

## Life-changing accommodation for young people with disability

The first specialist disability apartment block has opened in Guildford, Sydney, allowing fourteen young people with disability to live independently, some for the first time in their lives.

Due to their high physical needs, many faced a future living in nursing homes with limited opportunity for leisure and social activities and little to no interaction with the community.

The 15 apartment project, built by Ability SDA in collaboration with the NDIS, includes 14 apartments which are adaptable to each resident's specific needs. The apartments are extra large and self-contained, and feature smart-home technology, completely accessible bedrooms and balconies, open plan living rooms, wide doorways and customisable kitchens and bathrooms. The remaining apartment accommodates an onsite care team run by Achieve Australia whose services will be available to residents 24 hours a day.

"The residents we support will experience the latest technology, cutting-edge home design and have the opportunity to live a full life in the community," said Brent Pitts, Acting CEO at Achieve Australia.

23yr old Fathema is one such resident and becomes emotional when she talks about how her new apartment gives her hope for the future.

"Sometimes I pinch myself because I used to sit in a room and think 'I can't do anything'. I have so much more possibility now."

Improving quality of life and affordability was a major motivator for the Director of Ability SDA, Paul Simmons "We want to provide affordable, high quality housing for the most vulnerable in our society. The rental cost to each eligible resident is only 25% of the Disability Support Pension."

Leading this new drive for specialist disability accommodation (SDA) is the Summer Foundation who have worked closely with Ability SDA on the ground breaking project.

"Until recently, younger people with high disability support needs had extremely limited options when it came to their housing," said the Summer Foundation's General Manager of Housing Matching, Alecia Rathbone.

Six of the Guildford residents had previously been living in nursing homes.

"For many of these residents it will be the first time they've had a home they can call their own." Ms Rathbone said.

Another important aspect of the project was creating an intentional community. Features such as a rooftop terrace and outdoor cinema were included to facilitate socialisation.

Following the success at Guildford, Ability SDA has embarked on three more SDA projects in Villawood in Western Sydney, Gosford on the Central Coast and Townsville in Queensland.

For more information and to check your eligibility please visit the Ability SDA website  
[www.abilitiesda.com.au](http://www.abilitiesda.com.au)