

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BOARD



SERVING JEWISH SENIORS

MARCH 2017



An Exciting New Development To Accommodate More Residents

The primary mission of B'nai B'rith Retirement Villages is to provide affordable accommodation to Jewish Seniors and everything is done with that focus.

The aim of this bulletin is to introduce the Board and management team to both BBRV residents and the wider Jewish community.

The most recent expansion by BBRV has been the acquisition of the residential property adjacent to Princess Gardens, Rose Bay in November 2014 and this has now received development approval.

Leon Fredkin, General Manager of the Villages explains what happens next.

When did you get permission for the development of 13 Princess Street, Rose Bay?

LF: We heard on 14 November, 2016 from the Court Commissioner that we had gained development consent.

How many units have been approved?

LF: A total of 6 units – 3 x 3bedroom, 2 x 2bedroom and 1 x 1bedroom plus eight undercover parking spaces and one car share space.

What's the next step?

LF: It will take about a year for all the pre-building processes to be prepared. Before the development consent can be converted into a Construction Certificate, which would allow building work to commence, there are a lot of processes to be organised. For example, we

need to have a dust management plan and a traffic plan in place and these will take about six months to complete.

We will consult with our residents – something which I have promised – and all the pre-conditions in the development approval have to be met before a sod can be turned. There are also pre-building preparations that have to be done like access and protection for buildings, and these will take about three months.

We also have to engage a builder and have allowed ourselves considerable time for this process.

So when do you expect building work to commence?

LF: We believe we can start in early 2018 but we will know more when we have dealt with the Construction Certificate documentation later this year.

Can we talk about the disruption for Princess Gardens and other residents?

LF: It's true that there will be disruption including the normal noise of construction plus inconvenience and dust which we will endeavour to minimise as much as possible.

These are the things that will be worked on in the next year as part of our preparations. The present parking area will be fully replaced.

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Princess Street



We intend to undertake comprehensive consultation with our community and we have mechanisms in place to ensure that when construction does commence, disruption will be minimised as much as possible.

How long do you envision the build will take?

LF: I would expect it to take 12-15 months.

What other improvements and enhancements are planned for the Village generally?

LF: Substantial landscaping and improvements works in the existing Village space are planned including a new entrance, BBQ area and a permanent Sukkah as well as shaded garden seating areas.

Will there be any advantages for present Residents?

LF: Once the inconvenience and disruption is over, the Village generally will be an even more attractive place to live, enhanced by the extra amenities. Ramps, shades, a small fountain, places to sit - these are things we don't have now.



Board Member Profile:

Greg Bachmayer

When architect Greg Bachmayer entered the JCA Observership Program, he didn't know that skills he gained with other organisations would be tailor-made for B'nai B'rith Retirement Villages.

Greg came to the Board as an observer in 2015 before becoming a board member. With the building of six units at Rose Bay now approved, his knowledge is a welcome addition.

"We are most fortunate to have Greg's skill-set available. It's also an added bonus that his relative youth brings down the average age of Board members" said Chairman Henry Wirth.

After graduating from Architecture, Greg worked in residential architecture. Looking for wider experience, he went to Africa with a non-profit organisation where he expanded his skills providing models for sanitation, housing and general development in areas which were struggling to get attention and finance.

After further studies on his return to Sydney, he joined St George Community Housing where he researched and developed affordable community housing. He said that this not-for-profit organisation did have something in common with its African counterpart.

It has not previously been seen as desirable for a non-profit organisation to produce a surplus of funds. Greg says it's now viewed as a necessary aim, one supported by an organisation's donors, with the aim of making an organisation more self-sufficient.



DIRECTOR GREGORY BACHMAYER

B. Design (Syd), M. Arch (Syd), M. Prop & Dev (UNSW), MBA (Macq)

"There is a balance to be achieved by 'doing good things' and making a surplus. Stakeholders – and by that term I mean everyone involved – beneficiaries, donors and volunteers – do not all always see things the same way and measure 'good' differently" he explained.

"Volunteers also have a stake in the organisation because they are not working for monetary reward and believe deeply in what they are working for".

When asked if being involved with the Board took up a lot of free time, Greg said it hadn't done so –so far – but he expected that to change soon as he will be very involved with preparations for the expansion at Princess Gardens in Rose Bay.

In bringing his experience and expertise to the project, he is aware that there will be difficulties as in any such undertaking. He believes that while building work will provide some disruption, expansion of the Princess Street site is ultimately of benefit to the community.

"I see a huge opportunity for the Villages and believe that the need for affordable senior housing is only going to increase in the future. There are no other organisations in the Sydney Jewish community who are committed to providing affordable housing for Jewish seniors. It is possible that we may soon need to look further afield for future projects" said Greg.



“Volunteers also have a stake in the organisation because they are not working for monetary reward and believe deeply in what they are working for”.

A Chat with our General Manager

If you ask Leon Fredkin why he took on the job of General Manager of B'nai B'rith Retirement Villages (BBRV), the answer might be surprising.

"I liked the two people who interviewed me. I've learnt that people are more important than the job description" he said.

He believes it was serendipitous that he saw an advertisement for a part time job just as he was tiring of a large corporate environment. It wasn't until he went for the interview that he realised the job was one within his own community.

Born in Baku on the edge of the Caspian Sea, then part of the USSR, he came to Australia via Israel with his family in 1966. After gaining a degree in building he worked for a construction company for 10 years followed by many years in development and project management at a senior level.

Projects that he has been involved with include consolidating the sites on which the infamous "Toaster" at Circular Quay now stands as well as involvement in the development of Homebush Bay including Olympic Park and the relocation of the Royal Agricultural Society Show facility.

During a decade with the Department of Housing, he was involved with a wide range of projects including focusing on projects for seniors' living.

"We lived for many years in public housing at Eastlakes, so I have a deep appreciation for the sorts of issues that impact on people who live in public housing" said Leon.

The new development slated for Princess Gardens at Rose Bay is much smaller than the



GENERAL MANAGER
LEON FREDKIN

multi-million dollar projects he has worked on in the past, but he is excited that this project is going ahead.

While Leon draws on his many years of experience running large teams of people and dealing with advocates and stakeholders with diverse agendas, BBRV is the smallest organisation he has ever worked for. He says that endeavouring to deal with problems in a fair and equitable way is the same whatever the size of the organisation.

"In the last three years we have spent in excess of \$500,000 over and above our income from operations on improving conditions in the Villages. BBRV has never been as strong financially as it is now and the Princess Street project is an opportunity for us to expand an existing Village and balance the type of accommodation we can offer by building different sized units".

"I love my job, more than any job I have ever had because of what we do for some of the most vulnerable people in the community. When a resident says they love living in the Village, it makes it all worthwhile.

I also enjoy working with a Board that has a depth of character that I have rarely seen in an organisation. In my time here, the Board has never refused a request from any resident for financial assistance" he concluded.

Life at Kadimah Gardens

It would be hard for Warwick Morris, Village Manager at Kadimah Gardens, Wahroonga to describe his typical day.

He might be overseeing the refurbishment of a unit and co-ordinating plumbers, painters and electricians or dealing with residents' requests.

What are your duties as Village Manager?

WM: I run the Village and approve all accounts for payment. Basically, I look after all the different facets of the day to day running of the Village.

When our previous caretaker was unwell I also had to deal with lots of tradesmen – such as plumbers, painters, electricians and gardeners. This also includes directing the handyman we bring in two days a week to keep things in order and directing the common area cleaners who come in three days a week.

You mentioned refurbishments. What does that involve?

WM: As units become vacant, we are renovating and upgrading them, depending on what is required. This might include a new kitchen, air conditioning and carpet or a bathroom upgrade. Goods have to be purchased, measurements taken and quotes obtained, and all that takes time to oversee and organise.

What about functions at Kadimah Gardens?

WM: I look after bringing in the food for functions or make arrangements with the Residents' Committee to ensure we have everything necessary.



VILLAGE MANAGER
WARWICK MORRIS

Is there plenty to keep you busy with 48 units?

WM: Yes there certainly is. It keeps me busy but I do love my job.

What about the program for ongoing improvements?

WM: One of the many ways we are improving the property generally is to install new security screens on units facing the street – an added safety feature. New hand rails and awnings have been installed where required.

How do you deal with complaints from residents?

WM: I keep a log book of all requests and complaints. All complaints are listened to, noted and dealt with.

Are there aspects that are difficult to deal with?

WM: Some tasks are easier than others. Sometimes I have to talk to the family of a resident if the resident is struggling to manage independently. These conversations are not easy but it is part of my job. I try to do the best I can” said Warwick.



visit our website

www.bbrv.com.au

Princess Gardens at Rose Bay

Village Managers
B'nai B'rith Retirement Villages Ltd
Unit 52, 7-11 Princess St
Rose Bay NSW 2029

T: +61 2 9371 2631
F: +61 2 9371 1625
princessgardens@bbbv.org.au

Kadimah Gardens at Wahroonga

Village Managers
B'nai B'rith Retirement Villages Ltd
3-9 Jubilee Street
Wahroonga NSW 2076

T: +61 2 9489 5670
F: +61 2 9489 5660
kadimahgardens@bbbv.org.au

