



MEDIA RELEASE

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LIFESTYLE CHOICE FOR PEOPLE

WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Where and how we live in the community are choices that most of us take for granted.

For some people, their ideal lifestyle is sharing a home with friends or family in the suburbs, while others prefer to live in a city apartment close to restaurants and cafes.

But for one group within our community, this choice has rarely existed.

For many people with intellectually disabilities, the only option has been congregate living in private, gated communities.

However, times and attitudes change and this group of people is now increasingly being offered the same choices as the rest of us about where they live, who they live with and how they live.

Earlier this year, Minda opened the first of 16 new community houses, developed in conjunction with the State Government. When each of the new properties has been opened, they will bring to 56 the number of community homes operated and supported by Minda.

These homes are located in metropolitan areas, predominately in the south of Adelaide, and are a combination of new, purpose built homes and existing houses that have been updated to meet specific needs.

By the end of March next year, 40 people from our Brighton campus and the State Government's urgent housing list will move into these community homes, living assisted, but independent, lives.

One of the drivers behind our decision to offer greater housing flexibility is the *2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, adopted by the Australian Government in 2008.

Minda ratified the Convention in June 2009, becoming the first Australian non-government disability organisation to do so.

One of the principles behind the Convention is to support people to live independently, to be included in the community, to choose where and with whom they live and to have access to in-home, residential and community support services.

Minda is moving away from the “one size fits all” model to a more individualized, person-centred approach.

Research shows us that better outcomes can be achieved when people with intellectual disabilities are integrated within their community.

Community housing is world-best practice. Those living in community housing receive appropriate support and care to live a full and independent life within the community – something most of us take for granted.

Minda currently houses 250 people at its Brighton Campus and supports another 310 people in the community.

Residents at the Brighton campus are now being offered the choice of continuing to live there in an improved housing development or moving into community housing.

For those who choose to stay, we are looking at modernising the accommodation we offer to bring it more in tune with the 21st century. This is one of the keys behind the Brighton Masterplan which is currently being developed.

The choice of whether to stay at Brighton or move into the community is being made by the residents themselves. It is their choice.

However community housing is not just about those with an intellectual disability. It also assists the general public by raising awareness of disability issues and fosters a more inclusive society by helping everyone to understand why ensuring human rights for people with disability is important.

In other words, it is a win-win situation for the intellectually disabled and all South Australians.

Cathy Miller is Chief Executive Officer of Minda, one of South Australia’s largest providers of services for the intellectually disabled.