



Dunbar Way Renewal Evaluation

A study to contribute an evaluation of the
Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program (DWRP)

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1 Definitions & Acronyms

Affordable Housing

Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very-low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education. As a general rule, housing is usually considered affordable if the costs less than 30% of gross household income. Affordable rental housing may be owned by investors, local governments, community housing providers or other not-for-profit organisations

Community Housing

Community housing is housing that is owned and/or managed by a not-for-profit, non-government organisation. This is mostly affordable rental housing, but increasingly social housing. Community housing provides affordable housing options for some 18000 households in NSW on low to moderate incomes. NSW has the largest and most dynamic Community Housing sector in Australia, managing over 40% of the national supply of community housing.

Housing NSW

Housing NSW (HNSW) was a business unit of the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). In partnership with other stakeholders, HNSW provided safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for those in most need. It managed and coordinates a range of housing assistance, including provision of long term subsidised rental housing.

HNSW provided these services under a contract arrangement with the Land and Housing Corporation. It also has the broad responsibility for the development and implementation of housing policy in NSW. HNSW has been now fully devolved into the broader FaCS structure.

LAHC - Land and Housing Corporation

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) is a business unit of FaCS. It owns and is responsible for around 145000 dwellings with a value of \$32 Billion, principally used for the provision of social housing.

Social Housing

Social Housing is rental housing targeted to very-low to low income households. Social housing includes public housing, some forms of community housing, and Aboriginal housing.

TMG-Tenant Management Group

A committee of residents in the Dunbar Way estate that bring issues to Pacific Link, providing a voice for interested residents in their neighbourhood.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to contribute an evaluation of the Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program (DWRP) undertaken by Pacific Link Housing in North Gosford, NSW. The evaluation is designed to examine the various benefits or shortcomings to Pacific Link Housing, the Community Housing sector and Resident groups when small scale social housing estates are renewed. The property and tenancy information utilised by the study was current at the time the study was undertaken, but as the provision of community housing is dynamic, this data may differ to the present conditions.

Methodology

- Demographic analysis for the suburb of North Gosford (ABS 2011) and the Dunbar Way Estate (Pacific Link Housing).
- Engagement of community through door knocks, interviews, submissions and photographic surveys.
- Literature review of relevant social research, policy, plans and similar case studies.
- Identifications of measures to build upon successes and address shortcomings of the project.

Key Findings

Social and affordable housing demand

- There are approximately 55,000 people on the social housing wait list in NSW and there is a 10 (or more) year wait to access a social housing tenancy (dependant on needs and available stock) in the NN19 Gosford Allocation Zone
- Dunbar Way is a valuable resource of social housing in the lower Central Coast district. Pacific Link Housing manages 81 dwellings within the study area, and 18 on the adjacent Glennie Street.
- The Dunbar Way estate represents a distinct neighbourhood within the suburb of North Gosford, visually and socially, and in 2012 this was resulting in negative community sentiment and stigma.

Community engagement

- Extensive qualitative and quantitative engagement was undertaken during two periods. Period one represented a baseline study and was conducted in October 2013, before the works were undertaken. The second period of study was undertaken in April 2016, this served to gauge stakeholder and resident perceptions of the DWRP and the outcomes experienced. Stakeholder groups engaged included: Residents (17), Pacific Link staff (3), NSW Government (5) and submissions and letters on public record.
- The engagement revealed that the Dunbar Way community has smaller sub groups, often residents on a cul de sac, or Kendall Village. Ties within these groups are strong, identifying a strong connection to the neighbourhood and their neighbours. Residents relayed examples of helping one another out with daily activities such as child minding.
- Despite these strong community ties, they were often expressed within subgroups (such as immediate neighbours or residents of a cul-de-sac) of the community, with little connection between groups.
- The resident community noted that they were willing to participate in planning of renewal works and community development. Despite repeated attempts by PL to engage the community most respondents report that their first knowledge of the DWRP was the Baseline Survey invitation letter.

Perceived impact of the Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program

- Pacific Link has undertaken a high quality renewal and can enjoy the positive impact that it has upon the social and economic divisions of its business.
- Residents are overwhelmingly positive about the impacts upon the DWRP. The Program has established the Dunbar Way as a neighbourhood of choice.
- The addition of the playground has had multiple benefits for residents, ranging from a safe place for children to play, easing relationships within family groups, and providing opportunities for parents to meet each other.
- General works and refurbishments were seen to refresh the estate and bring it to standard in comparison with the surrounding neighbourhood. Residents have reported a reduction in stigma surrounding the neighbourhood and have more pride in their homes.
- Residents reported that PL's tenant management strategy was a significant feature of the DWRP. By moving on antisocial residents, there has been a positive impact upon the community.
- CCTV was received with mixed sentiment. Overall there was a very positive response to the perceived, added safety on the estate. Some residents that have CCTV overlooking their units were concerned for their privacy. Anecdotally, there has been a significant decrease in property damage and antisocial behaviour in the public domain of the Estate. Crime data from the Police supports this with an initial reduction of reported crime by 23%.
- All residents agreed that the DWRP had delivered an improvement to their quality of life, 80% of respondents could point to specific evidence that community relationships were improved (both within the estate and the broader community).

3 Introduction

Study purpose

In 2011, Pacific Link Housing negotiated a pioneering project with Housing NSW. Pacific Link undertook to renew the Dunbar Way estate in North Gosford in return for the management rights over all properties within Dunbar Way. This was anticipated to be a holistic approach to the improvement of asset management, community relations and the development of Pacific Link's core business objectives. This approach to estate regeneration is representative of international best practice, with the success of CHP led renewal works well documented in the UK (National Housing Federation, 2008).

In order to ensure that the DWRP achieved the anticipated social and economic benefits, Pacific Link Housing engaged the Western Sydney University to undertake an evaluation of the project. The evaluation was undertaken in line with a novel approach to evaluation that focuses upon resident's experience of social housing neighbourhood, their attitudes toward the built environment and their aspirations for the estate.

Project Methodology

This evaluation of the DWRP reflects the research methodology developed for the study of Social Housing Estate Renewal Projects (ERPs) by Gordon Bijen (2016). This method is interdisciplinary and brings the research participants' experience to the fore. This is done to gain a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between stakeholders and their environment. This methodology is also resource efficient by 'outsourcing' much of the intensive research activity to participants. For this evaluation, three major avenues of inquiry were pursued.

Detailed review of existing research

This detailed literature review will locate, collate and condense existing academic and industry literature relating to public housing redevelopment into a short review for the report. The review will discuss the emerging body of research and policy discussion on the role of place management as an influential variable in social interactions (Bijen and Piracha, 2012). The literature review will serve to position the Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program among similar redevelopments within Australia and internationally.

Various studies associate the built environment with both positive and negative social phenomena, such as social cohesion or crime rates. Vale (2002) states that much of the mainstream stigmatisation of public tenancy is consolidated by the design of public housing neighbourhoods. Despite this, policy makers often neglect to consider these associations. Whilst the theories of mixed tenure housing and neighbourhood effects have been vigorously debated, the meanings of place-making in the context of public housing renewal and the potential for these meanings to positively shape the trajectory of community development are under researched.

At the confluence of these issues lies the question of how estate renewal can be undertaken in a manner that enhances, rather than undermines communities. Responsive redevelopment models could be demonstrated to have significant benefits for policymakers, social housing professionals and community members alike. This report will show that community development, economic revitalisation and positive social outcomes can be encouraged by supportive place-making.

Semi-structured interviews

Focused semi-structured interviews formed the backbone of the project's empirical investigation. Interviews were undertaken with all stakeholder groups: residents, housing practitioners, community leaders, and other informed observers. Resident interviewees were recruited via a targeted letter delivered to all dwellings within the case study site. Residents then self-recruited by contacting the researcher and organising an interview. Practitioner interviewees included local government planners, community workers, architects, developers and representatives from social housing providers. These participants were approached directly and in many cases were already known to the researcher.

All interviews were semi-structured, with common themes aimed at eliciting in-depth, considered responses. For each interview an 'interview roadmap' was prepared which reflected the research questions and ensured consistent coverage of themes and signposted key concepts to explore with participants. Participants were also asked a series of 'ice breaker' questions at the beginning of the interview. These were intended to set the direction of the interview and to introduce the participant to the research interest. Themes pursued in the interview included:

- Experiential descriptions of the quality of the neighbourhood before and after renewal. What gave these characteristics?
- What are the positive or negative impacts of estate renewal? Has there been a measurable impact upon resident satisfaction, resident attachment to place and neighbourhood amenity?
- Outsider/Non-resident perceptions of the estate. Particularly after works are completed. Is there measureable improvement?

There were some specific variations targeted at particular participants depending on their position or role within the ERP. This allowed the researcher to compare perspectives across the sample, while allowing individuals to create narrative in response to themes that particularly spoke to their experience or perspectives. Resident interviews included questions about their experiences of life within the neighbourhood and the activities they participated in, how they move through the neighbourhood and their destinations beyond, how decisions about the ERP were made and who participated in these decisions. Practitioner interviews had an extra focus on the broader policy goals and implications of ERPs.

As previously stated, the interviews were to provide the core dataset for the research, serving to give the researcher an in-depth, 'existential insider' (Relph, 1976) understanding of the phenomenology of urban change in ERPs. The qualitative data collected through the interviews was the primary data source relating to the theories of place as an experiential construction and as lived space. Interviews were also important in building understanding of the memories, imaginations, and cognitive images of place. Interviews would generally occur in the home of a participant, if a resident, or in the office of a practitioner. By suggesting to participants the home or office as a meeting place, it was hypothesised that participants would be surrounded by a repository of memories (Rogers, 2013; Jacobs, 2010; Trigg, 2012) that could be called upon to provide a highly vivid account of the experience of urban change. The choice of the meeting place was left open to the participant as a measure to put them at ease and increase the likelihood of the interview going ahead.

Photographic Survey

This aspect of the research is aligned with current trends in built environment. The photographic survey undertaken by the researcher provided a visual description of the study site and identified significant features within the built environment. It is envisioned that the photographic survey will serve to connect the data provided by the other elements within the methodological framework.

Both the researcher and participants undertook an extensive photographic survey of the study site. Visual methods have much to offer this project. Images can at once convey meaning, emotion and discourse. Visual communication in place research can offer an avenue to bridge the gap between the 'words and numbers' of existing research and the 'experience' that this project is attempting to document.

Visual methods are not a new research tool for social scientists (Chenoweth, 1984) however, given the richness of the data that can be produced easily, there is significant untapped potential for place researchers. Van Auken, Frisvolland and Stewart assert that participant led photographic surveys have “three primary advantages:

1. photos can provide tangible stimuli for more effectively tapping into informants tacit, and often unconscious consumption of representations, images and metaphors,
2. produces different and richer information than other techniques and
3. may also help to reduce differences in power, class and knowledge between researcher and researched” (2010:373).

Stedman et al. (2013) note that participant-led photographic surveys are particularly effective in generating collaborative knowledge across culture, age, discourse and language. Another significant benefit is that by absencing the researcher from the fieldwork activity, the participant is reinforced as the expert of their locality, following Lefebvre’s charge to do so (1991).

When undertaking the photographic survey, participants were provided a camera and instructed to take photographs of the features that are, or were, meaningful to them. A notebook was provided for participants to annotate photographs for the debrief with the researcher.

To supplement the participants’ photographic survey, the researcher undertook a targeted photo-survey to form a ‘base line’, allowing data from interviews and critical discourse analysis to be examined against the reality of the built form of the neighbourhood. The collected photos and debrief formed a primary data source for the theories of place relating to environmental cognition and image.

Figure 1: Sample of Photographic Surveys in North Gosford

Source: Research Participants, 2013.



Literature Review

Since the 1980s, there has been a progressive residualisation of the tenant base in public housing. This has been driven from three major directions: decreasing housing affordability, changes to social policy more broadly and a net reduction in public housing stock. The result is that public housing neighbourhoods have become characterised by intergenerational welfare dependence, poverty, crime and antisocial behaviour (Arthurson, 2012). Physical decay, or poor urban design is given as compounding these issues. Together these concepts form the 'Neighbourhood Effects' thesis that ERPs are envisaged to address.

The neighbourhood effects hypothesis essentially states that living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood leads to, or compounds disadvantage at an individual level (Atkinson, 2008). There is a growing literature that seeks to establish the existence and/or efficacy of these effects (Lupton, 2003; Galster, 2010). The common assertions of the neighbourhood effects hypothesis can be summarised as:

- Conditions in housing markets tend to concentrate cheap housing away from employment opportunities or public facilities however the poorest people are likely to live in these locations. This has flow on effects for high unemployment, low educational attainment, and poor health outcomes as these households become concentrated.
- The disadvantage of an area can lead to it becoming stigmatised and suffering further from 'postcode discrimination' encouraging further revisualisation of the population as those with the financial capacity to, leave the neighbourhood.
- Continued residualisation of the population can result in the truncation of a person's social networks and the establishment of a 'culture of poverty'. Dysfunctional behaviour becomes normalised and reproduced.
- Poor quality housing and public domain serves to stigmatise the neighbourhood and can have significant impact upon the community's health, undermines morale and aids the committing of crime.

(Adapted from Sampson 2012)

These assertions can seem intuitive, with Cheshire (2007) likening them to an article of faith. However, they remain contested with major lines of criticism asserting that neighbourhood effects are difficult to attribute to a particular tenure or to the neighbourhood itself, suggesting that the processes of neighbourhood effects occur beyond the scale of the neighbourhood (Atkinson, 2008).

The remedy for the negative impacts of the neighbourhood effects thesis is the concept of social mix. The homogeneity of public housing estates is advanced as the causation for the social dysfunction found in these neighbourhoods (Cole and Goodchild, 2001). For Arthurson, social mix has been developed in policy discourse to describe what constitutes a community, specifically one that is heterogeneous in a range of aspects, including 'housing tenure, ethnicity and socio-economic characteristics of residents' (2008:209). The benefits of socially mixed communities are given by its proponents as:

- Improved access to social networks, which link residents to other opportunities such as employment;
- Positive role models to assist in integrating residents into the 'appropriate' behaviours of wider society. This factor is linked to ameliorating problems of crime, low education retention rates, poor health and high unemployment;
- Decreased postcode prejudice and lowering of the stigma associated with residing in neighbourhoods that are perceived as negative or undesirable; and
- Increased access to a range of health, education and community services that is difficult in areas of concentrated socioeconomic disadvantage due to service 'overload' within these particular neighbourhoods.

(Arthurson, 2008:6)

The neighbourhood effects/social mix theorisation of addressing disadvantage remains untested. Despite this, governments continue to pursue the policy framing ‘business as usual’ as untenable and citing the combined social and economic efficiencies gained by undertaking estate renewal. Within NSW the ERP model has undergone a series of evolutions, each iteration increasing the scale of both the physical redevelopment undertaken and social welfare policies deployed. This section will briefly trace the evolution of ERPs in NSW.

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), initiated in 1995 was undertaken in a number of estates with the chief objective to “remove the stigma associated with public housing estates and to ensure that they look and operate in a way comparable with other residential areas” (Ruming, 2006:28). The targeted estates were identified as having high levels of dysfunction, social exclusion and high management costs.

Primarily the NIP was an asset based program. HNSW planners proposed that the design of the built environment had a causal relationship with the social dysfunction experienced by residents. By undertaking a built form intervention, essentially ‘de-Radburnising’ estates, it was expected that the socio-economic issues would be addressed. Some token level of community consultation was also performed to gauge resident’s desires for their neighbourhoods (Stubbs and Hardy, 2000). Ruming (2006) outlines the NIP’s objectives as:

- improve physical amenity,
- improve estate services,
- improve estate appearances,
- greater security, safety and privacy,
- improve tenant control over private areas,
- better living spaces,
- better use of open space, and
- community ownership over the process and outcomes.

Unlike contemporary ERPs undertaken in other states, the execution of the NIP did not require the relocation of residents throughout the project, and did not lead to a reduction of public housing on site. By undertaking the subdivision of Radburn superlots, constructing new fencing, public domain enhancements, new street layouts and carports, Housing NSW deemed that the issues that serve to highlight the disadvantage upon estates had been addressed.

Bijen and Piracha (2012) found that in the case of the Riverwood NIP project, the focus on remedial urban design was a key to its success. By defining public and private spaces, improving site legibility and making modifications to housing that allowed passive surveillance; residents and community stakeholders enjoyed many improvements. Residents reported feeling safer and more active in the neighbourhood. Housing NSW noted that the community stabilised, with significantly reduced administration and maintenance costs. Moreover, the local community centre found that the estate became significantly more involved with community activities.

Judd, Randolph and Carmichael (2001) in their evaluation of the NIP suggest that while the NIP was generally successful, the methodology established by HNSW was difficult to apply rigorously. The autonomous nature of individual NIP projects made cross comparison difficult and impossible to accurately determine the efficacy of specific renewal expenditures. Judd (et al) suggested that any future ERP should include standardised cost-benefit audits and a rigorous baseline study to assess social impact. Despite these difficulties, the NIP is has been widely regarded as successful from the perspective of residents (Stubbs and Hardy, 2000).

The NIP was unique in its approach to estate renewal as the project was undertaken by HNSW, and funding streams were from within the government. Subsequent large scale ERPs have been undertaken in a more constrained financial environment, with the public housing sector facing ongoing concerns of financial viability. In order to achieve the core objectives of providing housing and addressing disadvantage (Lilley, 2011), housing providers are entering into public-private partnerships (PPPs) to fund ERPs. Typically these PPPs represent a far-reaching intervention into the physical and social fabric of the estate. The PPP realises a socially mixed outcome through the staged redevelopment of the estate incorporating both public and private housing, new public domain, open space and community facilities. The redeveloped estate enjoys a high standard of amenity and often becomes affordable, aspirational housing within the local market (City Futures Research Centre, 2013). To attract private investment, estates are redeveloped at much higher density.

The Dunbar Way Renewal is an emerging model of ERP that is undertaken and led by CHPs. These projects are reflective of the growing role and autonomy of CHPs in the Australian social housing space. The current projects underway would best be equated to small scale NIP style ERPs. The asset management focus is reflective of the capacities of many CHPs and follows the proven results of previous, similar plans.

Neighbourhood Improvement Program

PROBLEMS OF NIP ESTATES	NIP SOLUTIONS
The proliferation of 'Radburn' influenced cul-de-sacs and walkway, which influenced levels of ownership, identity and security.	Street frontage for all dwellings
Private space open to parks leading to potential intrusion	Re-defining private open space
Existing walkway network as site of fear and crime	Streets should replace walkways as the principle pedestrian network
Parks in public housing estates do not have public or road frontages	Street frontage parks
Dominance of cul-de-sacs	A connected street network
Minor roads are too wide, encouraging high speeds	Road design for safety
Public housing neighbourhood physically contained with clear boundaries	Physical integration with surrounding neighbourhood. Visual integration is also important.
Poor quality of existing fields and reserves	The equitable provision of safe, useable space
High levels of unused spopen spaces	Rationalised unused open space
Dominance of townhouses	Partial or complete redevelopment of town house precincts

Figure 2: Neighbourhood Improvement Program – problem / solution table

Source: Ruming, 2006.

4 Community Profile

Study area

The Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program is a small scale, CHP led renewal of the Dunbar Way estate in North Gosford. This three hectare site suffered from a chronic lack of maintenance and stigma from the local community. Pacific Link committed to refurbish the existing housing and undertake significant public domain and community safety improvements including landscaping (providing better legibility), a new park, and closed-circuit television (CCTV). The Dunbar Way ERP represents the new generation of ERPs which are undertaken wholly by CHPs. The site was chosen as the project attempted to stabilise a community with many negative conceptions of place.

The study area used for the data gathering activities for this case study comprises approximately eight hectares surrounding the estate. The area is bounded by Glennie Street to the north, Henry Parry Drive to the east, Dwyer Street to the south and Gertrude Street to the west. The estate lies within a residential area of the suburb of North Gosford, with a corner shop on the northeast extremity of the study area.

The Dunbar Way social housing estate lies approximately one kilometre to the north of the Gosford CBD and represents a distinct neighbourhood in North Gosford. The estate has two distinct components, readily distinguishable by variations in built form. For the majority of the estate, two storey townhouses are the dominant feature of the built form, which, dependent on their siting on allotments, have private front or backyards. Some townhouses also have carports. To the north-east of the estate, single storey townhouses constitute the housing. These dwellings feature private backyards and lock up garages. Kendall Village, a complex of one-bedroom apartments, are the focus of the central precinct of the estate. Newly constructed two-storey apartment buildings are positioned at the northern entrance to the estate, however these buildings are not subject the ERP. There are a number of pathways that link the otherwise insular estate to the surrounding streets. Surrounding the estate, the built form is dominated by single storey weatherboard cottages on large allotments. A total of 60.7% of dwellings within the suburb are detached, while another 38.6% are either flats, apartments or townhouses (ABS, 2011). This illustrates a fairly low density of development.

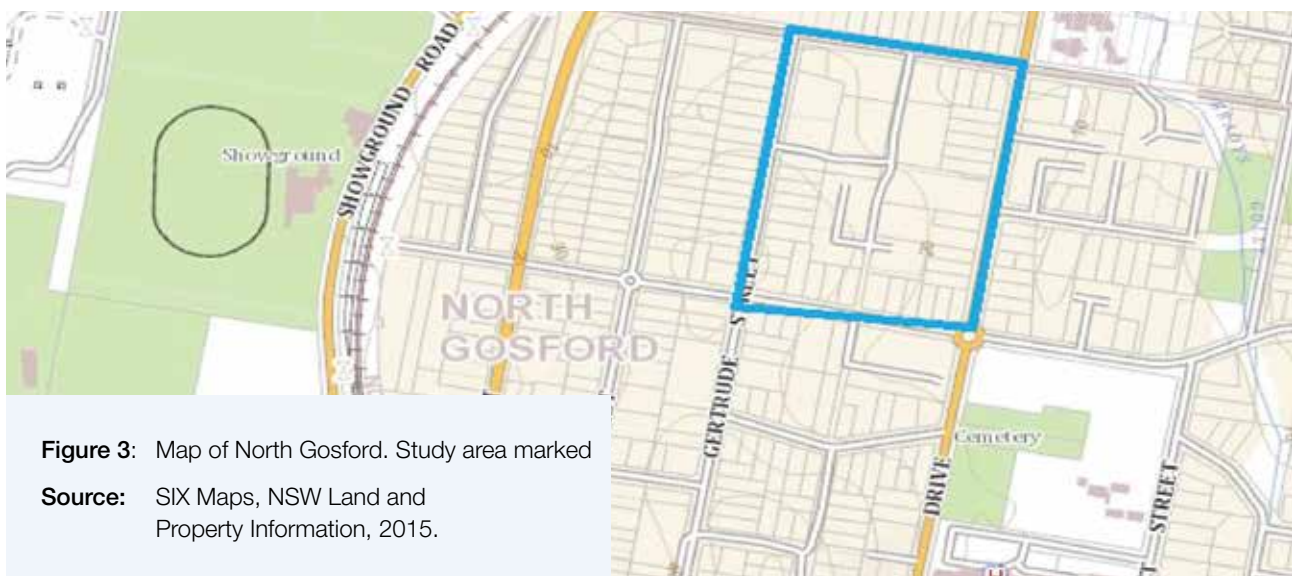


Figure 3: Map of North Gosford. Study area marked

Source: SIX Maps, NSW Land and Property Information, 2015.

About the Dunbar Way community

According to the ABS, the population of North Gosford in 2011 was 3500, an increase of 2% from 3438 in 2006 (ABS, 2011). Historically the Central Coast has been a source of lower cost housing in the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney and has been attractive to retirees and young families that are beginning their housing careers. This is reflected in the 2011 census data, which reveals that 40.7% of the population was less than 30 years of age and 12.1% were over 65 years. The median age of North Gosford is 37 years old, which is consistent with both the NSW (38 years old) and national (37 years old) averages and a combined 85.8% of the population is either employed full-time (60.2%) or part-time (28%).

Occupations within North Gosford are diverse with lower than average engagement with 'professional' sectors (21.7%) and higher than average engagement with 'trades workers' (14.6%), 'labourers' (10.7%) and 'community and personal services' (11.8%). The population is predominantly Anglo-Australian with only 2.2% of the population reporting, "born overseas/ancestry" apart from Australia, the UK or New Zealand. A total of 2.2% of the population is of Indigenous ancestry (ABS, 2011).

Within the Gosford LGA, the Dunbar way estate represents a pocket of social and economic disadvantage. At the time of the 2011 census, Household income is lower than average with 30.2% of households earning less than \$500 per week (ABS, 2011). This suggests that there is a large number of households are dependent on welfare payments, rather than being engaged in paid employment. Within North Gosford, approximately 12% of the population is unemployed. This is significantly higher than both the Gosford LGA (6.1%) and NSW (5.9%). This disadvantage is compounded by the lower than average rate of car ownership; 14.2% of households do not have access to a car versus NSW average of 10.4%, restricting resident's mobility and opportunity to travel for work or recreation (ABS, 2011).

Community relations, as reported by residents, are strained between different areas of the estate. The high rate of resident turnover in the estate and negative community discourses around the estate have led to a scenario where residents know and trust only their immediate neighbours, casting mistrust upon residents in other parts of the neighbourhood and holding others responsible for the negative image of the estate.

Dunbar Way within regional context

The built form of the suburb is diverse in appearance and building type. The commercial precinct of Gosford is clustered around the railway station, and follows the Pacific Highway to the north. Around the railway station, row shops form the majority of the precinct. These row shops largely house independent businesses with professional services generally occupying the upper storeys. There is also a large shopping centre, the Imperial Shopping Centre which houses two supermarkets and other specialty stores. The precinct also offers a number of government, social welfare, medical and professional services alongside a number of cafés, restaurants, and social clubs. Much of the precinct is undergoing refurbishment. The commercial precinct extends to the north, following the Pacific Highway, with large format stores and car yards being the primary businesses. Surrounding the commercial centre are residential neighbourhoods. The dominant dwelling type is three bedroom, detached houses, with increasing dwelling density adjacent to the commercial centre with apartment buildings.

Gosford is well connected in terms of regional transportation, with trains and buses providing access to destinations within the Central Coast region and beyond. Major roads are also easily accessible with the M1 motorway and Pacific Highway providing rapid access to Sydney, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Sub-arterial roads include the Central Coast Highway, Empire Bay Drive and The Entrance Road. Gosford has a number of educational facilities, including four primary schools, two high schools, three faith based schools, a TAFE, and a Campus of the University of Newcastle. Major features of Gosford include two hospitals, the Central Coast Stadium the Gosford Racecourse and various parks and open spaces.

Figure 4: Pictorial overview of Gosford study area

Source: Researcher, January 2014.



5

Stakeholder Engagement

Details of engagement completed with residents

The empirical activity at the North Gosford case study proved to engage a significant proportion of the population. From a total population of 100 dwellings, 10 residents responded to the recruitment letter. The cohort was comprised 5 females and 5 males ranging in age from 28-45 for females and 50-75 for males. Participants were well distributed across the case study site however there was a minor concentration present in the Kendall Village section, perhaps revealing that the older members of the community were more likely to engage with outsiders. Each of the 10 participants undertook an interview with the researcher for approximately 70 minutes. An 'Interview Roadmap' (Bijen, 2016) was used to guide the interview. Unlike residents in many Sydney based ERPs, the participants at North Gosford were not familiar with research processes and required the researcher to explain some of concepts and processes of interest to the study. Despite this, residents were still able to reflect upon their experience of the planned ERP and the community engagement processes.

Participants were requested to undertake a photographic survey of places and features within the urban environment that invoked an emotional response. Eight of ten agreed to undertake this survey and 7 completed it within the required time period. The photographs submitted to the researcher were of a different tone and depicted divergent spatial narratives. The fractious nature of the community was evident from both the photographs, and debriefings. Photos of participant's homes usually featured within the photo surveys which were accompanied with sentiments of pride or gratitude. Photos of the estate's public areas were limited in number and were often derided by residents as being 'gross' or 'depressing'. The vast majority of photos submitted to the researcher were from outside the case study area, often at the local shops, social clubs or by the water in Gosford. This reflected the comments made by many residents that they spent as little time at home as they could. Many

photos submitted to the researcher were unusable in the research as they were taken from within a car and

reflections had obscured the subject of the photograph, this is interesting in itself as when questioned about it, residents reported feeling uncomfortable taking photos within the estate for fear of retribution or being blamed for anything 'going wrong'. This reinforces the sentiments of residents regarding the fractious community sentiment and mutual mistrust of others in the community.

Details of Engagement with other stakeholders

In addition to the fieldwork undertaken with residents, the views and insight of other stakeholders was sought to build a clear picture of the Dunbar Way ERP.

A cohort of six Housing Professionals was consulted to measure the significance of the various interventions planned and the expected outcomes of the project. Of this cohort, three were staff of Pacific Link Housing in various capacities and three were external, but familiar with the project, and active in the housing sector.

Similar to the resident interviews, each of the six participants undertook an interview with the researcher for approximately 50 minutes. The same interview roadmap was used as with residents. This was to test the different ways that the evaluation was understood and measure the congruence between different stakeholder groups.

6 Renewal Overview

Overview of the Dunbar Way Estate Renewal

The Dunbar Way Estate Regeneration Program is representative of “best practice, place based regeneration” (Pacific Link Housing, 2014:1), focused on transferring the management of social housing to local community housing providers for regeneration. The Dunbar Way ERP is one of the first CHP-led regenerations undertaken in NSW.

This new generation of ERPs arise from the NSW State Plan, which places a strong emphasis on developing a social inclusion agenda through collaboration with the non-government sector to build the capacity and resilience of communities (NSW Government, 2010:44). Operationalising these guiding principles of the NSW State Plan, Housing NSW’s corporate plan sets specific goals for the “integration of social housing in communities, breaking the cycle of disadvantage for tenants in social housing, and provide more chances to participate in decision making” (Housing NSW, 2008). Major policy alignments can be found in the imperative to provide affordable housing in supporting communities, supporting a strong social housing sector, supporting the economic growth in the region. The redevelopment was also supported by Federal policy in the National Affordable Housing Agreement, seeking to deconcentrate areas of disadvantage.

At a local level, Gosford City Council welcomed the planned regeneration of the estate. The DWRP is consistent with the objectives of the Gosford Community Strategic Plan to ensure that appropriate, affordable housing be available in the community and address the shortage of affordable housing on the Central Coast. Council also anticipates that the intended works would ensure that the project was both sensitive to and supportive of the current community and further community development (Gosford City Council, 2013).

To address these policy directives, staff of Pacific Link formulated a master plan detailing the opportunities and imperative for undertaking the ERP.

Major objectives included:

- to improve the standard of living of current and future tenants
- to improve social cohesion on the estate, provide better opportunities for tenants and nearby residents, and reduce social and economic disadvantage
- to protect our investment in the neighbourhood, reduce turnover, increase rent payments and minimise maintenance expenditure
- to continue the process of re-imaging Pacific Link as a leading Community Housing Provider (Pacific Link Housing 2011:4).

To achieve the goals of stabilising the community and improve tenant’s perceived quality of life, a number of built environment interventions were planned.

Key interventions of the Dunbar Way ERP included:

- Repainting the exterior of all properties in the estate
- Update and renovate garden areas
- Install playground equipment/ establish a park at the south end of Dunbar Way.
- Install BBQ equipment
- Install CCTV with attendant lighting, tree pruning
- Recast the tenant group to encourage tenant participation

While a new approach in NSW, this model of increased autonomy of CHPs has been adopted from similar policies in the UK where CHPs establish targeted approaches to neighbourhoods, delivering a range of services, including the management, construction and delivery of place based housing products. Research undertaken upon these examples has shown that CHP led ERPs enjoy higher levels of success and are more economically efficient (National Housing Federation, 2008).

7

Findings

Findings from engagement with Residents

In this section the interview data from the Baseline and Phase 2 phases of research will be organised into a thematic analysis. In order to highlight the impacts of the Dunbar Way ERP, the baseline will be presented first, followed by the Phase 2 data.

Key themes of the Baseline Study

Analysis of the Baseline study data has revealed a number of divergent experiences of life on the Dunbar Way Estate. These differences in experience can be related to variables such as household structure, previous living arrangements and the period of time spent living in Dunbar Way. Four major themes emerge from the interview data which are discussed.

Figure 5: Dunbar Way

Source: Research participant, 2013.



Life on the Estate

Within the Dunbar Way participant cohort, the positive anticipation for change was readily observable. Eight of the ten participants expressed a strong connection to place, ranging from positive to resigned. These experiences related to the supportive social networks between neighbours, the security of social housing tenure or, conversely, the stigma that living in social housing brought. Participants conceived Dunbar Way as a place with more than its fair share of problems but one that was on an upward trajectory:

Yeah, I don't know because – well, if you follow the pattern over the years Dunbar's had a really bad name and that kind of hasn't been dropped... then when I moved here, there was a couple of bad eggs kind of still living here but they've been moved out. But I suppose for character – it's hard to describe really. It's pleasant, like it's a pleasant area, because I can sit out on my porch and have a coffee and I've got really good views over there. Yeah, it's just pleasant – a pleasant place to live.

(Participant 2013GR3)

For this resident, the amenity of the neighbourhood had been significantly improved by having problem tenants moved on, leading to a decrease in illegal activity. The ability to safely appreciate the natural amenity of the estate was a key to their connection to place. The tenancy management policies were major contributors to the security and cohesion of the estate. This cohesion was highly valued by many tenants:

For me and my family the best thing is it's a home, it's somewhere that I'm comfortable with. The neighbourhood is great, it can be challenging at times but we all get on because we are all in the same boat, more or less. Single parents, young people raising children. We've all got the same issues going on, same situation in the neighbourhood.

(Participant 2013GR10)

Figure 6: Rubbish dumping is a key concern for residents

Source: Research participant, 2013.



The cohesion was however, largely experienced by tenants on a sub-neighbourhood level with derision or mistrust directed to other parts of the estate. In the case of Dunbar Way the average length of tenure for participants was four years. As social connections to place were still developing for residents, existing narratives from the estate's past influenced how the community considered each other:

I find Dunbar Way has had a stigma and always will have a stigma because up the top end there used to be quite serious drug dealers. But, eventually, yes, time came and they got moved on. So that's the type of thing they've got to look at. Some of the other people have been quite good. The only other things they've got to have a look at now is various things like dumping of rubbish up the top, nobody's done a thing about it to see if the council will come and pick it up.

(Participant 2013GR2)

Significantly, the conceptions of Dunbar Way as a stigmatised neighbourhood were present in all interviews. Residents acknowledged the significant issues that affected the community, such as significant unemployment, welfare dependence and petty crime, and expressed the emotional toll this took on their lives:

Well to be honest, this place can be pretty depressing. I've never been in a housing community before so I didn't know. But after living here, like I said, I keep to myself because if you go out there you hear all the stories and you hear everyone's lives and everything and it can get depressing. So that's why you keep to yourself.

(Participant 2013GR10)

Figure 7: 'Sometimes this place can be depressing'- Participant

Source: Research participant, 2013.



Despite this, residents anticipated that the ERP would make significant inroads to improving the perceptions of the estate for both their neighbours and the broader community. Particularly, the restoration of dwelling façades, and the construction of the playground were seen as the measures that would have the most impact. While other measures such as the CCTV were dismissed as ‘Candid Camera’, with one resident claiming that the cameras were there to provide security to the built form, rather than the community.

Place attachment for most was strongly linked to their security of tenure, with many respondents formerly homeless or suffering severe hardship in the private rental market. For these residents, Dunbar Way represented an ontological security that had previously eluded them:

If we didn't get this house we'd still be living in a hotel and it would have been very, very negative. You can't do things in a hotel room. ... If we didn't get this house, it would be the hotel life and I would have started looking for housing. But when you go looking for rentals they don't accept you that well as a single mum.

(Participant 2013GR10)

Anticipation for renewal and community facilities

For both residents and other stakeholders, there was a sense that the ERP would positively disrupt the place narratives that exist in the neighbourhood. Residents identified the anticipated results of the ERP as; a more cohesive community, less stigma and more engagement with the housing provider. However there was some reservation among the residents of Kendall Village that their near monopoly on the influence in the neighbourhood would be undermined with the expansion of the existing Tenant's Committee to the broader estate. For others there was fear of the less secure tenure of community housing and the cultural changes that Pacific Link represented.

Figure 8: “Home”

Source: Research participant, 2013.



Frustrations during planning stages

The other major theme coming from the Baseline data is a sense of frustration about the renewal. These frustrations can be broadly split along two themes; the protracted renewal process and a perceived lack of communication. Many participants noted that while they did not understand the intricate processes and timeline of the renewal project, longer term residents expressed feelings of disappointment of having made decisions to transfer tenancy arrangements or other sacrifices which they perceive leave them in tenuous positions:

I think it would be, but let's face it, if they are going to do it, schedule and plan the blasted thing. It's like any construction or redevelopment project, if we know what the thing is then we can look at it and say okay this is where it's going. There will always be odd bits and pieces I'm quite willing to accept, I think everyone's quite willing to accept, but as long as we know where we're going.

(Participant 2013GR9)

These concerns were thought by residents to be compounded by a perceived lack of communication about the renewal. This is an important finding as Pacific Link undertook consultation via letters and the TMG, suggesting that there is potential to alter engagement practices to improve efficacy. When the researcher discussed the long timelines of other Estate Renewal Projects in Sydney, residents were appreciative of the challenges faced by PL.

Key themes of engagement with housing professionals

The interviews undertaken with the Housing Practitioner cohort, while following the same interview roadmap, delivered a different range of priorities and responses to the propositions. The key themes that came from these interviews were aligned with communication, the anticipated amenity that the ERP would bring and the increased security and safety for residents. In addition to interviews, key documents made available by Pacific Link were analysed.

While preparing to undertake the ERP, Pacific Link designed a comprehensive 'communications and PR' strategy. Fieldwork revealed a multi-faceted approach to drive the narrative of neighbourhood/community development:

"This is a first and critical initiative for the Central Coast. Instead of allowing the estate to slowly fall apart, Pacific Link has moved to take control and spend its own accumulated earnings to bring the estate up to date and make it useful for the next 30 years. It means that people in need can now be accommodated in the knowledge they have a mutual obligation to respect the improved amenities and opportunities that the program brings."

(Pacific Link, 2014)

The imperative of the ERP is the restoration of the estate into a safe, secure neighbourhood, providing a high quality of life for the community. Media releases, made periodically within local media and industry updates are designed to build a sense of anticipation for the renewed estate which is "essential to protect the value and extend the use of existing community and social housing assets" (Pacific Link Housing, 2014). These objectives are couched in the creation of a safe and 'enticing' neighbourhood through improved urban design in interviews with PL staff:

I think historically it's got a bad name, so when we do try and allocate people; they're like "I'll live anywhere except Dunbar Way," but since they are beginning to know about the changes that are going on a lot of people have been coming to us going "we've heard that it's changed a bit, we wouldn't mind living there now." I think painting it up and making it look bright and clean and neat again will definitely aid that and make it a place people want to live. Especially because down the bottom of the street we've got two new complexes that we manage as well.

(Participant 2013GP3)

Interviews with PL staff revealed that the Dunbar Way ERP is designed to combat the stigma that has built toward the estate in recent years. A major component of the Pacific Link strategy is the establishment of a Tenant Management Group (TMG). This TMG is considered a project specific extension of PL's existing tenant participation strategy. The TMG is intended to "facilitate grass roots participation to engage the commitment of tenants and neighbouring residents for successful and sustainable outcomes" (Pacific Link 2011:18). The function of the TMG is the discussion of matters that affect the cohesion of the estate and coordinating Pacific Link's agenda of implementing strategies to "address barriers

to workforce participation” and mutual responsibility in the post ERP neighbourhood. To date the TMG has coordinated events to promote better interaction between tenants such as morning teas and barbecues. The group also identifies specific assistance to PL associated with submissions to Council and disseminating information in the community regarding Pacific Link activity and any outcomes. There has been mixed success for the TMG during its tenure, as expressed by PL staff:

We've engaged them in everything. Like now I've just completed the playground proposal, so that's going to the board for approval. We've engaged them from the beginning. So whilst I've gone ahead and done all the nitty-gritty, you know arranging all the quotes. I've got them involved by helping. You know, what kind of equipment would they like to see, to the point where I've actually asked them to vote on which preferred playground they'd like to see. So I've gotten them involved. I must admit, it's very sad in a sense, where I've actually invited them to come along to make a vote, yet very little have showed any interest, which is very sad.

(Participant 2013GP2)

A secondary function of the tenant participation program is to build cohesion between different areas of the estate. PL staff expressed concern for the way the built form and street layout had led to the evolution of ‘ghettoes’ and ‘an us vs. them attitude’. This was reflected particularly by Kendall Village and the surrounding townhouses, with each group of residents blaming the other for the social difficulties and bad reputation of the estate.

The interview data demonstrated that for stakeholders of the Dunbar Way ERP, concepts of community and place were strongly aligned with the features and appearance of the existing neighbourhood and the planned ERP. For a majority of stakeholders, the potential for the ERP to make significant improvement to the neighbourhood was apparent in interviews:

I was involved in the initial concept of the project, which was based on I guess due to the extreme anti-social behaviour and the unsavoury elements that we had out there when I first started at Pacific Link. I think giving people more of a sense of place, something to feel proud of where they live, instead of being embarrassed about living in Dunbar Way. I think it will be beneficial...it's just going to create an area where people outside of the area are going to want to go as well, whereas at the moment it's avoided.

(Participant 2013GP3)

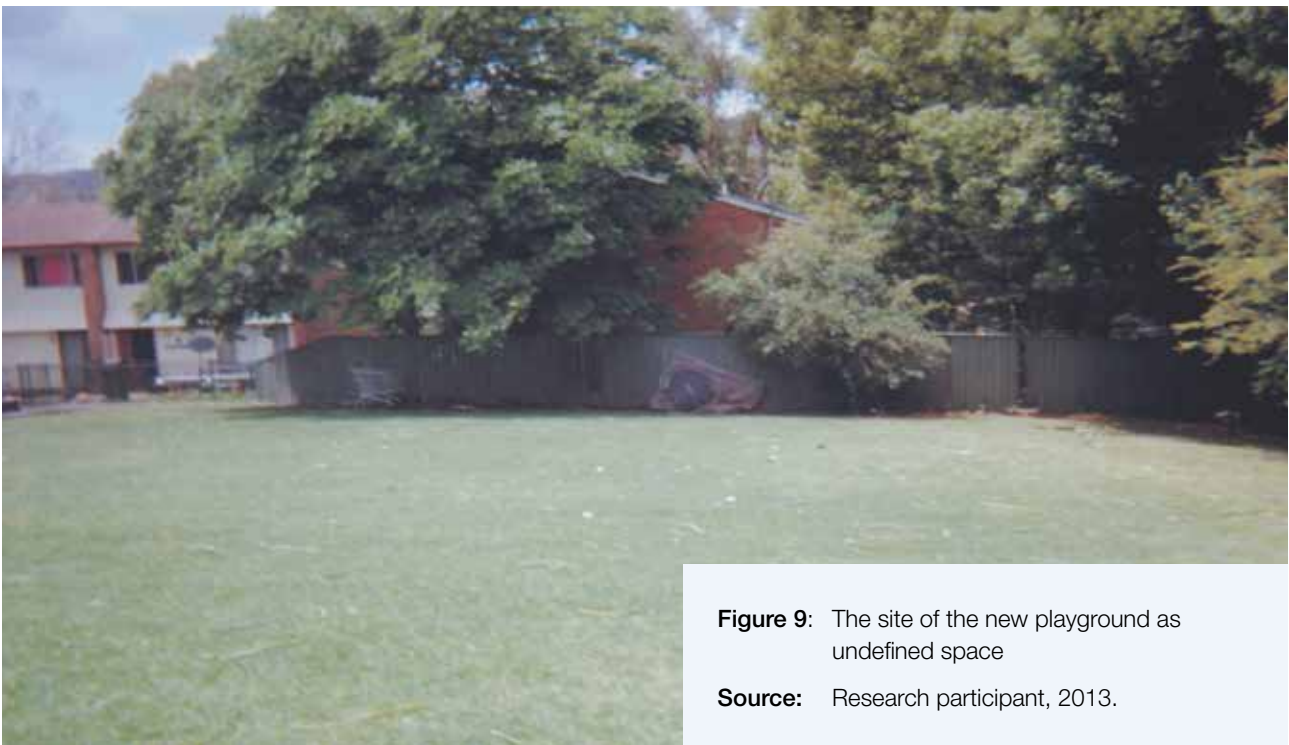


Figure 9: The site of the new playground as undefined space

Source: Research participant, 2013.

Conclusions from the Baseline

Overall, the Baseline study provided a robust foundation for the measurement of the perceived impact of the Dunbar Way ERP. The Baseline shows that the Dunbar Way estate is valued by the residents for the stabilising effect that housing provides. However, the estate was a place that also causes hardship in their lives in the form of stigma and the experience of severe social problems. Residents expressed a desire for the redevelopment to provide a 'fresh start' for the community and allow the estate to shed some of the narratives of dysfunction and crime that had characterised it in the broader community.

Key Findings from Phase 2

In this section, the interview data collected from Phase 2 along with data provided by Pacific Link is reviewed. This discussion again links the major themes of living through the Dunbar Way ERP and the response the community has toward the regenerated estate. As described previously, the interviews followed the same format as the Baseline Study; interviews of up to 70 minutes were undertaken at a place of the participant's choosing. This second phase saw a 20% churn in participants, this was due to two baseline participants moving off the estate.

Increased amenity

The impact of the Dunbar Way ERP was immediately apprehended by residents, with the improved appearance of the estate a key theme in interview data. Of this improved amenity the renovation of the facades and the creation of the park at the south end of the estate were major features. Interestingly, the park was noted as a positive intervention by all participants, with the older residents noting that there was less noise and danger as the children of the estate had a dedicated play area and no longer played in the street. Parents of children noted that they felt a lot more relaxed by the security that this safe play area provided; reflecting that before the renewal they would have prevented their children playing outside, now the park provided an opportunity for further development of relationships between households. Participants reported that both they and their children had made new acquaintances because of the opportunity provided by the park. Supporting informal contact with neighbours provided by features in the built environment is supported by the research of Jacobs (1961) and Kunstler (1993). These encounters with neighbours seem to be starting to break down some of the fractures in the Dunbar Way community.

I think the children's playground is great. I love it. It's literally designated for the kids because there's a lot of older kids, teens and that would just hang out and do all sorts of stuff. Gives them a place to go and out of their parent's hair, you know. It's really changes that little place up top (having a playground). Lots of things would happen in that park with regards to drinking and drugs, and people hanging around. It has deterred a lot of that because there are children playing and adults watching them.

While not as significant in the data as the park or CCTV installation, the renovated facades of dwellings had provided many participants with an increased sense of pride in their homes and had engendered the desire to make further improvements to their homes. For some this took the form of establishing gardens or undertaking regular maintenance to keep the frontage and yard tidy.

I've noticed that it looks a lot cleaner. It looks a lot nicer. We haven't got as many rough people cruising around, especially because the security cameras that went in as well. That's helped quite a bit. I know they've moved some people out who were destroying things and roughing up the street basically. With the improvements and stuff, yeah, no, it looks a lot nicer. A lot nicer so that your kids can go out there and you feel a lot safer.

The Dunbar Way ERP has achieved its objectives in regard to increasing the amenity of the neighbourhood. Through the measures implemented in the public domain, Pacific Link has made major positive impacts upon the attitudes of residents toward their home and neighbourhood. Through the specific intervention of the children's playground, new opportunities for community interaction have been created. When asked if further public domain development (such as a community garden or Men's Shed) would be well utilised, interview participants all agreed that it would be useful to the community if undertaken.

Reduced Stigma

A key objective of the Dunbar Way ERP is to improve the social outcomes of residents through the improvement of amenity on site. While the specific benefits enjoyed by members of the community have been discussed above, additional thematic data suggests that the community and neighbourhood is becoming less stigmatised. This is expressed in two ways, place attachment and place defence. By undertaking the works, combined with the informal social contact with others, residents are beginning to develop a sense of unselfconscious commitment to the neighbourhood. This is expressed by Relph (1976) as 'insideness' of place attachment. Interviews demonstrated that residents overwhelmingly felt that the estate was now a place that they were proud to call home. Place defence, (the willingness to deflect stigmatising discourses) was the other indicator used to measure the social impacts of the ERP. In this indicator, the data shows that residents are much more willing to admit living in the neighbourhood, or to counter stigma in the community.

I can tell people without cringing where I live now instead of going all, "It's just over there somewhere." I just say, "It's Dunbar Way," and if they don't like it then that's fine. Yeah, sometimes they have a comment. "Oh, my God. How can you live there?"...Then you turn around and you actually ask them, "Down your street, you've got no baddies down your street? Half the time they say, "Yeah, we get that." And I say, "What's the difference between your street and my street? You've got to look at your own street before you look at mine." Yeah, people are starting to wise up Dunbar is not that bad after all.

Figure 10: The new Playground at the Southern end of Dunbar Way

Source: Research participant, 2013.



Tenants also pointed to the media attention and visits from the NSW Premier and local politicians as evidence that the estate was becoming established as a neighbourhood of choice within the Gosford area. These events were also used as evidence to highlight that Pacific Link was an effective housing manager, and was often contrasted to previous management arrangements. Residents saw that Pacific Link was a positive force within the neighbourhood that sought to help Dunbar Way ‘shrug off’ the stigma it endures.

We’ve been in the news quite a bit, of them doing it up and everything else. Yeah, there is some people that have actually known I live in Dunbar Way and they’ve actually come up and said, “Oh, your place looks a whole lot better now.” It’s not dark and dingy or anything else anymore. Maybe that’s why they painted them pink. I don’t know. Might give it a happier look to them. Yeah, it’s probably a lot better for us for everybody else to know that we’re not dark dingy sort of troll people. Little trolls living up this end. Yeah, I it’s done a lot.

Improved safety

The final theme that was present in the interview data was that of the increased safety experienced by residents in and around their homes. Within this theme, three sub themes emerged; increased and meaningful social contact with neighbours, the installation of CCTV, and Pacific Link’s tenant management strategy.

Building trust

Meaningful contact with neighbours is embedded within the built form interventions undertaken by the ERP. By creating opportunities for residents to interact and form relationships, trust within the community has been fostered.

That’s probably a good thing. I see it as a lot more social as we have been only because we have more mums coming in with kids, so single parents coming in with kids and stuff. They’re all similar ages and things, so yeah, I see it becoming more social, a happier place to be, and even getting together up at the park and playing. Yeah, I see a lot more of that happening as long as the riff raff stays out and it stays cleans enough for us.



Figure 11: CCTV provides security to property and person in the public domain

Source: Research participant, 2013.

8

Closed Circuit TV

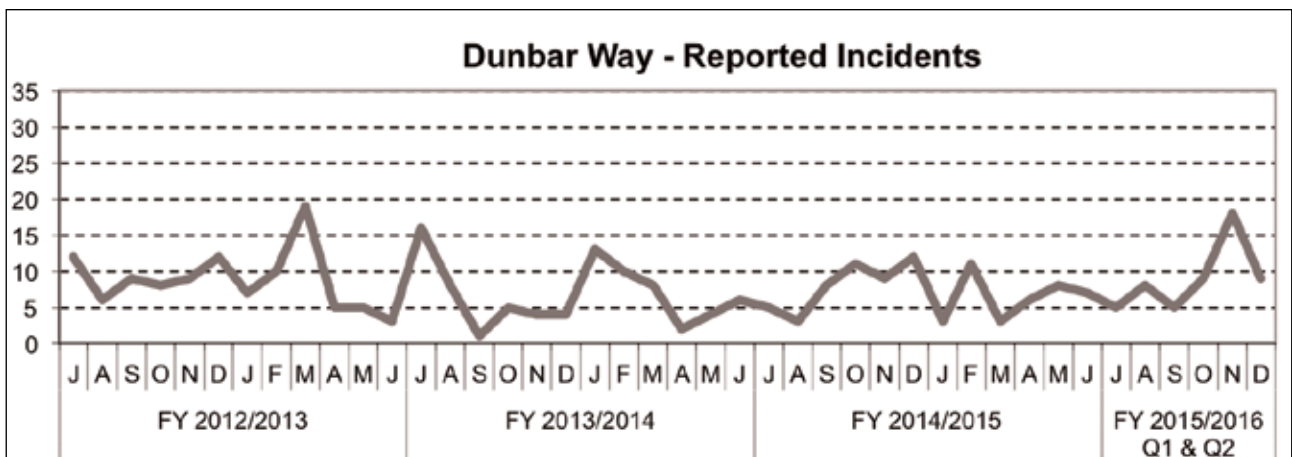
CCTV

A major component of the Dunbar Way ERP capital investment was the installation of the CCTV system. The cameras monitor paths, the parks and playground and streets within the neighbourhood, providing a visual deterrent to antisocial behaviour and crime. All participants asserted that the CCTV was the most effective intervention of the ERP. The deterrent impact of the CCTV on drug crime was particularly appreciated by residents with children, noting that they were glad that this negative influence had moved off the estate. Residents report the impact that the CCTV has had upon the amenity of the neighbourhood is 'like a switch', asserting that antisocial behaviour on the street, dangerous driving and drug crime largely ceased within days of the system going online.

Oh I love it. Love it, love it. We got a letter saying, "We're turning it on", that night- there was no trouble. Then we got another letter saying that they're turning it off for a few days and we'll be turning it back on the 17th. Well in that time the amount of trouble that went on in the street I mean I never got a good night's sleep. All the partying, the loud music, the loud cars - that's another story. As soon as they realised it was coming on again - dead quiet!

Figure 12: Calls for Service – Dunbar Estate

Source: NSW Police, 2016



Information provided by the NSW Police supports these accounts of the efficacy of the CCTV reducing antisocial behaviour and increasing community reporting of crime. Current research from Graves (2011) and Chaskin and Joseph (2009) suggest that the redevelopment processes induce residents to ‘protect’ the improvement and undertake to increase the reporting of criminal behaviour. Further, Bothwell, Grindoz and Lang (1998) report that in American ERP projects the increased place attachment that the improved built environment delivers, empowers residents to defend their neighbourhoods from potentially stigmatising activity.

As can be seen in Figure 12, calls for service have steadily increased since the installation of the CCTV in November 2014. This suggests that residents are more confident in the reporting of crime as there is now a sufficient evidence base to prosecute offenders. Additional data provided by NSW police (2015) show that there is a reduction of total crime of 23% in the first year that the CCTV was in use. Reductions in particular categories of crime related to the public areas of the neighbourhood are: Malicious Damage (83% reduction), Assault (25% reduction), and use of Police powers (30% reduction). Further, PL has reported that they have made no insurance claims arising from property damage since the installation of CCTV. These figures are a strong justification for the investment in the CCTV and provide evidence of its usefulness in creating a safer, stronger community.

Privacy and management of CCTV

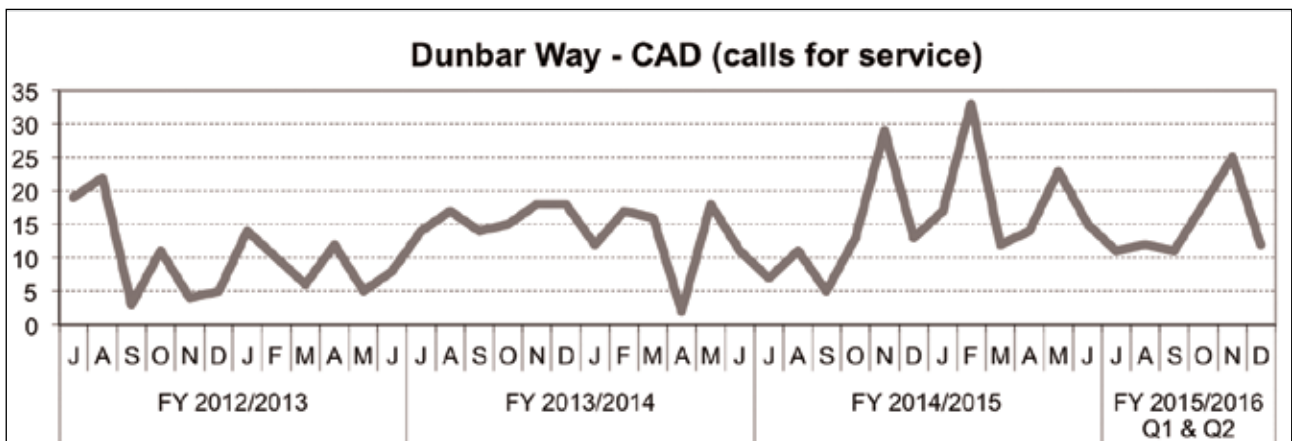
While the safety impact for the CCTV installation is apparent, there are some questions regarding the privacy and management of the CCTV. Some residents report that the CCTV is an invasion of their privacy, as they argue that camera angles are such that the activities inside their homes or backyards are being monitored. A second concern regarding the CCTV is the way that footage is reviewed. Two interviewees claimed to have had their homes burgled in plain sight of the cameras, yet as they were unable to precisely state the time of the incident, the footage was unable to be examined

Yeah, I’ve had a lot of problems with the CCTV – like I’ve been broken into twice. They’re pretty well useless, or they’re not interested. They’re just not interested. There’s just too much going on in this day and age. It’s all about the cost of things. Get over it. What did they take? I guess if someone was hurt or bashed then they would change their priorities. I’ve suggested these things. I’ve seen the cameras, they look down, but when I’ve had both times I’ve asked them to scan them and no, it’s just not a priority.

While the Pacific Link Policy outlines the way that footage is to be lawfully collected and used, research suggests that while the deterrent effect of CCTV is strong when first installed, footage must be actively monitored to maintain the initial drop in crime and antisocial behaviour (Nieto, 1997).

Figure 13: Reported Incidents – Dunbar Estate

Source: NSW Police, 2016



9

Tenant Management

Tenant Management

Although outside the scope of the Dunbar Way ERP and this evaluation, the tenant management strategies undertaken by Pacific Link before and after the ERP have had a profound impact upon the success of the ERP. All participants in the study report that the tenant management was the most effective ‘measure’ of the ERP.

The tenant management is the biggest factor because they had some absolute shockers in here. I’ve lived next door to them and, yeah, to get rid of those who cause the trouble, not who participate but actually cause it, they’re the ones to get rid of and they have done that. They mostly got rid of the riff raff which has made a huge difference.

This raises a number of questions for the study and more broadly the efficacy of built environment interventions alone. By undertaking the relocation or termination of problem tenants, the impacts of the intervention are

amplified beyond the natural influence of these measures. For example, the specific tenant moved on may have been responsible for committing offences that have seen major reductions. The presence of antisocial residents would also impact the desire for others to utilise public spaces or interact with their neighbours.

More broadly, there are questions regarding the future housing careers of those residents that are moved on. Specifically, does moving these tenants improve their outcomes or does it only serve to compound the problem in other areas? These questions are beyond the scope of the study, however they do warrant mention due to the emphasis Dunbar Way residents placed upon the importance of tenant management.



Figure 14: Defined space was appreciated by residents

Source: Research participant, 2013.

10

Conclusion

Conclusion

This evaluation, commissioned by Pacific Link Housing, provides an important and timely review of a neighbourhood that has undergone significant change. It finds a community that is largely optimistic about the potential and realised impact upon the physical and social environment. The community has a strong commitment to the objectives for the outlined by Pacific Link, and are reasonably engaged with the planning and research agendas forwarded.

Residents are generally supportive of the ERP, though this is conditional upon the continued improvement of the neighbourhood, which seems to be delivered through the growing community ties and place attachment. Careful planning of any further development will need to be undertaken, with a more sensitive approach to communications and engagement. Despite the low uptake or perceived sense of engagement, residents can now see that Pacific Link have made a considerable positive impact upon the neighbourhood. By undertaking the ERP Pacific Link Housing has laid a sound foundation from which to further develop Dunbar Way into a neighbourhood of choice in the Lower Central Coast social housing market.

This example of small scale CHP Led urban renewal is a validation of the model and is a promising policy direction as the Social Housing sector continues to evolve in NSW. Pacific Link has undertaken a high quality renewal and can enjoy the positive impact that it has upon the social and economic divisions of its business.

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