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House project starts

WORK is set to begin on a $4.1 million development to provide affordable housing in Bendigo.

Loddon Mallee Housing Services has begun site works on 18 one and two-storey units at 207 to 211 Neale Street in Flora Hill.

The City of Greater Bendigo approved the planning permit on January 11.

By CLARE QUIRK

The development will include six one-bedroom units, eight two-bedroom units and four three-bedroom units.

LMHS general manager of property and projects Mario Roccisano said the project was a significant development for Bendigo.

"It's quite a good mix, because we've seen a high demand for one-bedroom units, which is catering for all the demand signals we're getting from the housing market.

"It's a good time for affordable housing.

"For a number of decades affordable housing has been on the decline.

"This is the first time we've seen an acceleration, which is due to the Federal Government's nation building and economic stimulus program."

Mr Roccisano said a planning permit for 16 townhouses had been approved for the site, but a new one was needed to bring the project up to contemporary standards.

"The previous permit was quite stale.

"This project is more appropriate for the affordable housing market."

LMHS has more than 600 properties under management, with another 500 under construction or contract across Victoria.

The estimated economic multiplier effect of LMHS activitiesin the region over the past 16 years is close to $1 billion.

City GPs lured to take spell in the bush

CITY doctors will be offered incentives to work as locums in country areas.

The federal program is designed to give country doctors a break.

Up to 150 city GPs will be offered emergency training if they agree to works as paid locums for four weeks in country areas such as Bendigo and surrounds.

The Federal Government is providing up to $790,000 over four years for the program.

Launching it, federal Rural and Regional Health Minister Warren Snowdon said there was evidence that many city GPs were interested in working as country locums, but did not always feel skilled or confident enough.

Now, they would be able to get training in emergency medicine in return for an agreement to undertake four weeks of paid locum work in rural and remote locations.

GPs who took part would be eligible for up to $6000 in

Man of steel sees community as priority

MICHAEL McKern loves helping the local community.

This has been a priority for him as managing director of McKern Steel.

"We've been supporting locals for a long time," Mr McKern said.

"It's always been one of our main agendas.

"The community is what the City of Greater Bendigo is built on.

"If we can support each other the best we can it's only going to help.

"We support most community groups in Eaglehawk and we encourage