

INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO

Organisation:

Name: Ms Joyce Ingram

Telephone:

Date Received: 16/04/2004

Theme:

Summary

Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Issues on the
Matter of Redevelopment pertaining to The Block in Redfern

My name is Joyce Ingram and at eighty-one, I am the oldest of the Aboriginal Elders of the Block in Redfern. I am temporarily housed in Waterloo pending the redevelopment of the Block and plans are that I shall return to reside in the Block once a house is available for me.

I have been asked to give my opinion on plans for the redevelopment of The Block for submission to the government. These are my views.

1. For many years, the Elders of The Block have asked that houses on The Block be properly maintained and repaired so that the residents of all races are able to live with a degree of safety and pride that once existed there. The Housing Company in charge of The Block has failed the residents badly in this task with the result that the condition of the buildings have worsened from year to year and finally become inhabitable. Good families of all backgrounds have been forced to move out.
2. The Elders of the Block have always maintained that the rental policy be such that The Block be kept free of hard drugs. We have for years done everything we could to keep out drug dealers but with the increase in the number of houses being let to those involved in the trade by the Housing Company over the years, we have fought a losing battle. The Block of the future must be free of all dealers including those now residing and trading there who will not give such activities up. Concerned Elders, residents and ex-residents of

the Block want the Housing Company and the police to show no tolerance for hard drug dealers living and operating on The Block .

3. When the Block was given to the Aboriginal people by the Whitlam government, it was and has always been a place of community and gathering for the Aboriginal people. It was and always has been a place where the Aboriginal poor could come and find a place to stay. As an Elder of the Block, I do not wish to see that original aim set aside in the rush to spruce up the Block and make it middle class.


The problem with The Block is NOT poor people.

The problem is the drug dealers and the people who have allowed them to thrive within it.

4. I have been told they will build apartments in The Block. Perhaps we need a small hostel/apartment block for those from out of town who need a temporarily place to stay but we also need simple houses, each with a bit of fenced-up backyard, with enough room for a clothesline. We have told the Housing Company this for years. We have told the Housing Company that we need to repair the houses. I say, "Leave this little bit of land in Sydney for our poor, this little bit of land where we have gathered for so many years, leave this for us. And I shall continue to say it to the end of my days. You may rebuild – the houses are certainly in a bad state – But please, build us houses which we can afford to rent so we can someday come home. Let our children have an opportunity to point to The Block and say with some pride "This is where I live"".
5. I can see that there will be concerns about The Block deteriorating again if "left to the poor Aboriginal people".

For a long time we have said, " Let the Elders and other responsible people have the chance to be elected to the Housing Company that controls The Block and let them then make the rules for the sake of the community". I believe you would see resolution of the most difficult problems on The Block if democratic elections to the board of the Housing Company were to be facilitated.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joyce R. Ingram".

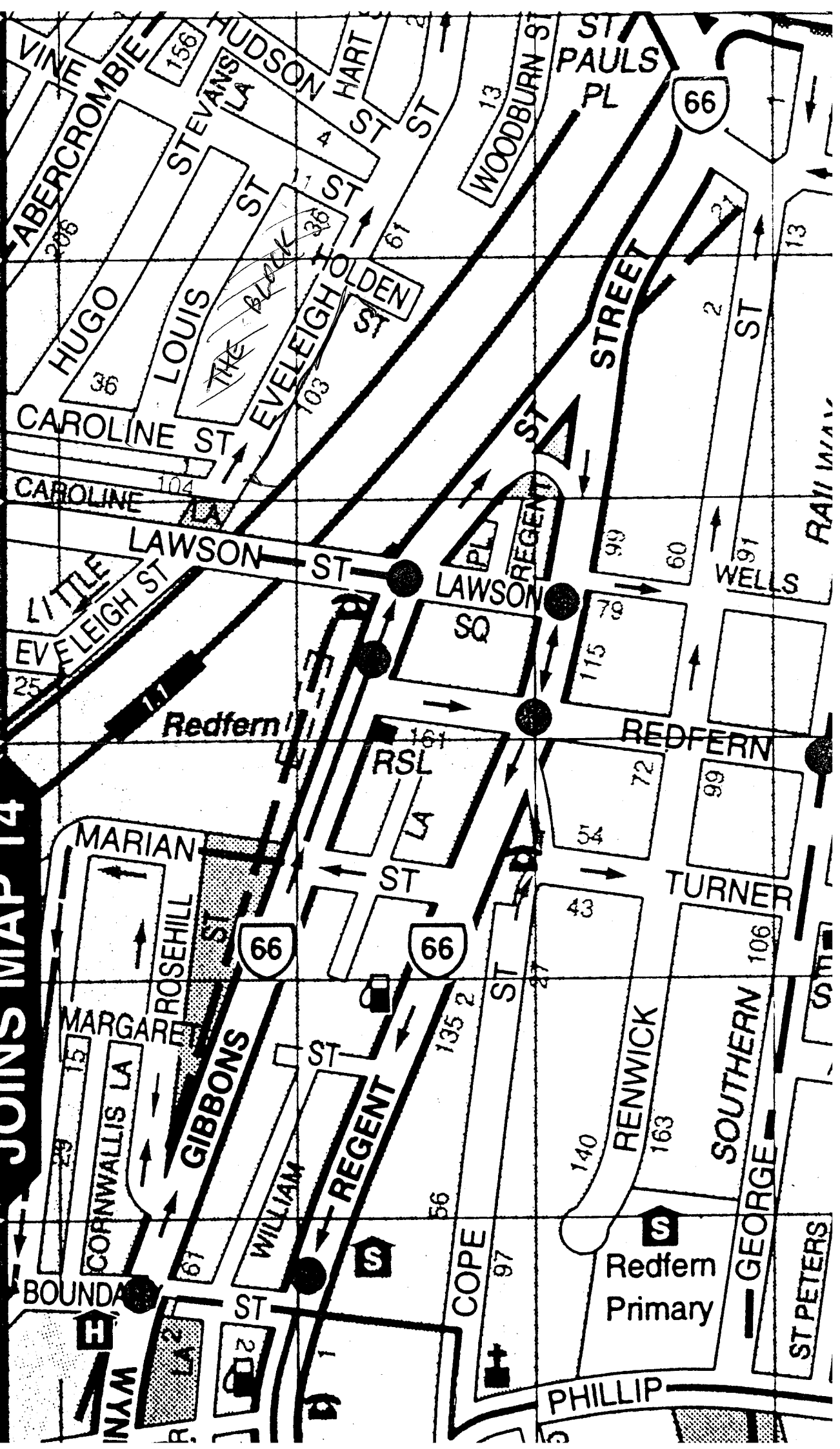
Joyce Ingram

Date: 3rd April 2004

N.B. There are issues contained within the Terms of Reference given which we may wish to comment upon at a later point in time. We will make those submissions in due course, if deemed necessary.

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JOINS MAP 14



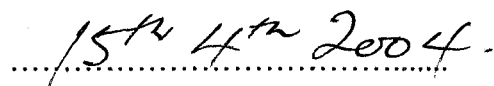
We fully support the above submission made by Aboriginal Elder, Mrs. Joyce Ingram. In addition, we wish the Committee to note that any redevelopment of The Block must take into consideration the area within its vicinity which is of spiritual significance to the Aboriginal people. This area, indicated roughly on the map attached, should not be built over.

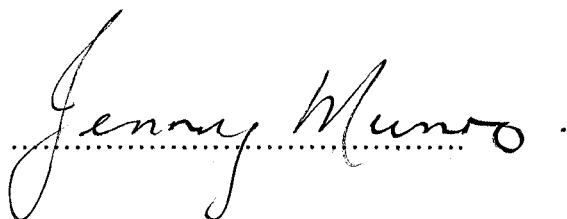
The above list of concerns is not exhaustive. There are other substantive issues we wish to address – and at the right time and place, we will no doubt do so.

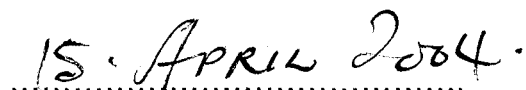
Signed:


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Lyall Munro, Elder


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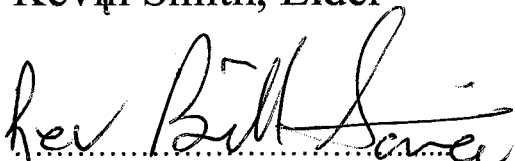
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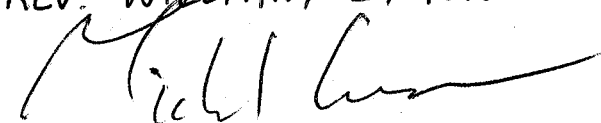
Signed:



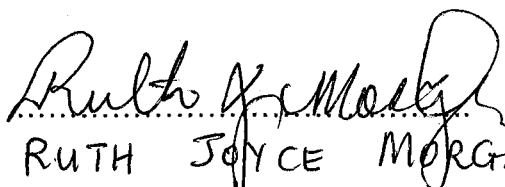
Kevin Smith, Elder



REV. WILLIAM SIMON



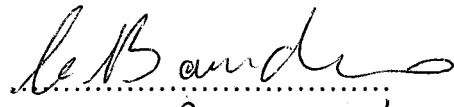
BRO. MICHAEL GRAVEYEN




RUTH JOYCE MORGAN, EX-RESIDENT

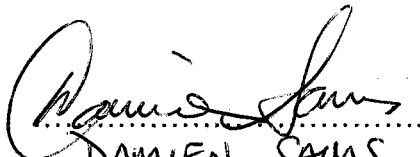
We., the Friends of The Block support the opinions expressed by
Mrs Joyce Ingram and the Aboriginal Elders.

Signed:



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CECIL BOWDEN.



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CECIL CLAYTON

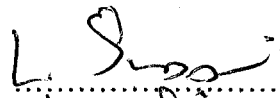

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CARLA WARE



.....
DAMIEN SAMs


.....
EMMA KEENE


.....
MAGIRAT CARMODY
PATRICIA BONEY
(PATRICIA BONEY)
.....
~~CINDY SMITH~~


.....
CINDY SMITH
(EX - RESIDENT)


.....
Lynn Simpson
(Person concerned for future
of the Block)


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YOKE LIN TAI