

**Submission
No 198**

INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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My name is Mr Eric Early and I have lived in a department of housing home for 41 years. My wife Rose and I emigrated from England on the 2 pound pom programme where we were shown houses that we would live in and be able to buy, after I started to work in the mine and teach Australians how to work in the mines. There was only a 6 month period in the start that people were given the opportunity to buy the houses which cost 1400 to build, and never since have we been allowed to.

The current problems with public housing is the shortfall and the number of different groups with their hands in the till operating housing or in Wollongong's case as proved committing fraud (the housing trust).

The list is getting longer, because old stock is being sold off instead of being maintained by doing BASIC maintenance such as painting .guttering, windows and fences. The DOH no longer for at least the last 10 years clean or paint a unit or house when people move out nor do they recarpet floors regardless of length of tenancy or new tenants which means for a lot they have thread bare carpets looking onto floor boards.

The wait for housing in the Illawarra stretches out in some suburbs to 15 years and it isn't because people don't die or move into smaller dwellings but because the DOH is selling them off instead of putting homeless families and others into these homes, leaving them empty at times for 6 to 12 months which allows time for the homes to become the focus of angry homeless or others who fire bomb or break in and do damage such as board youth.

athe DOH are moving out pensioners like me who paid full rent up until my wife and I retired, and who did not have the opportunity to buy them, and like Mick and Norma who had 5 kids and worked for the PMG and they could not afford to buy their home. We all have paid the cost of these houses our homes many times over and now are being forced out because we are no longer paying full rent but get a rent subsidy on a pension. Most of longer term tenants have looked after our homes as if we owned them by putting up garages polishing floor boards, putting carpet in and gas on as well as painting the inside and in this local area turning the stench of the old slaughter yards and swamp upon which we live into a nice place to live, so nice that we are being turfed out for the rich to buy them.

In the Wollongong area since 1970 or so the DOH have sold off hundreds of flats and houses to the university at Keiraville and Gwynneville taking away further stock, then hundreds of houses to the housing trust and other providers for free who then committed fraud but they are still giving them houses. In all of this when Myself and others asked Pru Goward at Nowra where had all the money gone from our rents and the sales of housing such as those above and those in Bulli that went for 1.5 million plus they would not answer. When asked had any of it been spent on new housing here she refused to answer. When asked what would future sales be used for she said to do up and build more housing in line with today's housing trends ie do up the houses we are selling after we move you out and then buying less valuable land away from your ties to the community and medium density housing so kids no longer have a back yard and you no longer have any privacy and those of working age don't have a chance in hell of getting a job.

The Department of Land and housing or DOH who spends millions on name changes every time they change it by the way, no longer use the public assets of the established homes to borrow money on our assets to build more instead they sell OUR ASSET off and borrow money from foreign countries and businesses to build not for profit housing (3of them). As tenants all we get is a lot of spin from the minute we are told over the phone "WE ARE SELLING YOUR HOUSE I WILL COME AND SEE YOU TOMORROW" not asking if they can nor letting you know that they must give you a letter 7 days prior to visiting you for this purpose and not giving you time to digest what has been said and what you need to move. You are told that you have 2 choices then we kick you out. All of this terrifying to a long term tenant elderly or not. Then often the tenant is moved from a 40 year old house to a 60 year old house even though we are told the age and condition of the other house you live in is the reason for the move and you are told that you have no right of appeal as you can sell YOUR house whenever you want even though these houses are actually a state/ peoples asset, Pru Goward in Nowra late last year stated she would not move anyone with a medical or social need to be in the house in which they live, and yet she is I am aware of a couple of families who meet this criteria 1 off which is backed up by neurologist. doctor. pain specialists, and 3 psychologists and others who have told DOH that moving her and her family from where they live at this time will KILL her. The DOH housing

officers have been advised to only talk to her about moving with a psychologist present and yet they continue to breach this.

Still the list gets longer in my street alone there are 4 vacant houses that have been vacant for more than 6 months with lawns that are attracting rats, mice. The DOH are refusing to do anything but urgent repairs and then the repairs are not done properly like my bathroom shower which needs the floor under it fixed but after more than 12 months they put some new tiles on so I no longer cut my feet. How long till someone goes thru the water logged floor? The broken and rusting guttering wont be fixed it has been more than 6 years and my broken windows who knows if they will ever be fixed so again where is my rent money going and the federal money given for repairs. The law used to be that when a landlord refused to do repairs to the property you could with hold your rent and then when the repair was done you paid all the back rent I have been told that I would be kicked out if I do this now. The DOH and other providers have become a slum lord any other landlord would be forced to do the repairs and council would force them to maintain their lawns because of rodents.

This government has sold more properties than any other and yet they still cry poor why was Greg Pearce so quickly dismissed when we started asking questions about where the money was going and who was buying the properties? At that time Transfield separated from the department of land and housing then a little bit later it separated again I ask who is fiddling the books and how many properties here in the Illawarra of which Pru Goward states are some of the most valuable properties so they must be sold even in the poorest suburbs of Unanderra, Berkeley, Warrawong and Bellambi the last of which is getting new fences, and the interior painting BUT ONLY 3 WALLS PER ROOM? and other suburbs nothing. A lot of the houses sold by labour in Bulli went for more than 1 million each . Part of the northern suburbs of Wollongong was donated by Henrietta Ziems for low income housing and yet it is being sold to benefit the rich, and yet this government is crying poor when a three bedroom fibro home 60 years old built on an old bog and slaughter yard sold for 684000 just before Christmas a family had to be displaced from their home to sell it off. TELL US PLEASE WHERE HAS ALL THE MONEY SET ASIDE FOR PUBLIC/ LOW INCOME/ SOCIAL HOUSING GONE.

low income workers such as posties, teachers, nurses, and even some police officers also live or are on public housing lists, please contact me and let me know what is happening we have a lot of people worried and some suicidal over this situation and uncertainty. Even though we have been writing to our local member Ryan Park and to Pru goward for a year we were not told of this enquiry until Tuesday this week

Eric Early