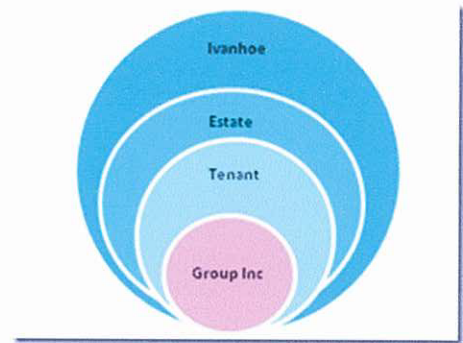


INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Organisation: Ivanhoe Estate Tenant Group Inc
Date received: 28/02/2014



The Director

Select Committee on Social, Public & Affordable Housing

NSW Parliament

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

S U B M I S S I O N

The Ivanhoe Estate Tenant Group Inc.

Ivanhoe Estate Community Centre





The Ivanhoe Estate Tenant Group Inc.
Ivanhoe Estate community Centre

24 February 2014

Dear Director and Committee,

RE: - Social, Public & Affordable Housing inquiry.

The Ivanhoe Estate Tenant Group Inc, are very active in our community, we have a wonderful community centre which the tenants and are making great use of. As you are more than aware our housing estate is currently in the "Herring Rd Urban Activation Precinct," before this there was a Taskforce (Appendix no 1) which we gave a presentation to. Preceding this there was an announcement on the TV without any consultation or warning. Now we are nearly 3 years down the tract and still awaiting on an answer to what will become of us all?, When will this all happen?

The residents here are now suffering from anxiety and depression and are in need of assistance.

Our housing estate works so well, we help each other In daily activities, care and respect each other, It has been said to us many times that we are the "Jewel In the Crown" of public housing". We feel compassionate In relation to our tenants and we will remain actively engaged in all we need to give the Residents of Ivanhoe Este, the elderly, the intellectually disabled, those with Physiological problems, families, youth, those of different ethic background, children and refuges a fair go.

In this submission we will endeavour to give a well-rounded view on things that may be able to create better housing, outcomes and communications with all parties. Perhaps a model could be made on how well Ivanhoe estate works now. We have included copies of newspaper articles (Appendix no 2), Correspondence between or local member and other (Appendix no 3) and activities and newsletter with in the Ivanhoe estate (Appendix no 4).

Development/Redevelopment of Social and Affordable Housing

- Clear timeframes for redevelopment projects – stressful for tenants
- Need more housing – need more dollars
- Cumbersome bureaucratic processes – lack of flexibility
- Social support and infrastructure critical in larger developments.
- Community rooms to be built in to all development projects
- Involve community in planning
- Community Development workers essential for social cohesion and advocacy
- Need to increase and maintain existing green spaces
- Access to community garden plots – use of roof top gardens
- Funds accumulated through sale of properties should be directly used to build more social housing
- Clear information about appropriate service to ring in particular circumstances
- Tenant groups from different areas meeting and supporting each other through redevelopment processes.
- Social mix

Social Disadvantage Created Due to Lack of Appropriate Housing

- Challenging for CALD communities
- Letters to tenants and applicants should be in clients first language
- Manager in Housing as first contact
- Marginalising people further
- Focus on rents – affordable housing as a starting point
- People forced to move from their current neighbourhoods being cut off from their support services
- Waiting list too long
- Remove work disincentives – short term leases remove security of tenure and discourage employment opportunities
- Employment discrimination for tenants living in public housing
- Mixed income levels should be introduced
- Relationship between client and provider is important, especially with CALD, disabilities, etc
- Stigma attached to social housing tenants within the broader community
- Lack of services for high needs tenants – not such number of services, but level of appropriate services
- Access to available services difficult
- People struggle to be heard and have their needs met.
- Overcrowding
- Constant 'talking down' to tenants and undervaluing their capacity
- Physical disability needs not suited to existing stock
- More research in to the outcomes and benefits of community development
- Private and public mix needs further investigation
- Better design and building standards
- Need to focus on building communities, not just houses
- Women – start with women in communities – empowerment, social enterprise, leadership
- Better public transport – transport and social housing go hand-in-hand
- Housing and service provider staff need to be more caring and attentive to tenants. They are not 2nd class citizens.
- Ensure housing offered is an appropriate allocation
- Assist tenants to act/work together
- Sustainable people power
- Lack of support for people with mental ill-health
- Lack of support for newly housed homeless people
- More rehabilitation housing needed
- More affordable housing options for low-income earners
- Involving support agencies and residents in allocations
- Let working people back in to housing
- Housing staff and tenants need to know there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour

Social Services Integration

- Community Housing providers need to ensure they provide links to appropriate services for tenants
- People with mental health issues need to better links with neighbours
- Privacy issues mean case managers can't talk about clients with neighbours, who can act as support for people with mental health and disabilities. Better communications needed.
- Provision of social services need to local

- Over 55's complex having young people with mental health and physical disabilities housed there. Inappropriate allocations.
- Community need to be more welcoming of people with mental health issues and disabilities.
- Many people are physically unable to get out and access services. Other are too scared to go out. They are unaware of services available.
- People often are unaware they are eligible for support services. Housing NSW staff could assess new tenants when signing their lease and refer to local services.
- Outreach programs needed to connect with people near their homes
- More programs to take place at a neighbourhood level e.g. Ivanhoe estate tenant group
- Complaints about anti-social behaviour should trigger a multi-agency response, often nothing happens.
- Provide tenants with information on local community services in area
- People with Mental Health are only seen when things reach crisis point
- People are release from hospital with no support
- Services work with individuals as opposed to the whole of community.
- More community development work needs to take place
- High turnover of staff means a loss of continuity in service and knowledge of local issues
- Many tenants have complex issues. Sometimes clients have a number of services providers; case managers, doctors, psych, etc. yet there is no communication between them.
- Lack of communication between service providers, Family and Community Services, mental health teams, community care, ageing and disability supports.
- Too many people fall through gaps in the system
- Need for more advocacy services
- Too much stigma and discrimination
- Neighbourhood Advisory Boards and Tenant Groups to assist supporting tenants

Increase in supply and effective management of existing stock

- Sustain levels of stock already held – no more sell-offs
- Selling stock and delaying capital works and maintenance is not a sustainable solution
- Look at 'rent to purchase' options for tenants
- Define affordable housing – what is the baseline?
- Older women need to be viewed as a priority group
- Need social and economically viable mix
- More community development
- Signs in buildings to be multi-lingual
- Build housing that can be modified as tenants age
- More aesthetic designs than the old concrete block
- A commitment from Commonwealth and State governments to provide more social and affordable housing in all areas of the state, not just cheap ones.
- Encouraging tenants to downsize should be done through incentives, not punitive measures
- Should be no single room accommodation
- Local connections need to be recognised
- Stop selling of social housing to pay the bills
- Better cost effective maintenance
- Stop demolition by neglect
- Speed up turnover in vacancies
- Same warranty for public housing contracts as for private sector
- No boarded up estates or vacant blocks

- Recognise the value of communities, especially long term communities like Ivanhoe Estate
- Better cooperation between all levels of Government

Maintenance and Capital Improvement Cost

- Investment in to maintenance to sustain properties to house people in to the future
- Develop connections with private sector to fund projects, repairs, etc
- Tenants need to be able to speak directly with contractor when first reporting issue
- Remove head contractor system and allow contractors who will complete the work to tender
- Localise services – this builds relationships, is more manageable, familiarity with properties
- Quality assurance – follow up and accountability of contractors
- Sustainability and affordability for residents e.g. solar panels, water tanks
- Employ full-time tradesmen who complete responsive maintenance and in down time, do non-responsive and upgrading work.
- Carbon tax supplement rent was to go to maintenance
- Stop 'fobbing' off public housing to community housing providers.
- Tenants to sign off on every work order
- Develop systems for auditing maintenance
- Inquiry into the maintenance system as a whole
- Social enterprise opportunities for maintenance provision

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that there are PEOPLE living in NSW public housing. We all deserve the recognition and respect that the NSW Government expects from us all. We live in a world that changes quickly and no one knows what is around the corner for them. Lives change often without warning; these changes affect us all physically, mentally and spiritually. Negating the financial burden on any individual is at times difficult, but despite the huge differences in incomes all Australians should be entitled to Housing, Education and have their medical needs fulfilled.

Being a member of an active tenant group and the assistance of the other group within our community have allowed Ivanhoe Estate to try and keep PEOPLE happy offering an open ear, and trying to keep our wonderful Community engaged in productive things. However what has happened to us all through bad management of announcement cannot be taken away quickly.

In summing up we truly hope that the State government and its officers may learn that PEOPLE do live in Ivanhoe Estate and the same mistakes are NOT played out in the years to come.

Yours Sincerely

The Executive Committee of the IETG Inc;

Vicki Newstead. President

Peter Evans. Vice President

Marie Sillars. Secretary

Keith Newstead. Treasurer