



**Minister for Regional Development; Lands;
Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development**

Your Ref: Petition No 139
Our Ref: 27-18204/3

Hon Brian Ellis MLC (Chair)
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
c/o Mr Mark Warner (Committee Clerk)
GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6838

Dear Chair

PETITION NO 139 - BASSETT ROAD SENIORS' VILLAGE, KARRATHA

Thank you for your letter of 3 November 2011 enclosing a petition tabled by Hon Helen Bullock MLC in the Legislative Council on 20 October 2011, seeking my comment on the terms of the petition.

The relocation of the Seniors' village, to allow for the connection of Sharpe Avenue to Dampier Road, was a key element of the Karratha City of the North Plan (the Plan), prepared by the Shire of Roebourne in conjunction with LandCorp. The Plan was prepared following community engagement and consultation processes followed by specialist engineering advice. The Shire Council unanimously endorsed the Plan.

In relation to the issues raised within the Terms of the Petition and the Submission from the principal petitioner, I can provide you with the following response.

TERMS OF THE PETITION

Cause Undue Stress and Isolation for Aged Residents

Since early 2011, the Shire and LandCorp have held regular meetings with residents of the Seniors' village to keep them informed on the proposed changes to the city centre and the requirement to relocate the Seniors' village. Whilst the Seniors' village residents have been supportive of the overall vision and planning for Karratha, the residents were initially concerned demolition of the existing Seniors' village was to be undertaken when there was not an alternative accommodation solution in place. As a result, other members of the community lodged a petition with Council to reconsider the demolition of the units.

New replacement accommodation has been designed in close consultation with the residents of the existing Seniors' village. I recently met with some of the residents and the feedback I received indicated they are satisfied with the current plans and also recognise, and look forward to, the substantial benefits the Karratha Revitalisation Project will bring to the whole community.

The Seniors will not be relocated from their current premises until such time that the new Seniors' village accommodation within the Warambie Estate is ready for occupation.

The location of the new Karratha Seniors' Village is within the town centre in close proximity to key services and facilities. This was a fundamental consideration in the selection of the site. In addition, the new Karratha Seniors' Village will be located approximately 150 metres from Finbar's Pelago Development which has approximately 3000sq/m of retail and commercial space.

Shade structures, tree lined streetscapes and new pedestrian links are proposed as part of the town centre revitalisation to improve the amenity for pedestrians and users of the town centre.

SUBMISSION FROM THE PRINCIPAL PETITIONER

Validity of Community Consultation Process/State Government Award to Finbar

During the preparation and assessment of the Plan (November 2009 to May 2010), extensive community consultation and engagement was undertaken. The award of the development contract to Finbar was provided after a publicly advertised expression of interest process under the State Government's Pilbara Cities Initiative. The award of the contract to Finbar preceded the endorsement and release of the Plan and is not related to the relocation of the Seniors' village.

Location of the Proposed Seniors' Accommodation

The State Government, through LandCorp, has engaged with National Lifestyle Villages (NLV) to co-locate and manage the new units as part of the existing Warambie Estate. The new units will be grouped together and comprise 11 new two bedroom units, a new Autumn Club common use recreational building, and an undercover area for the Autumn Club bus. The village will also be provided with a secure entrance gate to differentiate between the Seniors' village residents and the service workers accommodation, built adjacent.

As previously stated, the location of the new Karratha Seniors' Village will remain within the town centre in close proximity to key services and facilities, and approximately 150 metres from Finbar's Pelago Development, which has approximately 3000sq/m of retail and commercial space.

Commercial Value of Existing Site

The Plan identified the extension of Sharpe Avenue to Dampier Road as a critical element of the revitalisation of the town centre. The connection of Sharpe Avenue will provide improved connectivity and legibility for the Karratha

town centre, as well as unlock new parcels of land that will offer opportunities for new services and facilities to locate within the town centre to meet the needs of a growing community. It will also support the participation of the private sector development industry in providing new development opportunities within the town centre, including developable land where the current Seniors' village is located on Bassett Road.

Design and Costing of a Village Bypass Road

Multiple options were investigated as part of the design of the Sharpe Avenue extension. Each of these options had impacts upon the existing Seniors' village which would necessitate the demolition of the dwellings.

There is no plan to construct a bypass road to avoid the existing Seniors' village.

Wait List for Seniors' Accommodation

The proposal is to construct 11 new two bedroom units which is the same as the current configuration at Bassett Road. Once the new village is established, the Shire has advised the existing waitlist will be reconsidered to locate new tenants into the four vacant units that will be available.

Exclusion of Seniors' Village Residents from Meetings

The Shire and LandCorp have held regular meetings with residents of the Seniors' village to keep them updated on the planned relocation. These meetings included:

- preliminary discussions held in early 2011 to brief the Seniors on the proposed changes to the city centre and the requirement to relocate the Seniors' village;
- discussions held between residents and the Manager of the Autumn Centre to discuss the residents living circumstances and aspirations;
- meetings at the Shire office to discuss the implications of the Sharpe Avenue extension and available accommodation options for relocating the Seniors to the Warambie Estate;
- coordination of a meeting for residents to visit the Warambie Estate to view the proposed centre; and
- a Special Electors meeting was held in response to the abovementioned petition, lodged with Council, at which the Shire President and Shire Director of Development, Regulatory and Infrastructure Services responded to questions raised by members of the community.

The new accommodation has been designed in close consultation with the residents of the existing Seniors' village. Unlike the existing accommodation, the new dwellings will provide for universal accessibility including wider corridors, doorways and disabled toilet facilities, all within a secure village. As previously mentioned, feedback from the Seniors has been positive in respect of these benefits and those that the Plan will offer to the community at large. Indeed, the intention to deliver these benefits as quickly as possible is one of the reasons why the project has attracted State Government support through the Royalties for Regions program.

Storm Surge, Cyclone Rating and Construction of Dwellings

A Karratha Coastal Vulnerability Study has been commissioned, which is a joint initiative between the Department of Planning, Department of Transport, LandCorp and the Shire. The purpose of the study is to evaluate flooding from storm surge and riverine runoff, and what impact this may have on the future expansion of the Karratha town site. The study involves a detailed assessment of the impacts of future climate change, hydrology around Karratha, shoreline stability, modelling of flooding from storm surge and modelling of riverine flooding. Taking into account these factors, the study provides information for the minimum ground level requirements, which all developments will be required to meet, to avoid impacts of any possible flooding now and in the future.

The concern that the Karratha Seniors' Village will be located within a flood prone area has been addressed through these studies and investigations, with the new accommodation being constructed at finished floor levels that exceed the minimum requirements.

In terms of the dwellings being able to withstand cyclonic conditions, the Karratha Seniors' Village is being built to provide a structurally sound shelter during cyclonic conditions, as is the case with the existing Service Workers' Accommodation at the Warambie Estate.

I have been advised by the Shire the concern regarding poor construction of units at the existing Service Workers' Accommodation at Warambie Estate was investigated by NLV (with the Shire in attendance), and the claims were unsubstantiated. Minor issues consistent with normal shrinkage and settling of the property did occur, and essentially, these form part of routine six-monthly maintenance of the properties. These matters have been rectified by NLV.

Evacuation Plan for the New Seniors' Village

In terms of an evacuation plan for the new Karratha Seniors' Village, I have been advised that NLV will be developing an evacuation plan.

Midge and Mosquito Mitigation

The Shire has advised that it undertakes an Integrated Control Program for mosquitoes, and surveys and treats (if required) potentially inundated areas. Gum Tree Swamp and Pegs Creek, located within a kilometre of the city centre, are both treated sites. Midges are not considered to be a significant issue in Karratha, nor do they present a public health issue.

Environmental Impact Studies

Flora and fauna studies as well as an Acid Sulphate Soils assessment have been carried out by environmental consultants GHD for the Karratha town site. The findings of the report are that no significant flora and fauna or environmental issues were identified.

Cost of Relocating the Seniors' Accommodation

As part of the approved State Government Royalties for Regions funding, the first stage of works within the Karratha town centre revitalisation incorporates the relocation of the Seniors into new accommodation at Warambie Estate.

Demolition of the Existing Units / Housing Shortage in Karratha

The existing units have Joint Venture Agreements and related land leases which require these units be used to accommodate over 55 year olds. These agreements exclude these units being used for the accommodation of young families. It is expected the demolition of the units and realignment of Sharpe Avenue will open up considerable land use and economic development opportunities for the town centre, and will provide more accommodation opportunities for families than currently exists.

Pilbara Cities Vision / Karratha City of the North Plan

The Pilbara Cities project involves the transformation of Karratha into a regional city with a population in excess of 50,000 people. A key component of the Pilbara Cities project is the transformation of the central business district of Karratha into a more attractive and vibrant place.

The aims of the Karratha City Centre Infrastructure Works Project are to:

- address the Plan's *City Centre Master Plan 'Goals and Objectives'* of:
 - Community;
 - Economy;
 - Built Environment and Public Realm Environment; and
 - Infrastructure and Resources.
- improve the city infrastructure so that it facilitates change in the nature of the built form on adjacent land parcels;
- establish Sharpe Avenue as the 'main street' and key pedestrian spine, so that it facilitates change in the nature of the built form on adjacent land parcels, to create a quality pedestrian environment and improvement of access to the city centre for both pedestrians and vehicle traffic;
- establish a network and hierarchy of streets and public spaces that provide permeability and legibility to create an accessible and legible city centre destination;
- establish an integrated and functional movement network that ensures the safe and pleasant movement of pedestrians and vehicular traffic;
- establish roads and streetscapes that create welcoming outdoor environments (micro-climates) that encourage people to be outdoors and move throughout the city centre in comfort and without the need for vehicles;
- create activated public spaces that provide a high level of amenity and which incorporate a variety of recreational and leisure opportunities;
- ensure the unique qualities that define Karratha and its surrounds arising from its aboriginal heritage and culture, importance as a large West Pilbara town, unique landscape and role as a significant resource hub are translated through the design;

- incorporate a high level of innovation, particularly in the area of climate responsive design, and ensure that best-practice principles for construction in arid climates form the basis of the architectural vernacular; and
- provide infrastructure that seeks to minimise the environmental impact.

I am committed to the Pilbara Cities vision and the transformation of Karratha to a modern city, not just with superficial facelifts, but through the creation of liveable communities with access to the services and amenities a modern Australia expects.

I firmly believe this project can unlock Karratha's full potential and will become a benchmark for other regional areas. The community has shown great support and interest in the plans for Karratha's future and have taken ownership of the project to actively drive change. The Government, the Shire of Roebourne, business and industry all have a vested interest in a successful outcome and are fully committed to working with the community to make the Plan a reality.

Yours sincerely



**HON BRENDON GRYLLES MLA
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT; LANDS**

2 APR 2012

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