

\$160m care facilities planned for suburbs

Baptist church to build homes for the elderly

By Graham Downie

Development applications for two aged-care projects in Canberra's inner south – jointly costing almost \$160 million – have been lodged with the ACT Planning and Land Authority.

Subject to approval, construction of a \$40 million, 128-room aged-care residence in Griffith is expected to begin early next year and to be completed about 20 months later. The proposed 160-bed complex will provide low and high care and will include a dementia unit.

When the Griffith project is completed, residents from Morling Lodge in Red Hill will be transferred to the new accommodation, to be built on the site of the O'Connell Education Centre on the corner of Blaxland and Stuart streets.

Morling Lodge and adjacent independent living units would then be demolished and replaced by 118 one-, two- and three-bedroom units. That project is expected to cost about \$117 million. Senior project

manager for Baptist Community Services of NSW and the ACT Bob Kennedy said yesterday discussions had begun with residents of the independent living units at Red Hill over alternative accommodation after the Red Hill units were demolished.

Some people might return to the site after the new units had been built, but they would have to live elsewhere during the construction which would probably take about two years.

Mr Kennedy said both developments would have northern orientation for maximum solar gain; and water harvesting and black water treatment for reuse on the site.

The Griffith development would include a small retail area, movie theatre, medical consulting room, dental hygienist, podiatrist, chapel, gymnasium, pool and spa for physiotherapy and maximum daylight in residents' rooms.

The centre would have two, two-storey buildings, linked by a joint foyer. One building would have a

basement. Public comments on both applications close on September 17.

Mr Kennedy said the entire capital cost of both projects would be met by Baptist Community Services. There had been extensive community consultation over the past two years on the Griffith project and he was confident it would be approved.

Though there might still be objections after the development application had been approved, he did not believe they would delay the project.

There was less concern about possible objections over the Red Hill project because it would replace existing aged-care infrastructure. Though construction at Red Hill was not likely to begin for two years, the major concern would be to prevent inconvenience to nearby residents during clearing and reconstruction on the site. Executive director of the ACT Council on the Ageing Paul Flint welcomed both projects, saying there was a need to replace old facilities.