



JOHN FLYNN COMMUNITY GROUP

c/o 26 Schwarz Place, Flynn ACT 2615

Chair
Select Committee on Estimates 2010–2011
ACT Legislative Assembly
Civic Square, London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

16 June 2010

Correction of factual errors in evidence to Select Committee on Estimates 2010–2011

Dear Ms Hunter,

Thank you again for the opportunity to present to the Select Committee on Estimates 2010–2011.

We are writing to the Committee further to our presentation of evidence and further to the presentation by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) Minister Ms Joy Burch MLA and departmental officer Mr David Collett on 26 May 2010.

The John Flynn Community Group (JFCG) has a desire to move forward collaboratively with sound social, financial and environmental evidence-based planning to guide the prudent expenditure of \$4 million for revitalisation of the Flynn community via a sustainable hub.

The absence of a sound plan with genuine community input would raise serious questions about the cost-effectiveness and intent of the expenditure. While keen to proceed collaboratively, the JFCG considers that it is important that the Committee be made aware of these matters and some key errors of fact or misrepresentations contained in the DHCS evidence to the Committee, as follows:

1. Claim: “The John Flynn Community Group are welcoming of the childcare place. They are welcoming of the 100 to 120 ...”

- **The JFCG does not welcome a childcare centre of 100 to 120 places. We have not received any empirical evidence from the Department that supports this approach.** Rather, as our evidence indicates, the community welcomes a smaller *community-based* childcare (providing childcare places that are all new to the ACT) delivered as part of a socially, financially and environmentally viable community hub that protects heritage and uses the \$4 million wisely via a comprehensive site plan. This was the basis of the JFCG model proposed.

2. Claim: “We have already made contact with the architect for the Flynn school, Enrico Taglietti”

- The architect, Enrico Taglietti, has informed us that he has not been contacted or involved.

3. Claim: “The Flynn community group came forward with a number of options. We discussed those options, saw where they were compatible and where they represented different approaches. Whilst we have brought forward a proposal for the refurbishment of part of the school in this current financial year, it sits within the suite of options that we developed and discussed hand in hand with the Flynn community and certainly gives consideration to those things.”

- **The Flynn community came forward with one proposal, not a number of options that were considered.** THE JFCG presented *one* proposal for an integrated sustainable community hub based on social business and a citizen-centred governance model. As yet, there is no evidence that our proposal has in any way been considered, included, acknowledged or tested for viability as agreed through the recommendation of the School Closure Inquiry.
- The options proposed by the department were unacceptable to the community as they failed to provide empirical evidence of community needs and they appeared to be arbitrary—some government options involved demolishing at least part of the heritage-nominated building. We note that the department would not agree on terms of reference for the Joint Working Group that included a provision for addressing unmet local needs.

4. Claim: “ [the John Flynn Community Group] welcomed and accepted that other facilities and a community hub can be accommodated within the footprint of the building ... We will be able to accommodate the thrust of what the John Flynn Community Group wanted”

- **The thrust of what JFCG wanted is yet to be proven to be able to be accommodated within the remaining floorplan**—The size of the childcare proposed, the procurement process for childcare providers, and the two-stage process for further development are at odds with the carefully planned, sustainable, integrated community hub model and community consortium and governance proposed by the Flynn community.
- Without a site development plan that has been developed through discussions with the JFCG about community needs, DHCS and by default the Government is unable to demonstrate the appropriateness of its solution.

5. Claim: “I spoke before about the six meetings that we held with the John Flynn Community Group. Maureen Sheehan, the executive director, myself and, more recently, Bob Hyland have been involved in those meetings. So the sense that we have got a half-baked scheme with the childcare centre could not be further from the truth.”

- **There is no evidence that the Government’s childcare proposal is based on sound and tested information**—The JFCG has not been able to obtain or comment on the DHCS (Cabinet-in-Confidence) Budget proposal, any work plans or demographic rationale despite being part of a Joint Working Group tasked with preparing a submission. The JFCG has information and a rationale to indicate that the Community’s integrated hub proposal would be a cost-effective use of the \$4 million and is keen to incorporate this into a site development plan.
- **The John Flynn Community Group has never met with Bob Hyland.** The John Flynn Community Group does not know who Bob Hyland is and has not met with him.

The Flynn community recognises that a good understanding of the above facts could be important to the Committee deliberations and for ensuring that appropriate planning and community involvement guides the \$4 million government expenditure for Flynn. We understand that careful up-front planning and involvement of our community through a site development plan will enable the best use of the \$4 million to deliver an integrated and sustainable Flynn community hub.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself on 0432 035 112 or Roger Nicoll on 6259 2984 if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Eric Hines
President
John Flynn Community Group