Housing renewal and the Compact City: The social implications of a planning orthodoxy
Planning for Australia's Major Cities Seminar, 30th May 2006, Museum of Sydney

Bill Randolph
City Futures Research Centre
Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW
Objectives

• Review the common assumptions about housing renewal in three Metro Strategies

• What are the likely social outcomes of the push to a compact city?

• Background – Polarising cities e.g. Sydney

• Social segregation by urban design – the legacy of three decades of urban consolidation. More of the same?

• The policy challenge: creating social sustainable higher density urban renewal
### Three Metro Plan Housing Strategies Compared: An emerging orthodoxy

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<td><strong>Drivers</strong></td>
<td>Popn growth, Smaller households, Older households, Sustainability</td>
<td>Popn growth, Smaller households, Older households, Sustainability, Increased rental, Polarisation</td>
<td>Popn growth, Smaller households, Older households, Sustainability, Migration, Globalisation of Sydney</td>
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<td><strong>Preferred form</strong></td>
<td>Compact city Hierarchy of centres: <em>Urban Activity Centres Transport Orientated Development</em></td>
<td>Compact City Hierarchy of centres <em>Activity Centres Strategic Development Sites</em></td>
<td>Compact city Hierarchy of centres: <em>Global Sydney 4 Regional Centres 11-13 Major Centres Town Centres Villages Neighbourhood centres</em></td>
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<td><strong>Dwellings targets</strong></td>
<td>550,000 by 2026</td>
<td>620,000 by 2030</td>
<td>640,000 by 2031</td>
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<td><strong>Renewal/infill</strong></td>
<td>Inc to 50% (244,00)</td>
<td>67% (426,000)</td>
<td>60-70% (445,000)</td>
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Three Metro Plan Housing Strategies Compared – The benefits of compact residential renewal

Melbourne 2030

• Promotion of mix and variety of housing by size, type and tenure to meet diverse community needs, choice and affordability.
• Mixed use development
• Reduction of travel and energy use
• Generate multi-purpose and shorter trips
• More cycling, walking and public transport use
• Efficient use of existing infrastructure
• Provide “interesting places to live, work and socialise”
• Strong Communities strategy recognises areas of local, cultural and locational disadvantage
• Range of policies to promote community development programs for renewal areas
Three Metro Plan Housing Strategies Compared – The benefits of compact residential renewal

SEQ Daft Regional Plan

• Ensuring housing affordability
• Recognises areas of social disadvantage (Affordable housing strategies)
• Integrating transport and housing – lowers environmental impacts and transport costs
• Promote sustainable neighbourhoods – better use of infrastructure, lower greenhouse emissions, lower water use
• Nine “Neighbourhood Principles”
  
  Public transport
  Walkable neighbourhoods/cycling
  Reduced car dependence
  Range and variety of dwelling sizes
  Functional integration (homes, jobs, services, transport, recreation)
  Open space and parklands
  Strong sense of place through urban design
  Environmentally friendly development
Three Metro Plan Housing Strategies Compared – The benefits of compact residential renewal

Sydney City of Cities

- More interesting places to live
- Declining centres recognised
- Optimal use of infrastructure
- Sustainable transport – fewer car trips, public transport
- Multi-purpose trips
- Improves housing mix and variety
- High rise limited to major centres
- Allows for improved design quality
- Improved local planning process via targeted community consultation
- New housing to BASIX standards
- Affordability strategy canvassed - largely through planning negotiation and promised NSW Affordable Housing Strategy by mid-2006
The new metropolitan planning orthodoxy: Implications for socially sustainable cities?

Two key assumptions:
- Socially sustainable communities are more socially balanced
- Socially sustainable communities are more inclusive

Do the likely outcomes of current metro plans support or challenge these assumptions?

The Case of Sydney: Social polarisation – largely ignored in the City of Cities

Can we plan a city by ignoring the social context and outcome?
Sydney’s social divide – should be the starting point for the Metro Strategy

ABS Index of Social Disadvantage 2001
The suburbanisation of disadvantage
Proportional change in 1971 and 2001 LGA unemployment rates compared to the Sydney average
Growing regional imbalances – the impact on local incomes
Proportional change in 1981 and 2001 median household incomes compared to the Sydney median
Spatial polarisation is intensifying, but CoC ignores this
Change in the Proportion of CDs that are Severely Disadvantaged by LGA,
Sydney 1996-2001
445,000 new households in Sydney by 2031 through urban renewal
Dwelling growth in the next 25 years by sub-region (52% in smaller centres)
(Source: DIPNR Media Release December 2004)
What social outcomes will the Compact City bring?

Higher density housing….Investor driven and only fit for the smaller household – will this change?
Flats are family un-friendly

Sydney: household type by dwelling type, 2001
Spatial segmentation in the higher density market in Sydney: Flats for DINKs and Empty Nesters

33% couple only
10% income <$400
44% income > $1500
42% fully owned
31% rental
36% overseas born
59% Managers/ Professionals
3% adults unemployed
And Flats for Battlers……

43% families with kids
43% income <$400
3% income > $1500
70% rental
36% no car
80% overseas born
9% Managers/Professionals
24% adults unemployed
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Tenure profiles in 12 Sydney town centre sub-markets
Local variation in higher density submarkets:
Mobility in 12 Sydney town centre sub-markets

% Moved in 5yrs
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Income profiles in 12 Sydney town centre sub-markets
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Families in 12 Sydney town centre sub-markets

% Couple Family with Children

Percent

Sydney City, Manly, Penrith, Cronulla, North Sydney, Chatswood, Parramatta, Hornsby, Homebush Bay, Fairfield, Hillsdale, Liverpool, Sydney SD
Implications for the social outcomes from urban renewal?

- How far will future metropolitan housing depend on the perceptions and behaviour of residential investors?

- How many more households are there waiting to take up the supply of rental flats? Is the numbers game too simplistic?

- Or will home buyers step in? If so, what will that mean for design quality and amenity across the sector?

- Will smaller/older households retain their preference for house property?

- Will the higher density sector remain as transitory accommodation for most?

- Predicated on the replacement of 3-storey walk ups by 6-10 storey blocks. What urban outcomes will this produce on a block-by-block basis?

- How do we get rid of old blocks and who decides when they should go?
Implications for achieving socially sustainable higher density urban communities?

• Are higher density developments social sustainable (balanced) and suitable as long term housing?

• How do you build community in places where renters ‘churn’ through?

• Will higher density ever be child friendly? We will have to build more flats suitable for families – i.e. bigger (and can they ever be ‘youth’ friendly?)

• Or will high density housing ever be much more than Gen X/Y dormitories, empty nests or bottom rung owners and renters?

• Will there be a major change in who buys flats – should home ownership prevail over investors? Will Australia ever have a stable high density sector?

• Location – are town centres, rail stations and main roads appropriate places to cram flats? And what about open space – for “fur” and child families

• What do we do about the proto-slums? Who deals with the social fallout?
Getting close up and personal - implications for communal living (45% in communal title by 2025 in Sydney?)

• Communal living – close physical proximity to neighbours
• Physical constraints (e.g. adjoining apartments, small apartments, shared facilities, noise) – possibilities for disputes
• Many neighbours are transitory and do not associate with the property
• Body Corporates and the New Urban Governance – the Fourth Tier? How well do body corporates work? Who runs them? What are the problems? How do we solve them? Does any one know?
• How effective are strata management arrangements
• Building Quality and Successful Governance structures holds the key to successful strata living – and for the future of high density cities
• Essential to get both these right across the sector – but will we?
So will the Compact City be socially sustainable?

- Helps to recognise that the metro plans roll out in an socially divided city (Melbourne and SEQ acknowledges this – Sydney ignores it)

- What happens in the rest of the city? *City of Cities* ignores the issues of planning for the rest of Sydney or the role of planning tackling wider housing renewal issues outside centres (left to the market?)

- Must recognise that building flats in Bondi is inherently different to building flats in Fairfield – the form may be the same, but the economics and social outcomes will be very different

- Issue of those displaced – will affordable housing will take the strain?

- Will Sydney (or Melbourne or Brisbane) be more or less socially integrated as a result of Compact City policies?

- Current Compact City model predicts a city split in terms of life-style and household type reinforced by the built form