



The Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC
Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast
contactRose@parliament.nsw.gov.au

RE: Congratulations and Waterloo South Clarification

Dear Rose,

On behalf of myself and REDWatch I want to extend our congratulations to both you and the Labor Party on the election outcome.

Congratulations also on your appointment as Minister responsible for Housing and the inter-connected areas of Homelessness, Mental Health and Youth. As you know from your time as Shadow Minister and talking to communities, there are huge long-term structural issues across these areas and we wish you well as you and the new government bring a fresh set of eyes to these areas and look at how you prioritise the changes needed.

We note from reporting in the Sydney Morning Herald that you are reviewing public housing redevelopments in the inner city, including Waterloo. We appreciate that you have acknowledged that “there are residents there who are genuinely wondering what a change of government means for them, and where they’re going to live, and I do not want that uncertainty to continue any longer than is possible to avoid,”

We understand from the LAHC briefing this week of the Waterloo Redevelopment Group (WRG), of which REDWatch is a part, that LAHC expects to brief you in the next couple of weeks about the Waterloo South redevelopment.

The last Ministerial announcement about Waterloo, under the former Government, was dropped to the Australian Financial Review without even a public media release. LAHC assures us this will not happen again, but obviously they cannot bind their Minister.

Out of respect for tenants, it is important that any announcement about the future of Waterloo South be communicated to the Waterloo tenants and agencies prior to public announcement. We encourage you as Minister to prioritise tenants in announcing the future of Waterloo South under the Labor Government.

Tenants Union (NSW) and Shelter (NSW) have been trying to negotiate [A Compact for Renewal: What tenants want from Renewal](#) with DCJ and LAHC since 2017. The Compact is based on interviews with tenants about their experience of renewal. We would encourage you, as Minister, to be guided by the draft Compact and to facilitate formalising the compact at an appropriate time. One reason given by officials for not agreeing to the compact, is that Ministers and Governments will do what they will do and Departments cannot make undertakings about processes outside their control.

LAHC has agreed to some localised “Waterloo Renewal Principles” with the

Groundswell agencies and the WRG which, while less than sought in the Compact, represent some agreement around the project as it stands currently. I have enclosed a copy for your reference.

Through Groundswell, as REDWatch spokesperson, I have been involved in meetings under Chatham House rules with representatives from LAHC as well as ongoing meetings with DCJ, SLHD and other agencies around human service supports for tenants. When your ministerial advisers are in place, we would welcome the opportunity to also sit down with them, if not yourself, to provide a briefing on Waterloo South issues and initiatives. Groundswell has offered such a briefing in its letter and we would be involved in that discussion.


We would welcome a presentation to a REDWatch meeting from you as Minister on the new government's approach to housing policy after you have received briefings and decided with your colleagues on your implementation priorities. Please let me know when this might be appropriate.

You or your advisors are always welcome to attend REDWatch meetings and listen to the discussion as a way of keeping an ear to the ground. One of the challenges going from opposition to government is continuing to hear the voices of the communities you spoke to in opposition.

The local voices tend to become filtered and drowned out as information flows through agency officials and ministerial advisors. We are happy to provide a local sounding board to you and your staff about issues relating to our communities or to refer you to those best placed to provide input.

Wishing you all the best in the new role and the challenges ahead.

Yours Faithfully,



Geoffrey Turnbull
REDWatch Co-Spokesperson
On behalf of REDWatch Inc
c/- PO Box 1567
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Ph Wk: (02) 9318 0824
email: mail@redwatch.org.au
web: www.redwatch.org.au

REDWatch is a residents and friends group covering Redfern Eveleigh Darlington and Waterloo (the same area originally covered by the Redfern Waterloo Authority). REDWatch monitors government activities in the area and seeks to ensure community involvement in all decisions made about the area. More details can be found at www.redwatch.org.au.