

**Establishing a Federal Presence in Australian cities:
Reflections on the role of the Department of Urban and Regional
Development in urban regeneration in the 1970s**

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Development in urban regeneration in the 1970s**

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Key words: Urban Renewal, DURD, Sydney, Federal Urban Policy

Running head: Establishing a Federal Presence in Australian cities

Abstract

Urban rehabilitation, regeneration and renewal have intermittently been identified within federal (as well as state) policy circles as central to the functioning of Australian cities since at least the 1940s. This paper adds to existing knowledge by exploring the role of the Federal Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) in the 1970s in facilitating a series of urban renewal and regeneration projects in Australia's largest cities. The paper utilises previously unavailable data sources. Drawing upon ministerial correspondence and minutes recently out of confidential embargo, the genesis of an holistic urban regeneration agenda is explored. The paper traces the ideological foundations of and approaches to federal intervention at a time marked by disillusionment with the comprehensive redevelopment paradigm. It explores the relationships and tensions apparent between and within different levels of government in establishing a federal presence. The focus is on the relationships and processes which surround the rejuvenation of three inner city neighbourhoods in Sydney: Waterloo, Glebe and Woolloomooloo. The significance of the interventions is considered to lie primarily in the pioneering of an all-of-government approach that repays study at the present time when a renewed federal interest in Australian cities is evident.

Introduction

The role of federal governments in directing the growth and management of Australian cities has attracted both discussion and debate as interest in the possibilities and realities of strategic intervention has waxed and waned since the 1940s (Badcock, 1984; Jones, 1979; Oakley, 2004; Painter, 1979; Parkin, 1982; Stilwell, 1993; Stretton, 1989; Troy, 1978a). With the election of the Rudd Labor government in 2007, urban issues again appear to be on the federal policy agenda (through, for example, the establishment of the Major Cities Unit and the National Housing Supply Council).

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the internal machinations, ideas and objectives of the Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) period (1973-1975). Complementing previous accounts of the DURD era (Carey, 1986; Lloyd & Troy, 1981; Orchard, 1987, 1992; Troy 1978b), the focus is explicitly on inner city urban renewal projects. The details of these projects have received less critical attention, especially in relation to the objectives of DURD and the interactions between agencies at a time when government was beginning to comprehend the nature of, and appropriate responses to, an 'inner city' problem.

This paper draws on ministerial correspondence, departmental papers and minutes recently out of confidential embargo to explore aspects of DURD's intervention in inner city urban renewal programs in the early-mid 1970s. Following a brief review of urban regeneration in the post-war period, we explore the establishment of DURD. Then, we review three inner city redevelopment projects in Sydney, which facilitated federal intervention in planning and development. The case studies provide insights into the multiplicity of issues raised and policy challenges confronted at the time. The larger significance of this historical investigation is to underscore the importance of all-of-government approaches to urban policy that should be regarded as one important legacy of the DURD experiment.

Urban Regeneration in Post-War Australia

The most intense Commonwealth intervention into urban issues prior to the establishment of DURD and apart from the development of Canberra was the Department of Post War Reconstruction in 1942. Broadly embracing a Keynesian welfare interventionist philosophy, a key mission brief of the Department was to establish a national housing strategy and associated urban development reforms in response to the dual problems of inner city slums and outer suburban sprawl. This resulted in the negotiation of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) in 1945 and parallel new state planning legislation (Davison *et al.*, 2001). By the 1960s there was an increased restlessness with the continuing ability of such measures to satisfactorily address issues then facing Australian inner cities (Lloyd and Troy, 1981). In large measure this reflected parallel processes through the early post war period of spontaneous private rehabilitation of 'slum' areas in inner Sydney and Melbourne; together with more often unsympathetic large scale renewal initiatives harking back to the older modernist ideals (Logan, 1985). The first wave of inner city gentrification led rehabilitation signposted a more incremental pathway to area improvement and was led by middle class residents in places like Paddington in Sydney and by migrants who moved into inner city housing to be near family and because there had been few other options open to them in the housing shortage in Australian cities after the war.

Accompanying the growth of private and uncoordinated rehabilitation in Sydney and Melbourne, and drawing upon a burgeoning international literature on urban regeneration and critique of traditional state models (e.g. Jane Jacobs in North America, Peter Self in the UK and Hugh Stretton in Australia), the late 1960s and early 1970s saw public agitation for new approaches to the regeneration process. Some, but not all, of the protest was by middle class residents. Inner suburbs of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide all saw significant public resistance to conventional state planning and rehabilitation policy geared to comprehensive

redevelopment and forged out of planning and housing reform ideology from the early 20th century (Power, 1969).

By the late 1960s public unease over the state of Australia's inner cities and the attitudes of state governments which veered between neglect and heavy-handedness was reflected in the Federal (Labor) Opposition call for a federal commitment in cities and the need for new approaches to urban renewal. The inner city 'problem' was characterised by rapid price inflation, the dislocation of low-income residents through gentrification, the sale of public land, and the demolition of swathes of dwellings for freeways and commercial developments (Kendig, 1979). With the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in December 1972, urban affairs were once again on the Federal policy agenda. Tom Uren was appointed Minister for Urban and Regional Development and a new Department charged with implementing the Labor Party's urban agenda, including urban regeneration.

Urban Regeneration 1973-1975 - the Initiatives of the DURD

DURD 'formally opened for business' in January 1973 (Lloyd & Troy, 1981, 44). It took much of the first year to delineate the new department's tasks, develop an appropriate organisational structure and appoint staff. The Department was fully staffed by December 1973 and ready 'to become professional where [it had] in the past frequently been amateurish' with the setting of time targets and establishing of priorities seeking to replace an initial rather ad hoc approach to decision making.¹

The policy and program objectives of the new department were expansive and ambitious and included the growth centres/new cities program and the urban sewerage program. Decisions on urban regeneration were among those DURD had been forced to take on the run. By the end of 1973, work was already underway towards providing Federal Government assistance for several urban regeneration projects. Most of the projects had been set in train prior to the

election of the Labor government and did not necessarily align sweetly with all the policy objectives and strategic visioning set out by DURD. Nevertheless, these projects were identified by DURD as significant and relevant to its central policy aspirations and, more importantly, to improving the physical and social conditions of certain inner city areas. The projects were viewed pragmatically as vehicles to achieve better urban outcomes that may have otherwise failed to come to fruition.

Within DURD, the States Division was responsible for these projects, as well as the development of metropolitan strategies for the major cities.² By early 1974, the Division's work covered urban regeneration projects being considered or implemented at Waterloo, Glebe and Wollloomooloo in Sydney. Concurrent with these practical 'on the ground' projects the Division was also tasked with developing an inner urban policy.

The urban regeneration projects in Glebe and Woolloomooloo were conceived as examples of principles required in a more sensitive approach to inner urban rehabilitation relevant to other places in Australia, despite the fact that - perhaps contrary to conventional wisdom - none represented the pure renewal vision of DURD (i.e. coordinated redevelopment centred on the maintenance of the urban character, the promotion of social justice concerns, such as access of low-income earners to housing, and the coordination of infrastructure and other services (Reddel, 2004, UPR, 1987)), given the sites' histories of renewal initiatives prior to the election of the Whitlam Government.³

Despite the fact that the sites of urban renewal did not align perfectly with the overall inner city objectives of DURD (due primarily to the fact that they were 'live' before the election of the Whitlam government), the projects did seek to address three central concerns facing inner city regions as identified by DURD. First, that rising CBD land costs had led to commercial redevelopment of inner urban land and an associated depletion of inner urban housing. Second, was an additional threat to existing housing posed by major transport projects,

notably freeways. Third, was a lack of opportunity identified for resident participation in the planning processes affecting their neighbourhoods. Other issues included the increasing value of inner urban housing because of redevelopment pressures and competition from the middle-income groups that had moved into the areas. The stock of low cost housing in inner areas had been significantly reduced and the most serious problem facing inner urban areas was said to be the threat to their economically disadvantaged residents 'who were small in number and lacked a financial voice'.⁴

According to DURD, threats to inner urban areas also came from 'often unsympathetic developments' by public housing authorities that failed to recognise 'the individuality, aspirations or lifestyles' of inner city residents. There had been a 'lack of sympathetic or visionary planning approaches' by state and local planning authorities⁵. DURD acknowledged some responsibility on the part of the Commonwealth for the existing situation, perhaps a veiled critique of former conservative governments and their lack of interest in the urban environment. It was further argued that there was an 'apparent inability of the three tiers of government to come to terms with each other' to fulfil the aspirations of the nation's inner urban communities⁶. DURD's capacity to recognise the heterogeneity of inner urban communities was seen as one of its most important attributes at that time (Oakley, 2004).

DURD identified four broad topic areas where extensive investigation was required for successful urban renewal: inner city analysis, planning and coordination, housing, and transport. It also foreshadowed the possibility of developing inner urban policy in conjunction with the Area Improvement Program (AIP), and the need to monitor and evaluate the urban rehabilitation projects already underway. State bodies such as the NSW Housing Commission had reportedly welcomed discussions on specific inner urban problems. This is not to suggest that all discussions were entirely congenial. The negotiations over specific projects allowed DURD the opportunity to communicate the Commonwealth's concerns, stimulate problem-

solving by other bodies and encourage a coordinated approach by all levels of government and citizen groups.

Case Studies of Urban Renewal

This section provides an overview of three urban renewal projects in Sydney where DURD played a significant role: Waterloo, Glebe and Woolloomooloo. The projects offered learning opportunities for the Department and yardsticks upon which to base future policy and projects. The focus is on the interplay of various stakeholders involved in these early urban renewal projects. The order of the case study sites reflects the overall influence of DURD on the management and redevelopment of the sites at its demise in 1975, with Waterloo remaining in a state of flux with limited action on the ground, Woolloomooloo having achieved the most coordinated urban outcomes and Glebe resting in between. The case studies are then used as the foundation for some contemporary reflections of the role of the Federal government in urban policy.

The Waterloo Project

In April 1972 the NSW Housing Commission issued a proclamation under the state Housing Act to resume and redevelop 11 hectares of land, south of Redfern Park, in Waterloo. Over the next year, it developed an internally preferred redevelopment proposal that involved demolishing 500 existing low-rise dwellings (mainly terraced housing), and replacing them with 827 modern low-rise dwellings and six 30-storey tower blocks. Community opposition to the plan was fierce with the South Sydney Residents Action Group (SSRAG) leading a campaign against the project that resulted in the Builders Labourers Federation placing a green ban on the site in February 1973. SSRAG repeated Uren's position that the NSW Housing Commission had too narrow a vision, and seemed intent on creating large estates housing socially segregated groups without access to adequate health, welfare, cultural and other facilities (Housing Commission of NSW, 1976, p. 8.5).

Following the exhibition of the Commission's proposal in August 1973, South Sydney Council engaged consultants to evaluate the scheme and prepare alternative development suggestions (Planning Workshop, 1973). In December, Uren met with representatives of the Council and the Minister for Housing and Construction, Les Johnson, and agreed to support feasibility studies of alternative approaches.⁷ Johnson had already urged the NSW Government to reconsider the scheme, citing the international retreat from high-rise development. Although the Housing Commission scheme would be built with CSHA funds, there was little the Commonwealth could do to stop the proposal (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998, 223). Such a convoluted funding scheme targeted at specific housing outcomes and requiring delicate negotiations between federal and state agencies posed a considerable challenge to DURD in pursuing its inner city objectives.

Nevertheless, DURD tried to influence the State body to alter its Waterloo scheme. In January 1974, discussions were held with the Housing Commission's Chief Planning Officer concerning a letter DURD had received from Jack Bourke, the Commission Chairman.⁸ The letter stressed that the reduction in low-income housing stock in the inner city had led to the Commission receiving many more requests for assistance, and its Waterloo proposal was designed to help meet this need by providing accommodation for some 6000 people. While DURD expressed some sympathy with the Commission's position, the overriding belief was that the existing scheme would lead to a large concentration of low-income people and social problems. Avoiding such concentrations would help to mitigate the severity of the problems. In response, the Commission's planner conceded that the State Government as a whole probably was not particularly committed to the project.

Negotiations continued at a meeting in June 1974 between DURD, the Commission and the Department of Housing and Construction. There was agreement on the need for public housing and community facilities, but DURD pressed for a reduction in the 30-storey towers, retention of some existing housing and a greater social mix. The Commission indicated that if

the Commonwealth refused to provide housing funds for the Waterloo project, it would go ahead anyway using its own funding sources.⁹ By January 1975 however, there was agreement that a range of alternatives to the high-density redevelopment scheme should be investigated.

The Commission said in its subsequent (post DURD) 'Analysis of Options' document that the alternative schemes had been prepared as a result of discussions with Commonwealth Departments and 'as a pre-requisite to consideration' of the Waterloo scheme for Commonwealth funding (Housing Commission of NSW, 1976, 2.7). The Housing Commission in investigating its options considered nine alternative schemes for the site – four involving partial rehabilitation, one 'comprehensive rehabilitation' scheme, two high-rise redevelopment options, and low-rise and medium-rise redevelopment scenarios. Its analysis indicated there would be coordinated delivery of the Waterloo scheme, involving representatives of all levels of Government, expert committees to plan educational and community facilities, a community development officer, and a residents' consultative committee. However, by late 1975, the Commission indicated that it did not believe that any of the rehabilitation schemes were viable. It resolved however to put forward its options report to other agencies and the community as the basis of further consultation and concept development (Housing Commission of NSW, 1976, ii).

In October 1975, just months before the dismissal, the Budget and Finance Committee¹⁰ proposed zero funding for Waterloo in the Projects Branch forward estimates for 1976/77 budget. With the removal of the Whitlam federal government, management and planning of the site was retained by the Housing Commission of NSW. While the on-the-ground development outcomes were limited, the Waterloo project illustrates the capacity of the federal government to intervene in development projects and potential broaden their scope both in terms of development outcomes and ideological foundations.

The Glebe Project

Tom Uren became interested in the rehabilitation of Glebe shortly after being appointed Minister (DHC, 1980). The Glebe Estate was a parcel of 19 hectares of land, over 700 dwellings and some 60 commercial sites and buildings located on both sides of Glebe Point Road near the intersection with Parramatta Road. It was owned by the Church of England, and contained mostly older, poorly maintained houses rented to low-income earners. Early in 1973, Uren was approached by the Church of England and the Mayor of Leichhardt Council (supported by independent aldermen and backed by the Glebe Society) to purchase the Estate. The request to purchase the site was primarily driven by the inability of Church to maintain the dwellings. Low rental yield meant the Church could not afford an ongoing maintenance program (Whitlam, 1985)

After Uren received the letter from Council proposing Commonwealth purchase and rehabilitation at Glebe, he obtained the support of Whitlam to go ahead with a consultants' study of the issue (Uren, 1995, 276). In July 1973, the firm Jackson, Teece, Chesterman and Willis were engaged to report on the feasibility of the acquisition of the Glebe Estate, the condition of housing, and options for future administration. They found that the houses at the Glebe Estate were generally structurally sound and that the Estate as a whole comprised an architecturally unique townscape. They suggested that, by purchasing and rehabilitating the Estate, the Government could demonstrate an urban renewal approach emphasising support for low-income groups – thus meeting its broader social justice objectives. The report noted the importance of integrating health, welfare services and education with the community renewal process.¹¹ A joint Cabinet submission by Ministers Uren and Johnson, was approved in November 1973.¹² Over the following months, project costs of \$17.5 million for site acquisition and an estimated \$8.5 million for rehabilitation were agreed.

Meanwhile, freeway proposals that would cut through Glebe, derived from traffic planning associated with the Sydney Region Outline Plan of 1968, were confronted. The planned Western Distributor had already resulted in large public demonstrations. Commonwealth purchase of the land would dramatically alter the freeway plans and highlighted an unprecedented federal challenge to existing state based metropolitan planning.¹³ Frustrating the planned roadway and associated demolition became an additional rationale for Commonwealth action at Glebe (Uren, 1995, 281).

DURD's early thoughts were that the Commonwealth would provide a specific purpose advance to the NSW Housing Commission to acquire and rehabilitate the estate. According to Lloyd and Troy (1981, 186), however, the Commission would not guarantee the Commonwealth 'that it would not redevelop the site in a manner similar to its other inner Sydney projects', that is through comprehensive redevelopment for high density developments, an approach which was anathema to some members of DURD. Nevertheless, the consultants' draft report indicated that the Federal Government did not have the Constitutional power to undertake the project. A series of amendments were made to the planning documents which omitted reference to the Constitution, and indicated that it would be inappropriate for the NSW Housing Commission to carry out the project because 'it would probably severely stretch' its resources.¹⁴

DURD subsequently requested legal advice from the federal Attorney-General's Department on how the Commonwealth could acquire the land and undertake the project. The Government was advised that it could, using a liberal interpretation of the Constitution, acquire the land for the purposes of providing benefits (i.e. housing) to students, the unemployed, infirm, pensioners, migrants, members of the armed forces and their dependents and indigenous people. The Cities Commission, a statutory authority within Uren's Ministry, could assist in undertaking these functions - in this case, undertaking a pilot project on urban renewal.¹⁵ After the Government announced its decision to acquire the Glebe land, the NSW

Housing Commission wrote to DURD on various matters, and graciously welcomed the Commonwealth's decision on Glebe. The letter added however that the project would do relatively little to meet the high demand for inner city accommodation amongst low-income earners.¹⁶

DURD had simultaneously to resolve issues with other Commonwealth departments to finalise a project management structure. The relationship between DURD and Treasury was a constant point of contention in the development and implementation of a number of programs (Oakley, 2004). After difficult negotiations with the Department of Housing and Construction, it was decided to establish a Glebe Project Board, responsible jointly to Ministers Uren and Johnson. The Project Board comprised the Secretaries of DURD, Housing and Construction and the Cities Commission, and employed a Project Manager and other staff to work from an office at Glebe.

The NSW Government's objectives for the Glebe project were broadly similar to many of DURD's rudimentary inner urban policy goals. The project could be understood as promoting equity and maintaining community life by improving housing and community services for the low-income community in the area. Rehabilitation of an historic and architecturally interesting townscape could be considered as enhancing the urban environment. As the project evolved, it involved citizens in decision making through the establishment of an elected Residents Advisory Committee. A cost-benefit analysis undertaken by DURD in 1973 indicated that the project represented a reasonably efficient allocation of resources. The innovative analysis compared several renewal options and their costs and benefits to affected groups, including travel costs to any low-income earners displaced to cheaper, outer suburbs (Wagner, 1977). The Glebe project also aimed to better coordinate Commonwealth and state government services to the area. An advisory group of federal and state officials was established for this purpose, and on-site staff included both housing and community development workers (DHC, 1980, 151).

The incoming Fraser Coalition government significantly cut the funding allocated to the Glebe project and in 1981 abandoned the project all together. In 1984 the Hawke Labor government sold the estate to the NSW Government who expressed a desire to complete the work initiated under the DURD project (Whitlam, 1985).

The Woolloomooloo Project

As was the case in Glebe and Waterloo, controversy over the redevelopment of Woolloomooloo was apparent prior to the election of the Whitlam Government. Land immediately to the south of Woolloomooloo Bay was to be rezoned for high-density commercial uses under a plan prepared by the State Government in the late sixties, and a proposed Eastern Expressway cut through the area. The City of Sydney was issuing development consents under the plan, but by 1971 had developed a new strategic plan recommending predominantly residential use of the area (Lloyd & Troy, 1981, 188).¹⁷ Meanwhile the Coalition Federal Government was planning to use Commonwealth land in the area to build a major office complex of its own. In October 1972, the Federal Labor member for the area with local ALP activists helped organise a Residents' Action Group to protest against destructive high-rise developments and ensure local residents could continue to live in the area (Hardman & Manning, 1976, 53-54). Uren, as Shadow Minister for Urban Affairs, announced he strongly opposed the high-density redevelopment of Woolloomooloo and the proposed Commonwealth office block (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998, 203; Lloyd & Troy, 1981, 188).

In February 1973 the Builders Labourers' Federation placed a green ban on demolition and construction at Woolloomooloo – at the same time as the green ban was imposed on Waterloo. Further, the new Labor Federal Government decided not to proceed with the Commonwealth office block at Woolloomooloo. Negotiations about the future of the area then took place between officers of the Commonwealth and State Governments and City of

Sydney Council.¹⁸ By the end of 1973, a proposal had been developed for a reappraisal of the Woolloomooloo plans that would take into account the need for low-income housing and public participation. By January 1974, the three levels of Governments had agreed to the proposal, Minister Uren had promised \$20,000 for a study, and a new Woolloomooloo Steering Committee had been established. Despite some early concern that the State Planning Authority's representative might be obstructive (possibly due to concerns over redevelopment initiatives included in the Sydney Region Outline Plan), the Committee was able to liaise with residents, develop an alternative Woolloomooloo plan for discussion, and place the plan on exhibition by the middle of the year.¹⁹

Over the following months, the Steering Committee discussed funding arrangements and sought to develop a more flexible, strategic style of plan. The Committee then made recommendations on these issues, as well as proposing an evaluation of alternatives to the Eastern Distributor. When Minister Uren subsequently presented a submission to the Cabinet based on the recommendations, there was considerable concern about the proposed spending, but approval was granted.²⁰

In June 1975, the three levels of Government signed a formal agreement on Woolloomooloo. The Tripartite Agreement involved pooling all publicly-owned land, with the Federal Government providing basic financing for the project. The Commonwealth provided 2.6 hectares of land, \$14 million for land acquisition and \$3 million for site development, planning and landscaping. The State Government and City Council provided 0.5 and 7 hectares of land respectively, but areas equivalent to this would revert to them for schools, roads, open space and community facilities. The NSW Housing Commission was to develop low rise, medium density housing on 13.3 hectares of land, and 65% of the dwellings were to be provided to low-income earners. The low-income housing would include 90 existing dwellings to be rehabilitated. The remainder of the dwellings were to be sold on the open

market, with the proceeds reverting to the Commonwealth.²¹ The sales were not expected to fully compensate the Commonwealth.

Work on the project started in the second half of 1975. The Agreement specified that the planning and rehabilitation of the area was to enhance natural features and maximise amenity, and provide for low-income housing and rehousing existing residents in Woolloomooloo, consistent with Commonwealth objectives on equity and maintaining community identity – central pillars of its nascent inner urban strategy. Ongoing intergovernmental coordination was to be undertaken by a Technical Liaison Committee. In relation to Commonwealth concern about urban resource allocation however, more than one DURD officer considered the Woolloomooloo project to be a particularly costly exercise.²² By September 1975, budget cuts were threatening to delay work by the NSW Housing Commission at Woolloomooloo, because of the Commission's reliance on Commonwealth housing funds.²³

Despite cuts in funding, Uren later identified the Woolloomooloo site as the most successful inner-urban project initiated by DURD (followed by Glebe and Emerald Hill in Melbourne) (UPR, 1987). Uren attributed this success to the agreement of a plan based on a tripartite agreement between each tier of government and the involvement of community representatives on the planning committee (UPR, 1987).

Conflicts, Comparisons and Commonalities

The previous section provided a descriptive overview of the processes and inter-relationships between major players. This section provides a more reflective analysis of these relationships and draws together the three case study sites to explore the complex interactions which mediated planning and development of the sites. Critical inter-stakeholder relationships for each site are summarised in tables 1-3. While sites are characterised by a unique history and set of interested players, a number of important observations emerge:

- The capacity of local residents (be they key individuals or local Resident Action Groups) to access the Federal Government (either senior DURD officials or Uren himself) was central in facilitating the DURD presence in all sites.
- Similarly, the capacity of local Council to directly engage with the Federal Government was significant.
- For both local residents and local Councils, approaches to the Federal Government were made as a result of their direct opposition to the actions of the NSW State Government. DURD was viewed in these cases as a vehicle for local actors to challenge the State Planning Authority and Housing Commission. As illustrated in both Glebe and Waterloo, these approaches facilitated complex Constitutional arrangements (especially tied to funding/ownership).
- The NSW State Government represents the central protagonist in these cases of inner city redevelopment, with conflicts with the Federal Government and local Councils, as well as residents and unions. State government opposition to redevelopment and Federal intervention rested on two central (and not entirely outlandish) principles. First, the State government was seeking to maintain the integrity of its metropolitan planning instrument (*Sydney Region Outline Plan*) – a strategy which identified alternative land uses for all case study sites (especially freeway construction). Second, much of the challenges which originated from the NSW Housing Commission centred on limited budget resources and the incapacity for them to develop alternative designs for the sites in question.
- Despite the imperative of DURD to become involved in inner urban issues, its capacity to do so was mediated by its relationships with other Federal agencies. The main conflicts were with the Department of Housing and Construction (often centred on delineating authority and responsibility of each department in these sites) and Treasury (centred on the funding of renewal sites).

- The most successful redevelopment project (according to Uren himself) – Woolloomooloo – was underpinned by a universal opposition to planning/development options outlined by the previous Federal Coalition Government. Woolloomooloo represents the only site where a joint vision of the development was formed between all interested partners.

All these insights hold important messages for contemporary Federal government forays into urban policy.

The Waterloo Project		
Players	Objectives	Conflicts
DURD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General opposition to redevelopment plans / projects of NSW Housing Commission - Oppose significant densification of site and creation of socially segregated community - Engage in community consultation of the design/development of the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission by supporting South Sydney Councils' investigation into alternative designs - Limited capacity for DURD to stop Housing Commission development (despite the use of CSHA funds) - Complex funding arrangements limited Federal influence - Federal funding as lever for NSW Housing Commission accepting 'Analysis of Options' document
NSW State Government – Housing Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redevelop site under NSW Housing Act - Significant densification of site - Lack of strong conviction to the renewal of the site by state Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with South Sydney Council, SSRAG and BLF over design of redevelopment - Threaten DURD that development would proceed with project without Federal funds. Federal funds identified as means of influencing development of site. - Ultimate challenge to redevelopment
South Sydney Residents Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain character of local character - Use Uren's criticism of NSW Housing Commission to challenge development design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission of scale and design renewal project
Builders Labourers Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain character of local character - Support local residents group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission of scale and design renewal project – Green ban placed in site
South Sydney Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge design of development - Support local resident concerns over redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission over design of site – identify alternative designs
Department of Housing and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with stakeholders to identify alternative development options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission over design – international retreat from high-rise developments

Table 1: Players, Objectives and Conflicts in Waterloo

The Glebe Project		
Players	Objectives	Conflicts
DURD	- Purchase site – support from Whitlam - Demonstrate cutting edge urban renewal through the maintenance of existing dwelling stock - Integration of social services into renewal	- Conflict with State government over potential purchase of site – challenge initiative outlined in metropolitan planning. - Conflict with NSW Housing Commission (lacked resources to facilitate project) - Issue of Constitutional authority
NSW State Government - Planning	- Maintain metropolitan plan (Sydney Region Outline Plan) - Develop Freeway links	- Conflict with Leichardt Council and local community over construction of Freeways - Federal government purchase of site stopped demolition and construction of Freeways.
NSW State Government – Housing Commission	- Cost effective renewal of site - Minimise budget spend - Broad agreement with DURD over renewal of site (maintain architecture / affordable housing options)	- Conflict with DURD (would not assure development would align with DURD principals of State government retained ownership) - Welcomed DURD purchase of land (removal of state financial responsibility). Maintained that project would not meet unmet housing demand in inner Sydney.
Church of England	- Sell land to Commonwealth government to facilitate renewal of degrade housing stock	
Leichardt Council	- Facilitate Commonwealth purchase of land	- Conflict with State government over Freeway construction (represent local community)
Glebe Society	- Influence Leichardt Council to pursue Commonwealth purchase of land (Society had strong links with elected council)	
Local Residents	- Maintain local character - influence development of site (through Residents Advisory Committee)	- Conflict with State government over metropolitan planning (Sydney Region Outline Plan) which called for new Freeway construction
Department of Housing and Construction	- Maintain role as Federal government building agency	- Conflict with DURD over design, timing and funding of site - Conflict manifest in the establishment of Glebe Project Board (management shared between Departments)
Treasury	- Minimise budget spend	- Conflict with DURD over funding of site

Table 2: Players, Objectives and Conflicts in Glebe

The Woolloomooloo Project		
Players	Objectives	Conflicts
Coalition Federal Government (prior to 1973)	- Development of Commonwealth land into major office block	- Conflict with ALP activists, Federal Labor member and local residents over construction of office block.
Tom Uren	- Opposition to development Commonwealth office building while in Opposition	
NSW State Government	- Maintain metropolitan planning objectives (outlined under the Sydney Region Outline Plan)	- Conflicting land-use planning instruments (1960s policy promoting high-density commercial vs 1970s residential zoning) - State Planning Authority minor challenge to DURD and City of Sydney through Woolloomooloo Steering Committee - Need to alter planned Eastern distributor
Local Residents (Residents Action Group)	- Oppose Commonwealth office block	- Challenge Coalition Federal Government
Builders Labourers Federation	- Opposition to development of high-rise commercial in Woolloomooloo - Support local residents opposition to development	- Conflict with Federal Coalition development plans
DURD	- Opposition of office development – support residential development - develop low income housing and maintain local environment	- Negotiate with NSW government & Sydney Council over development options
City of Sydney Council	- Opposition of office development – support residential development	- Negotiate with NSW government & DURD over development options
NSW State Government – Housing Commission	- Develop low income housing as specified in site plan	- Issues of cost of project (funds from Commonwealth through CSHA)
Treasury		- Issues of cost of project (funding DURD involvement)

Table 3: Players, Objectives and Conflicts in Woolloomooloo

Urban Regeneration after 1975

DURD was abolished by the new Fraser Coalition Government. From 1976 former DURD staff and functions were incorporated into a new Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development (DEHCD). The new Department continued work on urban rehabilitation projects such as Glebe and Woolloomooloo, but overall spending on urban and regional development was more than halved (Lloyd & Troy, 1981, 253). The spending cuts heralded the start of a new post-Keynesian approach to economic development by Australian Governments, embracing more restrained and strategic forms of public spending and regulation, including the nation's cities. DEHCD established an Urban Renewal Task Force to provide policy advice on the subject and develop a research program. A report prepared in 1978 argued that while there was considerable debate about the roles of each level of Government, it was 'naturally accepted' by State and local Governments and community organisations that the Commonwealth's role was to provide funding (DEHCD, 1978, 85). Echoing the DURD stance a few years earlier, it concluded that if effective action was to be taken on urban renewal, tripartite arrangements at the regional level were necessary and would involve all levels of government, with provision made for involvement by the community and private sector. The report was issued with a disclaimer saying that it did not necessarily reflect the views of the Commonwealth Government.

Tom Uren had been the key driver of DURD's urban rehabilitation projects and policy which responded to popular concern. Its initiatives were sometimes challenged and slowed by other governments and other departments. However the development of a broader inner urban renewal strategy which might have provided a more over-arching policy framework was more directly hampered by conflict within the DURD Executive itself – conflict that ultimately reflected some of the concerns of other government ministers and departments (Oakley, 2004). One of the key issues was the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government's existing and proposed spending on urban rehabilitation, particularly in the context of the

radically different economic circumstances the Government had been forced to confront after its election.

DURD's intervention in urban regeneration in the 1970s showed, however, that the Federal Government could play a constructive role on the issue, working in conjunction with other levels of government and local communities. The opportunities afforded by such working practices were further acknowledged in the Urban Renewal Taskforce's 1978 report. Sandercock's (2005) assessment of DURD as a victim of uncooperative state level bureaucratic processes is writ large throughout the available ministerial materials. Sandercock (2005) also identified a strange paradox, in as much as DURD's nascent urban strategies subsequently manifested themselves within various State level planning agencies as ex-DURD employees helped shape new institutional forms and urban policies. This filtering down of policy initiatives potentially influenced subsequent federal activities in shaping Australian cities, such as the Building Better Cities program (1991-1996) (Gerner, 2002), despite different institutional structures, processes and policy objectives (Spiller, 1996).

This underlying structure of tripartite working strategies with the Federal agencies as both funders and facilitators (through the joining up with State level agencies to provide 'whole of government' responses) was a key legacy of DURD, rather than the projects themselves. At a time when considerable Federal monies are being directed back into Australian cities, it is perhaps pertinent to reflect on this and realise that 'big ticket' projects are not an end in themselves but offer substantial capacity to engage with structures of governance to more effectively address renewal and other urban issues.

Conclusion: Contemporary Lessons

With the election, in late 2007, of the Rudd Labor Government, urban issues are once again on the Federal agenda. To date the involvement of the Federal government has been (although

widely welcomed) limited to issues centred on housing, with the allocation of a new Ministerial portfolio (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, (partially) under Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek) and a number of key policy initiatives (National Housing Supply Council; Housing Affordability Fund (HAF) and the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA – replacing the CSHA)). As yet a broader urban policy focus has yet to materialise in any substantial form (despite the establishment of the Major Cities Unit). As this policy agenda develops, the Federal government should be keen to learn from the challenges and failures of previous interventions by Federal government (DURD and BBC). This paper, and the detailed analysis of three sites of urban renewal, offers a number of important lessons:

- Any policy/project intervention from the Federal government should start with the coordination and alignment of policy objectives (as much as possible) between tiers of government. Federal intervention should not be a simple top-down policy drive where State and Local Government policies are usurped by a Federal agenda.
- As such, a central concern of Federal interventions should be the alignment of policy to existing metropolitan planning frameworks. The case studies outlined here illustrate the difficulty of Federal programs when they challenge existing State spatial/strategic planning. Further, if a project-based approach is adopted (eg the urban renewal project covered here or the BBC program), these project should align with the projects identified by the State government in these strategic documents.
- It is likely that the capacity of individuals and local Councils to access the Federal government (and individuals, such as Ministers) has decreased since the time of DURD. Thus, any Federal policy should engage in consultation early in the piece to make sure all voices are heard and priorities are identified as a result of this broad consultation.

- It is important to recognise the governance structure of Australian cities is considerably more complex and convoluted than in the DURD period. In addition to engaging with more traditional urban stakeholders (residents, local Council, State government), the Federal government needs to involve a variety of new players, such as corporatised state entities (such as Landcom in NSW), place based development corporations (such as the Redfern-Waterloo Authority in Sydney) and ‘fourth-tier’ micro-structures such as Strata based body corporate.
- Federal urban policy should also seek to re-position from any role as just a ‘cash-cow’ for urban development. Although, as the case studies illustrate, the financial role of the Federal government is a significant bargaining chip, the Federal government should seek to be more integrated in the process. Further, the Federal government should work with other partners to establish new funding mechanisms (such as joint ventures or Public-Private Partnerships – also learning from issues with previous arrangements). These alternative funding mechanisms may potentially lead to more secure funding streams in times of economic downturn (again, as illustrated by DURD’s history).
- Individual projects should seek to establish effective management structures to facilitate implementation. These structures should be representative of all stakeholders and have clear terms of reference. The Woolloomooloo example illustrated that projects with clearly shared and articulated goals are the most likely to be successful.
- One of the main challenges of Federal urban policy is the need to coordinate between Federal government departments. The success of any Federal urban policy or program will be challenged if there is challenge from other departments. Central here is Treasury, but the number of departments which play a role in our cities is vast and all need to ‘buy into’ these initiatives (eg Infrastructure, Transport, Regional

Development and Local Government; Health and Ageing; Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; Climate Change).

- Successful urban policy should seek to generate bipartisan political support at a Federal level. Such an arrangement would increase the likelihood that policies and programs will continue if (when) there is a change in Federal government. Both DURD and the BBC examples illustrate that this is essential for long-term improvements in cities.

While these reflections may appear obvious and perhaps a little utopian, any Federal government urban policy which fails to heed these lessons of the past is sure to face considerable challenge and difficulties from a multiplicity of stakeholders at all levels.

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¹ 'Minute Lansdown to Executive 10 October 1973', Box Q17/4A, FBE.

² 'Minute on States Division Operations', 22 February 1974, Box Q17/1B, FBE.

³ 'Draft for ISRAG Conference 27 October 1973', Box Q17/4A, FBE.

⁴ 'Draft for ISRAG Conference 27 October 1973', Box Q17/4A, FBE.

⁵ 'Draft for ISRAG Conference 27 October 1973', Box Q17/4A, FBE.

⁶ 'Draft for ISRAG Conference 27 October 1973', Box Q17/4A, FBE.

⁷ 'Current Projects in Progress in Mr Wardlaw's Team' 14 December 1973, Box Q17/9A, FBE.

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- ⁸ ‘Letter Bourke to Lansdown 10 January 1974’, Box Q17/9A, and ‘Minute re Proposed NSW Housing Commission Project at Waterloo 22 January 1974’, in Box Q17/1B, FBE.
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- ¹⁰ ‘Draft Minutes of Budget and Finance Committee Meeting 31 October 1975’, Box Q17/16B, FBE.
- ¹¹ ‘Draft: The Church of England Lands Glebe: A Report to the Department of Urban and Regional Development, by Jackson, Teece Chesterman and Willis, July 1973’, Box Q17/10B, FBE.
- ¹² ‘Letter Reiher to Lansdown 31 January 1974’, Box Q17/1B, FBE.
- ¹³ Troy to James, pers. comm., 24 February 2009.
- ¹⁴ ‘Proposed Redraft of Chapter IV Administering the Estate’, n.d., Box Q17/10B, FBE.
- ¹⁵ ‘Minute re Public Accounts Committee Examination of AG Report for 1974-75’, 7 October 1975, Box Q17/17B, FBE.
- ¹⁶ ‘Letter Bourke to Lansdown 10 January 1974’, Box Q17/9A, FBE.
- ¹⁷ See also ‘Minute from Wardlaw to Lansdown’, n.d. c. September 1973, Box 17/4A, FBE.
- ¹⁸ ‘Current Projects in Progress in Mr Wardlaw’s Team’ 14 December 1973, in Box Q17/9A, FBE.
- ¹⁹ ‘Minute re Australian Government Participation in the Preparation of the Woolloomooloo Action Plan 22 January 1974’, Box Q17/1B and ‘Minute on Woolloomooloo 22 July 1974’, Box Q17/16A, FBE.
- ²⁰ T. Uren, *Straight Left*, pp. 278-279; ‘Minute re Projects Branch Activities’, n.d. c. January 1975, Box Q17/17B, FBE.
- ²¹ ‘Minute re Woolloomooloo Agreement and Future Action’, 7 July 1975, Box Q17/17B, FBE.
- ²² ‘Minutes of Cabinet Submissions and Legislation Committee Meeting 19 November 1974’, Box Q17/11A, FBE
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