LEAVING MINTO:
A Study of the Social and Economic Impacts of Public Housing Estate Redevelopment

IF I LEFT MINTO I WILL FEEL REALLY SAD AND I WILL MISS ALL MY FRIENDS. BUT I COULD RING THEM. I COULD E-MAIL THEM. I WILL MISS THIS SCHOOL AS WELL AS MY FRIENDS. THIS SCHOOL IS VERY MAD AND I HAVE HEAPS OF FRIENDS.

Minto Resident Action Group

In Partnership With
Social Justice & Social Change Research Centre, UWS
Animation Project, St Vincent de Paul Society
UnitingCare Burnside & Other Services

March 2005
LEAVING MINTO:

A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT OF MINTO PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE

A Research Partnership Between

Minto Resident Action Group
Social Justice & Social Change Research Centre, UWS
Animation Project, St Vincent de Paul Society
Shelter NSW
Franciscan Fathers, Minto
UnitingCare, Burnside
South West Regional Tenants Association
NSW Council of Social Services
‘Remembering Minto’ Project Committee
Diversity Services Macarthur
Tenants Union of NSW
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1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY

How does one tell the story of the Minto redevelopment? How can one accurately reflect on the many perspectives, events and decisions that have led to the progressive demolition of this large public housing estate in Sydney’s south west since August 2002, and which may see the displacement of some 3,000 people over the next 10 years? Such are the challenges of any piece of sociological research. No matter how objective the researcher attempts to be, and no matter how thorough the research process, it is inevitable that certain aspects of the research will be privileged. The question is - are all the perspectives of equal validity or importance? Will all stakeholders experience the social and economic impacts of such events equally? How does one understand the immediate and more long-term social impacts with any degree of accuracy? How does one assign weight to the quantified and unquantified costs and benefits to the immediate and wider community? These themes underpin much of what follows in this report.

A participatory approach has been taken to this research. The invitation to become involved was extended to the author in September 2002 by a range of services working with the Minto community, who together formed the Macarthur Housing Coalition. The Coalition was closely connected to the events unfolding in Minto through the varying involvement of its member organisations. These services were concerned that a proper evaluation of the immediate and longer-term impacts of the redevelopment had not been undertaken before the first houses in Valley Vista were demolished. There was likewise no proper evaluation regarding the proposal to redevelop a majority of the estate.

1 Boas (2002) notes the inherent tensions in the notion of ‘rational impartiality’ of the research process, and that inevitably those least powerful in the social order will have their voices represented imperfectly at best, and excluded or misrepresented in many research outcomes.

2 See for example Sandercock (1998) who draws on the work of Davidoff (1965) and later ‘advocacy’ planners who focused on the ‘outcomes’ of planning, bringing the distributional question to the fore in any urban planning endeavour.

3 See for example Reeler (2003); Boas (2002); Guba and Lincoln (1994); Lefebvre (1974); (1991); Strauss and Corbin (1990); Stubbs (2003).

4 The Macarthur Housing Coalition is a broadly based group comprised of local services including St Vincent de Paul Society, the Animation (community development) Project, Macarthur Multicultural Resource Centre now Diversity Services), Franciscan Fathers (living in a house on Minto public housing estate), South West Tenants Regional Association, Macarthur Community Forum, South West Tenants Referral and Advice Service, as well as state peak services including NCOSS, Shelter NSW, the NSW Tenants Union, South West Multicultural and Community Centre, and the Social Justice & Social Change Research Centre, University of Western Sydney.

5 For example, prior to the announcement of the demolition of Valley Vista, there was no EIS with a comprehensive Social Impact Assessment exhibited for public comment, submitted to or required by the demolition consent authority, Campbelltown City Council, under Part 5 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. There was likewise no requirement by Council as the consent authority under Part 4, s79C(1)(b) of the Act for the Department to conduct an SIA prior to being granted the first demolition consent. The demolition commenced within 2 months of the announced redevelopment by the NSW Department of Housing. Most residents were informed by a letter drop the day before the Minister announced the demolition.
This researcher’s involvement was sought due to two previous evaluations on the impact of urban renewal on public housing estates in South Western Sydney conducted for the NSW Department of Housing.

As part of this process, I also began to attend the Minto Resident Action Group, and the Department of Housing’s Minto Redevelopment Reference Group ⁶ as a representative of the Coalition. Participation in these forums provided a deeper understanding of the way that various processes interact ⁷ to produce the types of events unfolding in Minto at the present time. The various meetings and associated documents also form an important part of the background material to this report.

A few months later, at the invitation of the Resident Action Group, we began the development of a resident survey. This became a primary research tool in this study, and was conducted by a team of researchers from October 2003 to March 2004. The research strategy, including the questionnaire, was developed over five meetings with the Resident Action Group. These workshops were attended by around 60 individual residents in all, and by representatives of Shelter NSW, the NSW Tenants Union, NCOSS, South West Tenants Advocacy and Advice Service, Diversity Services Macarthur, SWRTA, St Vincent de Paul Society, Franciscan Fathers and the University of Western Sydney.

It became apparent in the workshops that tenants and services held a diversity of views about the redevelopment. Whilst some residents viewed with considerable distress the imminent demolition of their homes and loss of neighbours whom they regarded as ‘family’, ⁸ others were pleased that the Department’s actions may lead to a ‘fresh start’ outside of the estate. ⁹ Likewise, services’ views ranged from those who supported the Department’s ‘radical social mix’ solution, to those who considered that there was little if any justification for the destruction of a ‘viable community’. As such, much time was spent on developing questions that would discover the range of views, experiences and aspirations of residents, albeit within the highly restrictive framework of a questionnaire.

Much time was also spent ensuring that the research would be representative and reliable ¹⁰ After considerable discussion, it was decided that three precincts would be surveyed ¹¹ These precincts were mainly selected for their different housing and locational characteristics as well as where they fitted

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⁶ The Reference Group was set up in October 2003 by the NSW Department of Housing to provide advice and input on the redevelopment, and is made up of a range of service representatives, local residents, and representatives from the Macarthur Housing Coalition, and officers of the NSW Department of Housing. It developed from the Joint Stakeholders Steering Committee set up by the Department in July 2003.


⁸ Resident, Durban Way Minto, 15 April 2004.

⁹ Interview, Dunlop Residents, 26 June 2004.


¹¹ Residents originally proposed that the 1,000 households on the estate be given the chance to take part in the interview. However, after a review of how long this would take, a comparative study was decided upon.
within the proposed timeframe for the redevelopment. All households within randomly selected streets within in the Sarah, Dunlop and Caroline precincts were given the opportunity to participate, and around 80 per cent of residents took up this opportunity. The findings have a high degree of statistical confidence.\textsuperscript{12}

Residents decided that, as far as possible, they would conduct the interviews with a service ‘partner’. This was seen to have benefit for each partner. For residents, it would provide some support and legitimacy for the findings. For service representatives, it would provide greater trust by and access to resident participants. For each of the partners, it would provide a learning opportunity in how to conduct sensitive and respectful research in a difficult climate of change and uncertainty. The Resident Action Group considered it very important that all of the accompanying material emphasise that the research was voluntary, confidential and being conducted by the MRAG independent of the Department of Housing.\textsuperscript{13} They believed that this was the only way that residents would be open and frank about their views and experiences, and confident that their views would be accurately represented.

However, the questionnaire formed only one part of the research already undertaken by residents over the preceding two years. Other important work included the ‘Remembering Minto’ project,\textsuperscript{14} and an earlier resident survey conducted by the Minto Resident Action Group (MRAG), both of which were triggered by the NSW Department of Housing’s sudden announcement of the demolition of Valley Vista in May 2002. A series of focus groups and workshops with students from the four primary schools in Minto conducted by the UnitingCare Burnside’s Under 12’s Project\textsuperscript{15} also provided valuable insights into the impacts experienced by children and families in the redevelopment areas. This and other resident-initiated research also provides important background material for the present study.

From the beginning, it was agreed that the outcomes of the research would belong primarily to the MRAG, who would use the results as they saw fit, and that the integrity of the findings would be protected. It was also agreed that a report of the study would be prepared and released by the author in consultation with the MRAG and participating services. An important part of the study was the presentation of early drafts of the report to residents over a twelve-month period.

A condition of the MRAG was also that a brief fact sheet of findings be distributed throughout the estate before any final report on results was made available for general release, with the opportunity for all residents to attend a full presentation on the report on 10 June 2004. A further workshop involving residents from Airds and Claymore was held on 26 June 2004 with the local State Member. This provided residents from other Macarthur public housing

\textsuperscript{12} A 95% confidence level (+ or – 2.5% at the 5% statistic) was achieved via the implementation of a stratified cluster sample.

\textsuperscript{13} This is also consistent with the ethics requirements for social research undertaken within the University of Western Sydney.

\textsuperscript{14} Remembering Minto is supported by a range of services including Animation Project, Franciscan Fathers, Macarthur Area Health Service, Minto Family Centre, Macquarie Fields TAFE, Campbelltown City Council Information and Cultural Exchange.

\textsuperscript{15} Smith (2004).
estates with the opportunity to hear about the experiences of those in Minto. Further workshops were then conducted with the Minto Reference Group, and between residents and the Director General of the Department of Housing on 12 and 18 August respectively, and to Campbeltown City Councillors on 8 March 2005. Other less formal presentations were also undertaken at the MRAG’s request. Several workshops with Department of Housing staff on what could be learnt from the study were also given at the request of the Department. This culminated in a conference convened and organised by the MRAG and supporting services on 15 March 2005, titled Minto: More than Bricks and Mortar: The Social Costs of Redeveloping Public Housing Estates.\textsuperscript{16}

Though this process of does not fully compensate for the impact on Minto residents of ‘being studied’ once again,\textsuperscript{17} MRAG members felt that such early and continued involvement of residents was essential if there was to be any genuineness to the claim that the research ‘belonged’ to them. It also gave them the opportunity to present the finding of the research to those in decision-making roles, and to witness the process by which policy is developed.

For most of the time, this research has been conducted on an unpaid basis by this researcher as well as many of those participating as co-researchers or key informants. Such resident-led research, conducted in depth over some years, is time- and resource-intensive and difficult to fund. However, it is essential if more than a ‘snapshot’ and superficial view of a community in the process of massive and ongoing change is to be gained. It is also essential if critical evaluative research is to be produced in this important policy area.\textsuperscript{18} A part-time post-doctoral research fellowship (urban renewal) was been made available to write up and continue this participatory research through the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, from May to October 2004. Such institutional support was of enormous assistance in the final stages of this research.

This report is the first part of an ongoing participatory evaluation of the social and economic impacts the urban redevelopment process on Minto, which will be extended to other estates undergoing similar transformations.\textsuperscript{19} A second stage report, which picks up the evaluative social and economic framework set out in Section 9 of this report, will be prepared in late 2005.

\textsuperscript{16} The conference, also supported by UnitingCare Burnside
\textsuperscript{17} A number of residents commented that they felt the pressure of constantly ‘being studied’, particularly as they often provided their time and detailed comments to researchers, and rarely heard about the results, or were able to provide feedback on the findings.
\textsuperscript{18} See for example Jamrozik (2001) who argues that the researcher-sponsor relationship, whilst always problematic, has taken on new significance since the 1980s. In Australia, amid a climate of more constrained research funding and more controlled research outputs, ‘policy-relevant research has served increasingly to validate government policies...in a way not necessarily intended by the researcher’. Jamrozik likewise notes that ‘research methods in some policy-relevant research tend to reflect the value position of policy-makers, accepting or validating, as it were, social policies in which inequality of resource allocation is justified by claims of economic necessity’ (Jamrozik 2001, pp.43-44).
\textsuperscript{19} Up to 12 estates that may also undergo radical transformations over the next decade, including strategies that involve more comprehensive demolitions.
1.2 CHANGES SINCE THE FIRST DRAFT OF THIS REPORT

At the time of writing, and subsequent to the first draft of this study in September 2004, the Department of Housing continues to review its preferred position on the Minto redevelopmment. It has also undertaken further financial modelling as part of a reassessment of the current Master Plan. A revised Feasibility Study has been prepared with significantly reviewed parameters. These include a core principle that there be 'no net loss of public housing arising from the redevelopment', and that there be a comprehensive Social Impact Assessment completed prior to further demolitions, or decisions about which precincts would be redeveloped, and which will be retained. It also includes provision for no less than 30% of public housing spread across the redevelopment area, and a yet to be determined component of affordable housing (e.g. for key workers) tied to market rent, and managed through a local community housing association, or low cost purchase housing.

In part, this was due to problems with the previous Masterplan, and the planning and redevelopment process, identified by the Department itself. This included the likelihood of a significant loss of stock arising from the previous Masterplan, carried out as a Private-Public Partnership, as discussed later in this report. It was also due to the work of the Minto Renewal Reference Group, the preliminary findings of this study, advocacy by the MRAG and services about the negative social and economic impacts of the redevelopment to date, and the Department’s willingness to take these on board.

The Department’s openness to the preliminary findings of this study, as well as good faith shown in collaborative work on the Minto Reference Groups, has led to a somewhat more trusting relationship between residents, services and the Department of Housing, to the point where a joint presentation to Campbelltown City Council on the preferred option (Optimised Masterplan) has been undertaken in March 2005.20

A major concern surrounds the extent to which Campbelltown City Council will be supportive of the retention of substantial sections of the estate, as well as the proposed proportion of social and affordable housing. Also, despite the good will of individual Department of Housing officers and significant improvements in understanding and cooperation, residents await the final decision on the future of their estate with continuing uncertainty and concern. They are acutely aware that a sudden political decision can change even the most carefully planned and executed process.

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20 Minutes of Meeting, and Notes, Minto Reference Group, 19 January 2005.
1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

This research aims to fill a number of gaps in understanding the public housing urban renewal process in NSW. These include:

- Bringing the voices of those most affected by the urban renewal process to the centre of policy considerations;
- Providing a more detailed review of the immediate and longer-term social and economic impacts on residents in public housing estates undergoing urban redevelopment, of which Minto is the first major example in NSW;
- Providing a more detailed understanding of the decisions and processes that affect urban renewal as it is currently being played out in estates such as Minto;\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) The importance of a more ‘nuanced understanding’ through an examination of the micro processes of planning decisions underpinning urban transformations in noted, for example, in Yiftachel & Huxley (2000).
• Making a contribution to reflections on the future sustainability\textsuperscript{22} of the public housing sector in NSW, including the net costs or benefits to the immediate and wider community of these policies.

1.4 FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report aims to be informative and accessible to a range of readers, while observing stringent academic standards. As such, it attempts to maintain a reader-friendly style, where more technical or theoretical points are footnoted or appended for those who seek more detailed information.

The report first sets out a summary of the main findings at the time of writing, as well as preliminary recommendations.

Following this, there is a review of key literature on 'best practice' in public housing urban renewal. This helps to establish a framework against which the processes and outcomes in Minto to date can be assessed.

The report then provides a range of perspectives on the background to and history of the redevelopment from various sources including studies, official documents from State Government, community sector agencies and community groups, as well as interviews and minutes of meetings. Certain of these are documents are appended where relevant, or can be provided to the reader for review upon request.

A preliminary review of the immediate and longer-term social and economic impacts of the redevelopment is then provided. This is informed by the findings of the 2003/04 Minto Resident Survey, which is then reported.

A preliminary framework for reviewing the total cost to the community of such a redevelopment exercise is then set out. This will be refined and applied as part of a second stage study to be completed by the end of 2005.

Discussion on what can be learned from the current study follows.

The first-stage study ends with reflections from 'Remembering Minto', a community arts research work-in-progress being conducted by residents with the assistance of local services. 'Remembering Minto' is a resident-initiated and -led project that has recently received substantial funding from the NSW Department of Housing, and is supported by a range of local services.

Some concluding comments are then provided.

\textsuperscript{22} See for example Hall & Berry (2004) who reflect on the trajectory of public housing given the current operating deficits and unit costs in NSW.
2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

If I left Minto I would be really sad because my friends are important to me and the school is too. If I had to move I would be so Angry at my mum and dad. Once me and my family went to new castle I hated it so much I wanted to come back.

P.S I LOVE MINTO
2.1 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The study finds that Minto is an ideal area for the location of public housing due to its excellent access to services, transport and shopping. It is highly valued by residents for these reasons, as well as the sense of community and attachment that many experience. Minto has an excellent base from which to form partnerships in its strong resident organisations, services and voluntary groups. Further, it is well positioned locationally to benefit from improved linkages to the Sydney labour market that have arisen from the relocation of industry over the past decade, as well as its’ proximity to the M5 and the Western Sydney Orbital, currently under construction. Significant appreciation in land values, as well as improvements in services, infrastructure and employment in recent years creates a positive forecast for Campbelltown’s social and economic future.

Nonetheless, there is a clear need to significantly improve poor quality stock in the most run down and highest turnover areas. In these areas, redevelopment may be the most appropriate strategy, though this needs to be handled sensitively, with adequate mitigation, and in consultation with residents and services. In other areas, a more gradual approach to renewal may be appropriate. The assessment of different strategies that should to be applied in each area will require a careful case-by-case approach to research and consultation, and will depend on factors such as quality of the stock, nature of social and physical infrastructure, nature of community structures and attachments, and the needs and aspirations of residents.

Moreover, the original trajectory of redevelopment in Minto is not sustainable. It has had unacceptably high level of social and economic impact upon residents and the community generally. These have not been properly assessed or mitigated through an adequate assessment of the impacts under either Part 4 or Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW). This has exacerbated the impacts upon residents. In a wider sense, the redevelopment does not appear to be sustainable in the current policy and funding climate. The significant loss of social housing associated with the original Masterplan in the context of Sydney’s housing affordability crisis and growing waiting times for public housing is particularly problematic. Alternatives to public housing stock ownership, such as Commonwealth Rental Assistance and other forms of housing assistance, are far less efficient. A ‘total cost to the community’ approach to the assessment of immediate and longer-term social and economic impacts is required if the sustainability of current redevelopment activities is to be properly considered.

The 'Minto Renewal’, in its original guise, was in many respects the antithesis of ‘best practice’ in an urban renewal process. Nonetheless, the opportunity exists to significantly improve the process and the outcomes of the estate renewal currently under way.\(^{23}\)

This section provides an overview of the key findings of this study, with recommendations provided in the section that follows.

\(^{23}\) Since the presentation of earlier drafts of this report in September 2004, there have been significant improvements to the process through the Department, residents and services working together in more recent times, as noted earlier.
2.2 ABSENCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

No Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) nor per the DUAP Guidelines (2000) 'Is an EIS required' prior to the announcement of redevelopment. Nor was such an assessment required by Campbelltown City Council prior to the approval of demolitions, which to date involves over 200 homes. There has likewise been no documented assessment of the social and economic impacts of the redevelopment to date or as proposed under Part 4 of the Act per the requirements of s79C(1)(b). This states that the consent authority (Council) must take into account the likely social and economic impacts in the locality of any development (including demolition). Such an assessment of impacts, whether under Part 4 or part 5 of the Act would have been important for several reasons:

- In its absence, there appears to be no proper evaluation of the immediate and longer-term social and economic impacts in the 'business case' for the redevelopment, nor has it been assessed on the basis of the 'total cost the to community'. This would provide a proper basis for decision-making, and would complement the work done by the Department of Housing on the more narrow 'business case' for redevelopment;

- There has also therefore been limited assessment of opportunities for proper mitigation of the redevelopment for residents immediately affected, or for the wider community arising for example from the likely loss of a significant amount of public housing, and other externalities (e.g. community costs). There are several immediate consequences of this.

  - It has left residents' claims for mitigation up to the good will of the Department, rather than an independent arbiter of what they could reasonably expect to compensate them for the outcomes of the redevelopment process. It has led to considerable unnecessary suffering for a very high proportion of residents in Valley Vista precinct in 2002/03, and continues to mean that residents and service advocates must constantly 'fight' for basic mitigation in Sarah precinct rather than working from the base of resident 'entitlement'. Whilst there has been considerable good will and effort on the part of individual

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24 The test that needs to be satisfied under Part 5 of the Act regarding Crown development is whether there was a ‘significant impact on the environment’. This is dealt with in more detail in Sections 8 and 9 of the Report.
25 I.e. the more narrow impacts on the organisational ‘bottom line’ of the Department of Housing.
26 E.g. a Triple Bottom Line or comprehensive Cost Benefit Analysis process.
27 Note that there has been demolition consent but that this does not allow for mitigation including compensation of residents for loss, which has been negotiated with or offered by the Department, though in a piecemeal fashion, as noted later.
Departmental officers, such social and economic mitigation should have been structured into the redevelopment approval process to date, rather than the piecemeal approach to mitigation that has been taken (including adequate budgetary provisions);

- There has been no serious debate about the impact and potential mitigation of net loss of public housing stock in NSW at a time of public housing decline in real terms, and the serious housing affordability crisis;

- There has likewise been no adequate consideration of mitigation of the range of other community costs (externalities) likely to arise from the development, now or in the future.

- It is inconceivable that such a redevelopment process would have been undertaken without a proper assessment of the social and economic impacts, in a middle class (or any other) residential suburb at the present time. It is entirely counter to the prevailing culture of consultation required (under NSW planning law or by virtue of potential resident action) for any infrastructure or residential development process, particularly in existing urban areas.28

2.3 THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF A MASTERPLAN

No Masterplan was in place at the time when the demolition of Valley Vista commenced, nor is one approved as Sarah precinct is being demolished at the time of writing. Despite this, over 200 homes have been or are in the process of being demolished. Though it is understood that there have been several drafts put to the Minister for Housing by the Department, and a consultation process undertaken in Minto on an earlier drafts, there has not been agreement on the Masterplan. There has likewise been no application to the consent authority (Campbelltown City Council) for approval, nor any exhibition of the formal Masterplan application. This is significant for several reasons:

- There is no current physical or social planning framework for the redevelopment. This has led to the situation where the plan for the redevelopment changes on a regular basis and the community receives different information over time (e.g. which stages will be demolished first, or whether some will be demolished at all). Individual residents have likewise received varying information about whether their home will remain or be demolished;

- There is likewise a lack of basic decisions from the NSW State Government (more than 2 years after the demolition of stage one (Valley Vista) was announced) regarding the proportion of public housing to be replaced on site or in net terms at the state level. No decisions has been made about the preferred redevelopment private ‘partner’, or

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28 All major infrastructure projects, or those requiring resumption of houses as part of the development would normally require an Environmental Impact Statement and Statement of Environmental Effects.
about the timing, staging or process for the remainder of the estate redevelopment;

- The lack of a comprehensive framework has been one of the most confusing and distressing aspects of the process to residents, many of whom consistently describe ‘living in limbo’ and severe personal distress after some two years;

- The demolition of housing has arguably occurred prematurely, and at a time of severe public housing shortage. Long-term, settled residents with a strong sense of community and attachment to their area have been relocated, often in haste and in distress, reporting continuing impacts upon them and their families;

- It is uncertain at the time of writing when or whether the Valley Vista or Sarah precincts will be reconstructed, what form they will take, or which other precincts will be redeveloped.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE ‘MINTO RENEWAL’ VERSUS ‘REDEVELOPMENT’ PROCESS

A fundamental problem arises from the use of the term ‘Minto Renewal Project’ in all official literature and community processes when what is being embarked upon is in fact a ‘radical redevelopment’ of Minto. This fundamental conceptual mismatch has led to confusion, ongoing frustration, and resident cynicism about the process. It has also often led to resident withdrawal from the official Minto renewal process, though a significant number continue to attend a range of official meetings and consultations. Many are active in what is effectively a ‘parallel process’ where they continue to ‘renew’ their community. Concrete examples of fundamental dissonance from the official Minto process include:

- Discussions in DOH-initiated consultations about ‘strengthening the community’ at the same time as the residents population is preparing to be relocated for a lengthy period (at least 3-5 years) with no certainty that they will ever return;

- Consultation about ‘what you want for your community in the future’ when residents who are in the next stage of demolition and relocation are aware that they may not return and thus benefit from improved housing or amenity arising from the proposed private sector redevelopment;

- The inability of residents to influence core aspects of the redevelopment process due to a pre-existing financially-driven government agenda (or lack of agreement at various institutional levels about the agenda) and conflicting policy drivers, with limited room for movement by individual Department of Housing officers in response to residents’ expressed desires. An example is residents inability to have meaningful discussion about whether cottages will be retained in some areas, Which precincts should be demolished first, and which sections of the estate (if any) should be upgraded rather than redeveloped.
In general, from the time of the Minister for Housing’s announcement of the estate’s demolition in May 2002, this study finds that residents of Minto have been generally quite clear about the type of process they are in (redevelopment or demolition), and the degree of control they have over it (very limited). The lack of clarity has tended to be on the part of the Department of Housing, who have attempted to engage residents in processes that would have been more appropriate for a genuine ‘renewal partnership’, or have changed messages or direction regarding the trajectory of estate redevelopment many times.

The officers’ own constraints have been significant, not the least of which was the sudden announcement of the ‘demolition’ of the Valley Vista by the Minister and its legacy in their relationship with the community. A further constraint is the fact that they have been operating outside of the guidance that would have been offered by a ministerially-sanctioned Masterplan, and a proper Environmental impact assessment process.

This has exacerbated residents’ uncertainty about the future, and their ability to adapt to the imminent loss of their homes or community for the majority of those who place value on such attachments. It has also meant that residents have been less able to respond to the Department over issues arising from the redevelopment (e.g. had no clear ‘statement of intent’ about their area or home to which they could respond), and less clear about their future options or choices (e.g. regarding the time or nature of relocation).

Moreover, it has been a highly disempowering process. Nonetheless, hundreds of residents are engaged in a parallel process of resident-led and initiated participation. This has been in part stimulated by the redevelopment announcement and ongoing redevelopment activities, and has, in fact, served to ‘strengthen the community’, though perhaps not in ways envisaged within the official renewal process.

2.5 CONFLICT BETWEEN BEST PRACTICE IN URBAN RENEWAL AND THE DRIVERS OF NSW STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY

The drivers of public policy are in conflict with and largely work against best practice in the Minto renewal process. They contribute to a lack of ‘sustainability’ of the current strategies, particularly in relation to the social or affordable housing system, as well as for the local community.

The literature indicates that ‘best practice’ in urban renewal includes the following:

- Participation and engagement of the local community, which will lead to many of the desired changes in the absence of other (e.g. physical) strategies;
- Partnerships and resident-led solutions that build on the existing strengths of the community;
- Cooperative action with key services, local agencies, resident groups and coalitions that builds on social capital that has been developed over years of working within and with the community;
- Case by case approach to urban renewal, with varying emphasis on physical and non-physical renewal strategies depending on the circumstances;
- Open agenda that is able to be flexible as the process develops;
- Strategies related to social and economic development, including those which deal with underlying structural causes of poverty and exclusion;
- Consideration for the 'sustainability' of strategies employed within the local community as well as the wider urban system, including the total cost to the community of strategies employed rather than the financial 'bottom line' of one organisation.

In contrast, the policy drivers for the NSW State Government are often in conflict with such community renewal solutions. These include:

- Extreme funding constraints from ongoing cuts to Commonwealth funding under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement;
- Insufficient income from rental due to the increasingly disadvantaged profile of tenants, maintenance backlog, and decreasing amount of public housing stock to be allocated to less disadvantaged tenants who would lift net rental income;
- Ideological constraints on debt financing of public housing stock or infrastructure, though this is currently being questioned on an economic efficiency basis;
- Poor maintenance track record, and/or poor condition of older stock, and an inability to fund current liabilities;
- An inability to sustain existing stock levels due to funding constraints and historical management and maintenance deficiencies;
- An imperative to raise revenue through the sale of assets and public land in areas of increasing land value such as Minto to fund replacement elsewhere (though not at the same rate as the stock lost and potentially at a higher real cost), and to fund maintenance liabilities. This could be regarded as an effective de-capitalisation strategy at the state level, implicit in its outcomes if not in the express intentions of policy. The projected loss of 400 to 500 homes from the Minto redevelopment is significant in this environment;
- The need to deal with stigma associated with broad acre estates, and social problems largely arising from an increasingly residualised public housing sector, and the need to allocate to increasingly high need tenants from a shrinking stock portfolio.

Given the dissonance between urban renewal 'best practice' and the policy drivers of the NSW State Government in relation to its public housing program, it is perhaps unsurprising that the current 'Minto Renewal Project’ has had a less than ideal start and trajectory to date. This is despite the best will and efforts of a range of individual Department of Housing Officers.
2.6 PROCEDURAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SARAH PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT (SECOND STAGE)

Despite severe institutional constraints, many of the departmental officers involved at the coalface and in guiding the process have acted with integrity and compassion. This, combined with strong and ongoing advocacy from the Minto Residents Action Group, Macarthur Housing Coalition, and other service providers\(^29\) has led to some significant procedural improvements in the redevelopment of the second precinct (Sarah). These include:

- The appointment of an Independent Tenant Advocate, funded by the Department in early 2004, and auspiced by the South West Tenants Regional Association (SWRTA). This position is designed to ensure that any tenant experiencing problems in the redevelopment is able have an independent advocate with the Department, as well as a further source of information or assistance.

- Appointment of a dedicated Resettlement Officer within the Department of Housing, with clerical assistance, to 'case manage' tenants of Sarah undergoing the redevelopment process.

- The establishment of a Minto Renewal Reference Group by the Department with representatives from the Minto Resident Action Group, local and regional services, the Department of Housing and Council.

- A range of forums organised by the Minto Resident Action Group (MRAG), the Tenant Advocate, and/or the Macarthur Housing Coalition (MHC) on issues related to the redevelopment in which the Department has more recently participated;

- The development of detailed and specific procedures for the Department in relation to Sarah Way, though these are still problematic at times. These procedures were developed by the Department in close consultation with the MRAG and the MHC. Residents and services provided significant input to the drafting of some of these procedures.

With modifications for special local circumstances, these and other initiatives could be transferable to other areas undergoing such large-scale resident dislocation.

\(^29\) For example, the South West Multicultural and Community Centre, and the South West Regional Tenants Association.
2.7 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RESIDENT SURVEY

A survey of residents was undertaken from October 2003 to March 2004 by the MRAG in partnership with the University of Western Sydney and a range of local, regional and peak services and groups. Three precincts were selected for a comparative review of experiences and impacts to date. These were chosen on the basis of location, housing type and where they fitted into the timing of the redevelopment. The precincts selected were:

- Sarah as the area currently undergoing redevelopment;
- Dunlop, to be redeveloped in the intermediate term;
- Caroline, which was thought to be undergoing an upgrade and more gradual tenure diversification strategy.

The most significant variable in terms of differences between respondents’ views was ‘precinct’. This also intersected with housing condition (e.g. housing in the townhouse precinct of Dunlop was more run-down than in the other precincts selected, and its turnover and unpopularity was correspondingly high). As such, data was primarily analysed by precinct, with the knowledge that there are complex relationships at work in the precincts surveyed.

Overall, 180 houses were interviewed using a stratified cluster sample, and a high level of confidence in the findings was achieved. The following provides a brief summary of the findings set out in Section 6 below.

2.7.1 Housing Type

In the sample, there were:

- 40 Cottages;
- 140 Townhouses.

2.7.2 Years in Minto

An established community was evident, particularly in Caroline and in Sarah, but less so in Dunlop. Overall:

- 60% of residents had lived in Minto for more than 5 years;
- Over 40% had lived in Minto for more than 10 years;
- 23% had lived in Minto for more than 20 years.

2.7.3 Age of Respondents

- Overall, 50% of respondents were under 40 years of age;
- However, the age profile in Sarah and particularly in Caroline (70% over 40 years old) was much older than in Dunlop.

2.7.4 Proximity to Other Family Members

- Around 65% of respondents had family in Minto or nearby suburbs;
- This was highest in Sarah where over 70% of residents had Family in Minto or nearby suburbs.
2.7.5 Things Residents Like Best - First Choice

- Close to shops, transport, schools, or work (almost 60% of respondents);
- Qualities of neighbourhood, neighbours, or the sense of community (around 25%)

2.7.6 Things Residents Like Least - First Choice

- Problem Neighbours 24%
- Nothing 20%
- Drugs, etc 14%
- Break-ins, theft, etc 14%

2.7.7 Overall Feelings About Minto at the Time of Survey

- Quite positive to very positive 60%
- Quite negative to very negative 40%

A striking feature was the difference between attitudes of residents in the three precincts at the time of the survey:

- Caroline - at least 75% were generally positive to very positive
- Dunlop - around 58% were generally positive to very positive
- Sarah - around 40% were generally positive to very positive

2.7.8 Feelings About Minto Before and After Announcement

However, attitudes toward Minto before redevelopment announced were quite different:

- Almost 70% of total respondents reported that they felt positively about their area before the redevelopment was announced, with the following differences between precincts:
  - Sarah 71% before vs 40% after
  - Caroline 79% before vs 75% after
  - Dunlop little change at 58%

2.7.9 Main Reasons for Change to More Negative

- There was considerable concern among even Caroline residents (who were thought to be less likely to face redevelopment in the short term at the time of the survey if at all) about the future or perceived impacts of the redevelopment. It is significant that:
  - 77% of people in Sarah felt that the area had changed for the worse since redevelopment was announced;
• 73% said the redevelopment had impacted on their families, overwhelmingly in a negative way:
  ▪ 41% of respondents felt more neglected, unsettled, or unsafe;
  ▪ 44% of respondents had experienced / were experiencing personal or family stress, fear, uncertainty, ill health, family breakdown, with some serious impacts evident.

2.7.10 Intention to Stay in Minto

Findings that Sarah and Caroline residents had been more committed to their neighbourhoods or communities is also supported by the strong findings on 'intention to stay' in their area prior to the redevelopment being announced, where:

• 68% of respondents had intended to stay in Minto before redevelopment announced, with Sarah highest at 76%, and
• 70% of respondents had intended to stay more than 10 years, again with Sarah the highest at 80%.

2.7.11 Returning to Minto and Key Influences

• At least 60% of respondents would return to Minto after the redevelopment if they had the chance. Those who said they would not wish to return were divided fairly evenly between those who wanted to get out of Minto at any cost, and those who would prefer not to move again when they had settled in a new area.

• However, only 30% of respondents felt it was likely they could return to Minto. Most felt there would be insufficient stock replaced, while others thought that they would try to 'move on' after the redevelopment.

• Almost 70% of respondents would prefer to stay in Minto if their home were improved.

2.7.12 Consultation and Participation

A finding which causes considerable concern in terms of 'best practice' in urban renewal is that relatively few people felt that they had had any involvement or real input in the redevelopment so far.

• 90% of respondents felt that they had had no involvement so far;
• 97% felt that they had had no control over the process so far;
• 95% of respondents believed they would have no opportunity to influence the redevelopment process in the future.
2.8 SOME THINGS THAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE STUDY

2.8.1 Renewal Approach

- A very small area analysis is needed to understand the way an area 'works' in a renewal process.

- Redevelopment should use different strategies for different streets and/or precincts due to different:
  - Levels of satisfaction and community attachment;
  - Condition of houses and design features;
  - Resident aspirations.

- A case-by-case approach is needed, not a one-size-fits-all strategy for the estate, precincts or streets. This requires a more 'open agenda' than that which has existed in Minto to date, ad a great deal more flexibility than the Department has been able to provide in the renewal process.

- In terms of Minto specifically, a more detailed exploration of the issues in partnership with local residents may have indicated a different order of precinct involvement. In terms of level of impacts on the community, levels of attachment and condition and layout of housing:
  - Dunlop probably should have been the first precinct to be redeveloped, though this needs further community consultation. Due to the poor standard of stock and the high turnover in the precinct, it is an area where complete redevelopment may be warranted;
  - Sarah precinct would have been targeted later for redevelopment, and the Department may have used a different approach to renewal, as this area had many characteristics of a strong and cohesive community. Sadly, this is now too late.
  - There appears to be limited justification for the total redevelopment of Caroline Precinct due to the nature of its community and the standard and layout of housing.

Overall, a far more detailed analysis is needed of the remaining precincts to review the strengths and weaknesses of the area, including the appropriateness of the existing housing stock, strength of the community and community structures, as well as the needs and aspirations of their communities.

2.8.2 Thinking About the Meaning of ‘Community’

- The study highlights the fact that one cannot understand ‘community’ by drawing lines on a map, or spending relatively little time in an area.

- People experience geographic 'community' very differently:
• Some at the level of the estate (e.g. school, RAG, etc involvement)
• Most experience ‘community’ at the level of the street or cluster of streets;
• Of these, many experience it in the houses immediately around them (e.g. Durban Way, Sarah Precinct as it was prior to the current resettlement of its residents).

• Thus, within a very small area residents can have very different views of ‘community’.

• There is a need to radically rethink what we mean by the term ‘community’ when it is applied to areas like Minto. The present study indicates that it is often misused and misunderstood by policy makers, and used to justify various redevelopment actions enacted upon some of those least advantaged in society.

2.8.3 Consultation/ Participation/ Information

• The literature suggests that any urban renewal strategy is most effective when combined with community consultation and participation strategies, and that these participation strategies can lead to many of the desired changes in the absence of any other actions.

• This study again highlights the vital role that proper information, consultation and participation strategies can play in a successful and sustainable renewal process. This involves:
  • Adequate time and resources, and an honest approach for proper consultation or information;
  • Working closely with the different ‘communities’ within the estate to understand the issues and develop the right ‘solutions’;
  • An open agenda and a willingness to share power and control if the process is participation;
  • Honesty at all times about the type of process residents are engaged in - if it can only be ‘information’ with limited or no opportunity to influence the process or the agenda, it is best to establish the constraints of the process at its outset.

• Inconsistency (‘different messages’) and uncertainty (‘living in ‘limbo’) has been a very damaging part of the Minto redevelopment for residents. It has led to significant mistrust and cynicism. It has been very damaging to a high proportion of residents in the precincts that have undergone or are undergoing redevelopment.

• There is an opportunity to bring together two processes (the official redevelopment process, and the resident-led and initiated process) at the present time. However, the parameters of the redevelopment process must be reassessed in partnership with the community if this is to occur.

• Trust must be rebuilt before partnership can begin.
2.8.4 The Research Process

- A resident-led approach to research that involves key stakeholders (e.g., government, community services) in genuine partnership will uncover issues and responses that may not otherwise be understood or developed.

- Such an approach will enrich the renewal process, and enhance its chance of success if the real objective of the process is ‘community renewal’.

2.8.5 Housing Stock in Minto and NSW

- It is likely that there is a need to retain far more than the 20 to 30 per cent public housing currently projected in the redeveloped areas;

- The projected net loss of stock to NSW arising from such redevelopment is also not sustainable in the current climate if this becomes the model for redevelopment.
3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Year 1 student,
Sarah Precinct 2004
3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MINTO SPECIFICALLY

It is recommended\(^{30}\) that the NSW State Government:

- Reconsider the current ‘radical redevelopment’ strategy for Minto as it appears to be neither cost effective nor sustainable in a broader public policy sense;

- Make Minto a pilot area for an innovative and cost effective community-driven solution to the need for affordable housing for a growing cross-section of the Sydney housing and labour market;

- Undertake more gradual community renewal that leads to sustainable change in, and maturing of, the demographic profile in accordance with urban renewal ‘best practice’. This will include a more detailed examination of each precinct or cluster of streets within each precinct, and the needs and preferences of residents in each of these small areas. It is likely to involve the redevelopment of certain areas (e.g. poor quality and poor performing stock in townhouse precincts like Dunlop), and a combination of renewal approaches in other more settled areas with higher quality housing (e.g. precincts like Caroline);

- Ensure that there is no net loss of public housing arising from the redevelopment of Minto, and that the process of internal and external replacement be transparent;

- Engage in a public sector-led renewal in Minto in partnership with agencies such as Argyle Community Housing, Landcom, local services, the MRAG and the wider community. Where appropriate, a private sector partner could be engaged in specific precincts/small areas where this is \textbf{demonstrated} to be cost effective. This more proactive public-community led renewal would aim to ensure that:

  - DOH and the community can more effectively control the process and outcomes, and ensure that legitimate social, economic and financial goals are met;
  - As much public housing as possible (and as needed) can be retained in the area;
  - A higher level of public housing can be retained in NSW generally;
  - A mix of appropriate tenures can be developed that meet the need for affordable housing of a growing cross-section of the Greater Metropolitan Sydney population. This should be a mix of general and priority public housing of appropriate housing type.

\(^{30}\) It should be noted that many of these recommendations have, at the time of writing, been adopted by the NSW Department of Housing subsequent to the publication of earlier drafts of this report, and that certain recommendations have been incorporated as guiding principles for other regeneration projects that may involve significant components of estate redevelopment.
Workers who are employed in occupations and sectors which are of benefit to the community but whose incomes are not sufficient to rent or purchase housing close to their place of work. Such jobs are not geographically flexible, so that workers must either move into serious housing stress, or move to housing that is remote from their place of work.

The NSW Centre for Affordable Housing key worker housing pilot at Thornleigh to the North of Sydney involves the rental of 6 homes to key workers who are working in and essential to the local labour market, but whose incomes would not allow them to live affordably in the area. The homes have been constructed on a Department of Housing redevelopment site from funds provided by the Rental Bond Board, and are managed by a local Community Housing Association (CHA). The CHA has developed appropriate eligibility criteria and management processes in consultation with the Department and with local employers and services. Rents are set at 75% of market rent, and the operating surplus (projected at $40,000) may be directed toward the development of further housing (e.g. to repay loan finance) or to cross-subsidise other housing operating deficit. Tenure is for a three-year term, after which the housing is turned over. It therefore effectively acts as a stepping-stone for those needing to live in the area, and also strengthens their association with the local area, and benefits the local labour market.

In general, it is strongly recommended that a mix of tenures be achieved in each precinct redeveloped, and that that this mix include at least the following social or affordable rental housing composition:

- 30 per cent social housing (one third priority; and two thirds from the general waiting list) tied to a percentage of income;
- 20 per cent affordable (e.g. key worker) housing for low to medium income workers tied to discounted market rent (see for example the NSW Centre for Affordable ‘Key Worker’ Housing Pilot in Thornleigh). A proportion of this should be rented through a CHA, with some also available for low cost purchase tied to contractual arrangements to limit on-sale.

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31 Workers who are employed in occupations and sectors which are of benefit to the community but whose incomes are not sufficient to rent or purchase housing close to their place of work. Such jobs are not geographically flexible, so that workers must either move into serious housing stress, or move to housing that is remote from their place of work.

32 The NSW Centre for Affordable Housing key worker housing pilot at Thornleigh to the North of Sydney involves the rental of 6 homes to key workers who are working in and essential to the local labour market, but whose incomes would not allow them to live affordably in the area. The homes have been constructed on a Department of Housing redevelopment site from funds provided by the Rental Bond Board, and are managed by a local Community Housing Association (CHA). The CHA has developed appropriate eligibility criteria and management processes in consultation with the Department and with local employers and services. Rents are set at 75% of market rent, and the operating surplus (projected at $40,000) may be directed toward the development of further housing (e.g. to repay loan finance) or to cross-subsidise other housing operating deficit. Tenure is for a three-year term, after which the housing is turned over. It therefore effectively acts as a stepping-stone for those needing to live in the area, and also strengthens their association with the local area, and benefits the local labour market.
3.2 BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Department of Housing:

- Ensure that there is no net loss of public housing arising from the redevelopment of areas targeted for significant redevelopment, and that the process of internal and external replacement be transparent and publicly accountable;

- Ensure that a detailed Social Impact Assessment is conducted prior to planning for redevelopment of any further estates, and that such an SIA process forms part of the identification of estates that may be suitable for redevelopment, as distinct from those which should be subject to different (renewal or regeneration) strategies;

- That SIAs incorporate processes to ensure that there is a detailed examination of small areas and communities within an estate, and have the latitude to make recommendations about the potentially different ‘treatment’ of different small areas/internal estate communities;

- That an EIS also be conducted in relation to estates which are targeted for significant redevelopment prior to detailed planning, and that this EIS incorporate principles of TBL/total cost to the community (economic, social and environmental) of any redevelopment plans;

- This EIS should also form part of the selection process for estates that may benefit from some redevelopment;

- Critically examine the long-term social and financial costs of the redevelopment of estates through Private-Public Partnerships, compared with public-sector led redevelopment of estates, and public borrowing to fund a component of ‘affordable housing’ which could revert over time to social housing (see below);

- Consider augmentation public housing stock in all estates through the construction and rental of housing to groups such as ‘key workers’, with rent tied to discounted market rent (thus enabling a higher rental income yield to cross-subsidise public housing rental losses, and/or enable housing loan repayments, whilst keeping stock in public ownership);

- Ensure that each redevelopment also comprises a proportion of ‘affordable housing stock’ (e.g. for low income workers), either rented through a Community Housing Association, or for affordable purchase with contractual constraints on resale.
4. KEY LITERATURE ON ‘BEST PRACTICE’ IN COMMUNITY RENEWAL

I Think that they shouldn't knock down the houses because what if mothers have new born babies and they have to move out and it will be a hassle if they should ask the people if they want to move or not.

Top: Primary Student, Sarah Precinct 2004
Bottom: Valley Vista, 2004
4.1 OVERVIEW

A range of literature sets out what some researchers consider to be ‘best practice’ in urban renewal in public housing estates. Whether in the guise of ‘Neighbourhood Improvement’, ‘Urban Redevelopment’, ‘Community Renewal’, ‘Community Regeneration’,33 the literature is reasonably consistent about some of the hallmarks of what may be termed a successful or ‘sustainable’ community renewal process.35 Other aspects of sustainable community renewal are more contested, however.36 This section reviews some of the key orthodoxies of community renewal to provide a context to the Minto case study that follows, and a testing ground for some of these principles and practices.

4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

Key literature on community renewal and regeneration consistently highlights the important role of ‘participation’ and ‘partnership’ in any sustainable renewal endeavour. It notes that genuine participation of public housing tenants requires adequate time and resources,37 respect, a willingness to abandon preconceptions, and, as far as possible, an open agenda.38 Much of this literature could equally be describing an appropriate research process with such communities.

An extensive literature review conducted for an evaluation of the social costs and benefits associated with the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) in Airds in Sydney’s southwest in 1996 concluded that,

The literature suggests that that any urban renewal strategy is most effective when combined with community

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33 The NSW Department of Housing has itself used different terminology over time and in relation to different activities. For example, the term ‘Neighbourhood Improvement’ was largely though not exclusively related to the physical upgrades and estate redesign associated with the NIP in the mid- to late 1990s, which was superseded by the ‘Community Renewal Strategy’ in 1999, and the Community Renewal Program in 2003. The latter had an increased focus on social and economic development activities and objectives. See also Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph 2004; Wood, Randolph and Jud 2002; and Stubbs & Hardy 2000). ‘Urban Redevelopment’ in the current context more readily relates to the large-scale demolition and/or disposal of public housing stock, and the relocation or dispersal of tenants from areas of high public housing concentration (though often to other areas of high concentration) (DOH 2004a).

34 Wood, Randolph & Judd (2002) for example draw a distinction between ‘Urban Renewal’ which they maintain has been used to describe primarily asset-based or physical renewal activities, and ‘Community Renewal’ which they note has generally been used to refer to social and economic community development activities. A further distinction has been made by Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph (2004) who maintain that ‘renewal’ tends to refer to more physically oriented strategies, while ‘regeneration’ more commonly refers to a wider set of practices and includes practices such as community participation and community development.

35 See for example Stubbs & Storer (1996), which reviewed the empirically based literature on the value of active ‘participation strategies’, though the lack of evaluative studies in Australia meant that this was largely from the UK, USA and Canada.

36 See for example Wood et al op cit. in relation to community renewal orthodoxies. They note that ‘notions of what constitutes a reasonable ‘social mix’ or ‘tenure mix’ are far from agreed in the literature, and assessments of reasonable levels are contradictory or lacking in empirical evidence’.


38 See for example Maclennan (1998); Allen (1998).
consultation and participation strategies, and that these participation strategies can lead to many of the desired changes in the absence of any other actions [original emphasis].\(^{39}\)

Despite the increased importance placed on participatory policies and processes by State and Federal Government in Australia, more recent reviews of tenant participation in renewal or regeneration have noted that its implementation has been far from unproblematic.\(^{40}\) Concepts such as 'consultation' and 'participation' are often imprecisely defined or understood by policy makers, and there are frequently considerable differences between the expectations of institutional and resident 'partners' about what these terms mean and what to expect from a participatory process.\(^{41}\) There is also frequent confusion between what may be termed 'process' and 'outcome',\(^{42}\) and the extent to which participation is valuable for its own sake even if there is no tangible change to, for example, the living conditions or environment of residents.\(^{43}\)

Disagreement about the underlying function that participation serves is also a theme of the literature. For example, the use of 'participation' as a way of encouraging real and ongoing involvement in a regeneration process may be contrasted with the degree to which it is used to justify a particular pre-determined policy position, or to 'settle down' an area which has been problematic to manage as a holding-strategy, without any tangible gain from the process to the resident participants in the longer term.\(^{44}\)

Moreover, as noted by Randolph et al (2002), good will at the commencement of a community renewal or regeneration process is often not sustained throughout the project, partly as a result of the factors noted above. The lack of empirical studies in the Australian context further limits understanding about whether the outcomes of participation have been 'successful',\(^{45}\) and in whose terms this success may be measured.

\(^{39}\) Stubbs, J. & Storer, J. 1996, A Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the NSW Department of Housing's Neighbourhood Improvement Program: Airds Case Study Area, NSW DOH.

\(^{40}\) See for example discussion of the definition, nature and purpose of 'participation' in Wood, Randolph and Judd (2002).

\(^{41}\) For example, the difference between 'consultation' and 'participation' and the use of these terms interchangeably with serious consequences for the degree to which residents can understand and engage with officially or institutionally initiated processes (Stubbs & Hardy 2000, p.97).

\(^{42}\) See for example Wood, Randolph, & Judd (2002) who noted the different perspectives and rationale for consultation between public housing tenants by housing providers, and varying views about the extent to which there is an obligation for the consultation process to be translated into action on issues arising.

\(^{43}\) See for example Dalton (1996) who draws the distinction between the conceptualisation of participation between economic liberals or public choice theorists which takes as its starting point the primacy of individual choice and participation on the basis of maximising individual advantage, and that which underpins the position of for example social democrats, who see the value of participation as an end in itself (e.g. through building self-esteem and social connectedness) and as a way of clarifying and achieving outcomes that benefit a wider social group (Dalton 1996, pp. 182-205).

\(^{44}\) See for example Mowbray (1995).

\(^{45}\) See for example Wood, M., Randolph, B. & Judd, B. 2002, Resident Participation, Social Cohesion and Sustainability in Neighbourhood Renewal: Developing Best Practice Models, AHURI.
Despite the lack of resolution on these issues, other literature takes a more pragmatic approach. It draws a distinction between ‘information’, 'consultation and 'participation', where, in simple terms:

- 'Information' or 'communication' is generally used to describe a process that conveys information, where there may be little interchange between the different parties involved, and no expectation that residents can influence the agenda in any significant way.

- ‘Consultation’ is used to describe the process by which a body with greater power seeks the views of those with less power, in this case the relevant housing authority and its tenants. While this process may be undertaken with the intention to best meet the needs of those consulted and an expectation that their views will be ‘taken into account’, there is no obligation on the more powerful party to translate feedback into action.

- 'Participation', on the other hand, implies a shift in power such that those participating do so on more equal terms, and there is an implied process of 'partnership'. As such, those participating would expect that they would be part of the process of planning, carrying out and benefiting from any actions decided upon in the participation process.46

Whilst noting the varying ideological underpinnings of 'participation', others nonetheless argue that participation by citizens in the development of broad public policy is vitally important. They note that such participation has become more constrained and less legitimate in recent decades, and argue strongly for such practices to be ‘defended and extended’ as a means to a positive collective outcome, as well as for the benefits it gives to participants as an end in itself.47

In relation to 'participation' specifically in the context of public housing regeneration, Maclennan (1998) draws on extensive research and practice on urban renewal strategies in Britain. He notes that

...each area is different and has its own distinct problems and growth points. There are relevant general principles of ‘how’ to work - in partnership, with the community, holistically and strategically. It is important to allow local initiatives to ‘grow’ and find their own way of responding most effectively to the particular local needs and priorities.48

In a similar vein, a more recent paper from the Community Development Resource Association of South Africa, though describing a ‘community development’ approach49 to local area development, could equally be

46 See the distinction drawn in Stubbs & Hardy op cit. based on Arnstein’s (1969) ‘ladder of participation’.
47 See Dalton op cit
49 See also Wood, Randolph & Judd op cit. note the problematic use of the term community development in the context of the prevailing community renewal policy context.
describing the sensitive and respectful approach required in working and particularly researching with any community as part of an adequate sociological enquiry.

[F]irst [we must] own that an outside intervention is exceedingly arrogant and can only be mitigated by its antidote, a respectful facilitative approach. So intervening...with warmth and humble respect for what developmental streams are already moving in the community, tuning into their time, learning the trust to see and be a mirror, human ecologists looking for what is indigenous, latent and potent, looking for the will that is buried but alive, bringing to light hidden memories, stories...

Trying to connect communities with what is already theirs, healing relationships and helping humane leadership to surface and be strengthened and be responsible...first for what lies within and then with what lies without. To help people develop deep strength and voice over time to tackle their own contexts, representing themselves. And we have to work over time, with time not against it. 

Such approaches to working or researching with communities reflect not just a more participatory approach in terms of genuine partnership or power sharing. It also acknowledges that other community development or community renewal processes frequently precede and continue to run along side other official and/or partnership approaches to community renewal. Along with a range of appropriate methods, such participatory methodology ensures and enhances a rigorous approach to social inquiry.

Australian studies note that it is rare for community renewal processes to move beyond the ‘consultation’ level to become a genuinely participatory process, and frequently do not extend beyond the ‘information’ level.

The participatory approaches promoted by researchers such as Reeler (2003), Boas (2002) and Maclean (1998), are those to which this researcher refers when discussing the concept of ‘participation’ and participatory research in the current study.

The study of the urban renewal processes at work in Minto provides an opportunity to review whether ‘best practice’ approaches are being undertaken, and some of the outcomes of these practices to date.

50 Reeler, D. 2003, If You Meet the White Rabbit on the Road Steal His Watch, Community Development Resource Association in South Africa, p.3
51 See also the work of Boas (2002) on the nature of participatory research.
52 Key literature on Social Impact Assessment noted that a range of methods within an adequate social impact methodology is required depending on the phenomena in question. See for example NSW State Government SIA Handbooks for accessible discussion on these issues, including NSW Government Office on Social Policy, 1995, Techniques for Effective Social Impact Assessment: A practical guide, NSWGOSP, Sydney; and NSW Government Office on Social Policy & the NSW Local Government and Shires Association, 1995, Social Impact Assessment for Local Government, NSWGOSP & NSWLGS, Sydney
53 See for example Stubbs & Hardy op cit., Wood, Randolph & Judd op cit.
54 Ibid.
4.3 OTHER STRATEGIES THAT LEAD TO POSITIVE REGENERATION OR RENEWAL OUTCOMES

At the time of conducting the Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in Airds, it was noted that there was a dearth of evaluative literature on the impacts of urban renewal in the Australian context. The review of primarily UK and North American empirical literature undertaken for that study suggested that if the physical redevelopment of Airds were combined with the following strategies, the Neighbourhood Improvement Program would be significantly more effective in reducing social problems and their associated financial costs. As well as ensuring that there was a high degree of community participation in the urban renewal process, associated strategies found to have the greatest effect from the evaluative literature reviewed included the following:

- Achieving real community participation in planning, development and management of the estate in the longer term;

- Greater care by the Department regarding housing allocations to areas with a high concentration of public housing, and less focus on allocating to those with most complex needs and in most severe housing need;

- A more proactive approach to dealing with the small proportion of ‘problem’ tenants who could have a large impact on their street or precinct;

- Maximising opportunities offered by the then Neighbourhood Improvement Program for direct job creation and skills development that will lead to sustainable employment opportunities for unemployed residents;

- Enhancing opportunities for local residents to purchase their own homes through the investigation and adaptation of self build and self help housing schemes, and other more gradual tenure diversification strategies;

- Strengthening local neighbourhood organisations, and neighbourhood based community development, youth, health and recreational services as long-term partners in the urban regeneration process;

- Decreasing community isolation through improved transport infrastructure and strategies that link public housing estate residents with activities in the wider community, including employment, education and training.

These types of strategies would lead to a gradual reduction in turnover and change of perception or stigmatisation, and a gradual stabilisation of the area through maturation of the social profile. There is little in the more recent literature reviewed to suggest that these strategies have been contested if community ‘renewal’ or ‘regeneration’ in the broader sense is the objective of the exercise.
Again, the renewal of Minto as it has been carried out so far provides an opportunity for further reflection on these types of strategies.

4.4 ASSET AND NON-ASSET BASED STRATEGIES

A comparative study of the asset and non-asset based strategies used by the NSW Department of Housing in Airds, Minto and Claymore in 200055 found that, whilst all renewal areas had benefited from the different strategies employed by the Department since 1995, the focus on community participation methods in the Minto Intensive Management Area56 was leading to particularly positive outcomes. These strategies often complemented or were used as a follow up to more physically oriented upgrades or area improvements.

The most effective non-asset based renewal strategies were found to be:

- Proactive and flexible local allocation strategies, and ensuring that there was not an undue concentration of new tenants with high needs or from the 'priority' waiting list;57
- Ensuring the right mix of staff for intensive management projects;
- Establishing a more personal and involved local presence;
- Stronger action on tenants who were proven to be having a negative impact on the street or precinct (such as people convicted of drug dealing or repeated or serious public violence);
- A higher staff to stock ratio, and more flexibility for Local Housing Teams to develop and implement housing policy and procedures;
- Encouragement of tenant-led solutions to local problems and area improvements, including involvement in paid and voluntary physical improvements to their homes and precincts;
- Other economic and social development strategies as noted above.

Moreover, non-asset based strategies were seen to include a more long-term commitment by the housing provider to sustained support for local residents and initiatives. The comparative value of these strategies in relation to Minto are discussed in more detail below.

More recent Australian literature on the development of what may be termed 'exit strategies',58 picks up on some of these and other elements from the UK and US experience. ‘Exit strategies’ aim to ensure 'sustainability' in the

55 Stubbs, J. & Hardy, M. 2000, Evaluation of Three Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies Employed by the NSW Department of Housing, NSW DOH.
56 In Minto, an area that was seen as particularly problematic, the Hill Precinct was targeted for ‘Intensive Management’ via the establishment of the Hill Project in late 1998. Made up of Departmental staff with considerable policy and procedural flexibility, and located in an informal field office in the heart of the Precinct, the strategies employed were a combination of asset and non-asset management. A high priority was given to tenant participation strategies.
57 For example, new residents to the Minto Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) areas were selected because family links to area or expressed interest in living in the area, while others were more actively encouraged to move there, and received additional support (e.g. welcoming activities) upon moving in.
58 See for example Jacobs, K., Arthurson, K. & Randolph, B. 2004, Developing Appropriate Exit Strategies for Housing Regeneration Programs, AHURI (Southern Research Centre), pp. 2-3.
59 Jacobs, Arthurson & Randolph (2004) note that in recent years a consensus has developed among housing professionals that area-based strategies are the most appropriate form of
renewal process. More particularly, these types of strategies generally seek to ensure that the initial large-scale injection of funds or resources in the renewal or regeneration process are not lost after the initial (and relatively short-term) intervention in an area.  

Given that a primary aim of the housing authority is to avoid further major funding allocations to a local area after the initial, more concentrated renewal effort, and to ensure efficiency of funds spent, these strategies are generally undertaken in partnership with or delegated to community and/or private sector partners. Researchers note that there is an absence of explicit exit strategies in the Australian housing context, and a lack of critical evaluation of the sustainability of those that have been employed, even in the UK where such strategies are more commonly adopted.

The current study provides a further opportunity to reflect upon the relative value of these different types of strategies, and the degree to which an 'end game' has been envisaged or made explicit by the housing authority.

4.5 CREATING ‘SUSTAINABLE’ COMMUNITIES

4.5.1 Overview

What is meant by the creation of ‘sustainable’ communities is itself far from clear-cut. To a large degree, it depends upon who is defining ‘sustainability’, the geographic scale and time horizon at which the issue is considered, and what the hallmarks of a ‘sustainable community’ are considered to be. Moreover, it has been difficult to achieve consensus about even a working definition of ‘sustainability’ at the institutional level.

The small amount of Australian literature specifically about ‘sustainability’ in public housing renewal notes that a housing authority-derived definition is often accepted by practitioners. Such a definition sees community ‘sustainability’ as ‘self sustaining’, or requiring limited future intervention and thus government funding after the initial renewal activities. A local area focus is likewise generally adopted. As such, ‘sustainability’ is often defined by housing authorities within a reasonably narrow framework. As discussed below, this debate occurs within severe public resource constraints. This means that assumptions about the need to wind-back resources for highly disadvantaged

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60 Ibid., p. 1.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., pp. i-ii.

63 See for example McKenzie, S. 2004, Social Sustainability: Toward Some Definitions, Hawke Research Institute for Social Sustainability, University of South Australia.
64 Ibid.
65 For example Jacobs, Arthurson, & Randolph op cit. note that the term ‘sustainability’ in the context of housing renewal or regeneration generally ‘denotes policies that aim to maintain the level of services or standards into the future without recourse to large injections of additional public funds’ (Jacobs, Arthurson, & Randolph 2004, p.1).
communities after the initial concentrated ‘renewal’ endeavour are inevitable, and often portrayed as desirable.66

However, some researchers question the feasibility of approaches that rely on local area solutions to serious structural problems such as labour market restructuring, unequal educational attainment and life opportunities. The increased residualisation of public housing, and increasing allocation to those in highest need, seriously exacerbates such location-based disadvantage. Within the context of such entrenched lack of opportunity for increasing sections of Australian society, the viability of strategies premised on a longer-term reduction of resources and support for public housing communities is also questioned.67

However, other literature68 takes a broader approach to what may constitute ‘sustainability’ in the current housing context. It is more explicit in its recognition of the origin of the term ‘social’ or ‘community sustainability’ in earlier concerns about the physical environment.69 Most recently, it has been argued that economic and social sustainability have been adopted as ‘additional and interrelated concerns’ to environmental issues.70 Work at the international level has given rise to a number of definitions including the oft-cited Brundtland definition that ‘sustainable development’ is ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.71

69 McKenzie (2004) notes that since the emergence of widespread concerns over environmental degradation in the 1960s, a great deal of work has been put into the concept of environmental ‘sustainability’ (McKenzie 2004, p.1).
70 McKenzie (2004) notes that ‘sustainability’ is now a broad, multi-focal agenda of national and international public policy, with terms such as ‘sustainable development’ and ‘triple bottom line’ being used interchangeably. However, he also argues that notions of ‘social sustainability’ are most often regarded as an adjunct to or tool in understanding environmental or economic impacts, rather than as an equal consideration in any assessment of impacts or outcomes from a development process. Noting the frequent capture of policy related to sustainability by business or development industry interests, McKenzie (2004) argues that increasingly ‘we think in terms of “triple bottom line”, focusing on economic prosperity, environmental quality, and – the element which businesses tends to overlook – social justice’. He maintains that, despite its inclusion in the triple bottom-line, ‘the role played by “the social” is rarely equal to the economic and environmental concerns’.
71 United Nations 1992 (see for example Chapter 7 Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development; and Chapter 8 Integrating environment and development in decision making; and chapter 37 national mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries).
International instruments or agreements, such as *Rio Convention on Environment and Development (Agenda 21)*\(^{72}\) and the United Nations' *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, likewise focus on a broader framework within which to consider questions of 'social sustainability' at the international, national, regional and local community level.

*Agenda 21* notes that policies for environmental, social and economic sustainability need to be fully integrated within a national framework for sustainable development.\(^{73}\) In this way, sustainable development policies at whatever geographic scale should occur within a 'holistic view of development whose primary goals include the alleviation of poverty; secure livelihoods; good health; and quality of life'.\(^{74}\) Its goal should be to ensure socially responsible development while protecting the physical and social resource base for the benefit of future generations.\(^{75}\) Drawing on other international instruments,\(^{76}\) *Agenda 21* maintains that 'access to safe and healthy shelter' is essential to a person's 'physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and should be a fundamental part of national and international action'.\(^{77}\)

A key element of such sustainable development is said to be ensuring the 'widest possible participation' particularly of the most marginalised groups affected.\(^{78}\) In particular, such international instruments emphasise participation in decisions that affect them as a vital ingredient in developing sustainable responses to improving the housing conditions of the poorest in society.\(^{79}\) In this context, 'sustainability' is said to be vitally concerned to

Empower community groups, non-governmental organizations and individuals to assume the authority and responsibility for managing and enhancing their immediate environment through participatory tools, techniques and approaches.\(^{80}\)

Researchers drawing upon these more encompassing and participatory views of 'sustainability' note the importance of the social, economic and environmental conditions of individual communities. However, they also indicate the need to view decisions affecting communities within a broader time horizon and geographic scale. In this way, strategies employed at a given place and time are seen as having wider affects on and implications for the urban system as a whole, and in a cumulative sense.\(^{81}\)

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\(^{72}\) United Nations 1992 (see for example Chapter 7 Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development; and Chapter 8 Integrating environment and development in decision making; and chapter 37 national mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries).

\(^{73}\) UN *Ibid.*., Ch 8.

\(^{74}\) UN *Ibid.*., Ch 5.

\(^{75}\) UN *Ibid.*., Ch 8.

\(^{76}\) Specifically, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

\(^{77}\) *Ibid.*., Ch 7.

\(^{78}\) Ibid.

\(^{79}\) *Ibid.*., Ch 7

\(^{80}\) *Ibid.*., Ch 7

\(^{81}\) See for example Stubbs (2003).
Within such broad conceptions of 'sustainability', the Hawke Research Institute for Social Sustainability has developed a working definition of 'social sustainability' as a 'life enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition'. It puts forward the following indicators of the conditions of sustainability as:

- Equity of access to key services (including health, education, transport, housing and recreation);
- Equity between generations, meaning that future generations will not be disadvantaged by the activities of the current generation;
- A system of cultural relations in which the positive aspects of disparate cultures are valued and protected, and in which cultural integration is supported and promoted when it is desired by individuals and groups;
- The widespread political participation of citizens not only in electoral procedures but also in other areas of political activity, and particularly at the local level;
- A system for transmitting awareness of social sustainability from one generation to the next;
- A sense of community responsibility for maintaining that system of transmission;
- Mechanisms for a community to collectively identify its strengths and needs;
- Mechanisms for a community to fulfil its own needs where possible through community action; mechanisms for political advocacy to meet needs that cannot be met through community action.\(^{82}\)

The Hawke Research Institute notes that the definition of precise indicators in relation to a specific community would ideally be generated by that community, according to the specific needs and aspirations of that community. As such, a fundamental issue in relation to determining matters of sustainability within a specific local context is about developing and implementing mechanisms whereby that community can identify and work toward meeting its own needs and aspirations, within a context of institutional support and resources needed to improve the life opportunities of its members.\(^{83}\)

It is interesting to note that such practices advocated in relation to the development of 'sustainable communities' and 'sustainable development' bear a striking similarity to those put forward in relation to 'best practice' in participatory practices in urban renewal or regeneration. Again, Minto provides a further opportunity to review current practice in relation to such sustainability at the local area level as well as the wider affordable housing and urban system.

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\(^{82}\) McKenzie op cit., pp. 12-13

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
4.5.2 Public Housing in the Context of Broader Issues of ‘Sustainability’

Within the context of public housing ‘sustainability’ in particular, the work of Hall and Berry (2004; 2002) is important. At a broader geographic scale, they note that public housing is a key component of the affordable housing market in NSW. However, in recent years the supply of public and community housing has fallen substantially compared with the late 1980s. For the first time in decades, the number of publicly owned units of housing is falling in absolute terms.

Other researchers note that the decline in public housing proportionally and in absolute terms is occurring at a time when housing affordability has emerged as one of the most serious issues facing Australia and particularly Sydney and related regions. This is noted as a particularly serious question for Sydney’s ‘urban sustainability’ in most recent policy discourse. Key factors identified in the literature include the following:

- Low-income renters face a particularly serious situation in virtually all parts of the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region. All Sydney postcodes were generally unaffordable for lower income families, even those on Commonwealth Rent Assistance in 2001. Further, the cheapest rental options were reportedly not cheap enough to keep Rental Assistance recipients out of rental stress. Even in the areas with the largest supply of low cost rental accommodation in Sydney (i.e. Bankstown and Campbelltown in South Western Sydney in which Minto is located), 56% of very low income families on Rent Assistance were paying more than 30% of their income on their rental costs.

- Older renters, single person and single income families are most vulnerable in the rental housing market.

- Despite the relative affordability of parts of Western and South Western Sydney, others note that housing prices are ‘not necessarily cheap when the incomes of the households are taken into account’. Housing stress was virtually the same for Western Sydney as for Sydney generally. This is particularly true of private rental accommodation, where 40,000

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87 Sydney Metropolitan Strategy Background Paper (DIPNR 2004)
89 Ibid., p. 9
90 Ibid.
91 See for example Randolph, B. and Holloway, D. 2003, Shifting Suburbs: Population Structure and Change in Western Sydney, Urban Frontiers, University of Western Sydney, and Western Sydney Region of Councils.
92 With one in eight families paying more than 30% of a low to moderate income on housing costs (Randolph & Holloway 2003).
households in the 14 LGAs of Western Sydney\textsuperscript{93} are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.\textsuperscript{94}

- The literature notes that public housing waiting lists are at an all time high and unlikely to decrease in the future. There are currently almost 100,000 households on the public housing waiting list in NSW, with a 10-year waiting list in most sub-regions of Sydney.\textsuperscript{95} Rates of actual or effective homelessness are likewise increasing significantly.\textsuperscript{96}

In this context, researchers note the impact of ongoing cuts to Federal funding under recent CSHAs amid higher service expectations in the new agreements.\textsuperscript{97} The latter in part arises from a client base that is poorer and tends to have higher and more complex support needs than in previous decades. Meanwhile, public housing stock levels have failed to keep pace with population growth, increased levels of housing unaffordability in Sydney, demographic changes such as the aging of the population and increased levels of divorce, and related impacts on housing need.

Berry and Hall (2004) note that a major problem arises from the gap between the average income generated per unit of housing and the average cost to manage and maintain that housing. From 1990/91 to 2000/01, the decrease in operating incomes per dwelling fell by a greater amount in NSW than in any other state.\textsuperscript{98} Over this period, rebated tenants increased from 85% to 90% of tenants. More importantly, priority, crisis and emergency allocations increased from 20% to 40% of all new housing allocations. At the same time, maintenance and staffing costs increased significantly. In areas like Minto, priority allocations are far higher than the State average. The backlog in maintenance and depreciation of the portfolio are also factors in the substantial net financial loss incurred by the NSW public housing system currently.

In this context, the gradual 'cannibalisation of stock'\textsuperscript{99} through sale, and net non-replacement, has been a way of reducing unit costs. Simply put, the less stock the authority has, the less the operating deficit in a scenario where housing income per dwelling is on average not meeting its recurrent costs. Combined with the fact that few new dwellings are added to the existing stock, this represents an effective decapitalisation strategy, perhaps more by necessity than by design.

As noted by these writers,

\begin{quote}
It is clear that greater flexibility and more active asset management regimes introduced by the housing authorities during the 1990s have resulted in the gradual selling off or restructuring of public housing stock. Asset sales have helped bridge the increasing operating deficit for those authorities in the short-run. However, this is not a sustainable strategy for the longer term. As long as the underlying drivers are resulting
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{93} Including Campbelltown LGA where the Minto study area is located
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid.} pp. 9-10
\textsuperscript{95} NSW DOH (2004).
\textsuperscript{96} Shelter (2003)
\textsuperscript{97} As well as proceeding from the recommendation of the \textit{Mant Report}.
\textsuperscript{98} Hall & Berry (2004)
\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Ibid.}
in continuing falls in real income and continuing rises in real expenditures...eventually housing authorities will run out of dwellings to sell to bridge the growing financial gap.\textsuperscript{100}

They note that 'eventually' could be as soon as a decade or so at the current rate of sale and non-replacement.

As an alternative to the current effective decapitalisation strategy, Hall and Berry (2004) propose the following measures to ensure future sustainability of the public housing sector:

- The development of a funded ‘Community Service Obligation’ that recognises the difference between the commercial price and the amount of concession that applies where rent is subsidised. \textsuperscript{101} The central (federal) governments of financially successful housing services in Europe fully recognise the need for such CSOs;

- A widening of the eligibility criteria for public housing allocations which would ensure that net rents per household would grow in real terms because the sector is not 'rigidly targeted' to those on the very lowest incomes. Such a widening of criteria, including allocation to lower income tenants in paid employment, is seen to have three main benefits.

  - First, it would provide the housing authority with confidence that real operating and maintenance cost increases could be met through increased revenues irrespective of stock increases. This would provide a maintenance position for existing stock levels.

  - Secondly, combined with Federal Government support, or initial debt financing, it would enable housing authorities to grow their stock portfolios and so maintain their income, while continuing to assist those in greatest need. This would be through effective cross-subsidisation of those with least income and resources in the housing market by higher income tenants.

  - A third benefit could also be identified. This type of strategy would also assist in breaking down the growing concentration of those most socially and financially vulnerable by expanding the current tenant profile. As such, it could be seen as an effective ‘social mix’ strategy, but one that would be more gradual and have less negative social impacts than more radical tenure mix strategies (see below).

\textsuperscript{100} Hall & Berry (2004, p. viii).

\textsuperscript{101} Such a CSO would provide financial recognition that public housing increasingly houses the poorest of the poor, often with multiple and complex needs. Hall and Berry note that in all other corporatised government services, the difference between the commercial price of the service and the amount paid by the recipient of a service is recognised as a CSO, and is fully funded. Examples include electricity and water supply where, the authors note, the difference between the price per unit of consumption and the amount charged to concessional consumers is treated as a CSO and is normally provided as a Treasury payment to the housing authority concerned. This is not currently the case in relation to public housing, which is unrealistically expected to pay its way with a highly residualised tenant base, and decreasing amount of stock in absolute numbers.
Nonetheless, despite the financial issues facing public housing, Hall and Berry (2002) find that the construction or purchase of capital stock is by far the most cost effective housing solution in the type of housing market represented by Sydney. Thus it was found to be the most ‘sustainable’ in economic terms. They found that ‘in cities where the demand for affordable housing is most acute’ (Sydney and Melbourne), public housing ‘is easily the most efficient method of providing housing assistance’. Public housing was found to be 20 times more efficient than paying cash subsidies to households renting privately in Sydney. They concluded that ‘the future of public housing as a method of providing social housing is a major concern of contemporary housing policy debate’. Thus, issues about the future of capital stock are viewed as central to questions of ‘sustainability’ in the wider sense:

- To the NSW public housing sector in terms of the immediate provision of housing, and the availability of this resource for future generations;
- To the wider housing and urban environment in a cumulative sense;
- As a long-term issue of the total cost to the community of impacts arising from not having a public housing sector, and of its high cost alternative ways of housing a growing section of the community who are priced out of the private rental and purchase housing market.

However, a review of the Australian literature indicates that institutional concerns with ‘sustainability’ generally do not go beyond the business case, or financial ‘bottom line’ of housing authorities, to consider the real cost to the community of the decision taken to divest themselves of housing stock. Such critiques tend to be undertaken by housing advocates, though they are generally not financially costed. There is likewise a dearth of evaluative literature that considers the wider financial cost to the community from externalities such as homelessness, increased waiting times for housing, and the impacts arising from inadequate housing and the like; as well as the loss of public assets, land, and accumulated physical and social capital, though these may be presented in descriptive terms.

One of the few publicly available Australian reports that has taken this type of ‘total cost to the wider community’ approach to public housing is the Airds Cost Benefit Analysis. However, this study was confined to the social and economic costs arising from the highly residualised nature of the Airds public housing estate in the context of the objectives of the then Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP). This study found that physical redevelopment strategies, if used in isolation from participatory and economic and community development strategies, would be unlikely to yield ‘sustainable’ results at the scale of the local community. A selective allocations policy in conjunction with other proactive measures to mix demography noted above were also found to

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103 Ibid.
105 See for example Shelter 2003
be key components in long-term sustainability of the NIP.\textsuperscript{107} The cost savings projected were most likely to be achieved in the context of long-term actions that could increase resident satisfaction, slow turn over, and lead to a gradual change in demography.

The report found that, of the $28.0 million monetarised cost of social problems, over $22.0 million was from the direct and indirect costs of unemployment. The report was careful to point out that an estate like Airds does not operate as a ‘closed economic or social system’. It must be viewed at the wider geographic scale and time horizon. It therefore noted that,

\begin{quote}
A strategy that transfers the problems of the estate elsewhere would not reduce the total cost to the community of the social problems, but may simply appear on the negative side of a wider economic balance sheet. An unemployed person is a major cost to the community whether they live in Airds or Alice Springs.\textsuperscript{108} A lower crime rate in one area may be offset by a higher crime rate in another area when those responsible are transferred elsewhere. As such, care should be taken to ensure that the returns to the community to any redevelopment program are genuine and not illusionary.\textsuperscript{109}
\end{quote}

Moving beyond narrow conceptions of ‘sustainability’, and financial ‘bottom line’ approaches to public housing and urban resource decisions is therefore crucial if questions of sustainability are to be addressed in any real sense. A concentration on either resource-constrained local area approaches, or on the immediate ‘business case’ for public housing redevelopment in the current funding and policy context, is likely to lead to the most unsustainable of outcomes for local communities in the narrower sense of the term, and for the public housing and the urban system in the wider sense.

Again, the current study of the impacts of the Minto redevelopment provides a way of reviewing approaches to sustainable development in both the narrower and broader sense of the word.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{107} This broadening of the tenant base would also serve to achieve the increase in income to improve stock performance against current operating deficits, as proposed by Hall and Berry (2004), though a significantly enlarged stock portfolio would also be required to achieve financial sustainability.
\textsuperscript{108} Though not quantified in net economic or financial terms, this position is to some extent reflected in literature reviewed by Jacobs, Arthurson & Judd (2004, p.3) and categorised broadly by them as structuralist perspectives to urban renewal. As noted ‘…the utility of any area based initiative to address problems of public housing will at best be marginal, as they will address only the symptoms not the causes’.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p4
\end{footnotes}
4.6 THE QUESTION OF ‘SOCIAL MIX’

4.6.1 The Policy Context

Though a core tenet of ‘best practice’ in official urban renewal policy,\(^{110}\) and often referred to as a component of ‘sustainability’,\(^{111}\) the question of ‘social mix’ is generally contested in the literature. There are at best contradictory findings about the outcomes of attempts to break down or disperse enclaves of less advantaged people in discreet urban settings. The motivation for more recent moves to encourage socially mixed communities is also questioned. There are likewise disparate views on the causes and consequences of such concentrations of less well-off citizens.\(^{112}\)

Writers who support the ‘polarisation’ thesis\(^{113}\) contend that the poor and the better off increasingly live in segregated enclaves, and that the consequences for the poor and for wider civil society are largely negative. They cite stigmatisation of the local area and its residents, decreased opportunities for participation in employment and society generally, and reduced quality of life, as some of the consequences. Others contend that the poor have always lived together, though their concentration periodically comes to the attention of policy makers. A variety of policy responses are thus developed, or recycled. Such critics of ‘deconcentration’ or ‘slum clearance’ tend to view redevelopment activities with varying degrees of mistrust when accompanied by severe constraints on public funding, ideological restrictions on public borrowings, rising land values and increased desirability of formerly marginalised areas where the poor live.\(^{114}\)

The social and economic objectives of ‘social mix’ are often achieved through varying strategies to change the tenure mix on public housing estates. This is generally through individual sales to tenants or private purchasers, stock transfer to other social housing providers,\(^{115}\) redevelopment of aging stock in small clusters (e.g. homes on large blocks to smaller, higher density units), or ‘segmented estate development’ where a section of a new or redeveloped estate is identified for a particular type of tenure and transferred, for example, to private developers for redevelopment and on-sale to home owners.\(^{116}\) These objectives are less frequently achieved in the current NSW policy context through non-asset social mix strategies such as selective

\(^{110}\) See for example DOH (2003) Minto Redevelopment Fact Sheet, which highlighted the belief that ‘a greater mix of public and private housing will help lessen the stigma and isolation sometimes associated with living on estates’.

\(^{111}\) See Bisset, H. 2004, A Sustainable Future: Development and Finance, NSW Community Housing Conference, which notes the relationship between key challenges facing housing providers, particularly reduction in the value of the CSHA, maintenance backlog, ineffectiveness of CRA as a rental subsidy measure, and the need to find ‘alternative model of affordable housing to public housing’ which is ‘no longer sustainable’, presumably in the financial sense.

\(^{112}\) See for example Randolph, B. & Wood, M. 2003, The Benefits of Tenure Diversification, AHURI (UNSW/UWS Research Centre).

\(^{113}\) See Berry and Rees (1994); Troy (1996); Soja (1996); Blakely and Snyder (1997); Stilwell (1998).


\(^{115}\) See Darcy & Stringfellow 2001 for discussion on such transfers.

\(^{116}\) See Randolph & Wood (2003) for a more detailed discussion on mechanisms for tenure diversification and their social and economic objectives.
allocations or 'local allocations policies', where care is taken to select a family according to specific criteria such as attachment to an area, or a more advantaged social profile such as being in permanent paid employment, though this has occurred as part of specific non-asset based strategies (see below). Though ‘tenure mix’ is in reality one strategy for achieving 'social mix', these terms have come to be used interchangeably in more recent policy discourse.

In Australia to date, only Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia have pursued more large-scale estate renewal or redevelopment policies (or tenure mix as the primary mechanism to achieve social mix). As noted by Randolph and Wood (2003), tenure diversification policies in these states have generally involved the sale or transfer of large amounts of housing stock or demolition sites to private developers often 'in partnership with a private project manager' who 'takes the lead in the renewal or marketing process'.

NSW is at a relatively early stage in implementing these types of major redevelopment strategies. The establishment of a separate unit within the NSW Department of Housing in 2000 facilitated this more vigorous approach to 'social mix' via tenure diversification. The Housing Finance Investment Group (HFIG) was charged with bringing forward plans for the complete redevelopment of certain estates, with the 'explicit intention of working with private sector partners to sell off land and property in order to fund the renewal of stock'. 'Masterplanning' for estate redevelopment on several estates commenced in mid-2002.

The principal strategy proposed is to break up large estates through sale of land for private sector redevelopment while retaining or buying back some land or housing for public housing. It was envisaged that 'the public stock renewal process would be self-financing'. Nonetheless, other researchers had already pointed to the likelihood of significant net stock loss arising from such redevelopment, and questioned the degree to which it could be self-sustaining. The evidence from other states indicates their concerns have some foundation. Long waiting times arising from stock reductions as well as the need to give priority to relocating tenants from redevelopment areas were two of the problems highlighted. Minto in South Western Sydney is the first NSW estate to experience such redevelopment activity, though other estates are currently undergoing such a 'Masterplanning' process.

Like the more narrow conception of 'sustainable communities', the discourse of 'social mix' signifies not only an approach to urban renewal, but also a set of widely accepted urban orthodoxies. As USA theorist Goetz (2000) points out,

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117 Randolph and Wood op cit. p. v.
119 Ibid. p. 29
112 Ibid. p. 29
113 Ibid.
114 See for example Arthurson (1998) who notes that fiscal constraints at all levels of government will 'make large scale estate redevelopment difficult without stock reduction', particularly if the sale of stock goes some way toward repaying government debt or meeting deficits. She notes that the likelihood difficulty of maintaining current level of public housing where such strategies are used means that 'demolition or transfer of stock and funding must be weighed carefully against the present and future needs of low income Australian households' (Arthurson 1998, p. 43).
121 For example, Airds also in Campbelltown LGA.
such words are used as a justification for a whole set of actions carried out ‘with’ and frequently ‘on’ some of the poorest neighbourhoods in countries such as the USA and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{124}

In the Australian context, Randolph and Wood (2003) note that ‘a strong line of policy logic has developed’ that more or less explicitly maintains that tenure diversification leads to increased social mix in areas with previously high concentrations of public housing, and ‘consequently helps create more “balanced” and therefore more stable communities’. The authors note that a series of related social and economic goals are said to flow from achieving ‘social mix’ through tenure diversification. On the social side, major goals are to ‘normalise’ estates, de-stigmatise their populations, and provide the benefits that are seen to accrue from living in conventional or ‘mixed’ residential areas. These are said to include increased access to employment, services, and opportunity arising from greater social connectedness. On the economic side, such strategies can be seen as related largely to asset management, and particularly attempts to ‘come to grips with a situation of deteriorating and inappropriate assets in poor locations’,\textsuperscript{125} as well as dealing with financial constraints and increasing operating deficits,\textsuperscript{126} noted above.

Policy objectives related to ‘social mix’ including ‘tenure diversification’ can therefore be viewed as a subset of considerations about ‘sustainability’ of specific public housing communities, as well as public housing stock and/or housing authority sustainability in the narrower financial ‘bottom line’ sense.

\textsuperscript{124}See also Swingedouw (2000) and Davis (1991), who not the persuasiveness of such ‘congenial hegemonic discourses’ which frequently become pervasive despite the lack rigorous critical or empirical analysis.
\textsuperscript{125}Wood & Randolph \textit{op cit.} p. 33.
\textsuperscript{126}Hall & Berry (2004).
4.6.2 The Origins of and Evidence About ‘Social Mix’

Though some recent authors tend to start from an examination of the question on a fairly recent time horizon,\textsuperscript{127} the contestation of ‘social mix’ is far from recent. It can be found in Australian literature related to the living conditions of the poorest citizens from at least the 1890s.\textsuperscript{128}

An interesting feature of this literature in the Australian context is that, whether called 'slum clearance', 'city revitalisation' or 'regeneration', 'urban or community renewal', or 'urban redevelopment', the discourse from the 1890s, the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s and the present day is remarkably similar in many respects.

It is characterised by:

- A ‘pathological’ conception of and approach to those housed in poorer neighbourhoods;\textsuperscript{129}

- A tendency to portray the community as 'dysfunctional', 'disorderly', 'squalid' or 'criminal'. In this way, the people who live in a poor neighbourhood or pubic housing areas are packaged as 'a set of stereotypes' that 'tell little about the communities' to which these labels are applied;\textsuperscript{130}

- Reference to the 'economic worthlessness', unsalvageable condition or redundancy of stock. For example, in order to justify mass demolitions in the late 1940s and 1950s that preceded the construction of public housing high rise towers in inner city Melbourne, the former Housing Commission of Victoria 'had to represent existing buildings as worthless', though evidence on this was contradictory and often unsubstantiated;\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{127} For example, Randolph & Wood \textit{op cit.} who maintain that 'early tenure diversification initiatives in Australia can be traced back to the 1980s'. They note that these initiatives were ‘generally justified on the basis of a range of asset management related objectives’ such as enhancing the value of the remaining public assets on larger estates and achieving ‘asset sustainability’. As well as dispersal of existing tenants, this also had the value of allowing for stock reconfiguration to meet changing patterns of demand (Randolph & Wood 2003, p.i).


\textsuperscript{129} See Carlton 1996 \textit{op cit.}

\textsuperscript{130} See for example Carlton \textit{op cit.}, p104.

\textsuperscript{131} See for example Morrissey \textit{op cit.}
• A view (generally not tested by empirical study) that ‘urban renewal’ would lead to ‘social’ or ‘human renewal’.\footnote{See Morrissey 1991, \textit{op cit.}}

However, as Morrissey (1991) notes:

One function of the slum symbol had always been to explain the poverty and material short-comings of inner city working class areas in a way that would not require political or economic reform to change them…the need to look for structural causes [or solutions] did not arise.\footnote{Goetz (2000) is likewise sceptical about the function of urban renewal discourses such as ‘enhanced community’, ‘de-concentration’ or ‘social mix’, when they effectively mean large scale redevelopment of housing for the poor, and replacement by private sector housing, as they frequently do in the USA. Others like Davis (1991) argues that such discourses can both disempower and disable those who may otherwise question the efficacy of such urban renewal processes. Goetz poses a question that is perhaps of relevance to wider concerns of urban sustainability noted above. That is, in an increasingly unaffordable housing market, ‘where then can we make a place for ‘those whom no-one wants - those who need affordable housing?’\footnote{Sarkissian 1978; See also Sarkissian, W., Forsyth, A. & Heine, W. 1990, ‘Residential Social Mix: The Debate Continues, \textit{Australian Planner}, Vol 28 No 1, pp. 5 –15.}}

Goetz (2000) is likewise sceptical about the function of urban renewal discourses such as ‘enhanced community’, ‘de-concentration’ or ‘social mix’, when they effectively mean large scale redevelopment of housing for the poor, and replacement by private sector housing, as they frequently do in the USA. Others like Davis (1991) argues that such discourses can both disempower and disable those who may otherwise question the efficacy of such urban renewal processes. Goetz poses a question that is perhaps of relevance to wider concerns of urban sustainability noted above. That is, in an increasingly unaffordable housing market, ‘where then can we make a place for ‘those whom no-one wants - those who need affordable housing?’\footnote{In the 1970s Hugh Stretton, for example, argued for ‘mixed neighbourhoods’ to provide the ‘choices and experiences necessary for a meaningful life’ (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 5).}

One of the earlier comprehensive reviews of the evidence on ‘social mix’ by Australian researchers\footnote{Goetz 2000, \textit{op cit.}} traces the utopian origins of ‘social mix’ as far back as 1849 in its application to the British ‘model town’, and later to the Garden City Movement. These ideals of physically determined social mix ultimately gave rise to the Radburn-style estate upon which public housing estates of the 1970s and 80s such as Minto were based. The ideal of the ‘balanced community’, with its mix of ages, income and tenure also grew in popularity in the UK in the 1930s and 40s with the advent of the ‘New Town’ movement, though there was by that time a questioning of the real benefits of such public policies. Australian urbanists have also embraced the concept, though the popularity and promotion of policy prescriptions directed at achieving such ‘balanced communities’ have waxed and waned.\footnote{See Woodward, R. 2000, ‘Community Renewal in South Western Sydney – Social Inclusion: the Quiet Revolution in Public Housing’, \textit{Creative Approaches to Urban Renewal: A Conference on the Redevelopment of Public Housing}, 15 June 2000, Shelter Western Australia.}

Such utopianism is also prominent in the recent writings of those who have helped to engineer the current approaches to urban renewal in estates such as Minto, Airds and Claymore, though their aim is now to ‘de-Radburnise’ estates.\footnote{In the 1970s Hugh Stretton, for example, argued for ‘mixed neighbourhoods’ to provide the ‘choices and experiences necessary for a meaningful life’ (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 5).} Writing in 2000, Ross Woodward, the former Regional Director, South West Sydney Region of the NSW Department of Housing, traces the ‘utopian dreaming’ of those who have planned cities since ancient times, including those who designed public housing estates according to design principles that are now seriously out of fashion. However, the ‘quiet revolution’ in public housing redevelopment being undertaken by the Department of Housing is also being
pursued in support of social goals. Redevelopment in areas such as Minto is characterised as follows:

Residents are becoming empowered to become part of the decision-making process... The old silos of government are being challenged and beginning to be dismantled at the grass roots level... [with renewal programs] showcasing South Western and Western Sydney as areas of high disadvantage and isolation, but now at the forefront of the integration revolution.138

The utopian pursuit of social and aesthetic goals through physical redevelopment and design strategies is also prominent in the policy discourse underpinning the Minto Masterplanning process currently underway, as discussed below.

However, despite the aims of generations of town planners, Sarkissian et al (1990) find that:

Residential areas in developed western countries are characterised by a high degree of homogeneity in their social composition. Planners have despaired at their inability to integrate populations and governments have responded by proposing policies based on social and racial mix which have, on the whole, been unsuccessful.

More recent reviews of social integration strategies conducted by Australian researchers likewise call into question the uncritical acceptance of the 'social mix' orthodoxy, particularly where they are applied in the absence of other strategies to address serious social and economic problems and relative disadvantage.139 Australian researchers likewise repeatedly point out that that there is a dearth of evaluative empirical literature about the real impacts of estate improvement or urban renewal. The research that has been conducted is frequently contradictory or inconclusive in its findings, or indicates that such strategies have failed to achieve the outcomes sought except in a relatively limited sense, though there continues to be a plethora of official policy documents relating to it in normative terms.140

Findings from the empirical literature on social mix have tended to suggest that the outcomes of more radical social mix strategies that focus on removing the poor from areas in which they have lived have often not had the desired result. This includes the following:

138 Ibid., p. 16.
140 See for example Arthurson 2002, op cit. and Hoatson & Grace 2002 op cit.
That there is very limited meaningful social interaction between people of different tenure following strategies that put in place tenure mix;

- That those who are removed from an area undergoing urban renewal frequently express the desire to return, or feel at least if not more stigmatised in more privileged surroundings;
- Those who are better off frequently go to considerable lengths to distance themselves from those neighbours who are worse off;
- That there was relatively limited improvement in the employment prospects of less labour market advantaged residents from linkages to those in the renewed community who may be employed without active strategies to assist with employment and educational outcomes.141

Contrary to the negative portrayal of poorer areas in policy and the media, some researchers suggest that such communities experience an equally positive sense of 'community' to conventional residential areas if this is measured by interdependence, social contact, reciprocity, and shared values.142 Others report that non-public housing areas experience equal if not greater disadvantage across a range of indicators.143 However, others note that there is some support for the notion that residents of mixed tenure areas feel that they are less stigmatised, particularly where there is a relatively low proportion of identified social housing, and that greater community stability may result.144 US studies indicate that there may be some benefits, particularly from increased exposure to labour market opportunities, employment contacts and those who can effectively act as a mentor.145 However, they also note upward mobility for low-income and unemployed residents 'needs more than just social mix', but rather activities and programs that are 'specifically aimed at creating opportunities for these residents to gain access to jobs and higher incomes'.146

The conclusion reached in an extensive review of the USA and UK empirical literature for the Airds Cost Benefit Analysis was that perhaps the best that can be said about social mix is that 'the jury' was 'still very much out' on the benefits of social mix strategies at that time.147

More recently, Randolph and Wood (2003) find that the current evidence from the UK and USA where the use of these strategies is more advanced suggests that 'the arguments put forward for the social outcomes of tenure diversification are far from proven'.148 In general, they find that there is little evidence that tenure diversification has led to 'the promotion of inclusive social networks between owners and renters and greater cohesion'. Nor was there found to be the 'adoption of mainstream norms or values among disadvantaged public tenants, even if this could be accurately measured'. They note that improvements to service provision are likewise open to question, and that a reduction in the concentration of disadvantaged tenants could in fact lead to a reduction of services, which are there by the very nature of the area and effective economies of scale.149

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141 See authors noted above.
142 See for example Peel 1995; Hoatson and Grace 2002; Harvey 1972.
144 Randolph & Wood, op cit., p. iv.
145 Ibid. Also see
146 Ibid. Also see
148 Randolph & Wood op cit. p. 3
149 Ibid., p. iv
Like previous reviews of the evaluative literature cited above, this leads the authors of the most recent review to conclude that

[t]he evidence to date on the impacts of tenure diversification and social mix policies in public housing estates is therefore mixed at best.\textsuperscript{150}

In highlighting the increased use of tenure diversification strategies in Australia, others note the lack of clear objectives in the Australian context, and what they consider to be the ‘weak evidence base for the principles upon which it is, somewhat precariously, based’.\textsuperscript{151} Literature reviewed demonstrates that most of the arguments put forward for the practice of tenure diversification are at best inadequate. Rather,

[a] careful empirical examination of the objectives and outcomes of tenure diversification at a neighbourhood level is required in order to clarify the benefits, if any, of the policy. Without a clear understanding of the nature of the ‘balanced community’ or the cohesion that is being aimed for, policy analysts will not be able to comment on the success or otherwise of diversification policies.\textsuperscript{152}

Wood (2003) further notes that any ‘perceived benefits or apparent improvements’ must be examined carefully. Not only is it necessary to establish ’substantive change has occurred’. It is also essential to confirm that the change can reasonably be attributed to the diversification strategy rather than some other factor.\textsuperscript{153}

4.6.3 Some Final Comments of Social Mix in the Context of the Current Study

In summary, then, the objective of 'social mix' or 'social integration' and related strategies may be said to have mixed or even seriously limited results in the absence of other strategies to address social and economic disadvantage. Further, the best efforts of planners and those who would engineer a set of social outcomes through physical relocation, redevelopment or redesign are often thwarted due to a highly complex set of social arrangements. It may be useful, then, to think of ‘social mix’ policies as having three distinct areas of consideration for the current study:

- To achieve specific social equity objectives, including more favourable employment, education and life opportunities and upward social mobility. The evidence to date is of a fairly limited effect, though there may be some impact upon employment prospects arising from a closer geographic connection to the labour market for those who are relocated closer to employment centres.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p.v
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p54
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
- To achieve greater satisfaction of tenants through reducing the stigma associated with public housing estates. Again, there appear to be positive and negative outcomes associated with large-scale relocation of tenants, and mixed results. Whilst there may be some gains in resident satisfaction from a lessening of public housing stigma, this needs to be considered in the context of loss of community and neighbourhood connections for others. As well, there appears to be at least equal benefits from asset and non-asset based strategies employed as part of more gradual renewal activities.

- To achieve financial sustainability for the housing provider and the social housing sector. If the narrow ‘financial bottom line’ of the organisation is considered, there may be short-term benefits from radical solutions to tenure diversification, though these would be from the net decrease of stock that is proving to be a financial liability. In a wider time horizon and geographic scale, however, the likely loss of stock, decline of the sector and upward pressure on more affordable private rental stock that will occur as a result of such tenure mix solutions to social mix objectives is likely to result in even greater concentration of the poor in what remains of public housing in NSW. It will also reduce affordability of private rental housing. However, if tenure diversification is accompanied by strategies to increase stock and diversify the tenant profile (for example by including of more families in paid employment) then it is possible that these less radical approaches may lead to a gradual and more sustainable diversity of tenants, and increase public housing stock yield. In this scenario, tenure diversification becomes a means for survival and expansion of the public housing sector.

The current study presents a further opportunity to empirically review the notion of ‘social mix’ in the prevailing public housing policy context.
5. BACKGROUND TO THE REDEVELOPMENT

Feeling sad about this upset

Top: Primary Student, Sarah 2004
Bottom: Sarah Precinct 2004
5.1 History of the Redevelopment

The announcement by the Minster for Housing, Dr Andrew Refshauge, on 29 May 2002 was in many ways a defining moment in the State Government’s relationship with public housing tenants in NSW. Despite the Department’s stated commitment to engagement of tenants as ‘equal partners’ in community renewal,\(^{154}\) most Minto residents had only one day’s notice of the Minister’s announcement of the complete redevelopment of their estate. This study indicates that it has left feelings of uncertainly and mistrust not only in Minto, but also in other housing estates in NSW about what tenants may expect of community renewal in the future.\(^{155}\)

Though it came as a ‘complete shock’ to the vast majority of tenants in Minto,\(^{156}\) a reading of the various reports and press releases of the NSW State government over the preceding few years would have left a close observer less surprised. An examination of the unfolding events may also have indicated where public policy would lead in relation to estates like Minto. Nonetheless, the sudden announcement also left many Department of Housing staff surprised, dismayed and unprepared about how to deal with the reactions in the community,\(^{157}\) despite officers’ varied views of the proposed redevelopment of the estate in general.

This section of the report first provides a brief background to the Minto redevelopment, including some of the key documents and media releases related to the decision and its subsequent impacts. It then uses material gained in interviews with residents, attendance at forums and meetings and other documents arising from these to reflect on the steps leading up to the first stages of the redevelopment, and its immediate impacts.

\(^{154}\) See for example Implementation of New Directions in Tenant Participation in the Housing Portfolio: Report to the Director General of the Department of Housing, December 2001. At the time, the Tenant Participation Compact (2002a; 2003), and Community Renewal; Transforming Estates into Communities Partnership and Participation (DOH 2002b), and other relevant policies were also in the process of being drafted by the Community Renewal Unit.

\(^{155}\) Discussions with members of RedWatch, December 2004; and January 2005.

\(^{156}\) Interview with MRAG Committee, 15 April 2003.

\(^{157}\) Interviews, Senior Department of Housing staff, 25 February 2003.
5.2 The Policy Context

Neighbours are greeting one another for the first time. Some have lived side by side for more than 15 years without speaking a word over the fence. What were previously lifeless streets strewn with garbage are now makeshift playgrounds for children. Gardens are springing up everywhere. Fear is being replaced by pride. In a remarkable social shift, Sydney’s urban fringes are fighting back, shedding their old tag of “ghettos” to become the city’s new, improved housing areas. Residents of what have been “no go” public housing suburbs in Sydney’s southwestern satellite city of Campbelltown are trying to change their lives. It’s a change being compared with the transformation of seedy areas of New York such as the Bronx and Harlem...

The department’s 1970s “Radburn design” of making the street frontage of a home the back yard, and the rear end, with access via a pathway, the front, is being reversed in line with conventional homes. Housing Department director-general Andrew Cappie-Wood says residents have been isolated and stigmatised by the Radburn design. In fact, the $120 million earmarked for “deRadburnising” Sydney’s 11 public housing estates five of them at Campbelltown - is expected to save on the estimated $40 million bill each year caused by social problems (Sunday Telegraph, 3 November 1996).

As noted by Randolph and Wood (2003), the idea that there are benefits from the integration of public and private housing at the neighbourhood level has been evident in NSW policy for at least 20 years.\(^{158}\) Urban renewal programs put in place by the NSW Department of Housing since the early 1990s are consistent with the NSW Housing Act 1985. They also arose from recommendations of the 1992 Mant Report regarding stock redevelopment and management, increased tenure mix, and more intensive management and improved service delivery to tenants.\(^{159}\)

Partly in response to the Mant Inquiry, the Department established the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) in late 1994. Airds and Macquarie Fields were selected as the first two pilot areas.\(^{160}\) The aim of the pilot program was to ‘remove the stigma associated with public housing estates and

\(^{158}\) See for example Randolph & Wood op. cit. who note that one of the objectives of the NSW Housing Act 1985 is to ‘encourage social mix and the integration of different housing in existing and need communities’ (Woodward 2000, p. 25 cited in Randolph & Wood op. cit. p. 28).


\(^{160}\) Stubbs, J. & Whelan, A. 1994, Report on Community Consultations to Establish the Neighbourhood Improvement Program Pilot in Airds and Macquarie Fields, South West Region, NSW Department of Housing.
to ensure that they look[ed] and operate[d] in a way comparable with other residential areas. The main objectives originally set out were to:

- Change the balance of public and private open space
- Increase tenant control on security of homes
- Reduce homogeneity of public housing by sale of at least 20 per cent of dwellings to mix tenure
- Improve asset value
- Introduce total asset management principles
- Reduce overall cost to Government of social support
- Develop a partnership approach
- Involve private sector in redevelopment
- Develop a model tenant participation process
- Increase employment opportunities.

Moreover, Mant’s recommendations and the early NIP objectives foreshadow the current emphasis on stock redevelopment through tenure mix strategies in Minto.

The NIP was extended to 11 other estates in 1996, following early perceptions that it was having a positive impact on reducing stigma, crime and improving resident satisfaction, and an evaluation which indicated that it would lead to considerable social and economic benefits if it were successful in achieving its stated objectives. As noted above, these economic benefits were most likely to be achieved in the event of improvements to the long-term employment prospects of public housing tenants.

The NIP essentially represented a gradual approach to asset improvement, with more limited initiatives in relation to social and economic programs and community development. Though participation was a major aim of the program, in reality there was limited tenant involvement in setting the agenda for estate improvement. Tenant choices were largely limited to selecting between a range of fairly cosmetic options for the external improvement of their homes, as well as identifying the most problematic aspects of the physical design of their neighbourhoods, though more extensive renovation of the inside of homes such as bathroom as kitchens was incorporated into the mature NIP program, and later the Accelerated Improvement Program (AIP). Under the latter program, the NIP was essentially reoriented and incorporated into the core business of the Department. The bulk of the $107 million spent on the NIP in the mid- to late-1990s went toward physical reconfiguration of stock, including reorienting houses to the street, external improvements, and aspects of estate redesign such as closure of walkways, or enclosure of areas of poorly maintained open space into tenant’s backyards.

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161 Stubbs & Whelan *op cit.*
162 Stubbs & Storer *op cit.*
165 Stubbs & Storer *op cit.*; Stubbs & Hardy *op cit.*
Though breaking down the ‘homogeneity of estates’ was an objective of the early NIP, the degree of ‘mix’ envisaged was only 20 per cent private sale, as noted above, and far less ambitious than that proposed in the current Minto redevelopment. In general, more radical redevelopment strategies such as those being implemented in Minto at the present time were neither politically feasible nor practical at this time. Concerns about the loss of stock amid reduced Federal capital funding, and the cost of works associated with achieving separate title to ‘super-lots’\(^{167}\) were factors.\(^{168}\) However, some estates have subsequently been re-titled, facilitating the sale of selected properties and making redevelopment a more feasible strategy since 1999/2000.\(^{169}\)

The NIP was discontinued in its original form in 1999, though some elements remained. By this time, other estate renewal strategies were also being undertaken in more problematic areas, including stock transfers to community housing to ‘settle down’ areas such as Proctor Way in Claymore, as well as more proactive management, community development and support strategies in areas like ‘the Hill’ precinct in Minto, described below.\(^{170}\) The NIP was replaced by the Community Renewal Strategy (CRS) with a stated focus on social and economic development. Like the NIP, there was still a strong focus on ‘normalising estates’ to make them look and function like more conventional residential areas, though the characteristics of ‘ideal’ residential community were not made explicit. Interestingly, as noted by Randolph and Wood (2003), the CRS recognised that that the emphasis on physical solutions in the earlier NIP was ‘not necessarily appropriate and emphasise[d] the importance of integrating employment and community development initiatives’.\(^{171}\) As noted below, the salaries-driven CRS was also a far cheaper alternative to the capital improvements under the NIP.

Nonetheless, even by 1997 there was serious questioning of some of the more physical determinist\(^{172}\) underpinnings of the NIP, both within and outside the Department.\(^{173}\) A report commissioned from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research by the NSW Department of Housing in 1997\(^{174}\) sought to explore the relationship between crime and public housing estates. The report notes that a key aim of the study was to examine some of the premises upon which

\(^{167}\) The creation of super-lots was a deliberate strategy of government to avoid the sale of public assets at the time when estates were developing (1972 to 1989), and has restricted the establishment of Torrens title over large sections of broad acre estates.

\(^{168}\) See also Randolph, Judd. & Carmichael \textit{op cit.}

\(^{169}\) Ibid.


\(^{171}\) NSW DOH 1999, p. 7 cited in Randolph & Wood \textit{op cit.}

\(^{172}\) The idea still prominent in some urban design and planning schools that physical design to large extent determines or strongly influences behaviour, social interaction and social outcomes. This included the notion of ‘defensible space’ (see for example Newman 1972), though as noted by Stubbs & Storer (1996) this is strongly contested in empirical studies of public housing estate redesign in the USA and UK.

\(^{173}\) See for example Stubbs & Storer \textit{op cit.}

the NIP was based, particularly the reduction of ‘crimes of opportunity’ through improved design.\footnote{Weatherburn notes that the ‘Radburn’ estate design has come in for particular criticism in recent years. He notes that the Radburn estates were designed to separate cars from pedestrians. They feature service roads to accommodate garages at the back, while the front of the houses are linked by pedestrian paths across grassy open space. Weatherburn notes that this type of design ‘was thought to encourage neighbourly interaction, and allow for greater safety of children playing in communal areas. However, these estates, regarded as innovative when built, are now often seen as prime offenders in environmental crime prevention terms. Open space, rather than being ‘communal’ is said to become a threatening ‘no-man’s land’. Residents cannot effectively ‘police’ their territory because its limits are not clearly marked, while rear access to cars and garages, hidden behind high fences, makes informal surveillance very difficult. In addition such estates are recognisably different from surrounding neighbourhoods, making them easy targets for community criticism and stigmatisation of residents’.}

The Bureau’s research indicated that by far the most significant factor in the crime rate of a local area was the rate of unemployment rather than the concentration of public housing or its physical design. A weaker but statistically significant relationship between crime and other factors associated with socio-economic disadvantage was also consistently reported. The study found that there was ‘little evidence to support the proposition that the quantity or type of public housing in a postcode exerts a strong effect on its recorded rates of assault, robbery, malicious damage to property, motor vehicle theft or break and enter dwelling, independently of social factors’. This said, the rate of crime in public housing was sometimes higher than average due to the relative concentration of disadvantage, and particularly unemployment. The report noted that ‘since the 1981 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, priority housing allocation schemes have been developed to ensure that public housing goes first to those most in need’. This had the unintended consequence of reinforcing a social profile where there was a greater risk of involvement in crime or criminal victimisation.

However, the study also reported that areas with high concentrations of public housing often had very different crime rates, some lower than average. It reported that perception or other factors may be at work to increase concerns about crime even where there was no evidence of increased incidence. It concluded that ‘overall, it would seem that, looking at Sydney as a whole, the concentration of public housing into estates does not have a role in explaining crime rates over and above the actual percentage of public housing in each postcode’.

This had already been noted in earlier evaluations of the potential of the NIP to meet its objectives through physical redesign strategies. In particular, the issue of reality versus perception of crime had been noted in previous NIP evaluations,\footnote{See sections on ‘Crime’ in Stubbs & Storer op cit., and Stubbs & Hardy op cit.} as well as a wide range of empirical literature on urban renewal from the UK and USA.

Picking up on the Bureau’s study, regional and state-wide media carried stories that State Government funds spent on redesigning estates was ‘pointless’ if reducing crime was the aim.\footnote{See for example Daily Telegraph, March 14 1997, ‘House design won’t cut crime’, p. 17; and Parramatta Advertiser, April 9, 1997, ‘Deadline: De-Radburning No Crime Fix-It’} The press reported that the study had been ‘prompted by youth riots in the Villawood housing estate in December 1995’, but had found that ‘social and economic disadvantages were the major cause of
problems in these estates, not housing design’. Although by 1997 $12.0 million had already been 'spent on the first stage of the 10-year scheme', the media noted that 'Bureau director Don Weatherburn said that the State Government would have been better off pouring the funds into social programs if cutting crime were the goal'.

Nonetheless crime continued to be regarded as a design-related issue in official policy documents related in estate renewal, as well as the media. However, from 1999, non-asset based strategies became more prominent as estate renewal tools, at least for several years.

5.3 THE LEAD UP TO VALLEY VISTA REDEVELOPMENT

Renewed community pride has been credited for a nearly one-third drop in the crime rate in the Minto public housing estate over the last 18 months. Housing Minister Andrew Refshauge said "very good results" were emerging from the State Government's community renewal program for public housing estates. The program allows the community, with the support of a range of government and non-government agencies, to identify and manage its own solutions to local social problems (Macarthur Chronicle, 4 June 2002).

5.3.1 Participatory Strategies in Minto - the ITM Program 1998-2002

A follow-up study to the Airds Cost-Benefit Analysis was commissioned by the Department of Housing in 1999. This study compared asset- and non-asset-based strategies used by the Department in Airds, Minto and Claymore. The study found that, whilst all renewal areas had benefited from the different strategies employed by the Department since 1995, the focus on community participation methods in the Minto Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) area was leading to particularly positive outcomes.

Benefits identified after less than a year of operation included a considerable slowing of housing turnover, reduced number of vacant properties, and increased resident involvement in improving their area. Notably, residents reported that they felt involved in the changes that were occurring in their

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178 Ibid.
179 See for example, Community Renewal; Transforming Estates into Communities Partnership and Participation (DOH 2002b).
180 Stubbs & Storer (1996)
181 Stubbs, J. & Hardy, M. 2000, Evaluation of Three Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies Employed by the South West Sydney Region of the NSW Department of Housing, NSW DOH.
182 In Minto, an area that was seen as particularly problematic, the Hill Precinct was targeted for ‘Intensive Management’ via the establishment of the Hill Project in late 1998. Made up of Departmental staff with considerable policy and procedural flexibility, and located in an informal field office in the heart of the Precinct, the strategies employed have again been a combination of asset and non-asset management. A high priority was been given to tenant participation strategies.
community, and were actively engaged in a range of voluntary physical renewal activities.

There was also a very positive impact upon Minto residents’ feeling of safety and security. However, these were largely related to perception as, contrary to common belief, Minto did not have a crime rate much above the NSW average for the study period.\textsuperscript{183, 184}

The comparative evaluation of the different renewal strategies found that these types of resident participation activities also appeared to have ‘more long-term benefits in terms of residents’ perceptions about their ability to change their environment and their lives in other ways’.\textsuperscript{185} The study found that, apart from the benefit of any physical or asset-based activities in areas like Airds,\textsuperscript{186} there were clear benefits from the primarily non-physical strategies were being employed in Minto and Claymore. As such, there was early evidence that these strategies were likely to lead to sustainable changes in cost-effective ways (i.e. by achieving similar outcomes for a fraction of the cost of physical upgrade, though both were seen as necessary due to poor condition of housing in which people were living).

Moreover, the Minto Intensive Management area was found to be the most likely of the six study areas\textsuperscript{187} to ‘stabilise’ in the long-term when a range of factors were taken into account, and particularly if measured by ‘resident aspirations to stay in the area’. At that time, residents’ choice to remain in Minto was due to:

- Proximity to an excellent range of educational, retail and support services, and public transport,
- A commitment to their area developed over time,
- Their social and community ties, and
- Positive feelings about their area \textit{per se}.\textsuperscript{188}

The study recommended that the more ‘participatory’ non-asset-based measures being employed in the ITM area should be implemented across all public housing estates where social problems were evident.

Senior officers from the Department of Housing publicly recognised the positive aspects of the Minto ITM. They noted that ‘strategies to strengthen the

\textsuperscript{183}~Stubbs & Hardy (2000:29-58)
\textsuperscript{184}~See also Weatherburn (1997) discussed above. The \textit{Airds Cost Benefit Analysis} (Stubbs & Storer 1996) likewise founds that crime was related principally to a range of social or demographic factors, including the presence of a higher than average rate of poor, unemployed young men. In any case, it did not find Airds to have a ‘crime rate out of control’, but rather a higher rate of nuisance and annoyance, and particularly of domestic violence, though there was a greater perception of crime. In this case, physical determinist strategies on their own were unlikely to be successful.
\textsuperscript{185}~\textit{Ibid.}, p.9.
\textsuperscript{186}~The study also found very positive outcomes in the Airds NIP area, which largely employed physical redesign and improvement strategies. Airds was found to have significantly greater indicators of disadvantage and community instability than the other suburbs prior to and at the time of the study, so that improvements to the NIP area were more dramatic (Stubbs & Hardy 2000).
\textsuperscript{187}~These areas were a ‘control’ and a ‘renewal’ area in each of the 3 estates of Minto, Airds and Claymore.
\textsuperscript{188}~\textit{Ibid.} 59-74
community through participation initiatives and collaboration with local agencies were integral to the model’. Having spent $37.5 million on physical Community Renewal strategies in South Western Sydney and $19.1 million Western Sydney between 1996 and 1999, the ‘obvious question’ for the Department was ‘whether another approach could have the same outcomes’. In contrast to the physical redevelopment strategies, the Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) Program had a annual budget of only $250,000 for Minto per annum. The salaries-driven community development program was thus a fraction of the cost of the capital improvement-driven NIP.

The Department also reported that the early signs of non-asset strategies were positive, with the Minto ITM area having become a neighbourhood where ‘trust has developed and there is a growing level of positive expectations about the future’. In more concrete terms, the Department’s internal audit of the program’s impact on key housing indicators revealed a reduction of rental arrears from 52 per cent to 37 per cent in the previous 12 months, and a rise in the acceptance rate of properties in the ITM area from 38 per cent to 92 per cent since the commencement of the program. Involvement in such a program was acknowledged as requiring a long-term commitment by the Department ‘if there are to be long term changes that build social capital in these areas’.

A further evaluation was then commissioned to evaluate the relative performance of the ITM in Bidwill (where the ITM was accompanied by physical improvements) and Minto (where it was not). This later evaluation, carried out 18 months after the ITM implementation, was even more positive about the Minto ‘experiment’ than the first evaluation in 1999, outlined above. It reported there had been ‘remarkable success’ on a number of housing management indicators, including a significant reduction in reported crime, improved sense of personal safety, increased tenant satisfaction, and increased tenant involvement in community activities. The results were consistent on both estates, so that ‘early indicators therefore suggest that capital improvements may not be a significant contributing factor in ITM success’. It recommended further evaluation over time.

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190 The ‘Neighbourhood Improvement Program’ (NIP), piloted in Airds and Macquarie Fields in 1994/95 (Stubbs & Whelan 1995), and expanded to other estates across NSW
191 Ready (1999) also noted that, apart from a question about the cost effectiveness of the then trajectory of the asset-driven NIP in estates lie Airds and Macquarie Fields, there were two other motivating factors in a more participatory approach to community renewal. The first was the success of a small community housing organisation in making significant improvements in a section of the Claymore housing estate through utilising innovative management models. The second was the overall pressures on NSW Department of Housing staff who were constantly dealing with people desperate to move out of problematic housing estates
192 Ibid., p.4
193 Ibid., p.4
194 Ibid., p.6
196 Stubbs & Hardy op cit.
197 Ibid., p. 23.
Such was the early success of the ITM program that the Department decided to extend it from the Minto and Bidwill pilot areas to eight other estates in NSW in 2000/01. In line with Department’s commitment to ‘creating sustainable tenancies and communities’, the ITM program offered an ‘alternative housing management model aimed at providing a more responsive service with increased community involvement in addressing tenant needs’.

These participatory approaches are likewise promoted by the Department in policies such as the Tenant Participation Compact, and official policy documents including Community Renewal: Transforming Estates into Communities - Participation and Partnership. The Compact notes that ‘the Department of Housing is committed to upholding and supporting the rights of social housing tenants to participate in decisions made about their housing and environment’, whilst Transforming Estates into Communities promotes a ‘partnership’ approach to working with the community in all aspects of improving ‘quality of life’ on the estates.

Local and state media carried corresponding messages about positive changes in public housing estates in 2000/01 and early 2002. A number of newspaper articles over this period ran stories specifically on the benefits of more participatory, non-physical urban renewal strategies. Reflecting the changing nature of press releases from the Department, they were less likely to emphasise the physical changes to the estates than articles in the mid to late 1990s when the NIP was in full swing.

Newspapers instead carried stories on the ‘award winning community development programs’ in Bidwill and Minto. A visit to the ITMs by the Neighbourhood Poverty Sub-Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor

198 The eight NSW ITM locations were Minto, Bidwill, Bonnyrigg, Toongabbie, Bolton Point, Dubbo, Moree and Redfern.
199 The NSW Department of Housing’s Brief to Consultants for the Evaluation of Eight Intensive Management (ITM) Projects, (NSW DOH, December 2002) noted that the Department’s Community Renewal strategy reflected a focus on both asset and non-asset strategies in achieving this goal. These were set out in its estates strategy, Transforming Estates into Communities, which set out the Department’s strategic directions for Community Renewal on housing estates, with the ITM projects one element of this strategy.
200 Prepared and distributed by the NSW Department of Housing in as a draft document in October 2002 as recommended in Implementation of New Directions in Tenant Participation in the Housing Portfolio: Report to the Director General of the Department of Housing, December 2001, and following the evaluation of the Tenant Community Initiatives Program (TCIP) in 2000. Tenant participation was to be ‘transformed into a framework’ to ensure it became a part of ‘core business’. Responsibility for tenant participation activities was transferred to the Community Renewal Unit of the Department in July 2001 (NSW DOH 2001, pp. 1-3).
201 Prepared by the NSW DOH, Community Renewal Unit (2002), and subtitled ‘Places where people want to stay…where housing is more than just shelter’.
203 See for example The Sunday Telegraph,’The fringe fights back’, 3 September 1996. The article strongly promoted the changes wrought by the NIP in Macquarie Fields. It reported that, ‘In a change that is being compared to the transformation of New York's notorious ghettos, the residents of Sydney's south-western satellite are reclaiming the streets, planting gardens and greeting their neighbours - often for the first time. What were previously lifeless streets strewn with garbage are now makeshift playgrounds for children... Gardens are spiring up everywhere. Fear is being replaced by pride. In a remarkable social shift, Sydney's urban fringes are fighting back, shedding their old tag of "ghettos" to become the city's new, improved housing areas.
204 The ITM Program was awarded the Premier's Gold Award for Improving Service Delivery in late 2000.
Party in December 2000 heard that the success of the program had ‘stemmed from giving the residents a sense of ownership about their community’, which had led to ‘the community becoming more pro-active helping itself’.205

Similar reports about Claymore’s transformation from a ‘wasteland of poverty, crime and despair’ to a ‘place of pride’ were likewise reported in the state-wide press, with Argyle Community Housing’s Brian Murnane commenting on the central role that community participation played in this positive change. ‘The only way we could make it sustainable was to involve the people’, he was reported as saying. ‘Only when people take ownership of problems and achievements can there be guarantees that if we pulled out, the momentum is there to keep it going’.206

As late as 6 June 2002, the Macarthur Chronicle reported that ‘renewed community pride has been credited for a nearly one-third drop in the crime rate in the Minto public housing estate over the last 18 months’. Quoting the then Minister for Housing, Dr Andrew Refshauge, the paper reported that ‘very good results’ were emerging from the State Government’s community renewal program for public housing estates, and that a key aspect of the ITM program allows the community ‘to identify and manage its own solutions to local social problems’.207

Ironically this article, headed ‘Pride Triumphs’, appeared on the same page as a report on the demolition of Minto. It appeared one week after the Minister for Housing announced the ‘bulldozing’ of Minto public housing estate as a solution to its intractable social problems such as crime, and poor quality housing stock.

5.4 SHIFTING VIEWS

In the 1970s, Department of Housing developments like Minto were held up as a shining example of design and community living. Given names like Valley Vista, the belief was the estates would be home to multitudes of working families living on the outskirts of the growing Sydney metropolis. Nearly 30 years later, planners, governments and residents admit the experiments have ‘failed’ miserably, creating ghettos and entrenching disadvantage (Daily Telegraph, 30 May 2002).

On 30 May 2002, the Sydney press carried stories of Dr Refshauge’s announcement that the Department of Housing would ‘bulldoze’ its Minto estate, and replace it principally with privately constructed and owned housing, with a 20-30 per cent component of public housing. The ‘vision of planners in the 70’s [had] not been fulfilled’, it seemed.208 One article

205 Mt Druitt Standard (Australia), Huge turnaround Bidwill popular”, 20 December 2000
206 Sydney Morning Herald “Harvesting Pride Renews A Community” 1 December 2001
208 Daily Telegraph, “Bulldozing the past to make a new start”, 30 May 2002
concluded with a comment from a Valley Vista resident quoted as saying, ‘It will benefit Minto’.\footnote{209}

The message carried in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} was somewhat more strident in its criticism of the estate and its people. It reported that ‘large parts of one of Sydney’s most notorious public housing estates’ was ‘set to be demolished’. In part, it held the ‘much criticised’ Radburn design responsible for Minto’s problems, and reported that ‘these poorly lit lanes and bleak streetscapes of back paling fences were the perfect environment to foster drug and street crime. Parks, originally planned for community activities, became no-go zones. Termites and poor drainage added to the decay’. Dr Refshauge was \textit{this} time quoted as saying that, based on the United States-style Radburn estates, ‘Minto concentrated hundreds of disadvantaged people into one area enabling crime and unemployment to flourish and social problems to become ingrained over generations’.\footnote{210} This same article also made mention of the achievements of the ITM, including a substantial drop in police call outs and an increase in community involvement. However, the then Minto ITM worker, Helen White, described the physical issues on the estate such as termites, drainage and poor estate design as being significant problems.\footnote{211}

Two articles that appeared a week later\footnote{212} were likewise very positive about the Department’s planned demolition. Dramatically headlined ‘End For Hell Site: $350m saves Minto’, the \textit{Macarthur Chronicle} reported that ‘bulldozers will clear most of the largely termite-infested public housing area’, before a ‘$350 million estate of public and private housing is built’ on the site. It also reported the then position of the Department that ‘all of the much-criticised townhouses will go’, but that ‘the estate’s freestanding houses will remain but be renovated’. The articles also echoed Dr Refshauge’s apparently contradictory position that ‘after about 30 years of high crime rates, unemployment and social isolation, the area will have the chance to start over again’.\footnote{213} As noted above, these articles appeared next to the contradictory article on the ‘triumph of pride’ in Minto, including its substantial drop in crime.

The focus of the \textit{Australian Financial Review},\footnote{214} a month later, was less about overcoming social problems, and more about the opportunities offered by the sale of poorly maintained public housing estates to the private sector. It reported that the NSW Government had become the ‘first state government to introduce public-private investment in low-cost housing’, with Minto the first major example.\footnote{215} In a move that he ‘expected to be copied in other states’, the Housing Minister ‘called on the private sector to present strategies for the low-cost housing developments’, and announced that tenders would be called for a public-private redevelopment of Minto. The Director-General of the NSW Department of Housing, Andrew Cappie-Wood, was reported as saying that the key to success would be ‘developing financial structures that showed clear

\footnote{209} \textit{Ibid.}

\footnote{210} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, ‘Estate Escapes ’70s Cul-de-sac’, 30 May 2002

\footnote{211} \textit{Ibid.}

\footnote{212} \textit{Macarthur Chronicle}, “End For Hell Site: $350m saves Minto”, 4 June 2002; and \textit{Macarthur Chronicle}, “Termites to thank for a new estate”, 4 June 2002.

\footnote{213} \textit{Macarthur Chronicle}, “End For Hell Site: $350m saves Minto”, 4 June 2002

\footnote{214} \textit{Australian Financial Review}, ‘NSW Public Housing To Go Private’, 4 July 2002

\footnote{215} Although the Minister for Housing talked mainly about Minto, he also noted that such public-private partnerships were planned for Erskineville, Redfern, Liverpool and Randwick.
value for money’. Details of how these partnerships would work were not provided, with the Director General quoted as saying that ‘it would be up to industry to suggest these’ details.

Other national media carried similar stories that week.\textsuperscript{216} The Minister’s focus in these press releases was on a reduction in maintenance liability, provision of cost-effective low-income housing of improved amenity, and that Minto-style redevelopments would ‘reduce high concentrations of public housing to build a better social mix’.\textsuperscript{217} Interestingly, the private sector was reported at that stage to be ‘cautious about [the] NSW Government plan to develop private sector-funded housing for people on low incomes’.\textsuperscript{218}

By December 2002, the Department’s official documentation reported that the extension of the ITM projects from Minto and Bidwill across six more estates was less enthusiastic. It reported that the ITM projects had had varying and ‘mixed results’ in improving housing management performance. As such, the next consultant’s brief for an evaluation of the eight projects included the objectives of examining whether there were ‘alternate or more cost effective ways of achieving the same outcomes’; and the ‘need and use of exit strategies’ for ITMs.\textsuperscript{219}

The continued tension between physical and non-physical community renewal strategies, evident in earlier policy realignments between for example the NIP- and ITM-type processes, is likewise apparent in other official documentation from this time, and appears to reflect the different arms of the Department, and their priorities and philosophies. The imperative to reduce costs even further is evident in these documents, even though the ITM already cost a fraction of the physical improvement strategies, as noted above.

5.5 THE DEMOLITION OF VALLEY VISTA

Minto residents experiencing feelings of insecurity and upheaval as bulldozers pull down homes around them are urged to join the suburb’s newly-created Residents Action Group (\textit{Macarthur Chronicle}, 15 October 2002).

In August 2002, the Macarthur regional press began reporting the first demolitions in Valley Vista precinct. ‘Run-down townhouses in McElvior Way’ had been ‘bulldozed’, marking the start of a ‘massive demolition program and the end of an era of lumping public housing tenants together in troubled, low-income suburbs’.\textsuperscript{220} By the end of August, 13 families had left the estate and another 17 had scheduled moving dates. Most had accepted new accommodation in other public housing within the Macarthur district, and a substantial number of these in other parts of Minto.\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{216} See for example \textit{The Australian}, ‘Cool response to low-cost housing push, 5 July 2002.
\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{218} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{220} Macarthur Chronicle (Australia), ‘Bulldozers mark start of new era’, 27 August 2002.
\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Ibid}; and Resident Action Group File Records; and Franciscan Fathers’ File Records.
Reflecting the Department’s policy position at that time, the Macarthur Chronicle, noted that ‘more than 900 families will be moved out of Minto, but under the proposed 70-30 per cent mix of private and public housing, just 300 families can return’. The press reported that the response of residents had been ‘mostly positive’ to the demolition to this point.

By October, however, the media had started carrying stories initiated by the Minto Resident Action Group (MRAG), formed in response to the announced redevelopment. These signalled greater community concern about the demolition and its immediate impact on those relocated and those still waiting. The experiences of Valley Vista residents during the demolition process, and the negative personal and housing situation of some following their relocation, had flow-on effects to residents in other parts of the estate. The Chronicle reported that residents had ‘initially welcomed the decision but became unhappy when housing department officials were unable to answer “who, what, when and where” questions’. The MRAG’s chairperson, Adele Goodwin, was reported as saying that ‘people need to be informed of their rights in a situation like this [as] being asked to move is a big thing in one’s life’. She noted that the demolition of Valley Vista was ‘having a huge impact on our community’. The MRAG had been formed to give estate residents a ‘strong voice’ in redevelopment plans and re-location negotiations with the Housing Department.

5.5.1 The Valley Vista Redevelopment Process

Residents of Valley Vista had been informed that their homes were to be demolished one day before Minister Refshauge’s announcement, by a hand delivered letter. ‘It is probable’, said the letter, ‘that the first stage of the renewal project will involve the redevelopment of the Valley Vista precinct in which you live’. Earlier in the letter it had been stated that the ‘renewal project will start in the near future because it could take 10 years or more to complete’. Residents were informed that they might be offered alternative public housing in Minto or elsewhere in the Campbelltown local government area. The letter was received just over two months before the first six houses in Valley Vista were demolished. There had been no social impact assessment or other assessment of likely impacts undertaken prior to this announcement, nor had planning permission been granted at this time by the consent authority, Campbelltown City Council.

Coinciding with the Minister’s announcement was the release of the Department of Housing’s fact sheet, entitled Urban renewal: Building safer and stronger communities. The Department’s document noted that ‘a greater mix of public and private housing will help lessen the stigma and isolation sometimes associated with living on estates’. The Department raised several

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222 The MRAG received initial support from the Benevolent Society Community Leadership Program and the UTS Centre for Population education. It later received some funding from the Department of Housing, with funds auspiced by the Minto Family Centre, Uniting Care Burnside.
223 Resident Action Group File Records; and Franciscan Fathers’ File Records.
224 Macarthur Chronicle (Australia), ‘Residents set to be part of the action’, 15 October 2002.
225 Interview with MRAG Committee, 15 April 2003.
226 DOH (2002)
issues with regard to Minto. Among these were the costly maintenance of the older townhouses built during the 1970s. It was guaranteed that the redevelopment would only occur 'after extensive consultation with the local community'. However, in terms of the 'greater mix of public and private housing', the fact sheet was silent as to what kind of public-private ratio was envisaged. However, relocations and demolitions began without any written guidelines being released, and without any consultation with the community. There was likewise no liaison with local and regional services that had been working closely with the Minto community.

The Minto Healthy Community Project was a social development program that began in 1999. During 2002, Department of Housing staff began attending. However, at the meeting on 19 June 2002, it was strongly argued by residents that the Healthy Community Project was not a suitable forum within which residents could negotiate with the Department because the redevelopment was such a significant issue, and one that needed to be carefully considered by residents. Residents expressed the view that they needed their own group. Soon after, the first meeting of the Minto Residents’ Action Group (MRAG) was convened by resident representatives. 227 One outcome of this meeting was the creation of the first MRAG questionnaire designed to gauge resident attitudes towards the redevelopment. The MRAG undertook its first survey using its own resources and the support of local community services.

Another outcome was a letter to the Director-General of the Department. In this letter the main resident concerns were raised, framed in thirteen questions. The first question was simply: 'What percentage of the redevelopment will be public housing?' The replacement of public housing and potential net loss of stock has been an ongoing concern of Minto residents. Other questions related to how much notice would be given for relocation of Valley Vista residents, and to alternative housing options. Finally, at the end of the letter, MRAG requested 'a letter from the Department of Housing declaring that it [would] be honest with [them]', pointing to a lack of trust in the Department on the part of many residents.

The demolition of the first six houses in Valley Vista began on 1 August. Two public meetings on the 2 and 4 August drew about 100 and 70 residents respectively, who were often fearful, confused and angry. A few weeks later 228 the Department sent out a Question and Answer Sheet in response to growing resident concerns. The public-private mix was placed ‘in the vicinity of 30 per cent public, 70 per cent private’, though this may vary in light of ‘uncertainties and variables’. It was conceded that ‘in the end there will be a net reduction in the number of public housing dwellings in Minto’. Other issues addressed included who would be able to return and when, with the Department estimating the time for completion of the project at anywhere up to 10 years. It would be at least 3 to 4 years before those in the first stage redevelopment would be able to return. Two days later demolition commenced on 3 more houses.

Several concerns about the process were raised at the MRAG meeting on 13 of September. One complaint was that residents were not receiving enough notice of actual removal, with some only finding out a day or two in advance that they

228 On 20 August 2002.
were to pack and vacate their home. Some of those affected had lived in Minto for more than 20 years. It was suggested by the MRAG that residents be given notice ‘at least one week ahead’. Other suggestions included keys of new residence to be made ‘available 3 days before actual move-in’, so that residents could at least inspect the property prior to the relocation, and more communication with removalists, who often were reported as treating the residents and their belongings with serious disrespect and lack of care. Another point arising from the meeting was about the dates of DOH meetings - it was requested that the Department ‘check with residents about proposed dates for precinct meetings’ (original emphasis), as dates were sometimes inconvenient or set with too little notice, leading to poor attendance. Demolitions at 5 and 6 Nore Place and 82 Luttrell place were commenced on the 20 September.

In October 2002, the MRAG prepared a Fact Sheet in an attempt to answer continuing questions and concerns of residents. On several points the answers to resident questions from the Department were still indefinite. As to the ‘overall reduction of public housing in Minto’, the Department reported that it was ‘not possible to quantify this exactly’, but there would be a net increase in ‘higher demand’ areas. An interesting question from residents arose from their own survey and meetings. They considered that ‘the 30% target does not match with the estimated numbers who wish to move back’. The Department replied that that the 30 per cent is ‘not based on these numbers’, but on a ‘rule of thumb’ for creating ‘successful mixed communities’. The date for the completion of demolition of Valley Vista was ‘12 months or so’, with the Department ‘happy to proceed as properties are vacated’.229

On 3 February 2003, a number of residents and service representatives met with Ross Woodward, Director of the Department of Housing for Western and South-West Sydney. At the meeting, Woodward gave a commitment that there would be no overall reduction in stock, that there would be an honest and transparent process, and that residents and services would be invited to participate in any evaluation. Further, Mr Woodward was ‘shocked by some of the resident stories about relocation’ (discussed below), and assured residents that more resources would be made available for relocation. Residents put it to him that the Department was ‘not taking resident groups seriously’ as consultative and follow-up forums. There was also considerable discussion at about ‘social mix’. Woodward indicated that the Department’s long-term plan was for ‘dispersed and mixed housing within a context of growth’. The Department wanted to move away from being the ‘landlord of last resort’ and become instead a ‘bigger player in the market’.230

229 RAG files, DOH correspondence, 3 December 2002.
230 MRAG Files, Minutes of Meeting, 3 February 2003.
5.6 THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS AND MINTO’S REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Above: View over south-western Sydney from Minto Public Housing Estate

5.6.1 Overview

Minto has been the subject of a ‘masterplanning’ process for almost 3 years. At the time of writing, however, no final Master Plan has been formally exhibited or approved by Campbelltown City Council as the Consent Authority, though several drafts have been put to the community, and to the Minister for Housing.

The redevelopment was originally proposed as a private-public partnership (PPP). An accompanying Expression of Interest to attract a private sector investor was developed in 2003. It was first thought that this private sector partner would in effect purchase the main areas to be redeveloped. The Department of Housing would then either buy back stock or retain land in the redeveloped area. There are just over 1000 Department of Housing sites. However, the inclusion of open space areas owned by the Department, Council and DIRNR, and the potential for higher densities in some areas, means that the number of lots in the redeveloped areas could be at least 1,150. Of these, it is currently thought that 300, or between 26 per cent, will be public or community housing.

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231 This EOI is commercial-in-confidence and so cannot be reproduced here.
232 Presentation to Campbelltown City Council on the Minto Renewal Project by Peter Holland, Phil Nott & Scott Phillips, 10 August 2004.
233 Ibid.
However, there have been concerns about certain details of the Master Plan from some sections of the Department of Housing, as well as the Minto Reference Group. This includes issues related to design and layout, cost and feasibility of the Masterplan, including the projected net loss of a significant amount of public housing.\textsuperscript{234} As discussed later in the report, implementation of the original Masterplan meant that it would be highly unlikely that the remaining 700 public housing units will be replaced in other areas of Sydney due the cost of land and construction as well as projected profits from the PPP arrangements as originally conceived. Official Departmental documentation shows that net non-replacement could be as high as 400 to 500 units of the 700 or so that will not be rebuilt in Minto.\textsuperscript{235} As such, the Plan has been with the Minister for some time awaiting his sign off. It is understood that the parameters of the Plan, and of the proposed PPP arrangements, are currently being re-examined.\textsuperscript{236} As noted below, it is likely that it will take a significantly different form to that which was likely when this research began.

The Master Plan area officially includes an area approximately 140 ha in size,\textsuperscript{237} though this also takes in areas not planned for redevelopment such as the primary and high school sites, commercial precinct and private housing precincts that fall within its boundaries (see Map 1 following).\textsuperscript{238} The area that is specifically identified for redevelopment is approximately 92 ha, made up of:

- 56 ha of Department of Housing-owned land (60\% of the total) containing over 1,000 homes or home sites (post-demolition), roads and open space;
- 31 ha of Council-owned land (34\%) made up of roads, open space and vacant land; and
- 4.4 ha of DIPNR land (5\%) which is all vacant land.\textsuperscript{239}

### 5.6.2 Master Plan Arrangements

Simply put, a Master Plan is policy document prepared by a developer or development consortium, which provides a framework for rezoning and subdivision. In the official documentation prepared for the Department of Housing, a Master Plan is described as 'a vision for the area which looks to the future and may also change over time as situations change'.\textsuperscript{240} As such, the Minto Master Plan is 'not just for the Department of Housing Estates, it’s for

\textsuperscript{234} Minto Reference Group Meeting, 8 July 2004.

\textsuperscript{235} HFIG, 2002, Minto Renewal Project Feasibility Study Report, NSW Department of Housing.

\textsuperscript{236} Interview, Senior Officers NSW DOH, 10 June 2004.

\textsuperscript{237} Woods Bagot, 2004, Minto Renewal Project: Urban design and Planning Opportunities and Constraints, prepared for the NSW Department of Housing, Campbelltown City Council and the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources.

\textsuperscript{238} The Project Area is surrounded by the housing areas of Ingleburn, Bow Bowring, Minto Heights and Leumeah. It is bounded to the north by Ben Lomond Road, to the south by private residential development, to the east by Eagleview Road, and to the west by Townson Road and Pembroke Road.

\textsuperscript{239} Presentation to Campbelltown City Council on the Minto Renewal Project by Peter Holland, Phil Nott & Scott Phillips, 10 August 2004.

\textsuperscript{240} It is generally applied to larger development that are to be developed in stages. As such, the specific subdivision applications and concepts for housing type and density for specific precincts sit within the overall concept for this larger area.
Minto as a whole - to revitalise the suburb for the existing and future community’.  

The Master Plan process has been overseen by two main bodies, with input from other groups who represent services and residents. The official bodies are the Minto Renewal Steering Committee, and the Minto Renewal Project Reference Group, which have been set up by the Department of Housing to officially have input to the process. The groups that sit to essentially to the 'side' of the process are the MRAG and the Macarthur Housing Coalition. The Coalition was set up in response to the announced redevelopment of Minto mid-2002, and is made up of a range of services and resident representatives, including state peak housing and advocacy bodies. The Coalition aims to monitor and where relevant influence the redevelopment process in ways that are consistent with the interests of residents and public policy. Understanding these interests and developing appropriate responses is clearly a complex matter. The MRAG aims to represent the voices of residents in the redevelopment process, and work toward the best outcome for the diverse needs of residents. It is open to all residents, and has a wide diversity of resident participants in its regular meeting, special forums and activities. It has a membership mailing list of over 100, and regularly has 20 to 30 residents at its monthly meetings.

In terms of groups set up to officially have input to the process, the Minto Renewal Steering Committee has responsibility for overseeing and driving the redevelopment process. This includes co-ordinating input from the landowner consortium, overseeing Master Plan development, reviewing financial considerations, developing the framework for any public-private partnerships (PPPs), and liaising on all matters arising. Representation is at a high level from relevant government departments (including Council) and does not include residents or services, except for the Chair of the Reference Group, as discussed below.

A Minto Renewal Project Reference Group was also set up in October 2003. In part, this Reference Group grew out of the Joint Stakeholders Steering Committee, which was set up at the invitation of the NSW Department of Housing to have input to the redevelopment process. The Macarthur Housing Coalition was invited to develop terms of reference for the new group, and to have membership of the Reference Group. A range of local and peak services, residents and Departmental officers came to be members of the Reference Group. Terms of Reference as originally proposed by the Coalition were far more encompassing than those to which the Department eventually agreed (discussed later). Though the Macarthur Housing Coalition and other services and residents had some reservations about participating in a process where there was limited ability to influence the core agenda, or to look at broader issues of public housing sustainability as originally proposed, the Coalition finally decided that it was preferable to participate and have some influence.

241 Presentation by Deb Sutherland, Woods Bagot (urban planning and design consultants responsible for preparation of the Master Plan), 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report, NSW Department of Housing.

242 The Reference Group is made up of representatives of the NSW Department of Housing, Minto Resident Action Group, the Macarthur Housing Coalition, a range of other local agencies active in Minto, and is independently chaired by the Principal of Sarah Redfern Primary School.
over the redevelopment, especially if some of the worst aspects of the first Valley Vista redevelopment could be avoided or mitigated.²⁴³

The Chairperson of the Reference Group, a respected local school principal, was invited to participate on the overarching Steering Committee. Though this was perceived as a positive move by services and residents, in reality she has been limited in the feedback she can provide to the Reference Group due to the nature of discussions at the Steering Committee level, including matters that are commercial-in-confidence. The Reference Group has likewise regularly been presented with information that is confidential, and cannot be discussed outside the meetings. Members have signed agreements to this effect. Whilst the meetings of the Reference Group have been informative and departmental officers have been frank in their discussions, these restrictions have meant that some important feedback cannot be provided to the constituencies of the members (e.g. the Chairperson of the MRAG attends the Reference Group, but is prohibited from distributing certain information she receives at meetings). The author of this report also participates on the Reference Group (as well as the Coalition and the MRAG), so that certain limitations apply to materials that can be included in the existing report.

Nonetheless, there have been significant gains for residents in Sarah precinct from having their representatives participate in the official forum (the Reference Group) and the more representative forums (the Macarthur Housing Coalition and the MRAG), as discussed below. There have also been opportunities to discuss issues of broader public policy within the Reference Group format which have been positive, though these are not really within the framework set out in the Terms of Reference.

5.6.3 Scope of the Master Plan and Issues Arising

The Master Plan was originally to be of more limited scope than that proposed at the time of writing. It was initially to cover only those precincts which contained less attractive housing that was in poorer condition, principally the townhouse precincts. The original redevelopment proposal was thus to include the precincts of Valley Vista (which was already partly demolished when the masterplanning process was announced), Lutrell, Erskine, Sarah, Goodwin and Dunlop, though it was always likely that there would be some tenure diversification in the remaining precincts.

Other areas apart from those containing public housing stock also came to be included over time. Following the Minister’s announcement about the commencement of the Master Plan preparation, Campbelltown City Council asked the Department to ‘extend the study up to Eagleview Road and review the use of the large open spaces and undeveloped land owned by Council and

²⁴³ The Macarthur Housing Coalition is a broadly based group comprised of local services including St Vincent de Paul Society the Animation (community development) Project, Macarthur Multicultural Resource Centre, Franciscan Fathers (living in a house on Minto public housing estate), South West Tenants Advocacy and Advice Centre, Macarthur Community Forum, as well as state peak services including NCOSS, Shelter NSW, the NSW Tenants Union, and the Social Justice & Social Change Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, and individual community workers and residents.
others’. Other land owned by the then Planning NSW (now DIPNR) was also included in the redevelopment area. The first Master Plan consultations held by the Department in May and June 2003 were based on this more limited redevelopment proposal.

However, as the planning and urban design process unfolded, it was proposed that the entire estate be totally redeveloped. This now includes the precincts of Caroline, Friendship and Darcy, which contain a high proportion of cottages. They were previously excluded from more radical redevelopment as they were thought to provide better quality housing that had a lower turnover. The most recent official proposal is for comprehensive redevelopment that will include almost all of the 1,000 or so public housing units or blocks on the estate.

At the invitation of Campbelltown City Council, the three owners of the land (DOH, Council and Landcom - representing the interests of DIPNR) formed a Planning Control Group to co-ordinate the planning process. Council’s representative at the Master Plan Consultation Workshops held in May 2003 reported that Council was ‘excited at the potential for improvement’ offered by the Minister’s announcement and the opportunity to work in partnership with the Department of Housing. He noted that,

We are a landowner in the Minto area. Currently most of this is open space and undeveloped land, which has no particular purpose. Council wants to make sure that the land is put to its best use in the future redevelopment... Council is also the Consent Authority - the body which will approve or refuse redevelopment applications. Their job is to scrutinize and check that the development is appropriate. They will look at:

- Environmental issues
- Traffic
- Housing - type, size and form, etc

Council’s senior planner also noted that ‘there is a perceived conflict of interest in these two roles’. To overcome this, Council proposed to have ‘independent consultants to assist in decision-making’. DIPNR may also face such complexities arising from its role as landowner, and arbiter in any dispute that arises over the development consent or conditions between Council as

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244 Presentation by Cameron Lamb, Project Director Minto Renewal Project, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report, NSW Department of Housing.
245 Presentation by Cameron Lamb, Project Director Minto Renewal Project, 1 May 2003, in Twyford op cit.
246 Presentation by Deb Sutherland, Woods Bagot (urban planning and design consultants responsible for preparation of the Master Plan), 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report, NSW Department of Housing.
247 Various documentation and verbal presentations appear to make different statements in relation to this, however, so that it has been difficult to fully determine the Department’s intention.
248 See Presentation to Council by Peter Holland, Phil Nott & Scott Phillips, 10 August 2004.
249 Project Director, Cameron Lamb, Q & A Session, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting op cit, p.1
250 Scott Phillips, CCC, Presentation, 1 May 2003, in Twyford op cit, p. 2
251 Ibid.
Consent Authority, and the consortium of landowners (which includes DIPNR, though represented by Landcom). As noted below, under the current arrangements, the Master Plan approval, or other consents sought, constitutes development by the Crown under Part 5 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. As such, any disputes (for example over conditions) will be referred to the Minister for Planning.

Interestingly, comments by Council’s senior planner did not include any mention of the importance of scrutinising the social or economic impacts upon residents in the locality of the redevelopment, individually or as a community.

5.6.4 Minto’s Potential for Redevelopment

The Department’s Master Plan documentation notes that Campbelltown, and particularly Minto and other suburbs closest to Sydney’s feeder road network, are poised to take advantage of significant economic development opportunities over the next 5 years. Minto is 5 km north of Campbelltown CBD, and around 40 kms from the City of Sydney. Traditionally, the area has been perceived as ‘detached and distant’ from central Sydney. However, the area has experienced substantially improved road and rail transport in the past few decades, which has ‘brought Minto closer to the City’. The relocation of industry to the area, including warehousing and manufacturing industries, is ‘complemented by a road network that facilitates large vehicle movement’. Moreover, significant industrial activity in the area provides semi and unskilled employment and good public transport service to remainder of Greater Metropolitan Sydney’. Minto is one of the closest Campbelltown suburbs to the M5, which has greatly improved links between Minto, Liverpool and Sydney. The construction of the Western Sydney Orbital is also ‘expected to revitalise the economy of Campbelltown area’ over the next 5 years. Woods Bagot (2004) note that

In this context the southwest corridor, of which Campbelltown is part, has the potential to become an important component of Sydney’s industrial heartland, providing employment services and prosperity to its residents.

Other factors also make Minto a highly attractive redevelopment location. Though gentrification has been relatively slow to come to Campbelltown, the last 2 years have seen significant rises in housing prices, as well as a more gradual upward shift in demography overall. Commercial and retail activity has also increased significantly, with the redevelopment of sections of the CBD

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251 See for example Woods Bagot op cit.
252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
254 Ibid.
255 Woods Bagot op cit., p.9
256 Macarthur Chronicle, etc
257 Stubbs, J. 2004, Statement of Evidence, Toth ats Campbelltown City Council, NSW LEC 10625 of 2003
for more upmarket commercial, business services and hospitality uses.\textsuperscript{258} The rateable value of land (UCV) increased by 87\% for the LGA, and a high 160\% for Minto in the three years to 2003, though from a lower base rate.\textsuperscript{259} This was a much higher increase than for other Campbelltown housing estates. Campbelltown, and Minto in particular, would therefore be an attractive area for private sector investment, which has of course been a factor in its selection as the first estate for radical redevelopment.\textsuperscript{260}

In terms of social development, the Department’s documentation reports that Minto has a ‘population exhibiting a wide range of socio-economic characteristics’.\textsuperscript{261} Though the study area is comprised of 60 per cent public housing, the suburb of Minto has a far lesser proportion. At the time of the 1986 Census, 1,086 of the 3,620 dwellings in Minto suburb were public rental. This was just under 30 per cent, compared with a concentration of 85 to 90 per cent in the suburbs of Airds and Claymore. With demolitions of public housing and new private construction since that time, however, it is likely that the concentration of public housing would now be closer to 20 per cent for the suburb of Minto.\textsuperscript{262} Since the construction of the estate over two decades ago, a substantial amount of private housing has now been constructed around and up to the perimeter of certain precincts of the estate.\textsuperscript{263}

Master Plan documentation notes that Minto has excellent access to a wide range of services and facilities, including public transport, child care services, aged persons services, community centres, well-resourced primary and High Schools, parks and sporting fields. Services and facilities absent at the time of when the first public tenant moved in are now better than many areas of western or south western Sydney, and equivalent to some of the better serviced Sydney suburbs. Departmental documentation notes that, ‘Minto has great attributes: location, views, facilities, transport and a strong community, but has been let down by the housing’.\textsuperscript{264}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{258} \textit{Ibid.} \\
\textsuperscript{259} Valuer General, January 2004. \\
\textsuperscript{260} \textit{Ibid.} \\
\textsuperscript{261} \textit{Ibid.} p.3 \\
\textsuperscript{262} ABS Census 2001, Table B 19. \\
\textsuperscript{263} Stubbs & Hardy \textit{op cit.} \\
\textsuperscript{264} Presentation by Cameron Lamb, Project Director Minto Renewal Project, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, \textit{Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report}, NSW Department of Housing.
\end{flushright}
5.6.5 Physical Versus Community Motivations for Redevelopment

Throughout the formal consultations for the first draft of the Master Plan in May 2003, as well as the other less formal mechanism used by the Department including street BBQs, home visits and information sheets, the emphasis has generally been on the quality of the stock and related issues. This includes the need to revitalise and reconfigure an aging and poorly constructed housing stock, the need to account for changing demand, and the need to use existing land and resources most efficiently. In general, those co-ordinating the official Master Plan process have been careful to avoid open or implied criticism of residents and the community as sometimes happens in policy documents and the press, as noted above. Moreover, a growing respect between residents and those charged with co-ordinating the redevelopment has been evident in the meetings of the Minto Reference Group, discussed later.

The attributes of Minto’s residents was also perceived by planners and urban designers to be of value to the Master Plan process:

Minto has a strong community from which to get ideas. This is a major asset to the planning team. The community has already achieved a lot by working together, e.g. Kids Park.  

In consultations held in May 2003, Minto Renewal Project Director, Cameron Lamb, commented that

The challenge [of the Minto Renewal] is to address the housing problem and to look after and build on the sense of community and belonging. It is hard to fix the housing without having some impact on the sense of community. We are doing as much as we can to keep people in touch with what’s going on, especially people who have already moved.

At each of the sessions, strong concerns were raised by residents about the extent to which a community could be ’strengthened’ through the redevelopment process as proposed. As one resident commented,

You mentioned that you don’t want to destroy community. Sections of housing are being torn down, people are being moved out, but that will destroy the community. The community is being destroyed by not being there. No housing is being replaced in those areas being torn down.

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265 Presentation by Deb Sutherland op cit.
266 Presentation by Cameron Lamb, Project Director Minto Renewal Project, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report, NSW Department of Housing.
267 Workshop participant, Q & A Session, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting, 31 July 2003, Minto Redevelopment Consultation Report, NSW Department of Housing.
The Macarthur Housing Coalition, whose members attended all of the formal Masterplan consultations, also expressed strong concerns at the adequacy of the consultation process. They expressed the view that,

[A] fundamental flaw with the process has been the limits or boundaries placed upon what was open to discussion ... Feedback we have received from Feedback we have received from tenants has included that some felt intimidated at the consultations, while others felt their comments were dismissed by being ignored or laughed at. Much of the discussion was difficult to have in any depth without significant prior knowledge, resulting in superficial discussion. We believe there is a real question as to whether what tenants participated in was real consultation, as distinct from being provided with some basic information.

It appeared that comments were more likely to be noted if they agreed with the Department’s view ... It is our impression that large sections of the community did not attend the consultations because they felt it was not relevant to them because they were going to be relocated and had no real say in the matter. As a consequence it did not appear that the diverse nature of the community was reflected at the consultations.268

At the time of the Master Plan consultations, it was envisaged that only the townhouse precincts would be totally redeveloped, as noted above. Master Plan co-ordinators clarified that there would be a replacement of ‘approximately 30%’ in the town house precincts, and that in the lower density precincts like Darcy, Caroline and Friendship, in the future there would also be some mix of housing.

In response, this resident argued that, ‘In the meantime, it has destroyed the community. We have been told we won't be coming back’. Noting that approximately one half of those relocated had expressed a preference to come back, the Renewal Project Director commented that, ‘The challenge is not to destroy the community, and we recognise this as being a major challenge’.269 As noted by Ross Woodward, the then Regional Director, in May 2003 in a presentation to the Macarthur Housing Coalition on the rationale for the Minto redevelopment,

We chose Minto because we had been there for a number of years - we had communication, we had community partners, so we could go in and start the redevelopment work. It was easier as we had community involvement already.270

268 Macarthur Housing Coalition, 22 March 2004, Letter to NSW DOH.
269 Project Director, Cameron Lamb, Q & A Session, 1 May 2003, in Twyford Consulting op cit.
270 Ross Woodward’s Presentation to the Macarthur Housing Coalition, 26 May 2003.
5.6.6 Changing Parameters of the Master Plan

As noted above, there have been a number of changes to the parameters and details of the Master Plan over the past 18 months or so. These changes have mainly been about urban aesthetics, development costs, and to deal with infrastructure constraints.\(^\text{271}\) The changes have occurred with reasonable regularity. Contradictory positions have sometimes been evident among the various Departmental officers involved in the redevelopment co-ordination.\(^\text{272}\)

These ongoing changes have had a significant impact upon residents who have participated at various levels in the official and resident-initiated processes. The alterations to plans appear to have been less about accommodating community concerns and input than about coming up with an acceptable design solution that is cost effective, and that can accommodate the reconfiguration of roads, drainage and other utilities as various site investigations are competed. As such, the order and timing of precinct redevelopment has changed several times, as well as the extent to which various precincts or housing types will be redeveloped.

All in all, it has been a confusing, unsettling and difficult process for residents, and a frustrating one for Departmental staff involved in working with residents in the redevelopment process. This is discussed later in the report.

5.6.7 How Much Public Housing?

One of the key areas of debate during the Master Plan process has been the amount of public housing that will remain or be rebuilt in Minto as a result of the redevelopment. A second issue that has been consistently raised by residents and services has been whether there will be one-for-one replacement of stock lost in Minto in other parts of Sydney.

There has been a reasonable consistency from Department of Housing representatives about the first issue. From their perspective, and in much of the official documentation that has come out of the redevelopment process, 25 to 30 per cent replacement of housing that is redeveloped is generally the figure given.\(^\text{273}\) The amount of stock and the final percentage depends upon how much is ultimately redeveloped.\(^\text{274}\)

The debate has been complicated periodically by public statements from Campbelltown City Council staff, who have stated that Council wants to reduce projected amount of public housing in the redeveloped Minto even further (for example to less than the Campbelltown LGA average); or that the amount of public housing in Campbelltown generally should be reduced to the NSW

\(^{272}\) Ibid.
\(^{273}\) There has sometimes been confusion over how much public housing will be rebuilt, however, as sometimes it has been said that after the redevelopment, the Minto estate will have ‘30 per cent public housing’.
\(^{274}\) Some confusion has also arisen due to the distinction between Minto estate as distinct from Minto suburb within which the estate is located (where as noted above there is currently around 23 per cent public housing following most recent demolitions).
average (currently 4.5 per cent and falling). Council has strongly supported estate redevelopment *per se*. This arises from a view that Campbelltown has borne the brunt of public housing concentration for some years, which has worsened recently due to the need to increasingly allocate to applicants from the priority waiting list. Additional resources to adequately cope with decades of State Government policy have not been forthcoming. The desire to dramatically reduce public housing is not shared by all Council staff, and it is unclear to what extent it is official Council policy. The most recent presentation to Council indicates that a 26 per cent replacement of public housing stock is envisaged for Minto. However, it is likely that shedding public housing would be seen as a desirable action among many Campbelltown residents, particularly as the area continues to exhibit higher land values throughout the LGA, and shows other evidence of increased gentrification. Though Council’s concerns are understandable, it has nonetheless been disturbing for residents and local services present when Council representatives have indicated a lack of commitment to public housing, and a desire to shed as much stock as possible through the redevelopment process. There are also reported to be widely varying views among the individual Councillors.

Discussions about the percentage of public housing stock have sometimes seemed interminable to departmental officers at Reference Group meetings or other Department- or resident-initiated forums. Nonetheless, from each side they are important, financially, socially and symbolically. From the Department’s perspective, the poor condition and financial drain of some of the current stock portfolio in Minto makes redevelopment imperative. Though this has sometimes been couched in terms of social objectives (particularly to achieve a desirable ‘social mix’), more commonly the Department expresses its actions in Minto in terms of the condition of stock, financial constraints on upgrade, and high turnover in certain precincts (notably certain streets that contain townhouses which are severely run down in some instances). These are real constraints from the Department in the current funding climate. Officers also report that redevelopment is driven by higher demand in other areas of western and south western Sydney, and the need to fund new or different types of housing in these areas to meet changing demographic patterns.

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275 Confidential discussion, Department of Housing Officers, 21 October 2004. MRAG members also reported that they had attended a strategic planning workshop where Council officers had been speaking in late 2004, where several residents had been very disturbed by Council officers remarks about the likely proportion of public housing that would be preferred.
276 Presentation to Council by Peter Holland, Phil Nott & Scott Phillips, 10 August 2004 *op cit.*
277 Presentation to Council by Peter Holland, Phil Nott & Scott Phillips, 10 August 2004 *op cit.*
279 Interview, Senior Department Staff, 10 June 2004.
280 See for example Ross Woodward’s Presentation to the Macarthur Housing Coalition, 26 May 2003, on the reasons why the Department announced the redevelopment of Minto. He noted the need to ‘create a sustainable community through tenure mix’, as well as the need to reduce public housing concentration on public housing estates to meet social objectives’.
281 Ross Woodward, 26 May 2003 *op cit.* noted that ‘The worst quality housing has the highest turnover in every estate. People move on mainly because they can’t stand the housing’.
282 See for example Ross Woodward, 26 May 2003 *op cit.*; and Presentation by Bernie Coates, 6 August 2004, who noted that there was particular pressure from waiting list demand in areas like Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown. Demand was significantly lower in Campbelltown and especially Minto, though its was noted that this may change following the redevelopment and improvements in access to the Sydney labour market.
Residents and services have generally sought to preserve as much public housing stock as possible in Minto, and certainly no less than the 30 per cent mooted. 283 These views arise from general discussions with residents, as well as an earlier survey by the MRAG noted above. This indicated that far more than 30 per cent would seek to return to a revitalised Minto, due to its location, their attachment to the area, the level of services, and the opportunity to move into better quality homes. 284 They are also concerned that a private sector partner would argue for a much lower level of public housing than 25 to 30 per cent for financial or commercial reasons, and ‘drive down’ the amount of public housing. Residents at forums had had personal experience of people in private ‘not wanting to live next to us when they found out [a dwelling in a ‘salt and pepper’ street] was public housing’. They were also concerned public housing would be ‘quarantined’ to certain areas of the redeveloped estate, ‘probably the worst areas [rather than those like Valley Vista] with views and summer breezes’. Moreover, there was a fear that public housing tenants would be treated ‘even more like second, no third class citizens’ in the ‘new Minto’. 285 This is not an unreasonable fear, given the literature reviewed above.

The desire to preserve as much public housing as possible is also a feature of resident comments in the 2003/04 Resident Survey, reported below.

The second issue consistently raised by residents and services has been about broader policy issues - specifically, the amount of stock that will be lost to the social housing system through redevelopments like Minto. Whilst demand may be higher in other areas such as Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown at the present time, the cost of housing replacement is also higher in these areas. Services like St Vincent de Paul report that,

> We used to be able to move people out of refuges and crisis housing in the Macarthur in 6 weeks or 3 months at the most. Since the redevelopment, we’re keeping them for 9 months. It’s hard to see this as not being related to the loss of housing, especially in Minto. 286

Services also noted that there has been a significant loss of stock from redevelopment in other Australian states, and in New Zealand. 287 Residents also expressed concerns in forums convened by the MRAG about this broader public policy issue.

> Where are people on the waiting list going to live? When you’ve waited for public housing for years like I have, you know how important it is. It’s been a Godsend for me, I can tell you. 288

The Department has at various times made statements that there would be a ‘one-for-one replacement of stock in other parts of Sydney’ of housing that is

283 Minutes, Macarthur Housing Coalition, 2003-2005.
284 MRAG Meetings; with this view also supported by the findings of the Resident Survey, reported later.
285 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
287 Minutes of Meeting, Macarthur Housing Coalition, 11 October 2004.
288 Ibid.
demolished but not replaced in Minto.\textsuperscript{289} However, the official documentation (as well as the research noted above) shows that a different outcome is likely.\textsuperscript{290} An HFIG (February 2002) study\textsuperscript{291} upon which the Minister’s announcement to redevelop Minto was largely based, shows that ’Model 3’ and ’Model 4’ were the most economically advantageous to the Department.\textsuperscript{292} Of these, Model 3 was initially favoured. This was to involve the redevelopment of townhouse precincts that contained the most run-down and unpopular stock, with a more gradual upgrade of cottage precincts, with private sector partners. Although a less financially advantageous proposition for the Department at the end of 15 years than Option 3,\textsuperscript{293} the study noted that

\dots the combination of redevelopment with retention of the better performing housing areas allows for some resettlements within existing housing stock on the estate, resulting in better management of the huge rehousing task that would otherwise be encountered in Model 3, and provides a degree of continuity in terms of social linkages. As with Model 3, Model 4 (the total redevelopment of the estate with private sector partners) allows for the renewal of poorly performing areas within the estate and realignment of the public housing portfolio to better match current and future anticipated demands.\textsuperscript{294}

However, as noted by departmental officers at a special briefing on the background to the Master Plan in October 2003,

\begin{quote}
We originally favoured Option [Model] 4 - redevelopment of the townhouses. It would be less disruptive to the community, and the financial costs were favourable. But we were overtaken by events. Based on our presentation to him, the Minister announced the total redevelopment of the estate, starting with Valley Vista being demolished, and we went into the Master Plan process.
\end{quote}

Despite the different strategies involved in Model 3 and 4, a close examination of the financial modelling on each indicated that around 400 to 500 units of stock would not be relaced from the redevelopment in net terms (i.e. around 300 in Minto and 200 to 300 only replaced in ’higher demand areas as a result of Model 4’).\textsuperscript{295} Although departmental officers had maintained that there would be one-for-one replacement at different meetings, when questioned on the apparent outcome of financial modelling on the various options, they noted that,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{289} For example, Ross Woodward’s Presentation to the Macarthur Housing Coalition, 26 May 2003, who reported that ‘there will be no loss of public housing through the Minto redevelopment’, and that ‘anyone will be able to see where the money has gone. There will be a little bit replaced in Campbelltown, and more in Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown, Camden and Wollondilly’.
\item \textsuperscript{290} Housing Finance Investment Group (HFIG) & South Western Sydney Region, February 2002, Feasibility Study Report, Minto Renewal Project, NSW Department of Housing.
\item \textsuperscript{291} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{292} Ibid, p.23 - insert details of options
\item \textsuperscript{293} Ibid, p.23
\item \textsuperscript{294} Ibid, p.25
\item \textsuperscript{295} HFIG 2002 op cit., p. 23.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Minto itself doesn’t pay for all of its own replacement stock. It was never going to. Money will have to be found elsewhere, through other redevelopments on other estates. We will have to generate further revenue to fund replacement of stock lost in other high demand areas, which are also higher land value areas.  

5.6.8 Addendum

At the time of writing, and subsequent to the first draft of this study in September 2004, the Department is undergoing a further financial modelling exercise as part of a reassessment of the current Master Plan. As noted above, the likelihood of a significant loss of stock arising from the existing Master Plan, carried out as a Private-Public Partnership, is part of the reason for this re-examination.

A revised Feasibility Study has been prepared by the Department with significantly reviewed parameters. These include a core principle that there be no net loss of public housing arising from the redevelopment, and that there be a comprehensive Social Impact Assessment completed prior to further demolitions, or decisions about which precincts would be redeveloped, and which will be retained. It also includes provision for no less than 30% of public housing spread across the redevelopment area, and a yet to be determined component of affordable housing (e.g. for key workers) tied to market rent, and managed through a local community housing association, or low cost purchase housing.

The Department’s openness to the findings of this study, as well as good faith shown in collaborative work on the Minto Reference Groups has led to a somewhat more trusting relationship between residents, services and the Department of Housing, to the point where a joint presentation to Campbelltown City Council on the jointly preferred option described above (Optimised Masterplan).

A major concern surrounds the extent to which Campbelltown City Council will be supportive of the retention of substantial sections of the estate, as well as the proposed proportion of social and affordable housing, given Council’s stated belief (noted elsewhere) that the LGA already has more than its fair share of responsibility for public and affordable housing in the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

The potential for any agreed decisions to be overturned by a sudden political decision on the part of the Department of Housing also leaves residents with a high degree of concern and uncertainty at the time of writing, despite the good will of individual officers.

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296 Ross Woodward, October 2003, Special Briefing on Background to the Minto Redevelopment.
298 Minutes of Meeting, and Notes, Minto Reference Group, 19 January 2005.
5.7 PUBLIC HOUSING CONCENTRATION IN CAMPBELLTOWN

It is therefore interesting to note the actual situation in relation to public housing in the Campbelltown LGA.

Like several other areas of western and south-western Sydney, Campbelltown has historically been an area of disproportionate public housing concentration. Much of this housing is concentrated within the estates of Minto, Airds, Macquarie Fields, Rosemeadow and Claymore. Of these, Minto has the lowest concentration of public housing - currently around 23 per cent of the suburb, and down from around 30 per cent in 2001.

Campbelltown LGA has a higher than average concentration of public housing compared with NSW, though again this has been decreasing over time. The following table shows those areas in western and south western Sydney with a much higher than average concentration of public housing, and how this has changed over time, in order to provide a further context to issues related to redevelopment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>5,349</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>5,666</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>5,620</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>9,172</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>9,531</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>9,080</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown</td>
<td>6,909</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>6,875</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>6,545</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>3,867</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4,264</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4,360</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>4,415</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>4,493</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4,290</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>4,678</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>4,740</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>4,587</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSD</td>
<td>70,231</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>73,432</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>72,724</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>112,572</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>117,522</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>114,130</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Campbelltown has the highest concentration of public housing in NSW in proportional terms. However, it has been decreasing at a slightly faster rate than NSW and SSD over the past decade and a half, and is comparable to the proportional decrease in Blacktown, which has experienced substantial urban growth. The proportion of public housing in Liverpool LGA has decreased at an even greater rate over the period.

In absolute terms, Blacktown has by far the largest amount of public housing at 9,080 units, though this has decreased slightly since 1996. Campbelltown has lost around 600 units of housing since 1991, though a third of this is due to the
current redevelopment and other demolitions related to renewal. It had the second highest amount of stock in absolute terms in 2001 at 6,545 housing units, followed by Bankstown at 5,620 units, and Fairfield and Liverpool at 4,360 and 4,290 respectively.

5.8 RELOCATION CHOICES OF RESIDENTS

Residents of Sarah precinct, currently being redeveloped, are given a choice about the areas to which they can be relocated. There are certain restrictions to this, for example, the availability of stock in their area of choice. However, as far as possible, the Department of Housing’s Resettlement Officer attempts to explore with residents their preferences and meet demand. At the time of writing, 39 families have been assisted with relocated from Sarah ahead of demolition of their homes. Of these, 27 have been relocated within Campbelltown LGA (70%), a majority of these within broadacre estates in the LGA (55%). One-third have chosen to be relocated to Minto as properties become available within other precincts. A further 14 families abandoned properties or were evicted during the current redevelopment phase. Some of those who have moved to other parts of Sydney and country areas have moved into identified areas of public housing, while others have moved into mixed residential areas. The following table sets this out in more detail.

Table 5.2 Status of Residents from Sarah Precinct at July 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total dwellings</th>
<th>123</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total occupied</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Assisted Transfers</td>
<td>Minto 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airds 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bradbury 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Camden 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campbelltown 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claymore 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leumeah 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie Fields 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruse 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Sydney 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assisted Transfers</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evictions, Abandoned, Private</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Vacated</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties Demolished</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Properties</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DOH, 7 July 2004)
A significant number of former Valley Vista residents have also chosen to be relocated within Minto. However, like the current Sarah exodus, it is understood that not all those who wish to remain in Minto can be accommodated within appropriate housing. At the end of August, 19 families had been relocated within Minto for Sarah.

Similarly, not all of those who wish to return will have the opportunity to do so, as discussed in more detail below. The Department has a register where those wishing to relocate to Minto can express their interest in coming back after the redevelopment. However, it is also understood that a number of those wishing to return feel that it is unlikely that they will ever have that opportunity, due to the relatively small amount of stock that will be rebuilt or retained. They consider that they are receiving mixed messages about this from the Department, who is also in a difficult position in the absence of a Master Plan at present and does not want to give residents ‘false hope’.  

At the time of writing, most Sarah families have been relocated, with remaining families waiting to find suitable housing in an appropriate area. A number of these families have been waiting for some time. The rate of demolitions has accelerated, and there is little left of what used to be Sarah Precinct.

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300 Discussions with residents, MRAG meetings 2003-2005.
301 Ibid.
302 Comment, Resettlement Officer, Minto Renewal Project Reference Group, 10 June 2004.
6. IMMEDIATE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF MINTO REDEVELOPMENT

At one stage, my friend Scotty lived in the house across the road from the school. He used to move because they were knocking down the houses, but what they did was knock down the windows from the bottom and not the top so some people smashed the windows and got in when they got in. They smashed the walls and wrote all over the house. I felt really sorry for him. The END.

Top: Sarah Precinct, November 2004
Bottom: Primary Student, Minto
Sarah Precinct July 2004

An elderly man comes each day to look at his garden in Sarah way. He travels from his 'new home' on the other side of Minto. Sometimes he brings his wife with him. He stays long enough to do a bit of maintenance and, it seems, check that things are still all right with his home. His neighbour says that he doesn’t speak good English. She thinks that he might be confused - that he might think he’s just gone somewhere else for a little while, and that he’ll be back. Theirs are the last remaining townhouses in their small section of Sarah precinct, and they will probably be demolished together when she is moved in two weeks time. Gradual demolition of clusters of houses has generally been the process in Sarah, the second precinct to be redeveloped. The old man’s neighbour worries about what will happen to him when he comes back one day soon and sees that his home is being demolished. She has seen the distress when other friends and neighbours are moved. Most don’t come back to watch the demolitions, though some do. Some can’t say goodbye to their neighbours of many years as they know they’ll ‘cry and cry’. Others who have moved to other parts of Minto or other suburbs some years ago are bringing their children back so they can see where they used to live ‘before it is gone forever’. 303

6.1 KEY SOCIAL IMPACT QUESTIONS

The most difficult aspect of this research has been witnessing first hand and frequently the distress, fear and sorrow of people who face the loss of their homes, friends, gardens, special places, and memories. The difficulty of the researchers has been small, however, compared with that of the majority of residents in the redevelopment precincts, and those who work with them on a daily basis.

It has led the researchers to reflect upon whether and what kind of outcomes could justify or compensate for such loss. Will residents be compensated by:

- Improved social and economic outcomes arising from social mix?
- Increased access to services and facilities or services that are at least equivalent to those they currently value?
- Increased inclusion and participation in the life of the community in a social citizenship sense?

As noted earlier, the literature indicates that the results they can expect will be ‘mixed at best’.

In a broader public policy sense, will the loss of these homes, friendships, special places and people be justified by future gains in:

- Public housing stock numbers and quality?

303 RAG Community Briefing to Member for Campbelltown, the Hon. Graham West, 9 July 2004; and Site Inspection, Sarah Way, 13 July 2004.
These services included Macarthur Area Health Service, Benevolent Society (Community Leadership Program), South West Multicultural and Community Services, Brown Sisters, Family Support and Outreach Workers from Burnside Uniting Care.

Benefits arising from tenure mix?
Improved management and maintenance?
Improved asset-based outcomes?
Net economic benefit to the wider community?

Again the evaluative literature, where it exists, indicates far from clear-cut outcomes, as noted above.

So how does one measure the social impacts of what many people feel that they have lost? And how does one measure the immediate and long-term benefits with any degree of accuracy? What are the social and financial costs of these factors? Though this will be the subject of a more detailed second-stage report, some reflections on these issues follow in this and subsequent chapters.

6.2 RESIDENTS EXPERIENCES OF THE VALLEY VISTA REDEVELOPMENT

Throughout the demolition of the first precinct, Valley Vista, MRAG members, local services and community groups visited residents before and after their relocation. Much of this work was conducted on a voluntary basis. The Franciscan Fathers, who had moved into Walker Way several years before to provide a supportive presence on the estate, and St Vincent de Paul’s Animation Project, were particularly active in visiting and supporting residents through the difficult process of relocation and demolition of their homes. Other services\(^{304}\) who had already had a long involvement of working with the Minto community on a range of social development programs were also active in supporting residents through this process, as were residents themselves. This support and research by residents and local services related to the first stage (Valley Vista) redevelopment preceded the involvement of this researcher, and has continued to the present.

Based on interviews with 45 out of the 85 residents relocated from Valley Vista by MRAG and service representatives from June 2002, numerous issues were raised about the relocation process, many of which continue to bedevil this first group of residents. Some of these are outlined here. Specific issues are discussed later in the report in more detail.

\(^{304}\) These services included Macarthur Area Health Service, Benevolent Society (Community Leadership Program), South West Multicultural and Community Services, Brown Sisters, Family Support and Outreach Workers from Burnside Uniting Care.
First, information needed by residents prior to relocation was often inaccurate, incorrect, inconsistent or sometimes non-existent. For example, some residents were unaware that they could choose a house that was not part of a broad acre estate. One resident visited after her relocation was ashamed to tell her family that she had been moved to Airds, and instead gives a neighbouring suburb as her new home address.

Secondly, the relocation has meant additional financial costs for most ex-Valley Vista residents. Tenants were told that their rent would not increase following the move. However in many cases it did, for one family by $40 a week. There were also a range of hidden costs, for example people who moved to Airds or other areas outside the Sydney Metropolitan Area discovered that their calls to Sydney were STD. This resulted in difficulties contacting major government offices, as well as less contact with relatives living in Sydney due to affordability problems. It has led to acute feelings of isolation for a number of residents. Department promises sometimes failed to materialise, for example, several residents failed to receive the week’s free rent, or repayment for telephone and electrical connections that had been promised. This has now generally been rectified, though residents often waited for a year or eighteen months for this to be made good. A range of costs, some quite substantial, were also associated with having to purchase new fittings and fixtures. Valley Vista residents often relocated to homes without realising that their existing furniture, curtains or blinds would not fit their new home, or that improvements they had made at their own cost would not be available at the new home. This included pergolas, garden sheds, or hard landscaping, or sometimes carports or other items they had purchased or constructed. Gardens and other self-build improvements were likewise frequently lost.

Other concerns from Valley Vista are also relevant to immediate social impact considerations. The Department’s May 2002 Fact Sheet promised that public housing tenants from Minto would ‘benefit by having better access to alternative social housing’. These ‘new homes will be more community-friendly, secure, without the infrastructure and maintenance problems of older Minto houses’. However, in reality, follow up with relocated residents of Valley Vista by the MRAG and services indicated that the negatives of their new home often outweighed the positives. In many cases the new houses have proven to have all the maintenance problems of their previous Minto houses. For example, some of the houses offered were 35 years old, compared with the houses at Valley Vista that were said to be beyond their economic viability at 25 years. One resident was relocated to her new house in November 2002 only to encounter problems in April 2003. “I got a letter from [DOH Officer] saying that the house I’d moved into was to be demolished 18 months”. It was put to her that the land was ‘significantly under utilised’ and the asset had ‘reached the end of its economic viability’. Interestingly, she also received a letter on 18 April saying that the Department would do minor repairs and paint the outside of her house within a week. Others found that their new homes were of lower quality, or that there were unexpected problems with stoves or gas and electricity connections, and went some days without power or basic amenities, though this was often people who had relocated before a weekend.

For virtually every resident visited and followed up by services and MRAG at this time, there was a loss of amenities. Shops were much further away, whereas in Minto, the Mall was within short walking distance with a
comprehensive range of retail outlets. The price of goods at many of the shops was more expensive than at Minto. Public transport was far poorer when compared to Minto, which has very good access to buses and trains. Only a few residents moved closer to train stations. The rest moved further away, and in some cases miles away, for example residents at St Helens Park. Similarly with schools and doctors, only a few residents had better access, or moved closer to these types of services, while the majority considered themselves to be worse off. Established service links could often not be maintained, or residents faced considerable difficulty in doing so. Sarah Redfern for example has an excellent reputation as a well-funded primary school, which specialises in programs for students with special needs. Minto also has a wide range of services and special outreach programs available to residents due to the concentration of disadvantage and particular needs on the estate. These have been established over many years, often through strong lobbying by residents. Most of the relocated residents had not been given the opportunity to think through the implications of their move on their connection with services, family or friends, or access to retail, educational, transport or recreational services.

One of the most disappointing things for relocated residents was the condition of their new houses. Having moved from an area which was past its ‘economic viability’ and which had to be demolished, residents often found themselves in premises which were in many ways a good deal worse, as noted above. Bureaucratic problems in getting maintenance done were reported to be common. For example, when it emerged that residents had been relocated from Minto, they were informed by their new team, ‘Oh we don’t deal with that, you have to see [your previous officer]’. Co-ordination between the different offices of the Department was frequently a problem when residents relocated out of area. Though the local team was reported to be more understanding of the difficulties faced by relocating residents, those who moved out of the area often reported that ‘the [new team] doesn’t want to know about us. They say we shouldn’t expect special treatment just because we’re from Minto’.  

Frequent examples of residents moving into houses requiring maintenance were raised with services and residents conducting follow up visits. One relocated Valley Vista resident had been waiting five months when interviewed to have his oven repaired and his laundry floor fixed, which was allowing water to run into his bedroom. ‘It’s a mess to look at, it was at least one month after I moved in before the toilet bowl was even secured to the floor’, he added. Another resident had been waiting a little under three months for repairs. ‘I moved here with the promise that the carpets would be cleaned, the house fumigated, and the doors replaced. I’ve complained every week to the Department, but none of it has been done’. A single parent with five children had been waiting almost two months to have smashed-windows and locks fixed. A newly erected fence had a gap so large that dogs could get in and out of the yard, which were a danger to her children and prevented them playing outside, while ‘the back gate can’t be opened from the outside, there’s no hole to undo the latch’ so her child had to climb over it. One resident, who has epilepsy, had been waiting over two months for handrails on her steps and landing, though these had been fitted to her former Valley Vista home. When another moved in ‘there were telephone lines sticking out of the ground in the front yard’. Other

305 MRAG Files, 2002.
residents described similarly dangerous situations that took some months to rectify.

One couple had numerous problems with their new house. The first was with ‘a decrepit old tree beside the house’, which was in danger of falling at any time. The couple went through months of negotiation with the Department and Council, including having to get a ‘tree expert’ to give a formal opinion that the tree was dangerous. They then organised two quotes and submitted these to Council, before it finally went to the Department, who now have six months to take action. During the process, they found that the Department had in fact been ordered to remove the tree in 1993. Other problems were that the back fence was falling over, and the hot water system was broken. A replacement hot water system was shoddily installed so that there have been problems using it. Most residents had similar experiences, though the issues on each home were different.

This couple had also had a bad experience with their removalists, which was a common complaint from relocated residents. In removing boxes of fragile goods from upstairs, one removalist simply put his boot through a window, leading the resident who was standing five metres from the window to remark ‘wow where’s all that glass coming from’. The fragile boxes were then lowered from the window with a rope. Examples raised by other residents included a general roughness with furniture and belongings, and removalists comments such as, ‘You’re getting this for free so don’t complain about how slow we work’. Damage to belongings and refusal to take precious items was also frequently reported by residents followed up, and caused much distress among the first group of residents to be relocated. Residents’ distress was understandable, given the sentimental value of these belongings in the face of the loss of their homes, as well as the inability of people on low incomes to replace damaged goods or things that removalists refused to take.

Residents living near the demolition of Valley Vista also raised many concerns. The roads within the precinct are not built for large trucks, and many children play in the driveways and on the streets. During the September school holidays 2002 there was major truck activity within Valley Vista, and children would frequently chase trucks, and generally come into contact with demolition activity. The demolition itself created problems for residents nearby, such as constant dust and noise and the mass exodus of household pests into neighbouring houses. One resident commented that she had to "close all the windows and keep the children inside - two have asthma". Another resident complained that she had spent 10 days in hospital in January 2003 due to asthma and felt that it was due to the constant dust. One family rang the Department and requested to be relocated sooner because the mice exiting the demolition were so dense in their house. Moreover, the majority of residents who remained after the initial demolitions complained on infestations of mice, rats and cockroaches, and constant problems with dust and noise during the demolition process. They also noted a range of health and safety issues arising from this. The degree of stress arising from this and the uncertainly of 'when the call to move might come' was also reported to be severe from a high proportion of those visited from the first redevelopment precinct.

A range of other safety and security issues were also raised by residents living among the demolitions which some described as like ‘living in a war zone’. Houses remaining on New Years Eve 2002 were surrounded with incident tape
by emergency services and those occupied were painted with a large white cross so that emergency personnel would know which were occupied in the case of an emergency. The hasty demolition of homes in Sarah was attributed by Department of Housing officers some time later to 'threats of a large bonfire' in the precinct as part of general New Year's Eve celebration.\footnote{Ibid.}

Services and residents interviewed about the matter deny that there was any real fear and argue that the threat was 'talked up' and 'retrospectively reconstructed' to justify the hasty clearance of the area. It is difficult to know which is the case,\footnote{Interviews, Officers SWAHS, Burnside and MRAG members, July 2003.} though the view of residents interviewed was that 'demolishing a whole lot of houses seems like a fairly extreme thin to do' when the police would normally monitor any New Year's Eve activities anyway. In any case, the cording and prominent marking of houses was a disturbing and embarrassing situation for residents affected.\footnote{Ibid.}

A review of the detailed information on files kept by the MRAG and Franciscan Fathers by this researcher indicates that these were common problems faced by a large majority of those visited and followed-up.

Issues have arisen consistently since the Valley Vista redevelopment about the degree to which residents would be compensated financially or in-kind for their more tangible losses, and the process by which they could receive compensation. Some two years on, as the redevelopment of Sarah Precinct (the second redevelopment area) is under way, there are still a number of outstanding items that have not been replaced or compensated from the first precinct to undergo redevelopment. For example, documentary or photographic proof is required if residents want certain household items to be replaced now that their home is demolished (e.g. sales receipts for blinds or security doors that may have been purchased at their own cost some years before). Not surprisingly, these have often been difficult to produce, sometimes 10 or 20 years on, which means that these residents might not be compensated for these lost terms under Departmental policy. Residents of Valley Vista received one week’s free rent to assist them with the move, as well as reconnection and removalist fees. However, this was insufficient to replace many of the items lost in the move.\footnote{Ibid.}

Local services, the Independent Tenant Advocate and the MRAG have been tenacious in continuing to bring these issues to the attention of Departmental officers at the Minto Renewal Reference Group, and through other avenues such as meetings with local members. Their participation in the Reference Group and other forums has led to a number of their proposals for policy and procedural change being accepted by the Department (discussed in more detail below). Moreover, these policy and procedural changes have benefited the Sarah Precinct, which is undergoing redevelopment at the time of writing. However, a range of issues continues to arise despite these improvements.

\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
6.3 ONGOING SOCIAL IMPACTS FROM VALLEY VISTA, AND FROM SARAH PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

6.3.1 Impacts of the Redevelopment

Many residents who have attended the various RAG meetings, community forums or presentations to government departments and politicians concerning the second stage demolition (Sarah Precinct) or future estate redevelopment repeatedly describe the feeling of 'still being in shock'.\textsuperscript{310} They describe the strain on relationships with children, marriage break-ups, fights that they or their neighbours 'never had before' with spouses, family or each other.\textsuperscript{311} They describe the deterioration of their physical and mental health and the additional cost of doctor’s visits and medication.\textsuperscript{312} They also describe the 'creeping apathy' that set in after the redevelopment was announced, and the decreased level of care to their homes and gardens and the wider physical environment.\textsuperscript{313}

It is frequent enough, from enough people, and conveyed with such sadness or distress to indicate that there have been significant social impacts at the

\textsuperscript{310} MRAG Record of monthly meetings 2003-2004.
\textsuperscript{311} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid.
personal, emotional or health level from the redevelopment of Valley Vista and now Sarah precinct. These are also substantiated by the degree of social impact described in the most recent Resident Survey reported above.

Some of these impacts have lasted well beyond the initial stages of resettlement.

I was moved 2 years ago into Leumeah private, from Valley Vista. I was one of the first townhouses to be demolished, and I feel like I’ve gone back 20 years. I’m a ‘houso’ again. People in private don’t want to know me, they look down on me. I’ve lived in Minto and made it my home for most of my adult life. I’ve been involved in everything here - Kid’s Park, the RAG, sport, the school. I saw the pride that was building up here again a few years ago. We all struggled together and we were making a difference. I know we were. Then the redevelopment was announced and it all started going down hill. People have just let the place go now. Some of the gardens were beautiful. Now with people leaving rubbish on the streets and not caring, it’s gone right down. It breaks my heart. The pride is going out of the area, people have lost heart. Why is it that it seems we all keep struggling, going forward a bit at a time - but just keep getting knocked down? ...And on a lighter note, don’t forget to come to Minto Fun Day on Monday - we’ll have heaps of excellent activities. And we’re even starting a ‘laughter club’.

Like a significant number of former residents of Valley Vista and now Sarah precinct, this resident has continued to come back to RAG meetings, and kept up her interest and strong involvement in community initiatives like ‘Kids Park’ and community events. She has recently been part of the group who put together the successful submission and presentation to the Department of Housing for a $156,000 grant for ‘Remembering Minto’, some of which is reported at the end of this report. The grant will be used to tell the story of Minto working with a community writer in residence and through other visual and electronic media.

Former Valley Vista and now Sarah Precinct residents frequently report the sense of loss of community, friends, neighbours and networks. Even after a reasonable settling in period, they still describe the sense of loneliness, displacement, or even stigma in their new area.

It's so quiet where we are in ‘private’. There’s no life, no one around. No one talks to you. I miss the kids who lived around me. Seeing how they were going, having them call in. Having my neighbours call in. There’s no community in private. No one talks to you. That’s what I miss. I hope I can come back [to Minto] but there’s no guarantees. Maybe

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314 Presentation to local politicians, 26 June 2004.
315 Initial seed-funding from the Macarthur Area Assistance Scheme of $6,000 helped with the establishment of Remembering Minto.
I’ll come back, maybe I won’t. Maybe when I come back, maybe there’ll be no one left that I know.  

This researcher has heard these types of stories from such a range of people who have been relocated or from services working with those relocated, as to seriously question the basis of the ‘social mix thesis’ for many of these ‘deconcentrated’ residents. As one resident who had previously lived in the private sector and moved back to Minto several years before commented:

We’re as good as anyone and deserve respect. But there are things that give you away as different [from the home owners]. People are pretty good at picking up the differences. They’re not so good at seeing we’re all human beings.

Perhaps if these residents are followed up in 2 or 5 years, even those most unhappy with the move will be pleased with the eventual outcome. No doubt most people will adjust and get on with their lives in a spirit of resilience, even if they would not have chosen the move. As one resident commented,

We’ve had to get through a lot over the years, I know we’ll be OK, but you just feel it in your heart.

Others have mixed feelings about their move, or believe that it is early days. One of those most reluctant to move, and one who fought the Department for almost 2 years to preserve a group of homes in Durban Way where she and her neighbours were ‘like family’ commented after her relocation,

I really miss the others. They were more than neighbours. I really feel for [another relocated neighbour], he’s so lonely when I ring him up. I’m sorry we couldn’t save our homes. But in some ways, I wish I’d done this years ago. It’s quiet here [in a private street], no traffic or noise. The stress is easing up - maybe it’s because we fought so hard and I’m glad it’s all over. All the stress, all the worry. Maybe I’ll feel different in a year’s time.

Others are more positive about their move.

I never wanted to come to Minto. It’s been a bad experience for my family and me. There are so many problems in my street. It seems like it’s being used as a dumping ground and there’s nothing we can do about it. It’s intimidating, and I just want to get out.

As noted above, around one-third of those who have so far relocated from Sarah Precinct have chosen to live in Minto, and it is likely that this would be higher were suitable stock available, and on the evidence of the residents survey, reported below. At least 70 per cent of those who have left Sarah have chosen to relocate within Campbelltown LGA.

316 Interview, relocated residents, 26 June 2004.
6.3.2 Living in a ‘War Zone’

Although not as severe as problems during the demolition of Valley Vista, there have been ongoing problems associated with the demolition of housing in Sarah Precinct. These problems arise in part from the difficulties in coordinating such an enormous re-housing exercise, as well as the fact that it is of necessity problematic having relocations and demolitions occurring while people are still living in the redevelopment area.

A constant dilemma for the Department, and one upon which residents are fairly divided, has been the extent to which demolitions should be occurring while residents are still in the area, and the staging of such demolitions.

- Some residents have favoured immediate redevelopment of small groups of houses to avoid vandalism, squatting and people from outside the precinct using the vacant houses for illegal purposes. All of these things have occurred, and they have been very troubling for adjacent neighbours.
- Others have favoured a policy of no demolitions until large sections have been vacated, as they have been concerned about, noise, dust, safety and vermin from houses that are torn down in a residential area. The collapse of a wall during the demolitions in Sarah in 2004 (where fortunately no one was injured) seemed to confirm these residents worst fears about the potential danger to children, and led to much tighter controls to those already in place by the Department.
- Most residents agreed that the area has become far less safe, stable and habitable as demolitions progressed. The severe deterioration of the area over a 18 month period has been very apparent to the researchers.

Gradual demolition with residents in situ will always be a fraught issue, and one to which there is no clear resolution. A more planned approach to such relocation and demolition, with whole sections moved at the same time and demolitions of discrete areas is probably the most desirable situation. However, it relies upon sufficient suitable housing being available in a timely way, and this has often not been the case for families relocating from Minto to date.
One of the more positive aspects of the Sarah redevelopment has been the formation of the Minto Safety Committee, initiated by the Independent Tenant Advocate and the MRAG, in consultation with key human services and emergency agencies working in Minto. There have been a range of achievements to date including:

- Improved lighting in the redevelopment area;
- Increased surveillance by police, key services and remaining residents;
- Improved fencing of redevelopment zones, and unsafe features;
- Improved demolition and notification processes.

Though still less than ideal, these measures have mitigated some of the worst safety and security impacts of the redevelopment.

6.3.3 ‘Strengthening Community’ Through Redevelopment

One of the reasons we picked Minto [for the first radical public housing redevelopment] was that it had strong leaders and a strong community, so the structures were in place to work with the community on redevelopment. We felt that there would be the ability to communicate openly, and to work in the best way possible. (Department of Housing Officer, Redevelopment Workshop, November 2004).

We can only imagine what Minto may have once been like through glimpses of places such as the cottage precinct, Durban Way, at the time this research began in late 2002. Like a time capsule, these areas serve to give us a view back into past, even at this late stage of redevelopment, to what things would once have been like for many people in Minto. Through these glimpses we see a rich neighbourhood environment, one that still existed in many part of the study area, including Sarah Precinct, even as it began to experience the first impacts of resettlement and housing demolition.

The fact that the Valley Vista and Sarah Precincts became more unsettled and unstable after the announcement by the Minister of the redevelopment, and that some of the housing was reported to become effectively “crisis” housing or temporary accommodation during the redevelopment,317 made it difficult to gain an accurate reflection of Sarah Precinct. The cottage precinct, Durban Way, was one of the areas that retained its strong and cohesive community throughout the most difficult times of the Masterplanning process.

317 Repeated discussion at MRAG Meetings 2003-04 was about the extent to which the area was becoming more unsettled following the redevelopment announcement, including concerns that a number of ‘problem’ families were being move into the area temporarily due to its impending demolition, which would act as a deterrent to more long-term tenants. This increased the level of instability and problems, and, residents believed, acted as a ‘self fulfiling prophecy’ about Minto.
They were also active in the Masterplan Consultations,\textsuperscript{318} where they repeatedly expressed the view that they valued their community and wanted to save their homes. Unfortunately, residents and services presented reported that they did not feel that the consultation process was structured to allow for real input on the importance of this issue, nor reflected in the core outcomes reported.\textsuperscript{319} This issue was also the subject of representations by the Macarthur Housing Coalition at various times, who expressed strong discontent with the consultation process.\textsuperscript{320} They expressed the view that,

The Coalition has previously indicated that it believes a fundamental flaw with the process has been the limits or boundaries placed on what was open for discussion at the consultations. For example, residents who raised issues about whether cottages would be staying were informed that this item was purely for discussion with individuals affected, and not open for general discussion. This obviously had the impact of silencing discussion. Another issue that appeared to be outside the boundaries of the consultation was the amount or percentage of public housing that will be available in the "new" Minto. Tenants have told us that this is a key issue of concern for them.\textsuperscript{321}

Residents of Durban Way were particularly active in the MRAG, as well as other structures set up by the Department of Housing to consult on the redevelopment, including the Minto Renewal Reference Group. Durban Way residents have been as active and vocal in trying to save their own homes, as they were about the value of preserving other areas of Minto where strong community exists. They have also fought for the right of others to return to Minto. Some of these impacts are now seen in relation to the likelihood, at the time of writing, that cottage precincts may be preserved in the 'Optimised Masterplan'.\textsuperscript{322} In relation to their own homes and small 'community', Durban Way residents have not been as successful.

\textbf{Margaret and Colleen}

The first thing that impressed the researchers about Durban Way and surrounding streets on the first visits in late 2002 was the beautiful gardens of the cottages, and also of many of the townhouses in the surrounding streets. The longest residents in Durban Way, the McAndrews, had lived in Minto for 27 years and had been one of the first families to

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\textsuperscript{318} In May 2003.
\textsuperscript{319} See Twyford Consulting, 2003, \textit{Department of Housing, Minto Redevelopment, Community Consultation Report}.
\textsuperscript{320} Macarthur Housing Coalition, 22 March 2004, who wrote to the Department in response to the Manager of the Masterplan’s request for feedback.
\textsuperscript{321} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{322} Report of Department of Housing Officer, Minto Renewal Reference Group, 19 January 2005.
\end{flushright}
move in when the estate was new. Over that time their home (and garden) had taken on the appearance of one that was well looked after, with the sense of pride, establishment and permanence that seems to come with a well-maintain garden.

Over a period of 2 years, residents in three neighbouring cottages in Durban Way fought strongly to save their homes in the face of the redevelopment Masterplan process. The researchers watched these residents from shortly after the announcement that Sarah would be the next precinct after Valley Vista to be redeveloped. Over this period we watched as constantly 'going head to head with the Department' 323 took its toll on the residents. As well as observing their actions in various forums, this researcher interviewed two residents, Margaret and Colleen, 324 who had been neighbours for 12 years. After two years of fighting the demolition of their cottages, they had finally decided to "just get the hell out of here". One of these resident had informed this researcher some time earlier that she 'no longer had the strength to fight' as it had 'taken too much out of her' and that her 'health was suffering'. 325 However, this resident did not inform any of the other residents on the MRAG or the Minto Reference Group at that time as, 'she wanted to keep fighting for the others as 'maybe I can still do some good for them'. 326 A short time after the interview, both residents had left. All the cottages have since been demolished. During the interview, which was often emotional, Colleen found out for the first time that Margaret, her long-time neighbour, was giving up the fight and had decided to leave.

Margaret had been living in the cottage for 27 years. She was previously living in Cabramatta in a 2-bedroom unit. Her partner Ron had two children, Margaret then got custody of her three children, so there were 7 of them in a tiny place. They were offered a brand new four-bedroom house in Minto. Margaret was delighted and took it immediately.

Colleen had come to Durban Way more recently, and had lived there for 12 years at the time of the interview. She had come to the area from Claymore, where she had lived for 6 years. She described Claymore as "an absolute hell hole". 327 She was confined to a wheelchair after, so a single-story dwelling was very attractive. After talking to her would-be neighbours, Ron and Margaret, Colleen decided she liked the area. She knew the house was available and suited her needs. After talking to her local member, the Colleen leased the house. Their other close neighbour, Claudio, was also a long-term resident of 20 years, as were many other neighbours in the street. Together, they had formed a strong community, and relied upon each other for friendship, as well as more basic needs like transport, childcare and sometimes material assistance. Though many in the street were close, the bond between Colleen, Margaret and Claudio was particularly close.

Speaking to Colleen and Margaret, the sense of community was very apparent. Colleen told me, "We’re more than neighbours - we’re losing our family - that’s what Claudio said this morning. He came here 24 years ago after he split with

323 Record of Interview, 15 April 2004.
324 Ibid.
325 Interview, 23 December 2003.
326 Ibid.
327 Record of Interview, 15 April 2004
his wife and kids. He was a fairly new migrant, so we all became family”. Colleen also commented, ”We got to know lots of people because our kids played sport with other kids in the area”. 328

Margaret told me, ”This is the best community. Its what you make of it. At least 60 percent of the residents here are long term, rather than elsewhere where people come and go. Going back 12 months it was even more stable than this. A lot of transients have come in now [since it was decided to demolish Sarah Precinct]”.

The 'community' described by Colleen and Margaret seemed to exist more on a local or street level, or even in terms of smaller clusters of housing. This was apparent when Colleen remarked that ”it doesn’t matter whether we move to elsewhere in Minto or to the Central Coast, we’re still leaving our community - our friends who are like family”.

Faced with the prospect of moving and having to get to know new neighbours and make new friends, Colleen was pessimistic. ”We’re too old to replace this now. We don’t have kids now, so its much harder to get to know people, there’s much less contact”. Margaret lamented the imminent loss of her garden. ”We can’t build our gardens again, we’re not well enough and it’s difficult to move the plants we really want to keep. They originally said we could have as many trucks as we want - we’ve got 150 pots - we were verbally told this was OK. But now we’re told that removalist trucks won’t take plants”. Colleen told me, ”These things mean a lot to me. I had a rose that have been travelling with me for 20 years in a pot. This was the first time I planted it - 12 years ago - I thought this was where I’d put down my roots”.

Margaret told me that she had originally been told by the 'master planner' that only townhouses would be demolished, not cottages. The original announcement was said to be for the demolition of ”the ghetto” (referring to Dunlop Precinct). Suddenly they were demolishing Valley Vista. Margaret said ”they kept on giving us hope for two years, telling us that all the cottages would be saved. Then the 'white ant' thing started being talked about, but there’s no white ants in these houses”.

Reflecting on her experience, Margaret said, ”We’ve been treated like cattle - shipped on to trucks and shipped out”. Later she said, ”Their real agenda was always to get rid of us”. She also said ”We’ve fought hard, but I’d have to say that we’ve gotten nothing for it”. And later, ”Why put false hope into people’s hearts”.

328 Ibid.
Action to Save Their Homes and The Department’s Response

In March 2003, the residents of No. 2, 4 and 6 Durban Way wrote to the Department of Housing to express their strong desire to save their homes and their area. This letter started that they had lived at their respective cottages (at the time of writing) for 11, 26, and 20 years. The letter said:

These are our homes. We have raised our children here, developed our gardens and made loving additions to our homes. We thought we would die here. To move and bulldoze our homes would be like tearing down many wonderful years of memories. This stability is important to us.

We are more than neighbours. We consider ourselves family. We share a real history. These three houses and this street are our community. We look out for each other, trust each other and feel safe – none of us have ever been broken into. We have taken each other’s children to hospital and have keys to each other’s homes. Margaret and Ron are the contact for Colleen’s panic alarm (Colleen uses a wheelchair). Colleen’s daughter who has an intellectual disability is welcomed as part of the neighbourhood community. We really rely on one another. When we think about moving we get teary-eyed and two of us for the first time in our lives are on anti-depressants. It takes years to build such trust and connections and we feel that we will be dead before we could establish anywhere new...

We feel we are too old to start again from scratch. This includes re-establishing the physical aspects of our home and garden as well as the community bonds. We have taken 11-26 years to make these houses our homes.

The Department replied to the letter on 11 April 2003. This letter said among other things:

I realise that having lived in Minto for a considerable time you have developed strong links with your neighbours and the other people living in Durban Way. The close connection you feel with living in Minto and the fond memories of raising a family in your home were obvious from our conversation. It is unfortunate that the anxiety you are feeling from the announcement of the Renewal Project is affecting your health and I hope that the issue of Durban Way will be resolved soon...

On 5 May 2003 the Department wrote:

Many people are wondering what housing changes are going to happen in Sarah Way, Wangoola Way, Durban Way and Carlton Way. For many people this year has been an anxious
time so I would like to meet with you and hear what you think is needed to improve the way residents are rehoused...

On 1 August 2003, Ron and Margaret McAndrew received a letter from the Department of Housing. The letter informed them,

Broadly, the advice from the master planners is that retention of the cottages is inconsistent with the Department’s plans to renew the whole area ... Retaining any part of Durban Way would create inconsistencies with the urban design concepts and result in inefficient lot layouts around the cottages...

For these reasons, the plans on display next week will assume the Durban Way cottages will not be retained...

I asked the residents what finally influenced them to make the decision to move. Margaret told me, It was that last meeting the week before Christmas (2003) when [the master planners] basically said ‘no matter how much you fight, we’re going to win’. We’ve fought and fought, and we’ve been told so many different things, just to throw us off the scent. We’ve fought for two years. Now, we can’t fight any more’.

The last time I visited Durban Way, I drove past it twice without realising. It was, quite simply, unrecognisable. Houses, gardens and any landmarks or distinctive features had been obliterated. One of the researchers commented that if one has ‘ever been camping with a large group of people, the experience was like packing up the communal campsite at the end of the trip. During the trip, the campsite is a hive of activity and colour - a centre of energy and life. On the last day, everyone packs up and the site reverts once again to a barren and lifeless field. Gone without a trace, as if the campers were never there. Until now I never thought the same could be done with a 25-year-old community’.

Margaret’s move has left her with mixed feelings. Although initially relieved to have the stress of the move behind her, and to be in a quiet area, there is a lingering sadness evident for her and her husband, who has experienced poor health since his move. There is still a range of physical problems with their new home, which are still being resolved after 8 months. Claudio often contact his old neighbours. He expresses his sadness and loneliness, and misses his home and his friends.

Despite her move, Margaret McAndrew continues to be active in the MRAG and the Minto Renewal Reference Group, working on behalf of residents still to be relocated from Sarah.
6.4 IMPACTS UPON CHILDREN IN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

How I feel.

I feel sad for the people that get their house knocked down.
If I were those people I would feel devastated. I hope all those people will in the future. I wish I could do something about this. But I can’t. I’m just a girl. They all have to leave their families, friends, school etc. and they shouldn’t if they don’t want to. They have rights.

Year 5 Primary Student, Sarah Precinct 2004

The social impacts of the redevelopment upon children are of particular concern. As noted by support services working in Minto, and teachers at local primary schools, young children generally pick up the fear and uncertainty of their parents, but often do not have the language to express their concerns, or the ability to rationalise the insecurity or fear they feel. Distress or anger about the redevelopment has been evident among many primary school children, but sometimes it has been difficult for teachers or parents to deal with this effectively, though teachers have attempted to assist children with these issues as they arise.329

Since the commencement of the demolition of homes in Valley Vista and Sarah Precincts, community consultations have been implemented by the Department of Housing and various other resident groups and service providers. However, as noted by UnitingCare Burnside, there has been ‘one obvious group omitted from this process - children’.330

One project, Minto Under 12’s Project aimed to give children a voice by providing opportunities to explore and express their feelings about the redevelopment. It is located at UnitingCare Burnside’s Minto Family Centre in

329 The information in this section of the report is drawn principally from Smith, T. 2004, 'This Used To Be My Playground: The Impact of the Redevelopment of the Minto Public Housing Estate on Children', Uniting Missions Network 2004 National Conference; and from Uniting Care Burnside project staff.
330 Comments, Principal, Sarah Redfern Public School, Minto Renewal Reference Group, Smith, op cit., p1.
The Minto Under 12’s Project is federally funded by Family and Community Services.

NSW.\textsuperscript{332} UnitingCare Burnside has a long history of working with children, young people and families in the areas of child protection, early intervention and strengthening vulnerable communities. The drawings and stories scattered throughout this report have come from this project.

The Under 12’s Team developed a series of questions over the course of the project. These questions were:

- What is good about living in Minto?
- How do you feel about the redevelopment/moving?
- How do you feel about leaving friends/school/the community?
- What if you moved and it is not what you expected?
- How do you stay in contact with friends?
- How do you make new friends?
- What would you do if you were the Minister for Housing?

The project had a range of forums and workshops, including the following:

- A parent forum
- Workshops with groups of children from the four primary schools in Minto
- Children from groups run at the Minto Family Centre.

The focus groups included children who experienced direct and indirect impacts of the redevelopment. The aim was to give children an opportunity to talk about how they feel about houses being demolished around them, the possibility of having to move and of moving away from friends, changing schools, and how they are experiencing the redevelopment in general. Project staff were concerned that even children who are not facing relocation at this point in time will still be experiencing the impact of the redevelopment on some level - whether this be their friends moving away, watching as houses are vacated and eventually demolished, or hearing their parents and neighbours talk or sometimes argue about the redevelopment and how it is affecting their lives.

The focus groups ran for approximately one hour each during the school day. Some of the groups were small - 10 or so children. One of the schools agreed to let their sixty Year 6 children participate (the year was divided into smaller groups). A number of media were used with the focus groups including art, story telling and role playing/drama. The children ‘interviewed’ each other about the redevelopment - how they felt about houses being torn down, moving house, saying goodbye to friends, changing schools and so on. Project staff were interested in hearing about the good things and the difficult things.

The forums and focus groups were documented using drawings, stories, brainstorming, audio and video taping, photographs reflections. The project’s aim in documenting these stories was to work with the parents and children in developing strategies for supporting families during this time of redevelopment and relocation. Everyone who participated in the focus groups and parent forum received a Reflection Journal. Workers are certain that the discussions initiated in these groups have spread beyond the one or two hours spent with in workshops and focus groups.

\textsuperscript{332} The Minto Under 12’s Project is federally funded by Family and Community Services.
What the Parents Said

The parent forum involved a ‘small but very passionate group’ who identified some very clear issues, including:

- Schools - parents identified that their children do not want to change schools. Parents do not want their children to have to change schools, or to get into the cycle of moving houses and schools regularly. Many children are attending the same school that their parents attended and families wish to continue that tradition.
- Sporting Clubs and Facilities - parents articulated very strong links to local sporting clubs. Sporting Clubs were seen as support networks for their children and themselves. Minto also has a very large number of sporting facilities catering for a range of sports including Rugby League, Rugby Union, Soccer, AFL, netball, basketball, athletics, martial arts and so on. If moved to another area, there may not be the same access to sporting clubs and facilities.
- Friends - friendship was a very strong theme throughout all of the groups. Parents identified that for their children, most of their friendships are life-long. All of their children’s friends are in Minto. Moving means their children face the daunting challenge of making new friends.
- New Communities - parents also acknowledged that it is really difficult to ‘fit’ into new communities - and this is even more so for children as they have less ability to discover and access new social supports such as services and interest/sporting groups.
- Services - moving means having to locate a whole range of new yet necessary services such as doctors, paediatricians, dentists, baby clinics and community centres. Once located, parents would have to assess whether the new services met the needs of their family.
- Public Transport - Minto provides very good access to trains and buses that are beneficial to many families who do not have their own cars. Parents were concerned that a new area may not have the same access to public transport.
- Separated Families - for many children, mum and dad do not live under the same roof. Parents at the forum said most separated parents live in Minto or close by and children have very easy and regular access to both. Parents were concerned that if mum is moved to one side of Sydney and dad to the other, children will not have the same access to and support from both parents. There was also concerned raised over extended families - such as cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents - being moved to different locations, resulting in family support networks being broken up.

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333 Smith op cit., p. 4.
Overall, two distinct themes emerged from the forum:

1. Moving means going to a better place which equals a better life;
2. Different areas have different problems, and it is far from certain that the area will be better than Minto.

Either way, it is an unknown factor for families and they have concerns about where they and their children will be moved too and what kind of community they will be moving into.

The parents were asked if they could identify strategies and solutions for the issues they raised. The parents came up with a number of ideas including:

- For the Department of Housing to know exactly what is intended before they announce anything.
- For all Department of Housing staff to have the same information and say the same things.
- For the Department of Housing to ask the community first what it is they want.
- To know the background of the area or community to which they are relocated.
- To be able to 'check out' the new area or community before they are moved.
• To know what services are available in the new community, where they are and how to get to them.
• For the new area to have a community centre like Burnside for children and families to gain support from.
• The best way to find out information in the new area was thought to be:
  o Welcome packs
  o Welcome worker
  o To walk around the area yourself
  o Word of mouth
  o Flyers in the mail
  o By neighbours introducing themselves.

Parents identified the Department of Housing as being a key player in developing solutions to identified issues. However, the Burnside project report noted that it was ‘clear that the parents did not trust the Department of Housing in the process of relocation’. It reported that this was due to ‘the lack of consultation with residents and the inconsistent and misleading information with which they were provided’. 334

What the Children Said

At the time of writing, Burnside project staff had worked with around 100 Minto children aged 5 - 12 years. Overall, responses were very similar across all of the focus groups at each of the four schools and Family Centre groups.

Children had a great deal to say about the redevelopment and how it was impacting on them and their families. In response to questions about what is positive about living in Minto, children responded:
  • The Mall and the shops
  • Sporting clubs and facilities.
  • Friends
  • School
  • Family
  • Fast food chains
  • People
  • Everything is close
  • Access to public transport
  • Fresh air
  • Pets
  • Everyone is friendly
  • Multicultural
  • The community library
  • You know everyone everywhere you go.

As noted in the project report,

Children were easily able to identify a broad range of strengths about Minto. They were able to express a strong sense of community, and a clear sense of pride in their community. It was clear that the good things about living in

334 Smith op cit. p.3-5.
Minto far outweighed the challenging things about living in Minto.335

Children were asked a range of questions in relation to the redevelopment. The following extract from the Burnside project report provides typical response to these questions, and comments from the project team (Smith 2004).

How Do You Feel About the Redevelopment/Moving?

"Why does the government need another road in Minto? This is our home, Miss. We’ve been brought up in this place. Why do we have to move?"

For many children in Minto this is the only home they have really known. All of their friends are there. Children do not understand why they have to move away from their home, friends, school and community. The reference to the road relates to the knowledge the children have picked up from adults that there may be some new roads created to support the new development.

"Sad because we are leaving. The house is sad too because it is lonely and will get knocked down. I like that house and I’m going to miss it. I will miss all my friends."

Most children have not even contemplated the physical destruction of their home - until the bulldozers started to roll in. For families leaving Minto, they will not be able to return with their children or grandchildren and point out the house they grew up in - it will no longer exist.

"I don’t want to leave my house because my cat died, a kitten died and then another kitten died, and now they are buried in my backyard. Now they are just bones but I don’t want to leave them."

The family pet was very significant for children. Many asked if they would be able to take their pet with them when they moved?

The Department of Housing has indicated that they will relocate the remains of family pets when families are moved.

"My house has termites and it’s dangerous. It will be good to go."

Not all of the children were unhappy about the redevelopment, especially when discussing the physical structure of the houses. Many spoke about the houses being too small, they are riddled with termites or rust, and many are in dire need of maintenance.

335 Smith op cit. p. 5-7.
When the children were asked about the kind of house they want to move into they often talked about ‘BIG’ houses with lots of bedrooms - and they were all moving to the beach! Unfortunately, this will not be a reality for most families.

"It’s scary to not know what is happening."

Most children - like their parents - just want to know what is going on. The unknown factors are many and that is a very frightening prospect for children.

"I'd like to live with my dad, but I want my mum close by."

Children were also concerned about their access to both parents when they do not reside under the same roof. Children also raised the question that if they are unable to see both mum and dad everyday, which parent should they live with?

Children were also unhappy at the prospect of moving away from extended family such as cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents. However, children did talk about the advantages of moving to a new community where they have extended family already living there.

**How Do You Feel About Leaving Friends / the School / the Community?**

"You have no friends if you move".

For children in Minto most of their friends live next door, across the street or around the corner. They see each other everyday. They play in the street together and in each other’s yards. This is the way it has always been. Moving means children have to leave their friends - friends they have had for most, if not all, of their lives.

"I've never gone to a new school".
Of the children we spoke to, most have never even changed schools, let alone started at a new school in a new community. For children in Minto the prospect of changing schools is one they thought they would be facing with classmates - from primary school to high school.

Friends, family and school form the very centre of a child’s community. The redevelopment of the Minto Public Housing Estate means that the children’s community is being dismantled in all three of these key areas.

**What If You Moved and It Is Not What You Expected?**

It became apparent to the focus group facilitators early in the process that most children did not have a very accurate idea about where they were moving to in terms of the new house and the new community. We asked the children what would happen if they moved and their expectations were not met? There were some interesting responses.

"I’d move again”

"I’d sue the government”

"I’d vote the government out”

"I’d ask John Howard to give me a ride in his plane back to Minto”

"I’d feel angry”

"it would be boring”

"It would be pretty bad”

"It would be crap”

"It would be sad”

"I don’t know”

Overall, the response was negative. Children have quite definite expectations of where they are moving too. Strategies will need to be developed to deal with these expectations - both before and after families move.

**How Do You Stay In Contact With Friends?**

Children had very clear ideas about how to stay in touch with their friends once they have moved:
"Take two photographs of you and your friend. Keep one for yourself and give the other to your friend so you always have something to remember each other by”.

"By phone - you would memorise or write down their phone number”.

"By email (no one writes letters any more!)”

"Visit them.”

"Play with them.”

"Meet up with your friends somewhere and do something like go to the movies”.

How Do You Make New Friends?

Children had no trouble coming up with strategies for making new friends once they have moved:

"Be nice”

"Get to know people”

"Be funny”

"Try to blend in”

"Ask other kids if I can play with them”

"Look for another kid at school that has no friends”

"Be friendly and kind to others”

"Say hello”

"Ask another child what their name is”

The children were able to expand on their ideas and give very clear examples of how they would go about making new friends. Children were also able to identify each other’s strengths and qualities that make them good friends.
Solutions For The Minister For Housing?

As with the parents, children were asked to identify strategies and solutions regarding the redevelopment. The children were asked to imagine that they were the Minister for Housing - the person with the power to make decisions. As the Minister for Housing, what would they do about the redevelopment of the Minto Public Housing Estate? Again, the answers are informative:

"Put the houses back up so I can stay in Minto."

"I’d do want the people would want because they may not want to move out.”

"Move people temporarily and then move them back to Minto when it is rebuilt” (children estimated it would take anywhere from 2-3 weeks to one year to rebuild Minto).

"I would ask people why they want a redevelopment.”

"Ask how big their family is, and what do they need.”

"See if people are happy where they are and not move them if they are happy.”

"Keep trees for oxygen” (this theme came up at every focus group - you need trees to breathe!).
"Build bigger houses."

"Build a park for each part of Minto (which equated to at least four parks) with lots of equipment" (The children were divided over who should design the parks, some felt the children and families who would use the parks should design them, others felt this was the domain of the council).

"Fix the houses up."

"Move whole streets together to the same place."

"Give people notice and tell them what is going on."

"Build bigger schools" (many children and parents were concerned that as families were moved this may impact negatively on schools with resources and teachers decreasing - some felt that if all the schools were larger, they would not risk losing their resources).

"Fix the potholes" (while not part of the Minister for Housing’s brief, many children felt their were other areas in Minto where money could be spent rather than on demolishing homes).

"Unblock the drains" (again, an ongoing issue for residents that children felt needed addressing).

"Keep houses so you keep your friends and your community."

"Rebuild Valley Vista (the first precinct to be demolished) because it has stood vacant for a long time”

"It is important to talk to people, because it is happening to them, not the government”.

These ideas are evidence of the understanding children have of issues facing families in the wake of the redevelopment. It also shows that while nobody may be discussing the redevelopment with children, the children are certainly aware of the issues and are hearing conversations taking place around them. The children can also identify strategies to deal with many of these issues. These strategies are not necessarily invalid or unreasonable.

**Where to Now for the Burnside Minto Under 12’s Project?**

The Minto Under 12’s Project views the focus groups and forum as a starting point in documenting the impact of the redevelopment on children. How this information will be used will be shaped and guided by the parents and children. There are a number of opportunities in the coming 12 months for these stories to be told in various arenas.
The first step is to present this information to teachers at the four primary schools during staff meetings. The project is then asking the schools to help to organise a series of assemblies involving both parents and children. This way the project will reach a very large audience.

The project is seeking feedback from teachers, children and parents about the information collected to date. Staff have noted that the parents and children have very strong ideas about whom they would like to have hear their stories, and the next steps to be taken in this process. This will help project staffs to plan where to take this information to next.

Their aim is to keep working with and supporting children and parents during the redevelopment of the Minto Public Housing Estate, so that they can 'continue to enable children to have a voice - and to ensure that voice is heard'.

6.5 PROCEDURAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SARAH PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT (SECOND STAGE)

Despite severe institutional constraints, many of the departmental officers involved at the coalface and in guiding the process have acted with integrity and compassion. This, combined with strong and ongoing advocacy from the Minto Residents Action Group and Macarthur Housing Coalition, has led to some significant procedural improvement in the redevelopment of the second precinct (Sarah). These include:

- The appointment of an Independent Tenant Advocate, funded by the Department in early 2004, and auspiced by the South West Regional Tenants Association. This position is designed to ensure that any tenant experiencing problems in the redevelopment is able have an independent advocate with the Department, as well as a further source of information or assistance.

- Appointment of a dedicated Resettlement Officer within the Department of Housing, with clerical assistance, to 'case manage' tenants of Sarah undergoing the redevelopment process.

- The establishment of a Minto Renewal Reference Group by the Department with representatives for the Minto Resident Action Group, local and regional services, the Department of Housing and Council.

- A range of forums organised by the Minto Resident Action Group (MRAG), the Tenant Advocate, and/or the Macarthur Housing Coalition (MHC) on issues related to the redevelopment in which the Department has often participated;

- The development of detailed and specific procedures for the Department in relation to Sarah, though these are still problematic at times. These procedures were developed by the Department in close consultation with the MRAG and the MHC. Residents and services had a high level of involvement in drafting these procedures.

336 Smith op cit. p. 9-10.
• Two weeks rent-free as compensation instead of one week, as well as the cost of service reconnection and removal.

With modifications for special local circumstances, these and other initiatives could be transferable to other areas undergoing such large-scale resident dislocation.

6.6 OTHER SOCIAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

The report of the most recent Resident Survey, which follows, also provides more quantitative data on the current and potential future social and economic impacts of the redevelopment.

This is followed by a preliminary review of the broader or longer-term social and economic impacts of the redevelopment.
7. FURTHER SOCIAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS (MINTO RESIDENT SURVEY 2003/04)
7.1 RATIONALE

The most recent Resident Survey provides a way of understanding the differing experiences of residents undergoing the redevelopment process. It also provides a further way of gauging current and potential social impacts on the Minto community. It provides a more quantitative assessment of the nature and scope of impacts that may be experienced as a result of this type of development.

It is difficult for non-institutional researchers to fund or conduct detailed research. Whilst the Minto Resident Action Group (MRAG) had undertaken their own survey during the Valley Vista redevelopment, and other more qualitative research, they felt that this research was not considered to be 'formal' research (see Attachment C). Though such research is in fact legitimate and valuable, it can lack credibility with institutional bodies. As such, when this author became involved in monitoring the redevelopment at the invitation of the Macarthur Housing Coalition, it gave residents and services an opportunity to gain an additional resource to conduct research that would assist them and others understand what was happening in their community. It was also seen as an opportunity to give a stronger voice to residents in the redevelopment process, though this was already occurring thought the MRAG, Remembering Minto, and other resident-initiated forums and meetings with those with power to make decisions (e.g. delegations to the Minister and local politicians initiated by the MRAG). It provided input from those who may not otherwise be active in the redevelopment process.

At the invitation of the MRAG, we began the development of a resident survey. The research strategy, including the questionnaire, was developed over five meetings with the MRAG. Workshops and general meetings were attended by around 60 individual residents in all, and by representatives of Shelter NSW, the NSW Tenants Union, NCOSIS, South West Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, SWRTA, St Vincent de Paul Society, the Franciscan Fathers, while other local services agreed to assist with interviewing. The author joined the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre in an adjunct position some months after the research commenced, and took up a post-Doctoral Research Fellowship in May 2004. The University has thus been a formal partner to the research for since that time, and has assisted with funding for six months.

It became apparent in the workshops that tenants and services held a diversity of views about the redevelopment. As such, much time was spent on developing questions that would discover the range of views, experiences and aspirations of residents within the framework of a questionnaire. In effect, various drafts of the survey were piloted four times.

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337 The Department of Housing had also undertaken a brief survey of residents, a summary of which is also set out at Attachment C.
Much time was also spent in ensuring that the research would be representative and reliable. After considerable discussion, it was decided that three precincts would be surveyed. These precincts were mainly selected for their different housing and locational characteristics as well as where they fitted within the proposed timeframe for the redevelopment. All households within randomly selected streets within the precincts were given the opportunity to participate, and around 80 per cent of residents took up this opportunity. The survey method was thus a form of stratified cluster sampling. The findings have a high degree of statistical confidence for a study in the social sciences, as noted in the table below.

The three precincts are as follows (also see Map 2 following).

- Sarah was selected as it was the next precinct to be redeveloped after Valley Vista. This precinct is located in the central-northern part of the estate. It incorporates mainly attached dwellings and a small number of detached dwellings. A Youth Centre and Community Services building, from which a range of permanent and outreach services and activities operate, is located in Guernsey Road. MRAG and other meetings are held in the community room. The main provider in the complex is Uniting Care Burnside, which provides a range of important services to residents.

- Dunlop was selected as it was proposed for redevelopment in the intermediate term (perhaps 3-5 years), and was proposed at that time to be one of the later precincts to be redeveloped. The precinct is located in the southeastern part of the estate, and is separated from the remainder of the estate by Pendergast Avenue, and consists of only attached dwellings. Many of these dwellings have been assessed by the Department as being in a poor state of repair, and have a high turnover and low level of tenant satisfaction. The precinct is bounded by private housing to the south. The precinct enjoys an elevated position, with good views and visual interest.

- Caroline was selected as, at the time of planning the survey, it was thought that it would not be totally redeveloped, but that it would be upgraded. Tenure mix was to be achieved through selected sales of cottages. It is located in the mid-western side of the estate. The eastern edge of the precinct adjoins an existing privately owned residential area. The precinct comprises a 50/50 mix of attached and detached dwellings. The existing public housing dwellings are in reasonable condition, and official documentation notes that ‘Caroline precinct will be upgraded to provide good accommodation for approximately 10 years’.

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341 Ibid.
Residents decided that, as far as possible, they would conduct the interviews with a service ‘partner’. This was seen to have benefit for each partner. For residents, it would provide some support and legitimacy for the research process. For service representatives, it would provide greater trust by and access to resident participants. For each of the partners, it would provide a learning opportunity in how to conduct sensitive and respectful research in a difficult climate of change and uncertainty.

The MRAG considered it very important that all of the accompanying material emphasise that the research was voluntary, confidential and being conducted
by the MRAG independent of the Department of Housing. They believed that this was the only way that residents would be open and frank about their views and experiences, and confident that their views would be accurately represented.

The survey was administered face-to-face in residents’ homes, and took around 45 minutes on average to complete. Some surveys took much longer depending on the interviewer and the issues discussed. The benefit in having services and community groups involved was that, on completion of the formal survey, they often assisted residents by listening to their stories in more detail, or discussing other assistance or referrals they may need.

An initial call around was conducted to the selected households. Interviews were either conducted on the spot, or at a call back appointment. Letters were left for residents who were not home, and an option to attend Ko Ko’s Place (local community centre) at one of several times in the day or evening was offered to them if they did not want to be interviewed in their homes. Ko Ko’s was staffed at these times by two volunteer residents from Durban Way, both of whom had mobility problems (one in a wheelchair). They had been very engaged in the MRAG and in actions to try to save their street, so offered their services in a way that they could manage. For those who were not home on the first call back, or who did not attend the sessions at Ko Ko’s place, up to three more call-backs were made to enable the highest possible participation. As a result, the survey took around 5 months to complete.

Residents were generally handed an extra copy of the survey so that they could follow the questions. The interviewer(s) also held the survey that they were completing in such a way that residents could see what was being written. Where there was doubt about their answer, clarification was sought before the answer was filled in.

These methods of survey completion were discussed and modelled at the training sessions that formed part of the development of the survey instrument. Most of the methods discussed above were suggested by the MRAG members, and resourced by professional researchers.

### 7.2 RELIABILITY OF FINDINGS

The target sample size was selected to ensure a reasonable level of confidence in the findings. A 95% confidence interval of 5% was selected for a variable represented at the 5% level, and an appropriate sample size calculated for the various populations using the hypergeometric and binomial distribution depending on population size. A sample slightly lower than that required was obtained. This still provides an acceptably high level of confidence in the findings, as noted below.

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342 This is also consistent with the ethics requirements for social research undertaken within the University of Western Sydney.
343 Notes MRAG Meetings 2003.
Table 7.1 Summary of Confidence Intervals by Precinct Surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total households interviewed</th>
<th>Refusals</th>
<th>95% confidence level for a statistic at the 5% level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ or - 3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunlop</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ or - 1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ or - 3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ or - 2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A copy of the survey pro forma is provided at Attachment A. Briefing materials and introductory materials that formed part of the Information Kit provided to residents and service interviewers is provided at Attachment B.

7.3 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

7.3.1 Housing type

40 Households interviewed lived in cottages, while 140 lived in townhouses.

The following table shows the breakdown by precinct of those interviewed who lived in cottages and townhouses. No respondents in Dunlop precinct lived in cottages, whilst over half of those interviewed in Caroline lived in cottages, and one-quarter of those in Sarah.

Table 7.2 Housing Type by Precinct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Dunlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottages</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>00.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.2 Years in Minto

Over 40% of total respondents had lived in Minto for more than 10 years, while 60% had lived there for more than 5 years. Around 23% had lived on the estate for more than 20 years.

This is broken down as follows:

- <1 yr: 11%
- 1-2 yrs: 10%
- 3-5 yrs: 19%
- 6-10 yrs: 18%
- 11-20 yrs: 19%
- 21-25 yrs: 13%
- 25+ yrs: 10%

However, as the following table shows, the highest proportion of longer-term residents were in Sarah, where 55% of respondents had lived in Minto for more than 10 years, and almost one-quarter had lived there for over 20 years. In Caroline precinct, 44% of respondents had lived in Minto for more than 10 years. Dunlop precinct was more likely to have short-term residents, with almost 50% of residents having lived in Minto for 5 years or less.

Table 7.3 Years in Minto by Precinct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Minto</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Dunlop</th>
<th>Caroline</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 yr</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 yrs</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 yrs</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 yrs</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 yrs</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 yrs</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;25 yrs</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.3 Gender of Respondents

The gender of respondents was strongly biased toward women with:

- Male 26%
- Female 74%

7.3.4 Age of Respondents

Roughly one-half of total respondents were under 40 years of age. However, the age profile of respondents in Sarah and particularly in Caroline was much older than in Dunlop. Almost 55% of respondents in Sarah and almost 70% in Caroline were over 40 years of age, compared with only 37% in Dunlop precinct. This also indicates a more settled pattern of residency in Sarah and Caroline precincts, with far more turnover in Dunlop, which is a less attractive townhouse area where properties are generally in significantly worse condition.

Table 7.4 Age of Respondents by Precinct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Respondent</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Dunlop</th>
<th>Caroline</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-54 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-69 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+ yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.5 Respondents with children living with them and school attendance

A high proportion of respondents (80%) reported that they had children living with them. Given the younger age profile, it was not surprising that respondents in Dunlop precinct were somewhat more likely to have dependent children living with them.

The breakdown of dependent children of respondents\(^\text{344}\) by precinct was:

- 58 in Sarah
- 87 in Dunlop
- 41 in Caroline

The following table shows the schools attended by precinct.

**Table 7.5 School Attended by Precinct**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Dunlop</th>
<th>Caroline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campbellfield Primary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minto Public</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Redfern Primary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Redfern High</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grange</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leumeah High</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingleburn High</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{344}\) It should be noted that this does not represent all of the children resident in the three precincts due to refusal, absent residents, and that all streets were not included.
7.3.6 Proximity to other family members

Around 65% of respondents reported that they had family in Minto or nearby suburbs. The proportion of respondents with family in close proximity was highest in Sarah at over 70% of residents.

7.4 FINDINGS

An analysis of the data indicates that the most statistically significant variable in terms of the attitudes and experiences of residents was the 'precinct' in which they lived. In general, the area within which residents lived had a far greater impact on their views and expectations than, for example, the type of house in which they lived, or how long they had lived in the area. However, there was a slight overall difference with regard to housing type, though this was most likely correlated with condition of property. As noted above, townhouses in very poor condition were more likely to be concentrated in Dunlop Precinct. It is not surprising, then, that Dunlop residents had quite different and more negative views to those in the other two precincts. Variables related to precinct and housing type/condition are therefore relevant considerations.

As such, the findings are primarily reported here by 'precinct', bearing in mind the distinction between housing condition/type in these precincts. Where other factors lead to statistically significant difference, the findings are also reported by this variable (e.g. length of time in Minto, age of respondent, type of house).
7.4.1 What Residents Like Best and Least About Living in Minto

Respondents were asked what they liked best and least about living in Minto. The question was open ended with a free response by residents, and coded and grouped at the time of analysis to allow for as varied a response as possible. They were asked about these issues first as ‘warm up’ questions so that they could begin to think through their views prior to being asked more detailed attitudinal questions later in the survey. This and the following question about whether their overall feelings about Minto were positive or negative thus aimed to gain some understanding about their feelings prior to being potentially influenced by other questions.

**Things residents like best**

The first analysis is done by the first response given to this question. From this first response, the main things that residents liked best or most valued about living in Minto overall were:

- That it is close to shops, transport, schools, or work (almost 60% of respondents). Of these, around half most valued the proximity to a comprehensive shopping centre, which is within walking distance for most people on the estate. The proximity to a high school that was seen to be sympathetic to resident needs, and to several primary schools is also highly valued.

- Qualities of neighbourhood, neighbours, or the sense of community (around 25% of people nominated these types of factors as their first choice);

- Over 18% of residents reported that there was ‘nothing’ that they liked about the area.

The following table shows that there were some significant differences between precincts in this regard.

- Residents in Caroline precinct were far more likely to nominate as their first choice the quality of their home, or that their neighbourhood was quiet and peaceful,

- Residents in Sarah were more likely to nominate a long-term association with the area as most valued, and

- Those in Dunlop far more likely to report that their neighbours were what they most valued.
Table 7.6 Best Things About Living in Minto (First Factor Nominated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Dunlop</th>
<th>Caroline</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of area</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of home</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet, peaceful neighbourhood</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term association</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours / community / friends</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to schools</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to shops</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to transport</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to work</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to other</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere to live</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple Responses

The results to these questions were also analysed for respondents who nominated more than one factor that they liked best about the area. The following graphs show areas where there were significant responses or differences between precincts.

One of the strongest findings is the value that people place on factors associated with the long-term association with their area, and especially their immediate neighbourhood or street. Over three-quarters of people in Sarah nominated this as most important in their free choice question. These factors included the relationship with neighbours, family, friends and services.

Having a history in relation to the school, sporting or church community and a 'home where family had grown up and could come back to' featured strongly in comments. A frequent comment was, 'It takes so long to build these things up. How will I ever find these types of friendships, shared history with kids, and these sorts of things again?'
Those who were most likely to report that the aspect that they valued most was the quality of the area or of their neighbours and community lived in Caroline precinct, as shown in the following graph.
A significant number in each precinct noted that they valued Minto’s proximity to their workplace in the free response questions, with the highest rate of response in Sarah.

Respondents Who Value Area’s Proximity To Their Workplace

All precincts had a significant number of respondents who said that they most valued the quiet and peacefulness of their neighbourhood, with a higher rate in Caroline precinct.

Respondents Who Value Quiet And Peaceful Neighbourhood
Interestingly, it was those in Sarah who were most likely to freely respond that the quality of their home was one of the best things about living in the area, with almost 50% of Sarah residents reporting this.

**Respondents Who Value Quality Of Home**

![Bar chart showing respondents who value quality of home]

**Things residents liked least**

Respondent were also asked what they liked least about living in Minto, and were able to make free and multiple responses to this question.

In terms of the response given first, the following were the most common.

- Problem Neighbours 24%
- Nothing 20%
- Drugs, etc 14%
- Break-ins, theft, etc 14%
In general, it was not the area *per se* or even their housing that they nominated as problematic, but factors associated with their neighbours in terms of nuisance and annoyance, or more serious issues such as a house in their street that was associated with the sale of drugs.

Interestingly, only 2.3% of residents nominated issues such as the ‘stigma’ of living in an identified public housing area, or of the concentration of public housing as a major area of concern.

These responses are broken down by precinct in the table below.
### Table 7.7 Worst Things About Living in Minto (First Factor Nominated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worst thing about Minto</th>
<th>Precinct Sarah</th>
<th>Precinct Dunlop</th>
<th>Precinct Caroline</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug dealers, junkies</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break-ins / theft</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fights / violence</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems w/neighbours</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems w/neighbours</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish / untidy / unkempt</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No facilities for kids</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No maintenance by DOH</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No screening of tenants by DOH</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of redevelopment/uncertainty</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instability / transience</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing (worse) over time</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel unsafe</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids bullied at school</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark alleyways / lighting</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of area</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of home</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems w/DOH</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of DOH</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.4.2 General Feelings About Living In Minto

When asked about their general attitude to living in Minto, the following response was received:

- **Positive** 50%
- **Neutral** 15%
- **Negative** 35%
Main reasons neutral

Typically, the neutral comments were as follows.

‘As good a place to live as any’
‘No problems - I can’t complain’.
‘Can’t see why there’s so much hassle about it - it’s not a bad place to live’
‘I’ve lived in a lot worse’

When the ‘neutral comments’ were analysed, the vast majority indicated that respondents were quite sanguine or generally positive about their area, with only a few of those classified as ‘neutral’ tending to the more negative end of the spectrum.

As such, it is more accurate to describe the division between positive and negative is in the order of:

- Quite positive to very positive 60%
- Quite negative to very negative 40%

However, a striking feature is the difference between attitudes of residents in the three precincts at the time the survey was conducted. The following table shows that those in Caroline precinct were overwhelmingly more positive toward living in Minto than those in Sarah, which was at that time undergoing redevelopment.
When ‘neutral’ comments are analysed, the following difference in those feeling generally positive to very positive about their area at the time of the survey is apparent:

- Caroline - at least 75% generally positive to very positive
- Dunlop - around 58% generally positive to very positive
- Sarah - around 40% generally positive to very positive

![Bar Chart: Respondents Who Felt Generally Positive To Very Positive About Their Area]

7.4.3 Attitude to Minto Before Redevelopment Announced

Almost 60% of total respondents reported that they felt positively about their area before the redevelopment was announced, which is broken down as follows.

- Positive  58%
- Neutral    15%
- Negative   27%

However, when the ‘neutral’ comments are analysed, the response is closer to 70% who felt quite positive to very positive.
One of the most interesting findings is the major difference in attitude to their area by Sarah residents before and after redevelopment was announced, with around 70% of people (including positive ‘neutral’ respondents) who were positive prior to the announcement (compared with around 40% after the announcement).

The difference between the precincts is again striking, with almost 80% of people in Caroline feeling positive before the redevelopment was announced.

It is interesting that there was not a significant change in attitude by residents in Dunlop, which suggests that they have been less affected by the announcement, possibly more residents were less happy with and settled in their area compared with residents from Sarah and Caroline. This also accords with the fact that there were more longer-term and older residents in Caroline and Sarah, and in all likelihood a greater attachment to or investment in their community or neighbourhood, though there are certainly many people who have these attachments in Dunlop precinct as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Before Redevelopment</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Dunlop</td>
<td>Caroline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main Reasons for Change to More Negative

There is considerable concern among even Caroline residents (who were thought to be less likely to face redevelopment in the short term at the time of the survey) about the perceived impacts of the redevelopment so far. These generally relate to concerns about:

- Future loss of their home, friends or area to which they have become attached;
- Fear or uncertainty about the future generally;
- Anticipated loss of services or facilities;
- A sense that the area has degenerated, physically or socially, since the redevelopment was announced. This includes concerns that the Department and residents themselves are no longer committed to maintaining the area or their homes, and increased nuisance and annoyance which residents (correctly or incorrectly) attribute to more short-term rentals, and thus decreased stability.

Some typical comments include the following:

People are more unsettled. The Department is doing less maintenance. Are they running it down, like happened in Valley Vista? It becomes a downward spiral.

There’s different people coming in now - others are moving out. Who would move in if they know the whole area’s going unless they’re desperate?

My home was painted not so long ago. It was excellent - a new stove, new kitchen. Why have they gone to such trouble if going to redevelop? I’m so terribly disappointed.

I’m very afraid of what the future holds - I though I was here for life. Minto is my home.

Main Reasons for Change to More Positive

The main reasons that people gave who felt more positive about the area fell into two main groups:

- Those who felt that the Department would act to ‘get rid of drug dealers’, and take positive steps to reduce nuisance and annoyance as part of the development process;
- Those who believed that their home would be physically improved, or that delayed maintenance (urgent and cyclical) would be undertaken as part of the redevelopment.
Some typical comments included the following:

People are talking with hope about future - they’ve put up with bad houses and now will get better home here in Minto.

We feel some hope now that basic work will be done to our house and our street - it’s been very neglected in past 3-5 years.

Those of us who have been here for long time feel hopeful about the future - DOH really let place go over past few years.

This is a way of getting the druggies out, and making it into a decent place to live again. A few people spoil it for the rest of us.

7.4.4 Changes to the Area Since the Redevelopment was Announced

It is significant that 77% of people in Sarah felt that the area had already changed for the worse since redevelopment was announced. At the time when the majority of interviews were taking place, demolitions and relocations were just beginning, but were not a prominent feature of resident experiences as they are at the time of writing.

Views of Sarah Respondents Felt Area had Changed Since Redevelopment Announced

- Changed For Better / Neutral: 23%
- Changed For Worse: 77%
Dunlop respondents were less likely to report changes to their precinct since the redevelopment, though those who reported that it had changed were also more likely to report it had changed for the worse.

Fewer Caroline respondents felt that there had been any changes since the redevelopment, but of those that did interestingly they felt it had changed for the better. These tended to feel that it was positive that ‘something was happening to improve the area’ and commented on ‘our house getting done up like Airds’.

7.4.5 Impacts of the Redevelopment So Far

Respondents were asked about the impacts of the redevelopment so far on themselves or their families. Overall, 42% of respondents from the three precincts reported that the redevelopment had had an impact, and 55% of these said it had been more negative.

However, there are major differences between the three precincts, as would be expected from their different stages of redevelopment. There were significant differences between the two precincts that were to be redeveloped later (Dunlop) or at that time not expected to be radically redeveloped (Caroline):

- Around one-third of people in Dunlop said that the redevelopment had impacted upon their family with 60% reporting that it had been more negative so far.
- Only 21% of Caroline residents said there had been an impact, and three-quarters of these felt that it had been positive.
- However, 73% of Sarah respondents said that the redevelopment had impacted on themselves or their families in a negative way, even though the major relocations and demolitions had not commenced at that stage:
  - 41% said that the area was far more neglected, unsafe or unsettled
  - 44% gave examples of personal or family stress, including fear, uncertainty, and relationship or health problems, some of them quite severe.

Of the 27% of Sarah respondents who felt that there had been a positive or no impact on their families so far:

- 22% felt that it would give them the opportunity to leave Minto;
- 17% felt that it would give them the opportunity to get a better home;
- The remainder were non-specific, but felt that there was ‘at least something happening in the area’.
The comments made to interviewers, in their brief time with residents being surveyed, left some extremely concerned for the emotional and social well-being of many they had interviewed, particularly in the absence of any formal counselling arrangements in the short or long-term for these families. At least 14 people described what appeared to be severe depression or anxiety for which they were on medication since the announcement of the redevelopment. The sense of future dislocation and loss was clearly overwhelming for some residents. Some commonly heard comments from residents from Sarah precinct about the impact so far include the following. Each is from a different respondent interviewed.

It’s knocked me off my feet - it really upsets and worries you. I’m taking something to help me get through it - never been on anything before, I’ve always been strong.

Changing schools will be bad - the high School here has good activities for kids who don’t do so well at school. We need to be near a doctor (child with disability). Where will we find the shops we have here? Where will we live? This has been so good for us [moved 5 years ago to Minto]. There’s so much to worry about - I’ve been so depressed and worried - lots to worry about. I’m not coping at all - I thought they’d take me out of here in a box.

Really, it’s out of the frying pan and into the fire. I can’t sleep at night - I like it here. I’ve had so much trouble in my life - I thought things were settled for once.
There’s no information on the timing, and it seems to keep changing. It’s impossible to plan. I just want to know what’s going on.

Where could we end up? We moved from Claymore - I desperately don’t want to go back there. The last few years have been so good for my kids here. Now they’re stressed - they’re crying and asking if they’re going back there.

I’m worried I won’t get enough notice - my friend [in Valley Vista] got a few days. She had to leave all her plants behind, years of work and love. I’ve started to pack already, and put my plants in pots [resident still not relocated 12 months after this interview].

This home is my life. I don’t know when they’ll move me and if I’ll have a guarantee of security of tenure in my new home. I just feel sick all the time. My son says stop worrying or I’ll have a break-down.

Can’t plan anything. I’ve got no control over my life anymore - just waiting to be moved. Do you think they [DOH] keep us in the dark so we can’t do anything about it?

I’m ashamed to say it. We’re both on anti-depressants. We’ve never been on anti-depressants in our lives. I’ve always thought of myself as a fighter.

A strong theme was the imminent loss of community.

I don’t want to lose my community again. I had good friends in Valley Vista and I’m just starting to make friends again [in Sarah]. It’s had a really big impact on kids, to lose everyone they’ve known.

I’ve lost friends [from Valley Vista]. Now some are already asking for transfers out [of Sarah] because they know the end is coming. We’re losing our community. There’s nothing we can do about it.

*This is a good house - I’ve got good neighbours. They’re more than neighbours, they’re family. I’m involved in everything here - I came here when there was nothing, and now there’s everything. It makes absolutely no sense to us, no sense at all.*

*Others were concerned about the impact on access to services or locational issues.*

I find that many people who moved to Leumeah and Macarthur area want to move back because of the distance
of the shopping centre from their home. They need more places to shop in Leumeah and Macquarie Fields.

My kids feel unsettled because I have part-time custody, so very important that I’m placed near mother. I have no idea where we’ll end up. What if I can’t see my kids?

It’s a hassle packing and finding somewhere for disabled son. We’ve got everything (services and school) we need here.

I don’t want to move to an area that’s cramped - I’m worried about where I’ll end up. There’s lots of space around us here.

It’s hard to find jobs. I’ve been so worried. I’m hardly sleeping. I can’t put in a work transfer until I know where I’m going. I mightn’t get it anyway. I can’t afford to lose my job.

We both work in area - where will we go? We don’t want to end up in Claymore, or somewhere a long way from work.

I’ve already started to pack my stuff. I have no idea how long it will be, but I don’t want to have to leave anything behind [like a friend in Valley Vista]. But I’m worried whether I’ll be near station - I need to be near the station for my work [shift worker with no car].

Another theme was the sense that there was a lack of care or increased instability since the redevelopment was announced.

People feel that they can burn down houses because they are being torn down anyway. All of the rumours flying around Minto are creating a sense of uncertainty in the residents of Minto. This needs to be stopped immediately or anarchy sets in.

It has created a sense of instability - I like stability.

Seems like they're (DOH) letting the area run down - no maintenance is being done any more. And people who live here think - if they don’t care, why should we. It was different before the announcement, things were changing for the better.

I can’t do anything because I don’t know when it [the relocation] will happen. My hubbie’s not doing so much in garden now - just letting it go. I’m worried he’s depressed. He just stays in the house, he was always out in the garden. All the labour we’ve put into the garden will be lost. I don’t think I can do it all again at my age.
The minority of Sarah respondents who felt there had been positive impacts since the redevelopment made comments like the following.

We keep to ourselves, so don’t notice so much. Just want to get out of Minto now due to the violence. It wasn’t always like this.

I’ll be glad to go. There’s no maintenance been done on the houses for so long.

Maintenance issues. I put new carpet in 22 years ago. I have asked for new carpet upstairs, and Housing have said “no”. The fencing Housing has put up is like a patchwork. The place is a hole. Roll-on redevelopment!

I’m over the whole thing. I just want to get out now. Anywhere’s got to be better than here. Try living near a bunch of druggies and see how you like it.

I want to go before it gets like it was in Valley Vista. I want to go now before the demolitions start. Before all hell breaks loose.

### 7.4.6 Intention to stay in Minto

Findings that Sarah and Caroline residents were more committed to their neighbourhoods or communities is also supported by the strong findings on ‘intention to stay’ in their area prior to the redevelopment being announced, where:

- 68% had intended to stay in Minto before redevelopment announced, with Sarah highest at 76%, and
- 70% had intended to stay more than 10 years, with again Sarah highest at 80%

**Respondents Who Intended To Stay In Minto**

![Bar chart showing intention to stay in Minto for Sarah, Dunlop, Caroline, and Total.](image-url)
The intention to make the area their long-term home (more than 10 years) is also noted in the graph below.

**How Long Intended To Stay In Minto?**

However, the degree of uncertainty and instability brought about in part by the actual or proposed redevelopment is evident in the reduced number of people who said they intended to stay now. Much of this related to respondents feelings that their area would 'change forever', that 'the people who made it worthwhile would be gone’ or that 'there is no point hanging on to the past - we just have to accept that this is going to happen and move on’.

**Would You Stay In Minto Now?**
Almost 55% of respondents said that they would come back after the redevelopment if they could. However, an analysis of the ‘don’t know’ comments reveals that at least half of these are likely to want to come back if they were offered a home that is of a reasonable quality. This indicates that at least 60% would want to return to the area after the redevelopment.

Those who said they would be reluctant to come back appeared to be concerned that ‘it wouldn’t be the same without the people’, or that ‘once we’ve moved and uprooted our whole lives, we’re not going to want to come back and start all over again, or ‘I’m too old to move again’.

### Would You Come Back After The Redevelopment?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who would come back after the redevelopment.](chart1.png)

However, residents interviewed appeared to have little confidence that they would be able to come back after the redevelopment, particularly in Sarah and Dunlop, which are projected to be redeveloped completely and soonest.

### Coming Back - How Likely?

![Bar chart showing the likelihood of coming back for respondents in different areas.](chart2.png)
Almost 70% of respondents would ‘stay in Minto if their home were improved’. Interestingly, almost 90% of Caroline residents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating a very high level of satisfaction apart from the standard of their property. This was less of an issue for residents of Sarah, though a higher positive response from Dunlop residents may indicate that a significant issue in their satisfaction with the area relates to the standard of their home.

**Would Stay In Minto If House Improved?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.4.7 Consultation and Participation

A finding which causes considerable concern in terms of ‘best practice’ in urban renewal is that relatively few people felt that they had had any involvement in or real input to the redevelopment so far.

In terms of ‘information’, over 96% of those interviewed knew about the redevelopment prior to being surveyed. This included 100% of those surveyed in Sarah. However, when asked ‘how well informed’ they were about the redevelopment, a majority felt they were poorly informed, as shown in the table below. Adequate, accurate and timely information is arguably a prerequisite for any real involvement in a renewal process. Of most concern is that 41% of Sarah respondents reported that they ‘knew little or nothing’ about the details of the redevelopment, whilst a further 21% felt they ‘didn’t know enough’.
Table 7.9 How well informed are you about redevelopment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well informed are you about redevelopment.</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Dunlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-informed</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know enough</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know enough</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know little or nothing</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as 'participation' in the redevelopment is concerned, those who felt that they had had any involvement was very low. This was despite the range of mechanisms employed by the Department to attempt to engage people in the redevelopment process, including formal Master Plan consultations, street BBQ’s and newsletters, discussed above. Over 90% of residents felt they had had no involvement in the official processes, including over 80% in Sarah.

Table 7.10 Had involvement in redevelopment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement in Redevelopment</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Dunlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of 'participation', almost no-one felt that they had any power or control over the process or the outcomes. More than 97% of residents, including almost 95% of those in Sarah, felt that they had no control over the processes at work in their community.

Table 7.11 Had control over or say in redevelopment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Over Redevelopment</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Dunlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments made by residents indicated that, despite attempts made by the Department to counter the impact of the Minister’s sudden announcement and poor experiences in Valley Vista, there was an extremely low level of trust about the Department’s activities and the potential to have any say over the future of their area. In fact, around 60% of those surveyed in Sarah Precinct had attended formal BBQ’s and consultation meetings. Comments indicated
that they had generally felt that their comments had not been taken into account in planning for the estate. More typical comments included:

I went to one [Master Plan consultation]. I didn’t see the point in going back. There wasn’t a lot of input. They just came around and asked questions that weren’t to do with what’s going on.

I went twice. To see people I’ve never seen before, see other people in charge of the development. They weren’t from here - they were strangers telling us all about our community, like they know. Really, I think it was insulting.

I went to a BBQ and had a good chat with the neighbours, but the DOH people there couldn’t give us any answers. They probably didn’t know any more than we did. I think they were trying to help us, they tried to be nice.

DOH was very good, they explained to us what they hoped to do. I still found it a bit confusing though.

It was basically us listening to them. They’ve got a set agenda they want to tell us, no room for residents’ stuff.

The [Master Plan] consultations were a waste of time. They make everything look rosy - it sounds like we’ve won the lotto. But its our homes they’re tearing down, and we’ve got no say. Even when they say they’ll change things, they won’t give us stuff in writing. They end up doing what they were always going to do. They asked us what we wanted for the future, but it’s someone else’s future they’re talking about. I went along for a while. Now I don’t go any more.

They treat you like empty heads and give you the run around. They sidetrack you - the men in suits they brought in. Who were they? The regular staff aren’t well-informed - but they try.

The sausages were OK, but they weren’t telling us what we wanted to know. They’re just trying to keep us quiet while they do what they like. They’ve got no control anyway.

The big meeting [Master Plan consultation] - I saw the coloured maps. To be honest, it wasn’t all that helpful. It wasn’t what I expected. We won’t be getting the nice new houses. Afterwards, I went home and cried.

I can’t read, so it makes it a bit hard to get involved.

They always try to be helpful [at the BBQ’s], but they can’t tell us much. And the next one, we get a different story.
I’ve been to three meetings. They don’t let people really tell them. I think they’ve made up their minds anyway. They’re just trying to hose us down.

I haven’t heard anything at their meetings that I haven’t heard at the RAG (Minto Resident Action Group), so I just go to those meetings now.

They seemed friendly, but you go to these things, with all their plans - but you always get this feeling, like they’re trying to pull the wool over your eyes.

They showed us pictures about how we’d want the street if it got knocked down, but then didn’t tell us if it was going to be knocked down. It’s a joke when you know you’ll be gone anyway.

The serious lack of trust evident is supported by the fact that three-quarters of residents did not believe that they would have any ‘opportunity for involvement’ in the redevelopment in the future.

In all of the comments, a theme emerges that the Department is making serious efforts to engage residents and to provide information. However, this is hampered by several factors:

- The perceived powerlessness of Departmental officers themselves, and their lack of detailed information about how the redevelopment will proceed;
- A lack of trust that the Department will actually take into account the concerns of residents;
- A perceived lack of respect for residents by contractors and some client service officers;
- An inability to influence the main agenda of the redevelopment, though there may be some opportunities to alter minor aspect of its, including which laneways will close, or the location of a park;
- Varying degrees of cynicism about being asked to comment on ‘what the area will look like’ when most are aware they may not be around to benefit from the redevelopment and improved housing under the current planning arrangements;
- A lack of training in or understanding of participatory practices.
8. BROADER IMPACTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

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Primary Student, Sarah Precinct, 2004
8.1 OVERVIEW

A range of broader impacts of redevelopment have also been flagged in the course of this report. This section provides a preliminary review of some key considerations, as well as planning issues that arise under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

This section reflects some preliminary thinking on frameworks that may be appropriate for the assessment of questions of 'sustainability', as well as a 'total cost to the community' approach to the assessment of such redevelopments. These will be the subject of a second stage report on the Minto redevelopment in early 2005.

8.2 RETENTION OF STOCK IN MINTO

The redevelopment of Minto has often been portrayed as having social objectives, to a greater or lesser extent. This has generally been couched in terms of reducing social problems arising from the concentration of low income and/or high need families in the area. Meanwhile, services and residents have repeatedly asked why a 20-30 per cent mix is desirable in social terms, and even whether such a low proportion of housing can be guaranteed in the face of downward pressure that may be expected from potential private sector partners or section of Campbelltown City Council.

The Department’s answers have varied widely in this regard, and included remarks regarding the fact that 'research indicates that this is the appropriate mix for a sustainable or healthy community', expressions of 'resident aspirations' for this type of mix, to more pragmatic concerns about what the private sector or Council would find acceptable. More recently, the explanations have focussed on the relative demand for Minto, which is low compared with other areas of western and south western Sydney, though as noted above this is likely to change over time.

It has been difficult for residents to respond to this authoritative information or 'received wisdom', even where their experiences or views are significantly different. Residents in various forums have repeatedly asked why such a low level of housing has been decided upon, without consultation with them, and when a higher proportion of existing residents have expressed the desire to remain or to return.

There is likewise no distinction between people who are merely poor or without adequate employment, and those who have complex needs. Many residents commented upon the change in the perceived resident profile since the redevelopment was announced. This is, as it has been for some years, a question of appropriate allocations policies, though it is increasingly difficult to achieve a 'balanced' allocations profile where there is so little housing to allocate, and so many people in severe need on the priority and general waiting list.
A more financially oriented response was offered by the local member for Campbelltown, the Hon. Graham West, at a recent resident briefing.\textsuperscript{345} He indicated that 'the 20\% comes from what private developers will find profitable (as a proportion of public housing), and the 30\% is what the department will find profitable'.

At the present time, there is a notional commitment as to the amount of stock that will be purchased from any private sector partner and used as public or social housing. In the event of such a public-private partnership, the final proportion is likely to be shaped by a negotiated position that lies between the Department's preferred 30\%, the likelihood of a lower amount as the developer's preferred position, and a substantially lower amount preferred by Council as another joint venture partner.

This may be further complicated by Campbelltown Council's dual role as joint venture partner/land owner and consent authority for demolition or any Masterplan or development applications that come before it in the future.

As consent authority, it was also at its discretion as to whether a comprehensive social and economic impact assessment will be required in the future, as well as whether in fact there is grounds to consider that the requirement for an EIS is triggered under Part 5 of the EP&A Act 1979 in relation to the forthcoming Master Plan or for the previous demolitions.

These are serious considerations, and require both immediate and long terms assessments of the social and economic impacts of such a redevelopment. Processes put in place at this time also have implications for future estate redevelopment in other suburbs of Macarthur and elsewhere in NSW.

\subsection{8.3 NET LOSS OF STOCK}

A question of 'sustainability', and broader social and economic impact, arises from the net loss of housing stock in NSW that will arise from the Minto redevelopment, and from future redevelopments conducted in this way. This has been discussed above in relation to recent literature on the consequences of stock-shedding to reduce operating deficits as a short-term measure.

Like other features of the redevelopment process, the amounts of stock projected to be lost as a result of the Minto redevelopment continue to vary. As noted above, the best current information indicates a net loss of 500 units of public housing in NSW.

The question thus arises as to whether this is a sustainable activity in the current policy climate, and the extent to which it contributes to the effective decapitalisation of public housing stock in NSW. The total cost to the community must be considered in this respect, as well as the loss of public land and community/social infrastructure resulting.

Moreover, as discussed above, Minto is an area which is increasingly well-serviced, and located so as to take increasing advantage of linkages to the Sydney labour market. It is an area of rapidly appreciating land values, and is attractively located. It is, in many respects, an important area in which to

\textsuperscript{345} On 26 June 2004
maintain as much public housing as possible, particularly having regard to future social and economic improvements forecast.

As many residents have commented in the course of this research, ‘We put up with the hard times when there was nothing here. We fought for what we have now, and we want to be able to enjoy what we’ve struggled for’. It is thus also a question of who should benefit from the redevelopment process, and the extent to which existing residents who have contributed to their area are entitled to reap at least some of the benefits.

8.4 PLANNING ISSUES ARISING

A range of planning issues arise from the redevelopment of Valley Vista as the first precinct to be redeveloped. These continue to have an impact on the current redevelopment of Sarah Precinct, discussed in more detail below. They relate to the proper process by which the social and economic impacts of a redevelopment of this magnitude and nature should be assessed, and the consequences arising when they is not assessed in accordance with established planning policies and processes.

The redevelopment area comprises some 92 ha of publicly owned land. This includes over 1,000 public home sites. A significant number of these have been demolished or are in the process of being demolished at the time of writing, including those in the development precincts and some outside which have become vacant or derelict. The development area also comprises other land owned by the NSW Department of Housing, as well as substantial open space areas owned by Campbelltown City Council, and some Landcom assets. This includes land holdings currently defined as ‘community land’ under the NSW Local Government Act 1993. Each of these government bodies make up the existing joint venture partnership. The redevelopment therefore involves a ‘development by the Crown’. As such it must be assessed under both Part 4 and Part 5 of the NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 by the consent authority, in this case Campbelltown City Council.

Under Part 4 of the Act, Council is obliged to assess any Development Application (including redevelopment or demolition) in accordance with the normal provisions of this Part of the Act. This includes s79C(1)(b) which states that,

79C(1) In determining a development application, a consent authority is to take into consideration such of the following matters as are of relevance to the development application:

(b) The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and the social and economic impacts in the locality.

Part 5 of the Act, which applies to development on land owned by the Crown, includes a provision that any specific conditions placed upon the development must be with the concurrence of the relevant Minister. In the event of any dispute between the consent authority and the Crown (owner of the land) the
development application must be referred to the Minister for Planning for resolution and determination.

A further requirement can be found under s112(1)(a) of Part 5 of the Act. This states that,

112(1) A determining authority shall not carry out an activity, or grant an approval in relation to an activity, being an activity that is a prescribed activity, an activity of a prescribed kind, or an activity that is likely to significantly affect the environment (including critical habitat) or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, unless:

(a) the determining authority has obtained or been furnished with and has examined and considered an environmental impact statement in respect of the activity.

In this sense, ‘environment’ is defined under Part 5 as ‘all aspects of the surroundings of humans, whether affecting any human as an individual or in his or her social groupings’. Further, the DUAP (2000) Guidelines, Is an EIS Required? Best Practice Guidelines for Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, set out the range of considerations that apply in the preparation of such an EIS. This includes the following:

• Consideration of how the proposal is likely to affect natural or community resources, including whether it ‘changes the demography of an area’;

• Consideration of how the proposal is likely to affect the community, including whether it ‘generates population movements including influx or departure of the workforce’; or ‘leads to a loss of housing’; and

• Considerations of the way in which a proposal is likely to affect areas sensitive because of community factors include the impacts upon ‘communities with a strong sense of identity’, and ‘disadvantaged communities (reduced economic social or cultural indicators)’ (DUAP 2000, pp. 5-6).

In the case of the Minto redevelopment to date, neither of these avenues for the proper assessment or mitigation of such social or economic impacts have been pursued by the consent authority, Campbelltown City Council. No EIS has been required or conducted under Part 5 of the Act, and Council does not appear to have formally considered the social and economic impacts of the redevelopment under Part 4.

In this case, Council is in the position of being the joint venture partner, landowner, and consent authority under the Act.
To date, it is reported that Council has provided consent to demolish houses in two precincts (around 80 in Valley Vista and 70 in Guernsey Way)\(^{346}\) as well as a more 'blanket' arrangement to demolish any houses that become 'abandoned' or a 'fire safety hazard'. This is reported to be a 'fairly lose arrangement' which does not 'necessarily adhere to the letter of the law'.\(^{347}\) Under this arrangement, around 200 homes have or are in the process of being demolished at the time of writing. The documentation accompanying Campbelltown City Council's determination of the Development Application (for demolition) deals principally with consideration of the physical (environmental) aspects of demolition and mitigation (e.g. dust control). These documents do not make mention of any social or economic impacts, nor of any need to provide social or economic mitigations as part of the consideration of the application, nor as part of conditions of consent.\(^{348}\)

At the time of writing, as noted above, there is no Masterplan in place. The submission of such a Masterplan to Council provides a further opportunity for Council to ensure that it complies with both Part 4 and part 5 of the Act, and to engage in a thorough and transparent planning process. These issues have serious implications for the remaining redevelopment of Minto, as well as other public housing estates that may undergo the same process.

\(^{346}\) See Campbelltown City Council, 4 March 2004, Notice to Applicant (being the NSW Department of Housing) of Determination of Application (to demolish 70 Attached and Detached townhouses and Associated Structures)

\(^{347}\) Telephone Interview, Senior Campbelltown Council Planning Officer, 11 August 2004.

\(^{348}\) Campbelltown City Council \textit{op cit.}

Valley Vista 2002
9.1 ASSESSMENT OF TOTAL COST TO THE COMMUNITY OF REDEVELOPMENT

The following framework provides a preliminary way of considering the social and economic impacts of the Minto redevelopment, in the immediate and long-term. It provides a way of considering the total cost to the community of such a radical redevelopment, in the narrow and broader sense. The 'community' in this sense is the immediate community of Minto, and the broader 'community' of NSW (the two 'system boundaries' for such a consideration). Some of these costs can be monetarised, whilst this would be difficult for others.

It should be noted that the matrix below provides only examples of the types of considerations or indicators that may notionally be used in such an assessment. These have been drawn from some of the impacts identified this Stage 1 study. It should also be noted that the framework goes beyond a consideration of the financial 'bottom line' of the NSW Department of Housing to broader considerations of social, economic and environmental costs noted above. It thus involves questions of community and wider urban sustainability.

This more detailed consideration will form part of Stage 2 of the current study to be completed by the beginning of 2005.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Boundary</th>
<th>Potential Impacts</th>
<th>Economic (Monetarised) Costs/Benefits</th>
<th>Social (Non-Monetarised) Costs/Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community of Minto</td>
<td>Average value of garden-based home-improvements including plants, hard and soft landscaping lost</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of labour for above</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average value of self-build home improvements external, e.g. carports, pergolas, pools, paving lost</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of labour for above</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average value of self-build internal improvements, e.g. painting, fittings and fixtures lost (i.e. those that cannot be taken or removed)</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of labour for above</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social, emotional and relationship impacts (positives and negatives) in the short-term</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social, emotional and relationship impacts (positives and negatives) in the long-term</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of accumulated social infrastructure</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of accumulated social capital /loss of community</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of accumulated physical infrastructure</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average value of contractor work on homes</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of demolitions and associated works</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Boundary</td>
<td>Potential Impacts</td>
<td>Economic (Monetarised) Costs/Benefits</td>
<td>Social (Non-Monetarised) Costs/Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost and value of rebuilt housing and housing retained</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost and value of physical infrastructure replacement or augmentation</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost and value of social infrastructure replacement or augmentation</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of loss of teachers and programs from local schools arising from redevelopment</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of loss of other social programs and services arising from redevelopment</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of impact on social conditions for existing residents (improved or worsened)</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stigma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Crime, nuisance and annoyance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of impact on Department of Housing KPI’s (improved or worsened), e.g.</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Turnover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Arrears</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Indicators as determined</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community of NSW</td>
<td>Loss of up to 500 units of public housing net in NSW</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of longer wait for public housing, e.g. re different housing situations of those on waiting list, etc</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative cost of other housing options, e.g. RA subsidies, emergency or crisis accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of up to 92 ha of public land (council, DOH, DIPNR) in an increasingly high land value area</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of accumulated capital in other infrastructure - community centres, public parks, roads, and ancillary works (public and community investment)</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value of asset and land sales</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost and value of construction of new public housing @ average of $? per dwelling</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on financial position of DOH and sustainability of sector (positive or negative)</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost and value of replacement social and economic infrastructure in other areas</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A range of other Indicators to be determined</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2 QUESTIONS OF ‘SUSTAINABILITY’

As noted earlier in relation to ‘best practice’ in urban renewal or regeneration, the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Development has developed a working definition of ‘social sustainability’ as a ‘life enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition’. It puts forward the following indicators of the condition of such sustainability:

- Equity of access to key services (including health, education, transport, housing and recreation);
- Equity between generations meaning that future generations will not be disadvantaged by the activities of the current generation;
- A system of cultural relations in which the positive aspects of disparate cultures are valued and protected, and in which cultural integration is supported and promoted when it is desired by individuals and groups;
- The widespread political participation of citizens not only in electoral procedures but also in other areas of political activity, and particularly at the local level;
- A system for transmitting awareness of social sustainability from one generation to the next;
- A sense of community responsibility for maintaining that system of transmission;
- Mechanisms for a community to collectively identify its strengths and needs;
- Mechanisms for a community to fulfil its own needs where possible through community action; mechanisms for political advocacy to meet needs that cannot be met through community action.

The Centre notes that the definition of precise indicators in relation to a specific community would generally be generated by that community, according to the specific needs and aspirations of that community. As such, a fundamental issue in relation to determining matters of sustainability within a specific local context are about developing and implementing mechanisms whereby that community can identify and work toward meeting its needs and aspirations.

This above two frameworks could form the basis of a more detailed assessment of the sustainability of actions carried out in Minto and other public housing estates that may be targeted for a radical redevelopment in the future.
10. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A PARTICIPATORY STUDY OF MINTO?
10.1 OVERVIEW

There are a number of implications of the findings discussed above. These are related to the immediate processes at work in Minto as well as the type of redevelopment being undertaken in Minto.

10.2 RENEWAL APPROACH

The first issues relates to the type of redevelopment approach that needs to be applied in such a redevelopment. The study indicates the following.

- A very small area analysis is needed to understand the way an area ‘works’ in a renewal process

- Redevelopment should use different strategies for different streets and/or precincts due to different:
  - Levels of satisfaction and community attachment
  - Condition of houses and design features
  - Resident aspirations

- A Case by case basis is needed - not a one-size-fits-all strategies for the estate or for streets or individual residents. This requires a more ‘open agenda’ than that which has existed in Minto to date.

- In terms of Minto specifically, a more detailed exploration of the issues in partnership with local residents may have indicated a different order of precinct involvement. In terms of level of impacts on the community, levels of attachment and condition and layout of housing:
  - Dunlop should have been first, though this needs further community consultation;
  - Sarah would have been later and may have used a different approach to renewal in partnership with what had the characteristics of a strong and cohesive community. Sadly, this is now too late.

  - There appears to be limited justification to the total redevelopment of Caroline Precinct.

Overall, a far more detailed analysis is needed of the remaining precincts to review the basis and appropriateness of the current housing and community arrangements.
It is also evident that Minto is an area that would benefit from a non-asset based approach to urban renewal as well as the asset-based approach needed to upgrade areas of poor condition/performance housing stock.

Minto already had in place the level of and types of social and physical infrastructure, a high density of voluntary and funded community services, and a high level of community participation that would have supported the community through a very positive community renewal process. This includes:

- A high school and primary schools with excellent services and facilities (e.g. Sarah Redfern has extensive special programs and well above average provision of teachers specifically due to the concentration of less advantaged and/or higher needs children);
- Various funded services including Burnside Uniting Care, South West Multicultural and Community Centre, Animation Project, Youth Centre, Macquarie Fields TAFE providing services locally;
- Voluntary community services including Franciscans, Brown Sisters, St Vincent de Paul Society;
- A range of residents-initiated or -driven projects including the RAG, Healthy Minto, Kids Community Park, Remembering Minto, ‘I luv Min’o Community Festival’ in November 2003 to launch the community video and celebrate the community, and attended by around 300 residents;
- Strong Indigenous and Islander Communities including church, cultural and performance groups;
- Access to very good physical infrastructure that had taken many years to build up including trains, buses, playing fields, shopping mall, and better physical links to the Sydney job market than most other public housing estates in South Western or Western Sydney;
- Proximity to private housing and the opportunity to mix with people from private sector due to the lower concentration of public housing in the broader suburb (i.e. Minto public housing estate is part of the suburb of Minto);
- A pleasant physical setting with elevations, views, open space areas and established trees and vegetation;
- A strong desire by a majority of residents in many of the precincts to remain in Minto, albeit with improvement to their housing and attention to the problems arising from a high level of allocation to very high need tenants.

These are of course the factors that make the area most attractive for private sector redevelopment.

However, they also indicate that Minto is one of the most favourable estates in which to retain as much public housing as possible, and to engage the community in a genuine community renewal ‘partnership’ if this is the objective.
10.3 AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO THE MINTO QUESTION AND QUESTIONS OF ‘SUSTAINABILITY’

The work of Hall and Berry (2004; 2002) indicates that:

- In a decade or so there will be a seriously reduced public housing stock portfolio if the NSW State Government continues on its current trajectory;
- Public housing capital stock is most likely to provide the best financial outcome in the context of the Sydney housing market (compared with options such as head leasing and Commonwealth Rent Assistance);
- Tenure diversity can be obtained in a range of ways including the inclusion of lower to median income working families. This would help to cross-subsidise or offset losses from stock rented to lowest income households, and provide income from which to fund stock increases in a more sustainable way.

Likewise, work currently in progress in relation to the difficulties faced by key workers in obtaining suitable and affordable housing highlights the need to provide opportunities for these workers close to transport links to western and inner Sydney (Darcy & Blunden 2003; Darcy, Stubbs, Blunden & Perry 2004).

Minto is an ideal location for a public sector-driven estate renewal in partnership with the community and other agencies. Such an approach would see:

- Public housing maintained in an area of excellent social and physical infrastructure;
- Diversifying tenure by expanding the tenure base to moderate income families who experience affordability problems, and cannot purchase a home in the near future;
- Significantly increasing income from and viability of housing stock without incurring such severe impacts on the existing community as is occurring under the current redevelopment
- A more gradual process of change that is likely to be more sustainable
- The achievement of social mix achieved in more socially responsible ways with less trauma to the local community.

As such, Minto could provide an appropriate pilot for public sector-led redevelopment with selected private sector involvement, in partnership with for example Landcom, Argyle Community Housing, local residents and agencies (see for example key worker pilot project by the NSW Department of Housing, Centre for Affordable Housing, Rental Bond Board, and Lower North Shore Housing Association). Selected partnership with the private sector could also be undertaken in certain precincts if this were guaranteed to provide sufficient economic returns.
10.4 THINKING ABOUT THE MEANING OF ‘COMMUNITY’

The study highlights the fact that one cannot understand ‘community’ by drawing lines on a map, or spending relatively little time in an area. It is a complex issue that requires much exploration and consideration with residents themselves. The study indicates the following.

- People experience geographic ‘community’ very differently:
  - Some at the level of the estate (e.g. school, RAG, etc involvement)
  - Most experience ‘community’ at the level of the street or cluster of streets;
  - Of these, many experience it in the houses immediately around them (e.g. Durban Way).

- Thus, within a very small area residents can have very different views of ‘community’.

- There is a need to radically rethink what we mean by the term ‘community’ when it is applied to areas like Minto. The present study indicates that it is often misused and misunderstood by policy makers, and used to justify various redevelopment actions upon some of those least advantaged in society.

10.5 CONSULTATION/ PARTICIPATION/ INFORMATION

The literature suggests that that any urban renewal strategy is most effective when combined with community consultation and participation strategies, and that these participation strategies can lead to many of the desired changes in the absence of any other actions.

- This study again highlights the vital role that proper information, consultation and participation strategies can play in a successful and sustainable renewal process. This involves:

  - Adequate time and resources, and an honest approach for proper consultation or information;

  - Working closely with the different ‘communities’ within the estate to understand the issues and development the right ‘solutions’;

  - An open agenda and a willingness to share power and control if the process is participation;

  - Honesty at all times about the type of process residents are engaged in - if it can only be ‘information’ with limited or no opportunity to influence the process or the agenda, it is best to establish the constraints of the process at its outset.
Unfortunately, many of these factors have not characterised the Minto redevelopment process to date, though there have been serious attempts at improving the situation by the Department more recently.

Inconsistency (‘different messages’) and uncertainty (‘living in ’limbo’) has been a very damaging part of the Minto redevelopment for residents. It has led to significant mistrust and cynicism. It has been very damaging to a high proportion of residents in the precincts that have undergone or are undergoing redevelopment.

Also, the processes of ‘urban or community renewal’ and ‘urban redevelopment’ are fundamentally at odds, though they have frequently been spoken about as if they are effectively the same thing in the Minto context. The inability of government to adequately distinguish between the often-contradictory aims of each has contributed to much of the confusion in Minto. Likewise, the constantly shifting policy objectives in Minto and in public housing renewal generally have exacerbated an already sensitive and distressing situation for tenants.

The constantly shifting nature of policy and processes in Minto over the past six years or so has likewise contributed to distrust and a gradual disengagement of many residents and community groups from the official process. Moving from intensive engagement of the Minto community through the ITM Program in 1998 and an expectation that this would be a pre-cursor to a NIP-style upgrade of houses and the estate and environs, to a total demolition of the estate is a policy turnaround that many who participated in this study have not come to terms with. Unfortunately, by the time the Department’s ‘Masterplanning’ process was fully underway in late 2002, the stores of trust and goodwill were already low. The relationship was further damaged by the inadequate processes employed by the Department in the Valley Vista relocation and demolition (first stage). Even with apparent goodwill on the part of many in the Department, the processes of ‘consultation’ employed at the Masterplanning Stage in 2002-03 stage became largely a token exercise with a pre-set agenda, from which many residents report they finally withdrew.

In the observation of this researcher, ‘participation’ in developing appropriate responses to community issues has most often occurred outside of or even in spite of official departmental structures set up for this purpose. In contrast to official structures, groups such a the MRAG and Remembering Minto were essentially set up and controlled by residents in an attempt to try to make sense of and respond to the changing nature of messages and policies coming from the Department about its intentions in the estate. The MRAG also came to the fore when other structures became unworkable for them (e.g. Healthy Minto). Residents have kept a tight control over who in official positions are invited to attend their meetings due to negative experiences in previous groups such as ‘Healthy Minto’ which they believe came to support the Department’s rather than their interests. These came to be perceived to be generally different, especially after the redevelopment was announced.

However, the MRAG was consistently promoted and openly accessible to all residents, and my observations of the discussions was that they were skilfully and consultatively run, with a diversity of views encouraged and incorporated in all decisions that this researcher has witnessed. The group did not fall into a common trap of community organisations of being dominated by a clique of
certain resident interests. This was due to the skilful chairing by a local resident and the apparent good will of those who attended, as well as the resourcing of groups such as the St Vincent de Paul Animation Project, the Franciscan Fathers who lived on the estate, and other agencies trusted by MRAG members to attend their meetings such as the HCAP worker. The role of the Independent Tenant Advocate has also been important in this regard.

Much of what is best about the participation processes in Minto has been run by residents, and, as with many community development processes, has occurred in opposition to the official partnership processes that have been put in place. Residents have had to advocate strongly and repeatedly to gain relatively minor resources from various official funding sources, e.g. to have Kids Park preserved from redevelopment in the final Master Plan. Remembering Minto funds or to maintain what is precious to them. They have where necessary been oppositional to the official processes undertaken by the Department in which they originally participated (e.g. assistance for the Durbin Way Residents who sort to maintain their homes, but were ultimately unsuccessful as noted above).

Other resident-led processes have essentially been running in a ‘parallel process’ to those led by the Department. While the Minto Redevelopment Reference Group meets to discuss its’ latest survey or options for the Masterplan, the MRAG continues to assist residents to have a genuine voice in this and other forums, to facilitate individual and systemic advocacy on residents’ behalf.

Over the past 12 months there has been a genuine attempt by Departmental officers leading the redevelopment process in Minto to come to a better understanding of the impacts on residents, and to mitigate these where ever possible. As noted above, there has been considerable integrity and compassion on the part of many of these officers, and this has led to the acceptance and implementation of a number of MRAG or MHC recommendations in relation to procedural changes in the Sarah Precinct.

Trust has been building steadily though joint participation in these types of forums, but there is still much ground to make up. Such trust must be rebuilt before genuine ‘partnership’ can begin.

There is an opportunity to bring together two processes (the official redevelopment process, and the resident-led and initiated process) together at the present time. However, the parameters of the redevelopment process must be reassessed in partnership with the community if this is to occur.

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\[349\] The land is owned by Council.
10.6 HOUSING STOCK IN MINTO AND NSW

It is likely that there is a need to retain far more than the currently projected 20 to 30 per cent public housing projected in the redeveloped areas. Resident preference to return to Minto, as well as the suburb’s proximity to services, shops, transport and an expanding local labour market all make this an increasingly important area in which to retain as much public housing as possible.

Further, the projected net loss of stock to NSW arising from such redevelopment may not be sustainable in the current climate if this becomes the model for redevelopment. Although there are likely to be significant improvements on the original Masterplan if the ‘Optimised Masterplan’ is adopted as the preferred option, it is yet to be seen if the recently adopted ‘no net loss of public housing’ objective can be met in relation to these types of radical redevelopments. Close scrutiny will be needed to ensure that this objective can be met, and careful economic evaluation of alternative options to ensure that there is and effective and efficient outcomes from estate redevelopment.

10.7 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

A resident-led approach to research that involves key stakeholders (e.g. government, community services) in genuine partnership will uncover issues and responses that may not otherwise be understood or developed.

Such an approach will enrich the renewal process, and enhance its chance of success if the real objective of the process is ‘community renewal’.

I Feel sorry for the people that have moved and are moving. I Hope they still come back!

Primary Student, Sarah Precinct 2004
11 REMEMBERING MINTO

Top/ Bottom: Valley Vista 2002
It wasn’t just a place, it was a community, and that’s what they broke up (ex-Valley Vista Resident, May 2003).

**Remembering Minto** is a resident-initiated project strongly supported by services\(^\text{350}\) that seeks to capture the individual and collective memories of a community facing massive change. It aims to validate the experiences of the people who have made Minto their home. These experiences are often in stark contrast to the way the area and its people are portrayed by those from outside. The project’s value has been recently recognised by the Department of Housing, who have made a substantial grant available to continue the work that residents have been engaged in for the past two years.

*Remembering Minto* participants are collecting the stories, photos and video footage of a wide range of residents before and after they are relocated so as to preserve something of for themselves, their children and for the wider community. Some of the photos and interviews informed an initial presentation by services working with the community in mid-2003, around 12 months after the redevelopment of Valley Vista was announced.\(^\text{351}\) The final chapter of this report draws on this presentation and its reflections of many Minto residents on their experiences of the first stage redevelopment.

In their presentation, Foreman and Power (2003) noted that the process of redevelopment can be

...an opportunity to work together with the community in a respectful and renewing way. Yet there is another side to this process. A side that is rarely acknowledged. An alternate story, if you like. A story of displacement, of what is lost and the impact of that loss. There is a real living, breathing community in Minto. I have spent some time over the last 10 months listening to and learning from resident’s experiences. They have challenged me to think differently. I have spoken to about 30 per cent of residents that have be removed from the first precinct, and about 60 others through Resident Action Group and other community meetings. Their words tell the impact far better than mine could. And I quote:

"(When you move...) you lose your friends., you get really emotional... you’ve lost your community"

"I’ve been dreaming about bulldozers and the kids have been crying..."

"I was supposed to be here for life....I don’t want to leave"

\(^{350}\) Services currently supporting the project include Animation Project, Franciscan Fathers, Macarthur Area Health Service, Minto Family Centre, Macquarie Fields TAFE Outreach, Minto Library, Information and Cultural Exchange.

"They've gone because they have to go...but they have gone with hurt"

"We are very passionate about our area and now feel that community spirit and morale is being lost."

"Sometimes when I'm standing in my garden at Valley Vista and all the cars drive past it feels like I'm an animal in a zoo"

"The community is really being ripped to pieces"

"We've lost heart (in our garden) now, once we heard what's going to happen. Can't be bothered doing anything. We had some great times out here. Neighbours would come over - like a big family"

"Our neighbours are more than neighbours, we've become friends and we keep an eye on each others home..."

"I've been here 11 years and I chose to be here...I want to live here, I felt I could call it home"

And conversations with people who had who had just moved:

"I'm feeling tired, distressed, stressed and frustrated...there are still repairs needed on my house - there is no lock on the kitchen window, no key in the lounge for window, toilet dripping, tap not dripping but flowing, no security door... (DOH Officer) came around a week after I moved...I respected her so I didn't make a move but I've been waiting...its been 4 weeks now...even if I live in housing...I want to live in a sweet, sweet home"

"I'll miss my birds, I know the birds and really enjoy the sounds. The magpies come out when they hear my voice...I know they'll miss me"

"My son is so upset that he doesn't have anyone to walk to school with now..."

"I miss Minto, the children particularly miss Minto. The house is good but everything was close in Minto... no get togethers like in Minto...I had no trouble - I don't know why they say its bad"

"If they knew so long ago why didn't they involve us in the decision"
"Its so lonely now, quiet as a cemetery..."

"I really miss being so close to the shops when I could wheel my groceries home, now it costs me $12 in taxi fares...I really have to budget for more transport costs. The other day I thought I’d run out of toilet paper and I thought oh no I don’t want to have to go and buy it at the corner shop, its too expensive...lucky I found two rolls"

"Because our backyards were small, they’d all play in the park in the middle together. Once they’d see one kid another would come out and you’d spend hours watching them...I miss the kids coming in and out of the house"

‘You could rely on anyone in the street and that takes years and years to build’

"Suddenly your lifetime is torn up, its losing the community that you’ve made, that you’ve strived to make, the friendships, you’ll lose contact, you’ll lose that closeness"

"My daughter gave her job up when we moved. She walks late shifts and she felt safe walking home from Minto station because she knew everyone...she doesn’t feel safe where we live now and its in private!"

"Its lonely...I’m right in the middle of private...if you got depressed you always had a friend close by, the services...The kids, the people are more friendly in Minto, its very hard to put into words"

Foreman and Power (2003) also maintained that there was ‘another layer or dimension of destruction’.

For a number of years the community has come together over many and varied community projects from community policing to community gardens, to reclaiming a public space to fundraising for charities outside of Minto. In the words of one resident "Minto had become a community people wanted to move to". Since the re-development commenced I have seen the collapse of some projects and the dispiriting of others. And witnessed the pain this has caused the community.

From my experience residents’ views on the redevelopment are complex and mixed. There are those that do not want to move, those that are resigned to moving but would prefer to stay and believe they have no choice, those that want to
move but have not had the opportunity or information to reflect on the impact of the move and those that genuinely want to move. To me many are saying yes the physical environment needs some changes but talk with us about what needs to happen, work with us don’t make a radical decision to bulldoze our homes without consulting us.

The impact on individuals, families and communities is very complex and it’s not all good. There is loss and grief, and a real reduction in quality of life.

Some of this can feel overwhelming and be difficult to hear.

The presenters emphasised a number of measures that would have made a significant difference to residents undergoing the redevelopment process. These were:

- Reliable and consistent information
- Practical things done properly - repairs, removal, rent and sign-ups
- Being treated with respect - being a name not a number
- Acknowledgement of what is being lost
- Developing a climate of trust and lack of fear of being harassed if they spoke up
- Guidelines consistently adhered to and promises fulfilled.
- Being consulted before the decision was made, genuinely talking with the residents about what needs to happen to renew the community of Minto.352

Foreman and Power concluded with four phrases or themes that they had heard in relation to the redevelopment:

- The importance of truth
- The dignity of speaking out and of being heard
- The difference respect can make
- The acknowledgement of community

They noted that these ‘consistent themes or threads echoed in many ways through many conversations’ with residents in Minto.

One part of the work already completed by residents is the video, Remembering Minto 1976-2003: The Story Behind Valley Vista. The video captures the voices of those who were in the process of being displaced by the first stages of the redevelopment, and was written and filmed by residents. It concludes that,

Over 26 years, several thousand people have called Minto home. A community has been built, families grown, connections, networks and a history forged. Not always perfect, it has been a special place or many and holds many memories and stories. Sometimes those outside Minto have not seen the beauty, diversity and community that many who live here experience. Some only realise it when we leave. The people of Minto want others to ‘see us as we really are’.

352 Ibid.
12. CONCLUSION

To the family Centre
thank you’s for listening to us kids.
'Social Mix’, ‘Partnerships’, ‘Sustainable Communities’, ‘Participation’ - the terms are very familiar to anyone engaged in public housing renewal or regeneration. They signify not only an approach to policy and practice, but also a set of widely accepted urban orthodoxies. As USA theorist Goetz (2000) points out, these words are used as a justification for a whole set of actions carried out ‘with’ and frequently ‘on’ some of the poorest neighbourhoods in countries such as the Australia, the USA and Great Britain.

These terms have permeated government policy statements in relation to Minto public housing estate as the first estate in NSW to undergo this type of radical redevelopment. But what do they mean? Do these words signal a renewed commitment to community participation and social equity? Will they lead to the stated policy outcomes in the long-term despite some short-term pain for those residents relocated and waiting to know what their future holds? Or do they serve as a distraction from significant social issues such as failure of federal, state and local governments to deal with the desperate need for affordable housing in cities like Sydney, and the impact of the state’s progressive withdrawal from providing directly for its most vulnerable citizens? Whom do the actions carried out under this discourse actually benefit? And how do we measure the relative costs and benefits, social and financial, for those most directly affected and for the wider community?

This first-stage report has used a participatory methodology to examine some of the key issues arising from the early stages of the Minto redevelopment currently underway.

It finds that there have been many problems associated with the initial stages of the redevelopment from a resident perspective, and serious cause for concern about the immediate social and economic impacts upon a significant proportion of those in the redevelopment precincts. The lack of a proper social impact assessment or planning framework prior to the redevelopment has exacerbated these factors, some of which could have been avoided or minimised if such an evaluation had been conducted. The lack of an EIS or, failing this, a comprehensive SIA also meant that residents and their advocates have had to lobby or negotiate for mitigation that should have been theirs as a right. Good will on the part of the Department at senior officer level has led to a range of concessions and assistance being provided after the disastrous first stage (Valley Vista) redevelopment, which has eased the Sarah redevelopment. However, these have only partly offset the immediate loss, grief, and distress of a significant number of residents.
The study also finds that there is serious cause for concern about potential social and economic costs to the wider community arising from the redevelopment in a broader sense. This includes the net loss of stock that will arise from the redevelopment, the loss of land in an area that is well-serviced and is appreciating considerably in value, loss of infrastructure built up over many years, as well as the cost of externalities such as accumulated social and physical capital built up by the community over many years, and any ongoing social and financial costs to the community from long-term social or health impacts. These issues would also have been addressed in an EIS.

Moreover, Minto is an area where public housing should be located due to its excellent access to services, transport and shopping. It is highly valued by residents for these reasons, as well as the sense of community and attachment which many experience, Minto has an excellent base from which to form partnerships in its strong resident organisations, services and voluntary groups. Further, it is well positioned locationally to benefit from improved linkages to the Sydney labour market that have arisen from the relocation of industry over the past decade, as well as its’ proximity to the M5 and the Western Sydney Orbital, currently under construction. Significant appreciation in land values and service, infrastructure and economic improvements in recent years create a positive forecast for Campbelltown’s social and economic future.

It is yet to be assessed whether the proposed benefits of the redevelopment will in fact lead to a net result that is positive in social and financial terms.

Certainly, the evaluative literature that exists indicates that government policy justifications for the redevelopment are far from conclusive in their outcomes in other Australian states, or in the USA or UK. It would appear at this stage that such justifications are a somewhat unsubstantial premise for such a radical solution to the problems, real and perceived, of communities like Minto.

This study therefore forms the basis for a more detailed evaluation of the immediate and longer-term costs and benefits of such an exercise to those immediately affected and to the wider community. Some potential frameworks for considering these impacts have been proposed in line with issues related to urban sustainability. This will be the subject of a further report in early 2005.

Finally it should be said that, like any research process, this one has not been perfect, though the researchers have attempted to be detailed, rigorous and ethical in their approach and reporting. Nonetheless, as a participatory research process concerned for socially just outcomes for those most affected by current urban renewal practice, it has of necessity privileged the voices of those who have had least power in the process.
The need for such a counterbalance to institutionally commissioned research is noted by post-welfare state theorists such as Adam Jamrozik\textsuperscript{353} who argue that:

...policy-relevant research has served increasingly to validate government policies - policies in progress or about to be introduced - in a way not necessarily intended by the researcher...Increasingly, too, research methods in some policy-relevant research have tended to reflect the value position of policy-makers, accepting or validating, as it were, social policies in which inequality of resources allocation is justified by claims of economic necessity.

Given the power imbalance in the Minto redevelopment process described in this report, and the paucity of independent evaluative literature noted by other studies, the researchers can perhaps be forgiven for those times when the concerns of residents and services working with them predominate.

It is hoped that this report will attract a robust and constructive critique, and itself add to and stimulate further evaluative literature on this important policy area.

\textsuperscript{353} Jamrozik 2003, pp. 41-43
ATTACHMENT A:

RESIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
Minto Resident Questionnaire 2003

PART A: GENERAL

Housing Details:  
A. Precinct: 1) Sarah 2) Dunlop 3) Caroline  
B. Street: .......................  
C. Housing type 1) Cottage 2) T/House 3) Other  
Respondent details  
D.: 1) Male 2) Female  
E. Age: 1) <25 2) 25-39 3) 40-54 4) 55-69 5) 70+  

1. How long have you lived in Minto? 1) <1yr 2) 1-2yrs 3) 3-5yrs 4) 6-10yrs 5) 11-20 yrs 6) 20+ yrs 7) 25+ years  
2(a). Do you have children living with you? 1) Yes 2) No  
2(b) How many? 1 2 3 4 5 6+  
2(c) How old are they? 1) 0-4 No. .... 2) 5-12 No. .... 3) 13-18 No. .... 4) Adult No. ....  
2(d) (If at school) Which school do your children go to (circle more than one answer if needed)? 1) Campbellfield Primary 2) Minto Public 3) Sarah Redfern Primary 4) Sarah Redfern High 5) The Grange 6) Leumeah High 7) Ingleburn High 8) Other  
2(e) Do you have family in Minto or nearby suburbs? 1) Yes 2) No  
2(f) Comment (e.g. who? where?): .................................................................  

PART B: ATTITUDE TO MINTO AND THE REDEVELOPMENT

3. What are the best things about living in Minto for you or your family?  
3(a) ..........................................................................................................................  
3(b) ..........................................................................................................................  
4. What are the worst things about living in Minto for you or your family?  
4(a) ..........................................................................................................................  
4(b) ..........................................................................................................................  
5(a) On the whole, would you say that you feel more positive (happy) or negative (unhappy) about living in Minto at the moment? 1) Positive 2) Negative 3) Neutral/Don’t Care  
5(b) Why? ..................................................................................................................  

...........................................
6(a) The redevelopment of Minto was announced on 30 May 2002, about 18 months ago. Did you live in Minto when the redevelopment was announced? 1) Yes 2) No
(If ‘NO’, go to Qn 8(a) below. If ‘YES’ continue to Qn 6(b))
6(b) Thinking back 18 months or so (before the redevelopment was announced), on the whole did you feel more positive (happy) or negative (unhappy) about living in Minto then?
1) Positive 2) Negative 3) Neutral/ Don’t Know
6(c) Do you feel any differently now (since the announcement)? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don’t Know
8(d) (Note any additional comments about current impacts)………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………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PART C: HOUSING AND LOCATIONAL CHOICE

11(a) When applying for public housing, did you choose to live in Minto? 1) Yes 2) No

11(b) Why /why not? ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

12(a) Thinking back 18 months or so (before the redevelopment was announced) had you intended to stay in Minto in the long-term? 1) Yes 2) No

12(b) Why /why not? ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

12(c) How long did you intend to stay in Minto 1) <2yrs 2) 2-5 years 3) 5-10 years 4) >10 yrs

13(a) If you had a choice, would you want to stay in Minto now? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don’t Know

13(b) Why /why not? ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

14(a) If you had a choice, would you want to come back to Minto after the redevelopment? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don’t Know

14(b) Why /why not? ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

14(c) (For those who responded ‘YES’ to 14b) How likely do you think it is that you will come back after the redevelopment? 1) Likely 2) Unlikely 3) Don’t Know

14(d) Comments: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I am going to read you some statements. Could you please tell me if you ‘agree’, ‘disagree’ or are ‘undecided’ about each of the statements, and how strongly you feel?

15(a) I would want to stay in Minto if my house were improved or done up.

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Undecided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

15(b) I would want to stay in Minto if I were offered a better house here.

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Undecided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

15(c) I would want to leave Minto even if I were offered a better or more suitable home.

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Undecided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

15(d) I would purchase a home in Minto if I could.

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Undecided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

15(e) There are things about Minto make me want to leave even if I had better housing.

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Undecided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

PART D: INFORMATION, CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

16(a) Before taking part in the survey today, did you know about the redevelopment project happening in Minto? 1) Yes 2) No

16(b) Briefly, what have you heard about the changes that will be happening in your area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………I
16(c) In relation to the redevelopment of Minto, how well informed would you say you are?
   1) Well-informed  2) Know enough  3) Do not know enough  4) Know little or nothing

17(a) Do you feel as if you have had any involvement in the redevelopment so far? 1)Y  2) N
17(b) Do you feel that you have had any say or control over what has happened so far?
   1) Y  2) N
17(c) Do you think that you will have the opportunity to have a say over what happens in future to your area in the redevelopment? 1) Y  2) N

18(a) Do you think you get enough information about the redevelopment from the Department of Housing?   1) Yes   2) No   3) Don’t Know
18(b) Describe: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
18(c) Have you raised any concerns about the redevelopment with the Department? 1) Y  2) N
18(d) (If yes) What does the Department do when you raise your concern(s)? …………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
18(e) Have you attended any meetings, BBQs, etc specifically about the redevelopment hosted by the Department in the past 12 months? 1) Yes  2) No
18(f) (If yes) What was your experience? ………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
18(g) (If no) Why not?……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
Would you be interested in:
19 (a) Coming to information meetings for residents run by RAG?  1) Yes  2) No
19 (b) Being sent updated information sheets after meetings?  1) Yes  2) No
19 (c) Do you want to be notified of future RAG meetings?  1) Yes  2) No
19 (d) Would you prefer:  1) Sat afternoon  2) Mon evening  3) Fri Lunchtime

20(a). Do you have any concerns that you would like the RAG to raise with the Department specifically about the redevelopment? ……………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
FIELD NOTES AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
ATTACHMENT B:

INFORMATION KIT TO INTERVIEWERS AND RESIDENT PARTICIPANTS
INFORMATION KIT

Thank you for giving your time to conduct some surveys as part of a study into the current redevelopment of Minto public housing estate. The study aims to:

- Look at the current and future social impacts of the redevelopment of Minto;
- Better understand the views and needs of residents about the redevelopment of their area;
- Provide input to the redevelopment process in a way that leads to the best outcomes for the residents of Minto.

The survey is being conducted by the Minto Resident Action Group (RAG) with the assistance of the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, UWS.

A range of services are also assisting with the study, including NCOSS, NSW Tenants Union, Shelter NSW, Macarthur Legal Centre, South Western Area Tenancy Service, St Vincent de Paul and the Animation Project, Burnside, South Westerns Sydney Area Health Service, Franciscans, the Macarthur Housing Forum, and others.

The survey will be conducted between Monday 20 October and Friday 31 October 2003, and the results will be analysed by the end of November 2003.

We will be aiming to interview around 350 households as part of the survey, that is:

- All of Sarah Precinct (the next area to be redeveloped)
- All of Dunlop Precinct (one of the last areas to be redeveloped), and
- The Southern section of Caroline Precinct (houses to be retained at this stage).

It is important that we COMPLETE AS MANY SURVEYS AS POSSIBLE in the study precincts:

- To give all residents the opportunity to participate and to raise concerns that they may have;
- To provide a reliable sample for any conclusions drawn in general, and any comparisons between precincts.

This information kit includes:

- A letter of introduction to give to all residents, and to leave for those not home at the time of surveying;
- A map and detail of your allocated area (shaded area and written instructions);
- A record of interview separate from the interview form to be filled in for all houses in your allocated area as a complete record of addresses (eg to assist with call backs);
- A separate sheet to note the addresses of anyone who would like more information on the RAG.
- An introduction to be read to respondents at the start of the survey.

Please read the attached survey instructions carefully before you begin.

HAPPY SURVEYING!
SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pick up your survey kit from Kevin and Dan’s home, 9 Walker Way, Minto (9824 5405).

2. Review your survey kit carefully.

3. Check with Adele (0421 545 833) or Judy (0405 143 418) if you have any questions (e.g. re your survey partners), or any problems during the survey process.

4. Do a first call around to all the households in your area - if resident not at home, leave a letter of introduction - you have been allocated between 20 and 30 households. It is hoped you will get most if not all of those that are occupied.

5. If they are busy, make an appointment to come back if possible, or encourage them to come to Ko Ko’s (Guernsey Ave Minto) to be interviewed on either:

3.30 to 5.30 pm on Monday 27 October, or 9am to 12 noon on Friday 31 October.

6. Do a second call around, preferably at a different time of day, to get as many in your area as possible that you missed. It is very important to get as many surveys as possible for reliability and to enable all residents to participate. Any that you don’t get will need to be done by another interviewer.

7. Make sure you complete the ‘Record of Interview Addresses and Outcomes’ for every house you call at, even if they are not at home, or refuse to be surveyed. This is kept separate to survey forms, and will not identify a respondent with their survey. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR OUR LOGISTICS.

8. Also make sure that you note the names and addresses of those who wish to have more information on the RAG on the separate sheet provided.

9. When you have done as much surveying as you can (e.g. your 2 days), PLEASE RETURN ALL COMPLETED SURVEYS AND YOUR INFORMATION KIT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to Kevin and Dan’s. This will help to ensure that your surveys are completed by someone else by 31 October.
MINTO RESIDENT SURVEY INTRODUCTION (to be read to residents)

Hello, my name is .... I’m from the Minto Resident Action Group. We’re doing a survey about the redevelopment of Minto. We are not from the Department of Housing.

This survey is a very important part of understanding how the Minto community feels about the redevelopment, and what the impacts of the redevelopment on the community may be. The results of the survey will be used to get across what the people of Minto really feel about the redevelopment to the Department.

It is also being done with the help of the University of Western Sydney and services like St V de P.

The survey should take around 10 minutes. It’s completely confidential - there’s nothing on the survey form to show who you are.

You probably know that Department of Housing announced the redevelopment of the Minto estate on in May last year. This started with the demolition of Valley Vista precinct. Your area will be the next to be redeveloped, some time next year.
LIST OF RESIDENTS WHO WISH TO BE MORE INFORMED ABOUT RAG
(NB: Keep separate to questionnaire so as not to identify respondent)
Dear Resident,

The Minto Resident Action Group would like you to be a part of our survey on the redevelopment of Minto public housing estate. The study aims to:
- Look at the current and future impacts of the redevelopment;
- Better understand the views and needs of residents about the redevelopment of your area;
- Make sure there is the best possible outcome for the residents of Minto.

The survey is being done by the Minto Resident Action Group (RAG) with the help of the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, University of Western Sydney. A number of community services are also helping with the study.

The survey is being carried out from **Monday 20 October to Friday 14 November 2003**. The results will be analysed and available by the end of November 2003.

We are aiming to interview around 350 households as part of the survey, i.e:
- All of Sarah Precinct (the next area to be redeveloped)
- All of Dunlop Precinct (one of the last areas to be redeveloped), and
- The Southern section of Caroline Precinct (houses to be retained at this stage).

We may have called around while you were out or not available, but would still like to make sure you have the chance to be involved. We will be calling back to your area on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th November 2003, so if we have missed you this time we will try to call back. Otherwise, you can contact Judy Stubbs (0405 143 418) to make a time to be interviewed.

If you have any questions, please contact me (0421 545 833) or Judy Stubbs (0405 143 418).

Regards,

Adele Goodwin
Chairperson
Minto Resident Action Group
RECORD OF INTERVIEW ADDRESSES AND OUTCOMES (TO BE KEPT SEPARATE FROM SURVEYS)

(NB: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO COMPLETE THIS SHEET FOR EVERY HOUSE IN YOUR AREA.
Also note that it may take several call backs to interview the majority of those in your allocated area)

Note every address that you have been designated in the first column. Tick the appropriate box for each address that you attempt to interview (for example, tick “Survey Completed” for a successful interview). Where you successfully complete an interview in a call-back, remember to upgrade the status of the address to “Survey Completed”. Also note where an interpreter is needed for a call-back.
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<th>Address, Street &amp; Precinct</th>
<th>Survey Completed</th>
<th>Future appointment made (date &amp; time)</th>
<th>Respondent refused to participate</th>
<th>House appeared vacant</th>
<th>No-one home - left a letter</th>
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ATTACHMENT C:

SUMMARY OF 2002 MRAG & DOH SURVEY RESULTS
RAG survey - June 2002

- Over 40% have lived in Valley Vista for over 10 years
- 12% 5-8 Years
- half have other family in Minto
- 80% planned to live in their home at Minto a long time
- less than 20% don’t want to stay in Valley Vista, 50% definitely want to stay, 14% unsure and 20% might stay where they are transferred to if it was better.
- Almost 60% were scared, unhappy or didn’t have enough information to comment on how they felt about the re-development
- Comments: How long before we move? If I’m disabled will my new house suit me? Will we have enough bedrooms? Is the Department going to give us true information

Ian Brown’s (DOH) survey - 30 July 2002

- 38% pleased to move, 32% unhappy to move, 30% neither
- issues of concern: relocation of children and schooling, loss of friends and neighbours, loss of close proximity to shops, transport and schools
- when asked whether felt they would be better off:
  - 77% said yes based on the hope of improved accommodation, 19% said they didn’t know, 4% said they felt would be worse off.
  - 67% want to move back to Minto