



INNER SYDNEY VOICE  
regional social development council

# Inner Sydney VOICE

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## MORE THAN RATES, ROADS AND RUBBISH?

THE ROLE LOCAL COUNCILS PLAY IN COMMUNITY AND IN  
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO OTHER PARTS OF GOVERNMENT

### +PLUS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW  
COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES  
MAKING PLANNING SUBMISSIONS

COMMUNITY & PLANNING STUDY  
SUSTAINABLE MASTER PLANNING  
HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

SAFER PATHWAYS AROUND DV  
MEN'S REFERRAL SERVICE  
TENANT PARTICIPATION THREAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE INNER SYDNEY REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INC



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# *Editorial*

In March 1978, Inner Sydney Regional Council (ISRC) entered the “information game” with the launch of its 62-page newsletter *Inner Voice*. The editorial suggested it could be the newsletter of Inner Sydney, which it rapidly became. You can see the first editorial in *From the Vault* (page 31) and download the first issue from our website. Now as *Inner Sydney Voice*, we share that forty-year legacy, helping to provide information and insights to those who struggle to live in the inner city.

ISRC was originally set up to work with local councils on social development, so it is fitting this issue focuses on this often misunderstood and changing part of government. In *Australia's System of Local Government* (page 20) we learn that local government employs more people than the mining sector and we explain how local government interacts with federal and state governments. A second article, *Local councils: More than roads, rates and rubbish* (page 24), deals with how council responsibilities have changed how they organise and operate in NSW.

To help clear up confusion about the different *Roles and responsibilities of Mayors, Councillors and General Managers in NSW* (page 27), we have set out the roles from the NSW Local Government Act. Once upon a time when we talked development applications and planning, we thought of local government but

**ISRC was originally set up to work with local councils .. this issue focuses on this often misunderstood part of government**

with planning changes, they are just one of the “consent authorities” that might deal with a nearby development. *How to make a planning submission* (page 13), explains how the system works and what you need to consider. *Master planning for sustainable outcomes* (page 28), explores some of the environmental issues to consider when you assess master plans.

Not everyone just writes a submission, some join resident groups and engage in different ways. *Community engagement, participatory planning and the city* (page 17), looks at a recent study into the experience of community groups. It is timely, as the government will soon roll out community participation plan requirements for all levels of the planning system.

Councils are active also in the social policy area. The City of Sydney, for example, has a homelessness unit and undertakes half-yearly rough sleeper counts that indicate the level of homelessness in the city. In *Homelessness emergency* (page 6), Alex Greenwich reflects on the issue through his experience in SBS's *Filthy, Rich and Homeless* TV series.

Council also works, or partners, in other areas such as family and domestic violence. *Over 55s Elder Abuse Referral Hubs in Potts Point and Ultimo* (page 12) is about one of the projects supported by the City of Sydney Council.

The NSW government is rolling out a *Safer Pathway around domestic and family violence* (page 8) and we provide details of this program, its design and some of the places to go for help. One of these services specialises in *Working with men to end family violence* (page 10) so we explain from two perspectives how the Men's Referral Service works.

In *Tenant Participation Resource Service (TPRS) ends* (page 5) ISV laments FACS's decision to terminate the TPRS and HCP programs. For over 40 years, ISV has worked with public housing communities, including 23 years through TPRS. The decision creates great uncertainty for the future of tenant participation, advocacy and tenant support. ISV will monitor the impact on tenants.

Charmaine Jones and Geoffrey Turnbull co-editors Inner Sydney Voice.



**INNER SYDNEY VOICE**  
regional social development council

## ABOUT

Inner Sydney Voice Magazine is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Inc trading as Inner Sydney Voice. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. The organisation defines Inner Sydney as being the local government areas of Botany Bay, Leichhardt, Randwick, City of Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands across the areas we service, particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

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# TENANT PARTICIPATION RESOURCE SERVICE (TPRS) ENDS

AT THE END OF NOVEMBER 2018, ALL REGIONAL TPRS AND THE PLACE BASED HOUSING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM (HCP) SERVICES AROUND THE STATE END.

CHARMAINE JONES EXPLAINS THE CHANGE AND ISV'S CONCERNS.

For the last 23 years, Inner Sydney Regional Council / Inner Sydney Voice has managed, on behalf of the NSW Government, the delivery of the Tenant Participation Resource Service (TPRS).

A very different program, the Tenant Participation and Community Engagement (TPCE) program will start in December. The details of the new provider will not be known until late October so there will be very little opportunity for any transition between the old and new programs.

From the information to hand, we are concerned that tenants will find that many of the supports they have enjoyed will no longer be available to them. There was quite a strong reaction, for example, from FACS to the inclusion of any advocacy in the TPCE program.

While TPRS was evaluated, FACS did not consult with any tenants or tenant organisations during the process. FACS did not ask what tenants wanted from their tenant participation program! HCP providers were not consulted at all and HCP was not evaluated before a decision to scrap the program was made.

There was also a strong desire by FACS to minimise the number of providers and to prefer larger providers, which are not necessarily well connected on the ground. Even though ISV was an existing regional service provider, ISV was not even interviewed for the TPCE program. The existing place based HCP providers were worse off as TPCE is a regional program. Place based providers found it difficult to substantiate they could service an entire region. The new program has support for large public housing concentrations delivered by the regional provider rather than a local provider.

Another casualty from ending TPRS will be the tenants in housing

***“While TPRS was evaluated, FACS did not consult with any tenants or tenant organisations during the process. FACS did not ask what tenants wanted from their tenant participation program! HCP providers were not consulted at all and HCP was not evaluated before a decision to scrap the program was made.”***

transferred from FACS to community housing providers (CHPs). Previously these tenants received tenant participation (TP) support at arm's length from their housing provider through TPRS. The new TPCE program will only deliver services to FACS public housing tenants and FACS expects CHPs to fund and organise their own TP services. We have major concerns that CHP tenants will no longer have arm's length TP support. There are too many conflicts in having the landlord responsible for encouraging its tenants to have a voice about what happens in their CHP.

The new program aligns with the state's Future Directions housing policy so there will now be a greater emphasis on activities that meet these objectives especially for the “opportunity cohort” that FACS believe can exit

public housing.

While ISV will not be funded to deliver the TPRS program we continue to have some projects working with public tenants and have an ongoing interest in public housing issues. We encourage tenants to monitor the introduction of TPCE closely and to document any loss of service they may experience. Tenant participation is about making your voice heard and that includes making your voice heard about any loss of a service or lessening of tenant participation support.

Practically, David White, our CSNT-TPRS worker will finish up at the end of November. We thank him for his diligent TP work over many years and wish him well into the future. We are sure tenants groups will farewell him in their own way.

As ISV will no longer have a worker regularly attending tenant meetings, ISV magazine will no longer be hand delivered to tenant groups as it has been in the past. The magazine is available in PDF form or online through our website. We have an email alert that will tell you when there is a new issue. Unwaged individuals can get a copy posted to them for \$5.50 for four issues and we can consider posting out copies in bulk to interested groups.

Regional organisations like ISV, as well as state organisations like the Tenants Union, Shelter NSW and the Local Community Services Association (LCSA), will keep a watching brief on the new program as it rolls out and try to identify the gaps that emerge. So, let us know what happens and ISV will work with other organisations to identify and address the gaps.

Charmaine Jones is the Executive Officer of Inner Sydney Voice

# HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY

HOMELESSNESS HAS REACHED EPIDEMIC LEVELS. ALEX GREENWICH WRITES ABOUT HOMELESSNESS FOLLOWING HIS EXPERIENCE ON THE SBS 'FILTHY, RICH AND HOMELESS' REALITY SERIES.

**N**SW has the highest proportion of homeless people in Australia—approximately 38,000 people do not have a home. Since 2011 the number of homeless people in this State has increased by 37 per cent, which is more than double the national average. Some seven per cent of those people are sleeping rough, 16 per cent are in crisis services, 18 per cent are in boarding houses, 14 per cent are couch surfing, nine per cent are in temporary lodgings and 45 per cent are in severely overcrowded dwellings. All of these scenarios pose significant threats to life, safety, health and well-being. Without secure housing, medical issues, including mental health conditions, cannot be treated, they degenerate and new health problems emerge. People are at risk of violence and intimidation and are more likely to enter the criminal justice system. Getting and keeping a job also becomes almost impossible.

I was a participant in season two of the SBS 'Filthy, Rich and Homeless' reality series, which you can still watch on SBS on Demand. I experienced firsthand what it was like to be homeless, albeit for a short time. I stayed in boarding houses and crisis accommodation where facilities were run-down, security was low and costs were high. I heard from couch surfers who were forced to trade sex for a roof over their head.

People do not choose to be homeless; the causes of homelessness are out of their control—domestic and family violence, physical and mental health issues, trauma, job loss and poverty. Sadly, almost one-third of people accessing homelessness services are women and children escaping domestic violence. Those who experience

homelessness are like the rest of us, except that they have had a streak of bad luck. They simply have no safe housing options because the social housing waiting list is so long—60,000 tenancies long—and fewer than one per cent of private rentals are affordable for people on low incomes. Unless we take urgent action, homelessness will escalate further.

A disaster that threatens life on a large scale is often declared a state of emergency, which initiates urgent action to make people safe and help them recover. Homelessness is putting tens of thousands of lives at risk; there is no reason not to invoke a similar response. Just like a bush-fire, homelessness can burn through a person's entire life, and just like a flood, it can wash away all hope. This year Los Angeles declared a "shelter crisis" and put in place emergency measures to house its 28,000 homeless city residents, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern committed to getting rough sleepers off the street before winter with a \$100 million emergency housing package. If we give homelessness the priority it deserves we can solve the problem. The 'Everybody's Home' campaign has identified immediate and long-term measures to solve this crisis, including providing emergency housing in empty and unused government properties such as the Sirius building in The Rocks, which has sat largely empty for more than a year.

When homeless people are housed they should be given access to living skills, drug, alcohol and mental health services so they can get any help they need early and get back on their feet (the Housing First approach). Homelessness services should be available

in prisons to prevent homelessness on release. Charges for government services such as getting identification should be waived and incomplete housing applications should be permitted for people who are homeless.

Most importantly, we must expand social and affordable housing stock. We must build 5,000 new social housing properties each year until 2026 to meet need and we must mandate for at least 15 per cent of housing in major redevelopment projects to be social and affordable rental housing. I have seen the success that FACS and NGOs have had with assertive housing outreach in the inner city. The Homelessness Strategy, includes a much-needed focus on whole-of-government coordination but we are still only tinkering around the edges.

If we want to end homelessness by 2030—as the Premier said in response to my question in Parliament—we must build many more new social and affordable houses. The policy of selling off inner-city public housing to build more homes on the city fringes is a proven failure. Not only did it cause significant distress and loss of social support for former Millers Point tenants but also, as data from the UNSW's City Futures Research Centre shows, sales are having little impact on the social housing waiting list because most homes built are only replacement stock. If we do not provide homes for the people who need them, homelessness will continue to surge and we will have bigger social and economic problems to deal with. NSW is Australia's largest economy; we do not want it to become the country's most morally bankrupt State. NSW has the resources, a committed homelessness sector and we have the need.





***“The policy of selling off inner-city public housing to build more homes on the city fringes is a proven failure”***

SBS Filthy Rich and Homeless program  
cast: Back (L-R) Cameron Daddo, Sky  
Leckie, Alex Greenwich.  
Front: Benjamin Law, Alli Simpson.  
Image courtesy SBS

It's time for the government to treat the homelessness crisis as an emergency. The government can take immediate action to get everyone safely housed and put in place long-term policies to end homelessness in this state.

Ultimately, more government action is needed to build more homes and I intend to keep pushing for this in parliament. Make sure your MPs know this is important to you and ask them to speak up and push too.

Alex Greenwich is the Member for seat of Sydney in the NSW Parliament.

### **TAKING ACTION**

You can help end homelessness in NSW.

- Support the Everybody's Home campaign: [www.everybodyshome.com.au](http://www.everybodyshome.com.au)
- The City of Sydney has a good list of homelessness organisations that could do with donations of money, goods or your time: [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/community-support/homelessness/volunteer-and-goods-donation-directory](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/community-support/homelessness/volunteer-and-goods-donation-directory)
- StreetSmart provides a platform for fundraising through groups and businesses like leaving a donation at restaurants, with funds going to smaller local groups: [www.streetsmartaustralia.org](http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org)
- Homes for Homes invests in new low cost housing: [www.homesforhomes.com.au](http://www.homesforhomes.com.au)
- Homeground Homes is a non-profit real estate agent for people priced out of the mainstream market: [www.bridgehousing.org.au/pages/homeground-real-estate-sydney.html](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au/pages/homeground-real-estate-sydney.html)

# SAFER PATHWAY AROUND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

SAFER PATHWAY HAS ROLLED OUT TO 43 SITES ACROSS NSW, WITH THE REMAINING SITES TO BE IN PLACE BY NOVEMBER 2018. **FEROZ SATTAR** AND **ELLEN TEMBY** EXPLAIN HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS.



## WHAT IS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Domestic and family violence is an act of violence between persons in a domestic relationship as defined in the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal) Violence Act 2007*. Domestic relationships can include intimate and family relationships, such as married or de facto couples (including same-sex and gender-diverse relationships), carers, relatives, long term residents in the same residential facility and for Aboriginal people, extended family or kin. Domestic and family violence can include physical abuse, intimidation, stalking, sexual assault, psychological abuse, financial deprivation and social isolation.

Domestic and family violence is a violation of human rights and is a crime. It is the most prevalent form of violence experienced by women in Australia. It is the leading cause of death for women under the age of 45, with approximately one woman killed each week by her current or former partner. Although domestic and family violence is predominately perpetrated by men against women, men can also be victims.

## WHAT IS SAFER PATHWAY?

The NSW Government has invested \$390 million over four years to tackle domestic and family violence. One of the most significant domestic and family violence achievements is Safer Pathway. Safer Pathway is a streamlined and integrated approach to safety assessment, referrals and service coordination that prioritises the safety of victims and their children.

Navigating the service system can be confusing, repetitive and time consuming. Safer Pathway helps victims navigate this, by creating a coordinated and consistent response where government agencies and non-government agencies work proactively and collaboratively to provide

victims with the support they need, and so victims do not need to keep telling and re-telling their story.

The key components of Safer Pathway are:

- a Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) for Police and others to better and consistently identify the level of threat faced by victims
- a state-wide Central Referral Point (CRP) in which case workers are able to electronically manage and monitor referrals
- a state-wide network of Local Coordination Points (LCP) staffed by specialist workers to provide victims with case coordination and referral to a Safety Action Meeting if necessary
- Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) where agencies and services share relevant information in order to lessen or prevent serious threats to the safety of victims and their children
- laws that allows service providers to share information to facilitate victims' access to support.

Since the program started on 15 September 2014, Safer Pathway has had 397,175 victims referred (285,600 females and 111,575 males). In 2017/2018, there were 131,465 referrals (93,765 females and 37,700 males). Of these, 6,217 female victims (6.63% of the total female referrals) and 914 male victims (2.42% of the total male referrals) were assessed as facing a serious threat. The dynamics of domestic and family violence are complex. Female victims are more likely to experience violence in intimate partner relationships, while male victims are more likely to experience violence at the hands of another family member.

Moving forward, Safer Pathway will focus on expanding referral pathways into Safer Pathway for victims who do not go to Police, including via local neighbourhood centres and



health professionals. Safer Pathway is also working on improving access for people from culturally and linguistically backgrounds.

### WHAT ARE LOCAL COORDINATION POINTS (LCPS)?

LCPs are community organisations staffed by specialist workers who explore support options for each victim. LCPs will proactively call victims to offer them support, making appropriate warm referrals to a range of service providers. Where the victim is at serious threat, the LCP can also refer them to SAMs (see below).

LCPs are not case management services. If a victim is already being provided with case management by another service, this can continue. Safer Pathway builds on, but does not replace, existing services. Local, well established services are likely to receive referrals from LCPs.

### WHAT ARE SAFETY ACTION MEETINGS (SAMS)?

SAMs are regular meetings of key government and non-government service providers aimed at reducing serious threats to victims' lives, health or safety. SAMs are chaired by a senior police officer and organised by the LCP.

The government members include Police, Health, Department of Family and Community Services (housing and child protection), Department of Education and Communities, and Corrective Services. Non-government members are decided locally by the Chair and the LCP. The same local representatives from each service provider are expected to attend each SAM and they will have authority to make decisions.

Through sharing relevant information, members develop a comprehensive picture of each victim's situation and develop a list of actions for the members, designed to reduce the threat to victim's safety. Victims are never obliged to do anything as a result of a SAM. Although the SAM may make recommendations, the victim still has the right to use or not use support services.

### WHAT CAN SAFER PATHWAY DO FOR ME?

A few de-identified case studies are set out below.

**Nadia:** Over the last 18 years, Patrick had subjected Nadia to extreme physical violence, including on one occasion stabbing her in front of their children. Patrick went to gaol for this assault. An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) was granted for Nadia. The order prevented Patrick from contacting Nadia, but it allowed him to contact certain people by phone, including their eldest son.

As Patrick's date for release was approaching, Nadia's counsellor noticed that she was becoming increasingly anxious. The counsellor decided to refer her to a SAM. At the SAM, the following actions were developed:

- Police to work with their counterparts in the town where Patrick would be released, seek their assistance in extending the ADVO for a further 12 months
- Corrective Services to investigate whether Patrick could be placed on electronic monitoring when released
- Housing to:
  - investigate whether Patrick could be relocated to an area in which electronic monitoring was being trialled, and
  - review security at Nadia's house and upgrade if needed.

**Jessie:** Jessie is an Aboriginal woman who had experienced ongoing violence from her partner, Will. Jessie was too afraid to report this to anyone. Witnesses who saw Will assaulting Jessie in public contacted the Police on several occasions. However, whenever the Police talked to Jessie, she refused to answer questions.

Recently a LCP staff member saw Will assaulting Jessie on the street. The staff member contacted the Police and liaised with them to get Jessie's phone number. When the LCP was able to contact Jessie, she revealed that she was terrified of Will and had nowhere to go. The LCP referred Jessie to the SAM, where it came to light that there was an ADVO for Jessie against Will in another Police Local Area Command. The assault witnessed by the LCP worker was a breach of this ADVO, so the Police were able to charge Will. While this was happening, the LCP assisted Jessie to relocate without Will's knowledge.

**Feroz Sattar is the Coordinator Safer Pathway and Ellen Temby is a Policy and Project Officer, both at Victims Services in the NSW Department of Justice.**

## WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

- anyone in immediate danger should call Triple Zero (000)
- women experiencing domestic violence can call 1800 WDVCS (1800 938 227)
- men having problems with their

- violent behaviour can call the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491.
- anyone experiencing sexual assault, domestic and family violence; their friends and family; and workers and professionals supporting

someone experiencing or at risk of experiencing sexual assault, domestic or family violence – call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732). This is a national service available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

# WORKING WITH MEN TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE

NO TO VIOLENCE IS THE PEAK BODY FOR ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITH MEN TO END MEN'S VIOLENCE. JACQUI WATT AND ONE OF THE PHONE WORKERS EXPLAIN THE MEN'S REFERRAL SERVICE.



**F**AMILY violence touches the lives of many, and ripples through our communities. Over the past few years we have seen a growing community awareness about family violence. Naturally, people are curious. Who causes it? What causes it? Why does it happen? Can it happen to anyone? Could it happen to me; my daughter; my son?

Family violence can be a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviours that take many different forms. Family violence is: physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, social and financial. It happens within intimate relationships as well as between family members and is rarely an isolated incident. Family violence is predominantly perpetrated by men against women,

***“Our primary job is to ensure that women and children are safer through our interventions”***

## A NO TO VIOLENCE PHONE WORKER'S EXPERIENCE

As a phone worker working for the Men's Referral Service, I speak with a lot of men on a daily basis about a wide variety of family and relationship contexts, challenges and issues. Quite often, I speak to men who are talking about these issues for the first time. In this initial phone conversation, I talk to them about taking the next steps toward safer and happier relationships and families.

Sometimes the men who call us have already thought about what kind of support they need and are seeking information about anger management programs or couples counselling. Before we start talking about what he wants to achieve, we address the safety of his partner (and children). It then becomes clear if a specialist family violence service, such as a Men's Behaviour Change Program, would be the best support for him, rather than other options.

### ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger management is a popular term and is often the go-to

suggestion for men who respond to conflict with violent or aggressive behaviour.

However, in the context of intimate relationships, anger management can be limiting and doesn't address important safety concerns. While anger is a common emotional experience for many of the men we speak to, exploring their responses to anger more broadly often shows that they are already managing it quite well in most situations. For instance, they don't punch a hole in the wall when they're angry at a colleague and they don't assault a stranger when they're angry about waiting in line at the bank.

Quite often the issue they want support around is specific to their intimate and family relationships. To make things more complicated, they are often experiencing other difficult emotions connected to their relationships such as jealousy, sadness, or vulnerability. For men wanting to make changes to how they behave towards their partners or families, specialist family violence support is most appropriate.



children and other men.

Violence against women and children is pervasive, constant and a men's issue.

No to Violence is the peak body for organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence. We also provide telephone counselling, information and referrals for men in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. We've supported callers for more than 25 years and we're qualified to work with men who use family violence.

The Men's Referral Service is a men's family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service operating across Australia and is the central point of contact for men taking responsibility for their violent behaviour. The Men's Referral Service also provides support and referrals for women and men seeking information on behalf of their male partners, friends or family members and workers in a range of agencies seeking assistance for their clients who are men.

We've provided assistance, information, counselling and referrals to additional services, helping more than 150,000 men get the support they need and improving outcomes for families.

Our primary job is to ensure that women and children are safer through our interventions. We know that all cases of reported family violence are complex and this is why we thoroughly assess each situation to see what assistance is needed and how we can support the best outcomes for women, children and men.

Men's use of violence is a choice and men must take responsibility for their behaviour. We ask you to stop, reflect and ask yourself, what does your love look like?

If you are concerned about your own behaviour or how someone you know is behaving, contact the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or head to [www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au) to chat online. For all other enquiries, please email [info@ntv.org.au](mailto:info@ntv.org.au)

Jacqui Watt is the CEO of No to Violence, which has been contracted by the NSW Government to undertake sector development in NSW and welcomes men's family violence intervention enquiries from agencies.

#### BUT I'M NOT LIKE THAT

No matter how men have behaved toward their partner or family, I find that most men I speak with will try to avoid talking about what the issue is by focussing on what it is not, "it's not like I..." "I'm not as bad as..." "I'm not a violent guy". This is understandable; it can be challenging to take responsibility for how you have chosen to behave if these choices hurt people you care about. However, this can be a barrier to accessing the support which could assist in addressing controlling, abusive and physically violent behaviours of all kinds.

Engaging in a family violence specific service for men, such as a Men's Behaviour Change Program, does not mean you need to adopt the identity of "a violent man". Rather, it shows that you are choosing to address your behaviour and are working towards safer, more respectful ways of working with your partner or family.

Comments written by a No to Violence phone worker. Name withheld for privacy reasons.

## **No to Violence** 25 YEARS Working together to end men's family violence

### QUICK REFERENCE ABOUT MEN WHO USE FAMILY VIOLENCE



**Men who use violence are everyday men.**



**Men's Behaviour Change Programs are one of many perpetrator interventions.**



**Men's use of violence is rarely a one-off incident.**



**It is common for men who use violence to move from relationship to relationship.**



**Men's use of violence is a choice and men must take responsibility for their behaviour.**



**Men who use violence often believe the Police and Courts favour women.**



**1 in 6 women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15**

AIHW 2018

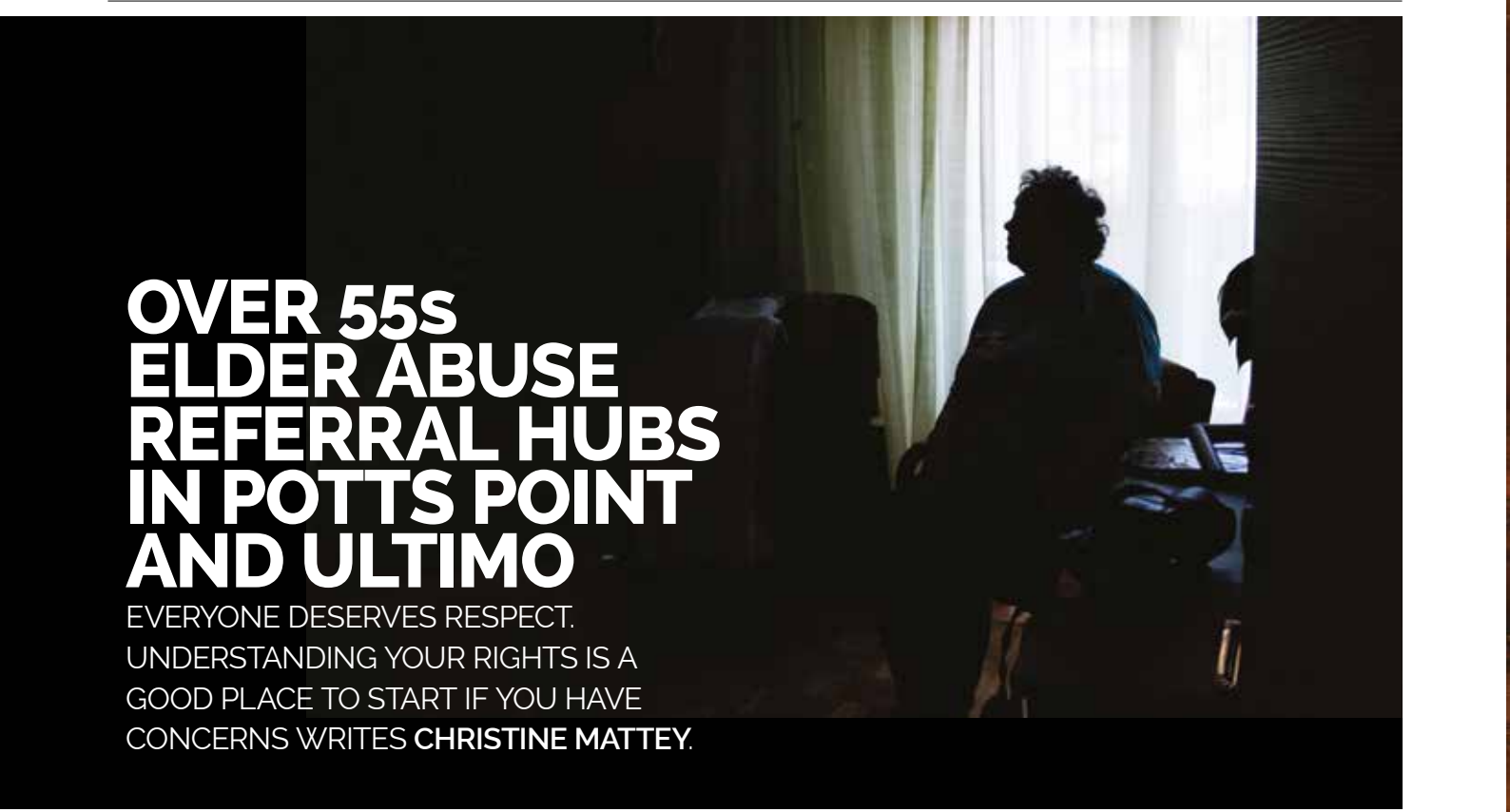
**Want support or information?**

Call the Men's Referral Service **1300 766 491** or head to [ntv.org.au](http://ntv.org.au) to chat online

[ntv.org.au](http://ntv.org.au)

[info@ntv.org.au](mailto:info@ntv.org.au)





# OVER 55s ELDER ABUSE REFERRAL HUBS IN POTTS POINT AND ULTIMO

EVERYONE DESERVES RESPECT.  
UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS IS A  
GOOD PLACE TO START IF YOU HAVE  
CONCERNS WRITES CHRISTINE MATTEY.

**W**e don't lose our fundamental human rights as we age, but through circumstances including a relationship breakdown, family dysfunction, ill health or precarious accommodation, we may feel as though we've lost our voice and the odds are stacked against us.

Address the concerns you, or someone you know, may have regarding legal issues, relationships, housing, at-home aged care services, the NDIS, counselling and /or personal safety. Each month, the City of Sydney in partnership with the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit are providing a safe, friendly and confidential space where you can have your questions answered directly by professionals working in these areas.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore said of the hubs, 'This important joint initiative supports our older residents to feel and be safe.'

All services providers who attend the hubs are happy to discuss ways to keep you, your assets and property safe, to assist you with planning ahead and to help you weigh up options and choices.

If you are a case worker, care advisor, GP, medical specialist, social or community worker, or other professional working with older people, you can refer your clients directly to the hubs for information, support and referrals.

If your English is limited, that is not an issue – we can access an independent interpreting service to assist.

The free, monthly hubs are at the following locations:

- Reginald Murphy Community Centre, 19 Greenknowe Avenue, Potts Point – 2nd Monday of the month from 10.30am – 2.30pm
- Ultimo Community Centre, 40 William Henry Street, Ultimo – 2nd Wednesday of the Month from 10am to 2pm.

If you have any questions at any point about your rights and options, you can contact the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit on 1800 628 221, Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 pm. Anyone can make the call.

Christine Mattey is a Senior Consultant at the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit [www.elderabusehelpline.com.au](http://www.elderabusehelpline.com.au)

## WHY ARE SOME OF US AT GREATER RISK OF OUR RIGHTS BEING DISRESPECTED?

- Lack of information available in our preferred language
- Language and cultural barriers may mean that it is difficult to understand the Australian aged-care system or services such as Centrelink, or even to go about everyday business such as banking
- An older person may rely on a family member to communicate with services and that family member may be acting in their own best interests
- Lack of status in the family, perhaps you live with your family in their home and might feel you can't speak up
- Be socially isolated
- Have memory issues or a dementia diagnosis
- Loss of a partner/spouse and are grieving that loss
- Have a disability that is either physical or intellectual
- Mental health issues
- Lack of money
- Poor physical health
- Dependent on someone for care
- Family conflict

**“This important joint initiative supports our older residents to feel and be safe.”**





## HOW TO MAKE A PLANNING SUBMISSION

WITH DEVELOPMENT AROUND EVERY CORNER IN INNER SYDNEY, IT IS LIKELY YOU MIGHT WANT TO RAISE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT A DEVELOPMENT. **AMELIA THORPE** PROVIDES SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO MAKE A PLANNING SUBMISSION.

**S**ubmissions can increase the quality and legitimacy of planning decisions. Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act), decision-makers are required to take submissions into account. This is meant to improve the quality and the legitimacy of planning decisions, and recognises that members of the public often have ideas and information that can improve planning outcomes.

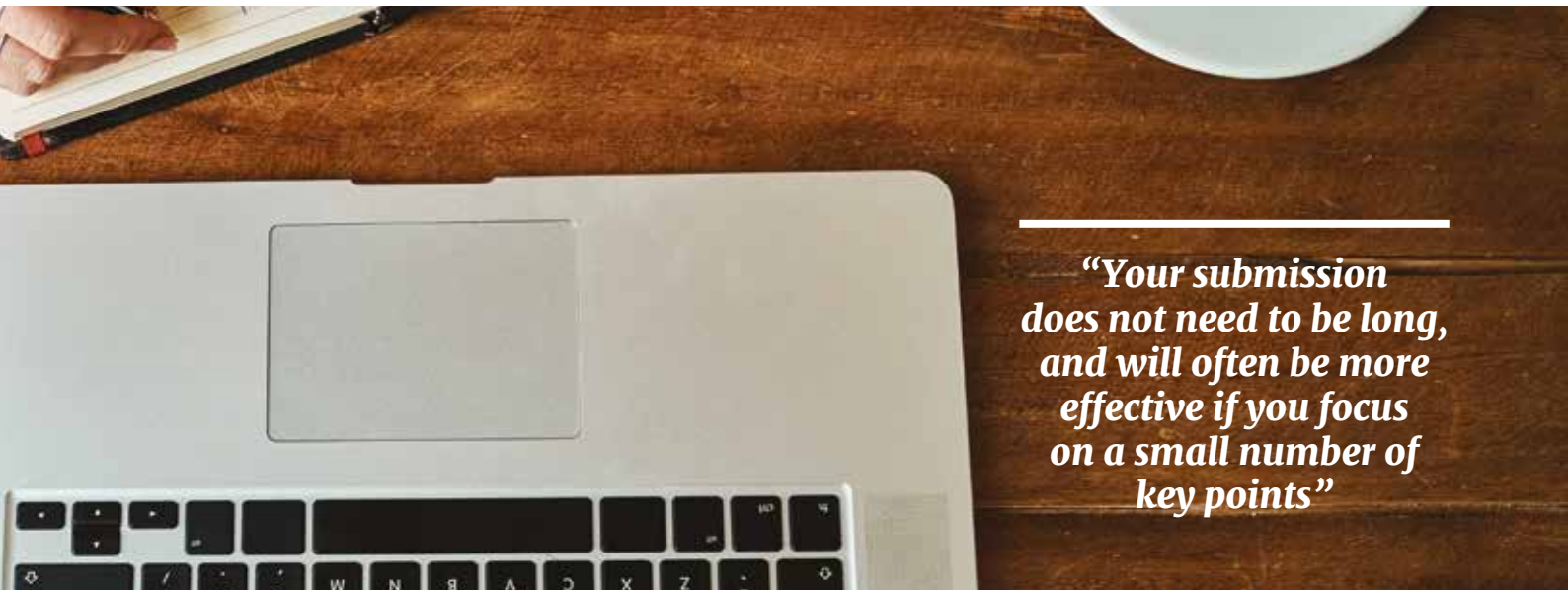
Making a submission can be important too for what happens after the decision is made. Under the EPA Act, people who made a submission (“objectors”) have rights to appeal the final decision in court in certain circumstances.

### PREPARING TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

Try to get your submission in by the deadline. If timing is tight, call or email before the deadline to request an extension.

Read the development application and supporting materials carefully. Make notes on parts you like and parts you disagree with, and things that you need to follow up.

Consult. Do your friends and neighbours have stories



***“Your submission does not need to be long, and will often be more effective if you focus on a small number of key points”***

## KEY TERMS

**Consent authority:** This is the person (or, more often, the group of people) that will decide whether to approve the development. For smaller developments, this is usually a planning officer in the local council. Larger and more contentious developments go to a Local Planning Panel. For other types of development, particularly really large developments, the EPA Act also provides for Sydney district panels, regional planning panels, the Independent Planning Commission, the Minister and other public authorities to serve as consent authorities.

**DA:** Development Application. This contains information about the applicant, the site and the proposed development, including drawings and a cost estimate. An environmental impact statement (EIS) or species impact statement (SIS) may also be required. The consent authority makes this information available to the public to enable the making of submissions, usually along with an assessment report prepared by the local council.

**DCP:** Development control plan. This is a policy setting out detailed requirements for developments on the site (things like building height, setbacks, landscaping and parking). These are not legally binding, but consent authorities follow them, if possible.

**Designated development:** Development likely to have high impacts (eg likely to generate pollution) or located in an environmentally sensitive area (eg a wetland), as set out in an Environmental Planning Instrument (EPI) or regulations made under the EPA Act.

**EPI:** Environmental Planning Instrument. This includes a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) (eg Sydney Environmental Plan 2012) or a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (eg State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Housing) 2009). The planning controls in these are legally binding, and the controls in a SEPP can override those in an LEP.

**Objector:** A person who made a submission objecting to an application for consent to carry out designated development.

or examples that can help explain the issues? Are there community groups or specialist groups that might have relevant concerns or expertise?

If there are meetings or briefings as part of the process, try to go along to these and talk to other people there.

## WHAT YOUR SUBMISSION SHOULD INCLUDE

The EPA Act sets out a range of matters for consent authorities to consider when deciding whether to grant approval for the development and whether to impose conditions (section 4.15, formerly 79C). For most developments, these include:

- EPIs, DCPs, regulations made under the EPA Act
- Planning agreements. For example, an agreement by the developer to give up some of their land to be used for roads or other public purposes.
- The likely impacts of the development, including impacts on the built and natural environment, and social and economic impacts in the locality
- The suitability of the site for development
- The public interest. This is a very open term, including things like climate change.

These are the only things that consent authorities can consider, so make sure your submission focuses on these. Even though a consent authority might be sympathetic to other concerns, they cannot take these into account.

The key thing the consent authority will be looking for is whether the proposal complies with the relevant planning controls. Is this development permissible on this site? There will often be a table in the report on the DA setting out the relevant planning controls, and whether the proposal complies with these. Look for areas where the proposal does not comply, or where there is only partial compliance. Explain why this matters and what should be done about it. Should the proposal be changed so that it complies or are there other ways the problem can be fixed?

Try to make constructive recommendations about what you would like to see (not just things you oppose). These should be clear and constructive, eg ‘the proposal should be amended so that...’

If consent is granted, conditions will often be imposed. Try to suggest conditions that could improve the develop-



ment, for example are there trees that should be preserved? Privacy screens that should be added? Better lighting or access arrangements?

Consent authorities are often happy to include these kinds of requests, if possible.

Check the DCP as you think about conditions. If there are relevant standards, the consent authority can't impose stricter standards. For example, if the DCP allows development up to 6 storeys, there is no point suggesting a height limit of 4 storeys.

Use evidence to support your concerns and recommendations. For example:

- Stories from the community that explain the likely impacts of the proposal.
- Government policies and reports, including from other departments or levels of government. Even within a single organisation you can often find policies supporting different positions.
- Data and statistics, eg ABS information about changing demographics.
- Scientific studies. If you can't find these online or in the library, try Environmental Defenders Office NSW: they run a scientific assessment and advice service giving free advice on environmental matters.
- Examples of best practice from other cities or countries, to show what else is possible and what has been successful.
- Newspaper articles, webpages and reports by relevant organisations, eg Inner Sydney Voice, Shelter, AHURI, ACF and the Grattan Institute
- Academic studies, theconversation.com.au is a good place to find academics doing work in the area.
- Photos and drawings.

If there are things in the proposal that you support, mention these. There may be other stakeholders who want to get rid of things you like so it is important to point out what you support. It also helps to make your arguments seem balanced.

## STRUCTURE

There is no standard template for a submission.

It is a good idea to include a paragraph at the start explaining who you are and what your interest is. Are you a long-time local resident with knowledge of the area? Are you representing an organisation with particular interests? Do you have any expertise that might be relevant?

The document you are responding to is often useful to structure your submission. Use the headings or categories in it as your headings. You don't need to respond to all of them, and you can use sub-headings if you have a lot to say about one.

Finish off with a conclusion highlighting your key points, and repeat your recommendations.

Include your name, contact details and the date of the submission. If you are willing to meet with the consent authority or to speak at a hearing, say so.

## STYLE

- Keep your writing simple and concise. Use headings and bullet points.
- Make sure you spell out any acronyms.
- Include references to any sources you refer to.
- Avoid emotional or abusive language. Don't spend a lot of time criticising the process to date, keep this brief and focus on what you want to happen next.

Your submission does not need to be long, and will often be more effective if you focus on a small number of key points. In many cases, the decision-makers will not read your submission. Where there are many submissions and/or the submissions are long, a planning officer will prepare a summary of all of the submissions. Keeping your submission short and your recommendations clear will help to make sure your points are properly summarised.

If you do make a long submission, it is a good idea to include a summary at the start, highlighting your key recommendations.

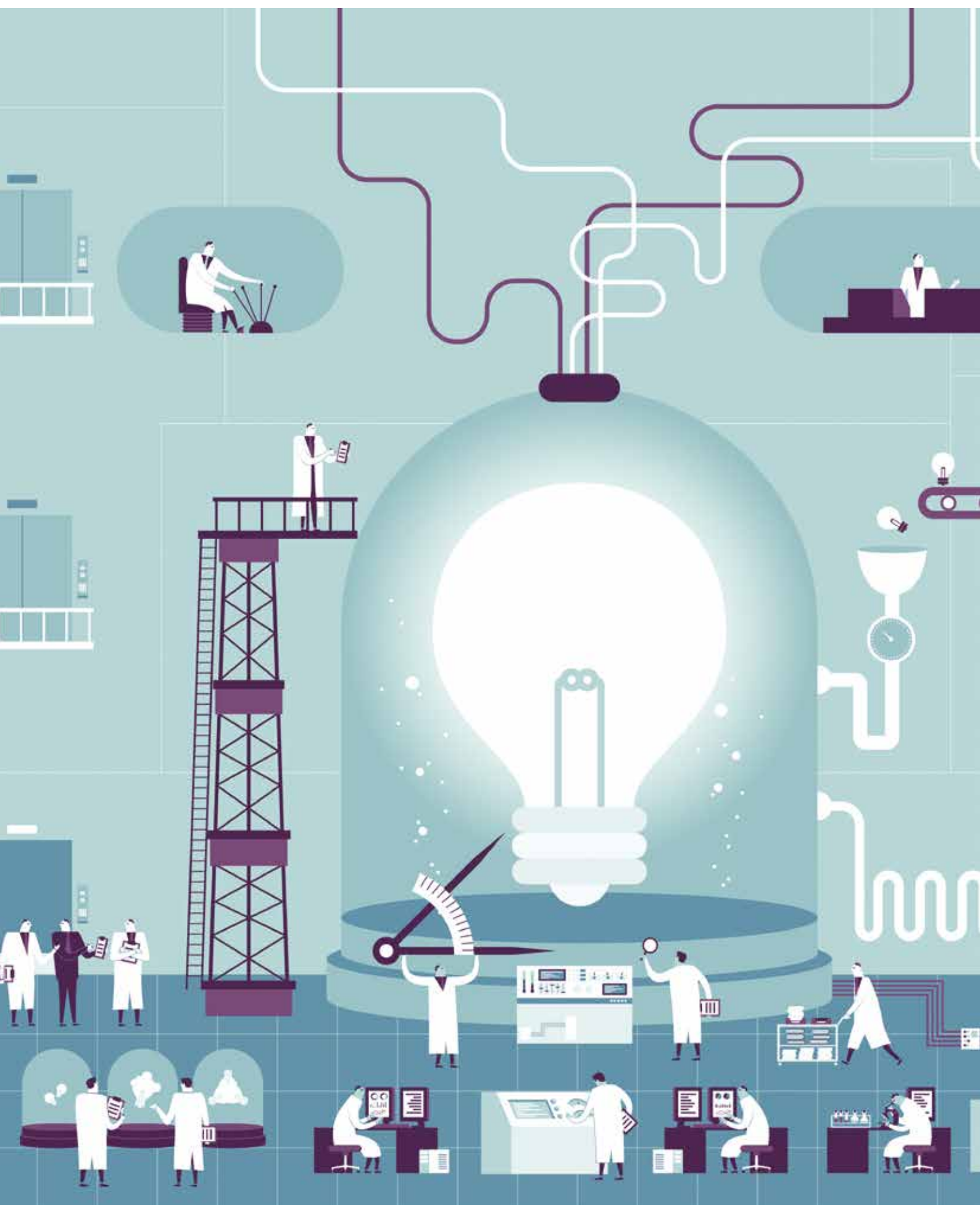
## AFTERWARDS

- Confirm receipt of your submission.
- Check if there are opportunities to speak to decision makers. Will there be a public hearing where you could explain your key concerns? You might consider calling the contact person to arrange a meeting, or asking for a meeting with your local Member of Parliament to explain your views and seek their support.
- Share your submission, eg through social media, or sending it to friends and neighbours. This might encourage other people to make a submission too. If others do make a submission, it is better if they use their own words and don't simply copy yours.
- Could you use the material in your submission to write a letter or opinion piece for local media to help build support?

It is important to remember that consent authorities are required to consider submissions, but they do not have to follow them. In *New Century Developments Pty Ltd v Baulkham Hills Shire Council*, the council rejected an application for a Muslim place of worship after receiving some 5,000 objections. The Land and Environment Court overturned that decision and granted approval, as the development was permissible under the relevant planning controls (and the objections were based on unfounded fears and racial prejudice, not planning matters).

A large number of submissions is helpful in demonstrating strong community concern, but will not necessarily change the decision.

**Amelia Thorpe is Research Director (Impact and Engagement) and an Associate Professor in Law at UNSW. She lectures in planning law and is the community representative on the City of Sydney Local Planning Panel.**







# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND THE CITY

WITH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLANS PROMISED ACROSS THE NSW PLANNING SYSTEM IT IS TIMELY TO LOOK AT THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS WHO HAVE ENGAGED WITH THE PLANNING PROCESS IN THE PAST. **DALLAS ROGERS** AND **CAMERON MCAULIFFE** EXPLAIN WHAT THEY FOUND WHEN THEY TALKED TO GROUPS.

**T**he participation of the city's residents in planning and development decision making is increasingly common in cities like Sydney. The right to 'have your say' has been extended to those who are often most affected by changes in our urban environments. Yet, processes of participatory planning and community engagement struggle to reconcile the varied expectations and desires that communities bring to the consultation table, leaving many residents disillusioned by the very processes designed to include, engage and inspire them.

In an attempt to better understand this conundrum, we recently analysed how Sydneysiders engage in the politics of urban development in Sydney. The research involved a set of focus groups conducted with resident action groups and other urban alliances from the greater Sydney metropolitan area. We then used an expert panel to further analyse the focus group findings in relation to the capacity of the NSW planning system to incorporate public input. We were interested in understanding how local resident and metropolitan alliances planned their encounters with government and developers around specific city developments.

We started with an idea from the Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe and we take a deep dive into the political philosophy of Mouffe in our research report. But, in short, Mouffe points out that despite the best efforts of different groups to come to agreement, people routinely disagree. Because of these disagreements, she claims that for different groups to productively work together their political interactions with others

need to be shifted away from active hostility and opposition, which she calls 'antagonism'. Mouffe claims that rigid opposition should be moderated into more adversarial positions, whereby each group is prepared to enter the messy politics of negotiation and debate, which she calls 'agonism'.

For Mouffe, agonism is productive because it represents a commitment to achieve an outcome despite the different expectations and positions of each group. It is a commitment to *ongoing* engagement across points of difference that is key for Mouffe. While Mouffe's ideas are popular in urban planning theory, little research has considered the conditions that might allow different groups to move from outright opposition to enter the messy politics of a development affecting them. In our focus groups, we talked to resident groups and metropolitan alliances who had used both rigid opposition towards a development as well as getting more involved in the messy business of negotiation and debate with a range of government departments and developers.

In broad terms, we found many people were dissatisfied with the government's attempts to engage them in development decision making, including, what they saw as, unproductive processes that dismissed their voices as NIMBYism and a nuisance to the government's progressive urban planning proposals. But within this broad context, we also found moments of alignment and negotiation, where groups with different expectations found ways to work together despite their differences.

### RETHINKING RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

When we asked the resident groups and alliances why they were operating in the ways outlined above, some claimed that the planning system was broken, or that the planning system now served powerful developers, or that community consultation and engagement was a farce.

We found that some of the new metropolitan community alliances were engaged with development proposals and projects via a very diverse set of political activities. It is not just through metropolitan strategic planning or local development assessment consultation processes that these alliances contributed to the planning and development of their cities and neighbourhoods. They were also engaged through political lobbying and political party activities, and through the media.

In other words, the metropolitan alliances stepped right outside the government designed community consultation events and the formal avenues available to them through the urban planning system. They mobilised local and metropolitan resistance and used whatever political tools were available to them to bring about urban change. For example, resident resistance could take the form of an antagonistic

opment is not enough, whether it happens at the strategic front end of the development process, or later as the specific plans take form. It is also the processes that determine what participation is and how it will be incorporated in a development's decision making processes that need to open up. Importantly, participatory planning should be a space to critique and hold to account the decisions of governments and the actions of developers in our cities – a place to question how public land and resources are used and distributed.

### THE ROLE FOR RIGID OPPOSITION AND OPEN DEBATE

If we want to truly engage the people of our city in the processes of city making, then we need to allow residents to decide on their own engagement methods, processes and agendas. The people involved in our focus groups did not accept the boundaries that were placed around 'community engagement' by governments or developers. Recognising the limitations of formal processes of participation, they sought other ways to have their voices heard; and here, we return to the ideas of Chantal Mouffe. We found that rather than

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***“Individuals and broader community alliances are assembling themselves outside the formal politics of the urban planning and development to create new ways to contribute to city making.”***

act, a lashing-out against a highly inequitable plan for delivering housing, transport or infrastructure in their city.

In these cases, their rigid opposition was not only a manifestation of their inability to remedy what they saw as the inequities in their city, but it was also a response to the government's formal engagement processes that did not have room for their vision of appropriate urban development. Many participants in our focus groups viewed the participatory planning process as a *fait accompli*, where community consultation was only tinkering at the edges of plans that had already been set in motion by others.

Much participatory planning research has focused on the consultations events that are organised by government. But we are paying more attention to the diverse methods that residents use to influence or protest against urban developments, many of which fall outside the formal government-created engagement events. We are interested in the possibilities for community action that hold to account governments and developers. When residents create their own spaces for participatory planning the scope for urban change can be vastly different.

We found that it is not just governments or their community engagement consultants that shape the way residents can inform urban development. Individuals and broader community alliances are assembling themselves outside the formal politics of the urban planning and development to create new ways to contribute to city making. We need to think about participatory planning as more than the government's formal community engagement processes.

For example, providing room for commentary on a devel-

moving from rigid opposition (antagonism) to a more adversarial position (agonism), as Mouffe suggests, the resident groups and community alliances involved in our focus groups used many different types of political action in an attempt to influence a development.

In our study, we explored how different resident groups and alliances used a variety of political tools to disrupt the actions of those with the power to shape a development. Doing so allowed us to trace some of the transitions that resident action groups and their members underwent in their attempts to influence a development. In many cases, they used political practices that fell outside of the formal government-designed community engagement events, but they also viewed these engagement events as useful sites for political action nonetheless.

Two key reasons were given for working outside the government events in our focus groups. First, many residents stated that they did not trust these engagement processes. Second, many residents wanted to comment on the decisions that had already been taken and were, therefore, off the consultation agenda, such as the housing affordability targets. Some focus group participants stated that the formal engagement processes of government often failed to adequately address the equity concerns of some dissenting community groups.

Therefore, we wanted to investigate the different strategies and tactics used by resident action groups in their attempts to influence urban development processes, the levels of success of these different approaches, and the ways that informal resident-led action interface with the formal urban planning system and the engagement events of government.



## NOT ALL NIMBYS ARE THE SAME

When analysing our data, it was necessary to further refine Mouffe's understanding of antagonism to better account for the actions of individuals and alliances in our focus groups. In our research report, *Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning*, we discuss three further modalities of antagonism to better understand the transitions that our participants made from antagonism to agonism. These are outlined as (1) rigid antagonists, (2) soft antagonists, and (3) strategic antagonists.

Rigid antagonists had a strong commitment to an oppositional approach to community activism in the focus groups, particularly within the smaller and more locally focused resident action groups. For these groups, their rigid antagonism was demonstrated through a single-minded resistance to any urban development in their area – some people call this classic NIMBYism. Rigid antagonists were uncompromising when they reacted against what they saw as more powerful players in the city. These groups suggested that they would 'fight' the urban development until the end, and this was typical of comments by these

community engagement and participation. They were willing to compromise and debate issues, they were open to different views, but they refused to be confined to the formal community engagement events of government. The inability of some community groups to affect existing power relations in the formal community participation events led them to choose to operate from outside of the formal planning politics to influence the development. They remained committed to the formal processes, but used informal actions to support their attempts to negotiate from 'inside the tent'. The take home point is that the strategic antagonists reported the most success with their development campaigns.

## CONCLUSION

For all the talk about the inability of NIMBYs to change their view about a development, or the devastation wrought by untrammelled urban development, governments at all levels are formalising community participation into the planning of our cities and regions. These formal attempts to institute more participatory planning mechanisms designed to engage communities in the planning process

***“The success of agonistic approaches on the part of resident action groups and community alliances in our research was dependent on the same commitment to negotiate a productive development outcome.”***

groups and demonstrated their zero-sum game mentality in contestations over planned urban development. Most importantly, this persistent rigid antagonism led to these groups often being placed outside of the politics of urban development, where decisions were made. The take home point is that rigid antagonists – the classic NIMBYs – were often not very effective political operators.

The soft antagonists wanted to be a part of the formal negotiations about the developments affecting them, which often involved the state and/or local government. Many soft antagonists participated in state government community consultations events, but reported that they remained outside of the politics of these urban developments because many of the decisions had already been made. In other words, despite their involvement in dialogue and debate, they did not think that they had an impact on the development.

This soft antagonistic position meant that even when they were included in the formal politics of community engagement, these groups felt that their voices had not been heard. They felt that they were, in effect, marginalised and co-opted through their inclusion in the formal community engagement events. The take home point is that soft antagonists – those who decide to move beyond being a classic NIMBY and engage with the government's community engagement events – reported they were also often not very effective political operators.

The strategic antagonists often had a strong and long history of collective community activism. They moved strategically between formal and informal processes of

are laudable. However, there is a tendency for participation to be framed as an end-in-itself, rather than as a means to produce a more democratic city.

The success of agonistic approaches on the part of resident action groups and community alliances in our research was dependent on the same commitment to negotiate a productive development outcome. Where this commitment to genuinely include many voices was limited by the processes of participatory planning, some groups found it more effective to move outside the formal urban planning and development processes to take a more antagonistic position in their attempts to produce a more democratic outcome.

Antagonistic action, whether in the form of protests, political lobbying or media interventions, may work to support the actions of these groups from 'inside the development tent', whilst also pointing to the limitations of our current participatory regimes.

Therefore, for participatory planning to be effective it must be framed within a context of a negotiable set of urban planning agendas, regulatory practices, and planning decisions, as well as an always-contestable and contested political process defined by its high frequency of regulatory and political change.

Dr Dallas Rogers is Program Director of the Master of Urbanism at the School of Architecture, Design and Planning, University of Sydney. Cameron McAuliffe Senior Lecturer in Human Geography & Urban Studies at Western Sydney University. A link to the research discussed is with the online version of this article. Their research was funded by the Henry Halloran Trust.

# AUSTRALIA'S SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

IN THIS OVERVIEW, **ROBERTA RYAN AND ALEX LAWRIE** EXPLAIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA, HOW IT OPERATES AND THE CHALLENGES IT FACES.

**A**ustralia is a federation with three levels of government – the commonwealth (national), states and territories (provincial), and local government. The federation formed in 1901 when the states and territories vested powers and tax raising capacity in the commonwealth through the constitution. Local government pre-dates the commonwealth, and councils are often referred to as ‘creatures of state governments’ as the legal basis for their incorporation, powers and supervision are set out in state legislation, rather than the commonwealth constitution. In effect, this means the states and territories are the genesis of national and local governments in Australia.

The commonwealth constitution sets out the division of powers and responsibilities between the commonwealth and state and territory governments. However, it does not recognise local government and there is often overlap in responsibilities for key services delivered by local councils. Land use planning is with the states and territories as it is not explicitly mentioned in the commonwealth constitution and the states and territories then delegate council's

responsibility for local strategic planning and development assessment. A 1988 referendum to formally recognise local government in the commonwealth constitution was defeated, and subsequent campaigns for another referendum have also been defeated. However, local government is represented at Australia's chief inter-governmental decision-making forum, the Council of Australian Governments, which includes each state and territory premier (chief minister), the Prime Minister of Australia, and the head of the Australian Local Government Association which is the industry association for council elected representatives.

The entire Australian land mass is not incorporated into local government areas. Some sparsely populated parts of rural and remote areas are ‘unincorporated’ and administered by the states and territories.

The Australian Capital Territory (Australia's seat of government and home to the national capital and parliament) is the only state or territory that does not have a formal system of local government and the Territory

FIGURE 1 AUSTRALIA'S THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

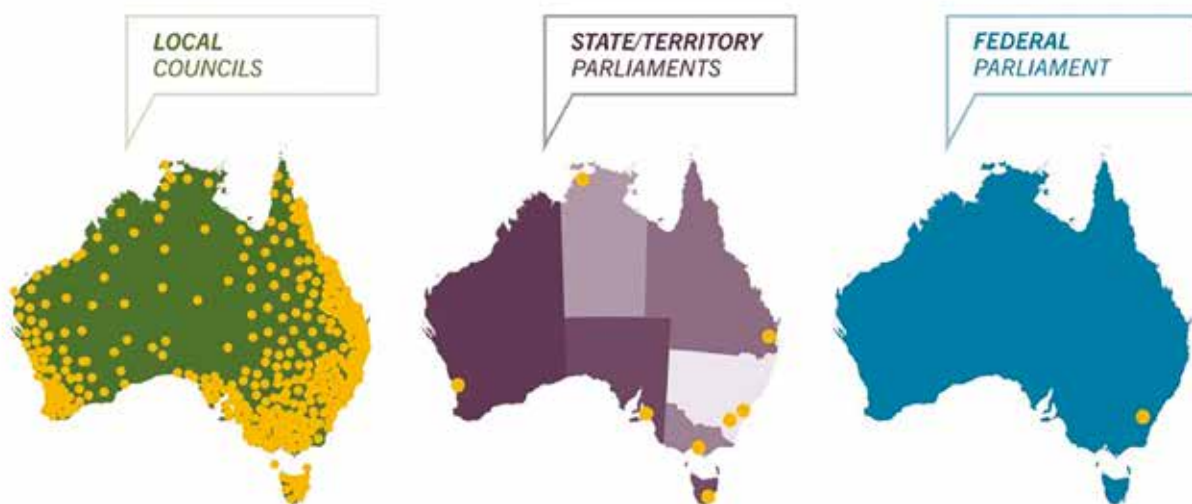




FIGURE 2 UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF NSW

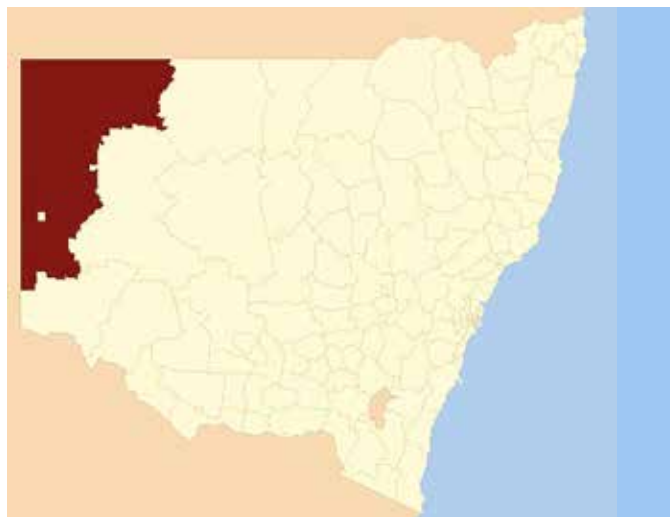
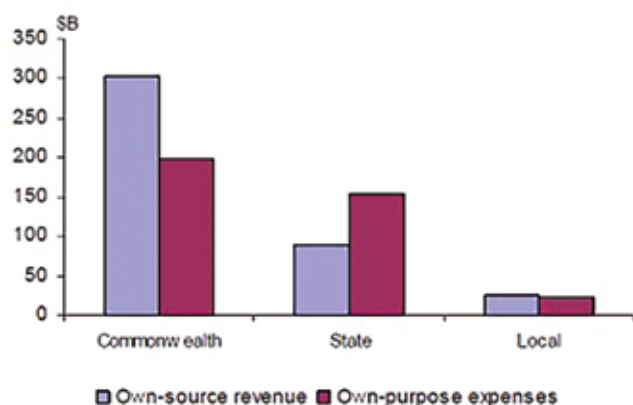


FIGURE 3 AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS



FIGURE 4 OWN SOURCE REVENUE AND EXPENSES BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT



1. Multi jurisdictional sector (mainly public universities) not shown.  
 2. Own source revenue defined as total revenue minus grant revenue; own purpose expenses defined as total expenses minus grants to other levels of government.  
 Source: ABS 5512.0 2007-08

Government performs local government functions in that jurisdiction.

### NUMBER, SIZE AND TYPE

From a high of more than 1,000 at the time of federation, there are now 537 local governments across Australia. They employ over 200,000, about 10 per cent of the total public sector workforce and more than Australia's mining sector. About 60 per cent of the workforce is employed in regional, rural and remote areas.

Australia's local governments are often referred to as 'council', 'city' or 'municipality' in urban areas, and 'shire' or 'town' in regional, rural and remote areas. 'County councils' also exist in some jurisdictions as formal corporations of two or more councils established for the purpose of shared service delivery, such as delivering water infrastructure across large regional and rural areas.

Like the states and territories, local governments across Australia vary substantially in population size, land area, and economic dominance. The largest council by population is Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, with over 1.2million residents whilst the smallest has just a few hundred. The largest by land area is East Pilbara, a remote mining community in Western Australia covering 380,000km<sup>2</sup> whilst the smallest is Peppermint Grove covering just 1.5km<sup>2</sup> around the West Australian capital of Perth.

Similarly, local governments vary substantially in the revenue they collect and spend. Those councils that include the central business districts of capital cities are often referred to as 'billion dollar councils'. Higher CBD land values means they collect substantially more revenue from property rates than other councils, and they often provide larger and more complex services and infrastructure. For example, Brisbane City Council runs the largest bus network in Australia.

Australia's capital city councils also typically have their own legislative charter, such as the City of Sydney Act or City of Brisbane Act, which provides for an expanded range of powers and responsibilities. For example, the City of Brisbane Act allows the Lord Mayor to prepare the budget that is then approved by the Council, and allows Councillors to be assigned a portfolio of responsibility such as transport or community services. In contrast, the budget of non-capital councils in other states and territories is typically prepared by the general manager and senior executive for approval by council. As another example, the City of Sydney Act establishes voting rights for CBD businesses, whereas businesses in non-capital councils do not have these rights.

### FUNCTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Australia's first local governments were established in Perth (capital of Western Australia) in 1838, followed by Adelaide (capital of South Australia) in 1840, and then both

## KEY FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

• Infrastructure and property services, including roads, bridges, footpaths, drainage, and waste	• Planning and development approval
• Provision of recreation facilities, such as parks, sports fields and stadiums, swimming pools, sport centres and halls, camping grounds	• Administration of facilities such as ports and marinas, cemeteries, and parking
• Health services such as water and food inspection, immunisation, toilet facilities, and noise control	• Cultural facilities and services, such as libraries, galleries and museums
• Community services, such as child and aged care, community care and welfare services	• Water and sewerage services in some states
• Building services, including inspections, licensing, enforcement	• Other services, such as abattoirs, sale-yards and airports

Sydney (capital of New South Wales, Australia's most populous state) and Melbourne (capital of Victoria, Australia's second most populous state) in 1842. They were established to provide property and town improvement services around the early colonial capitals and have since expanded to provide 'services to people'. Local governments now provide an increasingly diverse and complex range of economic, social and environmental functions such as child care and youth centres, libraries and aquatic centres, economic development, local environmental management and community health.

In Australia, local councils are governed by elected councillors ('the council'), and an executive led by a general manager and senior executives responsible for particular portfolios such as corporate governance and finance, community services, assets and engineering, and planning and environment ('the council organisation'). Councils have a high degree of flexibility in the organisational structure they adopt so the senior executive portfolios often differ from council to council.

The responsibilities of elected councillors and the executive also differ depending on the various states and territory local government legislation. However, elected councillors generally act as the formal decision-making body that approves strategic plans, policies and budgets prepared by the general manager, senior executives and staff. In contrast, executives are responsible for operational decision-making such as human resource allocation and finances. In most cases, contact between elected councillors and the council organisation is facilitated through the general manager. Elected councillors are responsible for appointing and overseeing the work of the general manager only.

Generally, the mayor also has a ceremonial role for a council and can have the deciding vote on a policy as there is typically an odd number of elected councillors, and the number of councillors ranges from as few as five to as many as fifteen. However, this is not the case in every state and territory. For example, mayors in Queensland are directly

elected and have greater responsibility for preparing policies and budgets. In contrast, only a handful of mayors in New South Wales are directly elected and it is the prerogative of councils in that state to choose the method of election. Most opt for indirect election where the mayor is elected by fellow councillors, but only for a minimum two year term rather than the full electoral cycle.

You can see how the NSW Local Government Act sets out the roles and responsibilities of mayors, councillors and general managers on page 27.

## FINANCE AND FUNDING

Australia's federation has a high level of vertical fiscal imbalance. The commonwealth collects most tax revenue (over 70 per cent), but spends less than half (about 40 per cent). To remedy this, Australia has a complex system of intergovernmental transfers to redistribute excess commonwealth revenue to the states and territories and local governments. A formula of horizontal fiscal equalisation aims to ensure all states, territories and local governments, theoretically, have the financial capacity to provide similar levels of service and infrastructure to their communities. Generally, local government is the most evenly matched level of government in terms of the amount of revenue it collects and what it spends. However, local government is increasingly handed 'unfunded mandates' where other levels of government transfer service and infrastructure delivery to councils without transferring the revenue needed to provide these.

Australia's local governments hold around \$A400 billion in assets, and collect over \$A15 billion annually in property rates. Whilst these rates account for about 40 per cent of total council revenue, they make up just 3 per cent of all tax revenue collected in Australia. Other major sources of council revenue include fees and charges (such as parking fines) and rental income from properties (about 20 per cent), and grants from other levels of government (about 10 per cent). The amount of revenue councils can raise from rates is often capped by state and territory governments at



the rate of inflation, although councils can make special applications to increase rates above the cap. This now common practice of 'rate capping' is often the subject of conflict between councils and states and territories.

Australia's local governments receive annual grants from both the commonwealth and state and territory governments. Some are recurrent 'general purpose' grants and can be used for whatever purpose a council desires, whereas others are 'specific purpose' and can only be spent on activities determined by the commonwealth or states and territories, such as maintaining local roads. A range of criteria is used to determine the grant amounts and the formula is often the subject of conflict.

Again, revenue sources vary substantially between the states and territories. For example, South Australian councils collect 60 per cent of revenue from property rates, compared to just 25 per cent for councils in the Northern Territory. This is largely due to different methods each state and territory uses to value the land on which property rates are based. Regardless, own-source revenue (such as property rates and fines) represent at least 85 per cent of all council revenue in all states and territories. Local councils expend roughly \$A34 billion annually, about 6 per cent of total public sector expenditure. Housing and community amenities (24 per cent), transport and communication (22.5 per cent) and general public services (17.2 per cent) are the main items of expenditure. However, again, these vary substantially depending on the dominant functions councils perform in each state and territory. For example:

- In Victoria, local governments have a longer history of providing 'services to people' and the proportion spent on social security and welfare (12 per cent) is higher than other jurisdictions (about 5 per cent).
- In Queensland, local governments

have a role providing public transport and the proportion spent on transport and communications (29.5 per cent) is higher than other jurisdictions (about 20 per cent).

- In New South Wales, local governments have historically provided social and affordable housing and the proportion spent on housing (26 per cent) is higher than other jurisdictions (about 20 per cent).

## REFORM

Like most parts of the world, Australia's local government system is the subject of never-ending reform. Generally, these reforms have focused on altering the boundaries of council administrative jurisdictions through amalgamation, changing governance structures and processes such as codes of conduct for elected councillors and land use planning decision-making. There is greater reluctance to reform

the basis of local government finances. The continual focus of the states and territories on structural reform, whilst ignoring financial underpinnings of the sector, is a site of deep and ongoing conflict between levels of government. For example, the Victorian Government dismissed all local governments in the early 1990s in order to drastically reconfigure boundaries and reduce the number of councils, and the state government was voted out of office not long after on the back of voter discontent. Similarly, the Queensland Government halved the number of local council in 2008, and several of the amalgamated councils have since successfully reversed these mergers.

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FIGURE 5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE BY FUNCTION

Expenditure		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$m	1	3	17	0	10	0	0	32
	%	–	–	0.2	–	0.5	–	–	0.1
Education	\$m	57	106	2	4	–	–	4	173
	%	0.6	1.4	–	0.1	–	–	0.9	0.5
Fuel and energy	\$m	–	–	3	3	11	–	1	17
	%	–	–	–	0.1	0.5	–	0.2	0.1
General public services	\$m	1478	1256	2108	516	131	137	163	5789
	%	14.3	16.5	24.0	13.9	6.5	20.2	35.7	17.2
Health	\$m	69	159	44	64	68	11	3	417
	%	0.7	2.1	0.5	1.7	3.4	1.6	0.7	1.2
Housing and community amenities	\$m	2827	1615	2153	626	538	143	90	7991
	%	27.3	21.2	24.5	16.9	26.6	21.1	19.7	23.8
Mining, manufacturing and construction	\$m	199	–	69	38	37	–	–	342
	%	1.9	–	0.8	1.0	1.8	–	–	1.0
Other economic affairs	\$m	339	386	198	117	104	30	29	1204
	%	3.3	5.1	2.3	3.2	5.1	4.4	6.3	3.6
Public debt transactions	\$m	246	71	341	32	35	5	1	730
	%	2.4	0.9	3.9	0.9	1.7	0.7	0.2	2.2
Public order and safety	\$m	323	169	131	131	42	7	20	825
	%	3.1	2.2	1.5	3.5	2.1	1.0	4.4	2.5
Recreation and culture	\$m	1474	1409	948	835	463	117	59	5304
	%	14.2	18.5	10.8	22.5	22.9	17.2	12.9	15.8
Social security and welfare	\$m	417	937	45	179	127	19	34	1759
	%	4.0	12.3	0.5	4.8	6.3	2.8	7.4	5.2
Transport and communications	\$m	1974	1407	2590	927	451	184	47	7580
	%	19.0	18.4	29.5	25.0	22.3	27.1	10.3	22.5
Other	\$m	960	114	133	230	7	26	7	1477
	%	9.3	1.5	1.5	6.2	0.3	3.8	1.5	4.4
Total	\$m	10 363	7632	8782	3703	2024	679	457	33 640
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

# LOCAL COUNCILS: MORE THAN ROADS RATES AND RUBBISH

LOCAL COUNCILS IN AUSTRALIA WERE SET UP IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY TO RAISE FUNDS AND MANAGE RURAL AND OUTER URBAN ROADS.

**MAIRE SHEEHAN** EXPLORES HOW COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE CHANGED AND HOW COUNCILS ARE ORGANISED TO MEET THEIR INCREASING RESPONSIBILITIES.

**I**n 1919 a local government act was passed in NSW. It outlined the responsibilities of councils. It was the beginning of the idea that councils are responsible for 'roads, rates 'n rubbish. Councils had the power to raise rates using a formula included in the Act.

The federal government included road grants for local councils in its budgets. In the 1970s the Whitlam government expanded the funds to include 'general purpose grants'.

From the 1970s the responsibility to provide physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and sewerage expanded to include administering compliance with state legislation such as town planning, companion animals etc. Councils were also made responsible for an increasing number of community services in what has been called 'cost shifting' where the cost is moved from state to local councils. The increasing responsibilities have put significant pressure on council budgets.

As councils were handed more and more responsibilities they began to increase rates to meet the cost of the extra services. The Wran Government intervened and introduced rate capping in 1977. The cap is on the total amount of rates a council can raise. It is not a cap on individual property rates. Councils use a formula to allocate the total rate cap amount across properties in the council area.

Prior to 1993, the mayor and councillors employed the staff and could get involved in day to day operations. Councillors also had autonomy under the Act to decide how, where and on what it spent council funds. Councils also held closed meetings – members of the public were not allowed to attend meetings.

Three items in the 1993 legislation changed this relatively free decision making power councillors had.

- **Separation of powers** – This separated the role of the main decision makers (the councillors) from the administration (the staff). The Town Clerks became general managers (GM) or Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and



***“Rates go nowhere near meeting the cost of council’s obligations to administer state government functions and deliver community services. The gap is increasing as councils are given more administrative and service responsibilities – cost shifting – without additional funding”***

they employ and manage the staff. Councillors make the policy decisions and the administration under the GM/CEO implements the decisions

- **Open meetings** – Councils are required to hold meeting open to the public. Many councils now live cast their meetings.
- **Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R)** – The law requires councils to develop a 5–10 year community plan, annual budgets and reports to the state government using the IP&R process included in the Local Government Act.

#### DO COUNCILLORS MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT EVERY ACTIVITY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

No. For example decisions about utilities such as electricity, gas, the NBN, state roads, and services such as schools and hospitals are not made by local councils. Decisions for residential and commercial developments have been moved to the state government or state managed planning panels.

#### SO WHAT ARE COUNCILS RESPONSIBLE FOR?

The state government gives council responsibilities to them. Some responsibilities such as roads, rates and rubbish have been with councils for many years. Administering compliance with state laws has increased significantly in recent times. For example regulating state laws covering companion animals, food safety in bars, restaurants, take-aways, parking, swimming pool safety, managing contaminated land, controlling noxious weeds and managing flood controls are all done by councils. All these compliance roles are administered by the staff under the supervision of the GM/CEO and take up a significant amount of council resources and funding.

Councils are also responsible for maintaining a range of assets such as roads, buildings, parks, sporting fields, swimming pools etc. Most of these assets do not generate income and most such as roads and heritage buildings are costly to maintain.

Councils are finding that the governments are shifting more and more of the cost of services from state and federal government (mainly state) to local councils. Research by Local Government NSW over eight plus years found cost shifting was increasing. The shift was highest in urban councils. Councils get no extra funding to manage and carry out these activities. If councils want additional funds for essential services, they must apply to the state government for a Special Rate Levy and meet certain requirements.

Councils were once responsible for making development decisions. Now they are responsible for assessing

and preparing reports on development applications before handing over to a decision maker outside of council. New planning bodies set up under state laws, like the Greater Sydney Commission, will rely on councils to resource the implementation of their plans.

#### WHERE DO COUNCILS GET THEIR FUNDS?

Councils collect revenue from rates, service fees, investments and a decreasing amount of government grants.

Council rates were capped more than 40 years ago. It means that the total revenue from rates in a council area is capped and can only increase by the amount determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). To divide up the rate cap and set the rates for individual land lots councils use a formula which includes the Valuer General’s land valuations. If the land lot has multiple dwellings, the rate amount is divided amongst the various dwelling owners. Rates are not paid by government or by religious groups.

Research done by the Local Government Association NSW found that rates go nowhere near meeting the cost of council’s obligations to administer state government functions and deliver community services. The gap is increasing as councils are given more administrative and service responsibilities – cost shifting – without additional funding.

Councils also raise revenue from fees that councils set like pool entry, gym fees, use of council facilities such as halls, parks for events, cafe footpath tables and chairs.

The state government sets other fees. This includes multiple fees for development applications, building certificates, compliance certificates etc. Councils do not control these fees.

Government grants are a diminishing source of revenue as governments cut or cap grant funding.

Council revenue from investment is minor and comes mainly from term deposits with a slightly better return than a cash account.

#### WHAT DO COUNCILLORS DO AND WHAT ARE THE LIMITS ON THEIR DECISIONS?

Councillors make decisions about where the council will put its resources and spend funds. The state government sets the rules and limits (apart from grants from the federal government) on these decisions. The state government sets financial targets that councils must meet.

The rules on how councils must plan and allocate resources are in the IP&R in the Local Government Act NSW. The IP&R includes a Community Strategic Plan (CSP), required by state law. Once the five to ten year CSP is adopted by



council, all decisions on resources and budgets must fit within the plan. The council can change the CSP but must consult with the community. The assumption is that the CSP is endorsed by the councillors on behalf of the community. The mayor and councillors have a role in engaging with the local community when the CSP is being developed and are expected to abide by and promote the plan when it is adopted. The council administration organise the process and write the CSP for endorsement at a council meeting

The CSP can include issues that are not direct council responsibility. Examples include schools, health services, affordable housing, green spaces and other social infrastructure essential for a livable community. Council can advocate for adequate and better state services and infrastructure for its community.

Councillors employ the GM/CEO who employs and supervises all other staff. The councillors review and make decisions on reports provided by the staff. The reports may be written by staff or by a contractor with specialist knowledge. The GM/CEO guides and advises councillors and council staff in developing the processes and documents for IP&R and all reports to the councillors. When a decision is made the GM/CEO supervises the implementation by the staff.

You can see how the NSW Local Government Act sets out the roles and responsibilities of mayor, councilors and general manager on page 27

Councillors can also bring forward their own ideas for action as a motion to a council meeting. Councils usually have a policy that requires councillors to lodge motions by a certain date, so that the administration can provide advice on its legality and any impacts it may have on the CSP or the budget. All report recommendations and motions are put to the vote and passed or rejected by a majority of councillors.

## WHAT MAKES A WELL RUN AND DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL?

Many factors affect how well a council functions. The working relationship between the governing body (the councillors) and the administration, the working relationships between the councillors and the expertise and capacity of the administration are key.

The mayor is the main communication link between the governing body and the administration, between the council as a whole and the community and also chairs council meetings. The role of the mayor has been expanded and detailed in recent changes to the Local Government Act.

A person who is clear on the behaviour expected of councillors, is open and transparent, understands and abides by the governing rules, is a good listener, negotiator and problem solver will likely have the leadership abilities and skills of a good mayor.

Similarly, councillors will perform best if they understand the behaviour expected of councillors, are open and transparent, understand and abide by the governing rules, are good listeners, negotiators and problem solvers when working with fellow councillors and the community. This is especially important when a councillor is promoting a new initiative or idea. Discussing it with fellow councillors to ensure they have a clear understanding of the intent and the potential impact is key.

Councils, like the community, can include people who have biases, are opinionated, not open to new ideas or won't talk with particular people. A councillor does not choose the councillors who are elected with them; the people choose them. The challenge for councillors is to open communication links with fellow councillors so common understandings are developed and differences respected.

In some councils, the councillors split into groups. Some groups are political party based but not all. Metro councils generally have more councillors elected from a political party ticket than regional and rural councils. Some councillors are members of political parties but run for council as independents.

Many newly elected councillors are surprised by the demanding workload, the challenges in developing positive working relationships with some of their fellow councillors and the technical complexity of the many papers they have to read when preparing to make a decision. It is not unusual to find council meeting papers up to 500 or 700 pages of engineering, finance, development and other technical documents.

## HOW MUCH ARE MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS PAID?

Mayors and councillors are not paid a wage. They are paid a stipend that is generally well below the average wage and varies depending on the category the Remuneration Tribunal puts the council in. The highest is the City of Sydney where councillors are paid up to \$38.5k and the Lord Mayor up to \$212k. Metro councils are on a scale depending on whether they are large, medium or small. For mayors the stipend is between \$84k and \$43k and for councillors \$29k to \$18.5k. The same categories apply to regional and rural councils. The highest are major regional centres such as Newcastle and the lowest are in rural councils which range from \$25.25k for the mayor to \$9.3k for councillors.

## CHALLENGES

For the vast majority of councils trying to deliver all the services a community needs or wants is a challenge, especially when state government requirements and cost shifting take up a large chunk of the budget.

The challenge of making decisions for the whole community when there are strongly held and differing views within the community is not new but is growing as budgets are limited and many social, economic and environment changes are happening. Collaborating with the community on where council should spend its funds and put its efforts is of growing importance.

Many decision directly impacting communities do not sit with or are being taken from councils. As a result, collaborating with and advocating for communities to other levels of government is becoming increasingly important.

Knowing and understanding how the system works and collaborating with the community is increasingly part of effective leadership for councillors. Councils have come a long way from the old style closed council meetings culture.

**Maire Sheehan was Mayor of Leichhardt between 1999 and 2004. She provides candidate briefings as well as induction and governance sessions for elected members.**

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MAYOR, COUNCILLORS AND GENERAL MANAGER IN NSW

NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT SETS OUT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MAYORS, COUNCILLORS AND GENERAL MANAGERS. IT IS USEFUL IN DEALING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT ROLES SO YOU HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS WHEN DEALING WITH COUNCIL AND KNOW WHO YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO IF YOU WANT TO GET AN ISSUE ADDRESSED. THE TABLE BELOW SETS OUT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAYORS, COUNCILLORS AND GENERAL MANAGERS AS SET OUT IN THE NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

ROLE OF MAYOR	ROLE OF COUNCILLORS	ROLE OF GENERAL MANAGER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be the leader of the council and a leader in the local community,</li> <li>• advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness,</li> <li>• be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities,</li> <li>• exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council,</li> <li>• preside at meetings of the council,</li> <li>• ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with this Act,</li> <li>• ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,</li> <li>• promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,</li> <li>• promote partnerships between the council and key stakeholders,</li> <li>• advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the council,</li> <li>• in conjunction with the general manager, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the council and the local community,</li> <li>• carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office,</li> <li>• represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an active and contributing member of the governing body,</li> <li>• make considered and well informed decisions as a member of the governing body,</li> <li>• participate in the development of the integrated planning and reporting framework,</li> <li>• represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community,</li> <li>• facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body,</li> <li>• uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body,</li> <li>• make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct the day-to-day management of the council in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council,</li> <li>• implement, without undue delay, lawful decisions of the council,</li> <li>• advise the mayor and the governing body on the development and implementation of the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council,</li> <li>• advise the mayor and the governing body on the appropriate form of community consultation on the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council and other matters related to the council,</li> <li>• prepare, in consultation with the mayor and the governing body, the council's community strategic plan, community engagement strategy, resourcing strategy, delivery program, operational plan and annual report,</li> <li>• ensure that the mayor and other councillors are given timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary to effectively discharge their functions,</li> <li>• exercise any of the functions of the council that are delegated by the council to the general manager,</li> <li>• appoint staff in accordance with the organisation structure determined under this Chapter and the resources approved by the council,</li> <li>• direct and dismiss staff,</li> <li>• implement the council's workforce management strategy,</li> <li>• any other functions conferred or imposed on the general manager by the Act.</li> </ul>





# MASTER PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES

THE SYSTEMS FOR ROADS AND TRANSPORT, WATER AND ECOLOGY, ENERGY, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATIONS ARE ALL PART OF A MASTER PLAN. ROB ROGGEMA EXPLORES HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE MORE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES IN MASTER PLANNING THESE SYSTEMS.

**W**henver an area is developed, or redeveloped planning has to be undertaken. Planning happens in different phases and at different scales.

The design for a garden is, as everyone can understand, something completely different than the design of a regional plan for the entire Sydney basin. Every type of plan has its own detail, and its own elements it is giving insight in. So, it is obvious the design for the garden requires the plan to give detail on the sorts of plants, the types of pavement and other furniture used in the garden. For a regional plan it must be clear where and how many roads will be planned, the number and densities of housing and where the waterways and green structures will appear.

## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan is a category of plans that is somewhere in between the regional plan and the plan for your garden.

A Master Plan is a plan that can be made for a range of scales, but it nearly

always will make clear in the plan what the main systems and structures in an area are, what the planned quantities and qualities are, and what the framework is for further spatial design. Generally, a Master Plan will provide the masses of urban elements, such as buildings and shows where public space of what size and type will be realized. In each of these parts of the Master Plan sustainability aspects can and need to be included.

In a Master Plan you will not find any detailed solution or design proposal.

## SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

The systems and structures in an area are extremely important because they determine the main spatial lay-out of an area.

The systems considered are generally the road and traffic system, the water and ecological system, the energy system and the social and communication system. For each of these, major decisions need to be made as to how these need to operate. And



***“A Master Plan will provide the masses of urban elements, such as buildings and shows where public space of what size and type will be realized. In each of these parts of the Master Plan sustainability aspects can and need to be included.”***



each of these systems can be made more (or less) sustainable.

A more sustainable traffic system prioritises cycling and walking over the use of a car, prefers public transport over solo-use and will stimulate the use of renewable resources for the energy needed to run the traffic system. Also, the size and number of roads is minimised in a sustainable Master Plan in order to give more space to nature and people.

To create a water and ecological system that is sustainable all the water used in an area is minimised, but once used the waste water will be fully recycled. Rainwater is collected and stored as long as possible and made available for reuse. The ecological system profits from an abundant water system as nature needs water to flourish. Additionally, trees are required in abundance to create the habitat for species, and to provide shade for people. It may be clear that in a sustainable Master Plan the space for water and ecology is maximised

and forms the main connective structure in the city.

The energy system can be made sustainable in different ways. To start with, the energy provided to the residents needs to be generated from renewable resources, the use in general needs to be minimised and waste energy needs to be reused if possible. At the same time energy will be lost if it needs to be transported over longer distances, hence (hyper) local energy generations is preferred. The local potentials for renewable energy, such as solar, hydro, wind and geothermal, may determine the location of land use that requires heating, cooling, electricity for their operation. Electricity intensive uses can be best positioned close to where electricity (solar, wind) can be maximally generated.

Once the energy is provided to a neighbourhood the distribution should be conducted in a smart way. If one household does not use its full capacity, that energy can be used else-

where. Via a smart grid the optimal use at different times during the day and night can be negotiated to reach the most sustainable result. When energy is generated using renewable resources as close as possible to where it is used, this will generally be the more sustainable option. It is clear that in the master plan the potential resources must be identified, located and at best, determine the land use

The social and communication system is dependent on networks to become sustainable. These networks can be virtual and, as everyone experiences, require fast internet, but must also consist of daily encounters and face-to-face contacts with neighbours and friends close by. Both systems of network require space in the area. The more space and connections are made available and possible the more sustainable the Master Plan is.

Each of these systems require infrastructure to function. The place where these systems manifest themselves in physical structures determines the way the area is experienced and how sustainable it can become. For instance, if a neighbourhood is dominated by car infrastructure this is not very sustainable and does not makes a very pleasant impression. When an area is dominated by green and water structures and people have easy access to these places, the neighbourhood is more sustainable and makes a pleasant impression.

***“In the case of Waterloo, the Master Plan needs to be made for the redevelopment of the area. This implies the plan cannot be made from scratch such as a greenfield location can. This also means that some elements are fixed, while other can be changed or completely renewed. The final system achieved should be exactly the same as for a greenfield location”***

Each of the systems in its most sustainable way of operation, requires the spatial structures to make these sustainability ambitions reality. The Master Plan is the planning document to provide the spaces needed for this.

#### QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES

A Master Plan should also indicate what quantities of which quality should be realised. This is the case for housing, green and water, and many other functions.

The quantities of housing will for instance determine the density in a certain area. But the quality will determine how this density is realised, as this can be done in many different ways. The balance between higher and lower densities is important here. Higher densities deliver environments that can afford higher investments in public spaces, pedestrian spaces and separate bike paths.

These environments can be located next to and around train or metro stations and the high quality of the public space will attract retail and leisure functions. It is important that these areas also provide the space for green and water storage, for instance on top of other functions (roofs, facades, etc). A more relaxed environment with lower density housing, such as detached, low-rise profiles are generally quieter and require less extensive investments in public spaces. In these areas there is more space for water and ecological zones.

These kinds of typological differences need to be determined in the Master Plan. In every case, when the balance of quantities and qualities is made, the sustainability factors need to be an inherent part of the way these typologies are projected. It often happens that the typologies are no more than a housing typology (high rise, rows, terraces) in a certain density, but the way water, energy, green and social networks are arranged is then forgotten. This should be organised in the Master Plan.

#### FRAMEWORK FOR SPATIAL DESIGN

After the systems and structures and the quantities and qualities are decided, the spatial manifestation of these elements is important to design well. The design includes how build masses are positioned and how light, sun, rain and heat can be accommodated/mitigated in the city. This spatial framework will not in detail design how each and every street, house and park will look, but it will indicate

how the hierarchy of spaces is shaped, how streets are connected and how the relationships are arranged between private and public space.

Moreover, the typology of green and water spaces is visualised in an integrated plan for the buildings, public and private space. This spatial framework is an integral part of the Master Plan and will provide the guidelines for detailed designs of buildings, parks, waterways, streets, squares, energy generation and nature areas. In the next stage after the Master Plan these detailed designs, for neighbourhoods, or individual elements will be designed in great detail.

#### WATERLOO

In the case of Waterloo, the Master Plan needs to be made for the redevelopment of the area. This implies the plan cannot be made from scratch such as a greenfield location can. This also means that some elements are fixed, while other can be changed or completely renewed. The final system achieved should be exactly the same as for a greenfield location.

The first essential step is that the systems and structures of mobility, water, ecology, energy and social aspect are made as sustainable as possible. Systems should be translated into structures that require space. Even if there is no water visible, it should be made clear that water requires additional space in the main structure of the redevelopment.

In the second step the quantities and qualities need to be brought in to balance. It is obvious that a location such as Waterloo will always be an area of higher densities. But this doesn't mean there is only one choice for a certain high-rise typology. And if highest densities are planned, it is important to pay extra attention to the design and quality of the public space to still be able to realise the spaces needed for a sustainable water, ecological and social infrastructure.

The last element of a Master Plan for Waterloo would be the spatial framework in which the aforementioned elements are spatially represented in a logical, moreover beautiful, urban design. In this framework the sustainable systems and qualities must be represented and used to formulate the guidelines for further detailed design projects.

**Rob Roggema is Professor, Sustainable Urban Environments, University of Technology Sydney.**



March  
1978

## 40 YEARS OF INNER VOICE

It is hard to think about the challenges of information sharing in the age before social media and the internet. In March 1978, when organisations were dependent on physical resource

centres, printed leaflets, word of mouth and telephone trees, Regional Council launched into "the information game" with Inner Voice. Forty years on Inner Sydney Voice still has a role to play.

### Editorial ● ●

Several months have gone into the planning of Inner Voice - the newsletter of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Co-op Limited.

And the last weeks have very much reflected local residents' reactions over the years at meetings, workshops and seminars - "Well, yes, we've been talking for hours about doing this, isn't it about time we cut the cackle and start doing?"

Result - 'Inner Voice: No. 1', an issue we thought might get to 20 pages, then 40 and, when laid out, reached 62. Everyone was eager to contribute - no-one refused, yet lots of pieces missed what with the mail strike, pre-Easter commitments, annual holidays and the like.

The Regional Council is now officially in 'The Information Game' - but looking back we wonder when ever we weren't in it. And if we've been in the participation game, which is about decision-making and taking action to make changes, then of course we've been in the information game - information being a prerequisite in that process.

In its first 2 years the Regional Council set the framework for its developmental work. Its 4 principal areas of activity were in housing, family support, planning and community activities.

And in everything it engaged in, the Regional Council's approach was determined by a belief in the fundamental right of people to participate in the decisions that affected their lives. Thus the Regional Council has always directed its efforts towards both the assistance of community groups, which are the structures that enable effective participation, and also by the opening-up and devolution of decision-making by governments.

With the fight for survival of the AAP last year, the Regional Council's efforts turned from expansion to consolidation to ensure the survival of community groups it worked with. And it demonstrated the effectiveness of the Council's efforts to link community groups into a network which provides information and mutual support. Increasing numbers of groups started using the Council's resources to assist their own activities, information flowed freely between them keeping them abreast of developments and, repeatedly, they worked together on issues of common concern.

The AAP survival campaign failed. But the mutual trust and togetherness grew. Members and volunteers grew in consequence. The AAP idea succeeded.

And whilst we may not appear to be as large as in days of yore - no admin section, no community development field staff - in fact, we're bigger than ever - more eyes and ears, more hands and feet. Our function is to develop an effective information service which will assist messages to be passed from an environment to a person or organisation who will use these messages to make decisions and, in turn, act on that environment.

'Inner Voice: No. 1' has very much been a joint team effort which the writing styles and layout reflect. Future editions will be more of the same, whether it be what's happening in a local street or how a government department works.

Inner Voice is nominally the newsletter of the Inner Sydney RCSD. In fact, it is the newsletter of Inner Sydney - if that be our choice.





A publication of:

**INNER SYDNEY VOICE**  
regional social development council

## WANT TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD?

We are always looking for new voices - opinion pieces, investigative articles, profiles of community organisations, interviews and more. If you have an idea or suggestion then contact us and discuss it with one of the editors.

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

Email: [isv@innersydneyvoice.org.au](mailto:isv@innersydneyvoice.org.au) Phone: (02) 9690 1781

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- \$40.00 for organisations
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If you would like to become a member of our organisation, please contact our office on (02) 9698 7690 or by email to [admin@innersydneyvoice.org.au](mailto:admin@innersydneyvoice.org.au) for an application form.

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