

# New Epping

## Social and affordable homes forging strong community connections

Haven Home Safe, in partnership with Homes Victoria, Riverlee, Hacer, MGS Architects and City of Whittlesea, welcomed residents to 151 new social and affordable homes in early 2023. These quality homes on Wurundjeri Country are part of Stage 1 of New Epping; an urban regeneration and mixed-use precinct 18km north of Melbourne CBD.

Many residents have local ties to the area – such as families with children in local schools – and key workers who have struggled to afford private rental accommodation.

Part of Haven Home Safe's approach to building strong communities is the inclusion of a placemaking strategy, developed in partnership with Village Well. This approach guides residents to become a community of neighbours who take pride in their homes, care for one another, and actively engage with

the wider community. Informed through extensive consultation with the local community and stakeholders, the placemaking framework helps to design customer-centric processes for the expression of interest allocations, and moving in stages and beyond to ensure thriving tenancies.

A dedicated Community Place Manager is also integral to the approach, providing residents with a trusted and welcoming on-site presence, helping people as they move in and navigate this new beginning. The Community Place Manager connects residents with local services such as employment services and the local library; and is responsible for planning and facilitating community building events. This commenced with a regular afternoon tea event that helped people to meet their neighbours and make community connections.



Communal outdoor space

Rex was one of the first residents to move in, and as a compassionate and caring disability advocate, he is looking to the future and thinking about re-joining the workforce. He has already been an active member of the community, attending local events with his neighbours.

***“I absolutely love it (living here), it is just great, very easy to get around, people are nice and the community around me makes such a difference.”***

***I love it here; you can't make a place without a community and the community is so nice here. Also, it's so close to the shops and it is very easy to get around. I have a lot of my friends who live in the area and often visit me so that's nice – Rex, Haven Home Safe renter at New Epping***

The 151 apartments are located across three buildings and comprise 78 one-bedroom apartments and 73 two-bedroom apartments. Four of the apartments are Gold Plus rated designed for people with mobility impairment. The buildings also feature communal spaces such as outdoor recreation spaces with barbecues and edible community gardens.

Energy costs are a significant burden for people on low incomes and this is taken into account when designing social and affordable housing. Several design features help lower residents' ongoing energy costs including average eight-star NATHERS energy rating, electric only appliances, and rooftop solar panels. The apartments are designed to Liveable Housing Australia (LHA) gold and silver standard, making them adaptable over time to support aging in place, and resulting in generally larger apartments with good circulation spaces.



*Apartment kitchen and living room*

Location is key to creating vibrant communities, and these apartments meet that need in spades. Located close to public transport; shops such as Pacific Epping Shopping Centre; green open spaces such as Edgars Creek; education facilities including early education and Melbourne Polytechnic TAFE; and health facilities including Victorian Aboriginal Health Services, Epping Medical Centre, and Orange Door Mental Health Services.

## About Haven Home Safe

Haven Home Safe is a for-purpose organisation that provides a range of housing solutions and wrap-around supports to help people find and keep a place they can call home. Haven Home Safe operates in 29 local government areas across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, with offices in Preston, Geelong, Bendigo and Mildura. Haven Home Safe partners with like-minded organisations, developers, investors and all tiers of government to deliver more affordable housing solutions and homelessness supports for Victorians.

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Haven Home Safe is a member of the Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria (CHIA Vic), the peak body for the community housing sector in Victoria. CHIA Vic works to support the growth of community housing as the most effective and efficient means of ensuring more disadvantaged Victorians can enjoy the dignity of safe, secure and appropriate housing.