



## The Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford

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June 21<sup>st</sup> 2022

Dear Parishioners,

### **OLHC Epping Parish and school community update**

I am writing to provide you with an important update about Our Lady Help of Christians (OLHC), Epping redevelopment project.

In recent months, our development partner Stockland announced that it had entered an agreement with EQT Infrastructure (EQT) to sell its Retirement Living business. The agreement includes Stockland's portfolio of 58 established retirement villages and 10 development projects underway and in planning, including our OLHC, Epping redevelopment project, which includes the new parish offices, parish hall, retail space, the primary school, parish OHSC facility, presbytery and car parking, as well as the retirement village and aged care facility.

In discussions with Stockland's senior leaders - Andrew Whitson, CEO Communities and Calum Ross, Head of Development, Retirement Living - about what it means for our project, they strongly believe the sale of the business to EQT will result in a better outcome for the Parish and school communities, with its increased focus on retirement living.

I, along with representatives of the Diocese and Catholic Schools Broken Bay, have met with EQT representatives. I can report that they are very excited about our project and look forward to commencing the construction works. I am also pleased to advise that our Stockland colleagues, with whom we have worked with for these past six years, are also joining EQT. As part of the transaction, more than 300 Stockland employees will transfer to EQT with the business. This means that Stockland will continue to work with the development team led by Calum Ross as well as our architects, Architectus who have presented to the parish and school communities on a few occasions. This is enormously reassuring for the continuity of our redevelopment project.

In providing you some details about EQT, they have advised us that it has a strong values-based culture and prides itself on being a reputable investor and owner with a clear purpose to future-proof businesses and make a positive impact. Headquartered in Sweden, EQT is a global investment organisation with a strong track record in retirement living, healthcare and aged care. It has more than A\$100 billion of funds under management and has portfolio companies across Asia Pacific, US, and Europe with over 175,000 employees and more than A\$40 billion in sales. Last year, it acquired Icon Group, Australia's largest vertically integrated cancer-care operator, and invested in Five Good Friends, a technology-enabled provider that connects people with care and health solutions in their community. In November 2020, EQT acquired Metlifecare, a leading retirement village operator with 28 villages in New Zealand.

The settlement of the acquisition is subject to Foreign Investment Review Board approval and is expected in the coming months.

In February, we advised construction would start in 2022 with completion at the end of 2023 for the start of the 2024 school year. With the Stockland and EQT working through a transition process, as a result, Stockland has had to revise its program targeting completion in time for Term 2, 2024. The Parish Works and School Works are now forecast to be completed by March 2024, and the Retirement Village and Residential Aged Care are forecast to be completed at the end 2024. Tours of the new Parish and School Assets and training as necessary will be undertaken in February 2024.

As mentioned in my updates to you this year, Stockland took site possession in February in preparation for construction commencement. I am now pleased to advise that we are able to confirm the builder's appointment with Stockland recently entering into the construction contract with Richard Crookes Constructions for design and construction of the project.

Richard Crookes Constructions is an Australian, family-owned construction company that has been operating for over four decades, and in that time their team has collectively delivered over 200 residential and accommodation developments, 100 aged care facilities and more than 300 schools, including the Opera Residences and Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College. They have extensive experience delivering retirement living and high-end residential developments as well as education facilities across multiple concurrent stages in live, operational environments, and we look forward to working with them to deliver the OLHC, Epping redevelopment project.

The next phase of the project involves finalising the design documentation ready for construction, and demolition of the existing presbytery, parish administration building and school buildings in preparation for construction.

Demolition is expected to commence in the week of 20 June 2022, weather permitting. Richard Crookes will access the site via Cambridge Street, and there will be no impact to the continued access to the OLHC Church without prior notification. The amenity block on Oxford Street will remain. This means the school bus pick-up location will not be impacted through the demolition phase. In relation to the school pick-up, the safety of students is the highest priority. The Director of Schools, Danny Casey will write again to the families to continue to ensure they are kept apprised of construction phase and logistics.

Importantly, OLHC Church will remain open for prayer, and that the Vigil and Sunday Masses will continue. However, given the noise of demolition and excavation, it is likely that weekday Masses during construction hours will be suspended, with more details to be provided in the Parish bulletin in the coming weeks.

Pedestrian pathways will be maintained along Oxford Street and Cambridge Street, with traffic controllers present during construction hours to halt pedestrians while construction vehicles are entering or exiting the site. Demolition works are restricted to Monday to Friday between the hours of 7.00am to 5.00pm. No demolition works will be undertaken on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.

Richard Crookes has leased floorspace in the neighbouring 16-18 Cambridge Street commercial property for their site office, with their site sheds to be located on the carpark of that property.

Construction is expected to start in September once demolition is complete, the design documentation is finalised, and a Construction Certificate has been obtained.

Throughout this year regular Project Control Group meetings have continued to take place with Stockland, in addition to almost daily interactions between us, our project managers from Root Partnerships and the Stockland team. As our development partner, they continue to work closely

with OLHC, Epping parish and school representatives to ensure a smooth construction period and looks forward to engaging with the broader community as it moves into construction phase and is committed to keeping key stakeholders informed as construction progresses by:

- Communicating what it is doing and how they intend to do it.
- Providing simple and direct feedback opportunities to stakeholders.
- Informing stakeholders of upcoming work in advance, where possible.
- Monitoring emerging issues and taking proactive steps to resolve them before they escalate.
- Holding community information sessions with the parish and school Communities and local neighbours and inviting feedback.
- Establishing a community feedback line and processing for issues.

Anticipated for post-demolition, but pre-construction, Stockland and Richard Crookes will hold an information session with local residents to provide information on scope, traffic management and construction management plans and feedback lines. It is intended that parishioners and school families will be invited to this forum.

A free-call 1800 number has been established for the project throughout construction (1800 466 939). A dedicated project email address has also been established to be monitored by Stockland to allow key stakeholders to directly raise queries ([cambridge@stockland.com.au](mailto:cambridge@stockland.com.au)). The project website (<http://olhc-develop.com.au>) will continue to be updated and refreshed. In addition, Project Updates and Fact Sheets regarding the construction commencement and appropriate milestones will be produced and circulated to all stakeholders to provide an overview of the next stage of works as well as an invitation for stakeholders to make contact to discuss questions or concerns.

To mark this significant project milestone in commencing construction works, we will also be commemorating this with an official 'sod-turning' ceremony in August to celebrate this historic occasion for the life of our parish and school communities.

In the coming months, I will also be inviting you once more to a parish and school forum so that I, with Dominique O'Sullivan, Principal of OLHC Epping Primary School and Danny Casey, Director of Schools, as well as the Diocesan Financial Administrator, Emma McDonald and our Project Managers from Root Partnerships and Stockland can introduce you to the builder, Richard Crookes and to present to you an update on this construction phase of the project.

Yours sincerely



Fr Jim McKeon PP