

Hon. Brian Elliis, MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public
Affairs
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

Dear Chair

Petition No. 139 - Bassett Road Seniors Village (Karratha)

Thank you for forwarding through the above detailed petition for commentary by the Shire of Roebourne (the Shire) specific to the 'terms of the petition' and the 'submission' from the principal petitioner.

Terms of the petition

a. Demolition of the Seniors Village

The Bassett Road Seniors' Village (the Seniors Village) is an 11 unit establishment targeting over 55 year olds. The dwellings were constructed in two stages by the Department of Housing:

- Five dwellings in 1997/1998 (in partnership with the Freemasons Homes for the Aged); and
- Six dwellings in 2003/04 (in partnership with the Shire of Roebourne).

The partnerships are subject to Joint Venture Agreements, with the Department of Housing holding the substantial component of equity interest in the properties. Seven properties are currently tenanted, four owned by the Freemasons Homes for the Aged and three by the Shire. The properties do not form part of a purpose build aged care facility.

In 2009 the State Government announced its Pilbara Cities vision regarding development of vibrant cities of the north. The Shire in partnership with LandCorp produced the Karratha City of the North (KCN) Plan consisting of three component parts - 'Implementation Plan', 'City Growth Plan' and 'City Centre Master Plan' (KCCMP) which was unanimously endorsed by the Shire's Council in June 2010 and subsequently endorsed by the Western Australian Planning Commission in December 2010.

The current Karratha town centre does not conform to sound urban design principles and has poor connectivity, including the absence of a well-executed main street. This and a number of other physical design constraints are required to be addressed if the State Government's plans to transform the town centre into a city centre with intensive and compatible land use, able to cater for estimated population growth to 50,000 by 2035 are to be achieved.

The KCCMP and Road Layout Plan (adopted by Council on 24 October 2011 and providing the underpinning detail for implementing the KCCMP) requires realignment of Sharpe Avenue to create a main street and a northern and southern extension. The Southern extension which will connect the road to Dampier Highway providing a defined town entry requires the demolition of the Seniors Village.

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State Government has committed \$65 million to the first stage of the city centre revitalisation works, which includes a component for relocation of the Seniors Village residents to the National Lifestyle Village at Warambie Estate.

b. Creation of undue stress, and increased isolation of residents, through relocation

The new Seniors Village will be located adjacent to the Pelago Development (which will include 300 residential apartments and 3000 sqm of retail and commercial space) and within close proximity (easy walking distance) to the main shopping and city centre. The issue of proximity to services and facilities was a key consideration in site selection. The revitalisation of the city centre will include shade structures; tree lined streetscapes; and improved amenability.

The Shire commenced initial consultations with Seniors Village residents in early 2011 to brief them on the proposed changes to the city centre and the requirement to relocate the Seniors Village. Whilst supportive of the overall vision and planning for Karratha, the Seniors Village residents were initially concerned and stressed at the concept of the demolition of the Seniors Village as an alternative accommodation solution had not been resolved at that time. During the investigation and planning phase for an alternative solution other members of the community lodged a petition with Council for reconsideration of demolition.

In summary, the Shire (including the former Shire President), Pilbara Cities Office, LandCorp and National Lifestyle Villages (NLV) have worked with and/or to advance the interests of residents to alleviate concerns, including:

- The Shire convening regular meetings with Seniors Village residents to ensure they remained apprised of developments in relation to the city centre revitalisation works;
- Council resolving to maintain lease terms and conditions in an alternate location, and agreeing to enter into negotiations with the State Government for the development of a purpose built aged care or senior citizens facility for the longer-term needs of the community;
- Pilbara Cities Office in conjunction with LandCorp securing 11 new housing units, a community centre and a garage to house the Autumn Centre¹ bus, within Warambie Estate, operated by NLV;
- LandCorp involving residents in the planning process for the design of those units; and
- NLV (in conjunction with the Shire) addressing site safety and security concerns raised by residents and ensuring that the Seniors Village will be a secure gated community with an on-call manager to address any maintenance and/or security issues.

The Hon. Brendon Grylls, MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Lands (the Minister) has as detailed committed funding for the units but has also written to residents reassuring them that lease terms and conditions will be maintained comparable to the existing Seniors Village.² The Minister met with residents on 7 November 2011 and feedback indicates that residents were comfortable with action taken in relation to relocation.

The design of the new units will more appropriately cater for the functional needs of the ageing residents of the Seniors Village. The provision of a 24 hour caretaker at the site and the addition of a community centre are services not currently offered at the existing facility. NLV also adopts a competency-based approach to senior's management and draws on the experience of a substantial operation servicing approximately 2200 seniors in the organisation's lifestyle villages.

The Shire will give consideration to meeting relocation costs of Seniors Village residents once the date of relocation is confirmed.

Submission from the principal petitioner

In prefacing this commentary the Shire iterates that it has elected only to address those matters raised by the petitioner additional to those addressed in responding to the 'terms of the petition'.

¹ Autumn Club is a an association of seniors within Karratha and districts.

² Hon. Brendon Grylls, MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Lands, Letter to Seniors' Village Residents, 10 October 2011.

a. Validity of community consultation and State Government announcement of awarding of contract to Finbar Group

During the preparation of the KCN Plan, November 2009 to May 2010, extensive community consultation and engagement was undertaken with the town's community. The awarding of the contract to Finbar was in response to a publicly advertised expression of interest under the State Government's Pilbara Cities Initiative for a development on land which was not related to the relocation of the Seniors Village and which preceded the endorsement and subsequent release of the KCN Plan.

b. The Shire President's statement at the 10 October 2011 Special Electors meeting

The Sharpe Avenue extension requires the demolition of the Seniors Village, however, the land abutting the road will form part of the town centre re-development process. The development of the city centre zone will be based on sound development principles that enable each parcel of land in the city to be developed to its highest and best use and which will allow for intensive and compatible land use in the city centre. The words of the Shire President as noted in the Minutes of the Special Electors meeting were:

The land under the Bassett Road village is subject to an expression of interest between the State Government and the private sector. The land has not yet been sold but it the subject of a bidding process. The outcome of that process is that it will be sold to the successful proponent. The Shire and State have considered an options matrix for the Sharpe Avenue extension and this option offers the best outcome in terms of developable land and legibility.³

c. A government department designing and costing a road that would bypass the village

Fifteen technical options were investigated as part of the technical design of the Sharpe Avenue extension and each of these options had impacts upon the Seniors Village resulting in demolition being required. As detailed, a well-executed main street is required with good connectivity and the Seniors Village is located directly in the path of the proposed southern extension of Sharpe Avenue. Consideration was also given in the decision-making process to the impact of multi-storey development on the village.

d. Waitlist for Seniors Village

The new Seniors Village at Warambie Estate will have 11 new units replicating the existing village in terms of the number of units as well as a common use community centre and garage facility for the Autumn Club bus. The existing waitlist will be reconsidered once the new village is established.

The Pilbara Development Commission has also undertaken a scoping study on the provision of aged care and likely need going forward.

e. Exclusion of Seniors Village residents from meetings

The Shire and LandCorp have held regular meetings with residents of the Seniors Village to keep them apprised of developments in relation to the demolition of the village and plans for relocation. The former Shire President participated heavily in that process. Specifically, consultations included:

- Initial consultations with Seniors Village residents in early 2011 to brief them on the proposed changes to the city centre and the requirement to relocate the Seniors Village;
- the convening of an information session by LandCorp's Karratha City Centre Infrastructure Works Team and relevant Shire staff on the intended demolition of the village and consideration of alternate accommodation arrangements;
- discussions between residents and the Manager, Autumn Centre (as a nominated representative), to discuss residents living circumstances and aspirations;

³ Shire of Roebourne, Minutes, *Special Electors Meeting*, 10 October 2012, p.30.

- the scheduling of a meeting at the Shire office to discuss the implications of the Sharpe Avenue extension and available accommodation options for relocating the seniors, including Warambie Estate;
- arranging for residents to visit Warambie Estate to view the centre; and
- the convening of the Special Electors meeting in response to the aforementioned petition lodged with Council (requirement under Standing Orders) at which the then Shire President and Director, Development, Regulatory and Infrastructure, responded to questions posed on the issue.

f. Location of the Seniors Village within the surge zone, and the construction, and cyclone rating, of units

The buildings floor levels have been set based on technical advice from hydrological assessments undertaken by MP Rogers and Associates specifically for the Warambie Estate and are set above the Kelly Line flood level.

As part of the greater land use planning for the Karratha town site, the Department of Planning, the department of Transport, LandCorp and the Shire have commissioned the Karratha Coastal Vulnerability Study that has assessed hydrology, storm surge analysis and climate change. This overall report is still being finalised however specific advice in respect to the new Seniors Village at the Warambie Estate has confirmed that the location of the Seniors Village is acceptable. When developed, the future development areas of the town centre to the North of the Warambie Estate will be raised to ensure all developments remain above the estimated future flood levels.

The homes at the Seniors Village will be built by the same company that built the service worker accommodation units at Warambie Estate and are designed to provide a structurally sound shelter in cyclonic conditions.

The allegations regarding poor construction, including cracks, gaps in the windows and panels falling off were investigated by NLV with the Shire in attendance and were unsubstantiated. Minor issues consistent with shrinkage and settling of the property were identified and would normally form part of routine six-monthly maintenance on the properties. Those matters were rectified by NLV.

There may be some noise issues due to the adjacent Pelago Development currently under construction and due for completion in 2013. Noise for the Seniors Village will be shielded to some degree by the existing Warambie Estate.

g. Absence of environmental impact studies

Flora and fauna studies for the Karratha town site including the town centre and the locations of the existing and new Seniors Village have been carried out by environmental consultants GHD. No significant environmental issues were identified as a result of these investigations.

h. Evacuation plan for the new Seniors Village

The Shire has been advised that NLV will be developing an evacuation plan in respect to the Seniors Village.

i. The proposed site being subject to midge and mosquito infestation

The Shire has an Integrated Control Program for mosquitoes and surveys and treats (if required) potentially inundated areas. Gum Tree Swamp and Pegs Creek which are located within a kilometre of the city centre are both treated sites. Midges are not a significant issue in Karratha, although sandflies can be an issue for the town at dusk. Neither midges nor sandflies present a public health issue. All the units will have fly screening.

j. Cost of relocating the units

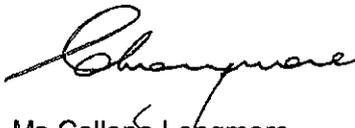
The State Government has announced funding for the first stage of the city centre revitalisation works which includes the cost to relocate the residents of the Seniors Village into new accommodation at Warambie Estate.

k. Demolition of the units in the context of the housing shortage in Karratha

The units at the Seniors Village are designated to accommodate over 55 year olds, a purpose which is embedded in both the related land lease and Joint Venture Agreements. These units cannot be allocated for an alternate purpose such as accommodating young families. The demolition of the units and realignment of Sharpe Avenue will open up significant land use and economic development opportunities for the town.

The Shire has attached at Appendix A, a presentation given by Ms Kathy Green, Seniors Village resident at the Special Electors Meeting 10 October 2011. The presentation reveals satisfaction with the Shire in terms of the outcomes achieved for residents of the Seniors Village.

Yours faithfully



Ms Collene Longmore
Chief Executive Officer

18 November 2011

APPENDIX A - Presentation by Seniors resident Ms Kathy Green

"Good evening everyone,

I am Kathy Green a resident of the Karratha retirement Village.

Firstly on behalf of the residents of the Karratha Retirement Village I would like to thank everyone for their overwhelming support.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you to the people of Karratha, Dampier in fact the whole of the Shire of Roebourne.

Thanks to you for your signatures on our petitions, your phone calls and support.

We are now being offered a new gated, senior friendly retirement village comprising 11 houses, a recreation hall and a new bus and trailer shelter.

Some people have the misconception that we are not being offered suitable alternative accommodation.

Originally this was the case and 2 petitions were started by Bev Anderson for which we thank her.

First petition: Requested a special meeting of electors of the Shire of Roebourne – that is why we are here tonight.

Second petition: To review the planned relocation of the Bassett Road Village in Karratha taking into account the needs of the aged residents of the Shire of Roebourne.

After several meetings between Shire representatives and retirement village residents, current residents were offered 8 houses on the Warambie Estate that were built for service industry workers and were almost ready for immediate occupation.

This would have effectively meant that a Karratha retirement Village with Senior friendly houses would no longer exist. Residents advised the Shire that they did not consider this was a suitable relocation option.

At a meeting on the 9th August 2011 between Shire representatives, retirement village residents, the CEO from National Lifestyle villages suggested that a fenced and gated retirement village could be built behind the service workers accommodation comprising senior friendly houses, a recreation centre and a new bus and trailer shelter.

Since then retirement village residents have had further meetings with National Lifestyle Village representatives who asked residents for further input into what they would require in a senior friendly village. Original draft plan showed only 7 houses, this has since been updated to 11 houses the same number as in the present village.

The Bassett Road village residents have been awaiting official written documentation regarding the commencement of this new retirement village. We have been told that the money is already allocated and official confirmation is in it's final stages.

Today we received that official written documentation signed by the Hon. Brendan Grylls MLA Minister for regional Development.

Our current leases with the Freemasons or the Shire of Roebourne state:
"in the event of this land required for redevelopment we have 12 weeks (3 months) to relocate".

No mention of offering alternate accommodation. Morally I believe the Shire of Roebourne and the State Government has a duty of care to relocate seniors in the current retirement village to a new seniors village. However legally I am not certain if they are required to do so. I personally feel sure that the proposed Sharpe Avenue continuation to Dampier Highway will go through, it is just a matter of when.

I realise that there are people who feel we should just stay put even if surrounded by multi storey buildings and main roads. If we have to relocate in another 6 months to 2 years time will we be offered another retirement village with the same incentives including to be moved at no cost to ourselves?

Contrary to rumours the residents of the Karratha Seniors Retirement Village have not received eviction notices instead we are now being offered a new senior friendly 2 bedroom home with a study in a new retirement village plus a recreation centre.

We will not be required to move from our current houses until such a village is completed and we will be moved at no cost to ourselves.

Thank you again to everyone for your support that has resulted in the residents of the Karratha Seniors village being offered this new senior friendly retirement village.

The majority of the residents have indicated that they are ready to shift as soon as official documentation is complete. This we received this afternoon.

Once again thank you for your overwhelming support.

It makes me proud to be part of a community that cares about others including the senior residents of Karratha."

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