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NEW DAY SERVICES CENTRE IN EPPING

Achieve Australia has taken a major step to improve its existing day services and to introduce a respite service for people with disability with the purchase of the heritage Araluen property at 2 Brigadoon Court, Epping.

Day services will be transitioned from their current base at Crowle Home in Ryde to Brigadoon Court by the middle of 2011 after all the necessary accessibility renovations have been completed.

Achieve Australia had been advised via a review some three to four years ago that the location of the current service at Crowle Home was not suitable under the Disability Standards Act and that it was to be relocated.

Chairman of the Achieve Australia Board of Directors, Ian Rutter, says:

“The Board and Property Taskforce have been looking for a location for day services. We have explored a number of options. Araluen will deliver almost all the services our community requires, including day services, respite, education and entertainment programs. In fact much of what we require for living, learning and achieving.

“Delivery of services for people with disability should be conducted in a manner that supports community integration.

“Community integration is a key element to quality activities. “

Achieve Australia’s purchase of Araluen includes the main house and reception centre as well as a chapel. The site has been recognised as a local heritage item by Hornsby Council. Its gardens and outdoor areas are well maintained and can be utilised for a range of purposes.

“Our new, facility in Epping will be a world-leading site providing a full range of education and support services,” Chief Executive Officer Anne Bryce says. “It will offer programs in art and music, for example, and will have the capacity to continue to run functions.”

“Respite is one of the greatest unmet needs in our community. The purchase of Araluen will change the entire notion and experience of respite in the traditional sense. The elegance and ambience provides the perfect setting for a weekend retreat for people with disability to escape into a tranquil environment.”

The weekend respite service will commence as soon as sufficient funds have been raised to operate a flexible delivery service.

The respite service will be self-funded as Achieve Australia does not receive government funding to run this service. Achieve Australia aims to raise \$1.5m from philanthropic and corporate support for the accessibility renovations, fit-outs and running of the respite service. Donations to this appeal are tax deductible.

Renovations will include a complete redesign of the bathrooms, wheelchair access through the front and side-back entrances, some modifications to the commercial kitchen as well as installation of a lift.

The programs and activities conducted at Araluen will enable more intimate and individualised learning and development opportunities. Some people will access their programs on site while others may do so at other locations in the community, thus reducing the number of people on the site at any given time and providing more person-centred programs.

There are currently 100 people with disability accessing our day services and community access programs.

“The facility will enable us to be innovative in the programs we offer”, Bryce says. “Also, it will enable us to integrate some of our other services, such as Transition to Work.”

The property has been purchased by Achieve Australia from a private family which has operated it as a function and events centre for some years.

ENDS

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