

**Clarke, Pamela**

**From:** Dave Hume [davehume09@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** 01 November 2010 15:24  
**To:** Gordon, Brian  
**Cc:** Hilton Precinct Secretary  
**Subject:** submission on social housing  
**Attachments:** Buswell ltr.doc



Dear Dr Gordon,

Please find attached a letter that we, the community group in Hilton, sent to the then Housing Minister Troy Buswell, we received a "form" letter that was obviously drafted by Homeswest personnel and hence we became dissillusioned.

A recent community meeting endorsed me forwarding the letter to you and your review in the hope that it may receive some consideration.

I would like to say that the letters contents had been made redundant due to action from homeswest, but alas I fear the points raised are, if anything, more relevant.

regards,

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Hilton Community Precinct  
C/o The Secretary  
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HILTON WA 6163

Hon. Troy Raymond Buswell MLA BEc  
Treasurer; Minister for Commerce; Science and Innovation; Housing and Works  
21st Floor  
Governor Stirling Tower  
197 St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6000

Dear Minister,

We, the members of Hilton Community Precinct, are writing this letter in the hope of finally getting someone to acknowledge our problems and to address our concerns regarding both the level of public housing within our suburb, and the associated troublesome tenants that are invariably overly represented.

We have had meetings with Mr John Pynes, Regional Manager, Department of Housing and Works, but feel that our issues have not been effectively addressed.

Our first issue is the level of Homeswest dwellings within our suburb. We recognize that Hilton comes off a very high base, where the vast majority of houses were originally state housing, but the current 18% is still 7% above the nominated target of 11% set by Homeswest themselves. Mr Pynes has stated that that current 18% is likely to rise slightly, as house blocks are subdivided into either battle-axe block homes or indeed units. We believe this is unacceptable for several reasons.

First, we are already well above the desired proportion of public housing within a suburb and so any increase strays further from the policy guidelines

and is likely to be detrimental to the development of a vibrant Hilton Community.

**We therefore call upon you to direct the Department of Housing to reduce, over time, the percentage of Homeswest dwellings in Hilton rather than cause it to increase.**

Second, the sale of the large blocks (up to 1000sq m) could provide substantial revenue to allow for multiple public housing tenancies in other developing areas that are far below the stated desired level (e.g. Armadale, 3% etc). This would appear to "fit" with your stated position of selling large properties in the western suburbs and using the profits to develop multiple dwellings in lower land cost areas.

**We therefore call upon you to direct Homeswest to sell large properties as they become vacant and use the proceeds to develop additional housing stock in areas where the percentage of Homeswest tenancies is lower than the desired proportion of social housing within a suburb.**

Third, the difficulties faced by Homeswest in developing this older housing stock is yet another reason for desisting with the current plan. The fact is that heritage renovation by private landowners – often young families that can help foster a sense of community by individualizing their properties – is the best approach for achieving the sympathetic development of these properties. This is in stark contrast to the constraints faced by Homeswest, who, out of necessity, tend to build standardized boxes that do little to enhance either the streetscape or indeed the community. Many of the development issues, such as streetscape retention and heritage value, cause delays by the local council, which invariably lead to Homeswest leaving the property vacant for months or years while they appeal the council position, allowing the property to become an eyesore, fire hazard and graffiti / vandalism target in the interim, making any redevelopment start with demolition, thus leaving the community with trouble spots for long periods. This also represents a huge waste and drain on limited resources as

Homeswest deals with a string of complaints during the delay period. One recent example is a small 2 bedroom dwelling that is one of the original Austrian kit homes assembled in Hilton after the war. It sits on a very large block, but is (by modern standards) very small. Homeswest have decided it is unsalvageable and hence will be demolished. Directly opposite this particular house is a similarly aged dwelling, that is privately owned and has been extensively renovated by a private owner, retaining the streetscape appeal, yet individualizing it and greatly enhancing its value. It increases the value of the suburb, not just the property.

Were the Austrian house to be sold privately, there is the opportunity for it to be renovated, extended and perhaps the block even sub-divided encouraging young families to live in the area, increasing student populations at the school and other community assets. Homeswest would reap the financial benefits much more quickly, and be able to tackle the long waiting lists by building new dwellings in areas with a low percentage of social housing.

**We therefore call upon you to allow large properties to be sold quickly, preventing vandalism, etc, and allowing the best opportunity for the properties to be redeveloped with heritage and streetscape to be included.**

Our second concern is closely associated with the first, that is, this problem is proportional to the overall numbers of Homeswest tenancies within an area.

First, we acknowledge that the vast majority of Homeswest tenants are no better or worse than the general community, however, as the charter of Homeswest necessarily means its clients are of the lower socio-economic demographic, obviously there is a percentage of tenants that are anti-social. With a much higher than targeted percentage of Homeswest tenancies we get a correspondingly higher number of troublesome tenants.

Lower the percentage overall to the nominated 11%, and we will bear our share of such tenants; as should every community.

One of the inequities in our system is that if a private homeowner engages in drug supply or serious criminal activity, they can forfeit their property and ill gotten gains. No such penalty appears to apply to Homeswest tenancies. Surely if Homeswest tenants engage in drug supply or manufacture they should also forfeit their right to occupy state owned housing. What this leads to is the example we have here in Hilton where there are known regular drug houses, where numerous tenants have been charged and convicted, yet the drugs continue to be supplied from Homeswest properties. These properties are known to local police, yet the situation continues.

It appears very difficult to evict troublesome tenants from State owned properties; this makes our suburb unsafe and is unacceptable.

One interesting comment from John Pynes was something along the lines of, "well they have to be housed somewhere", when referring to troublesome tenants. My question to you sir is "Why?" If they breach community standards, why should we suffer and continue to suffer?

**We therefore call upon you to address the issue of troublesome tenants and ensure that tenants convicted of serious crime are no longer able to enjoy state and community support for their housing needs.**

We thank you for your time in reading our concerns and hope that you will act quickly.

Signed,

Hilton Community Precinct