

Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Response Kew Cottages Coalition 22 November 2010

1. Implement all of the Public Land Development Inquiry Recommendations on Kew Cottages?

The Coalition gives in principle support to the recommendations of the Select Committee on Public Land Development. It is essential that we ensure that Melbourne's public land is audited and protected to preserve the amenity and liveability of our city. In particular, a Coalition Government will review the current proposal for the Kew Residential Services site to ensure the project incorporates protection of the heritage trees and buildings, protection of open space and provision of disability services.

2. Implement all of the Ombudsman Kew Cottages Inquiry Recommendations?

The Coalition gives in principle support to the recommendations of the Ombudsman's inquiry in to Kew Cottages and the St. Kilda Triangle redevelopment and will work towards their implementation. The Ombudsman's report highlighted concerning issues about lack of documentation, probity plans that were not followed or were missing, lack of understanding of conflict of interest and failure to publish contracts after signing as required. Therefore, the Coalition supports the recommendations as a means to improving record-keeping, transparency and conflict of interest as well as providing insight into the financial arrangements behind the Kew Cottages development.

3. Register all the remaining Kew Cottages Public Land on the proposed Baillieu Government's new Register of Significant Public Land?

Yes, subject to any contractual obligations to the contrary.

4. Boost State Heritage Controls to address the significant regulatory failings identified by the Ombudsman's Kew Cottages Inquiry?

The Coalition would regard the regulatory failings in relation to heritage controls at the Kew Cottages' redevelopment as significant and will work towards addressing these deficiencies.

5. Refocus Government attention on upgrading services on the State Heritage site for the intellectually disabled and the wider community?

The Coalition will insist on the developer of Kew Cottages fulfilling all its contractual obligations, including the preservation of 40 per cent of the site as open space and restoring the recreation building that was demolished in breach of contract. The Coalition is also aware of short-comings in the building of the 55 first stage private dwellings. Despite the statement by then Community Services Minister, Sheryl Garbutt in June 2005 that surplus funds from the sale of the land would be invested in disability services, the Ombudsman's report notes a departmental briefing of the Treasurer in March the same year advising that it was unlikely there would be any surplus from the project. The loss of \$17 million allegedly sustained on the first stage of the project makes the financial viability of the project questionable.

Finally, a Coalition Government would refer numerous concerns about the redevelopment of Kew Cottages to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission once it is established in July 2011 for investigation and report.