

Social Impact Review

Achieve Australia Limited's proposed re-development of
74-76 Belmore Street, Ryde

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Executive Summary

This Social Impact Review has been prepared in response to issues raised during the exhibition process for the proposed re-development of the 74-76 Belmore Street, Ryde ('Crowle Home') by Achieve Australia Limited ('Achieve Australia'), reference MP 10_0110.

The Review focuses on points raised by the September 2011 'Proposed redevelopment of Crowle Home, Meadowbank: review of social impacts and consultation' report prepared by Judith Stubbs and Associates (JSA, 2011) and covering letter by Penklis Lawyers (2011).

In our opinion:

- Several concerns raised during the exhibition process for the re-development of Crowle Home stem from the necessary focus in the Environmental Assessment report (Don Fox Planning, 2011) on planning issues in respect of the Part 3A process. Coverage of the social impact issues for residents and other stakeholders of Crowle Home was relatively high level in this document, with few specific details. Many of these details are now supplied in this Social Impact Review.
- Achieve Australia has been working for several years on addressing the social impact of moving residents to a community setting, and undertaking stakeholder consultation. This has been in close association with the NSW Government's Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) division of the Department of Human Services. Strategies and approaches to minimising social impact have been carefully documented in documentation provided by Achieve Australia.
- There has been extensive consultation and engagement with residents and other stakeholders on the re-development of Crowle Home. Consultation dates back at least as far as the 1990s, and there is documented evidence of a more systematic approach over the last three years. Various stakeholders, groups and agencies have been involved in this process through a range of events from larger gatherings to more individualised meetings. In our opinion this level of engagement and consultation would satisfy planning requirements.
- Both Achieve Australia's management, and the Friends of Crowle, support the move of Crowle Home residents to a more contemporary, less institutionalised style of living. However, they differ on the type of facility to provide - location in smaller group homes in the community, or location in a larger cluster scheme on the Crowle Home site. We believe that both of these options offer considerable benefits for residents. However, the favoured option of re-locating residents off site is supported by an independent report as best meeting the requirements of the Disability Services Act (Hawkless Consulting, 2011).
- The move of residents from Crowle Home has been continuing for a number of years. Upon reviewing numbers supplied by Achieve Australia management, we note that resident numbers fell from 98 in 1992 to 49 in 2008 during the period

when the institution was run by The Crowle Foundation. Achieve Australia has followed the same strategy of moving residents to the community, with current resident numbers reduced to 22. Therefore the change in organisational structures and governance arrangements, in early 2009, does not appear to have led to a change in policy.

- Achieve Australia has committed to retain a minimum of 15 apartments in the finished development on the Crowle Home site. These apartments will be of adaptable design standards, and could accommodate a minimum of 25 and potentially up to 30 people with disability, depending on room configuration and occupancy. It will therefore be possible for all 22 existing Crowle Home residents to have the option to remain in the location where they have lived for most of their lives. Achieve Australia's apartments will be from the already agreed 10% of new units on the Crowle Home site which will incorporate adaptable design features.
- Achieve Australia has articulated a clear strategy for how the re-development of Crowle Home will provide enhanced quality of life for residents, and the other people with disability they provide services for. The proposal therefore has positive impacts for a variety of Achieve Australia clients, not just those who are moving from an institutional setting at Crowle Home.

It is our opinion that the social impacts of the re-location of residents from Crowle Home to an off-site community setting will be largely positive. Where there will be negative impacts, our review of Achieve Australia's internal documentation identifies mitigation strategies. There is also evidence that sufficient consultation has taken place with stakeholders over a number of years. Therefore we do not believe there are sufficient grounds on the basis of social impact or consultation concerns to prevent the re-development of Crowle Home.

Methodology

In preparing this Review we have undertaken independent desk research on relevant policy papers, and assessed information contained in the 2011 Social Impact Assessment prepared by GML Social Research (Hawkless Consulting, 2010) and the Environmental Assessment report (Don Fox Planning, 2011). We have also obtained information both orally and in writing from Achieve Australia, and reviewed certain documents not in the public domain. We have specified the sources used in this Review in the 'references' section, as well as indicating statements representing our professional opinion.

Elton Consulting has undertaken four projects for Achieve Australia over the last year. We prepared a financial model for the re-development of Crowle Home, and facilitated the Information Session on 8 September 2011. We also assisted Achieve Australia write two documents submitted to ADHC: the Change Management Plan (Achieve Australia, 2011a) and a Strategic Business Proposal (Achieve Australia, 2011b).

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1 Background Issues

1.1 From institutional to community living

The NSW Government has been committed over several decades to move away from the institutionalisation of people with disability. When Crowle Home opened in 1952, it was relatively common for people with an intellectual disability to be accommodated in large institutions. From the 1960s all Australian states have pursued their own de-institutionalisation programs, involving a shift in both the housing context and support arrangements for people living in dependent care.

NSW initiated a state-wide plan in 1988 to close four state-run large institutions. By the mid-1990s there was a renewed push for de-institutionalisation, although only 1 of the 30 large not-for-profit institutions received funding. A 1997 audit report concluded that:

'There is broad recognition that institutions are outmoded models of care. Successive state governments have indicated a commitment to closure of large residential centres and their substitution with community based facilities' (NSW Government, 1997: p.ii).

Although the policy of de-institutionalisation continued for the next decade, progress was slow. This was due to the costs involved, and the complexities in locating new community facilities and managing the transition of vulnerable people. The previous NSW Labour Government's 2010 'Stronger Together second phase' policy, supported by the Coalition Government in 2011, contain a renewed commitment to close the remaining institutional homes by June 2018:

'These centres are at the end of their economic life and cannot continue to operate. Additionally, their antiquated hospital style structure does not allow for people with a disability to fulfil their potential as readily as in other settings' (NSW Government, 2008: p.24).

More recently, ADHC has reaffirmed the policy of de-institutionalisation:

'ADHC has already closed or replaced a number of large residential centres and has been investigating how facilities such as Crowle might be replaced with contemporary accommodation that meet standards and principles outlined in the *Disability Services Act (DSA) 1993* and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (ADHC, 2011: p:1).

Government policy for Crowle Home

There has been a longstanding tradition of de-institutionalisation by the organisations that merged to form Achieve Australia. For example, Hornsby Challenge was at the forefront in NSW of moving to community living options in the 1980s, and moves of residents from Crowle Home go back at least as far as the start of the 1990s. Therefore

the current approach of finally closing Crowle Home as an institution represents a continuation of over two decades of work.

In 2008 the State Government commissioned the Nucleus Consulting Group to clarify the current status of 20 large and small residential services operated by not-for-profit organisations. The report on Crowle Home indicated that move to community care and the re-development of the site were high priorities (Nucleus Group, 2008).

In August 2010 a single business case for the redevelopment of large residential institutions operated by 14 not-for-profit organisations was submitted to NSW Treasury via the Strategic Gateway Review process. The Business Case included individual Economic Appraisals for each project.

In August 2011, ADHC appointed PriceWaterHouseCoopers (PwC) to coordinate the production of Strategic Business Proposal from the 14 not-for-profit organisations. Achieve Australia's submission is currently with Government, having met the criteria set by PwC (Achieve Australia, 2011b). ADHC are supportive of Achieve Australia's move:

'ADHC believes that the redevelopment of the Crowle site will have a positive social impact on the current residents because they will receive improved living conditions and accommodation options that are more integrated in the community and which greatly enhance their capacity for exercising choice and achieving personal goals' (ADHC, 2011: p:2).

Community living alternatives

Retaining the previous institutional arrangements was not an option open to Crowle Home management, both when the institution was run by The Crowle Foundation (to 2008) and by Achieve Australia (from 2009). However, there are a number of different forms of community support that could be pursued to achieve the State Government's policy goals:

- *Group homes:* living arrangements usually based on the use of larger detached residential dwelling situated in suburban neighbourhoods with 3-5 residents occupying their own bedroom, with shared common areas and support facilities.
- *Cluster homes:* accommodation across several modest sized residential buildings housing (say) people 20 or more people with disability, clustered around communal open space. This approach offers the possibility of higher levels of support, through economies of scale, though cluster home complexes can be seen as less integrated within the wider community, forming a new 'mini institution'.
- *Individual homes:* people with disability are provided with sufficient levels of support such that they can live on their own, or with their families. As with the 'group home' option, sufficient levels of support are provided - both day and night.

In Australia, and in countries such as Britain, the main model for de-institutionalisation has been the 'group home' model for community support service delivery. The US, by contrast, favours individual homes (Gleeson & Kearns, 2001). The international research literature on de-institutionalisation is contested, with a brief review by Elton Consulting suggesting all three models of community support have supporters and detractors.

The main model Achieve Australia is following for implementing community support is through the use of group homes, a policy they refer to as 'community living'. We are advised by management that in some cases they have also provided support packages enabling former Crowle Home residents to live with their families, similar to the 'individual homes' approach. We also understand that Achieve Australia is looking to purchase pairs of neighbouring free-standing residential homes to convert into what will in effect be a mini-cluster with up to 8 residents in two properties. In this type of scheme, the properties would remain free standing, with main access through their own front doors, but have connection available through the gardens and shared support services. This supports the NSW Government's policy that 'one size does not fit all - alternative models [should] be designed to meet the current needs of residents' (NSW Government, 2010: p.24)

By contrast the Friends of Crowle advocate a development of a single larger cluster home on the Crowle Home site. This would provide continuity with the site for residents, though in our opinion does not fully accord with NSW Government policy as it fails to provide alternatives for existing residents, and does not - as required - optimise the amount of resources that can be used to benefit the specialist disability system. As highlighted in an Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute report, it is not uncommon for plans to de-institutionalise to be met with 'fierce resistance from parents', concerned about the availability of longer term funding for their children's welfare, and their safety in the community (Bostock et al., 2001: p.33).

The approach of using larger cluster homes can be controversial, as there is a concern that the process involves one form of institution replacing another. People With Disability Australia ('PWD'), the national disability rights and advocacy peak body, oppose this type of accommodation. In 2010 PWD opposed a 20 person cluster home on the Central Coast similar to the one advocated by the Friends on the Crowle Home site:

'If this goes ahead we will see people being moved from one segregated form of housing for people with disability to another. The homes ... still cluster a large group of persons with disability together in one location and therefore in no way promotes their participation in the life of the local community through maximum physical and social integration, as required by the DSA [Disability Services Act 1993 NSW] ... Cluster housing models fail to promote independence and personal growth of people with disability, and are instead strongly associated with the loss of skills and the development of maladaptive and antisocial behaviours. They are also far more likely to result in the neglect, abuse and exploitation of persons with disability' (PWD, 2010).

The NSW Government agency, ADHC, also take a view that 'congregate housing' may not satisfy state and international legislative requirements:

'ADHC considers that the principles set out in the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* are a primary consideration in determining the form that disability residential accommodation should take.

Key principles outlined in that legislation are that disability services such as disability accommodation should enable people with disability to experience:

- norms and patterns of everyday life that are as similar as possible to the rest of the community
- maximum physical and social integration in the life of their local community
- opportunities and lifestyles which are valued by the community generally and that are appropriate to their chronological age, and
- services provided in a way that results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities.

The congregate housing similar to that currently offered in the Crowle centre has been described by the NSW Ombudsman as being incapable of complying with the above requirements' (ADHC, 2011: p:2).

In our opinion, Achieve Australia's policy of mainly using group homes, with the occasional use of individual homes and small cluster housing, is reasonable. It accords with the dominant practice in Australia, is in accordance with NSW Government policy and appears well suited to meet the requirements of the NSW Disability Services Act 1993. By offering Crowle Home residents a choice of accommodation options, greater flexibility is provided to residents and families. The option of developing an on-site cluster arrangement at Crowle Home is discussed in the following section.

1.2 Progress with moving to community living

In 1992, Crowle Home operated as a major residential facility with 98 Residents. Table 1 shows the change in resident numbers since this period, with a reduction in residents living in an institutional setting to 22 as at March 2012. There have been a number of bereavements, due to both the ageing of the resident population and the health characteristics of their disability. Several former residents have transitioned to nursing homes, or now live with their families. However, the largest group, comprising half the residents living in Crowle Home in 1992, have transitioned to a range of community living options.

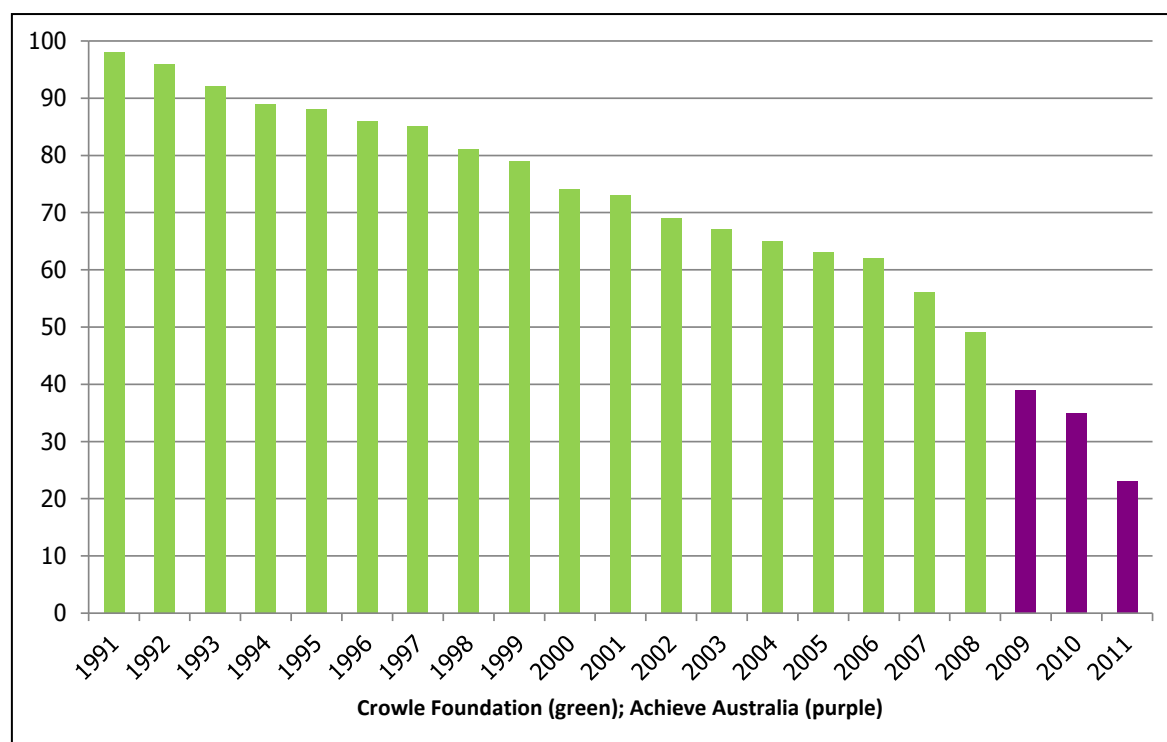
Table 1: Changes in Crowle Home resident numbers, 1992-2012

Period	Controlling organisation	Residents at period start	Moved to community Living Options	Moved to a nursing home	Moved to live with their family	Bereavements	Residents at period end
1992-2008	Crowle Foundation	98	-31	-1	-1	-16	49
2009-2012	Achieve Australia	49	-18	-3	-3	-3	22
Total			-49	-4	-4	-19	

Source: Figures supplied by Achieve Australia.

Figure 1 shows the decline in resident numbers at Crowle Home in a graph. During the period to December 2008, when Crowle Home was run by The Crowle Foundation (shown in green), the number of institutional residents halved, from 98 to 49. Since operation by the merged Achieve Australia organisation (shown in purple), Crowle Home resident numbers have again halved although the pace of de-institutionalisation has quickened.

Figure 1: Crowle Home resident numbers, December 1991-date



Source: Figures supplied by Achieve Australia. Resident numbers are at the end of the year.

In our opinion, this information supplied by Achieve Australia contradicts the claim that Crowle Home had some 90 residents 'as recently as two years ago' (Penklis lawyers, 2011: p.4). As opposed to adopting a radically new strategy on how residents will be supported, Achieve Australia has largely continued the previous policies of The Crowle Foundation of re-locating residents from an institutional setting to community living.

1.3 Crowle Home re-development plan

The location of Crowle Home provides opportunities for a more intensive use of the site. For Achieve Australia, this has the dual advantage of providing better quality accommodation for current residents, and helping fund other social and community projects (see section 1.4 below).

At the same time as continuing to move residents from Crowle Home to a community setting, Achieve Australia has been evaluating the best way to re-develop the site. This has been in conjunction with ADHC. In July 2010 an Economic Appraisal report, commissioned by ADHC, suggested three options for making better use of the Crowle Home site (Hawkless Consulting, 2010):

- *Base case:* the 36 residents then living at Crowle Home could continue to live on the site, but in improved accommodation that fully met Occupational Health and Safety requirements.
- *Option one:* residents would be moved from Crowle Home and accommodated in newly purchased housing in the community. This would give the opportunity for Achieve Australia to redevelop the Crowle Home site as apartments, with a portion of these new apartments retained for people with disability.
- *Option two:* would allow 20 residents to remain on site during the re-development of the Crowle Home site into a medium density residential scheme. The remaining 16 residents would then be moved off-site to newly purchased properties in the community.

The Economic Appraisal report favoured option one. It is noted in the report that the base case fell 'significantly short of the objectives of the Disability Services Act' as it did not complete the transition for the people with disability from an institutional setting. Option one was considered superior to option two in terms of both cost effectiveness, and also in an assessment of what would be best for residents:

'Option one scores significantly higher in [qualitative] effectiveness as it will not only provide residents with greater opportunities for integration into typical community settings and home styles, but will also enable Achieve Australia to pursue its strategic accommodation and service delivery model' (Hawkless Consulting, 2010: p.40).

Following a detailed analysis of the Economic Appraisal, we have been advised the Achieve Australia Board concluded in late 2010 that option one was the most sensible and viable option for the site. This strategy is currently being implemented, with NSW Government support.

In our opinion there is evidence that Achieve Australia carefully considered the alternative of building a larger cluster home to replace Crowle Home. They arrived at their decision to pursue group homes based on independent research, due internal process and with the support of Government. Although there was limited direct consultation with residents and their families about the rejection of the larger cluster option, it is Achieve Australia's stated policy to allow people choice over their future living options. Their proposal for a number of off-site smaller scale cluster homes may satisfy the concerns raised by the Friends of Crowle.

1.4 Use of development proceeds

The re-development of Crowle Home will generate a cash bonus for Achieve Australia. As a not-for-profit organisation, any surpluses will be used to further their social mission of 'delivering on the right of people with disability to achieve a meaningful and valued life' (Achieve Australia, 2012). Therefore the benefits of Achieve Australia's plans for Crowle Home will be available not only for the residents through moving from an institutional setting, but for a wider range of people with disability.

The following are examples of the applications of these funds currently planned:

- *Secure housing*

A new Housing Plan was adopted by Achieve Australia's Board in early 2010 which provides higher quality accommodation for a wide number of people with disability, not just those who are currently living at Crowle Home. The organisation operates one of the largest accommodation programs for people with disability in NSW, providing a range of accommodation support options for around 170 individuals. Achieve Australia offer a range of accommodation options including drop-in support based on individual needs, co-residency arrangements with non-disabled housemates and around-the-clock assistance in shared community households.

We are advised by Achieve Australia management that many properties currently used to house residents in a community setting are rented from private sector landlords. This can be problematic as the owners may not renew the lease at the end of the term, resulting in people with disability needing to move to new accommodation. In addition, it is not straightforward or cost effective for Achieve Australia to make property improvements to rented properties to increase ease of accessibility for residents.

We have reviewed the January 2012 version of Achieve Australia's Strategic Housing Plan, which is an internal management document. The Plan proposes to use part of the proceeds of the re-development of the Crowle Home site to move from mainly accommodating clients in rented group home properties, to using housing owned by Achieve Australia. New properties will also be acquired for residents exiting from Crowle Home. These changes are planned to occur over a number of years, with completion scheduled by 2015-16.

The Plan involves careful identification of properties that will be suitable for residents that, due to their disability and age, have access and mobility issues. Preliminary planning opportunities identified would be in the form of small cluster homes for eight residents in total under two separate roof lines. In addition, improvements will also be made to properties that Achieve Australia already own, including refurbishment and creating extra places for residents.

The Achieve Australia Housing Plan will ultimately mean the organisation would own a larger number of houses for the purpose of providing supported housing for people with disability. This is seen by management as a cornerstone goal by which the accommodation support programs will improve stability of tenure and improved living circumstances for the people who are supported by Achieve Australia. It will also place people with disability in the community, where they are better able to access local services and enjoy interaction with others in the neighbourhood.

- *Housing partnerships*

We understand Achieve Australia is planning to create opportunities for people with disability to invest in ownership of homes within the Achieve Australia

supported accommodation program. This is an element of the delivery of improved long term security and peace of mind for families of people supported by Achieve Australia. An opportunity for people to share in asset ownership is an area of benefit for some recipients of accommodation programs. It also increases the degree of choice that can be offered to people with disability.

- *Employment*

Achieve Australia already provide employment opportunities for people with disability. The legacy schemes inherited as a result of the merger are being reformed, premises upgraded and new links with employers forged. This process will be expanded further and faster over the next five years as a result of extra capital. Employment is a good way of integrating people with disability in the community, and breaking down barriers.

- *Respite*

We are advised that there are plans to launch a funded respite service. This will provide families of people with disability some temporary relief and flexibility through the type of service and programs available to them and the people they care for. Equally, the respite service will give the person with disability the opportunity to participate in the benefits of a program of life experiences, activities and social engagement with their peers

In our opinion the above examples demonstrate ways in which the development profits from Crowle Home can be used to provide higher quality and more secure living options for all Achieve Australia residents, not just those currently living at Crowle Home. Moving from housing people with disability in properties rented from private landlords on short term leases appears to be a worthy goal.

1.5 Future housing at the Crowle Home site

Achieve Australia management has advised that they plan to retain a number of properties in the finished development for people with disability. As such, they will be creating a mixed community in line with the State Government's 'Stronger Together' policy. The approach will allow Achieve Australia to have input into the location within the development of these properties, and their design. For example, their retained properties will be able to be fitted such that they are fully adaptable for people with limited mobility.

Development plans for the Crowle Home site await planning approval, and there are different options available as to the type of arrangement that Achieve Australia management will enter into with private sector development companies. As such, it is difficult to make precise estimates of final outcomes.

We have been advised by Achieve Australia management that the Board resolved in March 2012 that the organisation intends to retain a minimum of 15 apartments in the finished development. These apartments could accommodate a minimum of 25 and potentially up to 30 people with disability, depending on room configuration and occupancy. These apartments will be of adaptable design standards (Australian Standard

4299), and will be from the already agreed 10% of new units on the Crowle Home site which will incorporate adaptable design features.

With this commitment to retaining apartments on the Belmore Street site, it will be possible for all 22 existing Crowle Home residents to remain on the site, if this is their wish. As such, residents would be able to retain an association with a site where they have lived for most of their lives. However, due to the disruption that will be caused during construction, many residents may choose to move to purpose built accommodation in surrounding neighbourhoods.

2 Social Impacts

The social impacts of re-developing Crowle Home were considered in the April 2011 Social Impact Assessment (GML, 2011) and in section 71.5 of the August 2011 Environmental Assessment Report (Don Fox Planning, 2011: pp.70-77). The former document reviewed social impacts for the local community, as well as existing and future residents.

2.1 Achieve Australia's approach

During the planning process in 2009 for moving from institutional to community support, a process referred to as 'devolution', Achieve Australia management adopted the following principles to minimise social impact which were detailed in a 2011 internal document we have viewed, and reproduced below (Achieve Australia, 2011a):

- *Focus on the preferences and needs of people with disability*

'Achieve Australia is committed to giving more choices to people with disability, whether through their broader range of services provided or the transition from an institutional setting. People should have control over their daily lives, on the types of services they take from the organisation and the location in which they live. Residents and their families will be widely consulted over any changes that take place through regular meetings, and solutions found which meet their individual health needs, mobility abilities and living preferences. Time and effort will be taken to find out the views of [Crowle Home] residents on where they should move to and who they would like to live with, rather than letting their families make all the decisions'.
- *Provide genuine engagement with stakeholders*

'Achieve Australia will be open and honest in the way they interact with all stakeholder groups, providing as much information as possible and offering genuine choices. If solutions cannot be agreed at first, engagement will continue. Each individual case is different, and Achieve Australia will take the time to treat all individuals as unique.
- *Sensitively manage the change process*

'Several stakeholders are in vulnerable groups, many are aged, and few welcome change without understanding why it is necessary. Achieve Australia will work patiently and with empathy with all groups, and gradually make the case for change. This will be supported by positive stories about the excellent outcomes that can be achieved from people with a disability living in a community setting. Although there are deadlines in this project, the key factor is to bring people along the journey and not rush and cut corners'.

- *Move to a contemporary service delivery model*

'The devolution project will be seamlessly integrated into Achieve Australia's bold and visionary strategic plan to continue on its quality journey having moved beyond a compliance and quality mentality to a service excellence approach. Underpinning the Strategic Plan is the driving principle to support people with disability to learn and maintain life and work skills, develop relationships, make choices about their lives and participate in community activities'.

2.2 Managing the move to community living

The steps taken by management were as outlined in the Change Management Plan, with the main points summarised below (Achieve Australia, 2011a):

- Following the 2009 merger, management have devised and implemented the Strategic Plan 2010-2012 of which the move to community living was the key project.
- The transition was planned in detail in the August 2009 Large Residential Centres Services Strategic Report.
- In October 2009 Janus Consulting produced a Stakeholder Needs Analysis Report. This helped shape the Board's views on how to approach change management, and formed the Stakeholder Engagement Plan which has been implemented over the last two years.
- The Board was up-skilled through implementing The Australian Governance System and holding a number of off-site one day planning and change management events.
- Actions involving residents and their families are detailed in Section 2.5 of this report, staff in Section 2.6 and volunteers and day program residents in Section 2.4
- Regular reports of the transition to community living have been provided to the Board, with Key Performance Indicators set and monitored.
- In mid-2011 Achieve Australia's board and senior management team reviewed the approach taken to date and recommended changes to provide a firm foundation for further implementing the strategy in late 2011 and 2012.
- Achieve Australia's General Manager Operations was given a larger and more strategic role in delivering the move from Crowle Home project.
- Change Management Meetings take place approximately every two weeks.
- A revised transition project planning process has been put into effect from May 2011. This will govern change management planning until devolution is complete at the end of 2012. The process for completing Individual Transition Plans is detailed below in section 2.5.

2.3 Stakeholder impact planning

The August 2011 Change Management Plan (Achieve Australia, 2011a) outlined the approaches taken by Achieve Australia to ensure stakeholder needs are taken into account in the closure of Crowle Home. The Plan, which was submitted to ADHC, is not a public document. However, it has been reviewed by Elton Consulting. The Plan has three splits stakeholder management into three phases:

- *Phase 1:* March 2009 - June 2011. Completed. Lower impact on stakeholder groups.
- *Phase 2:* June - December 2011. Completed. Increasing impact, particularly on members of staff as numbers at Crowle Home continue to diminish.
- *Phase 3:* From January 2012. In progress. Many residents will move in small groups from Crowle Home to newly acquired properties, therefore a higher impact on residents and their families.

The main stakeholder groups affected by the closure of Crowle Home are:

- Long term Crowle Home residents with disability.
- Families and other providers of support to people with disability.
- Staff members.
- People with disability who use day program at Crowle Home.
- Volunteers who use facilities at Crowle Home for meetings, social events and as a store for goods sold through retail outlets to raise income.

2.4 Day program participants and volunteers

The Change Management Plan includes a detailed analysis of issues and actions by project phase for each of the first three listed stakeholder groups listed above. For the remaining two stakeholder groups:

- *Day program participants.* The transition to a new facility known as 'Araluen' at Epping was well advanced when the Change Management Plan was written, and is now complete. Araluen is a large former residential property previously used for commercial events. Following acquisition by Achieve Australia, the property was modified to give better access to all areas of the building and the site surrounds, including installation of a lift to service the two storey building. There are access ramps throughout, new adaptable bathrooms with electric overhead hoists, improved lighting, new recreational areas, adaptable pathways and a specially modified sensory room.

The move of day program facilities to Araluen was planned in detail by management. Change management policies were put in place for the 24 staff involving special training and development activities for the staff group. Individual

transition plans were negotiated for each day program participant in consultation with their families and carers. A Project Team of the key Achieve Australia management and staff was formed, with fortnightly meetings since May 2011. In addition there was a Project Group of families, program participants and staff. This Group also met fortnightly from May 2011 (Achieve Australia, 2011b).

Araluen was opened by The Hon Andrew Constance, NSW Minister for Disability and Minister for Ageing, on 29 November 2011, who commented:

'The programs and activities conducted at Araluen will enable more intimate and individualised learning and development opportunities. Day program facilities like this are vital in enabling people with a disability to participate in their community' (quoted in an Achieve Australia press release, 2 December 2011, available at www.achieveaustralia.org.au).

The transition of Day Programs from Crowle Home to Araluen was completed in January 2012.

- *Volunteers.* We are advised by Achieve Australia management that plans for the transition of the volunteers and other groups who use buildings at the Crowle Home site will be made during 2012.

2.5 Crowle Home residents and their families

This section details Achieve Australia's approach to mitigating the social impact of transitioning to community living, as detailed in the Change Management Plan (Achieve Australia, 2011a). Stakeholder consultation approaches are given in Section 3.

Social impacts: residents

The social impacts on the residents of the move from Crowle Home are:

- Moving from the Crowle home will mean a change for residents in that they have lived all their adult lives there. The average age of residents was 59 years in 2010, at the time of the Change Management Plan. The management of the impact of change in regard to the longevity of a resident's time in Crowle Home and the advanced age of this group of people is complex.
- It may be disrupting for some residents to move away from people that they have known for a long time.
- The paradigm shift from a 'provided' form of accommodation - meals, washing, supplies, laundry, medical - to an individualised community based access to services and an opportunity to be involved in the everyday aspects of their lives, cooking, cleaning, washing, gardening etc. requires re-training, up skilling and a different concept of support.
- Particular attention and support needs to be given to residents with high support needs, and complex and challenging behavioural issues.

- Many residents have received services such as hairdressing and doctor visits on site. These have been replaced by individuals accessing local services.
- Moving residents incrementally may cause confusion for residents. Changes will need to be explained to them both directly and through their families.
- As the move from Crowle Home proceeds, a number of residents are succumbing to aged related illness such as dementia. Some current residents will not be able to transition to the community, rather will require more intensive health and aged related support and treatment.

Social impacts: families

The social impacts from the closure of Crowle Home on the families of residents, and others giving support, are:

- Among some families there may be a sense of loss of 'home' as they feel ownership of a site that they have been connected to for several decades. Crowle Home is a familiar place for families. Some will fear the loss of the site's 'heritage' and legacy.
- Families may be concerned about a community based approach if they are not familiar with how it works. They will need to become familiar with residents having more control of their lifestyles and decisions. Access for family members and friends will be improved in the new accommodation settings, though this may take a while to become familiar.
- Several family members have been involved in volunteering for the upkeep of Crowle Home and been active in fundraising. The impact of the loss of the site as a focus for volunteer and fundraising support will need to be carefully managed, and other opportunities found.
- New community living arrangements will involve different locations and new travel arrangements for family members.

Achieve Australia's strategy

The approach put in place in 2009 to managing the move from Crowle Home, and to help address the above potential social impacts on residents and their families, has been to:

- Establish a Residents Consultation Group.
- Undertake a *Needs Analysis* of each Crowle Home resident with the resident and their family through an individual meeting. Residents who were willing and able to move within the next year were identified.
- Reassure families through regular meetings and discussions that the impact of the move from Crowle Home would be carefully managed and that they would be kept informed of the processes involved.

- Through the Needs Analysis, identify residents who may be better moving to nursing home accommodation or living with their families, and assist this transition to take place where appropriate.
- Develop an *Individual Transition Plan* for Crowle Home residents where their families have agreed to a move. These are detailed in the following sub-section.
- Establish groups of 4 to 8 residents who would like to move together to the newly acquired residential properties. Identify people with compatible needs, friendship groups and connectivity with the area to which they are moving.
- Prepare for the Crowle Home residents' move on an individual basis, giving them and their families time to become familiar with their new home. Involve the residents and their families in planning for the move to new accommodation through coaching, allowing them to view potential homes and socially interact with people they will share accommodation with.
- Identify the few residents where their families remain opposed to a move from Crowle Home to a community setting, and devise tailor-made solutions.
- Carefully plan and implement procedures to ensure the Crowle Home site remains secure, safe and welcoming despite the reducing number of residents.
- Ensure the final residents move from Crowle Home at the same time to prevent them feeling isolated on the site.

Individual Transition Plans

Individual Transition Plans are developed in consultation with relevant parties in a Crowle Home resident's life. These are usually the person's family: mother, father, sibling, cousins, etc. The process takes the person and their family through an explanatory process regarding living in the community and the steps associated with changing from living in an institution to living in the community in a group home.

The Individual Transition Plan is structured in two phases. The first part of Phase 1 takes the resident through a process of how they live now, such as daily activities, routines, opportunities, staffing, likes and dislikes. It involves the current living arrangements, and what they would like to see happen based on discussing other people's experiences and where they see their future.

The second part of Phase 1 focuses on the residents' aspirations of what they would like their home to look like, what they think the move will involve such as purchasing furniture and personal items, and establishing their idea of 'home'. New activities and daily living tasks they might like to be involved with are discussed. Achieve Australia discuss who the resident would like to live with, keeping in touch with friends, and what parts of their current lives they wish to continue. To aid in the development of these plans and assisting a realistic view of transitioning we take residents to see their friends who have already moved, and outings to places such as furniture stores, nurseries and grocery shops to assist the individual through exposure to these activities that have not previously been undertaken.

The second part of Phase 1 also includes family members, and takes people through all the changes that will occur, how life will be in their home, their new support staff, changes to money matters, support levels which always actually increase, access and activity issues. The resident and family members are encouraged to visit the new home, join social events at the home and undertake sleep-overs, usually on weekends. The process culminates on the day the person moves from Crowle Home, by which stage they are more than ready to make the move to their new home.

We have reviewed a Phase 1 Individual Transition Plan, with names removed, supplied by Achieve Australia. The Plan is a detailed nine page document covering communication with stakeholders, service plans and a variety of practical transition details. Forms include detailed checklists, and sign-off from relevant parties is required.

Phase 2 of the Individual Transition Plan is about managing the actual transition. This process normally takes about two months, although some have taken longer and others have been shorter. The pace is set according to the needs of the resident. If a resident needs a longer period of time to adjust, the transition process can continue until the person is comfortable with the move. Achieve Australia encourage the full participation of families of transitioning residents so that they can be involved in buying new furniture and deciding on other living arrangements.

We are advised that as at 26 March 2012, 21 out of 22 Crowle Home residents have completed the first stage of Phase 1 of their Individual Transition Plan.

2.6 Staff members

The move away from providing institutional support at Crowle Home has an impact on members of staff who work there. As with the residents, they often have a long association with the Home. Management therefore carefully planned to minimise the social impact on these individuals, as part of their Change Management process (Achieve Australia, 2011a).

The social impacts on the move from Crowle Home on staff members are:

- Many Crowle Home staff have been employed for a number of years and have concerns about their future employment and careers.
- Staff may have been undertaking their roles for many years and have a specialised set of skills. These skills may be more geared around institutional services and care, and they will need training to move to an individualised model.
- Staff may have formed social bonds with a number of residents.
- Staff may be relocated to an area where they have to travel further, or travel using public transport is more complicated.

Of the 32.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff at Crowle Home in 2009, 25 FTEs were care staff and 7.4 FTEs ancillary staff. During Phase 2, management negotiated redundancies for ancillary staff at Crowle Home who did not take up Achieve Australia's offer of retraining and re-deployment. Ancillary staff provide non support roles such as laundry

and catering that are no longer required when the move to a community setting is complete. With care staff, the aim has been to re-train people to work in a community environment. This allows continuity in association between many residents and support workers.

In early 2011, Crowle Home and other Achieve Australia staff were advised of the proposal for closing the Home, and reasons for the change. Options for retraining for Crowle Home staff, for example transitioning to community living arrangements, were detailed.. Staff were advised of the option of taking voluntary redundancy if they do not wish to move to a new role within Achieve Australia.

2.7 Community living options for residents

Each person is provided with accommodation by Achieve Australia has an annually updated Health Care Plan, is regularly assessed by speech pathologists and dieticians, and communication assessments are regularly made. Staff meet regularly to discuss how these plans are to be implemented. Achieve Australia draws upon external specialist expertise as required, including medical and allied health.

Living in a group home

We have discussed with Achieve Australia management the arrangements in place for living in the community in group homes. Accommodation is provided in a variety of settings and arrangements that are structured to meet the needs of individuals who require support with their day to day living. The program ranges from the provision of a few hours support each day for people who are relatively independent, through to intensive support 24 hours per day, every day.

Achieve Australia's group homes cover a mixture of building types including houses, apartments, villas and town houses. People live in small groups usually from one (for a person who is independent), to up to four people who can live together in a house.

In group homes where there are usually three or four people resident, the homes run very much as a household. There is usually a house account which each person contributes a weekly sum to. This money is used for communal buying of groceries and paying for utilities and services. Each person has their own income, usually their pension which they use at their discretion but also to pay for medications and other personal needs. Each person makes a contribution to their rent of 25% of their income which is based on the rent applied by Housing NSW for their tenants. Achieve Australia does not collect any other fees from the people we support in the homes. People need to pay for activities themselves such as day program fees and other similar costs.

Achieve Australia assists people to live in community homes in the same way as other people live in community neighbourhoods, and that the properties are indistinguishable from other houses on the street (see Figure 2). Visitors are encouraged and tenants can access the local community to access generic community facilities and services such as restaurants and cafes. People are assisted to decorate their home with paintings, photographs and other personal belongings to give each home their own unique feel.

Matching people in each home is important so that people are matched according to similar interests, temperaments and support needs.

Figure 2: Example Achieve Australia group homes



Source: Supplied by Achieve Australia.

The approach in group homes is to encourage each person to undertake as many tasks as they can for themselves. They are supported to learn and develop new skills. Sometimes these skills are significant, such as playing sport or doing artwork. For other people the skills might be more specific such as helping to prepare meals, cleaning, clothes washing and gardening. A common feature is that each person will participate in routine household duties such as their own shopping, sometimes accompanied by Achieve Australia staff. Box 1 provides examples, based on information supplied by Achieve Australia.

Box 1: Group home and drop-in support examples

- **A** is an independent person who works four days each week and is able to undertake many tasks for himself such as cooking, looking after his home and doing his washing and shopping. He requires support in managing his money, and Achieve Australia staff visit him a couple of hours each week to assist him complete more complex tasks such as answering mail and completing forms.
- **B** shares her Housing NSW apartment with another person also supported by Achieve Australia. She works three days each week and needs assistance each morning to get ready for work. Sometimes she might get a lift to work, but is encouraged to catch the bus as it builds her independence. On the two days that she is not at work she attends art school one day and on the other day undertakes shopping and meets friends. Quite often the two flat-mates will have people around for dinner, assisted by Achieve Australia staff.
- **C** lives in a group home and, due to a changes related to his health and age he is no longer working. He is still active in his independent living skills around the house and needs support staff to prompt him to remain on task. Achieve Australia uses an activities plan to enable him to plan each week and ensure that he is actively engaged in the community. His home is staffed for 24 hours. There are three people living in the group home of similar levels of capability, and the staff are able to cover emergencies such as health issues that may arise. The person suffers from epilepsy so it is important that his staff supervise his medication and track daily health.
- In another group home, **D** lives with one other flat mate. She has high support needs and is supported by staff in almost every aspect of her life such as bathing, toilet visits, dressing and leaving the house. She goes to day program three days each week. Achieve Australia staff take her there and collect her at the end of each day to take her home. This home is staffed 24 hours with the staff awake all through the night to ensure residents are supported immediately should an issue arise. In the day time, there are always two staff on duty.

Source: Information supplied by Achieve Australia.

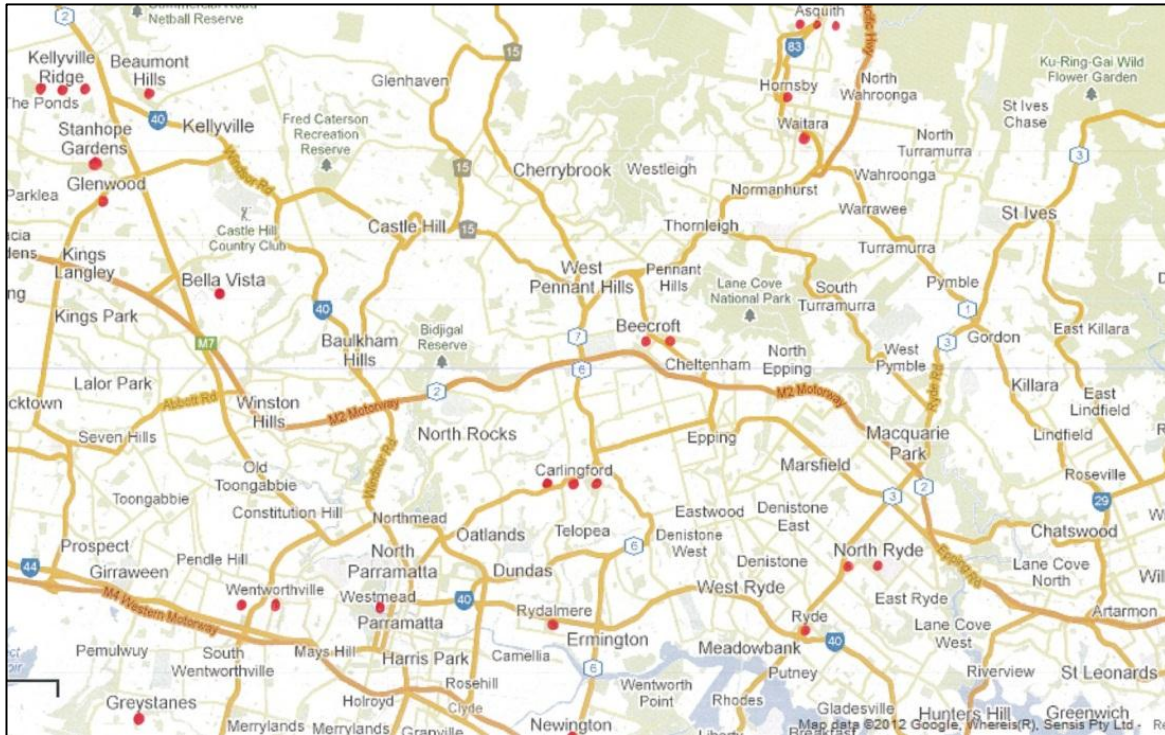
Achieve Australia's group homes have in place systems that ensure residents are supported appropriately. This may include help taking medication, and assistance when they are of poor health. Staff track visits to health practitioners, and support people to attend medical appointments and do what is required in response to the diagnosis and direction of Doctors and Specialists.

Direct staffing levels at group homes vary depending on the needs of residents but in a typical three person home requiring staff coverage for 24 hours, approximately six staff will be allocated on a rotating roster. The roster will be designed to meet the peak needs of the household and to have staff available to meet particular needs of individuals such as outings, other activities and visits to treating doctors and specialist health providers.

Geographical proximity

Achieve Australia operates within a cohesive area in Ryde and Hornsby, and westwards towards the Hills District. This allows a higher level of services to be provided from their head office in Eastwood, and also lessens travelling distances for families when Crowle Home residents are relocated to a community setting. Figure 3 shows the locations of group homes:

Figure 3: Achieve Australia community group homes



Source: Supplied by Achieve Australia.

From Figure 4, drop-in support locations are also located close to Achieve Australia's main location in the Ryde council area. This reinforces the fact that the organisation's service users do not have to travel large distances to receive support. As a result, negative social impacts from a move to community living will be minimised as people can retain continuity with the areas they have lived for many years.

This is a detailed map of the Sydney metropolitan area, Australia. The map shows a dense network of roads, including major highways like the M2, M4, and M5. Numerous suburbs are labeled, such as Sydney, Parramatta, Rouse Hill, and the Blue Mountains. The map also shows the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Opera House, and various parks and reserves. The map is oriented with North at the top.

2.8 Interim plans during construction

We have been advised by Achieve Australia management that the staff: resident ratio at Crowle Home has increased over recent years. In 2009 there were 49 residents who were supported by 25 FTE direct support staff plus 7.4 ancillary staff (kitchen and laundry). In March 2012, there are 22 residents supported by 15.2 FTE direct staff and 5.8 FTE ancillary staff. In terms of ratios of staffing per person expressed as the hours of direct support per person per in 2009 (at the time of the merger) the level of direct support staff was 38.8 hours per person per fortnight. In March 2012 the level of direct support staff was 55 hours per fortnight. The number of support staff has reduced in absolute terms but not at the same rate as the reduction of the numbers of residents.

The deployment of two full time registered nurses at Crowle home has been maintained through the period of moving to community living, with a reduction to one full time registered nurse occurring in January 2012. This corresponds to the halving of resident numbers. Staff training at Crowle Home has also been increased since 2009,. There are currently two full time Assistant Managers for Crowle Home.

2.9 Section conclusions

In our opinion Achieve Australia has put in place and implemented strategies aimed at ameliorating the social impact of the move from Crowle Home on various stakeholder groups. The groups most affected are the residents and their families, and it is here where careful and individualised plans are in place. Support levels appear to have been maintained at Crowle Home, despite the decrease in the number of residents. Care has been taken to try and maintain continuity for the residents, by encouraging them to move to the community in friendship groups, and for staff members to also transition to a community setting.

Even with careful planning by Achieve Australia, it is understandable that residents and their families will be concerned about a substantial change in their lives. Many have had a close association with Crowle Home for much of their lives. Whether the transition had been to a new cluster home on-site, or to community living, concerns would have been raised. The objections to Achieve Australia's proposals to community living, which have the backing of State Government through ADHC, need to be seen in this light.

The internal and external documents we have reviewed contradict both the claim that no relocation strategy exists, and that there has been no engagement with the families. As noted by Penklis Lawyers (2011: pp.11-12):

'It may well be that the relocation process has been more satisfactory than reported by many interviewees in the course of JSA's (Judith Stubbs and Associates) research, and that detailed written procedures and protocols exist'.

From our review, these procedures and protocols have been in place for a number of years although much of the information has not been in the public domain. It is our view that the procedures themselves have been well thought-out and are close to best practice.

3 Stakeholder Consultation

This section outlines the steps taken by Achieve Australia to consult with various stakeholders in the period since the organisation merged with The Crowle Foundation in 2008. Our assessment is largely based on information supplied by management, apart from an understanding of the August 2011 Community Information session which was facilitated by Elton Consulting.

3.1 Earlier consultation, to 2009

There is evidence that the families of Crowle Home residents were informed of de-institutionalisation plans during the 1990s, when resident numbers reduced from 98 to 74, with the majority of residents transitioning to group homes in the community. This was in accordance with State Government Policy, and at a time when there were a number of audit reports highlighting often unacceptable conditions for residents of large residential centres (NSW Government, 1997).

We are advised by the current Achieve Australia management that during the 1990s around half the board comprised family members. They would have therefore have been informed of The Crowle Foundation's strategy for de-institutionalisation. Whether or not The Crowle Foundation had the same level of formal consultation as introduced by Achieve Australia management from 2009, as detailed below, is not clear.

3.2 Consultation on moving to community living, 2009-2010

Achieve Australia management initiated various meetings to provide information to the immediate families of Crowle Home residents, and other interested stakeholders, during 2009 and 2010.

- Belmore Street Residential Families meeting, 19 June 2009. We have viewed an internal Achieve Australia document which minutes this meeting.
- Belmore Street Family Forum meeting, 16 October 2009. We have viewed an internal Achieve Australia email which minutes this meeting which was attended by 24 family members. The email notes that 'the meeting was cordial and friendly'.
- Eleven information sessions conducted over 4 days between August and October 2010, with an estimated 90 people attending. These were designed to provide advanced information on Achieve Australia's broader strategic plan and how the redevelopment of the site fits with the implementation of the strategy. The sessions covered both the move to community care and relocation of day program facilities.
- General meeting, 15 October 2010.

The above were open meetings, and Achieve Australia management were in attendance to answer questions. The sessions were designed to provide information on Achieve Australia's broader strategic plan and how the redevelopment of the site fits with the implementation of the strategy to increase social and community integration.

In addition to discussing the move to community living, during the October 2010 General Meeting details were given of the proposed relocation of day programs from the Crowle home site. If attendees had any issues arising from Achieve Australia's proposed changes that were not covered at the meeting, they were encouraged to make an appointment for a personal meeting with the Chief Executive Officer.

From an internal document supplied to Elton Consulting by Achieve Australia dated August 2010, used as the basis for the August and October 2010 information sessions, the rationale for moving from institutional support was the inadequacy of the current accommodation facilities to meet individual needs, or to cope with the residents. In addition, the inadequacy of the residential funding from the State to provide ongoing appropriate accommodation and support for this group of people was noted.

Box 2 details Achieve Australia's approach to consultation, and is a direct copy from the August 2010 internal document detailed above.

Box 2: Achieve Australia consultation principles, August 2010

- We need to have a conversation about these changes that will occur.
- We don't have a fixed time frame but we need to start a conversation with families and the Residents about future change.
- We will also meet with every person we support and with [communications] assistance we will communicate these matters to each person.
- Achieve Australia is 100% committed to providing support to effectively and properly meet individual needs.
- Achieve Australia is negotiating with the State Government who's plan it is to relocate all people living in Residential centres by 2016. Achieve Australia is working inside this Government time frame. By doing so Achieve Australia has a 'once in a generation' opportunity to gain a better funding outcome for the Residents.
- Achieve Australia's management will work closely with families and the residents through a carefully and sensitively planned transition process.
- Families will have opportunities to find out about the different forms of accommodation that could be available for their family member.
- This is a conversation about making changes – we can and will have more conversations with families in order to assist through the process.
- Achieve Australia will walk with you through the changes - transition and relocation - for your family member.
- You can have contact with families who have experienced the changes before – find out what their concerns are and what the successes have been through the new opportunities.

Achieve Australia's approach to consultation, as shown in Box 2, is focused on the needs of individual residents and involved family members. A number of different accommodation options would be offered to residents, including modest sized cluster homes, and there would be flexibility on transition timescales. Clear guidance was provided on what would happen next, and the levels of support that would be provided by Achieve Australia staff. Information on the future development plans for Crowle Home was not given, as a firm decision had not been made at that stage.

3.3 Exploratory meetings with families, 2010

During August and September 2010 a series of exploratory meetings were conducted with families who had relatives living at Crowle Home. We have reviewed a list of the 33 meetings, which encompassed the majority of the 39 Crowle Home residents at the time. Of the meetings, 31 were face to face and 2 were by telephone as the family lived out of state. With two families, a second meeting was held. Of the meetings held, most were attended by one relative, though two meetings were attended by two relatives.

These exploratory meetings were held to determine the views of individual families on the move to community living. They identified which families would like to move sooner rather than later, and which accommodation option would best suit their needs. Information was gathered by management on ideal re-location neighbourhoods, and whether a number of residents would like to transition to the same location to maintain friendship links.

3.4 Transition Meetings with families, 2010-2011

Once a family had indicated that they would like their family to transition to community living, work started on the Individual Transition Plans. These are described in more detail in section 2.5 of this report. The Transition Plans are compiled based on information collected during a series of Transition Meetings, and are 'living documents' updated as residents' situations change, and as they approach the time they will move to community living arrangements. We have been advised that there were at least 11 Transition Meetings held from late 2010 to June 2011, and further 21 Transition Meetings held between July and December 2011.

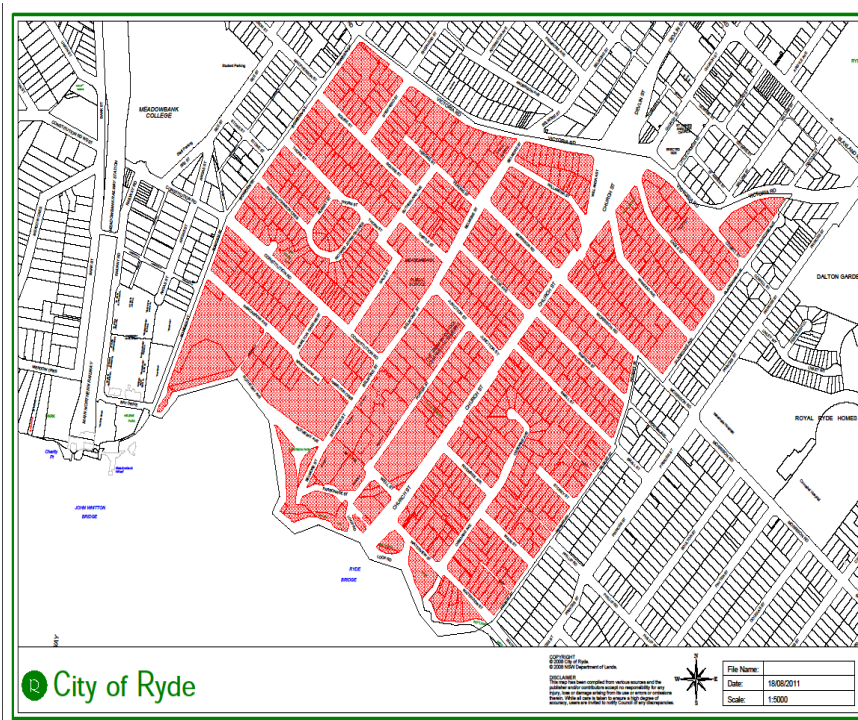
3.5 Community Information Session, 2011

In accordance with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's major project guidelines, Elton Consulting assisted Achieve Australia undertake consultation within the exhibition period of 24 August to 23 September 2011. The principal activity was a Community Information Session hosted at the Meadowbank Public School on 8 September 2011 from 6pm to 8pm. The principal target audience for this consultation program were residents in the area surrounding the proposed development site. In addition, Achieve Australia and members of the development project team presented to a meeting of the Meadowbank West Ryde Progress Association on 14 September 2011.

On Thursday 25 August 2011, around 2,300 flyers advertising the Community Information Session were delivered to residences surrounding Crowle Home. The delivery area mirrored that of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's distribution area for its

leaflet to residents, and is shown in Figure 5. Newspaper advertisements were also placed in the Northern District Times and The Weekly Times.

Figure 5: Area of flyer deliver for Community Information Session



The format for the Community Information Session was a drop-in style community information session. This technique is a standard consultation approach and has been used by Elton Consulting on a number of Part 3a and other development proposals. Achieve Australia assembled a team of project experts for the evening to answer questions from the public about the Concept Plan, covering the topics of architecture, landscaping, planning and traffic. Achieve Australia staff were also available for questions.

The consultation occurred in the meeting hall of the Meadowbank Public School. Signs were placed at the Thistle Street entrance to the school and within the grounds, to direct interested members of the public to the hall. The hall featured 13 large story boards describing the context and detail of the Concept Plan. Copies of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure advertisement describing how members of the public could make a submission were also made available.

A total of 65 people attended the session and a number of issues were raised concerning the Concept Plan, including:

- The history of Crowle Home
- Opportunities for potential business or retail on-site
- Maintenance of trees and heritage
- Planning process – clarification of the respective roles of Ryde Council and State Government and next steps

- Timing of construction and staging
- The appointment of a builder/developer
- Explanation of Council's strategic direction and their new Local Environment Plan.

Particular issues related to the development proposal included:

- Overshadowing to Porter Street houses
- Traffic along Porter Street
- Height and the variations between the proposal and Council's controls
- Dwelling mix – the number of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings
- The number or percentage of dwellings to be retained by Achieve Australia
- Distribution of traffic to the surrounding road network
- Adequacy of parking rates for residents and visitors
- Management of construction impacts
- There were comments received that the proposal seemed reasonably consistent with other new developments within the area and that parking provision struck a balance between not facilitating car ownership and not creating a parking burden on surrounding streets.

In addition to local residents, a number of families of Crowle Home residents, and families of people with disability receiving services through day programs from Achieve Australia, were in attendance. An impromptu meeting was staged half-way through the Community Information Session and family members raised a number of issues relating to operational matters and the general wellbeing of residents at Crowle Home.

Questions were answered by Achieve Australia concerning the merits of the Concept Plan and how that would benefit residents of Crowle Home. There was opposition to the proposal expressed by those families present and alternate development strategies were proposed.

3.6 Consulting with neighbours, 2011

Between 27 October and 1 November 2011 Woolcott Research conducted 300 telephone interviews of a representative sample of people living in the Ryde area (specifically the neighbourhoods of Meadowbank and Putney). We have viewed this research, and summarise key findings below:

- 82% strongly agree with the statement that people with disability have a right to live and be part of the community.

- Only 11% strongly agree and 10% slightly agree that people with disability should be placed in purpose built cluster homes where they live together in groups and are not integrated into the community. 46% strongly disagree with locating people with disability in cluster homes.
- Of people in favour of the redevelopment of the Crowle Home site, the main reason given, by 30% of respondents, was that it was good that people with disability could live in the community.

The Woolcott Research survey therefore supports in general the move of Crowle Home residents to living in the community, though opposes the idea of moving to larger cluster homes. In our view the survey backs the approach taken by the management of Achieve Australia in the de-institutionalisation strategy.

3.7 Consulting with government agencies

Achieve Australia, like their predecessor organisations such as The Crowle Foundation, are closely controlled, funded and regulated by NSW Government. The move from institutionalised to community living is a State Government policy, and Achieve Australia needs to obtain Government approval for re-developing the Crowle Home site.

In 2008 the NSW Government commissioned the Nucleus Consulting Group to clarify the current status of 20 large and small residential services operated by not-for-profit organisations. The report on Crowle Home indicated that re-development of the site was a high priority (Nucleus Group, 2008). As detailed in section 1.3 of this report, the July 2010 Economic Appraisal report, commissioned by ADHC, suggested three options for making better use of the Crowle Home site (Hawkless Consulting, 2010).

In August 2010 a single business case for the redevelopment of large and small residential centres operated by 14 not-for-profit organisations was submitted to NSW Treasury via the Strategic Gateway Review process. The Business Case included individual Economic Appraisals for each project. The following year, in August 2011, ADHC appointed PriceWaterHouseCoopers (PwC) to coordinate the production of Strategic Business Proposal from the 14 not-for-profit organisations. Achieve Australia's submission is currently with Government, having met the criteria set by PwC (Achieve Australia, 2011b).

Elton Consulting has reviewed the above documents, many of which are not in the public domain. In our opinion there is a clear indication there has been lengthy and open consultation between Achieve Australia and various NSW Government Departments over the re-development of Crowle Home.

3.8 Consulting with Achieve Australia members

While the membership structure of Achieve Australia is less open than for The Crowle Foundation prior to merger in 2009, we understand there remain independent members. The move to a new type of membership structure for the merged group brought Achieve Australia in line with the governance model typical for the larger not-for-profit social welfare organisations with a significant asset base to protect.

3.9 Consulting with groups

We have been informed by Achieve Australia management that in their opinion the 'Friends of Crowle Home Inc', an organisation registered in August 2011, are not representative of the views of Crowle Home residents. The Friends of Crowle organisation includes a number of people interested in the future of the site, although we are advised that only between 4 and 7 of the current 22 resident families are members. We are not able to verify this information as the Friends do not provide public information, for example through a website.

The leader of the Friends organisation is also the Chair of RASAIID, the 'Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled'. According to their website:

'RASAIID is a group of 19 families from Sydney's Ryde area. We have 20 adult sons and daughters with dependent intellectual disabilities. We are at or approaching retirement age and have cared continuously for them since their births. But we can't do so for much longer. We urgently need to transition our people into near-by suitable supported accommodation. This is our dream and we are fighting to make it a reality' (www.rasaid.org.au)

RASAIID support individual funding for people with disability, and the provision of accommodation in small cluster homes comprising typically five, four-bedroomed houses. It appears that their members are already families supporting people with disability at home, and therefore probably not Achieve Australia clients.

Supporters of both the Friends and RASAIID have attended a number of the public meetings detailed above. Members have been free to express their opinions at these meetings. In March 2012 Achieve Australia management and ADHC's Executive Director, Contemporary Residential Options, met with representatives of the Friends of Crowle. The meeting was facilitated by John Alexander, Federal Member for Bennelong, and many of the issues raised in the planning discussions on the future of Crowle Home were discussed.

3.10 Section conclusions

In our opinion Achieve Australia can demonstrate that they have consulted with key stakeholders since 2009. The format of consultation has mixed both larger and open meetings, and a meeting with the Friends of Crowle, to more direct discussions held with residents and family members. We therefore do not agree with the view that there have been 'serious deficiencies with consultation in general, and in relation to the Relocation Strategy in particular' (Penklis Lawyers, 2011: p.13).

Much of the controversy over Achieve Australia's plans has concerned differences in views about the type and location of community living arrangements following the closure of Crowle Home. The 2010 Economic Appraisal report favoured off-site community living, rather than a cluster home, and this was agreed by Achieve Australia management and ratified by ADHC. From this point onwards, the type of community living to be adopted has not been open to consultation, though there remains considerable flexibility on details that can be negotiated by individual families.

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