

Submission
No 177

**INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

Name: Name suppressed
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Phone

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Submission to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing

The Director,
Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing,
Parliament House,
Macquarie St.,
Sydney, NSW 2000.

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees

Dear Select Committee Members,

Firstly I would like to raise a number of general points ;-

1. The issue of two government agencies that manage social-housing properties. It is my understanding that in simple terms Housing NSW manage the leasing of the properties and that the Land and Housing Corporation manage the buying and selling of the properties. These agencies have different charters and at times are in conflict. There needs to be a consensus of purpose between these two agencies.
2. That Housing NSW has given the vulnerable and disadvantaged priority for housing. This, the majority of us would agree, would be fulfilling the department's role. However, when one realises that this translates into housing

the mentally ill, the drug dependent and the ant-social, without the back-up services they desperately need, it seems a recipe for a dis-functioning community. This is especially so when many such needy people are housed in a small area.

I would recommend to the committee that there should be a ratio of tenants with these problems to tenants without, of say 2 to 8.

The department is not equipped to house and look after the mentally ill, the drug dependent and the ant-social. This should be the responsibility of a mental health agency, which can follow up with the services that these people require.

3. I would ask the Select Committee to examine at the *Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act 1948* (NSW) (the LTA Act 1948) regarding the section on 'protected tenants' with a view as to questioning why government agencies are exempt from this act?

4. I ask that the Select committee to consider government re-funding of the Older Persons Tenants Service, which the NSW Government ceased all funding to the service on 30 November 2013. The committee may wish to consult the Older Persons Tenants' Service Evaluation Report (March 2013). An external evaluation of the Older Persons Tenants' Service was conducted by Judith Stubbs and Associates.



[The OPTS evaluation report can be downloaded here1.37 MB](#)

5. Regarding maintenance. The Select Committee should examine how this is co-ordinated; whether the use of contractors is a viable and economic means of fixing repairs. It is my experience that Housing NSW rarely inspects the repairs to be completed before or after the work has been done. Therefore being at the mercy of the contractor, who can basically charge what they like.

6. When we speak of Social Housing it is easy to forget that we are speaking of **people's homes and communities**. The majority we are speaking of are hard-working or retired folk, who have lived in their social housing homes for many years, some all their lives. Who have built communities, bonds and networks of neighbours and friends. Who depend on those infrastructures and local services, such as their local general practitioner, around them.

Secondly I would like to submit a few points about my particular area : -

1. The Millers Point, Dawes Point and Rocks area is unique, not only in Sydney, not only in NSW, not only in Australia, but possibly the world! You have a continuous community going back over a hundred years with some families going back generations! The majority of the houses built here were for the workers on the waterfront. It has a wonderful tradition of hard-working people. The area was **not social housing**, being administered by the Maritime Services

Board for many years. There were many families living here, where children grew up, married and they too lived in the area. It was very much a **village** where so and so was related to so and so. I remember a man, much to his chagrin, from outside the area who married into one of the families and was always known as so and so's husband. When the area was taken over by Housing NSW the majority of people in the area worked for a living. I still believe now that the majority of people either work for a living or have retired. However, we are still a vibrant, living, breathing, close-knit community.

2. There are several properties in the area where Housing NSW has spent a lot of money converting them from terrace houses into one-bedroom units. The majority of these are now vacant (e.g.

), which are in good condition and should be used to house people.

Housing NSW is constantly complaining of a lack of funds, yet they are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars per annum by leaving properties vacant that are available to let.

3. I myself moved into the area in 1972 and was taken under the wing by three locals. It has been/is a privilege to live in this community where I have met many acquaintances and made dear life-long friendships. Where I have watched children grow up, where, until it closed, I was being served by the third generation at the corner shop.

We ARE A COMMUNITY! Since 1974 I have lived with my wife who moved here in 1958. She and I intend to stay in our home of 56 years! It is VERY IMPORTANT to keep this community intact. To keep this village with all it's informal and formal infrastructures, it's network of families and friends.

Yours sincerely,