

## **INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO**

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Mr Con Panayotopoulos

**Telephone:**

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

To Director  
Standing Committee on Social Issues,  
Legislative Council

The social issues relating to the Waterloo/Redfern area have manifested over the past several decades due to the significant over-representation of lower socio-economic groups residing in these areas. The Redfern/Waterloo area houses a significantly large population of public housing residents. In fact this area (specifically Waterloo 2017) falls in the lowest 10 taxable income areas by post-code in the state of NSW. This population mix has encouraged many anti-social aspects to evolve, such as drug trafficking, assaults and robberies. These anti-social and criminal activities are not only committed by locals, but also by others who frequent the area, using the excellent transport links, particularly Redfern Train Station to access the area. The poor police resourcing along with cultural sensitivities to the indigenous population allow significant social problems to fester, rather than being dealt with in a more direct manner.

Due to the significant proportion of the population of the Redfern/Waterloo area that are either unemployed or under-employed the social issues are several. One way for this committee to alleviate these problems would be to relocate a significant amount of public housing outside this area. This can be achieved by the sale of public housing, particularly that which is in poor condition to the private sector for redevelopment into private housing. Due to the areas proximity to the city and coast the proceeds from the sale of public housing could be used to purchase land and build public housing in cheaper areas for significantly more residents, thus increasing the social services to the community. This sale of public housing would need to be done on a significant scale to reduce the proportion of public housing to a more normal level of say 5-10% (public housing to total housing), rather than the 30-50% proportion that currently exists.

The removal of large swathes of public housing would re-invigorate the area, increasing custom and encouraging the development of private businesses, particularly in the Redfern St, Botany Road retail precincts. These invigorated precincts would themselves offer further job opportunities to the socially disadvantaged.

With regards to the area known as the Block - the solution is simple. This area should be bulldozed and the residents relocated outside of Redfern/Waterloo. They should be given significant help to address social issues, such as drug use and alcoholism. The area should eventually be redeveloped into either green space or private housing.

In conclusion only a very significant reduction in public housing and replacement with redeveloped private housing along with the development of the retail precincts of Redfern St, and Botany Road and can change the social conditions of the Redfern/Waterloo area.

Regards  
Con Panayotopoulos  
Zetland N.S.W.