

# Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service

Tenancy Advice (02) 9698 5975



25<sup>th</sup> August 2022

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

By upload: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/paintshop>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Paint Shop sub-precinct rezoning proposal. Please find attached our submissions on the proposal.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our submission. To facilitate this, please contact Ned Cooke via [ned@rlc.org.au](mailto:ned@rlc.org.au)

Yours faithfully,

Katherine McKernan  
CEO  
Redfern Legal Centre

Ned Cooke  
Team Leader  
Redfern Legal Centre

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SUBMISSION: Redfern North Eveleigh – Paint Shop rezoning proposal

AUTHOR: Ned Cooke, Inner Sydney Tenancy Service Team Leader

DATE: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022

## **1. Introduction: Redfern Legal Centre**

Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) is an independent, non-profit, community-based legal organisation with a prominent profile in the Redfern and Waterloo area. RLC has a particular focus on human rights and social justice. Our specialist areas of work are tenancy, consumer law, credit and debt, financial abuse, employment law and police and government accountability. By working collaboratively with key partners, RLC specialist lawyers and advocates provide free legal advice, conduct casework, deliver community legal education and produce publications and submissions. RLC works towards reforming our legal system for the benefit of the community.

## **2. RLC's work in tenancy**

RLC has a long history of providing advice, assistance and advocacy to the local community, with a key focus on the provision of information and services to public housing tenants and a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. Since RLC was founded in 1977, tenancy has been one of our core areas of advice. Since 1995, RLC has been funded by NSW Fair Trading to run the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service ('ISTAAS'). ISTAAS assists tenants living in the City of Sydney, Randwick, Inner West and Bayside local government areas through the provision of advice, advocacy and representation. The Inner Sydney area has a significant number of people living in public housing and these tenants make up approximately 30% of all people advised by our practice.

Our submission is informed by the experiences of our clients.

## **3. Executive Summary**

The proposal to revitalize underutilized public land in Inner City Sydney is welcomed. However, there is an opportunity for the proposed renewal of the Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct to deliver much needed social, affordable and Aboriginal housing for Inner City Sydney.

Every day our tenancy team speaks with clients who are waiting to be housed or to be transferred to a property that meets their housing needs.

On review of the proposal it is recommended that it:

- a. Include a substantial target for the provision of social housing as well as affordable housing.
- b. Include a substantial target for the provision of culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing.

We also echo community concerns about the scale and density of the proposed development, the height of buildings, the location of residential towers close to the railway corridor, and the absence of a pedestrian bridge between North and South Eveleigh.

#### 4. Response to specific issues

Up to 449 new dwellings are to be built on the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct site. Minister Stokes' media release about the development states that the project has a 'historic target' of 30% 'diverse housing', half of which must be social affordable housing. It is understood that diverse housing could include student housing and 'build to rent' housing.

Nothing in the planning documents mentions a 30% target for diverse housing. Nor is there any reference to social housing, or dedicated social and affordable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing. The only target mentioned in the proposal is 15% for affordable housing.

##### Social Housing

With no social housing target in the planning controls, it can only be assumed that no social housing will be built on the site at all. This would be a missed opportunity to activate publicly-owned land to address the shortage of social housing in NSW. The location of this site makes it well-suited for social housing as it is close to transport, amenities and community services. The privatization of this land without a mandated social housing target cannot be justified.

In the Inner City (CS01) Allocation Zone, which includes the suburbs of Eveleigh and Redfern, the current expected waiting time for a studio, a one-bedroom property or 3-bedroom property is 5 to 10 years. For a 2-bedroom property or 4-bedroom property the waiting time is 10 or more years. At June 2021 there were 626 applicants on the waiting list for the CS01 Inner City Zone and 267 on the priority list.<sup>1</sup>

In NSW overall there are 44,127 people on the waiting list and 5,801 on the priority list.<sup>2</sup>

These numbers may reflect higher numbers of individuals waiting for housing, as more than one person may be listed on an application. The ongoing impacts of the pandemic, along with rising interest rates and cost of living have left more people in urgent need of housing. At the same time, NSW falls far behind other states such as Victoria and Queensland in social housing construction.<sup>3</sup>

Redfern Legal Centre through its Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service sees the ramifications of the shortage of social housing every day. The lengthy waiting list means that social housing is simply not a solution for people facing an unexpected crisis that impinges their ability to maintain a tenancy in the private rental market. It also inhibits the capacity of social housing tenants from taking steps to move out of social housing, because if they were to fail in the private rental market they would risk homelessness. The shortage of available social housing also affects people with a social housing tenancy who need to be transferred to a property that meets their changing housing needs, as there is simply not the availability of stock.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/nsw-social-housing-renewal-program-dwarfed-by-victoria-queensland-20211221-p59jf1.html>

We are familiar through our regular work with social housing transfer applicants that properties with certain features are in particularly high demand in the inner city. People who have reached the top of the waiting list, with clear needs to be housed in an area close to their supports and networks, may still wait months or years to be matched to a property that meets their housing needs. Common housing needs that are under-catered for in current housing stock include ground-floor dwellings, dwellings with flat access and/or accessible bathrooms, dwellings in low-rise buildings or low-density areas, properties with gardens and space for pets, properties with space to park and charge mobility scooters, and larger family-sized properties.

Social housing that is built on the site should provide a spread of different dwelling sizes and be designed to cater for a range of housing needs.

It is recommended that the proposal be amended to include 30% social housing. This is appropriate for publicly owned land and consistent with the target under the NSW Land and Housing Corporation's Communities Plus program.

#### Aboriginal housing

There is no target for dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing on the site.

The history and the cultural significance of the area as a home and a meeting place for First Nations people is recognised in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study that accompanies the proposal. The inclusion of a 'Connecting With Country Framework' with a view to implementing a design that 'places local Aboriginal stakeholders at its centre' would have more weight if dedicated Aboriginal housing was included in the proposal. This target would ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not displaced from the area.

It is recommended that the proposal be amended to include a specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing target.

We support the City of Sydney's call for a target of at least 10% culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affordable housing on the site.

#### Other issues

We concur with the concerns raised in submissions by the City of Sydney, other local organisations and members of the community which are likely to affect accessibility and amenity for future residents living on the site, whether they be private residents or social and affordable housing tenants. In particular:

1. The proposed density and scale of the development;
2. The location of residential towers directly adjacent to the railway corridor;
3. The absence of a pedestrian bridge over the railway tracks to link North and South Eveleigh

4. The need to consider amenity and service access within a community with high disadvantage and the impact that the development may have on this access for people experiencing disadvantage