

Inner Sydney VOICE

SUMMER 2013/14

**URBAN RENEWAL HEADED
THIS WAY**

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
AND CHANGE**

**PUBLIC HOUSING UNDER
THREAT**

**NSW DISABILITY REFORM
AND NDIS IN CONTEXT**





Central Park: A high density development with 1000 people per hectare doubles Chippendale's population and changes its social mix.



About

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

Acknowledgement of Country

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

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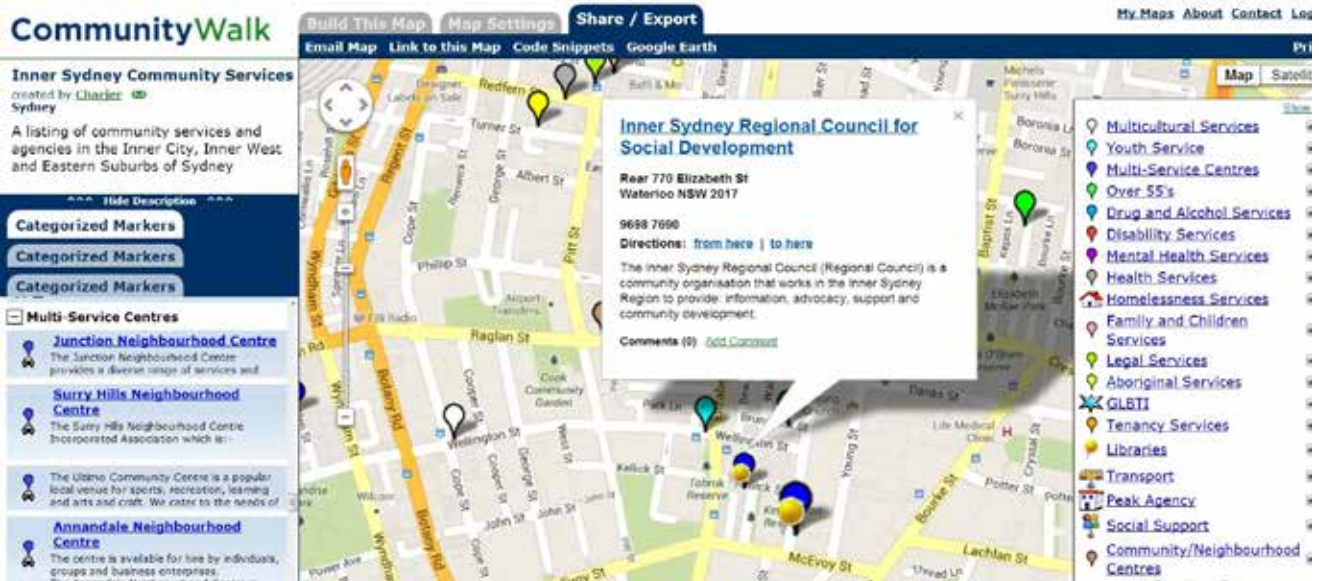
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Online community services map is live!

Find community services in the eastern suburbs and inner city.



Check out the link on our website www.innersydney.org.au

To add or update service listings please email admin@innersydneyrcsd.org.au

Reporting sexual assault

There is now another option

- 85% of sexual assaults go unreported in NSW
- NSW Police understand some victims don't want to provide a formal report
- However any information about a sexual assault is important
- Please help the NSW Police reduce this crime
- Complete the online questionnaire

Visit: www.police.nsw.gov.au
click on community issues/
Adult Sexual Assault

Report online anonymously
SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING OPTIONS (SARO)



FREE ENERGY ASSESSMENT

The Australian Government's Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS) is provided through community organisations around Australia and can help by offering:

- Knowledge on easy and affordable ways to use less energy;
- Assistance to understand your energy bills and the energy market;
- Information on rebates and assistance and links to other services;
- One on one budgeting assistance, and support in negotiating energy companies;
- Support to access no interest loans to purchase energy efficient appliances.

Contact:

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www.fahcsia.gov.au

EDITORIAL

In the last issue we noted that a growing Sydney was growing up as well as out. We highlighted some of the developments that were in the pipeline from the Block to Barangaroo, from Green Square to Ashmore.

With the Randwick and Anzac Parade Urban Activation precincts expanding and the Westconnex and Central to Eveleigh announcements, it has become apparent that such developments are just the start and that there is much more to come.

While communities focused on the new NSW planning system, the new Regional Plan for Sydney in the form of a Draft Metro Strategy was exhibited with none of the promised ground breaking community engagement. Yet this strategy is already being used to justify development announcements. On page 6 we look at how its “City Shapers” will change the face of the inner city and on page 10 we see what we can learn from the high rise development of Pyrmont Ultimo.

With the new planning system promising much improved community engagement there is the opportunity for the community to push the consultation envelope to achieve significant improvement. Three articles unpack some of the consultation issues, Dallas Rogers looks at how consultation spaces are controlled and how communities can respond through monitory mechanisms (page 12) while Roberta Ryan explores what is needed on the government and proponent side to improve the process (page 16). We have also explored some of the lessons from the Lift Redfern Station Campaign

(page 28) and sketched out the proposed Community Participation Charter from the new planning bill (page 18). The latter highlights what communities should expect for any future consultations with government in NSW.

The finding by the Auditor General that Public Housing is in decline (page 19) and comments from the Departmental Head (page 20) end an era of public denial. The reality is spelt out in two comments by Michael Coutts-Trotter when he says “in fact, the portfolio has been depleting at an average of 2.5 properties a day for a decade” and that “there’s one big lever to pull – the potential to more actively redevelop higher value land under the portfolio to provide ongoing returns to reinvest in social housing”. It is in this context that the sale of public housing needs to be understood and on page 21 you will find some of the arguments being used to try and save public housing in Millers Point.

Finally our HACC Development Officer, Enis Jusufspahic, explores the NDIS and its introduction into the Hunter on page 24 and we also explore local government statistical information that is helpful in funding applications and reports (page 27).

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

Below: Anzac Parade South Urban Activation Precinct protest – more will follow if best practice community engagement in strategic planning is not implemented.



THE SHAPERS OF THINGS TO COME

The face of inner Sydney is set for big changes over the next couple of decades with many communities already uneasy about what is planned for their neighbourhoods. What is driving some of the changes inner Sydney communities are and will be facing?

BY GEOFF TURNBULL

In the last year Urban Activation Precincts (UAPs) have been proclaimed in Randwick, Anzac Parade South, Mascot and Macquarie Park with the aim of substantially increasing development in these areas. We have also seen the light rail to link the City with Randwick or Kingsford announced, as well as a Sydney City Centre Access Strategy that will revolutionise how transport works in the City. Also announced have been the Westconnex, and the exploration of building over the railway lines from Central to Eveleigh. These and many other future developments are underpinned by the Regional Growth Plan for Sydney – the Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney to 2031 (Metro Strategy).

Sydney has had Metro Strategies before but this one is different because under the New Planning System for NSW these regional plans will become binding on lower level plans; sub-regional plans and local plans. While the Minister has backed away from some of his White Paper proposals, he has made it clear that getting people involved in big picture strategic planning will be a focus of the new system. In the many growth corridors and UAPs that are yet to be proclaimed, involvement in strategic planning will be even more important as the Minister wants it linked to “code assessable” development: where communities do not have a say on most development applications.

While the new planning system is to be built around much improved community participation in forming strategic plans like the Metro Strategy, the Metro Strategy exhibition predated this new system yet still locks in strategies with which subsequent plans must agree. It went on exhibition just before and concurrently with the proposals for the new planning system.

Awareness of the exhibition was low and many people just concentrated on the proposals for the new planning system and did not comment on the Metro Strategy at all. Seven hundred and twenty five people used an on-line petition and submission generator to ask for the Strategy to be re-exhibited when the New Planning System and new community engagement processes were in place. Only 420 other submissions were received - a long way short of the Minister's

goal of engaging a quarter of the community in strategic planning discussions.

The next opportunity for community participation in broad strategic planning will come when the sub-regional delivery plan is developed. This plan will flesh out where the growth shown in the metro strategy will go and how the city shapers will be reflected into a sub-regional plan. The inner city is part of the “Central” sub-region in the Draft Metro Strategy which consists of 17 council areas from Mosman and Ryde to Botany and from Strathfield to the eastern suburbs.

This is not to say everything waits until then, as there are already a number of Urban Activation Precincts (UAPs) declared which will do their own strategic planning as will the recently announced Central to Eveleigh Corridor. Developers also have been pushing for new UAPs so they can get on with building the homes it proposes. The Urban Taskforce in June 2013 proposed that the Government should allow UAPs within 800 metres of railway stations, town centres, along growth corridors and on key urban renewal sites.

One of the problems of pulling out UAPs or areas like Central to Eveleigh from sub-regional and local planning is that these excised areas are not looked at in the wider context and considered as part of a wider ‘where do we put growth and how does it interface with the surrounding community?’ discussion. The ‘where’ decision is made by state government. The ‘how it interacts with surrounding development’ is addressed in the belief that there are limited opportunities for growth elsewhere and the excised area has to over-achieve to compensate.

It matters not then for example that the City of Sydney Council's recent Local Environment Plan had already accommodated the state's growth targets. More development gets pushed in to the excised area pushing back development planned in other parts of the city.

This is not a new process. The old Part 3A, now State Significant Development also excised sites from local planning and pushed up densities on a similar rationale. The density allowed on the CUB site in Chippendale is an example. Such mechanisms, alongside spot re-zonings, remain in the new system despite the supposed emphasis on community engagement in upfront strategic planning. The new planning system also contains a new mechanism which will have the same effect – Strategic Compatibility Certificates. They will allow developers to get approval for developments consistent with what is in the Metro Strategy before the community gets its say in the Sub-Regional Delivery Plans and new local plans.

While the vast majority of the suburbs are untouched by the Metro Strategy proposals, the inner city straddles five of the nine key “city shapers” that drive the Metro Strategy - The Global Economic Corridor, Global Sydney, Sydney Harbour, Parramatta Road Corridor and the Anzac Parade Corridor (see box page 9).

These Metro Strategy shapers push the state's growth priorities into areas previously overseen by councils in a more local context. In some cases these state interventions, with incentives for councils, will be initiated or supported by councils as was the case for the Ryde Council's push for the North Ryde and Macquarie Park UAPs. In others, like Randwick, the State Government initiated the process around the light rail proposal and the development of government owned land. Randwick Council argued it was not consulted

before the decision was made to declare the UAPs. The boundary of Anzac Parade South has had a number of changes since the UAP was declared.

Driving this change is Sydney's growth. According to the Draft Metro Strategy the Central area subregion of 17 LGAs needs to provide 138,000 more homes for 242,000 more people between 2011 and 2031 and provide places for 230,000 more people to work.

The Metro Strategy exhibition had only just finished when the Department of Planning released its Preliminary 2013 Population Projections which increased the Central sub-region's projected population growth between 2011 and 2031 to 371,900. This would require a further 63,000 homes in the subregion on top of those in the Metro Strategy.

The main driver for the increasing population in the inner city is overseas migration. The population growth will occur across all the sub-region but the main increases in the projections are in the following LGAs: City of Sydney (106,000); Ryde (33,600); Randwick (33,500); Canada Bay (28,200); Willoughby (20,100); Strathfield (19,400) and; Botany Bay (18,000).

Much of the recent development in the inner city has been from redeveloping old buildings and industrial sites such as the ACI site, former CUB site or Ashmore estate. Large sites are beginning to dry up and a point will be reached where more difficult urban consolidation of smaller private lots will need to take place to allow for growth. Currently the approach is to up-zone areas where government would like to see increased density and let the market work. But this can be a slow process.

In Regent Street Redfern the terrace shops south of the GCA towers were rezoned for up to 18 storeys but to

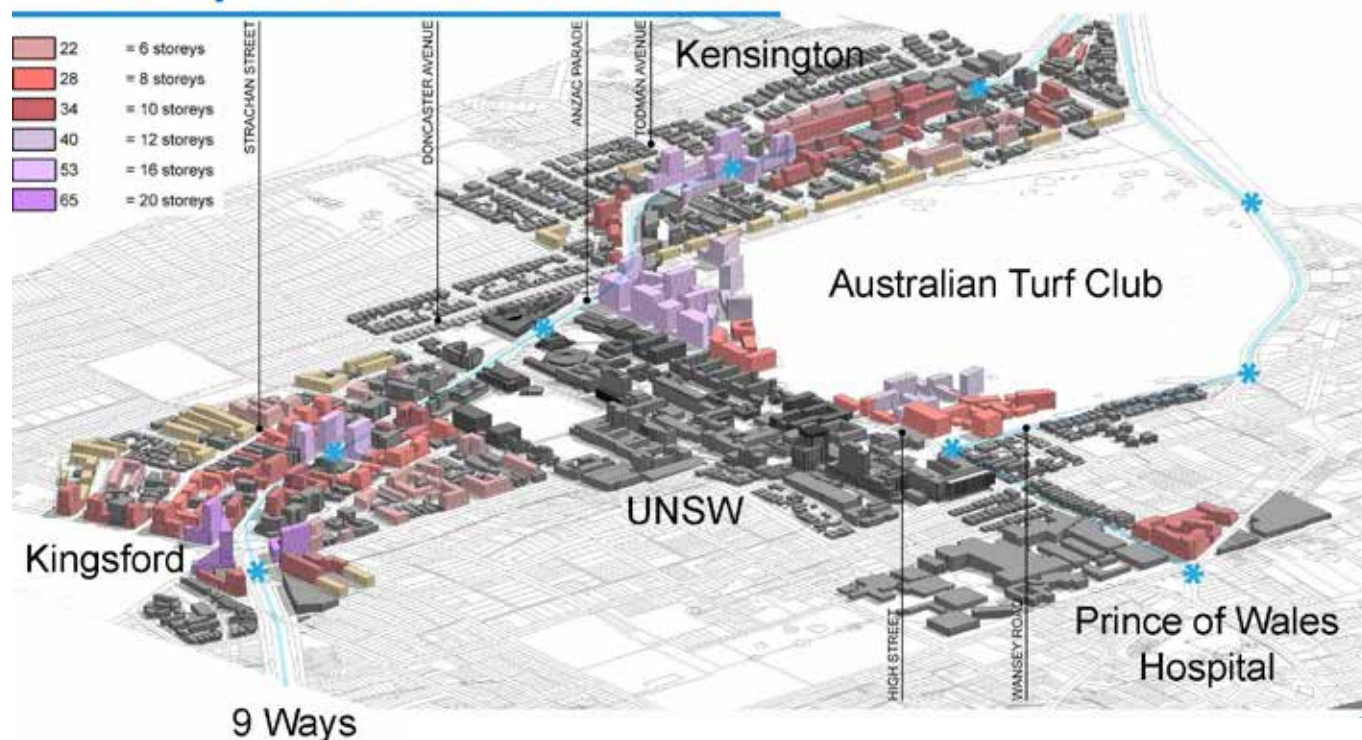
achieve this, adjoining lots have to be consolidated to get the full increase and so far there has been no movement. The old Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority now UrbanGrowth Development Corporation has the power to compulsorily acquire private property and make it available for redevelopment but so far this power has not been used.

Governments too have been looking at their landholdings to see if they can be used also for redevelopment. Large government owned sites are seen as low hanging fruit as they are already consolidated. The Central to Eveleigh Corridor proposal is an example. This corridor has heritage buildings that can be adaptively reused like Carriageworks. It also has land that can be used for new residential and commercial developments and public housing that can be redeveloped to accommodate higher density. In the long term there is also the possibility of using the air space above the railway line to provide new development space.

Inner city public housing estates are caught up in the "perfect storm" of being large blocks of government owned land, run down housing with big maintenance backlogs and concentrations of disadvantage supposedly needing to be 'socially mixed'. Redevelopment of public housing estates is seen as financially workable with the private sales funding new public housing on a 70% private housing / 30% public housing split. Given the Auditor General's Report and recent comments from public housing's Director General (see separate articles) it is not surprising that public housing will be a key focus for re-development in the inner city where land prices are high.

There can also be a too cosy relationship between the land holder and the consent authority in the case of up-zoning public land.

Proposed built form



Randwick UAP Draft Plan as at August 2013: Showing relationship between new light rail corridor in blue and the proposed built form to accommodate more people close to the transport corridor.

The Government makes the planning controls, so it has the ability to increase density and hence the value of government sites to try to get the best outcome for the department involved and the Government. For the North Eveleigh affordable housing approval recently the Government approved an extra storey above the earlier approved concept plan – all parties involved were related to the NSW Government.

Sometimes there can be disagreement. For the proposed redevelopment of Redfern and Waterloo Public Housing Estates the draft controls proposed one in five public housing units be removed from the area - probably never to be replaced. Behind the scenes Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), as the owner of the NSW public housing estates, pushed for taller buildings on the site so that they could retain a higher number of social housing units, while publically saying that they could not comment until “we see the planning controls”. In this case Government and community face the quandary of accommodating an additional 25% in density over the substantial increase already proposed or losing 700 units of scarce inner city public housing stock. We should see the outcome in 2014.

The conflict of interest between Government setting controls and also benefiting from those controls is a key reason why communities need to have a good look at Government up-zoning of its own land. It is even more conflicted when the LAHC, as the owner of the NSW public housing estates, also has responsibility for managing the community engagement of its tenants around the redevelopment and determining what can and can't be discussed in that process. This is an area that will need to be addressed under the new community participation processes in planning.

The proposed redevelopment of inner city public housing estates is not confined to Redfern and Waterloo. The UAP proposed for Herring Road, Macquarie Park proposes the redevelopment of 230 public housing units in Ivanhoe Estate and the Anzac Parade South UAP covers 2,500 public housing units in the 5 public housing estates in the Maroubra – Malabar area.

At least when it owns the land the Government captures the value uplift. On private sites, rezoning currently puts the windfall into the pocket of the land owner or developer. In Vancouver the government aims to capture around 70% of uplifts from rezoning to fund community facilities and affordable housing. Capturing this uplift is not happening in NSW and in the new planning system there is no longer a mechanism to capture new funds for affordable housing.

One of the problems in a high level document like the Metro Strategy is knowing how prescriptive are the lines on the maps. The Parramatta Corridor City Shaper is a case in point. The hatched area for the corridor covers parts of Haberfield, where heritage homes sit on large blocks attractive to developers.

The Metro Strategy says it will ‘capitalise on the delivery of the WestConnex Motorway and plan for staged urban renewal throughout the corridor’s many centres’. Does the coloured band of hatching mean this applies to you if you fall in that area or is this just indicative? Residents in the area wonder when they might be targeted for renewal. It was not surprising that a large number of people attended a public meeting about WestConnex in October at Leichardt Town Hall.

The recent announcement of the Central to Eveleigh Corridor referenced the Metro Strategy as its basis. This corridor

appears as one of the Global Sydney map areas and it proposed in this corridor to ‘support strategic renewal of this highly accessible corridor’. Residents in Chippendale wonder if their presence in the ‘Sydney Education and Health’ area might be used to sanction the swallowing up of Chippendale by the expanding Notre Dame University in the way that much of Darlington disappeared in the 1970s into an expanding Sydney University.

The People Unite Surry Hills (PUSH) campaign to move the light rail corridor through Surry Hills so it does not impact on Devonshire Street and destroy the buildings through which it will pass is taking on a City Shaper priority which is also the basis of the Anzac Parade City Shaper and the Randwick UAPs. PUSH’s campaign reminds us that change does not benefit everyone.

Projects that create a public good can also create collateral damage on those that are impacted by the change. This impact is not just if the light rail goes through your unit, it is also for those whose inner city suburbs are getting more high rise developments, experiencing more traffic and parking pressure and facing public transport congestion as their buses go past their stop already full. It is also about the currently strained local amenities becoming even more strained; the lack of pre-schools, schools, playing fields and public amenities are examples.

Despite the cry from developers and government that all reaction to change is driven by ‘not in my back yard’ (NIMBY) concerns, there are genuine issues raised by local communities that must be addressed by government, planners and developers. Any collateral damage on local communities from implementing state priorities need to be recognised and mitigated or compensated. The outcome needs to produce “quality in my back yard” (QIMBY). Resident Group REDWatch held a roundtable mid 2013 on “NIMBY - The Good the Bad the Ugly”. They put together a “NIMBY Discussion Starter” that groups can use to discuss this issue. It can be found on www.redwatch.org.au.

NSW’s new planning system proposes unprecedented community engagement in the planning process with a legislated Community Participation Charter. This provides an opportunity for communities to raise their concerns and to seek to have them addressed. As the system rolls out there is the possibility for communities to push the consultation envelope to try to ensure their concerns are understood and addressed.

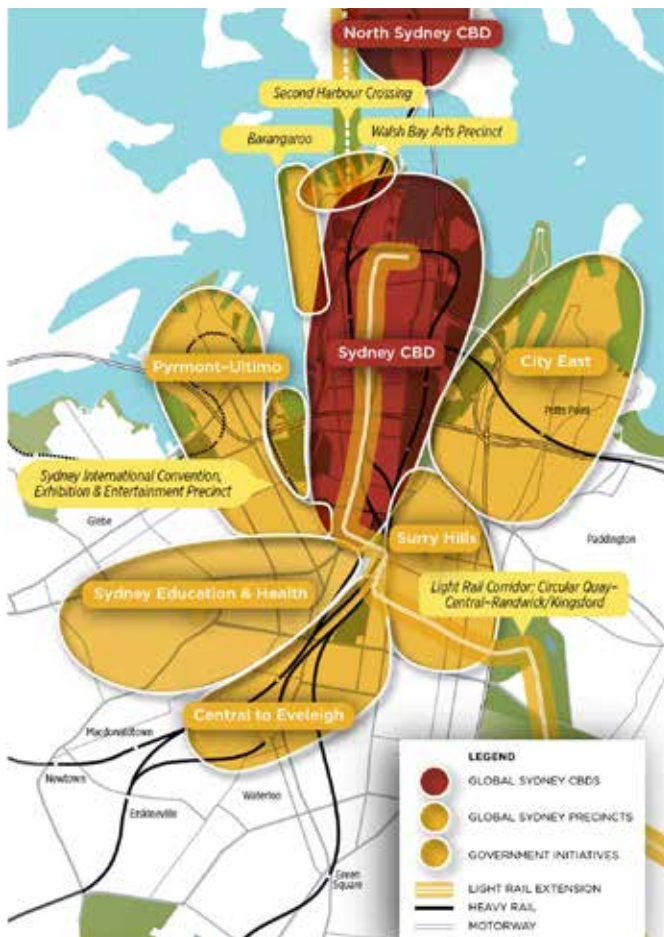
This is not to say that resident action groups will become a thing of the past by any means, but that there will be new spaces for communities and their groups to raise their concerns and to push for outcomes that work for both existing and future communities.

The extent to which the new community engagement process works will determine if it is possible to get agreement about the future shape of the inner city between Government pushing its big picture changes and the impacted communities. If it does not work then the Government will not get community sign up for the changes and battles over development that have characterised the inner city for decades will continue into the future. ■

You will find other articles in this issue of Inner Sydney Voice that provide helpful perspectives on some of these issues faced by inner city communities.



Above: Metro Strategy Global Economic Corridor City Shaper



Above: Metro Strategy Global Sydney City Shaper

KEY INNER CITY SHAPERS

The Global Economic Corridor (see left) extends from Port Botany and Sydney Airport, through Global Sydney to Macquarie Park. It includes centres such as Chatswood and Bondi Junction, the specialised precincts of St Leonards and Macquarie Park, four large universities and major health and entertainment precincts. Around 50 per cent of NSW Gross State Product is concentrated within the Global Economic Corridor.

Global Sydney (see below left) is made up of Sydney CBD and adjacent precincts and the CBD of North Sydney. It is the most highly sought after investment location and most internationally visible area of Sydney. Accounting for over \$99 billion (or just over one third) of the NSW gross regional product, Global Sydney is Australia's most significant concentration of economic, educational, medical, creative and cultural activity in Australia.

Sydney Harbour is the defining feature of Sydney and one of our biggest economic advantages. It has influenced where and how Sydney has grown and attracts considerable investment from both public and private sectors. Over the next 20 years, Sydney Harbour and its surroundings will continue to be the major economic driver for our city. It is the site of a nationally significant working port complementing Port Botany, a national and international tourist attraction, a destination of cruise ship companies and a sought-after location for investment in housing and commerce.

The Parramatta Road Corridor connects Global Sydney and Parramatta via Sydney Olympic Park. It is one of the busiest road corridors in Sydney. The WestConnex Motorway will provide opportunities to transform the local centres that exist alongside the Corridor and better connect them as Sydney Olympic Park grows. The Parramatta Road Corridor offers prime regeneration opportunities to create lively, well-designed centres with improved north-south and east-west linkages currently limited by the busy Parramatta Road. This will help to deliver a diversity of housing and jobs choices, close to the shops and services in a new, liveable context.

The Anzac Parade Corridor extends the length of Anzac Parade, from Moore Park to La Perouse, and includes the neighbourhoods adjacent to the road itself. It is identified for new housing and job opportunities integrated with transport improvements in an area that offers a great lifestyle and accessibility to the Global Economic Corridor. ■

Source: Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney until 2031

THE PYRMONT AND ULTIMO EXPERIENCE

Planning for urban growth is big news at the moment. The Government is forging ahead with its new planning legislation, its Metro Sydney Strategy and new transport system, not to mention changes to the Local Government Act. Its objective is to streamline the planning system to enable massive new developments in identified growth centres throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, including inner Sydney. It is therefore timely, to look back over twenty years of urban consolidation in Pyrmont and Ultimo, now the densest urban area in Australia.

BY ELIZABETH ELENIUS

The removal of heavy industry from Pyrmont/Ultimo, including the large CSR complex, the wool stores and the flour mills, saw the residential population of Pyrmont shrink to under 1,000. The planners then began to design what was probably the first growth centre in inner Sydney. They made a number of assumptions, the most significant of which was that families with children don't live in apartments. On this basis, the Government tried to sell our only public school site but fortunately were thwarted by the local residents, who knew otherwise.

Virtually all public buildings such as churches, halls, etc. were removed from Pyrmont, leaving us with just a school building converted to a Community Centre, and the lovely St Bede's Catholic Church, built by the quarrymen out of Pyrmont sandstone. Ultimo retained the Presbyterian Church and hall (now the Harris Community Centre), and the City of Sydney built the new Ultimo Community Centre, partly out of Better Cities Program funds and Section 94 developer contributions.

As a resident of Pyrmont for over 13 years, I have witnessed the extraordinarily rapid movement of residents into (mostly) apartment buildings, ranging from two or three storeys up to 22 storeys. These buildings have been imposed upon the original residents living in the few pockets of old terrace houses, and some existing social housing developments built in the 1930s.

Naturally there was, initially, resentment, and even some hostility shown towards the interlopers who all came from

somewhere else in Sydney, such as the North Shore or Warringah. And we knew no-one in the area. But as planning issues emerged with each new DA, people joined together to oppose, or try to get better outcomes for their new suburbs: and we have become integrated and strong communities.

It is timely to reflect on what has been successful and what have been failures of the planning conducted over 20 years ago.

The residential population mix, both in socio-economic, and age demographics is diverse. The developers' Affordable Housing levies enabled the construction of good quality Social/Affordable Housing complexes, well integrated into the new apartment developments. And, increasingly, residents are working together for the community, and for charities.

We have formed the Friends of Pyrmont Community Centre which we have identified as the focal point of the Pyrmont Community. Whilst the building is totally unfit for its purpose and much of it is leased to a childcare centre, we have managed to initiate a range of activities run for, and by our volunteers, including monthly community dinners (access by donation), and recently held an Open Weekend, complete with photographic exhibition and local history display, performances by the local choir and theatre group, and a Sunday childrens' day, to celebrate our success in getting the Centre open on Sunday, especially for families. We are also organising Christmas in Pyrmont in 2013, following successful Christmas concerts in previous years (in 2012 we raised \$42,000 for charities!).

Volunteers deliver bi-monthly newsletters to 6,000 households across Pyrmont to promote these activities. All these activities are generously sponsored by local businesses. Far from being socially isolated, residents are able to make new friends through the efforts of many volunteers. A local centre which is truly embedded within a community, be it comprised of high, medium or low rise residences is an essential element in building a successful community, integrating longstanding and new residents.

We have managed to build a successful community from small beginnings, despite major planning shortcomings associated with the almost complete absence of social infrastructure, particularly in Pyrmont which now has a residential population of around 12,000 and a worker population of around 16,000.

The 2011 age demographics demonstrate that, indeed, families with young children are living in apartments, and there is also a high population of young people aged between 20 and 34 years (4,391 in Ultimo with a high student population and 5,262 in Pyrmont). The most significant increase is in the 0-19 age bracket, with 899 children in Ultimo and 1270 in Pyrmont. The older, retiree demographic (65+) in Ultimo is 291 and in Pyrmont 711 out of total populations of 7,111 (Ultimo) and 11,618 (Pyrmont).

Since 2003, Pyrmont Action, along with a number of other community groups has been pressing for action by State and Local Governments on the shortfall in childcare, educational, sporting, cultural and community infrastructure.

In Pyrmont there are only 2 childcare centres and existing centres in Glebe and Ultimo are scheduled to close as the building owners wish to develop these sites. Our only local Primary School in Ultimo is over full and can't be expanded on

its current site. There is no accessible comprehensive Secondary School in the City of Sydney, apart from 1 campus of the Sydney Secondary College. And, whilst we have a number of nice green waterfront parks, there is nowhere for young people to play organised sport such as tennis or basketball.

Other Inner City suburbs share some of these problems, but ours have been exacerbated by the very rapid growth associated with the redevelopment, and the absence of planning for the necessary social infrastructure.

A further planning failure has been the requirement to provide a mix of commercial and residential buildings. In Pyrmont, our main street is full of empty shops as owners are charging CBD rents, and new commercial office buildings remain half empty; and at least one large block zoned Commercial remains undeveloped after 15 years, despite strong demand for residential apartments.

Public transport is another forgotten planning element.

Pyrmont, before the Anzac Bridge and Western Distributor were built, was on the main route from the Western suburbs to the CBD via the Glebe Island Bridge. We had great links to Balmain and Rozelle, as well as suburbs further out and to the Eastern suburbs. Now Pyrmont is served by two bus routes, and Ultimo, only one – and both have limitations in terms of access to the city centre, frequency and reliability.

The light rail is expensive and doesn't take people into the CBD although this may be addressed in the future. The situation will only get worse with the redevelopment of

Darling Harbour which is currently not directly served by bus, and the monorail which was used by Pyrmont residents has been demolished.

Transport and traffic are not even on the radar of Infrastructure NSW which develops the briefs for the plethora of new developments occurring around us.

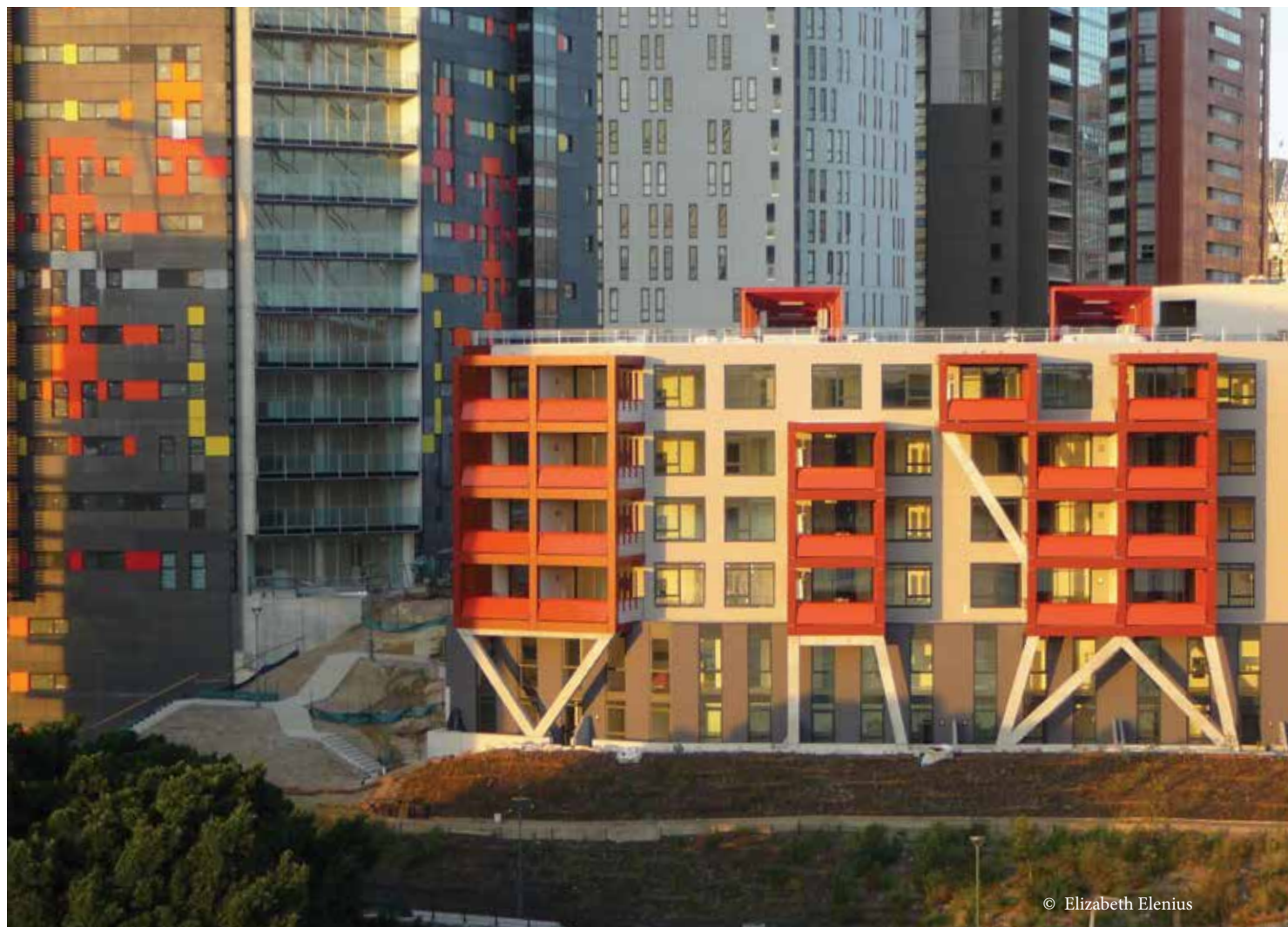
And now, we are experiencing further development right on our doorstep, in Barangaroo, Darling Harbour/Haymarket, Central Park, Harold Park, and now the Central to Eveleigh Precinct.

There is no provision for social infrastructure at Barangaroo or Central Park; we are hopeful of a community building in the new Haymarket precinct; and it is now dawning on people that Harold Park will need childcare and schools for the children moving there, as well as sporting facilities.

We are now pinning our hopes on the proposed Central to Eveleigh development to incorporate the educational, health, sporting, childcare, Affordable/Social housing and other social infrastructure missing from earlier large-scale urban redevelopment. And we trust that planners and legislators will learn from our experience.

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has said in the context of the new planning legislation that he wants to "get it right". The best way to do that is to listen to the community, and learn. ■

*Elizabeth Elenius Convenor of Pyrmont Action Inc.
(BA Earth Sciences, Macquarie University)*



© Elizabeth Elenius

THE REAL STUFF OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In his 2012 Marg Barry Memorial Lecture Dallas Rogers talked about the need for two different kinds of community participation spaces and the importance of monitoring government. With proposals for urban renewal and public housing redevelopment throughout the area up for “consultation” we have provided an edited version of Rogers’ presentation which is equally relevant to public tenants and the broader communities.

DR DALLAS ROGERS

We can think about this as the need for two different types of community participation ‘spaces’. The first is what I’ve called citizen-sanctioned participation spaces, those spaces that tenants create themselves to perform an act of citizenship; these spaces are solely managed by tenants or their representatives and that have no, or very little, state or housing manager control or input. Independent tenant groups, and by ‘independent’ I mean no strings attached to funding, which is increasingly difficult within a market-driven policy environment as will become clearer in a minute.

These types of groups need to be free to question government decisions, free to talk to the media, and have free access to information about government policy and the actions of governments and housing managers.

Tenant verse practitioner spaces

When tenants create a participation space to perform an action of citizenship, they think outside the ‘invited space’ box to broader civil society spaces. They think about going to the media, challenging the dispersal of public housing tenants, or rejecting the idea that the market is the best way to address structural discrimination within housing provision.

By comparison, in the spaces that the government and housing managers create, and invite tenants into to be involved or consulted within, these questions are off the agenda. I’m not arguing for one participation space over another, but that we need a multitude of participation spaces that will meet the diverse political needs of tenants.

The commitment by government to set up local consultative processes is good, in principle, but it has to be one of many participations spaces within a network, spanning the local to the national, of active tenant participation, or tenant activism, to put it another way.

So I argue that we need both practitioner and tenant

participation spaces if we want to start to bridge the gap between expectations and reality for tenants. Going to the media or protesting might be just as important to tenants, as an act of citizenship, as going to a community consultation or being involved in a committee that is put on by the government or a housing manager. And this leads to the next tension.

Transparency verse selective release of information

Democracy requires transparency, but can we really make everything available in a market-centric representative democracy? The renewal of public housing estates in NSW, and indeed an emerging trend within other Australian states, is to use the market, the private sector and non-government sector, to redevelop large public housing estates through contractual arrangements such as public-private-partnerships.

Bringing together the public and private sectors in this way introduces new challenges to transparency and therefore democracy and therefore community participation. Commercial-in-confidence and other legal and market requirements mean that governments cannot release information about government contracts and private sector negotiations until after key decisions have been made. The selective release of information by governments is often cited by tenants as a key barrier to their participation in housing governance at the local level.

This raises the question, *how are tenants to monitor the power of the public, non-government and private sectors if they don’t have timely and free access to the information that is guiding policy reforms and the reconfiguration of public and social housing?* Here the tensions between direct democracy and representative democracy raise their heads again, but in a new way.

Using the market to deliver social services and infrastructure means that the market - economic evaluation and financial measurements - become important decision-making processes that override, and are undertaken before, local community participation. These market processes are in direct conflict and often trump local level decision-making. To give you a concrete empirical example, I turn to the redevelopment of the Bonnyrigg public housing estate by public-private-partnership.

The Bonnyrigg Consultation

As you can see in the diagrammatic representation (opposite) of the various spaces that the NSW Government created to roll out the Bonnyrigg PPP, they created two spaces into which they solely invited the private sector developers. The first was invited space no. 2, or the PPP contract negotiation space where the Government negotiated the PPP contract with the private sector. And second was invited space no. 4, the PPP contract management space, or where the Government is project managing the PPP.

Local residents were, of course, not invited into these two spaces. In fact they were explicitly restricted from these spaces under financial and legal ‘commercial-in-confidence’ stipulations. Local residents were restricted, in short, because of the property developers’ involvement. So where were local residents invited? Well they weren’t in invited space no. 1, where the decisions about, and the framing of, the redevelopment project took place. Only the NSW Government occupied that space. Instead, local residents were invited into another space that the NSW Government created and called ‘community engagement’, or invited space no. 3.

Then when the PPP was under private sector management, the

NSW Government forced the local community into invited space no. 5 by making the private sector, through a not-for-profit housing manager, responsible for funding community participation. And it was within invited space no. 5 that the funding cut to the independent tenant group that I noted earlier occurred.

Three key points should be highlighted here. First, the Bonnyrigg case represents a serious reconfiguration of local level democracy, whereby different social actors were granted different rights. Second, what is clear from this case is that the NSW Government remained central to the design and implementation of the PPP, that is, the government continues to set the scale and scope of urban interventions. And third, once granted the power by the state, the private sector will, almost by definition, seek to cut costs and reduce completion and opposition to their projects.

State-managed verse market-managed policy

Under the former welfare state models, when the government managed and rolled out social policy and large infrastructure projects, tenants could use their constitutional rights to monitor the power of the government and the government's various social and infrastructure projects. But as the state moves toward market-managed policy, the introduction of public-private-partnerships and the like, tenants rights to call the government to account become more complex as a direct result of these new contracting and private financing arrangements and the selective release of information these legal and market frameworks mandate.

Additionally, in market-managed policy environments new rights are created for different parties. So called 'market rights' give raise to questions like, *can social housing tenants call the private sector companies that are redeveloping their estates to account in the same way they could government agencies in the past?*

For instance, the suggestion in the NSW State Plan of strengthening the powers of the state and federal power scrutinising mechanisms of government, including the NSW Ombudsman, is therefore a necessary step in mounting a challenge to the move towards a market-centric city. But this too is complicated by the marketisation of urban and social policy in NSW.

In interviews I've conducted, public housing tenants have stated that when they moved from 'public housing' managed by the state to 'social housing' managed by non-government organisations, that the NSW Ombudsman no longer had political oversight of the 'non-government' housing sector. Therefore, the political reconfiguration of our cities is at the very heart of the processes that will reshape citizens' rights. Tenants can no longer use their constitutional rights to monitor the power of a state as their landlord.

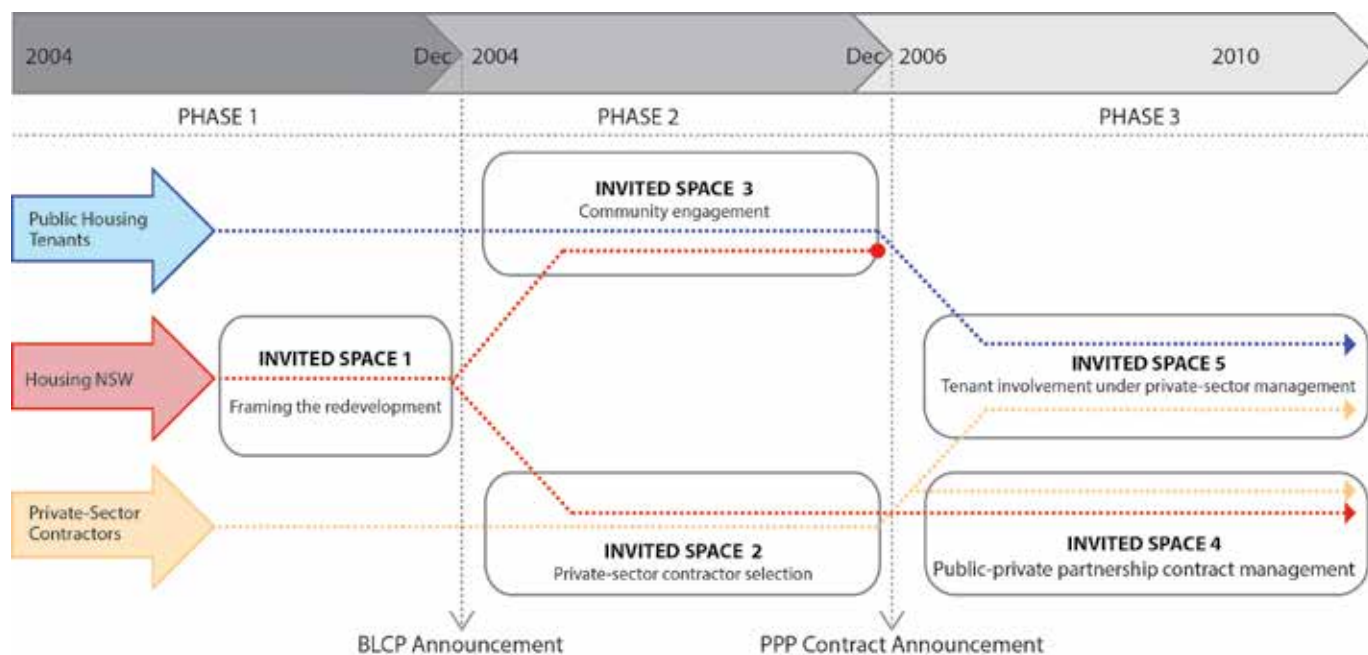
So how should we think about community participation and citizen rights?

Interests verse consensus. What are we aiming for here?

Monitory democracy, or monitory citizenship where tenants monitor power instead of trying to share decision-making power, and activism are long-standing and tried and tested as effective tenant participation models in a representative democracy. They are perhaps the best 'best practice' models we have. They accept that inherent political differences are a reality and operate across and through different political organisations and community groups.

More importantly, monitory and pressure group models also accept that we have deferred our responsibility to elected representatives, who have in turn, deferred their decision-making power to technocrats, or experts such as urban and social planners, architects, and policy makers. So when tenants ask for, or are told that, decision-making power is being

BONNYRIGG: THE FIRST NSW PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT BY PPP



given back to them at the local level, are we saying that we are removing this decision-making power from the housing managers, urban and social planners, architects, and policy makers, or the elected representatives themselves? And if so, how, to what degree and by what political mechanisms will this transfer, back to the local, taking place?

In a representative democracy where experts make decisions that will affect tenants lives in very real and significant ways, including moving them out of their homes and changing the terms by which their tenancies are secured, we need to ask if its possible to give tenants the same decision-making power as other experts; such as urban and social planners etcetera. This, to me at least, seems unlikely so it might be important to maintain monitory and pressure group models of participation that will allow tenants to pressure governments for change. This would require no strings attached to funding for independent tenant groups who can advocate through media and other political campaigns at the local, state and federal levels.

So why are independent citizen-sanctioned tenant groups needed?

It is well known that urban and housing policy reforms, such as housing subsidies, taxation exemptions, or welfare provisions, are not entirely driven by rational and objective assessments of the needs of those who live in Australian cities. Instead, these reforms are also an outcome of the politics and actions of citizen, government, industry, business, and non-government organisations. In short, and as Marg Barry astutely understood, housing provision and housing policy is primarily an issue of politics.

As shown in the previous examples, market-centric housing approaches are changing the way civil and political power is distributed in Australian cities. In particular, these market-centric approaches often serve to frame the debates about what is politically feasible and the actions that can be mounted to improve housing provision or address housing need. Low-income and disadvantaged citizens, and their representatives, need to be involved in these political debates; but how?

Well, if we look at the different types of rights that are being granted to different social actors within the current market-centric policy system, we see that not all citizens or groups have equal access to these civic participation tools. The playing field is uneven when it comes to community participation. Low-income tenants, for instance, cannot access shareholder rights because they don't have a financial stake in the assets involved in the urban redevelopments.

What low-income citizens do have is the capacity to hold the government to account; to monitor the power of the government and the private sector. But it is only through a well-resourced and coordinated network of independent community organisations that these political projects can be mounted in the interests of low-income citizens. And on political resolve, I reach my final point.

Community participation verse monitory citizenship

Yes, we need, and indeed we should expect and demand, the public, private and non-for-profit sectors to provide community participation spaces for citizens when their activities so drastically affect the lives of low-income citizens. But these state-sanctioned participation spaces will always have limitations. Therefore we also need monitory organisations and

individuals. As power monitors, those implicitly or explicitly disenfranchised from political power at any level of government can deploy a suite of rights, in addition to their constitutional rights, to monitor and discipline the power of individuals, the state and private corporations. Monitory citizenship often operates outside the boundaries of state and private sector sanctioned participation processes and encourages different interest positions. That is, it is not consensus seeking, it depends on conflict, dissidence and represents a challenge to oppressive power relations. It is what [political theorist]Chantal Mouffe calls Radical Democracy.

And, in my view, one of the most successful monitory organisations in Australia is located right here in Redfern/ Waterloo, an organization I'm sure you all know, indeed many of you are members; REDWatch.

REDWatch and monitory democracy

The monitory focus of REDWatch did not emerge as a 'consensus position' for the organisation, but instead as a process for mediating between different 'community interests' for the benefit of the local community.

REDWatch, an acronym formed in part from the Sydney suburbs of Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo and over which the organisation has a political interest, has a membership that includes local residents and representatives from non-government organisations and several political parties. The REDWatch area has been subject to various NSW Government bodies including the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) and currently the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA). It had its own Government Minister from 2004 to 2011 and interventions have included removing planning responsibilities from local government and placing specific responsibilities on various human services and planning departments.

Certainly the Government has conducted community consultations that REDWatch attends and even promotes. But it is REDWatch's organisational mission that makes it a monitory democracy organization par excellence. In the words of REDWatch, and I quote their website:

'REDWatch exists to monitor Government involvement in our area and to push for outcomes that benefit the community and not just the Government'.

REDWatch shares information and encourages other individuals, community groups, journalists, academics and even different government departments to 'do their own research and analysis' to monitor the power of government and the private sector.

REDWatch is, in short, a good old-fashioned activist organization with sharp new media teeth. It is an organisation in keeping with the old fashioned activist tradition that Marg Barry laid the foundations for four decades ago. ■

This article has been edited by Geoff Turnbull.

The full text of Dallas's presentation can be found at www.innersydney.org.au under the Our Projects tab, Marg Barry Memorial Lecture and 2012 Democracy from the ground up: the real stuff of community engagement.

Or listen to the presentation at <https://soundcloud.com/dallasrogers/annual-marg-barry-lecture-2012>

PARTICIPATION TOOLS AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

For a while now there has been a discussion and a good deal of academic and practitioner attention placed on developing good community participation tools, ‘best practice models’ if you like for community participation. And there are now some fairly rigorous models for community participation.

Models and participation techniques, such as IAP2’s spectrum (below), which provides both a theoretical rationale and practical communications tools that have been rolled out in a range of government settings in Australia.

The IAP2 model outlines the types of activities you might like to undertake, inform, consult, collaborate etcetera across the top. And then we see some familiar techniques for undertaking ‘direct democracy’ down

the bottom, ‘citizen juries’, ‘delegated decision-making’ etcetera. What is missing from this model and many community participation spaces is the way, the method or the process, by which these techniques of direct democracy will be incorporated into our of system representative democracy. What is missing here is the broader social and political context in which these participation techniques are practiced; it is this context that is key. This can create a huge tension between expectations and realities for tenants.

Tenants want to talk about the broader social and market context as well as their local housing issues. Sure, there might be formal requirements for government and social housing providers to undertake tenant participation at the local level, but tenants often report they can’t discuss or be involved in decisions about, for instance, the move from ‘public’ to ‘social’ housing, or the forced relocation of tenants. They state they can only discuss local issues such as maintenance, or small changes within predetermined policy frameworks, and not the policy frameworks themselves. And tenants want to talk about both, yes they want to be involved in the formal tenant participation spaces with government and social housing providers, but they also want to be involved in other political debates that directly affect their lives. ■

Source: Marg Barry Memorial Lecture and 2012 Democracy from the ground up: the real stuff of community engagement.

iap2 public participation spectrum

developed by the international association for public participation

| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |
| EXAMPLE TOOLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions |

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ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES: SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

Having engaged with communities on government policy reform and land use planning for about 25 years, Roberta Ryan thinks it's time to raise a different perspective.

BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROBERTA RYAN

The usual complaints go something like this...

...From the community

"Why consult us when they've already made up their minds?"

"Why is the process so...unintelligible, unpleasant, boring and inconveniently timed, etc. etc?"

"Why is it so hard to be heard?"

"We told you all this last time"

"What difference does what we say have and how would I know?"

...From the government or proponent

"How do we manage their expectations so they don't think they have more influence than they do?"

"How can we get good inputs from a broad range of people instead of only hearing from the ill-informed, the 'usual suspects' or those with a narrow viewpoint?"

"Why is the community so apathetic – where is everyone else?"

"Why are the people who come so angry?"

While these complaints do have elements in common, the parties are clearly coming to engagement with different expectations and anxieties. These feelings are born from a history of often terrible engagement experiences. The end result of all this, and indeed the current state of play, is well-deserved scepticism from communities, lack of trust (on both sides) that manifests in mutual hostility, a lack of insight from government and proponents as to what their role in all this has been, and people with important points of views to share who won't have any part of it.

Now of course this doesn't happen all the time – and there are some great examples of community engagement – but sadly not enough.

Governments, proponents and practitioners are usually more than happy to lay the blame on THE 'community' and often have little insight as to how we have ended up here. Decades of entrenched poor practices, largely unsatisfactory on both sides, now should be avoided at all costs.

Let me share a different perspective.

The community is doing government, the proponent, the public interest and all of us a favour by freely giving their time to help improve the outcome. Everyone else is on the payroll.

The regular attenders – the folks who diligently show up at most events (often only a handful) – are serving us well and are rarely seen in this light. They are most unlikely to be representative of the wider community's interests but they are the ones who keep trying on all our behalves. If others don't come, why is it the community's fault, rather than those who are supposed to design the processes to make it attractive to participate?

An environmental management program that was run years ago had all the hallmarks of this problem. The 'experts' (in this case engineers but it could be bureaucrats, town planners, lawyers, etc.) called public meetings all around the country at 6-8pm to talk about stormwater issues. When evaluating the process and interviewing the experts, they just couldn't understand why only a hand full of people (mostly retired, older, white men) came to the meetings: 'when we had catering and we bothered to go to their communities and towns. They are too apathetic to come to the meeting.'

Perhaps there are some obvious and not so obvious reasons for this. Who is free at this time of night (no one with family or caring responsibilities for example)? Who is interested? Who has time? And anyway by advertising a meeting in the local newspaper to come and talk about stormwater, it would not be clear to many, why it is important that they do, and what difference would it make.

An issue in this example was that the experts didn't think about how stormwater might be of significance to the people they wanted to talk with. What would make the community think it was something that was important for them to have a say about or something that might be interesting or could make a difference to where they lived?

The engineers know how important stormwater management is to communities, but communities may not – and it is not their job to figure it out. If you want someone's point of view, you need to be able to put the issue in such a way that it is relevant and important to them. Stormwater, among other things, not only affects flooding, but also depending on how it is managed, can make the difference to whether you can swim in your local river or creek.

In redesigning the process, the community was invited to the green-space that sits alongside the river, to come and talk about what the river that runs through town means to them, what role they would like it to have in their town, what they can do to improve its water quality and how much they want to invest in making it cleaner.

The river was significant to the town and people often reminisced about how they could swim in it when they were younger, but sadly not now. Indeed, they mostly didn't understand what was causing the pollution and why the signs went up some years ago warning of the dangers of contact with the water. In reframing the issue in a way that resonated with the community, hundreds of people,

families and kids came out on a Sunday afternoon to have a BBQ, get their faces painted and give their views. Good fun and good input was achieved.

It is possible, with some thought, to make issues relevant to the wider community and help them see how their views can be heard and even make a difference. It's my experience that the wider community do want to participate in making their worlds and their communities better and they can come in droves and have plenty that is useful to say. It doesn't cost any more than the failed and dreaded public meeting, and will be much more effective if the issue is described in ways that matter to communities and if the processes are designed as accessible to a wide range of people.

Besides having a change of attitude toward the community, governments, proponents and practitioners are responsible for conceiving of and delivering engagement processes that show people how their input can make a difference. If the 'wrong' people come or they are not well informed enough about the issue to provide useful inputs – it is poor process not self-interested or apathetic communities that are the reason. ■

There are few basic steps, besides making an issue relevant, that can make for better engagement.

1. Be clear about what influence the community can have, who makes the decisions and when, and then make sure that is communicated – so people know what they are up for and can choose whether they want to participate.
2. Respond to the ideas the community have provided, and communicate what difference if any they made, and why.
3. Get the right inputs into the process: junk = junk out. Educate people so their input has a chance to be valuable.
4. If you don't want just the 'usual suspects', go to where other people are and make it worth their while (with offers of fun, money, the capacity to make a difference, or whatever the motivation that might work in that community) to give up their time and ideas.
5. Do a bit of research about how that community lives their lives – good processes are often made relevant to how people live life and relate to their community.

Associate Professor Roberta Ryan is Director of the UTS Centre for Local Government and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

A NEW PLANNING APPROACH

The NSW planning changes promise improvements in the Government's engagement culture and its future community participation processes.

BY GEOFF TURNBULL

The White Paper promises "People from all walks of life will now contribute to shaping their community through ground breaking arrangements for community participation. A significant and representative proportion of the community will participate in the development of long term strategic plans for their area. The planning system can move from combative to collaborative."

The Planning Bill 2013 presented to Parliament sets out in Part 2 and Schedule 2 the key requirements for community participation in planning. At its heart is a Community Participation Charter comprising the following:

1. The community has a right to be informed about planning matters that affect the community.
2. Planning authorities should encourage the establishment of effective and on-going partnerships with the community in order to identify meaningful opportunities for the community to participate in planning.
3. Planning information should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation in planning.
4. The community should be given opportunities to participate in strategic planning as early as possible to enable community views to be genuinely considered.
5. Community participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of the proposed development.
6. Community participation should be inclusive and planning authorities should actively seek views that are representative of the community.
7. Planning decisions should be made in an open and transparent way and the community should be provided with reasons for planning decisions (including how community views have been taken into account).

If the Bill passes, this charter will form the basis for Community Participation Guidelines designed to provide tools and materials to help ensure representative community views are taken into account. Planning authorities, including local councils, will be required to prepare Community Participation Plans describing how and when the community can be involved in decision making. Councils will be able to choose how to engage so as to avoid a one size fits all approach.

An independent Community Participation Advisory Panel will be established to provide advice to councils on the preparation

and operation of Community Participation Plans and to make recommendations to the Minister on community participation in planning.

Councils or the Minister will be required by law to publish the reasons for decisions and to explain how they have considered submissions in reaching a decision. According to the fact sheet anyone will be able to challenge in the Land and Environment Court as to whether these requirements have been followed. However the Bill clarifies that a planning authority is assumed to have acted consistently with the Community Participation Charter if its community participation plan has been prepared in accordance with the Bill and it complies with the relevant community participation requirements under the legislation and the authority's participation plan.

Under the new system, communities must be consulted about State Planning Policies, Infrastructure Plans, Community Participation Plans as well as regional, sub-regional and local plans in addition to development applications that require exhibition. New 3D visualisations and plain English descriptions are aimed to assist the community understand what is proposed.

The Department engaged UTS to run deliberative forums made up of randomly selected participants during the White Paper engagement and it sees this as a way of getting broad representative input in future consultations. The validity of such processes is dependent not only on the selection process and enough time but also on the participants having access to a range of views and not just that of the proponent. This must be seen to be the case if the community is to accept this process. The Department must resist the temptation to cherry pick voxpops from such events to just support its views as appears to be the case in its *Planning For Our Future* publication.

The Minister and the Department will need to resist the urge to argue their case at all costs as they did during the White Paper road show. They will need to demonstrate a willingness to be open about any shortcomings of their proposals and to listen to alternatives if the community are to remain engaged.

While the new system will take a while to roll out, residents have recently requested and received agreement from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and UrbanGrowth NSW for this new approach to community participation in planning to be applied to the recently announced Central to Eveleigh Corridor.

The success of key parts of the new planning system hinges on the success of up-front community engagement. Minister Hazzard aspires to engage 1 in 4 people in decisions about their neighbourhoods. To achieve this there will need to be a major change in planning culture, a lot of opportunities for community participation and resources to help people make truly informed contributions.

After years of 'tick the box' consultation, the community will be watching to see if the new system results in both a more engaged government and a more engaged community that might see better community outcomes.

In the meantime the opportunity is there to push government to deliver real community engagement improvements in line with the aspirations of the new planning system. ■

As we go to print the Planning Bill 2013 is still before Parliament. Inner Sydney Voice will run more on the planning changes when the legislation is finalised.

PUBLIC HOUSING IN DECLINE

A study by the NSW Auditor General recently concluded that the limited resources available to the NSW social housing system mean that it is only capable of meeting 44% of actual need.

BY WARREN GARDINER

This finding is clearly consistent with the daily experience of the NGO sector across the state, as evidenced by feedback to NCOSS and other peaks and the findings of the ACOSS Australian Community Sector Survey.

The Auditor General's report *Making the Best Use of Public Housing* was particularly pessimistic about the state of, and prospects for, the public housing component of the social housing system. It found that:

- the shortfall between supply and demand was increasing;
- public housing stock is ageing and increasingly not fit for purpose;
- insufficient funding is available for necessary maintenance;
- houses are being sold to meet recurrent funding shortfalls.

It concluded that these trends were not financially sustainable, and if they continue, the stock of public housing would decline in terms of both the number of dwellings and their standard.

Just as importantly, the report noted that NSW lacks an integrated plan to address the underlying systemic and structural issues to ensure sufficient supply and a viable social housing system, notwithstanding measures taken to tighten eligibility, increase rents, sell stock and transfer business to the community housing sector. In response, the NSW Government has undertaken to develop a social housing strategy to address the Auditor General's recommendations and to outline the Government's reform priorities.

A key factor underlying all these problems is that Commonwealth housing funding, apart from the temporary Stimulus Package, has been in long term decline.

The report notes that the overall social housing system in NSW currently comprises some 151,000 dwellings, of which 119,000 or 79% is public housing, 27,000 or 18% is community housing and 5,000 or 3% is Aboriginal housing. All public housing properties and most community housing properties are owned by the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), with just under 3,000 dwellings having been transferred to the ownership (as opposed to the management) of community housing providers and a further 3,000 title transfers in train.

A particular focus of the report was on the public housing system's capacity to meet changing needs and specifically the how well Housing NSW acts to relocate tenants when a household's needs or circumstances change and how well the LAHC plans to ensure that its asset base reflects the requirements of tenants and applicants.

The headline finding was that there is a significant disparity between the type of public housing stock provided and the needs of tenants, creating simultaneously both an under occupancy problem and an overcrowding problem. Growing numbers of tenants are single person households, tenants with significant disabilities and elderly tenants. Around 30% of three or more bedroom cottages are occupied by a couple or single person. The mismatch between household composition and housing size is increasing as 'priority housing' households are often placed in properties larger than their standard entitlement, because of the shortage of smaller properties, and as households declining in size remain in their existing dwelling.

Space does not allow all of the pressures identified in the audit report to be outlined in detail. In brief these are:

- 25% of LAHC properties are over 40 years old and spending on essential maintenance and upgrade is consistently falling below what is required. It would require an extra \$330m to maintain current properties at a reasonable standard.
- The number of new tenants housed each year is falling, even after adjusting for properties transferred to community housing.
- 56% of new allocations in 2011-12 were to 'priority housing cases' with waiting times for 'wait turn' housing increasing as a result. In over 20% of allocation zones applicants for 'wait turn' housing can now expect to wait more than 10 years.
- The LAHC expects its rental operations to be in deficit by \$490m in 2012-13, even after reducing its maintenance expenditure to substantially less than required. As well there is no long term funding agreement in place that would allow the LAHC to plan its ongoing activities.
- Without increased funding the LAHC expects to dispose of more than double the number of properties that it will build over the next four years.

In the immediate aftermath of the audit report, the Premier decided to transfer the LAHC back to the FACS cluster, from the Finance and Services cluster where it was moved immediately after the 2011 state election. This means that all three housing agencies (the LAHC, Housing NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office) now report to the one Minister and the one Director General. This has been generally welcomed by the sector.

At a policy level the Government has promised to develop a Social Housing Strategy to address the recommendations in the report and to outline "how housing assistance can break disadvantage by increasing clients' personal responsibility, better integrating services and working more effectively with our non-Government partners". At this stage there are few details available about the proposed Strategy or on further work on the LAHC property portfolio or a promised Estates Strategy.

NCOSS will be seeking to constructively engage with these processes, whilst reminding governments that only a substantial injection of additional funds will stop the system from declining further and enable it to grow to better respond to the housing needs of low to moderate income households. Meeting 44% of the identified need is just not good enough. ■

This article by Warren Gardiner, Senior Policy Officer NCOSS, first appeared in the Sept 2013 NCOSS News and is reprinted with permission.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL: PUBLIC HOUSING CHALLENGES

Michael Coutts-Trotter has come from the NSW Department of Finance and Services to be the Director General of Family and Community Services (FaCS). His move coincided with the same move by the Land and Housing Corporation (the owner of public housing) joining Housing NSW within FaCS. Here, Mr Coutts-Trotter reflects on the housing challenges and describes redeveloping higher value public housing as the one big lever to pull to be able to invest in social housing.

BY MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER

Thank you very much for the chance to offer some very early thoughts about the responsibilities of my new job, and specifically our work in social housing.

I won't pretend expertise I don't have, or a grasp of policy I've not yet achieved.

That said, in my last job I was for two years responsible for the public housing portfolio. That taught me some uncomfortable truths, all of which are contained in the Auditor-General's recent report on public housing.

I know many people will have read it for themselves, but here's my summary of the major point.

Look past the effects of the national economic stimulus and the transfer of some properties to the community housing sector and the NSW public housing portfolio has been shrinking.

In fact, the portfolio has been depleting 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 government funding haven't been sufficient.

This isn't sustainable. And there are no easy answers.

Government revenue - state and federal - is under pressure. Revenue is produced by economic activity which is vulnerable to problems elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, the Australian economy is now producing lower levels of revenue from the same level of activity than it used to.

This is explained by decisions over time to lower taxes and a shift in patterns of consumption, with a greater share now going to health, education and food, all of which are GST exempt. Long story short, GST revenue to NSW in the next four years is now many billions of dollars below estimates of only three years ago.

Given that, and commitments to invest in health, education and disability support, there's no realistic prospect of major increases in government investment in social housing.

In public housing there's one big lever to pull - the potential to more actively redevelop higher value land under the portfolio to provide ongoing returns to reinvest in social housing. This would take time to achieve but is promising.

There are many other things that we can do to get the most - and most appropriate - housing out of the portfolio including encouraging a better match between tenants and housing, improving the performance of our maintenance program and possibly introducing contestability into tenant management services.

Other opportunities include helping to develop the capacity of the community housing sector, including Aboriginal community housing providers, encouraging Aboriginal home ownership, reforming homelessness services and making it easier for people to do the right thing as tenants in social housing.

We should also look to encourage more private and philanthropic entrants into low cost housing.

These things will all help but the only long-term solution is to reduce demand for social housing.

This means finding ways to help as many people as possible to move through social housing to greater independence. This isn't an achievable goal for all social housing tenants, but it can be for many.

If this becomes our clear and urgent objective, it will require changes in our department - in how we're organised, how we partner inside and outside government, how we prioritise our efforts and above all in the extent to which we empower and support the staff closest to our clients to make decisions about meeting their needs.

We made an important step forward in early September when we reorganised ourselves in 15 districts that exactly match local health district boundaries.

The new districts will help us to make more people decision-makers - and give people closest to the action more authority and support to make choices about how best to help the people we serve.

Our aim is to empower staff on the front line to begin to change how things run and make it easier to do great work.

Together with non-government organisations and other parts of government I'm sure we can find with new ways of using our shared resources, experience, skills and knowledge to do something fresh and brilliant for the most disadvantaged people we serve.

I look forward to working with you all. ■

These comments by Michael Coutts-Trotter first appeared in Shelter NSW's Around the House no. 94 in September 2013 and are reprinted with permission.

CAUGHT BETWEEN THE ROCKS AND A HARD PLACE

With public housing in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks again under threat of sale a group of interested locals formed a group called CoRE following a community meeting. They undertook a detailed investigation of the options for saving the areas historic public housing. The study by Freya Bunday entitled *Millers Point, Dawes Point & The Rocks: Living communities* presented two options to a community meeting in September 2013. Below is an edited version of the report which raises a number of issues relevant to the broader public housing community in the inner city.

BY FREYA BUNDEY

Dating back to the Victorian era, Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks form a small City of Sydney precinct located on the Sydney harbour foreshore. The closely connected community is the oldest surviving continuous urban residential precinct in Australia's European settlement, and has provided a home to generations of local workers and public housing tenants. The ABC's Hindsight program described these suburbs as a "small and feisty Maritime community living at the foot of Sydney Harbour Bridge".

Millers Point has been listed on the State Heritage Register since 2003 as "a living cultural landscape greatly valued by both its local residents and the people of NSW". The register recognises both the pristine physical geography of the area, and also the unique and intrinsic value of the community identity. Many of those living in the precinct are long-term residents, while others were born in the community and have a history of family connection to the place. As of 2011, almost half (47%) of the community were over 50 years old. The close bonds between community members, and the irreplaceable connection to place, have been fostered over years, if not generations.

It is this "locally-distinctive and self-sustaining" community, as recognised on the NSW Heritage Register, which is threatened by current proposals.

In 2012, the NSW state government Finance Department commissioned a review by the Land and Housing Corporation (LHC) into the possible sale of the 208 heritage-listed social housing dwellings in and around Millers Point. Former Minister for Finance Greg Pearce has attempted to outline the economic benefits of selling "underperforming" housing stock to address concerns of "long-term viability".





Such private sale of public housing would result in the dislocation of the approximately five hundred local residents, with severe social costs for the community at large. At stake is the intangible social cohesion and support provided through the local and informal networks, and the irreplaceable connection between ‘point people’ and the area.

The NSW state government recognises the heritage value of Millers Point, which protects the physical homes from demolition and destruction. It is imperative that this same logic be applied to the heritage value of the community to protect residents from dislocation. The argument that the heritage significance would be better preserved through private sales contradicts the integral part of the local community to the heritage listing. Indeed, Housing NSW’s own *Conservation Management Guidelines (2007)* state its “vision and objective of maintaining this unique place and its residential community as a priceless asset of the people of New South Wales and Australia.”

This is not the first time that private sales have been proposed. In 2006, the NSW State government sold 16 houses on 99-year leases. At the time, residents were told that the proceeds of sale were going to be used for maintenance and restoration of the Millers Point properties. This has not occurred. The initial sale was followed by a further 20 properties in 2010. In both cases, government Ministers promised that these were ‘one-off’ sales, and would consist solely of vacant properties so that existing tenants would not be affected. The second round of sales also came with the promise that the proceeds would fund public housing elsewhere. The government is yet to offer any hard evidence of this occurring.

To assess the consequences of the current proposal, Greg Pearce commissioned CRED Community Planning to prepare a Social Impact Assessment of: “the potential social

impacts that may result from the NSW Land and Housing Corporation’s evaluation of social housing and any further sales of social housing”. Such social impacts would be severe and long lasting, for both the local residents and the broader community.

CoRE proposes one or two or both of the following alternative models:

1. That the properties remain under the management of Housing NSW, which commits to the restoration and conservation of the properties. This model requires minimal transitional costs and allows for the retention of complete public ownership and maintenance of the properties. Its success would depend on improving the accessibility and accountability of Housing NSW to the local residents by the setting up of a mechanism to ensure funds do not go directly to consolidated revenue but are hived off at time of sale and can be tracked to specific maintenance and that none of the funds be used to pay for any bureaucracy that will administer the work.
2. That the properties be leased to a Community Tenancy Association (CTA), which ensures the restoration and conservation of the properties and that the leases be of a term long enough (e.g. 35 years minimum) so that the Community Tenancy Association can have enough control over the assets that they are able to be used as collateral for leverage of funds for new development and that any tenant who wishes that their tenancy not be transferred to a CTA has the option of remaining with Housing NSW. Leasing to a Community Tenancy Association is consistent with the NSW State government’s current political agenda. In April this year, 1300 public housing properties had already been transferred to community groups to afford the not-for-profit providers greater capital in order to borrow money from the private sector and thus allow for more social housing.

CoRE is in principle opposed to the selling off of public housing, especially in light of the Auditor General's Report *Making the Best Use of Public Housing* which states that the selling of houses to fund new development is financially unviable. CoRE is especially opposed to the sale of any 1, 2 or 3 bedroom dwellings as the Community regards them as fit for purpose regardless of the amount of backlog maintenance required. CoRE is however open to the possible controlled sale of a specific number vacant dwellings where the cost of restoration is the greatest, the use to the Community is the lowest and the sale value the highest, with the proceeds of sales going directly towards the maintenance and restoration of the properties and that after the targeted dwellings have been sold to fund maintenance backlog further sales cease indefinitely.

According to CoRE's estimations there are currently 40 vacant dwellings in the area. We do not support the sale of any one, two or three bedroom dwellings in the area as these are of most use to the Community. Nor do we wish to endorse any move which would result in the forced removal of tenants from any property where a case can be made for staying (eg long term residency, medical reasons, appropriate use of space/s). CoRE's proposal is focused on the current lot of vacant homes which are larger and would be most costly to Government to renovate and convert to multiple occupancy dwellings. The disposal of these properties would then bring the average cost of backlog maintenance down for the remaining properties.

The consulting company Sphere has undertaken financial modelling of CoRE's proposals, based on LAHC data (see subsequent section). Sphere's modelling demonstrates that with the sale of some housing, CoRE's models – including restoration and upgrades – can be economically viable over a five year period, and indeed preferable to the proposed sale of housing given the involved re-housing and administration

costs. This model would allow for an initial substantial investment in renovation/restoration works, while the continuing rent revenues would fund ongoing operations.

CoRE's proposal is timely as we understand that LAHC reports a budget shortfall of \$330,000,000 and that in order to make savings they have been reducing maintenance and upgrading of existing homes, reducing capital programs and selling properties. The Auditor General's Report *Making the Best Use of Public Housing* asserts that these practices, including the selling of properties are not financially viable.

Sphere's figures show that there currently exists an average maintenance backlog per dwelling of \$310,000. Added to that is the reality that as they are heritage listed historic houses and further neglect in maintenance will cause an exponential blow out in restoration costs as the building deteriorate at a more rapid rate due to their current state of neglect.

CoRE's proposal addresses the existing maintenance expense and the burgeoning expense into the future in a cost neutral way by allowing for the proceeds of sale to go directly to addressing the maintenance and bringing back the properties to a standard that ensures their viability into the future hence creating savings.

CoRE's alternative proposals provide a solution whereby the NSW State government can both meet its fiscal requirements and protect the intrinsic social value of the community. In line with the government's Conservation Management Guidelines and its commitment to the provision of public housing, these models preserve the mental health and physical wellbeing of the residents, the vibrancy of the community, and the precinct's historic architecture. ■

This article has been edited by Geoff Turnbull. The full CoRE submission can be found on our website www.innersydney.org.au

COMMUNITY HOUSING MODEL PROPOSED

Since 1996, New South Wales has been transferring some property management to community housing providers, and more recently, title transfers. This facilitates the growth of the Community Housing sector. This outsourcing trend follows similar directions in other Australian States and Territories.

Furthermore tenants leased under Community Housing are eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance that goes directly to the tenant and is recouped by the Community Housing Provider, which helps them operate at a profit. This payment is not available to public housing tenants and so cannot be recouped.

In New South Wales, titles to 3,099 dwellings have been transferred to Community Housing Providers. Title transfers to a further 2,921 properties are planned. The combined value of all these dwellings is reported to be almost \$1.5 billion. The New South Wales Commission of Audit reported in May 2012 that as part of the transfer the Community Housing Provider sector has committed to deliver 1,200 new social and affordable housing properties over ten years. This will be financed by leveraging the housing assets against borrowings.

Community Tenancy Associations Women's Housing and Bridge Housing already provide some Public Housing in the precinct. Residents interviewed for this report reflect positively on these arrangements. For example, Susan O'Brien notes that whereas the exterior of her property is managed by Housing NSW (as outlined above), the interior of the property and repairs to plumbing are managed by Women's Housing. In relation to internal repairs and in contrast to external requirements, Susan notes that internal maintenance "is completed within a week at the outside and with complete satisfaction".

Susan also reflects that: Another major difference between the Department of Housing and Women's Housing is that the people at the Women's Housing office know who you are when you phone or email them. You are not just a number or a faceless complainant as appears to be the case in the Department of Housing. ■

Extract from CoRE submission

NSW DISABILITY REFORM: IN CONTEXT

The roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in NSW commenced on 1 July 2013 with a three year 'launch' in the Hunter region. The scheme is due to be mainstreamed by 2018.

BY ENIS JUSUFSPAHIC

EVIDENCE BASE FOR A NATIONAL DISABILITY SUPPORT SYSTEM

In its final report on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, the Scheme) released in 2009, PriceWaterhouseCoopers projected a steady increase in the number of people with severe and profound disabilities from 1.4 million to 2.9 million over the next 40 years. The report also highlights ageing of the informal carer population as a pivotal issue, as unpaid carers provide far more support than formal paid care workers.

In the current system, the funds are usually held by the service provider, who is required to meet output targets. The process of changing service providers is difficult, as the service user/client needs to find a suitable service in their area which has capacity and is able to meet their needs. In many areas, there are few agencies that have capacity to accept new clients without extended delays. In this way, the person with disability effectively becomes tied to a service.

In the current system, the worker is seen as the expert and the person with disability as a sub-ordinate client; the assessment of a person's needs is based on what the person is not able to do and how we can best fit the person's needs within the existing service system. This contradicts the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which acknowledges that the person with disability is the expert on their own needs and capabilities by recognising "the importance for persons with disabilities of their individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choices".



Providing disability services is not necessarily straightforward.

Under an NDIS, the focus shifts to the person's needs, strengths, aspirations and goals, and the system works with the person to achieve those goals a step at a time. Instead of outputs, the new system is about achieving outcomes for the individual: gaining independence, promoting wellbeing and social connections. Indeed, the NSW Government had already recognised the need for person centred approaches through *Stronger Together*, its ten year plan for funded disability. Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) has been working to prepare the current system to be ready for the NDIS by providing person centred supports and individual funding arrangements that enable choice and control for people with disability.

THE NDIS: RATIONALE & FUNCTION

The NDIS is part of a larger disability reform process which took shape under the National Disability Agreement in 2009, which set some new government priorities in relation to people with disabilities and their families including strategies for increased choice, control and self-directed decision-making as well innovative and flexible support models for people with high and complex needs.

The new National Disability Reform Agenda will build on these priorities by introducing national tools to identify service benchmarks; plan for changing needs; identify people at risk; and work towards program and service delivery consistency across jurisdictions.

The NDIS is an "entitlement based" national system, which means that there is no financial means testing. This ensures that there is no disincentive for people with disabilities to earn, save and contribute to their society. The NDIS was introduced in order to streamline all supports a person may be eligible for into one flexible package that reflects their needs and aspirations. The NDIS is being designed to encompass all permanent functional impairments such as psychiatric disability and acquired brain injury.

The NDIS is being rolled out across the country at various launch sites to make the national roll out of the full system run more smoothly. In NSW, the NDIS commenced in the Hunter Region on 1 July 2013; it is a three year process covering the three major local government areas in the region. The NDIS is expected to be introduced to the rest of the State from 2016 to 2018.

ELIGIBILITY: BECOMING A PARTICIPANT

The NDIS targets people ages 0 to 65. Those who turn 65 while they are participants of the NDIS will have the option of going into aged care or staying with the NDIS. People who are over 65 and seek support from the NDIS for the first time will have their needs met through the aged care system.

In order to become a participant of the Scheme an individual needs to have an impairment that is, or is likely to be, permanent (including impairments that are permanent but episodic). The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) which administers the NDIS

may require medical evidence before a determination can be made as to whether the impairment is permanent or likely to be permanent.

The impairment needs to result in substantially reduced functional capacity to undertake activities such as communication, social interaction, learning, mobility, self-care, self-management without assistive technology, equipment or home modifications; or the person usually requires assistance from other people to participate in the activity or to perform tasks or actions required to undertake or participate in the activity. The person needs to demonstrate that they are likely to require support under the NDIS for the duration of their lifetime.

PLAN ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

In order to register for the NDIS one needs to call the NDIA, drop in to their regional office or complete an online registration form called the MyAccessChecker. This registration form asks for basic information about your capacity to carry out tasks of daily living.

Once a person with disability becomes a participant in the scheme, that is they become eligible for funded supports from the NDIS, the person meets with a plan manager employed by the NDIA to develop an individual plan. The plan comprises two parts: a statement of goals and aspirations prepared by the participant which outlines the person's goals, objectives, aspirations and context; and the statement of participant's supports which is prepared with the participant and approved by the Agency that sets out the supports that will be funded by the NDIS.

Individual plans are based on goals (for example being able to use public transport) and funded supports (which need to be reasonable and necessary) are timed limited and tied to the specific goal. The NDIA understands "necessary supports" as supports needed to address the impact of a person's disability on their participation in the community or employment. The Agency determines what is reasonable by taking into account value for money and efficacy of the support, balanced against relevant community standards such as what support it is reasonable to expect of families and carers.

Once a plan is in place, an individual with a disability can choose their own support providers and whether to manage their funding themselves or to appoint an advocate (carer, service provider or the NDIA) to manage some or all of their funding.

TRANSITIONING: CLIENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Under the NDIS, the service provider needs to bill the "fund holder" for the services provided to the person with a disability. Services are expected to bill the package holder through the NDIS Provider Portal. If the person chooses to manage the funding themselves then they are to receive the invoice. Services are only able to claim for supports rendered which are in line with the Agency's price list. For example, an hour of house cleaning is \$33.92.

Only approved providers are able to provide services to individuals with disability if the NDIA is the fund holder. In the NSW context, this means that the service provider will, in the medium term, need to meet the Disability Service Standards, including Third Party Verification, in order to deliver services under the NDIS.

Most disability specific government funded programs are transitioning to the NDIS. At the NSW launch site, the transition is occurring by client according to the program that that person is funded by. For example, a younger person with disability may be on an Attendant Care Package from organisation A and Life Choices from organisation B. In this case, both organisations will need to transition as the person is transitioning.

There may be a period of time during which current service providers will provide supports to people with disability under existing contracted funding arrangements as well as under the NDIS. In cases where the provider contract to provide services has not expired, representatives of ADHC will make arrangements with the provider for the remaining period.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFEGUARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE?

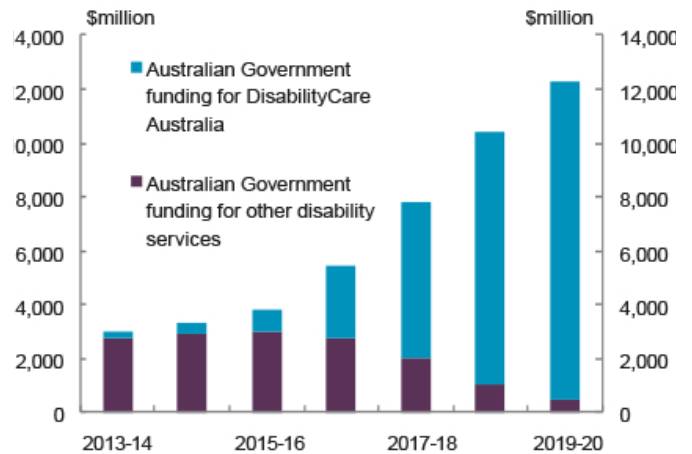
The NSW Ombudsman is to monitor and review services provided to NDIS participants. In turn, the participants will be able to make complaints to the NSW Ombudsman. Official Community Visitors will be able to visit the NDIS participants living in an accommodation service if in full-time care of a service provider.

A person with a disability may seek a review of a decision by the CEO of the NDIA relating to assessment and eligibility, the provision of reasonable and necessary supports, a decision to become a registered provider of supports and other matters. Alternatively, application can be made to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the CEO's decision.

CURRENT LIMITS OF THE NDIS

In order to fund the NDIS the NSW Government has committed all State disability services funding under the Heads of Agreement with the Commonwealth on the NDIS. This has further been elucidated in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NSW Enabling) Bill 2013, which authorises and facilitates the transfer of the State's public sector disability services assets and employees to the non-government sector by 2018-19, when the NDIS is expected to be rolled out across the State.

Under the National Disability Agreement, the states and the Commonwealth agree to fund services that assist families and carers in their caring role and services that assist people with disability to live in stable and sustainable living arrangements. As it stands now, the NDIS does not provide services directly to carers, although respite is provided indirectly; for example, when the individual with disability attends day activities or participates in community activities. However, this is not true respite, which is responsive to the person's informal care arrangements.



Total Australian Government Funding for DisabilityCare and other disability services will change over time.

A disability service provider advised that they had been engaging in long term goal based planning with the people they support for some years. Most clients identified that they wanted to live independently in a unit of their own or to share with other people. It difficult to access supported accommodation and/or group homes in NSW as demand is high and supply is limited.

The NDIS does not provide funding for the capital costs of housing, but provides funding for reasonable and necessary supports for an individual with disability to live independently if that is indeed their goal.

CONCLUSIONS

The Disability Service System is undergoing the most significant reform process since the inception of government funded disability services. Funding of the sector is expected to grow from approximately \$3 billion in 2013/14 to \$12 billion in 2019/20 (see graph above).

Government, together with the non-government sector, needs to ensure the future stability and viability of supports for the people with disabilities. This can be achieved through adequate resourcing and continuing to support local services and development initiatives. It is especially important as many organisations are looking at their operations and planning for the future by seeking to better respond to client needs and position themselves in a changing industry. ■

Enis Jusufspahic is the Home and Community Care (HACC) Development Officer (Eastern Sydney)

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

KEEPING UP WITH CHANGE

Every four years the census people come knocking on our doors and we fill in the census questions. In the back of our minds we know it must be useful for someone but probably don't think about how we might use the information ourselves.

BY GEOFF TURNBULL

Recently Leichhardt council briefed their human service interagency about how they could use census information when they are exploring the best locations for new services or needed to back up their funding applications with relevant statistical evidence.

Leichhardt had just subscribed for a one year trial to a suite of products produced by .id a company of demographers, spatial analysts, urban planners, forecasters, census data and IT experts who build demographic information products to make census data more easily accessible.

Leichhardt Council was keen to get its service providers to try the data and let them know if they thought council should continue to subscribe past the one year trial. This becomes even more importance since Leichhardt Council recently went out to residents telling them that they would either have to put up rates or cut services. In the meantime Leichhardt has joined all the other council in the ISRCSD region who make these useful tools available to their communities so we thought it would be useful to let everyone know about these resources.

Councils subscribe to .id's main packages which are: Community Profile, Social Atlas and Economic Profile. The City of Sydney also uses the Population Forecast module which is very helpful for a rapidly growing inner city area.

Data is available at statistical collection area level, for the entire LGA and for areas requested by councils – maybe suburbs or wards or in the case of the City of Sydney their village hubs.

While the best way to discover the material available is to play with the modules, a brief overview provides:

- **The Community profile** – profile.id - uses Census data to build a powerful story about the characteristics of your community, how it is changing and how it compares to other areas. This information might be presented by map or table which can be exported for use in reports and funding applications.
- **Social Atlas** - atlas.id - is a companion product to profile.id. It delivers Census data in a suite of powerful thematic maps which show how target populations are distributed across a local government area. Where are there concentrations of older people, low income people etc. Essential information if you are looking to locate a service or programme.
- **Economic Profile** - economy.id - combines 11 different datasets to build a cohesive story of a local economy, how it is changing and how it compares to other areas.
- **Population Forecasts** - forecast.id – (Sydney LGA only) outlines what is driving population change in your community and forecasts how the population, age structure and household types will change between now and 2031.

Access to the last and previous census data in the atlas is available through a council's website or it can be directly accessed from .id.com.au. So the Social atlas for Leichhardt can be accessed directly from <http://atlas.id.com.au/leichhardt/>. If you substitute your council name in place of leichhardt – say botany-bay you should get the direct link for your own council area atlas. At the top of the screen you will find the packages that the council subscribes to which can be accessed by clicking on the relevant tab changing the “atlas” part of the web address to “economy” or “profile” depending on the package you choose.

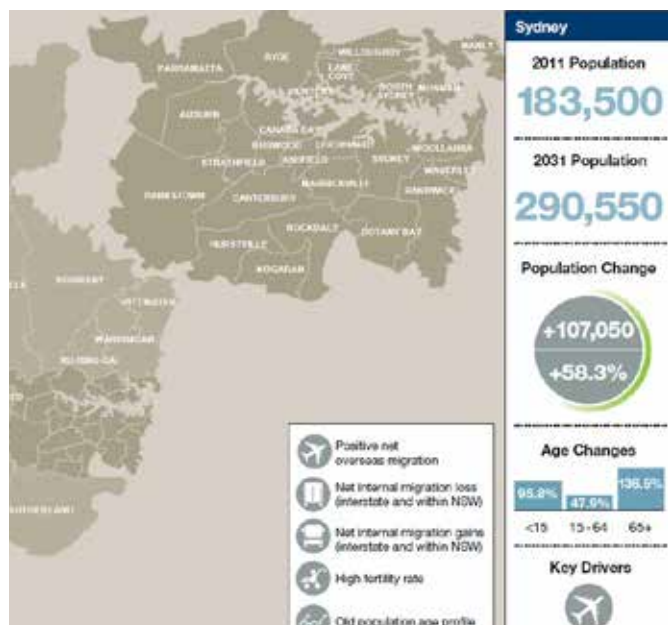
NSW Population Projections

For those looking to the future need for their services, have a look at the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure's (DPI) population and housing projections. They have just released their *Preliminary 2013 Population Projections* which show projections until 2031.

DPI is a key source of population analysis and policy-orientated advice for the NSW Government. It is responsible for the development and regular review of NSW official population projections, incorporating information from its Metropolitan Development Program, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship and NSW Health.

The population of NSW will increase by two million people to reach 9.2 million by 2031 so this is another important place to look when you are looking for material in planning or supporting your project applications.

You can download an interactive map with headline figures (see graphic at left) or download the detailed report from www.planning.nsw.gov.au/projections. ■



THE ART OF CONVERSATION

One of the co-coordinators and strategists for the *Lift Redfern: Make Redfern Station Accessible* campaign, Michael Chapman writes on applying 'common ground' team building strategies in engaging a range of disparate communities and individuals to work on a project for the shared benefit of all in the Redfern, Waterloo, Darlington, Eveleigh and Alexandria area.

BY MICHAEL CHAPMAN

On 15th August 2013 the Minister for Transport announced the adoption of Lift Redfern's interim access solution for the network significant Redfern Station. Prior to major redevelopment of the station, installation of a lift to access two platforms will be provided so that by changing at Central Station at least one line at the station provides a limited form of equal access.

This announcement was another win for our community – another windmill tilted.

As reported previously in ISV (Spring 2012), the Lift Redfern campaign is a whole-of-community press to force the State Government to commence the vitally important and decades-overdue redevelopment of Redfern Station. By working together to snowball a conversation, our community is seeing the Government sitting up, taking notice and committing to action.

Rebuilding Redfern Station has been on the Government's agenda from at least 1947, and Lift Redfern is not the first community campaign calling for action at the station.

At the commencement of this renewed effort some said "already tried to do something", "nothing will ever happen", "we're rusted on – Labor don't have to do it to get votes and the Libs won't 'cause they never will." The core organising group for this campaign saw an opportunity to build a conversation amongst a vast cross section of our community on an issue that affects us all. The aim was to build community capital – to have people of seemingly uncommon interest working together and sharing skills to achieve an outcome for the common good.

It was recognised in initial community meetings that for the campaign to be successful, a conversation about equitable access to Redfern Station needed to become pervasive. Narratives would have to be identified and individuals engaged to share their stories in illustrating the negative social and economic outcomes caused by the continuing delay in re-developing the station precinct. Conversations sharing our stories highlighting this essential transport infrastructure necessity needed to penetrate both the public domain and into meetings where actual decisions are made. The campaign would be a long one with many stages.

For the Lift Redfern conversation to truly resonate, it was important the initial murmurings arose from not just the

usual expected places. The Factory Community Centre and South Sydney Community Aid geographically and logistically anchored the campaign within the community. Enthusiastically integrating the campaign into their outreach programs enabled direct response from the Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Spanish communities. Koori Radio FM 93.7 facilitated access to the heart of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In building the narrative, it was vital to humanise the broad and deep negative impacts caused by this failure to provide equitable access at this major transport hub.

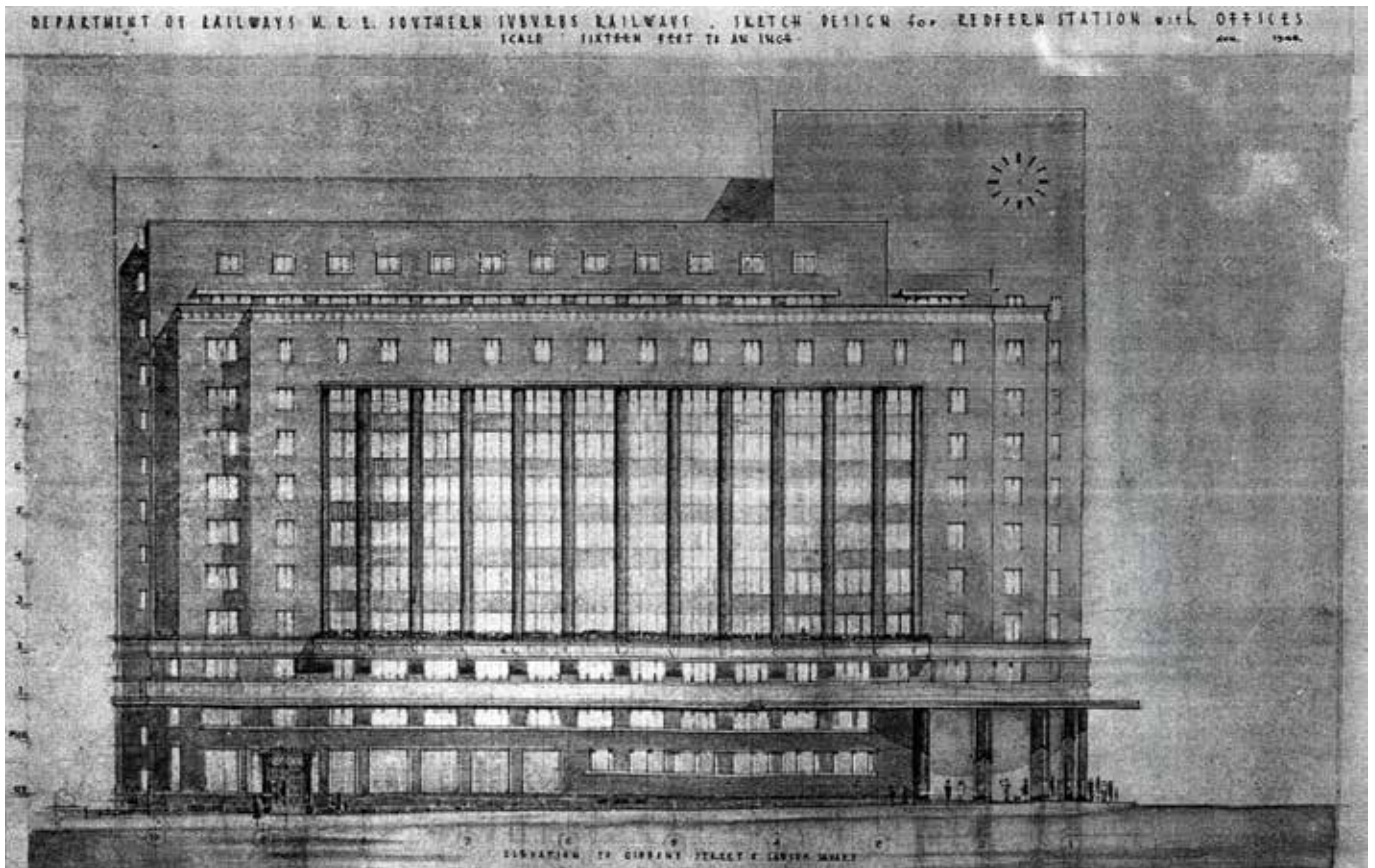
The then newly instituted NSW Parliament Peoples Petition process provided the necessary tool for beginning the conversation. Under the parliamentary rules, signatures to such petitions must be original ones. Having to obtain original signatures may seem cumbersome and not as easy as online collection, but the opportunity to engage face-to-face with possible supporters is instrumental in building a conversation to the point where it snowballs and takes on a life of its own. Redfern Station being a concrete physical entity provided a convenient and invaluable focal point for signature collection. Online and social media strategies were used to build signature collection teams, provide downloadable language-appropriate campaign materials and generally get the message out.

The launch by Australia's Disability Commissioner of the first stage of the campaign in early 2012 with 'Platforms and Carriages Week' saw the collection of over 10,000 signatures within a month to a Peoples Petition calling for equality of access at Redfern Station. There has been a parliamentary debate on the matter and questions have been asked of the Minister for Transport and her department.

Despite a delegation from Lift Redfern meeting with the Minister for Transport's office prior to the debate to seed an interim solution idea and inquire about Transport NSW's progress in meeting the Federal timetable for delivering equality of access across the rail network, the Minister made no formal announcement in parliament regarding when Redfern Station would be made accessible.

Stage Two of the campaign therefore targeted the Premier, Minister for Transport and President of the Legislative Council (Government Whip). From the manual collection of signatures the campaign moved to an online effort that allowed the forwarding of letters to these three members of government. The framing of this stage was a request that an interim solution for limited equality of access to the station be provided in a very timely manner. With the assistance of the community centres and the Sydney Story Factory (a not-for-profit creative writing centre for young people in Redfern), local school children participated by sharing their stories and writing directly to the Premier, Minister for Transport and President of Legislative Council.

In the background a small team working with the Redfern Legal Centre and a large city legal firm began exploring possible legal avenues under Federal disability access legislation to force the State Government to act. In seeking statutory compliance with the federally mandated timetable for the provision of equality of access to public facilities, the first step was to seek access to documents held by Transport NSW. Using the NSW Government's own Government Information (Public Access) Act ("GIPA"), the legislation superseding Freedom of Information requests, a range of documents on which to build a legal case was sought from Transport NSW. As a result over



A long time coming: sketch design for Redfern Station with offices from 1946

1000 pages of Government documents regarding Redfern Station are now in the public domain and accessible via the Lift Redfern and REDWatch websites. Some of these documents are also publically available through Transport NSW's GIPA Compliance Log.

Behind the scenes work has been integral to Lift Redfern's successes. One of the community strengths identified at the commencement of the campaign is the breath of representation on various ministerial panels and taskforces. Senior Aboriginal Aunties raised the issue during Aged Care ministerial consultation meetings; the Vice Chancellor and Provost of the University of Sydney drew the Minister for Education's attention this critical infrastructure upgrade need; precinct representatives pressed Housing NSW to take a stance; property developers highlighted their concerns during Part 3A planning discussions; and the City of Sydney raised in many forums the importance of the station's redevelopment for the whole of the Sydney Local Government Area.

'Playing the ball and not the man' is fundamental to maintaining the multi-partisan approach to solving the Redfern Station problem. From the outset local branches of various political parties were involved. The Chamber of Commerce, University of Sydney, Carriageworks and other cultural institutions were on board. The campaign obtained the unanimous support of the Council of the City of Sydney. This approach facilitated opportunities for Ron Hoenig (ALP) and Jamie Parker (The Greens) in the Lower House and Dr Mehreen Faruqi (The Greens) and Penny Sharpe (ALP) in the Upper House to press their Coalition counterparts and the Minister for Transport in meetings and in 'corridor' conversation. Lord Mayor Clover Moore, City CEO and senior staff also engaged the Minister and her department regarding the critical need for this infrastructure redevelopment as the opportunities arose. The Premier,

Ministers for Planning and Transport have been sighted casually inspecting the station.

One of the many off-shoots of the Lift Redfern campaign is the formation of a nascent Redfern Station Community Group. Since the commencement of the campaign community members have directly lobbied the Station Master to engage with the community in respecting and beautifying the station. This direct relationship building is dovetailing well with rollout of the Minister for Transport's vision for improved customer service and the appointment of the first of the network's new customer service managers to the Redfern to Strathfield sector.

Urban Growth NSW recently recognised Lift Redfern as an important community stakeholder in the proposed development of the Central Station to Erskineville rail corridor. The redevelopment of Redfern Station is key to delivering any vision for the revitalisation of this long neglected area of our globally significant city. Lift Redfern is advocating for an open, transparent and accountable community consultation process across all stages of the project's formulation and execution.

The Lift Redfern campaign continues to move forward, but in many respects the original aim of the campaign was achieved in the first few weeks following the formal launch. The joyous comments from participants about "meeting all these different people" and the "great opportunities for working together on other projects" revealed the power of conservation in building community capital. This excitement still underpins Lift Redfern as we move towards implementing the next stages in the campaign to make Redfern Station accessible. ■

*Follow the Lift Redfern Station Campaign at
www.facebook.com/LiftRedfern
 or <http://liftredfernstation.wordpress.com>*

ISRCSD MEMBERSHIP



The ISRCSD is a non-for-profit organisation providing information, advocacy and community development to local communities and community agencies in the local government areas of Botany Bay, City of Sydney, Leichhardt, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Local Government Areas.

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REVIEW

In 2008 I watched *Waterloo*, a documentary by filmmaker Tom Zubrycki, and I was left wondering why I'd not taken the time to watch before. "Waterloo" is an historical account of the 1970s battle by residents of this inner Sydney suburb of Waterloo to save the area from 'slum clearance' and redevelopment by the old Housing Commission.

BY MICHAEL SHREENAN

In the early 70s the state government initiated a massive scheme to pull down inner city terraces (slums) to build the new public housing estates that the government now wants to redevelop. *Waterloo* sets out to understand the residents fight-back in terms of the history of the suburb itself: the poverty and overcrowding at the turn of the century, and the impractical, idealistic solutions proposed by the planners of the day.

The film also looks at Waterloo in the context of urban housing struggles in Sydney: the anti- eviction campaigns of the 1930s, the rise of the Resident Action Movement in the late 60s and the alliance it formed with building unions resulting in the now famous "Green Bans".

In the process the film reveals the history of the Housing Commission and the inner city Labor machine, prompting

questions about the planning process, community involvement and bureaucratic accountability. How did the Housing Commission, a public housing authority set up by the state Labor government in the 40s, get to the stage of evicting workers to build more public housing?

I recommend this film, not only for its historical documentary value, but for its value as a motivational tool for people seeking to engage tenants in tenant participation, activism and lobbying.

The film makes no bones about it, the struggle to get a fair deal for people living on very low incomes – indeed in abject poverty – has never been an easy one. As the film shows, the path can be fraught with unexpected barriers, including government sanctioned dirty tactics and police hoodlumism, of the kind one usually associated with that depicted in old Hollywood gangster movies. The film includes eyewitness accounts of police smashing down doors, guns ablazin', shooting squatters as a means of evicting them from the homes bulldozed to make way for the housing estates of the future.

But the film also depicts the ability of motivated, passionate people to join together, and as one united community, take the fight to government. There is a lot the residents of Waterloo didn't win; they sacrificed a great deal for the fight, but there is a great deal they didn't sacrifice, including their self-respect, their respect for each other and their community, their dignity! Need a reminder of what that ANZAC spirit is all about? Get a copy of *Waterloo*. ■

You can still borrow the DVD from Waterloo Library or purchase a DVD or VHS from Tom by emailing tzub@ozemail.com.au

Michael Shreenan is Chair of the ISRCS Board

'WATERLOO' ~ the film that

took 3 years to make

No responsible planning has ever been achieved in the inner city without much effort and struggle. In 1974 it took people putting their bodies between bulldozers and homes in order to stop an expressway slicing through large areas of Ultimo, Glebe and Annandale. The same thing happened in The Rocks, Victoria Street and in Waterloo, and it could happen again given a building boom and a State Government sympathetic to developers' interests.

The film 'Waterloo' is about a group of residents living in South Sydney and their nine year fight against the planned demolition and redevelopment of their community by the Housing Commission. Their story is told against a background of 50 years of struggle by workers over rights to low cost housing. 'Waterloo' is a tribute to the courage and tenacity of some of these individuals, and it should prove an inspiration to those people undertaking similar campaigns now and in the future.

The NSW Housing Commission is the state body responsible for housing low-income earners who would otherwise not have access to the housing market. But the Commission was not set up in isolation. Instead it came into being as a response to a very real need. In the Depression years of the early 30's, workers organised a major campaign to stop evictions. It finally took confrontations between picketers barricading themselves inside houses, and police wielding batons and firing guns, to force Labor Premier Lang to change the law granting tenants a reprieve on rentals. In the film there is a re-enactment of the Union Street fight - the bloodiest of these battles.

During the 30's the Socialist press continued to campaign for a better deal for the working family. Oddly, it was the middle class planners who were seen as the experts. And it was the same houses that figured in the anti- eviction fights that planners condemned as unsuited for human habitation, the spreaders of disease, delinquency and other social ills. On a windscreen survey 40,000 houses including the entire suburbs of the now gentrifying Paddington and Bal-

main were black listed.

Eventually the Labor machine responded to the call. In 1941, Labor Premier McKell established the NSW Housing Commission. Six years later, McKell (who is interviewed in the film) - oblivious of the grief and hardship that would afflict thousands of tenants who would face eviction notices from the Commission - departed South Sydney for Canberra in his new role as Governor General.

In the 20 years between 1949 and 1969, stage by stage, streets of terrace housing were replaced by ever higher mountains of concrete flats. The people displaced were mostly tenants, and there was hardly any opposition. Liz Faunce, a Waterloo resident recalls: 'In those days you didn't fight the Government; you didn't fight the cops, and you accepted what happened to you.' Choices were very few. If you couldn't wait around for a flat, there was always the new estates 30 miles out.

By the early 70's, development accelerated, fuelled by the building property boom plus Askin's Liberal government. The displacement of low-income earners also accelerated. A whole complex of high-rise hotels and office blocks threatened to evict 200 families from the Rocks area, and developers had similar plans for Victoria Street and for Woollahroo. Meanwhile on the government drawing boards were expressways that threatened to cut in two, whole communities. Back in Waterloo plans for 6 storey flats were drawn up, involving the bulldozing of 500 houses. By this stage, however, people had had enough and chose to resist. Margaret Barry: 'Resident Action Groups formed all over the city. It was an incredible period. We were rushing to demonstrations all over the place; picketing till the evening or the 9am stint. It was the trades we made. We'll be at yours, but, by heaven when our turn comes you better be back at ours.'

Yet the groups themselves would have been pretty ineffectual without the muscle of the peoples' union, the NSW Branch of the Builders Labourers Federation. Victoria Street was lost, but the Green Bans saved The Rocks and Woollahroo. Waterloo was the tail end. The Housing Commission

waited till 1975 to act. Five locals, including Marg and Marsha Barry decided to barricade themselves inside an old corner shop, one of the places on the demolishers list. Like the picketers in the 30's they decided to sit it out. While a crowd gathered below, women walked by with their children on the way to school shouting abuse at the astonished demolisher. Eventually the authorities backed off. It was time for a victory party.

It now looked as if peoples' needs were indeed going to be taken into account, and consultation would in fact start, but then suddenly came a shattering blow. A letter arrived from the Housing Commission accusing Margaret Barry and others in the group of not being 'bona-fide' representatives of the area. If they weren't, who was?

Meanwhile a few suburbs away, Woollahroo was being turned into a show-piece suburb of housing rehabilitation and infill. A tripartite agreement had been drawn up between local, state and federal governments, and the Commission was actually going to carry out the work. It was obviously too much of an embarrassment to have a blighted run-down area situated between the Eastern suburbs and the city.

So why was Waterloo being singled out for preferential treatment? Was this the price to be paid for standing up and demanding ones rights?

By this stage the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development was well and truly off the ground, and as the film shows, the period between '76 and '81 have been ones of intense lobbying, compromises, internal conflict about the best tactics to adopt, and finally the need to take to the streets again.

The messages that come through in the film include:

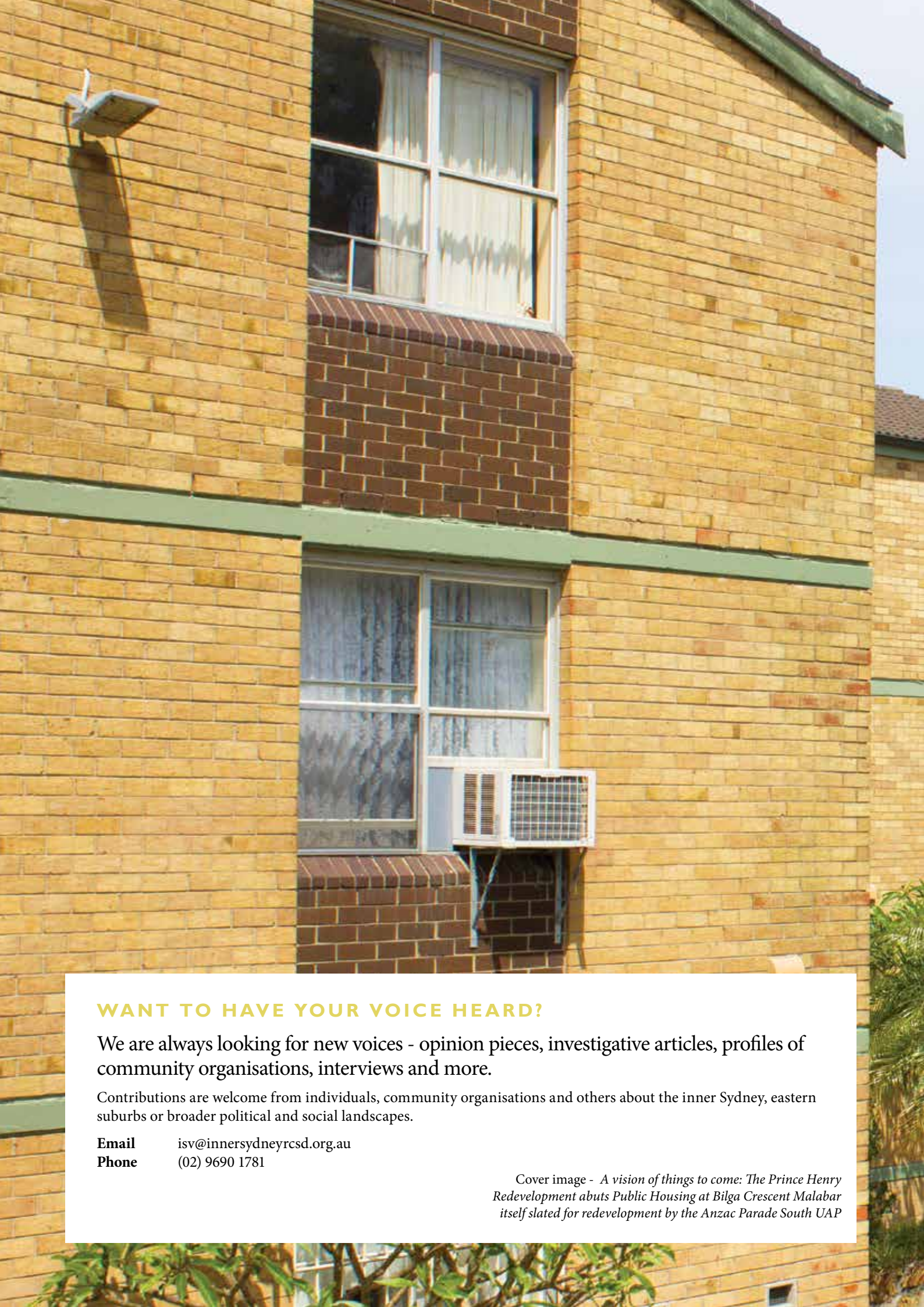
- the necessity on the part of the action groups to be prepared to consider any of a whole number of means, ranging from collecting petitions to squatting, to achieve their ends;
- campaigns like getting housing co-ops

off the ground ought to be remembered in an historical context, viz. the 50 year struggle over rights to have low cost housing in the inner city; * peoples' participation in decision-making processes is crucial if a bureaucracy is to be held accountable.

Tom Zubrycki



Dec/Jan 1981



WANT TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD?

We are always looking for new voices - opinion pieces, investigative articles, profiles of community organisations, interviews and more.

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

Email isv@innersydneyrcsd.org.au

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Cover image - A vision of things to come: The Prince Henry Redevelopment abuts Public Housing at Bilga Crescent Malabar itself slated for redevelopment by the Anzac Parade South UAP