

TRANSCRIPT

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the adequacy and future directions of public housing in Victoria

Ballarat — 2 March 2010

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Witnesses

Ms S. Lavery,

Ms R. Norman-Jones, and

Mr F. Dickson, residents of Delacombe housing estate.

The CHAIR — Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you for your time in appearing before the committee, which is conducting an inquiry into the adequacy and future directions of public housing in Victoria. This is not a government inquiry; it is a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided in the Constitution Act 1975 and further subject to the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, the Defamation Act 2005 and, where applicable, the provisions of reciprocal legislation in other states and territories. Any comments you make outside the hearing will not be afforded such privilege. We are recording the proceedings and you will be sent a copy of the transcript. You will be able to make minor adjustments to it if necessary at that stage.

I will now hand over to you to comment on issues relating to the inquiry. Before you make your verbal submission please introduce yourselves. Once again, thank you very much, and I ask you to make your submission.

Mr DICKSON — My name is Fred Dickson, and I am a resident of Delacombe.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I am Renee Norman-Jones, and I am a resident of Delacombe.

Ms LAVERY — My name is Sharon Lavery. I have been living at Delacombe for nearly nine years. I have just completed a bachelor degree in business information systems.

The CHAIR — Thank you. Who would like to go first?

Ms LAVERY — I will begin by introducing our group. The people who will be addressing the committee for this submission represent a group of residents from the Leawarra estate in Delacombe, Ballarat. Our group is made up of 11 residents of all ages, ranging in ages between the early 20s and late 70s. There are long-term and short-term residents involved in the group. We are all here because we share common concerns about our personal safety and that of our children, not to mention the safety of our properties and contents.

The issues that will be raised are very serious in nature. We are concerned that the due diligence and duty of care for residents is not being met. We are committed to working in good faith with government and community groups to make sure the issues experienced by us on a regular basis are heard and responded to.

Our housing estate is part of the Delacombe neighbourhood renewal area in the Grampians region. The Office of Housing owns 138 dwellings, which is 91 per cent of the 151 properties on the estate. All properties are either three or four-bedroom family homes. Our area has an average age of 22 years, with 53 per cent of households being single-parent households and only 11 per cent having a wage as their main source of income.

Families with complex needs are allocated to our area, and this high concentration compounds issues of disadvantage, social exclusion, welfare dependency and family dysfunction. These issues may be the reason why so many long-term and short-term residents have left or are leaving our area. This creates a high turnover of tenancies in our estate.

Families who are not involved in antisocial behaviour and who respect their property and their neighbours seem to be the ones that are leaving. It seems that every respectful family that leaves is replaced by antisocial families. We fear that the end result will be a totally antisocial neighbourhood. We feel that the Office of Housing has to implement a three-strike policy like the one in Western Australia.

The SEIFA index of relative socioeconomic disadvantage indicates the estate is ranked in the lowest 0.5 per cent of the state in terms of socioeconomic advantage. Our estate is further characterised by poor street design and urban amenity that contributes to residents' sense of physical and social isolation. Leawarra Crescent is the only link in and out of our estate.

Mr DICKSON — We have put our main concerns into three themes and have summarised the issues. We hope and understand you will take everything we have to say as seriously as we see it to be. We expect the committee in all its wisdom to look at these matters very, very seriously.

We are prisoners in our own homes; we cannot walk the streets and feel safe; the children are prisoners in their own homes; the children are not safe to go and play in the street, and they do not know how to respond if they get caught outside and see violence in the street. For example, my two children and I went to the trots one night.

We walked because it was a nice night. On the way home when we turned into Leawarra Crescent there were four youths on the other side of the road. They kept looking back at us, and I really believed they were going to confront us. I said to my children, 'If they come towards us and something happens, just run to the nearest neighbour'.

Our homes cannot be left unattended because we are afraid of burglary. Some residents are forced to defend themselves and their homes. Some residents are so concerned that they have purchased and installed their own video surveillance systems for their homes. Many residents fear dealing directly with neighbours because of a fear of reprisal. Hoons and motorbike riders have scanners so the police do not get them. Guns and knives are being used and carried — for example, one of our group members was standing at the back door of a friend's house, and one of the men there dropped a gun onto the ground and it went off and fired a bullet into the caravan.

The group member grabbed the four children who were playing in the backyard, and she ran and hid them in the bedroom. The friend's partner grabbed a kitchen knife and the group member heard him yelling to the man with the gun, 'Get out of my property'. We encounter lewd behaviour. Public displays of nudity and urinating are common occurrences. Responses from the police are inadequate and at times non-existent. Many residents feel they are doing the job of the police. These behaviours have a longstanding psychological impact on adults and an even greater impact on children.

The violence and lack of safety in our community puts pressure and additional stress on our family relationships because children are confined within the home for their own safety, and they are limited in their recreation opportunities in our neighbourhood. We feel confused. Do we stay or do we leave? Drug dealings and bashings are rampant in the area, and notifying the authorities seems to do nothing. Syringes have been found in the local children's park. Blocked drains also bring up used syringes when it rains. Known paedophiles live in our area, even within a short distance of at least one victim. When this victim notified the Office of Housing, the housing officer laughed, hung up and did not want to know about it. Perhaps our area needs a 24-hour safety house until these things are brought under control.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Firstly, there should be a three-strike eviction policy for antisocial behaviour like in Western Australia. Secondly, complaints from residents should be taken seriously and followed through — for example, a neighbour of one of the group members made a very serious allegation to the housing department. The matter was so serious that he had installed surveillance cameras to protect his family from the expected payback. He also started parking his car in the front yard in view of the surveillance system. The thugs came around one night and ripped out the surveillance system.

When the family complained to the housing department the reaction was to tell them not to park their car on the front lawn. This put the resident in a situation of adhering to the directions of the housing department and parking his car in the driveway where it could not be seen, and it was obviously now a great worry for this family. The staff at the Office of Housing seem to require more training to deal with these real-life issues.

The housing service officer for Delacombe has been entering properties unannounced. There has been an inadequate response from housing staff when residents have called with concerns, which include: residents feel that the stigma associated with Delacombe is affecting the way our complaints are handled; residents have identified occasions where we have been hung up on, screamed at, shut down and not taken seriously, leaving us helpless; after calling to log concerns, residents have been left feeling frustrated, angry, betrayed and with no-one else to turn to, due to no sense of commitment to action from the authorities locally; and residents are losing confidence that anything will happen in response to concerns, leading to the feeling that the risk of reporting issues outweighs the benefits.

We should have more choice in where we live. We get offered one choice when accepting a house and have little option to transfer. Housing should mostly be for low-income families or individuals; however, care should be taken by government to ensure that communities are well planned so there is a variety of age groups, household types, income levels, and employment and education status.

Tenants should respect their properties and their neighbours and endeavour to make Delacombe a family-friendly neighbourhood. Residents should be screened before being allocated government housing.

Those with serious criminal histories should not be housed in areas where they are likely to continue this behaviour, which includes: sex offending, drug dealing, gang activities and lewd behaviours.

Ms LAVERY — Policy seems to reflect a pattern, referring to the term ‘that everyone has the right to be housed’. This policy seems to be outdated and not suitable for areas of housing that are condensed, with demographics that are far too similar in nature. Vulnerable children, who would normally have a psychologically regular upbringing, are being forced to witness the antisocial behaviours of others, fearing to go outside their houses, and yet fearing to stay inside them.

Tenancy agreements are not being upheld. Illegal activity in one of these dwellings is meant to result in eviction, but we commonly see that this does not happen. Illegal activity such as drug dealing, burglaries, bashings and hooning continue to infest the area, even after housing and the police have been informed of this. Both police and housing departments are aware of the individual dwellings that cause this nuisance; however, even with the help of residents there seems to be no action taken.

The only action that we are aware of are letters we receive in the mail to cut our lawns, which is just disgraceful and even arguable in some circumstances. We do not see any action on the complaints that we make about violence in the streets, people living in properties when they are not meant to be there, and loud music — for example, one resident in our group called to complain about an incident. She felt that housing did not respond to the issue and only responded with a letter in the mail about mowing the grass when there is no grass in her front yard.

The average age of our area is 22. This is more than 10 years lower than the average age for Victoria. Planning for prospective tenants seems to have been mishandled. There is a high rate of truancy by children, as is evident when walking the streets on schooldays. A lot of trouble occurs when these children are bored and have nothing to do or have no realistic curfews. Safety is, by and large, our biggest problem in Delacombe.

In conclusion we believe the community has a shared responsibility to work with government and authorities to make sure we can live and bring up our children in an environment where they feel safe and connected. We appreciate the opportunity for the inquiry to consider our experiences and look forward to working with the government to see positive changes in our neighbourhood.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much.

Mr SCHEFFER — Thank you very much for your presentation, the submission that you sent earlier, which we have all had the opportunity to look at, and the additional material you have provided which, as I think you know, is now on the public record and will be in the Hansard transcript. So that much is achieved, and thank you for that. They are very serious issues that you are raising. I do not think anyone is under any illusion about that, so we have understood that part of it.

I understand that one of the ways that people are trying to address these issues is through the neighbourhood program that is operating at Delacombe; is that right?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — Could you talk to us just a bit about how that program is operating and tell us whether there are things that might help ameliorate the issues that you have described, as just a bit of a starting point?

Ms LAVERY — We have been working on doing things. The neighbourhood renewal program started a not-for-profit business called ReDCcom, which provides computers to disadvantaged primary school children. They do have youth groups and they are looking at different ideas. They have one committee, the Leawarra Residents Action Project, which actually is looking into different ways of getting kids off the streets. In reality most of these children are not really interested in sports and whatnot; they are more interested in other activities, like drinking and drugs and whatnot. We are looking into having different programs. They already have some programs running.

Mr SCHEFFER — How long has the neighbourhood renewal program been going?

Ms LAVERY — About four years, I think. I have been part of it for three.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have been in it for around five years. I was the first one to start up with it.

Mr SCHEFFER — When you go back four or five years, has there been much change?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — There has been a lot of change, but now that we are getting you might as well say nuisance people from Wendouree starting trouble over there, we are getting them in our area, which is making it worse. Then the good kids hang around the bad ones and then they turn evil as well, and it is just getting out of control.

Mr SCHEFFER — Some things that have come out of the neighbourhood renewal program seem to be facing the right direction, would you say?

Ms LAVERY — Absolutely.

Mr SCHEFFER — Am I right in saying that you feel as though while you are going two steps forward you are going three steps back or one step back?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Two steps forward, three steps back.

Mr SCHEFFER — So it is that bad, is it?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have spoken to some children who are of bad behaviour in Delacombe and I have asked them what they would like to do. They have asked for a skate ramp to be put in Delacombe for them to play with. They have even asked about painting cars. They want things to do that they like to do, but we just cannot get it. There is a skate ramp behind Delacombe Primary School, but you have the older kids who are belting them up and telling them to piss off home, not letting them go. The only other park that is close is the one in town, in Barkly Street. Most parents will not let them go there because it is too far away from home.

Ms KAIROUZ — Who have you asked for the skate ramp?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have spoken to a few people myself. I have even spoken to the police, and they are not willing to help. I have to have a meeting with the council and speak to them about it. I have thought of building my own for the kids, but it is council property.

Ms KAIROUZ — You have spoken to the mayor and council, have you?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have not spoken to the mayor yet. I want to speak to the council first.

Mr DICKSON — My argument is this: if you are prepared to put a skate ramp in Delacombe without any authoritative supervision, then what good is that going to do the kids? They are going to be stepping on needles; they are going to be pushed off those skate ramps by the older kids. Personally I do not think it is the time to do it. I think what is more important is to clean up Delacombe and then build on it.

Mr SCHEFFER — What does that mean, clean it up — you mentioned the three strikes and a greater police presence, I guess?

Mr DICKSON — Absolutely.

Mr SCHEFFER — How would that work, without a system of the community making decisions about it?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — We have too young a demographic in the area, and that hinders us greatly.

The CHAIR — When you say ‘clean up’, what do you really mean?

Mr DICKSON — I mean we have to put tougher rules and regulations down for the tenants in regard to staying there. The three-strike rule to me is the absolute be-all and end-all, because these tenants know that when they have had one strike they have only two chances left and that when they get to two strikes they definitely cannot afford to stuff up.

Ms KAIROUZ — Where do you think they would go after the three strikes?

Mr DICKSON — I do not particularly care where they go.

Ms KAIROUZ — So would they end up on the street, do you think?

Mr DICKSON — That is not my problem. They have put themselves on the street, and it has benefited the community of decent people.

Ms KAIROUZ — If they do end up on the street, what role do you think the government has?

Mr DICKSON — If they end up on the street — —

Ms KAIROUZ — Or the Office of Housing?

Mr DICKSON — I think that once a person has been evicted from an Office of Housing house, they should not get another one. Why give them another chance, when they have had three opportunities?

Ms KAIROUZ — It was very good. Thank you very much for your submission. You mentioned some of the complaints and said that you felt that they did not get you anywhere.

Mr DICKSON — No.

Ms KAIROUZ — Do you have any ideas or suggestions as to ways we can improve the processes of making sure that your complaints are registered or heard?

Mr DICKSON — One of the excuses that the department of housing keep throwing at me — and I do sympathise with them — is that they have to work within the government profile. They cannot step outside their boundaries.

Ms KAIROUZ — What do you mean by that?

Mr DICKSON — I mean that the rules are set down by the government and the rules are obviously not strong enough for the ministry of housing to act upon our complaints.

Ms KAIROUZ — So it is more around the antisocial behaviour?

Mr DICKSON — Yes.

Ms LAVERY — All complaints should be logged. I do not think they are at the moment — only because the person who manages our area does hang up on the phones and does have screaming battles with some of our neighbours. I am assuming those are not being logged.

Ms KAIROUZ — Have you had an experience like that?

Ms LAVERY — I have not myself personally, no.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have.

Mr DICKSON — So have I.

Mr FINN — These are ministry of housing officers?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Yes.

The Committee determined a short part of the transcript should not be reproduced on the grounds that it did not relate to the Terms of Reference and had the potential to impact negatively on third parties.

This decision was made in accordance with the procedures observed by Parliamentary Committees when dealing with witnesses, as stated in the *Guidelines for the Rights and Responsibilities of Witnesses*.

Mr FINN — Just on another matter, you were talking about the lack of police response to the many problems that you seem to have had. Is it just the norm that you ring the police and nothing happens?

Ms LAVERY — Yes, it is, actually. The other night, Friday night, I had to ring the police twice. I waited for about 40 minutes while the house that backs onto my backyard was being robbed and trashed. You could hear the kids from probably half a kilometre away, they were that loud. They were kicking the fence, which is my fence — damaging my fence — while they were burgling this woman's house. I told the police, and I had to ring them back 40 minutes later. The first time they said the police were already on their way. Somebody else must have rung them first. So everyone is ringing them and they are not showing up.

Mr FINN — On a scale of zero to 10, in terms of how liveable it is — 10 being an unliveable situation and zero being the ideal — where would you put Delacombe?

Ms LAVERY — I would put it up there at about 8.

Ms KAIROUZ — Through the Chair, I do not know what page number it is, but I think at point 8 Renee said:

Housing should be mostly for low-income families or individuals, however care should be taken by government to ensure that communities are well planned so there is a variety of: (a) age groups; (b) household types; (c) income levels; and (d) employment and education status.

If the government goes down that path and has diversity in areas, do you think that will alleviate the problems at Delacombe?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — It will, because everyone will have something to do.

Ms LAVERY — People can learn from each other as well. Instead of having the same demographic and you have everyone on the dole and no-one is working, everyone is bored and they have to do something with their time.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — There is a community house on an angle across the road from me, but as soon as it hits 3.30, the doors are shut and those people are out of there. It is meant to be for the kids. But I see people who come from Wendouree, Ballarat East during the day go over there, spend time over there, but as soon as that clock hits 3.30 for the kids to finish school, that is it, the doors are shut and all the cars are gone. The community house is locked up. There is nothing for the kids.

The CHAIR — Have you complained to the council?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I have not as yet spoken to the council. I have to ring them and make an appointment. We have been trying to get this all organised to bring up for years.

The CHAIR — Have you had any dealings with the local members of Parliament?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Not as yet. We have a meeting tomorrow, as far as I know. That is all I know.

Mr DICKSON — Not local members, but I have been in contact and had a meeting with Bill Shorten to do with this.

Mr FINN — Wish you well on that.

Mr DICKSON — Bill and I go back a little bit. This is something we are hoping will happen, that we will get some support from the federal government. We will have a meeting tomorrow with Karen Overington, and hopefully Karen will come to the party as well. We will be having a meeting with Catherine King as well. I am not quite sure when that date is — the 27th. The fact of the matter is that we are doing everything we can but the department of housing is not doing everything they can, because they are restricted through the policy they operate under. There has to be a change to it.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — We even have taxis that are scared to drop people in Leawarra Crescent.

Ms LAVERY — And they refuse to.

Mr DICKSON — Another issue is that we are desperately short of police. According to the police association we are 98 police short.

Mr FINN — That is in Ballarat, is it?

Mr DICKSON — That is in Ballarat.

Mr FINN — Is there a reluctance on the part of the police anyway to come to Delacombe? Do they have a fear of attending incidents in Delacombe?

Mr DICKSON — I have experienced that firsthand. On New Year's Eve I rang the police on three occasions about one particular incident. They never came at all.

Ms KAIROUZ — Can I just go back to the three-strike eviction policy for antisocial behaviour? Obviously a lot of the issues you are talking about are about the antisocial behaviour and you want the Office of Housing to address the antisocial behaviour or to help the tenants. Do you know whether it has worked in Western Australia?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — It is working 100 per cent in Western Australia.

Mr DICKSON — Yes.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — That is why we have put their suggestion down, because we like it, because it is effective, and it is working over there.

Ms KAIROUZ — But you do not have any statistics? We can find out.

Mr DICKSON — You can find out quite easily. Just look it up on the computer and you will get hold of that. That is the only model that we feel as a community can be implemented to protect ourselves and our children and our futures.

Mr FINN — Are you serviced at all by public transport after hours?

Ms LAVERY — No.

Mr DICKSON — No.

Mr FINN — That would mean after 6 or 7 at night?

Ms LAVERY — Yes, at 6 o'clock.

Mr FINN — There is no public transport after 6 o'clock. And on weekends, after?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — On Sundays there are no buses, but on Saturdays there are until 3.30.

Mr FINN — So after 3.30 on Saturday there is no public transport at all?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — None at all.

Mr FINN — So those kids who might otherwise go and expend their energy elsewhere are stuck and are almost prisoners on the estate?

Mr DICKSON — Yes.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Me and my partner have built a bike jump out the front of our place, and we have a whole lot of kids. Nearly every kid in Delacombe who comes out comes and plays on our bikes jump, and they have fun doing it. I even have video footage, because we have a video camera out the front.

Mr FINN — But at the moment there is nowhere else to go because there is no way to get there?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — No.

Mr DICKSON — Of course people have not got the money because it is a low-income area. We have got to have these facilities within Delacombe. But like I say, do not put those facilities there until Delacombe is cleaned up.

The CHAIR — This morning we visited Wendouree West to talk about community facilities and neighbourhood renewal and how they will develop the community centre and school and work in everything together. Is it a good model for your area? What do you think about that?

Mr DICKSON — I think Wendouree West has dramatically improved to what it was. But whilst Wendouree West has improved, we have deteriorated.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Because we are getting the people in our area who are evicted and who are trouble over there with their antisocial behaviour.

Mr DICKSON — That is not entirely true. I checked that up; that is not entirely true.

Ms NORMAN-JONES — We are getting the people from Melbourne as well.

The CHAIR — But it has dramatically improved? Wendouree West has improved from what it was?

Mr DICKSON — Yes, from what I have been told it has definitely improved.

The CHAIR — It is my understanding that Karen Overington, your local member, has a lot to do with it. She championed that, so it would be a good idea for you to work with her.

Ms LAVERY — She has been involved with different communities and the neighbourhood renewal before this one. This one is only still very new.

Mr DICKSON — We have Karen Overington. She is already offside with me because she has come out publicly and stated that we do not need any more police. We do need police. The police are telling us they need more police. We see a police car once every couple of weeks, if we are lucky. I will take a picture of the next one. It is a big highway — ‘Oh, there’s a police car!’

Mr FINN — Would more police and a zero tolerance approach by those police to the problems that you have in Delacombe have an impact, do you think?

Ms LAVERY — Absolutely.

Mr DICKSON — Yes, definitely.

Ms LAVERY — They ignore most things that are happening because they are just everyday things — it could be a child riding a bike without a helmet — but there are 12 kids out there causing havoc and they are trying to stop the havoc, but they are ignoring all the little things.

Mr FINN — So you would welcome police in there every day picking up people for everything?

Mr DICKSON — Yes.

Ms LAVERY — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — Just looking at some notes I have here, the neighbourhood renewal started in 2004, so that matches with what you have been saying. I have neighbourhood renewal projects in my electorate as well, and as the Chair has said, we looked at Wendouree West this morning. Overall my sense of them is that they are working fairly well — not uniformly, but working pretty well as models to get a better shape to some communities. But what I am hearing from you is that really it has not made any difference at all.

Ms LAVERY — I would not say that.

Mr SCHEFFER — Is that an exaggeration?

Ms LAVERY — When Renee said three steps back, I think she may have meant one.

Mr DICKSON — Renee said that; she is entitled to say that.

Ms LAVERY — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — That is fine; people have a right to say how they sit. But you have a different view; fair enough.

Ms LAVERY — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — What I am trying to get a grip on is there are different things that you are doing, like going to members of Parliament and speaking to the City of Ballarat and various things like that, but is there not a system of governance and organisation under neighbourhood renewal where these ideas can be pooled and they can be sorted through by the community and put into a priority and things can be worked on in an ordered way — physical buildings, processes, issues, identification and liaison with the police and different agencies?

Ms LAVERY — Absolutely.

Mr SCHEFFER — I do not understand how it has gone in a direction I do not recognise.

Ms LAVERY — One of the other committees we have that has been running for quite sometime now is the LRAP group; we meet every second Friday, and that is where all the ideas come from. As a group representing the residents we sit down and come up with ideas on what we think would be good for the area. We meet with the local police, we meet with Shane Snibson from the Office of Housing. Already we have got some action to a certain level. It is not like nothing is happening, because it is. People with a criminal history or whatnot now are not being put in Delacombe homes, so we are making headway.

They are also looking at how many children are in each court, with the average age being 22 instead of the state level being 35. So they are also looking at that and at how many children are being placed in each court whereas at the moment some courts have 16 children in them. So they are making headway, yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — You mentioned that the police are involved in those conversations. What are the range of organisations and agencies that come together around that group?

Ms LAVERY — So far it has been the police, the Office of Housing — like I said, we have had Karen Overington there — and other people from council.

Mr SCHEFFER — The schools?

Ms LAVERY — The neighbourhood renewal works with the Delacombe Primary School. That is where the computers go, and that is where all the scholarships go through. And they have after-hour programs for children. They have child care, pampering mothers sessions, they are running quite a few very good programs.

Mr SCHEFFER — And the Sebastopol College — there has been a redevelopment there as well?

Ms LAVERY — Yes, apparently.

Mr SCHEFFER — Is that good?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — It has not started yet. It is still under way.

Mr SCHEFFER — But you are engaged in how that is going to work? That is part of what the group talks about?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — I do not think we are. I do not think we are engaged in that one yet. According to Jen Hyatt, who is the project officer of the neighbourhood renewal and is sitting here listening today, we are not involved as yet. She says it is through the schools.

Mr SCHEFFER — But you will have the engagement of how that works?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — So there is sort of an order coming into that process?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — Talking about if you need more resources in that environment, do you get satisfaction there? Would you raise the issue of the skate boarding facility, for example? Would that be a place to raise it?

Ms NORMAN-JONES — Yes, I would do that. I have not done it as yet, but I would do that.

Mr SCHEFFER — Because you would agree that that is like the conduit where all of these ideas come in and can get processed so the community has some ownership of them? That is the way I understood that it worked, and it works like that for you as well; but that is a question for you.

Ms LAVERY — Can I just mention that Bill Shorten mentioned to us a man called Peter McDonald, who ran a model in Macquarie Fields, I think, in New South Wales. It was a neighbourhood in pretty much the same situation as ourselves, and he put this model forward and apparently it worked; Bill Shorten was going to look into that and see how they went about it.

Mr SCHEFFER — Okay.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much for all your concerns. They are recorded in the Hansard transcript, and we will consider them when we are doing the report. Thank you very much for your presence today.

Committee adjourned.