



fact sheet

Community Renewal in Airds



Airds Background

Airds is one of five broad acre housing estates built between 1972 and 1989 in the Campbelltown Local Government Area on the south-west fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area.

The estate is designed predominantly along the 'Radburn' principles which include:

- the segregation of pedestrian paths and roads through the use of footpaths, underpasses and bridges
- the provision of rear access to properties for cars with dwellings orientated towards common open space or a pedestrian walkway.

“Community Renewal is about reclaiming communities for people ...communities where no one is left out.”

Community renewal is about partnerships between communities and service providers, it's about recognising the benefits of diverse communities, closing the gap between the socially included and the socially excluded, responding to peoples needs for stable, well balanced communities, and building community confidence.

The process of community renewal is ultimately about community re-engagement of disadvantaged communities with each other, with services and employment, and with the broader community.

“It's our best opportunity to restore pride and a 'sense of place' to dislocated communities.”

Problems with the estate model

About 30% of New South Wales public housing is located in estates where there are more than 100 properties. These estates were developed from the 1950s to the mid 1980s and many experience similar problems including:

- housing which is poorly designed and maintained
- poor access to necessary services such as health services, transport and family support
- concentrations of disadvantaged families who are stigmatised by the rest of the community
- problems with crime and personal security.

Key strategies of Community Renewal

- make client service staff more accessible and visible so they can respond to problems quickly
 - work with the Police to identify trouble-spots and ways to reduce criminal activity
- improve housing so it better meets contemporary standards so residents want to stay
- improve social mix through identified sales and use housing associations to diversify management
 - work with groups of residents so they can develop new skills and help prioritise work
- link residents with training and employment opportunities
 - encourage other service providers to work in partnership with residents and the Department.

fact sheet Community Renewal in Airds



Major Achievements

What we plan for Airds:

- Increase employment opportunities
- Reduce the overall cost to governments of social support
- Improve asset value
- Increase tenant control on security of homes
- Reduce the level of public housing by sale of at least 20% of dwellings to private owners
- Change the balance of public and private open space
- Involve private sector in redevelopment
- Develop a partnership approach and a model tenant participation process.

Tackling Issues on the Estate

The estate had the following characteristics prior to the commencement of the Community Renewal Strategy in 1994:

- extremely high unemployment, in 1991 the unemployment rate in Airds was 42.5% compared to a NSW average of 11.2%
- very low income levels—31.1% of all residents had a household income of less than \$16,000 per annum
- large numbers of single parent families—43.5% of all families in Airds were sole parent families
- high youth population—52.8% of residents were under 19
- very high rental turnover—16% of all housing stock fell vacant in Airds in 1994/95.

Where We Are Today

The Airds housing estate has seen:

- a reduction in crime, nuisance and annoyance by 23%
- the majority of tenants reporting a greater sense of security and safety
- an 18% reduction in the number of properties that became vacant during the three years of the Strategy
- over 60 local tenants have been employed in activities related to the strategy, including 12 who are in full time employment

- trainees will enter a New Initiatives Enterprise Scheme in early 2000 to commence their own businesses in the local area
- other Government Departments such as Police and local government have reported a reduction in their workloads as a result of the strategy
- a reduction in the level of social stigma by residents within the estate and within the local community, which leads to a sense of community pride and less anti-social behaviour.



Tenant comment about the Community Renewal Program

"Our children can play in safety and our homes are no longer vandalised. Before we had a dangerous lane, now we have a lovely yard."

NSW Department of Housing

Prepared and published by the NSW Department of Housing's Communication and Media team JN2130

 <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au>

To find out more about Community Renewal in Minto contact the Regional Director - South Western Sydney Region

phone (02)9821 6218

facsimile (02)9821 6205

email woodwar@housing.nsw.gov.au