

# Social impact assessment a short explanation

for REDWatch  
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# What's SIA for?

The idea is to

1. think ahead about what might happen
2. avoid bad outcomes, and
3. make good outcomes better

The jargon for this is

Its anticipatory (thinking ahead)

Its precautionary (avoiding bad outcomes)

Its due diligence (doing the work well)

# Two key principles

1. The precautionary principle
2. Distributional equity – who wins / who loses

# A series of steps?

1. Screening	Is an SIA needed?
2. Scoping	What are the likely issues? Who is involved?
3. Baseline	Understanding in detail what is there now
4. Likely impacts	What might happen? (research/analysis)
5. Has the proposal changed?	Check, revise as needed
6. Mitigations?	Could some changes to the proposal improve things?
7. Write report	the Impact Assessment

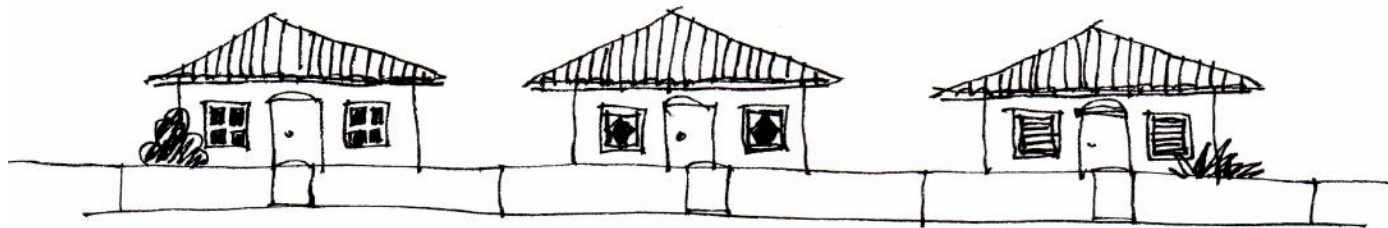
# Best practice

Screening	There is a public discussion
Scoping	This is open and collaborative
Baseline	The draft is made public
Likely impacts	The draft is widely consulted
Has the proposal changed?	There is continual updating
Mitigations?	Some things are simply ruled out (e.g. on the basis of precaution)
Write report	the Impact Assessment comes as no surprise

Often

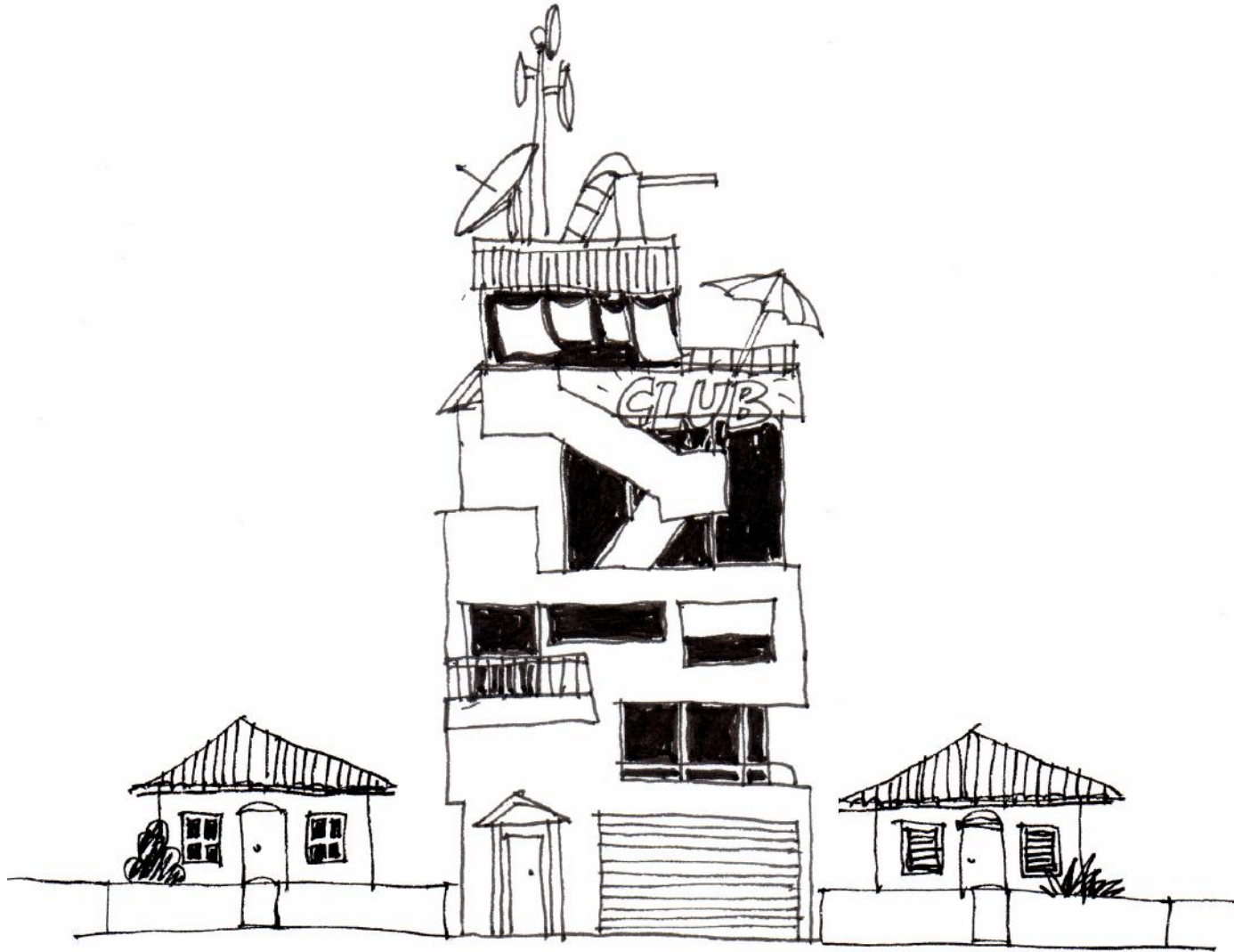
An impact assessment is done about a concrete proposal

Joe Bloggs lives in the middle house





# Joe Bloggs puts his grand design to Council



In my example

Joe Bloggs' plans were precise and detailed

There was a social impact assessment

Joe Bloggs' DA was refused

**That was the end of the matter**

In the case of Redfern Waterloo

What is proposed is not known

When it will happen is not known

This doesn't mean that social impact assessment shouldn't be done. But it makes it much harder

# Difficulty 1

We are only looking for **likely changes that matter** arising from the (unknown) development

Not to be confused with changes that will happen anyway – and there are lots of those

## Difficulty 2

It's a rare master plan that gets built

And in this case we are only at 'preliminary'  
master plan stage

So there is nothing concrete to examine

## Difficulty 3

Who is paying?

How a project gets funded determines its shape

Knowing how the project will be funded helps you anticipate likely impacts

## Difficulty 4

### Timeframe

This project might take 20 years – that's a long time to keep updating your SIA

## Difficulty 5

Some good intentions have been stated...

but in terms of final outcomes

(i.e. when its all over) (and too late)

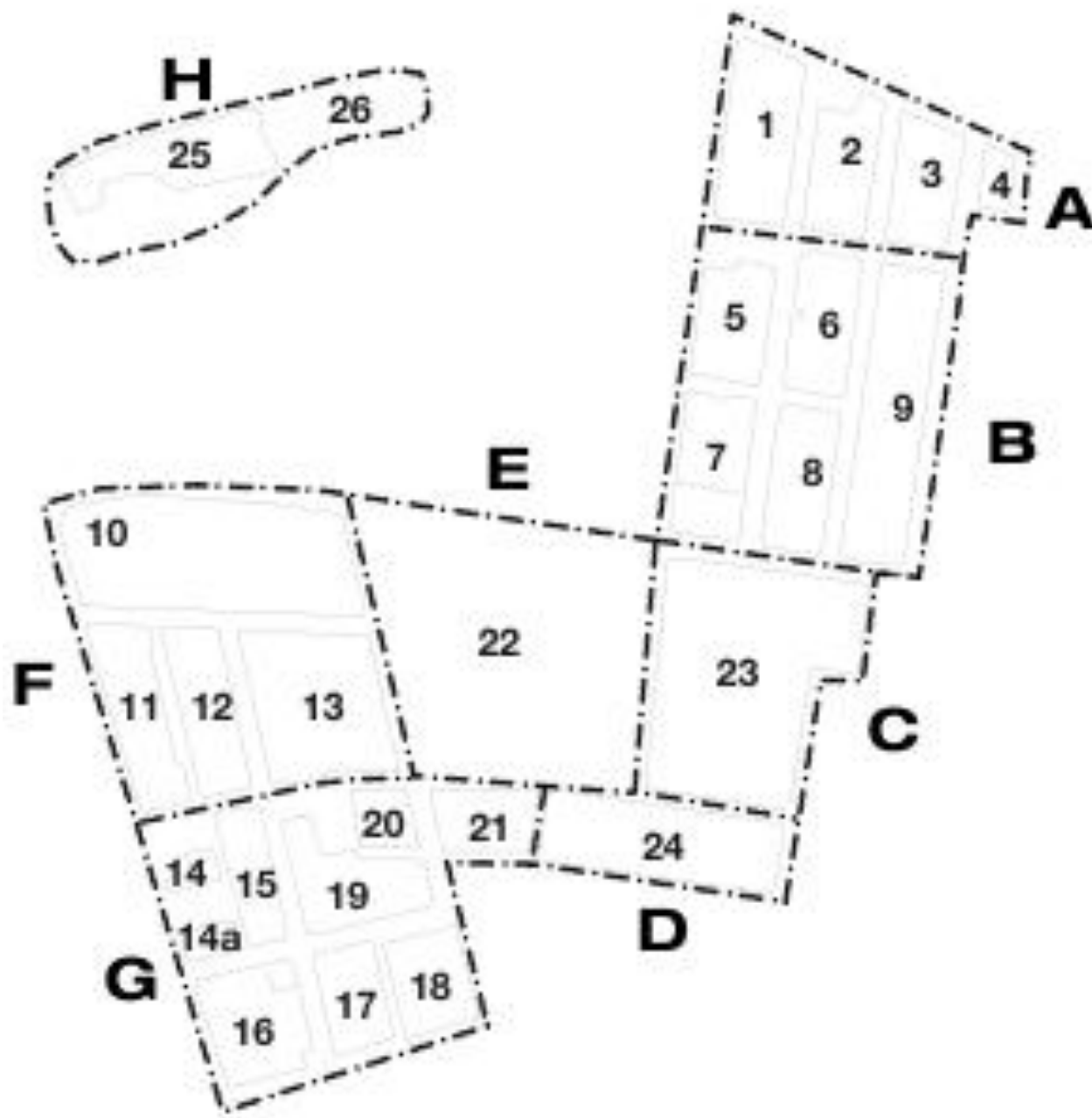


For example

Aim

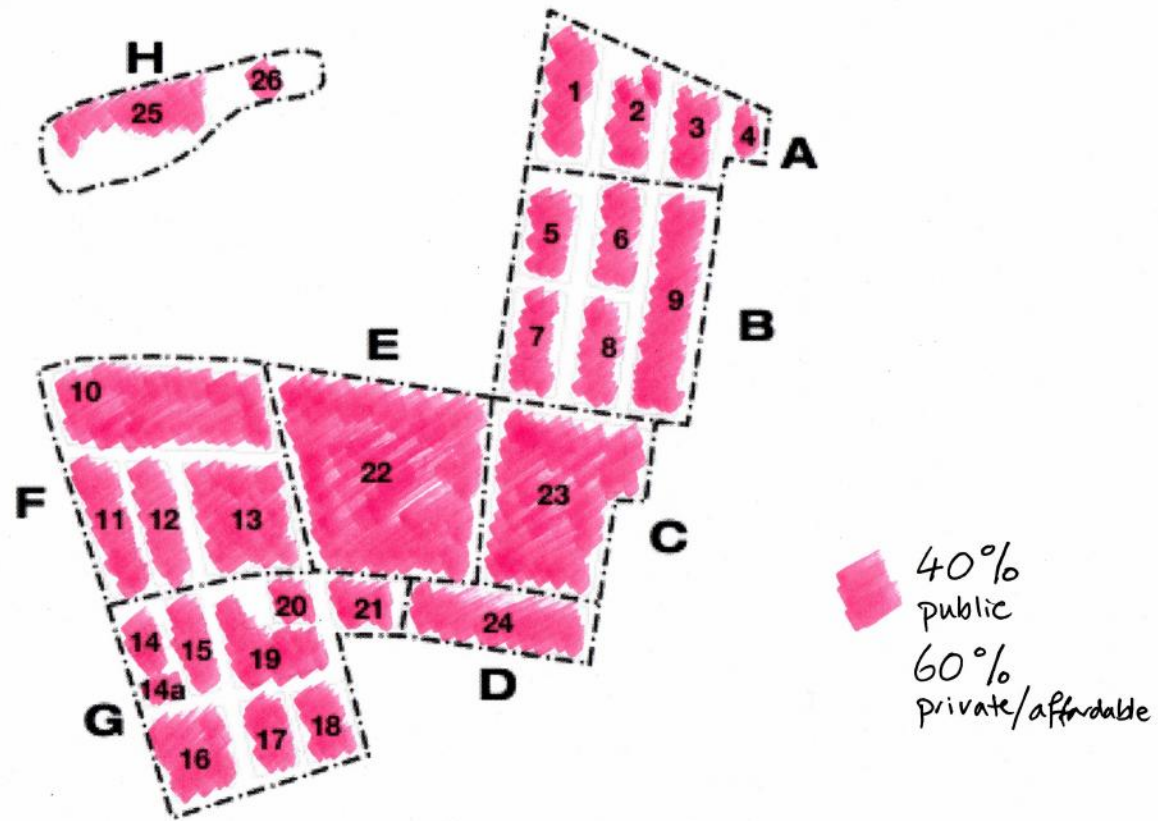
‘achieve over time a sustainable social housing mix with a target of 40% social housing and 60% private/affordable housing’

This is ***a target on completion***

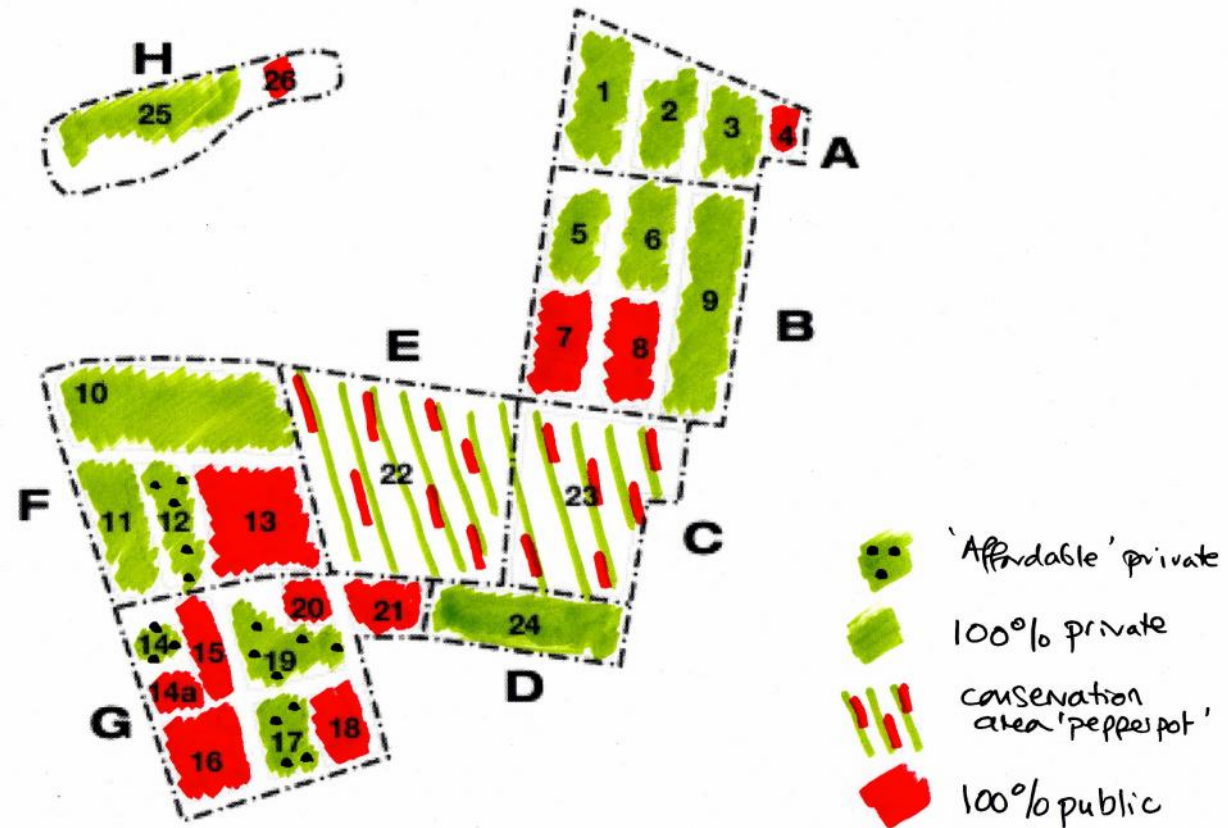


**the following options are fictitious**

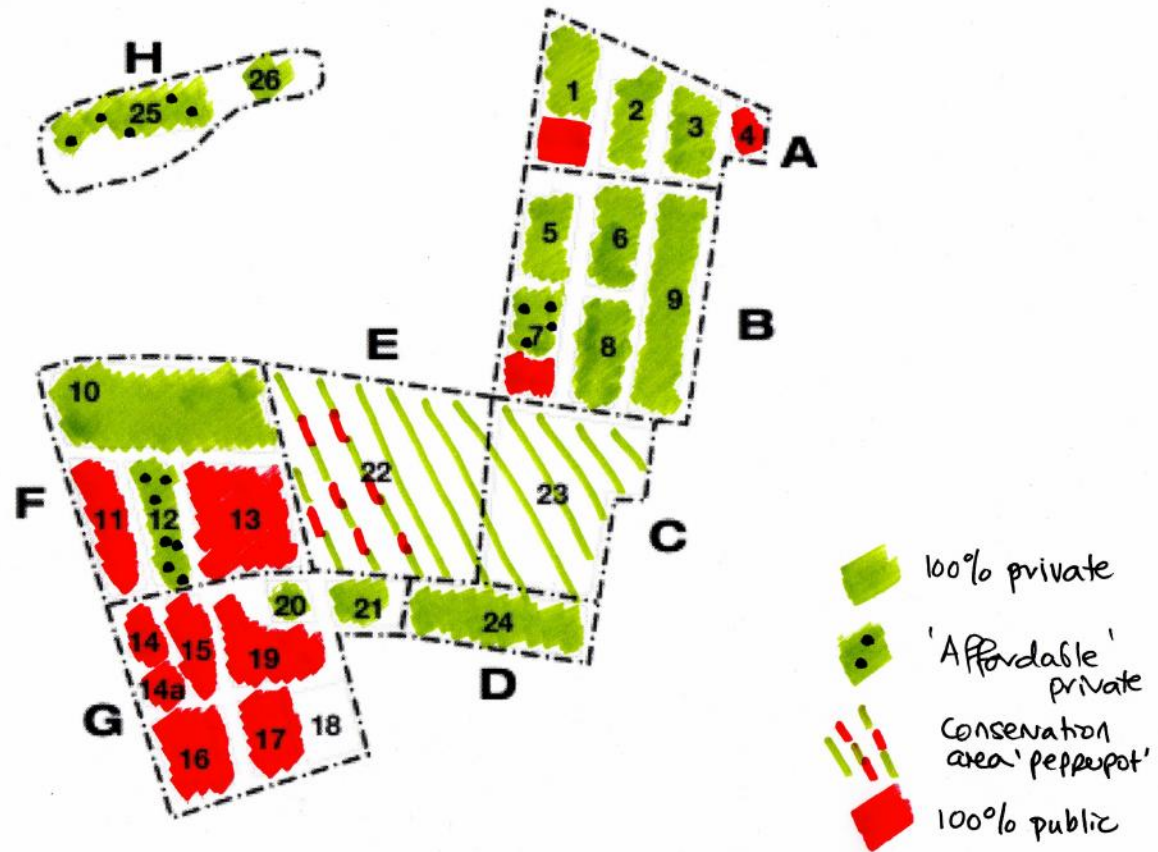
For example, this would achieve 40/60 in the BEP2 area



And so might this



Or this



# Difficulty 6

Scoping:

Its not just what happens inside the boundaries  
that matters

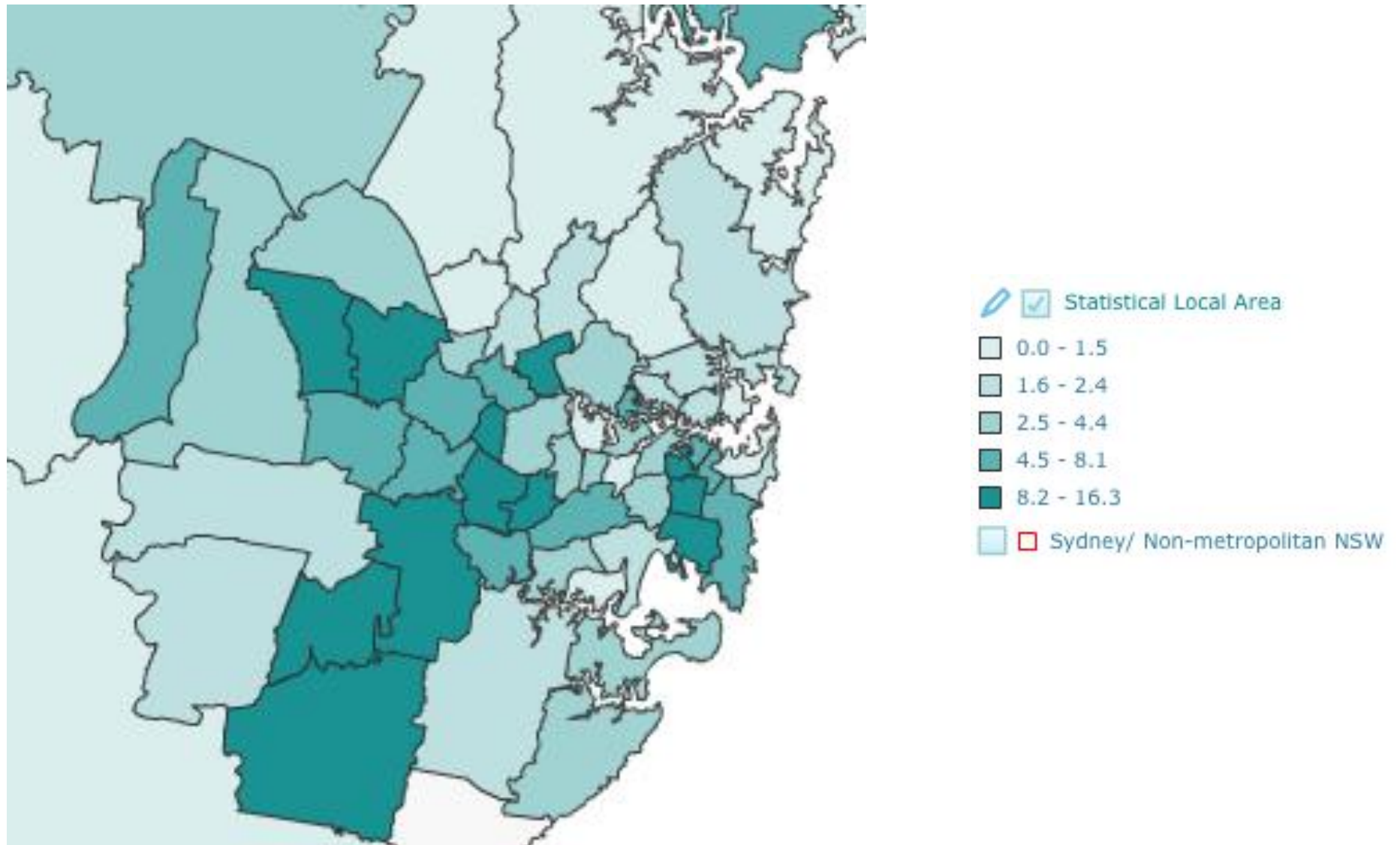
# 04.

Figure 29. Artists impression of a possible application of the proposed planning controls



The concepts have been prepared to demonstrate the merits of the planning framework, particularly in establishing a relationship with the character of surrounding development.

# % dwellings rented from housing authority, 2006, Sydney





# Difficulty 7

## Scoping:

A good SIA process is very consultative

But you can't consult people who aren't here yet

And as the project progresses new residents will want their say

## Difficulty 8

Social impacts are the poor cousin in impact assessment

This matters when there is a conflict between economic and social impact

especially when these conflicts are 'resolved' behind closed doors

## Difficulty 9

Its difficult to imagine a new environment

and its easy to want to hang onto the familiar  
and the local

If you only focus on this, the big picture may  
pass you by

# Difficulty 10

The 'bid' guys are not the 'build' guys

## Difficulty 11

Some people think that the role of SIA is only to suggest a few improvements (mitigations) here and there (a nice little park here, a hall there)

SIA is more important than that.

In best practice, SIA rules out some options and some proposals and results in a substantially better result

There is also **ONE ADVANTAGE** to being at the start of a long project

The best opportunities for good social outcomes are often lost right at the beginning

There is still an opportunity to avoid these losses

# What does all this mean for REDWatch?

I suggest

1. Take SIA very seriously – its an important tool
2. Focus on the big issues
3. Plan for both early & long term involvement

## Big issues might include

1. Distribution of public housing across the area
2. Number of social housing dwellings
3. The role of the area in the City
4. Risk that future service provision focuses on majority groups



## Big issues might include

5. Risk that high need service provision is eroded
6. Services and facilities open to all (no gates, pricing)
7. New infrastructure supports **management** of services – e.g. shop rental/carparking at A pays for manager's salary at B

# Early and long term involvement

REDWatch could maintain a watching brief

or

do its own long term/rolling social impact  
assessment