



Our Ref: 2014/28618

Ms Margaret Quirk, MLA
Chair
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House
GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6837

Attention: Dr Sarah Palmer
Principal Research Officer

Dear Ms Quirk

Thank you for your letter seeking my Department's input into the Policy Implications of an Ageing Community inquiry, being undertaken by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee.

Please find enclosed an outline of current Department of Housing initiatives which aim to expand the stock of age-friendly housing and housing related services for seniors.

Should you have any further queries please contact Danielle Killey, Acting Manager, Housing Policy, on 9440 2580 or at Danielle.Killey@housing.wa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

GRAHAME SEARLE
DIRECTOR GENERAL

17 October 2014



Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Inquiry into the Policy Implications of an Ageing Community

Seniors Strategic Planning Framework 2012-2017 (the Framework)

The Framework makes reference to the *Affordable Housing Strategy: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing 2010-2020* (the Strategy), which was launched shortly before the Framework. It is therefore a relevant document, in that it captures key elements of the outcomes sought by State Government around affordable housing options for seniors, which are detailed more fully in the Strategy.

Under the Strategy, State Government has increased affordable housing options for Western Australians on low to medium incomes. As of August 2014 15,900 new affordable homes have been delivered under the Strategy, which includes affordable options for seniors, against a target of 20,000 by 2020.

More specifically, a key reform area under the Strategy is to provide wider, secure, affordable housing options for seniors. This approach is consistent with the planning principles and the next steps identified in the Framework. Key aspects of the progress to date are detailed below.

- **Universal Design:** To support the establishment of age-friendly communities, where appropriate, the Department of Housing has incorporated universal design principles in new builds, including in all standard accommodation design briefs for social housing.
- **Ancillary Dwellings:** In August 2013, amendments to the State Planning Policy removed the family member occupancy restriction and increased the maximum plot ratio from 60m² to 70m². This was a key reform identified in the Strategy. This innovative solution will enable the Department to provide housing to those most in need, through universal design targeting persons with a disability and seniors, whilst maximising the benefit of currently underutilised stock, and harnessing private sector capital. The Department is currently delivering three ancillary dwellings in regional areas under the Community Disability Housing Program.
- **Partnering with Specialist Aged Care Providers:** The Department has sought to partner with specialist aged care providers that operate within the community housing sector to adopt innovative approaches to the use of co-investment and partnership opportunities to deliver more social and affordable housing for seniors. An example of this approach from the 2013-14 Annual Report is detailed below.

Ridgewood – the Ridgewood project will be developed in conjunction with Southern Cross Care, which was the successful proponent through a competitive expression of interest process. The objective of the project is to increase the supply of affordable seniors housing within close proximity to key services and amenities utilising a 6.8 hectare site in Ridgewood located 37 kilometres north of the Perth CBD. The innovative development aims to provide mixed tenures such as social housing, seniors housing, private rental, affordable land and home ownership. The commercial precinct is envisaged to include facilities such as a medical centre, supermarket and retail uses. A Development Management Agreement was executed by the Department and Southern Cross Care in 2014.

Under the Strategy the Department will continue to develop new initiatives to expand age-friendly housing stock and housing-related services for seniors. For example, the Department continues to develop new strategies and models to enable State Government to partner more broadly with industry to stimulate the supply of housing with access to services for seniors. Partnering with industry in this way will assist in alleviating current and future pressure on the social housing system, by including affordable housing options for seniors as part of broader developments.

Senior Officers Group

The Department participates in the Senior Officers Group (the senior officer in attendance is Ms Genevieve Errey, Director Social and Affordable Housing Reform) which is an information sharing forum to facilitate cross-department discussions relevant to the *Seniors Strategic Planning Framework 2012-2017*. The Group is effective to the extent that it provides an avenue for these types of discussions.