MARRICKVILLE council

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Affordable Housing Strategy

2009 - 2011

www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au

ADDENDUM

On July 2009, the NSW Government gazetted *State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing)* 2009 (SEPP). The SEPP seeks to increase the provision of affordable rental housing across NSW by creating incentives for residential flat buildings and low rise infill development if they include affordable rental housing and for granny flats, boarding houses, group homes and Land and Housing Corporation (i.e. Housing NSW) developments. This SEPP replaces *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 10 – Retention of Low-cost Rental Accommodation*.

In this Affordable Housing Strategy, Marrickville Council has recommended the use of voluntary planning agreements in association with floor space ratio bonuses to generate new affordable housing across the local government area. This approach is embedded in Council's preliminary draft Local Environmental Plan, which at the time of publication, has yet to be endorsed by the NSW Department of Planning for public exhibition.

Marrickville Council is also negotiating with the NSW Government to advocate for a more effective approach to the use of monetary contributions generated from the loss of affordable housing in the Marrickville area.

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FOREWORD

Marrickville Council is pleased to present its Affordable Housing Strategy. The strategy identifies actions that would lead to the preservation and creation of affordable housing opportunities in the Marrickville area. It builds on Council's previous work in this area and draws on a range of government policies, academic research and consultations.

The constant pressure of Sydney's housing market has brought a strong focus on the importance of affordable and appropriate housing for the community. Inner city suburbs such as Marrickville have been under particular pressure as a result of higher income groups and the gentrification of housing stock. This has resulted in the loss of accommodation in the area for low income and socially disadvantaged residents.

Enabling people to live in a home that is affordable and suited to their needs is vital for an economically and socially sustainable society.

According to the 2006 Census, the Marrickville area has a population of 75,525 residing in 28,087 households with families making up 59% of households. A further 41% are lone or shared households. Lone households are the fastest growing housing group in the area a trend that is reflected across Sydney where eight in ten of every non family household has one resident. With 44% of all dwellings in the area rented, the rental crisis affecting Sydney and Marrickville is of great concern. It is vital that Council respond to the declining levels of affordable housing in the area to enable people to live their lives close to the community, family, friends and employment opportunities.

This document provides strategic direction and develops actions which will enable us to achieve our commitment to plan and provide for current and future generations living in Marrickville.

Cr Sam Iskandar
Mayor of Marrickville
August 2009

1. COMMUNITY PLAN 2025

The Marrickville area is a great place to live and visit, and represents the best of multicultural inner-city living. The Marrickville local government area (LGA) is a diverse, vibrant and innovative area that acknowledges and is proud of its original people – the Cadigal-Wangal – and of each new generation of immigrants that have settled here.

Marrickville Council will work with the people of Marrickville to ensure that we maintain and build upon those elements of the community that we value, in order to keep Marrickville a great place to live in 2025 and beyond. The people and Council of Marrickville will strive to:

- support and promote our community's well-being and harmony, cultural diversity and inclusiveness so as to ensure that all people continue to feel welcome and feel that they belong;
- make Marrickville a centrepiece of inner-city ecologically sustainable development and environmentally sensitive principles through education, planning, programs, cooperation, and promotion of responsible individual and corporate conduct;
- continue creating and maintaining clean, green and attractive public places of which citizens feel proud;
- develop a community which is more liveable, safer and accessible to all citizens;
- promote a vibrant street life that encourages the community to engage and welcome visitors, where local businesses flourish, and local village shopping precincts are attractive and sustainable;
- have Marrickville recognised as a leading learning and creative arts centre of Sydney, that continues to celebrate and reflect on our Indigenous and post settlement history and society;
- plan, promote and lobby for a sustainable and integrated transport system that improves the quality of life for the people of Marrickville;
- maintain the vibrancy and liveability of Marrickville by having balanced and guided development, clean industry;
- work to minimise the noise and other pollutants of our environment; and
- keep Marrickville Council a leading local government organisation that is progressive, responsive, efficient and accountable and that exists to serve and support the people of the Marrickville area.

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2. OUR PLANNING MODEL

The activities and programs of Marrickville Council are guided by an integrated planning framework. This planning framework provides a mechanism for Marrickville Council to respond to the challenges and opportunities that Marrickville faces in the medium and long term in a sustainable and coordinated manner.

The Marrickville Plan is a long term vision that sets an inspirational agenda for the future of the area. The Strategic Plan 2006-2011 is a corporate plan that identifies medium to long term strategic objectives for achieving the long term vision for Marrickville. Implementation of the Strategic Plan is then guided through the Annual Management Plan, together with specific plans such as the Urban Strategy, the Local Action 21 (Sustainability Plan) and the Social Plan.

In 2005-2006, a large scale community consultation process was undertaken to engage the community in planning for the future of Marrickville. After extensive promotion of the draft Plans and another round of community consultation (April–June 2006), Council approved the Marrickville Plan and Strategic Plan. The community is surveyed and consulted each year in the development of the Annual Management Plan and Budget. This approach to ongoing community consultation has ensured that the strategic direction established by Council through the Marrickville Plan and Strategic Plan, continues to reflect the priorities and concerns of the Marrickville community.

All sections of Council work to and report against the targets established in the Plan. Within eight weeks of the end of each quarter, Council staff must report on performance against Budget and Management Plan targets to elected representatives.

Progress is then communicated to the community through Council's regular newsletter 'Marrickville Matters', on our community notice boards and through our website. That way, the community can know whether the organisation is meeting those commitments spelled out in the Plan.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Affordable housing is a growing concern across Australia, particularly for inner city and regional areas. Housing issues are seen as the responsibility of state and federal governments and the appointment of a Federal Minister for Housing highlights the importance of housing affordability. However, councils are in a position to feel the impacts at a local level and have a role to play through urban and social planning.

Affordable housing is defined as housing for low and moderate income households seeking home ownership and rental housing at a cost which generally does not exceed 30% of their income. Affordability problems occur when households cannot obtain adequate housing they can afford within their local area because of insufficient income, high house prices or rents, or a combination of both.

In 2008, it was estimated that 95% of low income renters in the Marrickville area were experiencing housing stress, which represents an increase of 40% since 2001. In July 2008 the vacancy rate was only 1.2%, even though 44% of all dwellings in the Marrickville area are accessed through the rental market. There was no affordable housing stock available in 2008 for purchase for very low to low income households.

Single person households are the fastest growing housing group in the area, with 76% of non family households comprising one resident. In 2006, 54% of single households resided in flats with the median age of an adult living in a one person household being 56 years. Over the last ten years there has been a 19% increase in the number of couples with no children living in the LGA, with a large proportion of these couples living in flats. It is possible that the affordability of flats compared to separate houses makes this type of dwelling more attractive to single people and couples with no children.

Enabling people to live in a home which is suited to their needs and affordable is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, the maintenance of the economy and is critical to the development of mixed and socially cohesive communities. Marrickville has seen the migration of higher income groups into the area and the gentrification of housing stock that displaces lower income groups. This affects the social diversity of the area as well as business viability because of difficulties recruiting and retaining key workers.

Local governments are able to influence the provision of affordable housing and the housing market at a local level through:

- planning tools;
- partnerships;
- advocacy; and
- community development.

Planning tools are the primary mechanisms available to local government, although a number of State housing policies limit councils' involvement in their application. For instance, *State Environmental Planning Policy No 70 – Affordable Housing* (SEPP 70) is an existing policy that only allows a select few councils to levy developer contributions for affordable housing on all new development. Marrickville local government area is not identified under this policy.

The development of this strategy has involved researching the housing market in Marrickville, and consulting with academic institutions, not-for-profit organisations, private sector owners and developers. Strategies have been designed to encourage different housing forms, remove barriers and provide a solid base for future planning to meet community needs.

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The aim of the strategy is to retain and facilitate the creation of affordable and appropriate housing in the Marrickville local government area. The purpose is to provide for social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability. Anticipated outcomes include:

- **increased stock of appropriate affordable housing for households with very low, low and moderate incomes;**

  Council will advocate for the increased provision of affordable housing in the area and explore emerging funding opportunities. Council will also work in partnership with all levels of government, private and not-for-profit sectors for achievable goals. Planning mechanisms are the primary tool available to local councils and Council will incorporate appropriate affordable housing provisions into the new LEP to achieve this outcome. Social housing provides a vital source of accommodation for those most at need and Council will support the expansion of this sector where appropriate. In addition Council will explore the use of unoccupied sites for affordable housing, including Council owned sites.

- **existing stock of low cost accommodation protected; and**

  Low cost accommodation in the area provides for people in need and on low incomes. Council will continue to monitor and work with owners of the estimated 200 boarding houses in the LGA. Financial incentives are a means of facilitating change and Council will advocate for such incentives to retain and improve this stock. Council will collaborate with Housing NSW and other parties in the Marrickville South area. Through social impact assessments and improved approaches to the enforcement of SEPP 10 the loss of affordable housing can be mitigated.

- **increased community capacity and participation**

  Research indicates that housing is more successful if provided alongside other forms of support. Council will support initiatives that increase social inclusion, resident access to employment opportunities, community cohesion and participation. Through its role in planning and implementing social policy and programs, Council will facilitate the provision of services to meet the needs of local residents. This includes initiatives that improve environmental and social sustainability for low to moderate income households in the Marrickville area.

The Strategy is designed to respond to emerging needs and funding opportunities over the next three years. It is recommended that progress is reviewed annually.

Recommendations

Using a whole of Council approach, this strategy will articulate Council's role in the provision of affordable housing. The research and consultations underpinning this Strategy have informed the development of three key outcomes and recommended strategies, including:

- Advocate for the development of a state wide framework addressing affordable housing.
- Advocate for the State Government to include planning mechanisms in environmental planning instruments that retain and increase the stock of affordable housing.
- Work with partners at all levels of government, the private and community sectors to facilitate the improved provision of affordable housing.
- Incorporate affordable housing objectives within the new comprehensive Marrickville LEP and DCP.
- Incorporate planning provisions and mechanisms into the LEP and DCP to encourage a diverse and adaptable range of housing in the Marrickville area, where appropriate, including: secondary dwellings, shop-top housing, universal housing design and a dwelling mix for residential flat buildings.
- Investigate emerging funding opportunities and incentives for the development of affordable housing.
- Develop and implement a voluntary planning agreement framework, subject to approval of the new LEP in 2010 by the NSW Department of Planning.
- Support the expansion of the social housing sector, where appropriate.
- Investigate the feasibility of a range of options to achieve a public benefit, including affordable housing, on Council owned sites proposed for development.
- Explore the potential use of sites and unoccupied dwellings in the area for affordable housing.
- Monitor existing stocks of boarding houses in the area.
- Explore opportunities to advocate for a range of incentives to retain and improve existing stocks of affordable housing that are linked to improved standards and amenity.
- Develop and implement Social Impact Assessment procedures that include affordable housing.
- Advocate for improved enforcement of SEPP 10 and use of monetary contributions.
- Collaborate with Housing NSW and other community partners in the Marrickville South area.
- Advocate and work with local organisations to improve the security of tenure and access to services for boarding house residents.
- Continue to work with boarding house owners/manager to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations with regards to health, building and fire standards.
- Initiate and/or facilitate strategies and services to increase access to employment and training services for low to moderate income households.
- Build community cohesion and encourage community participation in the operations of Council.
- Facilitate the provision of services to meet the needs of local residents.
- Support and develop initiatives that improve the environmental sustainability of housing for low to moderate income households.

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4. INTRODUCTION

Marrickville Council has a record of achievement and commitment to urban and social planning that improves the wellbeing and quality of life for citizens, and involves collaborative planning on social and community issues at the local level. Marrickville Council recognises that access to affordable, appropriate and secure housing is essential for an inclusive and sustainable community.

The lack of affordable housing is a growing concern across Australia, particularly for low income and socially disadvantaged groups. Inner city councils in Sydney such as Marrickville have been under particular pressure as a result of an inward migration of higher income groups and the gentrification of housing stock which has traditionally provided low cost accommodation to low income and socially disadvantaged groups.

Enabling people to live in a home which is suited to their needs and which they can afford is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, the maintenance of the economy and critical to the development of mixed and socially cohesive communities. This also means that housing designs are appropriate for household size, life cycle, physical ability, culture and appropriately located close to social networks, services and employment[1].

What is affordable housing?

In general terms affordable housing is housing that is appropriate to the needs of a household and within their means or capacity to pay.

There are three primary factors in a household's capacity to pay for their housing:

- Income of the household;
- Cost of appropriate housing; and
- Other essential living costs, such as food and household goods, transport, education and healthcare.[2]

Affordable housing refers to housing for low and moderate income households seeking home ownership and rental housing opportunities at a cost which generally does not exceed 30% of Household income.[3]

What is housing stress?

Housing stress is experienced when households on low to moderate incomes spends more than 30 per cent of their gross household income on housing payments. When housing costs exceed this threshold a household does not have sufficient remaining income to cover necessities such as food, health care, transport and education.

What are affordability problems?

Affordability problems occur when households cannot obtain adequate housing within their local area because of insufficient income, high house prices or rents, or a combination of these factors. This may result in more households either leaving their community to find cheaper housing or living in housing that is too expensive or substandard to their needs. This can then have flow-on effects upon their living standards and well being[4].

Effects of Housing stress

The Australian Housing Urban Research Institute (AHURI) funded the National Research Venture: Housing Affordability for Lower Income Australians study which identifies the major risks and challenges related to Australia's housing problem. The research looks at the impact of housing stress which can be significant and arises when people are forced into decisions that adversely affect them because they can't access affordable housing. The incidence of housing stress is greatest amongst lower income private renters, single person households, lower income home purchasers and households with children (both couple and single parent households). Some of the common effects of housing stress include:

- Facing the constant stress of not having enough money to cover rent or mortgage payments and other necessities of life, particularly utility costs;
- Constant stress contributing to health problems;
- Breakdown of family relationships;
- Increased financial hardship resulting in households going without meals and children missing out on activities; and
- Reduced health and dental care.

Renters are particularly vulnerable to low vacancy rates and increasing rent charges. AHURI has researched the experience of stressed renters and they include:

- The risk of being stigmatised with poor credit histories because of rental arrears;
- Being forced into frequent moves in the search for affordable rental housing. This brings with it dislocation and significant search costs, particularly when there are few vacancies in the low-rent segment of the market;
- Making trade-offs regarding dwelling quality and location which affect their access to employment, education and health services;
- Having their future aspirations for ownership blocked; and
- Fear that there will be no relief from this stress in the foreseeable future[5].

Defining target groups for affordable housing

Target groups for affordable housing are generally defined by household income levels. Within these income groups there are specific housing needs relating to occupation, household size, life cycle, physical ability and culture.

Households that require affordable housing can be broadly grouped into three income categories:

Low-income households with multiple disadvantages: For these households the need for housing assistance is likely to be significant and ongoing. For this group housing has to be effectively linked to support services and community networks. There are limited choices of housing for many of the most disadvantaged households. Within the Marrickville area the Department of Housing, social and community housing and boarding houses currently provide accommodation for this group.

Low-income households: These are households who face a housing affordability problem because they have low incomes. They may, or may not be employed. Different forms of housing assistance can address their need, depending on their life stage and market conditions in the local area. However, because of the widespread decline in lower cost rental housing in many areas, incentives to increase local supply are required to meet the needs of low-income households in many areas. Within the Marrickville area community housing; boarding houses and low cost rentals provide housing for this group.

Moderate income households: These are households with somewhat higher incomes (up to 120% of the median) but whose circumstances place them below the margin where they can afford market housing, especially in higher cost locations. Examples include single working people and working families on modest wages.

Income groups are generally calculated as a percentage of gross median income.

The State Environmental Planning Policy 70 – Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes) defines (refer Table 1 below) very low to moderate income as a percentage of income for the Sydney Statistical Division, of which Marrickville is part[6]:

Table 1: Target groups by income percentile

Income group	Income Percentile
Very Low Income	Less than 50% of gross median income;
Low Income	More than 50% but less than 80%; and
Moderate Income	More than 80% but less than 120%.

The median individual income in mid 2006 was $595 a week, 11% less than Inner Sydney ($669) and 13% more than greater Sydney ($518). The median family income was $1460 a week, 13% less than Inner Sydney's $1,671 and 21% more than greater Sydney's $1154[7]. Within the above income groupings there are specific housing needs related to occupation, household size, life cycle, physical ability and culture. There are a number of groups in Marrickville who may be disproportionately affected by the lack of affordable housing, including:

- key occupations and low income workers;
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- older people;
- people with a disability;
- young people, including students;
- single parent households; and
- people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Levels of affordable housing and housing stress

A significant proportion of low income residents renting and purchasing are experiencing housing stress in the Marrickville area.

Table 2: Household incomes and housing stress

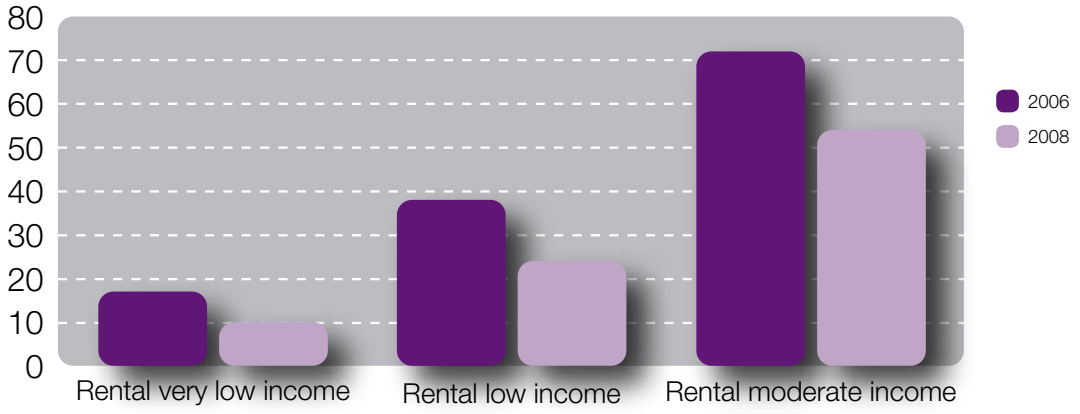
	Very low income households in housing stress		Low income households in housing stress		Moderate income households in stress	
	Renting	Purchasing	Renting	Purchasing	Renting	Purchasing
Marrickville LGA	95%	86%	72%	60%	36%	48%
Sydney SD	93%	83%	61%	60%	32%	42%

Source: Centre for Affordable Housing. Local Government Housing Kit Database

Since the 2001 Census, the percentage of households in housing stress has increased significantly. In 2001 the proportion of low income households in housing stress that were renting was 55%; this has increased to 95% in 2006. This represents a 40% increase over the last five years in the proportion of low income households in housing stress.

The Centre for Affordable Housing provides data on the proportion of housing rental and purchase stock that is affordable. In 2008, only 10% of rental properties were considered affordable for very low income groups, compared to the availability of 72% affordable rental properties for moderate income groups. However there was no affordable purchase stock for very low to low income households and only 10% of affordable housing available for purchase by moderate income groups.

Figure 1: Proportion of affordable housing rental stock available in 2006 and 2008



Source: Centre for Affordable Housing 2008. Local Government Housing Kit Database

There is a demonstrated need to address housing affordability for specific income groups and to mitigate the increasing levels of housing stress in the Marrickville LGA. A Marrickville housing needs study identified the need to increase the diversity of housing stock in terms of dwelling type, tenure and affordability. The diversity of housing plays an important role in supporting the diverse nature of the Marrickville community for current and future generations[8].

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

In 2007, Marrickville Council allocated resources to the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) with the aim of identifying strategies that would lead to the preservation and creation of affordable housing opportunities in the Marrickville area. The AHS builds on Marrickville Council's previous work on the Marrickville Urban Strategy 2007 and the Inner East Sydney Housing Strategy. It draws on a range of government, academic and overseas research and policies.

The development of this strategy involved:

- researching the housing market in Marrickville including levels of affordability and housing stress;
- consultation with academic institutions; not-for-profit organisations including housing providers; private sector owners and developers; and
- designing a range of strategies to encourage different housing forms, remove barriers and provide a solid base for the future planning of Council services to meet the needs of the community.

The Marrickville Council Affordable Housing Strategy has been developed in the context of the following:

- ongoing strategies within existing Council structures;
- short term and/or partially funded strategies that may require additional funding;
- new strategies that require recurrent funding; and
- evolving State and Federal initiatives.

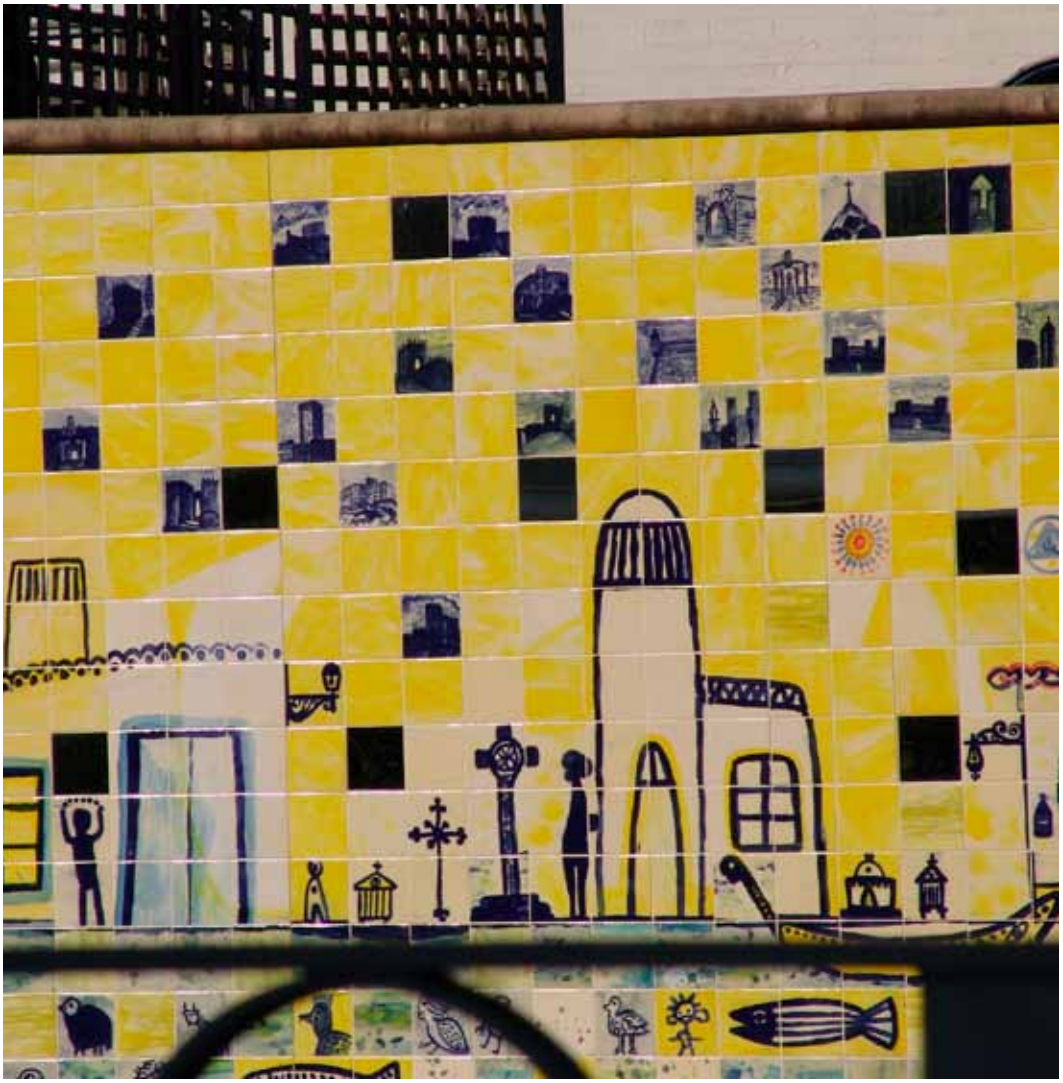
The AHS has been developed incorporating and drawing on affordable housing policies of neighbouring councils including Leichhardt Affordable Housing Strategy and the City of Sydney's Draft Affordable Rental Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014. Both of these documents include a focus on collaboration and partnerships with surrounding LGAs in recognition of the impact and effect of the lack of affordable housing on inner city suburbs such as Marrickville. The AHS acknowledges and reflects the collaborative emphasis as a strategic means of addressing affordable housing issues.

6. AIMS AND OUTCOMES

The aim of this strategy is to retain and facilitate the creation of affordable and accessible housing in the Council area to provide for social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability.

Anticipated outcomes include:

- increased stock of appropriate affordable housing for households with very low, low and moderate incomes;
- existing stock of low cost accommodation protected; and
- increased community capacity and participation.



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7. ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Commonwealth and State governments have the legislative responsibility for housing polices, particularly for those most in need. The main legislation relating to the housing policy in Australian is the National Affordable Housing Agreement, which replaced the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. This is a joint Commonwealth-State arrangement which aims to assist both renters and purchasers to obtain appropriate accommodation as well as assist people who are homeless. It is mainly concerned with the provision of public housing, but also provides funding for community housing, crisis accommodation and Aboriginal rental housing. However levels of Commonwealth funding have diminished over a number of years, reducing the capacity of States to meet need.

The economic and taxation policies of Commonwealth and State Governments also affect the cost of housing. Over a number of years, the cost of housing has dramatically increased for both renters and purchasers. While the Commonwealth and State governments are responsible for the policies that directly affect housing, the impacts are felt at a local level.

The social and economic sustainability and diversity of an area is linked to the degree to which people are able to live and work in that area. Declining levels of affordable housing reduce the ability of people from different backgrounds, occupations and income levels to live in a particular area. The ethnicity, religion, age, language, physical ability, gender, sexuality, family structure, education and income of citizens are some of the things which affect the social sustainability and diversity of an area.

The lack of affordable housing will also impact on the areas of economic sustainability. It has been argued that high housing costs have affected business efficiency in the form of difficulties of recruitment and retention[9]. This is particularly relevant to key workers, such as nurses, teachers and emergency workers. Key workers on low to moderate incomes will seek employment opportunities close to available affordable housing, reducing the time and expense needed to travel long distances between their place of residence and place of work.

While Commonwealth and State Governments have the legislative responsibility for housing and economic policies, the impacts are felt at a local level. Council's role is to sustain the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the Marrickville LGA for current and future generations.

Local governments are able to influence the provision of affordable housing and the housing market at a local level through:

- planning tools,
- partnerships,
- leadership, advocacy; and
- community development.

8. POLICY AND STATUTORY CONTEXT

Marrickville Council, located in the Inner West region of Sydney, has a record of achievement and commitment to urban and social planning that (a) improves the wellbeing and quality of life of citizens, and (b) involves collaborative planning on social and community issues at the local level.

Marrickville Community Plan and Strategic Plan 2006-2011

The Marrickville Community Plan 2025 outlines the community's vision and key principles. Council's Strategic Plan details Council's response to this vision and these principles. Within these documents, and the Annual Management Plan and Budget, Council and the community have recognised the importance of affordable housing in the area. The key objectives linked to affordable housing and this strategy Include:

Community wellbeing and inclusiveness

1.1 Make Marrickville a place where all those who live, work and visit feel safe, valued and that they belong;

1.1.3 Collaborate with others in planning and delivering services that produce better outcomes for citizens;

3.1 Develop a community which is more liveable, safer and accessible to all citizens; and

3.1.2 Ensure that the built environment reflects the expectations and accommodates the changing needs of the community

Guided development and sustainable transport:

4.1 Maintain the vibrancy, liveability and economic development of Marrickville by having balanced and guided development based on a sound framework of planning controls; and

4.1.5 Produce new planning controls and supporting mechanisms that retain existing and create new supplies of affordable housing.

Marrickville Urban Plan

In April 2007 Council adopted the Marrickville Urban Strategy. The Urban Strategy has been developed to provide the planning context for future development across the Marrickville LGA. This plan acknowledges that affordable housing is a key concern that may be influencing the population's characteristics as well as impacting on the economic opportunities and social needs in the LGA. Specific relevant objectives under 5.2: Housing and Living include accommodating future housing demand and addressing affordable and target group housing needs. The actions related to affordable housing are:

2.1: Develop an affordable housing strategy;

2.2: Plan for seniors living housing;

2.3: Enhance social housing and community housing provision; and

2.4: Encourage adaptable and accessible housing.

Marrickville Local Action 21 Strategy (2003)

This strategy sets out Council's detailed objectives for protecting environmentally sensitive areas in Marrickville and for promoting ecologically sustainable development in the area. Relevant actions include 7.3: Retain and enhance affordable and target group housing.

Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan

Marrickville Council is undertaking a major review of its planning controls. The review aims to ensure that the Marrickville LGA remains a great place to live, work and visit.

The review of Marrickville's planning controls responds to the NSW State Government's Planning Reform Program. The review will result in the preparation of a new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and consolidated Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Marrickville LGA. Marrickville Council is working towards a timeframe of 31 March 2010 for completion of the new LEP and consolidated DCP.

The new LEP will replace the Marrickville Local Environmental Plan and consolidate the various DCPs which currently apply across the LGA. The new LEP will be consistent with the Standard Template for LEPs, which was introduced by the State Government in March 2006. It is a requirement of the State Government that all councils in NSW develop new LEPs consistent with the Standard Template.

Marrickville Council's planning review will respond to the targets and objectives established within the NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy, and also those contained within the draft South Subregional Strategy.

Inner East Sydney Regional Housing Strategy

In 2005 Marrickville Council along with Randwick, Botany Bay and City of Sydney participated in the development of a regional housing strategy. This strategy builds on the following five key principles contained in the Inner East Sydney Housing Strategy:

- Working to retain the supply and where possible, create and target new supply of affordable housing for people on low to moderate incomes;
- Working to help employees who are important to our local economies to afford a place to live close to their workplace and families;
- Ensuring that new housing developments are appropriate to the needs of the future population;
- Participating in local community renewal programs; and
- Working cooperatively with other councils and government agencies with the Inner East subregion of Sydney to pool resources, coordinate the development of regional and local housing policies and share information about housing needs.

NSW Metropolitan Strategy

In 2005 the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy was released by the Department of Planning. This outlines the State Government's long term plan to manage Sydney continuing economic growth while balancing social and environmental impacts. A number of initiatives to improve the affordability of housing are identified, including:

C4.1 Improve the affordability of housing;

C4.2 Redevelop and regenerate Department of Housing Stock; and

C4.3 Use planning mechanisms to provide affordable housing.

South Sydney Subregional Plan

In December 2007, the State Government released the draft South Subregional Strategy. Subregional strategies have been developed to implement the Metropolitan Strategy at the local level. The aim of the subregional strategies is to act as a broad framework for the long term development of an area, guiding government investment and linking local and State planning issues. The South Subregion includes the LGAs of Canterbury, Hurstville, Kogarah, Marrickville, Sutherland and Rockdale

The draft South Subregional Strategy contains dwelling targets and employment capacity targets for the south subregion to 2031. The targets contained in the draft South Subregional Strategy are an additional 35,000 dwellings by 2031 and additional 29,000 employment capacity by 2031. Strategies specific to affordable housing include:

C4.1.1 The NSW government to develop options for improving housing affordability with a focus on affordable housing for particular groups in the community;

C4.1.2 The Department of Housing and Department of Planning to identify how possible affordable housing initiatives can be applied to the South Subregion; and

C4.1.3 The Department of Planning and councils to investigate opportunities to increase provision for affordable housing throughout the South subregion.

The dwelling target for the Marrickville LGA is an additional 4,150 by 2031. Marrickville Council is required to plan for these increases within its new comprehensive LEP and consolidated DCP.

NSW Local Government Act 1993

Council operates within the legislative framework laid down by the State Government. Their powers and responsibilities derive mainly from the Local Government Act 1993.

National Affordable Housing Agreement

This agreement replaces the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement and defines the objectives, and roles and responsibilities that will guide the Commonwealth, States and Territories in the delivery of services across the housing and homelessness services sector. This is a joint Commonwealth, State arrangement which aims to assist both renters and purchasers to obtain appropriate accommodation as well as assistance to people who are homeless. It is mainly concerned with the provision of public housing, but also provides funding for community housing, crisis accommodation and Aboriginal rental housing.

9. PLANNING TOOLS

While State and Commonwealth governments are responsible for housing those most in need in society, the effects of the lack of affordable housing are felt at a local level. However, there are limited planning tools and mechanisms available to Council to address and respond to declining levels of affordable housing in the LGA. Council works within the planning framework set by the State Government and is best placed to respond appropriately to local needs.

There are a number of State planning policies that guide and regulate Council's planning and development roles. However, there is a lack of a coordinated state policy framework to address affordable housing and local governments are constrained by the lack of planning mechanisms to deal with the issue.

- Council's new LEP must be consistent with the State government template, although Council's capacity to address affordable housing in the area is limited by the templates lack of affordable housing provisions.
- The Metropolitan Strategy identifies the need for affordable housing mechanisms to be included as planning provisions, either through negotiated planning agreements or inclusionary zoning. These actions have not been effectively carried into the Draft South Subregional Strategy, even though the Subregional Strategy states "any significant residential development which occurs within the subregion should consider affordable housing provision"[10]. The actions within the Draft South Subregional Strategy fail to provide councils with the necessary mechanisms to achieve this.
- An objective of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 is to encourage the provision and maintenance of affordable housing. However, the State government's template for the new LEP doesn't provide mechanisms to meet the objectives of the EPA Act.
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70 – Affordable Housing (SEPP 70*) does not identify the Marrickville LGA as an area where there is a need for affordable housing. Therefore, Council is unable to utilise section 94F of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

It is critical that a statewide policy be developed, including planning provisions on housing affordability. Such a policy would assist local councils in becoming more actively engaged in the provision of and retention of affordable housing within their LGAs.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) regulates the planning and development assessment functions of councils. An objective of the EP&A Act is the provision and maintenance of affordable housing.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act - Section 94F

The objective of Section 94 of the EP&A Act is for a contribution where a development is likely to increase the demand for public amenities and public services within the area. Contributions can be in the form of dedication of land or the payment of a monetary contribution. Most developers have chosen to provide a financial contribution.

Section 94F only applies to new developments within an area that has been identified in State Environmental Planning Policy 70 (see above).

Voluntary Planning Agreements

Voluntary planning agreements are a mechanism available to councils to achieve the provision of affordable housing within an LGA. Planning agreements are negotiated with developers when a change is sought to a planning instrument or at the development application stage. The change to a planning instrument or variation to a development standard is conditional on applicants participating in a voluntary planning agreement, which shares the benefits between the developer and the community. Changes to a planning instrument can include dwelling size, heights, care, parking, density of floor space ratios and section 94 contributions.

Advantages of implementing a voluntary planning agreement policy for Council include opportunities to:

- incrementally increase the stock of available affordable housing;
- share development benefits with the community; and
- provide a policy framework for establishing a legal, sound and transparent procedural process.

Limitations of voluntary planning agreements for Marrickville Council include:

- re-examination of zoning in order to maximize yields in the development of the new LEP is a State Government requirement;
- floor space ratios are already set at the maximum in the new LEP to encourage development;
- limited land for large scale housing developments in the LGA; and
- voluntary developer participation.

Waverley City Council has procured 32 units of affordable housing since 1999 through its Affordable Housing Program (WAHP). These units have been generated and secured through a combination of planning mechanisms, developer incentives and voluntary contributions triggered by floor space ratio provisions contained within their Development Control Plan 2006 part D2 – Multi-Unit Housing.

State Environmental Planning Policy – Retention of Low-cost Rental Accommodation (SEPP 10)

This policy requires local council consent and the Department of Planning's concurrence, to demolish, alter or change the use of a boarding house, a residential flat building containing a low-rental dwelling or a hostel. Consent is also required to strata-subdivide a low-cost residential flat building or boarding house. Taken into consideration is the availability of comparable accommodation, the structural soundness and fire safety of a building, the estimated cost of necessary improvements and the financial viability of continuing to run a boarding house.

State Environmental Planning Policy 70 – Affordable Housing (SEPP 70)

The policy allows a select few councils to levy developer contributions for affordable housing on all new developments (it is also referred to as an inclusionary zoning mechanism). Developer contributions for affordable housing can be in the form of dwelling unit/s or monetary contributions.

An example of the application of this policy is in the City of Sydney's Green Square Affordable Housing Program, which is implemented through the Green Square LEP and DCP. The program sets out provisions to enable Council to apply a 3% affordable housing levy. A community housing provider is responsible for the development and ongoing management of the dedicated affordable housing, ensuring that affordable housing is targeted at those most in need. Monetary contributions are collected in a trust fund managed by the Department of Planning and they are passed on to a housing company which uses the funds for the purchase of land and the construction of affordable housing.

10. MARRICKVILLE CONTEXT

The lack of affordable housing is a growing concern across Australia, particularly for low income and socially disadvantaged groups. Councils on the inner fringe of Sydney such as Marrickville have been under particular pressure as a result of an inward migration of higher income groups and the subsequent gentrification of housing stock that has traditionally provided low cost accommodation to low income and socially disadvantaged groups. Affordability is becoming a key concern that is influencing the population's characteristics as well as the economic opportunities and social needs in the LGA.

It is important to understand how the local population is changing the housing implications for both current and future residents. The following data has been compiled from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census data. It outlines the demography of the area by income and occupations, trends and labour participation, housing supply and market changes in the area.

Population:

From the 2006 Census, the population of Marrickville is estimated to be 75,525. Since 2001 the population of Marrickville has declined by 1.8%. The median age of all people in Marrickville LGA was 35 years, which is one year older than in 2001. The largest age groups in 2006 were between 25 and 39 years of age, making up 33% of the population. The age groups that increased most were 55 – 59, 35 - 39 and 0 – 4. The population of Marrickville is expected to age in the future with 28% of anticipated population growth to occur in the 55+ age group by 2031.

There are a number of groups in Marrickville who may be disproportionately affected by the lack of affordable housing, including:

- key occupations and low income workers;
- people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- older people;
- people with a disability;
- young people, including students;
- single parent households; and
- homeless or at risk of homelessness.

From 2001 to 2006 the average income in Marrickville LGA rose by approximately 26%. From 1996 to 2006 the median income has risen by approximately 42%.

The changing income median is reflected in the change of Marrickville resident's occupations. In 1996, manufacturing was the industry employing the largest proportion of residents, followed by Healthcare/social assistance and Education/training. In 2006, the industry employing the largest proportion of residents was Professional, scientific and technical services, followed by Healthcare and social assistance and Education and training.

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In 2006 Professionals made up 32% of working people in Marrickville. This was followed by Clerical/administration (15%) and Managers (13%). Over the last ten years the proportion of Professionals has grown by nearly 9%, followed by a 3% growth in Managers. There appears to be a direct correlation between the growth in Professionals and Managers (12%) and the decline in Trade, Labourers and Technicians, with these occupations declining by 11% over the last ten years.

Through the ABS it is possible to identify the number of people in different industries earning very low, low and moderate incomes in the Marrickville LGA:

- 14% of all people employed in industries earn a very low income (earning up to 50% of median income);
- Nearly 15% of workers earn a low income (earning 50% to 80% of median income); and
- Nearly 70% of people employed in industries earn a moderate income (80% to 120% of median income)[11].

The following graph represents the industries employing the largest proportion of residents on very low and low individual incomes.

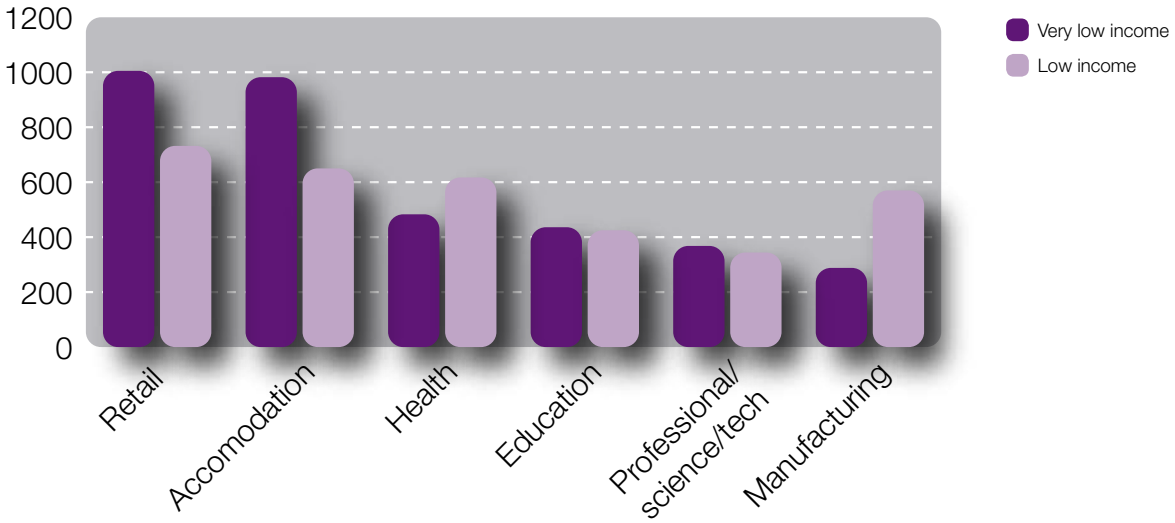


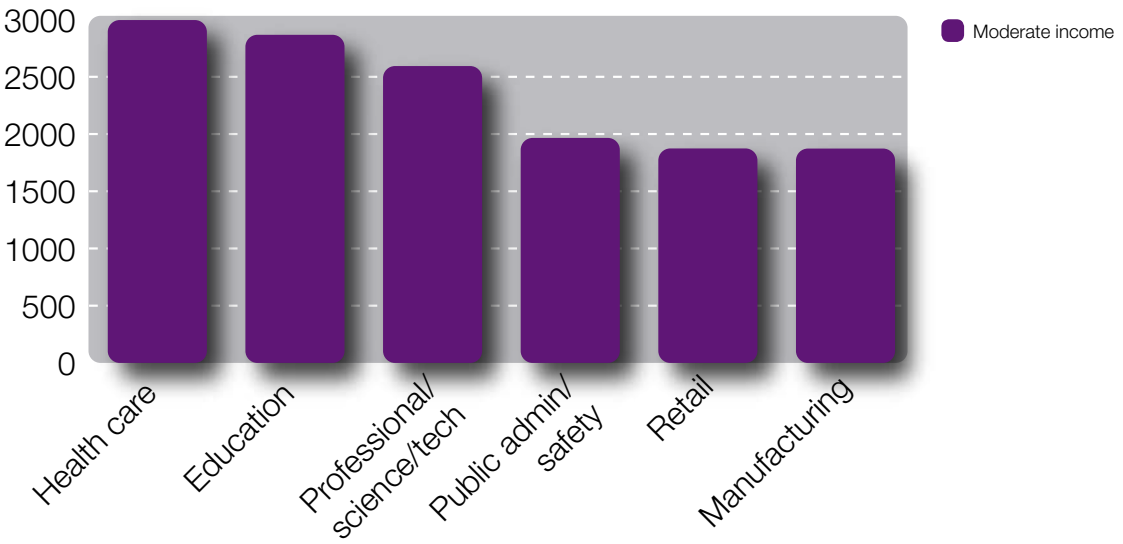
Figure 2: Industries with very low and low income workers

People working in the above industries and on very low to low incomes live across the LGA with concentrations in Marrickville, Dulwich Hill and South Marrickville. These suburbs have the largest individual suburb populations as well as the largest proportion of units and separate houses. Dulwich Hill has the largest number of units as well as the largest proportion of rented units, with 60% of all units in Dulwich Hill rented. South Marrickville has the second largest number of units with 67% of all units rented. Both Dulwich Hill and South Marrickville also have the largest number of units fully owned and being purchased. This indicates a suburb with a degree of affordability, especially for units, with an influx of new residents.

Citizens on low to very low incomes in particular industries appear to reside in different suburbs within the LGA. For instance people employed in Retail, Accommodation/food supplies, Health care or Education/training, Scientific/technical are spread across the LGA with a concentration in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill.

The following graph represents the industries employing the largest proportion of residents on moderate incomes.

Figure 3: Industries with moderate income workers



The ABS produces statistical tables on occupation by levels of individual income. From these tables can be ascertained the number of people in different occupations earning very low, low and moderate individual incomes. Approximately 18% of all occupations earn a very low income equating to up to 50% of median income, 21% earn a low income equivalent to 50 to 80% of median income and 43% of all occupations earn a moderate income being 80% to 120% of median income .The occupations with the highest proportion of very low income workers are labourers (17%) and sales workers (17%). For low income workers the predominant occupations are Labourers (17%) followed by Machine operators (15%) and Technicians and Trades workers (15%). For moderate income earners Professionals was the predominant occupation (22%) followed by Technicians/trades workers (17%) and Clerical and administrative workers (17%).

Occupations can be broken into two sectors, private and government. The following outlines the proportion of residents employed by each sector with the top occupations in each income level in the Marrickville area:

1) Private Sector employs 91% occupations	
Income level	**Occupation**
Very low	Labourers (18%), Sales workers (17%), Technicians/trade workers (13%)
Low	Labourers (17%), Machine operators (16%), Technicians/trade workers (16%)
Moderate	Professionals (20%), Technicians/trade workers (19%), Clerical (16%).

2) Government employs 9% of occupations	
Income level	**Occupation**
Very low	Community/personal workers (32%), professionals (30%)
Low	Professionals (35%), Clerical (18%),
Moderate	Professional (33%), clerical (19%),

Residents in the labour force without qualifications are concentrated more in the south of Marrickville, which generally has greater levels of affordable housing.

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People receiving government payments

Within the LGA there are a total of 10,349 people receiving a government payment, with more than 50% receiving an aged pension. The suburbs in the LGA with the greatest proportion of people receiving an aged pension are Marrickville, followed by Dulwich Hill. These suburbs also have the highest proportion of fully owned properties, reflecting a settled, older community. People receiving a disability support pension make up 23% of all people receiving a government payment in the area. Within the LGA 5,702 people receive some level of rent assistance with Newtown followed by Marrickville having the largest proportion of people receiving some form of rent assistance. People on low incomes, such as government payments are disproportionally affected by the escalating housing costs

People from Culturally Linguistically Diverse backgrounds

The LGA has long history of ethnic diversity with a large proportion of people speaking a language other than English. Residents born overseas make up 34% of Marrickville's population; this has fallen by 5% since 2001. The ABS estimate that residents born overseas living in Marrickville come from over 34 different countries. In 2006, 33% of the population spoke a language other than English, with Vietnamese and Chinese languages the most predominant. In addition, 609 new migrants moved into the area. Some of these were refugees and may not have any pre-existing social or family links in Australia. Refugees can experience a number of challenges moving to a new country, particularly if they have come from a refugee camp, do not speak English, have health issues or have limited or no education. Stable and affordable accommodation is vital for refugees to settle into Australia.

Indigenous households

The Cadigal-Wangal people of the Eora Nation are the traditional owners of the land comprising the Marrickville LGA. The area is now occupied by many Aboriginal people and in 2006 Census there were 1,078 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal living in the LGA. Of these people 48% were aged 0 to 24 years of age. Consultations with community housing providers, revealed a lack of affordable large dwellings that have the capacity to accommodate extended families in the LGA. Aboriginal people are experiencing alarming levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, highlighting the importance of social housing. It is estimated that 11.7 % of Aboriginal people aged 15 years and over in NSW live in overcrowded households and most of these are in rental housing. Overcrowding has negative consequences for health, education and family relationships and can contribute to family violence[12].

Single parent households

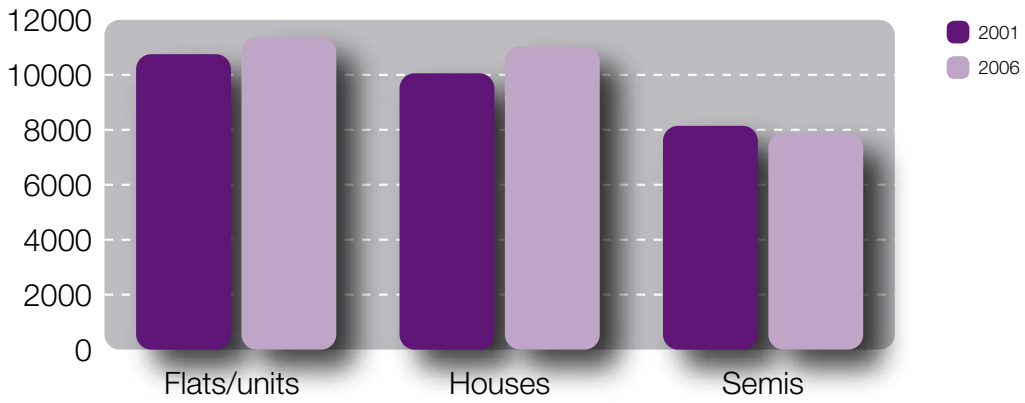
There are 7,168 residents living in the 2,858 single parent households in the LGA. Over 50% of these households contain children under 15 years and therefore still at school. In 2006, 69% of single parent families earned less than the median income. Single parent households face a number of practical challenges. These include finding affordable childcare, the cost of transport, and securing employment hours that fit around children[13]. For these reasons they often work in casual positions or at low paid jobs with no stability and limited conditions. Single parent families residing in rental properties can be severely affected by rent increases which can result in the need to move regularly. This adds to the practical and financial challenges they face and can have detrimental affects on health and education outcomes for children as well as parent's participation in paid employment.

Older people

In 2001, 10.3% of the Marrickville's population or approximately 7,000 people were aged over 65 years. Data from the 2006 Census indicated this figure had grown to 9,752 people over 65 years. By 2022 it is projected that 12.5% of the population will be aged 65 years and over. A large proportion of the area's residents, (5,921) receive the aged pension. Research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has demonstrated the need for a variety of housing options for financially disadvantaged older people given the unreliability of the private rental market and the unlikely growth of the public housing sector[14].

Types of dwellings

Figure 4: Types of dwellings in 2006 and 2008



Flats or units make up 37% of Marrickville dwellings, with most being low-rise (ground-floor or walk-up). Only 17% are buildings with four or more storeys. In the Marrickville LGA 36% of dwellings are detached houses, which is 16% more than Sydney.

Over the last six years there has been an increase of 868 private dwellings in the Marrickville area. This increase has occurred in 3 and 4 storey flat blocks and separate houses. Other dwelling types that declined since 2001 are one and two storey blocks, semis/town houses and flats attached to shops. There have been a number of large mixed commercial/flat block developments on both Petersham and Marrickville shopping strips, and a review of mixed commercial/flat development applications approved by Council will be undertaken.

Boarding houses

It is estimated that there are in excess of 200 privately run unlicensed boarding houses across the Marrickville LGA. They range from low to high quality accommodation for people on very low to moderate incomes. The lower end of the market targets some of the most vulnerable residents on very low incomes, often with drug and alcohol problems and/or those who receive income support in the form of pensions or benefits. The higher end of the market includes renovated or new premises targeting students and moderate income workers.

Boarding houses play an important role in the provision of affordable housing in the Marrickville area. The technical definition of homelessness includes “people living in single rooms in private boarding houses on a long-term basis: without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure”[15]. The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (Boarders and Lodgers Project 2003), reported that 80.5% of known boarding houses in the Marrickville area had no vacancies[16]. Of those with vacancies there was a concentration of disadvantaged people in premises that tend to be both of poor quality and more expensive than other boarding houses in the area. Anecdotal information collected from local community organisations providing services to the homeless suggests an increased demand for boarding house accommodation from women, couples and families. In the past these latter groups have rarely sought this style of accommodation. A shift in the demographics of residents seeking boarding house accommodation is indicative of the lack of affordable rental in the area and raises issues around the appropriateness and safety of accommodation for families and women.

Households

In 2006, Marrickville residents lived in 28,087 households, of which 59% were family households, and 41% were lone persons or shared households. Family households consist of couples with no children, couples with families and single parents. There has been an increase of 19% in Couples with no children directly correlating with an 18% decrease in the proportion of couples with children. Of the family households, nearly 50% had two members and 44% had three or more members. Single person households are the fastest growing housing group, with 76% of non-family households having one resident. This is a phenomenon that is reflected across inner Sydney where almost eight in every ten non-family households has one usual resident.

Types of Dwellings and Household Composition

In 2006, 54% of single households resided in flats with a further 23% living in separate houses and 21% in semi-detached houses or townhouses. Over the last ten years there has been a significant increase in single households residing in flats (36%) and separate houses (20%). According to the ABS, adults who lived alone were on average older than adults who lived in other households; with the median age of an adult living in a one person household being 56 years. This is consistent with a suggestion that many of these householders are older people living alone after the death of their spouse or partner[17]. It could also reflect an influx of individuals with increased incomes and the capacity to afford separate houses.

Over the last ten years there has been approximately a 19% increase in the number of couples with no children living in the LGA. In 2006 couples without children appear to be evenly distributed across the different types of dwellings i.e. separate house, townhouse and flats. However over the last ten years there has been a significant increase (36%) in couples without children residing in flats. It is possible that the affordability of flats and units compared to separate houses or townhouses makes this type of dwelling more attractive to couples without children.

The increase in family households without children (19%) is in direct correlation to the decline in families with children (18%). The most significant decline in the last ten years is found in the dwelling type for this group, with a 40% decline in families with children living in flats in the LGA. Over the same period there has been an 11% decline in families with children living in separate houses. A very small (2%) increase is found in the number of families with children residing in semi-detached or town houses. The decline in families with children is a reflection of the decreasing rental and purchase stock that is affordable in the LGA. Families with more than three people make up 27% of all family households. The substantial increases in median rents in 2007 (see below for details) for dwellings with more than two rooms has a significant impact on families with children

Tenure

Tenure relates to the occupancy rights of dwellings and includes rentals and ownership.

Tenure tends to vary with dwelling types and this can reflect different life stages. Overall, in 2006, 25% of dwellings in Marrickville were fully owned, which was 5% more than inner Sydney. Generally, more fully owned dwellings indicate an older, longer settled population. A further 28% of dwellings were being purchased indicating an influx of newer residents. Marrickville has a large proportion of rental properties, with 44% of all dwellings rented. The majority of rental dwellings are flats/units (68%). Private renters are most prevalent in Camperdown and Petersham (48% of households in each).

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Property ownership

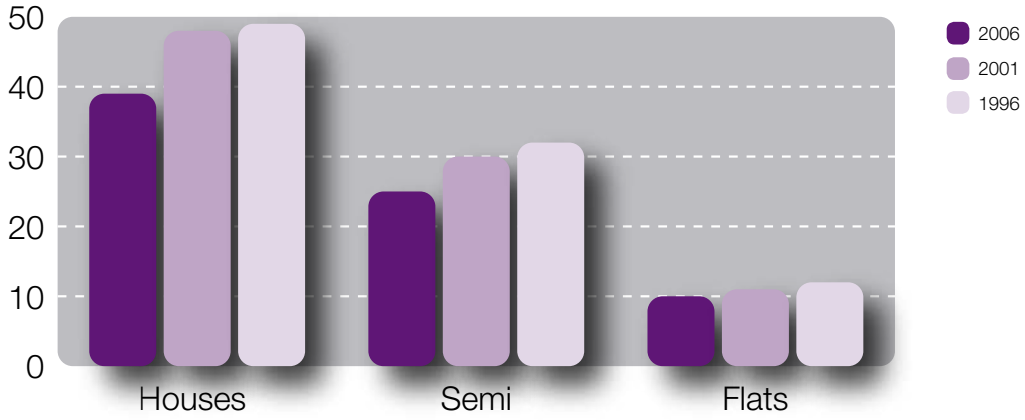
Overall, 25% of Marrickville dwellings are fully owned, which is 5% more than inner Sydney. Generally, more fully-owned dwellings indicate an older, longer settled population. A further 28% of dwellings are being purchased indicating an influx of newer residents.

Of the fully owned properties in 2006, nearly 40% are separate houses and 25% are semi-detached houses with just under 10% of flats in the LGA being fully owned. A similar pattern is reflected in the properties being purchased in the LGA. Of the properties being purchased 33% are separate houses, 36% are semi-detached houses and nearly 20% are flats. The small percentage of flats being purchased or fully owned compared to the proportion of flats rented (68%) indicates that the majority of flats in the area are being purchased as investment properties.

Fully owned properties in the Marrickville LGA from 1996 to 2006

Analysing the tenure statistics from the last three censuses reveals that there has been a general decline in properties fully owned in the Marrickville LGA. The most significant difference is found in fully owned separate house (10%), followed by semi-detached (6%) and flats with only a 2% difference. The decline in fully owned properties in the LGA indicates a changing population with decreasing numbers of settled, long term residents. This is reflected in the LGA suburbs that have lower percentages of fully owned properties and a greater percentage of rental properties. Newtown and Camperdown have relatively small proportions of fully owned properties (18% & 19%) and large proportions of rental properties (52% & 48%)

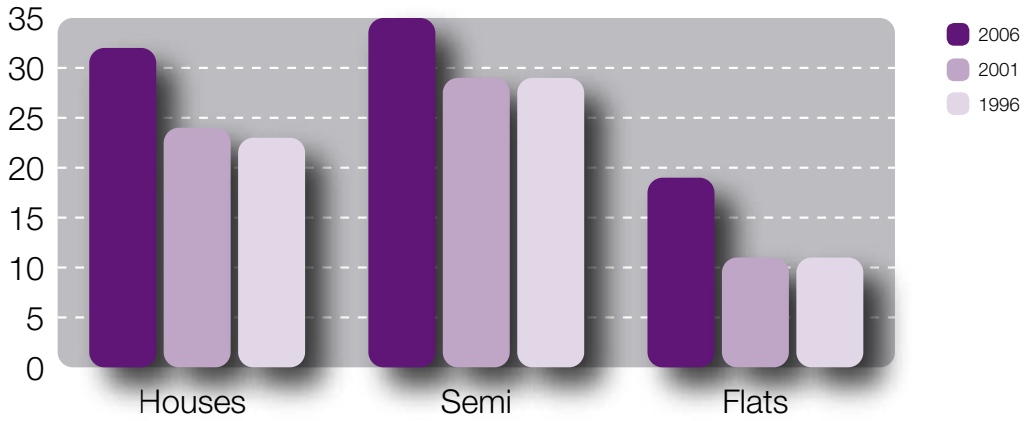
Figure 5: Proportion of full owned properties from 1996 to 2006



Properties being purchased in the Marrickville LGA from 1996 to 2006

The increased number of properties being purchased correlates with the decline in fully owned properties. Since 1996 there has been a 9% increase in the proportion of houses being purchased and a 6.7% increase in semi-detached being purchased. However the proportion of flats being purchased is greater than the 2% decline in fully owned flats, reflecting the growth in new flat blocks built in the area. The growth in the proportion of properties being purchased reflects a changing population with an influx of new residents. It also reflects the popularity of the LGA which is close to the city and well serviced by public transport.

Figure 6: Proportion of properties being purchased from 1996 to 2006



The suburbs within the LGA with the greatest proportion of fully owned properties are Sydenham (32%) and Tempe (35%), both these suburbs also have the greatest proportion of properties being purchased (35% and 38%) and the lowest percentage of rental properties. These suburbs have a large proportion of houses and semis (96% for Tempe and 93% for Sydenham). For both these suburbs the percentage of flats/units is only 4% of all dwellings.

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Rental properties in the Marrickville LGA

Marrickville has a large proportion of rental properties, with 44% of all dwellings rented. The majority of rental dwellings were flats/ units (68%). Private renters were most prevalent in Camperdown and Petersham (48% of households in each).

Housing NSW produces quarterly rental statistics based on rental bond lodgements[21]. Within the Inner Sydney ring for the June quarter 2008, Marrickville has the second lowest rental rates, and Ashfield the lowest. The median rent for all dwellings with:

- one bedroom is $265, and has increased by 6% within the last quarter, the annual median increase was at 10.4%;
- two bedrooms is $380, and has increased by 0.7%, within the last quarter, the annual median increase is 17.8%;
- three bedrooms is $515, and has increased by 5.1% in the last quarter, the annual median increase is 14.4%;and
- four bedrooms is $640, and has increased by 10% in the last quarter, the annual median increase is 30.6%.

The rental rates for separate houses are as follows:

- two bedrooms range from $405 to $525 with a median of $450, an annual median increase of 21.6%; and
- three bedrooms range from $470 to $600, with a median of $550, an annual median increase of 25%.

The rental rates for flats are as follows:

- one bedroom range from $224 to $330 with a median of $270, an annual median increase of 12.5%; and
- two bedrooms range from $300 to $400 with a median of $340, an annual median increase of 13.3%.

The large proportion of rental properties in the LGA and the current rental crisis affecting Sydney impacts on Marrickville residents. The rental crisis is demonstrated by the percentage of properties available for rent. According to the Real Estate Institute NSW at July 2008 the Inner Sydney rental vacancy, which includes Marrickville, was only 1.2%[22]. The tight rental market is also demonstrated by the number of new bonds lodged. In the 2008 June quarter new bonds lodged decreased by 8.2%, with annual decrease of 2.3%.

The Centre for Affordable Housing (Housing NSW) calculates the percentage of rental property for different income groups in an LGA. The available rental housing in the Marrickville LGA that is affordable for very low income households has declined over the last two years. In 2005, 18% of rental properties were considered affordable for very low incomes. By 2007 the percentage had dropped to 14%, a decline of 4% over two years. Over the same period there has been no affordable purchase stock for very low incomes[23].

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has identified a 36,000 shortage of rental dwellings in Sydney for the lowest income earners. In addition AHURI research has found that only 39% of low rent dwellings are occupied by low income people, with a relatively large proportion of low-cost private rental accommodation occupied by moderate/ high income households. This results in a situation in which low income earners compete with moderate and high income households for affordable tenancies in the private rental market[20].

11. OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

The lack of affordable housing is a growing concern across Australia, particularly for low income and socially disadvantaged groups. Councils on the inner fringe of Sydney such as Marrickville have been under particular pressure as a result of an inward migration of higher income groups and gentrification of housing stock that has traditionally provided low cost accommodation to low income and socially disadvantaged groups.

The loss of very low to moderate households will have adverse social, economic and cultural implications for the Marrickville LGA. These may include recruitment difficulties for some employment sectors, increased marginalisation of lower income households and environmental impacts of excessive commuting time. Ultimately, these will have long term implications for the Marrickville LGA.

OUTCOME 1: Increased stock of appropriate affordable housing for households with very low, low and moderate incomes.

1.1 Advocate for the development of a state wide framework addressing affordable housing.

1.2 Advocate for the State Government to include planning mechanisms in environmental planning instruments that retain and increase the stock of affordable housing.

1.3 Work with partners at all levels of government, the private and community sectors to facilitate the improved provision of affordable housing.

1.4 Incorporate affordable housing objectives within the new comprehensive Marrickville LEP and DCP.

1.5 Incorporate planning provisions and mechanisms into the LEP and DCP to encourage a diverse and adaptable range of housing in the Marrickville area where appropriate, including: secondary dwellings, shop-top housing, universal housing design and a dwelling mix for residential flat buildings.

1.6 Investigate emerging funding opportunities and incentives for the development of affordable housing.

1.7 Develop and implement a voluntary planning agreement framework, subject to approval of the new LEP in 2010 by the NSW Department of Planning.

1.8 Support the expansion of the social housing sector, where appropriate.

1.9 Investigate the feasibility of a range of options to achieve a public benefit, including affordable housing, on Council owned sites proposed for development.

1.10 Explore the potential use of sites and unoccupied dwellings in the area for affordable housing.

Rationale

Strategy 1.1

Advocate for the development of a state wide framework addressing affordable housing.

While the State Plan acknowledges that 'housing affordability is influenced by all three levels of government'[24] it does not propose to address the current policy void experienced by local governments across NSW. A State Affordable Housing Policy would provide a whole-of-government framework within which Councils could position current activities and develop coherent regional approaches on shared issues of common concern.

Strategy 1.2

Advocate for the State Government to include planning mechanisms in environmental planning instruments that retain and increase the stock of affordable housing.

Local Governments play an integral role in urban renewal and the development of sustainable communities, which have been defined as "places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents….They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all"[10].

However, current State planning laws restrict the ability of local government to provide for affordable housing through local planning mechanisms. This limits the capacity of local government to develop and maintain sustainable communities that are socially diverse and inclusive.

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70 – Affordable Housing is an existing mechanism that, if available for use by all Councils, would ensure an ongoing supply and enable councils to maintain the economic and social viability of local communities across NSW.

Strategy 1.3

Work with partners at all levels of government, the private and community sectors to facilitate the improved provision of affordable housing

Marrickville Council does not work in isolation but as part of a broader community of stakeholders. Within its Community Plan, Council has committed to working with community partners and stakeholder groups. A number of Commonwealth and State Government agencies and large private sector organisations have a major impact on the work of Council and the lives of residents, particularly in areas such as transport, urban planning and social services. Where appropriate, Council will advocate on behalf of residents to influence the activities of organisations in the public, private and community sectors.

Affordable housing issues are not confined with LGA boundaries and, therefore, cannot be addressed by councils in isolation. Joint planning and other collaborative approaches allow neighbouring LGAs to address similar housing market characteristics and supply and demand pressures that impact on housing affordability in their region.

Strategy 1.4

Incorporate affordable housing objectives within the new comprehensive Marrickville LEP and DCP

Planning mechanisms are the primary tools available to Council to directly increase the stock of affordable housing in the Marrickville LGA.

The Local Environmental Plan (LEP) allows Council to guide planning decisions for the area. The incorporation of objectives within the new comprehensive LEP and DCP will provide a clear policy signal of Council's commitment to retain and facilitate affordable housing in the area. Such provisions have enabled other councils to seek a component of affordable housing when land is rezoned, on larger residential developments and in the development of master plans.

Strategy 1.5

Incorporate planning provisions and mechanisms into the LEP and DCP to encourage a diverse and adaptable range of housing in the Marrickville area where appropriate, including: secondary dwellings, shop-top housing, universal housing design and a dwelling mix for residential flat buildings.

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) have identified a shortage of 36,000 rental dwellings in Sydney for the lowest income earners. The pivotal role of private providers in the provision of low to moderate rent housing has been emphasised by Shelter NSW in a brief on *Encouraging supply of private rental for low-income renters*[25].

Therefore, Council will explore planning mechanisms that promote a diverse range of housing options with the intention of expanding options at the middle range of the housing market and alleviating pressures on the availability of low cost rental accommodation in the area.

Planning mechanisms that encourage a diverse range of housing include secondary dwellings and shop-top housing. By encouraging the development of these generally smaller dwellings Council can expand the provision of low-cost rental options in the Marrickville area. In addition Council will incorporate a dwelling size mix for residential flat buildings within the comprehensive development control plan (DCP), which will stipulate the proportion of studio, one, two and three bedrooms required.

These market based solutions have the potential to:

- increase the availability of low cost rental stock for low to moderate income groups;
- facilitate ageing in place;
- provide greater housing choices for multigenerational and blended families; and
- increase the density within residential areas in a manner compatible with the environmental character of the locality and adjoining developments.

Future population growth is anticipated mainly in the older age brackets, highlighting a projected need for improved accessibility, appropriate to the needs of older people and people with a disability. Local government is in a position to encourage the public and private sectors to adopt universal and accessible designs to better meet current and future demand.

Strategy 1.6

Investigate emerging funding opportunities and incentives for the development of affordable housing

All levels of government have been involved in developing initiatives to address the lack of affordable housing in cities and regional centres across Australia. The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) provides the framework for State and Federal Governments to work together on improving housing affordability and homelessness outcomes.

Specific initiatives include encouraging the provision of low cost rental, reducing the cost of development, increasing the capacity of community housing providers and addressing homelessness. The most recent Federal initiative is the National Rental Affordability scheme; this provides tax credits over ten years to targeted housing. A focus of these initiatives is developing partnerships between government, private and public sectors that directly increase the stock of low to moderate cost housing. Financial incentives are one means of attracting and retaining private sector investors in the low cost rental market.

Strategy 1.7

Develop and implement a voluntary planning agreement framework, subject to approval of the new LEP in 2010 by the NSW Department of Planning.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA), Section 93F enables councils to enter into voluntary planning agreements (VPAs). Under Section 93F voluntary agreements are allowable between a planning authority and a developer who is seeking a change to an environmental planning instrument or is making a development application[26]. Amendments to the EPA establish a statutory framework for the development of a clear transparent policy for voluntary planning agreements and include public notification mechanisms.

VPAs for affordable housing are typically linked to bonus/additional floor space ratios, rezoning or larger developments. They involve negotiations with applicants over particular developments and can lead to contributions being applied to a public purpose. Contributions may be in the form of dedicated land and/or units free of charge; a monetary contribution or other material public benefit, or a combination of the above.

To implement planning agreements, Council will need to include enabling clauses in the new LEP which requires the approval of the Department of Planning. The required clauses are not included in the Standard LEP Template, although there are indications that the Department is becoming more responsive to the potential for such inclusions.

A Voluntary Planning Policy outlines the:

- legal context and mandatory requirements of VPAs;
- form of contribution within a VPA and benefits sought;
- method for determining and calculating public benefits;
- procedures for negotiating and entering into VPAs;
- notification and exhibition of VPAs;
- implementation and conditions of consent;
- planning obligations; and
- monitoring, review and registration.

Strategy 1.8

Support the expansion of the social housing sector in the Marrickville LGA, where appropriate.

Community Housing providers are an important source of low cost accommodation that is targeted at low income residents through eligibility criteria. Within areas such as Marrickville, which has a significant proportion of residents on low to very low incomes (over 25%), there are limited affordable housing options in the private market. Due to the small stock of public housing in the area, community housing plays a vital role in the provision of housing for disadvantaged low income residents.

In 2009, the Australian Government committed significant resources to social housing reform and capacity building. This investment is for maintaining existing properties, stock transfers from Housing NSW to the not-for-profit housing sector and building up to 6,000 new units of social housing in NSW. On top of this, the NSW Government is investing in an additional 3,000 homes.

Community housing providers have the ability as well as the existing infrastructure to expand their operations and include very low to low income workers. Should the inclusion of specific affordable housing provisions within the new Marrickville LEP eventuate, Council may decide to enter into project partnerships with the social housing sector, as opportunities arise.

Strategy 1.9

Investigate the feasibility of a range of options to achieve a public benefit, including affordable housing, on Council owned sites proposed for development.

The Marrickville Hospital site has been earmarked by Council for redevelopment. Uses for this site have included a Library and Civic Centre with residential dwellings. The previous Council explored the potential for affordable housing in the residential aspect of the site and investigations to identify a range of best value options for the community are ongoing. In addition, Council is exploring a number of options for the interim use of existing buildings for affordable housing. Explorations into the structural integrity of the buildings and the cost associated with repairs and fire safety standards are currently being undertaken and will guide future decisions.

Council's recent urban design study on village centres investigated site specific proposals to provide additional residential and commercial floor area in specific centres in Marrickville. The study was undertaken in response to land use planning directions established by the NSW Government in the Metropolitan Strategy 2005 and the draft South Subregional Strategy 2007. The study identified a number of centres in Marrickville that have the potential to accommodate greater building density. Within these areas there are two sites in Petersham and Dulwich Hill that include council car parks. Any future redevelopment of Council owned land is a potential opportunity to increase the availability of affordable housing stock.

Strategy 1.10

Explore the potential use of sites and unoccupied dwellings in the area for affordable housing.

While land is in short supply, there are a number of existing dwellings in the Marrickville area that were identified as unoccupied in the 2006 Census. In 2006 there were 2,246 unoccupied properties in Marrickville, making up nearly 8% of all dwellings in the area, which is consistent with greater Sydney but significantly higher than in outer Sydney (5%). The National Housing Supply Council is conducting further research into the effect vacant land is having on supply and demand. The largest proportions of unoccupied dwellings in Marrickville are flats or units followed by separate houses. There are a number of reasons a dwelling could be unoccupied including awaiting sale, demolition, replacement or renovations.

The current cost and availability of vacant land in the Marrickville area severely restricts any potential Council may once have had to engage in property development activities. However, Council may be able to partner with other levels of government, private and not for profit sectors to identify sites and negotiate their potential uses.

OUTCOME 2: Existing stock of low cost accommodation protected

2.1 Monitor existing stocks of boarding houses in the area.

2.2 Explore opportunities to advocate for a range of incentives to retain existing stocks of affordable housing that are linked to improved standards and amenity.

2.3 Develop and implement Social Impact Assessment procedures that include affordable housing.

2.4 Advocate for improved enforcement of SEPP 10 and use of monetary contributions.

2.5 Collaborate with Housing NSW and other community partners in the Marrickville South area.

2.6 Advocate and work with local organisations to improve the security of tenure and access to services for boarding house residents.

2.7 Continue to work with boarding house owners/managers to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations with regards to health, building and fire standards.

Rationale

Strategy 2.1

Monitor existing stocks of boarding houses in the area.

The Marrickville LGA has a large proportion of rental properties with 44% of all dwellings rented. In addition there is large number of boarding houses, including approximately 45 Class 3 (over 10 residents) dwellings and 86 Class Ib (under 10 residents) dwellings. In total, an estimated 1300 to 1500 low income people reside in these establishments across the Marrickville LGA.

Boarding house residents are technically homeless. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness in three categories, including:

- Primary homelessness: People without conventional accommodation, such as rough sleepers, squatters;
- Secondary homelessness: People who frequently move between temporary accommodation, emergency shelters, sleeping on couches; and
- Tertiary homelessness: People living in single rooms in private boarding houses on a long-term basis: without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure[27].

Boarding houses play a significant role in the tertiary homelessness category. They are privately run for-profit entities that house some of our most vulnerable citizens, who are recipients of pensions and benefits. Within this residential mix are a growing proportion of very low to low income workers, such as cleaners and labourers. Anecdotal information indicates an alarming increase in demand from women, couples and families, who have historically not been associated with accommodation forms in the category of tertiary homelessness.

Strategy 2.2

Explore opportunities to advocate for a range of incentives to retain existing stocks of affordable housing that are linked to improved standards and amenity.

A number of boarding houses in the area are in poor condition due to poor management and maintenance practices over time. However, these properties house a number of low income residents including workers.

Financial incentives are one means of retaining private sector investors in the provision of low cost rental accommodation, such as boarding houses, including:

- land tax exemptions from the NSW Office of State Revenue where 80% of a boarding house is rented out below a set threshold;
- residential Council rates instead of commercial rates; and
- Boarding House Financial Assistance Grants from Housing NSW for essential fire upgrade and fire safety associated with additional room extensions or new boarding houses.

In 2008, Council sponsored a forum for boarding house owners and managers (22 October, 2008) at which the boarding house sector identified the difficulties they have experienced in accessing fire upgrade grants. Expanding the criteria for this grant to include the health and amenity of boarding houses would assist owners to maintain properties and improve living standards for residents.

In addition to boarding houses, Marrickville has a large proportion (44% of all dwellings) of rental properties, the majority being flats/ units (68%). The Centre for Affordable Housing (Housing NSW) calculates the percentage of affordable rental properties for different income groups in any given LGA. In 2005, 18% of rental properties in Marrickville were considered affordable for very low incomes. By 2007, the percentage dropped to 14%, a decline of 4% over two years. Over the same period there was no affordable stock available for purchase[28].

The current rental crisis affecting Sydney has a significant impact on low income workers seeking accommodation close to jobs and older people. However, rental properties in the Marrickville area are not eligible for land tax exemption, because the Office of State Revenue restricts exemptions for low cost accommodation to within five kilometres of the Sydney GPO. The expansion of this boundary would safeguard the availability of private low cost accommodation locally.

Strategy 2.3

Develop and implement Social Impact Assessment procedures that include affordable housing.

Marrickville Council has a strong history of supporting its community and focussing on improving social outcomes for its residents. Social impact assessments address the impact on communities of proposed developments and redevelopments and inform Council's planning and decision-making. They can optimise positive outcomes and minimise negative consequences[29]. Social impacts can include the displacement of low cost accommodation, increases in rent and increased demand for housing assistance. Any cumulative loss of low cost accommodation will have long term affects on the social and economic fabric of the Marrickville area.

Strategy 2.4

Advocate for improved enforcement of SEPP 10 and use of monetary contributions.

Currently the only mechanism militating against the loss of affordable housing is SEPP 10 – Retention of Low-cost Rental Accommodation (refer to p.14).

In late 2004, the Department changed the way it administered SEPP 10, from applying a rent capping policy to levying developer contributions. The Department now allocates SEPP 10 developer contributions to social housing providers that service the Marrickville area on a rotating basis. Recently Council has issued an expression of interest process to identify a preferred community housing provider. This will enable funds to be accumulated and applied more strategically to the needs of moderate to low income and other socially disadvantaged households in the Marrickville LGA. This is a proactive way that Council can directly assist in the provision of housing to those in need.

Strategy 2.5

Collaborate with Housing NSW and other community partners in the Marrickville South area.

Housing NSW has only 875 units of public housing in the Marrickville LGA, the majority of these being flats or units. In 2006 (ABS) public housing was 6.7% of Marrickville's dwellings compared to 14.9% across the Inner Sydney Statistical Region.

Public housing targets those most in need and its sustainability is, therefore, important to the social diversity and liveability of the Marrickville area. Council is developing a memorandum of understanding with Housing NSW to guide working relationships and project partnerships that aim to improve physical and social outcomes for tenants and their neighbours.

Strategy 2.6

Advocate and work with local organisations to improve the security of tenure and access to services for boarding house residents.

Residents of boarding houses are not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 and, therefore, they have few legal rights and limited ways of resolving disputes. Most boarding houses do not have any written agreement that establishes the respective rights and responsibilities of managers/owners and residents. Residents have reported feeling unable to raise issues around safety, health and amenity for fear of eviction. Residents have been evicted without notice or options and, therefore, at risk of sleeping rough.

A Law and Justice Foundation report outlines some of the issues for boarding houses residents as: "unsanitary and dangerous conditions, arbitrary eviction; unsatisfactory lock systems and belongings being stolen; no regulation over rent or late penalties; and lack of legislative protection"[30]. Clearly, there is an urgent need to provide protection, health care and support services to boarding house residents.

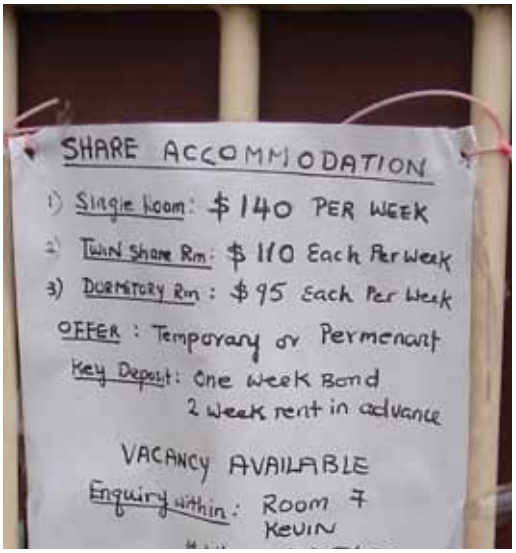
Organisations such as the Tenants Union and member of the local Boarding House Action Group (BHAG) have proposed an occupancy agreement as the basis for law reform. The few boarding houses that use an occupancy agreement have found it to provide residents and managers with clearer guidance on their rights and responsibilities. Social housing providers manage boarding houses with tenancy protection and appropriate support services through head leasing arrangements.

Strategy 2.7

Continue to work with boarding house owners/managers to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations with regards to health and amenity, building and fire standards.

Under the Local Government Act 1993 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Council has responsibility for monitoring fire safety, health and amenity in boarding houses. Monitoring Services Officers conduct annual inspections of boarding houses which are on Council's register, to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. Owners are made aware of any necessary works that are outstanding and are given a reasonable timeframe to undertake and complete these works. The majority of boarding house owners are compliant with minimal fire safety standards required under the Acts. Council will publish on its website an up to date list of boarding houses that have completed and meet all OH&S and fire safety requirements.

In addition to regular inspections, Council will take action when advised of an immediate danger to residents. Residents of boarding houses are often reluctant to report an issue and this limits Council's ability to take action. Under the Act, Council's authority to enter premises is limited and requires the approval of the individual residents or owners.



OUTCOME 3: Increased community capacity and participation

3.1 Initiate and/or facilitate strategies and services to increase access to employment and training services for low to moderate income households.

3.2 Build community cohesion and encourage community participation in the operations of Council.

3.3 Facilitate the provision of services to meet the needs of local residents.

3.4 Support and develop initiatives that improve the environmental sustainability of housing for low to moderate income households.

Rationale

Strategy 3.1

Initiate and/or facilitate strategies and services to increase access to employment and training services for low to moderate income households.

Council has a role in sustaining the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the Marrickville LGA for current and future generations. By maintaining diverse housing forms within the area, Council helps retain economic diversity and inclusive local communities.

A research project on Social Inclusion and Housing conducted by AHURI stresses that "housing is most successful in ensuring positive outcomes if it is provided alongside other forms of support such as education, vocational training and health care'[31]. This is particularly evident in boarding houses, in which there is a high concentration of residents living on pensions and benefits.

Council implements social inclusion strategies that support and promote active citizen engagement, build social participation and enhance health and wellbeing. Council's Community Development section conducts social planning and works with community partners on issues of concern to young people, older people, our culturally diverse communities, Aboriginal Australians and people with a disability to build community capacity and a sense of belonging, including those contained within:

- Draft Youth Strategy 2009-2011;
- Ageing Strategy 2008-2011;
- Marrickville Cultural Diversity Action Plan;
- DDA Action Plan;
- Aboriginal Belonging Plan;
- Safety in Marrickville (Crime Prevention) Plan 2008-2011;
- Marrickville Public Art Strategy; and
- Marrickville Urban Plan – Library Services and Communications and Cultural Services.

Strategy 3.2

Build community cohesion and encourage community participation in the operations of Council.

Social inclusion has emerged as an important theme in the Australian housing policy debate since the Federal Government appointed a Minister for Social Inclusion and established a Social Inclusion Board. The core elements of the social inclusion agenda are for all Australians to be given the opportunity to: secure a job, access services, connect with family, friends and local community; deal with personal crises and have their voices heard[32].

Sustainable, inclusive communities encourage a sense of belonging and assist very low to low income households maintain connections and support in the community. A key objective of Council's strategic plan is community wellbeing and inclusiveness: "care for and support our citizens, and promote community diversity to ensure that all people feel welcome, valued and that they belong".

The generation and protection of affordable housing across Marrickville is one of the critical elements in promoting greater social inclusion. It is also important as a lever to promote social mix and more effectively tackle disadvantage.

By publishing a range of strategic documents that interpret Federal and State government policies at the local level, Council raises community awareness of emerging social issues and how communities can take action on their own behalf.

For instance, Council is committed to building social capital and community participation in Council's operations through volunteerism, work experience and advisory roles. Council's advisory committees provide specialist advice to the elected Council as a means of participating in the decision making processes of government.

Strategy 3.3

Facilitate the provision of services to meet the needs of local residents.

Council's role is to manage planning and implementation of social policy, service networks and program development across the local government area, as well as a range of community projects and programs that support service delivery with community partners on local priorities and whole of government initiatives.

Council also administers a range of small grant programs that are available to assist not-for-profit organisations in meeting the needs of residents across the Marrickville local government area:

- Council Community Grants Program;
- Community Development and Support Expenditure (CDSE) Scheme;
- Arts and Cultural grants;
- Local and National Artists Residency Program;
- Marrickville Cultural Festival Grants Program; and
- Citizens for Sustainability Grant.

Some of these grants are used to assist local residents who are experiencing the impacts of unaffordable housing and homelessness.

Strategy 3.4 Support and develop initiatives that improve the environmental sustainability of housing for low to moderate income households.

Marrickville Council has developed a policy discussion paper, Green Equity, which addresses the disproportionate effect climate change will have on low income households. Residents living in older style or poorly maintained social housing or low cost rental accommodation are particularly affected due to inadequate structural climate proofing.

Low income households generally consume less water, electricity, gas and food than high income households but spend a higher proportion of their household income paying for it. Marrickville Council is currently engaging with low income households on environmental issues in a number of ways, including:

- Marrickville No Interest loans (NIL): With water and energy prices set to rise, the NILS program assists residents to purchase water and energy efficient appliances;
- Project Partnerships: An example of an initiative that develops community capacity and improves the environmental sustainability for low to moderate income households is the Urban Sustainability Program: Social Housing Sustainability Partnership. In partnership with Housing NSW, the City of Sydney, Marrickville, Randwick and Canterbury councils received an Environmental Trust grant to deliver environmental sustainability programs to low income, Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.
- Rainwater tank incentive scheme: A tank rebate program available to all residents and businesses in the local government area and specifically targeted at low income residents and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse households.

12. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Council will:

1. review the strategy and report on progress annually;
2. maintain an whole of council approach to affordable housing in the LGA; and
3. establish an internal reference group to guide the implementation of this strategy.

While a number of state and federal housing policies refer to the implementation role of local government, the necessary resources have not been allocated, For example, the National Affordable Housing Agreement between the Federal and State governments attributes to local government responsibility for building approval processes, urban planning and rates and charges that influence housing affordability[33]. This fails to recognise or allocate resources to councils implementing strategies that directly increase the stock of affordable housing in a local government area.

The development and implementation of a framework for voluntary planning agreements requires ongoing resources. Councils that have implemented policies on voluntary planning agreements elsewhere have emphasised the extent of staff resources required to negotiate and manage the process. In addition, action to explore partnerships and funding opportunities for affordable housing in the area may require financial and architectural modelling which can also be resource intensive.

Therefore, it is proposed to locate responsibility for implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy within Community Development and Planning Services, in the context of their respective professional functions and available resources.

The scope of this strategy is to document Council's role in protecting, promoting and developing affordable housing within the LGA. Each of the outcomes is linked to a number of strategies and allocated to the relevant unit within Council for implementation.

An annual review of the policy will allow Council to target strategies as funding and resources become available. The strategy can be amended over time to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Further actions may be included as new initiatives and opportunities arise.

Advice and guidance on the direction of this strategy were provided by a cross-Council advisory group. It is recommended that the advisory group continue to guide the strategy throughout its implementation.

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13. SUMMARY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	External partners
Outcome 1: Increased stock of appropriate affordable housing for households with very low to moderate incomes.				
1.1	Advocate for the development of a state wide framework addressing affordable housing.	Planning and Community Services	Short to long term	NSW State Government
1.2	Advocate for the State Government to include planning mechanisms in environmental planning instruments that retain and increase the stock of affordable housing.	Planning	Short to long term	Planning NSW
1.3	Work with partners at all levels of government, the private and community sector to facilitate the improved provision of affordable housing.	Planning	Short to medium term	Commonwealth Government Housing NSW Office of Community Housing Centre for Affordable Housing Not-for-profit sector Private sector Financial institutions
1.4	Incorporate affordable housing objectives within the new comprehensive Marrickville LEP and DCP.	Planning	Medium to long term	
1.5	Incorporate planning provisions and mechanisms into the LEP and DCP to encourage a diverse and adaptable range of housing in the Marrickville area where appropriate, including: secondary dwellings, shop-top housing, universal housing design and a dwelling mix for residential flat buildings.	Planning	Medium to long term	
1.6	Investigate emerging funding opportunities and incentives for the development of affordable housing.	Planning, Community Services	Ongoing	Federal and State governments
1.7	Develop and implement a voluntary planning agreement framework, subject to approval of the new LEP in 2010 by the NSW Department of Planning.	Planning	Medium to long term	Planning NSW
1.8	Support the expansion of the social housing sector, where appropriate.	Planning	Long term	Social housing providers Federal and State Government
1.9	Investigate the feasibility of a range of options to achieve a public benefit, including affordable housing, on Council owned sites proposed for development.	Planning	Short to medium term	
1.10	Explore the potential use of sites and unoccupied dwellings in the area for affordable housing	Planning and Community Services	Ongoing	All levels of government, private and nor-for- profit sectors

	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	External partners
Outcome 2: Existing stock of low cost accommodation protected				
2.1	Monitor existing stocks of boarding houses in the area.	Monitoring Services	Ongoing	
2.2	Explore opportunities to advocate for a range of incentives to retain and improve existing stocks of affordable housing that are linked to improved standards and amenity.	Planning and Community Services	Short to medium term	State and Commonwealth Government
2.3	Develop and implement Social Impact Assessment procedures that include affordable housing.	Planning	Short term	State Government
2.4	Advocate for improved enforcement of SEPP 10 and use of monetary contributions	Planning and Community Services	Short term	Planning NSW
2.5	Collaborate with Housing NSW and other community partners in the Marrickville South area	Community and Planning Services	Short to medium term	Housing NSW
2.6	Advocate and work with local organisations to improve the security of tenure and access to services for boarding houses residents.	Community Development and Planning	Short term	State Government, Tenants Union
2.7	Continue to work with boarding house owners/managers to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations with regards to health, building and fire standards.	Monitoring services	Ongoing	

	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	External partners
Outcome 3: Increased community capacity and participation				
3.1	Initiate and/or facilitate strategies and services to increase access to employment and training services for low to moderate income households.	Community and Corporate Services	Ongoing	Community partners
3.2	Build community cohesion and encourage community participation in the operations of Council	Community and Corporate Services	Ongoing	
3.3	Facilitate the provision of services to meet the needs of local residents.	Community Services	Ongoing	
3.4	Support and develop initiatives that improve the environmental sustainability of housing for low to moderate income households	Environmental Services	Short to medium term	Housing NSW, other levels of government

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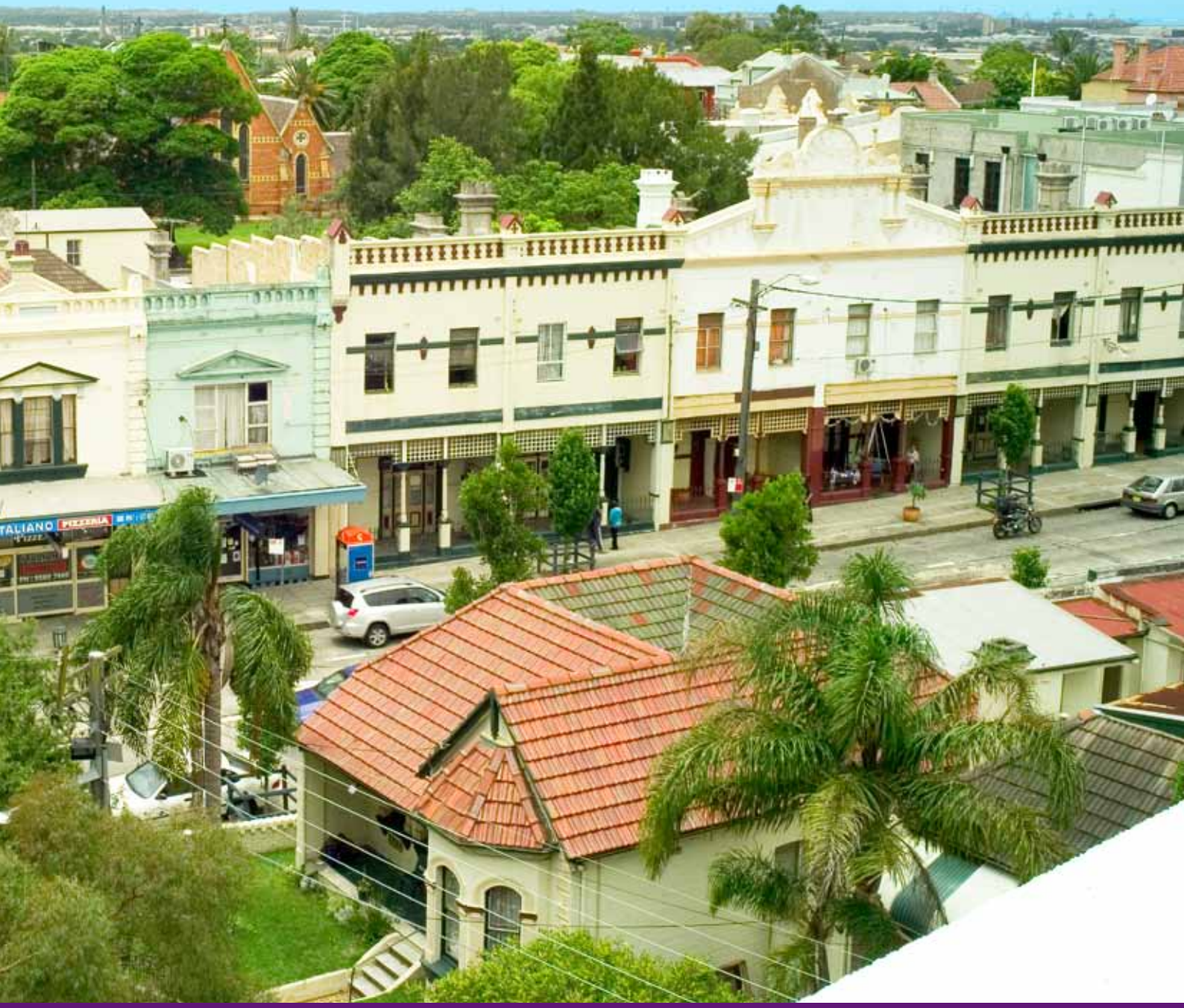

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