

Work set to begin on \$66 million Shortland Waters Golf Club village

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FAIRWAY TO GO: Aged care giant the Aveo Group is about to start work on 300 villas and a retirement village at Shortland Waters Golf Club. Construction on the \$66 million Shortland Waters Golf Club and retirement village complex off Sandgate Road is “imminent”, and the once embattled club hopes it will be finished by the end of next year.

Aged care giant the Aveo Group is set to start building 300 golf course villas in a retirement village with 127 aged care beds. Aveo also hopes to finalise a development application with Newcastle City Council to refurbish the golf course and build an expanded, single-storey clubhouse that the club is banking on to boost its dwindling membership.

Kerry Duggan, the treasurer of the member-run club, said the redevelopment will be essential for Shortland Waters to survive. “The start of the work is imminent, as far as the club’s concerned. The club is in a very healthy situation,” Mr Duggan said. “We couldn’t have survived without the money this will bring – we were in dire straits.”

Aveo executive general manager of developments Gary Kordic said the village would secure the future of the club, which sits between the University of Newcastle and the Newcastle Wetlands Reserve. “In addition to the social scene fostered by the golf club, residents will also have access to the renowned Forum sports and aquatic centre next door at the University of Newcastle,” Mr Kordic said. “We hope to build a vibrant and diverse community here in Newcastle designed to keep residents active, engaged and connected with the broader Newcastle community.”

The course and retirement village redevelopment has met with a long list of hurdles over several years. Newcastle City Council initially refused it over a lack of information on the environmental remediation work that would be required. The plan was deferred again by the Joint Regional Planning Panel in December 2013.

In the storm of April 2015, more than 60 trees fell on the course.

To ensure the golf course remains at 18 holes despite losing some of its land to villas, the club will acquire some of the land next door. Newcastle City Council owns one of the neighbouring properties, a former landfill, and had hired outside planners to advise whether to approve the redevelopment.

Those planners initially recommended rejecting the plan over a lack of information on soil and water contamination on some sections of the land.

Mr Duggan said some of the holes would be shifted during construction on the village, but that Shortland would play as an 18-hole course throughout.