

US developer brings new retiree living concept to Coast

Village for Biggera Waters

by Tracey McBean
business property editor

HARBOUR Quays at Biggera Waters is poised to house a \$40 million development that will be a fresh take on the traditional retirement village.

Property groups Valad and Petrac have joined with US company Harvest Development to bring the rental retirement accommodation concept to Australia, with the first projects to be on the Gold Coast and in Sydney.

The concept involves retirees paying a monthly fee for their accommodation and meals in a holiday resort-style community.

The joint-venture partners are proposing to develop a 133-apartment complex on a 1.1ha waterfront site in the Harbour Quays precinct, near Harbour Town.

Petrac director of special projects Stephen Bowers said the land, in East Key Drive, was under contract for an undisclosed sum subject to the Gold Coast City Council granting approval for the four-level project.

The development application was lodged a month ago and it is hoped an approval can be in place by November to allow completion of the project in 2009.

Accommodation will comprise a mix of studio units, and one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Mr Bowers said the rental concept was 'very well accepted' in the US and Canada where Harvest Developments, with 39,000 homes, was the largest provider of such communities.



Above: an artist's impression of the four-level retiree facility

Right: Harbour Quays with the project's site outlined



He said the all-inclusive concept did away with bonds, exit fees and large capital outlays, making the lifestyle straightforward for the 75-plus target market.

"The only thing they pay for is their telephone," said Mr Bowers.

"There is less to worry

about; we are not interested in taking bonds or exit fees."

Residents at the Gold Coast complex will pay about \$3500 a month, which will include accommodation, meals, cleaning, linen service and use of all facilities.

Residents do not have to pay for electricity or gas,

council rates, home insurance or groceries.

Mr Bowers said the complex also would offer a retirement-living option to the middle market and help take the burden off other aged-care facilities in the city.

He said some care services, such as physiotherapy,

would be made available at the complex.

Mr Bowers said the company wanted to have 10 such communities in the development pipeline in Australia within two years.

He said Petrac was seeking other Coast sites and was particularly interested in Robina and Varsity Lakes.

"The Gold Coast, because of its demographic, is one of the areas that will have the greatest need for additional aged-care facilities in the future," he said.

"It is a place where we would be guaranteed to succeed in the long term."

The rental accommodation concept was pioneered in the US in 1971 by Holiday Retirement Corp, the precursor of Harvest Developments.

Valad executive chairman Stephen Day said Australia was Harvest Developments' first choice to expand its accommodation model into the Asia-Pacific region.

Valad, which has committed to the first two projects, has indicated that there is scope for the retirement project assets to be folded into a new property fund when they are developed.

Petrac has worked closely with Valad on numerous projects, including coastal developments at Lennox Head in northern NSW, at Noosa on the Sunshine Coast, and at Brisbane's Redland Bay.

Valad also holds a trophy commercial site at Pimpama that sits next to the Pacific Motorway.

It bought the near 27ha parcel in 2005 at a cost of \$28 million and has earmarked it for a bulky goods precinct.