

## **Article for Nick Wood re Lot 47**

### **Lot 47 – A home the community built with such passion and positivity**

In 2018 Cromwell St John were planning to build a new state of the art Ambulance Station to serve the Central Otago region. Each year local volunteers commit thousands of hours to provide essential first responder services for our communities when they are at their most vulnerable due to illness or accident. One of those volunteers was Rotarian, Richard Jackson.

When Doreen Evans learnt of St John's plan, she believed that Cromwell Rotary and Lions clubs could lead a joint fundraising project with the support of local tradesmen, businesses, and the community to build a home, with as little cost as possible, and sell it at auction. The aim - to help St John fund their shortfall on their new Station build.

Doreen was involved in a similar project in Invercargill where the \$200,000.00 raised went to the Breathing Spaces Trust. Doreen was hoping to better that by involving the community more.

In early 2019 Doreen started to share her vision that by Rotary, Lions and the business community working together, volunteering time, skills, experience, products the community could help secure the future of St John so St John can continue to support those in the community when they are vulnerable. She was amazed by the positive responses she received.

Having decided this project was going to be a success, Doreen gathered a small group of Rotary and Lions superheroes together - Craig Lunn, Paula and Richard Jackson, Grant Lunn, Paddy Breen, Syd Dyer and Glenn Vaughan. They shared Doreen's vision and worked tirelessly for over two years to bring this project together. True superheroes, each one of them.

The next step was to secure the 4 main pillars of the project being, the land, an architect, a bank and an underwriter to ensure there was no risk. Doreen says she was very lucky to have meet John Searle who was undertaking a development of what was the Top 10 Holiday Park in Cromwell, now Prospectors Park. Also Jessie Sutherland, a local architect; Sue Bingham from SBS Bank as well as an underwriter who believed in the vision saying they thought there was little risk of the home not selling.

Having obtained Rotary and Lions approval to go ahead the superheroes got to work on organising the project. A decision was made early on to get as many businesses as possible involved. The idea being that by many working together, each doing a little bit, together something amazing can be created.

The build was split into 4 stages with a different builder taking charge of each stage. Many businesses, who would normally be competitors, joined together to provide products and services.

Doreen worked hard to ensure that every business involved was recognized. A website "Lot47.co.nz" and a Facebook page "Lot 47 Cromwell Community Project" were set up. Doreen was known to arrive on site taking videos showcasing businesses hard at work on

Lot47. She also went to business premises making videos of products they were providing for Lot47.

Doreen wrote weekly articles for the Cromwell News keeping the community informed about what businesses were doing on Lot47.

Building consent was granted on 3 March 2021. Ground broke on 25 March with the foundation poured on 8 May. Frames went up 15 May with the roof going on 28 May – excellent Roof Shout time!

Progress was amazing thanks to Les Topping who project managed the build for Rotary and Lions. He liaised between the superheroes, who had secured all the businesses, services and products, and the businesses themselves ensuring they had a timeframe of when they were required on site. Les also troubleshooted any potential problems before they arose.

Windows were installed 12 June with the pink batts and jib finished by end of June. Interior painting started end of July. The kitchen was installed and the flooring started going down on 5 September. Coloursteel cladding fixed by mid-September as well as the tiles. By the end of September the bathroom fittings and carpet had been installed, the landscaping started.

On 8 October the FINISHED shout took place. The home was then staged ready for the first open home on 16 October.

The home sold at auction for \$1,205,000.00 – WOW!

Doreen said it was an honour, and so much fun, working alongside so many Rotarians and Lions members as well as people and businesses from the community to make this dream fundraising project come true. She nearly pulled the pin on her involvement with the project when her son died in a car accident in November 2019. The grief sucked so much of her energy. What was left went into getting out of bed and getting through each day. Then along came Covid. Doreen said she is pleased she hung in there as the positivity of this project and all those involved have helped with the healing process.

After all costs, a profit of \$824,436.88 has been raised by Cromwell Rotary and Lions clubs together with so many people and businesses in the community. A truly AMAZING result by a small community!

The first \$243,000.00 has been given to St John, being their shortfall on the Cromwell Station build costs. Further funds have been tagged - \$75,000.00 for a new St John health shuttle and garaging; \$15,000.00 for a generator for new Station; \$10,000.00 to go toward equipment for a Central Otago St John station; \$50,000.00 to support the community to undertake health related courses and maintain health related equipment; \$100,000.00 "Topping Scholarship Education Fund" has been established to assist individuals with their training costs to become a health worker (nurses, doctors, paramedic, counsellor etc.).

The remaining \$331,436.88 will be shared between Cromwell Rotary and Lions clubs with the view of funding a major project in Central Otago or many small projects.