



Department of Human Services

Incorporating: Health, Community Services, Mental Health, Senior Victorians and Housing

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Mr Brian Walsh
President
Kew Cottages Coalition
PO Box 2317
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Dear Mr Walsh

I write in relation to your correspondence of 12 December 2008 to the Minister for Mental Health and Community Services, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, regarding the Kew Cottages Coalition's concerns about the next stages of redevelopment of the Kew Residential Services (KRS) site attaching a proposed plan for a respite centre, centre of excellence for the disabled and a community and recreational precinct. Your letter has been referred to me for a response as the matters falls within my area of responsibility.

When we met with the Disability Adviser Ms Sue Spence on 10 October 2008, you outlined your proposal in detail. As part of the staged redevelopment of the former Kew Residential Services site there will be recreation facilities, community rooms and rooms for visiting health workers.

The details are yet to be finalised but these facilities will be within the guidelines agreed at the commencement of the site redevelopment consultation process. This process included representatives from the Public Advocate, Community Visitors, advocacy groups and the Department of Human Services.

Whilst ongoing support for families and carers is an important priority, responding to the individual needs of people with a disability through services provided within the local communities is preferable. Therefore your proposal for the development of a Centre of Excellence for the disabled would not be supported.

In relation to your suggestion to include the development of a Disability Respite Care Centre, the Department agrees with the continuing need to support families, carers and people with a disability in a number of ways including a variety of respite options.

We have opted to develop locally available respite services which include a range of options such as facility-based (out of home) in-home and holiday respite. We have directed these supports to meeting the needs of people in their local communities. Further expansion of respite will continue to be provided, consistent with this approach.

We prefer facility-based respite to be in smaller settings as research in Australia and overseas shows that people in smaller accommodation settings have improved care compared to larger congregate care facilities.

I therefore am unable to support your proposal for a respite centre as there are facilities in place addressing the needs of these clients.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ARog', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Arthur Rogers
Executive Director
Disability Services

Date: 9/2/09