

Submission  
No 53

## INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Friday 21 February 2014

The Director  
Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Director:

**Re: Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing**

I am Aboriginal with South Sea Islander heritage also. I am 73 years old, widowed and live alone. My Great Grand Parents first lived in The Rocks in 1882. Here is my Submission for consideration by the Select Committee:

**8 Significant Issues, Past and Present, for me as a Tenant:**

1. I made my first application for accommodation with the NSW Department of Housing (DOH) in February 1986. I ran to Sydney to escape a violent husband and cruel marriage; was homeless; lived in a squat, but worked. When assessed, I was deemed ineligible for assistance with affordable or emergency housing so when I could afford it, found an attic in Waterloo to rent from a private landlord.

2. In 1997 when made redundant, I suffered depression, secured a Disability Benefit, and again sought the assistance of the DOH with a new application. By the time it was assessed, I had recovered and found new employment; but yet again, because I was working, was not eligible for either affordable accommodation or rental subsidy for private rental accommodation with NSW Housing.

3. I retired from employment due to ill-health in 2006 and again applied for affordable accommodation with NSW Housing and was put on the waiting list. When I was assessed, even though I was in receipt of an Age Pension, I was told I'd be placed on the long waiting list and my private rental accommodation could not be subsidized by NSW Housing, so I wrote to the Minister. As a result my private rental accommodation was subsidized late in 2007. Over the next 3 years the landlord systematically increased my rent \$50 every six months.

4. On 6 February 2012, after 26 years, I was offered my current home and have lived here since 1 March 2012. My Healthcare expenses and exorbitant rent used up all of my termination pay and superannuation and my only income is the Age Pension.

5. I suffer age-related hypertension, arthritis and advanced PCV (Polypoidal Choroidal Vasculopathy) condition of Macular Degeneration Disease, which are managed with medication and regular eye injections and laser treatment, so am mostly confined to my home.

6. With the help of the then MP for Sydney the gas hot water system and the roof guttering on the front of the building have been replaced. Roof guttering at the back of the building, together with the installation of a water tap remain outstanding from a work order due September 2012.

7. My home in Millers Point is comfortable and cherished. With the threat of it being sold and no water tap, I have not made a vegetable garden.

8. I cannot be moved. I am too old and unwell to have to pack up, clean, move out; then move in, clean, unpack and set up home elsewhere. Moving home is also very expensive, needs the good health, ability, energy and stamina of a younger person; and is time consuming.

**I support these 6 General Conclusions:**

- (1) Access to a stable, safe, secure, happy and cherished home is a necessity for everyone and a basic human right.
- (2) The NSW Auditor General concludes that over the past 10 years, social, public and affordable housing has been reduced and less than half of the community's needs are being met.
- (3) There are long waits for social, public and affordable housing and very limited chances to buy or build new homes in the inner city,
- (4) Selling Millers Point homes and relocating tenants will have a major impact on the community and push more tenants with health and welfare problems to areas away from transport, services, jobs and support.
- (5) More than 60 government-owned homes in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks are now empty.

(6) The backlog of maintenance on public housing shows the underperformance by NSW Housing as the Landlord; and a lack of basic duty of care on its part.

**I endorse these Urgent 8 Recommendations:**

1. The NSW Government should retain Millers Point Social, Public and Affordable Housing Stocks and not sell any more of its properties in the area.
2. The NSW Government should not undermine or demoralize the supportive and caring community in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks.
3. The NSW Government should not cleanse the area of people who are aged, suffer ill-health, are disabled or are on low incomes.
4. The NSW Government should not only advocate but also accommodate diversity.
5. The NSW Government should not be selling its assets in Sydney's Inner City Social, Public and Affordable homes.
6. The NSW Government should strenuously make bids at the AAAC Housing Meetings to Budget for, and invest significantly in, more Low Cost Housing or Affordable Low Cost Accommodation in Central Sydney.
7. The NSW Government should address the maintenance backlog in its Public Housing Stocks to make them safe, happy and secure; meet its responsibilities as Landlord, observe its duty of care; and, to protect its Social, Public and Affordable Homes Assets.
8. The NSW Government should research, design and implement an appropriate, more cost-effective and efficient management system for the rental of its Social, Public and Affordable homes assets.

Yours sincerely,

Friday, 21 February, 2014