

# CORRECTED VERSION

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

### REFERENCES COMMITTEE

#### Subcommittee

#### Inquiry into environmental design and public health

Melbourne — 7 September 2011

#### Members

Mr A. Elsbury

Mr C. Ondarchie

Ms S. Pennicuik

Mrs I. Peulich

Mr J. Scheffer

Mr B. Tee

Ms G. Tierney

Chair: Ms G. Tierney  
Deputy Chair: Mrs I. Peulich

#### Staff

Secretary: Mr K. Delaney

#### Witnesses

Ms G. Nagle, executive; and

Ms J. McGovern, executive, Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board.

**The CHAIR** — There are a number of things that I need to say for the record before we start. Welcome. It is great that you could make it, and we are anticipating a really good session with you. For the record I need to mention to you that you are covered by parliamentary privilege, so for any comments you make you are covered, but if there are comments that you make outside that are exactly the same as those you have made here, they are not covered by parliamentary privilege. You will also receive a copy of the transcript in 7 to 10 days, and if there are some issues that you pick up that need some resolution, our suggestion is that you liaise directly with Keir and they will get sorted. We will go straight into you providing your name and the organisation or organisations that you represent and your address. So if you can state that for the record, we will hand straight over to you to go into a 5 or 10-minute presentation.

**Ms NAGLE** — I am Gabrielle Nagle, and I am the chief executive officer of Glastonbury Community Services. I am on the executive of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board.

**Ms McGOVERN** — I am Joan McGovern. I am communications manager with the Shell Geelong Refinery, and as well as being communications manager I am involved in the community, and I am on the executive of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board and also on the executive of Northern Futures, which is heavily involved in our local community.

**Ms NAGLE** — We will start with our presentations and recommendations, an introduction and background around Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board and some of the evidence around the issues impacting on that community, particularly in relation to the environmental side of public health.

Corio Norlane is a longstanding disadvantaged area in the Victorian community, and we believe that continued investment is necessary, given the longstanding intergenerational disadvantage.

We also recognise that a lot of work has been done, both at a local and at a state level, to look at major urban renewal in that part of the Geelong area, and we believe that it is well recognised what the issues are in that community. A very good example is the Corio-Norlane education regeneration, which you may be familiar with, and that support for the funding of stage 2 is necessary. We also recognise that the community has advised that transport access and appropriate open space is definitely necessary to improve community wellbeing as well as to enhance public health in that particular area. We also note that the health issues of that community are 1.5 times greater than the average, to give you a bit of an indication of the evidence in and around the extent of the public health issues. We also recognise that there is a requirement for health and community services hubs as a one-stop shop in that community, also noting that there needs to be an increased connection of walking and cycling paths throughout Corio Norlane, and in your pack there you will have a map.

One of the major issues for that community is that it is intersected by the Princes Highway, so if you are coming from Melbourne to Geelong, that is the first fairly significant major intersection. The community has advised that one of their major difficulties is getting to the shopping centre, which is in the north-west, the top north-west corner of that community. There is only transport that goes north and south, not east and west, so there are some significant physical barriers and safety issues for the community to travel around in that particular area.

We also note that local government is highly supportive of developing the area in particular, and as a development advisory board we are also linked in with Healthy Cities. We believe that any sort of development into the future should be predicated based on the principles of Healthy Cities.

I guess the only other significant thing — and we will talk through that more in terms of the introduction and evidence — is that 50 per cent of the development advisory board's constituents are community members and come from a recognised community service that is about the residents. The development of the board over the last three years has really been a cooperative partnership. It has certainly had the support of not only the local community but corporate organisations such as Shell, local government and community service organisations like Glastonbury, that I represent, as well as state and federal government.

**Ms McGOVERN** — I should just apologise on behalf of Grant Boyd, who is the deputy chairman of the CNDAB and who was going to be here today. He is the CEO of Bethany. Glastonbury and Bethany are the two premium organisations that work in the social disadvantage area in Geelong, and the reason he is not here is because he is sick. He would have been here with bells on.

The purpose of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board is to promote whole-of-government and community cooperation, participation and investment in reducing disadvantage and promoting sustainable social, physical, environmental and economic development in Corio and Norlane. It is a legacy of the Corio-Norlane neighbourhood renewal program. Originally I was on the community reference committee which morphed into the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board, which has become a reference body for a whole pile of organisations, including many state government agencies that come to us with their plans for what they are actually wanting to do within our area. The Northern Water Plant, for instance, which Shell is also involved in, uses the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board as its reference group. Major projects under its former guise and plans for the area from its successors are brought to the CNDAB, as we call it, to get our input.

As Gabrielle says, we have got 50-50 residents: 50 per cent of the residents come from organisations in the four quadrants of Corio-Norlane. They are elected, so they very much represent the people who live in the area. The other 50 per cent are people like Gabrielle and myself, the police, the department of education and parliamentarians. It is seen as the body you go and talk to if you want to find out what is actually happening and what people really think in the community. There has been a lot of consultation done, and I have watched the local residents over the years grow in their sense of being able to talk to organisations and people such as parliamentarians and being able to take on leadership positions; they really know what they want these days.

I recommend referring to organisations such as CNDAB, and I also think that, in terms of recommendations your group might want to take on, governance bodies such as the CNDAB are really valuable to places around the state. I do not know that there are many of the CNDAB-type organisations in Victoria, but they are very powerful and potent in the community.

Social advantages and disadvantages are assessed through a combination of many factors. I do not know that I need to tell you what they are; I think you probably all know.

**Mrs PEULICH** — If you could, because one of my questions was going to be, ‘What are your indicators?’.

**Ms McGOVERN** — Okay: employment, wages, education, health —

**Mrs PEULICH** — Specifically do you have indicators that you measure your performance by?

**Ms NAGLE** — Of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board?

**Mrs PEULICH** — Yes.

**Ms NAGLE** — We actually do have plans. We have about six of them, and these are actually sitting under the Healthy Cities framework. We can furnish you with those in particular. A lot of our plans are obviously predicated on resourcing, but it is also about making sure that we have a collaborative voice with the community. It is a very structured, collaborative way to work, and I think it is quite unique.

From a board’s point of view, through the various committees we actually report back to the board. The plan is about this thick, and it could be anything from linking up to the education regeneration, or it could be in relation to housing. Whilst we are an advisory board, we do have plans that actually link up with both current and past government activity and community issues-raising.

**Mrs PEULICH** — On this list here, are they all board members?

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes, they are.

**Mrs PEULICH** — All of them?

**Ms McGOVERN** — Some of them are guests. It says there are 24 up the top that are not.

**Mrs PEULICH** — So you have 24 board members. How are they elected, and what is the process of governance?

**Ms NAGLE** — The process of governance is that, as Joan suggested —

**Mrs PEULICH** — Are they appointed, or are they elected?

**Ms NAGLE** — They are appointed based on where they have come from. We have four neighbourhood houses and they have committees of management, so they are appointed by the committee of management as a representative of that neighbourhood house as a community member.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Who has prescribed that structure?

**Ms NAGLE** — The board has developed that structure.

**Ms McGOVERN** — We have terms of reference which prescribe how people are elected.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Are there any others that are not prescribed by virtue of who they are representing that are elected, or is there a democratic process?

**Ms NAGLE** — There is a democratic process within the organisation that has been requested to be part of the 24-member governance group. When you look at it in terms of whether it is a government representative or an organisational representative, generally speaking, it will be someone of a chief executive officer level or somebody regional — say for VicPol it will actually be the sergeant who is responsible for the Corio police station — so it is basically the person that actually has the leadership responsibility in that particular area.

**Mrs PEULICH** — So is there a chairperson?

**Ms NAGLE** — There is a chair.

**Mrs PEULICH** — How is that person appointed or elected?

**Ms NAGLE** — They are elected by the membership.

**Mrs PEULICH** — From those who attended?

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes.

**Ms McGOVERN** — The deputy chairman is also elected.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Is there any funding for the functioning of your board and your own operations?

**Ms McGOVERN** — No.

**Ms NAGLE** — It has not got funding now, but it was funded out of the Neighbourhood Renewal program, which ceased in June of last year.

**Ms McGOVERN** — We are here by grace and favour.

**Mrs PEULICH** — It is a little like a committee of Geelong or a committee of Melbourne; is that right?

**Ms McGOVERN** — That is correct.

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes, and whilst it is not a subset there is a lot of interface because Glastonbury Community Services is part of the Committee for Geelong in terms of its membership, and I am on the Leaders for Geelong subcommittee, which is a subgroup of that. Members of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board neighbourhood house are doing the Barwon leadership program, which is a one-year program that tries to particularly focus on targeting these sorts of people so that they can enhance their capability in local leadership. I am on that, and community service organisations specifically try to target support. In effect it is a pseudo mentorship.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Your mission statement is ‘To strengthen and grow our community together’. It is very brief. Has that been teased out into a list of goals and objectives and actions? Are you proactive in seeking to do that, or is it just used as a reference group?

**Ms NAGLE** — We do have a comprehensive plan. We can furnish the committee with that, because it is quite exhaustive.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Are there any gaps in your structure?

**Ms NAGLE** — In terms of whether we could do things differently?

**Mrs PEULICH** — It seems to me that you are really developing a community plan.

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes.

**Mrs PEULICH** — I would have thought it would have been the role of local government with the appropriate reference groups to tease those out. Did you want to comment on that?

**Ms McGOVERN** — The local council is involved; they are guests and they participate. They bring their plans to the CNDAB. We are engaged; we collaborate.

**The CHAIR** — From my knowledge it was a deliberate decision to have more local service providers and grassroots community members involved in this group — that is, for it to be more organic than it being auspiced through the City of Greater Geelong.

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes, absolutely. The City of Greater Geelong is now doing a structure plan for the area. It is involved but in terms of its decision-making processes. We have one community development officer on the CNDAB who is specifically based in that community, but it is not senior management. They come and present to us, and they liaise with us in relation to their planning.

**Ms McGOVERN** — I made a mistake. I said they are guests. They are not; they are actually general members. Stephen Griffin is the CEO and Jenny McMahon is the community services general manager.

**The CHAIR** — And you would have a lot to do with Kylie Fisher as well?

**Ms NAGLE** — Absolutely.

**Ms McGOVERN** — Yes, she is a guest or ex officio member of the CNDAB.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Are there any particular indicators that stand out as your priority or those of that particular community? The reason I ask is that I am contemplating some pilots elsewhere and I am trying to glean from your experience — for example, what is your kindergarten participation rate or maternal and child health visitation rate? Do you see your role as being to say, ‘Okay, we have got some concerning indicators which are well below the state average; what can this committee do with its stakeholders in order to turn that around?’

**Ms NAGLE** — When you look at Australian early development index indicators, they are well below the state average. The issues around that are not only enrolments but attendance in terms of kindergarten, so we link with the education regeneration project. We are convinced that the co-location of kindergarten, primary and secondary — —

**Mrs PEULICH** — You think it is going to fix it?

**Ms NAGLE** — It will be a vehicle through which to engage parents who obviously have had poor educational experiences themselves, which is extremely significant. Getting those parents to first base integrates them into what is hopefully lifelong learning for their children, because we believe no parent starts out wanting to be a bad parent. When we look at all the levels of disadvantage, it is cumulative. If we can focus on education, we definitely believe it is a significant factor. We also think access and transport, in terms of open space and getting people from A to B, is really important, and I mentioned that before. It is also important to have hubs that people can go to that are non-adversarial, not statutory and which have a positive perspective, with infrastructure and built environment that is equal to what you would find in an advantaged community. The majority of infrastructure in the north is very tired; it is certainly late 1960s to early 1970s. That is why we are working with council to get them to look at locations physically and at how that is going to work best, and we have started with the education sector.

**The CHAIR** — I think another good example is the way that Glastonbury did that launch at the pier five weeks ago. It was a Friday evening and almost every organisation and every senior community person, including all the politicians, were there. How many would we have had there?

**Ms NAGLE** — At least 100 people.

**The CHAIR** — We were taken through how Glastonbury had changed its focus, and a lot of that change has been brought about by Glastonbury's involvement in this project; and the changed focus is now in the early childhood years. What I am saying is that the key service providers at the board level are looking at what is happening at the coalface, as organisations themselves are modifying their priorities.

**Mrs PEULICH** — It may well be in this documentation, but I would have thought that I would have looked at some indicators, identified some priorities, developed some actions that were going to be a fairly comprehensive go at trying to address those and then trying to mobilise the stakeholders and those who can bring resources to the table to achieve that. I am hoping that I am going to find that in here.

**Ms McGOVERN** — You will find that in there. Like I said, Northern Futures also works on other indicators. Unemployment is a really big issue. As it is described, worklessness is at 58 per cent in Corio. Health is a really big issue; Corio has rates of diabetes and obesity that are 60 per cent higher than the national average. It has significant health issues.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Multicultural communities, most of them?

**Ms McGOVERN** — Yes.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Are there some recommendations about that which tease them out?

**Ms McGOVERN** — Yes, and Aboriginal services, absolutely.

**Mr TEE** — Thanks for your presentation and the excellent work you are doing. I want to ask two questions. The first one is in terms of the nature of some of the work that you have been doing. Just thinking about and looking at the map on the back of your document that talks about social disadvantage, one of the issues we are looking at is open space and access to open space: how is that played out in terms of that community, how important an issue is it and how is it going to manifest itself?

**Ms NAGLE** — The issue is incredibly important. Looking at the development of Corio-Norlane over the last 50 years, the Princes Highway intersects the community at one level and then the west-to-east road actually breaks it into four quadrants. In all the planning that had been done in the past Corio-Norlane was considered to be a large area, but the community have identified that one of the biggest blocks for them is the fact that they physically cannot get from A to B within their own community because of poor transport and inappropriate safety in terms of lighting and paths, as well as the fact that open space and access routes are not available to go from where they live to the shopping centre, which is one of the main focuses in that community.

Some significant work has been done on walkability, cycling tracks and access to schools. There are significant areas of open space, but they do not necessarily connect to each other or to the shopping centre. The transport is really just north to south. The train stations, which run parallel to the highway, need upgrading to enable people to go from where they live to their place of employment.

**Mr TEE** — I suppose that starts on the next question, which is: from a planning and health perspective, in order to assist those communities what sort of things would you like to see the state government focusing on doing more of? That goes to the sort of recommendations that we can put forward to the government.

**Ms NAGLE** — As we have said before, definitely continuing the education regeneration, because we think that has made a really good start. That goes to pride and ownership in the community in terms of its participation in an extensive array of discussions around how its education services would be delivered better into the future. That ranged from anything like new school uniforms to rebranding services and making education a positive experience. We certainly believe that is really significant.

We also believe that transport in relation to getting to school, getting to the shopping centre and getting to health services is really critical. That would involve a combination of walking, cycling and enhanced public transport, as well as the rail line, from an employment point of view.

As Joan mentioned, there are also employment opportunities. Northern Futures is making significant inroads because there is a trade training centre going to be established in the north.

The other area is health and community services. The majority of the built environment is really poor and needs to be either completely upgraded or started again. There is working in partnership with local government. They recognise that there is a need, but trying to work out which part to do first is obviously going to be really significant. I think working with organisations such as the board we represent is a really good way to use a fairly independent vehicle to harness ongoing community support for and engagement with contributing to public health issues. We recognise, just as an example, that with diabetes, poor health indicators and poor indicators in relation to early childhood development there is a huge commitment to improvement and making things better. However, resourcing in those five areas would really be of substantial benefit.

**Ms McGOVERN** — I was at a wind-up session for neighbourhood renewal last year, and the then Minister for Housing, Richard Wynne, said something along the lines of, 'Governments of all persuasions have for decades ignored this area'. If you have a look at the indicators that Gabrielle has cited, you see it is absolutely true. It needs urban renewal across the spectrum.

**Mrs PEULICH** — I have just had a bit of a flick through your document. While certainly there is a body of work, taking it to the next level would be where you have clear and specific key areas of activity specified rather than just general sentiments, and that you would have specific indicators — for example, you may have a reduction in young people presenting with drug and alcohol issues. I would think you would have some actual empirical data, and then, following a three-year program, three-year period or whatever, be able to report on the changes in the statistics. I think communities do need a community plan, and I think what you do obviously reflects a lot of work, but I think that taking it to the next level is really going to be important for the capacity for building communities.

**Ms NAGLE** — I certainly take your point. Being an advisory board we are not a service provider, so Barwon Health has those particular statistic indicators, but I do take your point that it would bolster the opportunity to have a target.

**Mrs PEULICH** — I think it is crucial, because then you would have a very powerful document.

**The CHAIR** — Is there anything else that you want to say?

**Ms NAGLE** — There are just a few key points we have not mentioned. In about 2008 an economic study was done in relation to the area. Whilst it is three years old, I think it is still extremely relevant. It identified that by putting infrastructure and resources into the community a saving of about \$46 million per annum could be made across the board. That is obviously a fairly significant figure. We do have a variety of different reports that have been done either independently or by organisations or previous government departments, which we have available to us. But we certainly believe that a fair bit of groundwork has actually been done, and the information will not necessarily be any different in 2011. We are more than happy to provide that information to you.

**The CHAIR** — Great; thank you.

**Mrs PEULICH** — May I comment on that as well? It is disturbing to hear that, and I have heard and seen similar things occur when sometimes very valid consultant's reports are commissioned on a regular basis sometimes in collaboration with different municipal areas. Some do lots of good things with it, especially in the economic development units of local government, and others do bugger all and there is little change from report to report. Are you able to comment on whether the City of Greater Geelong has a viable and strong economic development unit which picks up that sort of data and translates it into some meaningful action plans?

**Ms NAGLE** — I would say they do. However, the focus on some of the services has actually been state and some has been local. It has taken three years to get to the point where they certainly recognise that and they

want to do things in collaboration. At the moment they are in the process of planning for services, but it has taken some time. But then again, the education regeneration has taken time as well.

**The CHAIR** — Could you just spell out exactly what happened with the education regeneration program, because it was a very significant exercise?

**Ms McGOVERN** — A number of schools have been closed and they have been brought under one roof, if you like — five roofs but one group. The driver for that was a woman called Arda Duck, but unfortunately she died suddenly. She has been replaced by a number of people; I am not quite sure whether there is still a really strong driver for it. The former state government did fund phase 1 of the education regeneration program. We do not have a commitment for phase 2, and it is critical to get it going to ensure the education of our children.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Were sites closed?

**Ms NAGLE** — Yes.

**Mrs PEULICH** — So they agreed to a regeneration without securing a full commitment to a full rebuild?

**Ms NAGLE** — That is right.

**Mrs PEULICH** — In my book that seems very short sighted.

**The CHAIR** — There was an expectation that the second phase would be funded.

**Ms McGOVERN** — That is right.

**Mrs PEULICH** — You will be relieved to know that an audit will take place from the end of the year and into next year around the needs of all education facilities and a future program to address them will take place. Statewide a lot of it has been significantly impacted by the BER and the impact it has on other facilities. There is a real need to put a line around that so we understand what we are dealing with. That might be something to keep in mind.

**Ms McGOVERN** — Some of the schools were becoming unviable. For instance, at Rosewall Primary School there was an absolute stigma about going in there — —

**Mrs PEULICH** — I am not arguing against it; it happens under all shades and hues of governments.

**Ms McGOVERN** — Yes.

**Mrs PEULICH** — But if I was involved in a regeneration program where you are closing sites, I would want to secure a commitment and money for a full rebuild before agreeing to it.

**Ms McGOVERN** — Yes. As that has not happened, we are hoping you will do your bit, please.

**The CHAIR** — There has been a change of government, so you get that opportunity.

**Mrs PEULICH** — You should have provided the money.

**The CHAIR** — We did to the extent that it was. We are looking forward to your government actually spending money in this disadvantaged area.

I think it is a good idea to draw this to a close. Thank you, Joan and Gabrielle. It was very good.

**Ms NAGLE** — Thank you.

**Mrs PEULICH** — We look forward to reading your next version.

**Witnesses withdrew.**