

DARLINGHURST

# Inner city aged care vision

## New centre aims to provide accommodation for homeless elderly patients

**Robble Patterson**

A CENTRE offering affordable aged care to the homeless has been planned for Darlinghurst.

The HammondCare centre – which would offer residential care for up to 50 elderly, homeless patients – will be submitted to the City of Sydney Council for consideration next month.

It would be funded subsidising part of the client's social security for care costs, but accommodation would be free through government subsidies, said HammondCare chief executive Dr Stephen Judd.

So far it has the support of both Homelessness NSW and the Wayside Chapel.

HammondCare plans to



An artist's impression of the new aged care home and the existing location (right).

build the home at 118A Darlinghurst Rd, now a car wash, next to St John's Church, set to be operational by 2017.

The organisation will lease the site from the church, which also runs an on-site cafe, Rough Edges, catering for the homeless.

Wayside Chapel chief executive Rev Graham Long

said it was a positive move.

"A lot of the poor people who have dementia end up in a nursing home out at Katoomba which takes people right out of the community they know, it puts them into strange lands," he said.

"Right now we haven't got much like that (proposed centre) to cope with them

and certainly the streets are not appropriate."

Homelessness Australia policy research officer Digby Hughes said the centre would help cater to a "huge need".

"At the last street count, in February, we had the highest numbers of rough sleepers since they started doing the count six years

ago," Mr Hughes said.

Dr Judd said the five-storey centre would aim to work with local health care providers.

He said he had begun discussions with St Vincent's Hospital about possible referrals and planned to meet, in partnership with St John's, with community and resident groups to discuss the project.

"This is a significant development in an area that has the highest concentration of aged homeless in NSW," Dr Judd said.

Dr Judd said most existing care homes for homeless people in the Darlinghurst area provided short-term shelter or long term accommodation but without higher levels of care.