleased with the role that this Council played in achieving this outcome. It demonstrates what can be achieved when levels of government work together in the best interests of this city.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Council note this wonderful outcome and convey our appreciation, on behalf of the city.