Inner Sydney VOICE

AUTUMN 2014

Property Crime Decline
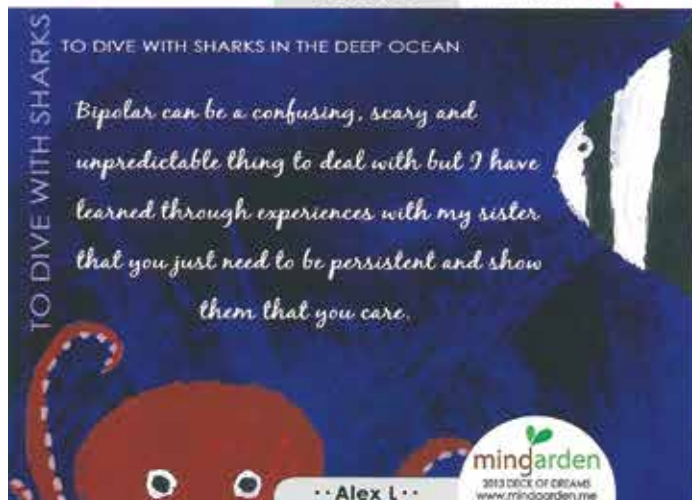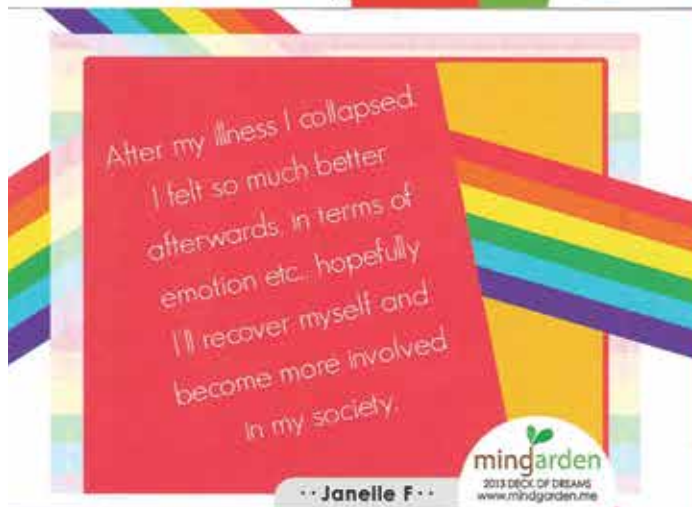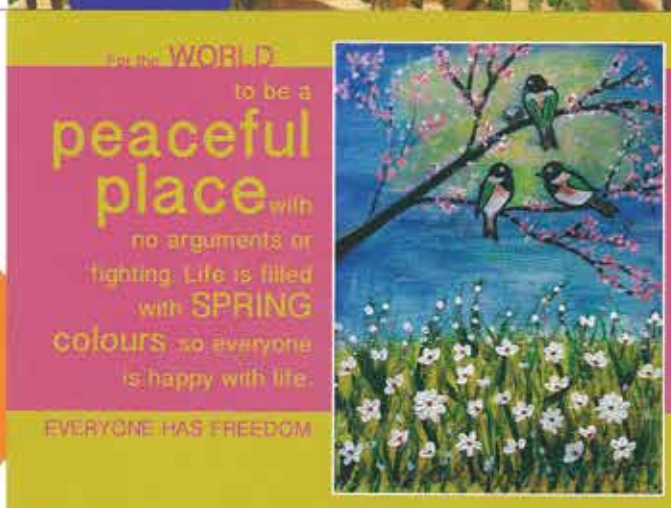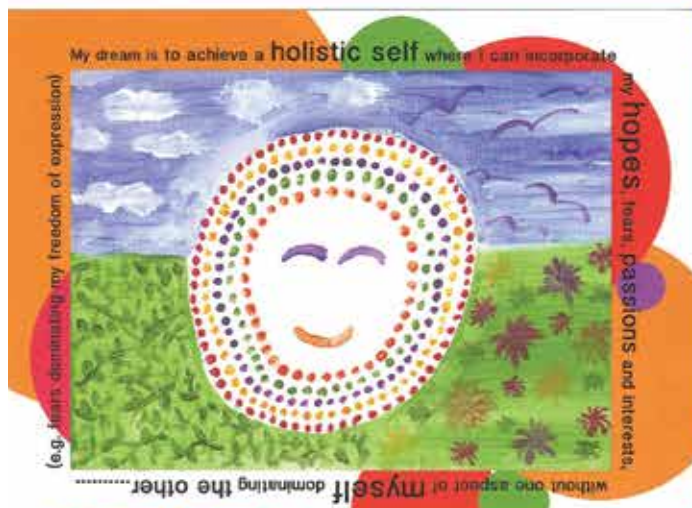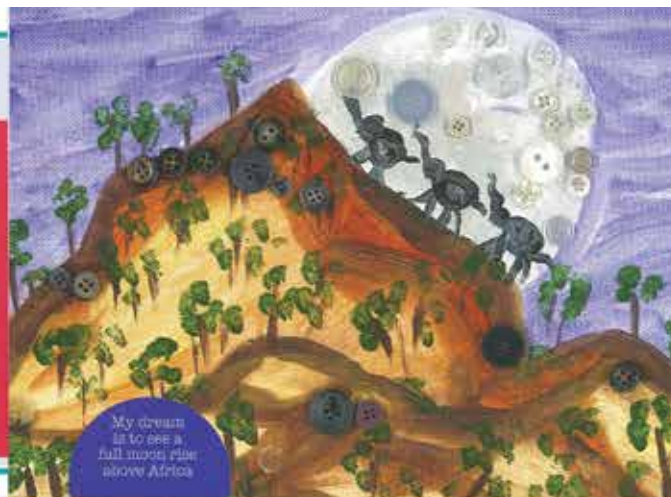
Community Safety and Overcoming Fear

House Prices, Ownership and Affordability

Social, Public and Affordable Housing Inquiry

Ageing and Disability: Block to Unit funding Challenges

A **SMILE** a day to keep the demons and doctors away

My dream is to see a full moon rise above Africa

My dream is to achieve a **holistic self** where I can incorporate my hopes, fears, passions and interests, (e.g. fears dominating my freedom of expression) without one aspect of **myself** dominating the other..........

For the **WORLD** to be a **peaceful place** with no arguments or fighting. Life is filled with **SPRING** colours so everyone is happy with life. EVERYONE HAS FREEDOM

After my illness I collapsed. I felt so much better afterwards, in terms of emotion etc.. hopefully I'll recover myself and become more involved in my society.

·· Janelle F ··

mindarden
2013 DECK OF DREAMS
www.mindgarden.me

My name is Chris Taylor. My wellbeing comes from the freedom of being able to **RUN** on a daily basis. To **RUN** in the fresh air through wonderful bush. This is a great privilege. I love to try new **RUN**s, always changing the route, looking for the perfect **RUN**. Sometimes I like to **RUN** with people and sometimes I like to **RUN** on my own. I like to **RUN** early in the morning. I **RUN** to celebrate being alive. Good and bad days, rain or shine. **RUN, RUN, RUN** !!! It can be lots of fun. **RUN** in the rain, **RUN** in the sun. Start small and go long. Listen to your favourite song. It will make you very strong. **RUN** here and **RUN** there. Feel the wind in your hair.

·· Chris T ··

mindarden
2013 DECK OF DREAMS
www.mindgarden.me

TO DIVE WITH SHARKS IN THE DEEP OCEAN

TO DIVE WITH SHARKS

Bipolar can be a confusing, scary and unpredictable thing to deal with but I have learned through experiences with my sister that you just need to be persistent and show them that you care.

·· Alex L ··

mindarden
2013 DECK OF DREAMS
www.mindgarden.me

I used to volunteer to look after fairy penguins at Manly and my dream is to one day be able to look after them again. As it gave me so much joy and I like all animals so much.

Images from Deck of Dreams (www.mindgarden.me) - one of the components of City of Sydney Narratives Project (http://cosnp.info)

INNER SYDNEY REGIONAL COUNCIL
FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Online community services map is live!

Find community services in the eastern suburbs and inner city.
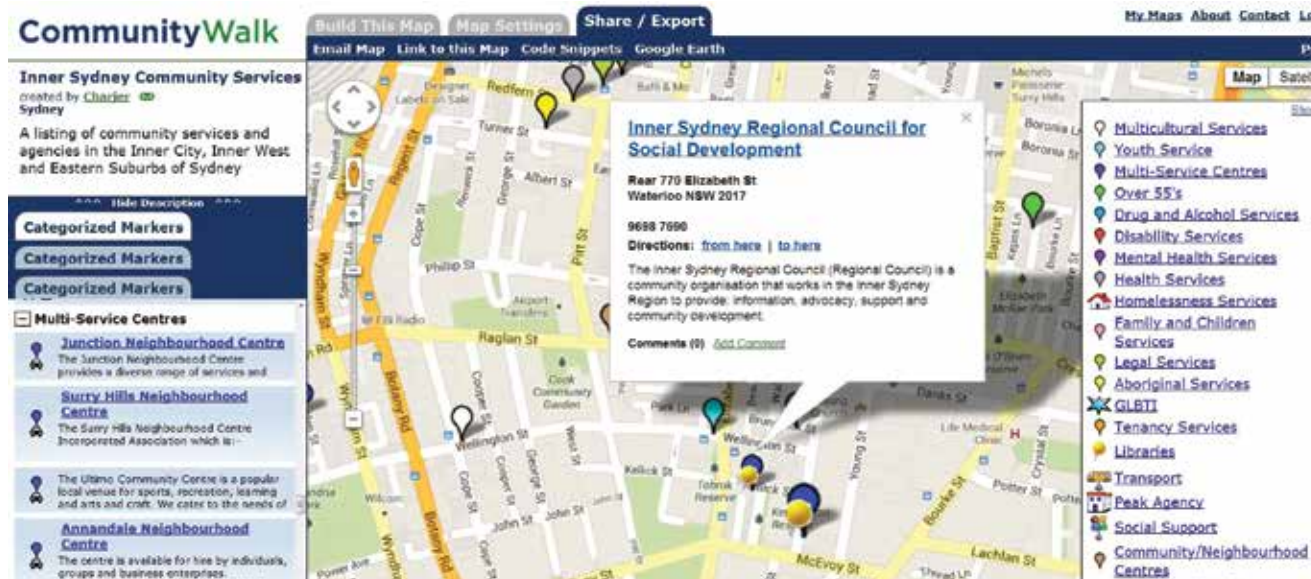
Check out the link on our website www.innersydney.org.au
To add or update service listings please email admin@innersydneyrcsd.org.au

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Looking Forward Looking Back 4

Mental Health Recovery Forum

9am - 5pm
Wednesday, 2nd April
Redfern Town Hall
73 Pitt St Redfern

Looking Forward Looking Back 2014 is a collaborative forum being organised by the Inner City Mental Health Working Group to promote consumer and carer participation across the inner city.

Keynote speakers, panel discussions, workshops and stalls will provide information on how different approaches are being used to improve a person's journey with services across the inner city.

Register Online at http://cosnp.info

For more information contact Douglas Holmes on 0413 464 469 or email djholmes@stvincents.com.au

Australian Government
Department of Health

Mental Health Council of Australia

INNER CITY WORKING GROUP FOR **Mental Health Recovery**

INNER SYDNEY REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Editorial

The media focus on crime stories make us all feel as if we might be the next victim of crime and that we need to take extra care to avoid a growing problem. The crime statistics however tell us that most categories of crime are in fact falling and we are less likely to be a victim of crime.

Listening to the nightly news of sensational crime stories, and the elevated fear of crime which results, can stop some people getting out into their communities and getting the exercise and social nourishment we all need. We thought it would be useful to unpack community safety a bit in this issue of ISV to try and balance the "if it bleeds it leads" news stories.

Garner Clancy and Dr Rohan Lulham take us inside the statistics and show us the dramatic inner city *Property crime decline* (page 6). Michael Shreenan looks at his experience of the cost of fear of crime and what can be done about it in *Confronting fear of crime* (page 9) and in a companion piece Colleen a worker on the Beyond Walls Project looks at her experience of working with street drinkers and users (page 11).

In *Preventing crime through better design* (page 12) Olga Camacho Duarte explains its origins and how we can make spaces safer, while Charmaine Jones in *Open spaces make happy faces* (page 14) looks at the importance of parks and what happens when they are not available. Finally in this community safety section *A helping hand for mental health* (page 16) looks at some initiatives of a community group in Surry Hills to help both those experiencing mental health issues and the communities in which they live.

The Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing provides an opportunity for housing issues to be aired and investigated this year. The opportunity is there to make a submission and to read those that will be publically available. Witnesses will be called before the Inquiry and issues debated and reported in the media.

We thought it important to provide a context for this discussion and have provided an overview of the housing market from a Parliamentary Research Service paper on *House prices, ownership and affordability: Trends in NSW* (page 18). One response to the housing affordability problem has been the creation of an "affordable housing" category and Craig Johnson explores *Affordable housing and the planning law debate* (page 24) while Chris Martin looks at *Social housing and heritage* (page 21).

David White reminds us that the *Audit report is key for the housing inquiry* (page 22) and Ross Smith (page 23) outlines the Inquiry terms of reference and how to make a submission. *One from the vaults* takes us back 30 years to the days when the Housing Commission made a surplus and there were government trading bodies like GIO to provide it with low interest loans.

On human service delivery Enis Jusufspahic follows on from his article on the NDIS changes in the last edition of the Inner Sydney Voice by exploring the coming *Challenges in moving from Block funding to Unit funding* (page 27).

Charmaine Jones & Geoff Turnbull, Co-editors
Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

Summer on the Green in Waterloo helps bring the community together

Property crime decline

Beneath the headlines, NSW has experienced a significant decline in property crime since 2000 with large reductions in burglary, motor vehicle theft, steal from motor vehicle, robberies and other property offences. Some of the greatest reductions are in the inner city.

BY GARNER CLANCEY AND DR ROHAN LULHAM

Inner Sydney (and most of New South Wales) is in the grip of a property crime decline - not that many people would know it. It is, in fact, a very substantial decline. The headlines and news reports might lead you to think that we were witnessing rising crime, rather than a significant decline. Sadly, the old adage, 'if it bleeds it leads' still holds true. Commentary about crime tends to be dominated by the gruesome or the spectacular. There is little room for positive or mundane stories.

Acknowledging these falling rates will hopefully help to reduce the fear people have of being a victim of crime and ideally will help there to be a more considered debate about criminal justice policies. Understanding the causes of these falls will help to bring about further declines, as well as consider if and how violent offences can also be reduced.

Crime Categories and Statistics

Crime data is generally presented in NSW for 17 major offence categories. These offence categories include; murder, assaults (domestic violence and non-domestic violence related), robberies (without a weapon, with a weapon but not a firearm, and with a firearm), sexual and indecent assault, malicious damage to property (which includes graffiti and vandalism), fraud and a range of theft offences (including burglary, motor vehicle theft, theft from motor vehicle, and steal from retail store). Drug and other offences, while important, often do not get included in the list of 17 major offences because of the influence of policing practices on the number of recorded offences for these categories.

Published NSW crime statistics are based on incidents of crime reported to the NSW Police Force. This data is then analysed by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and made publicly available (crime data can be accessed from http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/bocsar/bocsar_index.html).

It is well known that different offences have different reporting rates. Property offences such as burglary or motor vehicle theft have very high reporting rates because victims of these crimes often have insurance premiums that require a report to be made to the police. Offences like assault and sexual assault have low reporting rates, because the victim might know the offender and fear further attacks or violence.

Crime Statistics for Inner Sydney

Of these 17 major crime categories, the Inner Sydney Statistical Division (covering four local government areas – Sydney, Botany Bay, Marrickville and Leichhardt) has experienced declines in ten crime categories between 2000 and 2012. Four crime categories have gone up, one has been stable and trends could not be recorded for two other offence categories (i.e. murder and steal from person) due to the low numbers of murders and changes to the definition of steal from person. It is these declines that are of greatest interest here.

The Inner Sydney Statistical Division has witnessed the following percentage decline for the rate of key property offences between 2000 and 2012:

- 81.6% reduction in motor vehicle theft
- 82.2% reduction in steal from motor vehicle
- 77.6% reduction in break, enter and steal (i.e. burglary)
- 39.4% reduction in steal from dwelling (Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research)

These Inner Sydney falls are substantial and are greater than the NSW average for each offence, as shown by figures 1, 2 and 3.

As noted, while there are various problems with the accuracy of reported crime statistics, they generally do not apply to these offences. These types of property offence have very high reporting rates. This means that these substantial falls cannot be explained by changing reporting practices.

We also know that there have been significant falls in robbery offences (greater than 70% reductions across Sydney between 2000 and 2012).

Across Australia, NSW has led the way in the property decline. The falls in different property offences have tended to be greatest in NSW when compared to other States and

Figure 1: Percentage change in the motor vehicle theft rate by Metropolitan SSD (2012 vs 2000)

Region	Percentage change
Newcastle	-55.7
Central Coast	-57.0
Canterbury-Bankstown	-68.2
NSW	-69.2
Outer Western Sydney	-70.9
Blacktown	-73.2
Eastern Suburbs	-73.6
Outer South Western Sydney	-75.1
Inner Western Sydney	-75.9
St George-Sutherland	-76.6
Central Western Sydney	-76.8
Fairfield-Liverpool	-77.8
Northern Beaches	-78.0
Central Northern Sydney	-79.1
Wollongong	-81.1
Inner Sydney	-81.6
Lower Northern Sydney	-84.0

Percentage change

Metropolitan Statistical Sub-Division

Territories. Within NSW, the Sydney area has tended to have the greatest falls for many of these offences. This different picture across geographical areas means that there is still work to be done to ensure that all residents of NSW get to enjoy the same reductions in property crime.

Impact and Cause of the Decline

Substantially fewer people are now victims of these crimes in NSW than in the preceding decades. This has very real, positive human consequences. The trauma from having your home broken into, your car stolen, or having a gun or knife waved in your face during a robbery are reduced through there being far fewer victims. There are also numerous economic benefits, with less money needing to be spent on replacing stolen items, time lost through reporting crimes and dealing with insurance companies, and the inconvenience of not having a vehicle for an extended period. This should be a cause for some celebration.

So, if these falls are not due to changes in reporting of crime, then what has caused them? Is it a case that the money invested in rehabilitation and prevention across government and non-government agencies is finally paying off?

There has been limited research or analysis to shed light on what has caused these falls. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has examined different social trends and suggested that a reduction in heroin use and an improvement in employment and income levels might have contributed. Other factors might include focused policing practices, increased security and changes in the market for stolen goods. The falls in motor vehicle theft appear to be heavily influenced by the improvements in motor vehicle security. Improvements in home security have made it harder to commit burglary and the falling costs of many household items make them less attractive targets.

Further research in this area might help us to better understand the reasons for this remarkable decline in property crime.

Understanding the causes of these falls in property crime might help us to further prevent or reduce these crimes.

International Crime Decline

To complicate efforts to explain the crime decline, there is evidence that other Western democratic nations have also experienced significant crime declines. In fact, the declines in countries like the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) started before our crime decline.

Frank Zimring, in his book, *The Great American Crime Decline*, revealed significant falls in major crime types in the United States. Using Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) uniform crime reports for seven 'index offences' in the USA between 1990 and 2000, Zimring revealed the following falls: 39% reduction in homicide; 41% reduction in rape; 44% reduction in robbery; 24% reduction in aggravated assault; 41% reduction in burglary; 37% reduction in auto theft; and 23% reduction in larceny. Starting in 1991, these substantial falls amounted to 'the longest decline ever recorded' in crime in the USA. While the magnitude of the decline has not continued into this century, FBI crime statistical reports show that crime rates in the USA have generally continued to fall or remain stable in recent years.

Graham Farrell and his colleagues have reviewed similar trends in the UK producing numerous publications looking at the different dimensions of the crime decline in England and Wales. Many of the trends in the USA have been replicated in the UK. Farrell and his colleagues demonstrated that violent crime fell by 49%, burglary 59%, and vehicle theft 65% between 1995 and 2007. Interestingly, it appeared that this decline in the UK started a few years after that of the USA, but a good five to six years prior to the decline in NSW.

Figure 2: Percentage change in the steal from motor vehicle rate by Metropolitan SSD (2012 vs 2000)
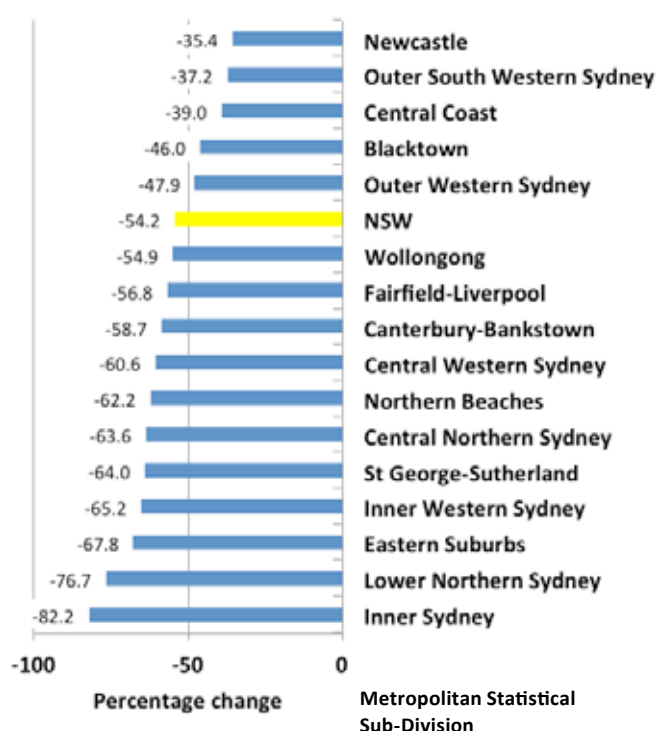
Figure 3: Percentage change in the break and enter rate by Metropolitan SSD (2012 vs 2000)
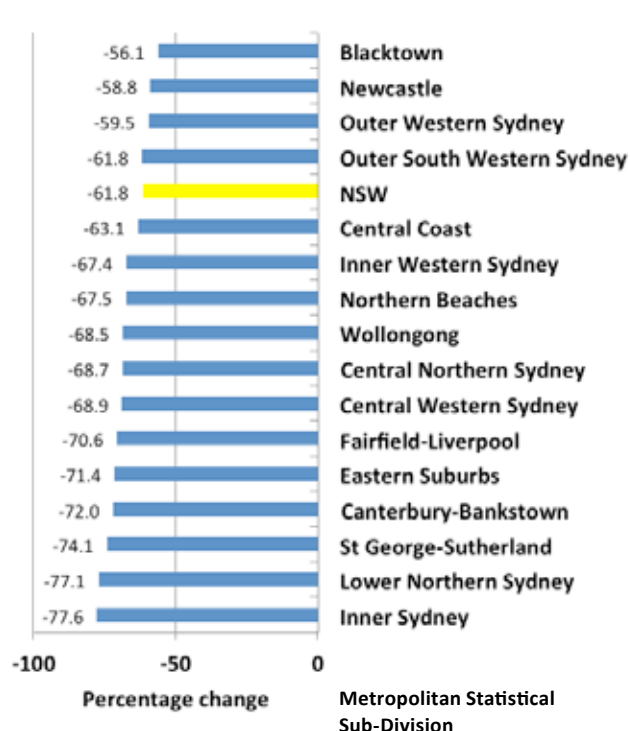
Importance of the Property Crime Decline

The magnitude of the property crime decline should be of interest to everyone. This decline should (we suggest optimistically) impact on car and home insurance premiums, result in savings to the government through reduced criminal justice costs, and mean a little less political rhetoric is invested in bidding to be the toughest on crime. We should also seek to better understand the reasons for these falls, so that we can do more of what is working. We should also apply any relevant lessons to those crime types (where possible) that have not witnessed the same downward trends. Some violence offences and fraud, in particular, continue to increase or remain stable.

Bucking the trend

While we have focused on the declines of ten offence categories in Inner Sydney between 2000 and 2012, four offences have gone up during this period: domestic violence-related assault, indecent assault, steal from retail store and fraud. The greatest increase has been in fraud offences, which have almost doubled during this period.

Many of these offences are likely to relate to credit card fraud and people driving off from petrol stations without paying. More prevention effort will need to be focused on this offence in particular over coming years, especially as new mechanisms make it easier to make (limited) use of stolen credit cards. The greater availability of push bikes also makes bikes vulnerable to increasing incidents of theft in years to come. ∎

Garner Clancey is a Lecturer in Criminology at Sydney Law School, Sydney University and Dr Rohan Lulham is a Research Fellow at the Designing Out Crime Research Centre, University of Technology Sydney.

The source for all graphs is the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Dr Don Weatherburn kindly provided copies of these graphs. Links and references to material cited in this article can be found on the web version at www.innersydneyvoice.org.au

## ALCOHOL-RELATED ASSAULTS IN INNER SYDNEY

Despite the good news reported here regarding property crime, there has been sustained attention given to alcohol-related assaults in Inner Sydney.

Despite the good news reported here regarding property crime, there has been sustained attention given to alcohol-related assaults in Sydney in recent months. Saturation news coverage has followed incidents of what is fast becoming known as the 'coward's punch'. Tragic stories of unprovoked attacks have dominated news stories. Headlines like the following have commonly accompanied newspaper reports and television stories: 'Alcohol-related violence crackdown', 'Sydney CBD's angry mile of mindless violence continues to claim victims' and 'Nights of storms on street'. These headlines and the sustained concern regarding alcohol-related assaults in Inner Sydney have resulted in a raft of recent policy responses, including restrictions on trading hours, a freeze on new licenses and increased penalties for alcohol-related coward's punch related deaths.

Getting accurate crime data on alcohol-related assaults is difficult. What level of consumption of alcohol is considered to be relevant to an act of assault is obviously open to debate. Similarly, it is well known that fewer assaults are reported to police than property offences. For these reasons it is very difficult to accurately estimate the level of alcohol-related assaults.

What we do know, despite the generally low reporting rates for assault is that non-domestic assaults (alcohol-related) rose significantly between 2000 and 2007 and have been falling in the Inner Sydney Statistical Division since 2008 (see graph). This decline is promising, but needs to continue to return to earlier levels.

While the headlines continue to draw our attention to non-domestic violence alcohol-related assaults, there is still much to be done to prevent domestic violence. Domestic violence-related assaults have increased in Inner Sydney between 2000 and 2012 – it is one of only four offences (in the list of 17 major offence categories) that have gone up in Inner Sydney in this period. Given that these offences frequently happen behind closed doors, they rarely attract headlines. Imagine how often we would be reading about these offences if they attracted the same headlines or media attention as the assaults that have occurred in public places or licensed venues.

Our attention and resources should not just be invested in seeking ways to prevent non-domestic violence alcohol-related assaults. Many victims of domestic violence suffer repeated coward's punches over extended periods. ∎

Non-domestic assault (alcohol related) in Inner Sydney SSD
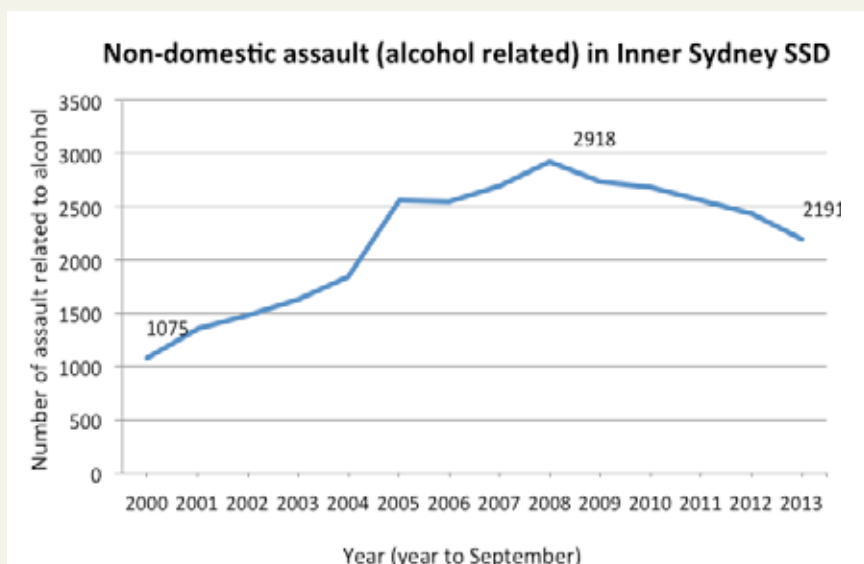
Confronting fear of crime

Fear can have a big impact on how we see and interact with those around us. Here we explore some of the human cost of our fear of crime and what can be done about it.

BY MICHAEL SHREENAN

In community work we are encouraged to take an evidenced based approach to our work and evidence the outcomes. Statistical evidence tells us crime is down. However attend a public meeting in areas of high 'disadvantage', pick up a newspaper, or have conversation with someone in the neighbourhood about what changes are needed in the area and crime tends to dominate the conversation.

Collectively, fear of crime has a greater impact on the quality of community life than the impact of actual crime. This is because the likelihood of our experiencing a crime is much lower than we expect from the actual prevalence of crime and because there are many more people whose life is influenced by fear of crime than will be a victim of crime. Some crime prevention cynics might even suggest that the fear of crime is a good thing because, by making people less likely to go out or making them more careful when they do, it helps to reduce actual levels of crime as there is a group of people who become victims of crime because of their over-confidence. But there is another side.

Fear of crime leads families and individuals to live in their own safe little private bubble but often at high cost. A frail person might be afraid to venture out alone for a walk or exercise for fear of being attacked and so remain safely inside without the exercise and social interaction that are likely to prolong and improve their quality of life.

Fear reduces trust between neighbours especially if they are new to the area. Rather than get to know our neighbours as people we often judge them on appearance, ethnicity, age, if they have children or parties or by how they dress.

Fear can make us become overly anxious, depressed, stressed, isolated and frightened to participate. In extreme cases it can cause ongoing mental ill health. This fear has high social and economic cost and in certain communities these irrational and disabling fears can spread like cancer.

Why is this fear so tangible despite the lack of a clear basis for it? Why do the responding strategies such as high visibility policing, safety audits, working committees, leaflets and poster campaigns etc. always appear to fail in delivering the desired results?

Media have always known that sensational stories attract their subscribers and because good news doesn't sell like fear and hysteria we hear little about the good news stories. NGOs have little incentive to focus on good news and community building because their limited and short term funding is based on addressing disadvantage rather than building on

Waterloo Mosaic Project Before & After – Community arts projects can help address graffiti. Projects that involve the community in designing and building artwork are much less likely to be vandalised because the community own, protect and respect them.

"

As Yoda said in Star Wars "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering". Dealing with fear of crime is an important part of having safe healthy communities."

strengths. Politicians have few votes to gain by challenging misperceptions and gain a lot of political capital out of such fear – just look at how being tough on crime comes up every election from both major parties.

Police enforcement tends to be responsive to crime which is often the symptom of broader social issues and not enough investment goes into addressing causes through prevention. Officers rightly focus on the major incident based crime rather than petty crime. However in my experience most complaints that breed fear and community frustration stem from issues which, in the police scale of comparative priorities, are often seen as minor nuisances.

Disorder incidents are a case in point, often there is no crime involved. Incidents like street fights, arguments, loud parties, people loitering, young people congregating and 'out of control' dogs are among the activities that make people feel unsafe.

Vandalism and graffiti also adds to the sense of fear but it often has more to do with the design of the environment or building, poor lighting, inactive space and badly maintained public spaces and buildings than a crime wave. Most petty crime is low on police priorities and can be challenging in terms of time, detection and prosecution. Addressing petty crime can be seen by enforcement agencies as a mundane, thankless task.

So what can be done to reduce this fear? Having worked in a number of communities that have high levels of fear of crime, the strategies which made significant difference were ones that encouraged strong community bonds.

Psychology tells us fear is a perception issue, based on our experience, social conditioning and our beliefs - both true and false. Positive experiences and challenging our beliefs about crime are some of the positive ways of countering our perceptions about crime and how likely we are to be impacted by it.

Sound place management where buildings and common areas are kept clean and well maintained, with visible and responsive security will enhance people's sense of safety. This is primarily the responsibility of the landlord, and if carried out correctly makes a big difference both socially and economically. In addition when tenants take responsibility for their building and are allowed to be involved in the maintenance and upkeep of their common areas, they are more likely to take pride in their building and in their community. Great examples of projects like this can be found in Waterloo's Odd Jobbers or Scotland's Lend a Hand Project and in community gardens.

Place making, well-resourced community development that focuses on relationship building through social and formal activities that provide people with the opportunity to make friends, creates a sense of pride and common ownership. The re-activation of dead community spaces through pop up events, community art, gardening and sports not only can bring people together socially but will often lead to trouble makers fleeing hot spots or trouble makers being engaging in positive ways.

Community involvement in local decision making is also important as they are best placed to know what's needed and what will or won't work. Decision makers need to be non-defensive, transparent and have an honest dialogue with the community. They need to work with them in identifying issues and designing and implementing responses instead of creating "solutions" to what they think are the problems without reference to the community.

Mural and arts projects like the Waterloo Mosaic Project (see photos previous page) that involved community people in designing and building the artwork are much less likely to be vandalised than projects without such involvement because the community own, protect and respect them.

Police enforcement on minor and serious crime has to be balanced with prevention, sound rehabilitation and support services if the cycle is ever to be broken. In reducing fear let's not just focus on the potential victims. A more holistic approach to human services support service which is non prescriptive, accessible to all, and responsive to need. The Single Shared assessment model of the UK is great example of shared cased management. This has been one of the reasons behind the community push for greater co-ordination between Redfern and Waterloo human service agencies. Improvements in mental health support should lead to less calls to police to deal with out of control situations and also result in the community not feeling unsafe from as many mental health incidents.

Police, Council and other community services participating in Community Safety BBQs and community events can also help concerned residents develop a better understanding of the risks of crime and what they can do about minimising their risk of experiencing crime in their home and on the street. Activities which help isolated people get to know people in their building, block or area also help people feel safer in the areas they most frequent.

We also need to remember those who commit crime. Criminals often do so from place of pain, anger and frustration. All of which stems from their own irrational fear, entrenched poverty, the need to survive, learned behaviour and the inherent need to have sense of belonging. Therefore capacity building projects should focus on helping people change their life and help them make the right decisions. Courses on basic life skills such as managing relationships, coping with anger, conflict management, budgeting, promotion of health living and wellbeing. Activities which encourage people to understand their rights and responsibilities, and help people create a sense of place, pride and belonging go long way in reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour rather than the demonising that often goes on which does nothing to reduce crime.

A local example is the work done jointly by Redfern police and Tribal Warrior's *Clean Slate Without Prejudice* program. The program reduces the 'them and us' attitude between young people and the police, and provides young people with

mentoring support along with the opportunity to socially participate in their community.

Another example is the Beyond Walls Outreach Program that specifically targeted "street drinkers" and those participating in risky behaviour. The steering group for the project was the Waterloo Safety Action Group, a body set up by the public housing tenants' Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board. Tenant representatives were continually dealing with concerns from other tenants about street drinkers and users in the area.

The worker was able to form bonds with people who were rarely engaged with services in any other way and supported them into services which provided intensive community support that they otherwise wouldn't have accessed. Attempts to secure ongoing funding to roll out the program has proven challenging in the current fiscal climate even though the pilot was successful. See *Beyond Walls: My Mondays* (below) in Waterloo for more on this project.

Our strategies should involve a mixture of divisionary activities that prevent and divert as well as direct activities which address underlying causes. We should dismiss media which exaggerates crime and instead celebrate our community's strength and progress. We should rebuild our sense of community pride and belonging rather than pander to the negative manipulation of our mass media and the rumour and fear mongers.

As Yoda said in Star Wars "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering". Dealing with fear of crime is an important part of having safe healthy communities.∎

Michael Shreenan is Chair of the ISRCSD Board, Executive Officer of The Factory Community Centre and also has community development experience in Scotland where he was also a Special Constable for 5 years.

BEYOND WALLS: MY MONDAYS IN WATERLOO

For more than a year I've been sitting behind a desk in a glass and concrete high-rise in North Sydney, and it's had me reminiscing about Mondays gone by in Waterloo, where I used to have the opportunity to work with staff from The Factory Community Centre on some of their Beyond Walls events.

Beyond Walls was an 18 month outreach pilot project funded from Federal Attorney General's Proceeds of Crime Funding and ended in January 2013.

I was originally approached as a community health worker at the Sydney Local Health District to see if I could source a speaker for one of the Beyond Walls sessions. Beyond Walls aimed in part to engage people who may have had issues with alcohol and other drugs, so a speaker with lived experience of hepatitis C and time in prison was arranged to talk about his journey through hepatitis C treatment to health. It generated lots of interest, questions and referrals.

It was easy to see that the investment The Factory had made in the area, and the trust and relationships they had developed with local residents was one avenue through which the health service could begin to build its own relationship with the community. A partnership quickly grew.

Over time we provided more information on health, ran healthy cooking sessions and even set up outreach liver screening (using a 'Fibroscan' machine that tests liver stiffness) – and over a quarter of the Beyond Walls participants needed to be referred specialist follow up.

Through the Beyond Walls project, The Factory was able to leverage relationships not only with NSW Health, but with the Housing Department, South Sydney Business Chamber, City of Sydney and other agencies and individuals to provide a program of positive activities that build social capital (and health seeking behaviours) for Waterloo residents. Dedicated Factory project workers provided individual case management and follow up for those in need of extra support.

I often marveled at the mix of people who would gather at events - all ages, races and genders talking over a cook top or canvass, each person with something to offer the others. The project was testament to how a safe space, trust and opportunities to engage in learning or simple fun can foster social cohesion. The outcomes were definitely bigger than the sum of the parts and I congratulate The Factory on their commitment to the neighborhood and the community for making it happen. I really miss those Mondays in Waterloo and I know the community also misses the project. ∎

Colleen, former Sydney Local Health District employee.

Preventing crime through better design

Careful design of public spaces and buildings can help prevent crime and make us feel safer. Olga Camacho Duarte looks at the origins of crime prevention, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and more recent approaches.

BY OLGA CAMACHO DUARTE

Inner Sydney will experience significant changes in the next couple of decades. We have new completed developments such as Central Park in Chippendale; Barangaroo continues to be developed despite controversy and the plans for Green Square are well underway. These current and future changes create possibilities for Sydney to be more liveable, vibrant, inclusive and safe.

A short history of crime prevention & CPTED

Crime prevention is a relatively new concept; however the idea of prevention has existed since early cities were formed. In ancient cities, protection from crime was exercised at the individual or family level with 'self-help' methods. As cities grew and risks increased these methods became more formalised, for example the Norman conquest of England in 1066 gave rise to a form of vocational citizen policing. Male citizens were required to form groups for the purpose of policing each other. Such groups gave rise to other forms of cooperative associations with the intention of protecting the community and one another. This, often voluntary, responsibility for crime prevention persisted in England until the 1800's and was the seedling for the police force as we know it today.

Urban design for the purposes of protection was at first exercised intuitively (location and then walls, moats, drawbridges were built to protect communities from external invasion). Planned urban design emerged during the re-development of Paris in the 1700s commissioned by Napoleon and led by Baron Haussmann. Parisians addressed crime prevention through preventive patrol, increased lighting and street cleaning. The transformation of Paris from its medieval form into a modern, open and hygienic city became the reference for cities of the time.

In the early 1900's Chicago was at the vanguard of crime prevention, using urban sociology to study urban dynamics of the time. Scholars from the Chicago School of Sociology investigated crime and delinquency in central areas. They identified transience and lack of social ties as factors limiting the exercise of informal social control in urban areas and leading to some degree of impunity. The Chicago Area Project (1931) sought to work with residents to build a sense of pride and community.

Below – Two examples of designs using CPTED proposed for Hamilton South NSW by Jessica Wong and Rohan Lulham. Designing Out Crime Research Centre 2011

BEFORE

AFTER

Contemporary definitions of crime prevention vary across disciplines; however they agree that crime prevention refers to actions that impact on the reduction of actual levels of crime and the perceived fear of crime. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been one of the most widely discussed and practiced crime prevention approaches of the past 30 years.

The main focus of CPTED is to make crime harder to commit by altering the physical environment. CPTED also focuses on creating conditions to make residents feel safe in their surroundings. This can be achieved by appropriate architectural designs e.g. increasing lighting, designing appropriate locks, doors and fences. These designs aim to encourage the creation of welcoming spaces that attract positive uses. CPTED has as its premise that through appropriate urban design, social cohesion and citizens' attention and involvement, crime prevention can be achieved.

The CPTED approach grew out of Oscar Newman's (1972) concept of defensible space. Newman's idea was "to propose a model which inhibits crime by creating a physical expression of a social fabric which defends itself". The idea behind this concept is that the physical urban environment can influence behaviour among residents and potential offenders. Residents can develop more caring attitudes so potential offenders will observe that the place is taken care of; hence they may be discouraged from committing a crime. Newman's work is based on his studies on public housing estates in America but the lessons from CPTED have transcended. CPTED is an approach now used in all types of residential and non-residential urban areas as well as for the design of products and other public spaces e.g. retail spaces, bus interiors and others.

CPTED principles

The CPTED approach is based on the principles of: territoriality, surveillance, access control, activity support, image/management and target hardening.

- **Territoriality:** is when local residents exercise a sense of ownership over particular spaces. It can be applied either in an indirect way, for example through signage and pavement treatments or in an explicit way by using fences to differentiate particular areas. Territoriality is difficult to define as it varies across cultures. Research has demonstrated that some burglars assess risks based on territoriality measures, so that clearly defined spaces can discourage crime.

- **Surveillance:** involves any actions to increase the chance that offenders will be observed. Physical design has the capacity to promote informal and natural surveillance opportunities for residents to observe and exercise guardianship. An example of this is when a resident can observe what is happening in their surroundings from their windows. Street activity also facilitates great opportunities for surveillance (more 'eyes on the street'). Designs with poor visibility that allow concealment such as shrubs, dark spots and blind corners tend to be attractive to burglars. This is perhaps the most relevant principle of CPTED. Other formalised types of surveillance include police patrols and mechanical surveillance such as CCTV. Research has shown that mechanical surveillance measures can become quite expensive, intrusive and logistically more complicated, hence, not as efficient as natural surveillance measures.

- **Access Control:** aims to reduce potential crime by limiting the access of people to certain spaces only allowing persons who have legitimate reasons to access an area. It can be applied in an informal way by using design that strengthens space definition; and in formal ways by having security personnel at entry points. Access control can be a controversial principle as it can generate negative social impacts such as privatisation of public space, social segregation, and displacement.

- **Activity Support:** uses design elements to guide people through spaces. For example design of signage encourages intended patterns of use and influences behaviour in public spaces. Encouraging positive activities and helping users of space navigate through it can deter crime by creating various conditions for safety. An example of this principle is the signage in the design of parks. Mixed-use residential areas are also seen as areas that apply the principle of activity support, encourage diverse uses and discouraging crime as a result of 'more eyes on the street'.

- **Image/Management:** Taking continuous care of spaces and putting emphasis in management can lead to actively used spaces that remain in good condition. On the contrary, a space, or infrastructure that is not taken care off and looks abandoned or in decay can function as a 'magnet' of crime. An example of this was the deterioration of the metro system in New York in the 1980's; once the trains and stations were cleaned from graffiti and management was enforced crime rates reduced significantly.

- **Target Hardening:** This principle is similar to access control as it encourages the design of barriers of many types to deter criminals from accessing a space. The problem with this principle is that it can lead to a 'fortress mentality' which does not contribute to reducing fear of crime. Too many countermeasures such as alarms, security cameras, etc. may also discourage legitimate users of spaces.

New creative approaches

It is important to note that CPTED is an approach that can have multiple interpretations. Taking CPTED literally does not tend to create welcoming and safe urban environments. In contrast, high quality architectural and urban design that takes CPTED principles only as guidelines and transcends CPTED with creative and innovative designs is the avenue to achieve a balance between great places and safe designs.

For example the Designing Out Crime Research Centre develops projects that are mindful of CPTED but address innovation in public space, moving away from counter measures (such as CCTV). We use human-centred design methods to capture essential human values and make them explicit in our designs.

In a nutshell, we all want to feel safe, and to have a sense of control and ownership over the spaces we use. Through design innovation those values can be achieved and a reduction of crime often comes as added value.

Olga Camacho Duarte is a Research Fellow at the Designing Out Crime Centre, University Technology Sydney.

References for further reading can be found in the online version of this article.

Open spaces make happy faces

Access to open space is crucial in high density neighbourhoods so understandably residents using Ward Park are concerned about what happens when their open space it is not available.

BY CHARMAINE JONES

There is much research that shows the positive link between green space and health and wellbeing. This is most apparent among the elderly, people who spend most of their time at home, and those from lower socioeconomic groups. Scott Weich and others have shown a prevalence of depression associated with features of the built environment, especially for those living high-rise dwellings.

One place full of elderly and those not so well off is the John Northcott public housing estate in Surry Hills. The majority, 93% in fact, of the tenants are on either an Aged Pension or a Disability Support Pension. Those residing at Northcott live in densely populated high-rise buildings, the estate consisting of over 600 small one or two bedroom units. Essential to the health and well-being of the whole local community, but especially for the more vulnerable, frail and aged or disabled is what the tenants refer to as their backyard, Eddie Ward Park or as it is commonly called Ward Park.

Currently, Ward Park has a range of outdoor equipment including two playgrounds, a flying fox, skate bowl, ping-pong table and two free BBQs. It is also the only 24 hour off-leash dog park within easy reach for those with companion animals. A wide and varied bunch of people utilise the space including dog walkers, parents and children, sun-bakers, book readers, skateboarders, kite-flyers, exercisers who run the gamut from gentle movement like Tai Chi to those doing more rigorous boot camp style activities. It is a place of refuge and respite.

The park plays host to the annual Northcott Pet Day which attracts hundreds of people and their pets to the park. In October, it is also the venue for a Mental Health Month event and throughout the year the City of Sydney holds Good Neighbour BBQs. These activities all encourage social interaction and community engagement.

Ward Park has always had the ability to bring the community together. In one instance, tenants at Northcott campaigned for over ten years for the installation of a public toilet, after tiring of people using the park as a urinal. The tenants were so grateful for the installation of the toilet in 2008 that there was a formal opening with the Lord Mayor Clover Moore in attendance to cut the ribbon. It is now the most heavily patronised pay toilet in the City of Sydney Local Government Area.

Social inclusion is one of the greater benefits of the open space provided by Ward Park. Tenants are able to socialise with neighbours and build a stronger connection with the wider community. There is much stigma attached to public housing and many a time a Surry Hills resident will be heard to pass comment on 'them at Northcott' as though the tenants there were a different breed of animal or had some kind of virulent disease. The interaction that happens between the tenants and other users of the park breaks down much of the preconceptions and prejudice toward public housing tenants held by the wider community.

In early December 2013, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development ran a series of consultations with the residents at the Northcott Public Housing estate, looking for input in to our submission on the South East Light Rail Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The rail will run down Devonshire St, alongside a large part of the Northcott Estate, with a station planned for Ward Park. Depending on the position of their homes and way of thinking, tenants' concerns were varied, from the loss of the tree canopy to the noise and dust a major development is likely to create. Yet there was one particular issue that united all the tenants we spoke to.

The EIS outlines a proposal to use Ward Park as a compound to 'accommodate a number of construction related activities.' An area approximately 3200m² of the park would be fenced off, for up to four to six years, to house an office, first aid room and sundry equipment. This compound would also require a number of trees to be removed, on top of trees already identified for removal to accommodate the station when built. The prospective loss of this open space has left the Northcott tenants and park users very unhappy.

Ward Park is 9,500m² with the two enclosed children's playgrounds occupying approximately 2,000m² . After doing some simple arithmetic, it appears almost a half of Ward Park will be consumed. In fact, due to the particular lay out of the open spaces in the park and the planned location of the compound, a better guess-timate is that only a quarter of the open space will be left available for public use.

The EIS states that the compound would mean "users of the park would be displaced, the types of activities suitable for the park altered and the general amenity of the park diminished." In the best of locations the loss of such an open space amenity would be an unpleasant outcome, but at Northcott, where years of community development work has taken place to build a healthy sense of place, the loss of open space and social events is detrimental in the extreme.

As the name of the suburb suggests, Surry Hills is hilly, with Northcott situated on the highest point. Topographically, this means for the aged and disabled tenants to visit local open green spaces, it requires a trek up and down hills and, for many, this is unmanageable. In fact, the closest open space, after Ward Park, is Prince Alfred Park, a 470 metre walk down (up on the return journey) a very steep Belvoir Street.

While there is the abundance of research into the connection between our environments and mental health and wellbeing, the tenants at Northcott do not need academics to predict the effects caused by the loss of the open space provided by Ward Park. They've been through it before. The tenants recalled a time a couple of years back

when the City of Sydney upgraded Ward Park. The process saw the major section of the park surrounded in cyclone fencing for over nine months while new turf was laid. The project had been delayed due to poor weather and other 'unforeseen circumstances' and as each week passed and the time that tenants had nowhere to walk their dogs, to exercise or to socialise with their neighbours lengthened, people spoke of a growing feeling of tension in the air.

The tenants reckon it will go something like this. Some dogs will become more aggressive as their exercise regime reduces and are required to share small spaces with other dogs. The local street drinkers will gravitate to the spaces within the estate to drink, and whether it is a perception or a reality, people feel menaced by these groups, who as the day wears on and the flagons run dry, become louder and more likely to vocalise their sense of disenfranchisement with words that could turn a sailor's ear red. The local kids, unable to tear around the grass and burn off youthful energy find less respectable ways to spend their time. The elderly return to the isolation of their units, bunkering down against the assault of noise creating by the dogs barking, people shouting and kids yahooing.

Above: Lord Mayor Clover Moore with Tenant Representative Rick O'Meara at the opening of the new Ward Park Public Toilet

Colleen Hepburn, Chairperson of the Surry Hills Public Tenants Association (SHPTA) says 'it is critical the community has access to the park. Most of the tenants live alone in small quarters – the loss of the open space makes the tenants on the estate feel claustrophobic and forgotten. Do they really need to take our backyard?"

Transport for NSW has claimed they will mitigate the impacts of the light rail installation as much as possible. A good start would be to use another, less vitally important, piece of land for a construction compound.

With the open spaces within our cities ever diminishing, and/or demand ever-increasing as we build denser housing, it is imperative we protect the parks and recreational spaces available to us now. ∎

Charmaine Jones is the Executive Officer at Inner Sydney Regional Council and a tenant at Northcott. Research references can be found in the one line version of this article.

A helping hand for mental health

Stories from a new resource kit highlight what a small group of people can achieve in supporting people with mental health issues in the inner city.

EDITED BY CHARMAINE JONES

In the early 2000s the Northcott Public Housing Estate in Surry Hills had a reputation as a dumping ground for people with mental health and drug and alcohol issues. The community saw a need for cross-collaboration between agencies and themselves. A collective group of like minded organisations and individuals created a forum which not only viewed best practice around mental health recovery, but provided a voice, not only to mental health consumers, but to their neighbours, friends, families and carers.

In 2006 Douglas Holmes, Consumer Participation Officer for the Inner City Health Program lead the ground work for St Vincent's Hospital becoming a signatory to the Northcott World Health Organisation accreditation as a Safe Community and the same year Douglas chaired the inaugural Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group.

The group developed ways of raising awareness and reducing stigma in relation to mental health. This approach is directed at promoting good mental health, preventing mental ill health and ensuring early intervention when mental health problems occur. It involved looking beyond prevention or management of illness, to the relationship between mental wellbeing and physical health, and people's connections with the community.

The group still meets monthly and consists of tenants, mental health consumers, and representatives from different service and government agencies, representatives from Housing NSW, St Vincent's Mental Health team, St Vincents Community Health team, City of Sydney, Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS), Neami, Mercy Arms, The Factory Community Centre, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, the Alex Greenwich's electoral office, Surry Hills Public Tenant Association and South Sydney Community Aid.

Each year, the group has developed events and projects to improve the lives of mental health consumers and the community as a whole. Activities have included Mental Health First Aid courses, the Looking Forward Looking Back Mental Health forums, Yo-Yo au Go-Go (Recovery is full of ups and downs, a yo-yo-ing day which saw 300 people turn-out in support of mental health recovery) and 'Keep Your Marbles' day as a Mental Health month promotional event.

Whilst the group itself is completely un-funded and none of the participants come to the table with specific funds, having such a diverse group of people around the table results in a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and resources that would be otherwise impossible to find.

In 2012, The Inner City Mental Health Working Group received a NSW Mental Health Matters award. The awards are designed to recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health of our community, over the past 12 months. The group has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ICMHRWG

The Cadre Project

In 2011 St Vincent's Hospital Inner City Health Program was successful in applying for funding from the Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP Salary Trust to develop the Inner City Cadre Project on behalf of the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group. The Inner City Health Program partnered with Mind Australia, a Federal Government funded not for profit organisation with the aim of supporting people's mental health recovery in a community context to train and roll the Cadre project out in Sydney.

The Cadre Project had its origins in Indonesia following an invitation in 2007 by Dr Yessi, Director of Provincial Health for the province of Aceh, to Anthony Stratford, Senior Training & Development Officer, Mind Australia, to conduct training in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Banda Aceh is the only providence in Indonesia with a community mental health program. Stratford's role was to train villagers or mental health cadres that are attached to each of the providences' 382 primary health care centres or puskesmas.

The cadre's role, in some ways is similar to Neighbourhood Watch, was to support and watch out for people who have returned home from hospital or who are becoming unwell and need to see a professional in the primary health care centre.

The project consists of a mental health support program that trains and supports communities (including individuals with mental health problems and disorders and their carers) to help care for each other. To date Public Housing community in Surry Hills, Woolloomooloo, Glebe, Ultimo, Waterloo, Potts Point and Redfern have participated in the program. (for details on the program see box).

The City of Sydney Narrative Resource

The aim of the City of Sydney Narratives Project was to encourage people affected by mental health issues, alcohol or drug dependency, people with social disadvantage, young people at risk and homeless people across the Inner City to gain the skills to tell their stories. As well as contributing to the Deck of Dreams, people who accessed the Inner City Health Program were also able to learn digital media, video making and web publishing skills.

This project was also funded by the Clover Moore Trust Fund with the support of St Vincent's Hospital and the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group.

The City of Sydney Narratives Box and online resource at cosnp.info presents this material to tell the story of the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group, the Cadre Project and the project participants. The resource contains stories and films, images from the Deck of Dreams, quotes and information about how people have collaborated across the City. It reflects over seven years of successful partnering and creative excellence.

UNDERSTANDING THE CADRE PROJECT

A cadre can be understood as a small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose. The most enduring feature of a cadre is that they either live in or have a special relationship within the community that they operate.

The aims of the *Inner City Cadre Project* include:

- To establish an inner city cadre network
- Educate and support cadres as community members to reduce stigma linked with mental health issues
- Assist people with mental health problems and disorders
- Benefit Housing NSW communities that include consumers, carers, neighbours and service providers
- Develop coping and support strategies for mental health consumers and their supporters, carers and neighbours
- Contribute to positive change in the community

The Role of a Cadre

The role of a cadre can be best summed up as operating to effect positive mental health and community outcomes. A cadre member can best be understood as someone who:

- Looks out for people in distress to get them help
- Sorts out problems and helps neighbours
- Cares for someone who has a mental illness
- Understands and can communicate how to maintain good mental health
- Is a community leader or spokesperson
- Provides support for people with a mental health issues
- Understands and helps to facilitate the concept of recovery to their neighbour

It is important to distinguish what is not part of the scope of cadre's activities as well as to be clear about what constitutes a cadre's area of responsibility.

The challenge for the cadre is to be aware of community issues or problems, to act as a resource and a reference point for individuals with mental health problems and have an understanding of the agencies or services that might be able to address them. Facilitating solutions or linking supports best sums up a cadre's role. At the same time cadres are not responsible for anyone's problems or for resolving them.

While the consumer movement and the recovery framework has informed the philosophy of the Cadre Project since its inception it is important to stress that cadre members do not need to have had a "lived experience" of mental health issues or function as a support worker. Some things that would lie outside cadre's boundary lines might include the following:

- Paid work
- De facto mental health work
- Offers medication counselling or treatment
- Provides a crisis intervention service or support

The Deck of Dreams

Jen Lee from the Day to Day Living Program at the Wayside Chapel had a dream. "Imagine a world where the focus is not a person's illness or history, but a person's dreams and purpose".

The Deck of Dreams has now become a wonderful reality, with the artworks beautifully produced into a deck of cards (see image above) to be kept or passed on, spreading positivity and lightness around a subject that is too often treated as deeply sombre and depressing.

Of the Deck, Jen says "You will share in 52 people's dreams and learn about their experiences. The more people that share their mental health experiences, the more lives could be saved". And with one in five Australians experiencing mental health issues in their lifetime and suicide being one of the leading causes of premature death amongst this group (SANE 2008), Jen's vision is to connect people to the part of them that wants to live.

If the Deck of Dreams' purpose was to inspire dream creation, there is no doubt it has been successful. It has become so successful; Jen is already being approached to implement the project interstate. ∎

The article has been edited from stories in the City of Sydney Narratives Project by Charmaine Jones, Executive Officer ISRC.

The materials in the box can be viewed online at http://cosnp. info. You can see some examples from the Deck of Dreams on the inside cover of this ISV; printed cards can be purchased from Jen at www.mindgarden.me.

House prices, ownership and affordability: Trends in NSW

The NSW Parliamentary Research Service has produced a paper exploring housing trends in NSW. The findings are relevant to the current affordable housing and planning debates. Below we have reproduced the executive summary. The report concludes that "Households who have not been able to gain access to home ownership have relatively little wealth of any sort".

BY ANDREW HAYLEN

Capital city house prices

Between 1995 and 2005, real house prices in Australia increased by more than 6 per cent annually. This was well above the average annual increase in the 20 years to 1995 of just 1.1 per cent.

When compared with some other capital Australian cities, established house prices in Sydney grew at a considerably slower pace through much of the 2000s; and most capital cities experienced flat or negative growth toward the end of the 2000s. Since the end of 2012, capital city established house prices have generally increased. The median established house price in Sydney has increased by 15 per cent since December 2011. Perth (up by 9 per cent) also experienced relatively strong median house price growth over this period. As of March 2013, Sydney had the highest median established house price at $605,000, followed by Perth ($528,000) and Melbourne ($480,000).

NSW house prices

Between June 1990 and June 2013, the median NSW dwelling price (for all dwellings) increased by $339,000 (262 per cent). Price growth has been most pronounced in the Greater Sydney region where the median dwelling price in the Inner Ring of Sydney increased by $555,000; prices in the Middle and Outer Rings of Greater Sydney grew by $455,000 and $332,000 respectively.

The recent upturn in the Sydney market is being led by inner Sydney which has outperformed Sydney's overall median growth. Since the end of 2012, the median Inner Sydney Ring dwelling price grew by $70,000. The median dwelling price in
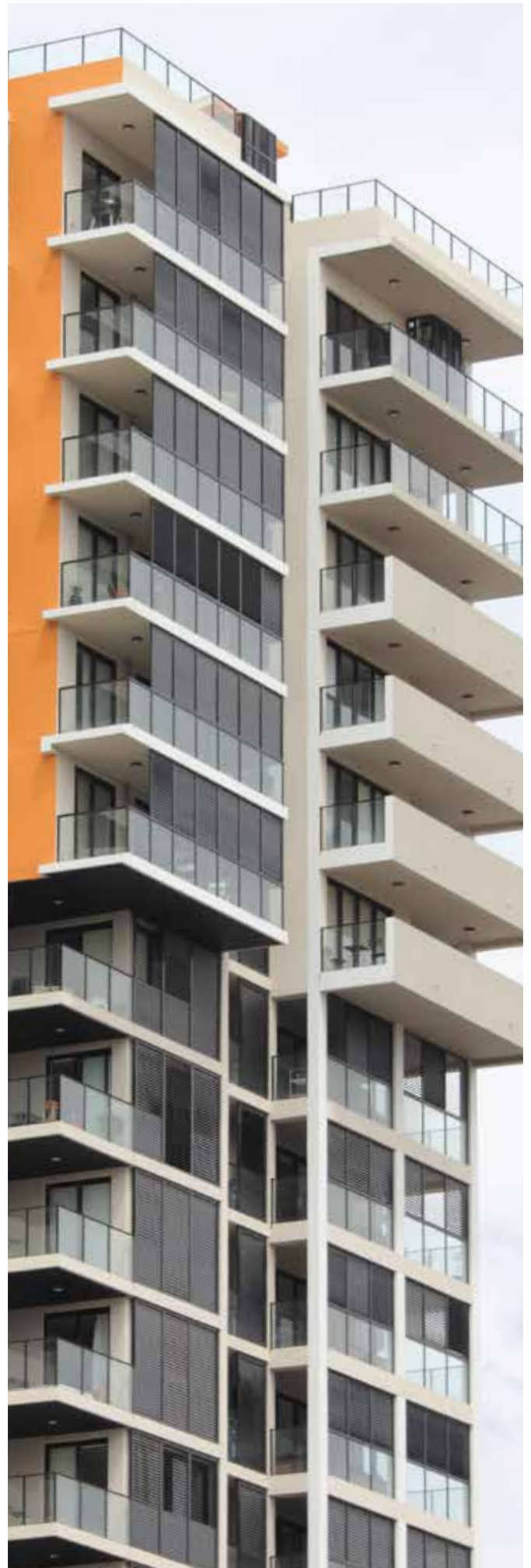
Right: New high rise unit housing in Redfern

the middle and outer Sydney rings also grew by $56,000 and $38,000 respectively.

According to BIS Shrapnel, growth in Sydney's median house price is forecast to continue rising by 6.5 per cent in 2013-14, 6.1 per cent in 2014-15, and 5.1 per cent in 2015-16. This growth is expected to be driven by improved State economic conditions and also by the deficiency of dwelling stock into the middle and outer suburbs.

General demand drivers

On the demand side, a number of factors have contributed to the strong growth in house prices over the last two decades: high population growth (primarily as a result of high migration); real household income growth; nominal interest rates have fallen; and financial deregulation has meant that housing finance is more readily available.

Between 1991 and 2011, NSW's population increased by 1.3 million people, with Sydney accounting for 71 per cent of this increase. New South Wales' population increased by 92,827 persons through the year to March 2013 which represents an increase of 1.8 per cent which was the highest level of growth since the 12 months to March 2008.

Between 1993 and 2000, Gross State Product (GSP) grew in NSW at an average annual rate of 4 per cent. This strong period of economic growth also corresponded with the rapid increase in real estate prices which grew at an average rate of 7.5 per cent over the same period.

The move to a low-inflation environment saw interest rates fall over much of the 1990s and remain at these relatively low levels throughout the 2000s. The Productivity Commission (2004) and the Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability in Australia (2008) both concluded that cheaper and more accessible housing finance underpinned demand and house price growth. The current monetary easing cycle has seen the cash rate fall by 225 basis points to 2.5 per cent (its lowest level in more than 50 years), which has triggered strong demand growth in the last 12 months.

Composition of housing demand

Prior to the late 1980s, housing demand was largely accounted for by owner occupiers. However, the rapid escalation of prices in the early 1990s, combined with structural tax changes and improved access to credit, saw residential real estate become a highly desirable form of investment. First home buyers and owner-occupiers are now not only competing with domestic investors, but also foreign investors.

Upgraders and downsizers represent the largest component of residential real estate demand in NSW. In November 2013, there were 16,140 non-first home buyer (NFHB) owner occupier dwellings financed in NSW. This is above the previous 6-year monthly high of 15,264 reached in October 2013. There have been 156,751 NFHB owner occupier dwelling finance commitments over the 12 months to November 2013. This is well above the calendar average of 125,759 since 2007. NFHB demand as a proportion of owner occupier demand reached a high of 93 per cent in NSW, around 6 per cent above the Australian average.

First home buyer (FHB) demand in NSW has varied over the last two decades, with the two notable periods of

Value of residential purchases by buyer type, Australia

- First Home Buyer (FHB)
- Non-FHB
- Investor
- Foreign Investor
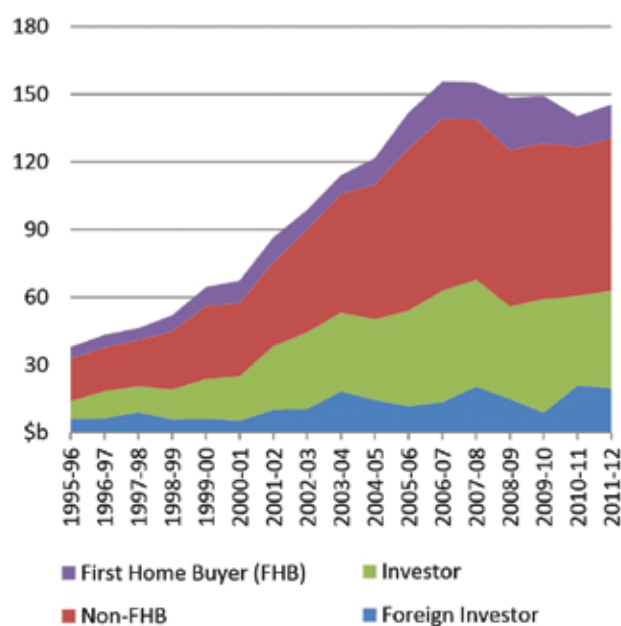
fluctuation corresponding directly with changes to first home owner incentive schemes in 2001 and 2009. FHB demand reached 34 per cent of all owner-occupier sales by mid-2009 (well above longer term trends and also well above the previous peak reached in 2001).

With the exception of the brief upturns in 2011 and 2012, FHB demand has been in decline in NSW since peaking in 2009. In November 2013, there were 1,286 housing finance commitments to first home buyers in NSW. Over the past 12 months, there were 12,682 commitments by first home buyers, 51 per cent lower than over the same 12 month period in 2012 (25,627 commitments). First home buyer finance commitments have accounted for 7 per cent of all owner occupier finance commitments in NSW over the last 12 months.

Investor activity has been trending up since the late 1980s. In 1985, investors accounted for only 13 per cent of total housing finance in Australia; as at November 2013, investors accounted for 38.5 per cent of total housing finance.

This increase in investor activity has contributed to the growth in housing prices over the last 12 months. At a national level, there was $10.2 billion worth of finance commitments for investment purposes in November 2013, which was 39 per cent higher than in November 2012. Investment finance commitments were 24 per cent higher over the year over the 12 months to November 2013.

Between 1995-96 and 2011-12, the value of foreign investment approvals in Australian real estate increased from $12.4 billion to $59.1 billion. In 2011-12, residential approvals accounted for $19.7 billion, with the remaining $39.4 billion tied to commercial approvals. Since 1995-96, the number of foreign residential investment approvals in Australia has increased from 3,181 to 9,768.

Foreign investment growth in NSW residential real estate remained relatively subdued prior to 2008-09, varying

between $2 and $4 billion. Foreign investment in NSW has more than tripled between 2009-10 and 2011-12 from $1.9 billion to $6.9 billion.

Since 2007-08, real estate investment in Australia from China has increased by more than $2.7 billion. Real estate investment from Singapore has also increased significantly from $1.8 billion in 2007-08 to $5.7 billion in 2011-12. The US was the largest foreign investor in Australian real estate in 2011-12 at $8.1 billion.

Housing supply

Over the longer term, dwelling commencements have generally failed to keep pace with increases in underlying demand despite rising house prices. Annual dwelling approvals (all property types) in Australia have declined by 15 per cent since 2002, and in 2012, were at their lowest level (90,438) since 1996.

Nationally, dwelling approvals have been trending up in recent months; with monthly housing approvals for October 2013 up 9 per cent since January and other dwelling approvals are up by 30 per cent. This increase in approvals is most likely a response to the rapid price rises seen across the major capital cities, including Sydney, at the end of 2012 and throughout 2013.

In NSW, between 1995 and 2012, the annual number of dwelling approvals (all property types) decreased by 22 per cent from 57,528 to 36,394. This decrease was largely accounted for by the 40 per cent decline in housing approvals over this period. The number of 'other' dwelling approvals has fluctuated over this period, but recent downward growth has meant they remain around the 20-year historical average.

Home ownership affordability

Rental prices, which form a large component of a prospective home buyers housing costs, have risen consistently in NSW over the last two decades, with the growth most pronounced in the inner urban areas of Sydney. Between March 1993 and March 2013, the median rent (for all properties) in the inner ring of Sydney more than doubled from $195 to $560; while the median rent in the middle ring of Sydney increased by $300.

The ratio of dwelling prices to income in Australia was relatively stable over the early to mid-1980s, but rose considerably during the late 1980s, the 1990s and the early 2000s, driven by rising dwelling prices. Between 2003 and 2012, the ratios flattened and then trended lower. Sydney's house price to income ratio has tended to be above those of the other State capitals.

Housing interest repayments in Australia have increased over the last decade as a proportion of disposable income. Throughout the 1990s, this figure fluctuated between 4 and 6 per cent. Between December 2001 and June 2008, this ratio increased from 5.1 to 10.9 per cent. This period reflected rising interest rates and declining affordability for households. While this ratio has declined following its peak in 2008, it still remains above the 20 year historical average of 6.7 per cent.

Gearing (the ratio of the value of housing debt to housing assets) has nearly tripled since the late 1980s, increasing from 10.6 per cent in September 1985 to 28.4 per cent in June 2010. This can expose borrowers and owner-occupiers to financial risk and variation in interest rates which may undermine the long-term affordability of home-ownership.

The most widely reported measures of home loan affordability in Australia are the Real Estate Institute of Australia Home Loan Affordability Indicator, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia–Housing Industry Association Housing Affordability Index, and the BIS Shrapnel Home Loan Affordability Index. All three indexes show that home loan affordability has fluctuated considerably in the last two decades; and while affordability improved between 2010 and 2012 following a decline in interest rates, affordability remains relatively weak on a longer term historical basis. However, the methodological and data limitations associated with these indexes prevent a complete and localised assessment of affordability. Also, these indexes are not entirely up to date.

With interest rates at the bottom of the easing cycle and price growth expected to continue, the affordability problem is unlikely to improve significantly in the next few years. Sydney and Melbourne, which are the least affordable capital cities in Australia, are also ranked 3rd and 6th globally in terms of unaffordability by the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey.

Outcomes of reduced affordability

Home ownership rates for young households have declined steadily since the mid-1980s and represent a negative outcome of the affordability problem in Australia. According to Battellino (2012), it may be that this is driven by demographic factors; but it is largely financially driven by unaffordability.

There are wealth implications from not having affordable access to home ownership. Owner-occupiers not only own all of the owner-occupied housing wealth, they also own most of the wealth in investment housing and most non-housing wealth. Baby boomer households (born from 1945 to 1960 and in middle age in 2005-06) who were able to become home owners (most likely in the 1970s or 1980s and no later than the 1990s) have the greatest holdings of all forms of wealth. Households who have not been able to gain access to home ownership have relatively little wealth of any sort. ∎

Andrew Haylen is a Research Officer in Public Policy / Statistical Indicators at the NSW Parliamentary Research Service.

The above article taken from the Executive Summary of the Briefing Paper No 01/2014 on Housing prices, ownership and affordability: Trends in New South Wales which can be found on the NSW Parliament website.

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Social housing and heritage

Social housing is not just a roof over tenants' heads; it is an important part of our heritage but what are the interactions between social housing and heritage?

BY CHRIS MARTIN

The heritage register of the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, which owns most social housing in this State, comprises more than 3,300 social housing properties that have some degree of heritage significance. The large majority of these properties are in inner Sydney, including, for example:

- Properties on the Daceyville estate (a heritage conservation area on the City of Botany Bay's Local Environmental Plan);
- Flats in the Strickland Building in Chippendale (a heritage item on the City of Sydney's Local Environmental Plan); and
- Properties in and around Millers Point (heritage items on the State Heritage Register).

Issues relating to social housing and heritage have been the subject of recent work by both Shelter NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW.

The Shelter Brief *Heritage and social housing* examines how heritage is protected, as a matter of law and practice, in New South Wales, and considers the implication of heritage protection for social housing asset management: that is, repairs and maintenance, modifications, redevelopment and disposal of properties.

Social housing heritage protection: law and practice

In terms of the law, there are two legal regimes that are most relevant to heritage significant social housing. The first is for locally significant heritage, as identified by the local council, and it operates through the planning system. In particular, it regulates development that affects heritage items and properties in heritage conservation areas, by requiring the documentation of heritage impacts and the consent of the local council before development is carried out. On the other hand, this regime does not impose any positive obligations on owners of heritage properties to maintain or restore properties and certain types of development can be carried out without formal development consent.

The second regime is for State significant heritage, as identified by the Minister for Heritage on advice from the Heritage Council. This regime also operates through the planning system, with some additional requirements imposed by the Heritage Act. These include a positive obligation to maintain the property to certain minimum standards and a process for seeking the approval of the Heritage Council for developments.

However, for social housing asset management purposes, the legal implications of these regimes is limited, particularly the local level regime. This is because of the way they operate through the planning system, which makes numerous special provisions in relation to development by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, such as granting it the ability to carry out repairs and maintenance, non-structural alterations, and landscaping without development consent, including in relation to heritage items.

Also, because disposing of a property is not 'development', sales of heritage significant social housing are not restricted by either of these regimes for heritage protection. This may be particularly important in inner Sydney, where there is interest in selling, rather than redeveloping, heritage significant social housing such as at Millers Point, even though the use of these properties as social housing is part of their heritage significance.

Probably more important than heritage law is heritage practice, as carried out by the increasingly professionalised body of heritage consultants, tradespersons and other experts. The leading statement of the principles and processes of heritage practice is the Burra Charter, which has wide acceptance in the heritage profession and in government agencies. It sets out a deliberate, continuous process of heritage management, emphasising documentation and a cautious approach to change: 'do as much as necessary to care for the place and make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that is cultural significance is retained.' It also observes that 'the best conservation often involves the least work and can be inexpensive.'

The NSW State Government has adopted the Burra Charter in its State Agency Heritage Guide, which directs agencies to 'lead by example' in the management of heritage properties. It also directs agencies to consider the state agency's own history, and that of the community it serves, and to manage and keep heritage assets to reveal and interpret that history.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation's scale, capacity for documentation and employment of expertise, and even its frugality, should make it well placed to be a good heritage practitioner.

Tenancy law and public housing heritage properties

The Tenants' Union's recent heritage work has been focused on a particular problem: the exclusion of public housing tenancies in heritage properties from the Residential Tenancies Act!

The Tenants' Union first noticed the exclusion in early 2013; apparently Housing NSW was not aware of it, nor was Fair Trading NSW, which drafted the relevant provision (clause 16 of the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010). The intention of the provision was to exclude only publicly owned buildings let by heritage aficionados who restore and occasionally exhibit the premises (e.g. Bronte House). The wording of the provision, however, means that public housing properties that are heritage items would also be exempt.

The exemption applies where a public housing property is a heritage item on a local council's heritage register or on the State Heritage Register. It does not apply to properties in a heritage conservation area, or to properties managed by a community housing landlord. Tenants with any queries about the exemption should contact their local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

Housing NSW has agreed with the Tenants' Union to seek an amendment to the provision that will return all public housing tenancies to coverage by the Residential Tenancies Act. ▪

Chris Martin is Senior Policy Officer at Tenants' Union of NSW and was commissioned by Shelter NSW to produce a Shelter Brief on Heritage & Social Housing.

The full study can be found on the Shelter NSW website.

Audit report key for housing inquiry

The Auditor General's report raises key issues to be considered by the NSW Housing Inquiry and those making submissions..

BY DAVID WHITE

The NSW parliament is currently conducting an inquiry into social, public and affordable housing, noting the recommendations of the 2013 report of the Audit Office of New South Wales entitled *Making the best use of Public Housing*.

Some of the conclusions of the Report which underpin the Inquiry stated:

- It is estimated that all social housing only meets 44 per cent of need in New South Wales.

- Housing NSW (HNSW) projected that for social housing to continue to meet the same level of need (i.e. 44 per cent of need) in 2021 it would require an additional 2,500 social housing dwellings per annum and cost more than $9 billion over 10 years.

- Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) has been disposing of more properties than it has added in recent years (except during the National Economic Stimulus Building years 2009 to 2012). LAHC sells public housing properties to meet operating cost shortfalls, disposing of properties each year. LAHC reported that from 2003-04 to 2011-2012 the sale of over 5,500 dwellings has raised $1.2 billion, and projects that it will be disposing of more than double the number of properties it builds over the next four years (see table showing net movement of LAHC owned stock opposite).

- While the housing stock reduces, the number of potential tenants increases. The waiting list is projected to grow by 60 per cent, to more than 86,000 by 2016.

- Public housing is ageing and increasingly not fit for purpose. The total cost of public housing per dwelling is now almost 50 per cent higher than in 2001-02. Although there is an ageing portfolio with its associated increased need for repairs and maintenance, overall the annual maintenance expenditure has dropped over the last decade.

- LAHC's public housing portfolio was worth approximately $32 billion in 2012 and could have notionally generated market rent income of around $1.5 billion. However, nearly $860 million was forgone to fund rental rebates to public housing tenants.

Above – The Strickland Building, Chippendale, Sydney's first public housing built in 1914

- Public housing rents are pegged to between 25 to 30 per cent of the income levels of their tenants, most of whom receive benefit payments through Centrelink. At June 2011, 94 per cent of public housing subsidised tenants received a Centrelink benefit as their main income, with only five per cent receiving wages as their main income source.

- LAHC reports that a continuation of current strategies will see the portfolio decline over time in terms of dwelling numbers and standard. This will have a negative impact it suggests by increasing the level of complaints about the standard of public housing. Without change, it is likely that public housing will either run down or be sold off.

- There are fundamental questions about the future of public housing that need to be resolved so that appropriate, long-term strategic planning can be effective. These include:

  1. With demand outstripping supply to such an extent, what are the priorities for housing people while remaining sustainable both financially and socially?

  2. What is the appropriate model of ownership, LAHC or community housing providers or a mix, and if so, what is the best mix?

  3. With costs growing and revenue declining, can revenue be increased?

These are some of the big issues the Inquiry should address.

See details opposite on how you can make a submission and have your voice heard! ▪

David White is the Tenant Participation Resource Services (TRPS) Worker at ISRC

Ross Smith is a Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board representative

Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing

The NSW Upper House Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing will consider many of the issues in this edition of Inner Sydney Voice. While submissions formally cut off at end of February 2014, ISRC has been told submissions will still be considered after this date.

BY ROSS SMITH

Your submission should address some – or all – of the inquiry's terms of reference. Below we have provided the relevant section of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry setting out what is to be investigated.

The term 1(h) – any other related matter – means that your submission does not have to exactly fit within any of the other terms of reference. Your submission may include facts, opinions, arguments or recommendations for action. The submission, once made public, is protected by parliamentary privilege. You will be able to read most submissions online.

Submissions can be made in writing but video and audio are also acceptable. If you are making a submission on behalf of an organisation, please indicate who has authorised it, for example, the executive committee, president or chairperson. Ensure that your name, address and phone number are included with your submission and keep a copy of your submission.

You can write a brief letter or a substantial research paper. You can also attach appendices and other supporting documents. Submissions can be mailed or lodged online.

Full Terms of Reference and other information about the Inquiry can be found at:

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialhousing

For assistance drafting or lodging a submission, phone (02) 9230 2111 or email socialhousing@parliament.nsw.gov.au

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. That a Select Committee be established to inquire into and report on demand for social, public and affordable housing and in particular:

    a. Projections of future social, public and affordable housing supply and demand to 2020

    b. Data regarding the link between the lack of appropriate social, public and affordable housing in New South Wales

    c. Housing design approaches and social service integration necessary to support tenant livelihoods and   wellbeing,

    d. Maintenance and capital improvement costs and delivery requirements,

    e. Criteria for selecting and prioritising residential areas for affordable and social housing development,

    f. The role of residential parks,

    g. Recommendations on state reform options that may increase social, public and affordable housing supply, improve social service integration and encourage more effective management of existing stock including, but not limited to:

        (ii)   Policy initiatives and legislative change;

        (ii)   Planning law changes and reform;

        (iii) Social benefit bonds;

        (iv) Market mechanism and incentives;

        (v)   Ongoing funding partnerships with the Federal Government such as the National Affordable Housing Agreement;

        (vi) Ageing in place; *and*

    h. Any other related matter.

2. That, in conducting the inquiry, the Committee note the recommendations of the 2013 report of the Audit Office of New South Wales entitled "Making the best use of Public Housing".
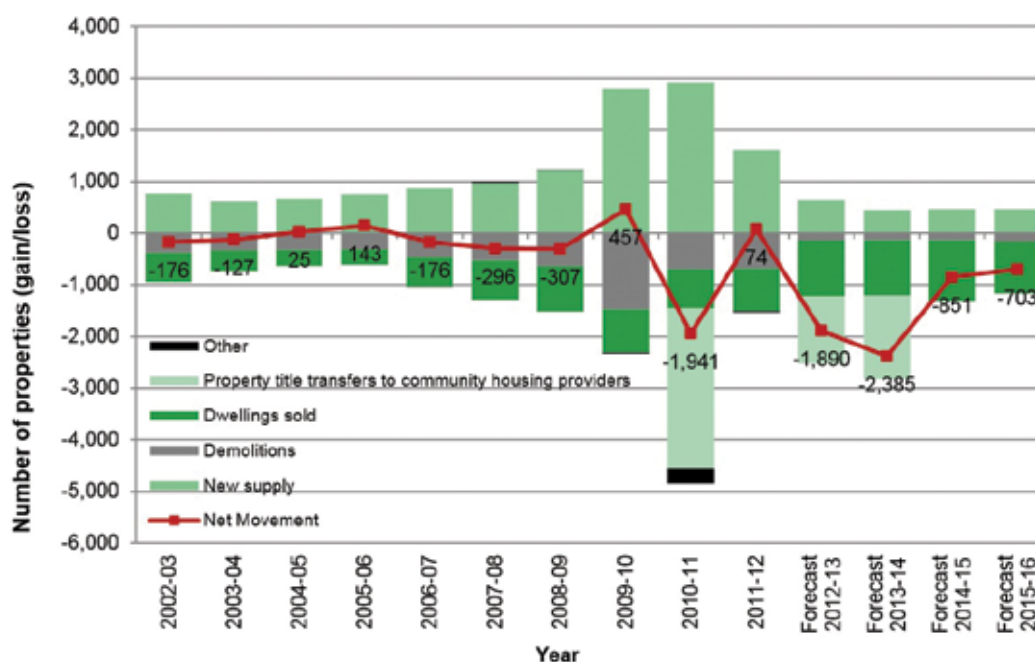
LAHC owned housing stock movement (including properties managed by community housing providers) between 2002-03 and 2015-16

Source:
LAHC March 2013

Note:
Excludes LAHC properties for short-term 'crisis' accommodation.

Making the Best Use of Public Housing (page 12)

Affordable housing and the planning law debate

Affordable housing mechanisms emerged as one of the areas of contention in the NSW Government's 2013 proposal to change the planning laws. What was at stake?

BY CRAIG JOHNSON

The introduction of a new Planning Bill into the NSW Parliament last year has heightened public debate about the planning system in New South Wales. The Bill, which would replace the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, was amended in the Legislative Council in November 2013 and is being reconsidered by the Government.

Most of the debate is about the amendments *other* than those concerning affordable housing. Here I am interested in those that did involve affordable housing, since these reflected submissions put forward by nongovernment organizations like Shelter NSW during the planning review process. What are they?

One, the amended Bill allowed for local plans to include planning controls to 'provide, maintain and retain affordable housing and encourage housing choice'. This is wider than what was proposed by the Government, the original Bill's wording being 'to encourage the provision of affordable housing and housing choice'.

Two, the amended Bill allowed for developers to make voluntary contributions of affordable housing under a planning agreement even though a strategic plan had not

Below – City West affordable housing planned for North Eveleigh

identified the provision of affordable housing. This is wider than what was proposed by the Government, the original Bill allowed those contributions to be offered for affordable housing only where its provision had been identified in a strategic plan.

Three, the amended Bill allowed for the establishment of new local affordable housing schemes that allow for 'mandatory' or blanket application of developer contributions for affordable housing in certain circumstances. It allows a consent authority to require a contribution for affordable housing (as a free dedication of part of the land or payment of money) as a condition on development approval in three scenarios:

- The development will or is likely to reduce the availability of affordable housing,

- The development will or is likely to create a new a need for affordable housing, or

- The development depends on amendments to the local plan.

The last scenario (dependence on amendments to a local plan) covers situations where a developer's proposal requires the local council to amend its local environmental plan to change the zoning (e.g. industrial use to residential use) or planning controls like floor space ratio and building height. Where these changes allow for more valuable or denser redevelopment, the developer gets an advantage called 'planning uplift' or 'planning gain'. Shelter NSW has argued that councils should be able to get a 'share' in this uplift, to which they contributed by amending the local plan, with the share taking the form of a community benefit, for example, a contribution by the developer towards affordable housing.

All these amendments reflect provisions of the current *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, but were not in the original Bill. While the original Bill sought to stop new schemes along those lines being introduced in future, it did quarantine existing schemes that derive their legal authority from all or part of the relevant sections of the current Act. These are the Ultimo–Pyrmont affordable housing program, Green Square affordable housing program, Redfern–Waterloo affordable housing program, Willoughby local housing program, and Part 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy on Affordable Rental Housing (the part that regulates development assessment where there is a loss of existing affordable rental housing).

The key amendment is the third one allowing for new schemes. The Government had indicated it wanted to get rid of developer contributions for affordable housing in its White Paper on the planning system released in April 2013.

Why is it important to keep them? The equivalent provisions in the current Act have *not* ushered in a tsunami of obligations on developers to contribute dwellings, land or money for affordable housing. The number of schemes is small, and they have certain operational constraints. After an initial interest in this mechanism in the late 1990s, public servants and (Labor) politicians went icy cold on them. Nowadays, they are not even being dusted off for the higher density development being proposed around urban activation precincts and the North West Rail Link Corridor.

Where they have been operating they contribute towards redressing (but certainly do not solve) the problem of a lack of affordable rental housing. There are now 445 affordable housing dwellings in Ultimo — Pyrmont, and 102 affordable housing dwellings at Green Square, that would not have existed otherwise. This means there are 547 low to moderate income households living in well serviced and well favoured neighbourhoods who otherwise would have been priced out of Inner Sydney.

Perhaps these numbers do not look that high to some. But let's get pessimistic. We have, in the Commonwealth sphere, no commitment by the current Government (nor from the outgoing Gillard–Rudd government for that matter) to any more incentives for affordable rental housing under the National Rental Affordability Scheme than were promised by then housing minister Tanya Plibersek back in 2008. We have, in the state sphere, a fiscal challenge of anticipated trading deficits for the Land and Housing Corporation, the state's largest and most important provider of social housing — a situation poignantly noted by a report, *Making the best use of public housing*, from the NSW Audit Office last July.

It has been very easy to criticize inclusionary housing mechanisms on the basis that these have aspects of a tax (and therefore, presumably, by definition, 'bad') and/or that they will 'scare the horses' (disincentivise development).

The literature on these schemes in the USA seems to be quite polarised and estimation of the positive or negative impact of them often seems to depend on whether the impact report was commissioned by the property lobby or by advocates of housing wellbeing for disadvantaged people. The arguments in England resonate with those in the USA, despite the English system over the past decade having been based on planning agreements rather than statutory based requirements.

Here in Sydney, there don't appear to be any independent impact studies of the few such schemes we actually have; though, a 2008 assessment of a City of Sydney Council proposal (not proceeded with) for an affordable housing levy across the City area concluded that the impact of this levy would not be very large, 'generally speaking', because the target number of dwellings was small compared to the size of the City's housing market and projected increases in supply of housing in the City (*Affordable housing levy - impact analysis*, PPM Consultants).

Most of the mainstream discussion around housing unaffordability is driven by demands from the development industry. We should expect developer lobby groups to focus on supply of private market housing and impediments to their members supplying housing services: that's what their members want them to do, and to do well. But there's a problem if the debate becomes one-sided and dissenting views are not heard. Fortunately it's possible to come across research findings that qualify the dominant view even in government commissioned reports.

Just over a year ago a report, prepared primarily by treasury officials from around the country, was released by the Council of Australian Governments about problems in the housing market. The context was a generalised anxiety by policymakers about a shortage of supply of dwellings,

and in particular about a decrease in the number of new dwellings being built in Australia since the mid 1990s.

The report, *Housing supply and affordability reform* (COAG Housing Supply and Affordability Reform Working Party, 2012), was primarily interested in construction of dwellings and how any shortage of dwellings could contribute to rising prices, higher costs for a consumer to purchase a dwelling, that would exacerbate housing unaffordability.

Interestingly, for such an impeccably 'orthodox' source, the report did not attribute all the reasons for housing unaffordability to the supply side. It suggested that the unaffordability of home ownership for many Australian households might be largely confined to a lack of means of some segments of the population, rather than a physical lack of supply of dwellings. Also, it suggested that reducing supply side constraints would not necessarily be sufficient to address the housing affordability problems of lower income households.

The second suggestion is intriguing given the focus of policymakers on supply side issues. These issues are very important in debates around reform of the land use planning system in New South Wales.

As part of a case for the changes ('reform') proposed by the White Paper on the planning system in April 2013, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure commissioned an assessment of the proposed changes from consultants, the Centre for International Economics. The CIE report (October 2013) pointed to data that indicated the NSW construction industry was not as healthy as that in other states: completions of new dwellings decreased by 23% from 1985 to 2012 (compared with an increase of 23% in the rest of Australia), and 40% fewer dwellings were completed in the 5 years to 2012 compared with Victoria.

The report looked at a bundle of supply side issues that might be the fly in the ointment. One of these was that of the availability of land for new dwellings. This issue is fundamental for understanding the conventional argument that the key thing that must be done to address shortages and prevent unaffordability is to release more land on the fringe of Sydney (and Wollongong, Newcastle, etc.)

On this issue, the CIE report said that you couldn't mount 'a credible economic argument' that the supply side constraint is a lack of land. They commented that Sydney and other NSW cities and towns do not have a severe problem with access to land for urban development, Sydney has considerable amounts of vacant land on the periphery already, and Sydney is sprawled like few other cities. (A telling comment was that the Sydney basin is bigger than the Netherlands, which accommodates 17 million people and a large agricultural industry.)

So we might ask why new land releases are so often held up as a panacea for housing unaffordability?

And we might cross-reference the CIE comments with the comments of the COAG Housing Supply and Affordability Reform Working Party, and ask whether the approach of the White Paper on the NSW planning system will help deal with the housing challenges of lower income households.

Having provisions in planning law that enable innovative and focused interventions by local councils to provide affordable housing — however undeveloped those programs, unfortunately, are — can only be helpful. Where those interventions are linked to a sharing of windfall gains that developers get from the redevelopment process itself is not unfair to developers.

Inclusionary housing provisions in planning law are not the (sole) solution to housing unaffordability and to the stresses and crises experienced by disadvantaged households and individuals. The way that markets work to reproduce efficiencies and inefficiencies, fortunes and inequities, are more complex than that. We also need to, and do, look for changes to the taxation system and for appropriate levels of government funding of social programs.

At the time of writing the fate of the 2013 Planning Bill and the Affordable Housing amendments is uncertain. ▪

Craig Johnston is the Principal Policy Officer at Shelter NSW.

The views in this article do not necessarily represent those of Shelter NSW.

Below – City West affordable housing on O'Dea Avenue, Zetland

TWO HOUSES COLLIDING

To help understand the Planning Bill amendments and the uncertainty at the time of writing below we have explained how legislation is made in the NSW parliament which is made up of The Legislative Assembly (the lower house) and The Legislative Council (the upper house).

An Act of parliament starts off as a Bill. A Bill may be introduced by a member of parliament in either of the two houses, but a money bill may only be introduced in the lower house. It's normal for a bill to be introduced into the lower house, and most bills are introduced by someone from the governing party. The Bill goes through a number of phases, called readings, and there is often a session to consider amendments. The Bill is then sent to the other house for its consideration, where a similar process happens.

If the governing party (which normally has a majority of MPs in the lower house) does not also have a majority in the upper house, it would need to negotiate with the Opposition party and the minor parties to get that house's support. Currently in NSW the Government needs 3 votes from among the two votes of the Christian Democrats and the two votes of the Shooters and Fishers Party, if the ALP and the Greens oppose a Bill.

The upper house may reject the Bill, pass it in the form they got notice of it from the lower house, or amend it. If the upper house doesn't do what the governing party wants, the government has to decide what to do with the Bill. It could withdraw the Bill, or it could renew negotiations to get majority support from the upper house. With an amended Bill bounced back to the lower house, after a period of 3 months the lower house may reconsider the bill and pass it without any or all of the upper house's amendments and resubmit it to the upper house. The upper house can compromise, back down altogether, or stand its ground.

Normally we would expect a negotiated result. Other procedural scenarios, like a joint sitting of the two houses and sending a Bill to a referendum, are uncommon.

When a Bill is agreed to by both houses it is sent over to the Governor for her approval, and at the time of assent the Bill is now called an Act. The commencement date of the Act is either specified in the Act itself or on a date to be proclaimed.▪

Challenges in moving from block funding to unit funding

Community based aged care and disability services are moving to an individualised funding package model. Enis Jusufspahic explores what this means for service providers who are accustomed to receiving a block funding grants.

BY ENIS JUSUFSPAHIC

The move to individualised funding

Inner Sydney Regional Council is concerned that many quality provider organisations may not survive the transition away from block funding to the new 'system', and that there will be a reduction in choice for people with disabilities and older people.

The current market for community aged care and disability support services is highly regulated. Services are required to meet Common Community Care Standards and/or the Disability Service Standards and implement continuous improvement plans.

The rationale for the move to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was to reform the disability support system in order to give people with disability greater control and flexibility about how they are supported to live the kind of life they wish to live in their local community.

The structure of the current community care system precludes services from tailoring services to clients due to contractual obligations to deliver only specified services, meet stringent risk management requirements and high output targets, the net result of which is structurally limited service. The move to individualised funding is positive for consumers as it allows for flexibility and arguably greater responsiveness to individuals' needs as the clients are able to choose more widely from services offered by the service system, private services and potentially the general community.

This has implications for service providers, but the intention of the Productivity Commission was never to deregulate the market. The Productivity Commission recommended that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) was to determine "efficient prices… on a competitively neutral basis".

Home and Community Care, Aged Care Packages & the NDIS

Aged care packages are allocated through the Aged Care Approvals Round administered by the Department of Social Services. The Department uses an area allocation formula to determine the relative need for aged care packages across different funding regions across NSW. Each year an allocation is made and services are encouraged to apply to provide the packages.

Starting in 2012, all new packages are required to be offered on a consumer directed care basis. This means that the package provider works with the client to understand their abilities, need and goals to devise a plan that best support them. Based on this support plan the service provides the client with a choice of services at different price ranges which the client then approves.

Under the NDIS, the system functions quite differently, as the assessment and planning are done by one agency – the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). If there is a change in the person's life and they require different support, they need to go back to the NDIA for an amendment of their plan. Under the NDIS, the service provider is strictly a provider, as opposed to the current model where there is an element of coordination and case management.

The current Home and Community Care (HACC) system is a broad community based aged and disability service system based on specialised services such as transport, meals, nursing, social support and others. The NDIA and package providers are to purchase services from HACC providers according to a set price for that region as in the Hunter demonstration site or according to the true cost of service delivery for that provider. It remains to be seen how the HACC service system is going to be transitioned across to the individualised funding model.

For many services in Eastern Sydney block funding is their core funding – accounting to 80 per cent or more of their total income – without which they are not able to provide a service. Some of these services are considering partnerships with other similar organisations in order to spread the risk by diversifying, be able to offer new services and attract funding.

Services have developed creative ways of using and supplementing their block funding e.g. relying heavily on local volunteers, partnering with other community services, obtaining small grants from local councils and other government bodies and discounts from local businesses.

Transitioning from a block funding model

The reality of the situation is that the market, if we can call it that, for disability and aged care services was established by government through block funding grants tied to hours of service provided to people with disability. The funding arrangements were structured such that the service provider would receive funding which was adequate to cover the cost of service provision.

Transitioning from block funding to individualised funding would have the greatest impact on services that do not have sufficient reserve funds to cover their running costs as the new system works on payments in arrears. This may happen if they do not have enough clients to meet operational costs, as true costs of service delivery are far greater than the costs

assumed under the block funding model. A move toward individualised packages would need to ensure that the true cost of service provision in the person's community is reflected in their care plan/funding package.

An individualised funding model shifts services toward a new business model where services are now required to calculate their true costs of service delivery which is to be charged from the person's funding package. Wider community activities that cannot be individually billed have to be dropped or funded from elsewhere. One issue is, if the funding package is not adequate to meet the person's needs and the cost of service is high then the clients may be missing out on services they need to remain living independently at home and to realise their potential.

While under the old model the person is guaranteed hours of service, under the proposed model the person would be guaranteed a funding package. The amount of funding needs to reflect the person's support needs based on real world prices of service delivery in the person's local area. Someone in a remote rural area will have a higher cost to receive a service than someone in a metro area who can have access to services without long travel times so to provide equity funding packages need to take such factors into account.

The onus is on the person with disability to purchase goods in the market that best meet their needs. In this case, we may see people with disabilities moving away from traditional disability supports towards general services in the community, where they exist, which are more competitive. This may work very well for a portion of the population but not everyone. People with higher needs are likely to have to rely on specialised disability supports which may become priced out of their reach if the price for disability supports is deregulated or if the funding package is not adequate.

Service providers may also come under pressure from new players in the market. When individualised funding was introduced in the UK some clubs provided services in competition to centre based services on a lower cost base because they were leveraging their existing facilities and their marginal costs were lower than the costs of existing dedicated services.

We suggest that a change is needed to government policy in funding and administering services to people with disabilities and older people, in order to ensure that nobody misses out on vital services due to market failure in their local region, by moving to a model that guarantees hours of service - as opposed to a funding package as cost structures vary greatly in different parts of the country.

Those individuals affected by market failure would require an increase in funding to allow them to purchase private services or to help pay for training and development of a person they trust to support them – a friend or family member. Another way of ensuring against market failure is to introduce viability supplements for niche service providers, services in rural areas and those that work with disadvantaged communities (culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander, homeless/financially disadvantaged). There is a precedent for this approach in residential aged care.

Information and advocacy

The strength of the block funding model is that it not only supports people with disabilities and older people in their community, but builds social cohesion one suburb at a time as the services draw on support from their local community, in order to deliver services. This is the hidden benefit of block funding. Community development and outreach would need to be funded separately to the individualised model as an individual client cannot be billed for services which benefit the broad community.

Information, advocacy and referral services are necessary for a just community aged care and disability support service. It is important to fund service providers and deliver information, advocacy and referral services as well as independent organisations focused on advocacy, outreach and research projects based. In its report on Disability Care and Support the Productivity Commission recommends that the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments should continue to provide funding for general advocacy by non government organisations outside the NDIS and independent of the NDIA due to a potential conflict of interest

Information provision should occur on a local level through outreach services provided by disability service providers, day centres, community and neighbourhood centres as well as state wide projects such as IDEAS NSW and regional development projects currently funded through HACC/CCSP (Community Care Support Program), who have specialist knowledge and expertise. These include community-based organisations with established links of trust over many years, such as Multicultural Access Projects (MAPs).

Community outreach

While there is great demand for specific community based aged care and disability services, people tend to seek out supports at a point of crisis as noted by the Productivity Commission. This is the reason why outreach is important as it links people with supports at an earlier stage. True outreach is more than promotion and marketing, as services spend much time talking to people with disabilities and their friends and family about disability and how the sector can best support them.

Some clients from Aboriginal and CALD communities require active support (two or three visits as there are significant cultural issues to work through) before they feel comfortable in accessing support services – HACC funded Multicultural Access Project is best evidence of this approach. Services need to be able to continue to outreach to the broad community and we feel that this is best achieved through some type of block funding.

Outreach does not fit as part of the individualised funding model, as these services are provided free and cannot be billed to someone in the NDIS system. Information services for hard to reach groups and even the general community of people with disabilities is greatly needed. This was identified in the 2012 Census report – that many people with disabilities needing supports with daily living tasks were not receive any.

Community development, sector support

Community development and sector support are the other funded areas which are not recognised in an individualised funding model. These projects support service providers in meeting quality standards, planning for change, professional development, and organise local service planning sessions, as well as the vital role of advocating on behalf of local service providers and consumers systemically with members of Parliament and funding bodies. Community Development projects also run forums for local service providers which assist with local service integration, promotion of good practice and responding to the reform process – HACC funded regional development projects are a good example of this approach.

The greatest benefit for the participants of the NDIS will be achieved by adequate block funding of non-individual service delivery aspects of the system such as community development, innovation, evidence and capacity building, collaboration practice, research, building partnerships with similar sectors, such as housing, transport and others. If we are not to lose some of the benefits of the current block funding system these other important elements also need to be identified and a funding regime put in place for them.

2015 and onward

The new community based aged care system which consists of essential community based services (HACC) and community aged care packages will not roll out until at least 2015. The NDIS is due to roll out in 2018 across different regions of NSW and the issues we have raised here are best addressed before full implementation We are at an early stage in this reform process. The new system is going to be shaped by what is learnt from the consumer directed care aged care package reviews and the functioning of the NDIS launch sites. As these changes roll out ISV will keep you up to date on issues as they arise. ▪

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Links to material cited in this article can be found on the web version at www.innersydneyvoice.org.au

Below - Alzheimer's Australia at Waterloo Summer on the Green: Funding mechanisms for community outreach and community education are still to be determined.

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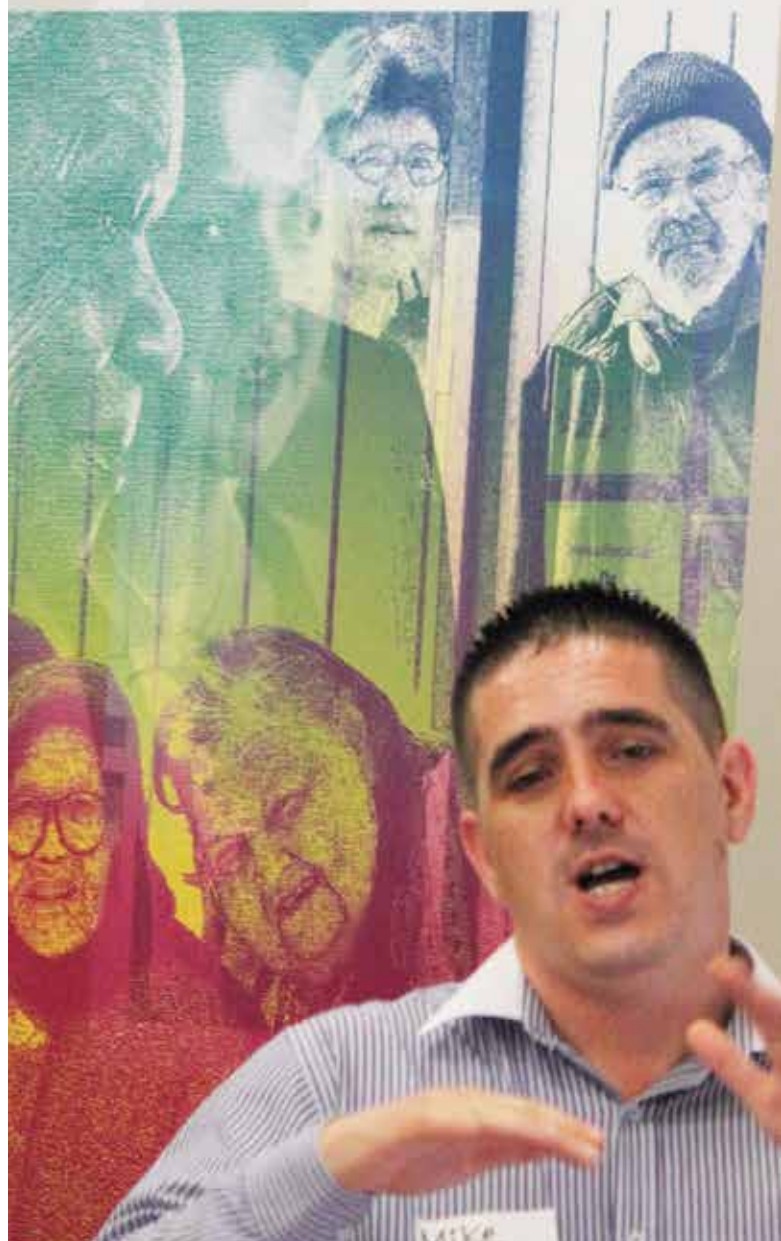
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The report on The Housing Commission's finances below reminds us that 30 years ago public housing made a surplus.

Public housing included full rent payers and people that these days would be targeted for affordable and social housing. Before privatisation, state governments also had government enterprises, like GIO, that they could get to lend money to or enter into joint ventures with the Housing Commission.

Back then there was still a sizable waiting list and not enough housing to meet demand, but at least public housing was not being sold off to fund the operations of the housing system and to cover the funding black hole.

Thirty years ago there was a viable mix in public housing, but to keep it working it needed a lot more housing stock. In its absence they stopped taking the people that paid the bills, leaving only those with higher and higher needs – the rest as they say is history!

May 1984

PUBLIC HOUSING – The Story So Far

With 126,000 applicants on public housing waiting lists around Australia and 52,000 of these in NSW, funds for housing has been the major issue of concern to the community housing sector.

The recent State election had NSW Housing Minister, Frank Walker proclaiming 1984 as 'The Year of Housing'. Unless there are a few surprises in the State Housing Budget in September Mr Walker's declaration cannot hold true for public housing.

For a long time assumptions about housing funding have been based on critiques of the level of Federal funds. While this was a real and continuing concern during the Fraser years the recent performance of the Federal Government has improved.

Although Treasurer Paul Keating is still to be convinced on the funding issue the recent negotiations for a new Commonwealth State Housing Agreement have won a great deal of support from many Federal politicians including the Federal Minister for Housing, Chris Hurford.

In the lead up to the State Budget, housing activists are taking a more critical look at the Wran Government's performance on public housing. They argue that as housing is a joint responsibility the State should examine its funding capacity with a view to increasing contributions.

The following statistics have been taken from official Housing Commission sources:

From the table a number of facts require comment:

● The only grant monies made available by the State Government has been the $1.08m in each of the three years.

● The surplus made by the Commission is counted as State contributions.

● The jump in loan monies to the Commission in 1982/83 reflects a

	1981 - 82	1982 - 83	1983 - 84
State Grants	1,080,000	1,080,000	1,080,000
Loans	29,500	22,745,700	21,000,000
Joint Venture	—	20,000,000	16,000,000
Deferred Payments	—	—	50,000,000
Internal Funds (surplus)	19,667,000	27,310,000	27,600,000
Semi-Goverment Borrowings	1,200,000	1,500,000	1,800,000
Total Commonwealth & State Funds	71,857,000	151,691,000	279,745,000

change in Commonwealth policy. From that year States could nominate part of their Loans Council funds for housing. These nominated funds attracted a Commonwealth subsidy bringing down interest rates from around 14% to 4.5%.

● Joint venture monies are funds raised by loans from the GIO (at 14% interest rate) and the Rental Bond Board (5%).

● Semi-government borrowings are from the GIO.

● The deferred payment funds are made available at market interest rates which vary daily but which are at the moment around 14%.

The crunch on funding for public housing by the State came earlier this year when Premier Wran announced in a blaze of publicity that the Commission would get $60m of "extra" funds. These funds turned out to be unexpended loans of deferred payment money which were originally to go to Elcom.

State contributions made in this way are difficult to justify given the State's ability to nominate Loans Council funds for housing and attract concessional interest rates. At present it appears that the Housing Commission will have to repay these loans and that the debt burden will force it to cut construction/acquisition targets in a few years' time. The gain of 1,000 new houses this year appears to be a poor substitute for the 2,500 or so houses which may be lost in three years'

time due to this "extra" funding.

The most startling fact to come out of an examination of State contributions is the proportion of funds made available in the form of grants. Although the Commonwealth has improved its performance from a low of 3% of funds as grants in 1975/76 to 71% in 1983/84 State grants remain abysmally low.

Less than 1% of State contributions were grants in 1983/84 (although this figure is the much more respectable 24.4% if you include the Commission's surplus).

It all sounds a far cry from the performance we might have expected from a State Government which calls 1984 the "Year of Housing" – unless of course you discount the most important issue, funding. Without adequate funding the changes made to public housing policy will be essentially cosmetic, evading the real issue of how to house people who have been waiting for public housing for periods of up to eight years.

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Contributions are welcome from individuals, community organisations and others about the inner Sydney, eastern suburbs or broader political and social landscapes.

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Cover image - *Summer on the Green in Waterloo helps bring the community together*