



# RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE (INC)

BELMORE ROAD NORTH (near Hannans Road) RIVERWOOD

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Mr Jim Montague  
General Manager  
Canterbury City Council  
77 Beamish St  
Campsie 2194

4 January 2011

## **Re: Development Application - Riverwood North Estate Residential Renewal project**

Dear Mr Montague,  
Please find our comments on the Development Application - Riverwood North Estate Residential Renewal project

### **Riverwood North Estate Residential Renewal project – Social Impact Review**

1. We are concerned re the identification of the area being referred to as the Riverwood North Estate. It was presented to us that the **project** was to be called the Riverwood North Urban Renewal Development, and this did not indicate to us that the Estate would then be referred to as the Riverwood North Estate. The area is and has been historically called the Riverwood Estate, a name which the community strongly identify with. We believe that unless there is major community consultation and agreement for a name change the area should correctly be referred to as the Riverwood Estate.
2. There are numerous references to access to the Riverwood Community Garden, whilst there has been no consultation around this or how this may impact on the garden. Currently the community garden is for social housing tenants who live on the Riverwood Estate.
3. According to information given on a regular basis by the Campsie LAC to the Riverwood Estate Advisory Board, the Riverwood Estate is no longer seen as a distinct "crime hotspot", particularly with regard to break and enter. It is our understanding crime on the Riverwood Estate has reduced dramatically in recent years and is among the lowest for the Canterbury area. Housing and place design is a welcome aspect of the planning which can make a contribution in maintaining this.

4. We state our concerns re the loss of 26 social housing properties through the development replacing only 150 units of existing 176 being demolished while the demand for social housing is so high. When the concept of this development was first presented to the community (2008) it was said that 200 of the new dwellings being built would be for social housing tenants.
5. We are concern that though the information sessions only talked about 5 storey buildings, the review documents talk of 5 to 9 stories high. Riverwood Estate currently has 2 by 8 floor high-rise buildings. These building have posed a range of issues over many years especially when they accommodated families. It has been our understanding that Housing NSW would never again build high –rise blocks so why allow a Developer.

## **6. Stakeholder and Community Engagement**

The Riverwood Estate is currently recognised for being a strong, well connected community that celebrates and values its diversity. The changes proposed will impact on the existing community dynamics and there needs to be an ongoing commitment by the Developers to embrace, recognise and work with these existing community structures so that the community maintains its character of community inclusiveness.

The Riverwood Community Centre currently supports a range of tenant participation infrastructures which facilitates active community participation including the Riverwood Estate Advisory Board which meets monthly and is comprised of representatives from the Riverwood Community Centre, Housing NSW Local Office, Canterbury City Council, Campsie LAC, St George Community Housing and tenant representative from 5 neighbourhood committees, the Riverwood Tenant Association, Arabic and Chinese Associations. The Board meets monthly to discuss both housing and social issues on the Riverwood Estate. We would like the Developers to actively participate on this Board around consultation on the project and for providing ongoing updates on the development. This would be a key move to ensure the ongoing involvement of the local community in the planning and development process and ensure the building of a health trust –based relationship with residents that is spoken of in the report. It would also ensure an understanding by the Developers of the impact the development has and will have on current residents and their reactions and feeling to changes in their community.

We would be interested in how and when resources for the long term will be provided for development of community development initiatives to strengthen social cohesion and address the integration of new and existing communities during the development and post development. While we are aware that a one day community relations position is currently being funded to build relationships with key stakeholders we would like to see the plans for a commitment of how this will continue occur.

## **7. Timing of the Project**

To date the current meetings with residents who live on the estate have been of an information sharing nature rather than consultation and residents have been overwhelmed with the relocation process of the tenants who are required to move for the development to take place.

The length of time allocated for the development of this new housing project of up to 9 years will mean there will be a lengthy and ongoing disruption to the community, how this will be managed, aesthetically (ugly fenced off area, opportunities for vandalism of unused property/land)), noise during construction period, available access e.g. community garden, other end of Kentucky Road is unclear in the report.

## **8. Open space networks**

While the concept plans talk of enhancement to environment and pedestrian amenity there is concern over the loss of the only area, that of Washington Park, (a Council owned area developed with housing tenants in 1986) that provided open space for young people to play and kick a ball around. It is currently regularly used by youth workers for on the Estate activities. No like area is considered in the site area to replace it though it hopes to attract families.

We believe it would be appropriate to find a way of incorporating the open space of the existing high-rise building across from the development into the open space networks proposed.

9. **Council buildings/development.** When the original concept of the redevelopment of the area was presented to the community it included the up -grade of Seniors Citizens Centre a building which is currently fully utilised by an aging and multicultural community, plus the relocation of the Riverwood Library, community room and public toilets available for the community garden. Currently they are now talked about as maybe, potential proposals, though throughout the reports they are referred to as integral to the development especially with regard to development location of the social housing units. These facilities were listed as a positive perhaps the alternative to views of wetlands area, access to community garden which the private development units will have access to. What real commitment is there to the development of these facilities?
10. In maintaining and building an inclusive community it is important that all community initiatives are inclusive of the whole community, it is unclear as to whether the ideas outlined by Payce are just to be for the new community or the Riverwood Estate community.

## Environmental Assessment

### Development description

1. **Talks about exclusive open space area will be for the exclusive use by residents and their guests –** This seems to contradict the notion of building an inclusive /integrated community for the residents of the Riverwood Estate.

### 2. Transport and Accessibility Impacts

With the increase of population of nearly 33% expected on the Riverwood Estate due to this development and the fact the new 500 private units could possibly have up to 2 cars in an area which is recognised for low car ownership the community is extremely concerned about the impacted increased traffic will have on intersections and movement of traffic along Belmore Road.

The community in the past have raised issues of concern with the Canterbury Traffic Committee re entry to the Estate at Washington Ave, parking along Belmore Road which obscures drivers vision turning right from out of Truman, difficulties turning right out of Community Centre Car Park and bus access to the existing south end of Kentucky Road. The report though seems dismissive that traffic will present a problem. The community envisages major traffic difficulties and would like to see the traffic issue address alongside the plans for this development.

### 3. Existing trees

Residents have asked if the existing large and beautiful trees in Washington Ave (in front of 9, 11 Washington) will be preserved.

Greta Vallance  
Manager  
Riverwood Community Centre