



Press Release
(For immediate release)
19 September, 2016

Plans unveiled for \$1.2m community hub in South City

South Alive has unveiled plans for a vibrant \$1.2 million community hub in South City.

The latest initiative of the South Invercargill Urban Rejuvenation Charitable Trust will provide a significant community asset, incorporating a social enterprise business to assist with the future sustainability of the organisation.

“We’re really excited. This is a real step up as we continue to recognise the needs of our community,” South Alive chairperson Robyn Hickman said.

“It will be welcoming yet contemporary – people will feel very proud of the vibrant space we are creating.”

The trust will purchase a 400sqm building, currently occupied by Bin Inn, on the corner of Grace and Ness Streets, adjacent to its existing community park and basketball court developments.

“This initiative will tie it all together in a fully integrated indoor/outdoor facility,” Hickman said.

Community funders and the Invercargill City Council have rallied behind South Alive to make the vision a reality, reflecting the positive impact the project will have.

The ILT Foundation has injected \$200,000, the Invercargill Licensing Trust \$25,000 and the Community Trust of Southland \$50,000 and a \$350,000 interest-free loan. The Invercargill City Council will repay \$200,000 of the loan over the next five years, with South Alive to pay the remaining \$150,000 starting in year six.

The ICC, which recently purchased the adjacent community park land, will also contribute by creating angle parking, laying new paving and erecting fencing.

ILT chairman Alan Dennis said the Trust applauded the ambition shown by South Alive.

“The scope for this to make a real difference in the lives of our community both now and for future generations is immense and that’s exactly the impact we want to see our funding have,” he said.

With a feasibility study now completed, plans will be finalised with South Alive taking possession of the building prior to Christmas. The first phase of construction is expected to be finished in February next year and will include a retail shop, an area for cooking demonstrations and a coffee counter.

An additional 50sqm space is designated for Koha Kai to develop into a purpose-built commercial kitchen for people of all abilities. Koha Kai, a not-for-profit charitable trust, provides training in hospitality and horticulture for people living with disability.

Founder Janice Lee said Koha Kai was “thrilled” to collaborate with South Alive on the initiative. The ‘training’ kitchen would take their trainees to the next level where the focus will be on producing quality, affordable, nutritious meals available for sale to the public.

“We train our teams in the schools and this is an important part of the Koha Kai strategic plan. Having this commercial space enables our trainees to develop and refine their skills and is the next step towards gaining qualifications and mainstream employment,” she said.

“The kitchen will also create a way to draw in the community. We hope to provide opportunities for the public to connect with us, learning to cook ‘Koha Kai’ style meals for their families, alongside our trainees.”

An extension to be built in phase two, expected to be in June 2017, will provide a community area for meetings, socialising and events, as well as a South Alive office.

Project Manager Janette Malcolm said the retail space was a key component to provide vital funding but would also be utilised for work experience for youth, the unemployed and those new to Invercargill who want to make connections in the community.

“It’s a social enterprise – our first goal is we must make a profit in the shop because we need South Alive to become self-sufficient with its operating costs and not continually reliant on community funders,” she said.

“Another important goal is how it contributes to South Alive’s strategies which are about building community identity, pride, participation and capability. We can have all these opportunities for people to connect with a reason.

“We need to get the term social enterprise into the vocabulary of our community. It’s not just about selling goods and making a profit – the way you go about doing that can have far-reaching benefits.”

Since its inception in 2012, South Alive’s achievements have transformed South Invercargill. Revamping the South City shopping area, Invercargill’s first dog park, community gardens and the “Tale of Southland” sculpture are among the many initiatives which earned it a place in the national finals of the 2016 Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards.

“Until recently, our major focus was about external pride and enabling people to feel proud about how South Invercargill looked and felt. That’s the big measure – do people feel prouder and better about where they live?” Malcolm said.

“When South Alive first started, that was just 35 percent of people. In three years it rose to 82.5 percent.

“Now it’s about internal pride and people feeling like they can really shape their lives and have the lives they want to. We have evolved to be more about capability building and participation, rather than purely infrastructure.”

Hickman said phase two of the development would bring greater opportunities for people to get to know others and expand their knowledge by learning new things.

“We’ve identified a real shortage of community space which is available and flexible to meet the needs of various groups,” she said.

“We didn’t think this big in the beginning but we’re evolving and this is the direction we are being led in terms of community events and participation so it’s a matter of getting those facilities now.

“If you just keep making the environment look better, you might not make inroads into people’s wellbeing. We need to do more.”

The feasibility study was completed with a grant from Venture Southland, who also dedicated staff time and support throughout the process.

With a collaborative approach, South Alive sought expertise from several local professionals who contributed pro-bono, including architect John McCulloch, real estate agent Trevor Thayer, Richard Smith of Southern Quantity Surveyors, John Schol of Malloch McClean and James Cambridge from Preston Russell.

Ends

Projected timeline:

- October 2016: Plans finalised and resource consent sought.
- December 22, 2016: South Alive take possession of the building currently occupied by Bin Inn.
- January 2017: Phase one construction begins, including a retail shop, demonstration area, coffee counter and Koha Kai's commercial kitchen.
- June 2017: Phase two construction begins, including an extension to provide a community centre with meeting rooms and the South Alive office.

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