

Drug rehabilitation hospital for Loch

Council has voted to allow a private, 20 inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation hospital at Loch.

The facility will be located at 13 Clarence Street. The site contains a large building positioned centrally on the land, which was last used as a medical centre and, prior to that, an aged care facility (Greenhills Hostel for the Aged).

Council received 34 objections to the proposal, but supporting councillors said the project was consistent with previous uses at the site.

Up to 20 single occupancy rooms are proposed with a maximum of seven staff during the day and two at night. Four staff are proposed on weekends. Patients are proposed to be admitted for four week periods as part of their rehabilitation program.

Objections to the proposal primarily related to safety, traffic, parking, noise, incompatibility with existing residential amenity, inappropriate location due to lack of services and other facilities, negative effect on tourism and perceived decrease in land values.

In all, the current facility will remain relatively unchanged from what already exists on-site and the application was approved subject to appropriate conditions.

“Tourist services and facilities can still be promoted through other development opportunities and it is considered that a majority of visitors to the town would be unaware of such a facility existing,” explained Bryan Sword, Council’s Director of Development Services. “This is because the facility will not be actively promoting or directing people to its location and because its patients will have limited interaction with the community.”

A planning permit will be issued in 28 days if no appeals are lodged to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) seeking a review of Council’s decision.

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