

## Waverley Local Government Area

### 18-22 Ocean Street & 30 Wellington Street, Bondi

Supplementary Statement of Environmental Effects for a *SEPP Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability* project including the demolition of three existing buildings on the site, the refurbishment of Scarba House (a scheduled heritage item) and the development of 140 independent seniors living apartments in three buildings.



Report prepared for  
**The Benevolent Society**  
March 2009

## 1 Executive summary

### 1.1 Ageing population

The ageing of Australia's population presents major challenges for governments, planners and the community as a whole, as we prepare to house, support and care for a greater older population.

Unless new approaches are developed, this demographic trend and its associated social and economic changes will lead to an unsustainable demand for aged care services. Meanwhile, expectations are changing among older people themselves, as well as among those approaching old age. If and when their health declines, they would rather be supported by community-based care than move to a nursing home or hostel.

The Benevolent Society's proposed development *Apartments for Life at Ocean Street* (AFLOS) has been developed as a response to trends occurring at a national level, as reflected in Waverley Local Government Area. AFLOS offers a new concept in retirement living that offers older people an alternative to traditional forms of retirement housing and aged care; one that allows them to live in their homes throughout later life and to stay connected to their local community.

The *Draft East Subregional Strategy* predicts that 18% of the population of Waverley Local Government Area will be over the age of 65 by 2031. In the 2006 Census the proportion of the population over 65 in Waverley LGA was 13.1%; this compares to 12.3% for the Sydney Metropolitan Area and 16.5% for NSW (ABS).

In October 2008 updated population predictions for State and Regional NSW were released by the Department of Planning. The population forecast for NSW was 440,000 people greater than the 2006 population forecasts that were used for the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* and subsequent *East Subregional Strategy*. These more recent figures predict that the population over the age of 65 will increase significantly in Sydney to 18% of the population and 21.5% in NSW by 2036<sup>1</sup>. It is likely that the percentage of the population over the age of 65 residing in the Waverley LGA will increase above the 18% predicted in the *East Subregional Strategy*.

To adequately house its rapidly ageing population, the proportion of accommodation to meet the needs of Waverley's seniors must increase substantially. Every opportunity to create seniors living projects must be captured because conversion of existing apartment buildings to seniors living standards is mostly not possible.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Department of Planning (2008) *New South Wales State and Regional Population Projections, 2006-2036: 2008 Release*. Sydney: Department of Planning.

## 1.2 The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society is Australia's oldest charity. Established in 1813, the Society has been caring for Australians and their communities for nearly 200 years. The Society is a secular, non-profit, independent organisation working to bring about positive social change in response to community needs. The Society's purpose is to create caring and inclusive communities and a just society.

The Society provides services to children, women, older people, carers and disadvantaged communities in New South Wales and Queensland. The Society's services for older people are aimed at supporting older people to age well, living as independently as possible with dignity and respect.

The Society's history of providing services to the eastern suburbs community dates back to the mid 19th century. It currently runs a range of services in the Waverley area for children, vulnerable families, older people, people with a disability and their carers. It has run community services on the site of the proposed development since 1917.

## 1.3 The concept

Apartments for Life at Ocean Street will be a new concept in retirement living and aged care. Its key aims are that:

- Residents are able to stay in the same apartment for the rest of their lives. The Society's goal is that 95 percent will never need to face the disruption and cost of moving to a nursing home.
- Older people are able to stay living in their familiar community, close to their established networks of friends, family and services.
- A new 'social hub' is created; connections between residents and the local community are built and strengthened; contacts with family and friends are promoted; social isolation is reduced.
- The apartments are affordable by local older people in a range of financial circumstances, reflecting the diversity of the local community.
- Lessons from the project are disseminated so that others can replicate or adapt the concept.

The availability of appropriate and affordable housing and social support is critical to enhancing older people's self reliance and quality of life, and to reducing their need for aged care services.

The project aims will be achieved through:

- The design of the apartments, buildings and external open space
- Inclusion of affordable housing
- On-site services, facilities, social activities and community engagement
- Assisted access to support services and care
- A philosophy of respect for residents' individuality and autonomy
- Evaluation and research.

The proposal has been based on the 'Apartments for Life' model developed by the Humanitas Foundation in the Netherlands which has attracted international renown for its achievements.

*"There is national interest across Australia in the success of this project. The Benevolent Society is to be congratulated for the leadership role it has assumed in demonstrating how existing Commonwealth and State regulation can be used in a different way to provide a new model of housing and support for older people."<sup>2</sup>*

#### 1.4 Amended plans

The subject proposal is for housing for seniors and has been lodged in accordance with *SEPP Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability 2004*. The works proposed are:

1. Demolition of all existing buildings on site except Scarba House and some of its additions
2. Construction of 110 space basement parking for three residential flat buildings;
3. Erection of three residential flat buildings, two of which will be ten storeys in height and the third building will be five storeys in height. In total the development will accommodate 140 apartments
4. Heritage refurbishments of historic Scarba House and its immediate environs
5. Retention of all heritage listed trees
6. Provision of on-site facilities for residents and the community including meeting rooms and a dementia day care centre
7. Extensive landscaping and opening up of the site for public access.

#### 1.5 Planning context

The subject site is currently zoned Special Uses under the WLEP 1995. The comprehensive LEP, required to be prepared by Council within the next two years, will not include

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<sup>2</sup> Gillian McFee, Uniting Care Ageing, Letter addressed to Tony Reed, 25 February 2009, Attachment One

provisions for Special Uses zones. As the site is surrounded by a Residential 2(c2) zone, it must logically be rezoned as Residential 2(c2) to be consistent with the locality. Within the Residential 2(c2) Zone, building densities of up to FSR 2.4:1 have been approved.

Residential flat buildings in the 2(c2) zone are regulated by the Waverley LEP and Waverley DCP. Whilst compliance with the DCP is not required, a comparison is made to better understand how the proposal fits into the surrounding zone.

The key development characteristics are:

- FSR of 1.48:1 (not including Scarba House)
- Maximum building height of ten storeys or 35.2 metres including the lift towers
- General compliance with comparable DCP setbacks with few, minor breaches
- 140 apartments – 116 x one bedroom, 22 x two bedroom, two x three bedroom
- Substantial compliance with DCP standards
- Full compliance with SEPP 65 and the Residential Flat Design Code.

## **1.6 Preservation of Scarba House**

Conservation, restoration and additions to the heritage item are proposed. Preservation of the original Moreton Bay Fig trees adjoining the entrance carriageway is also proposed. The necessary curtilage for the house is defined by the trees and the circular carriageway and the new works do not intrude into the defined curtilage.

## **1.7 Public interest**

This development would result in significant social and economic benefits for the community of Waverley that are in the public interest.

The development of seniors living accommodation directly responds to the current and future housing demands of Waverley. Thirty percent of the dwellings will be available as affordable housing at discounted prices, for older people with low or modest financial resources. A further 10% will be social housing for disadvantaged older renters on very low incomes. This 40% will be reserved for older people with a strong connection to Waverley.

This substantial affordable housing component will enable local older people to remain living in and connected to their local community. It will thus contribute to the social sustainability of the Waverley area.

Similar to projects in which Waverley Council has been developer or joint venture partner, this project does not rely on the Floor Space Ratio bonus for affordable housing.

Conservation and refurbishment of the heritage scheduled Scarba House and its heritage curtilage is a major part of the project and dictates the disposition of buildings on the site. The preservation of one of Waverley's best surviving Victorian mansions and one of the few to retain some of its original grounds is also in the interest of the greater community of Waverley.

The public interest will be served by the creation of a new local 'social hub' with facilities and services for residents of the site and people of all ages living nearby.

- A cafe/shop
- Meeting rooms for flexible use by local clubs and community groups, for wellness activities, exercise, adult learning, social activities etc
- A day care centre for people with dementia
- Open space for community use, of approximately half the site.

These will be located at ground floor level of the two main new buildings and in Scarba House and will be accompanied by a program of activities and events involving older people and the general community.

Waverley Council has identified housing affordability and the ageing of the population as two of its most significant community issues in its Social Plan. This development will directly address these two critical issues.

Some private interests (i.e. adjoining occupiers) will be adversely affected. A number of apartments in adjoining buildings will face increased overshadowing and others will face reduced views.

The applicant and this planning consultancy believe that the appropriate balance has been achieved between public and private interests, and that this project in its revised form is worthy of approval.