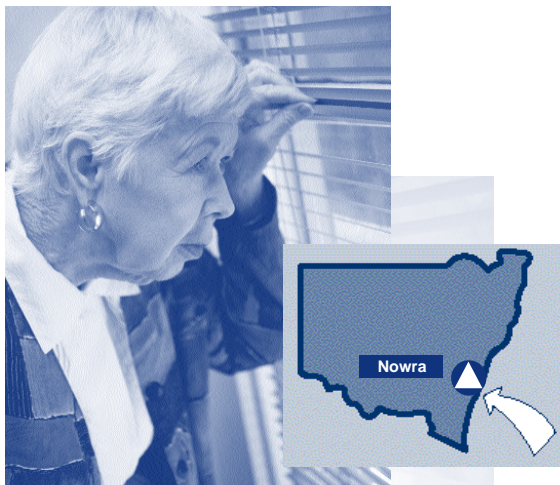




fact sheet

Community Renewal in East Nowra



East Nowra Background

The East Nowra estate comprises 598 dwellings with a history of:

- hard-to-let properties needing multiple offers before they are tenanted
- high vacancy rates
- excessive levels of nuisance and annoyance
- high levels of violence and crime.

Addressing Issues in East Nowra

The Community Renewal Strategy for East Nowra seeks to improve assets owned by the Department and to enhance the local environment to overcome some of the problems faced by residents and address negative community perceptions about the estate.

Key strategies aim to:

- address tenancy management issues
- minimise negative perceptions about the estate in the general community.

Strategies were developed in consultation with local Department of Housing staff, service providers, public housing tenants and the general community.

“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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Community Involvement in East Nowra

Communication and consultation have been key tools in solving problems for a community which is winning back its self respect.

Where We Are Today

The 1989/99 year saw the following results:

Asset Improvements

- Forty-nine properties had painting and fencing work undertaken
- One laneway was closed on the estate and a plan was submitted to the local Council to close the remaining laneways
- Superlots have been surveyed in preparation for future subdivision on the estate.

Management Changes

- An allocation strategy has been developed to overcome social issues by encouraging a more representative demographic mix on the estate
- More use has been made of the Residential Tribunal to address the level of nuisance and annoyance occurring in the area
- The local Client Service Team has developed a strong relationship with local Police to address issues contributing to crime in the area
- The local tenants' association, Nowra Tenant's Support, has taken a proactive role in developing a sense of community pride amongst residents
- Nowra Tenant's Support has also assisted the Department with developing a Local Action Plan for the area by undertaking a survey amongst tenants to identify key issues for the community.

Social and Community Outcomes

- Strong partnerships have developed between Shoalhaven City Council and the local tenants' group to introduce improvements to facilities in the area
- Tenants have established a Park Care and Crime Prevention Group
- An East Nowra Precinct Committee has invited local service organisations to participate in further community development programs
- Community awareness and participation has been increased through the publication of a bi-monthly newsletter distributed to public housing residents and private households.

Objectives for 1999/2000 Include:

- painting and fencing an additional 76 properties in the next financial year

Tenant comment about the Community Renewal Program

"Before the Program I had several break-ins. Since the work was completed I haven't had any trouble at all, I feel much safer now."

- increasing tenants' sense of ownership of their community
- improving the wider community's perceptions of the East Nowra estate
- maintaining departmental involvement in tenant initiatives, such as the park care group
- cementing partnerships with local government, service providers and residents of East Nowra to encourage their continued participation and support
- decreasing the vacancy and rejection rates of properties
- decreasing the number of applicants requesting rehousing
- increasing the sustainability of tenancies.



NSW Department of Housing

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

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