



**Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities
and Children's Services
Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction**

*Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600*

*Telephone: (02) 6277 4778
Facsimile: (02) 6277 8439*

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Mr Don Anderson
Honorary Secretary
Kew Cottages Coalition
donand@westnet.com.au

Dear Mr Anderson

Thank you for your email to the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, the Hon Bill Shorten MP, about the Kew Residential Services redevelopment. Mr Shorten has asked me to reply to you on his behalf. I apologise for the lengthy delay in responding.

The Government is committed to establishing a better approach to providing care and support for people with disability in this country, so that all Australians have the same opportunity to participate in the community, live meaningful lives and, where possible, participate in employment. This is fundamental to our vision for a fairer Australia.

I understand you are concerned about the redevelopment of the Kew Residential Services (KRS) site, in particular the loss of specific assets. I also understand that the Kew Cottages Coalition submitted to the Victorian Select Committee of the Legislative Council Inquiry into the Sale of Public Lands an alternative proposal for the redevelopment of this site.

This office is aware of the nine findings and four recommendations in relation to the redevelopment of the KRS site, as outlined in the final report of this Inquiry, tabled in the Victorian Legislative Council on 11 September 2008. The first three recommendations are directed to the Victorian Parliament, Government and Ombudsman. The fourth recommendation, however, calls on the Government to 'review the current proposal for the KRS development to ensure the project incorporates protection of the heritage trees and buildings, protection of open space and provision of much-needed disability services'.

Since the tabling of this report, the Parliamentary Secretary has received advice from the Victorian Minister for Community Services, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, in relation to the alternative proposal submitted by KRS which also serves as advice to this recommendation.

Firstly, Minister Neville advises that all state profits from the KRS project will go to increase disability services in Victoria.

Minister Neville also advises that there are eight facility-based respite services situated within the Eastern Metropolitan Region that cater for individuals with disability. These respite facilities are located in Doncaster, Heathmont, Mont Albert, Mount Waverley, Wantirna, Oakleigh and Box Hill. There is also a variety of flexible respite options available for individuals with disability and their carers, both within and outside of their home, responding to the diverse needs of families and individuals.

In reference to the KRS proposal for a 'Centre for excellence for the disabled', Minister Neville advises that this is not supported, as responding to the individual needs of people with disability through service responses in local communities is preferred wherever possible.

Finally, Minister Neville advises that a range of community and recreational facilities, some incorporating use of key heritage buildings is included in the development plan and will provide additional options for community and recreational activities, alongside the range of other facilities in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Victorian Minister for Planning, in approving the KRS site redevelopment plan, allowed for approximately 30 per cent of the site to be open space, and the heritage values of the site respected and incorporated into the staged redevelopment plan.

I also thought that you may be interested in the following. In 2008, the University of New South Wales was commissioned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to research the effectiveness of supported living in relation to shared accommodation to improve service delivery for people with disability. Through the research, the redevelopment of the KRS was identified as an innovative model of accommodation support provision based on current principles of individualisation of support and community living. The redevelopment was also found to be cost-effective and innovative, as it will provide smaller-scale residences accommodating between three to five residents in the community, in accordance with the process of deinstitutionalisation, while maintaining high levels of support and supervision.

Once again, thank you for writing and for providing Mr Shorten with your comments.

Yours sincerely



Mat Tinkler
Senior Adviser