



WATERLOO SAFETY AUDIT

Part 2 – 2015

Low Rise Buildings Safety Audit carried out by the Waterloo Wellbeing and Safety Action Group, subgroup of the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board

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BACKGROUND

The Low Rise Buildings Safety Audit was carried out as stage 2 to the overall 2012 Waterloo Community Safety Audit to capture two precincts (made up of walk up blocks) which previously were not covered, in particular the internal areas of the buildings. This report details the issues, concerns and recommendations identified by participants of the Safety Audit team.

This aim of the Safety Audit was to address issues of safety and amenity as well as pro-actively implement crime prevention initiatives which are collaborative and outcome focused. It will be the basis for planning future activity in the area in the pursuit of improved safety for tenants and visitors to the Waterloo public housing estate.

The report is owned by the Waterloo Wellbeing and Safety Action Group (WWSAG) who coordinated the audit, including: Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board tenant representatives and other tenants living in Waterloo, Housing NSW, Land and Housing Corporation, Redfern Local Area Command, City of Sydney, Counterpoint Community Services, Housing Communities Program, Sydney Local Health District, and South Sydney Community Aid.

Since its inception in 2009 the Waterloo Wellbeing and Safety Action Group has had significant concerns in relation to a number of issues including:

- Safety
- Amenity
- Anti-social behaviour
- Issues related to drug and alcohol use
- Mental Health needs
- Built environment decay

The findings, comments and recommendations in this document will be considered by the WWSAG, and its range of partners, at its monthly meetings and proposed safety strategies implemented through the WWSAG action plan.



SAFETY AUDIT PROCESS

Community Safety Audits are a recognised process for identifying problems, prioritising physical improvements to improve safety and amenity with the hope of reducing opportunities for crime, anti-social behaviour, and creating greater ownership amongst all stakeholders. These audits are partnerships with key agencies working with tenants and local not-for-profit organisations to develop joint strategies for resolving safety problems and working to keep areas safe.

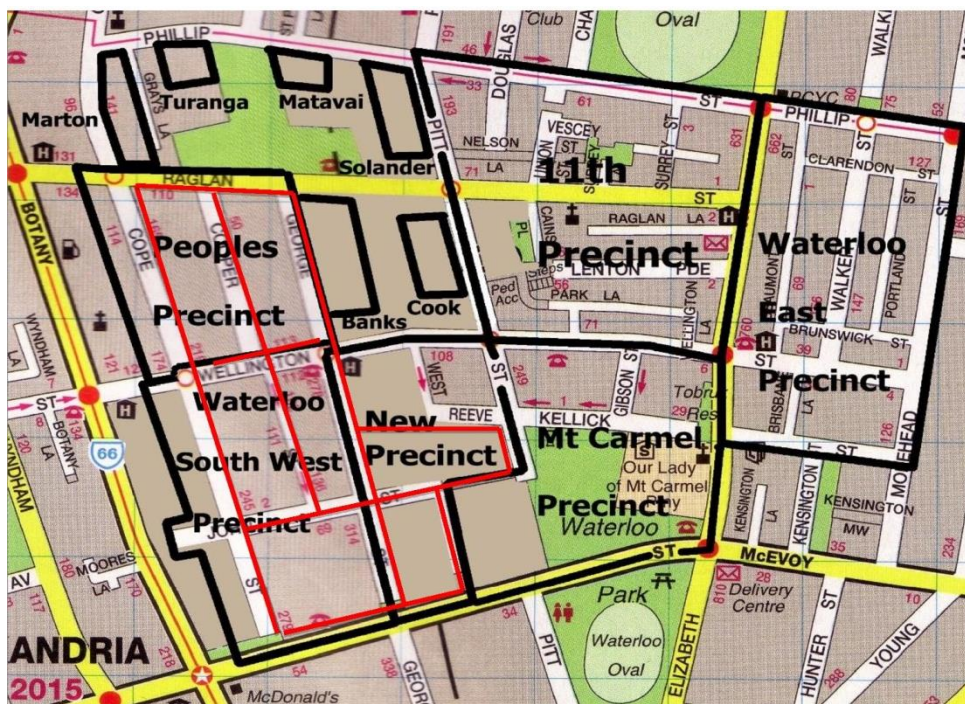
The core process for conducting a Safety Audit involved a series of 'walk around' audits of safety concerns, organised by precinct. Tenants in each precinct were invited to participate in 'walk around' audits, by way of a flyer letter box drop, along with representatives of the agency partners named above. Each audit started with an informal briefing session, introduction of tenants and agency staff, the purpose and intended outcome of the safety audit were explained and then teams were formed.

Each team was lead by an experienced facilitator who had undertaken a safety audit previously. The teams had 4-6 members each and tenants generally chose to join a team that covered the precinct in which they live. The team leader asked prompting questions along the way to stimulate observation, discussion of issues and to prompt suggestions for solutions. One person in the team was tasked with writing down comments and observations and another took photos of problem areas.

Once walk around audits were completed teams would discuss what the key issues were in the area they covered and identify any process improvement for the future. Results were then collated and reported back to the WWSAG for the purpose of this report. Including:

- General observations of the built environment and the surrounds
- Documenting existing and potential safety concerns
- Identifying specific location issues and needs
- Any impacts of the physical surroundings on tenants
- Social impacts on the built environment
- Creating discussion and ideas for action
- Priority areas to be addressed

The audit team carried out two daytime audits and two night time audits covering the South West Precinct and People's Precinct bounded by Raglan, Cope, McEvoy and George Street. The audit also covered another housing block bounded by McEvoy, John and George Streets behind the Dobell Precinct which was also not included in the 2012 audit. The public housing properties are walk up 3 story buildings, up to 60 years old. This ageing built environment presents significant challenges for both the many tenants who live in the area as well as the wide range of agencies working with tenants.



AUDIT FINDINGS - KEY SAFETY ISSUES

The key safety issues identified in the safety audit requiring attention by the appropriate agency (HNSW, LAHC or CoS) according to each issue are as follows:

Signage

- Street numbers are often poorly displayed or missing. Street numbers are not large enough or close enough to street fronts for emergency services.
- Poor signage, no evidence of ownership on display throughout the estate especially in building entrances, waste areas, and car parks. Where evidence of ownership is lacking, tenants have consistently reported problems with commuters parking their vehicles in their blocks and storing of unregistered vehicles. Additional signage and enforcement measures need to be considered.
- A program to ensure minimum signage standards are met in all buildings should be undertaken. These standards may be that:
 - Every building has a street number clearly visible from the street.
 - Every building has signs at the front door identifying the location of every unit in the block.
 - Every unit has a number on the front door.

Way Finding

- Lack of fire exit lights or evacuation plans in all buildings. Inadequate signage and way finding is a major impediment for Police operations. They can also compromise tenants safety in major incidents, and can create issues for support services attending home visits also.
- Recommendation made for main entries and car park entry points have a map identifying every main building on site and way finding signs to allow access to every building.

Lighting

- Lighting very poor in areas, need to be stronger or additional lighting installed particularly in car parks, bin bays and in particular the corner of John and McEvoy Street as it has been identified as being very dark at night. Where identified in the reports, bulbs providing stronger illumination should be installed.
- Many lights are broken (identified in night audit notes), external lights are on during daytime, and some are on 24/7. Timers need to be reviewed or sensor lighting could be installed in the internal areas to conserve energy.
- Lighting is seen by NSW Police as a major issue for their responsive actions.

Utility Cupboards/Cages/Access

- Electrical, gas, water, and under building access aren't unlocked. Many are broken or have no locks. Easy access for vandalism and potential hazard to tenants and children.
- A program to install locks on all cages and cupboards should be carried out to prevent vandalism and ensure safety for all tenants.

Building Security

- Many buildings with no security; doors are often propped open (either front, back, or both) or locks are broken and some with faulty intercoms. Unauthorised access is gained by non-tenants, problematic thoroughfare through buildings and connecting walkways.

- Tenants report that current security contractors aren't carrying out sufficient patrols, particularly at night. A review of the current security contracts for the walk up buildings is required to ensure equity of service.

Storage

- Many common areas (laundries, balconies, hallways) have items blocking access, general dumping and misuse.
- In response to the internal dumping/storage issues which create fire hazards and block pathways the Housing NSW client service team have noted particular units and have been taking measures to rectify situation, a thorough program needs to be rolled out to all buildings covered in the audit.

Fences and gates

- New style fencing in certain areas, clear lines of visibility and prevents problematic access through estate.
- Missing and/or damaged fence panels and gates indicating areas are not maintained or have any ownership. In a number of locations panels are missing and as a priority all walk up buildings should have the new style fencing installed to provide good clear delineation and prevent short cuts being used between buildings.

Trees and vegetation

- Some buildings the grounds are very well maintained, sense of pride and ownership.
- Sightlines, natural surveillance and lighting impeded in numerous locations. Pruning required. It is proposed that LAHC staff and City of Sydney staff take the results of the audit and conduct an assessment of what pruning is required.
- It has also been suggested that a review of the current City of Sydney policy for Housing NSW to request trees to be pruned be reviewed as it can at times fall down and can be very timely.

Waste Areas

- Bin bays are poorly maintained, damaged/broken bins, and little ownership throughout the estate, and especially down Cooper Street. A full bin audit is required through the estate to update to current model of bins.
- Significant amount of dumping, tenants, trades men and external. Better signage and enforcement could deter this.
- Waste and recycling education is required throughout the estate in partnership with City of Sydney waste team., it was observed through the audit that there is a need for community education regarding this matter. There is little recycling operating throughout the two precincts and where it does occur there is often contamination from general waste. The model at the Dobel building works very well as the two areas are separate for general waste and recycling, and tenants use the recycling facilities for its intended purpose.

Sharps

- While the two sharps bins in Waterloo are collecting high numbers of sharps on a monthly basis (2014 – 2015 statistics attached) and there is significantly less visible sharps in common areas compared to the 2012 Safety Audit, there are still a number of inappropriately discarded sharps in particular hot spots which tenants continue to report, particularly around the bin bays and external laundries.
- Drug paraphernalia discarded in common areas need to be removed much more promptly by contractors, and in addition WWSAG would like to see an arrangement between Housing NSW and Sydney Local Health District for SLHD staff to collect discarded sharps on HNSW land.

Maintenance

- Evidence of lack of general maintenance such as cracked pathways or entrance tiles to buildings, graffiti not cleaned up, bins not cleaned or damaged bins, fences falling over or missing panels and gates, and overgrown vegetation.

General

- Broken clothes lines
- Broken glass/windows
- Graffiti
- Dumping in streets and around bin bays
- Companion animal issues
- External laundries unused, some boarded up others not and being used for drug use
- Minimal sharps being found particularly compared to previous audit, new sharps bins being used

AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

The key safety issues identified by the WWSAG and tenants involved in the Safety Audit walk arounds are set as priorities for physical and amenity improvements across the two identified precincts.

Partner agencies in the WWSAG have pointed out that Housing NSW, Land and Housing Corporation and the City of Sydney Council should be identifying where they can some “quick wins” as far as the outstanding maintenance issues are concerned, some going back as far as the 2002 audit.

This will hopefully generate some more momentum for any proposed collaborative social/community development initiatives within the WWSAG action plan for the Waterloo area.

It is proposed that these improvements are carried out as funds become available to do so.

REPORTS FROM BOTH PRECINCTS

Overall daytime audit comments:

Across the South West Precinct and the People's Precinct area recurring safety issues included: external gas meter cages not locked, under building access not locked, internal electric meter cupboards open, external security lighting on during the day, no fire exit signs/lights in any of the buildings, dumping on common balconies, loose bricks laying around, external laundry blocks not secured being used for drug activity, vegetation hanging over footpaths and blocking sight lines, bin bays unsecured, dumping across both the precincts.

Location	Issue
George Street	
238	Dumping on top floor
240	Meter cupboards open, 1 st floor door jammed, dumping at back
242	Meter cupboard open, external lights on during day, loose bricks piled up at side of building, locked garbage bay
244	Open meter cupboard, barbed wire on 2 nd floor window
246	Meter cupboard unlocked, back door unlocked
248	Front door open, no locks on meter box, no locks on gas meters outside, no fire exit lighting, external gas heating boxes not secured (west side). Overgrown vegetation in front yard, discussion about removing lower plants to improve sightlines.
250	Trip hazard on path/ramp to building, smoke alarm on ground floor broken, no fire exit lighting, meter box not locked, exposed phone wiring, dumped goods on common area balconies, flood light facing Cooper St on during day time
252	Meter box not secured, cracked tiles on steps into building, external gas heaters not locked, broken clothes lines, external laundries not being used, exposed wiring, dumping in internal corridor
254	Underbuilding access not locked (front and back), phone wiring exposed
	Corner of George and John St fence panel missing, same as George and Cope
341	1 st floor termites in door jam, 2 nd floor no common area door
312	1 st floor common area window broken
314	Stairwell graffiti, glass pane missing in 1 st floor common area door, dumping on top floor
337	Chipped tiles to entrance, dumping on ground floor, 1 st floor graffiti and broken window
335	1 st & 2 nd floor windows broken and cracked, missing smoke alarm, damaged cables
333	Chipped tiles to entrance, dumping on ground floor, lights out 2 nd floor
John Street	
6	External gas meter unlocked, under building access not secured, no lock on internal meter cupboards, no back door lock, clothes line broken, some graffiti, no fire exit signs/lights, dumping in common balconies and hallways.
49 - 54	Roof work (front and back), security doors being replaced, fob access to garbage bays as part of planned works (Stage 2 Action Plan). Some graffiti on stairs, level 1 broken windows in common area.
31	Phone cables exposed ground floor, broken glass pane on 1 st floor common door, dumping on 1 st and 2 nd floor.
27	Meter cupboard open, dumping on top floor
McEvoy Street	
61	Minor graffiti, 1 st floor common balcony door missing glass
63	Broken tiles entrance into building
Cope Street	
241	Tiles chipped on front door steps, door closer missing, exposed wiring on ground floor, meter boxes unlocked, storage/dumping on common balconies, external laundries open and unused, bins damaged.
209	Front external light on during day, 2 nd floor ceiling manhole cover needs locked, external wall loose wires to gas heater, ground floor vent cover missing, rear LHS light on constantly, tree pruning required in rear corner. Garbage Bay 14 between 209 – 213 damaged driveway concrete and drains
213	Colorbond to be considered for rear fencing

215	Broken sewer gully, 1 st & 2 nd floor common area landing broken glass pane, no fire exit lights/sign
217	Front gate damaged, external lights on during day, external laundry unused and damaged, missing loop fencing between 215 - 217
219	Missing tiles on front steps, no exit lights, no safety rails on balconies, meter cupboards and cages open, manhole unlocked, external side gate broken
Wellington Street	
118	Old type bins in rear garbage area, need replacing. No latch on gate a corner. no locks on meter box, no locks on gas meters outside, no fire exit lighting, external gas heating boxes not secured
113	Carpark trip hazard, 3 lights on during day, man hole not locked, 3 rd floor doesn't lock, dumping in common area, gas meter open, latches on fences missing.
123	Overgrown vegetation, under building access unlocked, lock on electrical cupboard broken, no exit lights, no balcony railings, 1 st floor broken glass pane, external laundries unused and damaged, dumping in common areas
117	Electrical cupboard open, no exit lights/signs, manhole on top floor open, external lights on during day, external meter cages unlocked
	Corner of Wellington & Cooper Council footpath badly damaged
Cooper Street	
	Cooper Lane – Marked car spots needed, external lighting on during the day
	Bin bays unlocked and dumping around area
105 & 99	No key access to buildings, chains padlocked. No emergency vehicle access to rear of building
54	Missing fence panel and gate, entrance 1 st floor broken window, door propped open, 3 rd floor broken windows, dumping on stairwells, loose bricks laying around at back, gas meters open
52	Dumping in common areas, broken window on 1 st floor, 1 st floor balcony door needs replaced, exposed wiring
46 - 48	No gate and fence panel missing, back gate off hinges, 1 st floor missing glass in door, storage on balconies, meter cupboard lock broken.
44	Dumping in common area balconies
95	2 missing fence panels at front, under building access open, meter cages open, external laundries not being used and damaged, damaged clothes line, no exit lights/signs, electrical cupboard open
Raglan Street	
100	Dumping on top floor, light doesn't work
104	Loose render at entrance, 1 st floor smoke alarm missing, 2 nd floor man hole cover missing, tree pruning required in front of bin bay area.

NIGHT AUDIT

Two night audits were carried out covering the internal and externals in both the South West Precinct and the People's Precinct. The teams included staff from Housing NSW, City of Sydney, Redfern LAC, Land and Housing Corporation, The Factory Community Centre, the Tenant Participation Resource Service and tenants from the Waterloo public housing estate.

The aim of the night audits are to identify lighting that is broken, trees and vegetation obstructing lighting, as well as potential areas for crime and anti-social behaviour.

Overall night audit comments:

Difficult to see street numbers, not very visible – suggestion to put large numbers on letter boxes, as well as rear of buildings on the doors. Trees overgrown and blocking lighting. Lighting very poor in areas, need to be stronger or additional lighting installed particularly in car parks and bin bays. Suggestion to put sensor lights in bin bays.

Location	Issue
George Street	
331	External lighting out, very dark: north and rear north corners, south end corner light including the yard post light, entrance light as well as the garbage bay light
333	Front street light and rear security light out. No external rear lighting and front entrance light out
335	Trees need pruning, extra lighting required in front yard, and 2 x rear lights out
337	Trees need pruning near John Street, and rear lights required
341	Rear middle and bottom balcony light out, and garbage bay light
339	Both north and south end lights out
312	Rear flood light and front entrance light out
254	3 x rear balcony lights out
252	Front post light and entrance light out
248	Overgrown front yard, poor visibility, very dark. South side and corner lights out. Lower plants/vegetation to be pruned/removed.
238	Top floor internal light out
240 - 246	Side lights out, dim lights on flood lighting
John Street	
6	Front very dark, street light and rear flood light out
8	Side external light out
31	Very dark, lights out: on west and east side of building, bottom balcony lights, flood light near 31 John St and rear corner of carpark
27	Front external and entrance lights out
McEvoy Street	
59	Flood light, top rear balcony light, and front corner light out
61	Post light and front wall light out
63	2 x front building lights out, trees at front need pruning blocking post lights
Cope Street	
251	Side building light out
247	Front entrance light, south wall light, bottom internal floor, front post light all out
241	Top floor internal light, 2 x north security lights, rear flood light out
215	Entrance light ground floor out, external flood light is out
219	Front external flood light is out, internal top floor, external laundries need to be boarded up, install double flood lights right hand side off Cope St
217	Rear light out (Cooper St entry)
Wellington Street	
118	Trim front tree, blocking post light. Back corner light out

113	Side light and flood light out
117	Rear top flood light is out
123	Trim and remove bamboo front right hand side, change locks on end 2 laundries
Cooper Street	
105	Front light out
54	Security door not locking, needs Perspex
52	2 nd Floor internal lighting out
50 & 44	Side lights out
46	Overgrown vegetation, obstructing lighting
91	Trees need pruning over post light, vegetation needs pruning
89	External building light out near garbage bay
87	Remove bamboo covering to front fence, prune vegetation, front light out
Raglan Street	
102	Numbers not clear on building, side light out, Council street light out
100	Internal 2 nd & 3 rd floor lights out
104	Front post and rear spot light out, trees need trimmed near post
	Trees on corner of George & Raglan overgrown and very close to electrical wires

APPENDIX

Flyer (sample)

Audit Dates and precincts

Recording page for audit participants

A selection of photographs take by the Audit Team

2014 – 2015 Sharps Bins Collection Statistics

WATERLOO COMMUNITY SAFETY AUDIT

Making your neighbourhood safer



All you need to do is show up and be ready to tell us what you think could make your area safer. Residents from all properties that are between Cope, George, Raglan and Wellington streets are welcome to participate in our walk around.

WHERE? We will meet at The Factory Community Centre, 67 Raglan St. Waterloo

WHEN? THURSDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2015

Day time: 2pm – 4pm

Night Audit: 8pm – 9.30pm

For more information please contact Laura Kelly at the Factory Community Centre on 9698 9569 or at lkelly@the-factory.org.au

**COME ALONG AND BE PART OF MAKING
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD A SAFE PLACE**



Audit Dates & Precincts

Date	Precinct
Thursday 30th October 2014	South West Precinct
Thursday 13th November 2014	South West Precinct
Thursday 26th February 2015	People's Precinct
Thursday 26th February 2015	People's Precinct

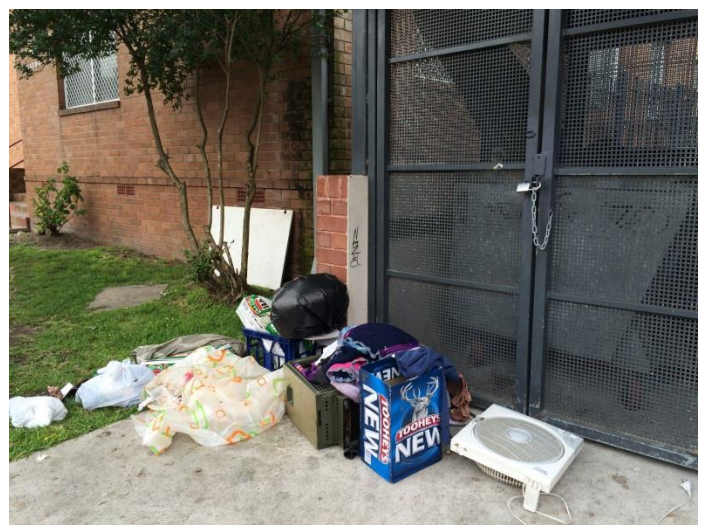
WATERLOO SAFETY AUDIT

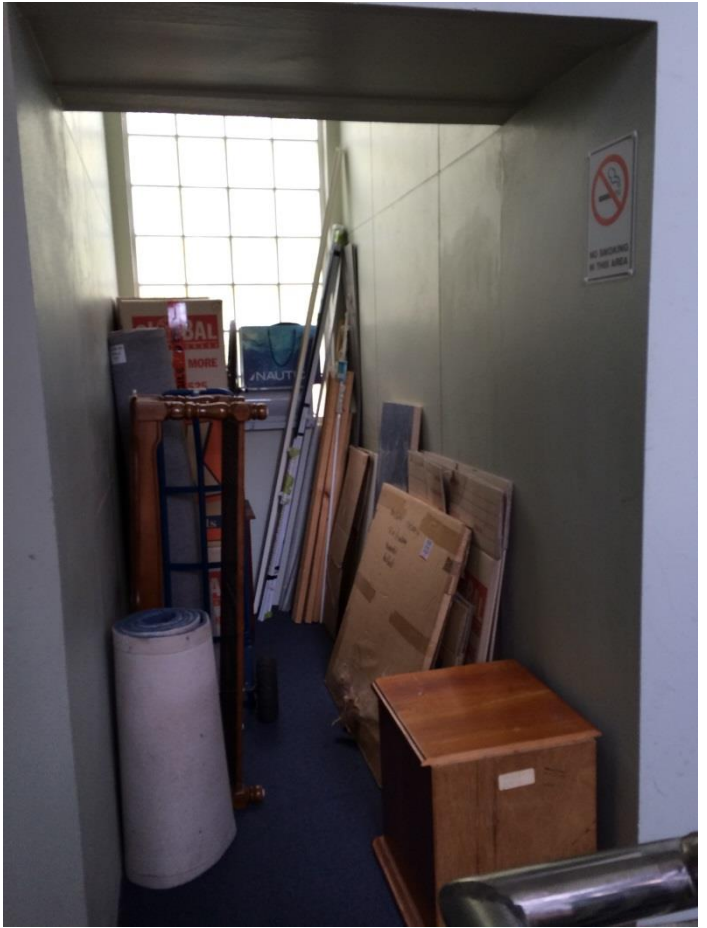
Date : _____ Group: _____

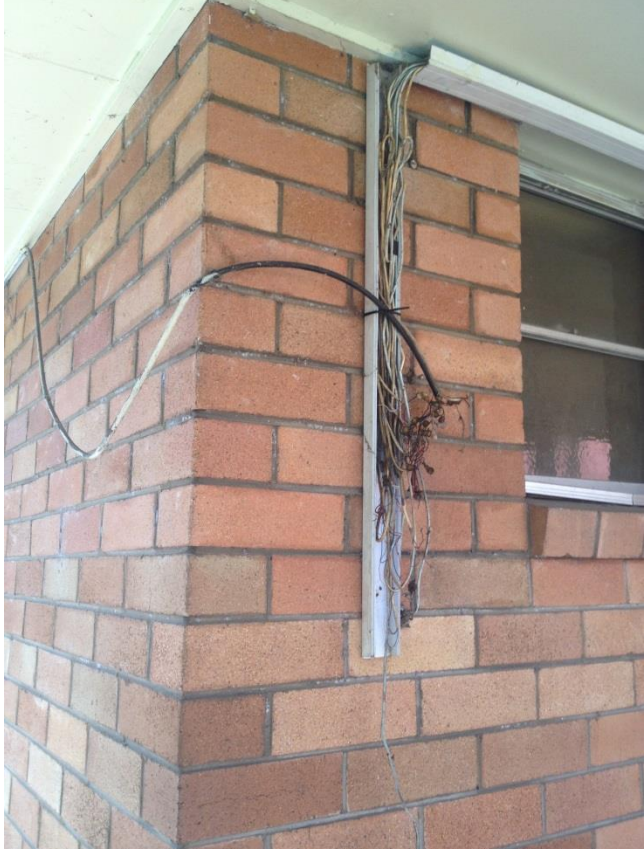
location	Issue	photo

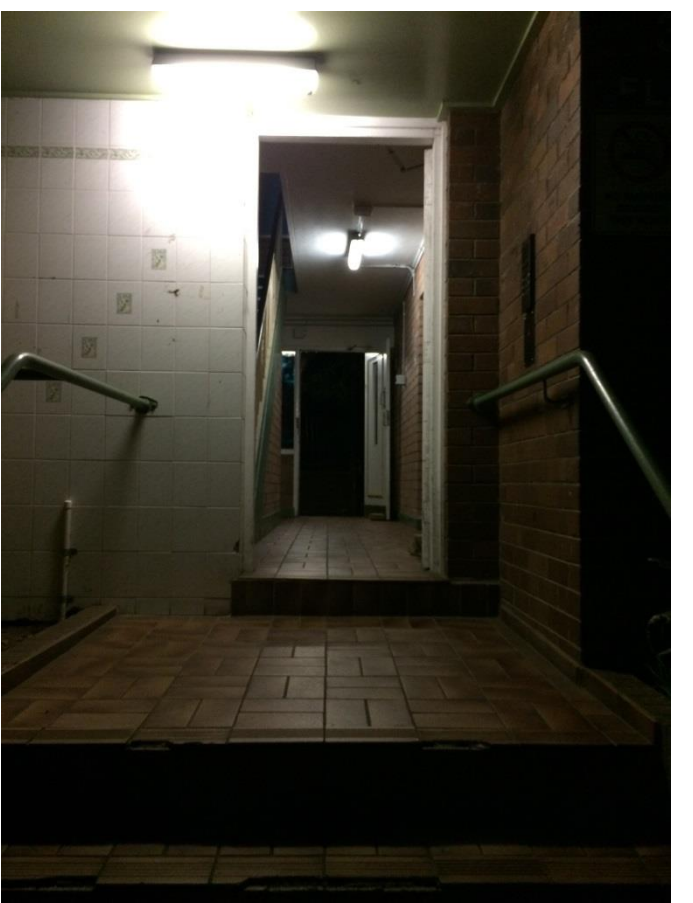
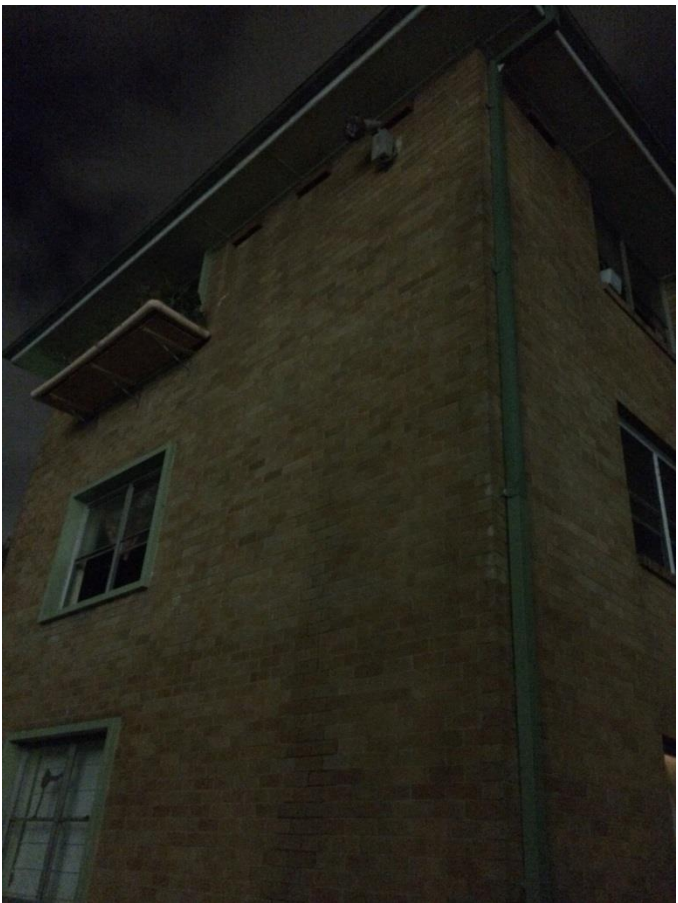
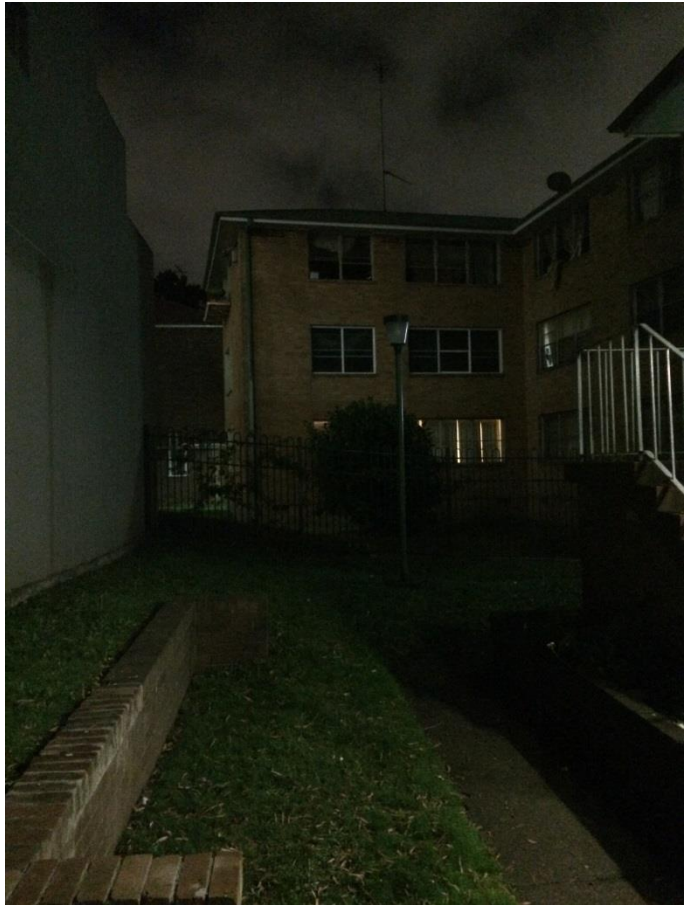
PHOTOGRAPHS

These photos highlight some of the problem issues and spots in the audit precincts. There are other spaces that are well maintained and valued by local tenants. A number of problems are generated from vandalism, waste management and anti-social activities.







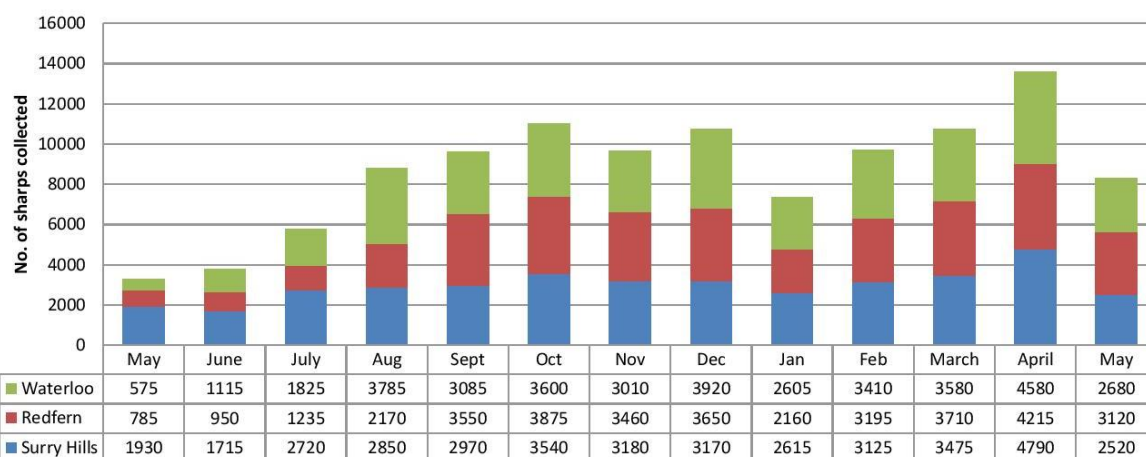


May 2014 - May 2015 Sharps Bins Collection Stats

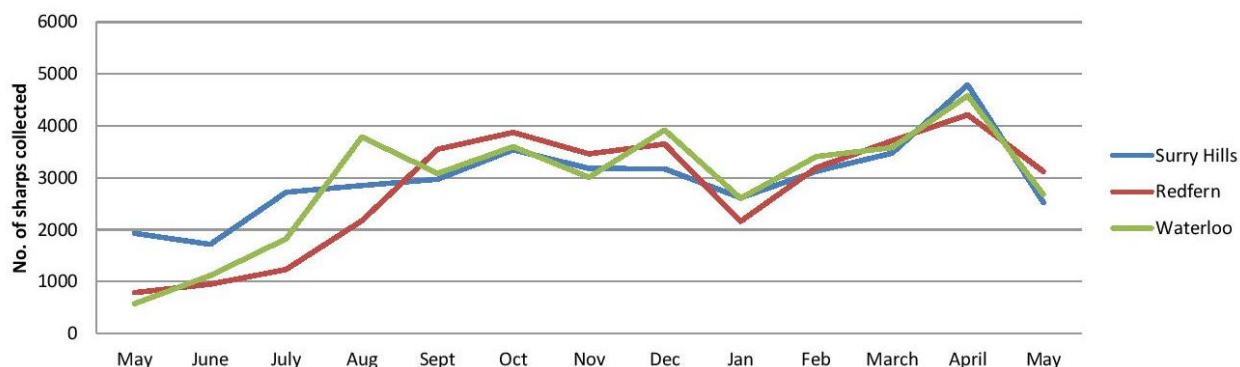
(across 13 months from initial installation in Redfern and Waterloo)

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	TOTAL	Month Avg.
Surry Hills	1930	1715	2720	2850	2970	3540	3180	3170	2615	3125	3475	4790	2520	38,600	2969
Redfern	785	950	1235	2170	3550	3875	3460	3650	2160	3195	3710	4215	3120	36,075	2775
Waterloo	575	1115	1825	3785	3085	3600	3010	3920	2605	3410	3580	4580	2680	37,770	2905
Total	3290	3780	5780	8805	9405	11015	9650	10740	7380	9730	10765	13585	8320	112,245	

2014 - 2015 Sharps Bins Collection Stats



2014 - 2015 Sharps Bins Collection Stats



% waste break up (estimate)

