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Kew Cottages Coalition (KCC)

30th June 2008

Ms. Lisa Neville
Minister for Community Services
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street,
Melbourne 3000

Email: lisa.neville@parliament.vic.gov.au (Urgent Please)

Re: Kew Cottages Stage 2 and Beyond: A New Window of Opportunity for Victoria.

Dear Ms. Neville,

I note the Premier's Media Release of 4th June 2008, announcing the completion of the Kew Residential Services Project at Kew Cottages. I note also that today (30/6/8) is the completion date for Stage 1 of the Government's KRS Development contract with Walker Corporation.

Further to our referral to you from the Premier (25/9/07), and our earlier discussions with your office, I am, therefore, now writing to seek a meeting with you to discuss the future of the balance of the Kew Cottages site. (ie: Stage 2 onwards)

We believe a unique window of opportunity has now arisen at Kew Cottages to provide a new model of care for Victorians with intellectual disability, as well as integrating the environmental and recreational values of the site.

I enclose a copy of the Coalition's proposal as submitted today to the Upper House Select Committee on Public Land Development, and would be pleased to provide any further information that you require.

I understand the Upper House Committee will be reporting to Parliament in September 2008. Given the powers available to you as the responsible Minister under *the Project Development and Construction Management Act S.12(1)* I would respectfully suggest, therefore, that **pending the Select Committee's Report to Parliament, and conclusion of deliberations of both the Upper House, and Heritage Victoria** it would be in the public interest for you to now:

- a) Review the proposed new disability service opportunities available, and
- b) Give DOI and Major Projects written directions in relation to the nominated project, that they ensure all construction and demolition works at Kew Cottages are now constrained to within the current Stage 1 boundary.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Walsh
President

Encs:

Kew Cottages Coalition Proposal for KRS site

Background:

The future management of the KRS site represents a unique opportunity to provide a new model of care for Victorians with intellectual disability, as well as integrating the environmental and recreational values of the site. The contiguous physical location of the KRS site with the Yarra Bend National Park and the longstanding and welcomed interaction by KRS residents with the local Kew community represent important elements to the likely success of a unique multi-purpose re-birth of the site.

Proposal:

Development of the KRS site as a housing estate be halted at Stage 1 and the remainder of the site be developed as an integrated Disability Support and Recreational area incorporating the following three key components:

1. Family Support & Respite Centre for the Disabled

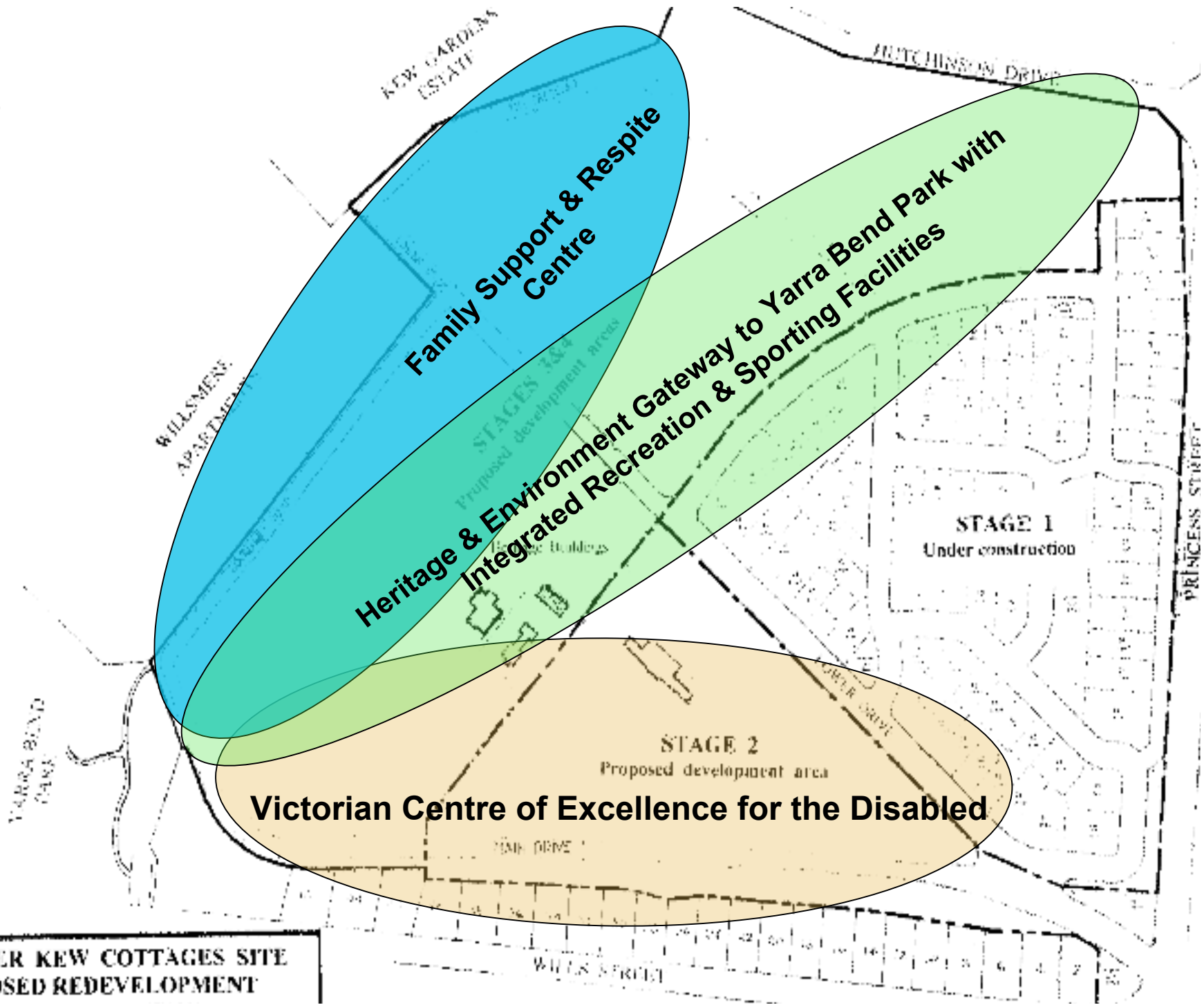
Previous models of care for the disabled relied heavily on residential and inpatient services. However, this model now has only limited relevance to the vast majority of the >3000 Victorians with intellectual disability since they are primarily cared for at home by their families. However, this important and welcome change has resulted in the need for a new form of support services whereby families can access reliable temporary and short-term respite care for their disabled children. Respite care has become especially important as parents of the disabled are aging and require their own medical services. Currently there are few options available for these families to have their disabled children cared for on a temporary basis in a setting with genuine expertise in disability. Furthermore, the pressures of long-term provision of disability care within the home is well known to lead to great intra-family stress and the need for simple respite care for families (often for only brief periods of a few days-weeks) is now acute. Thus, the establishment of a “*Family Support & Respite Centre for the Disabled*” on the KRS site would be a forward-thinking and welcome development. Many of the relatively new “H-block” buildings would be ideally suited to this task. Hence the establishment of such a useful Centre is likely to require minimal additional physical infrastructure.

2. Victorian Centre of Excellence for the Disabled

Victoria, as has recently occurred in Queensland and other States, would benefit enormously from the establishment of a “*Centre of Excellence for the Disabled*” to focus future research on optimal treatment and care options for the disabled. Victoria is fortunate to have a number of high standard academic groups with an interest in disability. Establishment of a *Centre of Excellence* at the KRS site would assist in creating the appropriate academic critical mass to result in Victoria becoming a national leader in innovative and effective new means of caring for the disabled while ensuring maximal community integration.

3. Community Recreational and Sporting Precinct

Close integration between the disabled and the wider Studley Park and Kew community has been a longstanding feature of the KRS precinct. The provision of sporting and recreational facilities that are designed to be used both by the residents of the *Family Support & Respite Centre*, the *Centre of Excellence* and the local community would be welcomed and would provide a unique opportunity of practical and real integration, which should be fundamental to any new vision of care for the disabled. Furthermore, appropriate development of such facilities can be undertaken in a manner that would complement the obvious environmental qualities of the area and enhance the physical links between the KRS site and the Yarra Bend National Park. Recent enquiries with key schools and sporting clubs in the region indicate that development of such co-shared facilities could be readily funded by local donations and funding commitments such that the establishment and long-term maintenance of these facilities could be achieved at no cost to the Government or local Council. This represents a rare opportunity to establish a unique multi-purpose sporting, recreational and environmental precinct that is associated with true integration between the disabled and a welcoming local community.



Family Support & Respite Centre

Heritage & Environment Gateway to Yarra Bend Park with Integrated Recreation & Sporting Facilities

Victorian Centre of Excellence for the Disabled

STAGE 1
Under construction

STAGE 2
Proposed development area

**FORMER KEW COTTAGES SITE
PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT**