



**Submission on the proposed
Explorer Street social housing estate in
Eveleigh, Sydney**

Counterpoint Community Services Inc
December 2020

About Counterpoint Community Services INC

Counterpoint Community Services Inc. provides a wide range of community support services in the Inner City and South East Sydney LGAs. We have operated in the heart of Waterloo since 1977, with a particular focus on working with social housing tenants and diverse communities.

We operate The Factory Community Centre in Waterloo, Counterpoint Multicultural Centre in Alexandria, Poet's Corner pre-school in Redfern and act as the lead agency for many local grass-root groups and services.

Our comments

We are writing to express our comments and views informed by our work with the community we serve, concerning the proposed renewal of South Eveleigh (Explorer Street) social housing estate.

Context

Further to our previous conversations and input into the above proposal(s), below is our formal comments for your consideration on this matter. We thank you for seeking our view and input on this matter.

We have focused our commentary on Explorer Street as this is the only site we have been briefed on, however our comments apply to the Glebe sight in general terms also.

Policies / Practice comments

Counterpoint is not supportive of the policy context of the above proposal(s). Disposing of valuable public land to secure investment to replace existing housing stock and in some circumstances, marginally increase housing, is in our view economically short sighted. Nor is it a sustainable housing policy for current and future tenants. The government should directly invest in social housing.

Furthermore, Counterpoint is also opposed to the unproven approach to create social mix in these communities as it only hides and dilutes disadvantage rather than addresses the cause of disadvantage.

Just like the Waterloo announcement, the announcements of Glebe and Explorer Street were first made to the media prior to informing residents. Making such announcements via the media prior to the residents that will be directly

affected is insensitive to any human being never mind those who are already vulnerable. This causes needless confusion and anxiety and indicates again that media coverage and self-congratulations are more important to the department and the government than the impact of their decisions on the tenants and community directly affected.

It is apparent that previous undertakings that such actions would not occur again has not been adhered to.

Counterpoint and its partners at Groundswell remain of the view that independent support should be in place during planning and through the life of any redevelopment sites. The removal of such support from Waterloo and Redfern has and continues to have significant impacts to individuals and community groups. This view is even more pertinent in sites such as Glebe and South Eveleigh where there is no existing generic support services in place.

Counterpoint holds the view that its recent report into human services, 'Waterloo Impact', is reflective of the experience of most city social housing tenants and the recommendations and issues contained within the report apply to these sites too. Counterpoint is of the view that all communities should have a place and a community plan that is resourced by community development coordinators. The sites of Glebe and Explorer Street are no exceptions.

Furthermore, it has been deeply concerning to hear that residents that were relocated from Millers Point will again be asked to relocate for the Explorer Street and Glebe redevelopments. Relocating once can be extremely difficult for vulnerable residents that depend on their neighbours and local community for support. To be asked to relocate twice in a matter of a few years is deeply troubling and only speaks to the short-sightedness of the government's redevelopment projects and to the apparent indifference these projects have on the people they impact.

Counterpoint would assert that DCJ and LAHC should sign up to the estate renewal compact as drafted by the peak agencies Tenants' Union of NSW and Shelter NSW. This will go a great way in ensuring that the impacts of renewals are better managed.

The proposal

Counterpoint welcomes the increase of 70+ units of social housing.

Counterpoint is supportive of concept A out of the options presented. From our engagement with residents, most will welcome and support the options of large additional outdoor space as opposed to smaller building heights.

However we also highlight that most neighbour disputes and complaints of anti-social behaviour take place in open spaces that are in close proximity to residential units. This need to be mitigated by a careful place management plan.

Counterpoint highlights that the right to return policy whilst welcome is potentially deceitful unless the plan is guaranteed an equal or greater amount of units with 3 bedrooms or more to reflect current stock.

Again, we also highlight that the policy of only pursuing development of small apartments rather than family sized apartments is in our view not future proofing for our public housing stock needs.

Lastly, we highlight that the area in question has a lack of community facilities on site nor any NGO service delivery presence.

THANK YOU

For further info, kindly contact:

Michael M Shreenan; Executive Officer
Counterpoint Community Services INC
c/o The Factory Community Centre
67 Raglan Street, Waterloo NSW 2017

Email: MShreenan@counterpointcs.org.au
Ph: 9698 9569 Mobile: 0413124615