

My name is Shirley Walker and I have lived in Hampton for 25 years. I volunteer for the Bayside Community and Information Support Services (BayCISS) I am also a member of the BayCISS Management Committee and the Hampton Neighbourhood Association.

Through my volunteering with BayCISS my interaction in 90% of cases is with those who reside in public housing estate. During most recent years I have found that there is an increase of clients who are either seeking appropriate public housing, are already on waiting lists and have been for an unreasonable length of time, or who are dissatisfied with the run down state of their housing. The allocation of a 10% increase in public housing on land already owned by the government is magnificently inadequate.

1. It is my experience and interaction with BayCISS clients that tenants do not necessarily like to be 'in the mix'. Whilst I agree the concept is admirable for the most part I have found that most families and older tenants do not feel at ease in mixed demographics.
2. As I live within 250 metres of the Koolkuna Lane housing in Hampton I have spoken with the tenants. Many approach BayCISS requiring assistance during difficult times seeking either advice, comfort or food assistance to see them through until their next payment. Some have been traumatised by having to move to another area after living in the residences for many years. Those still remaining are in a state of anxiety while waiting to be moved. Many of the residences are now unoccupied adding to their feeling of vulnerability from vandals.
3. Allocating part of the sites between public and private housing units from my knowledge of other parts of Melbourne have not always been transitioned well. Whilst the media has reported the success of such my observations are that some areas have transitioned better than others.
4. It would appear that some of the older estates are extremely run down, mouldy creating health hazards and should be replaced or extensively refurbished. Other sites such as Koolkuna Lane provide excellent public housing with car parking and mature vegetation. (Photo 1). Indeed it is irresponsible and outrageous that these units face the possibility of being demolished due to a recent application for development of the site due at VCAT on 4 December 2017. Since the introduction of plans for a proposed 3 storey development on the site the units have not been maintained however still indicate soundness of construction less than 25 years ago.
5. The proposed development will demolish the existing 16 units on the DHHS site with loss of amenity and mature vegetation for an increase to only 18 units. (10% increase) The remainder of the units on the proposed plans are for private sale. I would suggest that an upgrade to a second storey with a lift should be considered for these units This in turn would provide an immediate occupancy increase (approximately 80%). The removal of planning controls from local councils will have a negative effect when a Master Plan incorporating neighbourhood character, traffic flow and provision of services.
6. Third party appeal process should be retained in all instances concerning any development on public land. The proposed development of Koolkuna Lane is due to be heard at VCAT commencing 4 December and I am hopeful of a stay in proceedings until this Inquiry presents its findings in March 2018.
7. I believe that greater transparency, community consultation with affected residents and the broader community has not been considered in this development proposal. Indeed most residents living in and around the Koolkuna Lane estate are appalled at the proposed destruction and redevelopment on the site for minimal increase in public housing.
8. Any demolition of the estates as mentioned in a, b and c of your Terms of Reference should be deferred until your inquiry has been completed.
9. I welcome further consideration and rigorous study is welcomed into other public housing renewal projects.

10. There are many examples to be found of suitable public housing from overseas.

Finally, I can only hope that common sense prevails and that the Koolkuna Estate can be saved in time before VCAT hearing on 4 December return those residents that should never had to leave some 12 months ago plus with refurbishments 80% increase of others who have been waiting far too long.

Today, I have only become aware of the closing date for submissions for this Inquiry and wish to emphasise that the comments above are my own.

I look forward to your findings.