

WAITING LISTS: Ten year plus wait for a home in the Eastern Suburbs

Housing NSW figures show that people seeking social housing in the eastern suburbs had to wait over two years for a studio apartment, 5 to 10 years for a one or two bedroom property and over 10 years for properties with 3 or 4 bedrooms. These wait times apply to both priority and general applicants.

In separate news, online newsletter *Crikey* reported that state governments in NSW and Victoria have pushed public housing building to all time lows, across the whole state.

Crikey said "Investment in public housing has collapsed in NSW and Victoria, with both states taking advantage of stimulus-era funding to pull back on their own investment in housing... the national level of investment in social housing reached an all-time low in the second half of 2011 and remains there..."

"In NSW this year, just 31 public housing units have been approved for commencement. There were just 511 in all of 2011, compared to 927 in 2007, before the financial crisis, and 4736 in 2010, when the (Rudd government's) stimulus package work was in full swing."

On 30 October 2011, the 6937 social housing properties in the Eastern Suburbs were made up of:

- 480 studio apartments;
- 2017 one bedroom properties;
- 2780 two bedroom properties;
- 1485 three bedroom properties;
- 174 four bedroom properties

According to HNSW there were 1567 people on the Pathways Housing wait list and of these, 179 were approved for priority housing. 1388 people were on the general waiting list.

Housing NSW released details of the wait periods for transfers/placements across NSW in April. The details can be found on the Housing NSW website-

<http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/How+to+Apply/Expected+Waiting+times/>.

In spite of Housing NSW data revealing a severe shortage in social housing there has been no suggestion from State Government that more social housing will be provided to the Eastern Suburbs in the immediate future.

At EATS we deal with people facing homelessness on a day to day basis. Many are unable to secure affordable accommodation in the area and are forced to 'couch surf' or live in substandard accommodation.

Without the creation of more social housing properties social housing stock continues to grow older and deteriorate.

To get onto the Housing Pathways waiting list, applicants have to show that they have an urgent need for housing which they cannot meet in the private rental market.

People who apply for housing in the Eastern Suburbs area usually do so because they have a pre-existing connection to the area. They may have support networks, such as doctors, social workers, social clubs or relatives, their children might be settled in schools in the area or they may be caring for a relative who themselves lives in the Eastern Suburbs.

As housing prices continue to increase, the problems will only get worse. More and more people will become eligible for social housing while there are fewer and fewer homes for them. Uprooting people from their communities and socially isolating them by shifting them elsewhere is an inhumane and short sighted option, which will not resolve the problem.

The lack of social housing is not contained to the Eastern Suburbs. This is an issue over many areas of Sydney, and indeed, the entire state. It's a political issue that has been playing out over decades.

If you are currently on a waiting list to be housed in the Eastern Suburbs, or if the wait lists and lack of social housing concern you, we encourage you to write to your Local Member and the Minister for Family and Community Services, The Hon. Prudence Jane Goward MP, expressing your thoughts and asking for the provision of more social housing in the Eastern Suburbs and NSW in general.