

Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan Stage 2 (BEP2) Submission to Redfern-Waterloo Authority (RWA)

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There are many social and environmental concerns related to scale and type of development, lack of investment and vision for public infrastructure and services as well as the process undertaken to develop the draft BEP2. These include:

1. Sale of public land to private land developers

The NSW Labor state government now has a track record of prioritising interests of private developers over community needs. With this latest proposal to sell off existing public land in Redfern-Waterloo there is a real danger that many of the dwellings will become part of the transient private rental market. This is a very short-term grab for money and does not consider a long-term, liveable and sustainable vision for redevelopment in this area.

2. Planning for a sustainable and cohesive community

- The separation of private dwellings (infill) and public housing buildings (high-rise) sets the scene for societal segregation and division based on discriminatory criteria such as socio-economic status. The RWA should be planning development to ensure social harmony and cohesion within communities not segregation.
- Delivery of public and human services to the community should be a key focus in this redevelopment. This includes meeting the needs of all current residents as well as those who may move into the area once redevelopment is complete. Facilities such as aged-care, medical centres, childcare, schools and community halls should all be part of the services provided. Government investment should ensure a high standard of service provision.
- Redevelopment is a clear opportunity for applying environmentally sustainable design principles to ensure social and ecological sustainability. Measures to do this include solar passive design, site orientation, reusing rainwater and stormwater, energy efficient buildings, use of renewable energy, open space with native flora and the use of sustainable and low impact materials in construction.

3. Need for more social and affordable housing

Currently there are 3500 public housing units of various sizes in the precinct. Under the proposal this will be reduced to 2800 by converting 700 to affordable housing. We need more social housing and more affordable housing in the inner city - not a conversion from one to the other. Where did all the commitments for affordable housing in Redfern-Waterloo as part of the CUB site redevelopment go? This should be used to add affordable housing to existing numbers of public housing.

4. The plan does not cater for long-term future needs

The data used by Housing NSW to predict future demographic trends is 5 years old and assumes that the trends of the past 40 years will continue. It appears that HNSW assumes that older pensioners and singles will occupy social housing units or couples will occupy the remainder of the units. No allowance has been made to accommodate families with children and single parents wishing to live near the city.

5. Proposed heights and densities exceed Council development control regulations

The densities and heights proposed appear to exceed the council standards for the area. Any concessions from the council standards will negatively impact on the amenity of the area and the liveability of the community.

6. Reduction in public open space

Public open space in the proposed plan is significantly reduced from current levels. This is of great concern as there is already a shortage of open space and recreational facilities in the area. Redfern-Waterloo already has one of the lowest open space to persons ratio in Sydney. RWA planners need to consider innovative ways of increasing open space as part of this redevelopment.

7. Transport needs and traffic issues

This part of the city is already congested with traffic which is expected to get worse with the development proposed in the area. This includes the rezonings in Waterloo, Zetland and Green Square. This proposal will place an additional strain on the already over capacity public transport system. Public assets are being sold-off and housing densities increased for the benefit of private developers, yet no government or developer contributions are proposed for light rail or upgrades to Redfern station in this proposal. Reducing traffic through improving public, pedestrian and cycle transport should also be a key consideration. Inclusion of sustainable means of transport should be part of all development planning.

It is obvious that increases in population density (especially private dwellings) will result in increased traffic in this area. In view of this the figure of 1.5% increase in traffic (Traffic Study) appears to be inaccurate and understated.

8. Inadequate public engagement and consultation

The public engagement process has been inadequate and has failed to consider principles of inclusiveness, diversity and fairness. Given the complexity of issues related to this redevelopment, it is vital that affected communities be provided with adequate and relevant information and allowed the time and support to understand the information to be able to participate in a meaningful way and influence decision-making. A large array of participatory processes exists, including deliberative approaches. If the government is serious about really listening to the community, they need to rethink the model of tokenistic consultation that has been used during this process.