

# Inner Sydney VOICE

WINTER 2017 • ISSUE 132

*Special Edition*

## REDEVELOPING WATERLOO PUBLIC HOUSING

CONSULTANTS ARE STARTING STUDIES AND TALKING WITH RESIDENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT IN THE MASTER PLAN. WE EXPLAIN THE PROCESS AND PROVIDE BACKGROUND ON KEY ISSUES TO HELP YOU HAVE YOUR SAY.

### +PLUS

MASTER PLANNING TIMELINE  
WHO'S WHO IN WATERLOO?  
BASIS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

LESSONS FROM OTHER ESTATES  
DENSITY & HUMAN SERVICES  
CREATING SOCIAL MIX?

HEALTH & WELLBEING IMPACTS  
A HISTORY OF PUBLIC HOUSING  
COMMUNITY & AFFORDABLE HOUSING



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# ● *Editorial*

**T**his issue is for Waterloo public housing tenants and those interested in large-scale public housing redevelopments. Waterloo tenants have the opportunity to raise their comments and concerns during the forthcoming consultation about the redevelopment of their estate and homes. This magazine and activities organised by agencies and community groups, aim to help tenants have a voice in the discussions.

This redevelopment is important, not just for those in Waterloo, but also for other estates. Estate redevelopments at Waterloo and Ivanhoe create precedents for other redevelopments. Waterloo is the largest estate in the country. Over 20 years 2012 units, of Waterloo's 2500 units, will be pulled down to create 7000 new units with no loss of social housing.

How will these densities work for a public housing system that allocates housing to the most needy, giving priority to those with mental health, substance misuse, trauma and numerous other issues? What is necessary for these people to form a vibrant new "mixed" community with aged tenants, students and the owner-occupiers of the million dollar inner city apartments? Why is it necessary? Much could go wrong and many questions need addressing if the redevelopment is to work for tenants as well as government.

This issue includes Waterloo specific articles on *What we know* (page 6) about the master planning process and the key *Government undertakings* (page 9). We also include a *Who's who in Waterloo* (page 16) to provide an overview of government and community players including the *Capacity Building and Community Development projects* (page 19) in place to support tenants.

On broader public housing redevelopment, we include *More than bricks and mortar: Robyn's Reflections* (page 10) on the lessons from Minto. Shelter NSW and The Tenants Union NSW have recently proposed *A compact for renewal* (page 14) between communities and government to avoid the problems of past developments and Shelter NSW produced a guide to *Tenant involvement in public housing estate redevelopment* (page 12).

We explore the policy context in *Public Housing – on the up and up and up!* (page 20) and *City of Sydney planning density concerns* (page 31) provides Council's 2016 reaction to the densities proposed for Waterloo. We also explore the public housing redevelopment vehicle in *Communities Plus – something old something new* (page 22) and ask *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW – Is it good policy?* (page 24)

Renewing public housing is not just about buildings; it is crucially about people. It is about *Social Mix and the Challenges in Creating It* (page 26). Also our 2003 *From the Vault* looks at *What is a "Better Social Mix"?* (page 39). *Can the people problems be fixed by estate redevelopment?* (page 28) explores the human services challenges facing people with high needs, while *Reducing redevelopment impact on health and wellbeing* (page 30) looks at the role of Health Impact Assessments in planning a redevelopment.

Finally we provide some housing context in *Public housing in New South Wales: a brief history* (page 36) and explore two of the proposed housing types – *Is community housing set to feature in Waterloo Estate Rebuild?* (page 32) and *What is affordable housing and why do we need it?* (page 34).

Charmaine Jones and Geoff Turnbull Co-editors Inner Sydney Voice.

**What is necessary for these people to form a vibrant new "mixed" community with aged tenants, students and owner-occupiers?**

## 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.

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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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## Winter 2017 • Issue 132

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# TIPS ON BEING HEARD DURING MASTER PLANNING

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO HAVE YOUR SAY IN A CONSULTATION PROCESS. HERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO TO GET YOUR KEY MESSAGES AND MAIN CONCERNS ON THE TABLE FROM THE BEGINNING.

## YOU MATTER – YOU ARE AN EXPERT

You live here and know the place in a way consultants coming in from outside do not. They bring some expertise but they do not know the place like you do. You know what works and what does not. You know what would make your life and those around you better. You have things you can share and they are important to say in case they get missed.

want to hear. Others might not raise your concerns if you do not turn up. Make sure what you have to say is heard and written down and does not get lost in the conversation. Not every suggestion will end up being accepted but make sure your idea is not lost at the beginning. Sessions have feedback forms, so use them to make comments or send an email or drop a note into the Waterloo Connect office to be passed on.

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT YOU – TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

Older people might no longer think about places for children and young families might not think about older people. Remember the discussion is about what makes it better for the whole community and not just about your issues. Talk and listen to others and think about what the common concerns are that need to be addressed and then, when you get the chance, talk about them as well as your issues.

***Remember the discussion is about what makes it better for the whole community and not just about your issues. Talk and listen to others and think about what the common concerns are that need to be addressed and then, when you get the chance, talk about them as well as your issues.***

## KNOW WHAT IT IS HAPPENING

Read what gets sent around and if you do not understand it ask someone to explain it to you. Don't just rely on the official newsletters. Look out for information from non-government agencies and community groups and follow them on social media, go to meetings and ask questions. If you know what is happening then you and your friends can turn up and have your say.

## DO SOME RESEARCH

Some issues that come up will not be ones that you have thought about, so ask questions and do a bit of research. Community capacity building workshops, articles like those in this publication and online resources can help you think about what you want to say before consultants start asking questions officially. If you can't find the information you are looking for then ask.

## PARTICIPATE – PROVIDE FEEDBACK EVEN IF YOU OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT

Consultants want your input so attend meetings and workshops and have your say – you don't have to say what they

## FOLLOW UP AND DEFEND YOUR VIEWS

It is one thing to have a say, it is another for what you have said to be recorded and taken up by the consultants. So follow up and ask questions like "I raised this but I do not see where it is recorded or what you have done about it" or "I don't see how what you are suggesting addresses the issue I raised" or "how will you make sure this issue is not lost".

## ASK QUESTIONS

You are not expected to know everything, so if you do not follow what is happening ask questions. If you do not understand it is likely others do not either. Your questions might not be the same as others so make sure everyone has a chance to raise their questions too.

## YOU MAY HAVE TO FIGHT

Sometimes you might not be happy with what has been decided – for example if you oppose the redevelopment or you are unhappy with what the master plan decides. You have options to write to politicians, talk to the media and campaign. But don't forget to raise your issues with the bureaucrats and consultants as well because if the proposal goes ahead you might succeed in making it better than it might have been without your input.

## RESOURCES

This issue of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine contains articles on some of the key issues about the redevelopment. There are many other relevant articles at [www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/resources-inner-sydney-voice-magazine](http://www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/resources-inner-sydney-voice-magazine). You can also contact Thomas on 9698 9569 or email [cb@innersydneyvoice.org.au](mailto:cb@innersydneyvoice.org.au) and ask him to suggest some good resources on your issue.



# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE WATERLOO REDEVELOPMENT?

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE SHAPE OF WATERLOO ARE STARTING WITH THE COMMUNITY. **GEOFF TURNBULL** EXPLAINS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN AND REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

**W**hen the government made the announcement of a new Metro station at Waterloo and the redevelopment of the Waterloo public housing estate in December 2015, tenants sought details about how it would affect them. Detail about the redevelopment of the largest inner city public housing estate in Australia has been slow in coming. A master planning process that started in mid-2017 will formally determine much of the detail.

## MASTER PLAN TIMETABLE

Family and Community Services (FACS), Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) and UrbanGrowth Development Corporation (UGDC) are working together to plan for renewal in Waterloo, including the Waterloo estate and the land around the new Sydney Metro station, known as the Metro Quarter. They have mapped out an 18-month process to draw up and lodge a master plan for new planning controls for the Waterloo redevelopments. The organisations recognise that



this timetable is likely to continue to slip as they encounter unexpected issues, so timeframes provided in this article are a guide only.

The master plan timeframe includes opportunities for community capacity building to run in parallel throughout the master planning process. This is to give an opportunity to those impacted by the development to understand the urban planning and design concepts, formulate what they want to say during the consultations and how they might want to say it. Local non-government organisations (NGOs) run the community capacity building independently of LAHC.

### STATE SIGNIFICANT PRECINCT STUDIES

In May 2017, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) declared the Metro station site and the Waterloo Estate (excluding the conservation area) as a State Significant Precinct (SSP) making the Minister the approval authority not Council. This is the first step to rezone primarily government owned land for redevelopment. The declared area also covers 110 private properties along Cope and Wellington Streets.

The DPE issued 27 key study requirements LAHC and UGDC need to address in formulating their master plan and the new planning controls. To cover the existing SSP requirements and a place making study, UGDC has hired 19 consultants to produce a wide range of studies from wind and aeronautical patterns to open space and social sustainability. Summaries of key studies will be released in early 2018 to feed into the master plan options discussion. The study process will continue through 2018.

### NEED FOR WORK ABOUT PEOPLE ISSUES

The SSP studies are primarily about the buildings and the public space rather than about the people issues of public housing such as tenancy management, allocations and human service supports for tenants with high and complex needs. These issues also need addressing if there is to be a successful redevelopment outcome. Local agencies have requested additional work including an ongoing equity focused Health Impact Assessment, an assessment of the international experience of “social mix” (government now prefers to use the term “integrated communities”) and the development of an integrated human services plan to sit alongside the master plan (see pages 26–30 for more on these issues). LAHC have recently agreed that human services planning will run in parallel with master planning.

### PUTTING TOGETHER A VISION FOR WATERLOO

In parallel with the studies, consultants Kathy Jones and Associates (KJA) will be undertaking activities to gain input from the community. In this phase, called “visioning”, KJA will try to find out what people would like to see happen as part of the redevelopment – what people want to see kept or

changed. This is the main opportunity for residents, at the beginning of the process, to have your say and make sure your concerns are on the table. This process should start in October and run until early November 2017.

LAHC has said that the master plan visioning process will cover a number of areas such as cultural expression and community wellbeing; community facilities and social sustainability; housing and urban design; transport; and parks, open space and recreation. One issue LAHC wants tenant feedback on is whether tenants want to be in the same building as private tenants (called salt and pepper mix) or if they would prefer separate social housing buildings in the new development.

The visioning is not just about the questions the consultants ask. It is the opportunity for people to say whatever they want to say. LAHC, for example, has told tenants and agencies that if people raise issues in the visioning then it will look more closely at those issues even if they are not currently on the agenda. The need for missing services or greater integration of human services for people with high and complex needs would be such an issue.

It is important that people make their thoughts and concerns known at the start of the process to get their issues on the agenda. There is a greater chance for issues to be included at the beginning of the master planning rather than to try to have things added in later consultations. Further down the track you will be reacting to proposals put to you by consultants rather than trying to set the agenda!

### WHAT IS THE MASTER PLAN?

The master plan is a vision for the future of the Waterloo redevelopment area. Ideally, it shows how the future development can create a great neighbourhood where people will enjoy living, visiting and working, and how the change will happen over the next 20 years. It will show the location of new streets, footpaths and bike lanes, parks, community facilities, shops, offices, houses, car parking and transport service routes, as well as the type and size of buildings. The master plan consists of maps, diagrams and design rules to guide the new development. For a large site like Waterloo, to be developed in stages over 20 years, the process identifies where redevelopment starts, who will be relocated first and who will be living next to a construction site or otherwise inconvenienced.

### MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

The consultant studies, the community “visioning” consultation outcome and Government’s requirement for the project to be financially feasible, will feed into determining some options for the master plan. These three options will be the focus for a further round of community consultation.

Between the “visioning” and the presentation of “master plan options” there will be another opportunity for independent community capacity building to help people



understand the consultant studies. This will help people think about what to look for when the master plan options are presented for community discussion.

In addition, during the options testing, it is expected that independent experts will also be available to help people understand the proposals and to help people formulate what they might want to say about them. This independent support will continue through the process to ensure people are not reliant solely on the consultants, LAHC and UGDC for information to understand the proposals.

Based on the feedback, the multiple options will be re-worked into a single option that will be presented publicly for discussion. This will not be the final exhibition but rather an opportunity to view and discuss the preferred master plan before LAHC and UGDC formally put their proposal to DPE for assessment and formal exhibition.

### NEW PLANNING CONTROLS

The master planning is the mechanism for producing new planning controls for the Waterloo precinct that will replace those in the current City of Sydney Council Local Control Plan (LEP). The planning controls set the land uses for parks and buildings. For buildings, they also set the building heights, how much floor space the buildings have, as well as building use – such as residential, commercial or mixed use. This defines how much development can go on the site, not what it might look like. The planning controls will cover private land in the SSP area as well as government owned land.

Alongside the LEP planning controls will be a site specific Development Control Plan (DCP) that provides detailed planning and design guidelines to try to deliver what is in the master plan. There will also be proposals for development levies to be paid for community facilities and affordable housing. The Premier's Waterloo announcement said the Government was considering a Special Infrastructure Contribution on land around Waterloo station for the Sydney Metro project – this would probably see property within a certain distance of the station pay a levy when redeveloped and this would probably be included in the contributions plans.

The master plan proposal with its studies and proposed planning controls will go to DPE and the City of Sydney for assessment. DPE will then formally exhibit the proposal and ask for feedback from the community and government agencies. DPE will then ask FACS and UGDC to consider that feedback and make changes to the plan if needed.

DPE will then assess the plan with a Project Review Panel and make recommendations to the Minister for Planning and Environment to reject or approve the plan. The Project Review Panel has representatives from the Department of Planning and Environment, the City of Sydney Council, NSW Government Architect's Office, and Transport for NSW.

### PLANNING CONTROLS START A NEW PROCESS

It is important to understand that this 18 month (or possibly longer) process is about setting what LAHC, UGDC and their developers can do on the site, but it does not allow them to just start building. They have to get building approvals for the actual buildings they want to build in a subsequent development application (DA) exhibition process.

The DA process is supposed to happen within the planning controls approved, however developers and land owners often try to "push the envelope" to get approval for more on the site, so communities have to stay alert during the process to make sure that the master plan is not eroded in the actual development.

Waterloo estate is a very large development and it will not be developed in one lot. There will likely be a number of different developers doing parts or stages of the development over the 20 years. Before anything happens on the site, LAHC would first have to seek expressions of interests from consortia made up of developers, financiers and possibly community housing providers to deliver a portion of the plan for the selected site. Only after a final decision

is made as to who will develop a site will the developer prepare the detailed designs and studies for its DAs to get approval for what is to go on that site.

The DAs will include the fine detail about things like the architectural design of buildings, parks and community facilities outlined in the master plan for each site. The community will be asked to provide feedback as part of each DA assessment process.

LAHC has undertaken that tenants living in a site to be redeveloped will: have six months' notice of their relocation; be assisted in finding suitable premises; be assisted in their move;

and have a right to return.

On the Metro Quarter site, the NSW Government has compulsorily acquired the site with the exception of the Congregational Church. Work will start in the second half of 2017 to get this site ready for the construction of the underground station. What goes above the station will be determined in the master plan for the combined sites. It too will need to go through a DA process but construction should proceed quickly once the underground station is built, as staging would not be necessary.

### CITY OF SYDNEY COUNCIL'S ROLE

After the City of Sydney Council raised concerns in mid-2016 about the density of the development proposed by UGDC for Waterloo (see page 31), the Council has been working with DPE to create the SSP study requirements. Many of the Council's own policy and planning documents are referenced in the study requirements in the expectation that this will ensure Council's concerns are addressed. While the Minister makes the final decision, Council sits on the Project Review Panel.

Geoff Turnbull is the co-editor of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine.

**Waterloo estate is a very large development and it will not be developed in one lot. There will likely be a number of different developers doing parts or stages of the development over the 20 years.**



# GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKINGS

THE COMMUNITY ASKED FOR WHAT WAS NEGOTIABLE AND NON-NEGOTIABLE TO BE AVAILABLE BEFORE CONSULTATIONS STARTED. IN THE LEAD UP TO THE START OF VISIONING, LAND AND HOUSING CORPORATION (LAHC) HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ON THE DRIVERS AND COMMITMENTS ON THE WATERLOO REDEVELOPMENT.

**N**SW Government's Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW strategy, Communities Plus program and the construction of a new Sydney Metro station at Waterloo led to the area being nominated as a State Significant Precinct referred to as the Waterloo Redevelopment Precinct. The Waterloo Redevelopment Precinct is made up of the Waterloo Estate (owned by Land and Housing Corporation) and the new Metro Quarter (above the station to be developed by UrbanGrowth NSW). The area also includes a number of privately owned properties.

The new Sydney metro will be the gateway to the Waterloo Precinct redevelopment.

The redevelopment of the Waterloo social housing estate will be delivered under the Communities Plus program – a key feature of the Future Directions strategy. The Communities Plus program aims to make the best use of government owned social housing land to fund the construction of new and more social, affordable and private housing across NSW.

Aging social housing will be replaced with new, modern homes to improve the living conditions for social housing residents. This also includes tenancy management and support services to ensure the ongoing safety, health and wellbeing of residents.

The context for the Waterloo redevelopment includes:

- A new metro station will be built between Botany Road and Cope Street.
- Moving towards a housing mix on the precinct, of private, social and affordable housing. The sale of the private homes will fund the new social housing dwellings.
- There will be no loss of the current 2,012 social housing, and the aim is to have 30% of total dwellings as social housing.
- Up to 70% of the new dwellings will be private housing with 5%–10% of these being affordable housing for low to moderate-income households on the Waterloo estate site.
- The metro quarter will also provide affordable housing.
- There will be more housing in a master-planned precinct; this means more people will call Waterloo home. LAHC say this will bring other social benefits to the area, such as new and improved services, community facilities, shops and job opportunities.
- Private and not-for-profit sector investment is required to deliver the redevelopment.
- The model of management for social housing (public/community housing) will be determined through the redevelopment process.

LAHC recognises that Waterloo residents have many questions about what the redevelopment of the Precinct means for them and has made the following assurances:

- Planning for future services to support residents' health, safety and wellbeing will be done in parallel to the master planning process.
- Engagement will be active, meaningful and respectful and will recognise the cultural and historical importance of Waterloo and draw on local knowledge.
- The metro quarter will be a new hub and provide connectivity for the area.
- All social housing will be designed to be accessible for the elderly and people with disability.
- A mix of public and open spaces of the highest quality for the safe interaction for people of all ages, cultures and abilities.
- New community spaces, facilities, services, shops and employment opportunities will be available within the Redevelopment Precinct.
- The Congregational Church will be protected.
- The redevelopment will be delivered in stages over the next 15–20 years.

In addition to the above, tenants can also be assured by LAHC that:

- The intention is for the majority of residents to move from their current homes straight into the new social housing as buildings are completed.
- Any resident who needs to be temporarily relocated:
  - Will have the right to return to the new development.
  - Will be given a minimum 6-months' notice of when they will need to relocate.
  - Will be assigned a dedicated FACS Relocation Officer to help them through the process.
  - Will have the costs associated with relocating covered by FACS.
- Tenants will have their current lease arrangements stay the same in the relocated premises (applies to both continuous and time-limited leases).
- The Waterloo estate will continue to be maintained during the redevelopment.
- The current mid-2018 timing of relocations will be reviewed to possibly later in 2018, subject to master planning.

These drivers and undertakings were provided by LAHC.

They were still under discussion between LAHC and the NAB's Waterloo Redevelopment Group when we went to print.

ROBYN'S REFLECTIONS:

# MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR



REDEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN NSW IS NOT NEW. WHILE THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENTS OF WATERLOO AND IVANHOE MIGHT BE HIGH-RISE, PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITIES CAN LEARN A LOT FROM WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN EARLIER ESTATE RENEWALS. **JULIE FOREMAN** SPOKE TO **ROBYN STAFFORD** ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE AT MINTO.

## Tell me about Minto

I love the Minto Community. The public housing community of Minto has gone as most of the original tenants have moved on. Some of the families went before the redevelopment and have bought their own places. I worked at the Post Office in Minto Mall until I retired 11 years ago so I am lucky that I knew, and still do, people from every area. Minto is a very diverse community. We have the rich, the poor, the in-betweens (young families trying to make a living and buying their own homes). It is also very multicultural with people from many nations living in our midst.

As part of the renewal I was moved

over to Campbelltown for six years. I was lucky enough to be successful in the housing ballot and came back to a brand-new two-bedroom home in 2011. To be honest I am not that fussed about living where I do – once I put my car in the garage nobody would even know you're here. I say hello to neighbours but don't really know them. The fences are so high you can't even be sociable over the back fence. This is different to when I lived in Minto before the redevelopment.

## How did you find out about the redevelopment of Minto?

### How long was it expected to take?

I actually found out about the redevel-

opment on the 6pm news on TV on 29 May 2002 ... I couldn't believe what I was hearing! Yes, parts of Minto did need attention, but it was not a ghetto. I had recently had my townhouse inspected and I was to have some work done and an upgrade of my kitchen so for that, I was excited. Officially I received my notification from Housing NSW the following day via a letterbox drop.

The redevelopment was expected to take about 10 years initially, but there were four Housing Ministers before the masterplan was even signed. After the masterplan was approved the completion time was put back till 2015 and now that has been extended till the end of this year (2016).

## ADVICE FOR DECISION-MAKERS WHO ARE EMBARKING ON NEW REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

- COMMUNICATION – Talk to the people it mostly impacts on. Don't be afraid of them or their ideas and concerns.
- SHOW COMPASSION – How would you feel if you were uprooted from your home with no real control over the time to move and where to move to?

### Some practical things to think about:

- Have alternative accommodation ready for the elderly so people do not have to move twice.
- Ask who wants to move and start with them first.
- Keep residents informed and updated on plans.
- Come up with a different solution for single unit complexes. Without the right supports young people with

mental health issues and the elderly do not mix.

- Make sure there are community facilities such as parks, community centres and meeting rooms available in unit complexes.
- Try not to move the elderly as most have lived in their places for years and raised families there, so it is the family home. When implementing a redevelopment project try to understand that when older, long-term tenants were originally allocated their house they were told it was for life to "treat it like your own". They put in their own floor coverings, blinds, fans and air conditioners. Some even put up side fences and sowed the seed for their lawns. Their heart and soul has gone into their family home.



The plans have continued to change. At first we were informed that there would be no three bedroom homes built and instead we were to get 104 two bedroom homes and 120 senior / over 55s units. That changed too – the two bedroom stand-alone houses were not viable, so now three bedroom cottages are being built on the remaining lots. The small units have generated issues, which are caused by living so closely together without the necessary government or community supports. You can't just throw people together – especially when some have complex needs – and expect a community to form.

**What was the impact of the redevelopment on the community and on you?**

We were devastated and watched in awe at the speed that the first lot of residents were moved out. People were wandering around bewildered. The lack of information and understanding led to fear and stress and if I am honest, led me to take early retirement. Some people took the opportunity to move to coastal areas and we were all told we could come back. Those who wished could put their names on a return to Minto list.

Apart from our own individual stories there was the bigger picture. Due to dislocation and the population dropping the schools in our area lost

services – they have picked up again now – and our shopping mall went downhill badly. At times it was like living on a building site, and many friends moved away. It was hard to believe that 800 people were going to be dislocated and no social impact study was going to be undertaken. Gradually things have improved again.

During the difficult times community members met together, and did their best to keep each other informed and supported. Not long after the announcement the Minto Residents Action Group (RAG) formed. We worked alongside non-government organisations (NGOs) like St. Vincent de Paul Animation Project, South Western Regional Tenants Association, Shelter NSW and too many more to name individually. Along with these NGOs, residents and the wonderful Franciscan Friars who lived within our community, the Macarthur Housing Coalition was formed and we were successful in lobbying Housing NSW for an independent Tenant Advocate. Together these groups and Housing NSW came up with guidelines that have been used in a lot of the estates that are undergoing renewal.

**Julie Foreman is the Executive Officer of the Tenants' Union NSW. This is an edited version of the interview that appeared in Tenants News in March 2016.**

***“We were devastated and watched in awe at the speed that the first lot of residents were moved out. People were wandering around bewildered. The lack of information and understanding led to fear and stress”***



**TOP TIPS FOR ANYONE EXPERIENCING THE TRAUMA OF MOVING WITHIN THE PUBLIC HOUSING SYSTEM.**

- Do not talk to relocation officers on your own.
- Look around you – what do you have that you would like in your new place? Things like screen doors and window security locks are not always guaranteed.
- Make a list – NEGOTIATE.
- Have you purchased your own ceiling fans or air conditioner – did you have permission to install them? Even if you haven't – do you have receipts from an authorised installer? These can be relocated with you or you may get new ones.
- These days Housing try to match your needs to a house so make sure they know your needs – doctors, hospital, public transport, shopping and family.
- Get medical certificates from your doctors to confirm your needs.
- When you go to look at a new place, take someone with you – check each room for adequate power points – negotiate.
- Write a list of everyone who needs to be updated with your new address (this can be a very big job).
- Remember you are not alone; seek support from organisations and your community. Ask questions and negotiate.
- Be warned a lot of people get letters of termination and rental arrears when they are relocated. These need to be dealt with straight away and most are human error – like a relocation officer not pressing a button to finish off your account at the address you moved out of.
- Remember you are entitled to two weeks rent credited to your new account while you are moving.



# TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT

SHELTER NSW HAS PRODUCED A FACTSHEET FOR PUBLIC TENANTS FACING REDEVELOPMENT WHICH WE HAVE REPRODUCED BELOW. IN SHORT IT ENCOURAGES TENANTS TO STAY INFORMED, HAVE YOUR SAY, ASSERT YOUR RIGHTS AND TO COME TOGETHER.

**A** number of public housing estates have been redeveloped in NSW in the past decades, others are in the middle of redevelopment projects right now. The NSW Government's recently released strategy, *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW*, suggests that there will be a lot more in the next ten to twenty years.

How well (or badly) this goes for tenants depends a lot on good communication. Tenants should expect, and ask for, up-to-date information on plans for their homes and suburbs, a chance to have a meaningful say in these plans and a respectful process for meeting their needs in the midst of redevelopment.

## STAYING INFORMED

You should expect to have good information about Government plans well before they happen. This information can come in a number of ways.

- In mail-outs sent directly to you.
- In flyers available in public places like libraries, shopping centres and government offices.
- At community meetings and information sessions in your neighbourhood.

- On the internet, both via the official Department site and via social media.
- Through your regional Family and Community Services (FACS) office, or for larger projects through a special office set up to manage the project.

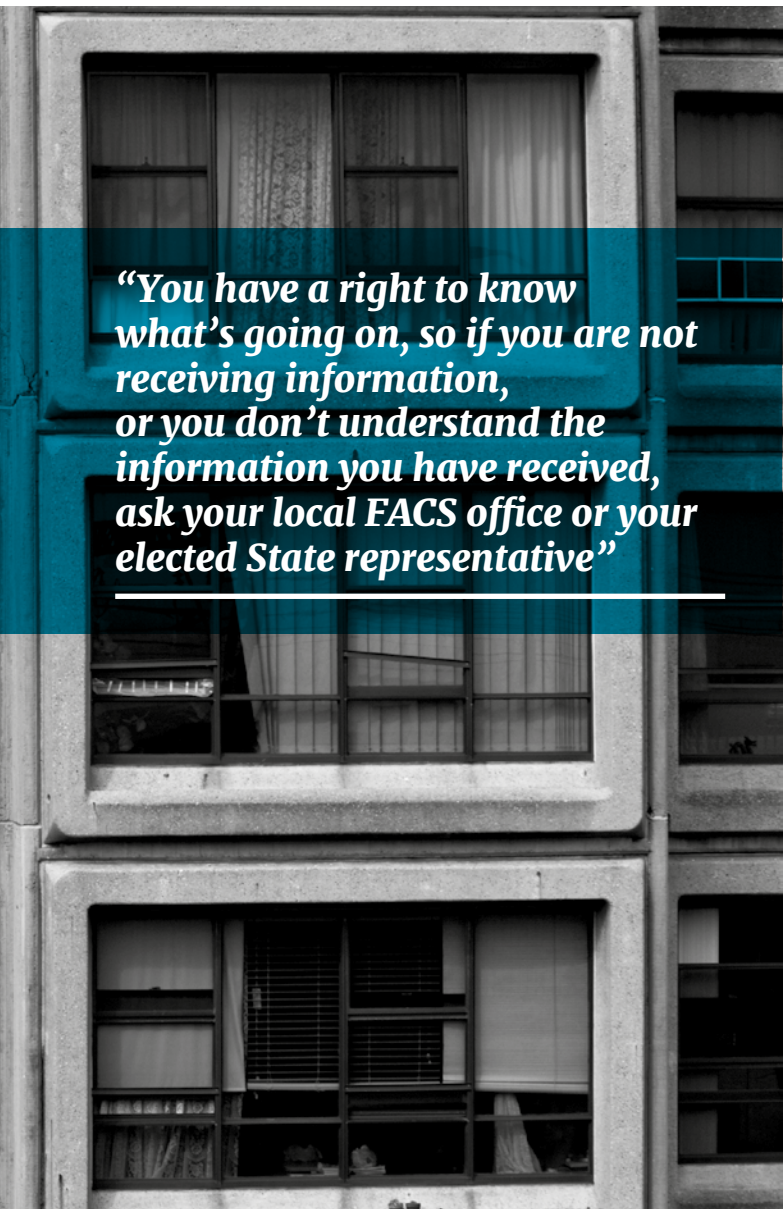
You should expect clear information, in writing and in person, on what the plans are, why this is happening, when it will happen, where changes will take place at what time, who is responsible and how you can find out more or have your say.

You have a right to know what's going on, so if you are not receiving information, or you don't understand the information you have received, ask your local FACS office or your elected State representative.

## HAVING YOUR SAY

Tenants and residents have a right not only to good information, but to a genuine say in what will happen to their homes, neighbourhoods and communities. You shouldn't just be presented with a final plan; you should be given a chance to influence what goes into that plan. You should expect to be consulted early, while plans are still being formed, and often as plans develop and change. You should





***“You have a right to know what’s going on, so if you are not receiving information, or you don’t understand the information you have received, ask your local FACS office or your elected State representative”***

expect your views and those of other tenants to be taken seriously and result in real changes to the project.

There are a number of ways this can happen, and it might be different in each community. You might see:

- Written surveys (on paper or online) asking you what you think about plans for your suburb.
- Community meetings and workshops to discuss the project.
- Information/consultation stalls in public places where you can discuss your ideas one on one with staff.
- Formal advisory groups or reference groups where community representatives have a chance to discuss the project as it develops.

You should expect that consultation events will be conducted in plain English (not technical gobbledegook), provide interpreters in major community languages if a lot of residents speak a language other than English, be held in venues that are accessible to people with disabilities and older people, and be run in a way that is respectful of community input. You should also expect that tenants will be supported to participate – that transport and other “out of pocket” costs will be met

### ASSERTING YOUR RIGHTS

If you are affected by a redevelopment and either have to move out of your home, or will have significant disruption around your home, then you have a right to a number of things. The Department should assign a single person to work with you and make sure you get these things. They should also give you written notice of key events that will affect you.

### ADVANCE WARNING

The Department should give you lots of notice if you need to move, either permanently or temporarily. They have promised at least six months’ notice. If you don’t have to move but there will be disruption to your home (for instance, because of road works or interruptions to power and water supply) you should be given warning of these things ahead of time.

### CHOICE

If you need to move out of your home, either permanently or temporarily, as part of a redevelopment, the Department should give you a choice as to where you go, and make every effort to find somewhere that fits your needs.

### HELP

You should get help with your move or with managing the impacts of redevelopment. For a move, the Department should meet any reasonable costs like removal and storage fees, power and water connection fees and so forth. You may also need physical help with these tasks – don’t be afraid to ask for it! If you need to move suburb, they should also give you good information about your new neighbourhood, including things like public transport routes and community services and facilities.

### TROUBLE-SHOOTING

If things go wrong – for instance if people turn up to do work without notice, or the impacts are much bigger than you were told they would be – there should be a person you can call who is responsible for helping to fix it.

### COMING TOGETHER

You can interact directly with the Department and its contractors as an individual, but sometimes there is strength in numbers. Most public housing estates have active tenant and resident associations. These are open to any tenant. Get involved and help present a united front in negotiations about your community. If the government slips up during the redevelopment, it is these groups who will hold them to account and negotiate for a better response.

*This article is reproduced from the Shelter NSW Factsheet  
Redevelopment of public housing estates - Staying Informed, Having Your Say, Asserting Your Rights, Coming Together*

# A COMPACT FOR RENEWAL PROJECTS WHAT TENANTS WANT FROM SOCIAL HOUSING RENEWAL

A COMPACT WOULD REPRESENT AN AGREEMENT ABOUT HOW URBAN RENEWAL IS CONDUCTED IN SOCIAL HOUSING AREAS, AND HOW SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS WERE TO BE TREATED AND ENGAGED. **BERNIE COATES** EXPLAINS THE GROUND RULES THAT EMERGED FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH TENANTS.



In early 2016, Shelter NSW, the Tenants' Union of NSW and the City Futures Research Centre at UNSW agreed to partner in a project to develop a Compact for Renewal between agencies undertaking urban renewal and social housing tenants affected by such renewal.

It is widely recognised that renewal of public housing areas can be highly disruptive, cause high levels of stress and trauma, and lead to significant adverse health impacts for social housing tenants. These effects are compounded because tenants are often highly disadvantaged and disempowered. Moreover, the renewal process is imposed from above; tenants typically have little or no say in the process, and this lack of control compounds these impacts. These adverse impacts were identified in important research conducted by Shelter NSW in 2014 and updated in 2016 as "Issues for Tenants in Public Housing Renewal Projects".

The need for a Compact arises from the variable experience of tenants to date with renewal, and the widely varying policies and practices affecting tenants applied by agencies undertaking renewal in NSW. Projects have been subject to widely differing approaches ever since the first comprehensive renewal project commenced at Minto, in south-west Sydney, in 2002. Some projects have taken tenants interests seriously and tried very hard to include tenants in all aspects of the projects. These projects have actively engaged tenants in planning, sought tenants' advice about implementation and gone the extra mile to ensure tenants are treated well and fairly when it comes to relocations and resettlement in new areas. In these cases, effort has also been put into strategies to support tenants to cope better with the impacts of change in their own family life and in their communities. Further, these projects have invested in the community and in building the capacity of the community so that tenants get real benefit from renewal, where they could otherwise have been significant losers from the process.

In the first stage of the Compact for Renewal project, the partner organisations sought to gain a rich and detailed

understanding of tenants' experience of renewal to date and to find out what tenants want and need to make renewal a better experience. We also sought to identify good practice where it existed. During 2016, a series of focus groups with social housing tenants was conducted in eight social housing areas in Sydney that have experienced renewal programs within the last ten years or so or were scheduled to do so in the near future. Across these areas, the experience varied widely from generally positive through to the highly traumatic and dislocating. The focus groups included a number of tenants who have been highly involved in the renewal processes in their area, some for 15 or more years. The focus groups thereby brought a wealth of experience and rich perspectives on renewal approaches and what works for tenants. A summary of the issues from these focus groups has been published as *Tenant's Experience of Renewal in Social Housing Areas*. Tenants who participated in the focus groups were provided with a record of their focus group discussion and a copy of this summary document, with an invitation to provide any additional comments.

From this rich information base and drawing on the issues raised by tenants in the focus groups, a comprehensive list of what tenants need and want from renewal projects was developed and published as *A Compact for Renewal: What tenants want from renewal*.

These core principles are followed by a comprehensive set of requirements. A selection of those requirements are listed below, grouped under four headings.

## PLANNING AND SETTING UP THE RENEWAL PROJECT

- **A social impact assessment** to be carried out for all projects, so social impacts are identified early and strategies to mitigate and manage them are set out. Tenants should be key informants for this assessment.
- **Social planning** should identify the social and community structures and organisations that are valued in the community and a plan developed for retaining and





transitioning them.

- A **Social Plan** to be developed alongside a physical masterplan, setting out the community facilities, support services and community services to be provided for the new community.
- The project team to include staff whose job it is to engage with residents, including **bilingual staff**. Tenants also want the project leader to accept them as key stakeholders and to 'meet them as equals'.
- An **on-site office** should be provided where tenants are always welcome, where good information is available and tenants' questions can be answered.
- Tenants want a **Community Reference Group** (or similar) to be set up for all projects—a secure and respected vehicle for community input to the planning and implementation of the project. Tenants also want a strong residents' voice in all aspects of the project, including support for an independent tenants' group.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Tenants to be **fully engaged** in projects as an important project stakeholder. Agencies should invest in capacity building to support tenants to participate more fully and meaningfully.
- An **engagement plan** should be prepared and tenants consulted about it before it is finalised. Project staff should report back to the community on the plan and involve residents in reviewing the plan periodically.
- Tenants want **quality information** to be provided about the project and how it will impact on them and the community. This information should be regularly updated and made available in many formats including a regular newsletter (or similar), face to face and at community meetings and events.
- **Consultation** should seek to reach all groups including harder to reach groups. Consultation approaches should be creative and varied to appeal and attract participation from the full range of population groups.

## MANAGING CHANGE AND THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF RENEWAL

- Agencies to provide a comprehensive range of practical, emotional and professional/specialist **support services** to assist tenants to better manage change and adverse impacts—including physical health, mental health, dislocation, stress, anxiety, grief and loss, and trauma.
- An **independent tenant advocacy service** for all renewal projects, spanning individual advocacy and collective or project-wide advocacy.
- Recognising the damaging effects of a loss of choice and control, tenants want agencies to extend choice and control in as many areas as possible, including choice of relocation areas, replacement homes, home improvements and control over the timing of the move.

## RELOCATION AND RESETTLEMENT

- Consistently good relocation practice, including a relocation coordinator who will 'go the extra mile' to support tenants through the process, and better training for coordinators in issues like trauma, grief and loss.
- Improved support for tenants to resettle in a new neighbourhood, including better information about services, transport, schools etc., and access to resettlement support services.
- Support for tenants to downsize and declutter, including access to a service to assist tenants over a period of time prior to moving.

In the second stage of the project, the findings are being presented to renewal agencies in NSW, including government and community sector agencies, seeking their feedback on the extent to which those agencies believe they can manage projects in line with what tenants want. Subject to the willingness of agencies to engage with the project, we seek to negotiate a compact by which agencies agree to manage renewal projects in social housing areas. In this negotiation, it will be important for project partners to emphasise their willingness to understand what's important for the agencies regarding renewal processes, and to work through the list of what tenants want from renewal to identify a set of principles and rules that both parties are comfortable with.

This compact therefore seeks to develop a set of ground rules that would make renewal less disruptive, traumatic and dislocating for tenants and would support their active involvement in the renewal project. The compact would outline a comprehensive set of requirements for renewal agencies in how to plan and manage these projects with the best interests of tenants in mind. It would act as a guarantee for tenants that their interests would be recognised and respected in the process. Ideally, it will also increase the chances that tenants may feel able to lend their active support to renewal projects.

Bernie Coates is a Visiting Fellow at City Futures Research Centre UNSW Sydney. He undertook the research project for City Futures, Shelter NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW. Until his retirement, he was the Director, Community Renewal at NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

This article appeared in Shelter NSW's *Around the House* 109 in June 2017. References and links in this article can be found in the on line version of this article on the ISV website.



# WHO'S WHO IN WATERLOO?

THIS IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR GOVERNMENT, NON-GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND PROJECTS AROUND THE WATERLOO MASTER PLANNING PREPARED BY **GEOFF TURNBULL**.

## WHO'S WHO ON THE GOVERNMENT SIDE OF WATERLOO

**Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)** is the Waterloo Estate landowner. It is part of Family and Community services (FACS) and it is leading communications and engagement for the master planning process. It has engaged UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation (UGDC) to prepare the master plan for the estate. FACS will also lead the redevelopment of the estate. LAHC operates the Waterloo Connect Office for the redevelopment. It is near the IGA in the middle of the Waterloo estate and is the official contact point for questions about the redevelopment.

**Communities Plus (C+)** is a special part of LAHC that is responsible for the redevelopment of public housing estates. It is their name you see on printed material and it has a Waterloo page on its website where material about the Waterloo redevelopment is posted.

**FACS Housing** is the department that administers the public housing for LAHC – this is who you talk to when you go to your local housing office.

**UrbanGrowth Development Corporation (UGDC)** is undertaking the master planning which covers the Waterloo estate and the Waterloo metro quarter, which is the area above and around the new Metro station. UGDC will lead redevelopment of the metro quarter. They are coordinating consultants and engagement with government agencies to inform preparation of the master plan. They were responsible for the recent work associated with the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Strategy and are the continuation of the old RWA / SMDA.

**Sydney Metro** is building the new metro station underground and is handling community engagement about the Metro line and the construction works for the Metro station.

It is working with UGDC to realise development opportunities above and around the station.

**Sydney Local Health District (SLHD)** is responsible for health issues in Waterloo and has agreed to work with local agencies to do work on health impact assessments of Waterloo, a two day health forum and place a health link worker into Waterloo to help agencies and tenants navigate the health system.

**City of Sydney Council** is the local government for the area but as the Estate is a State Significant Precinct, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and the Minister for Planning are responsible for deciding what happens. Council has an agreement with DPE that meant it was involved in setting the study requirements. Council also sit on the Project Review Panel to assess the master plan proposal before it goes to the Minister.

**Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)** is responsible for managing the statutory assessment process with support from the City of Sydney. They will exhibit the master plan and will call for public submissions and make recommendations to help the Minister for Planning make a decision about whether to approve the master plan.

**KJA (Kathy Jones and Associates)** is the community engagement consultants appointed by LAHC to implement a community engagement programme to talk to the community about what they think and then to feed this information into the master plan.

**Other Consultants** – there is a list of consultants working on the project and the studies they are undertaking at [www.communitiesplus.com.au/major-sites/waterloo](http://www.communitiesplus.com.au/major-sites/waterloo).



## WHO'S WHO ON THE COMMUNITY SIDE OF WATERLOO

**The Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB)** is made up of 11 precincts across Waterloo and each precinct has capacity for two elected representatives. The NABs were formed in the mid-1990s as a mechanism for tenants, not only to put a common voice to FACS and LAHC, but also to deal with the wide range of other bodies such as police, council and service providers that tenants need to deal with. Waterloo NAB meets every two months with LAHC about housing standards matters and on alternate months, a co-ordination group meets to deal with material from working groups. Working groups include the Redfern & Waterloo NAB Events Group, the Waterloo Wellbeing and Safety Action Group, and the Waterloo Redevelopment Group.

- **The Waterloo NAB Waterloo Redevelopment Group (WRG)** is independently chaired and meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2pm – 3.30pm. It includes NAB reps, representatives from local resident groups and service providers as well as interested public and private residents. NAB representatives will also meet independently to deal with tenant only issues. The WRG was set up by the NAB to get everyone around the table to guide the communication and engagement activities run by LAHC throughout the life of the redevelopment project. Kira Osborne, the independent community development worker for the Waterloo Redevelopment, is its Secretary.

**The Groundswell Redfern Waterloo Agencies** are a coalition of non-government agencies (NGOs) listening to, working with, and assisting local residents to understand what the government plans for Waterloo and to have their say about what happens in their neighbourhood. Initiated during the 2011 master plan by REDWatch with NGOs, Groundswell also operates the Groundswell Redfern Waterloo Facebook page and the morning teas at 10.30pm on the last Friday of the month at The Factory. Since early 2016, the coalition agencies have met monthly to push for, and guide, independent community capacity building and try to hold the redevelopment process accountable. Groundswell's successes include securing funding from FACS to NGOs for community capacity building and community development positions during the master planning (see page 19). The positions operate independently of LAHC, with NGOs employing the workers while their work is guided by the Groundswell agencies. Groundswell agencies have also been working with academics and other agencies to support tenants and deliver the best possible outcomes. The Groundswell agencies and their interests are:

- **Counterpoint Community Services** is responsible for providing a wide range of services and facilitates working with and for Waterloo and Redfern tenants. This includes The Factory Community Centre in Waterloo, Poets Corner pre-school in Redfern and Counterpoint Multicultural Services (previously South Sydney Community Aid) in Alexandria.
  - **From The Factory**, Laura Kelly's Community Development role supports local community groups, community

leaders, events and projects around both estates. The Factory is also home to Kira Osborne, the new Community Development Officer who offers independent support to the Waterloo community during the master planning (see page 19).

- **From Alexandria Town Hall**, Counterpoint Multicultural is the multicultural community centre servicing the City of Sydney's South area with special focus on the Redfern and Waterloo estates. It is supporting the CALD communities during the master plan discussion with specialist language and cultural expertise for Russian and Mandarin speakers through bilingual educators Mila Seredenko and Denise Fung.
- **Inner Sydney Voice (ISV)** is a regional NGO peak running a number of support projects including: the Central Sydney North Tenants Participation Resource Service (David White handles elections, training and support for the Waterloo NAB); Eastern Sydney Aged and Disability Sector Support and Development Project (Ross Bennett); a regional human services Information and Community Development Project (Charmaine Jones); and ISV Magazine. For the Waterloo redevelopment, ISV runs the community capacity building project to help residents have a voice in the discussions (Thomas Chailoux). ISV is also seeking further funding to support residents, supply residents with independent analysis of the consultants reports and for independent expert advice during the master planning process.
- **Redfern Legal Centre (RLC)** will likely receive funding from City of Sydney to assist people facing relocation when this happens. It has experience in doing this in Millers Point. Relocations continue to be pushed back as the master plan process slips. RLC provides tenancy legal support to public tenants and will provide training on tenancy issues in the capacity building.
- **Shelter NSW** and the **Tenants' Union of NSW** are state-wide peaks so are not closely involved on the ground in Waterloo but have immense experience in policy and bring to the table knowledge of what has and is happening in other redevelopments. They are working on a compact with the state government to guide public housing redevelopment (see page 14). They are involved in the community capacity building.

**Resident Groups** – In the non-agency space there are two main local resident groups: REDWatch (REDW – Redfern Eveleigh Darlington and Waterloo) and the Waterloo Public Housing Action Group (WPHAG). The Alexandria Residents Action Group (ARAG) borders the new Metro Station to the West.

- **REDWatch** has a broader coverage than Waterloo. REDWatch is incorporated and its membership includes public tenants, private renters, owners, and people who work in the area. It runs on donations of time and money, and receives no government funding. It was set up to ensure the areas' diverse communities are heard in discussions with government about what happens in the



area. REDWatch has been active in Waterloo since plans for estate redevelopment leaked in 2004. During the 2011 public housing master plan process, it fought a plan that wanted to remove 20% of public housing from Redfern and Waterloo. This master plan Groundswell has resources for capacity building and WPHAG is active so REDWatch is not doing some things it did last time. It is still pushing for the best possible processes and outcomes, holding its own monthly public forums (6pm first Thursday of the month at The Factory) and documenting what is happening on its website. You can see information about the current and past pushes for the redevelopment of the Waterloo public housing estate on Waterloo Public Housing Renewal tab on the REDWatch website at [www.redwatch.org.au](http://www.redwatch.org.au). A major focus this time around has been to get improved human services support for tenants – REDWatch says it cannot support any redevelopment of the buildings without a comprehensive and integrated human services plan to support the tenants with high and complex needs who will live there.

- **WPHAG** was established in 2016 by Waterloo tenants Richard Weeks, Riley Lichey and Jason Selwood. It is a mix of people from the Waterloo Estate who are defending public housing in Waterloo. Together with allies from the local mob, architects, researchers and media, they are lobbying State Government for guarantees on tenants' rights and the development of tenant-driven social housing policies. It established the tent embassy on Waterloo Green in mid-2016 to get support for a petition and has put a lot of time into ensuring maintenance is addressed. WPHAG has established the WPHAG Future Planning Centre (WFPC) as a community and volunteer run shopfront near the IGA in the centre of the Waterloo Estate. It is open Monday to Friday from 10am–3pm for the duration of the Waterloo master planning process. The space has a 3D scale model of Waterloo

that people can add information to, it has a resource library, a community notice board, a calendar of events related to the master planning process, a timeline of the process so people can see where we're at, and space for people to have their say throughout the process. WFPC is also an incubator of ideas, a space for conversation and connection and a place where volunteers with expertise can contribute and assist the community. Workshops, reading groups and community discussions with guest speakers are all part of what WPHAG is doing to provide better information for the community and to help inform the process with community led participation and action. An Aboriginal worker will also operate out of the WFPC after much lobbying by WPHAG. WPHAG meets every Tuesday from 4–6pm at the WFPC for residents to monitor what is happening at WFPC, find out what is going on and meet other residents. For more information email [wpahg.nsw@hotmail.com](mailto:wpahg.nsw@hotmail.com).

**#WeLiveHere2017** is a community-led art project, a social action campaign and documentary. In collaboration with Waterloo residents of the iconic Matavai and Turanga Towers, coloured lights are being installed into each window of people's homes. Residents choose a colour that reflects how they are feeling. By illuminating the towers from the inside, the project celebrates the people of Waterloo, showing the world "We Live Here" before our suburb changes. The project is generating important discussion about the importance of public housing and the communities affected by large-scale urban renewal: the lights are on, somebody's home from 9 September 2017.

**Community Projects** – There have been many projects operating across the estate such as the Milk Crate Theatre Project *Turning Towers*. Milk Crate Theatre teamed up with Counterpoint Community Services and South Sydney Community Aid to create an original, interactive play inspired by the NSW Government plan to redevelop the inner city suburb of Waterloo during February and March 2017. Another Milk Crate project is *My Future Waterloo* by Mount Carmel students supported by Counterpoint and Sydney Story Factory. Similar projects include the Waterloo Art Project and an oral history project. Such projects help a community stay connected and give them a voice during a time of dramatic and rapid change. Most of these operate out of one of the organisations listed above.

**Service Providers** – Many services work with people on the Waterloo estate. They will continue to meet people's needs during the redevelopment and will meet new needs as they arise during the redevelopment. Please raise any needs you have with your existing providers. If you do not have an existing contact, then approach one of the organisations mentioned above for assistance. Kira Osborne has an email list to keep organisations up to date about the Waterloo redevelopment and there is a quarterly meeting for agencies.

Geoff Turnbull is co-editor of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine



# REDEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROJECTS

TWO POSITIONS ARE IN PLACE TO SUPPORT WATERLOO TENANTS INDEPENDENTLY OF LAND AND HOUSING CORPORATION (LAHC) DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS. THE PROJECTS ARE RUN BY NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS AS PART OF THE GROUNDSWELL COALITION, WHICH REQUESTED FUNDING FROM LAHC.

## GETTING READY AS A COMMUNITY THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

THOMAS CHAILLOUX

Empowerment, peer-learning, Community capacity development... There are many words for these types of projects. Many have their own favourite way to refer to it. It all comes down, however, to the same thing: to build the capacity, advocate for and support the community so that diverse government bodies listen to what it has to say.

Waterloo residents should be at the centre of the planning process. This Capacity Building Project, through Inner Sydney Voice, is all about:

- strengthening the voice of the community and advocating on its behalf.
- discussing urban design and urban planning issues together before the consultation organised by government starts, so the community is ready to push key messages.
- learning the language of planners and urban designers so we can interact with them on their level while reminding them that residents are the most important experts about the neighbourhood where they live.
- circulating information, understanding the planning process, and convincing ourselves that together we can make a difference.

So far, community discussions on urban design and planning issues have included “Social Mix”, “Master Planning for non-planners”, “Density done well and high density neighbourhoods”, “Models of social housing management – public housing and community housing” and “Universal Design”. We also reflected on past consultation processes, and how we can learn from them in order to avoid repeating shortcomings and maximise opportunities. Hopefully, from these activities people feel that they are better able to engage in the government led master planning process and have their voice heard on the future of Waterloo.

Support will continue throughout the whole Master Planning process: during visioning, when studies are released, before and during options testing and finally when the draft master plan is released.

Contact Thomas Chailloux on (02) 9004 2449 or email [cb@innersydneyvoice.org.au](mailto:cb@innersydneyvoice.org.au)

An Aboriginal Liaison Project Worker is also being appointed. This position will be auspiced by Inner Sydney Voice and operate from the Waterloo Public Housing Action Group's Future Planning Centre.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY DURING UNCERTAINTY

KIRA OSBORNE

How do we support, sustain, and build community cohesion and solidarity during times of instability and uncertainty? How can we reach those most marginalised and isolated; ensuring they receive accurate information and support to participate, and have their voices heard? How do we support communities to advocate for positive social change, manage conflict, and collaborate to build effective relationships? These are some of the current challenges facing the Waterloo community as they stare down the barrel of an urban redevelopment of unprecedented scale.

The Waterloo Redevelopment Community Development (WRCD) project is led by Counterpoint Community Services (previously The Factory), a long-standing independent community organisation in the heart of Waterloo. This project works to foster the growth of community life, support those most marginalised and isolated and engage with local services providers to ensure their clients are informed and supported through the redevelopment process.

Counterpoint appreciates the value of establishing trust and building relationships with community stakeholders, most importantly the residents of Waterloo. The project will collaborate with numerous local organisations to coordinate and support projects that engage with community; supporting the development of their confidence, skill, and knowledge, and building on their strengths and resources. These projects will strive to reach ‘hard to reach’ residents including youth, the elderly, CALD communities and those with a disability.

We recognise the complexity of the Waterloo redevelopment and the challenges it will bring; we respect the history of the area, value the rich diversity of the residents, and believe in the power of a united community. We will work closely with the Waterloo community throughout the entirety of the master plan process and long-term redevelopment, to ensure the strong social fabric connecting Waterloo is maintained and strengthened.

Contact Kira Osborne at The Factory Community Centre, Ph: 9698 9569 Ext. 6 or email [wrcd@counterpointcs.org.au](mailto:wrcd@counterpointcs.org.au)

Bilingual educators Mila Seredenko (Russian) and Denise Fung (Mandarin and Cantonese) will do outreach and co-facilitate workshops through Counterpoint. For details contact Kira Osborne.

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LARGE PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES HAS UNTIL NOW BEEN FOCUSED AWAY FROM THE INNER CITY. REDEVELOPMENT IS NOW GOING HIGH-RISE, RAISING MANY NEW ISSUES UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE DIRECTIONS POLICY. **GEOFF TURNBULL** EXPLORES WHAT IS DRIVING THE WATERLOO AND IVANHOE REDEVELOPMENTS.

# PUBLIC HOUSING: ON THE UP AND UP AND UP!

The Auditor General's report in 2013 made it official that the system was cannibalising itself to stay alive. Michael Coutts-Trotter, head of Family and Community Services (FACS), put it this way in an ISV article in 2013 "In fact the portfolio has been depleted at an average of 2.5 properties a day for a decade. Properties have been sold and not replaced to help fund maintaining the balance of the portfolio in reasonable condition because rent and commonwealth and state funding have not been sufficient."

The sell-off of public housing in Millers Point has been the most public of these sell offs. But all around the state public housing has been sold off. "For Sale" notices have been going up on public housing in inner suburbs like Glebe, Surry Hills and the Waterloo conservation area. These sales have alarmed many inner city public tenants who believe they too will be moved out because of the desirability of the land they occupy.

It is within this context that in January 2016 the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for

Social Housing, Brad Hazzard, released *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW* which sets out the government's strategy for redeveloping its public / social housing over the next ten years. Social housing includes public, Aboriginal and community housing.

At the heart of this new strategy, Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), which owns public housing, will fast-track redevelopment through a new mechanism to grow supply of housing stock – *Communities Plus*. This will be done through partnerships with private sector developers, finance and non-government organisations.

The policy promises the "new social housing developments will be modern, look the same as neighbouring private dwellings and be close to transport, employment and other community services". The policy expects to generate \$22 billion in construction activity in NSW over 10 years with 23,500 new and replacement social and affordable housing dwellings.

Central to the strategy is development of projects in proximity to UrbanGrowth's priority renewal areas where

planning agencies can up-zone land to build larger redevelopments that deliver 70:30 ratios of private to social housing. The aim is to renew social housing stock and increase the amount of social housing where practicable, funded by the creation of private housing.

The policy uses as an example "the eight hectare Ivanhoe Estate at Macquarie Park (currently with 259 social housing dwellings), will be transformed into a high quality integrated community with more than 1,800 private, 556 social and 128 affordable housing dwellings".

Minister Hazzard's Waterloo estate redevelopment announcement stated "the Waterloo estate will be part of the property portfolio offered through *Communities Plus*". Ivanhoe and Waterloo estates are both in areas where the government, through UrbanGrowth, wants to develop higher densities around railway stations. Both areas require an increase in planning controls (height and floor space) to make them work.

In May 2016, Sydney Council revealed that the NSW government proposed to



remove the Waterloo development from Council control and they campaigned against it (see page 31). While Waterloo was declared a State Significant Precinct in May 2017, removing it from Council control, Council managed to negotiate a key role for itself and its requirements in the process.

The message is clear – public housing situated near railway stations, a proposed light rail line or which is in an area targeted for increased density is ripe for redevelopment under the new policy.

On 16 December 2015 the NSW Government announced a new Metro Station would be built at Waterloo enabling the redevelopment of public housing in Waterloo. UrbanGrowth had pushed for the new station on the basis it would justify an up-zoning and allow the estate to be redeveloped.

The Waterloo announcement was short on detail. It created great anxiety and uncertainty just before Christmas when local community centres were closed. It took until Minister Hazzard's meeting on 18th February for a Q&A sheet to be produced which clarified that the area to be redeveloped was the consolidated estate with its 2,012 public housing units.

An initial map included the adjoining heritage conservation area where estate consolidation was stopped by the 1970s Green Bans, as documented in Tom Zubrycki's film *Waterloo*. In 2011 there were 188 apartments and 336 terraces and town houses in this area – some have since been sold and it has not been clarified if sales will continue.

The Waterloo announcement was for "the delivery of an additional 10,000 homes". In May 2016 UrbanGrowth clarified that half of these homes would be in the surrounding area and half would be new private and affordable housing delivered in addition to an increased amount of social housing on the estate. Together the total number of units expected on the current estate will be a

***"The message is clear – public housing situated near railway stations, a proposed light rail line or which is in an area targeted for increased density is ripe for redevelopment under the new policy"***

bit over 7,000 increasing by 3 1/2 times.

Depending on how you do the estimates, that is between 13,000 and 14,000 people on 19 hectares (ha) approximately 700 people/ha. By contrast Central Pyrmont has 395/ha and the old ACI site has 360/ha. UrbanGrowth says density will be similar to Green Square Town Centre. Council argue this contains a lot of commercial floor space so it, and the CBD, cannot be compared with residential areas. According to Sydney Council papers the proposed density is much higher than the Green Square average and rivals the densest parts of Hong Kong and New York. UrbanGrowth has said developments in the corridor will be up to 35 storeys – the highest towers currently in Waterloo are 30 storeys.

Earlier proposals for Waterloo estate proposed lower densities. The leaked Redfern-Waterloo cabinet papers in 2004 indicated around 5,600 units and the Redfern Waterloo Authority's Draft Built Environment Plan 2 in 2011 proposed 3,920 units with a loss of 305 public housing units which was opposed by local groups. The earlier plan was considered uneconomical by government until the Metro station offered the possibility to increase densities.

UrbanGrowth has indicated it wants to talk to the community about how tenure mix might be delivered at Waterloo. In the earlier suburban estate redevelopments, the aim was to have public and private houses in the same street looking the same, but what is the equivalent for high-rise estates like Waterloo and Ivanhoe? Do they have mix on each floor, within each building or in separate buildings? How will this work if social tenants are

people with high needs and human services support does not improve?

Mixed buildings can create strata issues when a large portion of units are owned by one party which can disproportionately influence strata decisions. Separate strata within a building can address that problem but would work against people socially mixing as would separate buildings. In one case in a Melbourne renewal a brick wall was erected between the private building and its private space, and the public building. Much work remains to be done if there is to be a viable model in Sydney to deliver high-rise social mix. Community group REDWatch has raised a list of similar questions about the Waterloo redevelopment on its website.

Almost 2 years after the initial announcement there is still no clarity about the details of the proposal. The master planning will determine the detail. The Environment Impact Statement (EIS) for the Metro line and Waterloo station went on exhibition in May 2016 but it only covers the Metro Station construction. What might be built above the underground station will be determined in the same master plan as the Estate.

UrbanGrowth's Central to Eveleigh team prepared an Urban Transformation Study for the entirety of its area, which it released in 2016. While much of the preparation predates the Waterloo announcement, it will also guide renewal in the estate. UrbanGrowth will prepare the Master Plan for LAHC, LAHC will handle master plan engagement and FACS Housing will continue day-to-day dealing with tenants.

**Geoff Turnbull is the Co-editor of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine.**

# COMMUNITIES PLUS: SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW



COMMUNITIES PLUS IS THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO RENEW AND INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK IN NSW. THE APPROACH IS BEING USED IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE IVANHOE ESTATE AT MACQUARIE PARK AND IS PROPOSED FOR THE WATERLOO REDEVELOPMENT. **CRAIG JOHNSTON** AND **GEOFF TURNBULL** EXPLAIN THIS APPROACH TO USING THE VALUE OF LAND TO BUILD NEW SOCIAL HOUSING.

In recent decades, and as noted in a report of the NSW Audit Office in July 2013, there has been a steady decline in the number of dwellings owned by the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) — most of which are managed as public housing, and some managed as community housing.

In the last couple of years this decline has been stopped, and LAHC has reported extremely modest net additions in the number of dwellings it owns. Now, LAHC is looking to actually build on the turn-around, and increase the numbers overall from the current 130,000 or so state-wide.

Some of the core factors that underpin LAHC's commercial viability have not changed (and might not change), in particular a customer base of mainly lower-income households. But there has been a steady increase in the value of the land owned by LAHC. This has occurred as a result of natural scarcity in Sydney, and rezoning to allow for higher density that has been driven by successive state governments.

Currently some of its public-housing estates and sites are located where value in those sites can be 'unlocked'. The sites can be redeveloped at higher densities (with high-rise or medium-rise buildings); with components of private for-sale dwellings and also with components of social housing and intermediate ('affordable') housing.

This is the basis of the *Communities Plus* initiative foreshadowed in a media release by social housing minister Brad Hazzard on 24 September 2015. It was followed by an industry briefing held in November and further clarified in the initial Expression of Interest (EOI) processes. The program has a dedicated website at [www.communitiesplus.com.au](http://www.communitiesplus.com.au).

Many of the aspects of the initiative are similar estate-redevelopment initiatives that we have seen in the last decade (such as at Minto and Bonnyrigg). The approach involves:

- a redevelopment of an existing estate or site,
- demolitions of existing dwellings and construction of new dwellings,
- greater densities because of favourable planning controls (in particular floor space ratios),
- redevelopment not to be undertaken by a government agency (but by a private-sector firm or community-housing provider or consortium),
- developers' profit to be enabled by greater supply of dwellings on the site and sale of a proportion of those dwellings to individual owners,
- replacement of the social-housing dwellings demolished with new social-housing dwellings,
- displacement of existing tenants,
- various place-making and commu-

- nity-engagement strategies, and
- property and tenancy management of the social-housing dwellings by a community housing provider (not by a government agency).

Unlike some other estate redevelopment initiatives of recent years, there has not been the 'break-up the dysfunctional estates' rhetoric around *Communities Plus*. Rather, it has been cast around a need to grow the supply of social-housing dwellings, a practical path for financing that growth as well as a need to replace dwellings that are no longer 'fit for purpose'.

The initial package of seven sites involved the Ivanhoe public housing estate at Macquarie Park in North West Sydney and six smaller scattered sites within and outside Sydney. Since then estates at Telopea, Waterloo, Riverwood and Arncliffe were added. Most of the \$22 billion redevelopment of public housing estates announced as part of the Government's *Future Directions for social housing in NSW* policy (released in January 2016) are expected to be via *Communities Plus*.

The NSW Government has focused growth on the precincts where it can get greater densities, as part of a broader strategy of redeveloping town centres and precincts around transport nodes, and nearby estates get absorbed in the development. You can see this in the following examples:



- The Ivanhoe estate 259 dwellings at Macquarie Park in a middle-ring suburb close to a transport node, a university and a growing commercial centre, will be developed over 8–10 years.
- According to 2011 Census Telopea has 468 public housing dwellings making up 20% of the suburb. Telopea sits on the route of the proposed Parramatta Light Rail Project and is expected to be developed over 10–15 years.
- Redeveloping Waterloo estate's 2,012 dwellings has been used as part of the case to place a new Waterloo Metro station next to the estate in a redevelopment expected to take 15–20 years.

LAHC's intention is to cap social housing at each of the *Communities Plus* sites at 30% of the total new dwellings.

UrbanGrowth has advised that at Waterloo it is proposed there will be more than the existing 2,012 public housing units on the estate, that there will be 5,000 additional private units (some of which will be affordable housing) and that social housing will equate to around 30% of the development. At Ivanhoe, LAHC in its 'Registration of interest' wanted about 2,470 dwellings, including about 550 social housing and 120 'affordable' rental housing to be delivered on its land. The winning proposal delivered 3,000 dwellings including 950 (32%) social and 120 (4%) affordable housing.

LAHC will insist that the design of apartment buildings not distinguish between those used for social/affordable rental and privately-owned housing.

A paper released as part of the tender for some of the smaller sites was analysed by the Tenants' Union NSW and gives some indication of how the scheme may work.

- "The program is predominantly seeking one and two bedroom

## ***"Communities Plus ... has been cast around a need to grow the supply of social-housing dwellings, a practical path for financing that growth as well as a need to replace dwellings that are no longer 'fit for purpose'"***

dwellings as social housing, with a preference for more two bedroom dwellings. A number of dual key dwellings could be attractive as they provide greater flexibility."

- "as a minimum, the social housing will be required to meet the Silver Level of the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines as published by Liveable Housing Australia." This covers eight core design elements of most widespread benefit including step free access to the unit, a toilet and shower, as well as reinforcing for easy adaptation of bathroom and stairs.
- "Passive environmental design, which maximise solar access, orientation and cross flow ventilation to reduce energy heating, cooling, lighting and clothes drying costs...will be a requirement".
- LAHC will seek to optimise its commercial return for the land it contributes to the project, whilst adding to the overall supply of social housing and "seamlessly integrating" social, affordable and private market housing.
- "LAHC would retain ownership of the land until the project is completed and would appoint a Proponent to develop the site at the Proponent's cost. The proponent earns a return through a development fee equal to the proceeds of sale...[and] will be responsible for and accept all risk selling the private dwellings".
- The government anticipates that affordable residences will be owned or controlled by the developers,

and managed by a registered community housing provider.

Further, "it is not intended the value of land contributed by LAHC will fund the affordable housing component." These residences will be managed according to Department of Family and Community Service guidelines as to what constitutes affordable rental housing.

- The paper also notes that parties contracted to construct and manage the sites will not be able to draw on funding from other NSW Government housing initiatives, such as the Social and Affordable Housing Fund.

Any redevelopment relocates tenants. On the larger Waterloo estate, it is expected people will be relocated early in the development to surrounding suburbs. Later in the development it should be possible to move people directly into their new housing on the estate. In smaller developments an interim move is likely.

Many key questions remain unanswered. It is unclear what input current public housing tenants will have into the decisions that will affect their future. Issues of concern for current tenants are those that shape their neighbourhood, aspects of the redevelopment, the relocation process, engagement (information, consultation, participation) and the shape of the new built form.

Craig Johnston was the Principal Policy Officer at Shelter NSW. Geoff Turnbull is the Co-Editor of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING IN NSW: IS IT GOOD POLICY?

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND THE MANAGEMENT OF TENANTS WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE RECENTLY RELEASED FUTURE DIRECTIONS POLICY. **PETER PHIBBS** WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POLICY, ALSO RAISES SOME SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS.

**L**et me say at the start – if you are working for the Government, it's hard to write good policy. If you are the Minister it's hard to get good policy through a cabinet process, especially when you are dealing with colleagues who have little real experience of your portfolio.

There are a lot of good things in the Government's Future Directions document. For a Minister from a conservative Government to be able to attract substantial funds to increase the level of social housing and to renovate a large number of existing dwellings – Is a fantastic outcome for social housing. And who would argue about a plan that wants to improve the experience of social housing tenants? Another big tick.

However, I have some significant concerns with the document. One is the notion that people will transition out of social housing and into the private rental market. Clearly a lot of people do this already. An AHURI study on Social Housing exits led by Ilan Weisel from City Futures (*AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin Issue 190*) quantified the level of exits in some detail. The study found that annually, vacancies caused by voluntary tenant-initiated exits represent approximately five per cent of all public housing stock. It also found that about a quarter of tenants who

entered social housing in 2007 voluntarily exited within six years, although some of these will have subsequently re-entered or sought to do so.

The study suggested that increasing the level of exits from social housing of people who are unable to sustain a private market tenancy is likely to be counterproductive. This is the risk for a policy that sets a target of doubling the level of successful exits from public housing.

The problem is a simple one. Private rental markets, particularly in Sydney, are very difficult places for low income households. Tenancies are very expensive and often insecure, since the majority of investors are focussed on their returns from buying and selling property and not holding them long term. Moreover, social housing tenants who do find work are often employed on a casual or contract basis in low wage industries. In market terms, social housing tenants in this situation are facing revenue risk (from uncertain employment outcomes), cost risks (from increasing rents) and eviction risks (from landlords who want their rental properties vacant so they can sell them). Social housing tenants who voluntarily moved out of social housing in these circumstances would be exposing themselves to a number of short term and long term







risks, and social housing landlords would be likely to have a duty of care to counsel them against leaving, rather than having a KPI to move them on.

People are “staying” in social housing not because the social housing system is broken – rather because the private rental market is unsuitable as a long term tenure for people on low and moderate incomes in Sydney. Fixing it would require a radical change in private tenancy laws (not likely given the tenor of the recent discussion paper on *Tenancy Law Reform in NSW*) and a real effort by the NSW Government to address affordable housing. The Policy document talks about a joined up process between agencies, but it is not very evident. The reference to Fair Trading is very vague: “FACS will also work with the Department of Fair Trading to examine ways to make the private rental market more suitable for people on low incomes” (page 15).

My other concern with the document is the lack of evidence in the policy. For a document which was a long time in the making and included a significant amount of public resources devoted to a number of large consulting reports, why couldn’t we see more evidence in the policy. In particular, why wasn’t there a systematic examination of the costs and benefits of some of the new programs in the policy.

For example, making the poorest people in our community pay rental bonds to FACS Housing seems like a strange policy. To write as a justification that you are preparing them for a transition to the private rental market, when most of them won’t go near the private rental market (for reasons outlined above) does seem strange. Would the tenants be better off spending \$1400 on the education of their kids rather than having it locked away in the Rental Bond Board? If it’s about the tenant damage issue, why not use it as a “stick” for tenants who

damage their property rather than for every tenancy. How much will it cost to administer and will these costs exceed the assumed benefits? What are the equity issues with only applying it to new leases? It seems like a thought bubble by someone in the Minister’s office rather than a carefully considered policy. It clashes in a spectacular way with the policy aim of “A better social housing experience”.

My final comment relates to the issue of “joined up services”. This is a crucial issue for social housing tenants, particularly for children living in social housing. Education could have a transformational role for children of social housing tenants (think TAFE programs in housing construction and maintenance). So what is the only educational initiative mentioned? It is:

*“Commissioning a joint research project to determine the extent that living in social housing explains under performance, beyond that which is explained by socio economic status.”*

As a housing researcher, this makes me despair. AHURI has undertaken a range of housing research that demonstrates exactly the opposite. Children who move into social housing have a better educational experience than kids operating in the private rental market. There are a number of reasons for this, but the main ones are increased housing, and hence school, stability and increased disposable income of parents who can now help support their children by connecting them to the internet, buying books etc. (see *AHURI Final Report No. 47 Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes*).

The NSW housing agency actually helped pay for the research. Someone in FACS should go and read it.

**Professor Peter Phibbs is the Chair of Urban and Regional Planning and Policy at the University of Sydney and also Director of the Henry Halloran Trust at the same University.**

# SOCIAL MIX AND THE CHALLENGES IN CREATING IT

URBAN PLANNERS AND GOVERNMENT POLICY MAKERS OFTEN ADVOCATE HAVING A SOCIAL MIX WITHIN A PARTICULAR SPATIALLY DEFINED AREA, SUCH AS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF PUBLIC HOUSING.

**KATHY ARTHURSON** LOOKS AT THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL MIX.

**T**he term 'social mix' is commonly used interchangeably with tenure mix, which refers to the nature of housing occupancy. As such, this may include homeownership, private rental, public housing and community housing, with the different housing tenures all situated in the same location. This is considered an important aspect of planning policies that aim to build sustainable and vibrant communities.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE IDEA OF SOCIAL MIX

Many contemporary ideas underpinning social mix as a planning tool have a long history, although its popularity waxes and wanes at different times. In Victorian England, for instance, support for social mix was a response to social class segregation due to slum housing concentrated in industrial cities. Locating housing for the working classes amongst middle classes was seen as a way for the poor to gain role modelling about proper forms of behaviour – and to maintain their health and vitality as a labour force for expansion of industrial capitalism.

Recently, making changes to social mix has become linked to policies of Australian public housing estate renewal. Concentration and segregation of public housing households on estates is perceived as causing stigma and other negative effects. Lowering the amount of public housing on estates, dispersing tenants amongst homeowners and private renters, and attracting home buyers to estates is characterised as a mechanism to fix the problems. Many developments arising on former public housing sites are designed to achieve a 'social mix', of no more than 30 per cent public or community housing tenants.





## THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL MIX

Australian research that has sought public housing tenants' views about social mix policies shows that they are not a quick or even appropriate fix for the 'problems' of public housing. The policies rely on a simplistic explanation about lack of proximity of tenant households to home owners as a cause of problems and ignore other important issues. The reduced supply of public housing, reductions to funding, tighter targeting, and effects of economic and industry restructuring on employment opportunities have all impacted on the demographic mix of tenants. It is these factors that have led to increased stigmatisation of public housing, and exacerbated housing related poverty traps, not lack of social mix.

Certainly it is preferable in constructing new housing on vacant land (that hasn't previously been developed) to have a mix of different housing tenure groups, in order to provide affordable housing, create urban diversity and accessibility to services for different groups. However, when tenure mix is changed on existing public housing estates people already live there. Many are long term residents. Estate renewal generally requires tenant relocation, and as the concentration of public housing is reduced overall some existing residents have to move permanently to other areas. But of course those that are able to return to the regenerated estate should get better quality public housing than before.

## SOCIAL MIX IN HIGH RISE DEVELOPMENTS

The consistency of the housing tenure mix that is implemented varies. It might comprise a fine grained (salt

and pepper) mix - where residents from different housing tenures are located next door to each other. Alternatively the mix might be 'thinner' with different tenures clustered in particular pockets of the neighbourhood, or on one side of the road. All the public housing, for instance, might be clustered in the western corner of the neighbourhood.

Similarly, in high-rise buildings public tenants and home owners may live along-side each other, be grouped on different floor levels or live in separate buildings. At the Carlton Redevelopment Project (Lygon Site) in Melbourne all the public tenants are in one building and the private tenants' apartments are located in two separate buildings. Originally it was planned to have a 'salt and pepper' mix of public and private units in the same buildings to break down social barriers between tenure groups. The complex includes an enclosed courtyard garden, visible from all three buildings but only accessible to residents in private buildings. Research in 2014 by Iris Levin, Kathy Arthurson & Anna Ziersch found this design is not conducive to social integration.

## SUPPORT NEEDED TO MAKE SOCIAL MIX WORK

What did bring different tenure groups together in a productive way at Carlton was the 'Eco-Carlton Project' - residents interacted in learning about the special environmental features installed in the three buildings. Participants in Eco-Carlton said that having a social mix on the estate was worthwhile, although research in 2015 I participated in found, that to maintain ongoing social interactions between the different tenure groups, more community development work was needed.

In some instances, private residents were against a salt and pepper mix as they thought this would lower their property values. This viewpoint highlights that any changes to social mix must be carefully managed to avoid recreating conditions of stigma and exclusion for public tenants. Otherwise, according to research, places of social mix may become new spaces for social exclusion through identification of 'us' - private owners who purchase properties - and 'them' - public tenants paying subsidised rents to government for their housing.

## SUMMARY

Policy makers have not made a strong case for funding and support to address the long term viability and growth of public housing. The provision of stronger connections with support services in homelessness, education and health are also critical. Adopting social mix policies in estate renewal has become a convenient cover for the public-private mix and economic partnerships that come at the cost of selling off large amounts of public housing. Given the complexity of the issues it seems odd, if not counter-productive to focus on public housing concentration as the main problem and changing social mix as the solution. Especially when targeting of public housing only to people with high needs works against having a future social mix within public housing.

Associate Professor Kathy Arthurson is Director, Neighbourhoods, Housing and Health @ Flinders, Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity at Flinders University of SA. References and further reading on the issues in this article can be found in the online version.



# CAN THE PEOPLE PROBLEMS BE FIXED BY ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT?

ESTATE RENEWAL AND HOUSING MIX IS PORTRAYED BY GOVERNMENT AS A FIX-ALL FOR PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. **GEOFF TURNBULL** ASKS CAN NEW BUILDINGS ALONE REALLY ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS CREATED WHEN GOVERNMENT PLACES PEOPLE WITH HIGHER AND HIGHER NEEDS INTO PUBLIC HOUSING WITHOUT THE WRAP AROUND HUMAN SERVICES NECESSARY FOR THEM TO KEEP THEIR TENANCIES AND ADDRESS THEIR ISSUES.

**P**ublic housing started out as workers' housing. Early public tenants had to prove their house keeping skills were good enough to look after public housing and that they had a steady job to pay the rent. While some now elderly tenants came in to public housing on this basis, those entering public / social housing now do so on a very different basis.

When public housing construction did not keep up with demand, it started being allocated on the basis of need. While once everyone worked, this is now the exception. The waiting list of eligible people blows out as those with greatest need get priority access to scarce public housing.

Today's public tenants now have greater need for human services. Issues of aging and failing health face older public tenants. The issues for many of the new priority tenants are often complex and multifaceted. Alcohol and other drugs, mental health, domestic violence, homelessness, disability, trauma and institutionalisation in the prison system.

The human service needs of both groups require an integrated / wrap around approach that Redfern, Waterloo and Glebe groups have been request-

ing for a long time. Without a holistic approach for example, people with drug and psychiatric issues are pushed back and forwards between specialised drug, psychiatric and family agencies.

The failure of governments to adopt all the 1983 Richmond Report recommendations to provide de-institutionalised alternatives for the "psychiatrically ill and developmentally disabled"; the lack of resources for mental health; alcohol and other drugs support; and the lack of rehabilitation in prisons, all leave public housing bearing the externalised consequences of policy decisions in other parts of government, without the resources to address the issues that impact on those they are expected to house.

The 2016 FACS Housing *Future Directions* policy proposes "wrap-around" services to support tenants build their capabilities and take advantage of the economic opportunities". Hopefully it will produce better results at a local level than previous human service government agreements. Crucial to the success of "wrap-around" services, be it one stop shops or other ways of delivering services, are mechanisms for front line workers and NGOs to identify and report the lack of integration being experi-

enced by their clients and to have those problems addressed. Local services have proposed a mechanism for this.

The *Future Directions* suggestion to place a referral role in the new community housing approach will be no more successful than current referrals unless there is funding to increase delivery capacity for services when they are required.

As someone dies or exits public housing when they gain employment they will likely be replaced by a person or family with similar or higher needs, so it has the effect of further concentrating the disadvantage in public housing rather than addressing it.

One of the concerns for agency workers is that while tenants must establish evidence of high need to be allocated priority housing, there is no follow through to ensure that ongoing support is being accessed or that complex diagnoses are being case managed.

So some tenants create problems for







their neighbours by exhibiting anti-social behaviour and have difficulty keeping their tenancy. Neighbours have an entitlement to “quiet enjoyment” of their homes which may not be possible if their neighbour is going through an episode of psychiatric illness or drug, alcohol or violence issues.

The problematic behaviour that governments are seeking to address by estate redevelopment is a consequence of the housing and allocation policies of successive governments and the failure to fund sufficient human service support to the tenants they allocate to, and concentrate in, public housing.

Given all of the above, what happens in human service delivery becomes crucial, both for those with human service needs and their neighbours. In private complexes like Meriton, residents also experience anti-social behaviour. Tenure mix will bring additional issues and service needs. Without the human services aspects being addressed we

will not only see the current problems being carried over into new buildings, but due to the higher density housing, the consequences of any psychiatric or drug or alcohol event is likely to impact on far more people. Even if they have experience of bad behaviour in private developments, it is unlikely that private owners or renters will tolerate the level of behaviour FACS Housing have expected its tenants to tolerate.

A mixed tenure redevelopment with all those high income private owners and renters in the same area as public housing tenants with high needs will mean on average that the statistics will appear greatly improved. On the flip side it will be much more difficult for agencies to make the case to fund services for the less statistically visible part of the community with high needs that remains. Less land owned by government may also mean it is more difficult to find space to provide new services as they become needed.

The success of any redevelopment will be dependent on significant human service improvements for the public tenants. Agencies argue that if support systems for public tenants worked properly a lot of the pressure to renew public housing to “fix the problems” would not exist. Rolling out robust human services support in both Redfern and Waterloo estates prior to, during and after the Waterloo redevelopment would provide an opportunity to compare how human service improvements alone compare with estate renewal to address estate and tenants’ issues.

The final part of the human service – development picture is that redevelopment creates new human service problems and brings to light issues that are hidden from services.

Currently, for example, local community centres are not funded to deal with most of the public housing community who walk through their doors. They are funded by the state for families with children, but not to deal with older tenants or those with high needs where funding has moved to individualised federal packages that do not contribute

to such local community wide services. The Waterloo announcement has already created an increase of walk-ins to community centres by anxious tenants. This will significantly ramp up as people see plans for areas where their homes currently sit and as they face their relocations.

As FACS starts to knock on doors it will begin to uncover issues that it was not aware of, like tenants with restricted sight being able to operate around their own home but not being able to cope with a new environment, or people with dementia who have reverted to their birth language and cope only because their existing neighbours come from the same language group.

The Millers Point relocations highlighted that many people survived outside the formal health system because of social networks which were fractured during relocation. At the centre of the human services re-development issue is that redevelopments break community cohesion and support networks. The informal supports people have relied on are often no longer accessible, resulting in an increased demand for government funded services. This is the reason why minimising the disruption of communities during redevelopment should be a priority for government and service providers.

Usually the increased human service demands around redevelopment are only handled short term when people are relocated during building. Long term issues of providing support for people dislocated from their community, re-establishing supportive communities and supporting people with high needs in new public / community housing, are challenges the government often does not address. However, without such human service support constructing new buildings will not lead to the promised improvements for tenants and their neighbours.

**Geoff Turnbull is Co-Editor of Inner Sydney Voice Magazine and the Treasurer of Counterpoint Community Services**

# REDUCING REDEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR HOW YOU WILL BE AFFECTED, THE REDEVELOPMENT OF WATERLOO WILL PRESENT PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY CHALLENGES EXPLAINS ELIZABETH HARRIS.

**T**here will be people living through redevelopment who will not be relocated; some residents who will be temporarily or permanently relocated; and a very large number of new residents to the area. We know that the scale of these changes can have negative impacts on health that can be minimised if they are recognised and addressed.

The poor health of public housing tenants has been well established, with research demonstrating higher rates of infectious disease, chronic illness, mental health disorders, delayed child development, inadequate nutrition and poor oral health, compared to the general population.

This is often seen as resulting from a contest between context and composition. Are these poor health outcomes a result of the poor physical, social and economic environments in which people live that limit their life opportunities (context)? Or is it the composition of the population due to high numbers of people with long term mental illness, drug and alcohol problems, chronic health problems and families experiencing domestic violence that lead to these poor health outcomes (composition)? It is likely to be a combination of both, acting over time, which can leave some families trapped in disadvantage that can become intergenerational. Improving physical conditions are important but if they do not lead to increased opportunities for health through work and education, impacts may be compromised.

The international evidence of improvement of health and wellbeing from redevelopment is mixed and at times conflicting. Some studies such as “Moving to Opportunity” did find improvements in health, but no change in education and employment. A large Scottish study of relocated residents

found that although housing conditions and social cohesion improved, there were no changes to physical and mental health.

An Australian qualitative study of the Minto Renewal Project in south west Sydney found that children and adults who moved into an area of low public housing concentration reported improvements in psychosocial health outcomes. However, uncertainty, delay and ongoing disruption caused by relocation were identified as potential causes of stress, injury and hardship if appropriate services were not in place.

Insights into the health impact can be seen in *The Relocation of Public Housing Tenants in South Western Sydney – A Health Impact Assessment (HIA)* which provided much of the content for this article. Based on a literature review, a demographic and health profile of the Airds Bradbury area, in-depth interviews with employees of health and welfare agencies and residents, they identified six potential health impacts related to: Neighbourhood conditions; Residents response to renewal; Neighbourhood and housing quality; Social networks and community engagement; Access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity; and Access to social and health care services.

Analysis of local health data showed significantly higher rates of ill health, chronic disease and behavioural risk factors compared to the NSW average. These patterns of illnesses are often associated with poor living, social and economic factors such as income, education, employment and family type.

Although the health effects of redevelopment have been mixed in Airds Bradbury, all those interviewed acknowledged the process was stressful. This was true in the HIA where many residents reported increased anxiety and stress as a result of delays and

uncertainty of the move. Living in areas with empty housing meant they felt vulnerable to gang violence, vandalism and increased crime. Some residents who had moved to mixed-income communities reported increased access to transport, recreation and supermarkets, and they felt happier and safer. Residents who had been actively involved in the redevelopment and have positive relations with their housing officer seemed more satisfied with the relocation. A personalised approach to relocation is reported to have positive impacts on health and feelings of control.

Improved quality of housing had positive impacts on residents although many reported that the new housing did not meet their requirements for space, size and layout. Noise and dislocation during the redevelopment was also difficult for residents.

In summary the HIA found:

- A personalised approach at all stages of the redevelopment improves satisfaction and outcomes
- Community engagement should be a priority for investment,
- Ensuring uninterrupted access to services is important;
- Environmental and social disruption should be minimised;
- Residents should be rehoused in relation to their needs and preferences; and
- Redesigned neighbourhoods should maximise safety and security and provide opportunities for social interaction.

The HIA makes practical recommendations on how these issues can be addressed. You can see the full HIA at [www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/populationhealth/PH\\_environments/pdf/RelocationPHTenants.pdf](http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/populationhealth/PH_environments/pdf/RelocationPHTenants.pdf)

Elizabeth Harris is an Associate Professor in the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity at the University of NSW and is Director, Health Equity Research and Development Unit, Sydney Local Health District



# CITY OF SYDNEY PLANNING DENSITY CONCERNS

THE CITY OF SYDNEY HAS RAISED SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS ABOUT THE DENSITY AND AMENITY BEING PLANNED FOR THE WATERLOO PUBLIC HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT BY URBANGROWTH NSW. COUNCIL AGUES BELOW IT IS GREATER THAN ANYTHING SEEN IN AUSTRALIA AND IT HAS PROVIDED FIGURES TO BACK ITS CONCERNS.

**T**here are no similar-sized areas of this density in London or Singapore, and only a few in Manhattan and Paris. It is similar to some areas in Hong Kong.

## What does this mean for our neighbourhoods?

- In other areas of this size and density we know that:
- New apartments do not get enough sunlight
- Surrounding homes are overshadowed
- Local parks are heavily overshadowed
- There is more pressure on existing parks and community services
- There is a lot more traffic congestion
- Existing street trees need to be replaced

## What has UrbanGrowth NSW told us about Waterloo?

- 7,000 new apartments on the 19ha site, including replacing the 2,000 social units and providing more affordable housing
- New train station
- New development in the surrounding areas to help pay for the new station

## What makes a good community?

There is a similar number of dwellings in Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay. But a community is not just houses:

- These suburbs have 4 large parks, tennis courts and an oval
- There is a library and three community buildings
- There are 3 local primary schools nearby
- There are also aged care and child care facilities

- This community is served by three supermarkets, local shops, doctors and dentists and local offices
- Together, this makes a lively community and a good place to live.

## How does the City plan new communities?

We involve the community in our planning for new areas.

The City has been planning Green Square for more than 15 years. We're creating a community for more than 50,000 new residents and 20,000 new workers. Our planning at Green Square means there will be:

- Lots of new parks
- A new library and community cultural centre
- A new indoor swimming pool
- Supermarkets, shops, room for local doctors, dentists and other services
- New childcare facilities

If UrbanGrowth NSW squeeze 7,000 apartments on the Waterloo Estate, there will be no room for the things needed to make a good place for a new community.

The NSW government want to take planning control for Waterloo and Central to Eveleigh away from Council and the local community.

The City of Sydney is best-placed to do the planning for Waterloo and Central to Eveleigh. We will involve the community and we will be open and transparent.

To find out more go to: [www.redwatch.org.au/RWA/Waterloo/2016waterloo](http://www.redwatch.org.au/RWA/Waterloo/2016waterloo)

## DENSITY COMPARISONS PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

	Hectares	Dwellings	Dwellings per hectare	People per hectare
<b>Large precincts over 10 ha</b>				
Waterloo Estate (proposed)	19	7,000	368	700
Elephant Park (London)	11.4	2,988	262	497
Green Square Town Centre	17	4,000	235	446
Battersea Power Station (London)	16	3,444	214	406
Former ACI site	13	2,473	190	360
Victoria Park	24	3,124	130	247
<b>Small precincts under 10 ha</b>				
Central Park Broadway	6.9	2,229	323	613
Discovery Point	6.1	1,600	262	497
Darling Quarter	4.6	1,363	296	562

## OUR SAY ...

The above summary was produced and circulated by Council following a community presentation in June 2016. The table above was presented at that meeting in response to initial criticism from UrbanGrowth. Council encouraged residents to send *Back to the drawing board* postcards to the Minister of Planning about the issue.

While the NSW Government removed control of the redevelopment from Council, the area was limited to the Metro station and the consolidated public housing estate. Council however participated in the setting of the redevelopment study requirements and included many Council policies. Council also has a monitoring role on the Project Review Panel.

AN IMPORTANT COMMUNITY HOUSING INPUT TO THE WATERLOO ESTATE RENEWAL PROJECT LOOKS LIKELY. **HAL PAWSON** EXPLAINS THAT IN REPLACING THE ESTATE'S RUNDOWN PUBLIC HOUSING, A COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANISATION MAY BE BROUGHT IN TO MANAGE THE NEWLY BUILT LOW RENT PROPERTIES.

## IS COMMUNITY HOUSING SET TO FEATURE IN THE WATERLOO ESTATE REBUILD?

**T**riggered by the December 2015 NSW Government announcement of a new station nearby, the Waterloo Estate is set for a huge revamp over coming years. Existing public housing units will be replaced by an equal number of new low rent flats built to modern standards, with all current residents entitled to one of these replacement homes. To pay for this, valuable surplus land freed up on the site will be sold for private housing development so that the rebuilt estate will have a greatly increased number of homes, overall.

The Waterloo project is part of the NSW Government's state-wide *Communities Plus* estate renewal program. Under this model private developers partner with community housing providers to replace outdated estates with new low rent homes, alongside properties built for market sale. With Waterloo tenants having a 'right to return', these 'returning' (or remaining) residents are likely to find their new homes managed by a community housing provider rather than by the State Government's Department of Family and Community Services (FACS). Why would the Government choose to do this and what will it mean for tenants?

### WHAT ARE COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANISATIONS?

Community housing organisations, or CHOs, are not-for-profit bodies set up to build and manage affordable rental housing. Like public housing, CHO properties are generally rented out at 25% of tenant income (unless that income exceeds an equivalent 'market rent' for that property). For landlord and tenant responsibilities, CHO

tenancy agreements are also similar to those in public housing.

Important in ensuring CHOs maintain a good standard of service and efficient operation is their supervision through national regulation. Under this system the NSW Registrar of Community Housing keeps a watchful eye on all listed CHOs operating within the state, periodically checking that each organisation is 'compliant' with clearly defined minimum standards. This level of external scrutiny is unmatched for public housing.

In NSW around 30,000 tenants rent their homes from CHOs compared with around 110,000 renting a public housing property from FACS. Although there are hundreds of individual CHOs across Australia, most have only a handful of properties. The bulk of CHO tenancies are managed by a few larger organisations. In Sydney, these more significant players include Bridge Housing, St George Community Housing (SGCH) and the Women's Housing Company.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PUBLIC HOUSING TENANCIES ARE 'TRANSFERRED' TO COMMUNITY HOUSING?

Across NSW, many renting from CHOs are former public housing residents whose tenancies have been 'transferred' to a CHO at some time over the past 10 years. When this happens, tenants are normally protected against any loss of existing rights.

For Waterloo tenants who see their current public housing tenancy transferred to a CHO on the rebuilt estate, the State Government has indicated that lease length (unlimited or fixed-term) and other terms and conditions (such as whether pets are allowed) will

remain unchanged. Rents will also be set at an equivalent level to what would be charged in public housing, leaving tenants' net income after rent payment unaffected by the change of landlord.

### WHY ARE GOVERNMENTS WANTING TO EXPAND COMMUNITY HOUSING?

Both in NSW and in other states, governments have actively promoted the expansion of community housing over the past 10-20 years. This has happened for several reasons. The most important is the view that CHOs have the potential to provide a more personalised and responsive tenancy management service than public housing providers. The better results achieved by CHOs are reflected in the higher rates of tenant satisfaction recorded by CHOs compared with public housing landlords. In NSW, for example, the latest figures show 79% of CHO tenants 'satisfied with overall landlord service' compared with only 65% of public housing tenants.

One reason that CHOs are rated more highly by tenants is that they can afford to spend a bit more on housing services. This is partly because low income CHO tenants are eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). This is a Centrelink benefit that can be claimed to top up the rent a low income CHO tenant can pay, without any reduction in their net income, as compared with what their situation would be as a public housing tenant. For a CHO, the ability to have tenant rent payments topped up through CRA means the organisation's rental income can be about 50% higher than what it would be for a public housing



provider managing the same estate with the same tenants. This puts a CHO in a better position to keep its housing in a good state of repair and/or to invest in new affordable housing.

As a charitable organisation, a CHO can also benefit from tax concessions such as GST-exemption. This means CHOs can make tenants' rents go further when it comes to buying in property repairs or other tenant services.

Another reason that some governments have chosen to transfer public housing to CHOs is because, being non-government organisations, CHOs are less bound by restrictions on borrowing funds to invest in new housing that can add to overall affordable housing supply. A local example involved the 6,000 social housing dwellings built by the NSW Government between 2009 and 2012 as part of the Commonwealth Government's economic stimulus program to counter the risk of recession due to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. In return for receiving the 6,000 new homes, CHOs

committed to taking out debt to build an additional 1,200 affordable rental properties over the following decade.

However, this kind of deal can work only with significant government help – in this case provided by transferring ownership of the 6,000 new properties to CHOs at no charge. Although community housing finances are slightly stronger than those of public housing departments, the difference is nothing like enough to enable CHOs to build new or replacement social or affordable housing properties without additional government support or 'subsidy' of some kind.

Unlike public housing departments, there's a certain amount of competition between larger CHOs looking to be chosen by Government as a partner organisation on estate renewal or other housing development projects. Governments believe competing helps to keep CHOs 'on their toes'. This connects with a bigger argument that, by moving away from a social housing structure overwhelmingly dominated by a single

public housing provider, expanding the number of viable CHOs will benefit tenants and the wider community through a more competitive system.

## DIFFERENCES IN POWERS

There is one significant difference between CHO powers compared with those of a public housing landlord. Although seldom used, CHOs in NSW have the legal authority to end a tenant's lease without needing to jump through the same legal hoops as the public housing authority. Some have argued that this is an important aid in dealing with serious antisocial behaviour.

A similar difference in powers exists between public (council) housing and not for profit housing in England. English housing associations (the equivalent of our CHOs) likewise have 'no cause eviction' powers not available to councils. Although rarely used by English housing associations, the existence of these powers has understandably led to anxieties among English public (council) housing tenants facing possible transfer to housing association management.

Recognising these concerns, associations looking to take on former council housing have often contractually guaranteed no use of these powers for transferred estates. Here in NSW a similar pledge could possibly be offered by any CHO in line to take on ex-public housing tenants in NSW. Alternatively, a similar safeguard could be included in any new legislation the government might enact to underpin future transfers.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The NSW government has recently announced plans for another batch of public housing transfers to CHOs, state-wide.

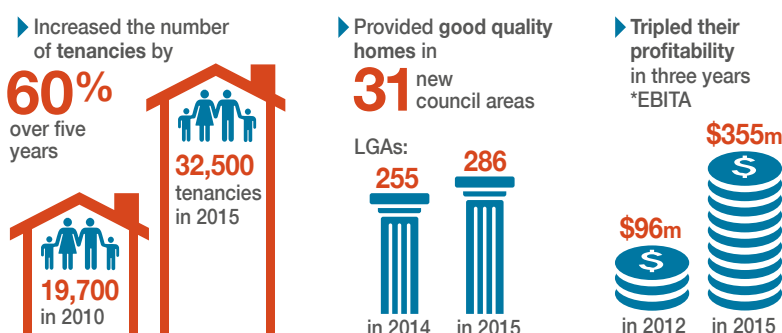
A decision on whether the low rent part of rebuilt Waterloo estate will be part of these plans should be revealed in coming months.

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

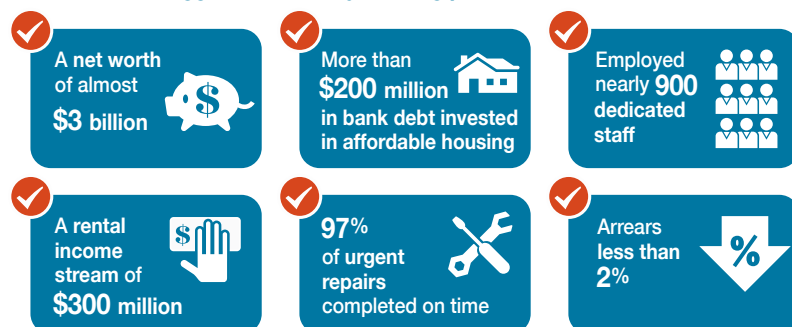
Hal Pawson is Professor Housing Research and Policy and Associate Director at the City Futures Research Centre, UNSW

## COMMUNITY HOUSING IN NSW: STATE OF THE SECTOR

In 2015, the 20 largest community housing providers:



In 2015, the 20 biggest community housing providers had:



source [www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au)



**T**here is clear evidence that this problem has been growing in Sydney for many years. Concern about the loss of low cost rental apartments and boarding houses was first raised in the 1980s when the inner city began to gentrify and attract new residents and tourists. Since this time there has been a steady decline in affordability across the metropolitan region. By June 2015, less than two per cent of Sydney's home sales and only 18% of rental properties were affordable to those on low incomes (down from a third of all rental properties in 2001). Over 70% of low and 95% of Sydney's very low income earners were in "housing stress" at the time of the 2011 census – paying more than 30% of their income on rents or mortgage.

A lack of housing options near jobs forces people to travel long distances and work longer hours, while others might be unable to participate in the workforce. Low income households often live in overcrowded and inadequate conditions, and forgo basic requirements for food, medicine, or education. As well as social costs, an inadequate supply of housing choices may undermine global competitiveness in an international economy which depends on 'key workers' such as police, nurses, automobile mechanics and teachers. International firms may hesitate to invest in cities where their staff will face high housing costs.

#### ISN'T NEW AND DIVERSE HOUSING SUPPLY ENOUGH?

Some say that an increase in the supply of new and diverse dwellings – particularly medium and higher density apartments – should resolve affordability problems.

But over the past decade there has been a phenomenal growth in the number of new dwellings in the central Sydney region, with the majority being medium

## WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

WHEN CITIES PROSPER, HOUSE PRICES AND RENTS TEND TO RISE. SO THE LOSS OF LOWER PRICED HOMES TO RENT OR PURCHASE CAN BE AN UNFORTUNATE BY-PRODUCT OF SUCCESS FOR GLOBAL CITIES SUCH AS SYDNEY.

**NICOLE GURRAN** EXPLAINS THE PROBLEM AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT.

and higher density apartments. In the City of Sydney area an additional 21,641 dwellings were added in the decade between 2001-2011; an increase of 25% in the housing stock. This compares to a 10% increase across the entire Sydney metropolitan area, roughly in line with the city's net population growth. Yet affordability problems have worsened over this time.

Neither the supply of social housing, nor new residential development produced by the market, has been able to meet the needs of Sydney's low or moderate income earners. So more must be done to support the provision of affordable housing, for these lower and moderate income groups.

## DEFINING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The term 'affordable housing' is used in many different ways by policy-makers, politicians, and the property industry, and indeed varies across Australia. Broadly speaking, affordable housing means homes that are available for low and moderate income earners to rent or purchase, while still meeting other basic needs like food, transport, electricity, health care, education and so on. Housing costs of up to 30% of income are usually said to be 'affordable' for very low, low or moderate income households. Currently, that means income levels of around \$24,000 for a very low income individual to \$120,900 for a moderate income couple with two children.

Many types of accommodation can fall within the affordable housing umbrella. However, a distinction is often made between 'affordable' and 'social' housing since a wider group of people are eligible for affordable housing, and the forms of provision are more diverse. Adequate quantities of 'affordable housing' usually depend on government intervention and funding.

Affordable housing might be offered as a fixed term lease for below market cost (80% of market value is a common benchmark). In NSW, 'affordable housing' has been defined as rental accommodation for very low, low and moderate income groups. By serving a wider range of income groups, including moderate income earners who can pay higher rents, affordable housing providers are able to cross subsidise their operations.

Other jurisdictions like South Australia and the ACT, extend the definition of affordable housing to include low cost home ownership – offered at a discounted price or on an equity sharing basis. In South Australia, where the planning system requires that 15% of housing in new residential areas be affordable, eligible households can obtain a discounted purchase price or enter into an equity sharing arrangement. These models can be structured so that the subsidy (and a portion of capital gains) can be recycled to provide an ongoing funding stream.

In addition to the use of government land, financial grants or incentives, the planning system often leverages affordable housing as part of new projects. Internationally, the benchmark requirement for affordable housing inclusion is usually around 15-30%, depending on the amount of government land and other resources invested in the scheme, and on the extent of value uplift associated with planning approval. Under South Australia's 15% quota providers of social rental housing or eligible households can obtain a discounted purchase price for dwellings delivered in this way.

Lower-cost forms of housing delivered through the private market for rent or purchase – such as modest apartments, senior's accommodation and sometimes boarding houses – can also be a critical supply of affordable

accommodation. It is important to monitor the availability of such housing in the market and to encourage its ongoing provision.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN INNER SYDNEY

Affordable housing is often provided by non-profit management and or housing developers, but could also be developed by the private sector. In Sydney, the City West housing company was established in 1994 to develop, build, and manage affordable housing initially in the Pyrmont/Ultimo urban renewal area and now over a wider area. Currently, City West has delivered over 730 units of affordable rental accommodation in Pyrmont/Ultimo, Green Square, and North Eveleigh (which won the UDIA NSW Excellence in Affordable Development award in 2015). However, overall less than one per cent of new supply in major renewal areas such as Green Square / Victoria Park has been in the form of dedicated affordable rental units.

While investing in transport infrastructure and new urban facilities improves accessibility and catalyses housing and economic growth, it is critical to ensure that these benefits are not solely capitalised in higher rents and prices which exacerbate the affordability pressures faced by lower income groups. Rather, the value created through urban renewal and development processes can and should be used to leverage a pipeline of diverse and affordable homes to meet the needs of households across the income spectrum.

**Nicole Gurran is Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Sydney where she teaches and researches on housing and urban policy. References and further reading on the issues in this article can be found in the online version.**





## PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW SOUTH WALES: A BRIEF HISTORY

TO UNDERSTAND MODERN DAY PUBLIC HOUSING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND ITS HISTORY.

**CHRIS MARTIN** LOOKS AT WHAT HAS SHAPED PUBLIC HOUSING OVER MORE THAN 100 YEARS.

**F**our years ago, the New South Wales public housing system turned 100 years old. The milestone went unobserved by the NSW State Government, in what felt like an embarrassed silence. Public housing was not always regarded this way. When the *Housing Act 1912* (NSW) was introduced, creating the NSW Housing Board and authorising the construction of the first planned public housing estate in Australia, the State Treasurer, Rowland Dacey, proclaimed the Government's vision proudly:

*We propose to establish a garden city, and to offer the people healthy conditions for living. It has been truthfully said that the city beautiful will yield big dividends to the nation. We propose to establish a city beautiful, which Australians abroad will be able to point to with pride and say, 'There, that is how Australia builds its garden cities.'*

Dacey died one week later, and was memorialised in the name of the first public housing estate – Daceyville.

This was not the first involvement by the NSW state government in the provision of rental housing: through the Sydney Harbour Trust, it owned and let houses at The Rocks and Millers Point which had been acquired when the area was resumed for sanitary redevelopment following an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900. But the 1912 initiatives were the first time the state government had a dedicated housing agency with a deliberate mission to improve housing through the design, construction and letting of publicly-owned housing.

The establishment of public housing in New South Wales reflected the international ferment at the beginning the twentieth century of ideas

for reform from a particularly 'social' point of view. In contrast to the moralising, classical liberal reformism of the previous century, this new social-liberal reformism proposed solutions to governmental problems not through *laissez faire* or philanthropy or well-meaning amateurs, but instead through greater interventions by the state and technocratic experts in planning, social security and other programs that would secure and regularise the lives and conditions of working people. Housing was significant in these programs of reform, and garden suburbs like Daceyville were described at the time as being 'the great lever of social reform'.

The social-liberal reform of housing was not, however, only – or even mainly – about public housing: the first choice of reformers was a reform of housing provided privately by the market. So, in the same parliamentary session as it passed the *Housing Act 1912*, the NSW State Government also passed legislation to advance deposits and mortgage finance to workers for home ownership; later, the commonwealth government would directly support home ownership through the War Service Homes Commission. Less directly, private housing to an appropriate standard was supported by the state through the wage arbitration system, which formulated a 'living wage' that accounted for the reasonable cost of housing for a working class household.

Public housing, then, was only one of several solutions proposed by reformers, never the most preferred one and, where it was implemented, it was with a considerable degree of variation and experimentation. This was especially the case in New South Wales: Daceyville was a fraction of the size originally planned when building stopped and the Housing Board was abolished in the early 1920s. A number of more or less stop-start engagements with public housing followed, including the short-lived Housing Improvement Board (1936–42), which produced the fortunately much longer lived Erskineville Estate.

Public housing really became an

enduring part of the policy landscape – and the landscape of our cities and towns – after 1945. Internationally, social-liberal reformism at this time was newly rationalised and extended by Keynesian macroeconomics, the practical experience of governing the war effort, and the politics of 'reconstruction', and around the world public housing entered its 'golden age'. In Australia, the commonwealth became crucially involved in public housing. First, the Commonwealth Housing Commission (the CHC), a board of inquiry appointed in 1943 by Ben Chifley as Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, presented a massive report documenting housing conditions and needs, and set out a striking statement of principle for housing policy:

*We consider that a dwelling of good standard and equipment is not only the need but the right of every citizen – whether the dwelling is to be rented or purchased, no tenant or purchaser should be exploited for excessive profit.*

On the CHC's recommendation, the commonwealth inaugurated the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) to fund state governments to build and operate public housing. Under the first CSHA (1945–55) State housing authorities built almost 100,000 dwellings for public rental – one in every seven dwellings built in Australia in that period. The NSW Housing Commission (established in 1942 to house war workers) built almost 38,000 dwellings under the first CSHA, about 18 per cent of all dwellings built here in the period. The majority of the Commission's new dwellings were detached houses built according to sanitary town planning principles on middle- and outer-suburban estates, initially of 500–2,000 dwellings each, with some very large estates in development from the late 1950s – notably Green Valley, with 6,000 dwellings for 25,000 persons, and Mt Druitt, with 8,000 dwellings for 32,000 persons. As the Commission put it, 'these estates radiate out from the city proper' and, it was claimed, 'created a potential labour





force in strategic areas which attracted and allowed “breathing space” for industrial expansion – and provided the “castle” for the working man and his family’. The Commission also built flats, first mainly in walk-up blocks, then, from the mid-1950s, in high-rise towers, such as John Northcott Place, a ‘Town in the Sky’ of 430 units in three 12-storey towers in Surry Hills, ‘designed mainly for business couples and families with grown-up children working in the city’.

Policy support for home ownership, however, remained paramount. Australia’s largest state program of direct assistance for home ownership was the War Service Homes scheme, which financed the construction of 265,000 dwellings in the period 1945–1971. From the mid-1950s, public housing policy was shifted to supporting home ownership too, with the 1956 CSHA concluded by the Menzies Government diverting 30 per cent of commonwealth funds to building societies and state banks to subsidise finance for home ownership. In the subsequent decade, public housing’s average share of completions declined by a similar proportion (in New South Wales, to about 12.5 per cent). Moreover, public housing authorities could sell much more of what they built – something Menzies and the state premiers had been looking forward to for some time. (After a conference with the premiers in 1953, Menzies is reported to have said ‘I do not want to see a state of affairs in Australia – and I am glad to gather that the premiers do not – in which governments are the universal landlords. I think that is a shocking position for governments to get into.’) In 1956–57, the NSW Housing Commission built 3030 dwellings – and sold 3,197. By 1969, the Commission would end up selling one-third of all the dwellings it had ever built (93,817 to that date).

From the 1960s, with public housing an established, if less preferred part of social liberal government, a new movement of social scientific investigation, both internationally and in Australia, began to uncover the persistence of

poverty amidst the prosperity of the post-war period. At first it was supposed that this would be addressed by extensions to government programs of social security and urban renewal but, by the 1970s, investigative attention was turning to the role of those very programs of government in the production of hardship and strife amongst poor households. So, for example, in his *Ideas for Australian Cities* (1970), Stretton defended both public housing provision and the suburban form of Australian cities, but lamented the reality: being a resident of a public housing estate was ‘like a yellow badge in a lifeless ghetto town to which it is public knowledge that no successful man would be admitted’ (page 167). These critical investigations were joined by community discontent with the paternalism of government institutions. In New South Wales, the strongest critics of the Housing Commission in the period – and, in particular, its plans for ‘slum clearing’ inner city suburbs and the construction of so-called ‘suicide towers’ in slum-cleared inner city suburbs – were the radical Builders Labourers’ Federation, working class residents action groups and community activists.

While progressive criticisms of public housing and other social-liberal government programs mounted, the long period of post-war economic growth ended and throughout the developed world a new agenda of market-led reformism was embraced by policymakers. Public housing in particular was rapidly recast from being one of governments’ solutions to poor housing and associated problems to being a problem itself. In the 1970s and 1980s, neo-liberal and neo-conservative governments turned strongly against public housing, reducing the size of public housing sectors, variously through cessation of new construction, sales of properties and, most spectacularly, the huge programs of demolitions in the US and the UK. They also shifted public housing’s target clientele from workers and their families to persons who are marginalised or excluded from labour and housing markets.

In Australia, where so much of the public housing stock was privatised a generation previously, the decline was slower, because the early Hawke Labor Governments of the 1980s continued building public housing to mitigate policies of wage restraint, but it took hold by the late-1980s and accelerated from the mid-1990s. Public housing’s share of dwelling completions fell from an average of 16 per cent over 1945–70 to nine per cent over the 1980s, and fell again to five per cent over the 1990s. Upon the election of the Howard Coalition Government in 1996, funding to social housing under the CSHA was cut and declined in real terms over the subsequent 10 years by 30 per cent, whereupon dwelling numbers began to decline absolutely. In New South Wales, the absolute loss of public housing was forestalled until relatively recently – but all the while the stock has become more rundown, and an increasingly poor fit for the changed clientele of public housing.

While the recent history of public housing is, on most measures, one of decline, it is also one of transformation, in potentially positive ways. As well as public housing, New South Wales has now developed a community housing sector to which state housing functions have been contracted out, in neo-liberal fashion. However, it is also in this sector that some of those older social objectives of security and dignity through housing are being maintained and rearticulated with greater responsiveness to the needs of individuals and communities; it is also where initiatives are forming to extend affordable housing again to working households for whom the private sector has failed to provide.

After the silence of public housing’s centenary year, the NSW State Government has recently had a little more to say about opportunities for growing social and affordable housing. It might yet come up with something to be proud of.

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## Social Mix

Social mix is easy to lampoon as this cartoon shows. This may be why governments now prefer to use the term "integrated communities" rather than "social mix". Whatever the term, the issues raised in this 2003 Inner Voice remain relevant today.

# What is a 'Better Social Mix'?

According to Professor Tony Vinson's study of social disadvantage, *'Unequal in Life'*, those in Waterloo are the most disadvantaged people in greater Sydney. Local Member for Bligh, Clover Moore, says these tenants "struggle to live with low incomes, drug and alcohol addiction, gambling problems, mental illness, high debt levels and limited employment. These families need the Government's support and help."

No one is pretending that Waterloo and Redfern are free of problems and do not need strategic attention. There may be merit in the notion of tinkering with the local social mix, but do we really know what the implications are?

Firstly, we need to work out whether we're talking about improving an area or improving the quality of life of the people living there. If the perception is that the disadvantaged population is the area's problem, then the area could be 'improved' by moving the population away and replacing them with people who are more upwardly mobile. If it's the present population's quality of life that we're trying to improve by moving new people in to 'dilute' them, then we should think of how that would work.

We might think that the new people would improve the quality of life for the original residents through three mechanisms. 1) That people who are more middle class provide role models of other ways in which it's possible to live, so that kids don't only see examples of unemployment, alcoholism, drug addiction and petty crime around them as they grow up. 2) The new people might bring more money to the area and therefore more work opportunities. 3) The more affluent new people might also be more demanding about service provision and thereby bring about improvements for everyone.

But rather than assuming that a 'better social mix' will do the trick, we'd better look for some proof or precedent.

There's not a lot of hard evidence

either way, but *'Housing Tenure, Social Mix and Creating Inclusive Communities'*, a paper by Kathy Arthurson of the University of South Australia, sheds a little light on some alarming potential outcomes.

Arthurson claims that because home owners tend to be more mobile, they carry out their activities away from the area in which they live. This means that they are not really integrated into the community. The result is actually greater isolation for the remaining public tenants than if their neighbours had continued to be other public tenants. The research findings also question whether placing residents with different income levels in the same neighbourhood raises awareness of class differences, creating tensions rather than the social integration.

Arthurson makes an interesting point about what she perceives as governments shifting responsibility for the well being of an area away from government and on to communities. "While varying social mix reflects efforts by government to create sustainable communities, it also represents a retreat from public policy as a way to alleviate problems of social inequality. Instead, community is portrayed as the locus of social change. Once the heterogeneous communities are created, and the problems of public tenants made less visible, then responsibility is placed on communities through some anticipated but highly questionable normalising effects of middle-income role models."

It's also interesting to read that "there are ... some advantages in having high needs groups located together in certain regions. Many special government services are only available when numbers of recipients reach a certain threshold. Without a critical mass, services are unlikely to be set up or ... maintained once the concentrations of disadvantaged residents are lowered through dispersal."

Back in December 2002, Shelter NSW hosted a conference, *'Social Mix in our Cities'*. Participants identified a number of concerns. The 'So-



cial inclusion and public housing estates workshop' stated, "The group felt that to define the problems of estates as something to be addressed by encouraging social mix was fundamentally mistaken. The problems of the estates were related to issues like poverty, health, education, unemployment, transport, poor design, lack of maintenance etc. Addressing these problems directly was more likely to be effective than trying to restructure estates to encourage social mix."

The workshop also concluded that as the problems of dysfunctional estates are exacerbated by reductions in government funding and the ever-tighter targeting of eligibility criteria to people with high and complex levels of need, it is unfair to blame the people for the problems, or to seek to resolve the problems by forcing already them to move.

In her conclusion Arthurson states:

"Clearly, continuing to pursue current directions in estate regeneration will obscure arguments about the importance, in lessening social disadvantage, of maintaining continued access to secure and low cost public housing. It seems more likely to lead to debates about communities as the locus of social change than positive actions by government to address causes of inequality."

"Implementing large scale changes to social mix rather than promoting social integration could easily become strategies to move tenants around and render them less visible and in need of some attention."

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