



OCEAN GARDENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (Inc.)

20 - 10 - 2014

The Hon. Simon O'Brien
Chairman
The Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

Dear Sir

**Ocean Gardens Retirement Village - City Beach
Petition No. 60**

Further to the recent submission of Petition No 60 and our supporting letter dated 4-10-2014, we earnestly request a hearing before the Standing Committee so that we can thoroughly put our views across to that committee what we feel is the unsatisfactory nature of the management structure at Ocean Gardens.

The Ocean Gardens Residents Association (Inc.) represents the interests of all the 260 or so residents in this village and is the only vehicle by which our main wishes can be communicated to the Board of Management.

As you are no doubt aware, Ocean Gardens is owned by a legal entity known as Ocean Gardens Inc. which is a not for profit incorporated body and a registered charity with full DGR status. The Board of OGI are charged with managing the running of the village on behalf of the residents and are paid handsomely for their duties.

Residents are attracted to this village for a number of reasons including its location, low rise ambience and garden layout, good facilities, outstanding views and in the past the protection offered to their substantial investment by the presence of three Board members who are councillors from the Town of Cambridge. This safeguard was provided by the Ocean Gardens Inc. Act 2004. This criterion in the constitution was removed by the Board in 2011 without the knowledge of the residents at the time which made a lot of residents quite unhappy.

Residents of the village come from all walks of life and from country and metropolitan areas who are mostly not very affluent and have invested most of their life's savings in purchasing a unit here. Since 2009, when the Board sacked our Resident Director, they have had no active say in the running of the village and since 2011 had no protection by the Town of Cambridge.

We consider this village to be unique in WA as no major firm (eg St Ives) or major charitable institution (eg a church) owns it. The land on which the village rests was, as you will be aware, given to the citizens of City Beach and Floreat (prior to the formation of the Town of Cambridge) by the Perth City Council for the princely sum of one dollar to facilitate the construction of reasonably priced retirement accommodation for senior citizens. It could barely be described as such at the present time.

The Board has recently announced plans for a massive increase in village population of some 30% over the next few years which will, if carried out, have serious consequences for existing residents depending upon how this expansion is executed. Residents' first inkling of this was in August 2013 when the Board tabled plans for a 4 storied block of 11 apartments to be built in very close proximity to the main function centre in the village. From a purely commercial point of view the location is good and would probably make money. From the existing residents' point of view it would be a tragedy. As previously stated, the residents had no opportunity to take part in a proper

consultation process over this proposal or make any objection. Despite a survey showing 98% of the village opposed the development, the Board pushed ahead with plans.

Due to the subsequent strenuous objections of the Residents Association the Board have now put a temporary hold on these plans pending the production of a Master Plan for the village expansion. We hasten to add that the residents are not against a modest expansion of the village population if we could get reasonable consultation established with the Board and if they would be prepared to consider alternative sites.

We have not been taken into their confidence about the sudden apparent need for such an expansion and their explanation to date has been weak and without a lot of foundation. If a genuine case could be put to us, we would offer support as long as the expansion protects the present wonderful ambience which is a characteristic of our village. We have suggested at least two other sites within the village where development could take place with minimum disruption to the village or its residents but we do not get a serious hearing in this regard. The Board has not indicated a believable reason why they should not proceed on these sites.

The residents feel that there could easily be a conflict of interest occurring when the Mayor of the Town of Cambridge is also the Chairman of the Board of Ocean Gardens Inc. irrespective of the fact that the Mayor allegedly does not vote in Cambridge Council meetings when the affairs of the Village are discussed.

In summary the residents earnestly request two actions from the Standing Committee.

- 1) That the Standing Committee does everything in its power to *not* let the Ocean Gardens Inc. Act of 2004 be repealed and
- 2) At least three or four of The Residents Association Committee be granted a hearing before members of the Standing Committee so as to be able to further explain our problem.

Yours Sincerely

JDSHill (Secretary)