

The Cygnet Care Farm: A site for therapeutic horticulture, agriculture, and hospice care and respite.

The Cygnet Care Farm is a health and community development initiative, based on the well-established the Care Farm model that is common throughout Europe. Care Farming uses farming and horticultural practices in therapeutic ways. It combines healthcare, farming, horticulture, training, respite and community development into one holistic program.

Care Farms improve the health and wellbeing of individuals with special needs as well as whole communities - by utilising the therapeutic benefits that come from being with animals, caring for others, gentle outdoor exercise and contributing in meaningful ways to a community.

This is a collaborative project idea that has the potential to bring together Local healthcare providers (eg GPs, RNs, Allied Health), the Centre for Rural Health and the Wicking Centre for Dementia Research and Education (UTAS), various community organisations (eg Lions), local farmers, Cygnet RSL, Port Cygnet Men's Shed, volunteers, local schools (St James Catholic School, Cygnet Primary School, Huonville High School), students of healthcare studies, carers, TasTAFE, Skills Tas, Carers Tas, Hospice services, Eldercare, Huon Eldercare, South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC) for Indigenous edible plants, etc.

Care farms UK (<https://www.carefarminguk.org/home>) define the scope of care farms as follows:

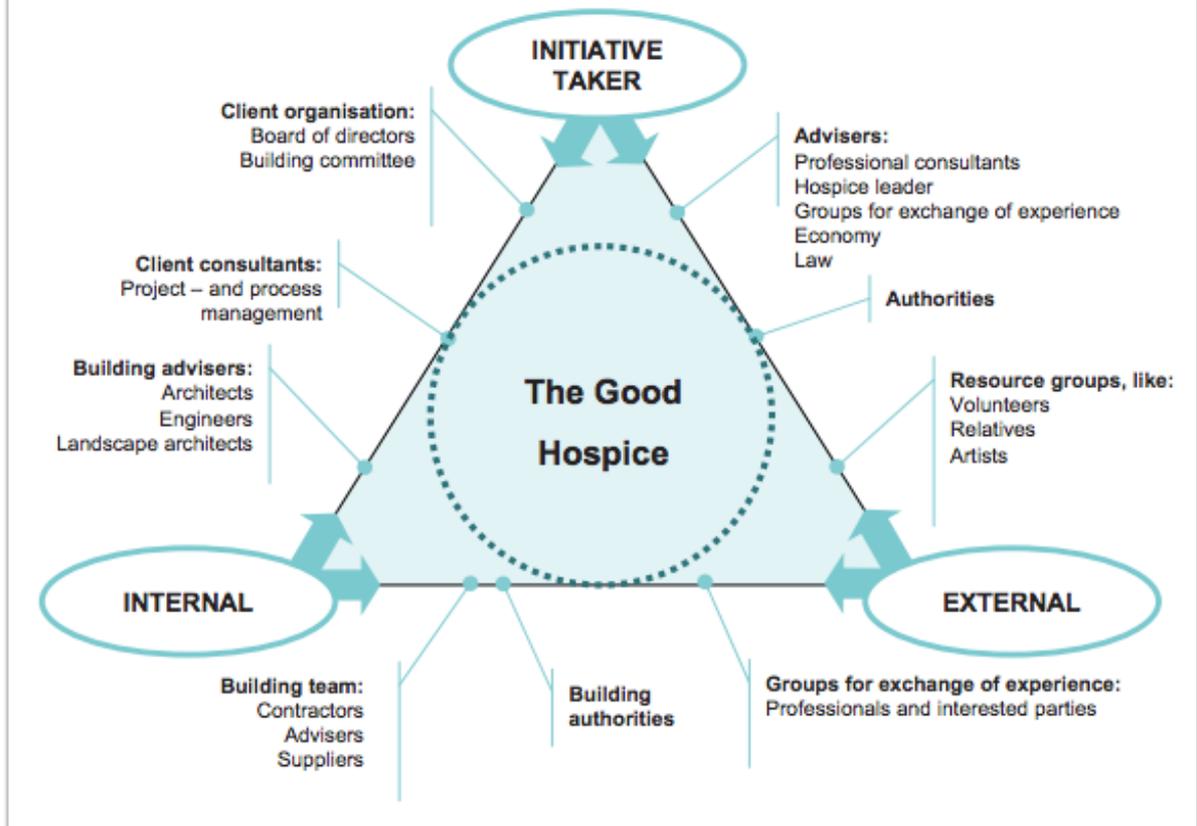
- **Provide health, social or specialist educational care services for individuals from one or a range of vulnerable groups.** Includes people with mental health problems, people suffering from mild to moderate depression, adults and children with learning disabilities, children with autism, those with a drug or alcohol addiction history, disaffected young people, adults and people on probation.
- **Provide a programme of farming-related activities for individuals with a defined need,** including animal husbandry (livestock, small animals, poultry), crop and vegetable production, woodland management etc.
- **Provide supervised, structured care services on a regular basis for service users,** as part of a structured care, rehabilitation, therapeutic or specialist educational programme.
- **Are commissioned to provide services by a range of referral agencies** such as social services, health care trusts, community mental health teams, education authorities, probation services, National Careers Service etc. Clients can also be self-referred as part of the direct payments scheme, or be referred by family members.
- **Utilise the whole or part of a farm.** Be they commercial agricultural units, smallholdings or community farms.

An innovative component of the Cygnet Care Farm could be the inclusion of an independent Hospice accommodation for people with a terminal illness and their families to receive respite care. This is modelled on Denmark's "The Good Hospice" (<http://www.hospiceforum.dk/media/TheGoodHospiceInDenmark.pdf>), a nature based model of care that is suitable for small populations in regional areas. The supportive environment will be designed to be deeply restorative and to enhance the quality of life for people experiencing illness and the demands of caring. There is currently no in-bed hospice service for people in Southern Tasmania outside of a hospital setting. This is a real gap in palliative services in the State, and there is a growing need for such a service. The hospice can be serviced by a combination of local healthcare providers, visiting specialists and highly trained volunteers. It is a best-practice model of hospice care, and Cygnet is an ideal community to establish such a place.

A beautiful and attractive park or green area provides an important breathing space for patients, relatives and staff alike. It is to be planted in a varied way and with the intention of creating experiences throughout the year, so for instance, allowance is made for evergreen plants and other evidence of life in the park during the winter months. ... Natural resting places should be located at strategic points in the form of benches. ... As an exciting addition to the park or the green area, a sensory garden could be laid out, creating experiences for all senses. The patients could smell, look at, touch and taste the herbs, flowers, fruits etc. They could also look at and listen to the water, gurgling from the water feature or listen to the birds chirping from the bird table.

(Extract from The Good Hospice p91)

Suggestion regarding the organisational model for the ideal implementation process



From The Good Hospice p106