



Counterpoint Community Services INC
67 Raglan Street Waterloo NSW 2017

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Counterpoints initial response to the media statement

On the appointment of Independent expert advice to steer the future of Waterloo

On behalf of the tenant's (NAB) Waterloo Redevelopment Group we respond to the above latest development of Plans for the redevelopment of the Waterloo Estate

It is not very reassuring to learn that two leading agencies of our city, i.e. LAHC and the City of Sydney, could not reach an agreement over the future of Waterloo South.

We restate that the Waterloo social housing community has been painfully subject to successive government planners and experts since 2003 to redevelop the local estates with no end in sight. As previously stated, the level of confusion, anxiety, and wasted energy has been physical and psychologically detrimental to residents and support agency stakeholders.

It is disappointing that more new experts are brought in to have a go; we can only hope this will not add to any further uncertainty for already needlessly stressed community members.

We note that residents were angry to hear about this new phase through news articles, and a short media statement that failed to acknowledge their existence, role in the process or the anxiety they been subject too.

It would have been more decent and respectful if they had heard directly from the department or relevant Ministers or even LAHC or Council with whom they have been engaged. This is a frequently repeated mistake that is frankly insulting. This is not a vacant lot being up-zoned people already live here.

The press release goes nowhere near explaining the process of offering the assurance residents require. It fails to address:

- Why there will be no community or NGO input, influence or involvement in the appointed panel and any decision they may make
- The need for expertise on public and social housing in advising the Planning Secretary which none of advisors appear to have.

 The Factory Community Centre
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- The promise of an exhibition process rarely results in communities' views genuinely impacting the outcome and is deemed by many to be too late.
- How will the department manage the conflict given the proponent is part of the same department that is now also the final decision maker
- Residents are not aware of any meaningful details of the difference between the LAHC plan and the city because LAHC has never presented on their lodge plan nor sought input on those point of differences.
- Similarly, residents are not aware of what differences still exist between Council and LAHC that DPIE need to resolve
- If the question and concerns of the community on the suitability of the high-density proposed for social housing tenants will be addressed by DPIE.
- Concerns around the shallow commitment of both plans as it relates to dedicated Aboriginal affordable housing and the marginal increase in social housing stock remain ignored.
- How the department will manage the conflict given the proponent is part of the same department that is now also the final decision maker
- The promise of community input through an exhibition process rarely results in communities' views genuinely impacting the outcome and is deemed by many to be too late especially when the prior process is aimed at resolving conflicting positions of 'experts.'
- There is no commitment to provide the much needed and previously highly valued independent support to residents during this increasingly drawn out process. This only further adds insult to injury.
- All parts of government involved should act on their duty of care towards the impacted residents and communicate directly with the broader community rather than just look at this site as a blank canvas without residents. Citizens before profit!
- It is noted that since the current phase was announced in Waterloo in 2015, none of the Ministers in question or Department Secretaries have spoken directly to the impacted residents, the community groups nor the NGO's who work with them.

The community asks the government to honour its undertakings to engage and work with them directly rather than determining their future behind closed doors. Those involved in the new planning process should meet with community representatives to address the concerns above prior to any further decisions being made.

Yours Sincerely

Michael M Shreenan
Executive Officer/ Acting Chairperson WRG

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