

From

Peter Muller

32 High street

Millers Point Nsw 2000

Re **With regard to Barriers to large scale investment in affordable Housing**

Hi I am a tax payer and am part of the Millers Point community in Sydney. I have lived and worked from Millers point in the building industry since 1998 in community housing close to my work opportunities, before being made a public housing tenant in 2009.

I was appalled in March 2014 at Pru Goward making the announcement that All Social Housing Properties held in trust by them, were to be Sold Freehold and all social housing tenants including women's refuges, long tenanted community Housing, Some on the oldest Co-op Housing, even our community run aged care facility Darling House would not be exempt, and like a lot of the residents have been fighting these forced relocations because of the immorality of social cleansing the city of the low income workers that do contribute to our city and the retired workers that lived and worked for this city most of their lives

As part of this struggle to prevent the immorally corrupt sale of this heritage area to property speculators for no real long term gain to our small, but I feel important local community or indeed the rest of NSW taxpayers.

I have written to seek backing from my own building super fund, to see if they would be interested? if offered "to purchase a 99year social housing, all of the purpose built social housing in Millers Point, including the Purpose built Sirius Building. It would include all the social housing homes built as part of Australia's first investment in social housing, just after the federation of Australia in 1901. In High street, Dalgety street, and Windmill street (Australia's first public housing projects were started here in Millers Point by the then landlords Sydney Harbor Foreshore Authority, This was 4 years before the formation of that other great public institution the Commonwealth Bank of Australia "the peoples Bank") that was how important social housing was thought of by the then Government of the day and I feel it is still important today.

This is why I have put forward this proposal to this federal housing working group today. I have sent the letter from the superannuation fund I approached to Brad Hazzard minister for housing NSW, and part of the letter in response suggested, I put forward the proposal to your Federal affordable housing Working Group as a possible financing solution to saving affordable housing in our Community of Millers Point NSW. If the perceived Barriers to Large scale investment in affordable Housing by mentioned by my super fund could be addressed by government on a Federal as well as State level

Millers Point social Housing, would be an ideal place to start a new approach to affordable housing for the city of Sydney, as a trial of best practice, as a way forward for Australian society, for a number of reasons that I will try to list.

- 1) The Millers Point community has had, because of its age, and heritage, experienced many social housing landlords, since the federation of Australia and even before! Most would seem to be better than our current landlord's, Housing NSW who feel the best way forward for our community is to evict all existing community housing, crisis accommodation providers, as well as direct Public housing tenants, instead of using Millers Point Social Housing as an ongoing Model, to **show case a new way forward for community based social housing in Australia**. The High value of the public land the homes sit on, ensures a good market rent on the home allocated for full market rental and the close proximity to casual

work, and construction sites surrounding the CBD ensures eligible workers of affordable housing would use the rental properties as an alternative to the daily long commuter travel times endured by building workers, casual hospitality staff, hospital and office staff.

It concerns all Australians, co-ops and Woman's crisis refuges, that leased homes from Housing NSW, as well as the direct tenants of public housing, are to be Socially Cleansed, from this Heritage area forever, and the homes sold freehold, to Rich Negative geared property speculators, with no long term thought to our communities future social housing needs for the next 99years and the future generations of low income workers that will be needed over that time

1a) Housing NSW's Millers Point eviction of social housing tenants from Millers Point our first suburb can be seen to be **working against** the Key Objectives of the 2001 housing act 5 Objects of Act (cf Act No 163, 1985, s 4, Act No 15, 1993, s 4)

This states in sect 5 Objectives of the act section 5(I) in particular "to encourage social mix and the integration of different housing forms in existing and new communities'. It is my belief that Housing NSW current policy for Millers Point is diametrically opposed to this very specific objective most. And is why I believe it should not be allowed to continue with the plan as it is because it destroys all the good work in affordable housing in this community that have been achieved over the past 110years of public Housing in Millers Point Since the federated Commonwealth of Australia's 1st public Housing Project was started here in Millers Point

1b) This community has experienced better outcomes in it's past from smaller, locally based and run community housing landlords, eg: Sydney city council housing, Private company's housing, Land lady leases, Foreshore Authority, Maritime services Board Authority etc, that we as a community have experienced previously over the Past 150 Years. Even the then Housing Commission in 1985, were better landlords for our Community, than the now Housing NSW inc. We have some of the oldest co-ops and affordable housing providers, and like the landlady lease holders of the 1980's, Darling House aged care, served the community better for affordable housing, than our current landlords Housing NSW, all have been financially profitable, and more importantly, **Socially profitable to the community**. With these real examples of success, with community involvement in social housing at a local level, right here in Australia's oldest suburb, it seems a real shame not to continue this very Australian tradition of a fair go to all.

I myself would feel proud, that as a member of a Members only benefit Super Fund, if part of my Super Contributions investment, was invested in a long term 99year CBD land investment, in Social Housing, in this Heritage Area, and I am sure most members would also consider it a sound investment, capable of commercial returns over the next 99years of the lease, if approved by the super funds.

1c) The sale of a 99year social housing lease, of the Millers point purpose built social housing, ensures that the heritage council voice can still be heard regarding the maintenance, and preservation of Australia's heritage in this 1st suburb to a greater degree, as they would continue to be Public assets that are only leased. We have seen in newspaper articles recently the Folly of the sale of heritage Properties sold to property Speculators, with Sydney council having to issue fines to new owners of heritage properties, because of the wilful destruction of the heritage value of the properties recently sold freehold. It should be a timely reminder, that it is only because of the Heritage council, and the Millers Point Community, along with the fact that these homes in Millers Point have been social housing for the past 110 years, and that's why they are still here and have not been developed yet by property speculators. This is why from the heritage preservation view point, to continue their maintenance and care as social housing properties under the 99year lease is the more likely to preserve these buildings. As the heritage properties still remain public buildings and not in private hands

This would show a real tangible link of Australia's past social history, and heritage to the future social needs of the community by providing certainty of the social values from the federation of this country, to the reaffirmation of those values in the Building of the Sirius Building in 1979, and Now to the future of the next 4 generations to the year 2015. Especially when compared to the alternative plans, by property speculators, for Public and affordable housing for Heritage Millers Point!

If the Super Funds could be persuaded by the Government, to fund Social Housing, by giving the assurances they requested in their response to the 99year social housing lease, a real change to future funding of social housing could be achieved, With Millers Point as the Model for the future of 99year social housing leases, is I believe possible. I have attached my original letter to the super fund regarding this proposal and their measured response letter outlining the requirements for funding social housing from government policy, which don't seem insurmountable. The first paragraph outlines their main concern when it states

“We are sorry to hear about your situation and appreciate the time you have taken to outline your circumstances. Cbus is currently exploring investments in affordable and social housing, but the Fund is yet to make an investment in this area. Our focus to-date has been primarily in relation to potential debt financing provision to housing associations or other similar entities. A key issue in this area though is the need for stable and supportive government policy, as well as government incentives where appropriate to enhance returns to a commercially acceptable level.”

The letters sent and received are attached as part of this proposal

2) This proposal of a 99year lease could realise about 240 of the remaining empty purpose built housing in Millers Point of which the 73 homes of the Sirius Building which has no maintenance issues and could be filled from the affordable housing waiting list immediately as is the recently upgraded homes by Housing NSW on little High Street and Gloucester street homes to give real value to community housing money spent on them back to the community, instead of wasting that money by just selling them after their government money upgrade for the property speculators to realise that financial benefit only at the detriment of the tax payers that funded the upgrade . We would like to suggest To reap the best financial reward to the Nsw Tax payer that these homes be part of the overall Social housing lease run as community housing This could be used mainly for low income casual workers as housing assets to existing co-ops and community housing e g: Argyle house or the Compound Co-Op that have proven their financial viability over the past 30 years or any other Management authority that the super funds suggest as suitable to the government and the investors

2a) Little High street Homes Numbered 3 to 9 is another section of the 99year lease that has recently been refurbished at the tax payers expense by Housing Nsw to heritage standards by the Public works carpenters and the excellent workmanship should be applauded. To gain the maximum value to the heritage quality refurbishment Little high street ground floor apartments would be ideal for most of the remaining Elderly public housing tenants in Millers point that cannot negotiate stairs well and require a 2nd bed room for family carers ect with the remaining 50% of dwellings being a mixture of affordable housing for casual low income workers of the community and Bangaroo construction workers etc to provide incomes for maintenance and investment return over the next 99years of the Social housing lease

2b) Windmill street is another section of the proposed 99year social housing lease that is more than suitable to the new way forward for affordable housing with 25% proposed for Public housing tenants ideally retired existing social housing tenants and single parent homes close to the casual work opportunities of the Sydney CBD. and the other 75% a mix of full market , affordable rent for casual low income and casual building workers.

2c) Dalgety street is much the same as Windmill street and would be suitable as a mix of 25% existing public housing with a higher mix of full market rent homes to cover the urgent maintenance on some of the balconies of the heritage homes in this street.

3) If 20% of the homes in Sirius with great views were rented at market rent, with the next 25% of homes, less desirable homes could be filled with some of the workers of this city area to prevent the long commuter travel that they are subject to at the moment.

Affordable housing tenants could fill another 20% of the homes in the Sirius Building and Darling house aged care that could also be tenants on 1 floor of the Sirius Building and the casual leasing rights to the surplus underground Parking. This would make the affordable housing financially viable to the super funds and allow them to provide the socially responsible long term investment they would like to be seen to fund for the benefit of its members some of which would probably be eligible for housing close to their work opportunities. Another idea for tenants in some of the other floors of the Sirius building would be to offer something like a Sirius version of "Ronald Macdonald house" for the country people of NSW, as accommodation to Patients families and relatives of some of the great hospitals in the immediate surrounding area eg: St Vincent's Hospital RPA Hospital, this would be of great benefit to All of NSW tax payers City and especially Country NSW areas, short term respite care in Sirius for convalescence of patients close to the hospitals that need respite care while they get better. It would be a continuation of the very concept that the Sirius building was intended for by a Former Australian Prime Minister "of A social benefit of all NSW workers and an affirmation their basic social rights to housing as citizens of Australia"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an alternative solution to social housing for Millers Point that does not include the freehold sale and eviction of all social housing tenants from Public land in Millers Point We have had a number of good locally based housing providers with proven records of affordable delivery of housing in Millers Point and we would have more if not for the removal of their homes by Housing NSW in their endeavour to sell all the public land and homes freehold in Millers Point

It is my hope that your fed finance Working party can assist in show casing as one model of the opportunity of making a Millers Point 99year social housing lease and it's business plan if run by super funds and Sydney city council existing co-ops Aged care, crisis care accomadation organisations that have a proven track record of delivery in this area

Kind Regards Peter Muller Resident of Millers Point social Housing estate