

12 December 2015

Plan Melbourne Refresh  
Department of Environment,  
Land, Water & Planning  
GPO Box 2392  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

## PLAN MELBOURNE REFRESH

Blairlogie welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Refresh of Plan Melbourne. The purpose of this submission is to contribute to the discussion in **Chapter 5: Housing** of the Discussion Paper and outline a housing proposal which demonstrates the flexibility that is required by the planning system to address the unique housing needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

It is time that Government adopted an innovative and flexible approach to accommodation solutions for people with a disability that facilitates the strengthening of communities as compared with the current one-size fits all model that ignores the complexities and character of communities like Blairlogie.

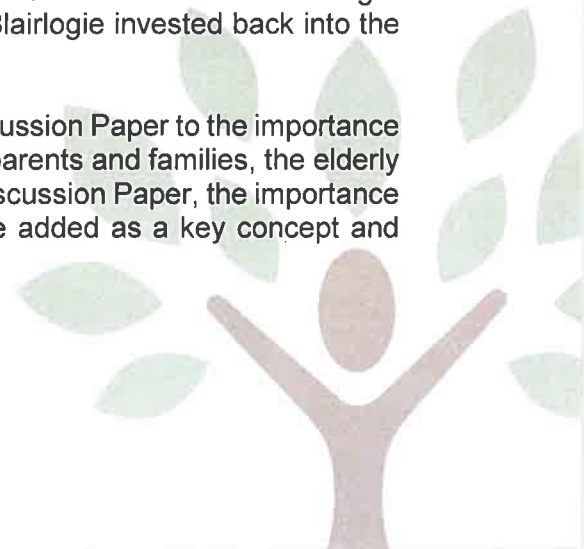
Blairlogie Living & Learning is a not for profit community service organisation that supports adults living with a disability. Since 1987, Blairlogie has existed to:

- Provide opportunities for people with a disability to pursue interests, achieve goals and participate in community life
- Empower people with a disability to make decisions and choices on matters that affect them
- Extend the skills, knowledge and experience of people with a disability
- Respond to the needs of people with a disability and their families and carers
- Allow people with a disability to experience maximum independence
- Enable people with a disability to make social and economic contributions to the community.

Governed by a voluntary Board of Management made up of both parents with children at Blairlogie and local business people, Blairlogie has a strong community focus.

In 2013, Blairlogie won the Casey-Cardina Social Enterprise Award for its' work in building a strong and healthy community with all of the profits made by Blairlogie invested back into the community.

Blairlogie strongly supports the reference at page 25 of the Discussion Paper to the importance of ensuring that planning responds to diverse groups such as parents and families, the elderly and people with disability. As suggested by Option 14 of the Discussion Paper, the importance of people in Melbourne's identity and place making should be added as a key concept and embedded in Plan Melbourne 2016.



Blairlogie also notes the comments in relation to Recommendation 17 of the Ministerial Advisory Committee that the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing is developing options for reform to social housing and potential action across government on housing affordability more generally.

Blairlogie advocates for the Government in carrying out this work to support and facilitate community driven responses to the issue of accommodation for people with a disability.

In this regard, Blairlogie requests the opportunity for a meeting to brief both the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing in relation to the proposed Blairlogie Supported Accommodation Project.

The Project is strongly supported by Blairlogie's Board and parents with their children at the centre. In this regard, please find attached letters from twelve of Blairlogie's parents and carers which describes the on-going struggles faced by families including ageing, chronic anxiety and depression. We hope that these letters provide the Government with insight into the particular issues faced by carers and families and the strong merits of the Blairlogie Supported Accommodation Project.

The Project proposes to integrate permanent accommodation with the existing Blairlogie learning and living centre at its' site at 685 North Road, Cranbourne South which provides sufficient room for the additional component. Preliminary concept plans provide for the delivery of 31 units on the site with a common facility accommodating kitchen, dining, laundry, and leisure facilities. The existing facility already includes an independent living unit under the current planning permit that provides much needed respite care for up to three clients on weekends.

The Blairlogie Supported Accommodation Project does not fit into the standard community care unit housing model and for this reason is not supported by the current Planning Scheme or Government's current community housing funding model. It is hoped that Plan Melbourne will deliver a change which supports the Project and empowers communities such as Blairlogie to meet its' community needs by delivering innovative solutions to the accommodation crisis facing people with a disability, their families and carers.

The Blairlogie Supported Accommodation Project is based on the following principles:

- Creating an integrated facility where residents can live and learn as part of one community building on the existing success of Blairlogie's centre
- Recognition that Blairlogie's nature based therapeutic approach at the centre's property in Cranbourne South's Green Wedge provides a safe and peaceful environment for its residents to live based on values that promote self-determination, individualized support and genuine community participation for people living with a disability
- A certain succession plan for the families and carers of Blairlogie when they can no longer care for their children with disabilities. Rather than faced with the prospect of their children ending up in a nursing home or respite care away from the Blairlogie community, families and carers can rest in peace knowing that their children will be looked after by the Blairlogie community.

In terms of funding the Project, many of Blairlogie's parents struggle to make ends meet as a result of their full time carers role. There is, however, generous support from the Uniting

Church and Rotary to fund the building of the new facility. Blairlogie's residents would still, however, rely on government funding for support with daily living tasks and community participation.

Blairlogie welcomes the opportunity to brief you in relation to these proposals as soon as practicable. In this regard, I will ring your office the week commencing the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting either at Blairlogie's facilities in Cranbourne South or at your offices.

Yours faithfully,



Enclosures:

Fifteen letters from Blairlogie's parents.