

BROADMEADOWS PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Broadmeadows/ Moreland

PRESIDENT

Mrs E. Kosanovic

SECRETARY

John Rutherford

February 8th, 2017

Committee Secretary

Parliament Standing Committee On Public Works

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

RE Proposed Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation Project

Dear Committee Secretary

On behalf of the members of the Broadmeadows Progress Association I wish to make the following submission expressing community concern with proposed changes to Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation (MITA).

The Association has had an ongoing concern and involvement with MITA since it was first proposed some ten years ago.

One of the initial concerns back then was the lack of community consultation and availability of information.

Unfortunately the responsible authority has once again proceeded in the same manner, disregarding the community and in fact compounding the lack of Community awareness by introducing application for the project over the Christmas holiday period.

While this might be regarded as good tactics by project management it has created misinformation, alarm and fanned racial disharmony in the community.

This may be of no consequence to the current project management but could in the finality rebound against future Federal Government activities.

There are many issues of community concern raised by the proposed change to MITA which include the following;.

-2-

1. To date the prime use of MITA has been to accommodate refugees awaiting the outcome of legal processes. These people are not criminals and are therefore classified as “Low Security”.

To construct a facility for high risk proven criminal detainees in close proximity with low security, non-criminals is for many reasons unproductive and totally wrong.

It will lead to insecurity, stress and mental deterioration among the “low risk” people particularly the refugees many of whom have already suffered trauma.

This cannot be justified by the “Statement of Evidence” claim that such an arrangement of shared facilities and location will be cost saving (2.3 page 6)

2. The proximity of “Hardened” criminals and shared facilities will discourage “Community Visitors” to the refugees.

This interaction of community members with refugees has a very positive role. It not only is comforting for the refugees and assists them when they are released into community housing but also helps dispel community ignorance and latent racism.

3. The provision of accommodation for criminals who are to be deported after being dealt with by the State penal system, would, in consultation with the State Government, be more appropriate and economical to be constructed attached to the existing prison were the criminal detainees originate.

In conclusion, it is requested that the Parliamentary Standing Committee On Public Works rejects the proposed MITA Project.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Hon. Secretary