

**Submission
No 72**

INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Organisation: Coalition of Glebe Groups (COGG)

Date received: 27/02/2014



Coalition of Glebe Groups

27th February 2014

The Hon Paul Green MLC
Chair
Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Chair

Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing

Preservation of the Glebe Estate, its heritage and value to Glebe

The Federal Government under aegis of Gough Whitlam – LABOR Party, Tom Uren initiated the purchase of the Glebe Estate from the church in 1974. His rationale-

“The Glebe Estate, I made a statement that we bought it for three major reasons. First of all, to protect the people living in it, secondly, to protect the townscape, 120 years old, and thirdly, now that it was Australian property, the Askin Government will not be able to drive a freeway through the centre of it.”

To date, it remains a valuable asset for Glebe and its residents, protected by St Phillips Heritage Conservation Area NSW. Unfortunately, The Land and Housing Corporation has at times neglected to maintain the properties and has in some instances sold individual properties. Apart from the economic value of the estate, the neglect of the asset has had a damaging impact on its residents.

Demographics of Glebe

The population of Glebe /Forest Lodge is approximately 14,000 that embraces a broad age range, many different nationalities and a large Aboriginal community. There are approximately 3,000 people residing in public and affordable housing. The Glebe community is very supportive of social justice and it works collaboratively to support public housing tenants and maintains the philosophy of affordable housing.

Housing Issues

It is our understanding from The Glebe Community Action Group, which has as part of its membership residents from The Glebe Housing Estate, that there are two main issues of concern:

Monitoring anti-social behaviour

There is a requirement for improved liaison from Client Service Officers (CSOs) with Housing NSW clients. It would appear that there is very little monitoring of anti-social

behaviour unless it reaches crisis level. The issues include noise, care of domestic animals, littering and general care of property.

Failure of response for maintenance

In the commercial arena, real estate agents carry out lease checks every 6 months. This regime assists with appropriate property maintenance, the responsibilities of Housing NSW and satisfactory commitment by tenants.

To date, tenants have serious concerns about responsiveness to maintenance calls. These issues include, no feedback of when work may occur, rude and intrusive arrival of sub-contractors and general frustration about follow up by CSOs.

Contracts for maintenance

Evidence to date has shown that there have been serious problems with Spotless as major tenderer and the appointment of sub-contractors. The issues include poor communication, rudeness and lack of respect for tenants.

Liaison with other government agencies

There is an urgent need for integration of appropriate government agencies, including Police, Health and Community Services. This liaison is important where tenants have severe psychiatric issues and/or criminal issues.

Counselling and support for clients

Most tenants love living in Glebe and they participate in community activities. New tenants would benefit from workshops that would assist them in learning about their rights, meeting procedures and resolving conflict.

In conclusion, it would seem that some of more successful social and public housing communities work best when they are set up as cooperatives. For example, women's housing, where tenants take an active role in the management of the complex. In saying this it is acknowledged that the complexity of issues in a large public housing estate is very different to those of smaller complexes.

References

<http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/uren/interview9.html>

http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19810521&id=O_5jAAAAIBAJ&sjid=2eYDAAAAIBAJ&pg=6822,7668455

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2427857>

Susie Cleary OAM, PSM
Chair COGG



COALITION OF GLEBE GROUPS (COGG)

Charter of COGG

Membership

A coalition of independent stakeholder groups, comprising the Presidents/Chairpersons and Vice-Presidents (or their nominees) of:

The Glebe Society Inc.
The Glebe Chamber of Commerce Inc.
The Glebe Community Action Group
The Glebe Point Residents Group
Glebe Area Tenants Group

It is intended that other community groups from Glebe and Forest Lodge should be able to tap into the coalition as the need arises or the issue demands.

Aim

To consult, from time to time to,

- Identify priorities for Glebe informed by the various strategic plans,
- Finalise proposals, and
- Work with the City of Sydney and other authorities to bring about the implementation of these strategies.

Process

- Chairing of meetings shall be by rotation amongst the Groups.
- Decision-making shall be by consensus.
- Representations from COGG should be the outcome of unanimous agreement.
- Administrative responsibilities shall be shared, based on discussion and resources.

19th May 2005