

Item 3.3

Support for Waterloo South Relocations

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Since the redevelopment of the Waterloo Estate was finally announced by the former NSW Government in 2015, residents of Waterloo have endured years of uncertainty. Many in the community are fatigued by consultation, confused by the iterations of masterplans and planning decisions. Community need certainty about the project to feel secure about their future.

Over the past seven years, the City has worked with the community to improve the plans including to achieve more Social and Affordable Housing on the Waterloo Estate. We also urged the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) to ensure a Human Services Plan as well as a Social Impact Assessment and Management Plan are developed and implemented alongside the planning process.

In August 2023, the NSW Premier and Minister for Housing announced their commitment to provide 50 per cent of the housing at Waterloo South as Social and Affordable Housing (with a minimum 15 per cent of this housing dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples). This comes after years of our steadfast advocacy.

Residents were recently told they will begin to receive formal relocation letters from mid-2024. This announcement brings heightened anxiety for many in the community, particularly about how their relocations will be managed.

The Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) has committed to providing residents with six months' written notice of their relocation, up to two offers of housing and they will have the right to return to Waterloo South.

Support for residents

In the lead up to, during and after relocations, residents will need access to various forms of support. The NSW Government has committed to bringing LAHC, the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under one agency called Homes NSW in February 2024.

DCJ, NSW Health and GroundSwell Redfern Waterloo have developed the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan and LAHC has separately developed an overarching People and Place Guiding Framework that proposes to develop a Human Services Plan and a relocations plan.

The NSW Government must holistically assess the needs of the Waterloo community, now and in the future and provide ongoing services (such as health, social, legal and cultural services) that respond to and support vulnerable residents and promote a harmonious community.

The NSW Government must also listen to and work with the community to implement the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan. In 2017, Shelter NSW, Tenants' Union of NSW and UNSW undertook research with Social Housing residents to understand the human impact of government redevelopment projects. They reported back with guiding principles for governments to follow to support residents through redevelopment projects. These principles must be incorporated into a comprehensive Waterloo-specific relocations policy due to the scale and impact of this project.

City of Sydney support

The City has a history of funding local organisations to support residents in NSW Government redevelopment projects. For example, we have supported community organisations by:

- Funding Redfern Legal Centre to provide tenancy support and legal advice to Millers Point residents.
- Funding Counterpoint Community Services to support Waterloo residents through the redevelopment process.
- Funding Redfern Legal Centre to provide tenancy support and legal services for residents impacted by current and future NSW Government redevelopment projects.
- Supporting the Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Alliance to build the capacity of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and community advocate for increased provision of Social and Affordable Housing.

Community development and capacity building will ensure residents are prepared for the relocation process, know what to expect and have access to resources to support self-advocacy. Individual legal case management may be required to help them understand their options, rights and how to respond. Culturally appropriate community support is also a priority, which should be managed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation.

The City's grants programs could again help Waterloo South residents through local community organisations, for example through our Community Services Grants Program and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collaboration Fund.

As part of the City's consultation for Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 - Continuing the Vision, the community told us they want a place where everyone feels welcome, where everyone has a home, a place people can afford to live in if they choose and that Social, Affordable and supported housing is available for those who need it.

The City of Sydney is committed to supporting the Waterloo Estate community and local organisations through the relocations process.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the Land and Housing Corporation's relocations process for Waterloo South residents will commence in mid-2024;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) consult with local community organisations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the Waterloo area about what support residents will require during relocations and advise them about the City's available grant programs; and
 - (ii) report back to Council (if required); and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Housing calling on the NSW Government to:
 - (i) develop a Waterloo-specific relocations policy;
 - (ii) adequately resource ongoing support services for Waterloo Estate residents as part of the NSW Government's redevelopment;
 - (iii) listen to and work with the whole Waterloo Estate community to finalise and implement the Human Services Plan in the lead up to, during and after the redevelopment;
 - (iv) confirm when Homes NSW will be created and how it will address the social impact of relocations as well as how the current Waterloo Human Services Action Plan will link to the Human Services Plan being developed under LAHC's People and Place Framework; and
 - (v) work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to ensure that the 15 per cent of housing allocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households is culturally appropriate with a mix of studio, one, two, three and four bedroom apartments.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor