



Counterpoint Community Services INC
67 Raglan Street Waterloo NSW 2017

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Initial response to Waterloo South Final Exhibition

The Waterloo south final exhibition plan has been released by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and can be found on <https://planning.nsw.gov.au/waterloo-south>

The final project proposes a site plan that will bring:

- 3,012 new dwellings, consisting of about 847 social Housing, 227 affordable homes and almost 1,938 market dwellings on Currently public land (LAHC), plus about 127 additional market dwellings on privately owned sites;
- a new central park adjoining Waterloo metro station of more than two hectares and a small garden in the south of the site in the block bounded by Cope, John, George and McEvoy Streets;
- about 255,000sqm GFA, including no less than 12,000 sqm for commercial premises and 5,000 sqm for community facilities, childcare and health facilities;
- four new high-rise towers of between 27 and 33 storeys

The Exhibition period of 8 weeks allows the community to respond to the plan formally with written submissions and informally with engagement activities. Our Executive Officer and Community Development Team have provided the following initial comments. We look forward to sharing a detailed response once we have digested the plans in their entirety.

- After more than a decade in the making, we welcome the arrival of this formal statutory exhibition. However, we note that the process to date has been needlessly stressful for the community.
- We thank the DPE engagement team for briefing community leaders before the press. (A historic first worthy of commending). While we acknowledge the community's consultation fatigue, we encourage all residents and local community organisations to digest what is proposed to ensure their voice is heard and not lost during this eight-week exhibition.
- We note that in 2019/2020, the state government stripped local NGOs of the resources required to provide independent support to the community. Our advocacy to resolve the deficit in support has fallen on deaf ears. NGOs were left to fund some of this deficit from reserves in addition to the limited but welcomed support from the City of Sydney.
- We remain disappointed that the plan only covers part of the estate and has not been developed in the context of the whole site. This will limit the ability of the community to consider the estate as a whole in their submissions.
- It appears that the landowner, the politicians, the economists, and the planners have now got a plan that they are happy with. However, the promised benefits and wishes of the community appear to be nothing more than bread crumbs and, in our view, superficial at best.

 The Factory Community Centre
67 Raglan St Waterloo NSW 2017

 Counterpoint Multicultural Centre
73 Garden St Alexandria NSW 2015

 Counterpoint Poet's Corner Pre-school
55 Morehead St Redfern NSW 2016

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- The sale of public land to private developers will only result in 98 additional public housing units on the existing site, whereas the 120 private dwellings will increase to 1,938. While the proposal plans to deliver renewed social housing stock and an additional 98 social housing units, it is unclear if there is an overall decrease in bedrooms, floor space, and public amenities for existing social housing tenants. Furthermore, with a social housing waiting list of over 1,000 in the inner city alone, the NSW government is missing an opportunity to deliver much needed social housing.
- We welcome the proposed 227 Affordable Housing units (7% total). However, we note that the community requested 10% dedicated Aboriginal Affordable Housing and 5% for the general community. In the context of soaring rents, with over 33% of households experiencing rental stress, the proposed 7% does not go far enough to address the demand for affordable housing.
- We believe that the planning debacle of the last decade and subsequent wasted expenses and poor productivity would have paid for an additional 1938 social housing units with government retention of land ownership. Issues with planning have only been exacerbated by politics and poor leadership.
- We have been advised that the NSW Government will listen genuinely to the community during the 8-week Statutory Exhibition. However, the proposed high density of Waterloo South, building heights, proposed social mix, and the park's location are non-negotiable. This does not leave much for the community to influence.
- The community desire for the proposed Community Centre to be located in the heart of the central park in addition to water features, community gardens, and pocket parks have been largely ignored.
- New community facilities have been promised but with little detail or guarantees on their nature, funding or management.
- Community Facilities won't be built until the end while existing community facilities battle mould and water leaks and are woefully inadequate for staff and users alike. Yet, these facilities will be in high demand during the redevelopment process regarding the support residents will need.
- Community throughout the process has raised concerns about the increased traffic, fears of a 'rat run' through the estate and subsequent adverse effects to the estate. Yet the plan continues to ignore those concerns and seeks the opening up of Pitt Street to McEvoy Street with left-in, left-out.

Counterpoint will continue to support the community and our partners as much as we can throughout the exhibition period.

We will organise independent consultations, support the Government's engagement plan and host local capacity building workshops with our partners in Groundswell and REDWatch.

For more information and support, please get in touch with us at info@counterpointcs.org.au or call (02) 9698 9569

Mike Shreenan
Executive Officer