



**HEART OF WILLOUGHBY**  
A New Lifestyle Precinct

## Work gets underway on transformation of beloved Willoughby landmark

It's been 10 years in the planning and now the \$95 million redevelopment of Club Willoughby is set to begin, marked by an official sod turning ceremony this week.

Known as the 'Heart of Willoughby', the project start was celebrated at a "Sod Turning Ceremony" officiated by Tim James, the Member for Willoughby, kicking off a significant new chapter for one of the suburb's most cherished venues.

Family-owned developer and builder Hycorp, founded in the early 1990s, has been working tirelessly alongside Club Willoughby to transform the underutilised site into a memorable multigenerational destination. The project received development approval in February 2021. The project is being developed and built by Hycorp.

The redevelopment will see the 52-year-old building replaced with a new state-of-the-art Club Willoughby along with Hyegrove Willoughby a 126-apartment luxury retirement community and aged care facility as well as 2,000sqm of open space including memorial gardens.

The contemporary mixed-use project in the geographical centre of Willoughby promises to be the beating hub for a connected and harmoniously integrated village for all ages.

While the Club will retain ownership of the land, a long-term lease will be granted to Hycorp who will operate the over-55s village.

Set over three levels, the new look Club Willoughby will offer a range of dining, function and event experiences under one roof. Residents of the 126-apartment retirement community will have access to a concierge service, complimentary basic groceries, meal preparation assistance, a laundry service, and an on-site building manager.

Community amenities will include an indoor swimming pool, beauty salon, cinema, wine-tasting room, gym and pilates studio plus access to around-the-clock care with onsite registered nurses.

Apartments include a mix of one, two and three bedroom floorplans ranging in size from 55sqm to 176sqm internally, each with their own balcony or courtyard.

Off-the-plan purchasers will also have the unique opportunity to custom design their apartment with add-ons such as heated flooring, wallpaper, pendant lights, and smart home automation systems.

In addition, 45 luxury care suites will be set up as three small 'homes' with kitchens, dining rooms and lounge areas designed to feel like a family home rather than a traditional aged care facility.

**Club Willoughby President Matt Vertzonis** said while the road to discovering The Heart of Willoughby had been long, the result will be a dynamic new premises for members, residents and the greater community.

*"The Club was built for a different era and since then people's expectations have changed. In a nutshell we all know it really has passed its use by date. Over the years, many different boards of directors have had the challenge of considering what should be done with the premises, but none of the previous ideas ever came to fruition,"* said Mr Vertzonis.

The Club connected with Hycorp at the end of 2013, with the two groups working together on ideas of what the future might look like.

*"Thanks to comprehensive community consultation, we now find ourselves with an extraordinary redevelopment. What appealed to us was the ability to stay on the site, fit in with the area, provide services in the area that were in short supply, and at the same time ensure our place in the community of which we've been a part since 1947,"* he said.



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### A future deeply connected with its past

Club Willoughby was created by the veterans of the Willoughby Legion Ex-Services Sub Branch with initial meetings held under a marquee before moving into the current premises in 1969.

**Barney Flanagan, the current Club Willoughby sub branch secretary**, attended the first outdoor club meeting in 1954 before the first Clubhouse was even constructed and was at the opening of the current Club Willoughby building 53 years ago. Although Mr Flanagan, 88, has fond memories of the current building, he said it's high time for a change.

*"It's going to be magic; it will be the centre of Willoughby and something that the whole community can enjoy. Back in the early days when I started with the club I could never have foreseen what it would become. I've seen the sketches and it's now coming to life. It's going to be a tremendous tribute to those who served, those who suffered and those who did not return,"* said Mr Flanagan, OAM.

*"I think it's also very important for all those long term locals who have lived in the area their whole lives to have a place to downsize to, move out of their big houses and start a new life,"* he added.

### A new era for high-end retirement living

**Managing Director of Hyecorp Stephen Abolakian** said both his company and the Club shared a common goal for members, future residents and the local community.

*"Our vision is to create a state-of-the-art showcase for the suburb of Willoughby offering a range of facilities and services for community members of all ages,"* he said, adding that the addition of retirement living will cater to residents seeking a hassle-free future.

*"As people age and require more services and help, we can provide whatever they need whether it is having the heavy laundry done or meals delivered, that level of care can be dialed up or down. It's about putting the control into their hands, a characteristic that is too often not available to people living in retirement communities or aged care facilities,"* he said.

The five-star inclusions at Hyegrove Willoughby are a result of local community consultation, with locals invited to have their say on what services and amenities they wished to see at the site.

**Member for Willoughby Tim James** said Hyegrove Willoughby is a testament to business and community groups coming together to create a landmark destination.

*"So many Willoughby locals will have memories of this location, and the club – whether for attending different events at the Ex-Services Club like Anzac Day or Remembrance Day, school sporting events or other community engagements. It's long been an integral part of our community, and I'm confident this project will give it a new lease on life, while delivering important accommodation to serve the needs of our residents and enable them to stay in a place they know and love."*

*"It's a reminder that progress can and must include honouring our past and the people that went before, as we create new spaces and places for people to gather, commemorate and celebrate different life milestones and moments."*

*"I'm delighted to see the level of care and attention that Hyecorp and Club Willoughby have already shown throughout this process of renewal."*

Stage 1 of Hyegrove Willoughby has sold out with Stage 2 now selling. After the August 17th sod turning, construction will begin with completion expected in late 2024.

**HYECORP**

  
Club  
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