



369 words | 442 on the page

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Villa enables solo lifestyle

A first-of-its kind development for regional WA in Geraldton will give Diane Galea and others a new lease on life as well as a state-of-the-art, purpose-built roof over their heads.

But for lifelong Geraldton resident Ms Galea, moving into West End Villas in Beachlands will be more than just having a new place to call home.

It will also mean she can reclaim her independence.

The 51-year-old became wheelchair-bound after an accident which meant she couldn't live in her existing home as it was no longer suitable.

Ms Galea said she was excited to move into her new villa at the end of the month, which would allow her to move freely in her wheelchair, cook in her kitchen, do all her exercises,

and get in and out of the bathroom whenever she wanted.

"Best of all I will be able to go back to living by myself again," she said, adding she would love to get a kitten.

There are six purpose-built villas for people with disabilities, able to accommodate up to 14 people in total, with supportive features including adjustable-height benches, motorised door openers and blinds, a video intercom system, raised garden beds for wheelchair use, and emergency back-up power to prevent outages affecting medical equipment.

The project has been in the works since 2019 and is the result of a partnership between WAI Group, Activ Geraldton, Community Housing Ltd and local builder Campbell Homes.

Activ executive manager operations north Michelle Bilson said the new specialist disability accommodation homes were a welcome update to previous infrastructure for the disability community in Geraldton.

"This project is the first offering of its kind in Geraldton and in WA," Ms Bilson said.

Community Housing Ltd State manager Garry Ellender said the homes were high quality, affordable, and accessible.

WA Disability Services Minister Don Punch will be in Geraldton on Monday to attend a special launch event of the West End Villas.

WAI Group director Paul Stanley said purpose-built offerings were being eyed in Bluff Point and Sunset Beach, as well as South Bunbury, Albany and Perth.

