



fact sheet

Community Renewal in Booragul



Booragul Background

The Booragul estate is in the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area. It comprises 110 townhouses on superlots located on a steeply sloping site. While the region has spent increasing funds on the maintenance and improvement of stock over the past few years, there remains a high maintenance liability which is the legacy of previous under-expenditure in Booragul.

Main Issues for Booragul

In the early 1990's the Booragul estate was suffering from:

- significant white ant damage
- adverse media coverage
- high tenant dissatisfaction
- poorly functioning estate

“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.



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Major Achievements

Since the program commenced:

- rental arrears have decreased
- lower levels of nuisance and annoyance cases have been recorded – in the last quarter only 3 cases were noted.

Vocational Skills Program for Tenants Launched

A work for the dole program has commenced resulting in permaculture gardens being developed and the sharing of produce grown amongst community members. A community shed will be installed to assist tenants to continue this project in the future.

What We Are Working to Do

In 1999-2000 the Region will embark on a process of reforming the delivery of its maintenance and improvement process. This reform is based on a number of strategies:

- local area planning to determine which properties to keep and invest in, which to redevelop and which to dispose of

- shifting from responsive maintenance to planned maintenance
- improving management of contractors.

Housing management strategies include:

- Good Neighbour Policy
- Memorandum of Understanding with the local Police
- a new local allocations policy
- increased and regular removal of rubbish from the area.

Tenant comment about the Community Renewal Program

“We didn’t believe things would ever change here –now we can see things are starting to happen and it’s given us some hope.”



NSW Department of Housing

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