

DRAFT Tenant Relocation Strategy
Hall Street, Bondi project
Toga Group

The following outlines an approach to relocating residential tenants potentially impacted by the Hall Street, Bondi project.

The project team has met with the Community Services Director at Waverley to discuss the approach to assisting existing tenants, which is required under Waverley Council housing policy.

Background

There are a range of housing programs offered by Housing NSW, the community sector and Waverley Council. These organisations operate a number of housing affordable housing services that are accessible to applicants who are eligible for the programs.

1. General Housing Program (Housing NSW)

The program is open to applicants on very low and low incomes who must meet the Department of Housing's Eligibility Criteria as a minimum.

2. Social Housing Subsidy Program (Housing NSW)

The program provides housing to very low, low and low to moderate income households for people who are not eligible for public or community housing. Eligible households can earn an income of up to \$45,837.00 per annum. This is indexed annually. The rent is set to a percentage of income. A bond is also required (2 weeks). These places are very limited – there is currently a waiting list.

3. Waverley Affordable Housing Program (Waverley Council)

This program provides affordable housing for households on low to moderate earnings. This is managed by South West Inner Sydney Housing Coop Ltd (SWISH).

4. Housing for Older People (Waverley Council)

To be eligible to use this program the person must be over 60, a resident of Waverley, receive a pension or benefit, have a health benefit card or be on a low income. The person must also be on the Department of Housing waiting list. The applicant needs to prove their level of need for this housing (i.e. Disability, insecurity of housing or excessive rent).

Although there are a number social housing programs on offer, these may not cater for all tenants in the Hall Street, Bondi site.



The approach

Our initial approach to assist tenants to move into appropriate, comparable housing is first establish each tenants housing circumstances and housing need. A letter will be send to each household to:

- Provide tenants with a project update (planning for the site)
- Invite tenants to a meeting to brief them on what is happening generally (timeframe, options to meet their housing needs). Informing tenants will help ensure that the facts have been clearly stated and ensure there is little misinformation about the project. At these meeting an attendance sheet will be recorded to better understand individual circumstances of each tenant.
- Arrange for each household to be interviewed privately to ascertain their status (e.g. income, assets, health or benefits). This information is important for Toga to better understand tenants' circumstances and to assist tenants in the most appropriate way.

Once people have been interviewed to ascertain their housing circumstances and need, they will be either:

- Directed to the appropriate organisation
- Presented with information about application to the Department of Housing. It is essential that we understand if people are eligible for as early as possible in the relocation process. For example, a person who is 80 years of age or older (and fits eligibility criteria) would go straight to the top of the Department of Housing list.

For tenants who are not eligible for assisted housing, Toga will investigate the option to liaise with local real estate agents to find comparable accommodation in the area. In the current housing market in the Bondi area, this may prove to be quite difficult.

For tenants who do not meet the criteria of the above-mentioned housing programs, Toga will investigate possible options in consultation with the tenant, prior to the time the premises need to be vacated.

Tenants who are not eligible for any type of assistance (short term tenants or people on holiday) will be notified and may wish to make their own arrangements.

We will discuss potential opportunities with the agents who entered into the leases with the tenants to understand if there were special circumstances under which the tenants obtained leases. The circumstances may include new arrivals, organisations dealing with refugees, employment or emergency accommodation.

Proposed timeframe

Late January 2009 – Letters are sent to tenants to inform them of the project and invite them to the meeting

February 2009 – Meeting with all tenants (to identify those eligible for Housing NSW waiting lists and assist with applications)

March/April 2009 – One-on-one meetings

May 2009 – Work through options to relocate each household

June - August 2009 – Tenants vacate the site and move to alternative accommodation.