

TRANSCRIPT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Inquiry into the public housing renewal program

Melbourne — 10 November 2017

Members

Ms Margaret Fitzherbert — Chair

Ms Nina Springle — Deputy Chair

Mr Joshua Morris

Mr Daniel Mulino

Ms Fiona Patten

Mrs Inga Peulich

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Participating Members

Ms Georgie Crozier

Mr Nazih Elasmr

Ms Colleen Hartland

Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

Witness

Mr Richard Holt.

The CHAIR — Mr Holt, I welcome you here today to give evidence. We are very pleased to see you. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Therefore you are protected against any action for what you say here today, but if you go outside and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. The proceedings are being recorded. I invite you to make any comments that you wish to make. If you could keep it to around 5 or 10 minutes that would be appreciated, and then we might open it up to questions. But we are very much in your hands.

Mr HOLT — I have put together a quick presentation that really fleshes out what I sent through to you, which really considered some issues of concern to me and my community, which is North Brighton, and which is adjacent to the North Brighton housing estate. In my case it is literally adjacent. If I walk out my front drive, the closest front door I have is to 10 Airlie Street, which is one of the flats, as we call them. It is not a pejorative term. We love calling them the flats, but that is what everybody calls them in the neighbourhood, including the people living there.

As my submission states, which you probably glanced at, I am a neighbour of one of the sites affected by the social housing renewal program. As such I have a range of specific concerns about the proposals for that site and the potential negative impacts on my neighbourhood. I do not believe the particular constraints of the North Brighton site have been addressed with any level of sophistication by the back-sold, yield-driven proposal put forward by DHHS. I believe this flawed design process can only lead to poor urban design outcomes for residents at the site and their neighbours.

But in spite of significant potential negative impacts on my neighbourhood and my own amenity, if anything I have been more troubled by the insight my involvement in this project, inadvertent as it is, has given me into the roles expediency and arrogance appear to be playing in the development of the site responses and the whole project design. That is what is really outlined in what I sent through. I am going to talk a little bit about process just briefly by way of illustration and a few examples of the many issues of concern regarding the process design and implementation of these social renewal housing program. Collectively these process issues are beginning to raise real concerns about procedural fairness. I have got an example somewhere in my bag, but I will not bore you by digging it out.

There are multiple versions of documents and we are now, in North Brighton, at the advisory committee stage — that being the only stage that we as a community get to meaningfully input into this process. An example that I found yesterday going through documents is that — and we are at the pointy end of the process — the design principles sit behind a whole range of other documents and there are still two versions of those design principles. They both claim they are substantially different. They both claim to have been developed in the same manner by the same group of people. It is illustrative of the sort of chaos that we are experiencing as a community in trying to understand this process.

At the Brighton standing advisory committee hearing on Wednesday, third and fourth sets of key documents were circulating, and there was a reference made at one point to a document that nobody had seen, not even the chair of the committee, at which stage a three-part conversation started to occur in the room between lawyers for Bayside council, DHHS and the chair, at which point it was up to me as a community member to say, ‘This is not appropriate’. We did get a direction then from the chair. It was a little bit too cosy for my liking in terms of an issue of process being dealt with in what I would call a planning clique. These are just examples.

Yet with such chaotic processes — they are, believe me, chaotic; and those are just illustrative — community members are being told they have to trust that numerous and serious unresolved design issues should and will be dealt with by a design development and approval process from which scrutiny is to be removed.

Ms CROZIER — Sorry, can I interrupt you there?

Mr HOLT — Yes.

Ms CROZIER — This meeting that you were just speaking about, was this recently — this Wednesday?

Mr HOLT — This was Wednesday. The Brighton housing estate is currently at the standing advisory committee —

Ms SPRINGLE — The day before yesterday?

Mr HOLT — Yes, correct.

Ms CROZIER — Mr Holt, you are saying that you have been told, or the community has been told, to trust the design development —

Mr HOLT — Absolutely. I can provide, if necessary, numerous examples of that that occurred at the standing advisory committee meeting on Wednesday.

Ms CROZIER — That goes to your point about that fifth document that cannot be provided, that you do not know what —

Mr HOLT — Well, as a result of my intervention at the committee, we are told now that that will be circulated once it is finished, once it is finally —

Ms CROZIER — What does that mean, though? What do you mean, ‘Once it’s finished’?.

Mr HOLT — Once it is finalised. The council’s lawyer and DHHS’s lawyer were having a conference — so-called — yesterday, and at that they were going to resolve some issues. An update was going to be published to people attending that committee, and that was to include all the alterations and variations it was meant to clarify. So that core document was the schedule to the development plan overlay. That is a critical document in this process.

Ms CROZIER — Could you provide all those documents to the committee, if you have them?

Mr HOLT — I will do what I can once I finished. They are numerous, and I will not have all of them. If I cannot provide them now, I will send them through.

Ms CROZIER — Thank you very much.

Mr HOLT — I can send the next one that we get as well, if you like.

Ms CROZIER — When is that expected?

Mr HOLT — This afternoon or this evening. We are being told we have to deal with this process and trust it. I do not think that is appropriate because what we have experienced is chaotic in an administrative sense. But of most concern, and this is in terms of process again, is the seeking of submissions and holding of hearings that are so structurally flawed — the hearing process itself and the submission process — that the voice of the most affected group is inevitably muted. By this I mean that the advertising period and the committee meetings of the standing advisory committee — once again, the only process we get as community members to input meaningfully into this process, given that our third-party rights are being removed — coincides with our neighbours who live in the flats negotiating with the proponent for their relocation. So in terms of any process design where there is no anonymity, that voice is not being raised, because those people — and we have spoken to them; we speak to them as neighbours; we do not meet with them but just bump into them in the street as that is what our neighbourhood is like; and we say, ‘How’s it going up there?’ — are scared, but they are not engaging in these processes, these critical processes, because they are negotiating relocation at the same time with the proponent. Now that is a design flaw in a process. That is a critical design flaw; it is not an insubstantial thing. In fact in looking at it it is clearly inconsistent with the Auditor-General’s guidance on engagement, which says that agencies should make ‘reasonable adjustments where necessary to remove barriers to participation and ensure an inclusive approach’.

The CHAIR — Mr Holt, just on that exact issue, I have been to that neighbourhood — and I understand what you mean about how it is very connected with surrounding streets and neighbours — and I was struck by the fact that some of the early consultation meetings were done some distance away —

Mr HOLT — A substantial distance.

The CHAIR — Yes, which people commented on at the time. It made it very difficult for residents of the public housing area to actually get along and be consulted —

Mr HOLT — Correct.

The CHAIR — because of the distance. What has happened with these subsequent meetings, like the standing advisory committee meeting and so on? Where have they been held?

Mr HOLT — They are mostly being held in Spring Street but some are being held at Brighton —

The CHAIR — Recreation?

Mr HOLT — No, at the council chamber in Brighton, near the library — still a substantial distance away.

The CHAIR — Yes, it is.

Ms CROZIER — What meetings are at Spring Street? Do you mean in the minister's office? Spring Street down there?

Mr HOLT — No, this is the standing advisory committee, so with Planning Panels Victoria. Planning Panels Victoria are running the standing advisory committee. It is not a panel; it is an advisory committee which will advise the minister on the 'suitability of the plan that DHHS has put forward', even though they have not really put forward a plan. They have put forward sketch plans; that is what they are calling them. What they are advising on is the planning scheme amendment to facilitate what they are proposing.

Ms PATTEN — When you were talking about the design principles and the fact that there were multiple documents that stated different design principles, you also talked about unresolved design issues. Were there any examples of that?

Mr HOLT — A clear one is the north-west boundary of a very long, thin site. I will give you a couple of obvious examples. On the plans at the moment you have parking under podiums along a very long, thin site at North Brighton. You also have on the same plans a cycle connection through the site that would have to go up onto the top of a podium, back down through an open space, back up onto the podium and back down. It is meaningless. It has not been thought through.

There is also a 3-metre setback along the long boundary with what is in documents called the 'sensitive residential interface'. What they have put between the three storeys and the side boundaries of seven houses along there is completely unarticulated. When I asked the standing advisory committee about the articulation of that area on Wednesday — this is what happens; this is our experience — ideas started to get thrown onto the table. It is far too late at this point in time, or it is far too early, to be having that committee hearing when critical issues like that interface have not been resolved. So there is absolutely no resolution of that interface on that site, and that is one of the most sensitive areas on that site.

Ms CROZIER — I would like to follow up on that. You spoke about the impact to amenity as well. Could you just give the committee an understanding of what you mean by the impact to local amenity?

Mr HOLT — My main concern is that the neighbourhood amenity by way of the circulation and the very fluid nature between the surrounding single-storey houses and the flats will be destroyed by what is being proposed. Essentially the committee that I love so much is calling our houses the hinterland of the property. In other words, the intention of the designers is to turn their back on the surrounding residences, which is completely counter to all the rhetoric around integration.

Ms CROZIER — What do you mean by turning their back? That is just a complete ignoring of your private properties in terms of the design and how that will impact on those private properties.

Mr HOLT — Yes, but what I am talking about is quite literal. Even though nothing has been resolved, they take this, which is just blocks on a plan, and send it off to developers to develop, and we do not see any more of it until the diggers come in. Regardless of that, what they are envisaging is a central corridor with the units of the development facing into that central corridor, which places the backs of those buildings against the surrounding neighbourhood. One of our big concerns there — and there is a concern about amenity, because our neighbourhood is our amenity — is the loss of that connection between our properties, our community, and that community because the urban designers and planners are looking at it as an island.

The CHAIR — I can say I back that up, having looked at it. What struck me about the estate is that it is very connected with its neighbourhood, and people tend to walk through it, literally, in a good way, to reach the walkway along the canal and also the school on the other side of the canal.

Mr HOLT — Exactly.

The CHAIR — But the design, as it is at the moment — and you would have seen a more recent version than the rough sketches I saw — is effectively a buffer to that. So it is sort of counterintuitive to what it is supposed to be doing. That was my take on it.

Ms SPRINGLE — Currently it is three storeys, is that correct?

Mr HOLT — It is three and four.

Ms SPRINGLE — Is that going to be maintained in the new development?

Mr HOLT — Not under DHHS's proposal. DHHS insists that they cannot renew the public housing within the framework of the existing planning scheme. I think that is just self-serving nonsense, really. We have had a look at it. You can increase the number of housing units on that site within the general residential zone that is there at the moment because the general residential zone takes into account existing built form. You can replace up to four storeys, you can do better design, you can put your parking underground — there are all sorts of ways.

Ms SPRINGLE — What are they proposing?

Mr HOLT — Up to nine.

Ms SPRINGLE — Nine storeys from three?

Mr HOLT — From three and four to nine in an area of single-storey houses. The site is three house blocks wide. It is not a massive site in width.

Ms CROZIER — What is the uptake going to be in terms of the new proposed development, from your understanding? How many more bedrooms will there be?

Mr HOLT — DHHS withheld that information as long as they possibly could. We have been asking for bedroom breakdowns for five months. We only got that information last week in the social impact study that was sent through as part of the documentation for the standing advisory committee. I cannot remember off the top of my head, but we have done the sums. There is a 10 per cent gain in units but a bedroom loss overall — because the majority of units on that site are three bedrooms — of 90 bedrooms.

Ms CROZIER — So there are 90 less bedrooms?

Mr HOLT — 90 less bedrooms, yes.

Ms CROZIER — Under the new development?

Mr HOLT — Yes.

Ms CROZIER — So they are going to put nine storeys up but have 90 less bedrooms.

Mr HOLT — Nine stories will give them an excellent view of the beach for the private developments. So that is the current proposal. That may come down to six, depending on what happens between council and the lawyer. Council's view is that six is the maximum. But those are the sorts of heights. At the moment what we are dealing with at the standing advisory committee is still nine, eight, six and three — a mix of those.

Mr MULINO — Just on this issue, is it fair to say that this has been going through iterations?

Mr HOLT — It is fair to say that that is all it is — iterations.

Mr MULINO — In the course of that have the number of storeys been coming down in parts of the proposed development? Do you feel that some of the concerns that have been raised have been reflected in subsequent iterations?

Mr HOLT — The extent has come down, but I do not think — we are busting our guts as a community, and it is not fun being in this situation —

Mr MULINO — Sure, and —

Mr HOLT — to have this discussion locally. The point about the process design is that it has been adversarial from the start, and that is extremely annoying from our point of view because the value in a site like this can be maximised by talking to the community who understands the way the neighbourhood works. The intention of DHHS right through has clearly been to avoid talking to the community as much as possible. It has been very difficult for us to get information. The illustration is the current bedroom numbers, which is a known fact. The only way we ever got that, and we have been asking for five months, is —

Mr MULINO — Just a couple of quick follow-ups. I take a lot of your points on —

Ms SPRINGLE — Actually, could he just finish what he was about to say?

The CHAIR — Yes, I was about to say you were mid-sentence.

Ms SPRINGLE — The only way you got it was what?

Mr HOLT — Was through the expert reports that were used in the standing advisory committee, and nobody even then brought them to our attention. We had to wade through the documents to find that information, but we did get it.

Mr MULINO — The reason I was interjecting was that Ms Crozier was about to —

Ms CROZIER — I was going to follow up on one of the points, but you go ahead. I have another question.

Mr MULINO — You have raised a lot of process issues, which I think we will follow up on and which are serious issues, but I just wanted to establish that it is a process where some of the concerns that are being raised are being reflected in subsequent plans — that levels are coming down in parts of the development —

Mr HOLT — I was reluctant to go too far into amenity. We got side-tracked and amenity is not my primary concern. There are other more administrative issues that are more my primary concern. As a community we do not believe that a planning scheme amendment is an appropriate way to renew housing on this site, so for me to say, ‘Oh, yes, the heights that are being spoken about have come down’ would misrepresent the feeling of my community that that represents significant change.

Mr MULINO — Just one last question, more a matter of principle: do you accept that there is a bit of a trade-off that we are facing, not just in this context but more broadly as a community, around densification, and that with population growth we are having to balance where to accommodate that and that if a bit of densification is necessary to accommodate more social housing, that we should think about that?

Ms CROZIER — But it is not. It is 90 bedrooms less.

Mr HOLT — Yes, I am happy to answer that. We can be fully aware of the densification agenda, which is what I would call it. This is not a great site to do it at that level. It is a good site given there is medium density at the moment for good, well-designed medium density, and that can include a degree of increase in density on that site through better design, but the services are a kilometre away or more apart from a school. Now, we are talking very few family-sized units, so the only local service at this site where we are interested is a school and a kindergarten and we are going down to single-bedroom units. We are aware that we are part of a cookie-cutter approach.

Ms SPRINGLE — Just on that, and I am just interjecting because it is leading directly on from what you are saying: how many families would you say are living in those flats currently?

Mr HOLT — I would have to guess because we have —

Ms SPRINGLE — Of course.

Mr HOLT — And once again we have tried to get that information from DHHS and it has not been forthcoming. Our experience — and this is where I say we have been dealing with an adversarial process — is that quite simply our emails to DHHS and the minister's office do not get answered.

Ms SPRINGLE — At a guess —

Ms CROZIER — They do not get answered at all?

Mr HOLT — They do not get answered.

Ms SPRINGLE — I just want a rough estimation. Would it be mainly families? Not mainly families?

Mr HOLT — It is a mix. There are a lot of people who have been there for a long time, so I have lived next door for 20 years. There are many people in that estate who have been there as long or a lot longer than I have. At the same time, if you walk through there at 9 o'clock in the morning, or 8.30, there are numerous families going off to the primary school, so that is just primary school age. So, yes, there are plenty of families —

Ms SPRINGLE — Yes. There is a significant number.

Mr HOLT — Yes.

Ms CROZIER — Thank you, Mr Holt. The whole government rhetoric about 10 per cent uptake in this example is clearly not the case, because of the reduction in bedrooms.

Mr HOLT — I think there is a desire to use units as the material measure of the increase in social benefit on the site, and I do not think it is appropriate because I think you should be talking about the number. It is simple: what is the number of people housed as public tenants on that site? And when they do that also we are aware that they are going to have to take into account flats and discount flats that are vacant at the moment because they have been allowed to run down so badly and people who have already started to relocate.

Ms CROZIER — So the point is you do not know how many people are there. You do not really know what the capacity is going to be. Can I ask then: do you have any idea when demolition will commence on this project?

Mr HOLT — If you look on the website, they are talking relocations starting later this year, and they have always said —

Ms CROZIER — 2017?

Mr HOLT — Yes.

Ms CROZIER — But we are nearly at the end of the year.

Mr HOLT — Yes. DHHS have maintained that works would start early to mid next year. At the same time, at the most recent conversation I had just in the street with one of the tenants — and this is the way they are getting their information a lot of the time — is that one of the maintenance crews told her that they thought they would be in for a couple more years before they were relocated.

Ms CROZIER — So the maintenance people are saying, 'It's not ready to be demolished. We're not ready to relocate you, so you'll be there for a few years'?

Mr HOLT — Yes, but I mean that is hardly an official source. But at the moment for some of the tenants, that is how they are getting their information.

Mr MULINO — Can I just go back to less bedrooms?

Mr HOLT — Yes.

Mr MULINO — That comes from the latest version of the plans that —

Mr HOLT — The social impacts report that was commissioned by DHHS for the standing advisory committee process. So in order to determine social impact they are having to look at some numbers and that is how those numbers finally got released.

Mr MULINO — Okay. Yes, that would be an important document for us to chase up obviously.

MR HOLT — Okay. That should be freely available, though I would suggest the standing advisory committee — it may be worth you talking to Planning Panels Victoria and getting all those documents.

The CHAIR — I think that is a very good suggestion.

Mr MULINO — Yes. One quick last question: you said you suspected there were a few units that were not being occupied because of their condition at the moment. Would you say that there was an issue with the quality of maintenance across parts of the complex?

MR HOLT — There is no doubt; it is terrible.

Mr MULINO — It is in need of significant refurbishment.

MR HOLT — There is no doubt about that. But that said, I moved there 20 years ago, and one of my first observations was, ‘They’re going to have to renew these flats’. That was 20 years ago. My observation is that there has been a decrease in the level of maintenance over probably the last 24 months. The condition of the flats at the moment is pretty ordinary, and that is what the tenants are telling me about the condition of the interiors of their units as well.

Ms CROZIER — Why do they think that has been ignored for the last 24 months then, if that is the case, if it has decreased in the last 24 months?

MR HOLT — No. My observation is that the level of maintenance has decreased just looking at the way the property is presenting. Tagging is out of control right at the moment. We are trying to illustrate our case at the committee so I needed a photo of the sort of level of disrepair. I did not have to look. That was the scary thing. I actually literally went about four steps —

Ms CROZIER — And you could see it.

MR HOLT — out of my front gate, pulled out my phone and took a photo. In that photo — I have probably got it somewhere, and there it is — there is graffiti. I did not have to search for it.

Ms CROZIER — That just is not getting cleaned up or —

MR HOLT — That is rotten posts, fences falling down, covers coming off things, graffiti all over the sign. And bear in mind that is the entrance to the site; that is what people have to pass on their way to their front door. That is not the back end of the site; that is the front end of the site. That is pretty typical of the level of maintenance down there at the moment, which I do not think is good enough. It is not about my visual amenity; that is about treating people properly.

The CHAIR — What I have taken out of your evidence — well, many things — is there seems to be total confusion about the timings going forward.

MR HOLT — Yes, there is that.

The CHAIR — That on the website it says people will start being relocated at the end of 2017 but we are not there yet. We have got people working on the site suggesting it might be much later. Am I getting a reasonable view of how things are?

MR HOLT — Yes. The information environment is certainly one of the chaotic elements about the delivery of the process is how I would put it.

The CHAIR — Was there anything further that you wanted to share with us?

MR HOLT — We sort of went on a tangent. I was only part way through what I was going to say. If I have time — I am not sure.

The CHAIR — There is time. We have allocated until 3 o'clock, and I am sorry, we did interrupt you, so please go on.

MR HOLT — No, that is fine; it was a good interruption. I like interruptions, and I am learning not to interrupt being down at that standing advisory committee because you get told off.

Ms PATTEN — Challenging.

MR HOLT — Yes, it is not so good. What I wanted to go on and talk about because it is part of my submission — and I am not a lawyer; that is probably pretty obvious — is I do think also that there are issues around the planning scheme being misused in a certain sense. This is a little bit more of an esoteric take, but I have been forced to read a lot of planning legislation and documents over the last little bit — far more than I would like. My reading of the act is — and this is reinforced by the definition of 'use', a critical term in the act being 'land use', which refers specifically to the use to which the land is being put, not land in general, but the land — is that the link that the act makes, quite rightly, between policy delivery and land use decision-making is site specific.

By comparison, in this instance an argument appears to being put, or at least being relied upon by DHHS and the Minister for Planning, that a policy need that is statewide justifies the use of planning powers on a site. In this case the use of those planning powers are to what I would regard as artificially inflate the value of that publicly owned site, because I do not think the amendment that is proposed reflects the condition of that site in many aspects. In normal circumstances there is no way you can imagine the application of a mixed use zone on that site. I would regard that power as being used to artificially inflate the value of that publicly owned site so it can be sold for a price that it could otherwise never achieve under normal market conditions, with only a vague link connecting profit to expenditure on other sites and a massive reduction in each site's social benefit potential — you can probably see where I am going with this.

The point is that the site has value. Yes, as a government I think it is a lousy decision, but governments sell public land all the time. But connecting an inflated value that can only be achieved by a very artificial planning process that is closed off from public scrutiny and public involvement and then selling that and using that — leveraging is the big word that is coming through, and the planners love it. I do not think it is an appropriate use of the planning scheme to be so-called leveraging value on this site to deliver a renewal process for the public housing which is simply just a normal part of managing an asset portfolio.

That is in the first instance, and I do not think that you can link that. Doubtless there is a statewide issue with housing, but I do not think that you can link it and use the Planning and Environment Act as a delivery tool for policy off-site. In other words, there is a clear link between using planning mechanisms for the delivery of policy outcomes. If you need a hospital at a particular site, there is a particular location and you have the site, go for it. I would emphasise that the public housing policy outcome is not being substantially altered, so we have one significant public policy outcome and all we are getting are 10 more smaller units.

The other thing to note is that there have been calls for a whole-of-life asset management strategy across the public housing sector and the public housing portfolio since 2000. So there have been various documents. There was the 2012 Auditor-General's report and the 2016 Auditor-General's report, which were specific on the need for a life cycle-based asset management strategy for the state's public housing portfolio. It is simple. I work in local government. Twenty years ago there was a crisis across the state in local government. Now in local government you go into their asset management division and every asset has a life cycle attached to it, and that life cycle replacement is built into the asset management, and that includes all the drains that are starting to fall apart. So that is a 100-year cycle on basic assets. If we cannot do that much in terms of such a significant state government asset, then we are not trying, honestly. We are not trying, and the Auditor-General and others right back to policy documents in 2000 made that point. This is where I do not buy the urgency argument. There is simply an asset management requirement that should be delivered on that site and that should be delivered promptly and sensibly. I do not think there is anything sensible about what is being proposed. Just quickly, I am probably going on too much now.

The CHAIR — No, we have got time.

Mr HOLT — There are a number of things that may be used by way of example by people in terms of the use of public land. Obviously the one that is in the news at the moment is the Peter Mac site. There were also last year some school sites in Oakleigh that I know were discussed within Parliament and elsewhere and in the media. In those instances there was restrictive zoning. The fact is, the sites needed rezoning. On this site there is no requirement to rezone in order to renew. There is not. There is, prima facie, no cause for rezoning. Rezoning is not required. We are also apparently — this is in the documents that are before the standing advisory committee, and it makes me laugh because I live next door in our little house — next door now to a site of state significance, and you will understand that that is being used as a reason for the minister to intervene, because if they did not claim state significance, essentially the minister could not intervene within his own guidance. I think that is a laugh. I think it is patently absurd, but that is the sort of process we are involved in.

We are also putting up with statements like that the site is under-utilised and is surplus and those sorts of things. Clearly it is not under-utilised. One hundred and twenty families live there. Clearly it is not surplus because people are living there.

Ms SPRINGLE — I just have one question, I suppose. In a practical sense, can you articulate what you think needs to happen now?

Mr HOLT — Yes, absolutely. What needs to happen right now is for that community — our community — to get together with some planners and DHHS and design. One of the things that really gets me about that site is that this is a site where you could do great public housing. One of the things is that this site has the advantage of having a level of integration between the community as a whole and the tenants.

Ms SPRINGLE — Existing integration.

Mr HOLT — And that is because of the structure of the site. Public housing tenants cannot get up to the station or the shops without walking up our streets, and we cannot get to the school without walking through their car park. And we meet and we mingle. We are not best mates, but as one of my neighbours said, ‘Their dogs shit on our lawns’. That is the sort of relationship that we have. You know, the guy who parks his —

Ms CROZIER — I would not be happy with that.

Mr HOLT — That is what neighbours are like. It is a neighbourhood relationship that we have, that should be being built on. There is an opportunity on that site for fantastic public housing that achieves the social mix. One of the things I made a note of — and I know AHURI have put in a submission to you guys — is that all the work and expertise that has been done on social mix, which is being used as essentially an excuse on this site to introduce private development, says you cannot deliver a social mix on a single development site scale; it has to be done on a neighbourhood scale. We have the benefit of a neighbourhood that is already going that way. It annoys the hell out of me, pardon me, to have ‘social mix’ being bounced back at us when we know how the social mix works.

The CHAIR — Thank you. I think that is a good point to end on. Mr Holt, thank you very much for what you have shared with us today. We appreciate it. You will be receiving a copy of the transcript from today within a few weeks.

Mr HOLT — Thank you. I might just say that I am part of the local group, which is the North Brighton Residents Action Group. I hate that name, but anyway, that is what you do.

Ms PATTEN — I have just been looking at your website.

Mr HOLT — We have asked for an extension because we are in the middle of the standing advisory committee process and we are somewhat overwhelmed by all of that. We will be presenting, so you might see me or one of my neighbours back here at some point if we have the opportunity, and we would love to have the opportunity.

The CHAIR — Certainly. Thank you very much.

Mr HOLT — Thank you.

Witness withdrew.