

### **Question 1.**

Please elaborate to the Committee on how the RWA proposes to facilitate the provision of 'affordable housing'. Please define 'affordable housing'.

### **RWA Response:**

The RWA has finalised two developer contribution plans for affordable housing.

The Affordable Housing Planning Agreement covering development at the former Carlton and United Breweries site in Broadway was executed on 31 January 2007. It is estimated that about \$25 million will be raised under this Plan over the development horizon of the CUB site that will be committed by the RWA to the provision of affordable housing in Redfern-Waterloo.

The RWA Affordable Housing Contributions Plan was approved by the Minister in May 2007. The Plan is expected to raise about \$35 million from development over the next ten years on strategic sites identified in Stage One of the RWA's Built Environment Plan. These funds will also be committed by the RWA to the provision of affordable housing in Redfern-Waterloo.

The RWA and Housing NSW are currently working in partnership to develop Stage Two of the Built Environment Plan. Stage Two will focus on the possibilities for renewal of public housing estates and the further opportunities this may create for the provision of affordable housing.

The definition of 'affordable housing' under both plans is derived from section 4(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and clause 8 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70 – Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes)*. It means housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households. A percentage relativity is applied to the median household income applying to Sydney from time to time as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. These are:

Very Low Income Household – Less than 50%

Low Income Household - 50 or more but less than 80%

Moderate Income Household – 80-120%

Affordable housing therefore is intended to be priced at such a level that very low through to moderate income households can meet housing costs and other basic needs and still be able to live in the Redfern-Waterloo area. The RWA's preference is that the affordable housing it facilitates be rental accommodation as this provides a more enduring solution to the affordability problem.

**Question 2.**

Please explain the RWA's proposed shared equity model of home ownership.

**RWA Response:**

The potential for shared equity is a matter for consideration under Stage Two of the Built Environment Plan. Any proposals that may derive from the work currently being undertaken by the RWA and Housing NSW will be the subject of Cabinet consideration before being placed on public exhibition.

**Question 3.**

One of the RWA's aims is to assist local unemployed people gain employment, many of which would be Department of Housing (DOH) tenants. Is RWA liaising with DOH tenants? Is RWA liaising with DOH to ensure that these people will not be evicted from DOH housing?

**RWA Response:**

The RWA has liaised to date with Aboriginal tenants regarding the employment opportunities being created in the Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh and Darlington area.

The RWA has liaised with Housing NSW which has advised that it has standard policies in place regarding the matter of tenant employment.

Relevant policies include the following general provisions:

Under the Housing NSW rental subsidy policy, increased income through employment results in increased rent contributions.

Under the Housing NSW Tenant Employment Initiative Scheme, tenants who gain employment do not have their income assessed for rental subsidy purposes until after the first 6 weeks of employment.

Under the Housing NSW fixed term tenancy policy, housing need is assessed at the end of a fixed term lease. All tenancies which commenced since 1 July 2005 are fixed term for 2, 5 or 10 years, depending on assessed housing need. Eligibility for continued housing includes an assessment of income level which varies depending on household size. By way of examples, at 1 July 2008, existing tenants who move into employment would need to have weekly earnings above the following figures to become ineligible for a renewal of their public housing lease:

Single person household	\$744 pw / \$38,800 pa
Single adult, 2 children household	\$994 pw / \$51,800 pa
2 adults, 1 child household	\$1088 pw / \$56,700 pa

Other limits apply for other household combinations.

#### **Question 4.**

Where do plans currently stand for redeveloping “the Block”?

#### **RWA Response:**

As the RWA’s written submission states, the Aboriginal Housing Company, which is the owner of land commonly referred to as “the Block”, has submitted a Concept Plan application to the Department of Planning which seeks to gain the advantages deriving from the RWA’s rezoning blueprint for land in the Eveleigh Street precinct. The application has yet to be determined by the Minister for Planning.

#### **Question 5**

Where do plans currently stand for revitalising public housing?

- a) Where will public housing residents go while their public housing is being revitalised?
- b) How will the RWA ensure that access to human services is maintained?

#### **RWA Response:**

In respect to public housing renewal, please see responses to Questions 1 and 2 above. A draft of Stage Two of the Built Environment Plan may be placed on public exhibition within three months, subject to Cabinet consideration.

The RWA understands that should there be any proposals to build new public housing, Housing NSW would seek to meet individual tenant’s relocation preferences, either within the existing area or other locations that they might nominate. This has been Housing’s approach in respect to their Elizabeth Street redevelopment.

The RWA will continue to play a role in the facilitation and evaluation of the progress of the Human Services Plan. The Plan is a NSW Cabinet-endorsed framework for improving the coordination, quality and access to health, education, disability, transport, employment and other human services in Redfern and Waterloo.

The actions in the Plan are being effectively undertaken by the agencies responsible for their implementation. The RWA Implementation Senior Officers Group (ISOG) that was set up by the RWA to oversee the progress of the plan will continue to meet to ensure that this effort is maintained for the community of Redfern and Waterloo.

#### **Question 6**

Will the Indigenous training college be expanded to offer more courses?

#### **RWA Response:**

RWA has successfully attracted additional funding to run more courses at the training centre.

#### **Question 7**

How do you propose to improve employment opportunities for Indigenous people with a disability?

- a) Will targets be set for this increased participation?

#### **RWA Response:**

The RWA already assists Aboriginal people with disabilities into employment through the current training and employment model.

Centrelink has identified that the majority of Aboriginal people in the Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh, Darlington area on disability income support are not able to work through having substance abuse issues. The RWA has been successful in training, brokering employment and mentoring Aboriginal people who have been alcohol or drug dependent.

#### **Question 8**

How will the RWA improve the quality of life for people with a mental illness?

#### **RWA Response:**

The Human Services Plan Phase 1 contains a number of actions in Priority 4 - 'Improve support for vulnerable people' that provide services and supports for people with mental illness in the area. Housing NSW and NSW Health are the lead agencies that have been implementing these actions and they will continue to do so.

Other initiatives that are currently in place that the RWA has direct involvement with and provide support to are:

- Redfern Waterloo Case Co-ordination Project – a coordinated process where Government and NGO's work together to plan and implement appropriate interventions and case management strategies to address the needs of at risk children and young people in Redfern and Waterloo. Mental health issues are detected and are being addressed through this process.
- Redfern Waterloo Community Drug Action Team – RWA convenes these meetings. A program currently in place in the Community Assistance Support Team made up of Health, Police, DADHC and NGO's such as Missionbeat and the Inner City Homelessness Outreach Support Service. This group engage with street drinkers and homeless people to identify support services. Mental health issues are being addressed through this group.
- Headspace Central Sydney – The RWA are part of the management advisory committee for Headspace which has received \$1million in funding to establish one of three one-stop shops at South Sydney Youth Services located at Waterloo for the central Sydney area to provide increased youth mental health services and early intervention services.

The RWA was also instrumental in concept planning and selling the surplus former Rachel Forster Hospital site to fund the development a of a new \$10 million Community Health Centre at the former Redfern Courthouse and Police Station. Works are expected to commence shortly on the new centre which, when it becomes operational in 2009, will deliver important mental health services such as:

- Acute care, triage case management and service coordination (centre based services and home visiting)
- Psychiatric consultation
- Mental health HIV/Hep c consultation
- Mental Health Work Program

#### **Question 9.**

Are there any plans to restore access to legal services for Indigenous communities in the area following the closure of the Redfern Courthouse?

**RWA Response:**

Court facilities were relocated by Attorney Generals to other nearby facilities following the closure of the Redfern Courthouse. Prior to its closure, AGs advised the RWA that the Redfern Courthouse was operating in a part-time capacity and was considered surplus to operational requirements. The RWA subsequently developed the proposal to retain the heritage Courthouse building in public ownership as a new Community Health Centre, providing important new services to the Redfern-Waterloo community on a full-time basis. The RWA has now ensured the funding for the new health centre through the successful concept planning and sale of the former hospital site.

**Question 10.**

How much open space will be left after the development of the Redfern-Waterloo area?

- a) Do you think this will be sufficient, given the plan to double the current population in the area?

**RWA Response:**

The Built Environment Plan (Stage One), which is an attachment to the RWA's written submission, contains indicative publicly accessible open space locations on the RWA's strategic development sites (see Diagram 3.5 on page 30).

The BEP indicates that the amount of publicly accessible open space in the area will increase quite significantly as a result of proposed development on the RWA's strategic sites. For example, the RWA's approved Concept Plan for the former Rachel Forster site contains a new public park of about 1100 m<sup>2</sup>. The RWA's Concept Plan application for the North Eveleigh site, which is on public exhibition until 12 June 2008, provides for about 20% (23,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of the 10.7 hectare site to be publicly accessible open space.

Stage One of the BEP proposes the addition of about 2000 new dwellings to the area on the RWA's strategic sites, which could account for between three and four thousand new residents. This falls way short of a doubling of the current residential population.

The proposed Stage Two of the BEP will seek to enhance the area's social mix by way of an increased proportion of private dwellings. While Stage Two is currently a work in progress, the provision of adequate open space is obviously a key consideration as it was with the development of Stage One.

The City of Sydney is also playing an important role in improving and expanding the amount of open space in the area.

**Question 11**

Are there plans to increase employment targets in the RWA's Indigenous Employment Model?

**RWA Response:**

The RWA is constantly increasing the number of people employed under its Indigenous Employment Model. Government agencies and the private sector have liaised with the RWA to manage the delivery of Aboriginal employment outcomes in construction, hospitality and office administration.

The RWA is currently developing the strategic framework to expand the Indigenous Employment model to the logistics and transport industries as well as the commercial administration and communications industries.