

**THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2005.**

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**INQUIRY INTO YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED DISABILITIES**

**Ms SUE HODGSON**, PRESIDENT, HOUSING OPTIONS PROVIDING EXTRA SUPPORT (HOPES), WAS RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Ms Thorp) - Thank you, Sue, for coming. Can you bring us up-to-date with some housing options?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, I think I will probably just expand a bit on what I have already said before the committee and I have put in front of you a paper that I will speak to. Basically I will take you very briefly through the background: when HOPES first started up and we talked to people about the housing options they would like, there was some concern about the traditional group home arrangement for several reasons, the main one being that in a group home people are put there according to their level of need, not necessarily because they are compatible with the other residents. Also there was concern because they become very dependent. The home is owned by someone other than them; they lose control over their lives. Particularly for people with acquired brain injury, who have some behavioural and cognitive problems, that sort of mix can be pretty disastrous. So we asked people what they would like to see. If you have fairly high support needs you obviously have to have somebody around supporting you and it is not really feasible to be living individually in a house in the community.

Finally, we developed what we called our cooperative living concept or model, which I have spoken about before. Basically that was to allow people to have their own space within a unit but the unit would be on-site with several other units in a cluster. I think you have probably seen something similar in Victoria. As well as that we would have a common house which could be used for respite and transitional living but would also be used as a centre for people living in the units to go and, as a group, do their cooking or whatever.

That was the basis of our concept and we developed that a bit more. Because it is so important for people to feel they have ownership of where they are, we looked at a cooperative model. So the plan was to form a cooperative of residents who would manage who lived there and what they did and that cooperative would consist of a resident and an advocate, so there would be like a dual membership of that cooperative.

When we were attempting to develop this model, on three separate occasions we almost received funding from the Community Housing Program but on each of the three occasions it fell through for different reasons. One of the sites that we developed, which I think I might have shown you before, was a site at Montrose which has an existing

house in that funny shape and then was a bare block of land which ideally suited our purposes. We asked the then director of Housing whether they could acquire that site for us to purchase from him or to discuss options. But the regional manager at that time felt that particular property was not useful for general housing stock purposes, so they would not purchase it. By the time we looked at other options of course it had been sold. I guess I am just telling you that because that has been the sort of experience that we have had in trying to develop the concept.

In the meantime of course - and this is going over a period of years - potential residents have lost heart. Every time I walk in the door someone asks me how the houses are going, which is very frustrating.

After this one died a couple of years ago, we continued to look for suitable sites because it was really important that the site be level, for fairly obvious reasons, and that it be close to and levelly accessible to services of some kind - a shopping centre where life is going on, so that people can be part of that community rather than being isolated and transferred into and out of it. For that reason there are really only two areas in Hobart that are like that. One is around the central part of Glenorchy and the other is around the Eastlands side of the city. We had already expressed an interest a few years ago in the Barossa Park site at Glenorchy. At that stage it was going to be developed but then the plug was pulled on that because I think there were some concerns about how the development might progress and whether it would become a ghetto or an area for vandalism and things like that. The whole of Barossa Park development was put on hold.

We continued to look and more recently we discovered that in the Clarence Council area - and you will see on the second page my rather bad colouring in on the top part - sections of the current Rosny Park Golf Course are no longer used. Clarence Council were keen to find uses for that part that I have marked in the dark green. There is also an area on the other side of Gordons Hill Road which will become available later but not at this stage. The piece above that darker green shaded area is crown land.

So their first call for expressions of interest was, what do we people think we could use this land for? Several groups, and even developers from the mainland, put in expressions of interest. The Council knocked some of them on the head and came back to others, including four groups, of which HOPES is one, to say, 'These are the sorts of things we would like to see developed there. What did you have in mind? Perhaps you could get together.' As a result of that HOPES linked up with Southern Cohousing - we were already aware of them - and another group called the Association of Christian Homes for the Aged. That particular group already runs Snug Village, which you are probably aware of, and they have a smaller development at Blackmans Bay, Hawthorn Village. They started with very little but have progressed well and now have some extra money. They had a lot of pressure from their members on the eastern shore saying, 'What about us? We need somewhere to live, there is nowhere here'. So they are keen to develop something on the eastern shore. They are predominantly a Dutch group, many of them involved with the Reform Church but not all. So we met up with them and with Southern Cohousing, who are predominantly a group of older ladies in their fifties and up, many of whom have been widowed or whose houses no longer suit them and who want to have a space of their own but within a friendly environment. They are keen to develop a cooperative cohousing group of homes which would house a whole range of

people - families, et cetera. Then, as I said, HOPES were looking for somewhere where we could put our cooperative living venture.

The other two groups: one is SAGES, the senior group on the eastern shore, which was keen to have a big convention centre somewhere. So although this did not really fit in with what they wanted to do on this particular land, they were very helpful in discussing things with council. The other group was a childcare group and the council were keen to have child care on the site too. We met with them initially and they were representatives of the ABC Learning Centres. The difficulty with getting involved with that group is that they think big and they wanted a centre that would house at least 97 children. We started to have some concerns about our residents, particularly the older ones, and the amount of traffic and things like that.

So we have finished up sticking with the three groups that I have just mentioned. Very generously, the architects who had done the Snug Village site agreed to draw up an initial sketch for us for free which was wonderful. But all they have done in this sketch is to simply put a footprint of the amount of land that we were talking about using. So it is not a finished concept. But the idea is that they have the HOPES group down at the bottom so that it is most easily accessible to Eastlands. It is all level. We talked to the council and DIER and they said there would definitely be a pedestrian underpass going through. They then put the aged care retirement village and hostel accommodation in the middle, which is simply a copy of what is currently at Snug Village; it is not a finished concept. Then the land up here starts to grade a little, even though it is all pretty level, so they put the cohousing group up the top.

We then talked about how we could interact and help each other and also how this might be developed as a village concept to bring the community in and let us out, rather than being separated from it. So this common house up here, which is the common house for Southern Cohousing, would act as a common house for the community. So there is a possibility of having child care in there, university of the third age, those sorts of things. We have planned an amphitheatre around that, similar to the one in Lansdowne Crescent, if anyone has seen it, so that the community can come in and use that facility with us. This part here would be developed as a small recreation area.

The other things that we are looking at developing in here are walkways to link in with existing trails that you could trail your way through and finish up coming back down to Eastlands.

One of the things that has delayed our progress is that there has been talk for some time about the traffic problems coming out of Gordons Hill Road and trying to access the highway from different directions. So the year before last DIER put out some suggestions, took up public consultations and eventually came up with a decision that the sliproad needed to go in down here on your map, where it says 'future road' down the bottom. The current golf course land goes right down to the corner, but it will lose part of that by having a slip road put in. The slip road has been an ongoing saga -

**Mr WHITELEY** - It sure has.

**Ms HODGSON** - and therefore is not finalised. Do you know about that?

**Mr WHITELEY** - I sure do.

**Ms HODGSON** - So that has been one delay. The other delay is that the council agreed to the rezoning and I gather that is with government somewhere to be -

**CHAIR** - It would be with RPDC, I would imagine.

**Ms HODGSON** - So we are not too sure how long that is all going to take, which is a dilemma for us, because in terms of trying to raise funds or work out where we go financially with this, we are a little bit in limbo.

**CHAIR** - Have you been able to get any guidance from the council on that?

**Ms HODGSON** - We have had several meetings with the council and what they are telling us is that as soon as the rezoning is completed they will go ahead and work out what they want to do next and call for definite expressions of interest.

**CHAIR** - I am surprised they cannot tell you what the delay is.

**Mr WHITELEY** - 26 July 2004.

**CHAIR** - That is weird, unless it is being opposed.

**Ms HODGSON** - They are saying that they are waiting for it to be returned.

**Mr WHITELEY** - It says here that you have to wait for government approval. That will be interesting, we will need to follow that up.

**Mr MORRIS** - I think that's what is meant though.

**Mr WHITELEY** - RPDC?

**Mr MORRIS** - Yes, I think that would be -

**Ms HODGSON** - Is that where it goes to from the council?

**CHAIR** - The Government have no input in this.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Leave it with me, I will find out.

**Ms HODGSON** - Okay, thanks for that. I do not know whether the Government have input because it is not crown land; it is Clarence City Council land, as I understand it.

**Mr WHITELEY** - It is now 16 months from the approval of council - very unusual.

**Mr MORRIS** - Not for the RPDC, not for a scheme amendment.

**CHAIR** - Unless it has been put on the backburner because no one has given the RPDC any idea that people are waiting on the outcome.

**Mr MORRIS** - Yes, that is right.

**Ms HODGSON** - It may be that they are waiting for the slip road to be finalised - I do not know. But I do not see how one would necessarily impact on the other.

**Mr MORRIS** - Talk to the RPDC - that is what needs to happen. If Brett could do that -

**Mr WHITELEY** - I will ring the council first and ask them about that.

**Ms HODGSON** - Greg Walker from Clarence City Council is the person that has been seeing it through for us. That would be great, thanks Brett.

There is still a lot of work for us to do and we have not actually stopped because there are decisions to be made about ownership, land divisions and things like that. The added difficulty for us is that we have no idea of the price they are going to ask for the land. What they have said is that usually the council ask for a current government valuation, as opposed to market value, but we have some issues. For instance, if HOPES is going to utilise this much, what happens to the public areas or the recreational areas that we want to develop too? At the moment the council is not signing off on any of that until they go to the next step.

**CHAIR** - Possibly also given that there are elections on.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is right.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Do you mean council or State?

**CHAIR** - Council. You were trying to trick me then, weren't you?

**Mr WHITELEY** - I was.

**Ms HODGSON** - It could well be, Brett, that after the council elections we will have the State election and then we are back to square one.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Not far off! That is why we need to get this sorted. For whatever reason, it is a good environment to be coming into. I would rather be coming into the next six months than the six months after it.

**CHAIR** - True. From the Clarence Council's point of view, there will be a new Mayor by tomorrow.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is right, there has to be a new Mayor.

**Mr WHITELEY** - That is right.

**Ms HODGSON** - We met with Doug Chipman a couple of weeks ago and brought him up to speed with it.

**CHAIR** - He would be supportive, wouldn't he?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, he was very supportive.

**Mr WHITELEY** *interjecting*.

**CHAIR** - You do not think he is going to win?

**Mr WHITELEY** - No, that is what I said. I said it would be a good use of time. You just do not know, you have to pick one of three. You had better see them all.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is right. We picked someone who had expressed some interest. As I said, originally when we were going to do a stand-alone concept - which I still believe can work - the advantage of taking one step back in the stand-alone model that we had before is that we still have the capacity to share support hours amongst the people.

**Mr WHITELEY** - But you are in control, aren't you?

**Ms HODGSON** - We are in control, yes, and we also have the capacity to support people who might be in units in the next street and various other places. So in terms of the size and shared resources, it is still possible to do it as a small thing on its own. But once you get this development - and there are obviously pros and cons - we do get some advantages in shared resources. We get the ability to utilise emergency support staff, for example, that would be around with the senior group. We get the use of a volunteer support from people who live in the cohousing. So those things are valuable. I guess the down side is that we have to be very careful on an area of that size that we are not developing a ghetto or something that looks disability oriented. We feel quite confident that will not be case because the retirement village section of it will have very mixed groups in it and the cohousing groups will certainly have mixed groups. What we are planning to do with some of our HOPES units is have double units where the family can live in one side and the person with the brain injury in the other side as a transitional process. So if the family should move out over time, there is a possibility of someone else moving in there. I guess the difficulties are working out how you can own that if you have very little money or are linking in with other people.

The Snug Village people have an accommodation bond, like a life tenancy arrangement, which has worked extremely well for them. But they are working with people who are in an older age bracket -

**Mr WHITELEY** - They have some means.

**Ms HODGSON** - many of whom have some means. You have a balance of probably more people with means than people without means so you can do that. With the Southern Cohousing, similarly, they have a smaller group but a group of people who have some money to put in. Whereas, the group of people that we are working with predominantly do not have much in the way of funds.

**Mr WHITELEY** - No many of them would be collecting insurance money either would they?

**Ms HODGSON** - No, there would be very few. We have had preliminary discussions with MAIB and we are hopeful that they would purchase a couple of units but they would be for their future care.

**CHAIR** - What about Housing Tasmania?

**Ms HODGSON** - We have had some initial discussions with Housing Tasmania. We have a problem and this has occurred over the years. The area for funding for the kind of thing we want to do is through the Community Housing Program, which has very limited funds. So what we are likely to get out of that is pretty slim.

**CHAIR** - What about the Social Infrastructure Fund?

**Ms HODGSON** - Also Affordable Housing.

**Mr MORRIS** - I was going to ask about the Affordable Housing Strategy, given that the Government has not committed itself to stage 2 and that, largely, the people whom you are representing presumably would qualify for public housing by lack of means, alone.

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, except they are not in category 1 because somebody would not leave them on the street.

**Mr MORRIS** - Yes.

**Mr WHITELEY** - It's amazing, isn't it?

**Ms HODGSON** - It is. We will not go down that path, it could take forever.

**Mr WHITELEY** - While we are on the cost, can I just ask a practical question? You have six unit, plus the multipurpose. Are there six there, is that what it is?

**Ms HODGSON** - This was the original plan. We were looking at possibly having these six, some of which are doubles. They would all be two bedrooms but some are two two-bedroom.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So you would be looking to get how many two-bedroom properties?

**Ms HODGSON** - Possibly 12 two-bedroom maximum.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So that is it there, roughly?

**Ms HODGSON** - Pretty well. There might be a couple more, yes.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So do you have any indication of how much that little part of the project will cost?

**Ms HODGSON** - No and this our dilemma at the moment.

**Mr WHITELEY** - No idea?

**Ms HODGSON** - No. Although we have been looking at whether we can make some educated guesses.

**CHAIR** - A lot.

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes. In terms of linking that into the Community Housing Program, this is our dilemma because to get Community Housing funds we need to have a finished product, signed, sealed and delivered, pretty well, and that is a problem for us here at the moment. However, I am meeting with Charles Spanier from the department tomorrow. Charles has been involved with the Macquarie Bank and possible liaisons that they were working on there which I do not think have worked out.

**Mr MORRIS** - No, they have dropped it. They did the consultancy but they have not accepted the recommendations of those consultants.

**CHAIR** - But it does demonstrate a willingness to have cooperative arrangements.

**Mr MORRIS** - Absolutely.

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes. One of the problems raised there was the size of Tasmania in terms of these sorts of developments which seem quite large to someone like me but a small priority and not considered relevant in mainland terms. So I am meeting with Charles because we still have an interest in what happens at Barossa Park too, on a smaller scale. Where we are up to at the moment is relatively abstract, I suppose, however we are trying to consolidate financial arrangements. We were supposed to have a meeting with the Director of Housing Tasmania three and a half weeks ago now. On the Friday she rang to say that now she had realised what we wanted to talk to her about, she wanted some more senior members to be there with her so she needed to reschedule the meeting. That was three and a half weeks ago and we have not had it yet.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a date?

**Ms HODGSON** - No.

**Mr MORRIS** - Sue, could I go back a moment to the motion that the Clarence City Council put through? Essentially the motion is to initiate amendment to facilitate the use for retirement/aged-care facilities/aged-care support services/tourism accommodation and caravan park and cohousing. Are you comfortable that you will fit under one of those categories?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, because we have a cohousing model.

**Mr MORRIS** - Okay, good. I just wanted to check there.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is my understanding, I did query that, but that seems to be going very well.

**Mr MORRIS** - Do you have any idea why they also have tourism accommodation and caravan park in that list as well?

**Mr WHITELEY** - There's a heap more room.

**Ms HODGSON** - Actually there is not now, we have used it all.

**Mr WHITELEY** - You've used it all, right.

**CHAIR** - It might have been options for the purpose of the planning scheme amendment.

**Ms HODGSON** - When they first called for expressions of interest and people came forward saying that they would like to have recreational ground there or they would like to have walking trails or whatever, the council, at that stage said, 'We want to encourage tourism; we want to encourage the community to use the land. We don't just want to hand it over to a housing developer', so for that reason they were including some of these things.

When we went back to them we said, 'We have a problem in terms of what we want to do. We have a problem if we put a caravan park in there. We don't think that is going to work. However, we are quite happy to discuss options for a bed and breakfast at the end of the cohousing, for example', and we talked about walking trails and other recreational activities we could bring into play there. Greg Walker, who is our main contact, said he was happy with that, but I think that is to cover themselves.

**Mr MORRIS** - Sue, I am not closely familiar with that land. There is also the bit on the other side of the highway, nearer Eastlands. If this land does not end up being available for you is it possible that you could be on the other side of the highway - on the Eastlands side of the highway?

**Ms HODGSON** - It might be possible. It is not as level, it goes up. It is level on Gordon's Hill Road but then it goes up quite steeply and I am not too sure, time-wise - not that time matters much - but our last meeting with Greg Walker intimated that it could be five years before we have buildings on the site.

**Mr MORRIS** - These things do take time.

**Ms HODGSON** - I thought that this diagram might show it but I do not think it does because it is too high up, but although the land is level in one part, it goes up quite steeply.

**Mr MORRIS** - I was thinking more of the land over this side of the highway.

**Mr MORRIS** - Yes.

**Ms HODGSON** - I am not sure about that, Tim.

**Mr Whiteley** - Where is that, Tim?

**Mr MORRIS** - On the other side of the highway, where it says 'Rosny'.

**Ms HAY** - The golf course.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is still a golf course, I take it.

**Mr WHITELEY** - I reckon you'd have to dive over to the other corner.

**Ms HODGSON** - As far as I know, that is all still being used as a golf course; it is this other piece that we will be eventually be using.

**Mr MORRIS** - Okay, and they are no longer using it, right. So even that piece is a possibility, but not as desirable.

**Ms HODGSON** - I have no idea when they are going to release it.

**Mr WHITELEY** - This is probably a very practical question, the 7.3 hectares they are talking about, on your plan. It would be interesting to know if you go solo how much you will need. It looks like you take up about one-fifth of the total?

**Ms HODGSON** - I think that was about right.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So one hectare would be more than enough for your project?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, it would.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Because, as you said, there would be some benefits in being in there but it is not the be all and end all? If it was going to mean the difference between two years and 10 years, then that would be another matter.

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, that is right and we cannot wait five years. We certainly looked at the various schemes over the years, so it could be something like this on a much smaller area of land with a couple of units that were either across the road or around the corner. Basically we need to be able to have the multipurpose house with an onsite coordinator to coordinate the care. But apart from that, the people could be more scattered.

**Mr WHITELEY** - You may have said this before. Do you have your financial modelling done on post-building it, other than the capital cost, how it looks after itself?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes.

**Mr WHITELEY** - You have done all that work and you are comfortable with that?

**Ms HODGSON** - We did all that work with the one on the other side. The trouble is that it is quite time consuming to do that. We even drew up rosters and how it would all work, we costed out three separate budgets depending on the level of need and then it did not go anywhere.

**Mr WHITELEY** - But you are comfortable with your figures?

**Ms HODGSON** - We are comfortable that we can do it.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Other than the capital cost?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes. The issue being that if, for instance, we were unable to get new support dollars or sufficient support dollars for Mary Jones and Tom Blake then we have

three or four other people here who have sufficient support dollars. So it might mean at the end of the day that we were unable to house some of the people that we would like to house but, nevertheless, we would still -

**Mr MORRIS** - Get a result?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes.

**Mr MORRIS** - I presume if MAIB were to come into some sort of partnership with you, they have an ongoing source of clients, so to speak, who are coming into the system all the time?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes and that is one advantage when we had that original plan, we were working initially in conjunction with Eskleigh because at that time Eskleigh were managing the MAIB houses and we had four residents with support dollars, non-MAIB but being supported by MAIB. Unfortunately Eskleigh wanted control of the facility and the care which was not quite the model we had in mind and so we separated. As a result we lost four people with support dollars. For example, we have two young men, one of whom has MAIB support and the other who does not, sharing the unit. They are keen to come in. So once you have support dollars for one person you can share those with other people.

**Mr MORRIS** - On the MAIB. Is it possible to do a direct partnership between yourself and the MAIB for your part of the proposal - perhaps to use them as a financier or something like that?

**Ms HODGSON** - We possibly could. The intention was that, once we had set something a little bit more in concrete, if they were prepared to finance, say, two of the units then we have a couple of people who would have the deposit to buy two more units and then we would be looking at public housing. We would do this balance which is the sort of arrangement that the cohousing group wanted to do too. That is one that we wanted to talk to Housing about.

**Mr MORRIS** - I am wondering whether MAIB might be interested in financing the whole lot.

**Ms HODGSON** - I do not know. I honestly have not discussed that with them. My feeling is that they may not be. Historically, with the previous management at MAIB and before economic rationalism became the buzz word, we had a situation where the then manager firmly believed that, because of the size of the State, the only way that they were going to get the best deal for their clients, apart from anyone else, was for a cooperative arrangement. That is when they bought the Douglas Parker Centre and had an inpatient unit. But that all fell away with the new management of MAIB and the core business arrangements. They felt that their business was for people who were their clients. So, instead of being a cohesive arrangement, it is MAIB and the money that goes to non-MAIB people is really through their community obligation funds and that sort of partnership arrangement rather than any direct involvement. They felt right from the beginning that they did not want to and should not be involved in accommodation as such, but because no-one else was doing it they did purchase accommodation and then they tendered out the care support. It certainly might be worth talking to them

**Mr MORRIS** - I was just thinking from a commercial point of view, it is a commercial opportunity for them. It is an asset that they would own and they would charge interest on it. They have significant amounts of funds under management of various sorts.

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, that is right.

**Mr MORRIS** - In fact, squillions under management. It may be that they farm all that out rather than do any direct investment themselves, I do not know.

**Ms HODGSON** - It certainly might be worth talking to them.

**Mr MORRIS** - It might well be worth talking to them. But I would have thought that the Affordable Housing Strategy would have been a perfect fit for the whole development, really.

**Ms HODGSON** - There are interesting things still going on with Housing.

**Mr MORRIS** - Say no more.

**Ms HODGSON** - I have been really frustrated in the last couple of weeks because we said and when I say 'we' it is not a royal we, but groups of people involved from ACROD to TasCare to Headway and various support groups - we have concerns about group homes and where groups homes are put. They are just completing a really nice house, a beautiful house, but it is at Mornington on a high hill. It has a lovely view and they have excavated the block, so you will be able to get around the block. But once people are in there, people with high support needs, they are going to be reliant on transport to go anywhere. There is not even a shop at the corner; there is nothing.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So it is not smart, is it?

**Ms HODGSON** - No. Secondly, they currently have three young men to go in and somebody from the department rang me up and asked me whether I knew a fourth person to go in. I found out who the three men were, with some difficulty. These three men have not met each other. One currently does not even live in this part of the State, although he does want to return to this part of the State. Because I know these people, I know there is going to be a problem with them getting on in the shared house. I think we are going around in the same circle again. When I queried the department about the site they said that was all that Housing had; Housing said they had to build there and I thought, 'This is ridiculous!'

**Mr MORRIS** - I vote you for the new Minister for Housing. All those in favour say aye.

**Ms HAY** - I just want to get that person's name from Housing?

**Ms HODGSON** - The Director is Mercia Bresnehan. It is Mercia that we are supposed to have the meeting with.

**Mr MORRIS** - Could you just note that last point, Charles, for a recommendation?

**Ms HAY** - What date was that, early October?

**Ms HODGSON** - I am not sure, about three weeks ago, I think.

**Ms HAY** - It is just better if I know the date.

**Ms HODGSON** - It was Monday 5 September.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Again, pardon my ignorance, is HOPES an incorporated body?

**Ms HODGSON** - We are an incorporated body. We are very small.

**Mr WHITELEY** - But no assets as such?

**Ms HODGSON** - No. Our assets are about \$1 000 I think.

**Mr WHITELEY** - The membership is small?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, small membership.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Does the committee comprise a wide group of interests?

**Ms HODGSON** - Yes, the committee is made up of widely representative people. I am a parent; David Pearce a person with a disability; we have representatives from Cerebral Palsy, the MS Society, Optia, who run a service and have a similar philosophy to ours, and Headway. We also have another parent, a person who is supporting someone like a partner. So it is a -

**Mr WHITELEY** - A good representation. There are two or three groups on there. That is good.

**CHAIR**- Terrific. Our committee will be making recommendations, obviously, in this area. From your point of view, I suppose rather than be specific about a particular project, what we would need to do would be to recommend cooperation, assistance with facilitation and that kind of thing.

**Mr WHITELEY** - We need a fast track - that is what we need.

**Mr MORRIS** - Certainly, we need to recommend that this be considered as a key part of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

**Mr WHITELEY** - Land is not getting any cheaper either.

**Ms HODGSON** - It is interesting because apparently Disability Services constantly say to other avenues of the department, 'We should do something about the HOPES model, the HOPES model sounds really good', but nothing happens.

**Mr WHITELEY** - They would like to see you further abroad in the State, where we need you in the north and north-west.

**Ms HODGSON** - That is right and the only reason we are starting here is because we need to start somewhere. But I have heard some horror stories from the north and north-west and we cannot help.

**Mr WHITELEY** - What we need is the same model to be picked up off the sketch and taken to other parts of the State.

**Mr MORRIS** - All you need to do is identify that there are sufficient people.

**Mr WHITELEY** - And we all know they are there.

**Mr MORRIS** - The thing is if you had a vacancy you could always rent it out to anyone on whatever terms and conditions you deem fit.

**Ms HODGSON** - We will never have a problem finding people.

**Mr WHITELEY** - I wouldn't have thought so.

**Ms HODGSON** - Whereas the difficulty in a group home is that you may have a problem finding a person that fits in with three other people in the house.

**Mr WHITELEY** - So you are saying you have no difficulty filling these six or 12. Are you being conservative on the basis that it is hard enough to get one, let alone six, or does your vision extend to the fact that this is the tip of the iceberg? Is there any need for any more or is this about it?

**Ms HODGSON** - There is certainly need for more. There are two things here: one is that we do not want to put 100 units in one place -

**Mr WHITELEY** - No, I am not suggesting that but there are six and 10 - the difference between six and 10 is a lot.

**Ms HODGSON** - It is an arbitrary thing. When I go back a few years, the problem is that we have had eight people who are really keen, ready to move in now, we have worked with them trying not to raise their hopes, pointing out that this could be a long-term process. People cannot sit in a tent or somewhere or with their mother waiting for ages, so our position at the moment is that we are confident we have enough people but today's people may not be tomorrow's people - only some of them maybe - because people have to move on.

For instance, two young men who were held in the Royal Hobart Hospital for far longer than they should have been were ultimately put into a home, which did not work, and then transferred somewhere else temporarily. They are now happy in that temporary situation and so the department said they could stay there. That is fine, and that is what we are saying. You cannot say today, 'Okay, here's a list, these are the people who are going in'. I can give you a list now of people who are keen to go in but the list will probably be different by the time we get anything off the ground.

**CHAIR** - Okay, members, do you have any further questions at this stage?

**Mr WHITELEY** - No, it was very good.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Sue, we have appreciated that.

**Ms HODGSON** - Thank you for having me. If you want anything else, just let me know.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**