

Devonport (Showground) Project

Connecting people, place and lifestyle

Media Release

Wednesday 17 April 2019

The Devonport Agricultural & Pastoral Society (DAPS) has signed a contract for sale for the Devonport Showground to affordable housing advocates Ian Ugarte and Simon Want.

Mr Ugarte and Mr Want founded the Australian Housing Initiative (AHI) to increase the supply of housing by the private sector to those people who need it most.

While the price is commercial in confidence, Mr Want said the sale would provide DAPS with the opportunity to redefine their service provision and a possible transition to a new site.

“Our lengthy discussions with the Devonport Agricultural & Pastoral Society, revealed they have faced a number of challenges to deliver their charter. One issue is that the site is no longer fit for purpose,” Mr Want said.

“We are respectful of the role DAPS and the Showground has played in the community for more than 100 years and recognise that the transition will be difficult. We will continue to work closely with the Society to support them on this transition”.

AHI has been working closely with the Government, Devonport City Council and community for the past two years to deliver a number of housing projects. They look forward to continuing this relationship with this new purchase.

Mr Ugarte said the Showground site presented a significant opportunity for Devonport.

“We are passionate about putting the needs of the community first and are looking to work closely with them on the future of this site,” Mr Ugarte said.

Discussions have already begun with the State Government and Council to ensure a strategic transition for TasRacing in the medium to long-term, which currently uses the site for a variety of its race meets.

“We have already started discussions about potential rezoning of the property with Council, which would need the final approval of the Tasmanian Planning Commission,” Mr Ugarte said.

AHI will now consult widely with existing users, the State Government, the Devonport City Council, business, the public and other interested stakeholders to ensure the future of the site offers the best opportunities.

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“The engagement process will ensure a range of community and other interested stakeholders organisations are involved,” Mr Want said.

“This process will help to ensure that the final development meets a mix of needs, while also ensuring that the Showground can continue to be used by a range of different community groups throughout the week.”

Mr Ugarte said initial conversations with the local community have already highlighted a number of great ideas like the incorporation of the existing farmers market into any development to assist in the activation of public open space that also retains the heritage of the site.

“Ultimately the purchase of the Showground presents the opportunity for the site to continue to contribute to the future fabric of the Devonport community,” Mr Ugarte said.

“With the Living City development underway, it is a critical time to ensure the needs of the community are planned for future generations.”

AHI would now like to hear from the community about what’s important to them and have invited residents to take part in the process online and at a community open day to be held in the very near future.

“We want to work with the community to understand what they love most about the site,” Mr Want said.

“We want to hear the stories, see the photos, read the letters, and speak to the people that have a connection to the land, the buildings and the experiences on site.

“All of this will form the starting point for the future of the site and will help us provide something of great value to the community.

To register interest in being involved please visit www.devonportshowground.com.au or visit the project’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/devonportshowground

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