

How can we make affordable housing work?

- A case study of the Willoughby Local Housing Program

Background

- Local Government Housing Initiatives Program 1995- Council received funding to employ a Housing Officer
- Housing Policy 1998 identified significant need for affordable rental housing
- LEP amendment and DCP 23 established affordable housing requirements through inclusionary zoning
- Known as the Willoughby Local Housing Program

Purpose of amendments

- Retain residents with historic links to the area
- Maintain diversity and social mix of the community
- Retain workforce that can undertake service industries that are essential to Chatswood business district

The affordability problem

Sydney

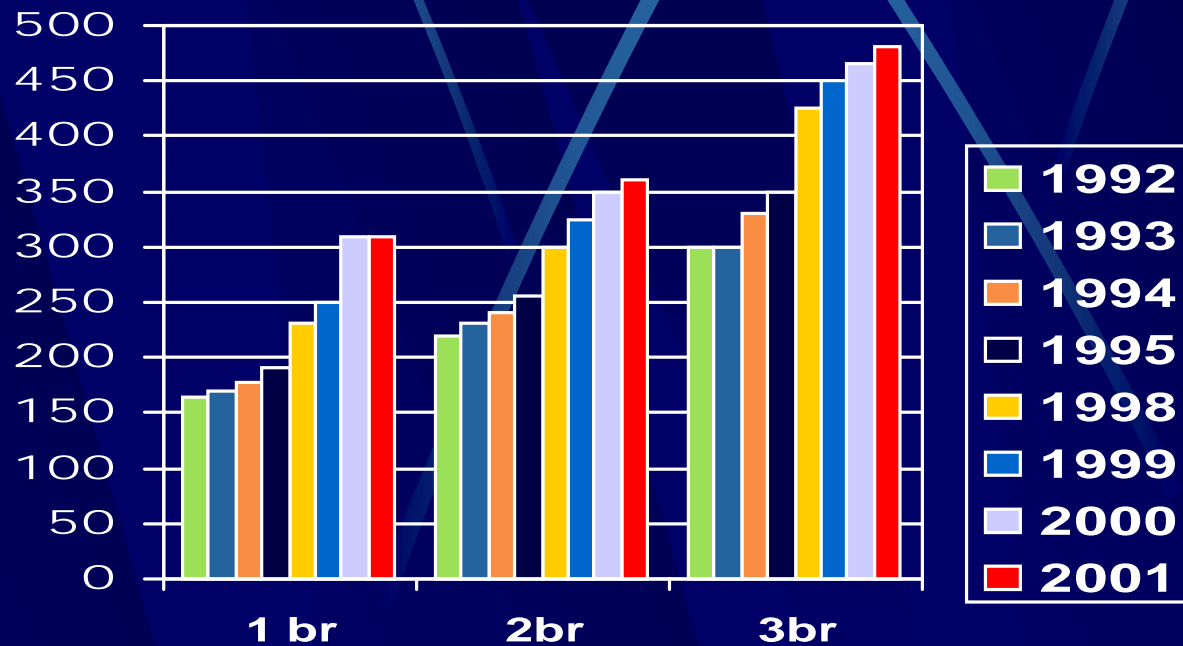
- From 1986 to 1996, private rent paying households in housing related 'stress' grew for Sydney from 67.3 per cent to 80.7 per cent (Berry and Hall 2001: 55)

Willoughby

- Rental levels for some dwellings have doubled in past 10 years
- One bedroom dwellings increased 24% in the year to December 2000

Willoughby's affordability problem

Rental costs in Willoughby LGA



Inclusionary zoning

- Where a developer is required to provide a proportion of affordable housing as part of rezoning process
- “Realistic means of achieving the planning objectives of housing affordability and social mix” (Williams 1998:304)
- Limited by local opportunities for rezoning

Willoughby's affordable housing provisions

- LEP 1995 requires 4% of residential floor space to be provided as affordable housing, either on-site or as monetary contribution
- Details of Willoughby Local Housing Program are specified in DCP 23
- Title of units is retained by Council
- Dwellings are managed by a community housing organisation, including tenant selection and maintenance

Tenant selection

- Household income of less than \$45000
- Mix of very low, low and moderate income tenants
- Special needs housing groups
- Residents or former residents of the local government area

Identifying Willoughby Local Housing Precincts

- The need for development to provide housing that meets the requirements of special needs housing groups
- The impact of the proposed development on the existing mix and likely future mix of residential housing stock within the City of Willoughby.

Case study: St Leonards

- Former SRA land (Special Uses Railway)- requested rezoning to 2(c) Residential
- Identified as a Willoughby Local Housing Precinct
- Required to provide 10 units as part of the development
- Two other sites identified

Standard of units

- Units to be of a similar standard to other dwellings in the LGA



Developing an affordable housing strategy- typical issues

- Negative perception of tenants
- Allocation of staff resources
- Finding information/ sharing of experiences- (LGSA Housing Reference Group)
- Experience with property management issues
- Whether AH is the role of local government

Developing an affordable housing strategy- typical issues

- Identifying most appropriate mechanism
- Definitional issues (Willoughby Local Housing Program)
- Setting up framework for management agreement
- Start up costs- no capital base
- Body corporate fees- new developments

How can we make it work?

- Legislative context
- Knowledge sharing between councils
- Cross divisional approach
- Dedication of resources
- Use of most appropriate mechanism at a local level

How can we make it work?

- Governmental commitment at all levels
- Education on tenants
- Establishment of a centralised housing trust or funding for start up costs
- Are we going far enough?
- Making a difference

Contacts

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