

MEDIA RELEASE

Waterloo South – good, but still time for a better deal for social housing and to raise the bar on what Government can deliver

After many years of patient waiting, the 1,500 plus public housing residents of the Waterloo South public housing estate have recently learned of the new government’s plans to redevelop the estate.

Today the NSW Government has announced its plans for the development of the Waterloo South public housing estate (currently 749 public housing dwellings) into a denser precinct of 3,000 dwellings.

Under plans pursued by the previous Government, 34% of the future dwellings were to be social and affordable housing. The plans announced today will see that increase to 50% with a very modest increase in social housing compared to previous plans, but much more affordable housing.

The new plan aims to increase the number of social and affordable homes in Waterloo South to 50% (30% social and 20% affordable). This will result in approximately 500 additional social and affordable homes compared to the previous Government's proposed plan. Over the next 15 years, it is estimated that the current 749 public housing units will be replaced with 900 new social housing units, 600 affordable rental housing units and 1,500 private dwellings.

Over time, Shelter NSW has pushed hard to improve the outcomes for the local community, people on the social housing waiting list and the people of NSW. We have argued for substantially more social housing, the inclusion of affordable rental housing and a guaranteed allocation for the Aboriginal Community.

Today’s announcement falls short of what we had hoped for but does offer a substantial improvement on the most recent NSW Government plans.

We hope to see the various consortia competing for the right to redevelop this estate deliver well above the minimum requirements set out by the state government - especially given the opportunities being offered by the Commonwealth.

Quotes attributable to Shelter NSW CEO John Engeler:

“At Shelter NSW we’ve long called for more affordable rental housing – in addition to social housing, not instead of it. We are pleased to see a substantial amount of affordable housing being locked in for this site. This type of housing and tenancy offers hope for the key workers, particularly those currently supporting the local community to remain in the area”



“With over 700 households on the social waiting list in the inner city as at June 2023 and a staggering 4,000 plus in neighbouring local areas we have to ask where the social housing for those people will come from?”

“The future Waterloo South will be a vastly denser precinct – home to 3,000 households. Care must be taken to create a place where large numbers of vulnerable people and lower-income people in general can reasonably and happily live. That will require Government investment”

“We would love to see the various consortia, including private and not-for-profit community housing developers, race to the top with this proposal. Time for them to sharpen their pencils and deliver an even better deal for the people of NSW”.

“The Waterloo South site will be home to 1500 private housing dwellings. We are calling for creative approaches for that component. We’d like to see shared equity home purchases schemes included; seniors’ housing and how about some genuinely affordable student housing? And of course, a Build-To-Rent approach could be a game changer for the private renters who will inevitably live there.”

“The NSW Government has the opportunity to create a showcase community at Waterloo South. Here is a key opportunity to demonstrate ‘density done well’, applying the principles of Inclusive Renewal”.

“Today’s announcement is about Waterloo South. We appreciate that the Government has been constrained by the plans locked in by the previous government. But when it comes to Waterloo Central and North all bets are off. We expect the Government to take a substantially different approach to those sites”.

For more information about:

- **Shelter NSW.** – we are independent, non-profit, member-driven organisation that has been advocating for better housing outcomes since 1975. We represent the broad interests of a diverse network of members, partners and aligned industry stakeholders who share our vision of a secure home for all NSW residents.
We are especially concerned with housing insecurity, increasingly experienced by people on low and very low incomes.
- **Shelter NSW 2023 policy priorities:** [Five Key Asks](#)
- Shelter NSW’s **April 2022 submission on the Waterloo South proposal:** [full submission](#)

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