

REPORT OF
THE HISTORY PROJECT
2017-2018

Waterloo Stories



FOREWORD

In February 2017 Cinetel Productions Pty Ltd were commissioned as consultants by Land and Housing Corporation and the Department of Family and Community Services to produce a major oral history project on the history of the Sydney suburb of Waterloo.

This project involved the community in different ways. It gave residents the opportunity to reflect upon and record their experiences of living in Waterloo, as well as expressing their views about the proposed redevelopment.

Between 1st June 2017 and 2nd March 2018 Frank Heimans and Graham Shirley conducted and recorded 50 interviews with 53 interview subjects, some in joint interviews with other family members. Subjects were photographed and five interviews were videotaped for use in a 15-minute video production on Waterloo. More than 60 hours of interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. At the completion of the interviews this Report was written.

The producers would like to thank the interviewees and staff of Land and Housing

Corporation and the Department of Family and Community Services of the NSW Government for their cooperation. Particular thanks is acknowledged for the assistance and guidance of Karen Gibb and Anthony Mitchell, and the Waterloo community as a whole.

It is proposed that all of the audio and video recordings, interview transcripts, the edited video and the Report are lodged with the State Library of NSW for use by present and future generations in order to add to the knowledge and history of Waterloo.



Project Producer, 2017-2018



Top: Waterloo Estate. Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Left: Waterloo aerial. Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report contains images or names of people who have passed away.

“I do think there’s an exciting future for Waterloo, but is very much dependent, in my view, on the level of engagement and communication that the government departments have with the community that the vision for the future of Waterloo has to be a shared vision. It is very easy for governments to come in with grand ideas and visions, but unless they’re ones shared by the community, then I think history has shown that those sorts of projects have very difficult lives.”

Mike Allen

Former CEO of Housing NSW,
interviewed 14/12/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 52:00



Waterloo Green basketball court. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for the NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

WATERLOO THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES

The first Europeans in Waterloo describe the land as being very poor and are not very interested in settling there because of the swampy land, but for the Aboriginal people Waterloo is a source of food and a place they visit regularly.



Right: Swampland, Waterloo.
Source: State Library of NSW.

"It connected up the Waterloo wetlands, connected up Botany and then going through up Waterloo and then into what is now the Centennial Parklands, and so these series of swamps were very important.

There was a whole ecosystem here. It's hard to imagine now because it's so urbanised and built up, but it was a series of heath and sand dunes and wetlands.

There were lots and lots of birds there, so really a cacophony of birdcalls could be heard. We know from the early Europeans that they used to go down hunting there, as well as Aboriginal people would go there, because not only birds but also wallabies were there and lots of lizards and snakes and so on. It was a very productive area for the Gweagal, Gadigal and the Wangal people who lived around Botany Bay.

There's not a lot of archaeological evidence around from the sand dunes that there were campsites around the wetlands but certainly around Botany Bay, further to the south. We know that was an extremely important area, as were the coastal zones. Waterloo particularly would have been an area that Aboriginal people were coming to get food, certainly through the pathways going through the area, but it was not a permanent campsite area in the Waterloo space."

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 12:10:08

The dispossession of Aboriginal people living around Sydney Cove begins in January 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet to Sydney under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip. The year following the founding of the colony a devastating smallpox epidemic spreads among the Gadigal population in 1789, decimating its numbers and pushing the remaining Aboriginal people into the Waterloo wetlands.

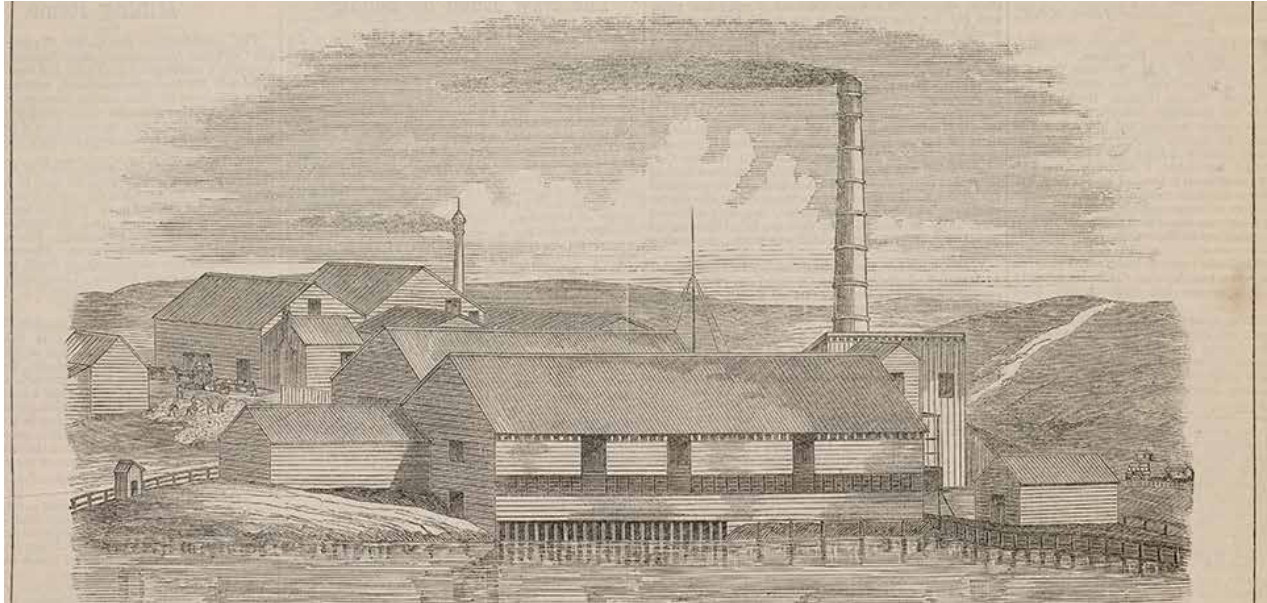
By the 1810s and 1820s Waterloo is perceived to be unused in the European sense, and the early industrialists decide that Waterloo will be a suitable place to set up such industries as wool washing and spinning, tanneries, fellmongeries, brickworks, soap works and candle making because land is cheap and water is plentiful. Europeans see Waterloo as being a place where it could be productive for them, not for agriculture necessarily but for what they call the noxious trades.

At the same time the first land grants are made.

“In the tallow works they boiled down the bones, so it made the place very smelly, and it was known as the ‘suburb of bad smells.’”

Inara Strungs

Former resident of Waterloo, interviewed
9/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 31:20



“Of course, they’re all labour-intensive industries so you’ve got to have workers, and because there’s no public transport and these people don’t have horses or carts, or anything, they’ve got to live nearby, and so that’s when you get the early appearance of working class villages and clusters of little cottages for the people who work in these industries in the 19th century.”

Grace Karskens

Professor of History, UNSW, interviewed 9/8/2017 at Kensington, NSW, 41:11

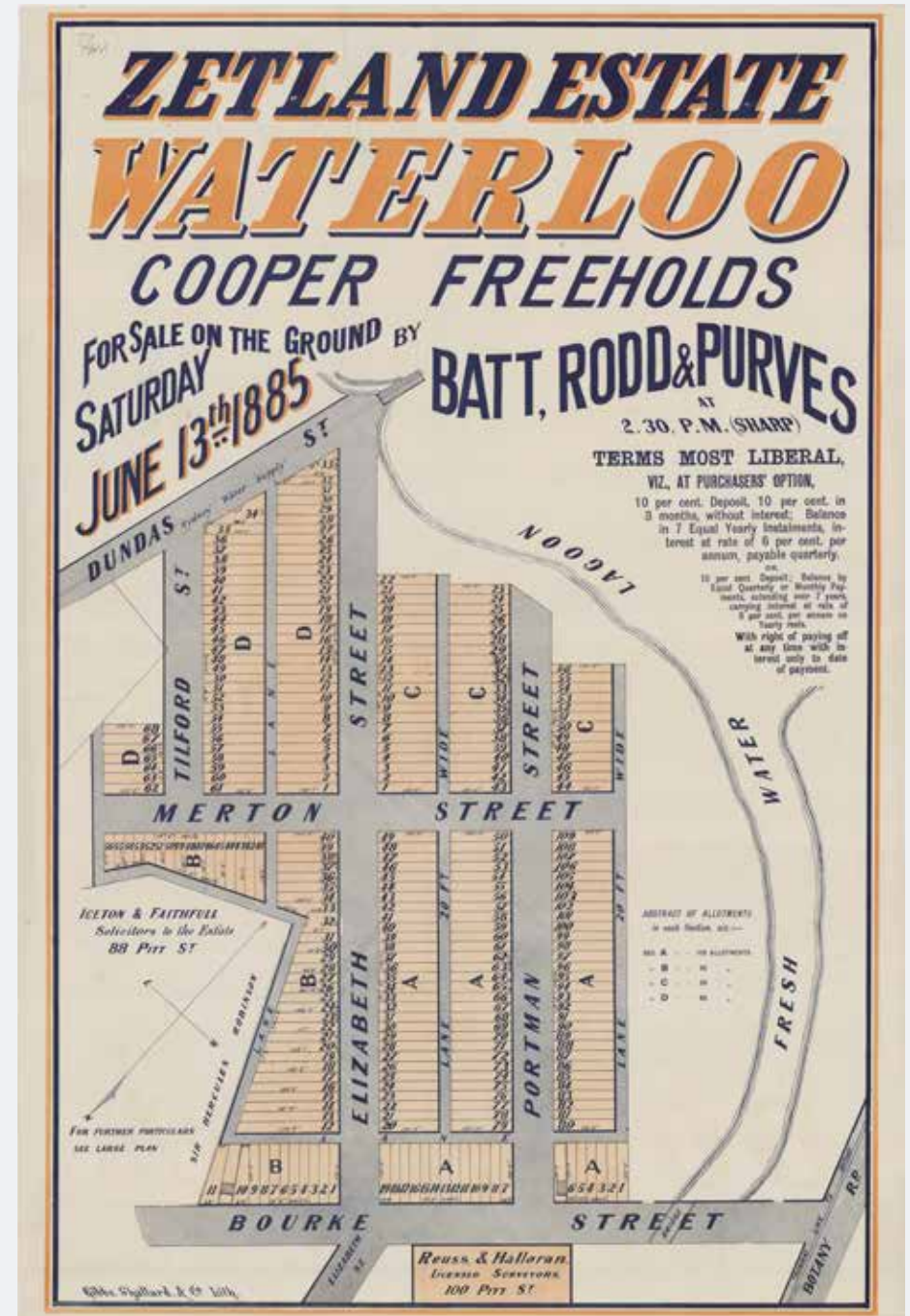
“There were a number of large estates that were set aside, most significantly the Mount Lachlan Estate and the Waterloo Estate. So Mount Lachlan was given to JT Campbell and the Waterloo Estate was given to William Hutchinson - they were given in the 1810s, 1820s, and they soon became consolidated into one large estate, which became known as the Cooper Estate. It was all of this 1400 acres of the Waterloo Estate, plus some of the Mount Lachlan Estate, and it was a really significant land holding, which the family kept hold of throughout the 19th century, and so that really influenced how Waterloo developed through the 19th century.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017
at Sydney, NSW, 12:13:02

Right: Reuss and Halloran, Subdivisions Plan of Waterloo, 1885, showing pattern and extent of subdivision in the suburb. Source: ML ref. SP W4/2, courtesy Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

Left: Waterloo Mills Wool Washing Establishment - the Upper Dam. Source: National Library of Australia.



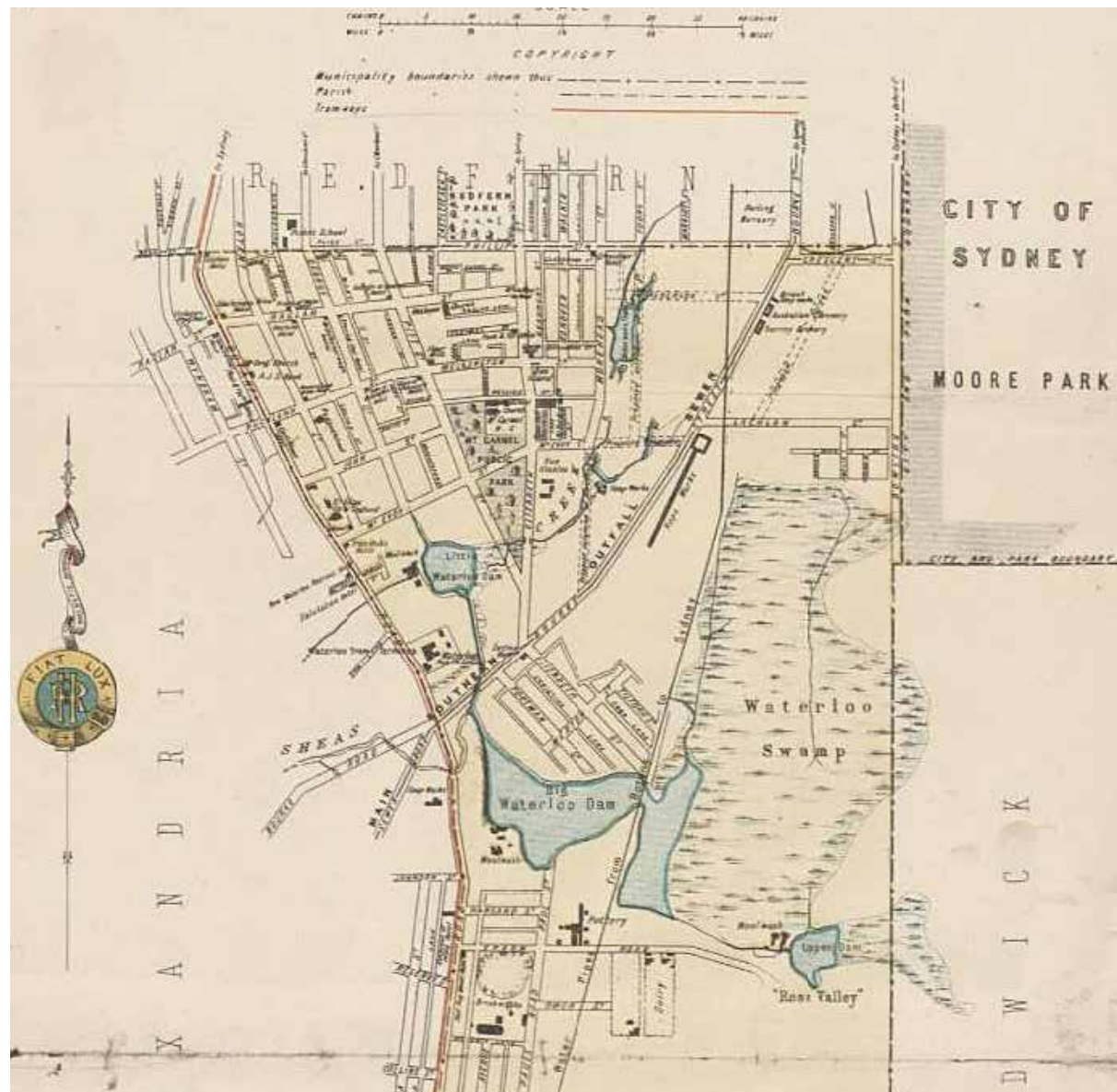
In 1859 Waterloo became part of Redfern municipality, but very soon the residents became angry that all of the money was being spent in Redfern, with no improvements in Waterloo. Consequently, there was a push to secede from Redfern and in 1860 Waterloo Council was set up.

“The Waterloo municipality basically ran from Phillip Street in the north. It had Botany Road as its boundary in the west. To the east it was basically South Dowling Street, and then its southern boundary was Gardeners Road. So that’s what the whole municipality encompassed, and that municipality stayed intact from 1860 until 1948, when Waterloo Council, along with a whole raft of other inner-city councils, was amalgamated with Sydney Municipal Council. So Waterloo was responsible for the suburbs of Waterloo, Zetland, and Rosebery. That whole area was their remit.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017
at Sydney, NSW, 12:35:36

Right: Atlas of the suburbs of Sydney (Higinbotham & Robinson).
Source: City of Sydney Archives.



The major subdivisions in Waterloo developed from 1870 onwards with parcels of land leased or purchased by land and investment banking companies who bought it to sell on as housing, the majority of it to poor, unskilled working families and people of Chinese and other ethnic backgrounds.

"There were grocers and butchers who were Chinese people in the area, so there was a strong population from the late 19th century, and they also developed their own temple, in Retreat Street. The Chinese were very much a part of the local community. Initially it was a lot of just Chinese men, but later on they had families. All of the residents were exposed to Chinese traditions and practices. So things like Chinese New Year was actually a really big deal in Waterloo and Alexandria in the early 20th century, and there are reports in the local newspapers that the Dragon Parade would actually stop the street and Botany Road would be crowded with people all wanting to see the spectacle."

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:02:24

Right: Dragon in the parade for Chinese New Year, New South Wales, 8 February 1935. Source: National Library of Australia.





Above: The Australian Natives' Association, comprising Australian-born whites, produced this badge in 1911. Prime Minister Edmund Barton was a member of the Association.

Right: Certificate of Domicile of Tin Lee, a cabinet maker. Source: National Archives of Australia.

However, there was a darker side to the influx of Chinese at Waterloo that begins when Chinese immigrants aboard three ships, SS Afghan, Menmuir and Guthrie were detained and deported in 1888 on entry to Australia, setting off a whole series of xenophobic events that would eventuate in the establishment of the White Australia Policy.

"There was this whole Chinese community there and this is a period when others are ramping up the racist legislation and when unions are really rioting about any Chinese people on ships, or sailors, or anybody coming in and they're actually riding in the street and smashing Chinese businesses - It's embarrassing that it is actually the union movement that's doing this; they're actually spearheading the racism that we see in the late 19th century."

Grace Karskens

Professor of History, UNSW, interviewed 9/8/2017 at Kensington, NSW, 79:20

The worst of these anti-Chinese laws concerns the re-entry of Chinese nationals to Australia.



“In 1901 a whole lot of restrictive immigration measures were introduced, which really changed things. Chinese who may have been living here for decades were, from then on, forced to undertake a dictation test when they re-entered the country. Before they left they would have to apply for a Certificate of Exemption of the dictation test so that when they re- entered Australia they weren’t forced to undertake that test and thereby blocked from entering if they failed.”

Melita Rogowsky

Editor, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney,
interviewed 2/3/2018 at Earlwood, NSW, 48:01

Herbert Young was born in 1927 into a Chinese family of 10 children in Waterloo.

"I lived the first 10 years of my life in Botany Road, Waterloo, under very sort of poor circumstances. Virtually we had no money. My father worked as a cabinetmaker very close in Waterloo, but every Friday when he got paid he used to go to the local Chinatown and he'd lose his money in gambling, so we were quite poor and we had to do with things like dripping, instead of butter."

Herb Young

Former Waterloo resident, interviewed 7/10/2017 at Wahroonga, NSW, 00:43

Herbert has vivid memories of the house he lived in at 131 Botany Rd, Waterloo.

"You walked in the front door and you were almost out the back door, but in between there was a stairway which led up to the bedrooms. If you walked in the front door, on the right there's a front room, for whenever anyone visited us, and then further on there was what we called the dining room and the kitchen, and then out from the kitchen you're into the back garden. There was no bathroom at all. We had a tin tub to wash in, which hung on the wall, and we'd use warm water from the copper, and that water had to bathe as many as wanted to have a wash."

Herb Young

Former Waterloo resident, interviewed 7/10/2017 at Wahroonga, NSW, 19:15

At the age of six Herbert was discovered by the Reverend David Morton of the Congregational Church in Botany Road to have an excellent singing voice.

Herbert was taught to read music by Miss Mack, who ran a dress shop further down Botany Road and who also happened to be a pianist in her spare time.

Herbert developed his singing and was engaged to sing at the Tivoli Theatre, doing the Tivoli circuit, and appearing regularly on Radio 2KY.



"She had this job playing at the local cinema, The Coliseum, when it was silent movies. She played the piano to give atmosphere, so that when there was gunfire she'd slam the lid of the piano, or hit the top of the piano, to represent gunfire, and with a romantic scene she was able to play a little bit of Tchaikovsky, or a little bit of sentimental music. When there was excitement, then she'd play a little bit of galloping music and so she was very good at improvising. But all that went when sound came in, when Al Jolson made the first sound movie, and as soon as he introduced that, all that talent went."

"Eventually I got a contract to tour Australia and New Zealand with a company in 1939, and that brought in quite a considerable income. We managed to buy a house from my earnings on the stage, until my voice broke at the age of 14, and then I led more like a normal life."

Herb Young

Former Waterloo resident, interviewed 7/10/2017 at Wahroonga, NSW, 32:02 and 03:35

Left: Herbert Young as a child. Source: Herbert Young.



Herbert Young, aged 12, touring with the Great North China Troupe, 1940. Source: Herbert Young.

After the White Australia Policy was finally laid to rest in the early 1970s, there were no longer any restrictions on immigration based on race and a steady trickle of Chinese nationals to Australia resumed.

Wan Ying Liang came to Waterloo from China in 1982 to visit her eldest brother who ran a restaurant in Canberra. Her two sons had immigrated and the impact of the Cultural Revolution was still being felt in China. Wan Ying Liang stayed in Canberra to help her eldest brother in the restaurant and was able to secure a temporary visa to work in Australia. When the student protests on 4 June 1989 at Tiananmen Square occurred she obtained permanent Australian residency status. She came to live in Waterloo in 2003.

“I went to Alexandria to work as a volunteer worker. Over there, people said, “Well, you speak Cantonese?” They asked me to organise a group of people who speak Cantonese, then we organised a Cantonese music group, and dancing and singing.”

Wan Ying Liang

Public housing resident, interviewed 18/9/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 40:00

The Chinese community is worried about relocation when the redevelopment of Waterloo begins in earnest.

“Initially, we didn’t have any opinions with regard to this redevelopment plan, but lots of people here, they don’t want to move to another place because they’re very familiar with this place. If they are relocated to another place, there may not be any Chinese doctors who speak our languages, they may find it difficult to go shopping, and they’re worried that the place would be very far away from Chinatown.”

Wan Ying Liang

Public housing resident, interviewed 18/9/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 70:17

SHOPS AND COMMERCE

Waterloo has always had a vibrant but small commercial heart with small shops providing basic essential goods. In the 1960s, Neil Hicks spent his early years in Waterloo, which was a very different place then.

“Horace had a horse and cart and he used to sell fruit from the back of the horse and cart. He’d drive all down Botany Road in the middle of the traffic. All the cars knew to go around him. We used to jump on the back and swing off the back and get a ride off him. He was blind in one eye, so we’d always come from the left so he couldn’t see us. I think he was the second-last horse and cart in Sydney.”

Neil Hicks

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 20/1/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 14:25

Far right: Shop on corner of Cooper & Wellington St Waterloo, 1940s.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.





"We used to have Mr. Whippy, who used to go around with the horrible song that he plays. There was the first supermarket down there on Botany Road. I think it's an IGA now. It used to be – I think it was a Woolworths. Saturday mornings, everybody did their shopping, so out the front of the supermarket they had what they used to call a chocolate wheel. It was like a wheel, and you'd spin it around.

You'd buy a ticket and you'd win a prize. Usually it was food. Saturday mornings down there on Botany Road, that was a big deal. Everybody was out doing their shopping and that was the day that everybody interacted and that. Now, every day is the same. But Saturdays, that was your big shopping day. It was almost a carnival."

Neil Hicks

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 20/1/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 16:30

It was a time when work and home were in close proximity.

"The people that lived in a particular area tended to work in that area because the jobs were there. It's not like it is now where you have effectively dormitory suburbs and then people go to work somewhere else. The whole thing about the inner city was that you had this juxtaposition of jobs and factories. So as you talk to the people that sort of lived in the area, they will talk about where their family worked in that particular place, whether or not it was at the ice cream factory or the handbag factory, or whatever. So there's that sort of proximity to jobs."

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice, interviewed 1/6/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 21:54





Top: Workers leaving factory. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy SEARCH Foundation.



Left: Drummond & Shirley Pty Ltd, Lachlan Street Waterloo, 1970. Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Neil Hicks' parents both worked in Waterloo.

"Mum ran a sandwich shop at The Cauliflower Hotel. She did counter lunches. She also worked at Nightingale Chemicals at one point, when I was quite young. But everybody in those days worked in a factory. I was a paper boy for a while and on Fridays I'd go around selling papers in the pubs and everybody in the pub would have a logo on their shirt. Everybody was working. Manufacturing – you could throw a dart at the newspaper and get a job. You could change jobs every week if you wanted. There was that much work around. So I guess that was a positive side of it.

Dad had different jobs. He was a storeman, and he was operating a printing press at one point. I think he was a foreman at a flour factory. He worked at Sweetacres; he used to bring home lollies for us. I don't remember anybody being unemployed, as a kid. Everybody had a job. I don't even remember if there was even a Centrelink around here. I think you had to go into Mascot, that was the closest Centrelink, because everybody had a job. It wasn't hard to have a job. It was easy to find a job in those days. It's quite the reverse now, which is a shame."

Neil Hicks

Waterloo public housing resident,
interviewed 20/1/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 7:57

The people of Redfern and Waterloo were then owner-occupiers and renters.

"It was close to the city, but not too close to the centre of the city. There were lots of parks. It was lots of families. It was all low income. So people spent most of their time out on the street, talking to each other.

There was industry in the area, so you had the glass factory over in South Dowling Street, near Moore Park. On George Street you had an ice cream factory. You had a school, and you had a pie factory. So there was a lot of employment for people in the area. They came in, they made some money, they lived in rental – some people bought the houses that they moved into – you could actually get loans off the government at the time. So the government would go and buy properties, renovate them, or buy a disused block and they would build a house on it. You would wander over to the government, you'd get a loan from them and you'd end up buying the house that you were living in."

Jose Perez

Public housing resident,
interviewed 14/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 04:16

Right: George Street, Waterloo, 1950s.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.





Beverley Wellfare has lived in Waterloo for all of her 72 years and has a phenomenal memory.

“Wormald Bros was in Young Street, and where the Hillsong Church is now, that used to be Blackwell’s. I don’t know what they made, actually. Machinery, I think. That was there. Then back of our place, we had the rabbit place, and then Frank Cridlands took that over eventually as their garage.

Then there was Holbrooks, up in Danks Street - Danks Street was all factories and it didn’t go right through to Dowling Street like it goes now. It used to stop at Bourke Street because that was all factories. Like, the glassworks in Dowling Street was right along there, and then you had other places: Akubra Hats was somewhere there. There were all factories around here then. Then at the corner of Lachlan Street, before you turn into Bourke Street used to be the Rope Works. My brother worked at the Rope Works, ‘til it closed. So you had all them factories around, and now they’ve pulled all the factories down and built units.

There was a very good shopping centre in Botany Road. Then later on you got Flemings Supermarket and Jewels’, and then later on Woollies came in and took over where Franklins was. Where Dr. Tang is in the middle used to be the best fish and chips shop you ever had. It used to be Tom’s Fish and Chips. Then up further where the dentist is in Elizabeth Street, as you come down Raglan Street there used to be a shop - there were two men used to own it. I don’t know what nationality they were, but they were lovely old men. They used to cook their own ham and that, and you used to get it off the bone. You’d go in there when you were a kid and buy sixpence worth of biscuits. They used to be broken biscuits, but they sold loose biscuits, and they were good like that, you know? But over the years somebody got in to rob them and bashed one of them up and he died, and then the other one sold the shop.”

Beverley Wellfare

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 25/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 16:56 & 33:07

“There were a lot of factories, and the brewery and the AGM, or the ACI glass factory and all those. What else was there? There was Telecom. There was packaging works and Mauri Brothers Chemical Manufacturing, where my father got the yeast from for his bakery.”

Inara Strungs

Former Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 9/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 23:50

Right: ACI Australian Glass Industries factory.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Far right: Akubra hats on display.
Source: State Library of NSW.





“Dollar Sweets was the big sweet factory and a lot of the Indigenous population worked there. There were clothing factories, and I’m not sure which ones, but the migrant women almost totally worked there. The men worked in the glassworks and in the railway yards, and there were lots of smaller factories and stuff around.”

Andrew Jakubowicz

Professor of Sociology, University of Technology, Sydney, interviewed 7/6/2017 at Coogee, NSW, 30:38

“You had Eveleigh workshops. Up near Waterloo oval you had Cottee’s factory. Down at Alexandria there you had Schweppes, used to be down there. Down at Alexandria Park High School now, or the school I went to, Cleveland Street, when they moved from the old Clevo, that was Redhead Matches. That was a huge factory down on Alexandria, right next door to Alexandria Park. Right across where the school park is now, there used to be a big meat works there, like an abattoir, and then just up from that was the Orange Spot. All these factories closed down over the years as we were getting older. Like, most of the factories were all closed by the time I left – let me think. Well, Peters Ice Cream factory was already closed by the time we left primary school here at Redfern, to go to high school, but the abattoirs closed a little bit later, say the mid ‘80s and so did the Orange Spot, like orange juice and all that, that closed as well.”

Paul O’Connor

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 13/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 20:25

Velma Lawrence laments:

"There was a factory. It was Sovereign Refrigeration. They used to make fridges. Then, on this side, down near the Duke, they used to make beautiful shoes. That's gone now. I worked at Akubra Hats, but they're gone. Then my mother worked at Crown Crystal Glass. That's still there. Then Reschs Brewery, that's gone. Every day, I can remember, at 3:00, a siren used to go and we all knew, 'Oh, it's 3:00.' Then we had the pawnshop, the milk bar - this is all in Elizabeth Street, just around the corner - the pawnshop, the milk bar, the bookshop. Like, you used to get comics: Ginger Meggs and Black Cat and all that, and you used to sell them to the bookshop. My father used to bring them home from the paper mill. Then there was a hairdresser, two butcher shops and Barbara Sacker's dress shop. Then on the corner there was a Dr. Barr, who was a doctor there for years and years, and then he left and then there was Dr. Guyatt he came. Then the post office. That was old then, you know. We had it for years and years, and then they decided they're going to close this post office and they started closing all the post offices, didn't they? Then they closed our bank. We had no bank. Caltex station, that went. Everything just went. All the shops closed down. Hairdressers, everything. We've got nothing here anymore."

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident,
interviewed 8/8/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 18:58



Reschs Brewery, Waterloo.
Source: The City of Sydney Archives.





Above: The Cauliflower Hotel, 2018.
Source: Frank Heimans.

Left: Preparing Latvian sourdough bread at the bakery.
Source: Inara Strungs.

There were also a large number of pubs in Waterloo.

“There’s a lot of pubs that have closed down around here. I could name The Baden Powell, The Empress, The Imperial, The Cricketers, The Star, The Somerset. The latest one to close down is the Duke of Wellington, which needed to be closed down because there was a lot of trouble there. So in the last, say, 20 years, eight pubs have gone.”

Paul O’Connor

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 13/6/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 30:46

Inara Strungs remembers:

“Oh, the pubs were very rough at that time. There were always fights outside them. A lot of them offer restaurant food now, but in the past - the Iron Duke Hotel was a bikie pub, and they had strippers and bar fights and punk bands. The Zeppelin Pub had lingerie waitresses. I think at one stage there were about 22 pubs in a two-kilometre radius in Waterloo. Those included the Duke of Wellington, Abbott’s, Grosvenor, Lord Raglan, Moore Park View, and many others, including the Cauliflower, which was named because that’s where some of the Chinese market gardens were originally.”

Inara Strungs

Former Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 9/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 25:16

AN ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

By the second half of the nineteenth century the original Aboriginal inhabitants of Waterloo had largely been dispersed and only remnants of the original clans remained in the area. The NSW Government establish the Aboriginal Protection Board.

“It doesn’t have much power at that stage. It can’t do very much. It’s just a response to what white people want, basically. But, from the 1910s they do gain more power. They gain the power to take the children away, for one thing in 1915, which is devastating. Then more and more powers are added, you know, they can move people at will, and if you end up on a station or a mission, they control every aspect of your life: who you can marry, where you can work, if you can work. If you’re of mixed descent they can chuck you off, away from your family. It’s a complete removal of every right, every human right, so you can see why Aboriginal people would come to the city to get away from that.”

(This would become known as the Stolen Generations).

Grace Karskens

Professor of History, UNSW, interviewed 9/8/2017 at Kensington, NSW, 58:19

There were many other reasons for the large influx of Aboriginal people to Redfern and Waterloo post-World War II.

“There was a lot of pressure after World War II on land. There was, in fact, a population boom in the Aboriginal population in New South Wales, such that the government reserves weren’t able to accommodate a lot of the growing population and there were rising tensions in the 1940s and ‘50s in rural and regional areas and a lot of conflict with police and authorities, and a lot of the young people came to the city as refugees from that conflict and also from the poor living conditions and the poor wages that were available in rural and regional areas. So you see the growth in the population, both of those living on reserves and those living in informal riverbank camps. A lot of those people, especially the young people, came to Redfern-Waterloo.”

George Morgan

Associate Professor, Western Sydney University, interviewed 16/1/2018 at Cremorne, NSW, 11:01:56

By the 1960s there was a growing world-wide movement of land rights for Indigenous people and civil rights for African-Americans in the United States, and its impact spread to Australia.



“A number of services start developing, and that then encourages more people to come to Redfern-Waterloo. So by the 1970s you’ve got the Aboriginal Medical Service, you’ve got the Aboriginal Legal Service, you’ve got The Foundo as well, which is supporting more social connections with Aboriginal people, you’ve got the Redfern All Blacks footy club. There’s a whole lot of things which are happening that kind of bring people together.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:19:22

Left: Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Renwick Street Redfern, 1989.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.

“The Aboriginal community insists on having their own housing – hence the Aboriginal Housing Corporation – and their own health service because they couldn’t get proper healthcare from white hospitals and doctors and nurses. The radio station, which is still going – Koori Radio – and a legal service, because as they still say, they’re the most arrested and incarcerated people. So there’s a legal service to help people, especially since there’s a long history – what they insist is a long history – of police victimisation. I mean, apparently the paddy wagon did wait outside the Empress Hotel and just wait until the Aboriginal people came out and put them in. That’s what they had to live with.”

Grace Karskens

Professor of History, UNSW, interviewed
9/8/2017 at Kensington, NSW, 62:13

Right: Aboriginal land rights March, Sydney 1971.
Source: Douglass Baglin Photography Archives.





Jinny-Jane Smith is an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the Waterloo Redevelopment:

"You can't go anywhere in Waterloo without seeing police. A police car, police bike, police people. Sometimes it's a good thing. Sometimes it's just plain harassment, you know. Like, we just bought a new car and my partner was driving to pick me up from work here yesterday, and they followed her. Because it's a new car around, they don't know the number plates, they don't know who owns it, they don't know who's driving it, so it won't be long before we're pulled over. We'll get that for a while until they get to know that it's us who owns the car and that we don't have an extensive criminal record.

We're not drug dealers. So that happens quite often. My daughter, she's been pulled up a few times, especially during school hours when she left St Scholastica's. She was doing a schooling program in which she could wear plain clothes, so she was harassed quite a lot about where she was going, what she was doing, where's her ID, doing warrant checks and stuff like that. This is the systematic racism of what goes on for Aboriginal people."

Jinny-Jane Smith

Aboriginal Liaison Officer, interviewed 24/11/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 54:10

Right: Aboriginal Medical Service, Turner Street Redfern, 1989.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.



Will Gordon tells a similar story.

“They pull you over and ask you, “What are you doing? Where are you going? What’s in your bag? What are you guys up to?” It’s like - what’s the saying - if there’s more than three black men in a group, it’s a mob, it’s a gang. It could be me and my two cousins and my brother and it’s like, “What are youse up to?” “We’re going to the shop to get something to eat.” You see young black fellas walking around in packs because they’re all related. Everyone’s related. They could be living in the same house, or they could be cousins or friends.”

Will Gordon

Aboriginal public housing resident, interviewed 30/1/2018 at Kings Cross, NSW, 44:43

Luke Freudenstein was the Commander of Redfern Police for 10 years:

“We did do a lot of raids. We did do a lot of control operations, undercover operations. We did do operations with our pushbikes, with uniform, with plain clothes, with detectives in suits. We did make a lot of arrests. But after a while, people would come and complain to me about some of the arrests, and I always took my time to speak to them individually, bring them up to my office and explain what I was trying to do. Very few complaints after that, and we get very few complaints from the Aboriginal community now because we respect them; they are the first people of this country, and our police do respect that, and they do respect that we have a job to do and they’ve got nothing to fear from us, only if they’re doing something wrong, or something criminally wrong.”

Luke Freudenstein

Local Area Commander, interviewed 18/12/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 13:15

“Not everybody has a good relationship with the police, and especially so for Aboriginal people. It runs deep. It was the police who used to remove the children.

The police have had a profound role, you know, and not your local copper here on the street, but the whole institution of the police, so that in turn was - you know, you grow up never trusting police.”

Dixie Link-Gordon

Founding worker, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women’s Centre interviewed 2/2/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 40:11

“The Aboriginal population has not recovered from the effects of the Stolen Generation. It’s part of almost every person’s story.”

Fr. Greg Flynn

Parish Priest, interviewed 18/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 28:20

PUBLIC HOUSING IN WATERLOO

The white community of Waterloo faced none of the problems of the Aboriginal communities who moved back to Waterloo but what they did have in common was poverty.



A terrace in Bourke Street, Waterloo, 1885. Source: NSW Government Printer Series: Housing Commission, State Library of NSW.

“There was a guy living in one of the terrace houses in Morehead Street and he owned his terrace but he was elderly, and like a lot of people there, he had the asset but had not a lot of cash, so he wasn’t paying his electricity bill. He was trying to save money, so he had candles, and unfortunately, he set his place alight. Killed himself, and what no one realised was that the row of terrace houses actually still had the timber shingle roof that had been put on them originally, and no party wall going above the ceiling, so it was just one horizontal furnace, and flames came out of his and then roared up the whole length, so the whole side of one street was destroyed.”

John Gregory

Architect, Housing NSW, interviewed 5/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 57:52

Velma Lawrence was born on Good Friday in 1941 and grew up in Lenton Parade, Waterloo. Her earliest memories date back to the war years.

"I can remember we used to have black blinds. Then you had the gaslight. You wasn't allowed to put your lights on. The gas used to come out of the wall, and that was your light. We had an old fuel stove. Chop the wood, cook on that. We had an air raid shelter next to the George Hotel. We used to play in it. You had the barrows, you had the horses. We had fun. We used to swing on the trees up here, get cardboard, put a bit of wax on it and slide down all the hills. We had great times, and yet we had nothing. But we had good food, always good food, and a guy used to come around on a horse and cart: "Get your props. Get your props." That used to hold the lines up. And then another guy used to come around: "Get your rabbits. Get your rabbits" Everyone would run out and buy a rabbit. We used to have stewed rabbits, baked rabbits. Oh, the meat was so tender, and that's how you lived, you know, because they made, like, stews, soups, because you had to feed all the family.

There was a woman in Lenton Parade, she had 17 children. People helped each other, you know? Not like now. If you was painting your house, the next-door man would come in and help you. All different now."

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident,
interviewed 8/8/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 08:20

"For a long time we never had electricity. You used to have candles or lamps, and my mum used to cook on a stove, wood stove in the kitchen, and then - because the landlord didn't get the electricity put on, we got it put on."

Beverley Wellfare

Waterloo public housing resident,
interviewed 25/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 23:25



Left: Velma Lawrence, aged 7, at Royal Easter Show, Moore Park with show bags. Source: Velma Lawrence.

“My father used to be an SP bookmaker. He used to carry a little box full of donuts, but all the slips would be under the donuts. We got raided. They pulled the phone out of the wall and everything. So we got declared. Took my poor mother to jail, and then they moved into the next house next door in the next week and opened it again.”

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident,
interviewed 5/12/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 16:39:07



Housing Commission Area. Source: City of Sydney Archives.



In the early decades of the twentieth century the concept of public housing started to take shape.

“Public housing really develops in the 20th century, and there’s a few milestones that it’s worth understanding so that we can see how we get to the amount of public housing that we get in Waterloo in the late 20th century. So in 1912 the state government actually passes two Acts. One is called the Sydney Corporation Dwelling Act, or Dwelling Houses Act, and that allows Sydney Council to start building flats and semi-detached dwellings for workers’ housing. They pass a similar Act for the rest of New South Wales that allows the state government to do the same thing, so that means that Sydney Municipal Council and the State Government can resume land, or acquire land through forced acquisition and resumption to build workers’ housing.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:31:28

When the war ended in 1945 servicemen returned to their families and there was a great need for housing, as families started to expand. The Federal Government anticipated this and established Housing Commissions in every state. The NSW Housing Commission began its reign in 1941. John Mant was a career bureaucrat who had always been associated with the big picture.

“What the Housing Commissions were doing was what they were set up to do. There were two inherited traditions: one was to clear slums and then there was the tradition of building homes for returned servicemen, which was really when the Commissions got going as a result of the housing...the Commission that was set up by Chifley and Co. after the Second World War, or towards the end of the Second World War, and the Commonwealth offered big money for state governments that set up planning policies, did city plans, and built tracts of housing for returned servicemen, for the baby boomers’ families.”

John Mant

Urban Planning Consultant, interviewed 20/10/17 at Cremorne, NSW, 30:15

The Housing Commission of NSW at that stage was effectively led by a very strong personality, the Secretary. His name was Jack Bourke (1916-1987) and wherever he moved the power followed. Later on he became Chairman and made all of the decisions.

“So a very interesting guy, and he was in the Airforce in the Second World War, and before that he’d been affected by the depression, the 1930s depression, and so a lot of Waterloo is coloured by the fact that McKell, the Premier and later Governor-General, grew up in that area, and he and Jack Bourke had the same idea about the terrace housing and the then existing housing forms being slums, because they only ever saw them, not in their prime when they were first built, but what they had become by the 1930s, where there was all manner of problem in terms of overcrowding and shoddy building added to them.”

John Gregory

Architect, interviewed 5/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 07:45



Right: Outrage at Jack Bourke's Housing Commission tactics.
Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.

McKell and Bourke really had a vision that what they were doing was for the absolute betterment of mankind.

Starting with the policy of 'Urban Renewal' in the 1940s, which continued into the 1960s, whole sections of Waterloo were razed to the ground and in their place rose two and three-storey apartments, 'walk-ups' as they were soon dubbed.

"The State would provide high quality housing and beautiful landscaped gardens with lots of fresh air and light, and it would overcome the dismal, dirty, smelly, flood- prone, insect-molested slums of the inner city. The vision of the Labor Party reformers was to create a new world, to wipe away this history of degradation and illness and oppression and provide the new generation, their kids, with a whole new way of life."

Andrew Jakubowicz

Professor of Sociology, University of Technology, Sydney, interviewed 7/6/2017 at Coogee, NSW, 40:30



Above: Demolition site, John Street Waterloo, 1964.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.

What sort of organisation was the Housing Commission of NSW, tasked with carrying out this urban renewal vision?

"I think it was probably a fairly typical government department of that era. Almost all of the senior managers were male. There were obviously women working in the office. It was very much, though, a construction authority. It still had a fairly substantial building program and that continued on from its establishment at the end of World War II, so there was a big emphasis on all forms of development and there were architects and engineers and road-builders and all sorts of people working in the organisation, as well as those charged with the responsibility of letting and managing the properties."

Mike Allen

Former CEO, Housing NSW, interviewed
14/12/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 03:30

Right: Waterloo building. Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.



The philosophy of the Housing Commission was direct and clear.

“It was a philosophy that was less about social value and social justice. It was just more about providing housing opportunities for a wide range of people. Yes, there were eligibility criteria, but in the '70s there were still lots of low-income working people who were seeking housing assistance from the organisation, and obviously lots of those in the tenant population at the time. I think I recall some statistics from that area that about 70 per cent of all of the Housing Commission's tenants at that time had some form of employment.”

Because the need for public housing was so much greater than the ability of the Housing Commission to provide it, prospective tenants went on waiting lists.

“Waiting times in the '70s and early '80s - you could still get housed in a couple of years in many places, possibly even less in some forms of accommodation, like bedsitter rooms and so on, but these days the number of people waiting up to 10 years is significantly greater and there are more people that are waiting beyond 10 years, which really is self-defeating if people have to wait more than an entire decade before they get some safe, affordable, and secure accommodation. The damage that can happen to those people and to their families in that period of time is really quite significant and, I would argue, is counterproductive, so increased affordable housing investment, in my view, will have offsets elsewhere in government expenditure.”

Mike Allen

Former CEO, Housing NSW, interviewed 14/12/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 06:34 and 47:32

Right: Waterloo from Poets Corner. Source: Land and Housing Corporation Archive.



Dallas Rogers saw it this way:

"After the Second World War, we were housing low income families in public housing. Over the last thirty years we've tightened the allocation strategies for public housing so tightly that you have to be very, very disadvantaged, or have quite severe health or other problems to even get into public housing, and so what we've done is concentrate people with very complex needs in a very tight location. Then the irony of this is, of course, at the end of that thirty-year period, the government starts to say, "Oh, there's a concentration of disadvantaged there," like this somehow came out of nowhere. This was the product of government policy."

Dallas Rogers

School of Architecture, University of Sydney, interviewed 10/9/2017 at Darlington, NSW, 26:56

"The role and function of the Department of Housing these days really is as a landlord of last resort, and the eligibility criteria are now so tight that most of the people, if not almost all of them on the waiting list would be people who would be social security recipients of one form or another. Eligibility has widened over the years to include other people. So, for example, single people who were not aged pensioners were not eligible up until 1983, and it was very much more accommodation for families at that time, or people who were elderly and on the aged pension. These days, the tenant population reflects a lot of those social changes so that the vast majority of public housing tenants, 90 per cent or more, would still be on a social security income, with a much smaller proportion of people, less than 10 per cent would be people who were earning an income. That's by comparison to 70 per cent or more of the tenant population in the mid 1970s."

Mike Allen concludes:

"My personal view is that, really, the system would be much better, and the outcomes for tenants, individuals and families would be much greater if all of the accommodation was owned and managed by the not-for-profit sector rather than by government. I come to that conclusion after spending more than half of my life trying to make the public housing system work. It is a failed model these days, in my view, and should be recognised as such."

Mike Allen

Former CEO, Housing NSW, interviewed 14/12/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 11:12 and 50:00

Right: Walker Street, Waterloo Source: City of Sydney Archives.





In the 1960s Velma Lawrence and her family were living in private rental accommodation in Redfern. However, it was anything but satisfactory.

"It was only three rooms, you know. My son and I slept in one room. It had single beds and oh, bloody rats down there. They come from the sewage. They were big slimy things. So I got this cat. I used to bring the cat inside. I wouldn't sleep with the lights out. I'd have the light on all night and the cat would be running up. You could hear him running up and down. Well that's how I got my Housing Department, my first one, because I just went to pieces. So I put my name down for the Housing Department, and one day it was pouring rain and I was depressed, I was crying, and this lady knocked on the door. The door was open, and I said, "Yes?" She said, "I'm from the Housing Department, I see you're on a list." She said, "I've come down to look at your house" and I said, "Yeah," and she said, "Where do you sleep?" I said, "In that room there." So she had a look and she said, "Oh, you and your son sleep in that room?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "Where's the kitchen?" I said, "There." You wouldn't believe it, the rain was pouring in. The week before that, my mother come down to see me and she went through the floor. There was a big hole in the floor, near the back door. The rain's coming in all over my fridge, and she said, "Oh." She said, "Is this the kitchen?" I said, "Yeah, this is it." Then she said, "Well, where's your bathroom?" I said, "Oh, you got to go outside." So she puts her umbrella up. So I said, "The bathroom's there." Like, there was a bath and a copper, and two real old tubs. When we opened the door, you wouldn't believe what was sitting there. A rat, right on top of the copper. She said, "Oh, my god. She said, "Oh, that's the biggest rat I've ever seen." She said, "Where's the toilet?" I said, "Right up the back." She said, "I'm not going up there." And that's how I got my first Housing Department at Redfern, and I took it. I was up there for eight years before I moved down here to Waterloo. Thank God for the rats."

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 18:02:50

By the 1960s the Housing Commission started to look at more ambitious and adventurous designs for their apartments.

“They’ve decided that high-rise is the way to go in the inner city, and they set their eyes on two places in particular - Woolloomooloo and Waterloo - and at the same time they’re trying to develop both of these, and in both places the community sets up a stink, and the Housing Commission really bites off more than it can chew. What the Housing Commission didn’t take into consideration was what the community wanted, and they weren’t very good at community consultation.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed
5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:37:39

During the 1960s John Gregory was a budding young architect, employed by the NSW Housing Commission in its Architects Branch.

“In terms of design principles, efficiency and economy were the by-words, so design principles were that they had to be functional pretty inoffensive cottage designs that were efficient and cheap, then hand them over to other people to put on blocks of land, and Jack Bourke was proud that it came up to a hundred thousand houses in his time that had been built. So you can’t take it away from them. They had a great production. There were a whole lot of little guides about how much floor area there could be. There were guides about how many kitchen cabinets there would be, for example, to a two-bedroom, to a three- bedroom, to a four-bedroom. So all the functional elements were covered pretty well, but there was nothing to say in style terms, other than, “We don’t want it to stand out. We don’t want it to look luxurious. We want it to look modest”, and that was about all. To some extent it felt like it was a reflection of Australian society generally anyway during that time.”

John Gregory

Architect, interviewed 5/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 29:33

Right: Aerial view overlooking Waterloo.
Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.







Above: In front of Joseph Banks building, Waterloo. Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Right: High rise buildings, Waterloo. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy SEARCH Foundation.

Far right: Waterloo building. Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.





In 1972 the Housing Commission declared that a large area in Waterloo was under a housing notification and that no one could sell their houses.

“A lot of owner-occupiers get caught out by this housing notification, that this is another area that the Housing Commission’s looking to develop. So then the Waterloo Resident Action Group is formed, and people like Marg Barry are instrumental in galvanising the community, along with other people - it was quite a significant group - to try and agitate against the Housing Commission, but also to get South Sydney Council to really look at this and to stand up for the community. So there’s a key moment when you’ve got the Endeavour project underway and South Sydney Council decided to look at the rest of the Housing Commission’s proposal to see if they really need to demolish another 500 houses, and they commission an independent report on the whole thing, and the Council unanimously decides that they are going to oppose the Housing Commission’s development. So that’s a key moment for Waterloo.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian,
interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:39:20

Marg Barry (1934-2001) was one of the key players in the fight to save Waterloo from redevelopment in the 1970s.

“She ran Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, now Inner Sydney Voice, I think many would say with an iron fist. She knew everyone. She knew a lot of people in government, and they were a significant force in the defence of public housing tenants, indeed tenants more generally. Often they were involved in kind of formal legal processes and they would align themselves with Redfern Legal Centre, by that stage operating out of Redfern Town Hall. Inner City Council for Regional Development was just a great local community organisation. They would regularly represent the individual and broader issues of the public housing community to the state minister, to the Department of Housing, to council, to local education institutions. It was just a great body of committed people that forcefully represented their local people.”

Tony Pooley

Former Mayor of South Sydney Council,
interviewed 30/6/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 15:55

THE ENDEAVOUR ESTATE

The 1970s was the decade when the Housing Commission had plans to build six even more ambitious 30-story towers at Waterloo, of which only two towers, Matavai and Turanga, were ever built because of community opposition.



Right: Waterloo 1970s. Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.

"In building these tower blocks; they said we need big blocks of land, so they bulldozed the streets as well. Waterloo had a traditional grid pattern that all Victorian streets had, which is a square grid, housing along the front, a rear lane at the back and then housing again, and it had lots of little narrow lanes. When they bulldozed the terraces, they also bulldozed those laneways and also amalgamated - so where you would now have Matavai and Turanga and that, that would have been four or five blocks. It's now all in one block."

Sean Macken

Town Planner, interviewed 17/8/2017 at Newtown, NSW, 74:03

"I think those towers, particularly Matavai and Turanga, were very appropriate forms of accommodation at the time they were constructed and for a number of subsequent decades. In fact, they were considered to be cutting-edge accommodation because they were focused only on the elderly at that time. The buildings are now quite a number of decades old. Like all buildings, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain them as they age, and technology around concrete construction and other things has changed, and those buildings, I think, probably have a fairly high ongoing maintenance cost and that would be a significant factor in the organisation's thinking."

Mike Allen

Former CEO, Housing NSW, interviewed 14/12/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 24:28

"The Dobell building has problems with water penetration, and it is to do with the design. You can see the wedding cake design, and that's somebody's balcony up there. The water membranes, they perish. There have been quite a few problems."

Diana Whitworth

Public housing tenant, interviewed 21/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 24:08

"When you come to look at Waterloo, where they built the high-rises with a large amount of green space around them, that was a model of how you might do high-rises well at the time, but now they're saying, "No, there's too much green space there. We need to actually change the way in which that gets put together and it doesn't create good places for people to work in." Interestingly, one of the debates at the present moment between people that live in the high-rises in Waterloo and the government, is the government saying, "We can't work with this. We'll knock the whole lot down" and some of the tenants are saying, "No. We want to keep these buildings. It's crazy to knock them down. They've got good life left in them. You need to re-block them and refurbish them and they'll be fine." From a government perspective, there isn't enough space in the middle to sort of put fill-in buildings and to get the density that they want, so they ideally want to sort of knock everything down."

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice, interviewed 1/6/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 33:49

As with any housing estate maintenance, security was an ongoing problem for residents.

"The case manager of the property changes every year. This is the biggest inconvenience because by the time the case manager knows what's happening with your unit and has the ability to change something, he has already been changed, and it's another person, and you need to do it all over again, because they don't have time to read all of your history, to go through deeply, and that's the biggest frustration.

The second frustration is the inability of Housing to make a contract with good subcontractors, because they are looking for cheap labour. They bring very low professional subcontractors to do a job, like maintenance, I'm talking about. The job sometimes they do, it's just unbelievably bad."

Ludmila Mikhailov

Public housing tenant, interviewed 16/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 61:01





Over time the towers proved not to be such a great solution to social housing needs.

“Oh, they are so lonely, the old people in there. They’re all my aunties and uncles. If they’re older than me they have made it through the rat race of life and just want to sit comfortably in their homes. They are very lonely because a lot of them are sitting there, and if they’re out of bread or milk, they’re too afraid to even pick up the phone, or ring their daughters, or their children or grandchildren because they feel they’re a burden on them.”

Sonya Brindle

Public housing resident, interviewed
25/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW 14:33

Left: Queen Elizabeth visit.
Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation
Archive.

“There was no security on the buildings. The security doors didn’t operate properly, and they had armatures on them that would open and close them, and people who wanted to gain entry to the building would deliberately break those armatures so that the doors stood open, and then anybody could come and go. So there were a lot of people in the building who had no business to be here, and it was a free-for-all. The stairwells were always full of used needles and other paraphernalia for taking drugs, and there would have been any number of drug sellers in this building, or any of the buildings around as well. The stairwells were always filthy, because people did all sorts of things in the stairwells. Now, since that time, Housing has made a lot of changes and they’ve increased the degree of security that there is, and they got really serious about people who had no right to be in the building.

They did a purge of the building and got rid of all of the people who were freeloading with somebody else; people who were actually living in the building as though they had a right to be there, but paid no rent because they were in somebody else’s unit.”

Russell Walker

Public housing resident, interviewed 19/6/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 16:45

Velma Lawrence recalls some horrifying moments, looking at the towers:

"I was standing here one day on the phone, and I could see the high-rise. Oh. I looked up. Look at that. Oh, my god. He just jumped, straight out, from the 14th floor. Just went - and I was shaking like a leaf. I couldn't talk. Next minute you hear all the sirens. But there's been a lot over there that have jumped. Killed themselves. OD'd. I wouldn't live in the place. They should never have built them."

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 17:57:39

Dominic Grenot commented:

"I think suicides have always been a feature of high-rise public housing, not just here in Sydney but all over the world, sadly, and for me the biggest issue around that - or there's two issues. I think it's really around potential inappropriate allocations being made to people who are not suitable for high-rise. Secondly, it's around not providing the right support. So, you know, it's fine to stick someone in a building, even in a high-rise, but if they're going to be more isolated they're not going to get the support that they need, and you're really just creating more dramas. I'm just guessing here, but I suspect that the suicides in Waterloo in particular have reduced over the years. But, you know, there still are some, and the reasons behind those are really varied, but mental health is certainly a big factor."

Dominic Grenot

Former Public Housing Liaison Officer for City of Sydney Council, interviewed 11/9/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 21:09

Jose Perez added:

"They were built to a good standard. If the maintenance had been continued the way it should have been, on the schedules that it should have been, those buildings will quite happily last the 100 years that they were designed for, and more, without a problem. The foundations on those things are just spectacular. They really went down to the bedrock. There was no mucking around with those things. But it's just that the maintenance was never done on the buildings."

Jose Perez

Public housing resident, interviewed 14/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 51:46



“At least Housing, for all its faults, and it did have lots of faults and it did do pretty crappy design a lot of the time, what it built was solid. You know, it was really solid. To go and build something now, in a time when the kinds of checks and balances that were in the approval system and in the certification system are largely gone, I just don’t have a lot of confidence that the quality of the underlying structure will actually be very good. Now, I could be proved wrong. I hope I am, and I’d like to come back and take my grandchildren through Waterloo and see a fantastic transformation, but 40 years in the government has taught me one thing, and that’s probably Utopia, and that will never be.”

John Gregory

Architect, interviewed 5/10/2017
at Cremorne, NSW, 100:15

Left: Sundial, Captain Cook Place, Waterloo.
Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South
Wales and Courtesy SEARCH Foundation.



Fr. Greg Flynn. Image by Frank Heimans

Father Greg Flynn had the last word:

“People in the towers I think are living in conditions of the ‘50s and ‘60s that have been so superseded now, but for many of them this has been their only home. They’ve been homeless, and they’ve been moved in these places and have lived in them for a long time. The great anxiety about moving out of there is something that I think about a lot.”

Fr. Greg Flynn

Parish Priest, interviewed 18/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 54:08

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

There is no lack of support for residents of Waterloo who were well catered for by various local, council and state government bodies.

“Waterloo is a lovely place to live. There’s quite a bit of open space. There’s local agencies, like The Factory, or what’s now called Inner Voice. There’s quite a lot of support systems. The old South Sydney Council – long gone now, they amalgamated the City of Sydney and South Sydney – had Community Transport set up. There were various organisations. I do voluntary work with one that’s now called Neighbour Connections. They have a Chinese worker, a Russian worker, other workers that see clients, sort out services for them, take them shopping. Community Transport is now Access Sydney, and they work out of Ultimo now. It started off with, you know, one car, two cars. Now they’ve amalgamated with Inner West Community Transport, I think it’s seven buses and various cars, and it’s very, very busy. It takes people to hospital appointments, medical appointments, they run shopping buses, and there’s the Village to Village shopping bus on a Thursday and Friday; the free bus that goes from here to Broadway. They also run shopping buses which pick up clients from their home and take them to Marrickville Metro to do their shopping and bring them back home again. All sorts of other things go on in this area that people don’t know about.”

Diana Whitworth

Public housing resident, interviewed 21/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 19:17

Right: Waterloo residents.

Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.





Dianne Rodgers is somewhat of a legend at Waterloo:

"I believe it was around about 1973 when 'The Factory' Community Centre opened. I enjoy working there. I work after school care upstairs and have been there for a long time. We cater for the children from five to twelve years of age. We used to have vacation care groups, which was on school holidays. We used to take the children as far as The Entrance for the day trip, Wollongong, all over the northern side to Clifton Gardens and Collaroy and stuff, the beaches, and we used to have kids that came in from out of our area because we had such a good program. We have a 22-seater bus and I think the Factory is actually funded through state government and FACS. We just had a six-week cooking program happening and stuff for the community to get involved in. We've got computers here for the community to come and use, free of charge. There's a family support worker there. There's a Russian worker there. There's Spanish Care, Community Care there as well. We go and pick up the children from two of the local schools. That's run through Barnardo's, but at the Factory, on the first floor. We pick up from Mount Carmel Catholic School and we pick up from Alex Park Community School. We bring those children back to the centre in the bus, and they do probably 15 minutes of reading, and we prepare a meal for them every day. We hold up to 25 children, and then we get them to get their homework out of their bags. We also cater for twenty Indigenous children and five others."

Dianne Rodgers

Public housing resident, interviewed 3/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 22:27

“The Waterloo Wellbeing and Safety Action Group is actually part of the Neighbourhood Advisory Board for Waterloo. In that group, we meet every month to discuss issues that have to do with wellbeing and safety. So, for example, we advocated for the alcohol prohibited area and alcohol-free zone. So that group is the one who actually does a safety audit every few years, and through that safety audit we identify certain safety or wellbeing issues. We also then have the events group and we also have the Learning, Education and Employment Group as well, which the market and the different social enterprises, like the Cycle Recycling Workshop and the Recycling Workshop in Matavai, is based on. All those groups are being coordinated by one of the workers through the Housing and Community Program. The other things that we managed to advocate is to have two sharps bins in the area, in the hotspot areas. So the idea is for those who use needles and sharps to dispose of the sharps more responsibly. Through that, we actually collected thousands and thousands of sharps each month through those initiatives.”

Bill Yan

Operations Manager, Counterpoint Community Services, interviewed 7/2/2018 at Alexandria, NSW, 28:03 and 48:19

What sort of a place is Waterloo for children to grow up in?

“Well, our kids, they do know different, they lived away for one year, but ultimately I think they think it’s fantastic, and accessible. I did an interesting thing with my daughter the other day.” She said, “What would happen if you left me by myself, if you walked out and forgot me?” like an umbrella, I guess,” and I said, “Well, what would you do?” and she said, “Oh, well, I’d go up the road to our neighbour” - immediate neighbours - and I said, “Yes?” and then she reeled off a list of at least five households that she could approach if she was in trouble, or needed assistance. Then, when probed, I said, “Well, what about the street around the corner?” and she then was like, “Oh, yeah, I know three more families that I could knock on the door of,” and she proceeded to do this for the next three blocks along; that she could knock on at least three houses and say, “I’m lost,” or “Mum’s forgotten me.” So that really made me happy. I thought, ‘That is right. We have a really tight-knit group of friends and neighbours that we can rely upon’. So it must be nice as a child to feel that kind of sense of community.”

Jackie Lau

Private resident, Waterloo, interviewed 6/7/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 18:46



Waterloo also has two kind citizens looking out for others, Russell Walker and Gerard Virgona:

Russell: “There were people who needed food, who were hungry. We knew that we couldn’t afford to feed people, but we knew about OzHarvest. So we got in contact with them, and we actually made a connection with them, and they started bringing food on a regular basis. We started doing this meal and advertised it. First of all, there were enough people to fill the community room...”

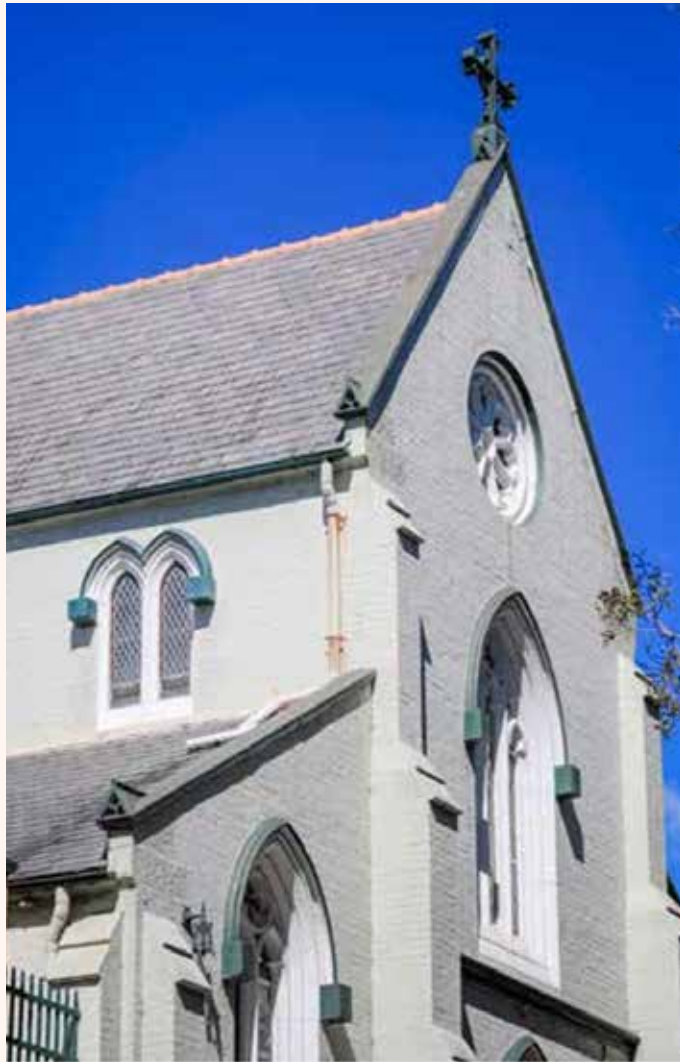
Gerard: “Which takes about 18 to 20. But now, we not only fill the community room, we’ve got tables outside. We get about 35 people, and we’ve had to take down the signs advertising it because we’ve already got more than we can deal with.”

Russell: “OzHarvest delivers food every Wednesday and we sort out what kind of a meal we can make with it, and do our best to make it, reheat food and so forth, and then serve about three courses. In wintertime, I make ten litres of soup on Tuesday so that it is ready for Wednesday. But we also, seven nights a week, do bread. Like, Eddy’s Bakery around the corner, when they finish for the day they’ll give us anywhere from two to six garbage bags full of bread, and we’ll break that down into smaller bags, and a different tall building gets it each night. Today is Monday, so it is this building tonight.”

Russell Walker & Gerard Virgona

Public housing tenants, interviewed 19/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 22:28

Left: Cook Place, Waterloo. Source: City of Sydney Archives.



Above: Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church, Waterloo.
Source: Frank Heimans.

The South Sydney Uniting Church at Waterloo with the help of people including the Reverend Dorothy McRea-McMahon also helps out.

“We started doing things which related to the realities of the community around us. We now have a community garden where people have little plots of land and they can grow vegetables and herbs or whatever they want, and they’ve got chooks there, so they take eggs home and things, and ducks. We’ve got a homeless shelter two nights a week in our hall, and we work with the Cana Community, a Catholic group, to do that, and so our hall has all the things that they need for a meal and washing clothes and having a shower, as well as bedding of various sorts.

We have art groups and we have what we call the Orchard Gallery at the back of the church, where we have art exhibitions by various people in the area and from our art groups. We have the choirs and a drama group, and of course we have our free local paper, which we started about 15 years ago, called The South Sydney Herald, and it’s now regarded as the most widely read local paper in the inner city. It’s a 16-page tabloid now, and we started it because we felt that the mainstream media only ever carried bad news out of Redfern, and also we wanted to discuss deeper issues, have opinion pieces and so on about all sorts of understandings of life, and we have a brief Faith column in there. I often write that, but other people do too. It’s just a reflective sort of column, and a lot of people have come to our church because they’ve read that and they can see that we’re radical, we’re inclusive of people of different sexualities and backgrounds and all the rest. We have articles by people of all faiths, just so people can understand more about other faiths rather than just being critical and attacking them and so on and yes, it’s read by about 30,000 people. All of it’s done by volunteers, except the printing and the designing.”

Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Interviewed 23/11/2017 at Petersham, NSW, 33:10

The Aboriginal community also has its support system.

“Following the civil unrest after T.J Hickey died, there was a meeting held on The Block that was convened by The Greens and the Labor Party. Out of that, the decision was that it would be good to have a group that monitored what was happening in Redfern-Waterloo and what the government was doing. So REDWatch was the name that they gave that group, the REDW: Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington, Waterloo was where it came from, and it was going to be set up to both support the Aboriginal community and to deal with issues around that, but it was set up to monitor what the government did in the area and to ensure that what happened worked for the communities as well as the government, to create discussion around those issues.”

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice, interviewed 1/6/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 52:53



Residents of Waterloo. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

THE MENTAL HEALTH SHAKE UP

In 1983 a reorganisation of Mental Health services in New South Wales took place. Its architect was David Richmond, a bureaucrat who worked closely with Jack Bourke at the Housing Commission.


“The Richmond Report was the State of New South Wales report that basically recommended the closure of large mental health institutions, the thinking being that if we closed down those institutions and people lived in the community, the government would resource mental health community support services to be able to support those people better. The report came out in '83, and between '84 and '88 is when the institutions were all shut down and people basically moved into the community. So some ended up in public housing, many ended up in boarding houses, and some, I guess, went with family, and some became homeless. The support systems were never really - what was promised was never really delivered.”

Dominic Grenot

Former Public Housing Liaison Officer of City of Sydney Council, interviewed 11/9/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 08:03

Right: Captain Cook Place Memorial Sundial, Pitt Street Waterloo, 2002.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.





As a result of the Richmond Report many existing housing residents found themselves under greater strain.

“Housing now has become more – and I say it honestly – a dumping ground for people who have problems with alcohol, problems with drugs, and mental health issues. Yes, these people need to be housed, but I don’t believe the solution of putting someone with an alcohol problem where they’re not in any sort of program to address that problem, they put them into housing, they’re given a benefit, and there you go. The people that bear the brunt of that are the tenants who live next to them, with the noise, the drunkenness, the language. It’s the same with people that are on drugs.”

Evelyn Morris

Public housing resident, interviewed 5/6/2017 at Waterloo NSW, 09:14



Above: Elizabeth Street streetscape Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Luke Freudenstein, Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command:

“We do have people suffering mental health issues who are out here in the mainstream, and they’re fine when they take their medication. When they don’t, they cause all sorts of situations where they’re threatening police or threatening to kill themselves with knives, and the amount of police and ambulance and fire brigade that it takes for a siege situation that could go on for hours – you know, I just think we’ve got to look a bit more closely at releasing people out on their own who may or may not take their medication, and when they don’t, it’s a lot of problems and, sometimes, self-harm.”

Luke Freudenstein

Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command, interviewed 18/12/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 55:23

CRIME IN WATERLOO

In the 1940s and 1950s
Waterloo was synonymous
with crime, as Velma
Lawrence recalls:

“Well, there was Hollywood George, and we were playing in Lenton Parade and we heard this bang, and looked down the street and he’d shot a bloke, and we all run inside. Police come. There was a few gangsters around, but the gangsters in the old days, they fought amongst themselves, but by God they helped the people that were down and out. Used to help them with money, food, but I can never remember drugs. It was always sly grog, two-up joints, SP bookmakers.”

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 5/12/2017, at Waterloo, NSW, 17:34:30





Inara Strungs, the daughter of a baker at Waterloo, recalls the 1970s:

“Well, a lot of people, when you said you lived in Waterloo, “Oh, you live in the slums, do you?” It didn’t have a very good reputation at that stage. It was quite run down and there was quite a bit of crime. My grandmother got mugged twice. Once she was threatened with a brick, and the second time some young girls grabbed her bag. She was knocked out once, and my father had his wallet stolen. My mother had her handbag stolen at the hairdresser’s. There was a suspicious death in Lenton Parade, and also an old man was killed in Elizabeth Street once because he’d won the lottery and he went and boasted about it at the local pub, so some people came and relieved him of the money.”

Inara Strungs

Former public housing resident, interviewed 9/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 27:31

Maureen Bell was a resident in the Joseph Banks building at Waterloo:

“I think it was maybe a year before I left there when people started getting assaulted in the lifts and robbed. Even my son got robbed coming home from work. He walked home in just his underpants, in the middle of winter. They’d taken his shoes, his pants, his shirt, jacket, everything. They even took his socks.”

Maureen Bell

Former public housing resident, interviewed 5/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 07:51

Left: Waterloo public housing building. Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

"Despite everything everybody says about all the drugs and everything that ever happens in Waterloo, my son used to go to school on his own. My son is now 24. He used to catch the train. I've even walked through the middle of the "horrible Block" where people have said they've had their cars attacked and everything. I used to drive through there with, allegedly, an expensive car. Nobody ever said anything except for "hello" to me. Even from those people that are drunk; you smile at them and say hello and every single one of them have still said "hello" back to me."

Jose Perez

Public housing resident, interviewed 14/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 97:35

"There's a lot of, "We love Waterloo," but quite often it is the case, when you say, "Do you really?" and, I mean, I've talked to a few of the tenants from Waterloo, and they say to you "After five o'clock, when the sun goes down, we lock ourselves in our apartment and we don't come out, no matter what happens, people screaming, throwing themselves off the edge. Whatever it is, we never come out."

John Mant

Urban Planning Consultant, interviewed 20/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 10:45

Right: Tribune negatives including high-rise buildings, Waterloo, New South Wales, 197-?. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy SEARCH Foundation.



Nona Harvey, a newly arrived teacher had secured a Housing Commission flat in Waterloo in 1987.

“The flat was nice, with a balcony and everything, but within the first week I soon became aware of a dark side to the place when my son, who was 11, had made friends with a little Korean boy. They went down to get some ice-cream, or milk, at the local little shops that were part of the estate, just around the corner, and he came back really horribly bashed. So I quickly became aware that there were gangs of young boys, and it was dangerous; places that you shouldn’t go if you were a child, and of course, I was very aware of that with my son. Attitudes were very negative, talking to people. “This is a terrible place. There’s terrible people here. Dangerous.” I joined the local tenants’ association, just trying to sort of get a feel for the place, and I thought, ‘If I’m going to live here, I’ve got to tackle this’ and this is where I can put to practice what I’d been teaching and let’s try and see if community theatre and community arts could do what it’s supposed to do, which is transform negative interactions into positive interactions.

There were no activities there for the kids, so they roamed around looking for trouble, basically. So I thought, ‘Well, if we gave them...’ You know, it was like proving a point, seeing if this really did work in action, the community theatre concept where you teach children skills. A lot of the children were not literate and there were disadvantaged children there too, quite often, and so I devised the sort of workshops, where they were using their body to express themselves, things like mask workshops, stilts, acrobats, juggling, puppets, dance, clown workshops and then even graffiti we got into later.

Then a friend came along with a video camera and videoed all of these workshops and got the kids videoing them, developing their video skills, and it just really took off. I was able to organise bonfires, have a bonfire night, because we were a proper group, and nobody else could have bonfires, but we could. We had tree-planting sessions. So we built in other activities and entertainment, the Café of the Gate of Salvation came and sang, and different other groups would come and provide entertainment, as well as the children themselves through their own workshops that led into the events. They just loved it. Sandra Nori, Frank Sartor and Clover Moore were presences there. I remember being with them and talking to them, and they were supportive, for sure.”

Nona Harvey

Former public housing resident of Waterloo, interviewed 28/10/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 02:33

Drugs have always been a recurring problem at Waterloo. Clover Moore is Sydney's Lord Mayor:

"I was elected to the state seat of Bligh in 1988 and when we got into the '90s it was the time of the very serious heroin epidemic and young people in both Redfern and Waterloo, as well as the other inner city areas were severely affected by this. We also had the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. I think trying to address drug addiction and trying to address violence in the community and trying to support people with HIV were very, very strong across the city area. I campaigned hard to get support for people with HIV, and that was through specific things like Ward 17 South at St Vincent's, and I got legislation through the parliament to stop vilification of the gay and lesbian community that could lead to hate crimes, and that was particularly around HIV."

Clover Moore

Lord Mayor of Sydney, interviewed 27/10/2017
at Sydney, NSW, 12:32:22

Right: Aerial view of Redfern, Waterloo and Eveleigh, circa 1980s.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.



"We had a number of complaints and information given to us about drug dealers in units, and it was difficult to police because there were a number on the same floor. So you try and do observations and you stand out. So we thought what we'd try and do is saturate the building for 48 hours, have 10 police on each shift, to stop users trying to get drugs off them and stop the suppliers trying to supply the drugs because, in my experience, drug dealers love to get rid of their drugs as quick as they can to make that money because they've been given those drugs, and then they've got to pay up line the money that they make. But we found another advantage in that, the community there, 99.9 per cent of the people living there loved it. A lot of people would think, 'My god, what's all the police doing here?' They loved it. They felt safe. Some of these drug dealers, they get users in there who are desperate and they're sometimes not functioning all that well and they'll go and knock on other people's doors, or old ladies' doors, and it terrifies them. They'll also, when they've had their drugs, lose control of themselves. They urinate, defecate, they squirt blood up against walls. It's terrible. So we get really good information from our community, and we'll go and target that building."

Luke Freudenstein

Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command, interviewed 18/12/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 38:42

"There's a lot of people that are pushing the drugs, or are selling, or involved in that aren't originally from the community. So they've seen it as an opportunity where there's a block of flats, you know, there are a lot of dark spots around the area, so you can get away with one building being a drug house. The police aren't going to be able to police that. It's going to be hard. They don't know where they're going to go. It's a big maze there. So people are taking advantage of the community in that way, so I think it's about people speaking out and looking out for each other. That's really important. I mean, you know there are Aboriginal members who are living in the community who are involved in that, but it's more so it's sort of been introduced to the community by people who aren't originally from the community. Yeah, more so."

Will Gordon

Aboriginal public housing resident, interviewed 30/1/2018 at Kings Cross, NSW, 41:21

THE RUSSIANS OF WATERLOO

Waterloo's Russian-Jewish community came to Australia after Mikhail Gorbachev allowed them to leave under his policy of 'Glasnost' (openness) and 'Perestroika' (restructuring) from 1987. They loved high-rise living and many settled in Waterloo, where they maintain their Russian traditions and culture.

“We love opera. We love ballet. We love theatres. We love movies and music. Every Russian has a set of music and books and videos, and we have a couple of bands, Russian bands, who play in restaurants, but they sing and play such wonderful pieces. That’s the music in our genes, I suppose. So we love to go to cultural events. We love museums. It’s the cultural thing. That’s the way we were raised, educated, and are following.”

Ludmila Mikhailov

Public housing resident, interviewed 16/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 51:50

In 1991 Ludmila Mikhailov, a Ukrainian from Odessa immigrated to Australia with her Jewish husband and son. In Sydney, her husband started a Russian-language newspaper for which Ludmila produced the layout and design. It also had notifications of Russian cultural events and notable calendar dates.

Ludmila has lived in the same public housing block in Waterloo for 18 years.

"During the day it's all fine. You can't see anyone. You can't hear anyone. But after the sun goes down, it starts. It's a party. It's a noise. It's a scream. It's someone who is beating someone. You can't pretty much sleep at all, because they're sleeping in the day and they're active during the night."

Ludmila Mikhailov

Public housing resident, interviewed 16/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 28:52

"I was working - for nearly two years I was in Jewish Care, doing different roles. I was receptionist, and then I was helping with documents, and then half of the year I was a case manager, half of the year I was a rostering clerk, sending carers to the families. So that experience showed me how more former USSR citizens live at Waterloo. It's just that they become older, and they're not going to see anyone to buy a Russian newspaper. The kids bring the newspaper to them into the house, or the carer."

Ludmila Mikhailov

Public housing resident, interviewed 16/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 43:20

"The social services, like Aged Care, like Meals on Wheels, I can start to see them more often. So a generation of the Waterloo residents are getting older. Automatically it's getting less loud, and at the same time more services are coming in to help them to live more comfortably."

Ludmila Mikhailov

Public housing resident,
interviewed 16/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 70:39

Ben Zavesa, an electronics engineer, landed in Sydney as a refugee from Baku, Azerbaijan, then part of the Soviet Union. He arrived in 1979 with his wife and daughter and with only \$400 in savings, the maximum he was allowed to take out. He had to leave behind a four-bedroom house in Baku and two beach houses that he and his father had built. He worked hard and in 1982 he brought his parents out from the then Soviet Union and after two years on the waiting list, the Department of Housing offered them a unit in the Solander building.

“They are quite happy to live here, and they don’t want to move anywhere else, because any movement, even when you’re young, is a big hassle for younger people, and for people over 90 years old, there are two problems for them. Number one is a psychological problem: to move from the place where they lived for a long time; and second is a financial problem because they invested part of their pension, or part of what they acquired as savings, into their units and put new carpets, or new kitchens in, and did not wait for the Department of Housing to do so.”

Ben Zavesa

Public housing resident, interviewed 31/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 28:40

Ben is a member of the Neighbourhood Advisory Board and a Precinct Representative of the Solander building and has lived in Waterloo since 1999.

“The Neighbourhood Advisory Board is a board - from the beginning it was an idea, as I heard. I’m a member of that board for about five years. The board existed much longer than that, and from the beginning it was organised by Department of Housing to make it possible to deliver messages and communicate with all tenants through representatives, or precinct representatives of the buildings. So this way they prevent all of the people going into the housing office and being in a queue, asking simple questions, probably pitting against each other, and that way they can deal directly with representatives of the buildings and all needs and wishes which people normally communicate with representatives of these buildings will go to Department of Housing, and vice versa. They can discuss these issues and let us know as representatives to communicate with people through the monthly meetings what they expect, what they want.”

Ben Zavesa

Public housing resident,
interviewed 31/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 45:36

Right: Margarita Afanasieva in her apartment.
Source: Supplied by Margarita Afanasieva.



Margarita Afanasieva's mother was a teacher and her father was a train driver in Leningrad during and after the Second World War.

Margarita married at 21 and came to live in Waterloo in 2004 with her son and husband. The Russian community at Waterloo was very large when she came but is now shrinking as people age.

Margarita is a member of a Russian Messianic Community, 'Eternal Years,' where members study the Bible. There is a section of the Waterloo library with Russian books. Margarita is worried about the redevelopment of Waterloo.

"If there is going to be a reconstruction here it's going to be bad. Why? Because everyone here has already got used to their place. Every person here. There are friends visiting each other. Well, I don't know, it's literally everything, whatever you might think of, everything is familiar, so to speak, we know where it is, we know how much it does cost to... well, I used to know how much things used to cost, now I do not. So leaving this place is going to be very hard on us. It's going to be very hard on the people."

Margarita Afanasieva

Public housing resident, interviewed 23/8/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 59:18

GROWING UP IN WATERLOO

Paul O'Connor grew up at a time in the 1970s when there were still whole families living in Waterloo.

"I loved it. Absolutely loved it. When we came home from school I had a paper run here, but most of the time we were all out the back; we were playing football, cricket, riding our bikes, skateboards. We were never in the house. The only time we'd come home was when the Old Man and Mum, called "Come up for dinner." Then in daylight saving time we'd all come up for dinner, and then as soon as we were all finished we'd be straight back downstairs again until about eight o'clock. There were that many kids around here then, we could have test match cricket. We could have full football team games against each other. That's how good it was. We all played football for the local clubs around here as well. I played for Souths. But now, wow, a scary place! You don't see any kids in the backyard anymore, in the park. You've got drunks in the park. I'd say for anybody who is raising children around here now, it would be terrifying."

Paul O'Connor

Public housing resident, interviewed 13/6/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 05:57

Right: Waterloo oval.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.





Sport is the unifying pastime at Waterloo, as Will Gordon recalls:

“Everybody loves rugby league around the community. Everyone used to go to the games at Waterloo Oval, and I remember them as kid, sitting on the hill. They were big Sunday afternoon games and Mum would be at home cooking a roast and you’d go and have a feed after the footy. You’ve got generations of families who came through these local footy clubs within the Waterloo area. You know, with the Zetland Waterloo Waratahs. You’ve got Chelsea, Carrington, all these little footy teams that make up the community, and they’re really significant to, I suppose, the lifestyle that a lot of the young people were living around that time. So before all the internet and all that stuff came in, you’d play your footy during that season, you’d go and play your cricket up on Mount Carmel Hill for Mount Carmel Cricket Club. Sport had a really big part in our life in terms of keeping us occupied, but also following our dreams. That’s what we wanted to do. But yeah, I think the sport aspect of the community back in the day, I remember that being massive, but also just, I suppose, just the general connecting with the other families.”

Will Gordon

Aboriginal public housing resident,
interviewed 30/1/2018 at Kings Cross, NSW, 12:56

Neil Hicks knows the origin of the name Rabbitohs.

“A lot of people don’t realise, the South Sydney Rabbitohs... a rabbitoh was the bloke who sold the rabbit meat. He was called a rabbitoh. Now a Rabbitoh is a football team, but it was originally the rabbit sellers who had a football team. I think a lot of them were Italian. That’s why it’s red and green - the Italian colours. I couldn’t swear to that, but that’s to the best of my knowledge.”

Neil Hicks

Public housing resident, interviewed 11/1/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 15:53

Right: Men and children playing football near public housing, Waterloo. Source: City of Sydney Archives.





“Everybody loved the Rabbitohs. I seen Clive Churchill play when I was 12. My ex-husband, all his family - there were seven of them - played for Souths, out of one family. Hasn’t been beaten yet. No, I like the football. My two sons, they played football. Me and my mate used to sit up on Mount Carmel Hill of a Saturday and wait for Souths - because they used to do a road run on a Saturday - to come up that hill, up near Mount Carmel Hill, and we’d sit there on the hill and wait just so we could see them. Old Redfern Oval as well. My ex-husband played for Souths. His brother played for Souths. His father, his uncle, and all of them, and in them days you had red and green eyes, and you had to come from this suburb to play for Souths.”

Velma Lawrence

Waterloo public housing resident, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 17:10:47



Above: Redfern Oval, view to Waterloo. Source: City of Sydney Archives.

“The Rabbitohs’ official last game at Redfern Oval was in 1987, but they played a series of games in the mid-’90s where essentially they returned to Redfern Oval, so that was a significant local event. In ’87, when they exited from Redfern Oval, they went to the Sydney Football Stadium which for many residents of Waterloo, was beyond their reach for both cost and transport reasons, but up until that time the residents of Redfern and Waterloo had filled Redfern Oval for 40 years, supporting the Rabbitohs.”

Tony Pooley

Former Mayor of South Sydney Council, interviewed 30/6/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 24:38

Boxing was also an important sport at Waterloo.

“Shane Phillips was very good at boxing, so he said, “I’m going to bring some of these kids along. I want you to bring some of the naysayer police, some of the police who don’t really believe in our program, who probably have a little bit of bias towards Aboriginal people.” So I did, and he did. In the morning, you could see they weren’t liking each other much, but you’re boxing: one’s got the gloves, one’s got the pads, and it’s three, four and seven-minute rounds, and you’ve got to talk, otherwise it is awkward. They just sort of built that relationship through - boxing is discipline, and it’s routine to get there at 6:00 in the morning. So now, Shane has four buses to pick up - we get 80 to 100 people there, half are kids. So they’re picking the kids up at 5:00, 5:30 in the morning, getting in the routine, the boxing discipline. They have breakfast, and they do their Aboriginal language, numeracy and literacy, and then they’re off to school. So just teaching them that basic, “You’ve got to get up early. You’ve got to work hard. You’ve got to go to school. Then you get your rewards when you get home.”

Luke Freudenstein

Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command, interviewed 18/12/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 21:25

There was even a circus that came to Waterloo:

“Well, they used to set the circus up where the high-rises are. There used to be a circus there once a year. We’d go up there; they’d have the big tents and the elephants and everything. That was always good fun.”

Neil Hicks

Public housing resident, interviewed 20/1/2018 at Redfern, NSW, 04:46



Left: Unloading Wirth's Circus vans at Alexandria Goods Yard, 1950. Source: Les Miller.

EDUCATION AT WATERLOO

Father Flynn is the Parish Priest at Mount Carmel Church and school. He has spent the past 47 years in the priesthood, eight of them at Waterloo in a church that has operated since 1858.

“The teaching staff was lay, to begin with. First of all the sisters came. They were Mercy Sisters, came from Ireland. They were of the congregation that are currently called Monte Sant Angelo, the North Sydney group of Mercy Sisters. When they came, they would only deal with the girls, so the lay staff started to deal with the boys and that was from about Year 4, Year 3, in primary school. Patrician Brothers came several years later, and so a boys’ primary into secondary school was established, while the girls had a secondary school here too.”

Fr. Greg Flynn

Parish Priest, interviewed 18/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 23:00



Above: Children playing in front of buildings, Waterloo.
Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.

Jose Perez was a student at the school in the 1970s and 1980s:

“Education at Mount Carmel was spectacularly good. Everybody that came out of there knew better than average in mathematics, in science. Everybody’s handwriting was immaculate that came out of there. It had to be - you couldn’t afford to lose any more fingers if it wasn’t immaculate.”

Jose Perez

Public housing resident, interviewed 14/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 16:37

“The school has a long history of accepting local residents without demanding that they all be Catholic. They took all comers and I think that was the case. When the school first developed, this was known as the Hungry Hill, and had a strong Irish population, most of whom were waterside workers and would walk to Darling Harbour and Sydney Cove to work and back again at the end of their shifts. Therefore, service to the poor has been a strong part of that ethic right through, and they’re talking about redeveloping parishes here, combining some of them with the redevelopment of the school. This would give this portion of whatever future parish it might be a sense of contribution to the larger reality as it’s going to be in the future.”

Fr. Greg Flynn

Parish Priest, interviewed 18/10/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 24:24

Will Gordon was a student at Murawina pre-school and then attended a primary school with a 90% Aboriginal population. In the mid 1990s, when Will was 17, he was invited to become a boarding student at the prestigious Saint Ignatius' College at Lane Cove.

"I think the most significant part about Waterloo is it's a place that breeds opportunity regardless of the stereotypes or all the negative press that the place might get. It's a low socio-economic community, but also it's a community with a whole generation of young people who are proud to be from the community. All these schools are filled with kids with smiles on their faces. People are making an effort to get their children to school, and education is the most important thing.

There are good things happening with the police there, with the boxing programs and stuff like that, which has lowered the crime rate for young men at the age of 18 and under. There are more opportunities for young girls within the community, and all these employment places that have been set up like the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and you have Weave. They take a holistic approach now in terms of giving young people opportunities to work, to live, to eat. Waterloo's sort of become a small little mecca for opportunity, even despite the reality of the drug issues that are still harming the community. But again, people are getting up every morning, smiling, going to school, happy to walk home, happy to play at the front of the front yard. This is their community, you know? It's a flourishing community."

Will Gordon

Aboriginal public housing resident,
interviewed 30/1/2018 at Kings Cross, NSW, 35:07

Diana Whitworth has lived at Waterloo NSW since 1982 as a public housing resident:

"There's a shortage of school places for children. We've got Alexandria Community School down here, which is full up. Then you've got Bourke Street, Gardeners Road. All the schools are full. There's no high school in this area, except for the Alexandria Community School which, as I said, is just about full. You've got to go to Mascot, Randwick, Leichhardt. They closed Waterloo and Redfern Public Schools. "It's an ageing population. The school population is dropping, dropping." Of course, now, the ageing population is dying, being replaced by a younger generation who have children, and all those people they thought would move out of apartments and go out west into houses didn't. They stayed put. So now there's nowhere for the children to go to school.

Now they're going to build a skyscraper down on Alexandria Park. They're going to build a new school down there, and then they're going to build the skyscraper school where the old Cleveland Street High is, the intensive English school."

Diana Whitworth

Public housing resident,
interviewed 21/6/2017 at Waterloo NSW, 33:36





For the Indigenous population there is the NCIE, the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence, which has operated on the site of the old Redfern school since 2010.

“It provides an opportunity for Indigenous people with some particular, usually sporting, talent to come together and get some more intensive support. It’s got a fabulous, relatively new pool. It’s got a good gym, that kind of thing. It’s got an oval on which you can train and play matches and that kind of thing. So I think it’s a bonus that it keeps a public facility in public hands. The old Redfern school has become this National Centre. Hasn’t been redeveloped and filled with flats, which is the last thing we needed there, and what it does is, I think, it just provides an ongoing connection for the Indigenous community in the Redfern and Waterloo area and that connection has gone back decades. It comes on the back of the Aboriginal Medical Service, which has been there for ages. So it’s another one of those facilities in a local area which has the potential to continue to link an Indigenous community with an area which is well known for its Indigenous roots and heritage and it’s pulling in people from all over the state and perhaps all over the country. I think that’s important in a facility like that, and provides the facilities they need and deserve.”

Tony Pooley

Former Mayor, South Sydney Council,
interviewed 30/6/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 93:52

Left: Large old public school, now the National Centre of indigenous Excellence (NCIE). Source: City of Sydney Archives.

THE ZETLAND MONSTER

One of the visible landmarks of Waterloo was the incinerator, which for years belched smoke and soot into Waterloo and surrounding suburbs. By the 1990s the residents of Zetland, Waterloo and Beaconsfield had had enough.

“One of the reasons I was successfully elected in the by-election was we had started a big campaign to close the Waterloo incinerator, which was the largest, belching out pollutants in the area since 1972. It was an incinerator for all the waste from Waverley and Woollahra councils, and that in itself was offensive, that these wealthy eastern suburbs councils were shipping their waste in trucks into Waterloo and burning it, and you could see the Waterloo incinerator for miles around, and when it was fully operational the plume of smoke coming out would blow straight into the Waterloo estate, because the winds are predominantly from the south in Sydney and it was to the south, and so we were running a very big campaign to get that stopped.”

Sean Macken

Urban Planning Consultant, interviewed 17/8/2017 at Newtown, NSW, 41:35

“I absolutely remember going down and we’d have the big banners, many produced by South Sydney Council, some produced by locals, and we would go down and I remember the banners would often say ‘Honk if you want the incinerator closed’ because it was right on that corner of King Street as it becomes the Princes Highway and Sydney Park Road. I remember the celebratory rally after there had been a build-up of rallies, and when the announcement was made in 1996 that the incinerator would close, council brought down a dozen bottles of champagne on that morning. We all drank it out of plastic cups, Marg Barry right in the thick of that campaign. Absolutely.”

Tony Pooley

Former Mayor, South Sydney Council, interviewed 30/6/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 35:02

View from Green Square station with the Zetland incinerator in the background. Source: City of Sydney Archives.



WE LIVE HERE

Waterloo has often been a place of inspiration for creative people to express themselves.

In 1977 filmmaker Tom Zubrycki was drawn to Waterloo and started shooting a 16mm documentary of the struggles of the community against redevelopment:

“Tom’s film, *Waterloo*, is a really kind of lovely historic take on Waterloo, and I think a lot of people didn’t realise the history that those high-rises have in terms of the first round of social cleansing, of you know, the clearing of the slums and Marg Barry’s fight was really to say that a lot of these houses have been deliberately left to be dilapidated by the government, and that is not a productive thing to do because they are people’s homes, or they could be people’s homes if they were looked after.”

Clare Lewis

Filmmaker, interviewed 12/7/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 57:40

Right: Two Aboriginal women.
Source: Image by Salty Dingo for
NSW Land and Housing Corporation.





Forty years later, in 2017, Clare Lewis, Filmmaker and a former Assistant Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, draws a parallel with her own powerful statement, a community-generated video project on Waterloo, titled WeLiveHere 2017:

“There was a casual conversation with a friend at a barbecue during 2015 about those towers, about Matavai and Turanga towers in particular and how much we loved the architecture, and we were fascinated by the estate. We talked about this idea that wouldn’t they look amazing if you gave every tenant a coloured light for their window, and we realised it could be a very ripe opportunity to make a very powerful statement and a very kind of collaborative art piece that related both to the history of Waterloo and also to the impact of the redevelopment announcements. We are just an organising committee that are issuing these lights and inviting the tenants to participate by simply allowing us to install them on the inner rim of their window, giving them a remote control with a range of colours that they can choose, telling them what those colours might invoke in terms of a physiological response, and letting them decide the hue of their environment. So there’s no kind of artist as hero with this project; it’s very much a community-generated project.”

Clare Lewis

Filmmaker, interviewed 12/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 06:50 & 12:00

“I’ve got nothing but good things to say about Waterloo. It’s actually very nature-filled, in a lot of ways. There’s a whole lot of paperbark trees and a lot of wildlife and possums, and it’s a very special place. We’ve made our home here; we’ve had both of our children here, and we feel very connected to it.”

Clare Lewis

Filmmaker, interviewed 12/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 21:58

THE STATE OF HEALTH IN WATERLOO

In the nineteenth century, times were hard for the citizens of Waterloo who suffered from health problems, unemployment and social disadvantage, compared to Sydney as a whole.

Right: Lane in Waterloo.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.





“The slums basically developed in the 1890s, and there was poor housing and high mortality rates, especially the infant mortality rate was supposed to have been as high as 46 percent. There was even an outbreak of bubonic plague from 1900 to 1907, so times were pretty tough then.”

Inara Strungs

Former resident of Waterloo, interviewed 9/10/2017
at Cremorne, NSW, 32:48

Dr. Marie Healy is a General Practitioner at Waterloo who loves her work:

“I realised that my passion really lay in looking after people who were elderly or who had chronic diseases, so Sister Pam Gooley, who had worked here for many, many years, she and I started working closely together and set up an Aged and Chronic Care Clinic. We would work a couple of days a week, just mainly seeing people with multiple morbidities, so people, say, on 16 medications with renal failure, heart failure, they’d had a stroke, end-stage diabetes, chronic obstructive airways disease, so a whole lot of issues. Often from the Stolen Generation or maybe that next generation, not coping well, but great people to work with. Low levels of education, but very wise people, I found, and the stories that they could tell you about what they’d been through. They were so resilient. They were people who had been brought up and abused in homes, or who had not been allowed into picture theatres because they were Aboriginal, and who had wanted to get an education but then weren’t allowed because of their Aboriginality and they were obviously highly intelligent people. So it was very, very interesting, dealing on multiple levels with these people.”

Dr. Marie Healy

G.P., interviewed 20/11/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 34:45





“I see a lot of people brought to see me by people - Mission Australia, Haymarket Clinic, Catholic Community Services, the Brown Nurses - and these people deal with patients who are really struggling with a whole lot of issues, and that’s endlessly fascinating, to see those people and to see where they’ve come from and why they are in the situation that they are in. How they’ve been lost in the system. How they’ve ended up - you know, their marriages have broken down. They’ve lost all their money. They’ve lost their skills. They don’t work. That sort of thing. Like, how has life unravelled and what can we do to help put some things back together? So it’s sort of like you’ve got work to do, and I sort of like that.”

Dr. Marie Healy

G.P., interviewed 20/11/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 49:01

Left: Waterloo Estate. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

Waterloo was well supplied with medical services - it had South Sydney Hospital and the Rachel Forster Hospital - now both gone:

"Rachel Forster Hospital had the only operating theatres that didn't have golden staph. It was a clean hospital. They closed it. It's ridiculous. It also had hydrotherapy, it had a pool. It had a Breast Cancer Clinic, which moved to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital when it was closed down. It was a very good hospital. They did a lot of orthopaedic work and they had a very good physiotherapy department. They used to send a nurse to the towers to keep track of diabetics and people who needed care. Now that's gone. You don't get that sort of service anymore. Overstressed, overworked community nurses have to come around and check now."

Diana Whitworth

Public housing resident, interviewed 21/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 18:08



Above: Royal South Sydney Hospital, Joynton Avenue Zetland, 1966. Source: City of Sydney Archives.

Dr. Healey emphasises:

“The first thing for this area, I think, is to really improve the capacity of the local hospital and clinics and access to specialist services. There’s a real pressing need to look at that now. With the increase in people who are elderly and people who are chronically unwell, no matter how good their primary healthcare is, they are going to end up in hospital, and they need to be able to access specialist and hospitals quickly, and they need to be able to financially access those services too, and every day almost I am faced with somebody who does not have the money but they need the care, and I have to discuss with them the choice between paying \$300 out of pocket and getting \$70 or \$80 back, or not, or just waiting and seeing what happens with their pain, or their lump, or whatever. So that’s not a fair conversation because you’re not really giving them a choice. You’re just saying what is.”

Dr. Marie Healy

G.P., interviewed 20/11/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 71:58

“Naomi Mayers set up the Aboriginal Medical Service, - it was close to 30 years ago now, and it was originally just in a couple of rooms really, and then the Catholic Church allowed her to use the land there in Redfern Street, and so she turned it into really a fantastic, real multi-disciplinary clinic. She had ear, nose and throat doctors coming in, gynaecologists, a whole lot of specialty clinics where the people would be bulk-billed and have access to these sorts of clinics. It wasn’t just medical, it was everything. There was dental, there was drug and alcohol, and there was also the community team, and so there were Aboriginal health workers, people would come in and have women’s groups and men’s groups and it was just great. It functioned really, really well, and it was the first setup of its kind and it was really something that other AMS modelled themselves on. They had a mental health worker, a mental health clinic. They had visiting psychiatrists come in. A psychologist eventually came in too. But also Naomi was very good too because people who lacked family connections because they were stolen, or whatever, Naomi would see that the AMS chipped in for funerals and that sort of thing as well, and she always attended funerals, was always very respectful of elders, so that was really, really good too. A lot of the elders there were from stolen backgrounds.”

Dr. Marie Healy

G.P., interviewed 20/11/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 37:10

REDEVELOPMENT IN WATERLOO



Above: Artist's impressions of Waterloo redevelopment. Source: NSW Government.

“Public housing has really been a place of turmoil for Waterloo, really since the 1950s, and the government always had their eye on what’s happening, and so that means that in the 21st century we’ve got public housing again being renewed in the area, but we’ve also got other urban renewal happening, with former industrial sites becoming now residential and a whole new sort of - almost like a mini-city being developed with the Green Square town centre, and all of this is really going to create a lot more social dislocation and a lot of issues with the community, between the community that was there before and the new communities that are moving into all of the high rise, be they private development or public development. So yeah, it’s again, I think - a point of tension for Waterloo - how the community will be able to deal with this ongoing upheaval of redevelopment that’s happening in the area.”

Lisa Murray

City of Sydney Historian, interviewed 5/12/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:42:50

When news of the redevelopment was announced, concerned residents set up the Waterloo Public Housing Action Group:

“One of the first major activities that the Waterloo Public Housing Action Group did was to stage a Waterloo tent embassy on the Waterloo Green for about two months from about March 2016. That was really quite a powerful meeting place for people to talk about the redevelopment, to sign a petition that was hoping to protect the rights of the tenants.”

Clare Lewis

Filmmaker, interviewed 12/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 48:47

Dorothy McRae-McMahon is a retired minister-in-association of the Uniting Church in Waterloo:

“I think they’re facing some very difficult times now in Waterloo. Many of the people in Waterloo are now very, very worried about some of the government’s so-called plans for the future for their area. The public housing is quite good. You know, they’re small units, but even so they’re good little units and they’re well kept, and people have been there for a long time and they’re handy to things, including parks, and they have gardens around them and so on, but they’re going to take them out of there, pull them down, and build the metro station, and then probably rebuild them later and bring them back. But, I mean, they haven’t been told where they’re going, when it will happen really, and how they’ll cope when they’re moved away from their friends and sometimes family and all that sort of thing.”

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Interviewed 23/11/2017 at Petersham, NSW, 63:28

Anna Kovic is a public housing resident in the Solander building since 1971:

"I've been to a few meetings and they say to us, 'Be patient.' We have to know what's going on." We still don't know which building is going first. We have to move from here. They say to us they will put us in another suburb until they will build these new buildings, then they will move us back. Who will be alive? Who won't be alive? They will do building by building. Which one will be first? We still don't know."

Anna Kovic

Public housing resident, interviewed 16/6/2017
at Waterloo, NSW, 34:04

"Some of the buildings that they're knocking down are where doctors' surgeries are, and chemists are, and churches are, and those sorts of things that we need to function as a society, and they're going to be replaced with apartments. Lots of apartments."

Sean Macken

Town Planner, interviewed 17/8/2017
at Newtown, NSW, 93:28

Geoffrey Turnbull, Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice, sums up the prevailing public mood.

"I think the main concern that people have had is that you had an announcement that the estate was going to be redeveloped, and then no information for almost two years afterwards, so we are only now starting a master planning sort of first visioning stage and yet for the last two years people have been living in this limbo that they thought that tomorrow they might get a notice that they had to quit. Government had kept pushing back the date at which they said they will tell the first people they'd have to leave, so that level of uncertainty. People, after the announcement, going and not buying furniture, or things that they were going to do because, 'I might have to move tomorrow.' The research that's come out of redevelopments in other places shows that anxiety has a significant impact on people's health and how they relate to the people around them, so that's been the main concern that people have had, and here we are: we still don't know the answer to those questions."

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice,
interviewed 27/10/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 16:34:23



Geoffrey Turnbull has concerns about the Aboriginal community and its intact survival.

“A lot of the Aboriginal community were renting, there was low-cost rental, and as those prices went up those people could just no longer afford to live here. That’s one of the problems that we have now, is that you have a very high-end market for people in the private part of the market who can pay a lot in mortgages or in rents, and then you have a public housing part of that, which are basically people on pensions and benefits and there is really no middle, and that in particular is an issue for the Aboriginal community. The breadth of that Aboriginal community has been lost over the last 10 or 15 years because those people that were working in the Aboriginal community, the kids of people that grew up in public housing or grew up in the area just could no longer afford to live here.

One of the things that we are arguing for at the present moment is that there needs to be an affordable housing element in this development for Aboriginal affordable housing, and that should be one of the asks that is coming out of the community. But it’s not something that’s on the government agenda at this point.”

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice,
interviewed 27/10/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 16:54:25

Left: Waterloo building.

Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

“There’s a lot of anxiety. It’s that whole thing around the anxiety of displacement again, you know, and being pushed off country again. It’s just an ongoing issue that has been around that the mob are just so anxious about being removed from country again after being here for so long. They moved them from The Block to here, and then now there’s talk of moving them again.”

Jinny-Jane Smith

Liaison Officer, Waterloo Redevelopment,
interviewed 24/11/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 38:18



Above: View from Mt Carmel, Waterloo Park.
Source: City of Sydney Archives.

“We’re talking here about redevelopment of public housing estates, but that redevelopment, when the requirements come down, is about the buildings. It’s not about the people that live there. So one of the key issues is that you could go through and you could renew all the buildings, but unless you addressed the human services side of that, you addressed the way in which allocations happen, who gets put into public housing and how it is managed, you could end up with people that currently have problems living in three and a half times more density.”

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice,
interviewed 1/6/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 67:10

Jackie Lau, Waterloo resident, voices her thoughts on what the community would like to see. Is she concerned that the redevelopment will be constructed by private developers?

“There are many examples of poor development. You just have to drive around, do a ring around Sydney and I think you’d be hard pressed to find good quality developments. What I’m concerned with is: what is the process for selecting the private developers? Is it going to be one developer doing the whole suburb so it becomes this Lego town of samey-samey buildings, or are we going to be getting a mix: developers that specialise in good quality, larger developments, and then some agencies that specialise in smaller developments and the landscaping and it’s, you know, developer-private; those two words? What’s their motivation?”

Jackie Lau

Waterloo resident, interviewed 6/7/2017, at Waterloo, NSW, 37:04

The redevelopment of Waterloo envisages a 70/30 mix of public and private housing, with private housing comprising the majority 70 percent:

“The only place it’s temporarily working is where they’ve hand-picked the tenants, but it hasn’t worked and I can understand why. You’ve got people who are paying a hundred dollars a week rent and somebody else next door paying \$850 a week rent, getting the same view, and using the same amenities - what do you think they’re going to feel? That’s where, in some places, they’ve divided the building in two and put a poor man’s entrance and a rich man’s entrance to the place, and the public housing tenants can’t use the amenities because they’re not paying enough rent. I mean, that’s stigmatising people. You’re creating resentment with the pensioners and you’re creating a class war between them.”

Richard Weeks

Public housing resident, interviewed 24/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 79:53

“At the moment, Waterloo is probably a 50/50 mix. When they’ve finished with it, Waterloo will be more likely 90/10 percent mix, because there are going to be some 10,000 apartments in the whole of Waterloo, of which 8,000 are going to be on what’s the existing Waterloo Estate. It’s going to be a small enclave of poor people surrounded by a very large cohort of very wealthy people.”

Sean Macken

Town Planner, interviewed 17/8/2017
at Newtown, NSW, 77:03

Clover Moore adds her opinion.

“I think the thinking behind “It’s better to have disadvantaged people living close to economically advantaged people: might change the life of the disadvantaged people” - I mean what’s going to change the life of the disadvantaged person is opportunity, education, good housing, and support when there’s family breakdown, that’s what - so that can happen in a social housing precinct as well as in a salt and pepper housing precinct, and I just know that through experience.”

Clover Moore

Lord Mayor of Sydney, interviewed 27/10/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 12:39:50

Right: Waterloo public housing tenants. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.





Geoffrey Turnbull, Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice, draws a parallel with the recent sales of Millers Point properties:

“The Millers Point relocation has basically made many people in Waterloo believe that that will be the outcome for Waterloo, part of that demonisation that says some places in the city are too good for public housing tenants and many people believe that Waterloo in particular - and if that estate is next to a Metro railway station - eventually will be too good for there to be public housing tenants and they’ll be moved out west, in the same way as generations before them have been moved. So that’s the tension because there is no longer that surety that public housing is actually supposed to be spread everywhere, and the gentrification and the property demand that there is in that space, many people believe will actually mean that there might not be a public housing unit there for them in the end because it’s too desirable.”

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice,
interviewed 1/6/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 126:13

Clare Lewis thinks:

“I’m not anti-change. I don’t think everything should be cryogenically frozen as it is, but I think that redevelopments of this scale run the risk of corroding what a place was defined by previously, and also I think the buildings are, on the whole, fairly solid, particularly the high-rises. They just need a good renovate. They don’t necessarily need to be pulled down.”

Clare Lewis

Filmmaker, interviewed 12/7/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 36:36

Clover Moore has her vision for Waterloo already formed:

“Waterloo’s part of the Green Square area, and we know that by 2030 we’re going to have an extra 60,000 people living there, and so we’re hoping that we’ll have - when all those people have moved in - and that’s not even talking about the proposal in the social housing area - that everything will be working really well: people will be using the bike paths, people will be using the walking paths, people will be using all the community facilities, they’ll all be catching the Metro. So there’s lots of potential there.”

Clover Moore

Lord Mayor of Sydney,
interviewed 27/10/2017 at Sydney, NSW, 13:00:27



“I like the community we have now. I like the people who have lived here. I think they should be able to come back. I would like to have the same amount, if not more, affordable and social housing. The reason is because they’re a community. I find with private areas, they’re there for themselves; quite selfish. To be honest, our community is so patient. Their demands aren’t as high as the private community – people who own private residences. I think there’s a higher expectation from them, whereas the community we have now, they’re realistic. But I just fear when we get a lot of private residents, that they won’t be as patient.”

Luke Freudenstein

Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command, interviewed 18/12/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 52:37

Left: Waterloo tenant. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

THE FUTURE OF WATERLOO

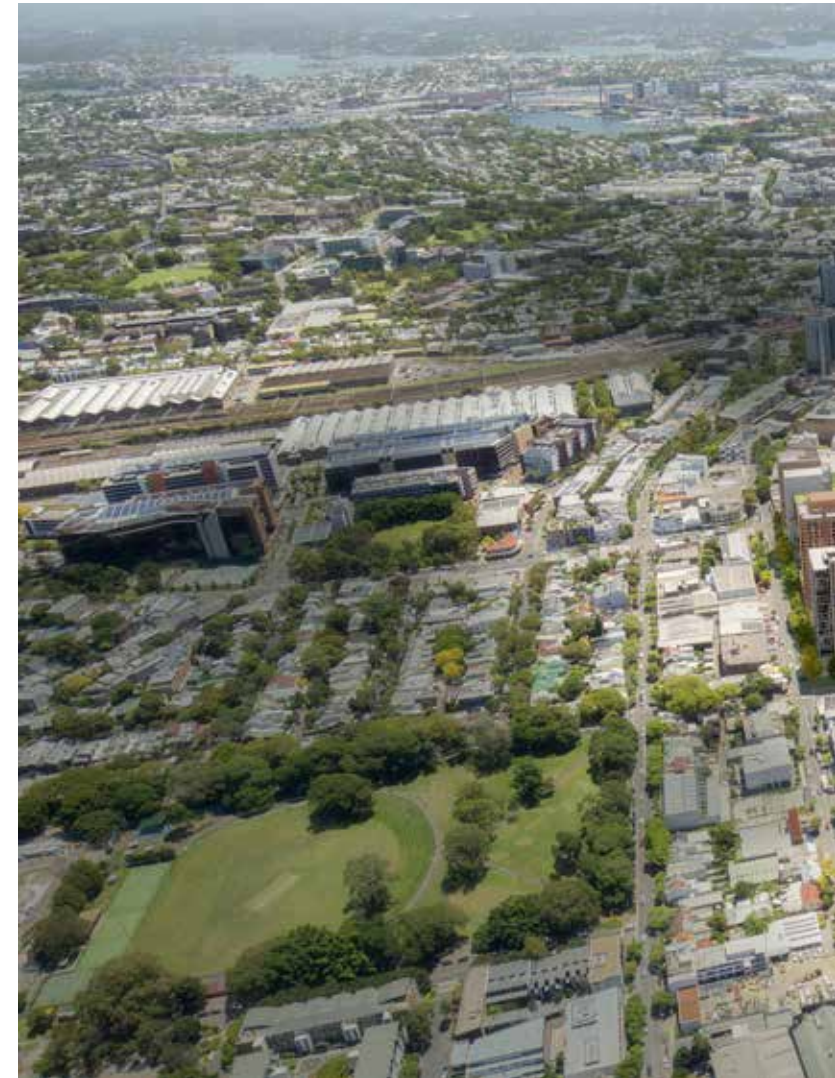
We asked almost every interviewee of this project for their views on how they see the future of Waterloo. Here are some of their thoughts.

“I think that communities must be brought along from the very start with any sort of plans for this so-called revitalisation or urban renewal because I have seen a whole lot of new developments in a whole lot of areas where service provision and amenity and the value of the community has not been considered, and how much knowledge that they can have about what’s needed on the ground, and so what I would like to say is that I think that the community has not been considered enough by the government in this, and that there’s a whole lot of things about service provision, amenity, and community consultation that have not taken place - that really should be considered ahead of all attempts to redevelop the area”.

Dr. Marie Healy

G.P., interviewed 20/11/2017
at Redfern, NSW, 82:22

Right: Artist’s impressions of Waterloo redevelopment. Source: NSW Government.





“There’s a whole lot more history to come with Waterloo. There are young kids there who come from a line of generations of people who lived in Waterloo, who’ve helped Waterloo grow, who help the children of Waterloo, who work there, who help development of different programs.

There are generations of families who are involved there, and there’s going to be a time when it’s not going to be there, and I think it’s important for the government now just to recognise that and to do everything they can to make sure that these families flourish in the future, because it’s just going to be a whole generation of mob who are just - there’s going to be no history left, you know?

It’s hard enough now, for Aboriginal people now. We keep our yarn going. We keep our talking. Everything’s oral, you know. A lot of it is documented on computers and the internet and stuff like that, and in museums and library, but it’s the word of mouth that keeps us going, that’s been keeping us going for thousands of years. But, you know, like I said, it’s Gadigal Country, but it’s occupied by many different cultures and many different tribes, and they’ve taken ownership of the place, and for that to stay alive, those people have got to remain there, you know, for generations to come.”

Will Gordon

Aboriginal public housing resident,
interviewed 30/1/2018 at Kings Cross, NSW, 68:35

"I think affordable housing is the big challenge for this redevelopment. The model that we'll be running with in New South Wales is basically a totally self-funding model that says we need to have 70 percent private housing and 30 percent public, roughly, and what we get out of the private development is what's going to pay for the building of the public, and the affordable housing gets squeezed in the middle of that. The problem is that because of what we have in public housing becoming higher and higher needs, and on the inner city private part of the housing you've got very expensive real estate, very expensive rents, very expensive mortgages, you have no middle within that community. You just have two extremes, and without that middle you don't have a vibrant, diverse community."

Geoffrey Turnbull

Publications Officer, Inner Sydney Voice,
interviewed 27/10/2017 at Redfern, NSW, 16:51:55

"It's all about green spaces, adequate facilities, infrastructure, maintaining the green space, the tree canopy, renewable energy programs, reducing the parking, encouraging public transport use, active transport, recycling, spaces for everyone and not just children, not just the elderly, not just the disabled. It's the workers, the people who want to start small businesses; they do a lot of matching grants for people who want to get involved in the community and create stuff. It's like 'Choose your own adventure' at the moment. I think if we were to be very optimistic, it would be a world-class redevelopment that other countries will look to and they will be sending their design teams out and asking our government questions. "How did you do it? What's the process?" and that's what we want. We want other cities to be envious of us. I want this to be something that we can show off and the people that live there can be really proud of because I love where I live, and I love my house, and I'm proud of where we live, but I don't think everyone feels that way, so it would be great if that could be the future for Waterloo."

Jackie Lau

Private Waterloo resident,
interviewed 6/7/2017 at Cremorne, NSW, 37:04

Right: Artist's impressions of Waterloo redevelopment.
Source: NSW Government.





INTERVIEWEES' BIOGRAPHIES



Margarita Afanasieva

Born into a Russian Orthodox religious family in Leningrad in 1937, Margarita's father was a train driver and her mother was a teacher.

Margarita arrived in Australia in 2002 and has lived in the same apartment in Waterloo as part of a large Russian community. She attends regular Russian Bible Studies classes held in the Turanga building.



Ah Bah Oh

Ah Bah Oh, or Baba as he likes to be called, is a Waterloo resident since 2006. Born in Malaysia of Chinese parents in 1943, he is a cook by profession, spending many years in the Malaysian Navy before coming to Australia. He has owned a Chinese restaurant and has taught cooking on a voluntary basis at the Waterloo Community Centre.



Mike Allen

Mike Allen started at the Housing Commission of NSW as a base grade clerk in 1968 and rose through the ranks to become Chief Executive Officer of Housing NSW (2006-2014). He presided over the introduction of a national regulatory system for community housing across Australia.



Maureen Bell

Living in the Joseph Banks building since the early 1980s, Maureen had an altercation with some youths and had her handbag and personal items stolen. Then when her son was robbed in the lift of his money and clothes, and when needles became a daily occurrence in the building, Maureen moved from Waterloo to Ulladulla.



Sonya Brindle

The daughter of one of the Stolen Generation, Sonya Brindle's father spent his early years at the Kinchela Boys Home at Kempsey, from which he ran away. Sonya lives in the Drysdale building and is concerned that she and other residents haven't been told enough about the redevelopment plans for Waterloo.



Max Eulo

Max landed work as a stockman from the age of 12 when he finished school. He lived on bush tucker, drove sheep and brought in cattle for branding. He also spent his younger years as a boxer under the name 'Snow White' and rode bucking bulls in rodeos. For ten years he fed the homeless at the Crossroads Aboriginal church and today performs smoking ceremonies at funerals.



Monsignor Greg Flynn

Parish Priest at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Church and school in Waterloo from 2009 to 2017, Greg Flynn has a keen sense of the needs, both material, cultural and spiritual, of the Waterloo community. He has identified sources of anxiety within the community about the redevelopment plans for Waterloo.



Luke Freudenstein

Luke Freudenstein, Commander of the Redfern Police Area Command (2008-2018) has been able to reduce the robbery rate in Waterloo from 100 per month in 2008 to 69 per year in 2017. He and Shane Phillips started a boxing program for Aboriginal kids which receives huge support from the community. His goal is to keep the community and the kids of Waterloo safe.



Will Gordon

Will Gordon recalls places of significance to Aboriginals, like Waterloo Oval, where football games were played on Saturday afternoons. "It's Gadigal country, but it's occupied by many different cultures and many different tribes, and they've taken ownership of the place, and for that to stay alive, those people have got to remain there for generations to come" he says.



John Gregory

While studying part-time for a degree in Architecture, John Gregory worked at the Architect's Branch of the Housing Commission. Their brief was to build nice, safe new buildings that would eliminate gambling, prostitution and crime, it was thought. John designed a lot of the 1980s low rise and town house developments and pushed the boundaries of what was possible in public housing design.



Dom Grenot

Dom Grenot spent 10 years with the Department of Housing and then became a Public Housing Liaison Officer for the City of Sydney Council. He was there during the implementation of the Richmond Report. Grenot tackled issues such as mobility, isolation, suicides from the towers, social mix, transport, and overcrowding and is writing a thesis on the subject.



Nona Harvey

With an interest in Drama and Community Theatre, Nona Harvey moved from the country to Waterloo to complete a Diploma of Education. After her 11-year old son was savagely bashed she decided to introduce programs for kids at Waterloo: community workshops for puppetry, stilts, juggling, acrobats, dance, mask-making, Tai Chi, unicycles, didgeridoo playing and community theatre, giving Waterloo children an outlet for their creativity.



Dr. Marie Healy

Dr. Marie Healy found her vocation working with Aboriginal patients and those less well-off in society while working in a Mount Druitt practice. When she moved to practise at the Aboriginal Medical Service she came into contact with the full gamut of Aboriginal health issues. She is involved with the Waterloo/Redfern community and writes a regular column for the South Sydney Herald.



Neil Hicks

An artist and a public housing tenant at Waterloo, Neil Hicks can hardly wait for the redevelopment of Waterloo to begin. He has strong childhood memories of Waterloo. Neil took part in almost every sporting activity possible, and he had a part-time job at Federal Matches when there were still factories at Waterloo.



Andrew Jakubowicz

Andrew Jakubowicz is the Professor of Sociology at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has published widely on ethnic diversity issues, disability and media studies and heads the online communities and human rights project at the not-for-profit Institute for Cultural Diversity.



Grace Karskens

Grace Karskens, a public historian and an authority on early colonial Australia, took a group of university students through a group history project on Green Square. Each student chose to write an essay on a particular aspect of Green Square's history. Grace believes that history is the relationship between the past and present. She has served on a number of editorial boards, most notably Australia's leading history journal *Australian Historical Studies*. In 2010 she was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy for the Humanities.



Anna Kovic

Intending to stay for a few years in the Solander building, Anna Kovic from the former Yugoslavia stayed for 47 years and is not planning to move again any time soon. She takes part in communal activities, yoga, Tai Chi, Ikebana, art and cooking classes and goes on organised bus trips. She has a small plot in the Community Gardens and attends regular meetings of the Public Housing Action Group.



Velma Lawrence

Velma Lawrence has lived all of her life in Waterloo. She left school at 14 to get a job sewing on button holes at a factory across the road. Velma has phenomenal memories of a Waterloo that existed well before the Housing Commission came on the scene.



Clare Lewis

Clare Lewis graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Brighton University in 2002 and made her way to Australia. She became Assistant Curator with the Museum of Contemporary Art. Clare had the idea for WeLiveHere2017, a collaborative art project that made a powerful statement about the redevelopment plans for Waterloo by putting coloured lights in the windows of the twin towers.



Dixie Link-Gordon

The eldest of ten children from a family of boxers, sport and her Aboriginal heritage have always played a large part in her life. Dixie is a founding worker of Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Centre and heads up an Aboriginal unit within the Women's Legal Service, NSW. Dixie has run campaigns to alleviate violence against women in families and communities.



Ted Mack
(1933–2018)

Ted Mack started his career as an architect and became Assistant Chief Architect of the Housing Commission of NSW at a time when it was regarded within the architecture profession as somewhat of a wasteland. Ted is responsible for much of the Housing Commission's output in the early 1970s until he became Mayor of North Sydney. In 1997 the National Trust of Australia designated him as one of the 100 National Living Treasures of Australia. Ted Mack is the only politician to have been elected as an independent to all three levels of government.



Sean Macken

As a Research Fellow with the McKell Institute, a Director of the NSW Urban Taskforce and a Councillor of the former South Sydney Council, Sean Macken is somewhat of an expert on urban housing. He oversaw the development and implementation of the Green Square Master Plan. He is a Director of Macken Strategic Planning Solutions, giving advice to government and industry on urban planning and infrastructure.



Dorothy McRae-McMahon

A retired Uniting Church Minister, Dorothy McRae-McMahon first caused controversy when she came out as a lesbian minister. She is co-editor of the South Sydney Herald which has reported on many issues around the redevelopment of Waterloo. Dorothy is concerned about the impact that the redevelopment will have on the Waterloo community. She was awarded a Jubilee Medal for her work with women in NSW, an Australian Peace Award and an Australian Human Rights Medal.



**Jamie Madden
and Jackie Lau**

Jamie and Jackie are typical of young couples with children who have joined the Waterloo community as private owners, which gives them a different perspective to the public housing residents. Apprehensive at first after what they had heard about Waterloo, they found the community very generous and mindful of looking after each other. Jamie and Jackie are keen to ensure that Waterloo will have a strong social bond between the private and public tenants.



John Mant

(1936-2021)

John Mant is an urban planning consultant, lawyer, advisor, former councillor for the City of Sydney, former advisor to Tom Uren, Don Dunstan and Principal Private Secretary to Gough Whitlam. He rewrote the NSW Local Government Act in the 1990s, frequently attacked the decisions of the Housing Commission and restructured it from the ground up. He chaired a Commission of Enquiry into Housing in the 1990s and has definitely left his mark on housing in Australia.



Ludmila Mikhailov

Born in Odessa, Ukraine, Ludmila and her family arrived in Waterloo in 1991. Her husband had been able to migrate from Ukraine because of his Jewish background. He started a Russian-language newspaper in Waterloo with weekly news of events in Russia, which he and Ludmila distributed in Waterloo and of which Ludmila became the art designer. The Russian community enjoys a rich cultural life and love music, opera and literature. However, they are aging and Ludmila worries about how the redevelopment plans for Waterloo will affect them.



George Morgan

Most of Associate Professor George Morgan's research has been about urban Indigenous communities and urban Aboriginal housing. He has published a number of books, among them 'A History of Aboriginal Housing' and 'Aboriginal Migration to Sydney since World War II.' This brought him to examine the Department of Housing files for Redfern and Waterloo and the impact that Aboriginal migration to the cities in the 1960s had on housing and the people themselves.



Evelyn Morris

A public housing resident at Waterloo for 29 years living in a three-storey walk-up apartment, Evelyn Morris recalls a time in Waterloo when there were no fences and residents kept their apartment clean and tidy and had families and jobs. She is a resident representative for the People's Precinct. She believes that today housing has become a place of refuge for those with severe drug, alcohol and mental problems who are not receiving the help that they need. She would like to see changes in the way that housing is allocated.



Clover Moore

Clover Moore first moved into Redfern as a young mother and became a councillor on the South Sydney Council in 1980. She was a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly for the next 14 years, and Lord Mayor of Sydney from 2004 to the present. She was successful in having a medically-supervised injection centre established during the AIDS epidemic. Clover has worked closely with the Waterloo community and stands firmly behind the City of Sydney's Green Square project.



Lisa Murray

The City Historian for the City of Sydney Council since 2010, Lisa Murray has added her knowledge and expertise to the reservoir of what is known about Sydney's history: local, civic, urban, community and public. She is a Board Member and former Chair of the Dictionary of Sydney. Lisa has extensive knowledge of Waterloo's history and has generously contributed that to this project.



Paul and Betty O'Connor

With a Housing tenancy of 44 years in the Marton building, Betty and her son Paul know a great deal about Waterloo. They remember a time when there were mainly families there, no drug addicts and plenty of shops and factories: the Eveleigh Workshops, Cottee's and Schweppes, Federal Matches, Orange Spot, Crown Corning and Peters Ice Cream. They also think that a new Metro station at Waterloo is not essential and that the mix of public and private tenants will not work.



Jose Perez

Jose Perez's family came from Spain in the early 1960s into a Waterloo that was rebuilding and transforming. The housing blocks were being constructed by the Housing Commission in its development heyday and many ethnic communities were moving in. Housing tenants put in the newer blocks then were predominantly tradesmen who had the ability to pay the rents and could do minor repairs. Jose is pessimistic about the government's plan for a 70/30 mix of social and private housing being able to work successfully.



Tony Pooley

Tony Pooley was mayor of South Sydney Council from 2002 until its absorption by the Council of the City of Sydney in 2004 and was Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney from 2007-2008. Pooley believes that areas like Waterloo and Redfern benefited by their amalgamation. He describes in general the population of Waterloo as generous, as long as they are able to keep a sense of security in their own unit or house. He increased mobility for residents, assisted community transport and improved access for mobility-impaired residents.



Dianne Rodgers

A worker at The Factory Community Centre for the past 26 years where she caters for children from 5 to 12 years of age, Dianne Rodgers grew up in Redfern. She has lived in the same house in Waterloo for the past 30 years but stayed for seven years on the waiting list to get it. She takes children on vacation care groups on a 22-seater bus. The Factory is funded by the State Government and FACS. Other programs it runs are computers for use by the community, a pick-up program from the schools, and free meals for children.



Dallas Rogers

For his Honours and PhD research, Dr. Dallas Rogers focused on large public housing estate redevelopments and worked closely with residents and NGO's in Redfern/Waterloo. He finds the geopolitics of land at Waterloo fascinating: public housing estates, private land and Indigenous land and housing and how to keep these different systems working together in the shift from public to social housing.



Melita Rogowsky

Melita Rogowsky is the author of a thesis on Chinese Australians between 1870 and 1930, mainly market gardeners and cabinet makers. One of the most important documents she found was the 1891 Royal Commission into Chinese Gambling and Immorality which centred on Chinese living in Alexandria and Waterloo, particularly around the Yui Ming Temple in Retreat Street. She also documents the anti-Chinese sentiments of the early 20th century which culminated in severe immigration restrictions on Chinese trying to re-enter Australia after visits to China.



Jinny-Jane Smith

Jinny-Jane Smith is the daughter of Kevin Smith, Aboriginal actor and Walbunga man from the South Coast of NSW. She is also an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for Land and Housing Corporation for the Waterloo redevelopment. She believes that the biggest problems facing the Waterloo community are drugs and systemic racism. She is starting an advisory group for tenants to meet regularly and be updated on the latest changes to the Master Plan.



Inara Strungs

Inara Strungs' parents are Latvians who fled when Russian troops invaded in 1945. After spending up to five years in refugee camps in Europe they were resettled in Australia where they bought a bakery in Lenton Parade, Waterloo. The Elma Bakery produced traditional Estonian sourdough breads. The bakery was closed in 1991 when the Housing Commission gazetted the land for demolition. Inara believes that the gentrification and urban renewal of Waterloo was bound to happen.



Geoffrey Turnbull

Geoffrey Turnbull, is the Publications Officer for the Inner Sydney Voice and the spokesperson for REDWatch, a residents group for Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo that aims to ensure community involvement in those suburbs. He is the REDWatch representative on the Redfern/Waterloo Groundswell Coalition, a community group formed to ensure that their voices are heard during the Built Environment and Master Planning processes.



Russell Walker and Gerard Virgona

Both public housing tenants in Waterloo, Russell Walker and Gerard Virgona started FAVOUR-OZ, a free barbeque and food service for the hungry and needy population of Waterloo. It started in the Community Room but has now expanded to tables outside and they feed about 35 people on a weekly basis. Eddy's bakery helps out with unsold bread which feeds an entire building for a day. Russell and Gerard buy the sausages and finance the venture themselves. A great idea!



Wan Ling Yiang

Wan Ling Yiang grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution when life was hard. She came to Australia to visit her brother and while in Sydney, the uprising of June 4, 1989 happened in China and she was given Australian citizenship status. She joined a Chinese Opera Group in Alexandria as a volunteer and prepared meals for elderly people at Waterloo for Meals on Wheels until funding ran out. She is very worried about prospects for the Chinese community when the relocation of residents begins.



Diana Whitworth

Diana Whitworth was born in Wiltshire, UK. She and her family came to Australia as 'Ten Pound Poms' in 1951. Diana married young and has been a public housing tenant since 1982 at Waterloo, which she considers to be a lovely place to live. When she first came to Waterloo families lived there, now there are more single-parent families on unemployment benefits. Diana is a member of many community groups, The Factory, South Sydney Community Aid, Inner Voice, Odd Jobbers and Neighbour Connections.



Richard Weeks

The chairperson of WPHAG (Waterloo Public Housing Action Group), Richard Weeks, is a retired teacher and soldier and a very effective negotiator. He has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with Land and Housing Corporation about how WPHAG will input into the Master Plan and has secured funding of \$50,000 from the City of Sydney to give residents a voice in the redevelopment of Waterloo. Richard believes that Waterloo needs more affordable housing.



Beverley Wellfare

One of eleven children but the only one of her family still living in Waterloo, Beverley Wellfare has been a Waterloo resident for all of her 72 years. Beverley's house had no electricity – they had candles for light and wood for the fuel stove until many years later electricity was connected. Beverley found a job at Service Box, packing Scrabble games until the factory burnt down. She recalls the demise of shops, factories and commerce at Waterloo after the banks and the post office closed down.



Bill Yan

Born into a Chinese-Malayan family, Bill Yan speaks Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay and English. He is the Operations Manager of Counterpoint Community Services. Core funding comes from FACS with additional funding from the City of Sydney. Counterpoint provides training and information workshops for the community. Counterpoint also provides computer training classes and English language classes to prepare the community for the changes to come.



Herbert Young

(1927-2018)

The third youngest of a poor family of 10 children and son of a cabinetmaker in Botany Road Waterloo, Herb Young had a rather uneventful early childhood until he was discovered to have a remarkable singing voice. He sang, first at the Congregational Church at Waterloo, then for Radio 2KY, the Capitol Theatre and the Tivoli circuit and then received a contract to tour Australia and New Zealand with The Great North China Troupe in 1939.



Ben Zavesa

An immigrant and Electronics Engineer from Azerbaijan, then part of the Soviet Union, Ben Zavesa had to leave property and savings behind to arrive as a refugee in Australia in 1979 and started from zero. Ben brought his parents out in 1982, and they were allocated a public housing unit in the Solander building at Waterloo. Ben is a resident of Waterloo since 1999 and member of the Neighbourhood Advisory Board, a Precinct Representative and a member of the Waterloo Public Housing Action Group.



Tom Zubrycki

After finishing university with a Sociology degree, Tom Zubrycki took to filmmaking and in 1982 made the documentary 'Waterloo', now a classic film about the struggles of people against bureaucracy, in this case the Housing Commission of New South Wales. At the time, houses were being demolished to build the Public Housing Estate. Tom, through his film, has explored the historical perspective of redevelopment of Waterloo and has added value and direction of public housing in New South Wales.

APPENDIX A: WATERLOO CHRONOLOGY

Pre-1788: Gadigal clans from the Eora Nation hunt, fish and eat plant foods like Geebung from the shores and inlets at Waterloo and Alexandria.

1788-1800: The Gadigal clans now have to reckon with eleven ships of the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip. Many die from diseases that they have no immunity to. The smallpox epidemic of 1789 decimates the clans and pushes the remnants into Waterloo, Alexandria and Botany Bay.

1802: Pemulwuy, a Bidjigal man becomes a formidable Aboriginal resistance leader, outlawed by Governor King and shot dead on 2 June 1802.

1810s: The ready supply of water in the Waterloo swamps attracts steam power for grinding grain and milling cloth at Waterloo. A water mill, steam mill, paper and flour mill are erected.

1825: Convict-turned businessman Daniel Cooper acquires both the Waterloo Estate and the Lachlan Estate, about 1585 acres of land.

1840s: End of convict transportation to NSW. The first timber and stone cottages are built at Waterloo. The Sydney Railway Company starts construction of the Sydney to Parramatta Line.

1850s: Brickworks, candle and soap factories, tanneries, breweries, fellmongeries, boiling down works and wool washing and scouring industries come to Waterloo after The Noxious Trades Act of 1849 banishes these from the City of Sydney. Schools and churches are established at Waterloo.

1850: Daniel Cooper provides the land for Mount Carmel church and school.

1853: Subdivision of John Campbell's Lachlan Estate. Four publicans are granted licenses.

1850s: Beginning of Chinese immigration on commencement of the Gold Rush. Many settle in Alexandria and Waterloo.

1860: Waterloo becomes a borough of Sydney. Rapid expansion of industry at Waterloo. The first brick houses are built.

1865: Archibald Forsyth establishes Australian Rope Works at Waterloo. It becomes one of the principal industries of the colony, employing 150 workers.

1870: Residences are built along Wellington and Raglan streets.

1875: The Eveleigh Railway workshops are constructed.

1880s: Residential development at Waterloo peaks.

1882: Waterloo Town Hall is built.

1890s: A Depression hits Australia. Building regulations come into effect in City of Sydney, but not in Waterloo.

1891: A Royal Commission into Chinese Gambling and Immorality is held.

1900s: Policy of 'Urban Renewal' starts. Cooper Estate is broken up, providing land for factories at Waterloo.

1900: Sydney's population reaches half a million. Plague outbreak in Sydney strikes.

1901: Dictation tests introduced for eligibility to become an Australian citizen or to re-enter Australia particularly affects Chinese already living in Waterloo.

1908: Victoria Park Racecourse is created on the former Waterloo Swamp by Sir James Joynton Smith.

1909: The Chinese Temple in Retreat Street is built. Aborigines Protection Act legislated, giving the government control over the movement, employment, finances and 'wellbeing' of Aboriginal people.

1914: First Baby Health Clinic in Australia is set up in Alexandria. Over 100 different industries are registered in Waterloo.

1914: Dunkerley Hat Mills, maker of Akubra hats in Waterloo receives contract to supply slouch hats to World War I diggers.

1920: Aboriginal migration to Sydney from rural areas post WWI.

1930s: The Great Depression hits Australia and unemployment is rife.

1938: The Day of Mourning held by Aboriginal men and women was held on 26 January, marking the 150th anniversary of the First Fleet's arrival.

1939: World War II begins. The country is put on a war footing.

1942: The Housing Commission of NSW is established by Premier William McKell, himself a former resident of Waterloo. Large parts of Waterloo are identified as a slum and become subject to the building of social housing blocks under McKell's policy of Urban Renewal.

1944: Founding of the Aboriginal Football Club, the Redfern All Blacks.

1950s: Decline of manufacturing industries at Waterloo as they move to the western suburbs of Sydney, leaving large areas of former industrial land for urban renewal.

1956: Formation of the Aboriginal Australian Fellowship by Faith Bandler and Pearl Gibbs.

1962: Planning of the Endeavour Estate begins in Waterloo.

1967: Referendum on including Aboriginal Australians in the population census and abolition of the clause in the Constitution to make special laws for the Aboriginal people is passed with a 90% majority vote.

1970: Aboriginal Legal Service founded in Redfern by Paul Coe.

1971: Aboriginal Medical Service formed, the first Aboriginal community-run medical service in Australia.

1972: Waverley and Woollahra councils are allowed to construct the Waterloo Incinerator over the in-filled site of Waterloo Dam.

1973: The BLF puts a Green Ban on an 11-hectare site earmarked for development at Waterloo.

1973: Aboriginal Housing Corporation, the first housing collective in Australia is formed.

1976: The twin towers, 'Matavai' and 'Turanga' are completed in 1977, and they are officially opened by the Queen.

1982: Tom Zubrycki produces his documentary "Waterloo".

1983: The Richmond Report into mental health is released.

1996: After 24 years of public protest, the Waterloo incinerator is finally closed down.

1998: Waterloo Post Office is closed.

2004: TJ Hickey's death after a police chase causes riots in Redfern/Waterloo.

2005: Redfern-Waterloo Authority formed.

2015: Announcement by Minister Brad Hazzard that the housing estate in Waterloo will be redeveloped and a new metro station built.

2017: Buildings on the site of the new metro station are demolished.

APPENDIX B: INDEX TO RECORDINGS

Interviewee(s):	Interviewer:	Date:	Duration:	File No:
Geoffrey Turnbull	Frank Heimans	01/06/2017	127:37	LAHC:FH1
Evelyn Morris	Frank Heimans	05/06/2017	78:13	LAHC:FH2
Maureen Bell	Frank Heimans	05/06/2017	23:53	LAHC:FH3
Betty & Paul O'Connor	Frank Heimans	13/06/2017	44:46	LAHC:FH4
Jose Perez	Frank Heimans	14/06/2017	101:01	LAHC:FH5
Anna Kovic	Frank Heimans	16/06/2017	58:39	LAHC:FH6
Russell Walker & Gerard Virgona	Frank Heimans	19/06/2017	67:35	LAHC:FH7
Diana Whitworth	Frank Heimans	21/06/2017	66:30	LAHC:FH8
Dianne Rodgers	Frank Heimans	03/07/2017	51:43	LAHC:FH9
Jamie Madden & Jackie Lau	Frank Heimans	06/07/2017	54:04	LAHC:FH10
Dallas Rogers	Frank Heimans	19/07/2017	57:35	LAHC:FH11
Sonya Brindle	Frank Heimans	26/07/2017	30:35	LAHC:FH12
Ben Zavesa	Frank Heimans	31/07/2017	66:34	LAHC:FH13
Velma Lawrence	Frank Heimans	08/08/2017	75:10	LAHC:FH14
Margarita Afanasieva	Frank Heimans	23/08/2017	66:36	LAHC:FH15
Dominic Grenot	Frank Heimans	11/09/2017	57:14	LAHC:FH16
Ah Bah Oh	Frank Heimans	18/09/2017	51:30	LAHC:FH17
Wan Ying Liang	Frank Heimans	18/09/2017	80:26	LAHC:FH18
John Gregory	Frank Heimans	05/10/2017	102:52	LAHC:FH19
Herbert Young	Frank Heimans	07/10/2017	90:13	LAHC:FH20
Inara Strungs	Frank Heimans	09/10/2017	38:30	LAHC:FH21
Fr. Greg Flynn	Frank Heimans	18/10/2017	56:18	LAHC:FH22
Ted Mack	Frank Heimans	20/10/2017	70:50	LAHC:FH23
John Mant	Frank Heimans	23/10/2017	106:51	LAHC:FH24
Beverley Wellfare	Frank Heimans	25/10/2017	62:15	LAHC:FH25
Nona Harvey	Frank Heimans	28/10/2017	37:31	LAHC:FH26
Ludmila Mikhailov	Frank Heimans	16/11/2017	94:37	LAHC:FH27

Interviewee(s):	Interviewer:	Date:	Duration:	File No:
Mike Allen	Frank Heimans	14/12/2017	54:50	LAHC:FH28
Neil Hicks	Frank Heimans	11/01/2018	50:38	LAHC:FH29
Bill Yan	Frank Heimans	07/02/2018	60:05	LAHC:FH30
Andrew Jakubowicz	Graham Shirley	07/06/2017	98:00	LAHC:GS1
Tom Zubrycki	Graham Shirley	29/06/2017	80:50	LAHC:GS2
Tony Pooley	Graham Shirley	30/06/2017	95:37	LAHC:GS3
Clare Lewis	Graham Shirley	12/07/2017	61:05	LAHC:GS4
Richard Weeks	Graham Shirley	24/07/2017	92:04	LAHC:GS5
Grace Karskens	Graham Shirley	09/08/2017	98:17	LAHC:GS6
Max Eulo	Graham Shirley	11/08/2017	48:07	LAHC:GS7
Sean Macken	Graham Shirley	17/08/2017	106:11	LAHC:GS8
Clover Moore *	Graham Shirley	27/10/2017	51:04	LAHC:GS9
Geoffrey Turnbull *	Graham Shirley	27/10/2017	86:26	LAHC:GS10
Marie Healy	Graham Shirley	20/11/2017	84:39	LAHC:GS11
Dorothy McRae-McMahon	Graham Shirley	23/11/2017	75:56	LAHC:GS12
Jinny-Jane Smith	Graham Shirley	24/11/2017	71:00	LAHC:GS13
Lisa Murray*	Graham Shirley	05/12/2017	100:12	LAHC:GS14
Velma Lawrence *	Graham Shirley	05/12/2017	94:0	LAHC:GS15
Luke Freudenstein	Graham Shirley	18/12/2017	63:03	LAHC:GS16
George Morgan *	Graham Shirley	16/12/2017	106:10	LAHC:GS17
William Gordon	Graham Shirley	30/01/2018	70:12	LAHC:GS18
Dixie Link-Gordon	Graham Shirley	02/02/2018	65:52	LAHC:GS19
Melita Rogowsky	Graham Shirley	02/03/2018	70:34	LAHC:GS20

Interviews marked with* are video interviews.



REPORT OF
THE HISTORY PROJECT
2017–2018

Waterloo Stories

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Front cover: Waterloo Green basketball court. Source: Image by Salty Dingo for the NSW Land and Housing Corporation.
Back cover: Waterloo area circa 1970. Source: NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive.