

**Submission
No 100**

INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Organisation: REDWatch

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Submission to the

**Legislative Council Select Committee on Social, Public and
Affordable Housing**

Inquiry into social, public and affordable housing

From REDWatch Inc

For publication along with the other papers and material arising from the inquiry.

To the Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues surrounding Social, Public and Affordable Housing. REDWatch believes that this is one of the most important topics in our area and has many members who are public housing tenants, private residents and house owner/occupiers.

REDWatch is a group of community residents and friends from Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh and Darlington who support the existing diversity in these areas and wish to promote sustainable, responsible economic and social development.

REDWatch recognises the importance of the Aboriginal community to the area.

REDWatch has been formed to:

1. Monitor the activities of the Government (local, state and federal), the Redfern Waterloo Authority (now UrbanGrowth), and any other government instrumentality with responsibility for the Redfern, Waterloo, Darlington and Eveleigh area, to ensure that:

- (a) The strategy benefits a diverse community
- (b) Communication and consultation is comprehensive and responsive
- (c) Pressure is maintained on authorities

2. Provide a mechanism for discussion and action on community issues.

3. Enhance communication between community groups and encourage broad community participation. This may involve:

- Holding regular meetings;

- Holding community forums and other events;
- Establishing a website;
- Communicating with the community through other means;
- Meeting with government representatives and authorities;
- Cooperating with other community organisations;
- And any other means the association deems appropriate

On Thursday 6th of February 2014 we held an open Roundtable to gauge the local community's thoughts on the themes identified in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. The roundtable was attended by over 30 local residents, from a diverse demographic, who engaged in a thematic discussion around the topics of housing which fell into the categories of potential, practice, people, place, properties, planning and policy.

Below we have recorded the comments of the attendees as they were posted on sheets of paper provided and have left them in their own words so that Committee members can get a feel for the issues that raised concern among residents. Many issues appear numerous times in different themes and we have highlighted these to show the common concerns of all residents.

We will follow these Roundtable dot points with REDWatch's formal comments.

Potential

- We need a workable funding model for providing high social and low income housing.
- The Department needs to consult with tenants – both current and future – about housing policy and practice.

- The delivery of lower housing costs for the whole community can arise from functioning Public Housing.
- A whole of government approach would include reductions in Health, DoCs, Corrective Services and Police budgets arising from functioning Public Housing within Housing NSW's budget.
- There should be a new model for Housing based on the reality that Government does have the funds.
- Community Development workers are needed and should be funded by Housing and Council.
- Opportunities should be taken to implement Aging in Place and Universal Design concepts.
- Train the Staff and then retain them!
- (Efficiency improvements for Public Housing)
- Treat tenants as people, not entries on a spread sheet.
- Residents should have a greater say and be involved in decision making, particularly when it affects them.
- We need high speed rail corridors to access land more efficiently

Practice

- Improve Contactor compliance.
- Recall/Audit system to check that work has in reality been done when signed off.
- Enforce rules equally for all drinkers.
- Treat tenants as people, not entries on a spread sheet.
- Maintenance should be done as need arises, not put off into annual plans.
- Adopt the maintenance and construction principles developed by HealthHabitat.
- Make reporting/requesting maintenance easier and cheaper – not all tenants have internet access and/or landline phones.
- There is a lack of feedback/response from Housing NSW when contacted.

- Housing NSW needs to tell people if nothing will be done when people contact them.
- Housing NSW to act within the law and comply with the law.
- Housing NSW needs to improve Openness, Transparency and information sharing in their dealings with tenants.
- There needs to be Place Management of public housing blocks.
- Housing NSW needs to improve Tenancy Management.
- Improve liaison with other government agencies including Health, Corrective Services and DoCs.
- Contractors attitudes towards tenants needs to be improved – Contractors Code of Conduct to be enforced.

People

- Tenants should be treated as people with respect.
- Reduce Stigma.
- Reduce stigma generation by Housing and Housing Minister.
- Community needs to be retained.
- Reject stereotypes.
- Common issues across communities unite residents.
- Regular Client Service Officer visits to vulnerable tenants.
- Vulnerable, Mentally-ill, Disabled - describes Housing NSW tenants.
- More Community Activities are needed.
- There needs to be more access to resources for Community Development
- There needs to be policies in place to prevent residents being targeted if they complain so that people can be more actively involved and responsible.
- Poor and rich together – no concentration of either – no ghettos.

- Review of Fixed Term leases should take reports of antisocial behaviour and Police call-outs into account.
- No 'One Size fits All' ideas/policies – recognise diversity.
- Health, Corrective Services and other government agencies to ensure supply of services, especially to Special Needs tenants.
- Tenants should participate in Building and Tenancy Management.
- Ensure mixed demographic in tenant body across all groupings – age, economic, cultural, social, gender etc.
- Improve matching of housing type and location to tenant.
- There needs to be encouragement of socialisation and a reduction of social isolation.
- Ban the use of 'no cause' evictions, especially in Community Housing sector.
- Establish regular open two-way communication between tenant and landlord – annual BBQs do not rate.
- Manage Anti Social Behaviour in a prompt and humane way.
- Small groups can be part of the larger community.

Place

- Housing stock is where people make their homes.
- Beware of the creation of "Gated Communities".
- Increase Full Rent/Market Rent tenancies to improve sustainability.
- We need Regular Client Service Officer visits.
- Ensure adequate Common Area Green space supply.
- Encourage residents to create more gardens and green places to meet/socialise in.
- Furniture supply needs to create socialising spaces in common areas, both indoor and outdoor.
- Universal Design is desperately needed in all new developments.

- Need for Community space.
- Need for space from which Health and Social Services can be delivered.
- Housing needs to be located close to services/shops/hospitals/employment.
- There needs to be access to good public transport.
- Vacant properties need to be re-tenanted as soon as possible.
- Street planning design practices need to be improved, especially in regard to Anti-Social/Crime aspects.
- We need awareness of links between Green Space per person and the health of the individual residents.
- It is important to maintain the common areas and buildings so as to provide a sense of pride in place among the residents.
- Grounds and Lawns contracts are not being delivered properly.

Properties

- Reduce opportunities for fraud in delivery of maintenance contracts, especially in the billing area.
- Replacement of properties with high maintenance costs – Auditor General showed that sale is financially unsustainable, also reduces stock levels.
- The Department should introduce the use of Concierge schemes where appropriate.
- There should be utilisation of commercial management strategies.
- Improve delivery of planned maintenance to minimise property damage.
- Provide employment opportunities in maintenance system for tenants.
- Use dedicated Handyman Services for rapid response to small jobs.
- Adopt the maintenance and construction principles developed by HealthHabitat.
- Properties should be repaired, not “Demolished by Neglect”.
- The sale of Heritage properties for revenue raising purposes should stop.

- Regular Property Inspections to underwrite an effective Planned Maintenance system.
- Property design needs to factor in long service life and low maintenance costs.
- “Name and Shame” those who fail to deliver repairs properly.

Planning

- Plan for enough housing to house the waiting list.
- Talk with the tenants/residents, both current and future, at all stages of planning.
- Involve the whole community when planning for their area.
- Ensure that housing built with government incentives is genuinely affordable and remains so into the future.
- Property taxes to be based on dwelling and size, not value of land occupied.
- Universal Design and Aging in Place principles should be utilised.
- Utilise ‘decentralisation’ principles to reduce growth of existing major centres/cities.
- Toss out the Affordable Housing concept – it is a political construct that is undeliverable in real terms.

Policy

- Ensure government compliance with its International and Australian obligations to ensure universal equity for all Australians of access to safe and secure housing.
- Give recognition that the primary purpose of housing is to provide the place in which a family lives.
- Give Social and Economic Justice equal value.
- Ensure compliance on the government’s part with the Aims and Objects of the NSW Housing Act of 2001.
- Utilise Land Tax to:

1. ensure the land zoned for residential purposes is built on promptly to prevent land-banking
 2. enable the government to access the unearned improvement in land value arising from zoning change
 3. ensure properties do not remain vacant for extended periods of time
 4. enable the government to share in the profits from short term property speculation
- Ensure that there is openness, competition and transparency in the Maintenance Contract tendering process.
 - Ensure that the support needs of tenants are met.
 - Volunteers and their contributions to Social Housing need to be formally recognised and valued.
 - Enable Councils to fund and administer low cost housing schemes using developer contributions.
 - That Social Mix, [socio-economic and cultural] where existing, be supported and that Social Mix, [socio-economic and cultural] where it does not currently exist, be supported.
 - Size/location of housing should not be utilised as a measure of personal status.
 - Recognition that Social Housing is a vehicle to reduce housing costs for the entire community through 'demand' side supply.
 - Adopt Triple Bottom Line accounting practices to factor in reductions in Education, Health, Human Services budget demands arising from functional Social Housing supply.
 - The NSW government should lobby the Federal Government to abolish the adverse impact of Negative Gearing, Capital Gains Tax etc on the price of housing.
 - Housing needs to be a single portfolio.
 - Boarding Houses, their role, operation, taxation treatment/structure and governance needs to be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis.

- Ensure that all recipients of government subsidies/special treatment relating to Social Housing are monitored for compliance with penalties for breaches.

These comments were spontaneous and reflected the many common concerns of the roundtable. Residents only had a few minutes to address each topic so remarks are necessarily brief and truncated.

REDWatch's formal comments

REDWatch would now like to address our concerns and comment on the topics raised at the Roundtable and the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.

As a community-based organisation of eight years standing with deep roots in the local area, which has a large concentration of public housing, boarding houses and private residences, we believe that this inquiry is exceptionally important and hope that its members will listen to the voices of the residents, particularly those in public housing.

REDWatch was formed to monitor the redevelopment of the local area (Redfern, Everleigh, Darlington and Waterloo) and to ensure that the community had some input and understanding of what this redevelopment would entail and its impact on the existing communities.

In 2004 the State Government created the Redfern Waterloo Authority (later the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority and now UrbanGrowth NSW) to oversee and facilitate the redevelopment of public assets in the area, including the large public housing estates in Redfern and Waterloo. In the process the RWA sold off the local public school and Rachel Foster hospital

removing facilities that are now needed in the area as the population grows through current developments and the proposed Built Environment Plan Stage 2 (BEP2).

BEP2 was based on a plan to demolish all of the three storey walk-ups in Redfern and Waterloo and consolidate the land in a way that would allow the Department to sell off 60% of the land to the private market and to reduce the public housing component to 40% of the land mass, which will also contain 700 affordable housing units. This proposed mix would see the loss of 700 public housing units from the area to allow for the affordable housing units.

We recognise that BEP2 was a plan that would increase the general housing supply but believe that it could have a detrimental effect on the number and security of the 4,500 public housing tenants living in the area and particularly in the walk-up dwellings. The plan to provide 700 affordable housing units was welcome but the loss of 700 public housing units and the displacement of so many residents from their communities was extremely disturbing. This is particularly true when the promise was made to rehouse these tenants within the City of Sydney LGA, a task that is seen as highly problematic as we are losing more public housing properties in the City than can be replaced.

It is well known that over 57,000 people are on the public housing wait list, with a waiting time of up to 15 years and it is obvious that the key priority of any government is to create more public and affordable housing in appropriate locations near transport, hospitals, education facilities, jobs and other human services. It is noted that there is currently a practice of selling off public housing assets, in particular heritage houses in the inner city. This practice has been examined in the Auditor General's Report that highlighted the fact that the monies from these sell offs are not going in to new public housing but vanishing into recurrent expenditure, thus lost forever, creating a practice that is unproductive as well as unsustainable.

We also believe that the definitions of “social” and “affordable” are very misunderstood terms.

What exactly does the phrase “social housing” mean? It has become a catch-all phrase embracing Public, Community and Aboriginal Housing Office properties. Its usage denies supply of specific information relating to the individual property types clustered under the phrase. It appears to be a slippery phrase that is undefined.

The definition of “affordable” housing is also confusing as the common definition of “affordable” refers to rent calculated at 30% of a person’s income, however much “affordable” housing as provided by government schemes like NRAS, which create housing at 80% of market rent for a period of only 10 years. In the Inner City area where rents commonly are as high as \$600+, 80% of market rent can still be highly unaffordable for low income workers who could theoretically be paying \$480+ pw out of an income of \$600+ which is way more than 30% of a low paid workers income. Many of these projects are simply land banking for developers rather than real affordable housing for key workers into perpetuity.

These schemes need to be reassessed and although incentives for developers are understandable they need to be more in line with the traditional version of “affordable” which is 30% of a person’s income not an unaffordable 80% of market rent. We must remember that house prices have risen a massive 18% in the past year and the inner city is becoming totally unaffordable for normal people on lower incomes.

This situation of rising prices and low incomes will only get worse over the coming years and increased public, social and affordable housing will become more desperately needed as property prices keep rising and incomes decline. Thus more public and affordable housing needs to be created by 2020 to ease housing stress and to avoid growing homelessness.

The right to shelter is an accepted human right but more and more housing is becoming unaffordable and unsustainable for many people and this will inevitably lead to people either moving further and further out of the city into greenfield developments or living precariously on the edge of homelessness. The growing number of people living in housing stress and a political climate that threatens to introduce austerity measures will increase disadvantage and the need for secure and affordable housing.

At present there is not enough affordable or social housing and both schemes are hampered by availability. There is a small amount of affordable housing but it is hard to access with strict criteria that means that many people are ineligible or put on long wait lists. It is remarkable when we consider the affordable housing levies that are paid via Councils to the State government for the creation of affordable housing developments but the build rate doesn't seem to reflect the amount of money collected through these payments.

Public housing, which was designed to house low income working families, has devolved over the decades to become housing of last resort with allocations policy leaving most people behind.

REDWatch would never criticise the importance of housing everybody but the practice of only housing people with complex needs before people on the wait list has become very divisive and problematic.

Many public housing estates have become very different to their original intent and long-time residents have seen their formerly quiet neighbourhoods become dumping grounds for the mentally ill, ex- prisoners, people with drug and alcohol addictions and troublemakers transferred from other problem sites. The following links to national Television News items show the living conditions currently being experienced by public housing tenants and the attitude of the housing provider.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-27/head-of-community-services-responds-to-public/4986280>

<http://aca.ninemsn.com.au/article/8740387/forgotten-housos-living-in-squalor>

<http://aca.ninemsn.com.au/article/8799683/seniors-living-in-public-housing-prison>

The importance of a rational and considered allocations policy is essential to end the perceived disadvantage that haunts public housing estates. The vast majority of public housing residents are quiet, law-abiding citizens who value their homes, their neighbours and their amenity and are not a problem to anyone, yet the whole of the public housing sector has come under a stigma that only relates to a minority of tenants. Allocations policy needs to be totally reassessed to ensure that problematic tenants are not aggregated in the one area and that they are spread throughout the community rather than all being put into the one building or estate. The previous practice of housing seniors in specific buildings is probably a better way to go rather than placing groups of problematic tenants into previously problem-free buildings. Although in most cases we believe that diversity of tenure and tenants is a good thing that could mix all types of people in an inclusive way. We would suggest this is done across all buildings rather than creating different buildings for different economic groups which could actually lead to smaller but more intense ghettos.

Rather than creating large public housing estates the Department should look at how they can diversify the supply of dwellings and the placement of buildings throughout the community. This is not to support the destruction of existing communities as happened at the Glebe Estate but to encourage the rationalisation of existing estates with better human services and targeted programs for people with complex needs.

Currently people with disabilities, complex needs and ex-prisoners are moved into a dwelling with little or no social support and often few life skills to help them maintain their tenancies and improve their life conditions. REDWatch has consistently called for an integrated human services body to be

formed to help support tenants fit into society and manage their disabilities. There needs to be a system of pathways to allow tenants to improve their social situation including pathways to further education and job training. It is also important to ensure that people with mental health problems are supported within the community and given the life skill abilities that enable them to exist successfully within society.

Growing disadvantage and inequality will only make these problems worse and along with reform of the allocations policy, the creation of integrated services bodies to support these communities and to create pathways to social stability is an essential part of good housing policy.

One of the recent moves by the government to separate tenancy (Housing NSW) and assets (Land and Housing Corporation) management is also problematic. Although it may make sense theoretically to make this split, in reality, it only dehumanises an already dysfunctional system. One of the common themes at the roundtable was the problem with getting action on maintenance, information on issues concerning their properties, and tenants being treated with respect by HNSW staff. The split between tenancies and assets has only exasperated these complaints and has highlighted the difference between people's homes and the government's assets and which removes compassion from decisions around the sell-off of public housing properties.

We can see this happening before our eyes down in Millers Point where residents who have lived in the area for generations experience extreme insecurity and their homes experience "demolition by neglect". The sell-off of over 30 large terraces via 99 year leases and the large number of empty and dilapidated houses highlights the roots of this insecurity. The failure of the Department to release the findings of the Social Impact Assessment it conducted only adds to this feeling.

This is no way to treat tenants who have spent decades making these properties their homes and in many cases increasing the value of the properties by carrying out maintenance and improvement works. Residents co-operate with HNSW and the LAHC in doing these Assessments with promises of being told the results and end up left with nothing but doubt and concern about their future. In many cases these are elderly people who find the uncertainty most distressing. When the Glebe Estate was demolished one elderly resident had a heart attack when faced with relocation.

In Redfern and Waterloo similar Assessments and studies were conducted but residents still wait years later to get the full results and the conclusions reached. Transparency and information sharing failure is one of the consistent complaints made by public housing tenants and NGOs. The lists of documents that REDWatch has requested to no avail includes the evaluation of the Concierge Scheme, the High Rise Strategy, and the Street Team Project evaluation, to name but a few.

In the light of the plans outlined in BEP2 many of these studies, particularly those on the High Rise buildings and the Master Plan, would be most useful for residents to understand what is coming with this proposed transformation of the housing estates.

This practice of keeping residents in the dark operates at every level of the public housing system from maintenance enquiries and anti-social complaints to future plans for their building, their neighbourhood and their community. There is more consultation than in the past but without ever knowing the results this just leads to more frustration and insecurity. Openness and transparency is a constant theme in the roundtable notes along with the alienation that residents feel with housing staff at all levels. The calls at the roundtable, from residents asking to be “treated with respect” and to “treat tenants as people, not as entries on a spreadsheet”, highlight this alienation.

Another example of this lack of transparency is the non-release of the assessment of the “concierge system” that was introduced into the high-rise buildings on the Waterloo Green. A one year trial

that saw a new level of security added to the buildings, which was aimed at stemming anti-social behaviour and controlling unauthorised entry to the buildings. The trial has now ended and the future of the scheme is uncertain but the full results of the assessment have not been shared properly with residents or local NGOs, with only a four page summary being made available. The scheme was highly publicised at the time of its introduction and was seen by fellow HNSW tenants as something highly desirable for their own buildings. This was never considered viable but still tenants ask for the concierge system to be extended to their high-rises at meetings to this day. Today the future of this scheme, which also employed Housing NSW tenants, is still unknown.

What the tenants consistently ask for is to be allowed to be part of the decision-making process and to have some say in the workings of their buildings. They want to be part of the process and thus gain some ownership of their own lives and homes. Community development is an important aspect in creating tenancy participation and more community development workers would go a long way to creating a more engaged and responsible tenant body. Giving tenants some sense of ownership of their homes and building social capital in the tenant body is a plus for both tenants and landlord and should be part of all large developments.

Another area of great concern for residents was the employment of contractors and the lack of any proper audit of their performance by the head contractor (Spotless) or by the Department. Poor and often unfinished maintenance is a common theme with examples of people being left with unfinished plumbing, intercoms that don't work for weeks and half-finished repairs. In a number of buildings in South Coogee this alarmingly included unfinished asbestos removal and a tenant left without a functioning toilet for six months.

A return to regular Client Service Officer (CSO) visits could improve and monitor these sorts of problems as well as ensure that tenants were coping and that no obvious criminal activity was

taking place. A decade ago these visits happened at 6 monthly intervals and provided a human link between the tenants and the landlord. Now seniors receive a text message once every 6-12 months asking to reply Y or N if they are ok – a system that removes all human contact and ignores tenants who are not classified as seniors.

As the public housing population increases in age it becomes essential for economic and social purposes to ensure that all new buildings are built around the principles of Universal Design to ensure ageing in place and accessibility for people with physical disabilities or who use wheelchairs. Building design is an incredibly important aspect of a tenant's well-being and the importance of useable green spaces, community gardens and meeting rooms must not be ignored. Nuanced and inviting surrounds with provisions for companion animals are known to be important for residents' quality of life and the creation of healthy and peaceful communities.

Much of the area covered by REDwatch has been treated as a social experiment over the last fifty years, which has seen strongly opposed "slum clearance" replaced with high density walk ups and high rise buildings which now in turn face more social engineering under the proposed BEP2. This new plan is based on the theory of "social mix" which we fear is a misnomer as what plans we have seen will only divide the community internally with separated buildings to house public, affordable and market residences. We have great fears that this could just concentrate disadvantaged tenants in a smaller more dense core with the private buildings separated possibly turning into gated communities.

We do not believe that this is true social mix, which in reality already exists in many buildings and which should see people mixed together throughout the buildings rather than being congregated into medium to high density isolated centres of disadvantage. Social mix does already exist in buildings with all ages, nationalities and abilities mixed in together to deny this and pursue a course of

building and financial segregation could achieve the opposite of what it claims to desire merely creating compounds and not mixing people in any meaningful way.

The Glebe Affordable Housing Project, which saw the demolition of a leafy low-rise estate and the creation of a wasteland, will see high density buildings divide the area into three sections of separated public, affordable and private buildings with little open space and internal social mix. The project has currently stalled with only the public housing building progressing to the Development Application stage. This project was widely seen as an unfair sell off of public land which led to the destruction of a viable community and much hardship for the elderly residents of the estate.

Social mix has become the Holy Grail of Housing Policy, this is particularly true of Public Housing Policy as seen in the UK and more recently in Australia. However when looked at closely there is little analysis of what the concept of Social Mix actually means, who it impacts on, who it benefits and how it is to be evaluated in the long and short term. Much of the research used for its justification is derivative and is based on dubious literature reviews of research that has in its original form questionable relevance to the topic. Its role in town planning and the subsequent gentrification that can follow are not mentioned nor is its impact on the original residents taken into account. A more evidence-based approach to such schemes is essential and its role in planning policy needs to be highlighted.

We also believe that assessment and research needs to be done and published about the progress of community housing and the impacts of transferring public housing properties to community housing providers and the differences in tenancy conditions, affordability, financial results and tenant satisfaction. We know residents have raised concerns about “no cause evictions” and the lack of appeal mechanisms and believe that an assessment of tenant’s rights may be needed.

Without a workable housing policy, which is rooted in evidence based research, social justice and a commitment to the well-being of existing residents and communities, REDWatch believes inequality and disadvantage will be the result and homelessness will become a growing problem. “Homelessness Australia” reported that over 28,000 people in NSW were homeless in 2013 and we can expect this figure to increase as prices rise and jobs decline or become more casualised. This will be compounded by the fact that homelessness services are to be centralised under the remit of HNSW, a body which this submission has identified as being unable to manage the assets and responsibilities it already has.

Although there have been some improvements in housing the homeless with projects like the Common Ground inspired Camperdown Project, Platform 70 and Way2Home there has been little analysis of the outcomes of these projects and the long term success of the clients tenancies. Questions, such as how well newly-housed tenants are adapting to their new circumstances, whether they are able to maintain their tenancies and how many fall back into homelessness, are yet to be answered. The progress and financial implications of the Camperdown Project, with its attempts at social mix, would be most valuable in planning for future housing and homelessness projects.

The related costs of homelessness from health to justice and welfare costs far exceed those for people who have been housed and in financial terms it is much more efficient to house people than to see homeless numbers grow. [see attachment 1 for details of costings etc] Functioning social housing offers many benefits, both financial and social, for not just the homeless but for society as a whole. The spectre of homelessness may appear to have plateaued but with daily job losses and growing economic insecurity and rising housing costs the importance of providing affordable housing, whether social, public or affordable is of the highest priority.

Australia has been very lucky in avoiding the impacts of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008/9 but it would be incredibly unwise to ignore the impacts of this crisis on housing in view of the promised austerity measures of the current Federal Government. In the USA whole neighbourhoods have been abandoned and people live in cars and tent cities around the edge of dying cities. In Europe austerity measures have led to huge unemployment and varying degrees of social instability and unrest. So far Australia has had a safety net that has protected society from such extremes but if promised cuts to social, health and welfare systems are introduced this could all change. It is for this reason that the State must ensure that housing is protected and made affordable for the disadvantaged and the working poor.

In summary, REDWatch believes that there is a strong social and economic case for the expansion of the historic role of public housing and the strengthening of affordable housing options for the disadvantaged and low income workers. Housing estates need to be serviced by Integrated Social Services to ensure that all tenants are supported where needed and building design needs to be of a human scale with environmental and socially sustainable design. We believe that the costs of not pursuing this course of action would ultimately be more expensive and disruptive than committing to the public/social housing system. We also believe that such a course of action would bring true benefit to the tenants, the broader community, and the Treasury of NSW.

Please see REDWatch's website for other papers on housing issues:

<http://www.redwatch.org.au/issues/public-housing>