



McAuley Community
Services for Women
A ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

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MEDIA RELEASE

VICTORIA'S FIRST PURPOSE BUILT ACCOMMODATION HUB FOR WOMEN WHO ARE HOMELESS, OPENS

McAuley House, Victoria's first purpose built accommodation and support hub for women who are homeless opens today in Footscray.

The \$11m building has been largely funded through the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (\$7m) and the Victorian Labor Government (\$4m).

Jocelyn Bignold, CEO for McAuley Community Services for Women, said: "Our objective was to build a sustainable building that offers women facing homelessness a safe community, that promotes respect and values the dignity and worth of each woman.

"Ultimately, McAuley House is designed to foster a spirit of harmony, security and empower women to achieve independence. We all deserve decent homes and supportive environments. We have a transformational building which we hope will stimulate change in the lives of those who live here," she added.

McAuley House has a specialist focus on those women who have experienced or are experiencing family violence and mental illness. In addition to accommodation, it will also act as a hub for community services that will reach over 100 women each year. New programs that are sensitive to women's specific needs will be pioneered, including education and employment, health, social and recreation opportunities.

The new building, designed by Hede Associates, includes 25-ensuite individual rooms for residents that are light and spacious, each with their own balcony where residents can grow flowers, vegetables or herbs, and have a space of their own.

McAuley House has a main dining room, a laundry and a purpose-built medical room. There are IT areas, several sitting areas, a recreation room, and meeting rooms for activities from education and training programmes to well-being or work-related skills courses.

Ms Bignold said: "McAuley House has been carefully created to provide personal and communal space to allow women to recover from the impact of family violence and homelessness; poor health (physical and mental); extreme social isolation; poverty and unemployment."

Throughout the building, there is specially commissioned artwork by renowned public street artists including international star Alice Pasquini and well-known Footscray artist Baby Guerrilla.

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