

Community Impacts of New Student Housing Development:  
The UNSW University Village



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Photograph of Sydney University Village. Source: Small 2008.

## Thesis Abstract

At universities across the country and indeed throughout the developed world, private student housing providers such as Campus Living and Unilodge are partnering with the tertiary education sector to provide purpose built student housing apartments. This new phenomenon has seen the unprecedented entry of the private sector into the once institutionally dominated student housing market. High density student housing which clusters a diverse and multicultural group of people at a young age is inherently capable of producing social impacts. An evaluation of the planning and assessment process undertaken in the development of new student housing at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) reveals these potential impacts. This thesis employs techniques of social impact assessment to provide recommendations for the effective integration of future student housing developments into the community. UNSW University Village is a purpose built student housing development currently under construction. Catering for over 1000 students, the development is one stage of new student housing development outlined in UNSW strategic planning documents. Using UNSW University Village as a case study, the thesis looks at the community impacts of large scale student housing developments provided as a result of BOOT (build, own, operate, transfer) schemes.



BPLAN class of 2008. Source: Small, K. 2008.

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# Table of Contents

Thesis Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments .....	ii
List of Tables and Figures .....	vi
Abbreviations.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction and Context .....	1
Research Context .....	3
Significance of the study.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Legislative Context .....	8
Research Statement.....	9
Research Methodology.....	9
Discourse Analysis .....	10
Key Informant Interviews .....	10
Thesis Structure .....	11
Chapter One Summary.....	13
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework.....	14
Community and Social Planning.....	15
Community and a Sense of Belonging.....	15
The University as a Community.....	18
The Changing Nature of University Environments.....	19
Responding to the Neoliberal State .....	20
Housing Markets and Housing Affordability in Australia .....	21
Student Housing Provision in Australia.....	22
Unilodge .....	23
Campus Living Villages (CLV).....	23
Chapter Two Summary.....	24

Chapter Three: Theoretical Impacts of Student Housing .....	25
Key University Student Housing Literature .....	26
Focussing on Social Impacts .....	32
Chapter Three Summary .....	33
Chapter Four: SIA Process - Legislative Context and Issue Identification .....	34
Social Impact Assessment (SIA) .....	35
SIA Stages and Components .....	40
The Application of SIA .....	41
SIA as a Method of Evaluating Student Housing Developments .....	41
Legislating against Negative Social Impacts.....	46
New South Wales Planning Legislation .....	46
Major Projects.....	46
Chapter Four Summary .....	48
Chapter Five: UNSW University Village Case Study .....	49
The University of NSW .....	50
Case Study: UNSW University Village (UNSW Village).....	53
The Social and Community Impacts of UNSW Village.....	60
Categorising the Scoped Social and Community Impacts of UNSW Village.....	61
Assessment of Issues and Legislation.....	68
Best Practice Social Issues and their Legislative Assessment .....	69
Chapter Five Summary.....	71
Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusion.....	72
Recommendations: Inclusion of SIA in Legislation .....	73
Recommendations: The Social Issues to Consider in Best Practice.....	74
Recommendations: Positive Integration of Student Housing Development .....	75
Opportunities for Further Research .....	75
Concluding Remarks .....	76

Bibliography ..... 79

Appendix A ..... 86

# List of Tables and Figures

## Tables

Tab 4.1	SIA process as developed for new university student housing development
Tab 4.2	Identified social impacts for consideration
Tab 5.1	Student enrolments at the University of NSW as at 31 March 2007
Tab 5.2	Key elements of the UNSW Village development
Tab 5.3	Weekly rents at UNSW Village
Tab 5.4	Median private rental prices in Randwick LGA
Tab 5.5	Identified social impacts and legislation summary table
Tab 6.1	Issues to be addressed by Part 3A of the <i>EP&amp;A Act</i> legislation

## Figures

Fig 1.1	Artist impression of UNSW University Village
Fig 1.2	Number of university and bachelor degree students in Australia 1949-2006
Fig 2.1	Photomontage of students living on-campus
Fig 2.2	Australian households with housing costs exceeding 30% - 50% of household income
Fig 3.1	Photographs of new student housing development in Melbourne
Fig 4.1	Symbolic representation of a cohesive community
Fig 5.1	Artistic impression of UNSW Village from High Street, Kensington
Fig 5.2	UNSW main campus map
Fig 5.3	Geographically defined community of UNSW
Fig 5.4	Location of UNSW Village
Fig 5.5	Spatial relationships and movement paths
Fig 6.1	Photographs of student spaces, Sydney University Village

# Abbreviations

BOOT	Built, Own, Operate and Transfer
CBD	Central Business District
CIV	Capital Investment Value
CLV	Campus Living Villages
DCP	Development Control Plan
DP	Deposited Plan
EA	Environmental Assessment
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
EPIs	Environmental Planning Instruments
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IAIA	International Association of Impact Assessment
LGA	Local Government Area
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
SACL	Sydney Airport Corporation Limited
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
UNSW	The University of New South Wales
UNSW Village	UNSW University Village





Figure 1.1 Artist impression of the new UNSW University Village. Source: Campus Living Villages 2008.

## Chapter One: Introduction and Context

The nature of the supply of university student housing is shifting remarkably in response to significant changes in the environment in which universities operate. This shift is resulting in participation by the private sector in the provision of purpose built student housing on both university and privately owned land. At universities across Australia and indeed throughout the developed world, student housing providers are utilising public private partnerships (PPPs) including build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) schemes to partner with universities to provide purpose built housing for their students. The nature and often significant capital investment value (CIV) of these purpose built apartments means that in NSW, they are often assessed as Major Projects under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (EP&A Act)* and subsequently consented to by the Minister of Planning. Whilst this legislation includes an environmental assessment, a formal social impact assessment (SIA) is not required and the social impacts of student housing development may not be appropriately scoped, identified, mitigated or managed within the framework of this existing legislation. The legislation does not facilitate the rigorous assessment of the potential social impacts of large scale private sector provided student housing and fails to acknowledge many of the widely known specific potential impacts that students and student housing have on the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) located in the local government area (LGA) of Randwick in Sydney's eastern suburbs has embraced the use of PPPs through the implementation of a BOOT scheme to develop the UNSW University Village (UNSW Village). Selected through a comprehensive tendering process, Campus Living Villages (CLV) will deliver over 1000 beds in a one to eight storey purpose built, mixed use student housing development on the northern boundary of the UNSW main Kensington campus. With frontage to High Street, the development is being developed on university-owned land. Currently under construction, the UNSW Village is one stage of student housing development identified in the university's strategic planning documents (NSW Department of Planning 2007, Architectus 2007 and UNSW 2007). The make-up of university student populations in Sydney is culturally and socially diverse and this is illustrated in the examination of statistics on students attending UNSW.

Information on the UNSW website reveals there are approximately 1124 student residential places within UNSW's colleges and a further 670 places in student apartment buildings that are either owned, run or affiliated with the university (UNSW Accommodation Central 2008). These figures indicate less than 5% of the 2007 UNSW student population resided on-campus or in a student housing affiliated with the university. According to internal data collected by UNSW Accommodation Services Central, in the period January 2008 to March 2008, 138 local resident applications were made for UNSW students apartment accommodation compared to 275 international student applications. These figures do not include applications from local or international families which are recorded separately and represent a small proportion of all applications (UNSW Accommodation Services Central 2007-2008). Further details of the student population and student residents at UNSW are presented in Chapter five.

Student housing developments that cluster a diverse and multicultural group of young people at an often young age are capable of producing a unique set of social impacts and these potential impacts are discussed comprehensively in the literature and discourse contained in this thesis. This thesis will address the social impacts felt by a university and its local community that result from the delivery of large scale student housing developments. The UNSW Village will act as a case study. A comprehensive list of social impacts will be compiled using best practice principles from the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) in conjunction with a collection of social impacts used widely in the field of social impact assessment. This knowledge allows for recommendations to be made in Chapter six, concerning NSW legislation, SIA issues to consider and integrating student housing into the broader community.

At first glance it is apparent that the university student populations within Australian cities, such as UNSW in Sydney, encompass a distinctive set of social structures and subsequent issues. Culturally and socially diverse, the often transient nature of the student population results in inherent challenges in the fostering of a cohesive community. The identification and analysis of the social impacts of the UNSW Village on the surrounding community is a key focus of this thesis. For the purpose of this study, the 'surrounding community' is defined as those people who reside within a geographically defined distance or area, specified in Chapter five as applied to the UNSW case study and all those people who form the relational community of a university as defined further in Chapter two.

## Research Context

### The changing nature of the university environment

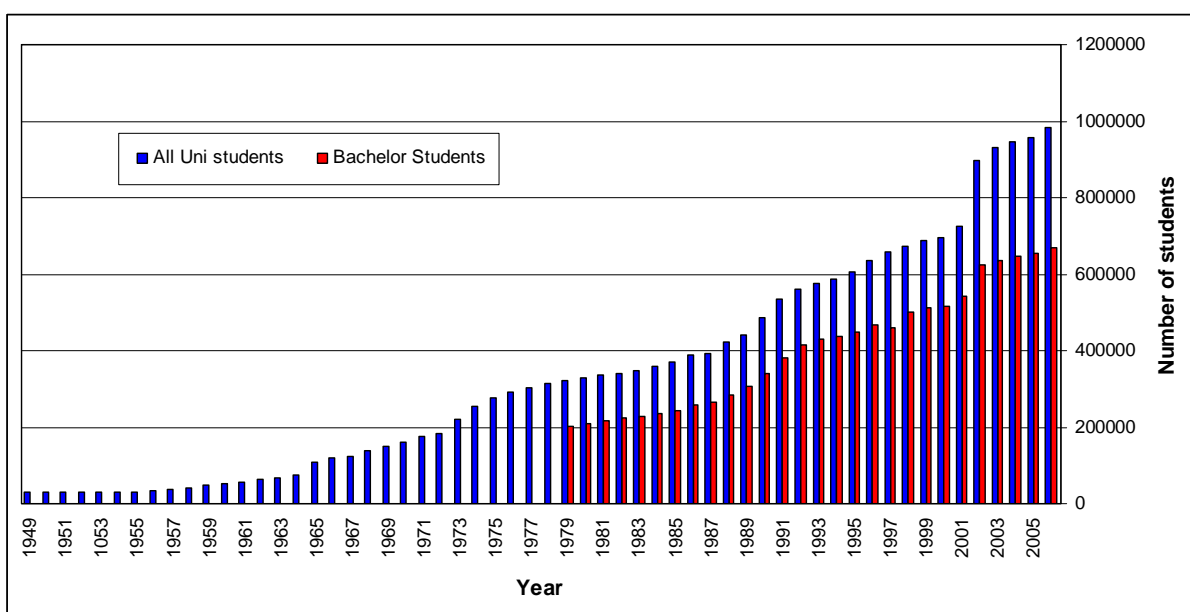
The traditional form and function of student university housing is rapidly changing to reflect current societal expectations and the climate of university funding. An assessment of the impact that a shift towards private sector involvement in the provision of university student housing is needed, with particular reference to the social impacts the large scale developments have had on the university and surrounding community. The affordability of student housing is a social issue of particular concern as private sector involvement in this higher education sector may limit the ability of a university to influence the type, form and cost of housing for its students. This changing nature of the student environment is further illustrated in neo-liberal ideology.

"The paradigm shift in economic and social policy towards neo-liberalism has provoked serious social and political strains (e.g., rising poverty, declining population health) and a loss of confidence in public institutions. Increasing reliance on market forces and classical liberal ideology has provoked a widespread conversation among those who fear the high political, social and economic costs of ignoring social cohesion (Jenson 1998, v)."

Jenson (1998) illustrates the significant changes in society that have resulted from the 'paradigm shift' towards neo-liberalism. Universities in developed nations have experienced two major shifts in the environment in which they operate. The first is the rapid expansion and increase in student numbers experienced over the past few decades influenced by the economy, changing attitudes and an overall shift towards lifelong learning. This shift towards lifelong learning is illustrated in the increasing number of students completing university and Bachelor degrees in Australia in the period 1949 to 2006 as illustrated in Figure 1.2 The second has been the changing nature of funding systems and new budgetary realities which have often meant universities have become less reliant on grants and have

an increased dependence on private funds (Macintyre 2003). Maxwell (2006) highlights that continued tightening budgets in this sector places pressure on universities seeking funds for their own regeneration and opens up the market for private investors. This has created opportunities for private investors to enter the traditionally institutionally dominated student housing market (Maxwell 2006). Partnerships between universities and private housing providers have significantly altered the student housing landscape and are often improving a university's capacity to provide its students with highly desirable accommodation options (Hare 2006).

**Figure 1.2 Number of university and bachelor degree students in Australia between 1949-2006**



Source: Marshall and Steinmetz, 2008

### Student housing provision today

Student housing is grounded in the context of its traditional role and function (which provided students with accommodation, meals and a degree of pastoral care) and the factors that have led to opportunities for the private sector to deliver it. A university in today's environment is forced to position itself to be attractive in a competitive market (Macintyre 2003). This manifests itself in many ways and includes providing services that are attractive to prospective and current students. One key area of student services is student housing. The traditional form of student housing with a dormitory layout and shared bathroom facilities is increasingly being replaced by high quality student apartments that are well-equipped with modern conveniences (Pekala 2003). Universities have seen an opportunity to reinvent their original student housing product to meet the demands of present and upcoming generations of university students.

## **Public private partnerships and BOOT schemes in the provision of student housing**

“At the heart of all PPPs is the deployment of private sector capital. Within a PPP framework, this can result in greatly improved value for money for the government in terms of the risks transferred to the private sector and powerful private sector incentives for the long-term delivery of reliable public services” (Gerrard 2001, 5).

Public private partnerships (PPPs) are a flexible model (Gerrard 2001) that allow for the use of private sector capital to enhance and develop public services. PPPs tend to be sophisticated and effective in the way in which they manage financial risk by the public sector. The utilisation of private sector funding and expertise can result in value-for-money in service delivery whilst also transferring much of the financial risk to the private sector. BOOT concession agreements are one form of PPPs. Under these agreements, the public sector continues to be accountable to the public in the delivery of the service (Gerrard 2001).

In order to deal with the dual problems raised by Macintyre (2003) of increasing demand for student housing and decreasing availability of finance, universities such as UNSW have utilised other forms of service delivery to provide student housing. Project Director of UNSW Village Paul Turner discusses the delivery of the UNSW Village student housing development through a form of public private partnerships known as BOOT schemes. BOOT schemes allow universities to provide new student housing development without the capital costs associated with both construction and ongoing maintenance (Macintyre 2003). BOOT schemes are often associated with a contractual period during which time the private sector provider operates the service. In the case of the Campus Living Villages student housing development at UNSW, this contract period is 40 years (Turner 2008). Importantly, Turner (2008) states that due to the amount of legal work and cost involved with a PPP “unless you have a project worth \$100 million it is not worth doing” (Turner 2008, pers. comm).

As explained by the Vice Chancellor of UNSW, Frederick G Hilmer in his letter to the Minister for Planning at the time, Frank Sartor “The University... is seeking a development that enhances the campus experience at minimum risk and cost to the University” (Hilmer 2006,1). The Vice Chancellor further explains that a BOOT scheme is to be implemented to provide new student housing on university-owned land along High Street through a tendering process “Given the commitment of funds to other core capital works requirements, the university’s ability to provide new housing as a priority is limited without the involvement of the private sector. UNSW therefore intends to engage a private sector party through a competitive tendering process to design, construct, finance, maintain and

provide management services... of new student accommodation under a Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) arrangement" (Hilmer 2006, 1).

## **Significance of the study**

The presence of the private sector in the higher education sector and the utilisation of PPPs including BOOT schemes in the provision of university student housing is groundbreaking given the once institutionally dominated nature of the sector. As highlighted by Hare (2006) the new Sydney University Village (SUV) at Sydney University was the leader of this concept in Australia and used a model now being replicated elsewhere. With other universities across NSW also embracing this model for the delivery of student housing (including UNSW and Macquarie University), it is timely that an analysis is undertaken of the social impacts these large scale developments have on the surrounding community. This thesis undertakes this analysis and provides valuable insights for the housing industry and the legislative process that facilitates student housing development through practical recommendations and social and town planning commentary on the potential social impacts of these developments.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This thesis is grounded in social and community planning principles as the core of postmodern town planning. Within this framework is the use of social impact assessment (SIA) as a means to evaluate the impacts of new student housing development. In doing so, this research contributes to an understanding of the social impacts of large scale purpose built university student housing. These impacts are rarely identified, scoped, mitigated or managed in a rigorous way in the current process which utilises an environmental assessment (EA) of a proposal without the incorporation of a SIA. This thesis proposes that private sector involvement in the university student sector has additional social impacts than what would normally occur as a result of institutionally provided student housing and that these impacts also emerge from the large scale nature of student housing developments provided by BOOT schemes. These implications will be discussed throughout this thesis and contribute to the cumulative impacts of large scale student housing developments as assessed under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*.

## **Community and social planning**

"Social planning plays a pivotal role in creating liveable communities, vibrant economies, sustainable places, diverse cultural expression and social cohesion. Social planning involves planning for the needs and aspirations of people and communities through

strategic policy and action, integrated with urban, regional and other planning activity" (The Planning Institute of Australia Social Planning Chapter 2008).

The Planning Institute of Australia's (PIA) Social Planning Chapter (2008) defines social planning as the practice of enhancing a community's well-being and liveability through the application of identified social objectives in a strategic planning process. With a foundation in social justice principles (PIA 2008), social planning involves understanding human social and cultural needs and the subsequent equitable realisation of these needs within the community (Thompson 2007). Thompson (2007) argues that social planning is at the core of, and an essential component of, all modern town planning. Responding to diversity is seen as an important challenge for social planners. Diversity can be described as the distinguishing factors that characterise individuals (Thompson 2007) and include but are not limited to: gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality and socio-economic status. A holistic approach to social planning encompasses "planning for people, building communities and working in an integrated way" (Howard 2004, 17). Indeed it is these principles that underpin this research.

### **Introducing social impact assessment (SIA)**

The principles and application of Social Impact Assessment also contribute to the theoretical framework for the understanding and analysis of the social impacts of student housing developments. These principles can then be applied in the context of the NSW Major Projects legislation assessment process to determine the effectiveness of this legislation to identify and scope, mitigate and manage emerging impacts. SIA involves the foresight to assess and predict the potential future social consequences of a development project or policy. In doing so, SIA seeks to ensure that a development is responsive to an individual community's needs (Barrow 2000). The intended goal of SIA is thus to assist individuals, groups, organisations and communities to identify and understand the potential social, cultural and economic impacts of proposed change through development (Barrow, 2000). SIA is not an exact science but it is a practical process that gives an indication of the often unintended consequences of development.

In the conceptualisation of social impacts, Vanclay (2002) acknowledges that there is little justification for the development of a standard list of social impacts to consider in a social impact assessment. The concern of doing so is the oversimplification of the impacts and the "complex casual mechanisms that produce social impacts, especially the higher order impacts or flow on effects" (Slootweg et al in Vanclay 2002, 184). Indeed, a common problem of SIA is the underestimation of the eventuating social impacts on affected communities. Vanclay (2002) argues for a considered 'scoping' process to inform the issues to be addressed in a SIA. In following this methodology, a comprehensive list of social

impacts can be beneficial in raising the awareness of the social impacts that may occur as a result of development. Despite its identifiable limitations, SIA remains an important and powerful tool in the assessment of social and community impacts of development and will be used in this thesis as a method that can scope and identify social impacts before they occur and provide direction to universities and the housing industry about the potential implications of large scale student housing development so that these impacts can be mitigated and managed.

Chapter four of this thesis examines Social Impact Assessment as a method of measuring the community impacts of privately provided student housing development on the community surrounding UNSW. In doing so, lists of the key social impacts relevant to the development are compiled in accordance with best practice in the social impact assessment field. This thesis approaches the SIA process within a legislative framework (*EP&A Act*) from a social planning perspective. A case study documents the potential social impacts of private sector provided by the student housing development on the UNSW campus and its geographically defined neighbourhood as defined in Chapters two and five of this thesis.

## Legislative Context

A development or type of development is declared a 'Major Project' to be assessed under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* if it meets select criteria. If a particular development is declared a Major Project, it requires the NSW's Minister for Planning's approval. There are two categories of Major Projects:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 or;
- An order by the Minister for Planning that is published in the NSW Government Gazette.

A comprehensive list of Major Project types are set out in Schedule One of the Major Projects State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). These project types are also referred to as classes of development and include, for example, health and public service facilities. The Minister has the discretion to decide if a project meets the Major Projects SEPP criteria and it can then be declared a Major Project. Schedules Two and Three of the Major Projects SEPP specify the categories of development that are defined as Major Projects based on location. As with development types set out in Schedule one (1) it is at the discretion of the Minister if a development meets the criteria of the Major Projects SEPP and can be declared a Major Project. The Minister has the discretion to declare a development a Major Project by order under the *EP&A Act*. In doing so, the Minister publishes an order in the NSW Government Gazette where in opinion of the Minister, the development has either State or regional environmental planning significance.



Chapter four will discuss the Part 3A declaration and assessment process associated with the UNSW Village case study in the context of the assessment of its social and community impacts. The scope of this thesis does not allow for a comprehensive critique of the Part 3A declaration or assessment process. Instead, this thesis determines the adequacy of the Part 3A process in the assessment of the social and community impacts of large scale student housing development in NSW. It also identifies and highlights the social and community implications that may be associated with private sector provided university student housing.

## Research Statement

**New, large scale student housing developments produce significant social impacts on local communities. The identification and mitigation of these impacts are not adequately addressed in the NSW planning legislation, namely Part 3A of the *EP&A Act's* assessment process.**

The entry of the private sector in the delivery of university student housing has fuelled growth in this sector resulting in a scattering of new student housing developments throughout NSW. Town planning assessment of large scale forms of these developments is often under part 3A of the *EP&A Act* due to the development's potential to be of State or regional significance and its capital investment value. For the purposes of this thesis, a large scale student housing development is one with 300 or more individual bedrooms and is three or more storeys in height. In this regard, the UNSW Village along High Street forms the case study in Chapter five and is considered a large scale development. The social impacts that this student housing development has both internally and on the communities that surround it are largely unmeasured. This thesis uses the UNSW Village student housing development to provide an understanding of the community impacts of university student housing developments and the planning regulation that allows them to occur. The case study highlights the social impacts that are not being addressed in the current legislation.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology for this thesis consists of two main components. The first element involves a literature review and desktop study of key discourse identified in the topic area. Theoretical concepts are sourced from a variety of disciplines including housing theory, neo-liberalism, public private partnerships, community and social planning including SIA. This wide ranging theoretical discourse is necessary due to the complexity of the subject, the interconnectedness of issues and inability of one

concept to understand the topic. The second element consists of thorough in-depth interviews with experts in the higher education and planning industries.

## **Discourse Analysis**

A key component of this thesis is a review of current academic literature, books and other publications relating to community and social planning, the provision of student housing in the university context and the planning legislative context of social impact assessment and approval process under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*. Recommendations that identify best practice in the successful integration of SIA principles are made to improve the existing legislative processes that shape planning outcomes. The intention is to source guidance for future student housing developments to ensure that they integrate well into existing communities and acknowledge their social context.

## **Key Informant Interviews**

The utilisation of qualitative methods through a series of in-depth interviews and discussions with various agencies adds a rich and deep dimension to the study. This data complements the discourse analysis and provides housing industry and specialist planning knowledge of the provision of university student housing in NSW. All formal interviews were conducted with prior approval from the Faculty of the Built Environment, Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel. A copy of the approval form is included as Appendix A.

## **In-depth Interview Participants**

- Paul Turner, Project Director and Legal Project Director of UNSW Village, Facilities and Planning UNSW
- Sue Holliday, Planner and private consultant involved in the campus design of UNSW
- Administrators of UNSW Accommodation Central

Interview participants were selected for their specialist planning or higher education sector professional knowledge. All interviewees quoted and identified were given the opportunity to participate in the study voluntarily and have given their written consent to be quoted in this study. Informal discussions took place with a further participant who did not wish to be quoted or identified. Accommodation Central UNSW was approached and agreed to share data that can be published as part of this thesis. Representatives from Campus Living Villages, Unilodge and the New College Post Graduate Village were contacted and declined or did not respond to requests to be interviewed. Whilst it is acknowledged that a small selection of informant interviews does not constitute the most

comprehensive qualitative approach, the informant issues do provide significant and current information about the topic which further informs the discourse analysis.

## **Thesis Structure**

### **Chapter One: Introduction and Context**

Chapter one has introduced the topic of large scale student housing development and the role of the private sector in its provision through the utilisation of PPPs. The factors that have led to the utilisation of public private partnerships in the delivery of university student housing have been briefly explored and provide a context for the further discussion of the importance of considering the community impacts of these developments. This chapter has acknowledged that there are inherent social issues associated with any large scale development of this nature and provides a context for the identification and discussion of these issues. The incorporation of the thesis research statement in this chapter provides direction and a clear indication of the objectives of this study.

### **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

Chapter two provides a theoretical frame for the topic through the unpacking of theory and key literature in the field. This thesis is underpinned by principles of community and social planning theory and ideology as the basis for identifying and understanding the social impacts of student housing development which is explored in greater detail in Chapters three and four. Chapter two briefly explores the notion of community and a sense of belonging to a university community. It documents the general evolution of student housing provision in the developed world with a description of the housing options available to university students within a context of housing affordability. Public private partnerships are then explored as the underlying principle that enables universities to partner and form agreements with private companies to develop, construct and operate university student housing.

### **Chapter Three: Theoretical Impacts of Student Housing**

Chapter three explores the social impacts that occur on neighbourhoods when extensive student housing is developed in the area. It begins with the identification of key literature that provides an insight into the impacts of student housing development and student presence on communities in a global context. This literature has a distinct focus on North America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Finally, social impacts of student housing development issues and concerns are categorised to start the process of identifying ways to mitigate negative impacts. This chapter links strongly to Chapter four which adopts a method of SIA to be applied to the case study of UNSW University Village. This chapter

acknowledges that there are other impacts associated with development including economic and environmental impacts, and raises these issues in the context of their social impact.

#### **Chapter Four: SIA Process – Legislative Context and Issue Identification**

Chapter four examines social impact assessment as a method of identifying and measuring the social impacts of a planned development. In doing so, this chapter illustrates how SIA can be used as a tool to scope and identify issues that may emerge as a result of a new and retrofitted student housing development. This chapter also provides a planning framework through the identification of key legislation in NSW that facilitates the development of large scale, new student housing development with a capital investment cost that exceeds \$30 million. With a particular emphasis on identifying and mitigating negative social impacts, this chapter highlights the issues that need to be addressed in the assessment of university student housing development which will be applied to the case study in Chapter five.

#### **Chapter Five: Case Study of UNSW University Village (UNSW Village)**

Chapter five documents the UNSW University Village (UNSW Village) as a case study of a new large scale university student housing development. Located on UNSW-owned land within the main UNSW Kensington Campus, University Village uses a BOOT scheme to allow a private sector company, Campus Living Villages to build, own and operate more than 1000 university student beds for a 40 year contractual period (Turner 2008). This chapter will describe the concept of the UNSW Village, its significant scale and provide an overview of the assessment of social impacts carried out as part of the environmental assessment process. As the current largest student housing development of its kind in the southern hemisphere (Turner 2008), the case study of UNSW Village provides an important basis from which chapter six draws conclusions.

#### **Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusion**

Chapter six is the concluding chapter of this thesis and provides recommendations in three key areas of large scale student housing. It begins with recommendations for the inclusion of social impact assessment in Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* assessment process in order to identify and mitigate social impacts on the community. The chapter then provides recommendations of the social issues to be considered in best practice social impact assessment of student housing development. The final set of recommendations provides practical guidance to the housing and higher education industry in the positive integration of student housing developments into the community. The thesis concludes by

reviewing the research statement that was driving the research and identifying opportunities for further study.

## **Chapter One Summary**

This chapter has provided a comprehensive outline of the research project including the research statement that guides and provides purpose to the study. An exploration of the issues relevant to the topic, as detailed in the research context and theoretical framework, provide issues to investigate and analyse. This chapter has established the significance of this study and highlighted that it is timely that an analysis is undertaken of the social impacts these large scale developments have on the surrounding community. Chapter two presents and analyses the theoretical discourse of the role of community and social planning as the framework for the delivery of university student housing in Australia.



Figure 2.1 Photomontage of students living on-campus. Source: Campus Living Villages 2008.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Chapter two presents and analyses the theoretical discourse on the role of community and social planning as the framework for the delivery of university student housing in Australia. The notion of community is discussed as well as the importance of the movement towards quadruple bottom line reporting to include culture as well as economic, environmental and social considerations in the planning and assessment of development. This chapter gives an understanding of the university as a community and how it can respond to the neoliberal state discussed in Chapter one, through the utilisation of private public partnerships such as BOOT schemes in service and infrastructure delivery. The underlying need for university student housing is addressed through a discussion of the Australian housing market with reference to affordability issues. This chapter concludes with an introduction to two student housing providers in Australia and highlights the scale and magnitude of the market in which these companies are currently operating.

## Community and Social Planning

As discussed in Chapter one, social planning plays an important role in the creation of liveable communities through the incorporation of values such as sustainability, acceptance of diversity and social cohesion. With core principles in social justice, social planning develops strategies to meet the needs and aspirations of people in communities (Social Planning Chapter, PIA 2008). These elements and many others contribute to a planning system that fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion in a community, regardless of an individual's background (Thompson 2007). In this context, social planning provides a framework to understand the needs, aspirations and values of people living and working in and around a university community and how these factors can be identified and acknowledged in the planning and provision of new university student housing developments. In acknowledging and planning for these communities, the potential negative impacts of university student housing can be mitigated with strategies for this purpose identified in Chapter six.

## Community and a Sense of Belonging

“The sense of belonging to a neighbourhood is the result of a complex process involving objective qualities of the neighbourhood, the psychological and physical state of the person and the person's own subjective definition of neighbouring and neighbourhood” (La Gory, Ward and Sherman 1985 in Young et al 2004, 2628).

In understanding the dynamics of university environments it is helpful to first explore the notion of 'community' and some of its components. McMillan (1976 ) defines a sense of community as “a feeling that members have of belonging and being important to each other, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met by the commitment to be together” (Chavis, Hogge, Mcmillan and Wandersman 1986, in Chipuer and Pretty 1999, 646). Elements of this definition were then incorporated into McMillan and Chavis's (1986) sense of community model. This four dimensioned sense of community model includes membership, identification, fulfilment and emotional connectivity as the defining aspects of a community.

Chipuer and Pretty (1999) explain the four elements in further detail: membership relates to feelings of safety and a sense of belonging along with identification to the wider group; influence is described as the mutual ability of individuals and the community to bring about change; fulfilment relates to needs that enable cooperative behaviour within the community; the final element, emotional connection focuses on emotional support that helps individuals and the community through any struggle and success associated with community living. The sense of community model has the capacity to relate to

'community' as both a geographical area (referred to as the neighbourhood) and as a network, such as an area defined for its political importance (Chipuer and Pretty 1999). This network is also referred to as a 'relational community' and is defined as the interaction of people for the achievement of a common goal or purpose (Chipuer and Pretty 1999). Relational communities are not tied to geographical boundaries (Heller 1989 in Chipuer and Pretty 1999) and the workplace is thus identified as being a relational community, where people come together for a common goal and relate in some way to that community without necessarily residing within close proximity to it (Klein and D'Aunno 1986, Price 1985 in Chipuer and Pretty 1999). A university is thus a relational community of staff, visitors and students within a further geographically defined community that includes residents.

Community building and the subsequent sense of community that may be associated can take place in individual communities by "... neighbors [sic] learning to rely on each other, working together on creative tasks that take advantage of new self-awareness of their collective and individual assets and in the process creating human, family and social capital (Mc Neely 1999 in Chavis and Pretty 1999, 640). A broadening awareness of the role of a sense of community has emerged in recent years amongst government, foundations and community organisations that wish to utilise it to aid in solutions to community problems (Chavis and Pretty 1999). Chavis and Pretty conclude by acknowledging that sense of community is a universally applied experience that provides hope to addressing individual community problems that may emerge over time.

### **Community boundaries and factions**

Shaw (2007) raises important issues about community and relationships within communities. "It is vital to recognize the ways in which structural location, material circumstances, position within the division of labour, gender, age, ethnic identity, and so on, structure community relationships" (Finch 1989, Harvey 1989; Oakley 1992 in Shaw 2007). Whilst community and a sense of community may conjure up visions of inclusion, Cohen (1985) and Brent (1997) argue a different perspective (in Shaw 2007). Cohen argues that whilst boundaries are essential in both the definition and meaning of community, they can result in discrimination due to boundary drawing and the subsequent situation of individuals and groups being either 'in' or 'out'. Brent argues that the intrinsic formulation of community relates to creating difference and in that difference Bauman (2001 in Shaw 2007), argues that communal identities are capable of being the 'by-products' of boundary setting (Shaw 2007). Shaw concludes that "far from generating harmonious social relations, community can create, or at least reinforce, social polarization and potential conflict; differentiation rather than unity" (Shaw 2007, 29).



Shaw (2007, 31) warns that a “tendency to romanticize [sic] ‘neighbourhood’ is strong in community studies”. Such a tendency makes it important to explore different aspects and obligations often associated with being part of a community “as the balance between rights and responsibilities has shifted, community is increasingly invoked to imply individual responsibility and social obligation” (Humes 2004 in Shaw 2007, 31). Shaw highlights that it could be argued that the some notions of ‘community’ are increasingly being identified with the ‘dispersed state’ “charged with responsibility for service delivery, social control and even surveillance” (Shaw 2007, 31). It could be argued that it is these same notions attached to university communities that create an obligation on those communities to provide housing for their students and it is neoliberal ideology that allows for and at times encourages the utilisation of private sector delivery of this housing through public private partnerships.

### **Social capital**

After considering the implied responsibilities associated with being part of a community the discussion is brought back to considering social capital, that “intangible ‘something’ that exists between individuals and organizations [sic] within a community” (Kay 2005, 163). Social capital relates to the trust that is built within a community and the contacts that are built for mutual benefit. Social capital can be considered a ‘resource’ and a productive element of a community that is most noticeable when it is not present in a community “when there are few social networks, a lack of trust, little effective mutuality, no shared norms and no commitment to the area, community cohesiveness declines and social underdevelopment is likely to occur (Kay 2005, 167).” Recognising the existence of social capital allows for an increased understanding and appreciation of how communities function (Kay 2005). Fukuyama (1995 in Kay 2005) makes the important point that social capital is open to interpretation “what looks like a strong sense of social solidarity from one perspective can be seen as atomization [sic], divisiveness and stratification from another” (in Kay 2005, 170).

### **Triple to quadruple bottom line reporting**

In providing a framework for the understanding of people and communities, Howard proposes that “planning for the people should drive the project and that sustainable development should measure its achievements through a triple bottom line approach” (Howard 2004, 17). The triple bottom line approach is an accounting and reporting structure developed by Elkington to assist the progress of his concept of ‘sustaining capitalism’. Reporting within a triple bottom line framework requires “the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice” (Elkington 1997 in Hawkes 2004, 47). Hawkes (2004) argues that culture is an a further important consideration to be included in the triple bottom line framework in what is now being referred to as the quadruple bottom

line. The quadruple bottom line consists of considerations of all three elements of the triple bottom line with the inclusion of a fourth aspect, culture. Culture can be defined as the 'way of life' of different groups of humans through the expression of their identity, belief systems, aspirations, values, dress, language, food and all aspects of their existence (Hawkes 2004). Hawkes (2004) argues convincingly that cultural 'vitality' is just as important to society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability, making a strong case for quadruple bottom line reporting.

## **The University as a Community**

Howard (2004) acknowledges that communities all "differ in their needs and aspirations" as well as in their "capacity and opportunities" (Howard 2004, 17). For the purposes of this thesis, McMillan and Chavis's 1986 sense of community model is utilised to define university communities. This model is applied as it has the dual capacity to recognise and relate to the notion of community both geographically and as defined by a network. The geographical community (referred to as the neighbourhood) can then be defined by marking boundaries on a map. The community of people living around a university can therefore easily be defined by geographical area. As discussed previously in this chapter, the relational community is a network of people interacting for the achievement of a common goal or purpose (Chipuer and Pretty 1999). In the context of a university, the relational community can be considered to be all those people who attend university as students in various modalities including full time and part time as well as full time and part time academic, administrative staff, retail and commercial staff who work within the university. The definition is intended to be broad and to have the capacity to include all people who relate and associate themselves with the university such as graduands, alumni and visitors to the university. The key element appears to be that the individuals feel part of the university community and interact with the university in achieving a common goal or purpose (Chipuer and Pretty 1999).

Relational university communities, are unique in that they have a particular set of circumstances to deal with and manage. These issues may relate to the transient nature of the university student population, issues relating to parking and transport due to a large influx of students and staff arriving and departing on a daily basis, cultural diversity, and a high proportion of students residing within the surrounding geographic community which has implications for the demographic profile of that community due to a higher than average amounts of young people in a concentrated area. These factors form a unique community with issues that need to be identified and managed to enable cohesive living, study and working environments.

## **The Changing Nature of University Environments**

### **The higher education sector in Australia**

The Australian higher education system currently consists of 39 universities (37 public and two private), one Australian branch located overseas, three self-accredited higher education institutions and approximately 150 non self-accrediting higher education institutions including TAFE institutes (Bradley et al 2008). Higher education is an important component of the Australian economy and has become a major source of export income. The productivity commission (2007 in Bradley 2008, 7) defines the core role of universities today as “the provision of teaching and the dissemination of high quality, openly disseminated, basic research” and further adds “Even where universities undertake research that has practical applications, it is the transfer, diffusion and utilisation of such knowledge and technology that matters in terms of community well-being” (Bradley 2008, 7).

The high education industry has experienced a significant amount of change and in the past twenty years this change has been the intensification of the scale and complexity of the sector and a reduction in reliance on government funding (Bradley et al 2008). The funding shift has resulted in universities being less reliant on the government (despite the Commonwealth continuing to be the biggest single source of income for universities), and are subject to competition for non-government funding. Students are progressively more demanding and as consumers of education now have high expectations around cost, outcomes and quality for services and facilities (Bradley et al, 2008). Housing is one key component of this.

### **Traditional student housing form and function**

The original forms of student housing tended to centre on dormitory style models where formal halls of residence or colleges were seen as an integral part of the university education process. Such residential halls catered for all students and allowed for the combination of pastoral care by the university as an institution as well as opportunities for formal and informal tutorials. The traditional model became outdated as a result of the expanding tertiary sector that resulted from the post-war baby boom (Charbonneau et al 2006, Dagit 2003, and Macintyre 2003). Macintyre (2003) notes that university students of the 1960s did not look favourably upon what was seen as unwanted restrictions placed upon them by the formal halls of residence. Dagit (2003) explains that the level of amenity that traditional dormitory-style accommodation provided in universities are no longer considered adequate “earlier dormitories built either in the early 1900s or after World War II do not necessarily have the amenities required by today’s student” (Dagit 2003, 14). As a result, the student housing sector

expanded and changed to cater for the times and has manifested into what is often found in Australia today, university colleges with shared facilities, apartment style accommodation and a further supplementary reliance on the private rental market (Macintyre, 2003 and Kenyon 1997).

University colleges tend to provide full board as well as pastoral care and academic support. The colleges differ from the university student apartments which encourage a greater level of independence. Students living in these apartments are expected to share financial responsibilities as with any other household and are generally assigned a private bedroom and share a kitchen, bathroom and lounge room as common space where they are expected to prepare their own meals and contribute to cleaning. There is less pastoral care and academic support provided for students residing in university apartments than the university colleges but some support is often in place (UNSW 2008).

### **Changes in form and function of university student housing**

The traditional form of student housing which often included a dormitory layout and shared bathroom facilities is increasingly being replaced by high quality student apartments that are well-equipped with modern conveniences. Universities have seen an opportunity to reinvent their original product to meet the demands of the present and upcoming generations of university students (Pekala, 2003 and Dagit 2003). A university in today's environment is forced to position itself to be attractive to students in a competitive market (Macintyre, 2003). This manifests itself in many ways and includes providing services that are attractive to prospective and current students. One key area of student services is housing. Marsters and Bliss (2007) observe that, to be competitive, a college or university should establish strategic plans that will support their future growth and incorporate the facilities envisaged to support an increasing campus population. It is considered imperative that a strategic review is undertaken before any investment is made in residential facilities. The strategic review should link with the universities goals and objectives as an institution. These goals and objectives may be to upgrade or increase residential housing in a manner that attracts future students and establishes a clear direction for the university to meet present and future housing demand (Marsters and Bliss, 2007).

### **Responding to the Neoliberal State**

Chapter one discussed the neoliberal ideology that provides a framework for privately provided services and infrastructure. The 'paradigm shift' towards neo-liberalism (Jenson, 1998) furthers the understanding of the current situation and the movement towards the 'Third way' approach to meeting community needs through infrastructure and service provision. This can be achieved through the utilisation of public private partnerships (PPPs) to deliver infrastructure and services through the fusion

of public institutions and public sector investment, expertise and efficiency (Heywood 2004, Jenson, 1998).

### **Public private partnerships (PPPs) and BOOT schemes**

“student housing can also provide an economic model by which adequate levels of private sector investment can be attracted” (Macintyre 2003, 117).

The utilisation of PPPs to deliver infrastructure and services has become common practice in recent years (Engel et al 2007). PPPs in the form of BOOT schemes are the contractual arrangements that facilitate the partnership between universities and private sector providers to build and operate new and retrofitted university student housing developments on university-owned land. The main point of difference between a PPP and traditional public provision of infrastructure and services is the merging of investment and service provision into one long-term contract (Engel 2007). Engel (2007, 1) explains how a PPP operates “for the duration of the contract, which can be as long as twenty or thirty years, the concessionaire will manage and control the assets, usually in exchange for user fees, which are its compensation for the investment and other costs. At the end of the franchise, the project reverts to government ownership”.

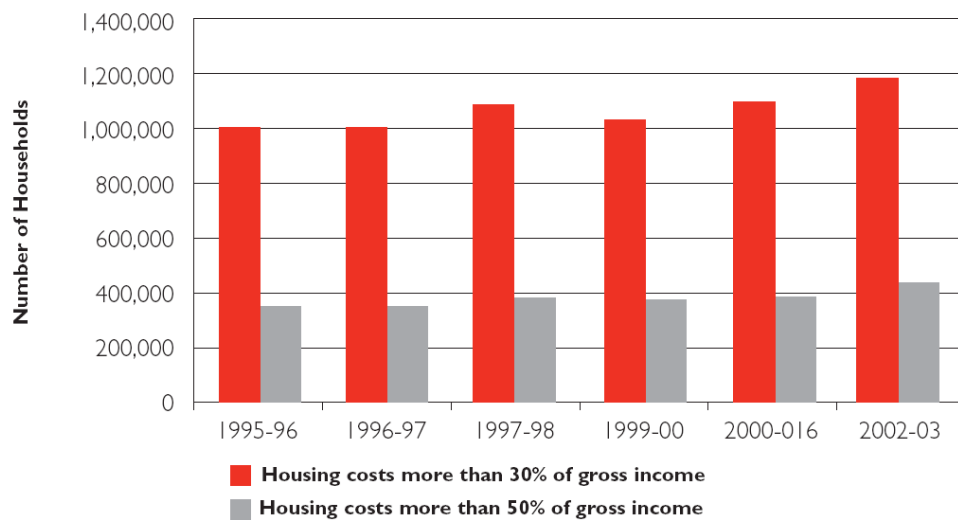
PPPs have altered the student housing landscape, and are often improving a university's capacity to provide its students with highly desirable accommodation options (Hare, 2006). According to Macintyre, student housing delivery by private sector providers appears to be a model that is attracting investors whilst also delivering much needed student housing product to universities. The possible benefits of such a partnership are numerous. The private sector developers gain an instant market of student tenants by aligning themselves with a particular university and delivering a purpose built product on university land. The perception of a secure and guaranteed market of tenants can lead to securing cheaper commercial lending rates and the maximisation of tax advantages (Macintyre 2003) The university benefits by providing suitable housing stock to its students without the burden of an upfront capital investment or ongoing maintenance costs (Hughes 1995 in Macintyre 2003).

### **Housing Markets and Housing Affordability in Australia**

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) define housing affordability as a measure of the financial situation of a household renting or purchasing a dwelling for the purposes of living in that dwelling. This measure can be shown as a percentage of household income that is needed to obtain a dwelling or the amount of household income remaining after housing costs are met (Chapman 2006).

Figure 2.2 depicts the situation of all households in Australia and shows that the total number of households between 1995-1996 and 2002-2003 the total number of households who pay have housing costs that exceed 30% of gross household income is rising. In the year 2002-2003, almost 1.2 million Australian households were considered to be experiencing some form of housing stress, (AHURI, 2006). Student housing provides an opportunity for universities to counteract this affordability issue by providing more cost effective accommodation to its students. Chapter five of this thesis will briefly discuss housing stress in the context of students residing in the local government area of Randwick.

**Figure 2.2 Number of Australian households with housing costs that exceed 30% and 50% of gross household income.**



Source: Survey of Income and Housing, 2002-2003 in AHURI 2006.

## Student Housing Provision in Australia

As discussed throughout this thesis, the university student housing sector has traditionally been dominated by institutional and university-owned housing stock (Maxwell, 2006). At the same time as demand for quality, the quantity for university housing is increasing, encouraging the private sector to become involved in the development of new and retrofitted student housing projects. The neoliberal ideology discussed previously in Chapter one has left the higher education sector as a whole unable to invest in large housing projects and has created unprecedented opportunities for private investors to enter the student housing sector (Maxwell, 2006). There appears to be enormous growth in the student housing sector in Australia and other parts of the world because many universities understand that

making high-quality accommodation available to students is part of their commitment to improving the student experience (Hare, 2006) and yet they are not in a position to provide it themselves.

In Australia, Campus Living Villages (CLV) and Unilodge are two private sector companies operating within the university student housing market. This section gives an introduction to Unilodge and CLV which both operate in the Randwick LGA and provide housing for students at the University of NSW. Chapter five will discuss the Campus Living UNSW University Village development and the rental costs associated with living at this development (currently under construction).

## **Unilodge**

“UniLodge is a professional management company and also market leader in the operation and management of tertiary student accommodation in Australia and New Zealand” (Unilodge 2008).

The operating arm of Meridien Student Living (MSL) Unilodge Pty Ltd ‘Unilodge’ has “pioneered the [student] market” since 1996 and was acquired by MSL in 2006. With 17 student accommodation facilities in Australia and New Zealand, the company claims to be the largest student accommodation manager in the Australia/ Asia Pacific Region (Unilodge 2008). With over 42,000 student beds under management across Adelaide, Auckland, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney Unilodge offers four partnership structures: PPPs, strata development, BOOT scheme and management contracts and a range of property services including development, consultancy, and accommodation management services (Unilodge, 2008).

## **Campus Living Villages (CLV)**

“Campus Living Villages, a leader in the field of student housing, own, develop and/or manage over 10,000 beds in Australia and New Zealand, with a further 30,000 in the United States” (Campus Living Village 2008).

A wholly owned subsidiary of Transfield Holdings, Campus Living Villages (CLV) is currently working in partnership with 12 universities across Australia and New Zealand to provide over 10,000 student beds, with a further network in the United States of America (USA) (Campus Living Villages 2006-2008). CLV has the capacity to handle all aspects of a proposed new or retrofitted university student housing development and works with Universities in the delivery and management of these developments. “Our vertically-integrated delivery approach allows us to handle all aspects of development in-house, from financing and development, to management and operations. We offer universities a range of

commercial options, including BOOT project delivery - (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer) - whereby ownership of the development reverts to the university after an agreed term" (Campus Living Villages 2008, website). Utilising university land allows for student housing developments to integrate seamlessly into the physical community. The Campus Living Villages' UNSW Student Village will be examined in detail as a case study in Chapter five of this thesis.

## **Chapter Two Summary**

This chapter has provided a theoretical understanding of community and social planning, housing and university student housing, and why is it important to consider the university as both a geographically defined community and a network of people who form a further transitional community. Private public partnerships in the form of BOOT schemes have been discussed as a response to the neoliberal state to provide context to the environment in which universities in Australia are currently operating. Issues of housing affordability have been addressed to provide an insight into the need for student housing that is relatively affordable for students. Chapter three will discuss the concept of social impacts and identify the theoretical potential social impacts associated with student housing development and the presence of students within a community.





Figure 3.1 Common areas and student apartments at IQ Apartments, a new purpose built student housing development in Melbourne. Source: Realestate.com.au 2008.

## Chapter Three: Theoretical Impacts of Student Housing

This chapter explores the social impacts that occur on neighbourhoods when extensive student housing is developed in the area. It begins with the identification of key literature that provides an insight into the impacts of student housing development and student presence on communities in a global context. This literature has a distinct focus on North America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Finally, social impacts of student housing development issues and concerns are categorised, starting the process of identifying ways to mitigate negative impacts. This chapter links strongly to Chapter four which adopts a method of SIA to be applied to the case study of UNSW University Village. This chapter acknowledges that there are other impacts associated with development including economic and environmental impacts and this chapter raises these issues in the context of their social impact, the focus of this thesis.

## Key University Student Housing Literature

### Insight into key university student housing literature

“There has... been little corresponding investigation into the social impacts of universities upon their immediate localities” (Kenyon 1997, 286).

A number of seminal scholarly articles shed light on university student housing in the global university context. Key writers include Agron; Charonneau, Johnson and Audrey; Macintyre; Kenyon; Marster's and Bliss; and in the Australian context, Hale. Many articles on the topic are brief in nature and provide a mere glimpse of the issues. Agron writes extensively on the topic of student accommodation and the quest to attract more students to on-campus housing. Agron's analysis on the latest data of new student housing in the United States offers a practical assessment of the financial cost of developing student housing in a developed nation. Specific reference is made to the amenity improvements that are becoming standard inclusions in university student housing developments. Charbonneau, Johnson and Audrey (2006) discuss the competitive advantage gained by a university that provides affordable student housing. Using online questionnaires, the authors get an insight into the needs and aspirations of students and the tradeoffs they are willing to accept in order to gain suitable accommodation opportunities.

Marsters and Bliss (2007) explore strategic planning as a means of providing for growth in residential accommodation and facilities for students and considers housing in the context of campus planning as a whole. Options for university housing are explored including the retrofitting of existing buildings as well as purpose built new developments. Macintyre's 2003 article 'New models of student housing and their impact on local communities' is key reading and encapsulates the profound shift in the environment in which universities are now operating and the budgetary and demand issues placed on student university housing as a result. The article investigates the history of student housing, the implications of student housing development for the local community and the role of culture on these impacts. An exploration of further issues considered to be outside of the scope of this thesis are incorporated; including the link between student grades and on-campus housing and the contribution student housing development can have in the regeneration of inner city areas.

Kenyon makes a contribution to what is described as “an emerging body of knowledge concerned with the social impact of the expansion of HEIs (higher education institutions) on their immediate localities” (Kenyon 1997, 286-287). Until the time the article was published, Kenyon stated that there was a lack of investigation into the social impacts of the expansion of HEIs. Importantly, Kenyon highlights the

need to address the emerging and intensifying social impacts as a result of an increase in the number of university students generally. "If we fail to attend to the social impact of this population, then we are in danger of neglecting some crucial university and community relationships that are of real concern to many of the citizens of our urban environments" (Kenyon 1997, 287). Kenyon's (1997, 287) article, which uses qualitative data in the form of 72 in-depth interviews conducted in the Sunderland (United Kingdom) argues that there are negative impacts on both the "social and physical fabric of a neighbourhood" as a result of the presence of students in a community and that students are perceived by both residents within the community and their own 'subgroup' to be a separate community within a community.

Macintyre's 2003 article 'New models of student housing and their impact on local communities' provides an insightful understanding of the positive and negative consequences of new student housing development. Macintyre describes the magnitude of the potential impacts to be felt at a local scale and provides an impetus to mitigate these impacts "If student housing developments are undertaken without regard for the consequences upon the local community, then it is reasonable to expect numerous local-level problems" (Macintyre 2003, 116).

Concepts and issues identified as important in the literature on university student housing and student presence within communities is included in this chapter to provide an understanding of the evident and emerging impacts of this form of development. The following section explains the importance of integrating student housing into a community. This is followed by 'student presence in communities' which discusses and highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics and perceptions of students in communities and the way student housing is viewed within a neighbourhood, as identified in the key literature.

### **The literature on integrating student housing into a community**

"the greater the levels of integration, the less the likelihood of diminished security, opportunistic burglary, and prohibitive insurance rates" (Macintyre 2003, 116)

Student housing that is integrated into the community may result in less negative social impacts and may make a positive contributions to the overall community (Macintyre 2003). The conditions that are associated with this positive integration relate to the length of tenancy agreements, the size of the developments and their consistency with existing patterns of residential development, as well as the features of the development that make them attractive and desirable to students (Macintyre, 2003). Macintyre (2003) acknowledges the role that new student housing development can play in the

regeneration of inner city areas considered to be in decline. This issue is considered to be outside of the scope of this thesis and therefore is not explored because universities in inner city areas may be experiencing gentrification processes which add further complexity to such a study.

### **Student presence in communities**

“If we fail to attend to the social impact of this [student] population, then we are in danger of neglecting some crucial university and community relationships that are of real concern to many of the citizens of our urban environments” (Kenyon 1997, 287).

Student housing developments have a variety of impacts on the social dynamics of a community. Macintyre (2003) acknowledges that a large concentration of students living in an area has the potential to cause disruption to existing local patterns of social practice. It seems evident that the demographic shift caused by large scale, new student housing developments, in particular, has an impact on the surrounding community. Macintyre (2003) and Kenyon (1997) are two key authors who highlight the significant negative physical, social and economic impacts that may result from student housing development in a community. It should be noted that a proportion of the identified physical, social and economic impacts relate to student presence in a community in general and students living in rental dwellings as opposed to on-campus accommodation. Identified community reactions give an indication of the issues that may result and can be used constructively in mitigation.

### **Kenyon’s physical, social and economic areas of concern**

Kenyon’s 1997 study uses three categories to group areas of concern in relation to students living within communities. These groupings are physical, social and economic concerns. This chapter uses Kenyon’s three areas of concern to provide structure for the identification of issues from the literature and to discuss the role of cumulative impacts of student housing. It is acknowledged that the three categories are interlinked (Kenyon 1997) and impacts cumulative.

### **Physical concerns**

The physical concerns that arise from students residing within a neighbourhood were especially highlighted in Kenyon’s paper on the community of Sunderland in the UK and primarily relate to issues around safety and security. Physical concerns include the perception that students attract burglars to the neighbourhood due to a higher than average number of electrical consumer items including computers per household as a result of four or five students sharing a dwelling and the transient nature of student communities which often results in properties left vacant for set periods throughout the year (Kenyon 1997 and Macintyre 2003). There is also a perception that student households are less secure

and that the properties are not as well maintained overall by landlords (Kenyon 1997 and Macintyre 2003). "We have streets along here that have unemployed people in them, and the students as easy pickings. Come Christmas and summer, there is nothing easier than an empty house to break into, with rotten windows and shabby back doors" (Kenyon 1997, 291). From a planning perspective, these issues can be overcome in new development through appropriate mitigation measures including the incorporation of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles and the application of recommendations provided in Chapter six.

### **Social concerns**

"A tangible illustration of the isolation of students in the community is that they rarely become involved in any resident associations or neighbourhood watch groups" (Kenyon 1997, 294).

The literature documents the potential for significant negative social and community impacts as a result of student presence within communities "...student presence leads to an erosion of feelings of stability, cohesiveness and confidence within the community" (Kenyon 1997, 293). Kenyon (1997) highlights that it is the often transient nature of students as neighbours that is a contributing factor to social concerns as there is often a high turnover of student tenants and long periods throughout each year where student tenants are absent from the property. This factor links to economic concerns in that the transient nature of student communities is often linked to affordability issues and an inability on behalf of a student to pay 52 weeks worth of rent (Kenyon 1997).

As stated earlier in this chapter, the literature shows that in a considerable number of cases, residents of student housing are perceived by the local community to form a separate 'community within a community' causing the existing community to dissociate themselves with the student community and in extreme cases, their overall community (Kenyon 1997). This occurrence is highlighted by Kenyon (Kenyon 1997, 293): "...the failure to contribute to 'neighbouring' as the social concern most commonly associated with students in the community" (Kenyon 1997, 294).

The literature shows that students as a sub-group of the community are less likely to contribute to a positive neighbourhood due to the perception that they are less neighbourly and are an isolated group that fail to interact with the wider community (Kenyon 1997). Kenyon (1997) raises the factor of commonalities of interest to express why students may stay within their own community where their friendship and lifestyle needs may be met and to explain why non-student members of the community may not seek out the acquaintance of student neighbours. Large scale, isolated student housing

developments and clusters of dwellings occupied by students that are disconnected from universities and the wider community may contribute to the process of 'ghettoisation' which has significant negative implications for the community (Macintyre, 2003). A ghetto can be defined as a concentration or cluster of people in an area that experiences severe social or economic constraints. In the Australian context, this may include areas with a deteriorating built environment corresponding with poverty and a high crime rate (McMahon, 2004).

### **Economic concerns**

Kenyon's final identified category of concern is the economic impacts of university students living in communities. There are a number of issues raised that can be solely categorised as economic concerns and there are some social and physical issues that have economic implications. The often transient nature of students is one such factor as this has consequences for the cohesiveness of the community as well as the vitality and vibrancy of local retail and services (Kenyon 1997).

The first identified area of concern relates to students living in rental properties in the private market and the perception that dwellings that are tenanted by students are more likely to be in a state of deterioration due to a failure of landlords to adequately maintain the properties and a greater acceptance of lower standards by the often young and often transient student community (Kenyon 1997 and Macintyre 2003). This perception and reality is thought to depreciate the pricing of other housing stock within the area. "The stereotypical reputation of 'student areas' and the personality profiles attributed to students themselves, are believed actively to deter potential buyers..." (Kenyon 1997, 296). It is evident that this area of concern also had safety and security implications which were discussed previously in the 'physical concerns' section of this chapter. It is acknowledged that well maintained new student housing development may have the opposite effect.

The second economic concerns relates to the often transient nature of the student population and the impact this has upon demand for local commercial and community services. Due to the "sudden rise and fall in demand" for goods and services within the local area (Macintyre 2003, 116) experienced throughout the teaching and non-teaching period of the academic calendar, local commercial enterprises selling goods and services are economically impacted, as a significant proportion of the population leave the area during holiday periods. Such a phenomenon results in an exodus of potential customers for a wide range of goods and services during the university holiday periods (Macintyre, 2003).

The third economic issues raised in the literature relates to the price of rental properties in university neighbourhoods. Macintyre (2003) discusses the supply and demand phenomenon of a large number of students seeking out a limited supply of accommodation within close proximity to a university campus. A limited supply and a high level of demand raises the price of the accommodation which has impacts for members outside the student community who may wish to reside in the area but are prohibited by high rent. At the same time, the university may attempt to reduce the pressure for its students by buying up properties in the area and leasing them to students or for future housing development (Holliday 2008). This has a flow on impact of reducing the overall taxation (in the form of rates) collected by the government (such as the local council) which reduces the economic capacity of that local authority to provide services for the community (Macintyre 2003). Stereotypes also come into play and impact on the economic value of property in an area. "The stereotypical reputation of 'student areas', and the personality profiles attributed to students themselves, are believed actively to deter potential buyers" (Kenyon 1997, 296).

### **The cumulative effect**

Denham 1992 (in Kenyon 1997, 293) argues that the impacts of students within a community have a cumulative impact "...individually, many... problems [associated with students] may seem trivial. However, taken together, they create a deeply damaging loss of confidence and identity..." It seems evident that cumulative impacts are an important factor to acknowledge for neighbourhoods that may be experiencing a combination of physical, social and economic impacts as a result of student presence and large numbers of students living within the community. Planners can assist in the planning and development of student housing given their overall community view and knowledge of economic, social and physical domains. Whilst economic and physical concerns and the cumulative impacts are acknowledged, this thesis focuses on the social impacts of student housing developments.

### **The role of culture**

Chapter two discussed the role of culture as the fourth dimension in a quadruple bottom line approach, which provides further input to the more traditional and commonly applied triple bottom line approach. For the purpose of this thesis, culture is incorporated as an element to be considered under social and community impacts just as economic impacts will be considered if they have social implications. The cultural implications of student housing developments are addressed in the context of the case study in chapter five. Interestingly, culture did not specifically emerge as a major issue in Kenyon's or Macintyre's research on the impacts of students housing in communities. Both of these studies focussed on case studies of universities outside of Australia.

The following section 'focussing on social impacts' will define the concept of social impact, explain direct and indirect social impacts and highlight the importance of considering social impacts in the planning and development of new and retrofitted student housing development.

## **Focussing on Social Impacts**

### **Exploring the concept of social impacts**

"Social impact: a significant improvement or deterioration in people's wellbeing or a significant change in an aspect of community concern" (Barrow 2000, 221).

The international association of impact assessment (IAIA) conceptualises social impacts as being an impact upon one or more of a person's: way of life, including:

- the way people live their lives, work, interact and play;
- culture such as their belief systems,
- values and language;
- community and its cohesion,
- stability, character and available services and facilities;
- political systems such as the level of democracy and how people participate in decision making that impacts upon their lives;
- environment, including the quality and availability of natural resources;
- health and wellbeing, encompassing a holistic view of a person's state of physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing;
- personal and property rights; and
- fears and aspirations such as their perception about the safety of their community (Vanclay 2003).

Vanclay (2002) highlights that social impacts are not uniform and further adds that they will vary according to specifics such as place, project, community and different groups within a community. Different individuals and communities may also place a different amount of emphasis on each social impact. Whilst social impacts in general are defined by the degree of improvement or deterioration they have on individual and community wellbeing they can also be grouped as direct and indirect social impacts closely related to the concept of social change processes (Vanclay 2002). Social change processes refer to the policies and activities that are in place regardless of the local social context. In some instances, the characteristics of a local area and the specific mitigation processes in operation will result in social change processes leading to social impacts (Vanclay 2002).



## **Direct and indirect social impacts**

Vanclay (2002) categories social impacts as direct and indirect. Direct social impacts are those social change processes that occur after planned intervention. They may be intentional, unintended or at a different scale to initially estimated. Indirect social impacts result from changes in the biophysical environment. Changes to human beings interaction with the natural environment can be the result of changes in the biophysical environment (Vanclay 2002). Identifying the full range of social impacts (both direct and indirect) can be achieved using a framework advocated by Slottweg et al (2001 in Vanclay 2002) which provides for the conceptualisation of “the full range of social impacts that are likely to occur from a given intervention” (Vanclay 2002, 193).

Vanclay highlights (2002, 200) that “SIA literature has confused impacts and social change processes” and calls for differentiation between impacts and processes. He seeks to give an indicative account of the possible impacts of particular projects whilst arguing that it is not possible to compile a checklist. The checklist mentality is thought to discourage the proper identification and analysis of impacts, particular those that are secondary and indirect impacts (Vanclay 2002). Despite this, a compiled list of impacts is recognised as a starting point and point of reference in the scoping process as well as setting a minimum standard of issues to be addressed. Chapter four will explain the concept of SIA and how it can be used to scope and identify social impacts.

## **Chapter Three Summary**

This chapter has discussed and analysed briefly the negative potential social impacts associated with student housing developments and the presence of students within a community Recommendations provided in chapter six of this thesis will build upon the mitigation measures sourced from the literature in this chapter. This chapter has acknowledged that social impacts cannot be looked at in a vacuum and raised economic, environmental and cultural issues to provide a holistic understanding of the social and community impacts associated with student housing developments. Chapter four will examine social impact assessment as a method of measuring the community impacts of large scale university student housing development and identify key legislation in NSW that facilitates the development of large scale, new student housing development.

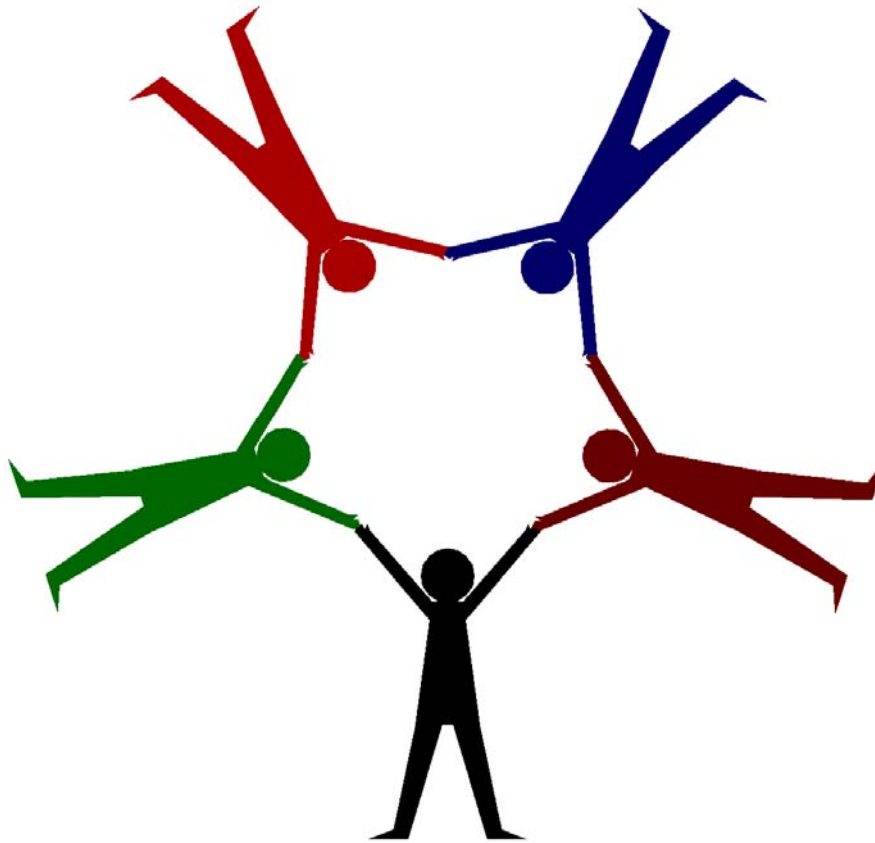


Figure 4.1 Symbolism for a cohesive community. Source: Goggle Images 2008.

## Chapter Four: SIA Process - Legislative Context and Issue Identification

Chapter four examines social impact assessment (SIA) as a method of identifying and measuring the social impacts of a planned intervention. In doing so, this chapter illustrates how social impact assessment can be used as tool to scope and identify issues that may emerge as a result of new and retrofitted student housing development. This chapter also provides a planning framework through the identification of key legislation in NSW that facilitates the development of large scale, new student housing development with a capital investment cost that exceeds \$30 million. With a particular emphasis on identifying and mitigating negative social impacts, this chapter brings together the issues that need to be addressed in the assessment of university student housing development which will be applied to the case study in Chapter five.

This thesis draws extensively on the expertise of the international association for impact assessment (IAIA) and one of its key contributors Frank Vanclay, a key academic in the SIA field and the author of a significant body of work as part of the IAIA's special publication series. In drawing on best practice, this thesis makes reference to many contributors in the field but especially the work of Barrow (2000). Chapter three's section 'focussing on social impacts' explored what is meant by the term social impact. In understanding potential social impacts as a result of any development, assessment processes such as SIA can be introduced in order to not only identify social impacts but to form judgements about who will be most affected, under what scenarios the best result can be achieved and how potential impacts can be dealt with over the life of a development or project, through identification, monitoring and in some cases mitigation and prevention before they occur (Barrow 2000, Vanclay 2002 and 2003).

### **Social Impact Assessment (SIA)**

"SIA is best understood as an umbrella or overarching framework that embodies the evaluation of all impacts on humans and on the ways in which people and communities interact with their socio-cultural, economic and biophysical surroundings" (Vanclay 2003, 2).

Social impact assessment (SIA) can be understood at a number of levels, as it refers not only to a field or research and practice but also "a paradigm consisting of a body of knowledge, techniques, and values" (Vanclay 2003, 2). SIA is a process that can be followed by professionals in the field to understand and assess the social impacts of planned changes or events and subsequently to develop strategies to address these social impacts through monitoring and management (Vanclay 2003). SIA should therefore be understood in a holistic way rather than merely a task that allows for the prediction of social impacts as it contributes to a body of knowledge as a methodology and instrument as well as field of research and practice (Vanclay 2003).

Barrow (2000) argues that it has been difficult to agree upon one universally accepted definition of SIA. This thesis draws upon the knowledge of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) which defines social impact assessment in the following way. "Social impact assessment includes the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans and projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions. Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment" (Vanclay 2003, 2).

SIA is thus a proactive approach to development that seeks to achieve better outcomes for both the biophysical and human environment including communities through local knowledge and understanding and by working with key stakeholders in a community. SIA practice acknowledges the way in which social, economic and biophysical impacts are often interconnected and has methods to understand these connections and any flow-on impacts. SIA as a methodology can be utilised for a wide variety of situations and although most commonly used in planned interventions, can be an effective technique in the identification of social impacts resulting from other events such as disasters and demographic change (Vanclay 2003).

SIA is a comprehensive process that should not be approached formally by one individual but rather relies on the contribution of a team of specialists. Specialists include professionals with the ability to assess a large variety of impacts of a planned intervention including but not limited to: aesthetic impacts such as landscape analysis, and impacts related to: archaeology, heritage, community, culture, demography, development, economics, gender, health, politics, psychology, and a range of other factors including the impacts on social and human capital and the impact on other societies (Vanclay 2003, 2).

Barrow notes that SIA generally takes a multidisciplinary approach through the use of a number of objective and subjective assessments and judgements about proposed changes (Barrow 2000). Tester and Mykes (1981 in Barrow 2000) identified three objectives of SIA: to inform the public about proposals and the consequences; to gather information from local experience; to request public opinion about proposals and alternatives. The IAIA states that the objective of SIA is “to ensure that development maximises its benefits and minimises its costs, especially those costs borne by people” (Vanclay 2003, 3). The identification of impacts prior to their occurrence allows for mitigation measures to be implemented and informed decision-making, resulting in better outcomes for a particular planned intervention such as a proposed development (Vanclay, 2003).

### **Core values of SIA**

The IAIA (2003) acknowledges a set of core values that are considered fundamental beliefs of what it refers to as the SIA community. These core values relate to a belief that: all human beings have fundamental human rights and are equal which should be protected by law with a system of justice that is equally accessible to all. It also believes people have a right to enjoy healthy living and working environments which are important to good health and quality of life. People have a right to be involved in decision-making in situations that will cause change in their lives and planned interventions such as development can be improved by the utilisation of local knowledge and experience which is considered

valuable (Vanclay 2003, 5). These values provide a context for the adoption of SIA in decision-making and provide insight into the development of SIA as a field of practice.

### **The history of SIA**

The practice of predicting foreseeable social and economic impacts is not a phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century alone. Barrow (2000) states that there is evidence 17<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists and social psychologists made attempts to prevent and prepare for social and economic ramifications of activity in a process similar to SIA. The forms of SIA used today utilise more than three decades of theoretical and methodological development in order to provide insight into the impacts of future change and development through an understanding and knowledge of the past (Barrow 2000). SIA has thus been evolving over time and has developed into a more widely utilised tool today (Barrow 2000). Bissett 1996 (in Barrow 2000) believes that SIA is likely to become better integrated with planning and policy-making in the future.

### **The value and usefulness of SIA**

SIA seeks to perform the often complex task of predicting the consequences of change and is not intended to be used as the only indicator of the suitability of a development or policy, or whether or not it should proceed. Barrow (2000) articulates that SIA is a tool that can be utilised to:

- predict potential negative impacts of a proposed development in order to prevent or mitigate these identified impacts;
- identify and maximise positive potential impacts of a proposed development;
- disclose the impacts of past developments and;
- as a research tool.

A number of arguments have been proposed in support of SIA and these arguments tend to relate to issues around: utilitarianism, which aims to result in the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people; justice; functionalism, to ensure a development is effective; upholding democratic decision-making and; ethical pluralism, as seen in its set of underpinning core values (Barrow 2000).

### **Approaches and processes in SIA**

Due to the number of disciplines that make a contribution to SIA, there is no generic approach to its application (Barrow 2000). Despite this, Barrow acknowledges an emerging integrative approach to SIA in which technocratic, the scientific and ordered approach and participatory forms, which embrace the involvement of people in a democratic process combine. SIA has two main distinct applications, the first being as an integral component of planning, decision-making and monitoring of a development and the

second being an add on extra (Leistriz and Ekstrom 1988 in Barrow 2000). According to Freudenburg 1986 in Barrow 2000) three distinct groups can be included in the SIA process:

- The originator of the development or act of change;
- A government or non-government organisation (NGO) or;
- The public, community or an individual.

Whilst it is most likely that the second group being government and NGO's will initiate and oversee an SIA process, any of these identified groups may conduct an SIA (Barrow 2000). It seems clear that the relevance and success of an SIA will be largely dependent on the focus of the team, the ethical standards applied, the law and application of the SIA and local factors influencing the process (Barrow 2000).

This thesis makes reference to a selection of forms that SIA can take including comparative SIA and community-focussed SIAs. It acknowledges that there a large number of different approaches to SIA that can be applied to different circumstances. Comparative SIA comprises of a study that uses hindsight and past experience to predict the outcome of a proposed development (Burdge 1995 in Barrow 2000). Another approach is to focus upon the community which is identified as a manageable scope of study for SIA in which an SIA team can work in the community to identify current behaviour and events in order to predict future situations (Bowles 1981 in Barrow 2000). There is some criticism to the community approach due to the difficulty in defining community and the fact it is unclear if the individuals who participate are truly representative of that community (Barrow 2000). Chapter two defined community for the purposes of this thesis in both the geographic sense, the neighbourhood and also as a network known as a relational community.

Professionals undertaking SIA, referred to as 'assessors' often have the difficult task of integrating the two main conceptual paths within SIA which consist of political, being value judgements through the empowerment of the community or technical which relies on empirical data and expert opinion (Barrow 2000). Barrow (2000) argues that human needs are often prioritised and that this will not always result in the best long term social or sustainable outcome.

### **The scale of SIA**

SIA is capable of being utilised at a number of different scales which are defined as: micro, concerned with specific projects in the short term; meso, the assessment of a number of projects usually over a five to ten year period and; macro, focussing on the bigger picture and a longer term of more than ten years into the future (Barrow 2000). Barrow observes that the majority of SIA has focussed on the micro scale.

## Identifying and overcoming weaknesses in the SIA process

SIA techniques at times rarely deal with indirect social impacts and cumulative impacts identified and discussed in Chapter three. A failure to identify and consider these impacts may provide a false conclusion about the overall impacts of a proposed planned change (Barrow 2000). Barrow (2000) reflects on some of the overall weaknesses of SIA:

- The approach lacks standardisation.
- The process is poorly funded.
- The process is often rushed.
- SIA is often conducted by people with inadequate skills and experience;
- There is a failure to utilise SIA in monitoring, mitigation and problem management and to see it as a tool to determine the appropriateness of a development alone;
- Legislation can be inadequate and the findings in the SIA process are ignored and;
- Social issues can be complex and difficult to deal with thus making SIA more complicated than environmental impact assessment (EIA).

This list highlights some of the common issues identified as weaknesses in the SIA process. Appropriate funding, time and resources mean that many of these problems could be overcome. In addition, it is possible that an individual or group commissioning or undertaking a SIA could manipulate the information uncovered during the process or seek to hide or deliberately underestimate any identified negative impacts whilst at the same time placing emphasis on any benefits. SIA must therefore be a transparent process in which methods and approaches are clear to follow and imposed or regulated by a government or independent body to ensure the accuracy and the professional accreditation of the assessors (Barrow 2000). SIA is a complex process that is often inappropriately or poorly applied. Barrow (2000) advocates that SIA should:

- not be used for the justification of past decisions;
- integrate into the planning process at the earliest possible stage;
- not impose change that are considered unsuitable in a given context and;
- go beyond impact identification to provide recommendations for action, measurement and monitoring.

## SIA Stages and Components

The SIA process is generally acknowledged to comprise of at least eight stages, as identified by Barrow (2000 with reference to Burdge and Robertson 1990).

- Scoping the potential impacts on people and societies and determining the scale of these impacts through the identification of appropriate methods, key informants and sources of data;
- Formulating of alternative proposals based on community needs through the use of public meetings, advisory groups, public data and other methods as needed;
- Profiling to determine impacts and who will be affected by through the recognition of appropriate methods to measure impacts after conducting a current social profile;
- Projecting the scale of impacts with the use of information gathered to estimate differences in impacts according to changing scenarios;
- Assessing the degree of the impacts including the most significant ones and the likely reactions to these with a view to determining the potential to avoid or mitigate them;
- Evaluating the benefits and overall impacts to present an opinion about the proposal
- Mitigating impacts as appropriate;
- Ongoing monitoring of the impacts that eventuate and development and using a monitoring plan, an opportunity to learn from observations;

A ninth step can be included:

- Auditing to determine the effectiveness and cost of the SIA and providing valuable information for the improvement of the process.

### The SIA toolkit, methods and techniques

“SIA essentially deals in informed judgement and it may not be possible to repeat successive assessments to give consistent results; whereas, in science, application of a given methodology should give results that are broadly comparable” (Barrow 2000, 77).

SIA relies on accurate information for the identification of the current situation as this is the point from which changes to that base can be predicted, judged, analysed, mitigated and monitored (Barrow 2000). Conducting an SIA requires an appropriate methodology and set of tools and assessors. Whilst a methodology is the way in which a task is approached, a technique is the specific approach or tool used (Wildman 1990 in Barrow 2000). Emerging from the literature is a sense that SIA is a flexible tool that can be designed to meet the needs of a specific community and situation. It is informed by social theory and is an evolving process that draws information from past experience to forecast future scenarios (Barrow 2000). The assessment steps and corresponding methodologies and techniques available in the SIA tool kit can be summarised, specifically relative to this thesis in Table 4.1.



Social indicators are a standardised grouping of specific social conditions that provide insight into current conditions and trends (Barrow 2000) and are utilised in SIA to ensure that factors not directly measurable are included in the assessment. Social indicators are an important data source for SIA and provide information about the population prior to any planned intervention (Barrow 2000). Social indicators utilised in SIA focus upon: population characteristics; the structure of the community and institutions; the political and social resources; individual factors such as fears and aspirations; and community resources (Barrow 2000).

Impacts are identified through the utilisation of a variety of data sources and methods. Once impacts are identified they can then be classified, for example as demographic, economic and impacts on social values and attitudes (as discussed in Chapter three by Kenyon 1997). The scoping process will indicate that there is an impact and its magnitude and validity can then be determined. SIA is thus a process that is undertaken to document a variety of social impacts and their relationship with a variety of different scenarios.

## **The Application of SIA**

### **SIA and small communities**

“Small community-focussed SIA has mainly explored specific social impacts, community social viability and the state of the local economy” (Barrow 2000, 121).

Bowles (1983a in Barrow 2000) states that “SIA is often applied to small communities”. The social dynamics of small communities including factors such as their relative isolation, well defined conditions and dependence on particular resources make them generally conducive to SIA study (Barrow 2000). This thesis deals with university communities which can be seen to have similarities to the small communities. The section ‘Problem Identification: Scoping and identifying the issues’ will use a compiled list of potential social impacts associated with university student housing that can be applied to the case study in Chapter five.

### **SIA as a Method of Evaluating Student Housing Developments**

As previously mentioned, the conceptualisation of social impacts involves identifying changes to people’s way of life, culture, community, political systems, environment, health and wellbeing, personal and property rights, fears and aspirations (Vanclay 2003). This thesis employs techniques of social impact assessment (SIA) to identify social impacts related to university student housing developments

and provide recommendations for the effective integration of future student housing developments into geographically defined and relational communities.

For the purpose of this thesis SIA will be utilised a tool kit of knowledge that can be employed to scope and uncover what social impacts the UNSW University Village might have on the geographically defined community of Randwick and the relational community of the university. A list has been compiled of social indicators and factors that are considered to be important to the people living and working in a community that surround a university. These are drawn from SIA literature, local government social plans from three Sydney Councils and information obtained from key informant issues as part of this thesis. It should be emphasised that the process of SIA is not a tick box approach but rather a method of scoping and identifying issues and attempting to estimate the effective impact of each in differing situations and on different people and groups. The information required to do this is gathered formally and informally and this thesis does not seek to carry out a full social impact assessment of the case study. Instead it seeks to scope and identify the issues that are considered important in the consideration of the development of large scale university student housing projects through the identification of impacts relevant to large scale university student housing projects.

### **Drawing on the tools**

The SIA process and approach taken in table 4.1 informs the process to be undertaken in the scoping and identification of the social and community impacts of university student housing development. This information has then been combined with the work of Burdge and Robertson 1990 in Barrow 2000. Table 4.1 outlines the SIA process as it applies to new and retrofitted university student housing development. Chapter five applies the details of the case study: UNSW University Village to the social impacts identified in table 4.2 and scopes social impacts as applied to the neighbourhood surrounding the university (the geographically defined community) as well as the network of people who attend, teach and work and relate to the university (the relational community).

**Table 4.1 The SIA process as adapted for new university student housing development**

<b>Step</b>	<b>SIA Process</b>	<b>Tools/ method or approach</b>
1	Problem identification	Scoping the potential social impacts on individual members of the relational university community and the geographically defined community 'the neighbourhood' as a whole to determine the scale of these identified impacts. Involves the identification of appropriate methods, key informants and sources of data.
2	Formulation of alternatives	Formulate alternative proposals based on community needs. This stage can involve the utilisation of public meetings, advisory groups, public data and other methods as needed.

3	Profiling	Conduct a current social profile of the geographically defined community 'the neighbourhood' and a snapshot of the relational community (such as the students) and undertake profiling to determine who will be most affected by the potential impacts (identification of vulnerable groups).
4	Projection	Project the scale of social impacts by using information gathered to estimate differences in impacts according to changing scenarios identified in stage 2, formulation of alternatives.
5	Assessment	Assess the degree of the identified social impacts, including the most significant impacts and the likely reactions people will have to these impacts with a view to determining the potential to avoid or mitigate impacts.
6	Evaluation	Evaluate the benefits of the proposal and the overall social impacts to present an opinion about the proposal (which may be presented as a public document for comment).
7	Mitigation	Identify and formulate strategies for the mitigation of identified social impacts.
8	Monitoring	Monitor the impacts that eventuate over time and develop and use of a monitoring plan. This is an opportunity to learn from observations and experience and utilise this information in future developments.

Source: Barrow 2000 adapted by Small 2008.

### **Problem Identification: Scoping and identifying the issues**

Whilst it is acknowledged that it would be impossible to develop a concise list of all the potential social and community impacts that a university student housing development may incur, (Vanclay 2002 and 2003), this thesis has used the first stage of the SIA process, literature, expert interviews, best practice and an informed professional understanding of social planning principles to develop a starting point in the identification and subsequent assessment of the social impacts of these developments on communities. Chapter five introduces the UNSW University Village case study in detail and will utilise the issues scoped in this chapter to make meaningful comment about the social impacts of this development and the adequacy of the Part 3A legislative process in identifying, mitigating and managing social impacts. The social and community issues that have been identified and are considered important in the assessment of large scale student housing development are discussed in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Identified social impacts for consideration**

<b>Identified Issue for Consideration</b>	<b>Description</b>
Community safety and security	Safety and security relates to the design principles of the development that facilitate a safe and secure environment for residents and the community as a whole. Developments that promote a safe and secure environment incorporate lightening,

	are designed to provide casual surveillance to common areas and the streetscape and may have site specific security in place such as closed circuit monitoring, on site security officers and limited access residential buildings (key and swipe card entry only).
Location convenience and amenity for students	Student housing development that is considered to provide convenience and amenity to students will be located in close proximity to a university campus and may offer access to facilities such as a supermarket or convenience store, cafe, banking facilities, medical facilities, and on site management.
Recreation and leisure opportunities	Recreation and leisure opportunities relate to open space and areas for recreation located as part of the development or in close proximity. These spaces are intended to be enjoyed for passive and active recreation and to encourage positive, healthy living environments.
Pedestrian links and permeability	Pedestrian links and permeability relate to clear and safe pedestrian pathways and access points to a development or place of interest. Student housing development that facilitates pedestrian movement will provide at least one well defined access point to the street and the university campus and will preferably offer at least one path of access that is sheltered.
Traffic, transport and car parking	Traffic, transport and car parking provide opportunities for vehicular movement around the site and private vehicle and service access to the site. Student housing development in close proximity to public transport that operates most hours of the day will allow students to access the CBD without the need for private vehicle transport. Road access to a student housing development should facilitate access by emergency vehicles and parking should be provided for those students who must travel to areas that are not serviced by adequate levels of public transport.
Heritage conservation	Heritage conservation refers to the acknowledgement of areas or places of interest that are to be retained due to their significance to that area. In some situations, a student housing development may be located in close proximity to or within a heritage conservation area and this will have implications for that development. Generally, this involves the retention of heritage items and maintenance of the streetscape within a conservation area, enhanced by buffers between other forms of development to ensure areas of heritage conservation can be enjoyed by the community, within their context.
Preservation and respect of diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social diversity</li> <li>▪ Cultural diversity</li> </ul>	The social and culture diversity of an existing community relates to the unique set of structures of that community and its subsequent values. Student housing development should be designed with these community structures in mind and incorporate a consultation process to allow for the existing community to comment on proposed developments and make a meaningful contribution to the outcome of that development.
Community integration and relationships	Community integration and relationship are important aspects of a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of community</li> <li>▪ Sense of belonging</li> <li>▪ Neighbouring</li> <li>▪ Social cohesion</li> <li>▪ Sense of place</li> </ul>	<p>community and include a sense of belonging to the community and social cohesion. Student housing development can foster a sense of community, belonging and social cohesion. Positive neighbouring can be encouraged by clear links between proposed development and existing residential development. Balconies addressing the streetscape, soft landscaping and communal recreational areas may encourage a friendlier environment.</p>
<p>Disability and access</p>	<p>Disability and access caters for people with a range of physical or sensory disabilities to ensure they have a reasonable degree of access both within and to that development. Student housing development should cater for people with disabilities and ensure that people with a range of impairments can live, work and enjoy the space. Pedestrian links should cater for the mobility impaired in accordance with Australian standards.</p>
<p>The natural environment in its social context</p>	<p>The protection of the natural environment in its social context relates to the promotion of intergenerational equity and healthy living environments that can be enjoyed by present and future generations.</p>
<p>The built environment</p>	<p>The built environment in a social context relates to the impacts of the constructed environment upon people due to issues such as over-shadowing, aesthetics and streetscape.</p>
<p>Locality specific issues</p>	<p>Locality specific issues involve the relationship a development has with local landmarks and specific places and areas in a location.</p>
<p>Housing affordability for the community</p>	<p>Housing affordability can be defined as the ability to secure appropriate accommodation as defined by the relative proportion of a person's income to secure that accommodation. Housing developments can impact on the supply of housing in a community and this can have affordability implications.</p>
<p>Delivery and ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding - use of PPPs</li> <li>▪ Staging and construction (noise, dust)</li> </ul>	<p>Funding a development through a public private partnership such as a BOOT scheme may result in unique or additional impacts that can be explored. Staged development occurs in parts rather than constructing a complete development which can have benefits. The construction process will usually involve dust and noise generation that can be mitigated.</p>
<p>The local economy</p>	<p>The local economy refers to the economic activities within a community which may include employment and job creation and local business with goods and services for sale. The construction of a new student housing development has a number of local economic impacts including job creation in construction and management.</p>
<p>Issues specific to student housing development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age structure</li> <li>▪ transient nature of student populations</li> <li>▪ Housing affordability for students</li> </ul>	<p>Student housing development is identified as having a specific set of issues and social structures. These include a cluster of young people who are often a transient population due to the university calendar. Full time university students at a young age may be more likely to experience housing affordability issues or have unique housing requirements.</p>

## Legislating against Negative Social Impacts

The planning context of the provision of large scale student housing projects is explored in this section through an explanation of the *EP&A Act*, Part 3A declaration process. (This is further discussed in the context of the case study, UNSW Living Village in Chapter five.) The issues scoped and identified as being matters that I would include in an assessment of the social impacts of university student housing developments provide for a checkpoint of the existing environmental assessment considerations. From this it can be determined if the current planning system is considered adequate in this regard. This chapter concludes below with a discussion of the adequacy of Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* which addresses social impacts of large scale private sector provided student housing developments.

## New South Wales Planning Legislation

The planning system in NSW facilitates and manages change, particularly in the built environment through the development of strategic planning documents such as master plans and in the assessment process through the issuing of development consent which grants permission for development. The NSW Department of Planning is the consent authority for major development projects in the state of NSW. As explained in the following section, development that is considered to be of a major scale due to capital investment cost or of 'significance to the state' is assessed by the Department of Planning rather than the local council (the usual consent authority) to which the development site relates. The Minister for Planning currently has the authority to determine if a development meets the requirements for consideration under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*, via State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Major Projects) gazetted with 2005 legislation. This section provides some of the guidelines for this determination in situations that may be relevant to large scale student housing development. Chapter five illustrates how the case study, UNSW University Village was assessed under this part of the *EP&A Act*.

## Major Projects

"The NSW Department of Planning is committed to providing efficient, transparent and rigorous assessment of the State's most significant development projects" (NSW Government, Department of Planning 2007, 1).

As part of ongoing reform to the NSW planning system, the NSW Department of Planning introduced new 'Major Project' laws in 2005 for the streamlining of the assessment of proposals considered to be of state or regional significance. This reform was a key part of and under the guise of the NSW

government's overall commitment to improving the planning system and the assessment process for state significant development.

### **Development types**

As discussed previously in Chapter one, Schedule One of the Major Projects SEPP lists the types of development deemed to be a major project under the legislation. These developments can include classes of development such as health and public service facilities. Within Schedule One are the common thresholds that a proposal must meet to be considered under this legislation. These thresholds may relate to factors such as the capital investment value of the proposed development. It is at the discretion of the Minister of Planning to form the opinion that a specific project meets the threshold and it is then declared a major project. Relevant to this research, Schedule One of the legislation states that "development for the purpose of teaching or research (including universities, TAFE or schools) that has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million" is considered a 'Major Development' under section 20 (Educational Facilities) of Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*.

Schedules Two and Three of the Major Projects SEPP illustrate the types of development that may be considered due to their location. These areas are usually mapped and clearly defined and include some development in Sydney Olympic Park and Taronga Zoo (NSW Government, Department of Planning 2007 and 2007b). It is again at the discretion of the Minister if these developments are to be considered Major Projects.

Development that is considered to be of local significance and does not meet the requirements to be determined under the above mentioned Part 3A legislation will be assessed by the local council to which the development site relates. Therefore, in the case of university student housing proposed to be developed on university-owned land, the total CIV which includes all the costs that relate to that development of under \$30 million dollars is assessed by the local council and does not fall under Part 3A. Instead, the development will be subject to the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan which, in the case of universities, is site specific. It is noted that the Minister does have the discretion to determine a project to be of state or regional significance to be determined under the Major Projects SEPP regardless of the total CIV or any other factors generally considered in the determination. In this regard, the legislation around declaring a project to be of state significance is open to interpretation, the opinion and discretion of the Minister and the ability of the applicant to put an appropriate case forward to the Minister. It seems clear that the majority of large scale, new purpose built student housing development will be assessed under the Major Projects legislation due to the significant CIV and the development's State or regional significance.

## Chapter Four Summary

This chapter has examined social impact assessment (SIA) as a method of identifying and measuring the social and community impacts of large scale university student housing development on the surrounding community. In doing so, this chapter has shown how social impact assessment can be used as tool to scope and identify issues that may emerge as a result of new and retrofitted student housing development. With an emphasis on identifying and scoping issues, this chapter has highlighted the social and community impacts that need to be addressed in the assessment of new and retrofitted university student housing development. Chapter five will discuss the UNSW University Village as a case study and compare the identified and scoped social impacts to the issues addressed in the actual assessment and determination of the development to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the legislation to identify and mitigate social impacts.





Fig 5.1 Artistic impression of the new UNSW University Village as seen from High Street, Kensington.  
Source: Campus Living Villages 2008

## Chapter Five: UNSW University Village Case Study

Chapter five documents the upcoming UNSW University Village (UNSW Village) as a case study to illustrate the potential social and community impacts as a result of new large scale university student housing development. The case study is presented within its context as a large new development located on a site leased to Campus Living Villages on the main campus of the University of NSW in Kensington, Sydney. The chapter applies definitions and concepts from Chapter two and discusses and defines both the geographic and relational communities of the University of NSW. This background and contextual information leads to the main component of this chapter, the evaluation of the social and community impacts of the UNSW University Village against the social impacts scoped and identified in Chapter four. Chapter six utilises this information further in order to highlight areas in the legislation that at present do not address the full spectrum of social impacts that may result from new student housing development.

The UNSW Village is a large scale purpose built university student housing development currently under construction on UNSW's main campus. This development will house over 1000 students in a new residential precinct on the northern side of the campus in the area commonly referred to as 'lower campus'. One of two new purpose built developments currently under construction at the University of NSW, the UNSW Village development was made possible due to a BOOT scheme with Campus Living Villages. The second purpose built student housing development under construction is New College postgraduate student accommodation, approved by Randwick Council on 14 August 2007 to cater for 319 students. The combination of the New College Village development and the new UNSW University Village will increase the amount of on-campus student accommodation at UNSW to 2,342 student places (UNSW Accommodation Central in NSW Department of Planning 2007). It is the UNSW Village that is the focus of this case study.

## The University of NSW

The University of NSW was established in 1949 and comprises of nine faculties across the main campus at Kensington as well as the College of Fine Arts in Paddington Sydney and UNSW at Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. The main campus comprises of a 38 hectare site in Kensington, approximately seven kilometres from the Sydney Central Business District (CBD) (UNSW 2008). With an enrolment of 36,881 students at its Sydney campuses as of March 2007, the UNSW is a culturally diverse learning environment with a significant proportion of its student population born overseas as noted in Table 5.1. The student population was made up of 48% female students and 52% males of which the majority (66%) were completing a bachelor's degree or diploma.

**Table 5.1 Student enrolments at the University of NSW as at 31 March 2007**

Total Enrolment	UNSW Kensington (main campus) and COFA Paddington (excluding UC-ADFA Canberra)
<b>By Gender</b>	
Female	17,635
Male	19,246
<b>Total Enrolment</b>	36,881
<b>By Attendance Type</b>	
Full-time	13,056
Part-time	23,825
<b>By Level of Program</b>	
Bachelor and Diploma	24,472
Masters Coursework	6,379
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	2,255
Doctorate	2,181
Non-award	959
Masters Research	506

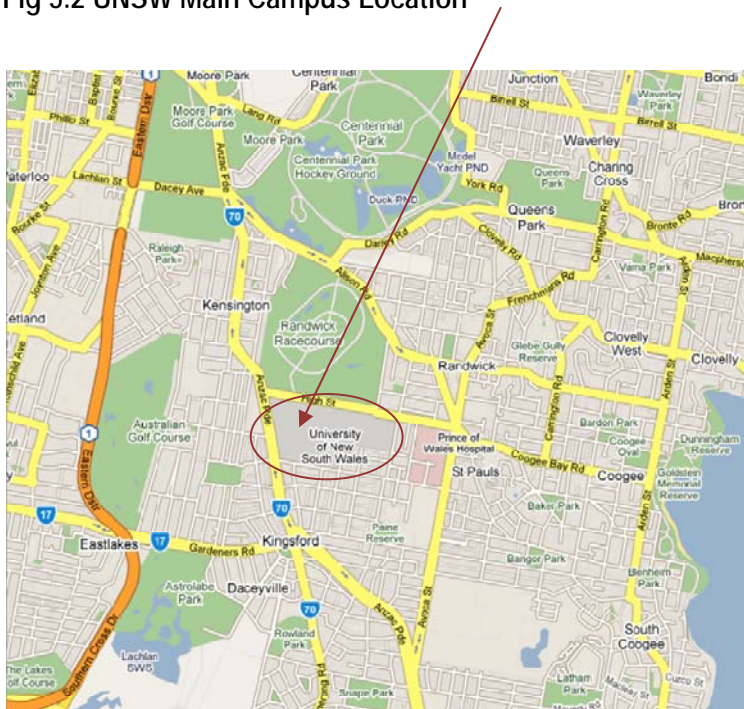
Cross Institution	124
Postgraduate Qualifying	5
<b>By Campus</b>	
Kensington	34,577
Paddington (COFA)	2,304
<b>By Residence Status</b>	
Local	29,212
Overseas	7,669
<b>By Country of Birth</b>	
Australia	17,760
Asia	11,991
Sub-continent/ Middle East	2,429
Europe	2,070
Americas	1,271
Africa	729
Pacific Islands	589
Other	42

Source: UNSW Planning 2007-2008.

### University of NSW Main Campus

The main campus of the University of NSW is located in Kensington, in the LGA of Randwick in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. Figure 5.2 shows the Kensington Campus and its location relative to other key land marks in the eastern suburbs such as Centennial Parklands to the north and the eastern distributor to the west of the campus. The case study UNSW Village is located along High Street along the northern border of the Kensington Campus.

Fig 5.2 UNSW Main Campus Location



Source: Google Maps 2008.

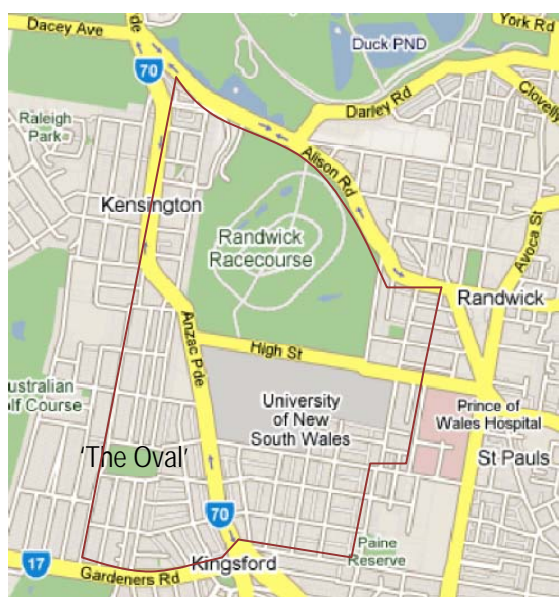
## The University of NSW as a community

Chapter two discussed the concepts of both geographically defined and relational communities. This section defines both the geographically defined community of UNSW, often referred to as the neighbourhood, as well as the relational community of the university. Defining the community as both geographic and relational will assist with the social impact scoping and identification process which forms a significant component of this chapter.

### The geographically defined community of UNSW

Figure 5.3 defines the geographic boundaries of the neighbourhood of UNSW for the purpose of this thesis and includes all those people who live and work in the area defined by the red boundary line. The mapped area has been chosen based on: relative distance to the university and; topographical factors that may enhance or diminish the social impacts experienced in particular locations due to factors such as walkability and student access to these areas. The areas south and west of the campus are relatively flat and therefore very walkable and subsequently used extensively by students for on-street parking and shopping. The streets south west of the campus and in particular to the north and east of the parklands often referred to as 'the oval' are used extensively for on-street all day car parking by students. Areas to the east of the campus tend to be very steep and therefore less walkable. The Randwick Racecourse is considered to form a significant buffer to the area in the north of the university.

Fig 5.3 Geographically defined neighbourhood of UNSW



Source: Google Maps 2008.

It is acknowledged that people outside of the boundaries of the neighbourhood defined in Figure 5.3 may consider themselves included in the community surrounding the university and may also experience social impacts as a result of activity within the university precinct, however for purposes of this immediate study, this area is noted as the UNSW neighbourhood.

### **The relational community of UNSW**

As discussed in Chapter two, the definition of a relational community can be applied in a number of ways. The relational community of the University of NSW is defined for the purpose of this thesis to consist of the network of students, academic staff and administrators who come together for the common purpose of education at the university both past and present. In this way, the university network includes all alumni and graduands. The definition is not intended to exclude visitors to the campus or the retail and non academic staff who provide and utilise services at the university. The important component of being included in the relational community is being connected to the network within the university; through involvement and a self proclaimed sense of belonging to the university.

### **Case Study: UNSW University Village (UNSW Village)**

The UNSW Village is a large scale purpose built student housing development with a capital investment value of \$85 million (Haddad 2008). Currently under construction, the development is the current largest purpose built student housing development in the Southern Hemisphere (Turner 2008). Chapter one introduced the context of the case study and discussed its relevance as a student housing development provided under a BOOT scheme. Campus Living Villages, is the company responsible for the construction, ownership and operation of this development under a 40 year agreement (Turner 2008).

This section provides an introduction to the UNSW University Village including the site on which the development is located, a discussion of the proposal and the development concept with reference to the assessment process under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*. The Director-General's Environmental Assessment (EA) Report 2007 explains that the Minister for Planning was of the opinion that the proposed development was a "Residential Project" with a Capital Investment Value of more than \$50 million that would contribute to state or regional planning objectives as per the criteria in Part 5 of Schedule One Clause 13(1) of the Major Projects SEPP (NSW Department of Planning 2007). It is noted that the development also meets further requirements of the SEPP discussed in Chapter four. A number of other information sources are drawn from in discussion of this case study. These sources of information include but are not limited to:

- The register of Major Projects, NSW Department of Planning;
- NSW Department of Planning, Director-General's Environmental Assessment Report, Major project assessment: Student Residential Accommodation December 2007 to be referred to here on as 'Director-General's EA Report 2007';
- Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report September 2007;
- Major project application, EA requirements UNSW student housing 07-0071;
- Correspondence between UNSW and the Department of Planning (2006-2008);
- All plans, reports, diagrams available on both the Department of Planning and Randwick City Council websites and;
- Interviews with persons listed in Chapter one of this thesis.

## The Site

The land on which the development is located forms part of lot 3 in DP 1104617 at the University of NSW in the area known as 'lower campus' adjacent to gate two in High Street, Kensington. Figure 5.4 shows the location of the village which is a subdivided portion of the University approximately 18,530sqm in size and leased to Campus Living Villages for a period of 30 years (NSW Department of Planning 2007, Campus Living Villages 2008, Hilmer 2006).

**Fig 5.4 Location of UNSW Village**



Source: Campus Living Villages 2008

## The major project application and approval outcomes

The major project application was accepted and issued on 26 July 2007 signifying the declaration of the proposal as a major development under part 3A of the *EP&A Act*. The Instrument of Delegation issued by the Director-General Sam Haddad on 8 December 2006 listed the responsibilities of the Department of Planning and the local Council, the City of Randwick in the determination of the proposal. The delegation of the assessment process took place in accordance with Section 23(1) of the *EP&A Act* to transfer the development assessment function to Randwick City Council (Council) with 12 conditions. These conditions specified the process of delegation for Randwick City Council and issues related to accountability in the process. "Council shall be responsible for all aspects of compliance of any approval issues (should the Project be approved), unless otherwise agreed to by the Minister" (Haddad 2006, 2). Delegation to the Council allowed for consultation with the Department of Planning and the Council were required to submit a draft EA report to the Minister for comment prior to finalisation (Haddad 2006, NSW Department of Planning 2006-2008).

The original proposal was lodged by UNSW Village Pty Ltd with the Department of Planning on 27 October 2008. The development proposed: the demolition of eight existing buildings on the site; construction of a new building with 303 apartments, with capacity for 1030 beds in a series of buildings of four and eight storeys; a basement car park and a total of 74 on-site car parking spaces and the retention of existing heritage buildings within the Old Tote Heritage Conservation Area. This proposal was publically exhibited between 3 October 2007 and 2 November 2007. A preferred project proposal was submitted later. Approval was granted for 268 self contained residential apartments with 1018 single occupancy bedrooms by the Minister for Planning on 23 January 2008 subject to further conditions.

The applicant submitted three further modifications with the latter being MP07\_0071 MOD 3 approved on 13 November 2008. These modifications were sought under section 75W of the *EP&A Act* for a number of design changes that resulted in a slight reduction in the gross floor area of the development and improvements in the amenity of apartments and common areas. One of the key changes was to convert a number of one bedroom apartments into studios to address feedback from UNSW, which suggested that there was increasing demand for studio accommodations for students (Architectus 2007). Further changes involved reconfiguration of internal areas to increase the size of bathrooms and living spaces in some units. The modifications were reviewed by Randwick Council and no objections were raised as they were deemed consistent with the original proposal and were not considered to

detract from the streetscape. The modifications were detailed on the Department of Planning's website in accordance with clause 8G of the *EP&A Act* regulation 2000.

### **Permissibility**

The land on which the development was proposed was zoned 5 Special Uses under the Randwick Local Environmental Plan 1998 and is permissible with consent. The Director General's 2007 assessment report (2007, 12) states that "the proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant objectives of the Special Uses Zone and is therefore a permissible use subject to the Minister's approval".

The Environmental Planning Instruments (EPIs) and other plans and policies that applied to the development (as detailed in the Director General's 2007 assessment report) are listed below. It is noted that a SIA was not undertaken and that specific legislation related to the assessment of social and community impacts did not apply.

### **EPIs, plans and policies:**

- Application of EPIs to Part 3A Major Projects
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 11 – Traffic Generating Developments (SEPP 11)
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 (SEPP 55)
- Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65)
- Environmental Planning Policy (BASIX) 2004
- Randwick Local Environmental Plan 1998 (RLEP)
- Deemed Development Control Plan – UNSW Kensington Campus (Campus 2020)
- Development Control Plan – UNSW Kensington Campus (the DCP)

### **Consultation Process**

Randwick Council was responsible for the consultation process as per the instrument of delegation. Section 75H(3) of the *EP&A Act* requires that the environmental assessment must be made available to the public for a period of no less than 30 days after the Director General has accepted it. As stated previously, the application was put on exhibition between 3 October 2007 and 2 November 2007 and details were sent to all land owners of property adjoining the site (in Anzac Parade, Barker Street, Botany Street, High Street, Kennedy Street, Norton Street, Willis Street, Day Avenue and Doncaster Avenue). Additionally, further copies were made available at Randwick Council offices and the Department of Planning's Sydney office. All relevant state government departments were informed. The preferred project that was eventually approved subject to conditions was lodged on 28 November 2008



and was not readvertised or exhibited as it was considered to be largely the same as the exhibited proposal. The details of the preferred project were made available on the Department of Planning's website as per Section 75 of the *EP&A Act*.

## **Submissions**

The Director-General's EA Report 2007 details the project and is the environmental assessment of the proposal. The report notes that the proposal was amended after receipt of number of objections, recommendations, advice and comments from Randwick City Council, the Roads and Traffic Authority Sydney Regional Advisory Committee, the joint Randwick/Waverley Design Review Panel, the Department of Housing and local residents (NSW Department of Planning, 2007). A total of five submissions were received following the exhibition period. These submissions included one agency submission from the Department of Housing and four submissions from local residents.

The Department of Housing questioned the affordability for students; requested a student selection policy; and queried how accessible accommodation (for people with disabilities) will be allocated. The Director-General's EA Report 2007 considered these issues to be reasonable and stated that the relevant matters were addressed in the preferred project report. A similar statement was made in response to the four public submissions which raised the following issues: inadequate amount of car parking for students; noise generation including air-conditioning units to be detract from the amenity of surrounding land uses; impacts on solar access to surrounding buildings; increases in the velocity of winds and the impact of this on surrounding areas; construction noise and dust and a statement that providing car parking will encourage more students to drive to the campus. External referrals were also received from the Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (SACL), Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Water and Energy. The assessment report states that the majority of issues that arose as a result of the public exhibition and assessment were resolved with the applicant or through conditions of consent placed upon the development (NSW Department of Planning 2007). The EA of the proposed development is based largely on the preferred project proposal which is slightly different to what was exhibited.

## **Preferred project**

This section provides details of the preferred project which has been modified slightly on several occasions, the latter modification three of which has been described earlier in this chapter. The intention is to provide an overview of the nature of new student housing development through the use of the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007 and the Director-General's EA Report 2007 for the case study: UNSW University Village. This information illustrates the scale of this development and the

concept driving this very modern and purpose built university student housing precinct. The Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007 has slightly different details to the Director-General's EA Report 2007 which details the development as exhibited and then the details of the preferred project. The preferred project was approved subject to conditions so it is this development concept and outcome that is discussed in this thesis. The overall development concept is the same. The key elements table 5.2 provides a summary of the preferred project.

**Table 5.2 Key elements of the UNSW Village development**

<b>Number of Apartments</b>	
Ground level	30
Level one	28
Level two	40
Level three	45
Level four	41
Level five	34
Level six	22
Level seven	20
Level eight	8
Total number of apartments	268
Total number of beds	1,018
Site Area	246,200 sqm
Gross Floor Area	57,380 sqm
Maximum number of storeys	8
Parking spaces	74 cars (including 3 disabled spaces, 4 motorcycle spaces and a stand for 100 bicycles).
Landscaped open space	12,750 sqm

Source: Department of Planning 2007

### **The Campus Living Concept for UNSW Village**

Campus Living Village student housing developments are a unique living environment for students and the UNSW Village will provide a range of services and facilities to students “an extensive Student Life Programme will focus on growth, development and support, as much as social, sporting and cultural interaction” (Campus Living Villages 2008, website). The company aim is to “not only redefine student life, but also student lifestyle” (Campus Living Villages 2008). The UNSW Village, as a product of Campus Living Villages, is thus an evolving concept in student accommodation that goes above and beyond a place to sleep. This development promises to be well equipped, be purpose built for students and offer modern conveniences such as a convenience store, e-library, and cafe and incorporate environmentally sustainable design initiatives (Campus Living Villages 2008).

## Rental agreements and cost

The weekly rental costs of living in an apartment at the UNSW Village, which opens in January 2010 were released in October 2008 on the Campus Living Villages website. The weekly rental cost does not include a once off application fee of \$70, a yearly fee of \$115 and a refundable bond of \$600 for multiple bedroom apartments and \$800 for one bedroom apartments and studios. The weekly rent does include utilities such as electricity and gas. Rental contracts are for a period of 52 weeks and students who vacate before this period due to unforeseen circumstances will be assisted by Village administration in the finding of a new occupant. A charge of two weeks rent is payable for breaking the rental agreement and the Campus Living Village website notes that "providing this services comes at a cost and is disruptive to the Village community" (Campus Living Villages 2008, website).

Table 5.3 details the weekly rent of the UNSW Village which is \$225 for the majority of apartments and up to \$333 for a large one bedroom apartment with a balcony. These rates are competitive and generally more affordable than median rental costs in the Randwick LGA detailed in Table 5.4, particularly when it is inclusive of furnishings and most utilities. A one bedroom apartment in the private rental market has a median weekly rental of \$350 not inclusive of any furnishings or utilities and this compares to a range of \$322 - \$333 for a one bedroom apartment in the UNSW Village development that includes utilities and furnishings. The UNSW Village thus presents good value for money and is relatively more affordable for students. Table 5.4 details the median rental costs of the Randwick LGA as at March 2008 and shows that the most expensive one bedroom apartment in UNSW Village which costs \$333 per week is more affordable than the median price of a one bedroom apartment in the Randwick LGA at \$350 per week.

**Table 5.3 Weekly rental at UNSW Village (recently released rates)**

Apartment type	Weekly Rent per person
	Furnished apartments including water and gas
1 Bedroom (regular)	\$322.50
1 Bedroom (large balcony)	\$333.00
1 Bedroom (studio)	\$311.50
Private bedroom in a two bedroom apartment	\$247.00
Private bedroom in a shared three, four, five, six, seven or eight bedroom apartment.	\$225.00

Source: Campus Living 2008

**Table 5.4 Median private rental prices in Randwick LGA (as at March 2008)**

Property Type	Weekly Rent Per household Unfurnished, private rental market. No utilities included	Weekly Rent Per person Unfurnished, private rental market. No utilities included
One bedroom	\$350	\$350
Shared two bedroom (2 occupants)	\$440	\$220
Shared three bedroom (3 occupants)	\$590	\$197
Shared four or more bedrooms (4 occupants)	\$865	\$217

Source: NSW Department of Housing 2008.

### **Housing stress and students in Randwick**

Housing stress in Randwick is largely a problem for the those people under 25 years of age, who represent 30% of all Centrelink Rent Assistance recipients in the Randwick LGA experiencing housing stress (Davies 2008) notes that “this is a very high proportion compared with neighbouring LGA’s without universities (for example Botany Bay has only 4% of all CRA recipients in housing stress aged under 25 years)” (Davies 2008, 2). The Department of Housing report comments that in the whole of NSW, there are only four LGA’s with a greater number of CRA recipients in housing stress on Youth Allowance than Randwick. These LGAs are Armidale, Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, importantly all local government areas with universities. “This is a strong indicator that a high proportion of CRA recipients in housing stress in Randwick are students” (Davis 2008, 2).

### **The Social and Community Impacts of UNSW Village**

The community and social impacts of the UNSW Village development are discussed in accordance with the issues scoped and identified in Chapter four of this thesis. This application of SIA principles provides insight and categorisation of the social impacts of large scale student housing development. An environmental assessment (EA) was undertaken by Randwick City Council under delegation from the NSW Department of Planning and the details of this assessment have been referred to throughout this chapter as Director-General’s EA Report 2007. This thesis focuses on the identification of social impacts and provides comment about the adequacy of the EA process in determining and assessing these impacts. Chapter six will interweave informed opinion and insights to provide recommendations for the mitigation of the social and community impacts of student housing development. It should be

emphasised that this thesis has deliberately chosen a case study that involved the delivery of a new purpose built student housing development by the private sector through a BOOT scheme.

### **The application of SIA principles to the case study**

A formal SIA process was not undertaken for the UNSW University Village development and the full range of social impacts scoped and identified as being important considerations in large scale student housing developments in Chapter four were not all considered formally in the Major Projects assessment process. This section will counter act this by applying the scoped and identified issues to the development concept to raise issues from the perspective of their social and community impact. As this thesis focuses on the social impacts of student housing developments, information is organised into positive or negative impacts on the community.

Of interest in this thesis is the way in which social impacts are addressed and mitigated in the Major Projects assessment process. The Director General's Requirements specified that social impacts were a head of consideration under Part A. In the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007 a summary conclusion reads "the development is not considered to have any detrimental social impacts on the surrounding area" (Architectus 2007, 42). It is interesting that the Director General's requirement to address the likely social impacts is addressed in a single sentence in the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007. This thesis explores the social impacts of this development to determine if this statement is accurate and further asks the rhetorical question, on what basis was this statement made? Principle Nine of SEPP 65 required the development to meet social dimensions "Good design responds to the social context and needs of the local community in terms of lifestyles, affordability, and access to social facilities. New development should optimise the provisions of housing to suit the social mix and needs in the neighbourhood..." (as quoted in Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007, 48). A general statement provided in the EA report fails to grasp all aspects of this principle and it not considered an adequate social assessment of the development.

### **Categorising the Scoped Social and Community Impacts of UNSW Village**

This section categorises the scoped and identified social and community impacts of large scale student housing developments as discussed previously in Chapter four and applies them to the case study of UNSW Village. This process allows for a broad overview of the development in its social and community context and highlights issues identified that were not addressed in the legislation. In making this link, it becomes evident that there are several groupings of social impacts that are at present not

routinely addressed in the Major Project's legislation and assessment process. In some cases, the developer, Campus Living Villages, has adequately demonstrated that the development concept has identified, mitigated or managed emerging impacts. This thesis considers that Campus Living Villages are perhaps an exemplary example of a private sector provider in many respects and that there is an opportunity for SIA principles to be incorporated into the *EP&A Act* legislation in order to ensure that all future student housing development meets appropriate standards and does not compromise the integrity of the geographically defined community in which they are located. The following information corresponds to Chapter four and provides a brief summary of the UNSW Village's social and community impacts.

### **Community safety and security**

Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65) ensured that the development provided a safe and secure environment and Campus Living Villages released a statement to accompany the Major Project application which detailed a number of initiatives to be used including lightening provided in accordance with Australian Standards, Panic points monitored by closed circuit television and importantly passive surveillance to common areas. The development appears to provide a good level of safety and security through design and other measures.

### **Location convenience and amenity for students**

The development is located on university-owned land in the lower part of the university campus and thus offers exceptional location convenience for students attending UNSW. The development is a purpose built series of student housing apartments with associated on-site commercial activities proposed. The UNSW Village is considered to provide residents with a very high level of residential amenity as it offers a variety of living options and the majority of apartments are designed to be dual access to allow for cross ventilation and sunlight access (Department of Planning 2007).

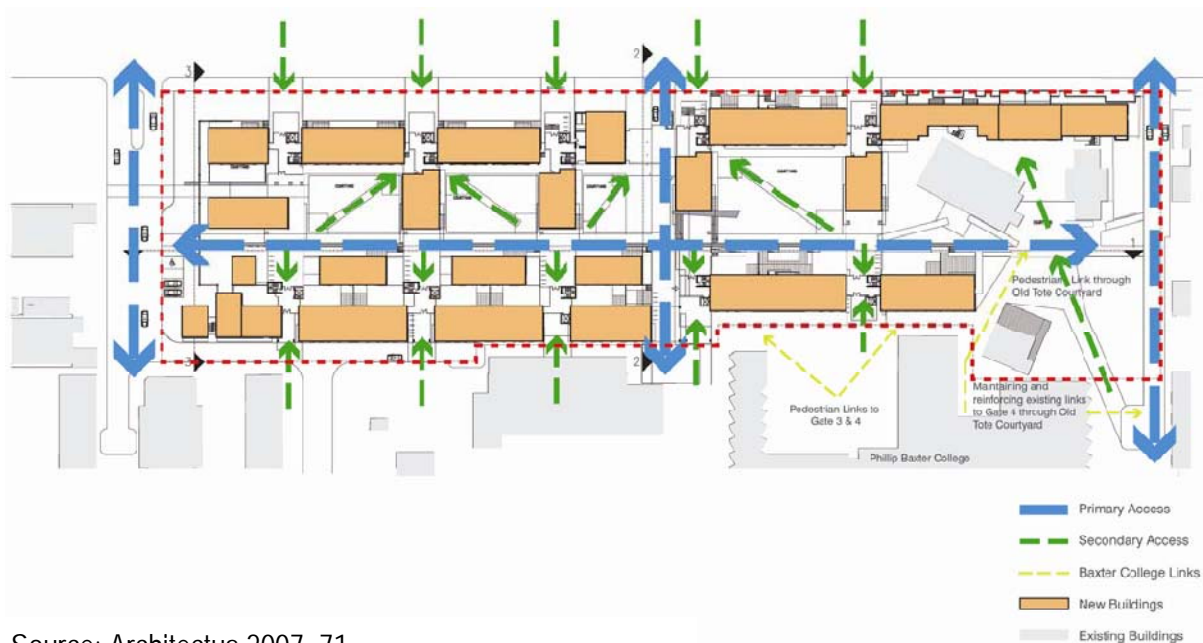
### **Recreation and leisure opportunities**

The development incorporates landscaping and five courtyard areas and is in close proximity to the passive and active recreation areas provided on-campus such as the Village Green. The development is a short bus trip from the vast passive and active recreation areas of Centennial Parklands, Moore Park Golf Course and the entertainment and restaurant precinct of Fox Studios. In this regard, the development is considered to offer students a high level of recreation and leisure opportunities.

## Pedestrian links and permeability

The development includes a number of pedestrian linkages facilitating access to the site and through the site. Legibility is addressed through compliance with the provisions of Part J of the UNSW Kensington Campus DCP which requires paving selection to make a contribution to the legibility and place an emphasis on pathways between key hubs and entrances. Gate 3 on High Street will provide an important pedestrian link into the campus. Figure 5.5 shows the spatial relationships and range of movement paths through the development.

Figure 5.5 Spatial relationships and movement paths



Source: Architectus 2007, 71.

## Traffic, transport and car parking

The University is well serviced by Sydney buses with regular services to Central Railway Station, Bondi Junction and East Gardens Shopping Centre. This development is located in close proximity to a number of key bus stops and access to these services is considered to be very good. A total of 74 car parking spaces are included as part of the development with a bike stand catering for 100 bicycles. It is not evident how the car parking spaces will be allocated but it seems likely that the developers envisage that the majority of students living on campus will not need to have a private vehicle and will utilise public transport due to the convenience of the location and the ease of access to the campus.

Whilst the social impacts of car parking provision may not be immediately clear, an interview with Sue Holliday makes this connection and revealed that. "We did focus groups with the community as part of

the Master Planning process and got further information from the Council... The focus groups, particularly in Kensington indicated a very strong dislike of the students, primarily because of parking. People were very unhappy with the students even when it was put to them that students bring a lot of economic vitality to their local areas, the overwhelming response was focussed on students parking on their streets" (Holliday 2008, pers. comm). The clear link between parking provision and the perception of students by the local community is evident.

It should be noted that the comments made in the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007 in relation to car parking are spurious: "the proposed development will include public benefits which include onsite car parking which will in turn reduce the demand for car parking on the street" (2007, 42). There is no indication that the basement car park will be made available to the public and adding a further 1000 residents and allocating 74 car spaces to the entire development is unlikely to reduce car parking demand on the street due to an intensification of the site and a situation of present high demand for car parking in the area. This statement is seen as invalid from a town planning perspective. The proposed car park is not considered to be of any public benefit as it services the development and visitors to that development.

### **Heritage conservation**

A component of the development site is occupied by a heritage conservation area consisting of the Old Tote, Fig Tree Theatre, The White House and fig trees. These buildings and areas are proposed to be utilised as part of the development and retained in their context. A 30 year management plan was requested in the Director-General's EA Report 2007 and any changes to the use of these buildings that would impact on their heritage significance would require a separate development application. Strict conditions of consent were placed on the new parts of the development to protect the structural integrity of the buildings within the heritage conservation area (Department of Planning 2007). It appears that the heritage conservation area will be protected and that this area will form an interesting and unique part of the student housing development. Conditions of consent require necessary maintenance on these buildings to be carried out and to have a plan of management in place will facilitate the protection of this area in the future. A Heritage Impact Statement was included as Appendix G of the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007.

### **Preservation and respect of diversity**

- Social diversity
- Cultural diversity



The UNSW Kensington Campus DCP refers specifically to cultural facilities and events in Part 5.9. The development does not provide any new cultural facilities but does retain the existing Fig Tree Theatre. The Architectus report notes that the Myers studio will be retained in the medium term. This development does not appear to contribute greatly to the area's social and cultural diversity but may add to specific programs and events that develop over time. UNSW has been acknowledged to have a culturally diverse student population and it is envisaged that this will be reflected in its housing in some way.

Of critical importance are the issues raised by Holliday (2008), who argues that there is a divide on the UNSW campus "The problem for students is that UNSW is quite a diverse campus in terms of the background of the students and, what you find is, that the overseas students tend not to mix with the Australian students, and the Australian students tend not to mix with the overseas students, and there is a bit of a divide on the campus and this needs to be addressed." Holliday then goes on to say. "For this [UNSW] campus with that issue I don't think we are going to see a big commitment by students into the community. There really aren't any structures to engage them into the community... and because there is a bit of residence by that community, you would really need to do a whole program of community engagement and identify what opportunities there are" (pers. comm). The contribution of the UNSW Village in the fostering of cultural diversity is unclear and not addressed in the assessment or legislative process.

### **Community integration and relationships**

- Sense of community
- Sense of belonging
- Neighbouring
- Social cohesion
- Sense of place

The assessment report does not make mention of community relationships or the impact of this development on social cohesion, sense of community, sense of belonging or neighbouring. The issue of neighbouring in the geographically defined community is an important aspect of 'student presence' raised in the literature. It is unclear how students will contribute to neighbouring but it does seem possible they may form a community within a community and have little interaction with the geographically defined wider university. Sense of place is addressed extensively in compliance in the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007. The sense of place of the campus is thought to be enhanced by the development which creates a definitive edge to High Street with a vegetation buffer and legible access points.

The assessment and the legislation fail to fully acknowledge and address the issue of student relationships with the wider community. Holliday (2008) suggests that UNSW campus be more accessible to the wider community, achieved through urban design and a sense of belonging to the UNSW community "The campus should be public place. We [planning consultants] recommended that they take down the wall around the campus, so that the campus can become more seamlessly integrated with the community and, so you don't feel like your entering an alien place" (pers. comm).

### **Disability and Access**

UNSW Kensington Campus DCP requires that "equal access to the public domain is to be achieved through integration of the findings of the UNSW Disability Access Audit" (as quoted in Architectus 2007, 57). The applicant commissioned Morris-Goding to conduct an access view to confirm compliance with the DCP and provide advice and strategies on access for people with disabilities. The development is envisaged to provide adequate access for people with a disability "the proposed development has demonstrated a reasonable degree of accessibility" (Morris-Goding 2007, 3). Eleven units within the development are required to be wheelchair accessible in accordance with Australian standards (Morris-Goding 2007).

### **The natural environment in its social context**

The natural landscape of the development site is addressed extensively through compliance with the UNSW Kensington Campus DCP. The applicant included an arborist's report with the proposal and met the existing tree management strategy that retains and protects significant weeping fig trees in and around the heritage conservation area. The natural elements of the site which include respect for its topography and the retention of significant trees have been met. The development was assessed in accordance with ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles to ensure that it would not cause any irreversible damage to the environment and that biological diversity would be observed. This thesis looks at the social impacts of the development and is thus concerned with issues of intergenerational equity and the Inter-Generational Principle to ensure the natural environment is preserved for the appreciation and benefit of future generations and that the development will make a positive social contribution to present and future generations. Legislation appears very strong in this area and this principle is addressed extensively in compliance.

### **The built environment in its social context**

"The design of the proposed student housing development will enhance the streetscape along High Street and integrate well with the existing University buildings adjoining the site" (Director General's

Assessment Report, Department of Planning 2007, 20). Issues of aesthetics, design and the ability of the built environment to relate to the streetscape and fit within its environmental and social context are interwoven extensively into the existing legislation. This development is envisaged to relate well to the streetscape and create a definable edge as discussed in the legibility section of this thesis.

### **Locality specific issues**

The development is located on High Street Kensington opposite the Randwick Racecourse Heritage Conservation Area. The Director-General's EA Report 2007 states that the retention of the majority of the fig trees will provide screening to the Race course (Department of Planning 2007). It is noted the development is on the far side of the Race Course and a significant distance from the main public areas used on racing days.

### **Housing affordability for the community**

The development does not provide housing opportunities for people other than students of the university. It is possible that meeting the housing needs of 1000 additional students could reduce demand in the local rental market in the Randwick LGA but the effects of this are not known. Housing affordability is a significant issue in the LGA of Randwick.

### **Delivery and ownership**

- Funding - Utilisation of PPPs
- Staging and construction (noise, dust)

There is no mention of the methods of funding in either the Architectus Part 3A Major Project Report 2007 or Director-General's EA Report 2007 and it is interesting that the provision of this development through a public private partnership rather than government or other form of institutional funding is therefore assumed to not have any additional impacts. The development will not be staged and construction impacts including dust and noise are mitigated and monitored as requirements including in the conditions of consent.

### **Issues specific to student housing development**

- Age structure
- Transient nature of student populations
- Housing affordability for students

The proposal provides more than 1000 additional housing places for students of the campus and as shown previously in this chapter, the cost of living in the development is relatively more affordable than the median prices in the private rental market within the Randwick LGA. The proposal meets the strategic vision of the Campus 2020 Master Plan and is the first stage of an additional 3,000 beds to be provided within 1.5km of the university campus over the life of the plan (Architectus 2007).

Campus Living appears to have dealt with the age structure and transient nature of the student population through the development of pastoral care programs for residents and by having 52 week leasing agreements whereby it is difficult for students to treat the accommodation on a transient basis (i.e., they will be heavily financially disadvantaged if they only live at UNSW Village during the academic components of the year). It should be noted that it is a Campus Living Villages initiative to address these issues and does not appear to be legislated. The literature discussed in Chapter three indicates that the community will benefit from a continuous year round student presence rather than a transient student presence.

### **The local economy**

The Director-General's EA Report 2007 (19) states that "the proposal will have positive economic impacts on the local economy during both construction and operations". The development has an estimated Capital Investment Value of \$85 million. It is expected that 145 people will be employed in the construction of the development and that a further ten full-time staff will be employed once the development is operational. The development will contribute \$890,034.97 to services in the local community through a Section 94 contributions levy (Department of Planning 2007). Due to its ability to create employment opportunities and the large Section 94 contribution it generates, this development is anticipated to stimulate the local economy and provide housing for a further 1000 students who are likely to all contribute to the local economy in some way as consumers of goods and services. It should be noted that the development does not provide any childcare facilities.

### **Assessment of Issues and Legislation**

Table 5.5 cross references the scoped social and community impacts of large scale student housing development with the legislation under which the UNSW Village development was assessed. In doing so, this table highlights the areas where the legislation can be improved in the future in order to provide a holistic assessment of student housing developments that takes into consideration the social impacts on the geographically defined communities that surround them. Reference has been made throughout this thesis to the actual requirements of the legislation in NSW in regards to social impacts. The issues

identified above in pages 62 - 68 as the best practice considerations of social issues are listed on the left hand side of the following table. Assessment of how the case study addressed these issues is made in the right hand column.

## Best Practice Social Issues and their Legislative Assessment

Table 5.5 Identified social impacts and legislation summary table

Identified Issue for Consideration	Summary
Community safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in the legislation in SEPP 65;</li> <li>▪ Campus Living released a statement about safety and security at the UNSW Village to accompany the Major Project application;</li> <li>▪ This statement detailed the safety measures that will be provided as part of the development.</li> </ul>
Location convenience and amenity for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in legislation and assessment.</li> </ul>
Recreation and leisure opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Campus Living released a statement to accompany the Major Project application.</li> </ul>
Pedestrian links and permeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in legislation and assessment</li> </ul>
Traffic, transport and car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in legislation and assessment.</li> </ul>
Heritage conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in legislation and assessment;</li> <li>▪ Heritage Impact Statement included as Appendix G of the Architectus 2007 Major Project report.</li> </ul>
Preservation and respect of diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social diversity</li> <li>▪ Cultural diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not addressed in the legislation or assessment.</li> </ul>
Community integration and relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of community</li> <li>▪ Sense of belonging</li> <li>▪ Neighbouring</li> <li>▪ Social cohesion</li> <li>▪ Sense of place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not addressed adequately in the legislation or assessment.</li> <li>▪ SEPP 65 requires social dimensions to be considered as part of design principle nine and for design to respond to the social context of the community.</li> <li>▪ There is no evidence that the social dimensions have been explored or considered.</li> <li>▪ Sense of place has been addressed through compliance with the UNSW Kensington Campus DCP.</li> </ul>
Disability and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Covered extensively in the legislation - Building Code of Australia;</li> <li>▪ Specific requirements were contained in the UNSW Kensington Campus DCP;</li> <li>▪ Report commissioned by Morris-Goding .</li> </ul>

The natural environment in its social context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequately addressed</li> <li>▪ Natural elements of the site addressed in UNSW Kensington Campus DCP</li> </ul>
The built environment in its social context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed extensively in the current EA legislation and process.</li> </ul>
Locality specific issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressed in legislation</li> <li>▪ Addressed in the assessment report with specific mention of the major adjoining landholder.</li> </ul>
Housing affordability for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not addressed in the assessment</li> <li>▪ Unclear how the submission from the Department of Housing influenced the outcome of the development.</li> </ul>
Delivery and ownership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding - Utilisation of PPPs</li> <li>▪ Staging and construction (noise, dust)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The legislation does not consider the implications of development provided by PPPs;</li> <li>▪ Any additional impacts of private sector provision of student housing were not addressed in assessment report;</li> <li>▪ Health and safety issues during construction addressed through conditions of consent.</li> </ul>
The local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No assessment of local economic impacts;</li> <li>▪ Statement that the development will be in the public interest and that job generation is anticipated.</li> </ul>
Issues specific to student housing development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age structure</li> <li>▪ transient nature of student populations</li> <li>▪ Housing affordability for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issues specific to student housing development are partially addressed by Campus Living and not addressed at all in the legislation.</li> </ul>

Table 5.5 has illustrated that the current Part 3A Legislation is inadequate in its ability to identify and assess the social impacts of student housing development. Campus Living Villages appear to have addressed many of the potential social impacts of the UNSW Village development, regardless of whether or not they were legislated to do so. However, there is serious concern about the adequacy of the legislation to identify and assess negative social impacts on communities as a result of new student housing development. There are particular concerns relating to issues dealing with social and cultural diversity and community integration and positive relationships. In theory, this allows for providers to enter the industry and operate at a standard which may bring about unmitigated social impacts on the community.

## Chapter Five Summary

Chapter five has used UNSW University Village as a case study to illustrate the potential for social and community impacts as a result of new large scale student housing development and importantly the way social impacts scoped and identified in Chapter four are acknowledged or fail to be addressed in the Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* Major Project assessment process. Chapter six will provide a set of recommendations to mitigate the impacts that large scale university student housing developments have on the geographically defined neighbourhood in which they are situated.



Figure 6.1 Photographs reflecting the quality of the Campus Living Villages Sydney University Village student spaces, including the 'Hoochie Mumma' Cafe (right). Source: Campus Living Villages, 2008

## Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusion

Chapter six is the concluding chapter of this thesis and provides recommendations in three key areas of large scale student housing. It begins with recommendations for the inclusion of social impact assessment in Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* assessment process in order to identify and mitigate social impacts on the community. The chapter then provides recommendations of the social issues to be considered in best practice social impact assessment of student housing development. The final set of recommendations provides practical guidance to the housing and higher education industry in the positive integration of student housing developments into the community. The thesis concludes by reviewing the research statement that was driving the research and identifying opportunities for further study.



## Recommendations: Inclusion of SIA in Legislation

Whilst it is not disputed in this thesis that Part 3A of the *EP&A Act* legislation may provide for a thorough and rigorous environmental assessment of large scale developments, this thesis has discussed the legislations ability to identify, scope and mitigate social impacts as they apply to new and retrofitted large scale private university student housing development. As discussed previously, the Major Projects legislation allows for a separation of assessing and consent authority functions through delegation of the assessment of a proposal to the local Council. It is considered that if a development is to be assessed under Part 3A legislation, the best outcome for the community will result from the project being assessed by the local Council which can provide valuable local knowledge in the assessment of an application.

In the case of UNSW University Village, the Minister provided a list of environmental assessment requirements that were to be met under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*, including the likely social impacts. The Minister made further references to issues considered to have social implications including, but were not limited to, the need for a 'particular regard' for the amenity impacts, safety and security characteristics of the proposal, the provision of active recreational open space, treatment of the heritage precinct, pedestrian linkages, and transport and access (NSW Department of Planning 2007). The consultation requirements required the applicant to consult with the local Council and document all community consultation activity (NSW Department of Planning 2007). I would argue that whilst social issues are considered important in the legislation, the way in which an application is required to address them is ad hoc and lacking of any comprehensive process. There is no mention of a SIA being required and it appears to be left up to the applicant to decide what justification is appropriate to prove that the likely social impacts of the proposal have been considered.

Given the community and social impacts of student presence and student housing identified in the discourse of this thesis, it is alarming that large scale student housing developments are being approved without the integration of SIA principles or some other form of social impact identification and mitigation in the planning and assessment process. An increase in student presence alone has been shown to have significant social and community impacts on geographically defined communities surrounding universities. Large scale new purpose built university student housing appears to be an emerging trend throughout Sydney creating a real need for this issue to be addressed.

The discussion of the case study has shown that Campus Living Villages is quite exceptional as a private sector provider as that developer did go through a thorough assessment process and considered some social impacts in seeking approval for the UNSW Village student housing

development. Despite this, there are still a wide range of social issues identified in Table 6.1 that were not addressed and were not required to be addressed by the legislation. It is a concern that, although there are operators who do this form of development very well, operators within the sector are only required and may only provide the bare minimum mitigation strategies for social and community impacts before they occur. It is a further concern that the notion of profitability in this sector (now that student housing is being delivered under a PPP), leads community outcomes open to abuse if the legislation does not adequately address the potential impacts. The legislation should be changed to address this issue through the incorporation of SIA principles as a standard measure of assessment in all large scale student housing developments that are determined under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act*. The following recommendations are proposed in this regard:

- Make social impact assessment a requirement of all large scale student housing development assessed as Major Projects or;
- Introduce a State Environmental Planning Policy that specifically deals with large scale student housing development, incorporating social impact assessment principles.

### Recommendations: The Social Issues to Consider in Best Practice

This thesis recommends that the following issues identified in table 6.1 should be assessed in the proposed SIA process as legislated by Part 3A of the EP&A Act legislation.

**Table 6.1 Issues to be addressed by Part 3A of the EP&A Act legislation**

▪ Community safety and security	▪ The natural environment in its social context
▪ Student convenience and amenity	▪ The built environment in its social context
▪ Recreation and leisure opportunities	▪ Heritage conservation
▪ Pedestrian links and permeability	▪ Locality specific issues
▪ Social diversity	▪ Housing affordability for the community
▪ Cultural diversity	▪ Delivery and ownership structure
▪ Sense of community	▪ Staging and construction (noise, dust)
▪ Sense of belonging	▪ Source of funding
▪ Neighbouring	▪ The local economy
▪ Social cohesion	▪ Traffic, transport and car parking
▪ Sense of place	▪ Disability and access
▪ Issues specific to student housing development – age structure, transient nature of student populations, housing affordability issues for students	

## Recommendations: Positive Integration of Student Housing Development

The following is a set of key recommendations for student housing providers in the housing industry to foster the positive and successful integration of large scale student housing developments into existing communities:

- The size and scale of the student housing development should be consistent with the residential patterns that currently exist;
- Maintain a continuous population to support a stable economic and social contribution to the local community through longer-term tenancy agreement periods such as 48-52 weeks per year;
- In the case of shorter leasing arrangements, ideally, tenants should be found for the holiday periods as this supports the local economy;
- Student housing should be competitively priced, appealing and designed for specific student needs in order to attract a diverse mix of students who choose to live in the development all year round (Macintyre 2003 and Small 2008);
- Address any division on a campus between local and international students before attempting to encourage students to better integrate with the surrounding community (Holliday 2008).

The discourse of this thesis indicates that the culmination of these conditions fosters the positive integration of university students residing in student housing development with the wider community. The following recommendations are made in relation to universities and student presence within communities:

- Develop and implement a community engagement program to identify opportunities for students to become active participants in community life;
- Reduce the number of hard surface walls that physically separate the university from its larger community environment. University campuses should be public spaces that are seamlessly integrated into the neighbourhood and;
- Encourage public transport use amongst students as issues of parking, traffic and transport can be the source of community resentment towards students in a neighbourhood (Holliday 2008).

## Opportunities for Further Research

This research has identified a number of opportunities for further study including:

- Study the tension between the local and international student populations and how these cultural differences are managed on a university campus;
- Assess the ability of new student housing product to respond to cultural differences amongst a student population;
- Establish a model for the effective engagement of the university student population together with the wider community and;
- Identify differences in the social impacts of new student housing developments in metropolitan areas compared to rural university communities.

## Concluding Remarks

This thesis has illustrated the need for a change in mindset and legislation in order to address the social impacts that large scale student housing developments can have on the local communities in which they are located. It has been shown that this can be achieved through the adoption of SIA principles in legislation and practice in order to place greater value on the identification, mitigation and management of social impacts. Whilst the legislation has evolved throughout time to include a thorough environmental assessment of Major Projects, this study has shown that there is a gap in this same legislation's ability to assess the social context and complexities of a development. Failure to assess this context has been shown to have negative social impacts for community relationships and integration.

As highlighted in Chapter one, the student communities within Sydney's universities are often extremely diverse in terms of their social and cultural background. Within the student population of UNSW, students who were born in Australia are a minority group. It is apparent that in situations where the majority of students were born overseas unique social and future housing implications are created. Holliday (2008) raised the issue of the cultural divide that exists at the UNSW campus between international and local students and the implications this has on the wider community. I believe that a failure to acknowledge the cultural diversity of the student population and the population of the geographically defined community surrounding a university is likely to have significant consequences. This issue can be addressed through a number of measures raised in this thesis, namely appropriate legislation and the application of this legislative process.

Chapter three highlighted the potential negative social and community implications associated with university student housing development. It is my belief that the often transient nature of student populations and their predictable 'mass exodus' from the community during university holiday periods contributes to the perception that student neighbours are unstable and unreliable, without a willingness or ability to contribute to community life. In effect, the student population has been seen as an effectively temporary population who reside in the community for two distinct periods annually, coinciding with the university teaching calendar. The practice of 52 week rental contracts is one measure that can encourage students to make a commitment to living on-campus in the long term. It is up to the university and student housing providers to then provide the facilities and services required to engage these students into on-campus residential life.

I believe that the documented trend of clustering students within a community does not encourage them to participate in the broader community. The temptation to foster a 'community within a community' to

the exclusion of all others within these developments needs to be balanced with positive interactions with the wider local government area. A bridge between the university student community and the wider community needs to be built in order to promote positive interactions, safer environments with lower crime rates and inclusiveness and acceptance of diversity. This can be achieved by physically integrating a university campus within the community and removing physical barriers between the university and the wider community, as advocated by Holliday (2008). Once this is achieved, a number of initiatives can be put in place to engage students within the campus itself and then into the local community through a community engagement program (Holliday 2006).

It is not acceptable that individuals and families who live within close proximity of university student housing developments and student rented housing are made to feel isolated or even fearful. As Kenyon's 1997 research shows, the cumulative impacts of a significant proportion of students within a community include a loss of community identity and "quite simply, local people no longer feel that they belong to the areas in which they live and in which they have brought their homes" (Denham quoted in Kenyon 1997, 293). Alternatively, existing residents need to be more inclusive of students and welcome them into the area. In effect, it becomes a two way process where residents need to value the contribution of the students, and the students need to make an effort to be engaged with the local community (Holliday 2008 and Small 2008).

I believe that the location and placement of student housing developments can intensify their community impact. Student housing developments are often located on the edges and boundaries of universities in what I would describe as the 'transition zone', where the university meets with the local community. This zone creates clear opportunities for the positive integration of these developments into the community due to its physical proximity and opportunities to use design to create a university campus that promotes integration and interaction with the community beyond the boundaries of the campus. However, failing to acknowledge the need for their positive integration and underestimating their cumulative impacts can result in negative impacts on the surrounding community, promoting segregation and a hostile living environment as discussed in Chapter three.

Addressing the implications of these issues is seen as particularly important given the trend towards transferring the building, owning and operating of these developments into the hands of the private sector. This thesis has shown that the potential negative social impacts of student housing developments can be mitigated through the appropriate design and integration of these developments within the community, realised through the application of social impact assessment and core town planning principles incorporated into legislation.

In summary, this thesis has answered its research question and shown that new, large scale student housing developments produce significant social impacts on local communities. The identification and mitigation of these impacts are not adequately addressed in the NSW planning legislation, namely Part 3A of the *EP&A Act's* assessment process. Recommendations have been provided for the inclusion of SIA principles into the legislative process in NSW to overcome identified gaps in the legislation that could potentially lead to poor community outcomes. This inclusion of recommendations for the successful integration of large scale student housing development provides practical recommendations for the housing industry in NSW to ensure the success of these developments for the benefit of the students, the university itself and the broader community.



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# Appendix A

