



The Hon. Pru Goward MP
Minister for Family and Community Services
Minister for Social Housing
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

21 March 2018

cc: Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter

Dear Minister

INNER SYDNEY LOCAL ALLOCATIONS STRATEGY

We represent concerned housing, homelessness, tenant, legal and community organisations and are writing to you regarding the Inner Sydney Local Allocations Strategy.

We share the Government's desire to ensure residents of Waterloo, Redfern, Glebe and Surry Hills live in communities that are safe, healthy and empowered to address the challenge of drug use in our communities. However, we are deeply concerned that this policy, in its approach and framework, is fundamentally flawed and will not achieve the outcomes that the Government is seeking.

The policy undermines the ability of people to rebuild their lives after they have served their sentence. Its practical impact is to extend punishment beyond the judicial system. Similar precedents overseas have shown policies of perpetual punishment do not work and may further marginalize people who need extensive support as they work to reintegrate with the community.

In addition, this type of policy response to inherently complex issues appears likely to shift the problem to other communities and risks progress made through local efforts based on partnership and collaboration.

We are further concerned the Local Allocations Strategy is discriminatory; disproportionately impacting Indigenous communities and people with psycho-social disability. Both groups face underlying and significant social and health challenges and are over-represented in the criminal justice system. This is also the case for women in the justice system who are seeking housing as a pathway from domestic violence and the criminal justice system.

We are also concerned the policy has been rushed in its drafting and implementation.

It is disappointing that such a significant policy with wide ramifications would be implemented without FACS undertaking appropriate consultation with local support service providers, community, legal and peak housing, homelessness and tenant organisations.

While FACS has published a factsheet with basic information about the strategy and provided clarification on some points, we have a range of questions and concerns regarding the implementation and administration of the strategy including the appeals processes, privacy and confidentiality protocols, discretion and exemptions. We would also like the opportunity to discuss the evaluation processes that would apply at the conclusion of the strategy's trial period.

We requested a sector briefing from FACS last week so that we might clarify details of how the Inner Sydney Local Allocations Strategy is being implemented and administered, and discuss our concerns. We appreciate any assistance you are able to provide in arranging a joint briefing for our organisations.

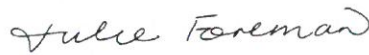
Our organisations are keen to work constructively with government in responding to inherently complex issues like this and we look forward to hearing from you.

If you need further information please contact Julie Foreman, Executive Officer, Tenants' Union of NSW (201/55 Holt Street Surry Hills 2010) on telephone 8117 3701 or email, Julie.Foreman@tenantsunion.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Karen Walsh
Chief Executive Officer
Shelter NSW



Julie Foreman
Executive Officer
Tenants' Union of NSW



Tim Leach
Executive Director
Community Legal Centres NSW



Alison Churchill
Chief Executive Officer
Community Restorative Centre



Anna Cody
Director
Kingsford Legal Centre
UNSW Law



Jo Shulman
Chief Executive Officer
Redfern Legal Centre



Jonathan Hunyor
Chief Executive Officer
Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Ltd