

Creative Approaches to Urban Renewal

A Conference on the Redevelopment of Public Housing

Presented by Shelter WA on Thursday 15 June 2000
at the State Library Theatre, Perth

Conference Proceedings



Creative Approaches to Urban Renewal:
A Conference on the Redevelopment of Public Housing

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Conference Opening

Bronwyn Kitching
Chairperson, Shelter WA

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to *Creative Approaches to Urban Renewal: A Conference on the Redevelopment of Public Housing*. I thank Spencer Riley for the welcome to country .

The number and diversity of delegates here today demonstrates the considerable interest from across the community in urban renewal and the redevelopment of public housing. There are delegates representing state and local government, community services and organisations, local community groups and tenants.

In particular, I would like to welcome

- distinguished guests including Ken Travers, West Australian Opposition Spokesperson for Housing who is also representing Dr Geoff Gallup, Opposition Leader
- representatives from the Ministry of Housing and other State government departments
- delegates who have travelled from regional Western Australia; and
- keynote speakers who have travelled from interstate.

The Minister for Housing The Honourable Kim Hames is not able to be here today and has sent his apologies.

Shelter WA is a community based organisation that seeks to represent the views of community groups and housing consumers on major housing issues. A central part of Shelter's role is providing information and facilitating debate and dialogue on housing policy and practice in Western Australia.

The catalyst for today's Conference has come about through Shelter's coordination of the Redevelopment Working Group which was established following a Forum on the New Living Program in 1998 jointly coordinated by WACOSS, Shelter WA and the Community Housing Coalition.

The redevelopment of public housing is a significant feature of Australian public policy at the turn of the millennium. State Housing Authorities across the country are embarking on a process of redeveloping and renewing public housing estates. In Western Australia the Ministry of Housing's New Living program is being implemented in many suburbs across Perth, as well as in regional areas.

Today's Conference will highlight approaches to redevelopment that integrate physical, economic and social strategies. The Conference aims to inform local policy and practice, and provide an opportunity for dialogue on approaches to urban renewal and the redevelopment of public housing estates.

Shelter WA would like to thank a number of organisations and individuals for their contribution to today's Conference.

Firstly, thank you to the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia for sponsoring the Conference and providing funds for sponsored positions. The sponsored positions have enabled community groups and tenants to participate in the Conference.

Shelter WA would also like to thank Community Arts Network and the Local Government Community Services Association for their support.

Thanks must also go to Shelter WA staff Catriona Cameron and Glynis Menezes for their work in coordinating the Conference. Presenting a Conference of this size involves enormous commitment in terms of time and energy, and I would particularly like to thank Catriona for transforming the initial idea into the event today.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I declare the Conference open.

Community renewal & disadvantaged areas - A national agenda for action

Professor Bill Randolph
Director, Urban Frontiers Program
University of Western Sydney

Background to the research

The talk I will be giving today is based on work I'm undertaking at the UFP in partnership with Dr Bruce Judd at the Uni. of New South Wales on community renewal in the public and private sectors as a way of increasing social cohesion and community building.

The current research is being supported by the NSW Department of Housing and the NSW's Premier's Department. Part of this work involves an evaluation of the NSW Department of Housing's Neighbourhood Improvement Program that ran from 1995 to 1999 – now transformed into the Community Renewal Strategy. We are also working with the South Australian Housing Trust on an evaluation framework for one of their renewal projects in north Adelaide. And we have recently won an AHURI grant to review best practice resident participation in urban renewal projects in Australia.

Objectives

This paper will review some of the findings from the research we are currently doing in this area:

- Brief discussion on the way policy debates from a variety of directions seem to be converging at the present time
- Mapping disadvantage in Sydney and other Australian cities.
- Briefly consider the range of approaches to renewal in Australia
- Comments on one of these approaches – comprehensive urban renewal

Conclusion

There is a need for focus to shift to community regeneration not just on physical renewal. We need to have policies that renew communities not just the locations they occupy. Several States, including NSW, are moving in this direction.

But we also need to shift our gaze to those areas that have taken the strain as public sector has declined - areas that show just as much disadvantage – physical as well as social - as the public housing estates, but are predominantly in private ownership. How do we develop renewal policies for these areas?

The converging policy debate

The current interest in estate based renewal in public housing sectors dates back over the last decade or so. This interest stems from a growing realisation that something had to be done with public housing estates that were suffering from the combined impact of declining investment, falling asset values, increasing concentrations of people with social disadvantages, and rising management costs. Many of these changes were a result of deliberate government policies aimed to run down public housing, increase the targeting of allocations to those in most need, and increase reliance on the private sector for everyone else. But there were also other forces – labour market restructuring, growing welfare dependency for many, the legacy of poorly designed and located public housing development in the decades after the War, new demographic patterns and new patterns of social dislocation. Housing Departments found themselves managing the locations where those worst effected by wider social changes were becoming concentrated. These changes are understood and documented.

By the mid-1990s most States had implemented estate renewal programs. Most of these were primarily concerned with physical aspects of the estates and the underlying problem of the falling asset values. These tended to be promoted as ways to improve the social aspects of estates by marketing and sales policies thereby engineering social changes through a greater mix of tenures and therefore household types.

However, there has also been a growing recognition that there was more to renewal than just physically upgrading the property and selling it off. The introduction of initiatives aimed at improving social and employment aspects of estate communities have become more prominent. With them, the

concepts of social exclusion and inclusion have come into the jargon, with attempts to regenerate the communities on the estates as well as to physically restructure them.

Social capital

As well as the explicit policy focus from State Housing Authorities in estate renewal, there are a number of other developments that are also relevant to this debate. There has been a lot of interest in the concept of *social capital* in relation to disadvantaged communities in Australia in recent years, to some extent derived on the US social welfare literature.

I'm not sure what this debate has amounted to in terms of tackling issues of locational disadvantage, but it has generated a large literature in the social welfare and social policy areas. These have led to some interesting policy development, for example, those attempting to increase community self help and build "capacity" and social networks as well as early intervention strategies. However, these interventions are largely focused on individuals and families, rather than communities and locations.

Quite apart from whether many disadvantaged communities really lack social capital (rather than just opportunities to get meaningful work), one of the main criticisms of these approaches is that they tend to ignore the importance of "place" and locality in the definition of what communities are. Without a clear definition of what constitutes the "community" in which social capital building is to be promoted, then policy based solely on concepts of social capital are likely to lose focus by missing the role that neighbourhoods play in generating or at least maintaining the conditions for social disadvantage.

While we don't know enough about the impacts that neighbourhoods have in developing patterns of social disadvantage, it can be argued that locality, place or neighbourhood has a key role in understanding how patterns of disadvantage and the processes that generate them are maintained. *Place is therefore important.* Hence the focus on places – suburbs, estates – in current urban renewal projects.

Place Management

Reflecting this has been the development of a series of policy interventions around the concept of "Place Management", especially in NSW and Queensland. These have tended to be aimed at producing better "whole of Government"

approaches to service delivery and more effective ways of administering services in local disadvantaged areas. In NSW a range of place management initiatives have been implemented in recent years, including several targeted at crime and drug dealing in Sydney, and some recent focus on poorly performing areas outside Sydney. Local councils have also implemented place management initiatives in disadvantaged areas. But again, the approaches have been highly idiosyncratic with no systematic approaches adopted. While this has its advantages – interventions in disadvantaged areas need to be flexible and appropriate to the area and the community and its particular set of problems, again it militates against a coordinated approach to delivering assistance of disadvantaged places. However, I don't want to dwell on these now.

Social exclusion/inclusion

The concepts of social capital and place management are certainly useful in developing an understanding of disadvantaged areas and the problems they face. And they also assist in developing policy. But in many ways they leave the story half told, albeit from very different perspectives. This is where the concept of *social exclusion/inclusion* comes in.

The advantage of social exclusion/inclusion as a framework for policy action is that it focuses on the interconnectedness of the problems – and this clearly means that policy responses need to be equally interconnected – to create "joined up" policies for "joined up" problems in the jargon.

Social exclusion has also been developed with an implicit recognition of the role that localities play in forging patterns of social disadvantage. Policy responses framed in terms of social exclusion/inclusion therefore tend to stress the problems of places, rather than just those of individuals and families.

Summary

So from a variety of directions it could be argued there are a number of converging debates and policy responses that seem to be converging around issues of community renewal in areas that currently experience disadvantage.

How far is Disadvantage associated with public housing estates?

Switching tack a bit. As part of the work we've been doing on social exclusion and disadvantage is an

exercise is to map out the distribution of disadvantage areas in Sydney and elsewhere to identify areas where detailed studies can be carried out.

One of the key findings of this exercise was that the data on disadvantage revealed that far from being a problem solely of public housing estates, disadvantage is much more widely distributed. In fact, in Sydney, we found that once you allowed for housing tenure, many areas outside the public housing estates showed equally high patterns of disadvantage.

In order to unpack some of these issues, we've gone back to the 1996 census in the first instance, and in particular the much used ABS Index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage explore these issues in more detail.

The Case of Sydney

We focused our analysis on the most disadvantaged 13% of Collector Districts (CDs) in Sydney from the 1996 Index. These were mapped splitting them into three groups – CDs with high proportions of public housing (20% or more), CDs with medium levels of public housing (6% to 20%) and CDs with low proportions of public housing (below 6%). The map in Figure 1 highlights the well known public housing estates in western and south western Sydney.

But just as significant are those groups of CDs with lower levels of public housing. Three concentration in the latter group stand out – Fairfield/Cabramatta/Liverpool, Auburn and Bankstown/Lakemba. Clearly, there are significant areas of disadvantage beyond the public housing estates. This fact is often overlooked in the current debate on disadvantage in the west.

We went on to unpack the socio-economic profiles of these three groups of CDs to establish what the basic characteristics of the groups of CDs were. The results revealed a marked differentiation between the three groupings. The following analysis concentrates on the groups with the highest and lowest proportions of public renters (see Table 1).

So what does Table 1 (page 14) tell us about:

Areas of high public housing:

- Only half of all households in these CDs – those with the highest proportions of public

renters - were renting from a public landlord.

- Third were home owners or buyers.
- Single parent families were twice the Sydney average.
- Almost a third had no car – reflecting problems of isolation and lack of access.
- Poverty was twice the Sydney average.
- Unemployment almost three times the Sydney average.
- They were relatively stable – in line with Sydney averages.

Areas of low public housing:

- Two parent families were around the Sydney average and higher than for high public housing area.
- A third were home owners (possibly reflecting a high proportion of older households and retired people?).
- 43% were private renting (twice the Sydney average).
- 40% were living in flats or Units (twice the Sydney average).
- Over half were born overseas, and
- Almost a fifth were not fluent in English.
- 60% had moved in the five years preceding the census.

OK – so that's Sydney. But what about Perth? Do we find the same patterns here?

The Case of Perth

In fact, looking at the CDs with the most severe levels of disadvantage, we found that of the 94,000 household living in these CDs, only about a third (32%) of them lived in CDs with the highest levels of public housing. 40% lived in CDs with medium levels of public housing, and 28% lived in CDs with low levels of public housing. So clearly, there are considerable number of households living in highly disadvantaged areas that are not related to public housing at all. So who are they and how different are they to those in public housing areas.

The answer is these households are very similar across both private and public sector areas. As Table 2 shows (page 15), the most significant differences are that in comparison to those disadvantaged populations living in areas of high public housing, those living in predominantly private sector areas, tend to be:

- older,
- poorer,
- higher proportion of home owners
- higher proportion of private renters, and,
- living in flats.

Summary

So we can see that while disadvantage is clearly associated with public housing, it is not exclusively associated with it. There are, income cases extensive areas outside the public sector which are characterised by high levels of social disadvantage. Moreover, the populations are somewhat different in these two types of area.

This analysis points to the need for a wider understanding of the need for renewal and regeneration activity than is currently the case. While public housing needs a substantial level of new investment (as I argue below, in both its physical and social assets), there are other areas that also should be the target of assistance.

However, for the rest of this paper, I will concentrate on the experience of renewal in the larger public housing estates. First, I will look at the range of policy options that are currently being tried by public housing authorities across Australia to tackle the problems such estates face.

Current policy options for disadvantaged communities

Our work on renewal projects in the public sector has led to development of a typology of renewal activity.

The Policy Response Continuum:

- Wholesale (or substantial) asset disposal (including demolition and redevelopment) to reduce concentrations – mainly termed urban renewal projects
- Partial asset disposal (or ‘stock trading’) to achieve greater “mix”
- Asset (or physical) improvement strategies to

aid marketing and increase asset values

- Management-based strategies (e.g. ‘intensive tenancy management’, community housing management) – to reduce costs of management
- Whole of government approaches (e.g. ‘place management’, focus on service delivery)
- Community development (or social) strategies – building community cohesion, social capital, employment and skills training, early intervention strategies, etc.

There isn’t time to dwell on all these kinds of approaches here as we are still in the early stages of research that will help to fill out the picture on how well these range of strategies are working in NSW.

However, I would like to make a few comments about the most common policy approach across Australia, and the one currently predominant in Western Australia, namely urban renewal projects. These are primarily aimed at reducing concentrations of public housing on estates through refurbishment and sales. Often the aim is to reduce the proportion of publicly owned stock to come average or at least locally average level.

Comprehensive asset based renewal

Examples of this type of approach are common – The New Living Program in WA, the Urban Renewal programs of the SAHT and smaller examples such as Inala project in Brisbane. Typically, these schemes require the decanting of most of the tenants to locations outside the renewal area, the redevelopment of refurbishment of the stock and the marketing of the renewed stock on the home ownership market. Some proportion of the renewed properties may be withheld for reletting, with some tenants able to return. The “social mix” is engineered in a simply manner by introducing home owners into the area, thereby changing the social profile as owners are likely to be more economically independent with low levels of welfare dependency. These kinds of scheme are based on a core presumption – that high concentrations are public housing are “bad”, that sales of property, after suitable refurbishment are “good”, and that only by reducing the concentrations of public tenure can “successful”, “sustainable” and “balanced” communities be produced.

Now there is clearly some logic to these kinds of proposals, and in many circumstances they should be supported, not least in purely pragmatic terms.

Firstly, and often most importantly, they offer a way for SHA's to invest in order to improve the financial return of the assets under their control. Both by providing immediate returns through the sales of properties and also by the potential for revaluing the asset values of those properties that remain in public ownership, this provides an immediate financial incentive for such a policy. This has positive impacts on the financial viability of public housing landlords and should be seen positively as a way of regaining the control over the public housing sector in financial terms. The question is, of course, what does this matter when SHA's have no real use of highly valued assets when they can't borrow against them and the majority of tenants are on benefits and hence won't be paying any higher market rents.

Asset renewal approaches also allow the potential for reconfiguring the distribution and composition of the stock. By selling in concentrations of family homes in some locations, the potential for reinvesting the proceeds in new accommodation in areas of high demand and in forms appropriate to the needs of those on the waiting lists – often the need is for smaller property more conveniently located – then the de-concentration approach can be beneficial in terms of overall demand management.

The problem is that rarely do sales provide sufficient return to allow for a one-for-one replacement ratio. Only if land is cleared and redeveloped to higher densities – potentially a much more sensible use of space on many of the lower density suburbs and consistent with urban consolidation policies – can stock numbers be maintained. However, in Western Australia as in some other states, there is clearly a desire on the part of the Government to simply reduce numbers of public housing.

However, there are dangers in this policy:

- **Do sales create viable home ownership markets?**

The sales policy will backfire if those areas that are redeveloped and sold on then fail to perform as areas for viable home ownership. In many respects, the problems many peripheral public housing estates that suffer from that is reflected in low demand also mean that homeowners may have

difficulties selling on property bought on these estates once the initial hubris over the sales has died down.

There is some evidence – albeit anecdotal – that some of the early renewal schemes in north Adelaide are suffering from falling property values and sale problems. This of course has an immediate impact on the asset values of remaining publicly owned property and calls into sharp question the value for money rationale of public investment committed in renewing the estates in the first place.

While for some estates in the more desirable or accessible locations may have little problem in attracting demand from homeowners, many other estates are not in good locations and may suffer accordingly.

- **Creating new slum landlords**

Then there is the very real potential problem of low value property sold on public estates returning to the rental sector, this time under the ownership of private landlords. Slum landlords are a real threat to public landlords on estates that have been sold.

What will happen if tenants excluded from public housing due to more stringent approaches to disruptive tenants simply turn up in ex-public housing that is now privately owned? There will be no recourse to intensive housing management practices to deal with such disruptive tenants. There are already apocryphal stories coming from council house estates in the UK about this very problem.

- **Impact on the waiting list**

Of major longer term concern is the obvious problem of the impact of sales and deconcentration on the waiting list. If the reduction in densities in high density estates is not accompanied by compensating development elsewhere, then, unless waiting lists are falling, there will be an inevitable impact on the length of time those on the waiting list will wait for rehousing.

This stems not just from the loss of stock and the reduction in vacancies over the long term as a result, but also the short term problem of having to use available vacancies for tenants decanting to allow renewal to proceed. The SAHT is increasingly concerned about the effects of their renewal strategies on the waiting list in Adelaide. Similar

concerns here???

- **Can the private rented sector “take the strain”**

The only place this displaced demand for rental property for those unable to afford home ownership must be the private rented sector.

Whether it can take the strain through increased supply, what the impacts on those who are now forced to remain in the sector will be, whether it is desirable from a social policy point of view to support a large private rented sector for low income tenants and what the impact will be in terms of the growing open ended demand for Rent Assistance will be must surely be debatable.

The central problem with urban renewal

At its worse wholesale asset redevelopment through sales and disposals of public stock represents a housing manager’s nightmare:

- Fewer public stock, chasing
- Longer waiting lists
- Increased concentration of most disadvantaged in the remaining public stock
- More intensified housing management problems and asset devaluation of the remaining stock?

The fundamental concern about this kind of approach, despite its attractions and in many ways successes, is that it doesn’t attempt to solve the inherent problems of disadvantaged tenants. It simply shifts these tenants - and their problems - to different locations.

Put simply, urban renewal programs address some of the physical symptoms of disadvantage but not the underlying causes – social and economic marginalisation of the populations on these estates. In other words, these kinds of renewal schemes *improves the place but at the expense of the community.*

Nevertheless, these kinds of schemes can be very successful for those tenants who remain and for the in-comers who benefit from the investment. And those who are decanted from the estate may also benefit by moving to a better house in a less stigmatised area – often the carrot offered to ensure the tenant moves. But it is difficult to say whether this has been the case. In SA there is no systematic monitoring of decanted tenants to date – has

this been done in Perth?

There are clear losers in this approach - those who have longer to wait on the waiting list. Help for their housing problems is simply pushed backwards as waiting lists inevitably lengthen.

The lack of tenant participation is also a key issue. Housing authorities have become much more skilled in managing these renewal schemes with the more recent schemes boasting copious amounts of consultation with tenants and residents. However, the actual community development aspects often remain little more than consultation on what will happen, rather than involving the tenants in the decisions making on design and other aspects. Moreover, real community building aspects of areas renewal – schemes involving residents in social capacity building and employment and skills training for example, to address the core problems of disadvantage, are often added as afterthoughts and poorly articulated in the program. The emphasis is very much on renewal as an asset improvement strategy and to pursue “social mix” through social engineering achieved by changes in tenure structure.

I would suggest that over the long run the problems of housing authorities and, more importantly the people they house and who are characterised by social disadvantage, are not addressed by physical renewal. It is going to be more, not less, difficult to manage a fully residualised welfare housing system that large scale renewal and disposal policies will create. Nor are policies that simply shift disadvantage households around the public housing stock and exclude many more to a much less preferable life in the private rented sector likely to help those tenants involved. A key question must be are these types of intervention *really* benefiting the community that suffers from disadvantage?

In conclusion, I would argue that while yes, we do need a physical fix for disadvantaged areas – upgrading and renewing the stock, and that efforts to achieve greater “social mix” may also be worthwhile, these should not be the be all and end all of renewal programs. We also need parallel interventions to increase social and economic integration and community regeneration of the disadvantaged populations that live there.

And these need to be implemented in situ, with tenants benefiting from improvements themselves, not just being shunted around the ever decreasing

stock. All the evidence suggests that to do this effectively, you must engage and involve tenants in decision making about their communities in some way.

You can't build communities by breaking them up. Neither can you effectively build communities without their active involvement.

The agenda for renewal

Last year we released a rather grandiosely titled National Agenda for Action in developing new models for community renewal in Australia. The objective was to build on some of the more innovative examples of community renewal, both here and overseas, as a basis for developing a national renewal strategy for urban communities facing problems of social disadvantage and social dysfunction. This strategy is worth replaying at this conference to indicate the way in which those involved in renewal may want to lobby for effective reforms to current policy and practice to better assist those communities at which much current urban renewal activity is directed.

In particular, I would argue that we need a nationally coordinated effort to address the issues of disadvantage, not just in those areas where state Housing Authorities own a substantial proportion of the housing stock, but in other neighbourhoods outside where the private home predominate, but where, as I've shown earlier, problems of social disadvantage are just as acute as those in public housing estates

These issues will need to be comprehensively addressed if the next generation of renewal policies is to build on current best practice and move forward.

- Government policy and action must focus coherently at the local level in a new range of co-ordinated and explicitly *spatial* policy programs and initiatives – *locality matters*. Related to this is the issue of identifying at which geographic scale differing policies will operate. Not everything works at the level of the neighbourhood. Some initiatives, such as employment generation, will only be effective if operating at broader spatial scales. Consequently, policies should be developed in an interrelated and spatially 'nested' format, as different policy issues, service delivery modes, and community integration models will have

different levels of spatial resolution.

- There is a need to move beyond top-down concepts of "place management". All levels of government must act in concert, but effective renewal is much more than just a top-down approach of integrated service delivery – important through this may be. The "bottom-up" must be included in renewal strategies – communities *must* be involved and feel they own the changes that are happening. Moreover, place management is a spatially vague policy concept – how are the "places" defined and what constitutes them? Clear geographical boundaries to intervention need to be defined, based on clearly stated assessments of local needs.
- New community-based (and community led) agencies are needed that will encourage and facilitate effective community renewal with an emphasis on participation in local decision making through on neighbourhood-based renewal initiatives. These will need to be properly accountable, transparent and with a clearly defined role within prevailing local democratic structures. Having said this, the limits of effective community involvement also need to be understood, with a basic principal that communities should have options on how far they wish to be involved.

We are currently looking at the examples of the Community Development Corporations in the US and the Housing Association led "Housing Plus" neighbourhood regeneration initiatives in the UK for inspiration here.

The possibility of building a much stronger community housing sector, together with NGOs and other non-profit organisations, such as Development Trusts, to undertake such a role, built around a housing renewal core, but extending to social and employment initiatives, needs to be developed. Pilot schemes could be developed, with appropriate support, involving partnerships between no-profits, local government, local business and the community. Linked to this should be a well thought through and adequately funded national coordinated community training and skills development program that is ongoing and builds on and disseminates good practice.

- Serious consideration should be given to a major new separate funding mechanism – a

Community Renewal Fund, for example - *outside* current state and federal departmental structures, to break away from the silo mentality of state agencies and free up funding to be used across current government agency boundaries and in innovative ways. Moreover, this commitment must be for a longer term than is currently usual, stretching beyond current political cycles. There would need to be an enhanced role for the State Audit Office, regulating and overseeing program delivery, monitoring spend and encouraging best practice.

- A long term strategy is needed (10 years?) with a structured approach to policy development, secure funding and including monitored pilot projects, commitment to acting on the outcomes and clear exit strategies for what happens once funding is removed. We must move away from the current approach of *ad hoc*, short-term and unlinked policy initiatives that are not self-sustaining once completed. Naturally, long term monitoring and auditing systems will need to be in place to ensure programs remain accountable and viable over these extended periods.
 - A *bi-partisan* understanding and consensus of the need for renewal would enhance the long-term prospects of community renewal. A wider acceptance of the benefits – social *and* economic – of renewal needs to be promoted – for example, through a thoroughgoing assessment of the costs of maintaining disadvantaged communities.
 - Ways must be established of ensuring cash spent on renewal initiatives actually finds its way into the local economies of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to assist in community building. Again, proper auditing systems to monitor this would be needed, assessing both the community value added of renewal policies as well as the value for money to the funding agencies.
 - Community renewal must integrate physical renewal and asset management strategies *and* social and economic renewal strategies. Its not good enough to simply “build” the problem away by dispersing disadvantaged communities through redevelopment under the guise of social mix. Neither will a reliance on community focused social initiatives be enough to make a long terms difference. Job and skills training to help residents access available jobs
- and employment generation strategies also need to be part of the mix, as will initiatives to enhance security and safety and environmental improvements.
 - Community renewal offers a major new role for local government as the *key* facilitator between the stakeholders (community, private sector, voluntary agencies and state government) in each locality. Local government could rise to meet this challenge, given adequate local leadership and appropriate funding mechanisms.
 - Partnership will be the key element of any renewal strategy - partnerships between Federal, State and Local government, charitable/non-government sectors, employment and skills/training agencies, community sector, employers and the business sector and private funders. Governments can't do this on their own. Models for developing effective multi-sector partnerships need to be researched and developed, and implemented in coordinated pilot programs. All sectors of the community should be part of the solution.
 - Renewal policy needs a flexible framework to allow different solutions to emerge in different areas reflecting local needs and conditions – especially important if problems in socially disadvantaged areas *outside* of the large public housing estates are to be tackled. Also, the importance of *small* projects at the local scale need to be recognised, projects that meet differing local needs, tap local energies and help to build the ‘glue’ of social cohesion within neighbourhoods.
 - A *national* system to identify and disseminate good practice and policy innovations to all involved in the process is required in order to break out of the state-based perspectives that limit learning from others. It is inefficient to keep reinventing programs and initiatives that have been tried elsewhere.
 - There is a crucial need for properly trained and skilled professional staff to facilitate and motivate agency coordination and community involvement and who can think beyond the confines of the state agency ‘silos’.
 - If the issue is to be addressed across Australia, there is a clear role for a national lead to be taken by the Federal Government – the States

do not have the capacity to coordinated a coherent national policy response on their own.

All this will need clarity of thought and action, and commitment from government in partnership with communities, business and voluntary groups. It also needs resources, although this is not a call for vast sums to be spent on big projects – small and local initiatives will be an important part of the delivery of the program.

And as I've attempted to show, its not just about public housing, although State Housing Authorities may have an important role in some localities where problems are particularly concentrated. Many disadvantaged households live in private accommo-

dation, much of which is characterised by high costs and poor quality. Jobs are also a critical factor, so are welfare policies, education, skills training, health and social services, policing and juvenile justice.

A thoroughly holistic approach of the sort outlined above is a pre-requisite for success in working with disadvantaged households and their communities to assist them towards greater participation in the economic and social wealth of the nation.

Table 1: Profile of CDs with Severe Disadvantage by Proportion of Public Housing, Sydney, 1996

	High Public Housing (> 20%)	Low Public Housing (< 6%)	Sydney Average
% Dwellings with No Motor Vehicles	31.5	24.9	15.5
% One Parent Family Households	21.4	12.1	10.2
% Two parent family households	28.9	35.7	37.4
% Owner Occupied Dwellings	18.3	32.8	40.3
% Dwellings Being Purchased	14.5	14.2	22.7
% Public Rented Dwellings	48.9	1.1	5.5
% Private Rented Dwellings	11.7	42.7	23.6
% Flats, Units and Apartments	27.5	40.4	22.2
% Households Weekly Income < than \$300	32.9	21.5	16.3
% Unemployment Rate	18.9	19.5	7.5
% Persons Born Overseas	32.0	55.0	30.7
% Persons Not Fluent in English	7.5	18.7	4.8

Table 2: Profile of CDs with Severe Disadvantage by Proportion of Public Housing, Perth, 1996

	High Public Housing (> 20%)	Low Public Housing (< 4.6%)	Perth Average
% Dwellings with No Motor Vehicles	22	18	10
% One Parent Family Households	17	10	10
% Two parent family households	24	24	35
% Lone person households	30	34	23
% Owner Occupied Dwellings	19	34	37
% Dwellings Being Purchased	25	24	32
% Public Rented Dwellings	34	1	5
% Private Rented Dwellings	15	31	21
% Flats, Units and Apartments	13	17	7
% Households Weekly Income < \$300	25	29	18
% Unemployment Rate	16	14	8
% Persons Born Overseas	33	36	32
% Persons Aged 60+	17	20	14
% Persons not at address 5 years ago	43	43	44

Community Renewal in South Western Sydney

Social Inclusion: The Quiet Revolution in Public Housing

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The Quiet Revolution: An Overview

There is a quiet revolution gathering speed through many towns and cities in New South Wales. The carefully planned separation of land uses and particularly the segregation of public housing tenants into discreet homogeneous communities is being replaced by multi-purpose land use zoning and pro-active policies of integration. Our urban forms are changing, perhaps reflecting a deeper change within the psyche of our society. Public policy is also changing where the 'silo' mentality of service delivery is being replaced by concepts of 'whole of government' and cross provider models. There seems to be a broader acceptance that the inequities of social exclusion need to be addressed, through a combination of housing and planning policies and broader government action across agencies.

The major theme of this paper is that the old models of separation are no longer relevant. The paper focuses on the end product of political and philosophical attitudes to social communities and urban form; our cities. It then examines the drive towards a new view of public housing in Sydney as a case study. It argues that where once public housing was used as a tool to drive economic development which, as the economy and family structure changed, resulted in social separation, isolation and division, it is now again being used to drive an agenda of integration and inclusion.

A society's values have traditionally been reflected in its urban form. Communities everywhere are undergoing significant change in response to globalisation, technology and the acceleration of pluralism. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in New South Wales where planning tools and political decision making processes are struggling to catch up with the emerging needs of a more diverse, complex and multicultural society. The quiet revolution in public housing is one example of the new social order. The separation of the disadvantaged

into large public housing estates have failed. The estates are being redesigned, refurbished and broken up to mix tenure. Poor quality housing is being demolished, refurbished or sold. Residents are becoming empowered to be part of the decision making process. Partnerships are being forged with the private sector and support agencies. The old silos of Government are being challenged and beginning to be dismantled at the grass roots. The new housing is high quality, integrated, unidentifiable as public housing and scattered across communities everywhere. Gone are the notions of housing being simply disconnected units of shelter. This article tracks the progress of this reform and examines the philosophies behind it, showcasing South West and Western Sydney, as areas of high disadvantage and isolation, but now at the forefront of the integration revolution.

The City as a Reflection of Values

Since humans first began to assemble into communities, their settlements have symbolically displayed their social and spiritual values. In his work *The Design of Cities*, Bacon states: "The city is a people's art, a shared experience"⁽¹⁾. In other words, cities express the collective state of mind of their inhabitants both consciously and unconsciously through the allocation of resources and the layout of space.

To understand urban form today it is first necessary to scan the history books for context. The origin of the city is in fact very complex. The economic interpretation regards the city as the market place, a consequence of economic surplus, where the products that local villages could not consume were exchanged in a convenient place. Labour specialisation grew, which led to the beginning of a class structure. City planning began to segregate land uses on a class basis. However many scholars of the city, such as Jacobs⁽²⁾ have argued that cities are equally a result of a central bureaucracy that has been given the power to command food and services from the people of the countryside. In ancient communities this was the priest king who was a semi Divine intermediary between heaven and earth, the co-creator of the cosmos and guarantor of order. Tuan⁽³⁾ substanti-

ates this position by claiming that when urbanism is traced back to its primary sources, it is found that the idea of a supernatural world is a dominant force in the formation of cities rather than the usual notion of a market place.

The city first took form as the home of the Gods. Its design became a symbol in space where internal values were represented. Designs were an expression of sacred belief, in opposition to the perceived profanity of the chaos in the feared and poorly understood natural world beyond the city walls. There are countless examples on every continent of ancient and medieval cities where the city design reflected a community's view of the cosmos. Egyptian monumental architecture and planning were direct expressions of cosmic belief and the need to provide for journeys in the afterlife. Mesopotamian cities, with a centrally placed temple and surrounding terraces reflected the relative distances between God and man. Pre Columbian civilisations such as Teotihuacan, Indian cities such as Srirangam, Chinese cities such as Beijing and the Middle Eastern city of Jerusalem all demonstrate the care that the city planners took to ensure that the city was a reflection of social and religious values. Urban form today is as much a reflection of our values as it ever has been. Our processes and values may be different but the outcomes are not. Economic values have replaced religious values so commercial skyscrapers have replaced cathedrals as the symbolic heart of the city.

Even in Australia where commentators generally disregard such influences on the layouts of towns and cities there has, in fact, been both subtle and direct influences. The Australian tradition closely followed the British model. In the early days of the NSW Colony, town planning directly symbolised the relationship between Church and State and particularly the supremacy of the Church of England.

Most pre 1836 towns followed the principle that the Anglican Church should occupy a central and prominent position in each town, preferably on the highest point, as the symbol of the aspiring role of religion in society. This was particularly promulgated by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in his design of towns. Ruhan⁽⁴⁾, in his review of Macquarie's work states that "social life revolved around the churches and schools" and that all the towns were centred on the parish church. This was characteristic of European city design in the Middle Ages following the Greek tradition. The market

square was deliberately located at the opposite end of the main street leading from the church, symbolising the distant but necessary relationship between a spiritual realm and the commercial world. Examples of these towns are Goulburn, Berrima, Wollongong, Liverpool and Windsor.

After 1836 town design changed with the passing of the Churches Act which equalised the four major denominations⁽⁵⁾. An example of how this manifested itself in town design is Berry on the NSW South Coast where each denomination occupied a site on each of the four corners of the grid pattern.

Since that time urban form in NSW has continued to reflect the values of a society keen to separate land uses and social classes. The garden city movement further advanced the notion of separating home and work life resulting in the emergence of the suburb. Living areas were separated from industrial and commercial areas. Over time further segregation occurred with the development of subcategories of housing types and industrial uses.

Social Mix: Visions of Utopia

Over the centuries, social philosophers have outlined their views of Utopia. In dreaming of a better world, writers and visionaries have described Utopias largely in terms of the city. Mumford believes this is due to the fact that the city had the advantage of mirroring the complexities of society within a frame that respected human scale⁽⁶⁾.

Utopian writing is contained in a very strong environmental and moralistic caste. The ancient writers such as Plato in the 'Republic', Aristotle in 'The Politics', Saint Augustine in the 'City of God' to the later writers such as Thomas Moore in 'Utopia' (1516), Thomas Campanella in the 'City of the Sun' (17th century), Francis Bacon in 'The New World Atlantis', HG Wells in 'A Modern Utopia', and modern architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Buchminster-Fuller, all describe their vision of the ideal society matched with a physical layout of space. The key element was elimination of poverty, access to nature and a classless social order. In modern times, this has been discussed in terms of social mix, or a "socially balanced" community.

In a thorough examination of the concept of social mix, Sarkissian, Forsyth and Heine confirmed that for the past century planners have expressed the desirability of socially mixed communities or

“balanced communities”. They acknowledge that:

“One striking fact however, overshadows all the tributes paid to the idea of social mix over the last century. Residential areas in developed Western countries are characterised by a high degree of homogeneity in their social composition. Planners have despaired about their inability to integrate populations and Governments have responded by proposing policies based on social and racial mix which have, on the whole, been unsuccessful”⁽⁷⁾.

Why has social mix been so difficult to achieve?

Sarkissian, in her literature review of the subject states that most commentators conclude that social mix is an unworkable concept in practice. Over time neighbourhood homogeneity is an inevitability as residential mobility is a sifting process and families gravitate to areas which they consider comparable with their background and aspirations.⁽⁸⁾

Sarkissian further reports that James Simmie⁽⁹⁾ argued in the mid 1970’s that regardless of the outward characteristics of mixing people from different backgrounds, the real issue for urban planning is about resource allocation. Deliberate interaction of people with differing social backgrounds will facilitate social change and threaten the social system as it is by requiring a more equitable distribution of resources. Simmie argued that despite the rhetoric, the actions of planners, government and social administrators are imposing their own values on one way resource allocation; most resources to the rich and few resources to the poor. The end result is social exclusion, the current terminology for describing communities of disadvantage, not able to access the range of opportunities afforded to the broader community.

This paper does not intend to unravel the intense debate and prolific literature around social exclusion emerging primarily from the U.K and Europe. However, it is important to note that in his explanation of social exclusion Somerville⁽¹⁰⁾ demonstrates that the term has two meanings. The first relates to exclusion from labour markets and the second relates to the denial of social citizenship to certain social groups. He further confirms that a number of writers have argued that space, especially residential space, is extremely important in the causation of social exclusion. This is very relevant to the Sydney context where both meanings apply and residential space has been a

strong causative factor.

Power in her study of the failure of large public housing estates in Northern Europe states “Housing has a major effect on the social structure of cities. Housing is socially divisive because it is often built for separate social groups in unequal areas”.⁽¹¹⁾

Planners: Gatekeepers of the Public Good?

In the Sydney case study, which follows, blame for the outcomes could easily be apportioned to the city planners. However, planners act within social and political contexts and constraints. The key proposition of this article is that an entire community bears responsibility for the quality of its urban form. Cities are a reflection of broad community values through the political processes that form them. In fact, the Sydney experience has been replicated in many cities around the world, as demonstrated by Power and Van Kempen in their work on Social Segregation and the creation of the “dual city”⁽¹²⁾.

Modern town planning is based on the premise that the market place is inadequate to protect the public interest and that intervention is necessary.

Ratcliffe⁽¹³⁾ argues that the utopian view of urban planning which dominated for centuries is unachievable and has now been replaced by reformism. Utopian planning aimed for an end state and was comprehensive in its approach. Reformism, on the contrary, concentrates on incremental change to address existing problems within current constraints.

Planners are charged with the responsibility of balancing competing land uses and directing growth in such a way that benefits are returned to the community, social costs are minimised, environmental impact is minimised and there is community acceptance of the outcome. While there will always be biases, subjective opinions and varying degrees of public participation and political expediency, it could never be argued that Sydney was planned in a vacuum without the firm imprint of the values of successive generations, as manifested in the political and economic systems at the time.

Public Housing in NSW

The impact of public housing on the planning of Sydney needs to be reviewed in the context of the changing role of public housing in Australia. Public

housing commenced in New South Wales after World War 2 as a government response to stimulating the economy and providing rental accommodation for those returning from the war. Post war economies were buoyant and public housing was regarded as a stepping stone to home ownership for working class families.

During the 1970's the boom/bust economical cycle emerged. This brought with it increased rationing of public housing and changes to eligibility, resulting in a gradual shift to welfare housing. The stepping stone notion of short term assistance leading to home ownership largely disappeared. Tenants predominantly changed from low income families to welfare recipients. For example, in 1980 around 40% of tenants received welfare, compared with over 90% in 2000.

During the 1960's and 1970's public housing was used by governments in many countries to drive economic development and influence the urban form of cities. N.S.W was no different. Large public housing estates were built on the fringes of towns and cities, using experimental urban designs and building forms. The emphasis was on supporting the building industry, stimulating local economies and putting a roof over the heads of disadvantaged families. The focus was on maximising the number of dwellings rather than the quality of the resulting communities. The Growth Centre/decentralisation policies of the time were government driven, with public housing one of the tools used to drive change. Examples include Bathurst/Orange in Western NSW as well as subregional decentralisation within the Sydney Basin. Acclaimed at the time, these estates have now become pockets of disintegration and symbols of urban decay. They have had serious multiplier effects on the economies and quality of life of large sections of our towns and cities. The cost has been enormous, particularly in Sydney.

The Planning of Sydney

Prior to 1951 there was virtually no planning framework for the Sydney Region. However in 1951 the county of Cumberland Planning Scheme (see page 20) was released by the Cumberland County Council, an instrumentality of the then State Government. A feature of this plan was the containment of Sydney by an open space "green belt". Liverpool, Fairfield and Parramatta were regarded as the edge of the city. Lands beyond would be retained as rural farmlands or open

spaces. Campbelltown and Penrith were satellite towns well away from the metropolitan area.

However the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme was ineffective in containing Sydney's growth. The green belt was gradually undermined by fingers of development. As a result a new plan was released in 1968. This plan, known as the Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP)⁽¹⁴⁾ has guided growth ever since (see page 21).

SROP defined sectors of growth along transport corridors. These corridors primarily extended into Western Sydney, South Western Sydney, North Western Sydney, and Gosford/Wyong. The South West Sector was to result in "two major cities, Campbelltown and Camden". The Western Sector would result in "Urban expansion around the three cities of Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Penrith"⁽¹⁵⁾

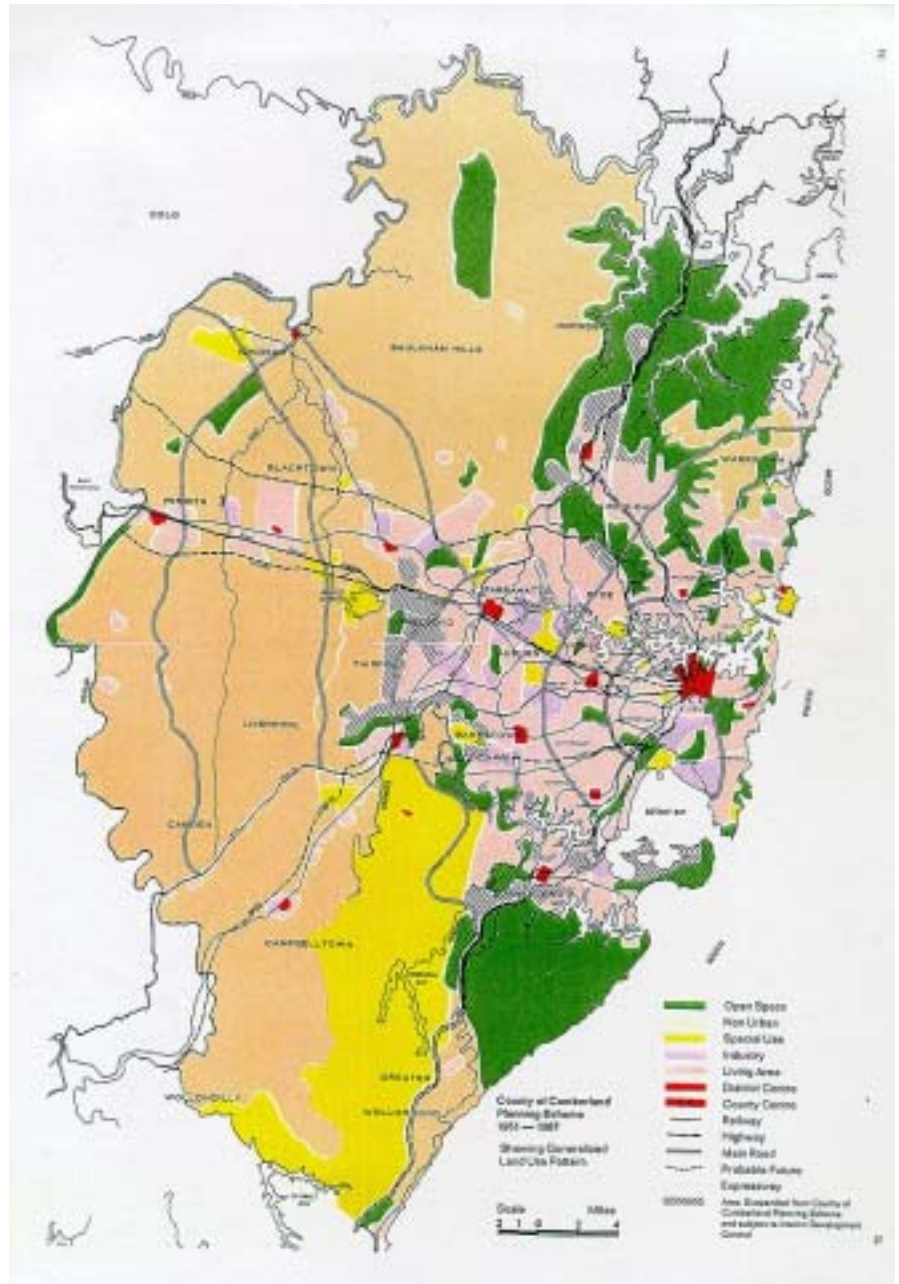
Governments took a pro-active approach to implement the SROP by taking on the role of land development. They focussed on both the Western and South Western growth corridors. A huge building program was undertaken by the former Housing Commission on a policy of broadacre development with designs mostly based on the Radburn principle (houses "back to front" with the front door facing a walkway or common open space area and the backdoor facing the street). The large estates of Mt Druitt and Campbelltown (Macquarie Fields, Minto, Airds, Claymore and Ambarvale/Rosemeadow) were constructed. This added to the already high proportion of public housing in these sectors, particularly in South West Sydney where the huge estate of Green Valley had been constructed near Liverpool in the 1960s.

The estates were part of an economic development strategy designed to lead the way for the private sector to follow. Land was also acquired for industrial, and commercial purposes to complement the residential development. The industrial land was serviced to provide local employment, the commercial land was developed to provide Regional shopping centres (Macarthur Square and Mt Druitt). The intention was for low income families to be able to work and shop locally, forming the initial demand for services which would quickly attract private housing.

Outcomes of the Plans

The use of public housing as a growth strategy for Sydney, has strongly contributed to a divided city.

Figure 1. County of Cumberland Planning Scheme



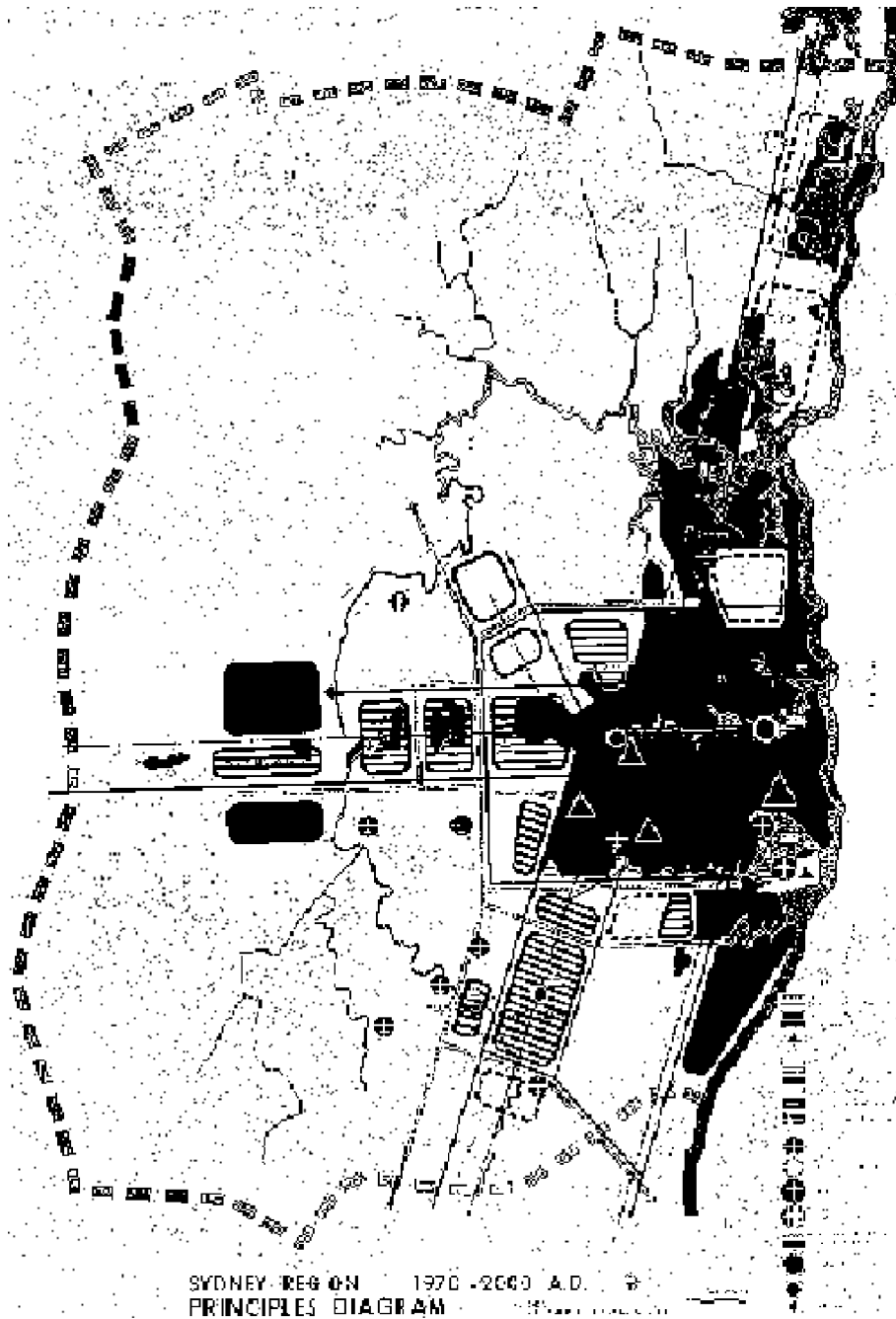
The growth expectations of the time were not realised. Industry was slow to develop. Meanwhile, the composition of public housing tenants was changing from working class families to largely welfare dependant and often single parent families. Transport and community services were poor or non-existent.

As a result, the South Western and Western Sydney sectors quickly became more stigmatised. Concentrations of poorly designed and poorly serviced public housing became the flavour of the

sectors. The new estates compounded the levels of disadvantage already evident from previously constructed estates like Green Valley at Liverpool and the high number of new migrants being housed in Fairfield, the location of a major migrant hostel.

Social exclusion of these communities has been reinforced by economic restructuring over the past 20 years. This has then impacted on the entirety of both sectors, with disadvantage being a core element of the majority of suburbs when compared with the rest of Sydney. It can be argued that the

Figure 2 Sydney Region Outline Plan. Principles Diagram.



stigma, poor services and lack of social mix has kept property values low across the majority of sectors, thereby attracting a predominance of low income families to the available private sector housing. The disparity is clearly shown in the 1996 census results as displayed in the Social Atlas at Figure 3⁽¹⁶⁾ (see pages 22-23).

The South West and Western sectors contain the overwhelming majority of:

- low income households
- unemployed people
- people without qualifications

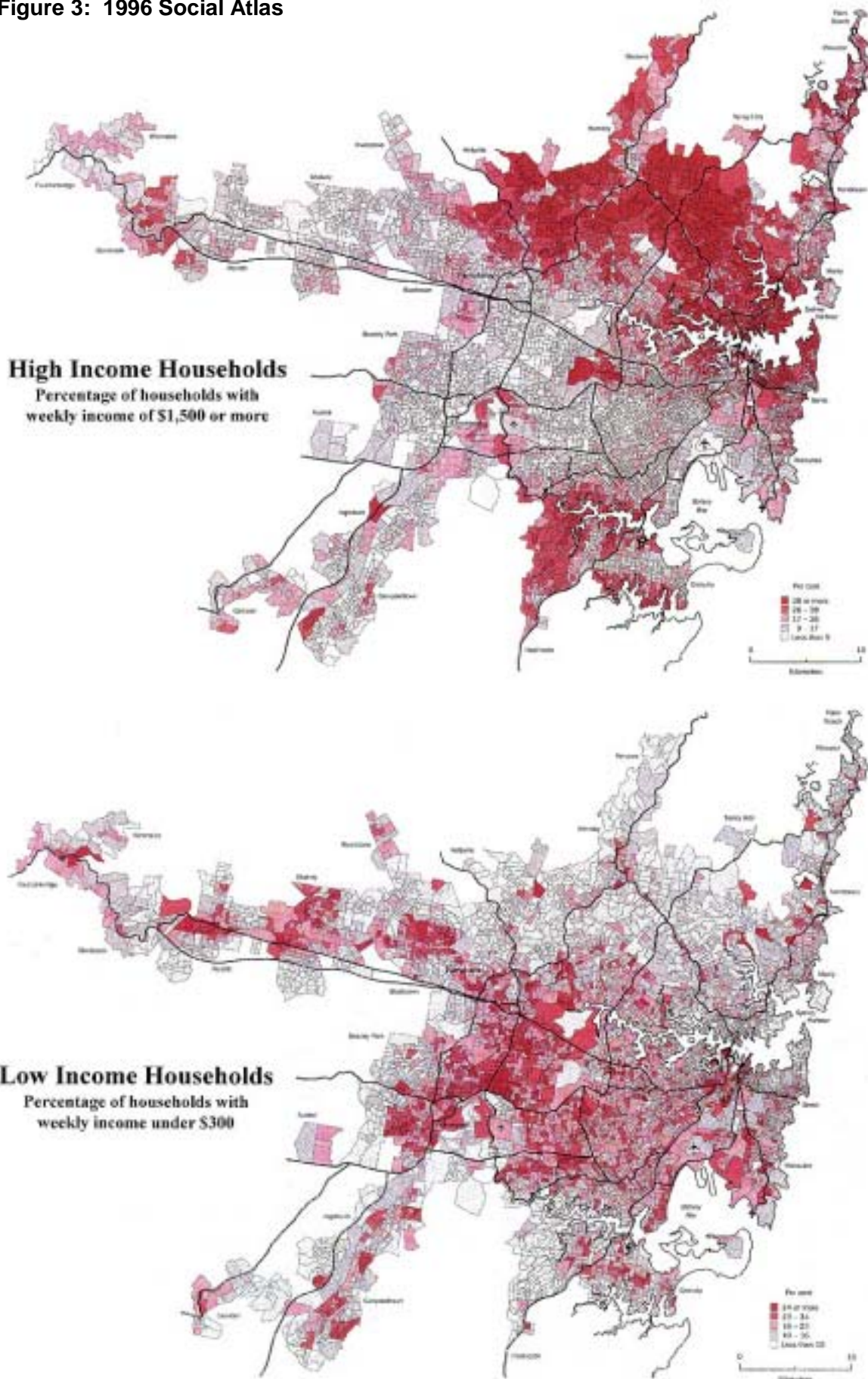
- people with trade qualifications

Conversely, Central Sydney, the Eastern suburbs and the Northern suburbs contain the majority of:

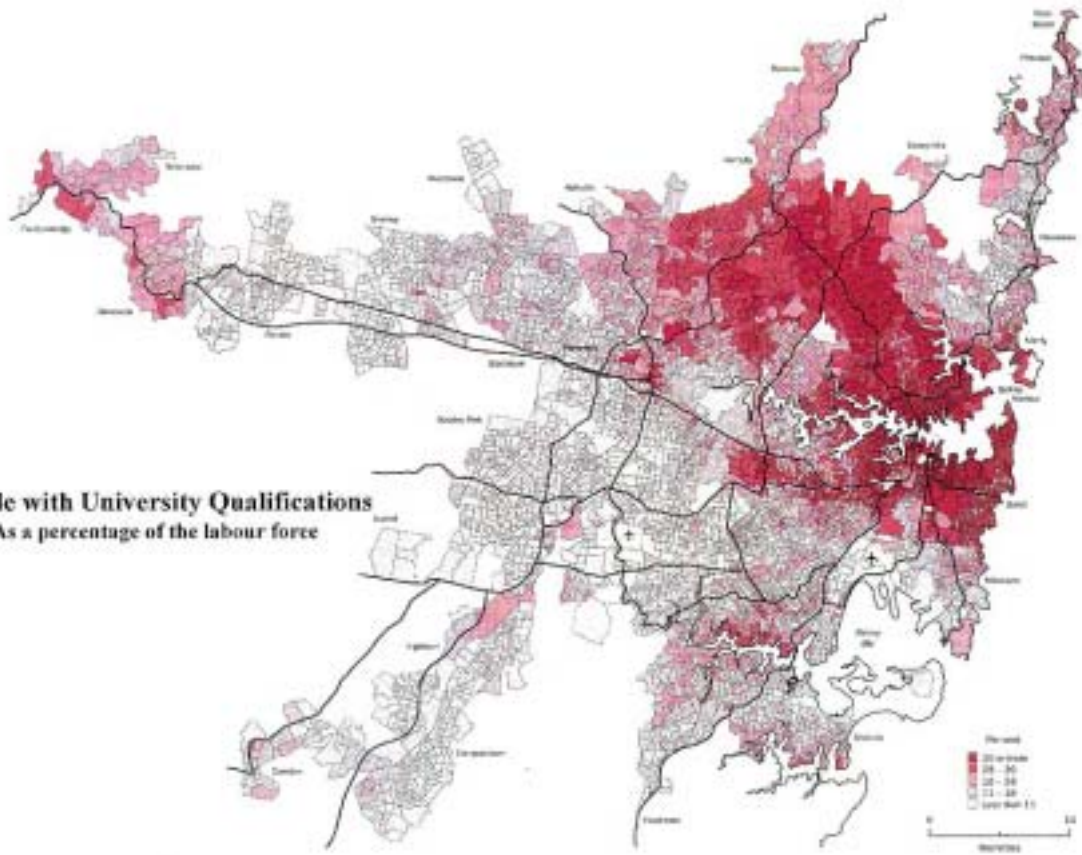
- high income households
- high employment
- people with university qualifications
- Managers, administrators and professionals

The City of Sydney is clearly divided socially into two, with the “haves” and “have nots”. A report by the Society of St Vincent’s de Paul on poverty⁽¹⁷⁾, “The Great Divide”, confirms the fact that

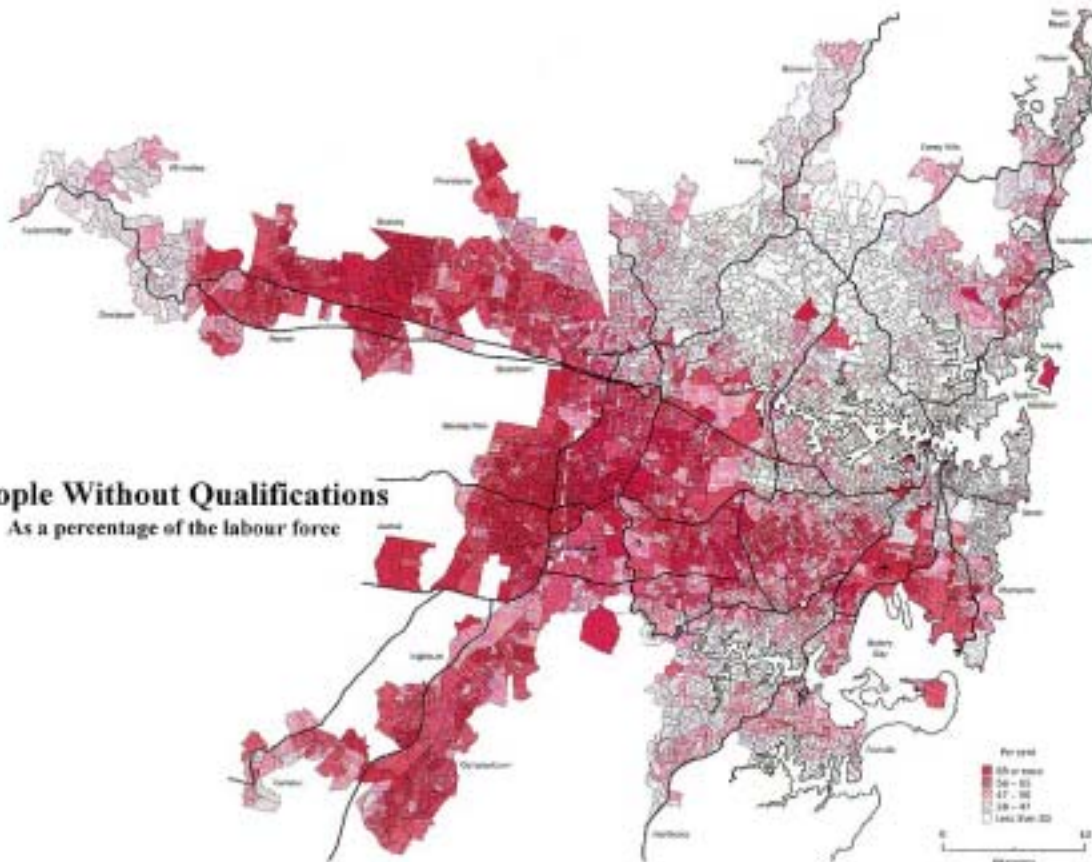
Figure 3: 1996 Social Atlas



People with University Qualifications
As a percentage of the labour force



People Without Qualifications
As a percentage of the labour force



poverty and disadvantage in Sydney is concentrated in 22 suburbs in Western and South Western Sydney, where thousands live “in a state of despair”. This paper identifies the “Great Divide” between these suburbs, and adjoining suburbs which are wealthier. However, in the Sydney wide context, the divide is even more apparent between the West/South West and the North/East, (as shown in the Social Atlas indicators at Figure 4). This is further demonstrated in the report by Vinson⁽¹⁸⁾ (1999) “Unequal in Life; The Distribution of Social Disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales” where a range of disadvantage factors were ranked and graphed.

This is the legacy of decades of separation planning. The implications for the entire community are complex and long term. The negative multiplier effect, without intervention, means that the division can only grow. This is evidenced by:

- the changing labour market denying access to the unskilled labour force in South West and Western Sydney, thereby further entrenching welfare dependence
- the public housing estates having clearly failed, as sustainable communities.
- economic development is further impeded by the stigma of the housing estates. This was demonstrated clearly in a report prepared for the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils⁽¹⁹⁾.

Study after study confirm the relative disadvantages of Western and South Western Sydney. The St Vincent De Paul Society and Vinson Reports clearly show that pockets of poverty are centred on the public housing estates. Without intervention, the gap is likely to widen even further as public housing is, by necessity, targeted more and more at those in most need. The media constantly focuses on these disadvantaged communities in a frenzy of condemnation, arguing that public tenants in these areas should appreciate and respect the roof over their heads no matter what their circumstances. In media eyes, they are the new “undeserving” poor. This oversimplifies the complexities of the issues. Many of these people are trapped in a cycle of poverty and living in housing which is poorly designed and located with little sense of community.

Integration versus Disintegration

These large housing estates have clearly been a significant failure. The particular failures relating to the physical designs of these estates were

documented by Woodward⁽²⁰⁾. The former Housing Commission assumed that residents of the estates would always consist of low income families working locally in neighbourhoods where common areas were happily shared. This assumption was reflected in the Radburn designs employed by the planners at the time. Another layer of assumptions accepted the separation of social classes, limited access to services and concentrations of disadvantaged people.

These estates were built proudly in a grandiose manner demonstrating the wider community acceptance at the time for concentrations of poor people to be detached from main stream society. It was considered at the time that concentrations of public housing in Western and South Western Sydney would:

- drive the local economy and bring employment services with it;
- produce social networks among equals and opportunities/ encouragement for community participation;
- provide thresholds for cost effective support services by focussing on communities where there is sufficient demand to substantiate specialist services;
- produce a sense of community and facilitate the emergence of community leaders
- provide critical thresholds for the provision of community services such as schools, shopping centres and public transport.

The large concentrations have, over time, shown that the anticipated outcomes have failed to materialise and there is a clear case of social disintegration. The estates are now characterised by high unemployment, high crime levels, substance abuse, neighbourhood disputes, truancy, vandalism, family stress and break down, poor social mix and little sense of community.

There can be little doubt that one major contributing factor to the disintegration is the abnormal concentration of disadvantaged people in neighbourhoods which look different to the norm, where support services are limited and where the pathways to economic independence are non-existent at worst or an obstacle course at best. Residents are disempowered, feel trapped and do not have a sense of belonging. A resident who had lived in the same house in Airs for 27 years including raising five children, told to the author in conversation “None of us are here by choice you know”.

The question however is whether the dispersal of these same families would have brought about different outcomes. Opinions differ. For example, the NSW Auditor General stated in his review of the NSW Department of Housing decision to demolish the East Fairfield(Villawood) Estate, that with regard to crime “there is general agreement between researchers, and shared by local practitioners, that redevelopment itself will not reduce crime overall; it will just shift it to a different location”.⁽²¹⁾

However the evidence of failure in the estates from every available social and housing indicator is so strong compared with disbursed public housing that the NSW Department of Housing is moving quickly to break up concentrations through separate title, subdivision and partial sale. It is worth noting that crime rates in Villawood and surrounding suburbs since the demolition of the estate have reduced dramatically. High crime rates have also eased at Airds where there is a direct link between design improvements and lower crime.

Inclusion

Just as the former Housing Commission led the way in creating a dual Sydney with social exclusion and division, the Department of Housing is now at the forefront of change in community values and a new philosophy of integration. This has meant finding new ways for providing services to disadvantaged communities and a fundamental shift in housing policy. Breaking up the estates, reducing public housing concentrations, scattering new public housing developments, finding new ways of delivering services and empowering tenants have been key components of this work. The NSW Housing Act, 1985 has in fact, as one of its objects “to encourage social mix and the integration of different housing forums in existing and new communities”⁽²²⁾.

The estates at Mt Druitt and Campbelltown are being refurbished and subdivided to allow selective sale and tenure mix. The work involves “de-Radburnising” to create streets and neighbourhoods which look the same as anywhere else in Sydney. Specifically, walkways and open space are being enclosed into backyards and the focus of the house is being turned back onto the street rather than into common areas. Walkways are being closed and in some locations new roads are being constructed to give a street address to previously “land-locked” dwellings. The “back to front” housing which is a key feature of Radburn has been instrumental in the

failure of the estates. These estates were deliberately constructed on superlots (where up to 200 dwellings are on one title) to prevent their break up and sale.

The “de-Radburnising” process is complex and expensive. Sales have commenced, but it will take another ten years for the work to be completed and 10 more years for full integration to occur. Concentrations of housing which cannot be improved or tenure mix created through a renewal approach are being demolished and the land sold. The largest example of this is the East Fairfield estate where 253 multi-unit dwellings constructed in the 1980’s on the Radburn principle were demolished in 1998 and the site sold for private housing.

Funds from sales, including East Fairfield, have been used to purchase new housing or redevelop older sites across Sydney. This housing is new, high quality, integrated and unidentifiable as public housing. Redevelopment has replaced older post World War 2 fibro cottages on large allotments of land with villas and townhouses. This accords with urban consolidation objectives and has been a further catalyst for revitalising older suburbs. The long term goal is to have no large estates, with all public housing scattered and integrated. As the profile of public tenants continues to emphasise those with welfare dependency and high support needs, the imperative for integration becomes even more urgent. The alternative is enclaves of extreme poverty in a more divided city where division may be incapable of being bridged.

A study by Jupp⁽²³⁾ of 10 mixed neighbourhoods across Britain confirmed that social mix had created very few problems. Residents of estates with mixed streets tended to report fewer problems of vandalism, cleanliness and noise.

Where physical integration through sales and tenure mix is some time away, service providers are exploring new ways of integrating their services to get more effective seamless service delivery in areas of highest need. For example in the Campbelltown estate of Claymore, an integrated services project known as “Gumnut Services” has been established. Through a shared funding arrangement, the three levels of government are working with non-government agencies to provide an integrated, intensive and local service under one roof. Another Whole of Government project is centred on early childhood intervention and family

support. It is known as the Schools as Community Centres Project based at Macquarie Fields, where human service providers jointly fund a facilitator who is responsible for integrating services to meet the needs of families with young children. A key objective is to connect these families with their community.

The Department of Housing is also changing the way it delivers services in disadvantaged communities. Rather than operating at a distance with offices based in shopping centres, the Department is meeting the challenge head on by moving onto the estates. Pilot "Intensive Tenancy Management" Projects have been established at Minto (Campbelltown) and Bidwill (Mt Druitt) where dwellings in the midst of some of the worst designed and most unpopular areas have been converted to people friendly offices. A new relationship between tenants and the bureaucracy is being forged with outstanding positive results. In a similar project in Claymore (Campbelltown) an entire street has been transferred by the Department to the Argyle Housing Association to manage.

Welfare dependency is acute on the large estates in South Western and Western Sydney where opportunities are few, stigma is high and there are few worker role models. Unemployment rates on some estates are as high as 50%. The Campbelltown Regional Employment Strategy⁽²⁴⁾ confirmed reports by tenants that identification of their estate address on a job application is grounds for the application to be culled.

Recognising that social inclusion is as much about location as access to labour markets, specific attention is being directed to providing employment opportunities to public housing tenants. One example is the Tenant Employment Program jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments, is enabling tenants to set up small businesses, be employed on refurbishment projects and be trained in a range of job skills. The Department of Housing is also introducing a policy of not raising rents for tenants in employment for the first 12 weeks, to remove one disincentive to work. Approximately 200 tenants have so far been employed under these initiatives.

Is it worth the cost?

The economic cost of rectifying the mistakes of the past and rebuilding a more equitable city is

enormous. Already \$74,000,000 has been spent in Mt Druitt and Campbelltown alone, with the final figure likely to be in the order of \$240,000,000. However the cost of not spending this money is even greater. Stubbs⁽²⁵⁾ concluded in her review of the work at Campbelltown that the social costs of doing nothing far outweigh the capital costs of improvement.

There is a philosophical and moral viewpoint that urges the creation of a city where the divisions between rich and poor are actively limited by recognising the causalities and acting to rectify them. The social justice platform argues that residents of a city should have equal access to the opportunities that the city provides. In Sydney, that could clearly not be the case without the major intervention and investment of the kind currently being undertaken to lift the profile of South Western and Western Sydney.

The economic imperative also supports integration as a way of appreciating assets. The NSW Department of Housing has the most valuable portfolio of assets in Australia. Without the current intervention, these assets would continue to devalue because many cannot be traded, stigma and physical deterioration continually depress capital values and public housing applicants do not want to live in them. Economic sense dictates that governments should own housing that enjoys capital gains by virtue of its location, style and amenity rather than have estates that cannot be sold, are depreciating in value, and are an increasing drain on housing management and support services.

Rear Guard Actions

Not everyone in the broader community is comfortable with the integration of public housing and the freeing up of communities to determine their own levels of social mix. Prejudice in the community against public housing tenants is common place. Development applications to local councils for public housing projects often have a rocky passage. They are subject to more scrutiny and attract more public opposition than identical projects from the private sector. Some councils attach onerous conditions or attempt to refuse applications on the basis that they will house public tenants. This attitude can be partly understood in the context of the media attention given to public housing, which primarily revolves around crime, vandalism, proliferation of rubbish, and the

generally poor living conditions concentrated on the failed estates. It rarely focuses on the circumstances which have created these conditions or on the majority of law abiding public tenants who are quietly and proudly living their lives in already integrated neighbourhoods.

Even within the housing sector there are debates about selling public assets because of concerns that the revenue will be insufficient to replace dwellings in more highly valued areas.

As the estates are broken up and sold, there is likely to be increasing resistance from other better-off communities. Already the signs are there. In mid 1999, 400 residents from Woodbine, a suburb of Campbelltown, separated from the public housing estate of Claymore by the M5 Freeway, petitioned Campbelltown City Council against a footbridge over the Freeway to join the two suburbs. The Daily Telegraph⁽²⁶⁾ reported that "the residents believe some of the people from the predominantly Department of Housing suburb of Claymore will break into their homes, steal their cars and vandalise their property". The footbridge is needed because of the isolation of Claymore and the difficulty residents have accessing jobs and services in Campbelltown.

Conclusion

Separation planning has helped create social exclusion. Processes are being developed to address exclusion but they are complex, require commitment and significant investment. They need to involve physical renewal, combined with community building which has the active and collaborative involvement of all levels of government, the community and the private sector. The processes need to empower communities to tackle their own problems.

Substantial progress is being made in South Western and Western Sydney, the centres of some of the worst social exclusion in Australia. The quiet revolution in public housing is demonstrating success, but there is a long way to go. Complex, entrenched problems of excluded communities require shared commitment, collaborative strategies and joint action. This is the challenge for the government silos, if excluded communities are to get social and economic justice, and the gaps across the urban dualities are to be bridged.

Footnotes

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Preparing Communities: Consumer Participation in Urban Regeneration

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Introduction

This paper will provide some background information on urban regeneration in South Australia. It will then outline the training program, *Preparing Communities: Consumer Participation in Urban Regeneration*, which Shelter SA has recently developed and piloted.

Urban Regeneration in SA Redevelopment

In South Australia urban regeneration has essentially been an asset management strategy of the State Housing Authority, the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT). The strategy has been driven by the imperatives of the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) to:

- manage a large pool of old, run-down properties
- pay-off a high interest debt;
- cope with significant reductions in funds from the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement; and
- plan within an uncertain environment regarding future Commonwealth funding for public housing.

The aims and outcomes of the SAHT asset management strategy have been to:

- reduce public housing stock concentrations and overall numbers; and
- increase the value of the remaining properties.

In less than a decade the overall public housing stock levels have been reduced by 10,000 properties. In 1993 the SAHT owned 63 014 properties. In 1999/2000 the number of tenable dwellings had been reduced to 53,300. The target for 2000-01 is 52 350.

In areas where the SAHT believes that there will be a good financial return, the stock concentrations are being reduced to between 15% and 35%.

Planning for Sustainable Communities

At a central planning level and in some of the urban regeneration project areas the conversation is shifting from one grounded in asset management, concerned only with improving the quality and value of properties, to one about community sustainability. The Department for Human Services (DHS) is starting to explore what is it that makes a community sustainable, how can we achieve this, and how can we measure it?

The areas targeted for redevelopment by the SAHT are where the communities are missing out more than other Australian communities – missing out on the jobs, the education, good health, and justice. Nobody has a simple answer to this, but the SA government has started trying to tackle this by looking at developing a whole of government approach to urban regeneration.

Central Planning

Currently key players involved in central planning for urban regeneration in South Australia are Planning SA, Department for Human Services and the Department for Education Training and Employment.

Planning SA has released a Green Paper which provides an overview of urban regeneration issues for metropolitan Adelaide. The Green Paper raises issues of:

- Increasing disparities in the socio-economic circumstances and living conditions of communities in different parts of Adelaide; and
- Population shifts which have created a mismatch of service infrastructure in different parts of Adelaide.

The DHS led an Area Regeneration Work Group of six government agencies. This group developed principles which should form the basis of urban regeneration approaches in South Australia. Some of these are:

- A vision about regeneration outcomes which encompasses economic, social and environmental objectives;
- Approaches to regeneration which respond to

the diversity of local/regional circumstances and the opportunities and strengths inherent in specific areas;

- Effective engagement of, and partnerships with, different spheres of government, the private and non-government sectors in order to maximise and integrate planning and resources inputs; and
- Active community involvement in defining their needs and aspirations in as essential component of planning.

It is pleasing to see articulated the principles of involving the community and different spheres of government. The next step is to set up the mechanisms for ongoing and effective input.

Regional Partnerships

In keeping with the focus on community sustainability, there are partnering agreements between a range of players, including local government, DHS, Commonwealth Family and Community Services, local service providers, as well as the SAHT, in some project areas.

Community Participation

The involvement of residents in the partnerships is still problematic, although positive steps have been taken since the early projects. Now most metropolitan urban regeneration projects have a Neighbourhood Development Officer (NDO), usually employed by the SAHT, appointed to consult with and involve the local community.

This is an important step forward, as community development is a key aspect of successful urban regeneration. The most effective way of maximizing the resources in communities targeted for urban regeneration is to have good quality, long-term community development. The effectiveness of the NDOs is limited by the shortness of their contracts. Community development is a long-term process, but most NDOs are employed for less than three years, some for only 6 months.

Most urban regeneration projects in metropolitan areas have Community Reference Groups (CRGs), which are comprised of local residents who give advice to the project managers. The level of consultation which the CRG members undertake within their local communities is questionable.

One of the most glaring problems with involving the community in urban regeneration in South Australia is that the key decisions have been made before

there is any contact with local residents. Central to this is the decision to relocate residents to reduce the concentration of public housing in the project areas. The local communities are not asked if they want this dispersal of their community. Then the CRGs are expected to represent a community in which large numbers of people are moving in and out in a short period of time.

Preparing Communities: Consumer Participation in Urban Regeneration Training

One way of tackling the problems of inadequate consultation with and involvement of local residents was to provide training to the representatives. Training is part of a community development approach to involving community in policy and program development.

Training can provide a range of benefits to participants and their community. It can:

- build confidence;
- provide information and knowledge;
- develop skills;
- facilitate analysis and reflection;
- develop critical awareness of socioeconomic and wider policy contexts;
- contribute to strengthening organisations and networks; and
- strengthen participation in regeneration.

The Project

Shelter SA received a one-off grant which enabled us to employ a Project Officer half time for 12 months. She consulted with community representatives in the urban regeneration areas to gain an understanding of their training needs, then developed and delivered the training modules.

Participants were public housing tenants and home owners from all of the metropolitan urban regeneration project areas. There were some participants from areas which are not directly impacted by urban regeneration, including Murray Bridge, a town about 80 kms south east of Adelaide.

The workshops were run in a different urban regeneration area every time, incorporating a bus tour of the local project. The decision to offer the workshops across the board, rather than for specific groups was influenced by the following factors:

- after the initial round of consultations, none of

the groups identified themselves as ready for training as a group;

- given that this was a pilot program, we were seeking a range of involvement, experiences, and responses to shape the final material; and
- we wanted to provide as many opportunities for the 'cross pollination' of ideas and experiences as possible.

There was extensive discussion within Shelter about whether the training should be competency based, in accordance with the new national Vocational and Educational Training system. Non-competency based training was adopted because:

- the participants were not particularly interested in accredited training;
- it can be more easily adapted to the individual needs of participants; and
- there are no existing *National Competency Standards* which directly match the skills which participants were wanting to acquire.

The closest we came to finding a competency standard which aligned with the training needs of the communities in urban regeneration areas was *CHCCH1A Orientation to work in the community housing sector*. This competency standard was adapted into Module One, An Introduction to Urban Regeneration. So although we did not deliver a competency, we used the national standards where possible to facilitate the use of the training materials for competency-based training in the future, if that is ever desirable.

The modules

The training modules were titled:

1. Introduction to Urban Regeneration
2. Being a Community Representative
3. Consultation skills for community representatives
4. Promoting your community's interests: Advocacy skills for community representatives.

Purpose of the modules

The purpose of Module One was to introduce to participants a broad picture of the environment and context within which urban regeneration takes place.

Module Two aimed to introduce participants to the concepts of community participation and the role of community representatives within this.

Module Three aimed to enhance the participants' effectiveness as community representatives by increasing their knowledge of what is consultation and methods for conducting consultation.

Module Four aimed to increase participants' understanding of advocacy and ability to advocate on behalf of their community.

Learning Outcomes

Participants were expected to achieve the following outcomes from the workshops.

Introduction to Urban Regeneration:

- Gain an understanding of the concept of urban regeneration
- Explored how politics, economic and social issues impact on urban regeneration;
- Become more knowledgeable about past, present and possible future urban regeneration projects;
- Explored the principles and values that underpin community work and gained an appreciation of how they may influence your work as a community representative; and
- Gained an appreciation of the work that is undertaken by each of the key players in urban regeneration.

Being a Community Representative:

- Understand the concepts community, consultation, involvement, participation and their relationship to each other;
- Be able to relate various levels of participation to your experiences as a community representative;
- Be knowledgeable of the benefits of participation to individuals, communities, organisation and society;
- Have a general awareness of the roles and motivations of community representatives, and have linked this back to their situation; and
- Have developed strategies to respond to a range of issues related to community participation.

Consultation Skills for Community Representatives:

- Be knowledgeable of what consultation is and how it fits into community participation practice;
- Be able to recount their various experiences as consultors and consultees, what worked and what didn't work and relate this to their roles as community representatives;
- Be knowledgeable of how to plan and conduct a

- consultation, using a variety of techniques;
- Have increased their awareness of the value of informal consultation, be able to identify the various ways in which they carry it out and have increase their repertoire of skills and strategies in this area;
- Be able to identify the value of feedback and accountability in the consultation process and have developed a range of feedback strategies relevant to their situation; and
- Have developed a range of strategies that consultees can use to make best use of the consultation process.

Promoting your Community's Interests:

- Be able to define advocacy, what the common terms mean, what the different types of advocacy are and who can be an advocate;
- Be able to identify the principles that guide advocacy; and
- Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the processes and skills involved in advocacy.

Lessons Learned

The project evaluation indicated that the content of the training program was highly successful. 95% of participants said that the training was relevant and increased their knowledge. 85% said that the training increased their skills. 79% said that they had already put into practice the knowledge and skills gained through the workshop, and 95% expected to be able to use them in the future.

The most significant problem identified through the evaluation is that the training needs to be contextualised within particular projects or communities. Only 42% of respondents felt that outside agencies' views of their ability to represent their community had been enhanced as a result of attending the training. This indicates that Shelter SA needs to promote the training to the relevant agencies involved in the urban regeneration projects.

The other major lesson learned from the pilot project is that there is a range of benefits to delivering the training for specific project-based groups.

Firstly, a number of participants indicated that the distances for travel were a difficulty, even though Shelter SA paid for the cost of travel. Area based workshops could all be held within the vicinity or participants' homes. This would also help to overcome another criticism of the workshops, which was

that they were too long. One of the factors making the workshops even longer was that participants who did not live in the local area had to travel up to two hours to get to the venue. Furthermore, with the venue close to where participants live, the workshops could be shorter as it would be less of a problem to have more of them. (This would not preclude a bus tour of other urban regeneration areas, which was a highly successful aspect of the pilot project.)

The other advantage of delivering the workshops for specific groups is that they can be used more consciously as a community development tool. We could adapt the exercises to fit with the specific circumstances of that particular area. This was found to be very useful when we were invited to deliver the training Module One for residents in the Peachey Belt, a northern metropolitan urban regeneration area. During the workshop the residents were able to develop a strategy for addressing the problems they were experiencing in their area. Shelter SA continues to work with this community in following through with the strategy.

Summary

Urban regeneration in South Australia has come a long way from the first redevelopment projects nearly ten years ago. The government is asking questions such as, How do we identify sustainable communities?; and What makes them sustainable? It is attempting to incorporate the goal of sustainability into the urban planning environment and the human services provided to communities by the State, Local and Federal Governments.

Shelter SA is still critical of the lack of community involvement at both the central planning and the regional projects level. One of the strategies we have adopted to help increase the effectiveness of community involvement in regional projects is to develop and pilot a training project for residents in urban regeneration areas.

The training project has been found to be effective in increasing the skills and knowledge of the participants. The next step is to increase its impact on the agencies involved in the urban regeneration projects. We also aim to use the training modules more proactively as a community development tool by offering it to specific communities.

The Role of Cultural Planning in Redevelopment

Pilar Kasat
Cultural Planning Program Manager
Community Arts Network WA

Introduction

The words **RE**development and **RE**newal imply the sense of adding and improving; both words have pre-fix RE-meaning **once again, again, afresh.**

This lends itself to look at RENEWAL AND REDEVELOPMENT as an opportunity. The opportunity to generate places and communities in which people can feel a sense of belonging and ownership.

It is also an opportunity to **evaluate, what has worked and what has not.**

Over the last couple of days I have been looking on the Internet in search of interesting information on Urban Renewal. Mind you, I declare myself a novice in the high-tech race. Nevertheless I found several sites which sounded relatively interesting. I have to say that most of them were specifically examples that have been documented in the USA.

I thought it would be interesting to read something to you that also comes from the USA. It is a quote from the book *Towards Cosmopolis* and is a reference to the Los Angeles riots in 1992. It reads:

I am angry.
It is all right to be angry.
It is unfortunate what people do when they are frustrated
and angry.
The fact of the matter is,
Whether we like it or not,
Riot
Is the voice of the unheard.

This is, I suppose the antithesis of what the notion of Renewal and Re-development intends to address. Nevertheless this is also the reality, perhaps an extreme reality that occurs when individuals in a community have no voice.

Cultural Planning

Cultural planning intends to address issues of community participation. Not just community input to decision making but a particular **way of engaging communities.** Using **culture and the arts** we look at ways in which community participation becomes a meaningful exchange.

Cultural Planning is a tool, a way of deciding how best to use your community's cultural resources for economic and social development. Cultural Planning taps into the DEEP WELL OF IDEAS for community projects and draws out a way of ensuring that these projects happen.

Cultural planning also provides a way for communities and local governments to develop a shared vision and a way of more effectively coordinating community resources to build a strong and sustainable cultural industry.
Community Arts Network WA

Community Arts Network of WA (CAN WA) has been working in the field of cultural planning for 6 years. We have a specific program, the Cultural Planning Program that works with Local Government in addressing issues of community cultural development.

The way we approach cultural planning is through a partnership with local government authorities which are interested in re-addressing the way in which they seek community input and community participation in local decision making.

The following is a **Community Cultural Development** (CCD) methodology that CAN WA utilizes. CCD is a methodology that values individuals, histories, hopes, experiences, needs and recognises that each individual contributes to the make up of the collective-the community (CAN WA).

Processes & Rationale

In the case of the City of Stirling a decision was made to localise the process in an area that has been under serviced, and in which there were specific social and economic needs. This area has the youngest population in the City and is also

characterised by high levels of unemployment and high concentration of persons from Aboriginal and non-English speaking backgrounds.

In addition, it was seen as an important step in the context of **The New North** Urban renewal program run by Satterley Mc Cusker Group for the Ministry of Housing.

I will briefly address the initiatives CAN WA and the City have undertaken in the area and later on Phillida Rooksby will talk more specifically about the findings to date of the Cultural Mapping process.

In our initial discussion with various service providers **we learnt that there were two main community sectors we should be concentrating on in our community mapping process. These were the disability sector and the youth sector.**

It was pointed out to us that there was substantial disadvantage experienced by these groups, as well as a strong perception of the lack of safety for these groups.

On one hand there was anecdotal evidence that persons with disabilities were experiencing substantial abuse, including bullying and petty crime by mainly youth in the area. At the same time we were told that youth in the area have been substantially disadvantaged over a long period. Some examples of this are the lack of facilities for youth, limited public transport, and a high percentage of youth unemployment.

Cultural Mapping

We undertook a Cultural Mapping exercise with the community of the Balga-Westminster area, the area which is undergoing redevelopment through the Ministry of Housing's New Living program.

Cultural Mapping involves a community identifying and documenting local cultural resources. Through this research cultural elements are recorded- the tangibles like galleries, craft industries, distinctive landmarks, local events and industries, as well as the intangibles like memories, personal histories, attitudes and values.

Commonwealth Department of Communication and the Arts (1994) Mapping Culture

An application for funding was submitted to Safer WA. The main proposal was to develop a number of programs with youth and people with a disability

to fulfill a two-pronged approach:

- On hand we intended to increase participation from these groups and therefore address the perceived lack of safety in the community. We also intended to strengthen networks and engage these groups in creative activities, as well as raise awareness of issues affecting people with disabilities.
- On the other hand the programs were to form the basis of a participatory consultation strategy that would contribute to policy formulation.

Mapping Initiatives

The mapping initiatives included surveys and interview training.

- *Surveys:* The general community has had an opportunity to have a say in relation to their community and their aspirations for the future via a survey which has been widely distributed.
- *Interview training and Interpersonal skills:* In addition to the survey a more qualitative approach was used with local community member conducting interviews. A training session was developed and coordinated, and subsequently the "trainees" undertook to meet and interview other community members. CAN WA assisted the City of Stirling by engaging a community physiologist to undertake this task.

In addition we established a number of activities with youth consisting of:

- Disability awareness training in the High Schools
- Capoeira demonstrations and workshops
- Theatre workshops with the High Schools
- Public performance: reclaiming public space, celebrating public space.

We believe that an action based consultation method that is participative and engaging will allow for young people to explore issues in a creative manner.

Slides (Use of)

We are assisting young people in formulating **their own solutions to the issue of safety, community participation and community ownership.**

The Capoeira workshops have been incredibly successful. Capoeira is a form of non-contact

martial arts that originated in Brazil as a response to black slavery. Capoeira incorporates music and dance as well as acrobatics movements.

The workshops have regularly attracted approximately 40 young people from the area. They have been running weekly and will continue until September

Through the Capoeira workshops it is expected that young people will **develop self-esteem, and establish long lasting networks and friendship, which will give them an opportunity to feel safe, enhance their sense of belonging and self-respect.**

Through all the activities the instructors have been briefed on how to consult with young people.

The expectation at the end of the mapping process is that the City of Stirling will have a detailed, relevant source of information of the issues affecting young people and people with disabilities in the area. This information will enable the City to make informed decisions and establish policy in the areas of community development that will more efficiently respond to community needs.

It also assists in capacity building. We have a group of young people who have been actively participating in activities that are meaningful, formation of networks, use of community places, increased awareness on issues surrounding people with disabilities.

The Cultural Planning Program in the Balga and Westminster area has attracted funding and in-kind support from various sources including:

- Safer WA
- City of Stirling
- CAN WA and Catalyst Investment program (CAN WA manages Catalyst on behalf of the State of WA through ArtsWA in association with the Lotteries Commission).

It is likely to attract further funding.

Conclusion

The Cultural Planning Process in the Balga and Westminster area has highlighted gaps in service provision. The City of Stirling can provide a better service by having an understanding of the needs of the community, in particular, for the youth and the disability sectors.

In addition, and most importantly, this process highlights the strengths of the community and the importance of engaging its citizens to take part in decision making process. The value the community gives to their place is instrumental in how they relate to the place and to others living in it.

Re-development and re-vitalization processes are intrinsically linked to community development practices. It is people who are the objects and the subjects of any development. The City of Stirling has a great opportunity to respond to this process by engaging in developing policies, which will ensure long term and sustainable community cultural development practices.

For those people who have participated in the process, in particular the young people attending the Capoeira, this process has been much more than a mapping/consultation process. This has been a real and genuine way to become involved and in that process of involvement to establish trust and rapport amongst themselves and the artists involved. They have been valued, appreciated and their input has been taken into consideration.

For further information on the CAN WA involvement in the City of Stirling, Cultural Planning and Community Cultural Development you can contact Pilar Kasat at Community Arts Network WA on (08) 9226 24 22 country callers on 1800 681 021 or email pilar@canwa.com.au

Phillida Rooksby
Senior Project Officer
City of Stirling

Findings to Date: Outcomes of consultation and project

The aim of the cultural planning project was to develop a long term vision for the cultural and social development in Balga-Westminster: to address community aspirations by building on strengths of area and community whilst addressing weaknesses.

The project also sought to:

- Provide a model for possible future cultural planning projects and policies within the City;
- Actively utilise consultation mechanisms and activities to build on community networks and thus fosters a sense of inclusion and local identity through participation.
- Identify specific sub-projects which directly address issues identified by the community, as part of the project.

Balga-Westminster was selected because of:

- The current negative image associated with the area;
- The opportunities offered by the Ministry of Housing New North Refurbishment program;
- The enthusiasm for the project shown by the local community (particularly key individuals from the Balga Action Group and Westminster representatives);
- The distinct and rich, but often undervalued community spirit and culture in the area; and
- The social problems experiences in the area.

We are currently approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the project and therefore have not collated all information or completed all activities. However, some interesting trends have emerged.

Activities

The following activities are being incorporated in the development of the Cultural Plan:

- Review **Existing Community Development Documents:**
 - ⇒ Aged Residents Needs Survey 1998;
 - ⇒ Youth Questionnaire 1998;
 - ⇒ City of Stirling Survey of Past

- ⇒ Performance 1997;
- ⇒ Client Satisfaction Survey for Multicultural Clients of the CoS Day Centre 1996;
- ⇒ Community Services Development Plan 1996;
- ⇒ Balga Action Group Local Community Workshop Outcomes 1998; and
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Forum Outcomes 1999.

- Establishment of a **Steering Committee** of interested community and agency representatives: intended to foster community ownership of project.
- **'Our Place' Cultural Planning Workshop** - May 1999 – Involving a range of activities and discussions looking at what place and things mean to people, how they arrived in Balga-Westminster, what is special about it, the image of the place to others and their hopes for the future. Finally - Cultural Mapping.
- **Inter-agency Meeting** - meeting of agencies active in Balga-Westminster and their issues and concerns associated with the New North project. Aimed at improving agency networks, too.
- **Open-ended interviews** conducted by community members within their communities about community values, participation, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Training in interviewing skills was provided to participating members.
- **Targeted interviews** with attendees at the Autumn Centre, multicultural centre, unemployment centre etc.
- **Community Survey**, distributed to all households within the area.
- **Activities associated with a Safer WA grant:** focused on more interactive consultation, as detailed by Pilar (intended to 'giving something back' to participants, thus contributing to the desired outcomes of community development).

Activities included:

- ⇒ Disability Awareness Training and activities;
- ⇒ Capoeira (Brazilian non-contact martial

- ⇒ arts) displays and workshops; and DJ Rap workshops (replacing theatre workshops, for which there was insufficient interest).

Activities funded by Safer WA were all designed to address problems associated with security, youth at risk and crime against disabled people, all identified in consultation at the commencement of the project as 'problem' issues.

- **Public Art mural** project at Balga PCYC, funded with an Artsource grant and incorporating youth participation.

Outcomes of all consultation will be collated and recommendations (ie Cultural Plan) developed (around November).

Summary of Responses

To date, information has been collated mainly from surveys and interviews, which are complete. The outcomes show.

- Very different responses from different groups. In particular, older members of the community tend to focus on physical improvements and infrastructure whilst younger were more interested in the 'people' aspect of the community.
- The overall trends of responses revealed:
 - ⇒ **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** Friendly people and community, proximity to City, people, some local conveniences, trees and 'greenness' of the area;
 - ⇒ **NEGATIVE ASPECTS:** Security (prevalent local government issue at the moment), streetscape and quality of buildings, negative external image, 'problem' people, lack of facilities (particularly for youths and seniors).
- Many of the responses to the surveys and questionnaires were very much aimed at responding to the City: looking at things the City can 'fix' such as verges etc.
- Many expressed, in one way or other, feelings of disempoweredness - universal trend? Something we are really seeking to improve through the project. Apart from increased community sense of empowerment, belonging, responses to problems etc, many fundamental problems raised relate to lack of ownership, of both public and private spaces. For example: public spaces and streets – these are not well

maintained because such spaces are not seen to 'belong' to anyone/the community. Similarly. Security issues are contributed to by a lack of ownerships of street, society, neighbours etc. Private places which not owned or not worth investing in will often not be well looked after. Having said that, some issues (including maintenance) simply come down to lack of money.

- Refer to Helen Le Gresley's (Cultural Psychologist consulting to the City) summary of responses to interviews and surveys (attached).
- Many people were happy to be asked their opinion and the survey in particular appears to have made many of them start thinking about potential improvements. This, in itself, will hopefully lead towards increased interest, participation and empowerment of community members to identify, take ownership of and address local problems.

Personal Lessons from Project

- As a town planner, it was a relatively novel approach for me, though the theory is embedded in models of participative and community-based planning. It was a steep learning curve for me and, I think, most involved.
- The project represented a relatively new approach for Stirling, too, particularly in that it takes a comprehensive, place-based view of an area, as opposed to the more traditional 'issues/departmental' organisational model upon which most bureaucracies are based.
- This is one of the greatest strengths of the approach but will also represent a significant challenge, in that implementation, over an extended period, coordinated across many departments and individuals will be difficult – there is significant potential for the focus of the project to be lost.
- The project clearly shows the importance of relationships in the community and in successful planning. The experience of participating in the project was very involving for the staff, as well as the community. The final report, no matter how thorough, will probably not be able to convey to the read the most fundamental benefit of the project which was the implicit understanding, trust and personal relationships which develop.
- Project illustrates the true connections between 'place' its physical planning and management,

- and the community, sense of belonging and local values and activities.
- We still have some work to do to develop responses to issues raised and strengthen the ties between physical and social/cultural/ community planning. However, recognition that place is not just physical is fundamental to this process, as recognising is the importance of community ownership of their area, their members, their identity and their strengths and problems.

- This also leads to a strong conclusion that 'renewal' will not success if it only addresses the physical. (It is also threatened by any significant disruptions the renewal process may make to the fabric of the community.)

**BALGA-WESTMINSTER CULTURAL PLAN1999-2000
DRAFT SUMMARY OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION – INTERVIEWS & SURVEYS
By Helen Le Gresley**

Interviews

Interviews = 47 (20 % were under 17 years of age)
Interviewers = 10

Discuss process of training community members to undertake interviews – personal, professional and community capacity building (see Maton, 2000). Building on resources/assets already in the community and facilitating networks so as to sustain cultural planning objectives.

Experience of living in B- W: Generally positive but had both positive (parks, people, facilities and services) and negative (unsafe, diminishing public facilities, physical appearance) comments.

Interesting events	Requested future activities	Changes to make B- W a better place to live	Who
Community/ social events eg. BAG party	Youth: Education, training, groups, hang out	Changes to physical environment: verges, bulk collection, parks	Residents
Sporting events/venues	Sporting: adult walking group, varies of sport	Positive media	Shire
Safety initiatives	Safety: neighbourhood watch	Increasing safety: parks, neighbourhood watch, street lighting,	Police
Senior interests		Community spirit: Council – community partnerships on events, forums. Committee representative of diverse population. COLLABORATIVE ACTION.	Media
Youth events		Facilities/Services: market, youth facilities, senior activities.	State government
			Homeswest
			BAG

Surveys

There were 178 valid surveys. The surveys provided qualitative data to facilitate in-depth knowledge of community member's perceptions and experiences.

Sense of community

Generally majority felt that it was a good place for them to live, they felt at home in the area and expected to live there for a long period of time. However, respondents did not feel as confident that residents in the area could solve problems if they arose. This is a reflection of the amount of influence that the respondents feel they have in the community. Influence is an integral part of achieving a perceived sense of community and involves community members possessing a sense of mattering, of contributing to the community and the ability to acknowledge others needs, values and opinions (Mc Millan & Chavis, 1986). It has been suggested that influence is nurtured through community member's participation in voluntary events and associations, as this yields a sharing of power that leads to greater "ownership" of the community by the participants, greater satisfaction and greater cohesion (Mc Millan & Chavis, 1986).

Thus as 25% of the respondents stated that they haven't been involved in any community activities in last 12 months in addition to 25% feeling that there is no community events that add to community spirit, feelings of powerlessness are perpetuated. It is not surprising then that residents felt that they wanted more community cultural events in their community such as concerts in the park, cultural festivals, family fun days, and community awards nights.

All changes suggested by community members in regard to requested future activities and making B- W a better place to live, are all criterion identified by Wood (1999) (for Healthway) for Healthy Communities (safe; recreational, cultural and leisure opportunities; participation in community life; foundations of trust; protection and care of the natural environment; clean, healthy and pleasant physical environments; and community social involvement etc). To facilitate a healthy community (or social capital within a community) it is important that the process be one that facilitates collaboration, inclusion, participation, ownership and sustainability, i.e. one similar to the cultural planning process. As Wood (1999) highlights "it is the processes rather than the outcomes that have the potential to em-

power communities, build social capital and enhance their capacity to deal with other issues" (16). Thus planning in COS is facilitating a process, used in both the Demo Council and Safer Wa project, that should be given priority in the future in other departments. As stated departments who manage the physical landscape, such as parks and gardens and waste management, play an important role in facilitating sense of community as community development and planning due to the intertwining of social and physical aspects of a community demonstrated by the community members responses.

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Aspects of the community to actively nurture *	Aspects of community to actively improve	Initiatives to improve the area	Who	City of Stirling's role
People	Perceived crime/safety issues	Crime and safety initiatives	City of Stirling	Physical maintenance refurbishment
Parks and Bushland	Stigma of living in area	Positive promotion of the area	Residents	<i>Community services/facilities</i>
Community facilities and activities	Untidy look of verges and median strips	Clean verges and median strips	Local police	Waste management services
Recreational facilities and activities	Condition of the houses	Improve local housing	State and federal government	Safety
	Lack of community facilities and services	Upgrade community facilities/services		Improving community/council relationship
	Poor community relationship	Build community relationships		Recreational facilities/services
	Lack of Council initiated improvement	Maintain parks and bushland		
	High unemployment	Community clean up		
	State of parks and bushland	Upgrade street features; lighting, bus shelters		
	Appearance of retail and private enterprise premises			

* These places are loved because they provide the residents with a positive place that reinforces their sense of community as they interact safely and positively with other community members. In addition these places are easily accessible, either by being affordable or close by, and allow the respondents to access services or facilities in the area that provide them with a rewarding experience, either by meeting their social, physical and/or psychological needs. Furthermore, the places are aesthetically pleasing, in that they are well maintained and cared for physically. Indicates intertwining of the physical and social aspects of communities and the consequent combined effect on people's sense of community, civic pride, and health. As Proshansky (1990) has stated every physical environment is also a social environment and that it is sometimes impossible to separate these two aspects of our environment and their effects of people. **Thus important that all players within local government and within the community accept responsibility for facilitating sense of community and a healthy community as these seem to be as much influenced by social aspects as the physical aspects of a community.**

On the Ground: Practical Responses & Strategies

An approach to community development: The Eastern Horizons New Living Project, Perth WA

Alison Day

Alison Day & Associates

1. Introduction

In 1999, Alison Day & Associates prepared a Community Development Plan for the Midland/Midvale Redevelopment Project (the Eastern Horizons New Living Project) on behalf of the Ministry of Housing and the City of Swan.

The Community Development Plan was intended to assist the local community, human services providers, the City of Swan and Midland Project Management (the project managers) to undertake a range of initiatives to bring about many positive changes to the living conditions and community spirit of people in the project area.

To the author's knowledge, there is no precedent in Western Australia for a Community Development Plan to be prepared for a publicly funded redevelopment project. The absence of a model provided both challenges and opportunities for the Community Development Plan.

The following presentation describes the Community Development Plan and the consultation process used in its preparation.

2. Background to the Eastern Horizons New Living Project

The project area is located adjacent to the metropolitan regional centre of Midland, covering the suburb of Midvale and some residential sections of Midland. The relevant local government authorities are the City of Swan and the Shire of Mundaring.

Midvale was established in 1948 as a public housing area. Midland is a long established 'working class' suburb. Housing in the project area is approximately 1/3 private, 1/3 private rental and 1/3 Ministry of Housing.

The project area once contained a vibrant community with a range of community facilities. However, it has experienced the loss of major

sources of employment over time, the ageing of its population, a high proportion of disadvantaged families moving into the area and the deterioration of housing stock.

The social and physical conditions have declined to the point where a redevelopment project was considered essential.

3. The Community Development Plan

The Community Development Plan prepared for the Eastern Horizons New Living Project has three components:

- A community profile
- A community vision for the study area
- Strategies to achieve a range of community development objectives

Community Profile

The profile provides information about the population of the redevelopment area and the community services and facilities currently located within that area.

The profile:

- Provides information to inform and guide the community consultation process for the Community Development Plan
- Provides baseline information for any future monitoring of the progress of the New Living Project and any future evaluation of the project's effects on the population and social infrastructure
- Informs relevant stakeholders

The profile is particularly important as it paints a picture of the population of the Midland/Midvale project area before the New Living Project dramatically transforms the area both demographically and socially over the next 2-3 years.

The project area population is considerably socially and economically disadvantaged in relation to the

populations of the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring and the Perth metropolitan area. A number of factors (historical and current) are responsible for this situation. The 1996 population for the project area was 3986.

Relative to the local government areas of Swan and Mundaring and the Perth metropolitan area, the project area is characterised by high proportions of:

- Seniors (14% of population)
- Indigenous Australians (9% of population)
- One person households (32% of households)
- One parent families (19% of households)
- Persons not in the labour force (53%)
- Households with low incomes
- Households with no motor vehicle (24%)

The Community Vision

The vision statement describes the kind of place and community that the current residents of the project area, and other stakeholders, want for the future.

The community consultation process for the vision involved asking the following questions:

- What do people think of as 'community'?
- What it is like to live/work in the project area now (positives and negatives)?
- What kind of community do people want for the future?

The description of what life in the project area is like now, is largely a negative one. Crime, antisocial behaviour, unemployment and poor sense of community are some of the issues raised repeatedly in the consultations. The high levels of awareness of the area's problems meant that, for many, trying to identify what is good about the area was a difficult task.

The vision was eventually articulated as follows:

"A community:

Where people have more opportunities for interaction and can become more involved in community life. Where people can help each other, work together and live in harmony. Where people can live with feelings of safety and security. Where people have a sense of community and a sense of belonging. Where people have a sense of pride about themselves and where they live. Where there

is a feeling of hope about life and the future.

Where there is employment and more things to do for the young. Where there is a more attractive and safe living environment, where there is more open space and a more vital local shopping area. Where there are improvements to pedestrian access and street lighting.

Where people can live a 'normal' lifestyle in a 'normal' suburb".

Community Development Strategies

A number of community development strategies have been identified as a response to the community profile, the vision for the future and issues raised by the community.

These strategies are a guide to community development and will be subject to community feedback and regular review. The strategies are not intended to be prescriptive – they illustrate what is possible

The strategies are intended to support planning, engineering and socio-economic objectives for the project area and be sustainable beyond the life of the project

The strategies deal with the social, cultural, spiritual, economic and physical aspects of peoples' lives. They are intended to encourage hope, enthusiasm, and an atmosphere of caring and respect.

The community development strategies are described under the following headings:

Sense of place

- Increased awareness of area
- Increased pride in the physical environment

Community and individual wellbeing

- Involvement in community life
- Improved opportunities for interaction
- Living in harmony
- Feeling hope
- Feeling safe
- Supporting the young
- Supporting employment initiatives

The community and the Eastern Horizons New Living Project

- Community identification with the project
- Community involvement in the project

A detailed list of the strategies is provided in Appendix A.

4. Key Recommendations

The Community Development Plan contains a range of recommendations. Key recommendations include:

- A community worker (person or organisation) be engaged as part of the project to facilitate community development and take initial responsibility for implementing the community development strategies.
- Two Detached Youth Workers (1.5 full time equivalent persons) be engaged as part of the project to address the needs of young people, particularly Aboriginal young people.
- A Community Reference Group be formally established for the project. This group should comprise community members and human services providers and have a number of roles
- There be monitoring of social and economic change in the Eastern Horizons New Living Project area so that the social effects of the project can be quantified and qualified
- Midland Project Management liaise with an accommodation working group currently exploring a range of initiatives to address the needs of the homeless, and people seeking affordable rental accommodation, in Midvale and Midland.

5. Community Consultation

Community consultation was an important component in the formulation of the Community Development Plan. The community was consulted to identify:

- Current issues
- Current community needs
- Goals/ a vision for the future
- Strategies (what should be done and how the community can be involved)

A range of consultation techniques was used:

- Attendance at existing community forums (eg. Residents and Ratepayers Association, seniors groups)
- A public session
- A public display (Midland Library)
- Meetings with specific groups (eg. seniors, Chamber of Commerce)
- Primary school exercise and discussion groups
- Youth survey
- Local shop owners survey
- Meetings with government and other service providers
- Project workshops (key stakeholders)

Comment was obtained from:

- The general community as represented by the Midvale/Midland Residents & Ratepayers Association and people interviewed at the Midland Public Library (in an organised session)
- Seniors (who constitute a significant proportion of the community) as represented by the Midland Pensioners League, Swan Caring Service and Ace Cinema Seniors Group
- Young people as represented by young people using the services of the North East Regional Youth Council (NERYC) and Swan View Youth Centre
- Children as represented by students at the Midvale Primary School
- The business community as represented by members of the Midland & Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry and local shop operators
- A range of service providers, particularly the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring, the Police Service, Education Department, Family & Children's Services, employment service providers, accommodation providers and the Family Support Network which acted as a key reference group for the study

Details of who we contacted are provided in Appendix B.

6. Study Challenges and Opportunities

The study had a range of challenges and opportunities that are summarised below.

Challenges

- There was no precedent for the Community Development Plan
- The profile of the community posed challenges for getting people to participate in the study and identify a positive future
- The Community Development Plan was prepared as a separate exercise from the Masterplan for the redevelopment project
- There was no public release of the project Masterplan at the time of the Community Development Plan preparation (and therefore little public knowledge of the project)
- The project area has no logical boundaries from a community perspective
- The project area covers two council areas

Opportunities

- Could identify what needs to be done without constraints/preconceptions
- Could deal with issues that tap into feelings and spirituality
- Could support existing efforts by the community and human services sector
- The Community Development Plan could pull a range of issues into one comprehensive document

7. What is happening to the Community Development Plan now?

The Community Development Plan has been accepted 'in principle' by the Ministry of Housing, the City of Swan and the Shire of Mundaring. A consultative committee, with representation from the Ministry, the local authorities and the local community has recently been established. This committee is currently identifying strategies within the plan that require priority action. Funding is to be sought for the implementation of the Community Development Plan.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

SENSE OF PLACE

OBJECTIVE: INCREASE AWARENESS OF AREA

Strategy: Local history projects

Strategy: Cultural mapping exercise

Strategy: Provision of an estate name and other identification

OBJECTIVE: INCREASED PRIDE IN THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy: Improve the appearance of the project area

Strategy: Awards for property and street appearance

Strategy: Encourage private home owners to improve properties

Strategy: Extend verge mowing

Strategy: Reducing graffiti

Strategy: Reducing litter

Strategy: Community art

COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL WELLBEING

OBJECTIVE: INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY LIFE

Strategy: Empowerment of community

Strategy: Increase membership of community groups

Strategy: Support for the Residents and Ratepayers Association

Strategy: Encourage linkages between locally based service providers and the community

Strategy: Identify any need for local recreational/sporting/interest groups

Strategy: Involve local offenders in community projects through liaison with the Ministry of Justice

OBJECTIVE: IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION

Strategy: Provision of temporary community meeting place in site office

Strategy: Provision of a community facility

Strategy: More and Improved POS

Strategy: Hubs of activity

Strategy: Provide more and better footpaths to assist safe pedestrian movement in an area where there is a low proportion of car ownership

Strategy: Improved access to Midland Gate Shopping Centre and improved accessibility throughout the project area (including crossing of major roads)

OBJECTIVE: LIVING IN HARMONY

- Strategy: Promote inclusion
- Strategy: Reconciliation
- Strategy: Making connections in the neighbourhood
- Strategy: Celebrate cultural diversity
- Strategy: Celebrate Aboriginal culture
- Strategy: Bringing the community and local business together
- Strategy: Bringing different generations together
- Strategy: Shire boundary rationalisation

OBJECTIVE: FEELING HOPE

- Strategy: Provide adequate accommodation
- Strategy: Celebrate new facilities
- Strategy: Keeping people informed
- Strategy: Supporting families
- Strategy: Supporting individuals
- Strategy: Addressing drug issues
- Strategy: Improving the community's image in the media

OBJECTIVE: FEELING SAFE

- Strategy: Provision of security patrols
- Strategy: Extend Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House Program
- Strategy: Community safety audit
- Strategy: Linkages with City of Swan safety initiatives
- Strategy: Liaison with the WA Police Service
- Strategy: Liaison with Midland Safer WA Committee (local branch)
- Strategy: Improving home security
- Strategy: Review safety issues in relation to Public Access Ways
- Strategy: Provide better street lighting throughout the project area
- Strategy: Provide a safe pedestrian crossing of Morrison Road

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING THE YOUNG

- Strategy: Youth workers
- Strategy: Youth programs
- Strategy: Link with Regional Youth Strategy
- Strategy: Link with youth facility study
- Strategy: Link with PCYC
- Strategy: Young people as a part of the community

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

- Strategy: Increase employment opportunities
- Strategy: Encourage the employment of local people in the revitalisation project
- Strategy: Encourage home based business
- Strategy: Internet facility

THE COMMUNITY AND THE EASTERN HORIZONS NEW LIVING PROJECT

OBJECTIVE: COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PROJECT

- Strategies: Project signage and information dissemination
- Strategy: Project milestone events
- Strategy: Acknowledgment of local people

OBJECTIVE: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

- Strategy: Formulate a community consultation program
- Strategy: Community involvement in the project
- Strategy: Community involvement in the development of local parks
- Strategy: To promote inclusion for people with disabilities,

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN STUDY

- City of Swan
- Shire of Mundaring
- Midvale Primary School/Midvale Pre-Primary School
- Midvale Child Care and Neighbourhood Centre
- Midvale Community Health Centre
- Parent Adolescent Counselling Service
- Midland Nursing Home
- Morrison Lodge
- Karnany Aboriginal Centre
- Midvale/Midland Residents and Ratepayers Assoc
- Midland & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Shop owners
- Pensioners League (Midland Branch)
- Family & Children's Services, Midland
- Police
- Swan Districts Seniors Citizen Centre
- Swan Education District
- Midland Aboriginal Advisory Group (MAAG)
- Midland PCYC
- NERYC
- Hills Community Support Group
- Midland College of TAFE
- Ministry of Justice
- Midland Enterprise Centre
- Jobs Australia, Midland

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- Centrelink
 - Joblink
 - Workright
 - Kuljak Aboriginal Employment, Training and Cultural Centre
 - Swan Initiatives
 - Eastern Metro Community Housing Assoc Inc
 - MIDLAS
 - Swan Park Sporting Complex
 - Swan View SHS
 - *Governor Stirling SHS*
 - Swan Food Centre
 - Adolescent Conflict Counselling Service, Midland
 - NE Metropolitan Community Drug Service Team, Midland
 - Swan District Hospital
 - Swan Clinic
 - Swan Hills Division of General Practitioners
 - Midland Women's Health Care Place
 - Midland Youth Health
 - Swan Valley Child & Adolescent Mental Health
 - Service and Youth Therapies Service
 - Midland Local Drug Action Group
 - Midland Disability Services Commission
 - Swan Emergency Accommodation
 - Family Futures/Aboriginal Health
 - Midland Artists Collective
 - St Vincent de Paul
 - Midland Brick

On the Ground: Practical Responses & Strategies

Balga Action Group

Keith Merrit Balga Action Group

Balga Action Group was formed early in 1998 to express community concerns—in particular the proposed New North Project effecting the suburbs of BALGA Westminster, Girrawheen and Koondoola.

The community was adamant that all 3 storey blocks of flats were to be demolished and that Balga receive a high standard of upgrade.

After some in fighting and many letters/faxes, meetings with Homeswest/Minister—the Minister Kim Hames finally announced that all 3 storey blocks of flats in Balga would be demolished. The land would then be subdivided and sold.

To ensure that Balga received a high standard of upgrade a number of sub committees were formed—namely:

- Main road beautification and streetscapes
- Refurbishment (homes)
- Redevelopment.

These committees meet with the New North Project Managers (Satterleys) - City of Stirling—Main Roads and Homeswest offering requests and ideas. For example the beautification of Wanneroo Road—the committee suggested that the blackboys in the extension of the Reid Highway could be removed and transplanted in Wanneroo Road thus saving on costs instead of just bulldozing the natural fauna. Originally small trees had been planted and were moved down when the grass was cut—proving to be a costly exercise.

In the early stage of refurbishment of homes for sale or rent the quality of workmanship in some areas was sub standard. It was found that our project manager was only allowed a fraction of monies allowed to a similar project manager south of the river (not a level playing field as we were led to believe). At this time our project manager received a lot of flack from our group for a poor standard in some areas of workmanship—they could only do the best that was possible with the

monies available!!

Through BAGs efforts more refurbishment funds per home were made available by Homeswest to the project manager who was then able to deliver a much higher standard of refurbishment.

Balga Action Group inspects batches of all refurbished properties (sale/rental) and the outcomes are discussed with the New North.

Through this inspection process we have a higher standard of upgrade than we would have had. We still don't always agree—we are working together.

At times we have had to meet with Homeswest for additional funds to include extra items in the project managers specifications:

- All asbestos roofs removed
- New kitchens
- New bathrooms
- Additional wall tiles (40+) around shower/bath wall
- Security locks/screens
- Fencing
- Landscaping front yards
- Level back yards
- To include a pantry
- New stoves
- Hot water systems as necessary
- New gutters where necessary

'Communities still have to be vigilante if they expect a high standard to be maintained'.

The demolition of the flats and a high standard of upgrade for Balga is only the start fo the process necessary to rebuild our suburb and make it a better and safer place to live, play and raise a family. This can only be done through cooperation by all parties.

We are fortunate in Balga to have the support of our local councillors, the City of Stirling, Local members of Parliament, Satterley (New North Project) and Homeswest who are all working towards making this renewal program successful. It is up to the communities to make the most of their redevelopment as it will not happen again—what you have

achieved during the 10 year program is what you be left with!!

To this end we have a number of sub committees and activities—the New North is most supportive.

- Family Christmas Celebrations/ Carols/ Fireworks is a free community and multicultural day/evening.
- The Skateboard Park was a BAG initiative and is in operation.
- The cultural planning was a BAG initiative to have the City of Stirling budget \$15,000 for a pilot project supported by CANWA—the City of Stirling is now a participating council for the year 7/99—6/2000 and with additional funding from Safer WA has been extended for a further 6 months.
- We acknowledge the support by outside organisations in the early days—Disability Services, Community Housing Coalition, CANWA, Shelter WA, Australians for Reconciliation and the City of Stirling.
- City of Stirling sponsored intergenerational walks in conjunction with BAG.
- Youth Awards initiated by BAG/ New North—into six Balga Schools with 4 awards for each school. Each recipient receives a certificate and a cheque for \$50.
- Community Clean ups
- Overpass Committee—Mirrabooka Road/ Reid Highway has proven to be a dangerous intersection and the committee are seeking a resolution to this safety issue.
- Main Road Beautification Streetscapes (metal bollards were surplus in Beaumaris Development and were able to be used around trees in the centre of Camberwell Road) thanks to Satterleys.
- Safer WA—active participation at local district level
- Telethon donation of dolls house for auction on the internet
- Assistance to other community groups

Balga Action Group supports the Renewal Program and commends Homeswest for its initiative in the undertaking of such a project.

A saying in the army—”It’s all training”

On the Ground: Practical Responses & Strategies

Karawara Community Project

Joyce Wilkins
Management Committee
Karawara Community Project

An established community discovers that redevelopment is going to take place.

What happens to it, let us look back to that point in history of our Karawara Community Project?

I believe it is important to identify the emotional process that begins to take place, once we do this it can become a tool, which can enable use to survive and hopefully rebuild a new community.

The whole process is a very painful one, however if we share the experience, in the knowledge that every community is unique and what works for one may not work for another, but it may enable us to identify what's happening and shed a little light on the situation.

The very knowledge that others have trod this path and come out of it at the other end can be very comforting.

Life Threatening

Our community's life was threatened, and its heartbeat went into a stage of shock, the grieving process begins.

WE can now look back in retrospect but at the time all we could do was deal with the shock and put some survival mechanism into process.

Denial was the first stage, that feeling of numbness of disbelief its like being on automatic pilot. It's not really going to happen, and our very heartbeat was threatened.

Preventing it happen was the second stage, we set out to change peoples minds, to let them know how much we are hurting and what our community means to us. Demonstrations to local council, Homeswest, this took place in a variety of ways.

At the Annual General Meeting with many

councillors and local politicians present, the young people presented a powerful drama, by carrying a casket, which held symbols of their community. They then presented a eulogy.

Another time the children were involved in a demonstration at the local council offices, with placards and song they too put across their story. At least we were doing something and enabling the community to express itself and its anger in the only way it know how to at the moment.

Recognising the divisions that were beginning to take place, 'us and them' syndrome this was very painful. We began to identify who our real friends and allies were.

Recognising the need to go forward to take stock of what was happening. I believe this turning point took place when we engaged with Ken Marston from WACOSS. Ken initially helped us to bring to dream again to work out strategies on how to go forward.

Building bridges that had been broken, getting people back on side. Selling ourselves, affirming whom we were and what we had to offer. A very positive experience.

We did this in different ways. We organised an information evening for the council, stepped out of our own community hall, on to neutral ground. The story was told in a powerful way, professional parents, and a young person who had grown up with the project and saw it as her extended family.

The stories were shared along with the value of the project for community, and also its value nationally and internationally.

However it was the young person who had the most impact. Honey spoke of it being her extended family; her heart beat just like the music she was studying at the time.

We all felt the healing had begun to take place, enabling us to continue to walk along side, support and resource the people in the community who were hurting, for there was a lot of undervaluing

taking place, the long term tenants and their needs, the excising structure, the supportive networks and resources, these were all overlooked.

The community meetings continued, tenants were supported and resourced, wakes were held, acknowledging the grief that was taking place.

Surrogate Community Development, a bitter pill to swallow a private group coming in from the outside, trying to build community from the top, ignoring the established community and all we stood for with our grass roots development, which enabled many people to feel valued.

The journey continues redevelopment is taking place all around us, earth movers demolition, noise and a lot of dust is all part of this. Relocation of the project into new buildings will soon take place.

A lot of people who were part of our community have moved out of the area. The community is being reshaped. It will never be the same. New people new challenges, and big painful questions on the horizon.

Will our excising philosophy fit in with this new community, where the dollar seems more important.

Will this new community see the value in our fun factory and other programs? Can we change for the community? Or do we continue to serve the people who value us, those who have been dispossessed of so much already, their community, their resources, their self image and self worth. Can we expect dedicated staff to change their philosophy?

These are all important questions we need to address as we continue our journey. I hope one day we will be able to share the story of how we recreated and reshaped a new community at the same time holding on to our philosophy of inclusiveness for all people.

