



Bonnyrigg Longitudinal Panel Study

First wave: 2012

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City Futures Research Centre

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Summary

The regeneration of the Bonnyrigg estate in western Sydney represents complex housing and urban policy on a number of levels. It is Australia's first social housing public-private partnership; it has involved the complete transfer of stock and sitting tenants to a community housing provider; and its success in the long term depends on selling a vision of mixed tenure living across 18 different stages and 13 years – a timeframe that will see governments come and go, and economic and housing market cycles rise, fall and stagnate. At the heart of this change are its existing and often longstanding households, progressively joined by new residents attracted to living in the neighbourhood. Bonnyrigg's context presents a background of commitment to place – especially those who have raised families on the estate – warts and all. There is an understated desire to recognise what's good about the neighbourhood, and to see the rest come good.

This first wave of interviews in this longitudinal study has provided unrivalled insight into the passage of urban renewal from those most directly impacted by the process. With around 100 resident interviews undertaken, almost 1 in 10 households across the suburb (and indeed a number of former residents who decided not to stay) have contributed their thoughts, and expressed their hopes, desires and concerns regarding the rebirth and regeneration of their Bonnyrigg. The breadth of views and experiences heard will not be of surprise to the community renewal team or indeed other stakeholders committed to the project. However, acknowledging and reiterating this diversity is important in the context of this research. You are not going to please all households all of the time; equally, there are some residents who are simply thankful for being assisted and are perhaps more forgiving, tolerant and accepting of less than ideal circumstances. Our resident interviews are complemented by interviews with 12 key stakeholders – both within and outside the consortium partnership.

Key messages

- **The 'big picture' principles of the renewal aims, objectives and process are understood, however it is crucial to recognise that households assess the change underway, and the value of that change, in everyday terms.**

While consideration, engagement and expectations of households regarding the renewal process are as diverse as the community itself, commonly observed views, however, tend to capture a tension between the big picture of complex renewal (and the multiple demands framing how it gets delivered) and how it translates and impacts in a very everyday sense. The benefits and trade-offs which will eventuate through the process, and the tremendous disruption that goes with it, are understood and evaluated by households in those terms. For residents, the success of the renewal, and its potential impacts on their lives, is quite rightly filtered through a more everyday lens. A new house might be valued, but their more immediate concern is how it is going to translate into a home for them.

While these 'everyday' matters – am I going to have a garden large enough to grow vegetables? what about my shed?, my pets? – may seem relatively minor against the scope and complexity of the project as a whole, these filters are far from irrelevant. They are absolutely central to understanding how the process of change is experienced and interpreted by Bonnyrigg households. Factors such as being unable to take much loved pets to their new home, losing their garden, or feeling that expenditure made in their previous property is not taken into account at the time of moving, shape impressions of the wider renewal process.

- **The diversity of residents' housing pathways ensures that the impacts the renewal project has on residents are equally diverse.**

Our interviewees have come to live on Bonnyrigg through a diverse range of housing pathways, from those early public housing settlers, through mutual exchanges and voluntary transfers, to those who have come more recently, whether as owner-occupiers, private renters, or short term accommodation lessees who are only here for a short time. These pathways will continue to diversify as the renewal activity progresses, with more private householders arriving, creating a more diverse and mixed community.

Our conversations with many of the long term residents (and ex-residents) included them reminiscing about Bonnyrigg's 'good old days', the openness of low density housing, and the freshness of the suburban air in what essentially was the edge of the city. For the ex-residents especially, they expressed concerns over the increase in density, where the 'new' Bonnyrigg will look nothing like the 'old' Bonnyrigg, a Bonnyrigg that they had invested greatly both financially and socially. Their sense of loss is therefore understandable. For others, the changes taking place are largely positive, especially in eliminating the stigma that Bonnyrigg had as a 'public housing estate'. This is shown through the pride that they have with their roots. For private owner-occupiers and renters who have more recently arrived, affordability is shaping up to be an important driver in their choice; however, convenient location and perceptions that the neighbourhood is changing underpin views that it is becoming an attractive environment to bring up a family.

- **The staged, internal relocation model has helped keep the community together. While this is a substantial strength of the approach, it is not without its challenges and concerns.**

The staged approach of the renewal means that most residents only need to temporarily relocate on-site in Bonnyrigg, lessening the distress that some may have experienced were they to relocate off-site. Many who have gone through temporary (and permanent) relocation were largely happy with the assistance they got from Newleaf in helping them relocate. They felt well prepared by the Newleaf team for the move, whether in needs assessment, cultural sensitivity (provision of translator), or the offer to help them pack up their possessions. Many were also happy with the other support that they received, whether in terms of talking through the early decision making process, or making adjustments to their homes (e.g. soundproofing).

While the complex process of relocating has thus far been managed well, it has not been without its challenges and concerns. Some residents recalled their time in temporary relocation (or when awaiting temporary relocation) as 'waiting in limbo', where many boxes were left unopened and sometimes life, work and education plans put on hold. For these residents, temporary relocation was a very stressful period, even more so than they had anticipated. This feeling of limbo was shared by community tenants and private owner-occupiers alike, especially when the early promise of buying the latter out failed to materialise. Some also felt that by dividing the suburb into 18 stages, the community is essentially broken up during this time (even though most will continue to stay on-site).

- **Place-based renewal is the focus. However, the impacts of renewal and change for the Bonnyrigg 'diaspora' should also be recognised in holistic community renewal strategies.**

While we only managed to speak with a small number of ex-residents who left Bonnyrigg after the announcement of the renewal project, many felt that they had no choice but to leave. Most of these ex-residents spoke of the difficulty that they had in first making the decision, but also the limited time they had to prepare and make arrangements after accepting an offer of housing elsewhere. Most now have settled

into their new neighbourhood, though it took time; many still visit Bonnyrigg either to see friends or to use services.

Comparing the outcomes of these ex-residents with those who stayed, especially at this early stage of the renewal project, is unrealistic. One major difference that these ex-residents expressed regarding their experience, however, was the feeling of a lack of transitionary support at the time of moving off-estate. There was little following up on their progress or concern as to whether they have settled into their new neighbourhood. In essence, they felt that they had been forgotten by the system despite having lived through (to many) a life changing event. Thought needs to be given as to how these ex-residents can be assisted, and at the very least, feel less forgotten.

➤ **Maintaining transparency and communication with residents should be paramount. It is an informed community that understands the broad parameters of the project.**

2012 was a difficult year for the project for a variety of reasons, and this impacted on the level and quality of communication between the Partnership and community. The earlier than expected relocation of residents who opted to leave Bonnyrigg caused a chain of events that not only had implications for the consortium partners, including necessary changes to the masterplan, it also created confusion and a sense of uncertainty amongst residents. The lack of communication regarding the delay of Stage 3 prompted many residents to speculate financial difficulties, bad weather, problems with council approval, and how these would impact on the timescale of the renewal, and indeed if the renewal would actually continue.

The perceived lack of transparency regarding the redrafting of the masterplan was the most contentious. While the new masterplan will have provisions for all tenants who wished to stay to remain on-site, the changes made – especially the inclusion of apartment blocks requiring lift access – was approved without consultation. For a number, there was a sense that what they had originally 'signed up' to has now been superseded, and much of the early effort spent in ensuring community buy-in was thus lost. A sense of resignation also set in among sections of the community, with the feeling that, since it was not 'their' money and not 'their' home, their opinions mattered little (if at all). Transparency, not least relating to progress on site – which residents can see for themselves – needs to be maintained even during these periods of uncertainty so that the community feel included rather than having a renewal imposed on them.

➤ **Expectations regarding community engagement should be on residents' terms, and in timeframes appropriate to household context and relative to everything else going on in their lives.**

While engagement activities offered during the early phase of the project were wide and varied, participation remained limited to relatively few who were involved in a number of activities. These early activities acted more as a means of social interaction among these select few rather than as a catalyst for wider community integration. This is not necessarily a criticism of the types (or quality) of activities offered, but more a reflection of the different coping mechanisms residents have devised to manage the life-changing transformations that are happening around them. For many, there are often other, more pressing matters (on-going health issues, care arrangements etc.), that they need to take care of above all else. Many of our interviewees suggested they would want to become involved in the future, when they have the capacity to do so, or when it is their 'turn' to relocate.

Community engagement strategies were reworked during 2012 to better align activities to the role of facilitation rather than involvement. This included cutting the current number of activities back from around 90 to 60. To some residents this signified a retreat from contracted responsibilities, but in time these more streamlined

activities program are expected to help deliver community renewal outcomes as identified at the outset of the renewal project as well as cater to the community's needs.

➤ **Life in Newleaf: adapting to more 'compact' living**

The renewal project brings about significant changes to the physical form of the suburb, none more so than the increase in density and the need for residents to adjust to a more compact living environment. This increase in density is the result of both the complex financing arrangements of the renewal project itself but also a pressure to better utilise existing land in urban Australia. The more compact layout has thus far received mixed reviews, with some welcoming the increased opportunities for passive surveillance, contributing to a heightened sense of security. For others, the decrease in privacy, primary experienced by having neighbours closer by, has taken some getting used to.

The kitchen and dining area is singled out to be a space of concern amongst some residents. Many tenants found the open-plan kitchen and dining area quite a change to what they have been used to; the space provided is often too small for a family-sized fridge and many dining tables have been consigned to the garage. More limited external space has also reduced the opportunities residents had in tending to a much-loved pastime of growing vegetables, also a means of reducing the grocery bills.



Source: Newleaf Communities

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Introduction

Context

Bonnyrigg is a suburb in western Sydney located within the Fairfield Local Government Area, approximately 40km west of the Sydney Central Business District and around 7km from the nearest regional centres of Fairfield and Liverpool. Housing was first built in Bonnyrigg during the late 1970s continuing through to the mid-1980s, with most of the suburb built for public housing using Radburn-style design philosophies. In principle, the Radburn design is sometimes credited with promoting community life and serving as a precedent for 'New Pedestrianism' with the local landscape more geared towards pedestrian rather than motor vehicle travels, where an intricate system of pedestrian footpaths and laneways interweaves cul-de-sacs and communal open spaces. In addition, large sections of the suburb are formed by 'super-lots', where multiple dwellings (often semi-detached row houses) 'share' one super-lot. The Radburn design was also applied to many other public housing estates built in Australia around the same period.

Figure 1: The Radburn-style streetscape of Bonnyrigg



Source: Newleaf Communities

By the mid-1980s, most of the suburb was built and occupied. Bonnyrigg was made up of 900+ households, the large majority of whom (90%+) lived in public housing. This included a diverse community of young families, migrant families who had recently arrived, public housing tenants who had transferred from other areas, as well as a wide range of workers who worked nearby or further afield. Over time, Bonnyrigg began to gain a reputation of being a family-friendly area and attracted other public tenants to transfer to Bonnyrigg when vacancies became available, or young families to buy into the area when dwellings came up for sale. This diversity in the community is highlighted by the numerous ethnic groups that are active in the suburb as well as a number of churches and temples that can be found throughout. It has an especially big Vietnamese community – partly due to its proximity to Cabramatta, a centre known for its concentration of Vietnamese people – but also the highest concentrations of Assyrian and Lao people in Sydney.

While the Radburn design in principle promoted community life and encouraged walking, in reality, the laneways and cul-de-sacs provided many opportunities for crime (e.g. muggings) to occur. Feelings of a lack of safety in the community began to grow. Many of the row houses that share a super-lot also share a common roof which made break-ins into adjoining homes possible and frequent. These issues were also reported in many other public housing estates built to the same design principles. This period also saw more stringent eligibility criteria for public housing tenants introduced, due to a wider restructure of the social welfare system. The new tenant mix contributed to greater concern about, and arguably the higher incidences of, crime and lack of safety around public housing. As a result, large public housing estates, including Bonnyrigg, developed a poor reputation over this time. This prompted State housing authorities, including NSW Land and Housing Corporation, to introduce deconcentration strategies from the 1990s onwards.

Estate deconcentration and neighbourhood renewal

Early deconcentration strategies focused on selling off some of the public housing stock to reduce the overall clustering of public housing at the estate or neighbourhood level, whether to existing tenants (through Right to Buy schemes) or to other buyers. By the early 2000s close to 100 public housing dwellings in Bonnyrigg had been sold to existing tenants or other buyers, reducing the overall concentration of public housing to just over 800 households.

Figure 2: Old homes awaiting renewal, Bonnyrigg



Source: Newleaf Communities

Asset-management and 'obsolescence' considerations have also been instrumental in policy direction. After nearly 30 years, many of the properties in Bonnyrigg were considered to be reaching the end of their intended lives, and ongoing maintenance costs had become an increasing concern for NSW Land and Housing Corporation. The view was also taken – after a series of attempts to mitigate the short-comings in the design and layout of the estate – that a comprehensive regeneration solution was required. The estate – always seen as a pretty tough place – had become increasingly stigmatised, suffered high levels of crime, and the physical make-up of the estate was compounding multiple layers of disadvantage shaping the quality of life of Bonnyrigg's residents.

From a policy perspective, comprehensive redevelopment of the estate was chosen over other deconcentration and renewal strategies for a number of reasons. First, the concentration of public housing was considered too high for contemporary estate management strategies. Reducing public housing concentration to a benchmark (although never explicitly acknowledged) 30% in Bonnyrigg would have required the sell-off of over 500 additional dwellings, resulting in a large number of tenants being displaced from the suburb, which was considered to be not in the best interest of the local community. Second, given concerns that urban design was exacerbating crime and perceptions of safety amongst residents, it was argued that the suburb required significant redesign.

It is important to acknowledge that comprehensive renewal objectives were also driven by opportunity and viability. While Bonnyrigg is positioned within western Sydney's lower and moderate value housing market, there is a substantial demand for aspirational but affordable housing in the locality, especially amongst the Asian communities (and Vietnamese community in particular). The low density built form of the original estate represented an opportunity to extract greater value from the land on which NSW Land and Housing Corporation properties sat. Through densification, a significant number of private properties could be introduced onto the neighbourhood footprint. Associated principles of 'social mix', and diversification of housing provision and management, presented both challenges and opportunities that came together to underpin the application of the public-private partnership (PPP) model in Bonnyrigg.

A desire to deliver Bonnyrigg's renewal through a PPP was also borne out of political commitment to the model – the partnership approach had been applied to other forms of 'social infrastructure' across NSW by the government – coupled with the large price tag tied to extensive refurbishment and comprehensive renewal of the estate. Furthermore, the notion of 'diluting' concentrations of social disadvantage echoed perspectives that renewal activity should no longer simply be treated as a matter for public funding alone: such models had 'failed', and a 'whole of community, 'whole of market' solution was required¹.

In both policy and political terms therefore the renewal model put forward was seen to tick a number of boxes. Alongside benefits to tenants in terms of improved housing better suited to contemporary needs, other noted advantages of the PPP-driven comprehensive renewal approach included:

- Fostering 'social mix' through tenure mix
- Facilitating diversification in social housing provision and management through transferring NSW Land and Housing Corporation stock to a community housing provider as part of the renewal contract
- Providing new affordable supply in an existing area, helping meet wider strategic goals of Sydney's metropolitan plan

These purported strengths can of course be balanced by substantive critique of the PPP model itself, seen as a 'poster child' of the limitations of neoliberal housing and urban policy more generally, as well as much of the assumption and justification used in underpinning their application. For example, the evidence base regarding the actual benefits of social and tenure mix – fundamental to the public/private model – are contested and far from clear.

¹ It is interesting to reflect that policy settings of the not-so-distant past had demonstrated that government-led housing activity can drive housing development and provision across both the public and private sectors. The State Housing Commission – the original Housing and Land Corporation – had developed the suburb of Green Valley neighbouring Bonnyrigg through the provision of a mix of housing for sale and rent. However, the neoliberal economic and fiscal policy settings of recent decades have progressively withered governments' willingness to carry the risk and debt of such an approach.

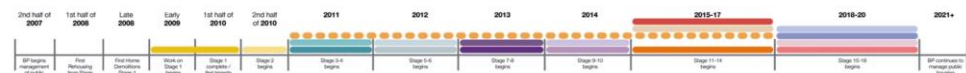
A competitive tender to redevelop, manage tenancies and renew the 'community' in 2007 was won by Bonnyrigg Partnerships, which comprises five partners: Westpac is the financier; Becton Property Group, the developer; St George Community Housing, the non-profit housing manager; Spotless Services Australia, the maintenance manager; and Bonnyrigg Management Company (now branded Newleaf Communities), who manage service integration and community renewal activity. The final contract was also meticulous – at 2,000 pages in length – covering all aspects of the renewal process from financial arrangements to a comprehensive evaluation plan.

The approach utilises a cross-subsidisation model, with private housing sales used to help finance the cost of rebuilding public housing and providing neighbourhood facilities. This enables an under-resourced public housing agency to clear repair backlogs with a lower use of public funds (Milligan and Randolph, 2009). Proceeds from the market rate sales will be split between the equity partners and NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

Staging

The PPP is guided by a renewal masterplan, which sets out partner responsibilities and rights, the staging of the renewal, as well as key deliverables including new housing stock, new community facilities, social housing management, and community renewal. Overall, the project is delivered in 18 stages over a 13-year reconstruction timeframe, with the social tenancy management and community renewal aspects to continue for an additional 17 years after the completion of reconstruction. At completion, Bonnyrigg will house 2,400+ new and refurbished dwellings, around 700 of which will be social housing.

Figure 3: 18 stages, 13 years (original masterplan)



Source: <http://www.newleafcommunities.com.au/imagesDB/paragraph/StagingPlan.pdf>

The renewal approach is highly distinctive in terms of its staged approach. Most significantly, it has enabled the existing community to remain 'in situ' through the process. Furthermore, by breaking down redevelopment into stages, debt exposure and financial commitments required in reconstructing each stage is limited. Furthermore, by redeveloping in stages, only a limited number of new homes come to market at the same time, ensuring a more sustainable injection into the local housing market rather than flooding it with essentially 1,500 new properties all at once. Socially, the staging approach requires only a small number of tenants to be relocated at any one time, making the organising of logistics more feasible and interruptions to be better contained in any given period.

The significant increase in population was also seen as necessary in both financing the project (through sale of new dwellings) and for perceived social reasons (in reducing the overall concentration of social housing). These changes will significantly impact the local demographics and therefore the community in Bonnyrigg, transforming it from a predominantly social housing estate to a mixed-tenure community where there is a stronger emphasis on the balance of different tenure types.

In order to assist existing residents throughout the reconstruction period, a detailed mobilisation plan was devised and implemented. Community renewal activities have also been initiated to help existing residents engage and benefit from the changes taking place. This longitudinal study can be considered one such inclusive component where residents can contribute to discussions on renewal activities.

Study background

The stated key driver for the renewal of Bonnyrigg has been the objective to improve the circumstances and outcomes for residents, whether they remain to live in Bonnyrigg or move away as the neighbourhood renewal progresses. In order to better understand these outcomes, particularly those at the household level, the City Futures Research Centre at the University of New South Wales was commissioned by NSW Land and Housing Corporation and Newleaf Communities to conduct a longitudinal panel study.

This longitudinal panel study takes an outcome-based approach by tracking the past, current and future residents throughout the renewal of Bonnyrigg. The tracking of residents represents a long-term commitment and relatively resource-intensive endeavour, both on the part of the research team and the residents themselves. The longitudinal panel study commenced in 2011 and will run for the remainder of the Bonnyrigg neighbourhood renewal until its completion.

The longitudinal panel study approach

By taking a longitudinal approach, the first-hand account of the effects of the renewal processes at the household level can be monitored over time. This is particularly important as Stubbs, Randolph and Judd (2005: 12) noted in their report on the Bonnyrigg Living Communities baseline survey that one of the main challenges in Bonnyrigg's renewal will be maintaining the community's confidence in the successful delivery of an improved, more liveable community. This application of the longitudinal study will provide an avenue for tracking residents' perceptions as well as providing a means of regular insight on progress to the stakeholders of the project.

Previous studies in tracking the experiences of residents experiencing neighbourhood renewal are already well underway in the UK and in the US. These studies have not only tracked life outcomes of those residents who remain on site but also, through programs such as Gautreaux and Moving To Opportunity (MTO), the prospects of those moving from disadvantaged to 'better' neighbourhoods. The Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) program in the US, which involves

the comprehensive renewal of large public housing projects through the introduction of private sector housing, also holds a number of lessons that informed our approach.

The Washington D.C.-based Urban Institute has been responsible for conducting the most comprehensive resident tracking studies for HOPE VI since 2001 (Burton et al. 2002). This longitudinal study included interviews with more than 800 heads of households across five renewal sites, and two waves of follow-up interviews were conducted two and four years after the initial 2001 baseline study (Popkin 2010). It also included in-depth interviews with local HOPE VI administrative staff and used the adult-child dyads to collect additional qualitative data on the impacts on children. The in-depth interview approach, along with the inclusion of children, is mirrored in the Bonnyrigg longitudinal panel study allowing crossovers to be compared as both longitudinal studies progress.

In the UK, the British Household Panel Study has been on-going since the early 1990s, the latest wave of which was completed in 2009. This is a comprehensive, multi-purpose survey that included questions on housing structure, tenure and other people-based outcomes over the duration of the study. While the study itself was not designed specifically to track resident experiences through renewal activities, literature resulting from this study detail its extensive recruitment and retention strategies. Some of these strategies are incorporated into the Bonnyrigg longitudinal panel study in an effort to emulate the study's high retention rate.

While panel studies can provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence of absolute change of, for example, a community's experience as it goes through estate redevelopment, their use is relatively rare due largely to their costly nature (both in terms of time and finances). Smaller-scaled panel studies are most often used in health and medical research.

Report structure

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides details on the **approach and methodology** used in assembling the Bonnyrigg Residents Panel. This includes explanation of the rationale behind the six cohorts, details on recruitment, the resident interviews, the stakeholder interviews, and a profile of our recruited and interviewed participants. Chapter 2 also includes a section on our revised methodology, modified in response to unexpected recruitment outcomes, and a section on how the panel will be maintained in between interview waves to minimise attrition.

Chapter 3 follows and provides a review of **contextual data** that highlights a quantitative dimension to the changes happening in Bonnyrigg. This includes a brief explanation of external data sources used and a summary of the more structural changes that have occurred since or just prior to the announcement of the neighbourhood-wide renewal. It focuses on 7 dimensions that reflect the renewal's aim of improving the life chances and outcomes of local residents. The 7 dimensions are:

- Changes to local population
- Changes to cultural diversity
- Changes to local income
- Changes to local housing profile
- Changes to educational outcomes
- Changes to employment outcomes
- Changes to crime and safety

Chapter 4 provides a **description of the lived experiences in Bonnyrigg**, from the time it was first developed back in the 70s until just prior to the announcement of the neighbourhood-wide renewal. Different groups of interviewees recounted the wide array of circumstances under which they first arrived in the neighbourhood. They also talked at length about their life in Bonnyrigg during the early years, how it has

changed over time, the emergence of a local community and its centrality in relation to the city and other major service centres.

Chapter 5 highlights the experiences of residents as they **prepare themselves for impending change**. This includes factors influencing their decision as to whether to stay on-site or leave permanently, how those at different stages along the renewal timeline relate to the prospect of change, and their participation in and perception of community engagement activities. The experiences of private residents in how they have prepared for change (despite not having the opportunity/need to relocate) are also reflected upon.

Chapter 6 explores residents' experiences of **living through the first stages of the renewal process**, including insight from former residents' who chose to leave Bonnyrigg. The experiences of residents who have lived through the first few stages of the renewal are then explored, including tenants' experiences of temporary and permanent relocation, the assistance they received during these periods, as well as the experiences of private residents with demolition and reconstruction happening around them. The chapter concludes with the residents' views on how they are being kept informed during the renewal and having St George Community Housing Ltd as a new landlord.

Chapter 7 focuses on **the emergence of Newleaf** and residents' perceptions on how Bonnyrigg is evolving. This captures interviewees' views on the changed layout of the suburb and densification of the renewed sections, including interviewees' descriptions of improvements the new layout would bring (or have brought) to their lives, but also the initial teething problems that they have experienced. The experiences of newcomers (private owner-occupiers and tenants moving in) are also reflected upon.

Chapter 8 highlights **the impacts the renewal activities have had on the lives of residents thus far**. We focus specifically on the everyday experiences of residents, including their experiences and perceptions of crime and safety, education, schooling and children activities, changed employment outcomes, and how the renewal activities have brought about both good (e.g. removing stigma) and bad (e.g. loss of a sense of community) changes to Bonnyrigg. We also dedicate a section on the experiences of former residents who have left and reflect on how they see their decision on leaving Bonnyrigg have impacted their lives.

Chapter 9 reflects on the **experiences of stakeholders** involved in arranging and managing the neighbourhood-wide renewal of Bonnyrigg. We focus particularly on the successes and challenges in managing the relocation processes and the practicalities involved as well as supporting residents through these changes.

The conclusions highlight some of the key messages we learnt from the first wave of interviews for the Bonnyrigg longitudinal panel study. This includes recommendations on how to improve residents' experiences prior to and during relocation as well as settling into the new homes. These recommendations reflect the insights of residents who are preparing for or have already lived through relocations.



Source: Researchers

2

Approach and methodology

This study takes the form of a longitudinal panel, with participating households re-interviewed every 2-3 years as Bonnyrigg's renewal progresses.

This chapter provides details on this longitudinal panel approach and further explanations of the overall methodology used to establish and maintain the Bonnyrigg Residents Panel. This includes descriptions of the 6 cohorts that make up the panel, the rationale for revising the methodology in early 2012, as well as recruitment and sampling.

To date, 189 households have been recruited, 96 of which were interviewed during this first round. A number of challenges emerged, especially during recruitment and when scheduling interviews. These challenges are described in this chapter. A profile of the recruited and interviewed participants is also included in this chapter.

This chapter concludes with details on the strategies that the research team will employ to maintain the panel's interest in between interview waves, and recruiting new participants in the case of interviewees leaving the panel.

The 6 cohorts in our Panel

Six cohorts are identified to represent the different groups of past, current and future residents of Bonnyrigg who participate in this longitudinal panel study. These 6 cohorts are differentiated by the distinctive characteristics of their households at the commencement of this study. The 6 cohorts are nominally identified as C1 through to C6.

Cohort C1 represents the public housing tenants who had previously resided in Bonnyrigg but left and were transferred off-estate permanently since the announcement of the renewal of Bonnyrigg. More than 160 such households had transferred off-estate, representing one-quarter of the neighbourhood's original residents and is therefore a significant component of the renewal experience.

Cohort C2 represents community housing tenants from the early stages who, at the time of their first panel interview, have been rehoused permanently within Bonnyrigg. This cohort also includes community housing tenants who requested early relocation and have been rehoused permanently within Bonnyrigg.

Cohort C3 represents community housing tenants who, at the time of their first panel interview, have been temporarily relocated from their original home and are awaiting permanent rehousing.

Cohorts C4 and C5 are community housing tenants currently residing in their original homes and who have yet to be temporarily or permanently rehoused within Bonnyrigg. For **cohort C4**, it represents those households that will be temporarily relocated within the next 2-3 years, and at the time of recruitment was identified as consisting of residents living in Stages 5-8.

Cohort C5 represents those households that will be relocated in the later stages of the renewal, and at the time of recruitment was identified as consisting of residents living in Stages 9-18.

Cohort C6 represents private owner-occupiers and private renters who currently live or will be moving into Bonnyrigg. This cohort includes a number of original private owner-occupiers who have been long-term residents of Bonnyrigg as well as newcomers to the neighbourhood.

Recruitment and revised methodology

Initially, the panel was to consist of around 180 households. A recruitment strategy was devised, with the initial goal to recruit and interview 60 households during each of the first 3 years of the study. At the conclusion of Year 3 the panel will be complete.

Recruitment commenced in July 2011, with members of the research team attending various community events in Bonnyrigg. These yielded varying levels of success in terms of recruitment, with 35 residents signed up by early October 2011, and another 4 were referred from Newleaf Communities following up on information left at these community events. An advertisement was also placed on the front page of the June 2011 issue of the Bonnyrigg community newsletter (see Appendix 1), and this was replicated again in the September 2011 issue.

The initial recruitment period (second half of 2011) yielded lower than expected sign-ups, and this prompted revisions to the recruitment strategies in October 2011. Doorknocking was chosen by the research team and the Advisory Group as the most appropriate vehicle. After amendments to the University of New South Wales' ethics clearance were approved, this doorknocking exercise took place in early March 2012 and resulted in 117 more sign-ups; another 4 were also referred by Newleaf Communities with residents following up on information left with them during doorknocking. Additional referrals were also made by participants who have already signed up as well as through interviewers' private contacts. By November 2012, a total of 189 participants have signed up for this study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Recruitment method by number of participants signed up

Recruitment methods	Timing	Total
Doorknocking	March 2012	117
Referrals	On-going	27
Coffee session	July 2011	26
NSW Land and Housing Corporation	2011-2012	9
Public tenants reference group	August 2011	5
Men's shed	August 2011	2
Private tenants reference group	May 2012	2
Meet Your Neighbour Day	September 2011	1
Total		189

The revised recruitment strategy was a resounding success and yielded a much higher number of participants than initially anticipated. With more than 150 participants signed up at the conclusion of doorknocking, continuing with the initial methodology of 60 interviews per year would risk participants not interviewed during the first year losing interest. It was also inappropriate to randomly select a sample of 60 households to be interviewed during the first year and schedule the other households in for Years 2 and 3.

Given the challenges the research team faced in recruiting, a revised methodology was proposed and accepted by the Panel Study Advisory Group in early 2012. The revised methodology involves amending the overall panel size from 180 down to 108 households, with the first wave of the full panel interviewed during 2012. Overall, this consolidated approach equates to a similar number of interviews over the lifetime of the study and does not impact the general structure of the panel. The suggested sample size of each cohort was also revised to reflect the consolidation of the full panel. The revised sampling for each cohort is detailed in the next section.

The most significant impact of this revised methodology – aside from minimising participant attrition – is that there will be years (2012, 2014, 2016 ...) of intense research activity interspersed with 'fallow' years (2013, 2015, 2017 ...) when there will only be limited activity taking place.

The issues identified in the original research framework regarding retention and refreshment, however, would continue to apply in maintaining the panel's interest during those 'fallow' and subsequent years. For example, recruitment activities will continue beyond the first recruitment phase and interview (2012) years but to a lesser intensity than during the initial recruitment phase. Participants recruited during these subsequent years will be used to refresh the panel when wave 1 participants decide to leave the study and also to reflect changes to the Bonnyrigg population as renewal activities progress and the tenure mix change. For scheduling and budgeting purposes, it is assumed that the Bonnyrigg longitudinal panel study will yield a retention rate similar to that experienced in the HOPE VI tracking study (around 60%) and have a net loss of around 35 households per interview wave.

The revised methodology brings forward broader scope results of the full panel two years ahead of schedule, so that instead of having annual reports at the completion of Years 1 and 2 followed by a full, first wave report at the conclusion of Year 3, this full first wave report is now completed at the conclusion of Year 1. The revised methodology also gives residents a more clearly defined interviewing schedule, where most participants are interviewed during the same year rather than having the research activities spread out over 3 years.

Sampling

The success of the revised recruitment strategy meant that we managed to oversample for most of the 6 cohorts. This was partly done to encourage neighbourhood-wide interest in the study in order to assist the realisation of the intended inclusive approach of the Bonnyrigg renewal. Learning from previous longitudinal studies, oversampling was also done to counter potential panel attrition both at the initial (prior to first interview) and subsequent phases. The overall sample of 189 included representatives of all 6 cohorts, with oversampling achieved for the 5 cohorts (C2-C6) that currently live on site in Bonnyrigg (see Table 2).

Table 2: Recruitment against sampling frame

Cohort	Initial identifiers	Suggested sample size	Recruits
C1	Public housing tenants who have transferred off-estate permanently	24	12
C2	Households that have been permanently rehoused in Bonnyrigg	18	28
C3	Households temporarily relocated and are awaiting rehousing in Bonnyrigg	18	23
C4	Households to start the rehousing processing in the next 2-3 years (4-5 stages)	18	39
C5	Households that will be rehoused in the later stages of the renewal process	18	65
C6	Existing and new private owner-occupiers and renters who live in the neighbourhood	12	22
Total		108	189

Cohort C1

An initial sample of 40 participants was suggested for cohort C1. This was based on the rationale of having a 'control' group, where the participants in C1 will not have experienced the impacts of living through a neighbourhood renewal, and 40 was deemed a reasonable sample of the 160+ households that have left Bonnyrigg to represent approximately one-quarter of the original population. This initial sample was subsequently revised to 24 to reflect the consolidating of the overall panel size.

Despite 3 waves of mail-outs to invite former Bonnyrigg residents to participate in this study, under-sampling was achieved for C1. The current sample of 12, however,

represents former Bonnyrigg residents who have relocated to nearby suburbs as well as to other public housing dwellings further afield and will thus represent different relocation experiences. Given the small sample size, however, these experiences can only be viewed as indicative rather than representative of all those who left Bonnyrigg.

Cohorts C2-C5

For C2-C5, initial sample size of 30 households per cohort was suggested. The uniform sample size for these cohorts was devised to provide consistent representations across all 4 cohorts. These were subsequently revised to 18 households per cohort to reflect the panel consolidation.

Oversampling was achieved for cohorts C2-C5, with significantly higher number of participants from C4 and C5 recruited. This is partly due to the larger population base for these two cohorts at the time of recruitment. As the renewal progresses, however, changes to the housing circumstances of participants in C4 and C5 will also come to reflect the experiences of temporary relocation (C3) and residing in a new home (C2).

Cohort C6

Prior to the commencement of the Bonnyrigg renewal, around 100 private households lived in the neighbourhood. An initial sample size of 20 was set to represent this group of private households (C6), with the sample size revised to 12 following panel consolidation. This relatively small sample size was devised to reflect the number of private households as a proportion of Bonnyrigg's population at the time of recruitment (around 18%).

Cohort C6 was also over-sampled; again this was due to a relatively small sample base and a higher than expected participation from private owner-occupiers and renters. As the panel is refreshed in the subsequent interview waves, however, the experiences of private households will become prominent to reflect the changes to the tenure mix of the neighbourhood.

Cultural diversity

Participants signed up represent the cultural diversity of Bonnyrigg, with 12 language groups represented in our sample. The research team conducted all of the English-language interviews. Nine native speakers were employed to conduct interviews in languages other than English. The project information statement and consent form for this study were translated into 4 languages – namely Arabic, Khmer, Spanish and Vietnamese – to reflect the high number of speakers of these languages signed up.

Table 3: Number of participants initially signed up by cohort and preferred language

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
English	9	11	8	19	28	15	90
Vietnamese	0	9	9	8	17	5	48
Spanish	1	1	0	5	8	0	15
Arabic	1	0	0	5	6	1	13
Khmer	0	6	3	0	3	0	12
Lao	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Assyrian	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Croatian	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Greek	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Indonesian	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mandarin	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Thai	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	12	28	23	39	65	22	189

Scheduling resident interviews

Interview scheduling commenced in mid-April 2012 with the first round of interviews conducted since late April. An average of four interviews is scheduled per person-day. Interview appointments are confirmed by phone 1-2 days prior to the interview date. The average interview time was around 45 minutes, with a handful (especially with longer-term residents) lasting up to 1.5 hours. For the smaller language groups and for C1 participants who have relocated a fair distance away from Bonnyrigg, interviews were conducted by telephone to allow for greater efficiency. In all, 96 interviews were conducted during the first round.

Table 4: Interview methods employed

Method	Interviewed	
Face-to-face	76	79.2%
By telephone	20	20.8%
Total	96	100%

Attrition

Attrition presented to be problematic both at the time of scheduling as well as at interview. A high number (46) of phone numbers (both landline and mobile) provided by signed up participants were either incorrect or have since been disconnected. We were also unable to get hold of 21 signed up participants who were either not home when we rang or did not return our messages. A number of recruited participants (21) have also since changed their minds when the research team rang to schedule an interview. A high number of interviewees (26) also failed to turn up for interviews at the scheduled times, often without notifying the research team in advance. Common reasons for these 'no shows' included scheduling conflict (e.g. doctor's appointment), unforeseen health reasons (e.g. last minute hospital visits), or because they forgot about the interview appointment. Most participants (21) were able to be rescheduled and completed an interview at a later date, but a small number (5) still failed to show up at their second, rescheduled interview appointment (see Table 5). Overall attrition rates represent a net loss of 49% of signed up participants.

Table 5: Participant attrition

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
Number disconnected/ wrong number	1	9	1	17	14	4	46
Unable to get hold of	1	3	3	7	4	3	21
Changed their mind	2	0	1	4	12	2	21
Failed to show up twice	1	0	1	2	1	0	5
Total	5	12	6	30	31	9	93
Net loss since recruitment	42%	43%	26%	77%	48%	41%	49%

Interviews held

In all, 107 interviews were conducted for the first wave of this longitudinal panel study. These include 96 interviews with residents and 11 with stakeholders.

The 96 resident interviews fall short of the overall sample of 108. The conversion rates for the different cohorts varied, and as a consequence the number of conversions fell short of the suggested sample size for cohorts C1, C2, C3 and C4, although the number of interviews conducted with residents in C2 and C3 fell short of the suggested sample by just 1 (see Table 6). The 7 interviews conducted with C1 participants represent less than one-third of the suggested sample, and as noted above only about 5% of the 160+ households that have left Bonnyrigg. Their experiences as such, while wide-ranging, should only be taken as indicative rather than representative.

Table 6: Interviews conducted vs. revised sample size

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
Revised sample size	24	18	18	18	18	12	108
Recruits	12	28	23	39	65	22	189
Interviews conducted	7	17	17	9	34	12	96
As % of revised sample	29%	94%	94%	50%	189%	100%	89%

The 9 interviews conducted with residents from C4 represent half of the suggested sample. This short fall is partly the result of relocation planning and activities happening in Bonnyrigg at the time of the interviews, where residents from Stages 5 and 6 were either about to or have recently been rehoused. As such, a number of the participants signed up were not interested in being interviewed during this first wave. Some of the participants from Stages 5 and 6 and who have already relocated temporarily or permanently were subsequently re-categorised into C3 and C2 respectively. These re-categorisations are reflected in the number of recruits for each of these 3 cohorts.

34 interviews were conducted with residents in C5. Much like the oversampling described above, the higher number of interviews conducted with C5 residents is due largely to the bigger population base for which the research team could draw from. While some of these interviewees relayed a sense of disinterest in the neighbourhood renewal as the impacts on them are as yet less immediate, the overall strong participation of residents from C5 is encouraging. Over time, the experiences of these C5 participants will come to reflect those in C2-C4 as the renewal activities progress.

Table 7 provides details on the languages resident interviews were conducted in. In all, 10 language groups are represented in this first wave of resident interviews, reflecting the cultural diversity of Bonnyrigg. Vietnamese was the most common non-English language resident interviews were conducted in, followed by Khmer and Spanish.

Table 7: Language interviews conducted in

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
English	5	6	5	3	14	8	41
Vietnamese	0	7	8	3	10	2	30
Khmer	0	4	3	0	2	0	9
Spanish	1	0	0	1	5	0	7
Arabic	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
Assyrian	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Greek	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Indonesian	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mandarin	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Thai	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	7	17	17	9	34	12	96

Of the 41 interviews conducted in English, several interviewees were of Indigenous background; several more were of non-English speaking backgrounds (including migrants from China and Vietnam) but chose to be interviewed in English. Their experiences will reflect these communities.

The majority of residents interviewed have been long-term residents. More than half have lived in Bonnyrigg for at least 15 years, with another one-third having lived in Bonnyrigg for at least 5 years. As such, most of our interviewees have seen significant changes to the neighbourhood, both prior to and since the renewal activities commenced in 2007. Around 10% of our interviewees arrived in Bonnyrigg after the renewal commenced (see Table 8).

Table 8: Length of residence in Bonnyrigg

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
Less than 1 year	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
1-2 years	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
3-5 years	0	1	0	1	2	1	5
5-9 years	0	4	2	2	6	0	14
10-14 years	0	5	3	2	8	1	19
15-19 years	1	0	1	0	4	3	9
20-29 years	3	5	6	1	4	1	20
30 years or more	2	2	5	1	10	3	23
Total	7	17	17	9	34	12	96

The most common pathway through which residents came to live in Bonnyrigg was through placement by NSW Land and Housing Corporation. This group represents more than 70% of our interviewees, the majority (55) of whom did not originally specify Bonnyrigg as their preferred location. A small number arrived in Bonnyrigg through emergency accommodation. Only 10 interviewees said that they chose Bonnyrigg as their preferred location (see Table 9). Reasons for their preference varied, from having family who live in or near Bonnyrigg being the most common reason.

7 interviewees came to Bonnyrigg through mutual exchanges with former Bonnyrigg residents and voluntary transfers. 2 interviewees said that they were forced to transfer to Bonnyrigg because their previous dwellings were scheduled for renewal.

Table 9: How did you/your family come to living in Bonnyrigg?

		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
Offered housing by NSW Land and Housing Corporation	Specified Bonnyrigg	0	2	4	0	4	0	10
	Did not specify Bonnyrigg	2	15	11	6	21	0	55
	Emergency accommodation	1	0	1	0	2	0	4
Exchange / transfer	Mutual exchange	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Voluntary transfer	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
	Forced transfer	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Private	Purchased from NSW Land and Housing Corporation (originally tenant in same dwelling)	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
	Purchased from NSW Land and Housing Corporation (originally tenant in different dwelling)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Purchased privately	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
	Private rental	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
No data		1	0	0	1	4	0	6
Total		7	17	17	9	34	12	96

Five of the private homeowners interviewed were previously public tenants, most of whom purchased the dwelling they were living in, with only 1 purchasing a different dwelling on the same street of their previous rented dwelling. Two private owners purchased directly from Newleaf, with another one purchasing through private sales in one of the later stages of the renewal. Four interviewees are currently renting privately in Bonnyrigg, most of whom live in the renewed stages. One private renter noted that they have purchased a new home through Newleaf and are awaiting its completion.

Two-thirds of our interviewees currently live in detached houses with about one-quarter living in newly built townhouses or attached dwellings. Only a small number of interviewees have moved into the newly built apartments in the renewed stages (see Table 10). This reflects the housing stock profile of Bonnyrigg at the time of the first wave interviews, where it is still a relatively low density neighbourhood.

Table 10: Dwelling type

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total
Detached house	3	8	14	7	23	8	63
Town house / attached	3	5	2	2	10	4	26
Apartment	1	4	1	0	1	0	7
Total	7	17	17	9	34	12	96

Resident interviews

With this first interview, the conversation inevitably serves the purpose of getting to know about the interviewee and their household, and in a sense ‘catch up’ with their lives as lived on Bonnyrigg. Hence most interviews focused very much on understanding the historical ‘housing pathways’ of each of our interviewees (how did you come to be living on Bonnyrigg?) and their lives in Bonnyrigg over the years, as much as talking about their perspectives of the renewal process or indeed on those broader outcome issues (in terms of wellbeing, health, employment, etc). The latter will provide a more dominant component of the conversation in follow-up interviews in future years. The first interview has been a process of the residents getting to know the researchers and vice versa, and building a comfortable context within which residents feel happy to discuss the issues of interest and importance to them.

While it was intended that children aged 10 years or older would be involved in this first wave of the longitudinal study where they would be interviewed as part of household, the research team had difficulty engaging with participants who wanted their children involved in this research. The experiences of children aged 10-18, however, are reflected in some of the resident interviews, where parents and/or grandparents of children spoke of their adjustments to the Bonnyrigg renewal, including the impacts on their school and social lives. The research team will continue to work with the advisory panel on new avenues of engaging the younger cohort of residents for any future participation.

We have already heard a diverse range of experiences, as would/should be expected. In this regard, the intensive method, enabled through in-depth interviews of this kind, has been successful. Some of those narratives are proactively supportive of the renewal process, others largely positive, others are accepting, others pragmatic. Some of the individual, personal reflections also point to a degree of sadness and trauma.

Those narratives help understand how the big ideas and long term goals of complex, comprehensive urban renewal impacts on the day-to-day lives of the households most affected. In many ways, their relationship with the renewal process is an extension of how they negotiate and prioritise all the other issues, challenges and positives going on in their lives. Depending on outlook, age, sense of security, the question of change – and quite dramatic change after many years for long-term residents – elicits a spectrum of responses reflecting that diversity. It is not only about the actual process of change, but also the spectre of change.

In sum, the narratives coming through provide unrivalled insight of the thoughts, fears, aspirations and expectations of a diverse community experiencing this significant change. Some of these narratives are woven throughout this report to provide a more first-hand reflection of the residents’ experiences. These are accompanied by a brief description of each interviewee’s background (cohort, gender, age, number of years in Bonnyrigg, and language interview conducted in).

For a full list of interview questions, please see Appendix 2.

Stakeholder interviews

As part of the monitoring process, the research team conducted interviews with partners of the Newleaf consortium as well as other organisational stakeholders (e.g. Fairfield City Council). These interviews sought the partners' and stakeholders' views on the renewal process, efficiency of implementation so far, and management of the relocation process, as well as acting as a forum where issues that emerged through the resident interviews were discussed. These stakeholder interviews are conducted at the conclusion of each interview waves to help track changes throughout the renewal timeframe.

Participant retention

Participation in a longitudinal panel study often represents a significant commitment on the parts of both the research team and the participants. The makeup of the research team may change over time, while some participants may also drop out over the course of the research due to, for example, the significant time commitment or changed household circumstances, but overall the same participants are interviewed at different intervals throughout the research period, with changes in their experiences tracked over time. This approach allows demographic variations within the participant sample to be better controlled and therefore provide a more stable research basis.

As detailed in the framework of this study, best practice strategies were considered in maintaining and retaining resident participation for the Bonnyrigg Residents Panel. These best practice guidelines recommend the following 4 strategies:

- i) Establishing good rapport with participants early on
- ii) Providing clear research objectives at first contact
- iii) Maintaining contact in between interviews (such as through follow-up telephone calls, on-site visits and regular mail updates)
- iv) Providing incentives which increases incrementally at each stage of the research

A Swiss study on panel attrition showed that the retention rates differed amongst different demographic groups, with participants aged in their 30s most likely to stay in the panel and those aged in their 20s least likely to stay in the panel. Persons who are more upwardly and socially mobile (e.g. tertiary-educated or single) are also less likely to stay in the panel while those from a more stable household structure (e.g. married or employed full-time) are more likely to stay in the panel. The Bonnyrigg Residents Study benefits from the pre-existing structures of Newleaf Communities and its regular contact with residents to maintain good rapport and contact during the 'fallow', non-interview years.

Panel 'refreshment' and gradual shift in composition over time to reflect the changing population profile of the neighbourhood will also benefit from ongoing recruitment activities tied to the stage role out of the redevelopment. Each new stage – and the private residents moving to Bonnyrigg – provides a new opportunity to engage the new community and see if they would like to join the study. The research team will also continue to attend community events on a regular basis to allow participants and other residents become more familiarised with the research team.

In addition, the research team has employed, and will continue to employ, the following strategies to keep panel participants actively engaged and informed throughout the duration of the study, thereby minimising attrition:

- a. **Incentives** – Woolworths gift vouchers are provided to each participating household in recognition of their contribution in time and information.

- b. **Annual lunch and presentation** – with assistance from Newleaf Communities, the research team will host an annual lunch at Bonnyrigg. The research team will present an annual update of the study at the lunch. The annual lunch will be held at a convenient location in or near Bonnyrigg onwards from 2013.
- c. **Regular print contact** – the research team will provide regular updates on the progress of the study via the Newleaf Communities quarterly newsletter. These updates will be made available for all Newleaf Communities residents. Thank you cards have also been mailed out to all residents who have participated in this research thus far, thanking them for their participation and reminding them their household's de-identified ID number. Follow-up cards will be sent out on a half-yearly basis to remind participants to provide updates to the research team should their contact details change. This will assist in the maintaining of a rigorous tracking system which is paramount in providing regular updates on progress and in maintaining a high retention rate.



Source: Researchers

3

Contextual data

Introduction

This chapter sets out a contextual, background picture of a changing Bonnyrigg as reflected by a range of official datasets. Unlike the qualitative approach that the rest of this longitudinal panel study takes, these datasets are quintessentially quantitative and would reflect the overall population change in Bonnyrigg rather than individual circumstances. The changes that are reported in this chapter, therefore, would more likely highlight the differences created by those families that have relocated off-estate permanently and those new families moving onto Bonnyrigg. These differences are likely to become more pronounced as renewal progresses.

The datasets used indicate more broadly changes to Bonnyrigg's cultural and socio-economic diversity as well as perceptions of crime and safety. Changes to educational and employment outcomes take longer to realise than demographic changes; these will slowly emerge over time as the neighbourhood renewal progresses.

Some of these datasets are updated more frequently than others. For example, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' Small Area Labour Market reports are updated quarterly, whereas the Australian Census is only updated once every 5 years. Where new data is available, they will be updated in any subsequent interview reports.

Key messages

A number of key messages are observed from the analysis of official datasets:

- i) Outcomes of the physical renewal are beginning to emerge, most notably in the changing tenure profile and the high proportion of households that have experienced relocation between 2006 and 2011.
- ii) Bonnyrigg experienced a slight loss in population between 2006 and 2011 as the early phases of relocation are dominated by families that have relocated off-estate permanently but fewer new families moving onto the renewed stages. It was also noted that these leavers were more likely family households with young children rather than older households.
- iii) The local population in Bonnyrigg is becoming more culturally diverse, with more overseas-born and non-English speaking residents moving in between 2006 and 2011. These changes suggest that many of the families that have left Bonnyrigg were of Anglo-European backgrounds and born in Australia while newer residents were born overseas and of non-Anglo backgrounds.
- iv) There is confusion regarding the transfer of tenancies from NSW Land and Housing Corporation to St George Community Housing Ltd, with a high proportion (51.7%) of the population still nominating 'public housing' as their tenure in 2011. This confusion is also reflected in our interviews, especially with non-English speaking residents.
- v) Changes to educational and employment outcomes take longer to emerge. The initial (and marginal) changes reported here reflect the exit of some public housing tenants and the arrival of new private residents.

Data sources

2006 and 2011 Census data

2006 and 2011 Census data were extracted using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) online program TableBuilder Pro. The data represents the collection districts and Statistical Areas that comprise the Bonnyrigg renewal area rather than the entire suburb (see Figure 4). While both boundary sets include a small section that lies outside of the renewal area, this is comprised of industrial buildings and recreational areas only and therefore does not impact on the overall change in residential population. This is the closest reflection of the population profile of the renewal area. The use of the 2006 and

2011 datasets provide a first review of Bonnyrigg's pre- and post-commencement population profiles.

Figure 4: 2006 Census Collection Districts and 2011 Statistical Areas, Bonnyrigg



Note: Dark green denotes 2006 Collection District boundaries; light green denotes 2011 Statistical Areas (SA1) boundaries.

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Recorded Crime Statistics 2007-2011

The Recorded Crime Statistics series, as published by NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), is available only at the Local Government Area (LGA) level or above. Crime data relating specifically to Bonnyrigg is therefore unavailable. Time-series data for Fairfield LGA is used in this report to provide an indication of change in crime and safety in the local region instead.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test results

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests have been carried out annually since 2008. According to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, they were designed “to identify whether all students have the literacy and numeracy skills that provide the critical foundation of their learning, and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community”. NAPLAN results are calculated for each individual school and are therefore not available at the suburb level. The NAPLAN results of the one primary school (Bonnyrigg Public School) and one secondary school (Bonnyrigg High School), together with those of St Johns Park Public School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, are reported here to reflect changes of local residents' educational outcomes since the renewal commenced.

Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) quarterly reports

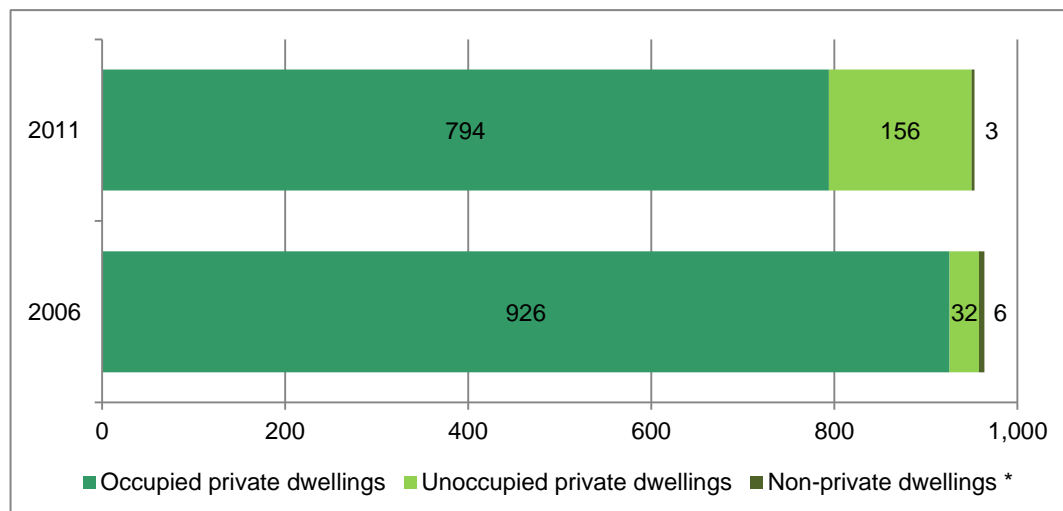
SALM labour force and employment statistics are published by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). They are available at the Statistical Local Area (SLA) level or above; data relating specifically to Bonnyrigg is therefore not available. The SLA of Fairfield – West, which comprises Bonnyrigg and several other suburbs, is instead used in this report as a near indication.

Changes to local population

Dwelling profile

Due to renewal and relocation activities, where the number of households that have relocated off-estate are yet to be fully replaced by the number of new households moving onto Bonnyrigg, there was a net loss of 11 dwellings in Bonnyrigg between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. This results from a sharp decrease in the number of occupied private dwellings (from 926 in 2006 to 794 in 2011, a net loss of 132) and, consequently, a sharp increase in the number of unoccupied private dwellings (from 32 in 2006 to 156 in 2011, a net gain of 124). This sharp increase of unoccupied dwellings accounts for both the number of dwellings vacated by former residents who have relocated off-estate as well as new dwellings in the renewed stages awaiting occupancy.

Figure 5: Change in number of occupied dwellings, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



* Convent, monastery, etc

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

The number of non-private dwellings (such as shared accommodation) also declined from 6 in 2006 to 3 in 2011. All recorded non-private dwellings in Bonnyrigg in 2006 and 2011 were located as part of the local temples.

Age profile

In 2011, 2,518 people lived in Bonnyrigg (1,169 males and 1,349 females). This represents a population decline of over 400 people since 2006, most likely as a result of families relocating off-estate and new families yet to replace these relocations. While declines were noted for all but the oldest (80 years or older) age groups, the decline was most notable in the younger age groups. The number of children aged 0-14 years, for example, declined by more than one-quarter (-27.9%). Together with a notable loss in the 25-44 years age group, this suggests that a large number of families that have relocated off-estate were families with young children. Overall, Bonnyrigg is still a relatively young suburb, with two-fifths (40.9%) of the population aged under 25 (see Table 11).

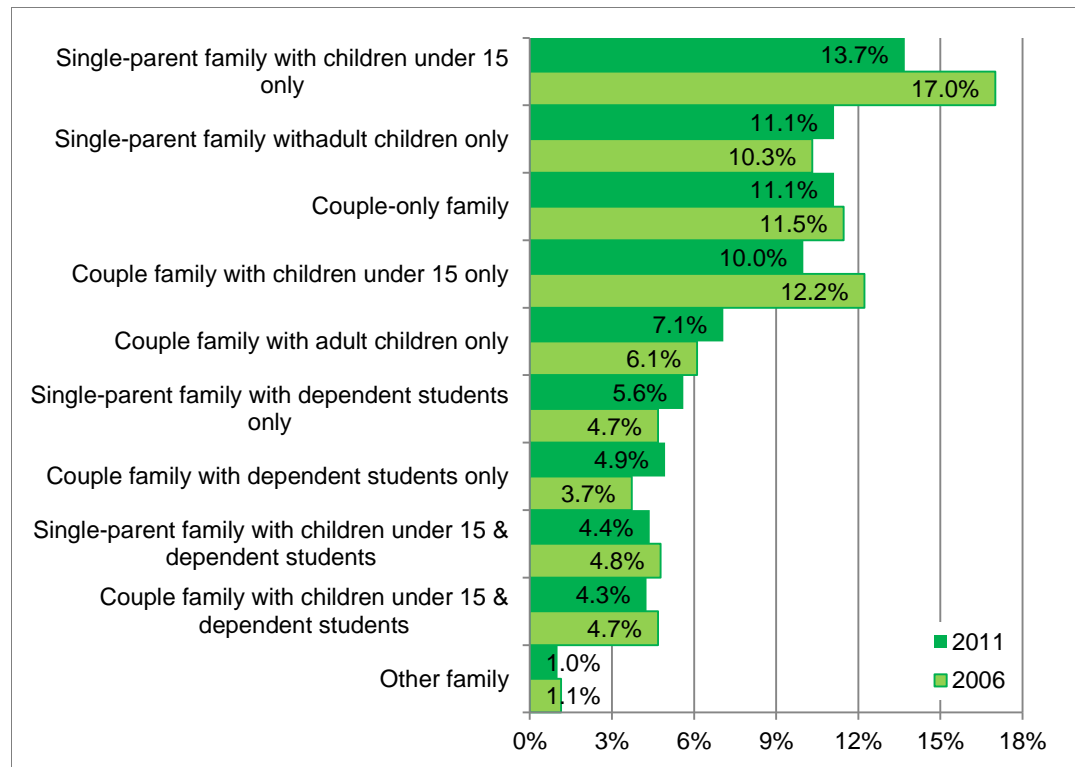
Table 11: Population change, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

	2006		2011		2006-2011	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-14 years	761	25.9%	549	21.8%	-212	-27.9%
15-24 years	544	18.5%	480	19.1%	-64	-11.8%
25-44 years	685	23.3%	585	23.2%	-100	-14.6%
45-64 years	693	23.6%	642	25.5%	-51	-7.4%
65-79 years	204	6.9%	193	7.7%	-11	-5.4%
80 years or older	53	1.8%	69	2.7%	16	30.2%
Total	2,940	100.0%	2,518	100.0%	-422	-14.4%

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Families

Figure 6: Change in family profile, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

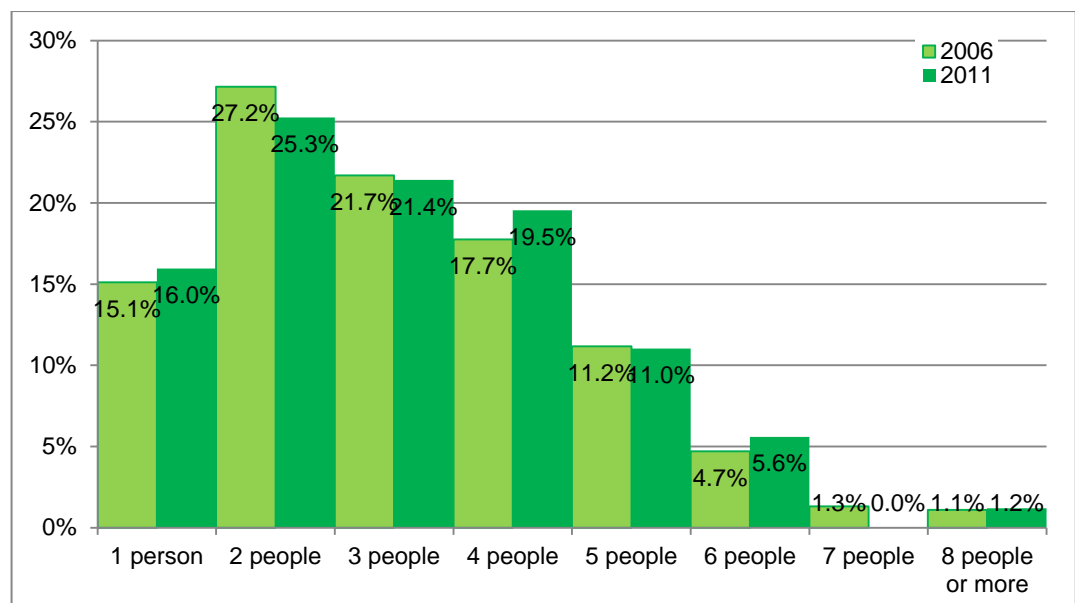


Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

In terms of family composition, there were few changes in Bonnyrigg between 2006 and 2011. Single-parent families continue to be the most common family type, although the proportion of single-parent families with children under 15 only declined from 17.0% in 2006 down to 13.7% in 2011. The proportion of couple families with children under 15 only also declined over the same period (see Figure 6). This reflects the overall decline in the number of children aged 0-14 years and adults aged 25-44 years between 2006 and 2011, as described in the previous section.

Household size

Figure 7: Change in household size, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

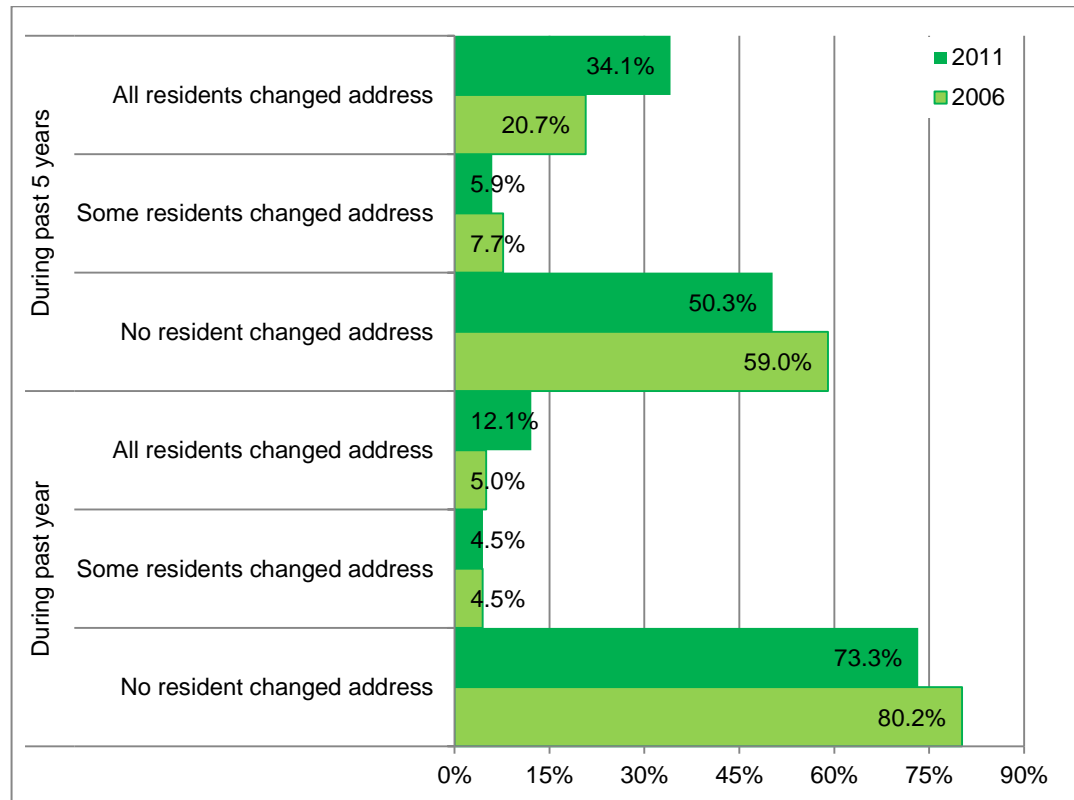


Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

The household sizes of Bonnyrigg residents have also changed little between 2006 and 2011. There is a marginally higher proportion of households with 4 residents, while there are marginally lower proportions of households with 2 or 3 residents, but by and large there has been little change in terms of household size despite wider changes throughout the suburb (see Figure 7).

Household relocations

Figure 8: Household relocations, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

The relocation of Bonnyrigg residents commenced in late 2008, and by late-2012 all households who wished to relocate off-estate permanently have left Bonnyrigg and all residents from the first 6 stages have been relocated on-site. Concurrently, new private owners and renters have moved into the first two renewed stages. Some of these relocations were captured in the Australian Census. One third (34.1%) of all Bonnyrigg households relocated during 2006-2011 compared to just one fifth (20.7%) during 2001-2006. More than one-tenth (12.1%) of households also relocated during 2010-2011, a proportion more than double that during 2005-2006 (5.0%). The proportion of households that did not relocate subsequently declined (see Figure 8).

Changes to cultural diversity

Birthplace

Bonnyrigg continues to be a culturally diverse community in 2011. There is a slightly higher proportion of overseas-born residents living in Bonnyrigg in 2011 than in 2006. The dominant overseas-born communities in Bonnyrigg remain that of those born in Vietnam (19.9% in 2011, 18.4% in 2006), followed by those from Cambodia (5.5% in 2011, 5.0% in 2006) and Iraq (5.1% in 2011, 3.8% in 2006). There was also a notable increase of residents from the Philippines between 2006 (0.5%) and 2011 (1.5%) despite an overall population decline for the suburb (see Table 12). These changes suggest that a large number of those families that have relocated off-estate permanently are of Australian-born background, while the new, incoming families are more likely to have been born overseas rather than in Australia.

Table 12: Top 10 countries of birth, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

	2006		2011		2006-2011	
Australia	1,342	45.6%	1,088	43.2%	-254	-18.9%
Vietnam	540	18.4%	502	19.9%	-38	-7.0%
Cambodia	148	5.0%	139	5.5%	-9	-6.1%
Iraq	111	3.8%	129	5.1%	18	16.2%
Laos	74	2.5%	65	2.6%	-9	-12.2%
Chile	47	1.6%	43	1.7%	-4	-8.5%
Lebanon	59	2.0%	42	1.7%	-17	-28.8%
Philippines	15	0.5%	39	1.5%	24	160.0%
China *	36	1.2%	31	1.2%	-5	-13.9%
Thailand	46	1.6%	29	1.2%	-17	-37.0%
Other	327	11.1%	216	8.6%	-111	-33.9%
Not stated	187	6.4%	195	7.7%	8	4.3%
Overseas visitor	8	0.3%	0	0.0%	-8	-100.0%
Total	2,940	100.0%	2,518	100.0%	-422	-14.4%

* excludes Taiwan and the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Spoken languages

Vietnamese remains the most commonly spoken language in Bonnyrigg homes (32.6% in 2011, 29.7% in 2006) while English was the second most common (21.6% in 2011, 26.9% in 2006). Other languages commonly spoken in Bonnyrigg in 2011 include Khmer (6.9%), Arabic (6.1%), Assyrian (5.2%), Lao (3.5%), Spanish (3.1%) and Cantonese (2.5%) (see Table 13). Much like the observation noted above, these changes suggest that a large number of the families that have relocated off-estate permanently are of Anglo-European backgrounds, while new, incoming families are more likely to be of non-English speaking backgrounds.

Table 13: Top 10 languages spoken at home, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

	2006		2011		2006-2011	
Vietnamese	873	29.7%	821	32.6%	-52	-6.0%
English	791	26.9%	544	21.6%	-247	-31.2%
Khmer	220	7.5%	175	6.9%	-45	-20.5%
Arabic	187	6.4%	154	6.1%	-33	-17.6%
Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	141	4.8%	131	5.2%	-10	-7.1%
Lao	85	2.9%	87	3.5%	2	2.4%
Spanish	130	4.4%	78	3.1%	-52	-40.0%
Cantonese	84	2.9%	63	2.5%	-21	-25.0%
Mandarin	22	0.7%	30	1.2%	8	36.4%
Min Nan	0	0.0%	25	1.0%	25	0.0%
Other languages	290	9.9%	234	9.3%	-56	100.0%
Not stated	110	3.7%	176	7.0%	66	60.0%
Overseas visitor	7	0.2%	0	0.0%	-7	-100.0%
Total	2,940	100.0%	2,518	100.0%	-422	-14.4%

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Religious beliefs

Religious beliefs feature strongly in life in Bonnyrigg. In 2011, less than 10% of residents said they had no religious affiliation (6.7%, compared to 6.5% in 2006), while more than one-third (36.3%, compared to 33.8% in 2006) nominated Buddhism as their religion. Other popular religions for Bonnyrigg residents included Catholicism (24.2%), Anglican Protestantism (5.4%), and Islam (4.2%) (see Table 14).

Table 14: Top 10 religious affiliation, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

	2006		2011		2006-2011	
Buddhism	995	33.8%	913	36.3%	-82	-8.2%
Catholic	774	26.3%	610	24.2%	-164	-21.2%
Anglican	224	7.6%	136	5.4%	-88	-39.3%
Islam	149	5.1%	107	4.2%	-42	-28.2%
Eastern Orthodox	84	2.9%	100	4.0%	16	19.0%
Assyrian Apostolic	69	2.3%	66	2.6%	-3	-4.3%
Pentecostal	30	1.0%	35	1.4%	5	16.7%
Baptist	55	1.9%	33	1.3%	-22	-40.0%
Christian, nfd *	52	1.8%	31	1.2%	-21	-40.4%
Other Protestant	20	0.7%	21	0.8%	1	5.0%
Other religions	129	4.4%	82	3.3%	-47	-36.4%
No Religion	192	6.5%	168	6.7%	-24	-12.5%
Supplementary codes^	6	0.2%	14	0.6%	8	133.3%
Not stated	154	5.2%	199	7.9%	45	29.2%
Overseas visitor	7	0.2%	3	0.1%	-4	-57.1%
Total	2,940	100.0%	2,518	100.0%	-422	-14.4%

* nfd stands for 'not further defined'

^ 'supplementary codes' include all other religious affiliation so stated in the Census form but were not further defined under the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (Cat. No. 1266.0). These include 'Theism', 'Latter Day Saints, nfd', 'Assyrian Apostolic, nfd' and twenty other such groups

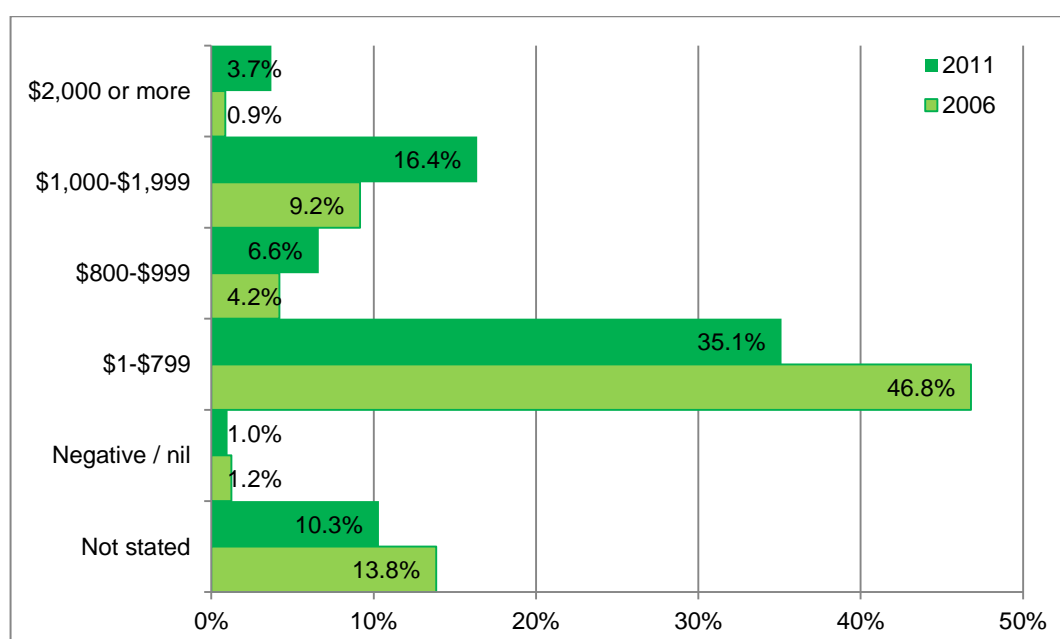
Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Changes to local income

Family income

The ageing of the population and change in tenure mix is also reflected in the change in income profiles of Bonnyrigg families. While the income ranges included in Figure 9 have not been indexed to reflect inflation or consumer price index they nonetheless show an upward trajectory for families living in Bonnyrigg.

One-third (35.1%) of Bonnyrigg families still have relatively low weekly income (\$1-\$799); this proportion has, however, decreased significantly since 2006 (46.8%). Concurrently, the proportions of families with higher weekly income have increased, most notably in the \$1,000-\$1,999 income group (from 9.2% in 2006 to 16.4% in 2011).

Figure 9: Changes to weekly family income, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

Note: Not indexed by consumer price index or inflation

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

A combination of factors may explain these changes to the local income profile. As noted above, income ranges included have not been indexed by inflation or consumer price index, and therefore may only reflect wider changes to the overall income in Australia. Indeed, similar changes are noted for Fairfield LGA between 2006 and 2011, although the decrease in the proportion of families with low weekly income (\$1-\$799) was less marked (from 32.1% in 2006 to 26.6% in 2011) than noted in Bonnyrigg; the increase in the proportion of families with high weekly income (\$2,000 or more), however, was significantly more marked (from 13.3% in 2006 to 20.5% in 2011). As a result, Bonnyrigg is still a relatively lower income area than compared to other parts of Fairfield.

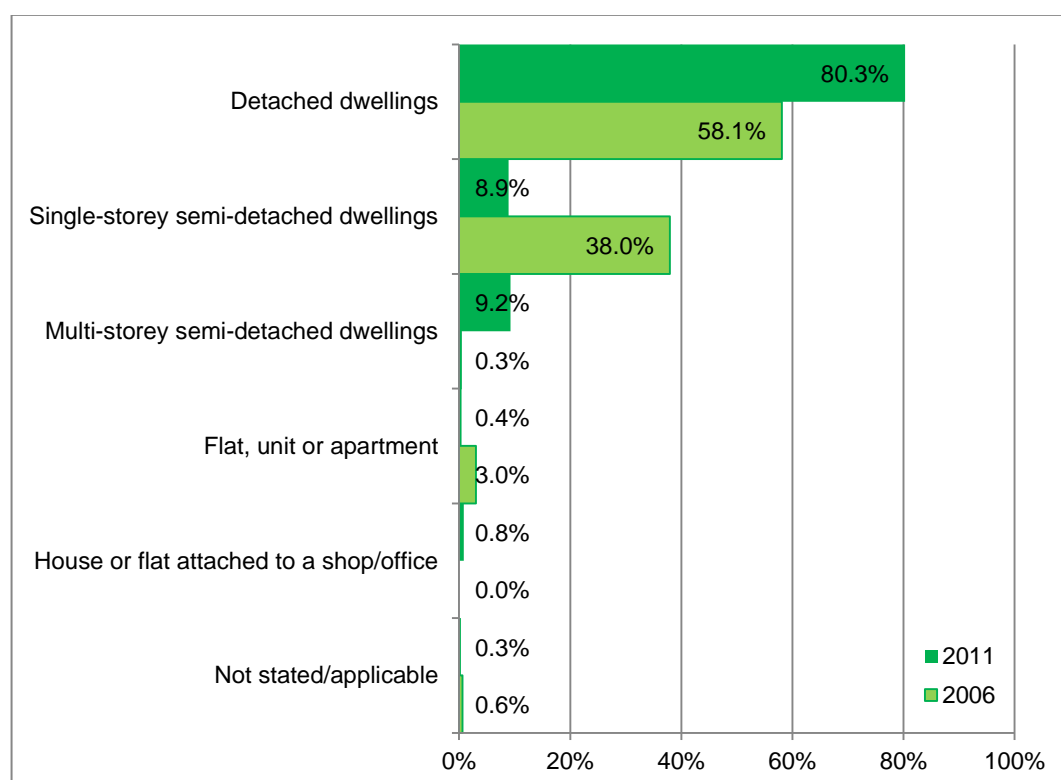
These changes to Bonnyrigg families' income profile, while less pronounced in the higher income ranges than compared to Fairfield LGA, may reflect changes in the local population, especially the arrival of new, home-owning residents. While starting at a small base in 2006 (9 families), the number of Bonnyrigg families in the \$2,000 or more weekly income range increased more than threefold (to 33 in 2011); the number of families with weekly income \$1,000-\$1,999 also almost doubled over the same period (from 96 in 2006 to 146 in 2011. See Figure 9). These changes will continue to evolve as the renewal in Bonnyrigg progresses and as the tenure mix continues to change.

Changes to local housing profile

Dwelling structure

In terms of the housing stock, much of the densification is achieved by reducing the overall lot sizes of individual dwellings as well as the construction of townhouses and apartment blocks throughout the suburb. At this relatively early stage of the renewal, evidence of this densification is beginning to emerge. While the proportion of households living in detached dwellings increased from 58.1% in 2006 to 80.3% in 2011, the most significant changes are seen in the two semi-detached categories. The proportion of single-storey semi-detached dwellings (which was made up mostly of townhouses) declined from 38.0% in 2006 to just 8.9% in 2011; concurrently the proportion of multi-storey semi-detached dwellings (comprised almost entirely of new townhouses in Stages 1 and 2) increased from 0.3% to 9.2% (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Change in dwelling structure, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

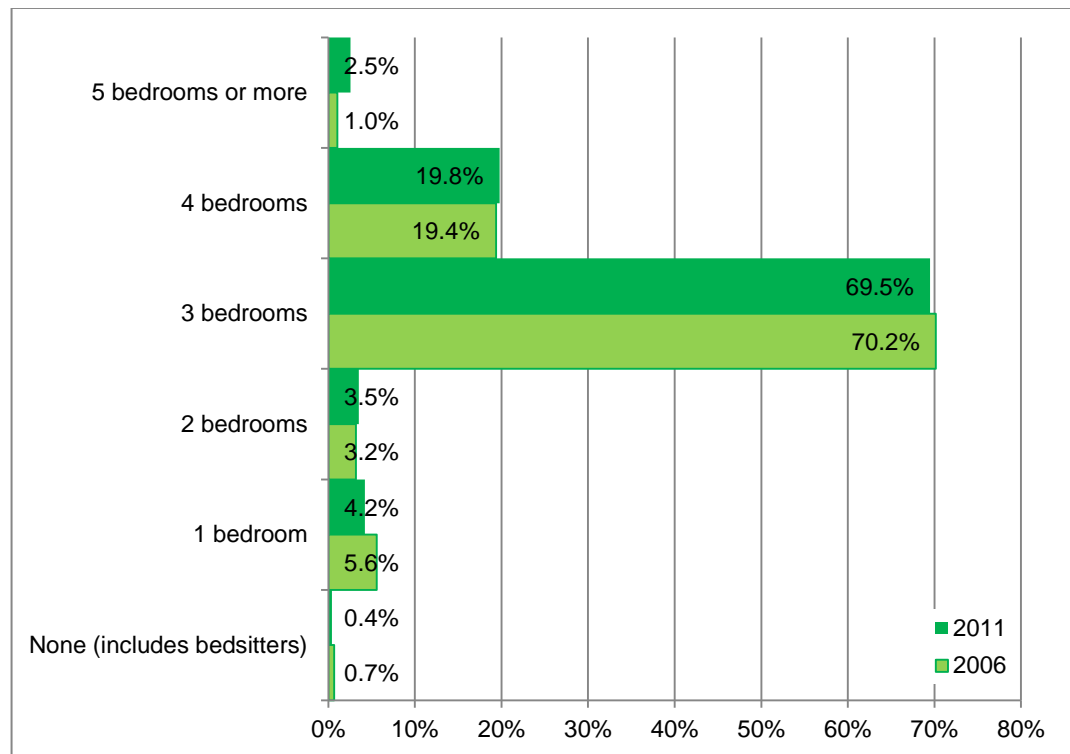


Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Dwelling size

Despite the overall densification of the suburb, the renewal has not impacted the size of homes in Bonnyrigg. The majority of homes in Bonnyrigg in 2011 had 3 bedrooms or more, with only small proportions having 2 bedrooms or fewer (see Figure 11). Our interviewees that have already relocated permanently into new homes in Stages 1 and 2 also noted that the interior of their new homes are generally comparable to their old homes, with reduction in dwelling most noticeable in the outdoor areas.

Figure 11: Change in dwelling size, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

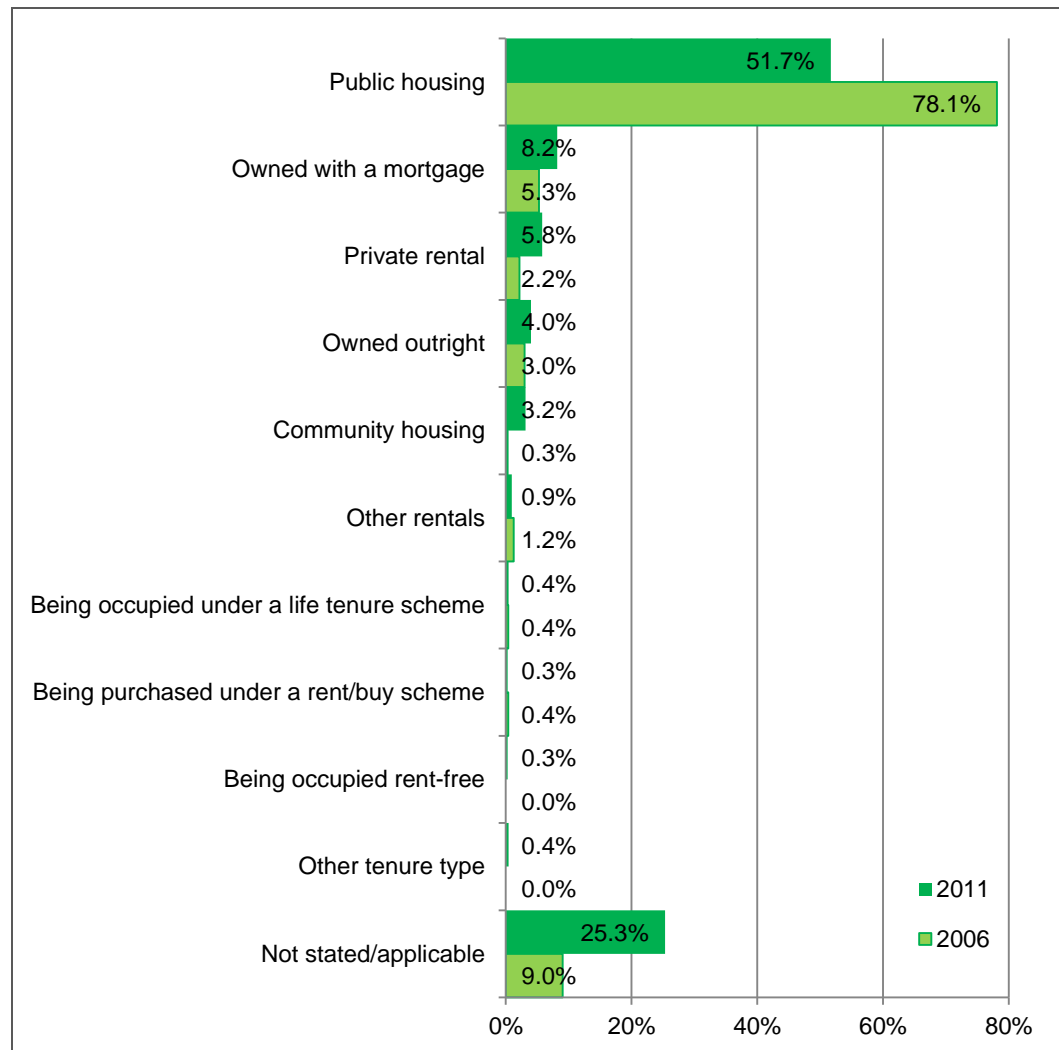
Tenure

The impact of transferring all public tenancies to St George Community Housing as part of the renewal is partially reflected in the change in Bonnyrigg's tenure profile between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of public housing reduced from 78.1% in 2006 down to 51.7% in 2011; concurrently the proportion of community housing increased from 0.3% in 2006 up to 3.2% in 2011 (see Figure 12). While in reality all former public housing tenancies within the renewal area were transferred to St George Community Housing and are officially classified as community housing, confusion exists within the community as to which category they belong. As the Census is a self-completed questionnaire, the relatively high proportion of public housing in Bonnyrigg is a reflection of this confusion, especially amongst older residents who have been in the public housing system for a long time (with many still referring to the state housing authority as Housing Commission rather than NSW Land and Housing Corporation) and those from non-English speaking backgrounds who mainly associate with residents who maintain the old terminology. The significant increase in the proportion of households that did not state or nominated not applicable as their tenure category may further reflect this confusion.

Bonnyrigg's renewal also brings about increases in homeownership and private tenancies in the suburb. Prior to the commencement of the Bonnyrigg renewal, 101 private households already live on-site, most notably in the former Department of Education site which makes up Stage 7 of the renewal plan. With the completion of only Stages 1 and 2 by the time of the 2011 Census, the increase in homeownership and private tenancies is still relatively low (the number of private homes increased by 70 between 2006 and 2011), but evidence of this change is already slowly emerging. Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of homeowners (with or without a mortgage)

increased by one-third, with most of this growth noted in ownership with mortgage (from 5.3% in 2006 to 8.2% in 2011). Households in private rentals also increased from 2.2% in 2006 to 5.8% in 2011 (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Change in tenure profile, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



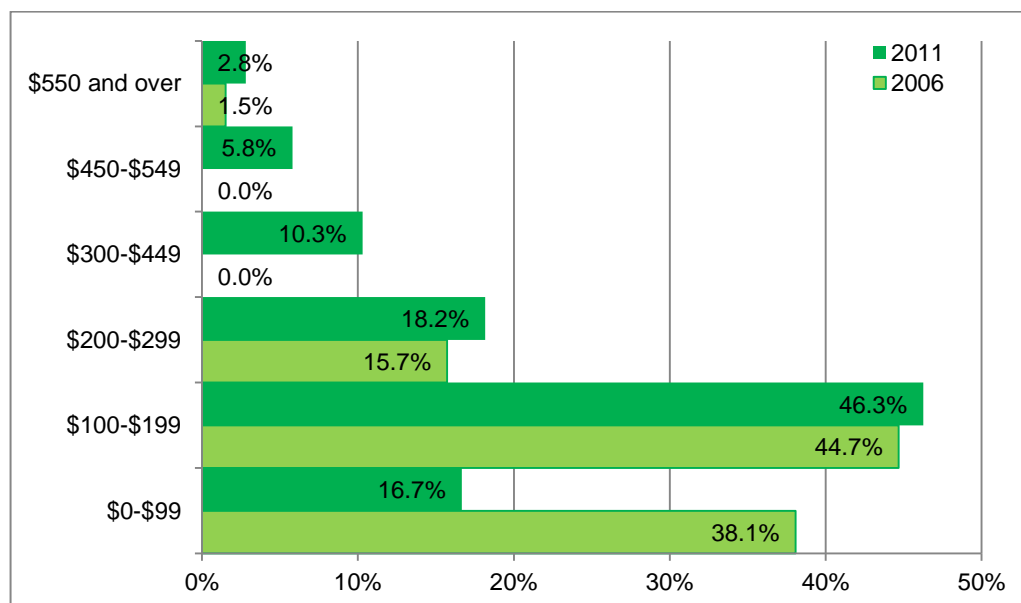
Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Housing costs

This section covers changes to both weekly rent paid as well as monthly mortgage repayment. All figures reported are not indexed by consumer price index or inflation and should, therefore, be used as an indication only rather than an accurate reflection.

The number of households renting (whether as community, private or other tenants) in Bonnyrigg declined by one-quarter (-26.3%) from 725 in 2006 to 534 in 2011. A large number of this decline is accounted for by the number of households that transferred their public tenancies to other areas in NSW as well as due to the decline in the overall number of dwellings available for rent whilst the neighbourhood undergoes renewal. This decline is despite the increase in the number of privately rented dwellings in the renewed stages of Bonnyrigg. With these changes, the proportion of households in the higher weekly rent ranges (\$300 or more) increased, while that of those in the lowest range (\$0-\$99) declined (see Figure 13).

Private homeowners comprised only a small proportion of Bonnyrigg's population prior to the commencement of the neighbourhood renewal. This includes a mix of former tenants who purchased their dwellings from NSW Land and Housing Corporation as well as those who purchased from other private owners. This proportion of private homeowners will continually increase as larger sections of the suburb are renewed over the next decade.

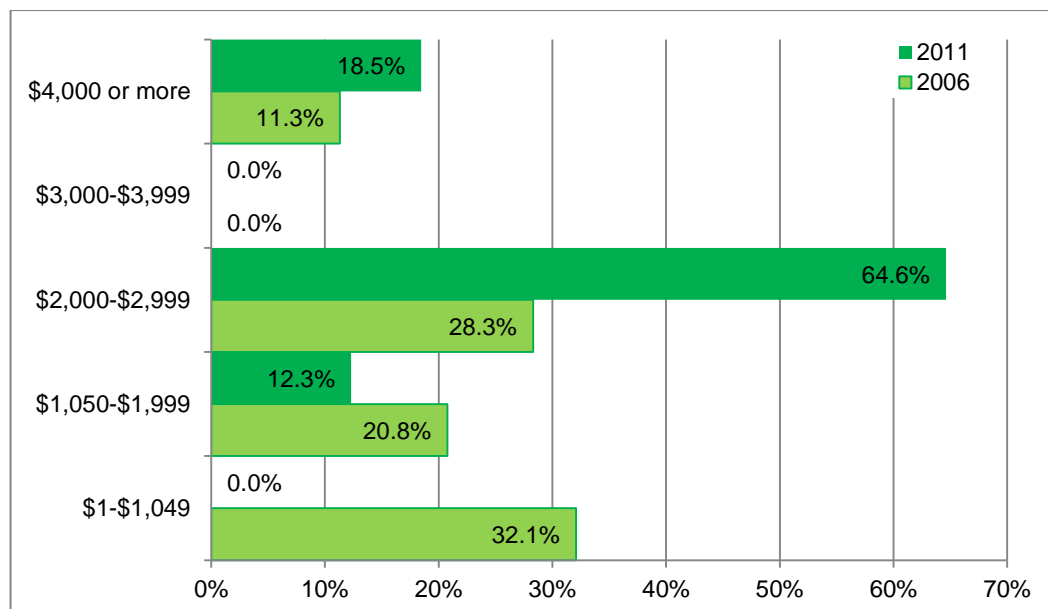
Figure 13: Changes in weekly rent, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

Note: as a percentage of all (community, private or other) renters only

Note: Not indexed by consumer price index or inflation

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of private homeowners with a mortgage increased by more than half (52.9%) from 29 in 2006 to 38 in 2011. Out of these mortgagors, the proportion with mortgage repayments in the higher ranges (\$2,000 or more per month) increased significantly. The proportion of mortgagors with monthly repayment between \$2,000 and \$2,999 increased from 28.3% in 2006 to 64.6% in 2011, while those with monthly repayment between \$1,050 and \$1,999 decreased from 20.8% in 2006 to 12.3% in 2011 (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Changes in monthly mortgage repayment, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

Note: as a percentage of all private owners with a mortgage only

Note: Not indexed by consumer price index or inflation

Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

These changes partly reflect the changes in interest rates between 2006 and 2011, which experienced a sharp decline in late 2008 before a persistent incline from mid-2009 before stabilising in mid-2011. The significant increase in the proportion of private mortgagors with a monthly mortgage of \$2,000-\$2,999 also likely reflects new, incoming

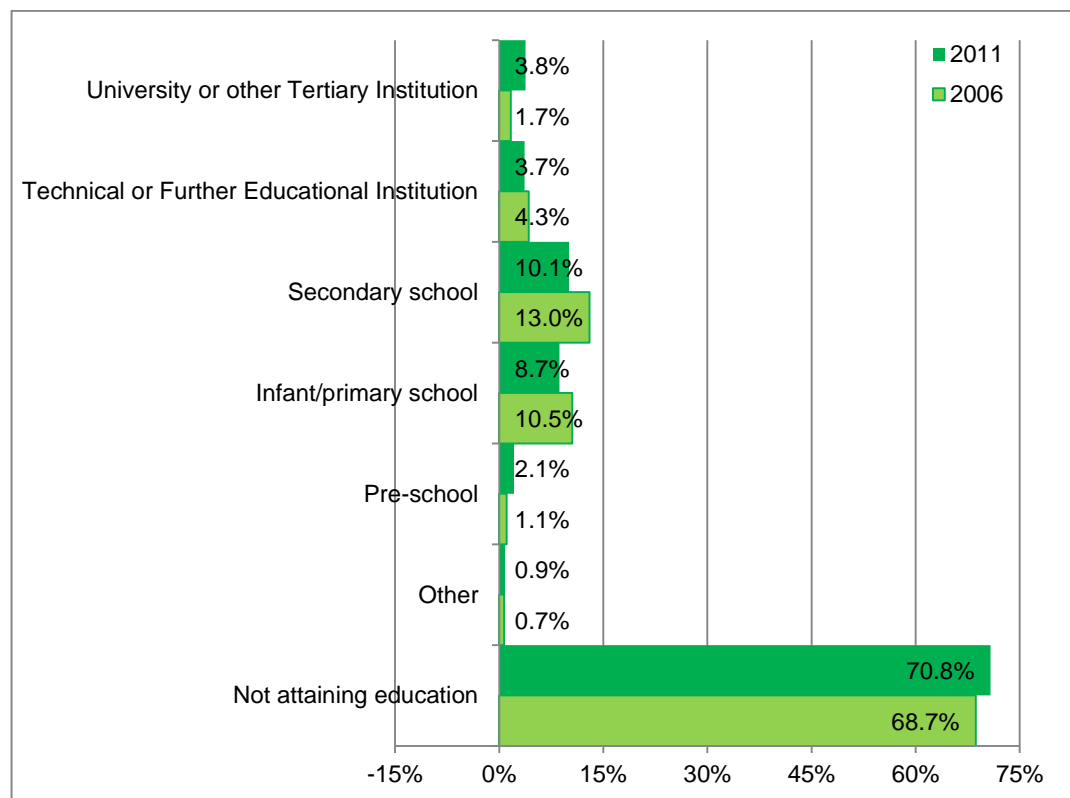
households that have purchased the smaller (2-3 bedroom) new apartments or townhouses in Bonnyrigg, while the increase in the higher end (\$4,000 or more per month) likely reflects new, incoming households that have purchased the larger (4-5 bedroom) detached properties in the renewed stages. The impact of the neighbourhood renewal on house prices in Bonnyrigg will emerge more slowly over time and as the renewal activities progress.

Changes in educational outcomes

School attendance

There was little change in the types of educational institutions Bonnyrigg residents were attending between 2006 and 2011. Overall, over two-thirds (68.7% in 2006, 70.8% in 2011) were not attaining education at the time of the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. Reflecting the significant net loss of children aged 0-14 years during this period, the proportions of residents attending infant/primary school and secondary school declined. The number of residents attending university or other tertiary institution, however, doubled between 2006 (44) and 2011 (84). Despite this increase, they still only represent a very small proportion of the population (3.8% in 2011) (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Type of educational institution attending, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



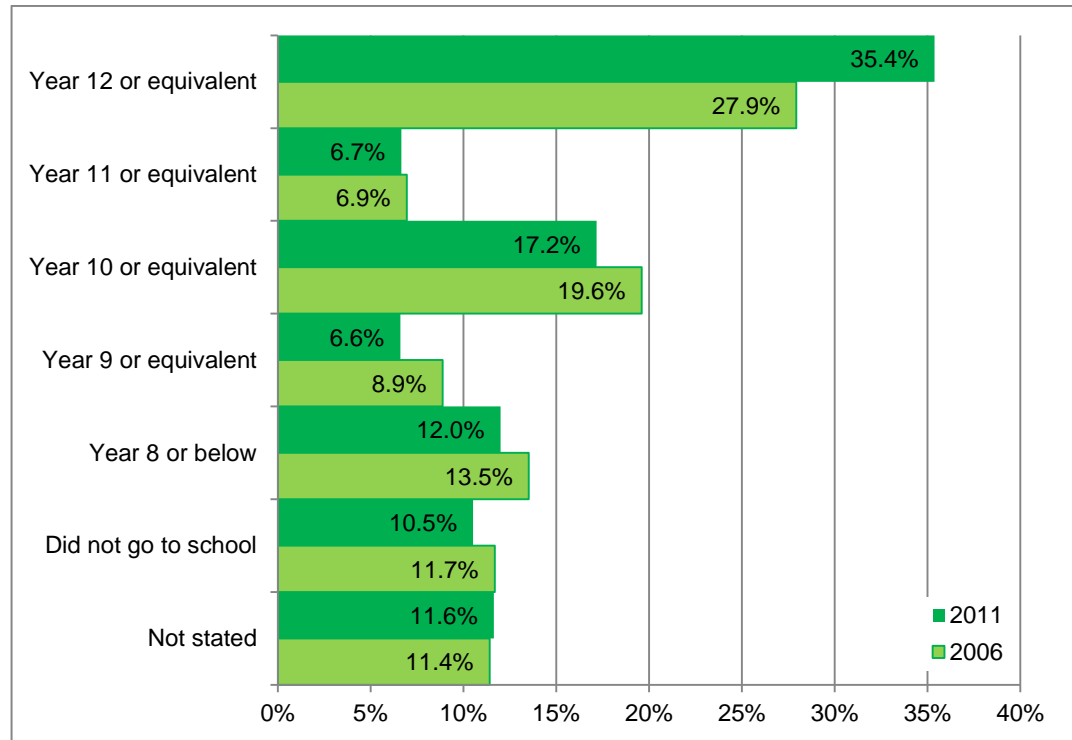
Note: Persons aged 15 years or older
Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Educational qualification

Much like higher participation in university or other tertiary education institute participation and post-school qualification attainment, there was a notable increase between 2006 (27.9%) and 2011 (35.4%) in the proportion of Bonnyrigg residents who attained Year 12 schooling or equivalent qualification. The proportion of residents who quit school at lower levels accordingly declined (see Figure 16). These changes likely reflect the overall change in the population of Bonnyrigg and the high amount of relocation activities (both residents relocating off-site permanently and new residents moving into renewed stages) happening between 2006 and 2011 rather than as a result of educational and training activities injected into the neighbourhood during the initial phase of the renewal. The awarding of partial selective school status to the local

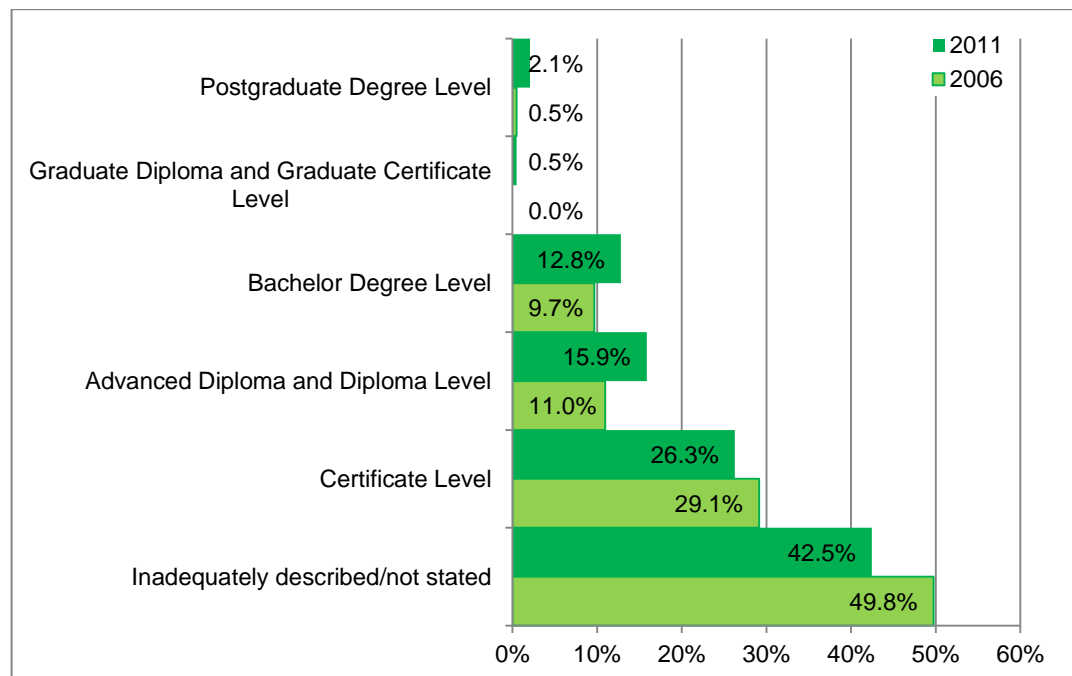
Bonnyrigg High School in 2010 may encourage more local high school students to continue their secondary education.

Figure 16: Highest level of schooling attained, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



Note: Persons aged 15 years or older
Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Figure 17: Changes in highest level of post-school qualification attained, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011



Note: Persons aged 15 years or older
Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

The proportion of Bonnyrigg residents who have attained post-school qualification also increased between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of those with vocational qualifications (advanced diploma, diploma and certificate) increased marginally, while those with tertiary qualification (bachelor, graduate diploma, graduate certificate and postgraduate

degree) increased more noticeably. The number of residents with bachelor degree qualification increased by one-third, up to 12.8% in 2011, while the number of residents with postgraduate degree qualification increased threefold, up to 2.1% in 2011 (see Figure 17). Again, these likely reflect wider changes to the Bonnyrigg local population rather than significant increases in educational attainment of local residents over a short period of time.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results

Note: NAPLAN results are compared nationally using the following five categories on the MySchool website:

Substantially above national minimum standard
Above national minimum standard
Close to national minimum standard
Below national minimum standard
Substantially below national minimum standard

Bonnyrigg High School, the local secondary school, became a partial selective high school in 2010. This is reflected in its NAPLAN results, which since 2008 have shown improvements in most assessments domains; this is especially true since it was upgraded to a partially selective high school in 2010 (see Table 15). In 2011, Year 7 students were within range of the national minimum standard or above in all domains; improvements can also be seen in narrative/persuasive writing and numeracy skills of Year 9 students.

Table 15: NAPLAN results, Bonnyrigg High School, 2008-2011

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 7	Reading	499	503	514
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	508	508	524
	Spelling	536	555	556
	Grammar & punctuation	590	598	512
	Numeracy	515	528	549
Year 9	Reading	552	550	535
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	510	536	529
	Spelling	571	566	579
	Grammar & punctuation	541	531	548
	Numeracy	562	573	563

Source: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Bonnyrigg Public School is the local primary school for Bonnyrigg residents. Its Year 3 NAPLAN results fluctuated since 2008 but have generally remained below the national minimum standards of each domain. Year 5 results have, however, generally improved since 2011, especially in spelling and numeracy where in 2011 it was assessed to be above national minimum standards (see Table 16).

Table 16: NAPLAN results, Bonnyrigg Public School, 2008-2011

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 3	Reading	344	389	377
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	399	424	379
	Spelling	392	435	382
	Grammar & punctuation	375	394	380
	Numeracy	379	416	402
Year 5	Reading	446	473	462
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	467	487	477
	Spelling	496	488	492
	Grammar & punctuation	442	502	489
	Numeracy	440	492	496

Source: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

St Johns Park Public School is located just outside of the renewal area, across the road from Stage 3. It is part of the NSW Priority Schools Program which focuses on improving literacy and numeracy, including Opportunity Class for academically gifted children in Years 5 and 6. It is a local school that many Bonnyrigg residents also attend. Its NAPLAN results have generally been within or above national minimum standards across all domains since 2008, with improvements shown for grammar and punctuation and numeracy for both Year 3 and Year 5 students (see Table 17).

Table 17: NAPLAN results, St Johns Park Public School, 2008-2011

		2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 3	Reading	411	437	401	420
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	458	430	425	453
	Spelling	453	464	441	466
	Grammar & punctuation	413	429	440	460
	Numeracy	436	439	398	423
Year 5	Reading	481	500	498	496
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	516	513	509	510
	Spelling	547	548	548	543
	Grammar & punctuation	509	530	545	526
	Numeracy	525	541	523	544

Source: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC) School is also located just outside of the renewal area, across the road from Stages 8, 9 and 10. It is a popular Catholic primary school especially amongst a few groups of local residents who follow the Catholic faith. One interviewee said that, whilst their adult children no longer live in Bonnyrigg, their grandchildren attend OLMC and they help their children out by looking after the grandchildren after school. Between 2008 and 2011, its NAPLAN performance has remained above average, with the level of Year 5 spelling consistently above the national minimum standard (see Table 18).

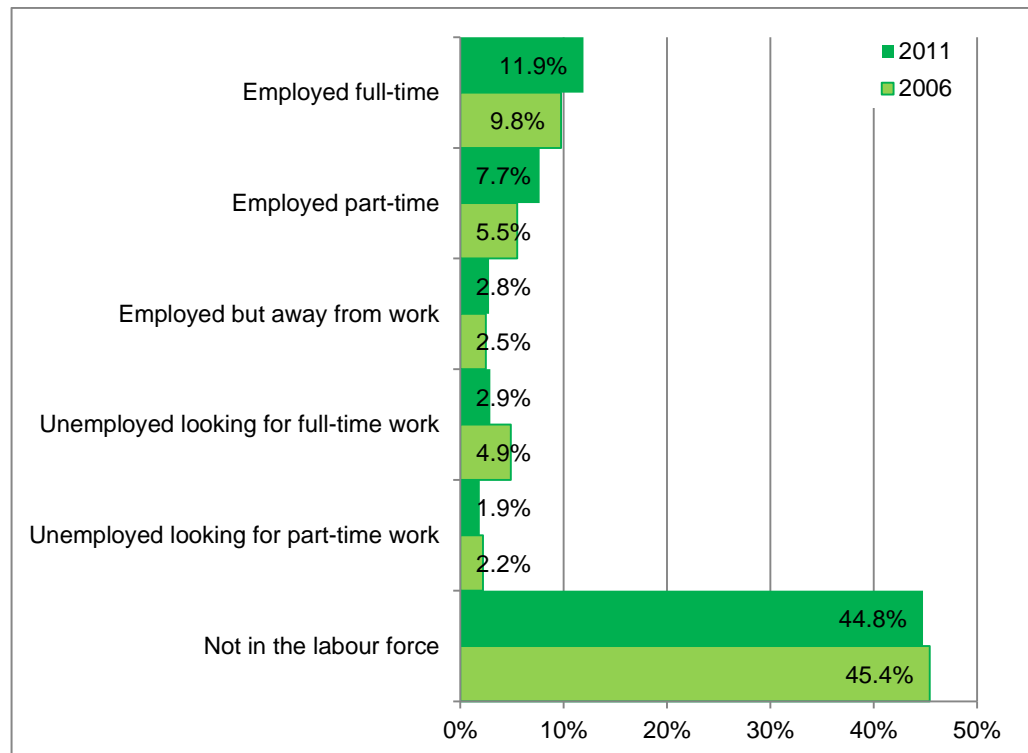
Table 18: NAPLAN results, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, 2008-2011

		2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 3	Reading	400	431	413	414
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	448	451	457	440
	Spelling	437	457	438	422
	Grammar & punctuation	401	442	434	434
	Numeracy	393	402	397	394
Year 5	Reading	495	511	586	479
	Narrative/Persuasive writing	529	518	507	501
	Spelling	542	533	526	522
	Grammar & punctuation	515	524	521	518
	Numeracy	500	521	502	492

Source: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

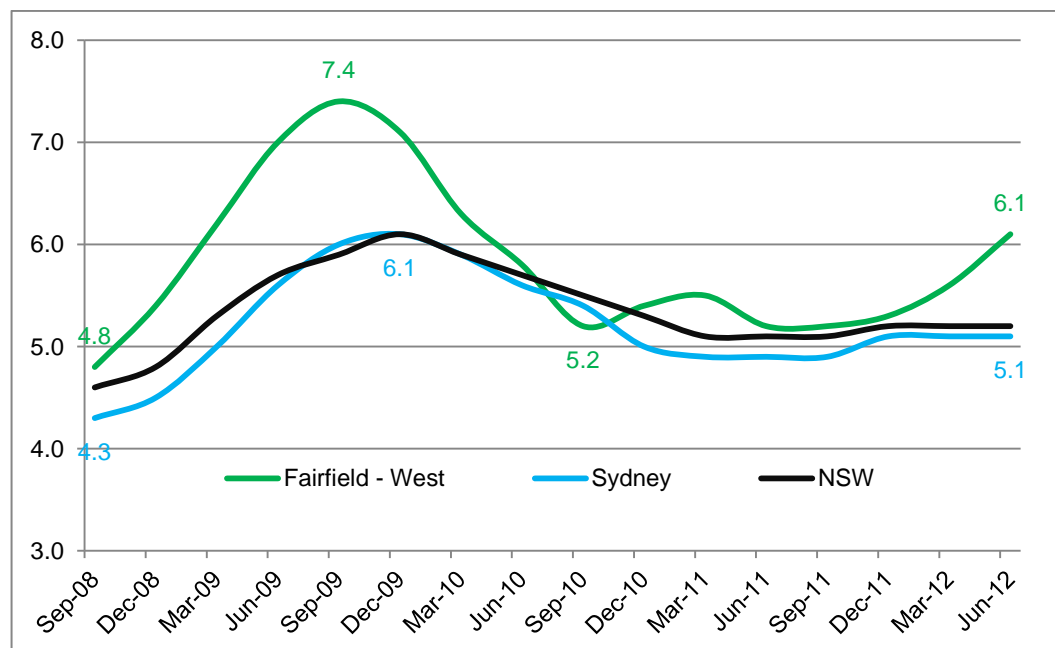
Changes in employment outcomes

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of Bonnyrigg residents employed increased while the proportion of residents unemployed declined. The proportion of residents employed full-time increased from 9.8% in 2006 to 11.9% in 2011, while the proportion of those employed part-time increased from 5.5% in 2006 to 7.7% in 2011. The proportion of residents unemployed and looking for full-time work almost halved between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of residents not in the labour force (i.e. those who are unemployed and are not looking for work) remains high in 2011 (44.8%) compared to Sydney (26.0%) and NSW (26.3%) (see Figure 18). The changes in the number proportion of Bonnyrigg residents reflect wider changes to the public/community tenant employment profiles (where they are increasingly likely to be employed persons but in low-income households) but also new private homeowners moving into the neighbourhood, where they need employment to maintain a mortgage.

Figure 18: Changes in labour force status, Bonnyrigg, 2006-2011

Note: Persons aged 15 years or older
 Source: ABS TableBuilder Pro

Between September quarter 2008 and June quarter 2012, the unemployment rate amongst Fairfield – West residents increased from 4.8% to 6.1% after peaking at 7.4% during September quarter 2009. Concurrently the unemployment rate for Sydney residents increased from 4.3% to 5.1% after peaking at 6.1% during December quarter 2009. Unemployment rate in Fairfield – West fluctuated more so than in Sydney or NSW as a whole. Recent trend, however, shows that unemployment rate in Fairfield – West is increasing more sharply than compared to Sydney or NSW (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Changes in unemployment rate, Fairfield – West SLA, 2008-2012

Source: NSW DEEWL – Small Area Labour Market quarterly reports

Changes to crime and safety

Local level crime data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) is not available for the suburb of Bonnyrigg specifically; data for the Fairfield LGA (within which Bonnyrigg is located) is used here instead as a proxy.

Since the renewal project commenced in early 2008, there have been notable changes to crime and safety in the Fairfield LGA. There were notable reductions in non-dwelling break and enter, motor vehicle theft, stealing from motor vehicles, stealing from persons, and malicious damage to property at rates similar to those seen throughout NSW. Motor vehicle theft especially has declined significantly between 2010 and 2011 despite an upward trend being noted for NSW.

There have, however, been negative changes in other offences that many interview participants took notice of, including significant increases in drug activities and liquor offences. The incidences of possession and/or use of a range of drugs increased at higher rates than compared to NSW between 2007 and 2011, although these upward trends appear to have stabilised since 2010. Liquor offences in Fairfield LGA increased by over a quarter (26.1%) between 2007 and 2011 despite being stable throughout NSW.

Recent increases (since 2010) were especially noted for trespassing, theft and breaching apprehended violence orders (see Table 19).

Table 19: Proportional changes in major crime, Fairfield LGA, 2007-2011

Offence type	2010-2011 trend^		2007-2011 trend^	
	Fairfield LGA	NSW	Fairfield LGA	NSW
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	Stable	Stable	13.6%	Stable
Break and enter - non-dwelling	Stable	Stable	-9.2%	-8.6%
Motor vehicle theft	-15.3%	Stable	-7.4%	-7.4%
Steal from motor vehicle	Stable	7.5%	-6.1%	-6.2%
Steal from person	Stable	Stable	-5.0%	-7.6%
Malicious damage to property	Stable	Stable	-3.9%	-5.1%
Harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance	Stable	Stable	8.5%	3.3%
Other theft *	33.9%	Stable	10.8%	-2.9%
Possession and/or use of narcotics	Stable	Stable	13.7%	8.5%
Possession and/or use of cannabis	Stable	Stable	31.5%	18.4%
Possession and/or use of amphetamines	Stable	25.8%	26.9%	11.3%
Possession and/or use of other drugs	Stable	Stable	26.0%	26.6%
Trespass	47.0%	Stable	Stable	-1.3%
Liquor offences	Stable	Stable	26.1%	Stable
Breach Apprehended Violence Order	21.1%	Stable	9.0%	2.1%
Breach bail conditions	Stable	19.1%	25.5%	14.3%
Transport regulatory offences	Stable	6.2%	9.7%	11.9%
Other offences	Stable	-8.5%	5.5%	Stable

* other than 'receiving or handling stolen goods' and 'stock theft'

^ The trend test used was a two-tailed Kendall's rank-order correlation test with a 0.05 level of significance

Source: NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2007-2011 (BOCSAR 2012)



Source: Newleaf Communities

4

Bonnyrigg and Bonnyriggers

Urban renewal happens in place: that context, and the breadth, diversity and different opinions and expectations of those households most affected by the process, both in negative and positive terms, are as significant to its success as the complexity of the financing arrangements, political will or market viability underpinning the process. Despite Bonnyrigg sharing characteristics with many low density mono-tenure public housing estates laid out according to Radburn principles in the late 1970s/early 1980s elsewhere in western Sydney, it also charts a quite distinct history which is reflected in the current fabric and nature of the community.

While our panel of interviewees is not an exact reflection of the diversity of households making up the Bonnyrigg community, when weighed against the demographic profile of the neighbourhood in the 2011 Census, it is an impressive fit – most notably in terms of the diversity captured and the proportionate number of households spoken to amongst the key cultural and language groups. Our panel therefore captures different strands of Bonnyrigg's history: a cohort of predominantly white, Anglo tenants who moved into a new Bonnyrigg where original residents and the neighbourhood have aged together. Many – having come in their 20s and 30s back in the early 1980s – are now in their senior years. There is also a substantial Vietnamese community whose arrival stretches over a longer period, from those housed by the Department of Housing in the 1980s, those that 'sat it out' on wait lists in private rented sector accommodation in neighbouring districts for many years, to more recent incomers to the neighbourhood across all tenures. There are also Spanish speakers who arrived in the 1980s – a large proportion of them from Chile – alongside more recent arrivals, both through humanitarian and economic migrant channels, from nations including Cambodia, Iraq, Laos and the former Yugoslav nations.

Amongst these groups, a breadth of feeling – from quite intense attachment to little or no positive affiliation – emerges. It is not a simple divide between older householders who have lived the last 30 plus years on the estate and relative newcomers. However, amongst pioneer residents – 'Bonnyriggers' – there is a sense of attachment which aligns with a perspective that the trajectory of Bonnyrigg over past decades is in part a reflection of the trajectory of their own lives. For many it has been hard, but they would not necessarily change things. If you live somewhere for 30-35 years, that deep-seated connection is understandable. More recent arrivals might experience the same problems, fears and future aspirations for the neighbourhood, however the impact of having lived through it and raised a family over that time is arguably a less significant determinant in shaping their relationship with the renewal process than those with a much deeper (arguably richer) history with their neighbourhood.

This chapter highlights how the trajectory of Bonnyrigg as a neighbourhood over time – and in parallel its residents' housing pathways and life opportunities – is important for appreciating how different households understand and engage with the renewal process in different ways. It explores how residents came to live on Bonnyrigg, and their experience of living on the estate prior to the commencement of renewal activities.

Coming to Bonnyrigg

Pioneers

Amongst its earliest residents, Bonnyrigg rarely featured on their preferred wait list locations. As a new estate perched on the far reaches of the urban fringe, many of those original inhabitants offered a property on the new estate had not heard of Bonnyrigg before. For a number, the offer of a new home in a new neighbourhood was important, however a more pervasive sense emerged in our interviews with long-term Bonnyriggers that it was the offer of a home at an affordable rent that was the crucial determinant in their happening to end up as an early tenant on the estate.

A key theme that emerged amongst pioneer residents when discussing their move to Bonnyrigg was a sense of the social housing system helping provide the security, safety and breathing space they were struggling to find elsewhere. A number of residents talked of trying to bring up families single-handed while juggling jobs – and sometimes multiple jobs – just to survive debilitating housing costs in the private rented sector. Others were able to remove themselves, and their children, from difficult, violent domestic contexts, and others still to homes that were suited to their or their family's specific needs – for example homes more suited to those with physical disability.

In terms of where those moving onto the new estate had been previously living, many had grown up in the Fairfield and Liverpool area, and had their names on the wait list for properties in that area. Others relocated from further afield, with a number having previously been living in private rented accommodation closer to the city. Amongst Bonnyrigg's pioneers were also those that had come much further, with a number of our panel having arrived in Australia as refugees from South East Asia in the late 1970s/early 1980s and being placed in Bonnyrigg.

Across many of these 'original' resident', their memories of the relief at being given a home provide a compelling reminder of the crucially important role played by the social housing system, and the impact it can have on those households. Many of our discussions brought out a sense of solidarity with the old 'Housing Commission' as well as Bonnyrigg itself – through both its ups and downs. While it has been observed that over time long-term tenants risk building up a degree of reliance, dependency and expectation on the housing provider, a more nuanced perspective emphasises a two-way relationship based on a sense of 'doing right' by the Department because they had done right by them.

Doing time on the 'wait list'

For those that did not move to Bonnyrigg shortly after its construction, their housing pathways were more reflective of the changing pressures on public housing wait lists and allocations from the mid-1980s onwards. Many of our interviewees had rented for quite a significant length of time in the private sector while waiting for their names to gradually creep towards the top of the allocations list. Waits of around 7-8 years were common amongst this cohort, and for Vietnamese speaking residents, it was often a move from surrounding suburbs like Cabramatta to Bonnyrigg. Whilst the estate might not have been the first choice for all those who ended up on the estate, it was seen as a good option by families given the availability of detached house, size of lot and proximity to the wider community.

More recent priority, high-need applicants

Those interviewees arriving more recently recount a diversity of pathways to living on the estate – and, as in the pioneer days – reflects a barometer of the importance of affordable housing provision for those who need immediate or specific assistance, those who need humanitarian assistance to settle in their new country, and those who sit out the ever-lengthening period on the waiting list in the hope of moving to the security and affordability of social housing. A number of our panel had relocated from other NSW Land and Housing Corporation properties over time from nearby neighbourhoods in order to move into a larger home, or housing that could be adapted for the specific needs of ageing family members or those with disabilities. There were also instances of having moved from further distances (for example Mount Druitt and Campbelltown) to be closer to family or cultural communities focused around Cabramatta.

Private residents

Even before renewal, approximately 15% of Bonnyrigg's households were 'private' residents. This reflects an enclave of private housing built on former NSW Department of Education land in the middle of the estate (now designated Stage 7 of the renewal

activities), as well as a fair degree of incremental sell-offs of public housing to sitting tenants exercising their right to buy their home. Amongst existing resident owner-occupiers we spoke with, most had bought their property some years ago, and certainly prior to commencement of the renewal process. They had decided to buy when opportunity or change in family circumstances gave them the impetus to do so, for example starting a family or a lump-sum payment on retirement. A number had bought 'directly' into the estate – i.e. had not previously been NSW Land and Housing Corporation tenants – reflecting upon Bonnyrigg's good location in terms of schools and services as well as connections with community in Cabramatta. One participant who relocated from Adelaide acknowledged that when he moved and purchased his home he was not aware it was predominantly a public housing suburb. The stories of our interviewees who have moved to Bonnyrigg in the last few years having bought or are privately renting a property in Stages 1 and 2 of the renewal will be returned to in Chapter 7.

Living on Bonnyrigg, pre-2007

Couldn't ask for a better place (C5, female, 75+, 28 years)

[Bonnyrigg?] Poor, a ruin, and dirty (C2, female, 55-64, 12 years)

The early years

Our interviewees – especially those who had lived on the estate from the outset – demonstrate a strong level of commitment to, and sense of ownership of, Bonnyrigg. This deep-seated attachment to the locality is not framed by rose-tinted glasses, nor is it simply articulated as a story of 'good place turned bad'. Most acknowledge that it has always been a pretty tough place to live, has had its ups and downs, and indeed probably some of the most challenging times were in those early years. Many of the early residents talk about almost immediate problems with crime and safety, noting that it was a place where people (inevitably) had few connections and a sense that those who ended up on Bonnyrigg were those who had few other choices.

Bonnyrigg was a hell, too many bad people. (C1, female, 75+, 33 years)

When I first came here 25 years ago, it was wicked, it was bad. Big fights out there in the dead ends - I mean big fights with big weapons. (C5, female, 65-74, 25 years)

During these initial years, services were limited, and local gangs roamed the streets and caused damage through vandalism. A few of our interviewees recall living in fear, stating that they did not dare leave their homes without some sort of security measures (for example a baseball bat) even if it was just to take the garbage out. Break-ins were frequent. Others reflected more on the positive aspects of a pioneering community, being in new homes on what was then the edge of the city and surrounded by fields and bush. They recall the walk to the shops on Cabramatta Road and trips into Cabramatta and Liverpool before the arrival of the shopping centre in the 1990s. For some, a sense of community grew as families themselves grew and children went to the local schools.

When I first moved there, there was no road, no lights, no nothing. It was just – you know – they were just moving people into new homes. A lot of the people that moved in at the same time as me, they left, they didn't like. As I said, there were no tarred roads; that all got done after we moved in. (C1, female, 45-54, 30 years)

While discussions touched upon other factors shaping interviewees' memories, most stories were framed primarily in the context of crime and safety, and changes over time on the estate couched in those terms. The large majority of our interviewees had been victims – and often frequent victims – of crime. It has been a persistent issue that has defined residents' experience of living in the neighbourhood. For many, it has been a direct reflection on the community, not only in terms of the external stigma that it fuels, but also on the 'type of people' living on the estate. This latter observation is

central in understanding the extent to which safety concerns affected a number of our interviewees, since it reflected problems ‘from within’, and a sense of caution amongst neighbours and between cultural groups. Understanding the temporal characteristics and nature of crime – robberies, and break-ins during the day occurring when tenants might have stepped out just for an hour or two – gave them a sense that the targeted, as well as the perpetrators, were local. This not only inevitably heightened safety concerns at the neighbourhood level, but for some, restricted their desire to leave their homes, impinging substantially on their everyday lives.

They didn't take too many things; they waited until we left the house, and then came inside, breaking the door down. (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years)

We always lose stuff almost all the time, but I don't know how to complain to anyone because everybody else were the victims too. (C2, female, 55-64, 12 years)

Change over time

Although crime and safety concerns are a strong, persistent thread in how our interviewees discuss living on Bonnyrigg, whether reflecting upon those early years or more recent times, there is a general sense that things have gradually and continually improved. This is not necessarily a recent shift, and many reflected that the neighbourhood settled down to an extent following the estate's early years. While problems went in ‘waves’ (a number suggested causal relationships between local residents who had been in gaol returning into the community, or a cohort of local children evolving into a troublesome group of teenagers), the broader narrative was one of things getting better. This is certainly not to suggest that those concerns have disappeared. Indeed, especially for more recent movers into the area, even this ‘improved’ context is considered a continuing, major concern. Nevertheless, a pattern of ‘things getting better’ was associated with problem tenants and ‘troublemakers’ being relocated, and through physical interventions aimed at tackling the ‘built-in’ design concerns that had plagued the estate from the outset.

It's very hard to say that Bonnyrigg is a safe place to stay as there are always thieves and gangs hanging around, but it would eventually vanish to somewhere else and then overtime it would resurface again. (C5, male, 55-64, 10 years)

For many, the laneways and cul-de-sac Radburn layout of the neighbourhood, along with poor lighting, presented opportunities for break-ins and muggings to occur. For one interviewee, and despite living along a main road, their home was broken into several times when burglars would jump the fence from the laneway along one side of their property and come in through the backyard. They also noted that many burglars would escape from police chases through the laneways. Many noted that these crimes began to reduce when some of the laneways were closed.

Rubbing along

Much is written in the urban renewal academic literature about the importance of building more socially inclusive, socially cohesive societies. Fostering a greater sense of community – whether in terms of neighbourliness, engagement or participation – is seen as a fundamental component of the community regeneration process. There is an implicit, simplistic assumption from a policy point of view that there is something that needs ‘fixing.’ By contrast, the communities themselves see themselves as close-knit: something often backed up by community surveys conducted in such localities which pick up on ‘social capital’ characteristics. Indeed, in the ‘baseline survey’ carried out in Bonnyrigg during 2005 (Randolph, Stubbs & Judd 2005), the strength of Bonnyrigg as a community shone through.

I can feel that I am amongst my family (C4, female, 45-54, 2.5 years)

In-depth insight provided through discussions with our interviewees points to a more nuanced understanding of Bonnyrigg residents’ conceptions of their own community. Certain strengths were reiterated – interestingly, often amongst those in our cohort of former residents who had decided to leave – and these often reflected the nature of a

group of families ageing alongside the estate itself. Over many years, they experienced the changes taking place, seeing the same faces, sending their kids to the same schools.

For a number of interviewees, those positive community strengths were to a degree a retrospective recognition of what living on Bonnyrigg had given their families. A number reflected on their household and housing circumstances prior to moving onto the estate, and that life has continued to be pretty tough for them, but focusing on the fact that their children had got on in life (and got out). For example, we were told how a total of 13 children from the 30 or so homes on Bonnyrigg's most notorious cul-de-sac in the 1990s had gone on to TAFE and university. As such, although the 'life chances' of interviewees might not have changed substantively in the 20-30 years of living on the estate, there was a clear sense of intergenerational benefit.

Not all reflections on bringing up children and the influence of neighbours share such positive outcomes. A few of our interviewees shared painful and heartbreaking experiences of seeing their children hang out with the wrong crowd, get involved in drugs and unhealthy relationships, getting in trouble with the police, and ultimately periods in gaol and estrangement.

A consistent thread that came through many of our interviews was a feeling that the community 'worked' for many because they set careful frames and parameters around their engagement. For a number, there was a sense of things being OK because 'I keep myself to myself' and not let others too far into their affairs. Others noted having a close network of neighbours, although even within small cul-de-sacs, there would be certain houses and families that would be avoided. Many reflected on the great cultural diversity in the community but the overriding view was couched positively in terms of 'rubbing along' harmoniously, rather than expressed concern. A number of older residents who had arrived as migrants 20-30 years ago felt that some cultural groups had different expectations or cared more about their surroundings – as indicated in the up-keep of their gardens – than others.

There are many people around who don't care about the garden. They don't cut the grass, or have plants to make it look prettier ... You can see the difference immediately with an immigrant: they like to have house with plants and garden at the entrance. Here in the middle of Bonnyrigg it was horrible, and they didn't take care of the grass, never cut it. (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years)

In general, social cohesion appears to present itself passively rather than through extensive integration or mixing across religious or cultural lines. Whilst the upkeep of gardens and green space might be the visible focus of some tension, it was also apparent that those spaces played an important role in keeping the peace, enabling interviewees to engage with their neighbours and wider community on their terms. For example – and certainly for the detached houses – the space around their own home and distance from neighbouring properties meant that universal neighbour tensions could in part be avoided, particularly around issues of noise. The low density layout meant that they not only felt they were less exposed to the comings and goings of their neighbours, but equally meant that they felt more relaxed about noise that they or their children might have made. Thus the problematic design of the estate – certainly in terms of the legibility of its public spaces – was accompanied by the benefits of spatial 'buffering'. As shall be discussed, the spatiality associated with a sense of 'not being bothered by others/risking bothering others' infuses much of the consideration – and concerns – voiced regarding the design and layout of the redevelopment.

Well connected, with everything you need

It's like its own little world. You don't have to travel too far to get anything. (C5, female 35-44, 14 years)

Central to everything, close to everything I care about. It's a good place. (C4, male, 19-24, 3 years)

A final, important component of the narrative regarding life on pre-renewal Bonnyrigg relates to the sense of place which has evolved over time. From its isolated origins, the suburb has developed into a well-connected neighbourhood. Many interviewees commented on the proximity of shops, services and religious centres, and public transport – with the T-way often mentioned. This presents a positive context which many of NSW Land and Housing Corporation lower density estates in Sydney's west do not enjoy, and undoubtedly is a key factor in shaping the market viability for the estate's future. While many of Bonnyrigg's original residents may have had little choice ultimately in ending up on the estate, the suburb now sits a dynamic part of Fairfield's housing market, surrounded by neighbourhoods of choice.

Rehousing

Staying in Bonnyrigg?

Ask us today about:

- Any issue you may have with your current home
- What stage your current home is in
- Your one on one interview with your Housing Manager
- By when do you have to notify if you want to stay or leave Bonnyrigg
- The 6 months notice you will receive
- How long you have to move
- Your temporary home stay
- How many offers of housing you get
- Modifications to your property
- Relocation costs
- Removalist and packing assistance offered
- The relocation of your pets
- The 2 week rent credit to your rent account during rehousing
- Whether you can move close to your current neighbours
- Individual support needs
- Your family's bedroom entitlements
- What stage in newly built homes you will move into
- Allocations to the new homes
- Home improvements you have made to your current home
- The role of our dedicated Housing Manager Rehousing & Support
- The Tenant Advocate available in Bonnyrigg
- Language assistance available
- Any issue or concern you may have in regards to your rehousing



Leaving Bonnyrigg?

Housing NSW staff will be available at the Bonnyrigg Partnership office, Shop 36-38 Bonnyrigg Plaza, Bonnyrigg Ave, Bonnyrigg on:

- Tuesday Mornings (8.30am-12.30pm) and
- Thursday afternoons (1pm-4.30pm)

You will also be able to contact Housing NSW Monday to Friday between 8.30am-4.30pm on Freecall 1800 637 283 to talk about your relocation.



Source: Newleaf Communities

5

A community preparing for change

Change is always a good thing no matter what because it needs to be done, but sometimes when change comes along there is also the unknown as well. People fear change as well as embrace it. (C5, female, 35-44, 14 years)

In this chapter, we share our interviewees' experiences of the initial consultation, engagement and subsequent announcements tied to Bonnyrigg's renewal. As the redevelopment includes a strong component of community renewal, it is important to learn how the community is affected throughout the renewal timeframe. This includes gauging the community's sentiments about the early phases of the redevelopment – how they came to hear about it, how much input they feel they have contributed, and the factors shaping their decision whether to 'stay or go'. Whilst many lessons had been learned from earlier, less well-prepared interventions – such as Claymore and Minto – the announcement of Bonnyrigg's redevelopment caught a number of residents by surprise, hearing about it for the first time on the news or seeing it in the newspaper.

Nevertheless, for many, the announcement represented a more certain step in a history of unrealised plans. The engagement during these preparatory stages has been acknowledged as 'best practice' by NSW Land and Housing Corporation themselves, and it is fair to say that it is a view endorsed to a large degree in the reflections provided by our interviewees. They acknowledge a strong level of initial engagement and, importantly, an approach that encouraged them to genuinely participate by building their capacity to do so.

As such, this preparatory engagement has equipped the community with a good level of understanding of the aims and principles of the redevelopment process. There is a high degree of comprehension of core elements shaping Bonnyrigg's renewal: the nature, composition and arguments for (and against) the public-private partnership (PPP) approach; the rationale for increasing density and introducing a more socially 'mixed' community; and the logic of a staged process over many years. This is not to suggest that all residents are comfortable with all aspects of the process, or understand the complexities of the contracts or market sensitivities that sit behind the development model. Nor does understanding mean positive acceptance or empowerment: for a significant number there is a fair degree of resignation shaping their perspectives on a process that represents "*a huge big upheaval*" (C1, female, 65-74, 28 years) and reflective of the fact that "*it's government housing; it is their money not ours*" (C3, female, 55-64, 20 years). There is, however, a sufficient level of understanding amongst the large majority of the challenges involved, and for concerns to arise when the flow of information and engagement is not maintained.

Initial consultation and building awareness of the renewal

Residents were consulted about the renewal activities from a very early stage. Activity ranged from 'town hall'-style discussions about the masterplan for the estate, visits to new housing developments and design workshop. A Community Reference Group, comprising a number of existing community members, was also established in order to provide an important conduit between residents and the renewal consortium. Many of our interviewees reflect upon this period of engagement favourably: they recall the sessions where they were given the skills to meaningfully participate, and felt that they were able to shape the development process in some way. There was a general feeling that residents were being kept informed of what was going to happen, and were given sufficient explanation in order to engage with the broader issues relevant to the renewal process.

Whilst the current level of engagement varied greatly amongst our interviewees, it was clear through our discussions that the general level of comprehension regarding

the program for renewal amongst residents is high: there is a good understanding of the rationale behind increasing densities and introducing a 'tenure mix'; many were also very comfortable in articulating the advantages and disadvantages of the staging process and how this related to wider economic and housing market factors. There was – perhaps inevitably – a more sceptical view of the financing of the project, and a view by some that the approach was predicated on making money. The key point here is that this initial grounding has served the community effectively, providing them with a platform from which they can take a view on progress against initial aspirations.

The involvement of translators and establishing language-specific activities like the coffee session meetings were especially welcomed by residents from non-English speaking backgrounds to have their say about the renewal process:

It is good because we can express what we need and feel in our language, and sometimes she brings people to explain to us [at the coffee sessions] things in Spanish that sometimes we don't understand in English (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years).

For the 'regulars' especially, they took these group meetings and organised activities (e.g. meeting with architects and planners) to learn not only how they personally and the community would be affected but also to gain new skills such as reading concept plans and entitlement contracts. These residents also spoke of the increase in confidence that they gained by becoming more involved in their community and by becoming proactive about changes that will happen in their lives. While many do not feel that they have had a lot of input into the higher level decision-makings such as the layout of the new suburb and the design of houses, they feel that they have had sufficient input in the more day-to-day or more personal matters such as the railings on the balconies and the types of windows which allowed them to have a degree of buy-in into the process.

Although our interviewees' recollections of consultation during the mobilisation period were largely positive, there was a significant minority who felt that their voices had not been sufficiently heard. One went as far as suggesting that he was coerced into saying that he was happy with the changes happening to his neighbourhood: "*She [relocation interviewer] wanted me to say that I was happy but I wasn't happy about the new houses*" (C5, male, 65-74, 13 years). Others felt a degree of resignation regarding the degree to which they would have any real influence: "*At the end of the day it's not our house, it's their house. We have to do as we're told*" (C5, female, 65-74, 25 years).

Interestingly, similar concerns were prevalent amongst private residents who feel that their engagement in initial consultation activity was treated as somewhat secondary as they, unlike the tenants, would not be going through temporary relocation and rehousing. Some noted that by the time they were invited to participate most decisions had already been made and their input would make little or no difference:

They do it then they ask for our advice; a bit late for that isn't it? (C6, female, 35-44, 18 years)

Whilst they owned their homes, and so had the security of staying in 'place', the streets and neighbourhood around them is undergoing dramatic change. There was also concern expressed that the government and consortium had not really thought through the implications for those residents who had shown their commitment to the neighbourhood through purchasing their property.

Deciding whether to stay or go

Residents were asked to make a decision on whether to stay or go very early in the process, before any renewal activities (relocation, demolition or construction) began. For some, the decision to stay or go was straightforward. For many long-term residents, however, they were committed to the neighbourhood and it was perhaps

this – wanting to remain in place, rather than the prospect of a new home – that influenced that decision to stay. While needing to elect whether to stay or go early on, most of our interviewees (and particularly those choosing to stay) stand by their decision. It has meant that there is a significant degree of acceptance of the ensuing disruption in their lives: a sense of having signed up for a process which will mean their neighbourhood is in effect a building site for over a decade; that will involve them having to leave homes that they might have lived in for 30 plus years and where they raised their families; and to living temporarily elsewhere before finally reaching the end point of the process. In many regards, the design of the renewal process meant that those that chose to stay in effect ‘signed up’ for what is a substantial level of disruption over a period of years.

I went up and I spoke to the lass at St George. I was really upset, crying. I never get like that. But she said to me, she said, “you know what, I think you’re grieving”, and I was. And after I had a long walk with her, I sort of came home with a different attitude, a bit. And I thought, well this is it. I’ve got to go. (C1, female, 65-74 years, 30 years)

The factors shaping residents’ decisions whether to remain on the estate are an important part of the renewal story, and one from which a number of useful lessons can be learned. While for some the offer of relocation presented an opportunity to get away from Bonnyrigg, for others, the decision reflected a harder trade-off. There was a sense from a number of the interviewees who had moved off the estate that they felt they had little choice but to go. This was voiced in particular by a number of elderly residents, who felt that the uncertainty and disruption outlined in the information and advice received regarding the redevelopment process meant that it was best for them to go, even though they remained committed to Bonnyrigg.

As such, the decision was as much shaped by the worry and anxiety of change and disruption in later life – and seeking to minimise that – rather than the ‘pull’ of moving elsewhere. The need to move up to three times and being relocated in temporary homes for up to 3 years were cited as the deciding factor for some. It was clear that there were also a number of (at least partial) misconceptions. The role of St George as the community housing provider (and indeed community housing more generally) was not wholly understood. A number of interviewees suggested that had they stayed on the estate they would have been transferred over to the ‘private sector’ and that wanting to remain within the public housing system. Others had had their decision shaped by the anticipated policy on pets, and that if they wished to keep their pets, they would have to go.

Although residents had been expected to say at the outset whether they wished to remain or move away from Bonnyrigg, their relocation off the estate was initially scheduled to occur as and when the redevelopment stage in which their property was located came up. As such, for some that move might have been relatively soon, but for others, it could have been 10 years away. However, the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package announced as part of the Commonwealth Government Package during the 2008-2009 economic downturn provided funding for up to 20,000 social housing dwellings across Australia, with over 6,000 of these allocated to NSW.

This significant funding (and freeing up of existing) stock enabled NSW Land and Housing Corporation to rehouse all those intending to leave at the commencement of the relocation process. As a result, the need to act on decisions came far sooner than many had envisaged, and when it came to having to move, a number felt they ended up being pressured and rushed. Some felt they were compromised and pressured into agreeing to the alternative homes offered, although others did reflect that NSW Land and Housing Corporation sought to accommodate preferences as best they could in meeting their needs (see Chapter 6). The reality for a number of long-term residents was a sense that, after 30 years of living in their Bonnyrigg home, they had to agree to a new property and make the move within a matter of weeks. As shall be discussed in Chapter 8, this ‘early’ relocation of all departing residents not only had a significant impact on those leaving households but also on the wider roll-out of the renewal as a whole.



Source: Researchers

6

Living through change

Redevelopment has now been underway for a number of years. Residents who made the difficult (or perhaps for some, less so) decision to leave have moved on, and those in Stages 1 and 2 have moved into their new homes. There is also a significant number who have been relocated to their temporary housing on a different part of the estate awaiting the construction of their Redevelopment Stage. The project soon enters a critical phase where the first significant increase in the number of private residents arrives and continues to alter and change that image of Bonnyrigg as a 'Housing Commission area'.

This chapter focuses on the early mobilisation phases of the redevelopment – of former residents adjusting to life away from their former homes, of residents who stayed living through and near construction activities, waiting their turn to relocate, and most of all their feeling of being caught in stasis or limbo.

Settling into a new life away from Bonnyrigg

While we only managed to speak with a small number of former residents (our C1 cohort), most of them left Bonnyrigg 3-4 years prior to our interviews. Opting to relocate off-estate permanently, none of these residents had to go through temporary relocation but instead moved directly into their new homes. While they left Bonnyrigg for different reasons, many shared a great deal of similarity in their relocation experiences. Most had been long-term residents at Bonnyrigg, and unlike the profile of leavers identified in the 2006-2011 Census change data (see Chapter 3), most were older couples or single persons with grown, adult children who no longer live with them.

Their long prior association with Bonnyrigg meant that, despite opting to leave, many spoke of a deep sense of loss as they prepared to move off-estate or once they have moved away. This was partly because, for most, their departures from Bonnyrigg were all relatively sudden, with many of our interviewees saying that they were given merely a week's or a fortnight's notice to move after accepting a relocation offer.

There were mixed views amongst our interviewees regarding the way NSW Land and Housing Corporation approached their relocation off-site. A number reflected their positive experience of being shown properties, being given unofficial offers where they had the option of rejecting without penalties, and relocation managers doing all they could to find suitable properties in the desired locations. Others reflected upon the pressure of making a choice under the time constraints involved: while they were entitled to reject one offer, many felt that they had to accept it, not out of coercion but in fear of the second offer being less satisfactory than the first. There was also a sense of dissatisfaction from some that they did not receive appropriate compensation for the upgrades they made to their previous homes in Bonnyrigg (e.g. blinds and garden sheds).

Regardless of their experience of the move itself, the majority of our C1 interviewees emphasised that their new tenancy managers are professional and sympathetic of their experiences. Nevertheless, given their ties to Bonnyrigg, most said that they had a difficult time settling into their new homes. All resettled in non-estate, suburban settings where public housing is not the majority tenure. Over time, they have come to know their neighbours and the initial barriers of living amongst a mix of public and private residents have broken down. Many also said that once they have moved there was little in the way of follow-up support or concern to see how they have settled into their new home and neighbourhood.

A number of these interviewees still visit Bonnyrigg on a regular basis, mostly to visit friends but also for services (e.g. the local pharmacy and medical centre) that they have used for a number of years. For one family, even though they relocated almost 4

years ago, they still visit Bonnyrigg on a regular basis to visit friends and use services. Driving by their old home (or where their old home used to be before demolition), that deep sense of loss resurfaces, despite admitting that they now live in a spacious home on a quiet street with good neighbours:

You feel like you're smogged in here, but when you go to Bonnyrigg you can take a deep breath, and you go 'ah, that smells good'. It's quite different here. ... It's happy times when I go to Bonnyrigg; it makes you happier, then I can come back here. (C1, female, 55-64, 18 years)

Although most of our C1 interviewees acknowledge that they are now in a 'better' place, in terms of their new homes, neighbourhoods and their sense of wellbeing, it was clear from a number of our discussions that the passage to that point – from moving away from the estate to the current time – had been a very difficult one for some. A number reflected on the tremendous strain and anxiety caused in the early months post relocation, often coupled with a sense of isolation. As such, much of the support afforded to those remaining on Bonnyrigg to assist through the process of change did not extend to those who left: the emphasis on community building and renewal thus got lost for the not insignificant numbers making up the Diaspora.

Every time we go there she gets upset, especially when we walk past where our old house was. ... We virtually spent all our time over there. It's probably only this year that we stopped going there so much. (C1, couple, 55-64, 23 years)

Staging

The staged approach to Bonnyrigg's renewal is a stand out feature of the program. Although not unique, it is a particularly innovative – yet highly complex – approach, tying the incremental renewal of the estate to the gradual release of properties onto the housing market. Extending over a period of 10-12 years, it also allows the existing residents to remain on 'site', albeit with the requirement to temporarily relocate within the estate during the process.

As such, it counters a core criticism of renewal activity of this kind to a certain degree: displacement. Even in comprehensive renewal schemes where a 'right of return' is afforded to tenants moved off-estate during redevelopment, there has often been an inevitable tendency for those residents, after that initial disruption, to subsequently choose to remain in their 'temporary' dispersed locations. The result may be a transformed neighbourhood, comprising a mix of private and affordable housing, but the community is quite different. Fundamental questions arise in such circumstances – including the simple matter of 'who, then, is urban renewal for?'

Understanding the staging approach

The fact that it is staged is probably good because where things go a little bit astray in Stage 2 you make adjustments so that in Stage 5 it doesn't happen again, so I support the staging idea; also on the basis of the whole estate would be unbearable if the whole thing was a construction site (C6, male, 65-74, 31 years).

Bonnyrigg is different, and the structure and process underpinned by the staged nature of the renewal approach arguably represents a great deal of complex, ongoing disruption balanced with the benefit of keeping a very loyal and resilient community together. Under the approach, small sections of the suburb – typically between 50 and 100 dwellings – are under redevelopment and reconstruction at any one time.

Most of our interviewees acknowledged that this was a sensible approach. It enabled them to stay in the neighbourhood whilst construction occurred, and meant that groups of neighbours within the same stage were able to remain together. A number of interviewees – particularly those with long term health-related concerns and in their elder years – emphasised that they found the process very stressful, and that they had put in requests to 'jump stage' and move directly into a new home – even if this

meant having to live away from their current neighbours or move to a property not as ideally suited.

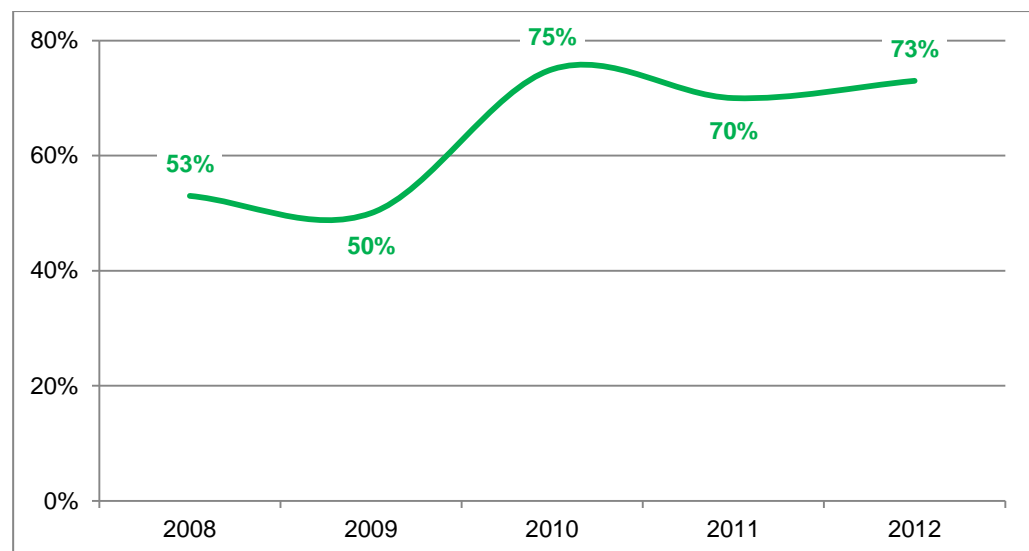
I've requested an early move, because the dragging out of the trauma and the stress is very hard. Very hard (C5, female, 65-74, 25 years)

Residents also recognised that staging allowed lessons to be learned along the way, and where necessary, for issues and problems to be addressed in subsequent stages. The short-lived 'quadplexes' built in Stage 1 were often raised as an example. Whilst viewed sceptically by social housing tenants, they were viewed equally negatively in terms of poor private sales: there is little or no interest in strata products in the suburban Fairfield market. As such, it was as much market as well as community feedback that sent Becton back to the drawing board. Although a few commented that they were, in a sense, 'guinea pigs' subject to the learning curve of the project more widely, most reflected that it was good that their feedback could feed into improvements in later stages.

While many residents understand the need to redevelop Bonnyrigg through a staged process, some queried the timing of particular elements, especially the construction of community facilities and aged housing. For the more elderly tenants, there was a sense of resignation (only made partly in jest) that they would not live to see the completion of the aged units due for completion in one of the last stages. Others questioned the promise of new facilities such as a new community centre which to date have yet to come to fruition. While most of these residents understand that only two stages have been completed thus far, the lack of communication (see later section) regarding when these facilities will be provided has led some to think that they were merely empty promises.

Relocation and assistance through the moving process

Figure 20: Level of satisfaction with relocation, Bonnyrigg, 2008-2012



Note: % of respondents who answered "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" to the question 'Overall, the process of moving to another home'

Source: Bonnyrigg Community Resident surveys 2009-2012

Many of our interviewees who have remained in Bonnyrigg largely acknowledged that the multiple moves endured before getting into their new homes, while a significant disruption to their lives, were an essential part of the renewal process. As such, it was a necessary evil that they both understood and had 'factored' into the decision-making process at the time of deciding whether to stay or go. To a degree, this has fostered a sense of acceptance (albeit somewhat resigned) to the disruption caused. It is clear

that a number of our interviewees had found the moving process itself very stressful: often they were elderly, and were packing up what would have been the family home for decades, and thus had not had to go through this ordeal for a long time.

The Newleaf teams have done beyond what I have asked. They moved everything from the heavy stuff to the lightest stuff and it didn't even cost me a cent. (C3, female, 35-44, 10 years)

While there were a few complaints regarding the service provided by the removalists, most interviewees felt that they had been looked after well, and spoke positively of the preparatory and follow-up meetings with St George staff. Many residents of non-English speaking backgrounds also commented that for these pre-relocation interviews, the tenancy manager often turned up to the interview with a translator or that they spoke plain, easy-to-understand English in order to help them understand the process and procedures involved, as well as for the tenancy managers themselves to understand the tenants' needs and requirements.

I can't remember exactly, but they gave us quite a lot of notice of the move date, probably a good two months if not more. It was sort of that thing that you keep thinking 'oh I've got two months', 'I've got seven weeks', 'I've got six weeks', then 'oh damn, we're moving next week' and we moved everything. They gave us the keys about two weeks before we actually had to move in. Then we started moving, but for a start I didn't realise how much stuff I had in the old house. So we were sort of caught on the day of the move. We had most things packed up but we were throwing things into boxes on the day of the move. Luckily we sort of had another five days or so after the move to bring bits and pieces over and try to clean. (C2, female, 55-64, 12 years)

Waiting in 'limbo'

Although our interviewees generally accepted the need for multiple moves and temporary relocation as part of their renewal experience, many nonetheless spoke of the emotional toll the waiting (especially during the temporary relocation) had on their daily lives, and likened their experiences to being in 'limbo'. Out of the 17 residents interviewed who have been permanently rehoused in Bonnyrigg, only 3 moved directly into their new home without first being temporarily relocated for a short period. A number of these interviewees said that they felt that their lives were on hold to a certain extent, whether in terms of doing things to the house (for example buying new carpet) or garden, or delaying take up of education or training opportunities. Many of those who had already lived, or were currently living, through temporary relocation said that during this period many boxes were left unpacked, and that their daily lives were more about 'making do' rather than making themselves feel comfortable in their temporary home.

The only concern in that respect is the length of time we're going to be in this other new house; whether we just live off our suitcases or we unpack properly, you know, because we're going to be stuck here for a couple of years before they get built. (C5, male, 25-34, 10 years)

Others reflected on the experience, now passed, more positively. One interviewee said that she found the experience cathartic and that she used the opportunity to de-clutter 25 years of 'junk'. Having already moved and de-cluttered once when moving to her temporary home also made the second move easier. Another family currently in their temporary home observed that their experience of relocation has not been as bad as had been expected and are quite happy with the overall outcome so far.

For residents in the latter stages of redevelopment, the staging process elicited a number of different perspectives. For many – and certainly those who were unlikely to commence relocation for another 5-6 years – staging meant that the renewal process did not greatly impact upon their everyday lives. In a sense, living on particular parts of the estate meant that redevelopment could be 'out of sight, out of mind'. For others, the program, extended out over many years, created stasis and uncertainty. Some

interviewees said that previously they had not paid much attention to the progress of the renewal, but with their 'turn' to relocate approaching (even though still some years away) they are now beginning to think more about how they will be affected and are slowly coming to terms that the improvements they have made, and may make in the short term, to their homes and gardens will be 'pointless'.

Despite requirements for properties to be maintained to 'transitional' standards, a few of our interviewees expressed concern that this was not taking place, with short term fixes being put in place. Others took a more pragmatic view, suggesting that there was little point investing a great deal in housing that was going to be demolished, and in fact complaining that money was being wasted where they felt this was happening.

Given the level of disruption caused by the redevelopment process to residents' lives, it is important to reflect the extent to which residents have taken this in their stride. It might be argued that they had little choice or say in the matter; nevertheless, they have got on with things and this particularly complex logistical component of the renewal process has, to date, progressed with some success. This is not to suggest that the impact for many households has not been significant. Adjustments can take time, and different residents settle in at their own pace.

These short-term adjustments are especially hard for older residents and residents with mobility or other health issues. Several interviewees spoke about their older relatives getting lost while walking back from the local shops or from social outings; one also spoke of the local disabled bus service dropping him off at his old home on a number of occasions after having relocated temporarily several months prior. One interviewee who previously lived on one of the main thoroughfares but has temporarily relocated to a cul-de-sac has found the adjustment particularly difficult, with her sense of safety severely affected by this move: *"I'm so scared I want to fall and faint"* (C3, female, 45-54, 20 years). There was a general sense, however, that the opportunity to remain in the neighbourhood while renewal activity took place made the disruption involved a painful but necessary trade-off.

What was both interesting – but should also be of concern – was the extent to which a greater sense of anxiety had set in during the latter half of 2012 amongst those yet to be relocated. While this was particularly so amongst those who were currently in their temporary homes and who therefore had firsthand experience of their expected 'move in' dates being pushed back due to delays in Stage 3, it also filtered through to those scheduled for moves in later stages that the timeframes might not be as originally envisaged and that their wait might be pushed out further and further. Crucially, a mix of masterplan revision, construction delays and, on reflection, inadequate communication during this period has led to heightened concern amongst some that the renewal might be struggling.

It's not just those awaiting rehousing that feel 'in limbo'

While inevitably the focus of partnership activity has been given to the social housing residents being relocated, an interesting, parallel narrative of feeling trapped and 'in limbo' was voiced by a number of our existing private householders. Some had participated in the initial consultations, and confused interpretations reined regarding the status of the partnership 'buying them out' as part of wider redevelopment activity. It was inferred that private owners would be offered the opportunity to sell their homes to Newleaf however there is uncertainty as to whether this offer is still on the table. A number have put off plans for renovations and are feeling that the investments that they made – to their properties and to their community – are being slowly eaten away by confusion of what roles they, as a part of the neighbourhood, should/could play in the future of their community but also the stalled modernisation of their own homes:

We can't sell, because no one would buy into the estate. People have had auctions and no one's turned up. What's the point? You don't know whether you're going to keep your house, do renovations. Is it going to be money blown into the wind? We're just nowhere land. That's why we're not fully renovated because we put it off

wondering what we're going to do... It would've been a far simpler solution for them if they had bought us all out when it all started. I'm sure the reason why was financial, that they didn't want to spend the money until they've started to earn the money by building new homes, but we can't live like that (C6, male, 65-74, 31 years).

With a number of our interviewees, a sense of frustration was clear. They are reluctant to leave because they genuinely feel a strong sense of attachment to their neighbourhood which many have said they helped build by investing in its physical and social fabric. At the same time, they feel a sense of powerlessness that the redevelopment is encroaching on their homes and privacy, and even that in the end it will not be their decision to whether stay or go:

If they say I have to go, I have to go because I can't stay if all the surrounding houses are new. It's rough. (C6, female, 35-44, 18 years)

In response, innovative solutions in order for them to stay in Bonnyrigg were mooted. One private homeowner who purchased her home from NSW Land and Housing Corporation more than a decade ago said that while she would not be willing to sell her home to the redevelopment (because she thinks the compensation her family would receive will not be enough to purchase a comparable home in a similar neighbourhood) she would consider swapping, even if it means moving from her detached house to a duplex next to another private household.

Neighbourhood churn

It's rough, because some tenants in, sometimes rough, it's not safe (C6, female, 35-44, 18 years)

With Stages 4 and 5 demolished and Stage 3 near completion, a significant number of residents are currently temporarily relocated. We discussed above the impact this period of temporary relocation has on the relocated residents themselves and the feeling of uncertainty that has settled amongst this group of relocated residents. While these relocations are disruptive to the 'movers' themselves, the 'receiving' residents in the stages where these movers have settled have also spoken of interruptions to their lives and changed feelings of community.

Many of our interviewees commented on the increased 'churn' seen in the area and the impact this was having on cohesion and safety concerns. Although to some this increased movement can be attributed to the temporary relocation process, it is important to note that there has also been a significant amount of vacated property used for temporary emergency accommodation – up to 60 homes at the peak, although this had started to reduce towards the end of 2012. It is likely that many of the concerns being expressed by our interviewees related to the use of this stock, with new neighbours arriving every 2-3 months, rather than the existing Bonnyrigg residents who were likely to be in their temporary homes for at least 18 months. Nevertheless, the conflation between the two in terms of residents' experiences is important to acknowledge, and these competing demands on stock across the estate during this time clearly impacts on perceptions and experiences of the residents.

Construction

They start at 8-9 and finish at 5pm. They are just doing their jobs and aren't much of a nuisance at all (C4, male, 65-74, 27 years)

The construction phase of the Bonnyrigg renewal started in 2007. By the time of our interviews, Stages 1 and 2 had been completed and Stage 3 was under construction. Housing in Stages 4 and 5 had also been cleared ready for redevelopment. By and large, most residents generally showed understanding towards these disruptions and

that there will no doubt be knock-on effects from the construction and that they are simply part of the process.

Views on the construction activity, and its impact on residents' everyday lives, varied. A large number of our interviewees who live in the south-western part of Bonnyrigg (south of Tarlington Parade) have not really been affected by the construction and barely noticed any changes to their daily routines. For those living closer to the construction sites, there have been a few on-going issues and concerns, with dust and vermin being the most common. Many residents who live directly next to or within short walking distance to construction sites said that a lot of dust get blown over from the upturned earth. One interviewee said that boxes that she kept in her carport were ruined by muddy waters that had runoff from the construction site next to her house during the wet months of early 2012.

We get dust blowing over here constantly. It's particularly bad because all three of us have asthma. ... They haven't offered as little as cleaning our windows for us. We are old; we can't do all that by ourselves. (C5, female, 65-74, 25 years)

Some have also noticed there are more rats running around the neighbourhood since the demolition and construction started. (Researchers have seen rats running in residents' backyards in broad daylight when we have turned up for interviews.) One interviewee said that placing baits throughout his home and in his backyard has offered little deterrence and that one of his children had also been bitten by a rat. Those suffering from these problems said that they had received little assistance from Newleaf in addressing the dust and vermin issues, and would have welcomed extra dust barriers on the fences of the construction sites, rat-baiting and, offers to clean their windows which, especially for the elderly, are difficult tasks to keep up on a regular basis.

As the construction activities increased from early 2012, some of our interviewees had noticed a commensurate increase in local traffic. Again, the impact on residents living next to or near the construction sites has been greater than others further afield. Many said that the increased traffic has mainly been of additional trucks driving to and from the worksites. It was commented that the heavy machinery can also be noisy at times, but again this is mostly confined to during daytime and many find that 'tolerable'. Most, however, said that both Bunker and Tarlington Parades have been the only thoroughfares through Bonnyrigg from the outset and traffic along these two roads have always been busy so an extra truck or two has not made any difference at all.

Ongoing community engagement during the renewal process

Ongoing community engagement is vital in any project of this kind. Where the project is complex and extends over such a period of time, it is crucial. Following mobilisation and completion of the first stages of the redevelopment, a regrouping can be observed in the level of engagement between the Newleaf partnership and community.

In large part, it can be argued that this is an inevitability of the transition from design and development to roll-out and delivery and as initial enthusiasm and energy amongst the community may wane. It also reflects the changing nature of necessary communication, moving from engagement and consultation activity where residents felt that they had a chance to express their views and voice their concerns during mobilisation, to the more 'information receiving' updates as the renewal actually rolls out. Furthermore – and as frequently expressed by our interviewees – community members will engage in different ways at different times as suits their needs, requirements or expectations. This includes, particularly for many not being rehoused until later stages, essentially ignoring the redevelopment process until their 'time' comes.

Against this explanation as to why the nature and relative success of engagement has shifted, it is important to reflect that changes to partnership strategy and activities

(including a revision of the community renewal plan) alongside the wider challenges faced by the project during 2012 translated into a difficult period for communication. A deterioration in information flows coincided with a sense by many of our interviewees that the project had 'stalled' (given delays to Stage 3) and that the original 'contract' between developer and community had been overridden with insufficient engagement (in the form of revised masterplanning activity).

Maintaining communication through community activities and events

They pretend that they care about us with these coffee sessions and meetings, but they don't really listen. They just give us pats on the backs, like you do with a horse. (C5, male, 65-74, 13 years)

A quarterly community newsletter has provided one of the key strands of information sharing since project commencement. Most interviewees acknowledged that they regularly received the newsletter (although some of the private residents noted that they did not), and many admitted that it often simply ended up in the bin (without being read). For a number, however, the newsletter provides their main (and often only) means of receiving any information about the renewal. A number of non-English speaking interviewees noted the value of the audio CD versions translated into their preferred language.

For a few others, they regularly attend the monthly coffee sessions both as a means of receiving information but also to socialise with others who speak their language and share similar cultural backgrounds. A number of regulars to these sessions noted that attendance has been declining over recent months, partly as a result of residents being moved around, but also because others were becoming disillusioned.

Many interviewees were aware of community renewal activities put on by the Newleaf team, although rather fewer had actually taken part in those activities. Those that had participated felt that there had been a drop off in the number of programs and events taking place over the past year. Others had noted that the programs were not really for them (many felt they were 'too basic' and not really geared towards developing actual skills that would help them elsewhere), or that they had been interested but were unable to get involved due to health concerns or carer commitments. Some interviewees with limited English proficiency said that they have not participated in any local activities because they would not be able to communicate with other participants or the organisers.

Keeping informed, 'aware' residents in the loop

They want to be seen to be communicating and working with the community, at the same time they still just go ahead with their own regardless of what the community feeling might be. (C6, male, 65-74, 31 years)

They have changed their tack over time. They say something and then they change it. (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years)

While about half our interviewees said that they felt well informed and that their views and concerns were heard through consultation activities, others said that they were not given proper avenues to voice their opinions and that their suggestions were simply ignored. Most interviewees reported that they regularly receive the community newsletter and other information leaflets that Newleaf distributes to their letter boxes.

2012 was a pivotal year for the project, and this has also proven to be the case in terms of communication. Residents had moved into Stages 1 and 2, and Stage 3 – much larger, and including the first significant wave of new owner-occupiers – was to be completed. The renewal timetable had successfully negotiated the fallout from the Global Financial Crisis until that time, but a number of factors conspired to cause concern and delays to the process in early 2012. The year commenced with very poor weather, with some of the highest rainfall on record leading to delays in laying

foundations. However, other factors off the construction site significantly slowed down progress.

The failure of the quadplex model in terms of market interest (and acceptance by community housing residents) necessitated a reworking of this building type. Further, the decision by NSW Land and Housing Corporation to relocate all those electing to move off the estate at the outset had a major knock-on effect for the partnership. The properties vacated had to be reallocated, resulting in a greater number of social tenants living on the estate compared to the number specified in the original PPP contract. Both factors were instrumental in the need for a revised masterplan which went to Government and Fairfield Council for approval during 2012.

The revised plan has led to a number of concerns. The quadplexes have gone, and the density uplift is now to be achieved through development of 3 storey walk-ups (starting in Stage 3), and indeed rising to a number of 4-6 storey lifted blocks as part of later stages. Many of our interviewees felt that these changes had been pushed through in a way that undermined all the efforts tied to initial consultation. For a number, there was a sense that they felt they had 'signed up' and were part of a vision for Bonnyrigg that has now been superseded. It was suggested that since it was not 'their' money and ultimately therefore not 'their' home, their say counted for little. While some have voiced their concerns particularly about the increase in density, seeing the new housing being built close together led them to feel that their opinions do not matter, and that they all have little say over the final outcome of what will be built and what they will be moved into:

Their thoughts were in the right place when they decided to do the change, but they hadn't really sat down and really thought about the people they're moving in there.
(C1, female, 55-64, 23 years)

At the end of the day it's not our house, it's their house. We have to do as we're told.
(C5, female, 65-74, 25 years)

Delays to Stage 3 compounded a growing sense of concern and disengagement from the renewal process for a number of our interviewees. In our discussions, a range of views were expressed as to why those delays were taking place – speculation about financial trouble, problems selling private houses, and the wet weather compounding drainage problems on the site – but the key reflection was one of a relative lack of explanation and update from the partnership. Residents knew something was wrong, and in the absence of more timely information, a degree of uncertainty has set in. For some, they no longer felt confident (or clear) about when their redevelopment stage would start (if at all). For those who had been active participants of community renewal activities – also being streamlined at this time – there was a sense that there was a degree of stepping back from the partnership.

Ongoing communication, and meaningful consultation, appears to have struggled over this important phase in the redevelopment process. Our subsequent discussions with key stakeholders reflect on these concerns from a different perspective, but the lesson here is as the project drifted, a number of our interviewees felt a sense that they too had been cast adrift.



Source: Newleaf Communities

7

Newleaf

They might have changed the name but it is still Bonnyrigg. (C1, female, 55-64, 23 years)

This chapter focuses on residents' perspectives of the new Bonnyrigg – Newleaf – as encapsulated in the first two stages of redevelopment, and in residents' perspectives on becoming community housing tenants. The new streetscape with two storey houses off Edensor Park Road mark a symbolic change from the low density villas of the original estate, and many residents make a clear distinction between the 'real' (or old) Bonnyrigg and Newleaf. For many, Bonnyrigg's original, suburban character is valorised, and that it is this spacious Bonnyrigg that they know and love. For those residents that had a bumpy experience of life in Bonnyrigg, the change of name signifies a new beginning, offering the opportunity to leave behind the previous negative connotations and bad reputation of the suburb.

Changed layout of the suburb

One of the biggest physical changes the renewal activities bring to Bonnyrigg is a change in its street layout. This change is brought about by the closing of laneways and opening of cul-de-sacs, a process that many of our interviewees said began over a decade ago and has made significant positive impacts on their lives in Bonnyrigg. Many of our interviewees noted that they have been victims of petty crime (e.g. mugging) while walking along the laneways. For residents who used to live next door to laneways, they also had persistent problems with trespassing and break-ins. One interviewee, for example, said that local youths would regularly jump her fence to get to the local park which is just on the other side of her property. For these residents, the closing of the laneways not only decreased the opportunities for these petty crimes but has also increased their sense of safety.

The changed layout in Stages 1 and 2 has seen streets realigned and renamed; former cul-de-sacs have been opened up as thoroughfares and a new street (Newleaf Parade) was built. Most of our interviewees currently living in Stage 1 have resettled on lots where their former homes used to stand or from nearby lots, albeit with new addresses. Some spoke of their initial adjustment to their new addresses and found that, while it was easier for them to walk and drive around and that the stigma of living on some of the suburb's more 'notorious' streets (Badgery Way and Driver Place) no longer exists, there were problems with having mail redirected, takeaways delivered or even receiving emergency services because the new streets have not been updated in emergency service systems and in street directories.

A number of interviewees awaiting relocation also expressed concern regarding the renaming of streets. One private resident was particularly concerned about the renumbering, that despite not having to relocate, would require a lot of efforts on their part in updating service connections, redirecting mail, and most of all updating legal documents such as the deed of their properties. They suggest that foresight from Newleaf is needed on how to minimise these disruptions, such as by providing standardised letters explaining the circumstances that have caused the re-addressing that they can forward to service providers. For other private residents, the opening up of cul-de-sacs and realigning streets would result in parts of their private land being acquired by the redevelopment. Some of these private residents were unsure of how they will be compensated for the compulsory acquisition but also of the decreased amenity of their neighbourhood when quiet cul-de-sacs are opened up to increased foot and car traffic.

With the changed street layout and new housing design, many residents cited on-street parking as a problem. Our interviewees living in Stages 1 and 2 said that there are not enough parking spaces (in garages, carports, or on driveways), and as a result many residents now park on the street. One resident commented on the difficulty of

having to take their car off the road for insurance purposes, and having to squeeze it onto the nature strip and their front yard. Some residents said that parking is especially a problem during school pick-up hours, where cars are parked along both sides of the streets. As a result there is often not enough room for more than one car to drive through and create dangerous situations where children walking in between parked cars are often concealed from view and may get hurt.

Densification

Those house reductions [in size] are beneficial for them [Newleaf] but not for the people who will live there. For business it's fine, but not for the comfort of the people. (C5, male, 65-74, 16 years)

The renewal of Bonnyrigg includes significant increases in dwelling and therefore household numbers. While residents generally understood the rationale behind increasing the density of their suburb and that the large lots of the original estate are no longer suitable to modern day lifestyles, the majority of interviewees felt that the new housing is too densely built. A number of concerns were shared in this regard, ranging from high density not being in keeping with the neighbouring suburbs, to seeing the redevelopment as a money-making exercise for the government and the private developer.

For a large number of our interviewees, especially those who have lived in Bonnyrigg for a significant amount of time, what they like most about their suburb is the feeling of openness and the green space found throughout the suburb. Many also value the spaciousness of the old, detached houses that they now live in (or used to live in), which allowed them to store their possessions or to have their own privacy even if living in a large household – *“I certainly think that the old houses have more air with space to move, whereas the new houses are now smaller”* (C3, male, 75+, 32 years). Many of these residents who are now used to living in large detached houses expressed concerns about needing to move to smaller homes, especially the need to downsize the possessions or to buy new furniture (which they cannot afford) in order to fit their new homes – *“we will have to get rid of our furniture to fit into the new house”* (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years).

A common concern regarding living in closer proximity to their neighbours is noise. Many are concerned about common walls – *“If I cough they will hear me”* (C5, female, 45-54, 16 years). Indeed, some of our interviewees who live in Stage 1 recalled initial problems with soundproofing, for example residents living in ground floor apartments were able to hear footsteps of those living on the first floor. Noise concerns also stemmed from the residents' transition from living in very low density (large houses with large yards in between) to relatively close proximity. This transition would necessitate changes to their lifestyle. Speaking with residents who have moved into the new homes, however, most of their concerns about noise prior to moving into the new homes did not eventuate, and once initial problems with soundproofing had been addressed, they were quite happy in their new homes.

Gardens – or the potential lack of garden space – proved to be another major source of concern for a significant proportion of our interviewees. Many residents have established gardens in their yards, and many grow vegetables and herbs that supplement their meals and help keep their grocery bills down. A main concern for many of these residents is the lack of exterior space that comes with the new homes, that they will no longer be able to provide for themselves, their neighbours, and take away the opportunities for a significant pastime. Many of our Vietnamese interviewees said that they often prefer to cook outside (especially when they have an open plan kitchen) for better ventilation, and with a small backyard this will not be possible. These concerns may seem trivial on some levels, but they are the details that affect the daily lives of these residents the most.

New homes

Like my house, old, but I feel safe. But the new one, looks very new, very attractive, but ... it's not comfortable to live in. It's too small, and the land is too small. (C6, female, 35-44, 18 years)

We see that they look like pigeon houses. There is no room to pass by the house; they are too close to each other. (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years)

I feel like it has improved. There was more space in the old house but very difficult to access, whereas new houses have smaller space with no big backyard, but easier access and bigger rooms. (C2, female, 45-54, 10 years)

Whilst the change in density and layout has taken some getting used to, the new homes themselves – certainly amongst residents who have actually moved in – have generally been well received. A number expressed positive improvements to their lives. Although many observed that exterior spaces are much smaller compared to their old home, the interior feels bigger and larger than they had expected it to be. A number of tenants also spoke of an increased sense of security since moving to their new homes without the need to implement additional security measures such as bars over the windows:

Since I moved into the new place, for almost a year now, it has been safer and better improvement with security than the old house (C2, female, 45-54, 20 years).

Figure 21: New houses in Stage 1 of the Newleaf Bonnyrigg development



Source: Newleaf Communities

Nevertheless, some of our interviewees who have moved into Stages 1 and 2 have found the interior layout taking a little getting used to. Although the overall space provision is good, they have found it difficult moving all their furniture from their old homes. In part this is a reflection that many tenants will be required to 'downsize' when they move, for example where they might have had a number of spare bedrooms in their previous home. However, for others, the dimensions or layout of rooms have proved frustrating. Many commented on the difficulties of fitting a decent

sized fridge into the allocated space in the kitchen, meaning that the main family fridge was consigned to the garage or hall. Similarly the open designs of some of the smaller properties made it difficult to fit a dining table in the living area (the research team can attest to this – we were shown a number of dining tables laid out in the garage):

Once you put the couch in, the space is tight as (C3, male, 55-64, 22 years)

For others, and particularly a number who are awaiting their stage in the relocation process, the move to a new home is filled with considerable trepidation. With many of our interviewees having lived in their old Bonnyrigg homes for 20-30 years, a number have inevitably accumulated – and in some cases hoarded – many possessions over this time: extra fridge freezers, multiple garden sheds filled with items discarded by neighbours, etc. The need to relinquish much of this at the time of relocation, and again further when finally moving into their new home, is a pervasive worry particularly for some of our elderly interviewees. Others – and especially those that have already been through the experience – commented that the need to prepare for moving into a smaller property was cathartic, helping them prioritise what they need and getting things in shape for a new start.

Many of the residents we spoke with currently keep pets, and indeed for a number of former residents we spoke with one of the main reasons why they chose to leave Bonnyrigg was a misconception that they are not allowed to keep pets in the new homes. While some of the residents who have remained onsite have sought clarification from Newleaf regarding policy in this regard, several told us that they would likely opt to surrender or put their dogs down before moving to their new homes. Concern was expressed that the new homes, given their small back yards, are not suitable for their pets' needs and would prefer to not have them around than to have them live in confined spaces.

They are just too small, maybe for a couple that is just starting but not for us. I ask myself, what will happen with the people who have dogs, cats, and chickens? (C5, female, 65-74, 32 years)

Having a new landlord

Integral to the PPP approach, NSW Land and Housing Corporation has 'handed over' responsibility for its housing stock and tenancy management responsibilities on the estate to St George Community Housing for the next 30 years. The transition from public to community housing has been a relatively smooth experience for most of our interviewees, with few having noticed any clear differences in terms of tenancy management. For many, the most noticeable differences have been changes to the procedures for requesting repairs and maintenance and their responsibility over the water bill. Changes to the social housing system in 2005 meant that tenants are now responsible for paying their water bill. With their transfers to community housing happening at around the same time, many tenants believe that this is an additional cost that they need to bear as community tenants rather than as public tenants.

Confusions also remain with some tenants as to where their tenancies belong. Many, especially older tenants and tenants from non-English speaking backgrounds, still refer to their landlord as 'Housing Commission'. On the one hand, this can be seen as a positive reflection of their smooth transition experienced from one provider to another. On the other, there is confusion amongst some tenants regarding their payments and entitlements. Many tenants are, for example, concerned about the amount of rent they are liable to pay, thinking that moving into a new home will incur additional rent payments. This view is particularly prevalent amongst tenants who have yet to relocate into a new home. While some tenants who have moved into the new homes in Stages 1 and 2 have said that they pay slightly more rent than previously, only some understand this is offset by Commonwealth Rent Assistance and therefore has little impact on their out-of-pocket payments. This confusion has caused some tenants to believe that living in Newleaf is "*more expensive than living in private rental*" (C2, female, 55-64, 21 years).

There is also confusion amongst some tenants that their tenancies remain in the public housing system until they move into a new home and therefore they will not receive additional assistance until they make this transition. This is an important point to note, as it not only reveals much about the distinction residents make about the 'old' and 'new' Bonnyrigg as we discussed above, but also their understanding of the complexity of Bonnyrigg's renewal. While many understand and accept the need for the renewal and the need to relocate, there is still confusion in the detailed operation of the partnership.

The majority of our interviewees were happy with the maintenance and repairs service provided. Many said that responses to requests were generally quick, although procedures are now a lot more formalised than previously and this has taken some getting used to. Workmen now perform to set tasks as specified on their worksheets and have little flexibility in performing additional, ad hoc inspections or repairs which is a big departure from some tenants' previous experience with maintenance and repairs provided by NSW Land and Housing Corporation, where these ad hoc inspections and repairs were often the norm. Nonetheless, most interviewees understand that these are only minor adjustments and that they are generally satisfied with the quality of services that they have received.

Experiencing tenure mix

At first when we said we bought a house here, the first impression was 'why would you? You know it's Bonnyrigg, it's Housing Commission, are you sure you want to live there? Is it safe? That's our first impression, and same with my family. And then when we explained to them that we'll be private plus Housing Commission, and then they actually came here and had a look themselves, it kind of gave them a different impression as well. But it's still in the back of their minds, it's still got Housing Commission people living here. But my mum ...she visits me, and she's starting to like it. She said, 'oh yeah, the housing's nice, the people's nice'. (C6, female, 25-34, 10 months)

Bonnyrigg will be quite a different place in 10 years' time, physically, economically and socially. The mixed tenure redevelopment will see a dramatic increase in the number of private residents who call Bonnyrigg 'home' over this period. The first new private residents arrived with completion of Stages 1 and 2, although in these early stages, the overall proportion of social housing tenants has remained higher than the long-term planned mix. Nevertheless, we managed to capture the views of a number of these incomers – both those who have purchased and those currently renting – during our first wave interviews. The presence and stories of new Bonnyrigg residents will become more prominent as both the renewal stages and the longitudinal study unfolds.

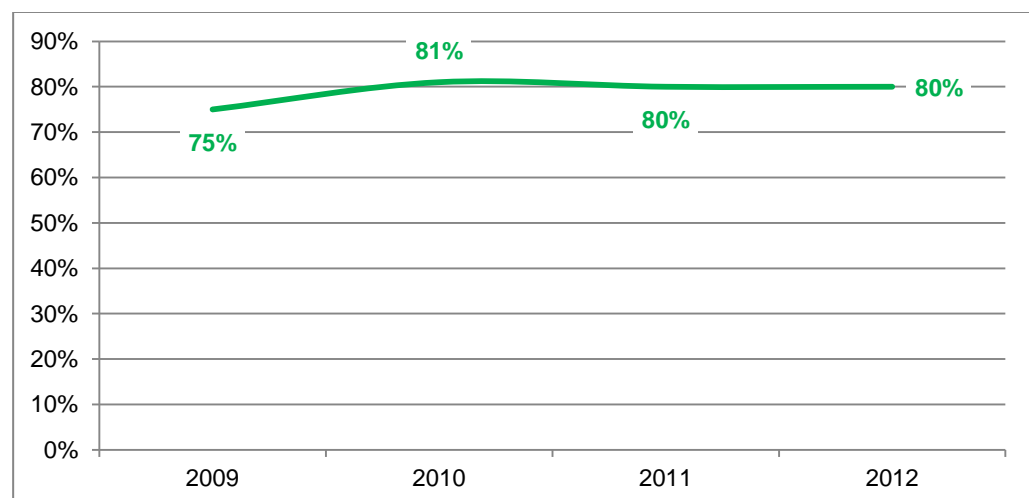
We spoke with 4 private residents in 'Newleaf' of whom only one is an owner-occupier having bought the property (the others rent from a private landlord), although another private renter said his family has purchased in Stage 3 and that they were currently awaiting its completion so that they could move in. While having been in the neighbourhood less than a year, their impression of the redevelopment is largely positive so far. They had heard of Bonnyrigg either from having lived or worked nearby previously before deciding to buy or rent into the area, although interestingly none said that they were aware that the redevelopment would be a mixed tenure community before purchasing or renting their properties. A number said that they had some initial concerns when they found out that there were social tenants in the renewed stages rather than just 'in the old parts'. For the two who have purchased, relative affordability was acknowledged as a key factor in shaping their decision to move to Bonnyrigg. The exemption of stamp duty no doubt contributed greatly, but our purchasers also reflected upon the centrality and convenience of the suburb and the quality interiors of their new homes. One has recommended their friends to buy into the area as well.

In exploring experiences of tenure mix further, having moved in, incoming residents found it made little difference to their lives or perspectives of the community, and certainly in the case of the private renters, had not affected their interest in perhaps purchasing a home in one of the later stages. While a few of our private newcomers are aware who lived beside them – ‘they own next door, public housing the other side’ – others acknowledged that they knew little about their neighbours. Language issues were cited as a principal factor in neighbourly chat not often going beyond polite hellos, but a few of the private residents noted that they were not often around – leaving first thing in the morning to go to work and returning home tired in the evening. It was for these reasons – with employment and friendship networks outside the neighbourhood – that ‘mixing’ was limited, rather than lines being drawn by virtue of tenure.

From the perspective of the community housing tenants, the shift towards a mixed tenure community has been viewed in largely positive terms from the outset of the renewal process, and has continued to track well in the annual customer satisfaction survey (80% agreement or strong agreement in the most recent results, see Figure 22). A number of our interviewees awaiting relocation voiced some caution, but it would be fair to say that these concerns were more reflective of the uncertainty faced. Some suggested that they might be looked down upon by neighbours, or that their new neighbours might be less tolerant of their noisy lifestyles, *“that’s a bit of a worry, in the way that there’ll be an upper class, a middle class, a lower class to choose from”* (C5, female, 65-74, 25 years). One elderly resident noted that there was a risk that the community would face significant ‘churn’ (not using this term) with a high proportion of properties in the private rental market. Their worry was that if problems arose, then unlike social housing, it was difficult to address these issues in a structured way.

More generally, however, those still living in Bonnyrigg were looking forward to their new neighbourhood becoming more mixed: less stigma and a new start, with homes and gardens worth looking after and tending. For those who have moved into their new homes in Stages 1 and 2, although the community housing renters tend to stick together – not least because many were good friends and neighbours pre-renewal – the experience has generally been positive. A number observed that some of the new incomers were young, large families helping establish a new younger generation in the neighbourhood.

Figure 22: Community sentiments towards public-private tenure mix, Bonnyrigg, 2009-2012



Note: % of respondents who answered “very agreed” or “agreed” to the question “There is a good mix of public and private housing residents”.

Source: Bonnyrigg Community Resident surveys 2009-2012

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Source: Newleaf Communities

8

Changing lives

The fundamental determinant of the success in Bonnyrigg's renewal depends on how its residents will fare during and after the construction. In this regard, the research (and policy) imperative is a simple one: has this expensive, complex initiative delivered better lives for the original residents? As well as driving physical renewal, a principal goal of the partnership approach has been to 'renew' the community through building cohesion, engagement, confidence and, over time, increased ownership in the decisions and organisations shaping the future social wellbeing of the neighbourhood.

The Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project service manual 2008 draft established a number of key values that have driven community renewal activity during the early years of the redevelopment:

- A 'people place'
- A place for 'nature'
- A place with a retail centre
- A place for recreation
- A safe place
- A cultural centre
- A mix of buildings and housing
- A place to stay, and
- A strong and vibrant community

The longitudinal study was designed to assist in tracking and measuring these outcomes (and their progress throughout the redevelopment), with interviews exploring:

- Impact on personal life/wellbeing
- Impact on family life
- Impact on community life, and
- Impact on perceptions of Bonnyrigg as a place and community

This chapter discusses our interviewees' views on their involvement in community engagement activities, the stigma of living in a 'Housing Commission area' and how that is changing, and the wider impacts the redevelopment has had on their lives thus far in regards to crime and safety, education and training, and employment. We also highlight the perspectives of former residents to see how their lives have been changed since leaving Bonnyrigg and how differently (or not) these outcomes are achieved both within and outside the neighbourhood during these initial years of the redevelopment.

Participation in the community

Many of our interviewees are aware of community engagement activities made available by the Newleaf team. These include the different community and reference groups (e.g. the public tenants group, private residents group, community reference group), hobby classes (e.g. knitting group, card-making), conversation groups, and other means of information distribution and participation (e.g. monthly coffee sessions in 6 languages). However, relatively few have actually participated, and those who do tend to attend multiple activities. Indeed, the participants tended to know each other previously, and the events themselves had provided a means – rather than the catalyst – for them to socialise. Those who had attended events said that they were happy with their organisation.

There were, however, some negative views on the community activities offered, typically by those who had not to date participated. A number thought that the activities organised – especially from a training point of view such as computing

classes – were pitched too low and that the skills they could gain were merely elementary and therefore not particularly useful in helping them access further training or in gaining employment. Others took a more cynical view, suggesting that the activities were simply superficial measures to detract from wider redevelopment concerns.

The limited breadth of participation in activities arguably has a number of explanations. The type of activities has been ‘too niche’ and with little rationale beyond a small number of tenants expressing an interest: their role in contributing to community renewal objectives has been less clear. Limited involvement may also be seen – incorrectly we suggest – as a high degree of apathy within the community. A more nuanced reading would understand that this is a community going through change and dealing with those changes as best suits them.

For many, that means not participating with ‘renewal’ activities until they need to: if they are still 5-6 years away from rehousing, there are other, more pressing, more challenging and important issues to deal with in their lives. For others, it would seem to reflect the continuation of a mindset that has been very important to their wellbeing and survival as a long-term Bonnyrigg resident – a sense of keeping to one self, not making yourself someone else’s business: *“my attitude is if they leave me alone, I leave them alone”* (C3, female, 65-74, 32 years).

This continued tendency towards insularity can be seen as a weakness, failing to build up social and human capital. However, it also reflects a community participating, and choosing to participate, on their terms. This is not to nullify the need for Newleaf to ensure that such opportunities for getting involved and building community are upheld, or to excuse concerns over the level of communication and dissemination provided in the latter part of 2012 (see previous chapter), but it does point to the need for ‘community renewal’ plans to not assume the terms on which households will want to get involved. A well thought through community renewal strategy capturing the needs and aspirations of local residents on the one hand but also aligning with broader ‘outcome-oriented’ goals of the partnership on the other might be desired, but it still does not translate into high levels of buy-in.

That said, there are a number of positive developments. Some of the residents who have relocated into the completed Stages 1 and 2 for example mentioned the walking group which now meets regularly in Tarlington Reserve. The group was initiated by the community itself, and several interviewees said that they were regular participants. They also noted that most of the participants did not know each other previously, and because they are from diverse backgrounds and speak little English, there was little communication aside from walking together. This has not deterred them, and the walking group had been running for a few months when we conducted our interviews.

A changing community in a changing neighbourhood

Many of our interviewees agree that a strong sense of community continues to exist in Bonnyrigg, but the dynamics within the community are slowly changing. For some, especially those who have lived in Bonnyrigg for a long time, ‘new Bonnyrigg’ is a big departure from what the neighbourhood and the community has been for the last 20-30 years, and they feel a level of uncertainty regarding how the community will continue to change and more importantly how it will eventually settle. To these long-term residents, the departure of former neighbours signified the end of the community as they knew it, and while they still keep in contact, that community is now lost:

We were a community, but it’s been broken up now. You’ve got people who moved off; you’ve got people in other areas. Will all that come back? It’ll be something interesting to see. Can you build a new community? (C2, female, 45-54, 31 years)

Everybody used to be friendly with everybody. The people that made up Bonnyrigg had moved out. There is no cohesion in the neighbourhood anymore. (C6, female, 65-74, 31 years)

However, this is countered by many interviewees suggesting that the renewal signifies a new beginning, and that a changing, evolving community will be positive. The tenure mix strategy – if not achieving all perceived policy goals – appears to be helping reshape concerns regarding stigma amongst residents now living in Stages 1 and 2. A number of residents noted shifting attitudes, and a ‘winning over’ of visitors once they saw and appreciated the extent of change taking place.

Many of our interviewees’ grown up children have left Bonnyrigg but still live nearby and some recalled their children’s views of the changing Bonnyrigg. Many said that Bonnyrigg has changed significantly since their childhood days, that it now looks cleaner, safer, a place where they are proud to be associated with. One interviewee said that her children now quite happily refer to themselves as Bonnyriggers, noting their roots in this neighbourhood. Several interviewees also said that children who had grown up on the estate have purchased homes in the renewed stages either for themselves or their parents to live in. For others, the new housing and street layout signify a “*new beginning and new life*” (C2, female, 55-64, 8 years) not just to themselves but also to the wider neighbourhood. It is clear then that the residents’ pride of their neighbourhood, while it has always been there, has strengthened.

For many of our interviewees, the most significant improvement they can see for now is in how the neighbourhood looks, that it is now “*beautiful, clean, new and modern*” (C5, female, 55-64, 8 years), and a number also expressed how these ‘cosmetic’ improvements may also have flow-on impacts on their lives – “*I think that Bonnyrigg is a good place to live and I don’t want to move to anywhere else and I think that the new house will improve my living condition even further*” (C5, female, 65-74, 14 years). Interestingly, stigma was more likely to remain as a concern for those still living in ‘old Bonnyrigg’, tied to crime and safety issues and perceptions of limiting life opportunities:

I would rather live in Yennora, Lansvale or Green Valley to get away from these sorts of dangers. (C5, male, 55-64, 4 years)

[Quoting her child] “This is my ideal, my dream, mum; I want to move out of Bonnyrigg. I want to study and have something in life.” (C4, female, 65-74, 12 years)

Impacts on our C1 leavers

You feel like you’re smogged in here, but when you go to Bonnyrigg you can take a deep breath, and you go ‘ah, that smells good’. (C1, female, 55-64, 18 years)

While we only spoke with a small number of former residents during this first wave of interviews, most, especially those who lived in Bonnyrigg for a significant number of years, still maintain a connection with the neighbourhood. Indeed, many of these former residents spoke of a significant sense of loss when they moved away after having grown up (or grown old) in Bonnyrigg over the last 25-30 years. Many remember Bonnyrigg fondly and still visit regularly, whether it is to visit their friends and former neighbours or to access services. Some of our interviewees who have remained living in Bonnyrigg also treasure these friendships with their former neighbours and continue to stay in contact with them: “*after being here for 25 years you can’t exactly cut ties like that*” (C5, female, 65-74 years, 25 years).

This sense of loss is unavoidable when one leaves a neighbourhood that has been home for a quarter of a century whether voluntarily or, as some interviewees saw it, reluctantly. For many of these former residents the move was tough and, certainly in the short term at least, the impact on their everyday lives was palpable. A number

talked of coping with this loss and anxiety with little support, and for the first 6-12 months after leaving Bonnyrigg, their lives were not great. However, 3-4 years on, and feeling more settled in their new neighbourhoods, many reflect that it was the right thing to do, that they are now in a better space, and all the heartache has therefore been worth it. Most no longer have a desire to return and live in Bonnyrigg, despite acknowledging that some of their initial fears regarding the redevelopment (smaller homes, neighbours much closer by) are not as bad as they had expected.

Changes in crime and safety

One aspect that many hope will improve – and think will improve – is safety. Life in Bonnyrigg has been tough, and over the years residents have experienced their fair share of break-ins, muggings and witnessed street fights, drug use and drunken ‘louts’ in the parks. Over time, it built up a reputation of being dangerous and unsafe. Many of our interviewees acknowledged that these kinds of activities can happen in a lot of places and are not unique to Bonnyrigg. Nevertheless, many think that there is much improvement to be made regarding crime and safety in the neighbourhood. For some of these interviewees, Bonnyrigg is still quite dangerous after dark, and many have said that they continued to feel unsafe at night time: *“really scared walking home from the bus stop at night, I get heart aches”* (C5, female, 55-64, 8 years).

For quite a few of our interviewees who have been rehoused in Stages 1 and 2, their sense of security has improved greatly since moving in. Many think that it has a lot to do with the opportunity for passive surveillance; some also think that, due to the closer proximity of their next door neighbours compared to previously, it is more likely that they will be heard and that their neighbours can offer assistance: *“Since I moved into the new place for almost a year now, it has been safer and better improvement with security than the old house”* (C2, female, 44-54, 20 years). Likewise, a number of new residents to Bonnyrigg said that while they have heard of the occasional break-ins (whether in ‘old’ or ‘new’ Bonnyrigg), they feel that these incidences are no more frequent than in most other suburbs and therefore feel quite safe. One of our newcomer interviewees commented that: *“I heard people saying Bonnyrigg is unsafe when I first moved here, however I have been here for 1 year and I feel it is very safe”* (C6, male, 35-44, 1 year).

Education, schooling and children activities

It is unrealistic to expect significant changes to educational outcomes within a short timeframe and, as our analyses of NAPLAN results showed in Chapter 3, there have not been consistent improvements amongst the 4 schools since the redevelopment began. However, a number of interviewees noted that Bonnyrigg High School had become one of NSW’s partially selective schools, and that a positive sense of change was coming through. One interviewee indicated that this had influenced their decision to stay as they hope that improvements to the school will give their children a better chance of getting into university. A number of our younger interviewees had recently completed TAFE and university studies, and may continue their studies further.

One interviewee, who lives in one of the later stages of the renewal and has therefore yet to relocate, spoke of the impact the renewal has on their children’s social networking as changes happen around them. They said that their children have friends who have moved off-estate, some to neighbouring suburbs but some also further afield (e.g. the Central Coast). While they still keep in touch via Facebook or by other means (e.g. by phone), the interactions are very much different to keeping in contact in person. The children have also told them that it has become quite difficult to make new friends because there are new people moving in and out all the time, and they do not know if they are here just temporarily or more permanently.

Residents have also noticed changes in the provision of services to children. One of our interviewees who grew up in Bonnyrigg for example said that there are now a lot

more services and activities made available to children in the neighbourhood, especially during school holiday periods:

I guess first off there are more services much more readily available, which I'm quite happy about I guess, a lot more activities for kids, like during school holidays which never used to happen when I was little. Started to occur when I was in high school (C5, male, 19-24, 16 years)

Figure 23: School children walking home after school through the reconfigured Tarlington Reserve



Source: Newleaf Communities

While there have been improvements in terms of activities for children, activities for teenagers were seen to be lacking still in Bonnyrigg. A number of our interviewees said that a lot of the 'problems' (such as vandalism and so-called 'youth gangs') that they used to experience – and to some extent still experience – are caused by bored kids. One interviewee expressed concern about the lack of local role models and mentors and how this will impact on the local youths (and her teenage children):

I can't see any positives. [My teenage children] don't have anything to look forward to (C5, female, 45-54, 16 years).

Changes in employment outcomes

Changing levels of engagement in the workforce tend to be more dependent on external factors (such as wider global economics, national policies and regional employment markets) that are not – and cannot – be controlled by the population itself or the neighbourhood undergoing redevelopment. Equally any change may also be rather subtle (especially in the short term), masked by wider changes in the region and, in the case of Bonnyrigg, in the local population as it undergoes relocation and receives new residents. It is also important to acknowledge the age and carer profiles of many of the existing residents: many are retired, and many are dependent upon disability, carer or incapacity pensions. In this regard, a significant proportion of the population is not actively seeking work.

Nevertheless, a number of successes in terms of assisting entry into the workforce can be acknowledged. Most notably, although none of our interviewees were directly employed or had been trained through *Green Wings* – the neighbourhood landscaping

and gardening social enterprise facilitated through Newleaf – many mentioned the service. Others recognised that the redevelopment would bring more people and more opportunities to the area over time – helping reinforce what they already knew: that the neighbourhood was conveniently located, and ‘on the up’.



Source: Researchers

9

Stakeholder interviews

In this chapter, our attention turns to the views and insights of key individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of Bonnyrigg's regeneration and, in particular, the community renewal aspects of partnership activity. The aim here is not to provide a 'response' to the issues raised through the voices of residents, but rather an open discussion from their perspective on process, outcomes achieved and challenges faced. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with 12 stakeholders (see Appendix 3).

These discussions were instructive in a number of ways. A central observation across those interviews was that the partnership approach, and complexity of the PPP, presented a number of challenges and differences of opinion amongst the partners. It is also interesting to reflect upon how the dynamic within the partnership has evolved over time. Although this chapter highlights a number of often competing perspectives alongside the many shared aims and objectives amongst the principal 'stakeholders', it is important to frame those observations: that those tensions can be expressed and discussed can be seen as healthy rather than divisive. The partnership functions to allow those tensions to be aired, and the tensions appear to remain focused primarily on differences of opinion regarding the most appropriate approach to achieve shared outcomes, rather than a dismantling of those shared goals.

Perhaps for different reasons, and with different emphases and different bottom lines, the constituent parties nevertheless continue to articulate success and failure seen in the delivery of the project in 'best for people, best for place' terms. Those can therefore be seen as transparent and healthy: a positive rather than negative observation. As such, there is a degree of 'grumpiness' amongst partners on particular issues. By contrast, the view from the round is that perhaps this willingness to tackle those concerns risks obscuring recognition of the fact that, despite its complexity and those challenges, the outcomes of the endeavour – and the partnership approach – are delivering, and for the most part with significant success.

The insights from our stakeholders capture the challenges shaping the dynamic in a partnership expected to deliver particular outcomes established at a point of time at (or indeed pre-) commencement and to be delivered over the next 30 years across different economic, market, business and indeed community generational cycles. The tension of 'fix' and 'flexibility' within contractual arrangements in the light of those quite fluid 'externalities' acts as a focus for many of the issues and differences of opinion raised, and highlights differences in terms of exposure to the market, to risk, to investor expectations, and a desire to ensure 'public good' and best practice outcomes in the face of those complex variables.

2012: regrouping in a tough year

In many regards, the partnership has faced challenging circumstances from the very start – commencement of the program in late 2007/early 2008 essentially coincided with the onset of the Global Financial Crisis and commensurate economic, policy and market turmoil. At face value, Australia – certainly when compared internationally – appeared to ride the storm relatively unscathed, put down to a combination of prudent banking practice, an economic context shielded by the emerging resources boom, and actions through Commonwealth Government policy stimulus. Indeed, Stages 1 and 2 of Bonnyrigg's renewal proceeded as scheduled in very tough market conditions during 2009/2010.

However, the Crisis set in train longstanding concerns: Becton came under pressure, and has remained in a weakened position ever since. The company has found it difficult to recapitalise and a struggle to raise funds necessary to ensure the timely release of stages of the redevelopment as scheduled. As such, a lead member within the consortium – initially holding considerable say over the original shape and nature of the PPP – has been weakened, and continues to be vulnerable.

Spotless – the maintenance and repairs contractor – has also seen substantive changes in terms of its management structure, operation and priorities in these early years since mobilisation. Whilst commitment to Bonnyrigg, and the renewal principles shaping the partnership approach, remains high, the contract has taken on an ever greater role in defining and delimiting service provision and delivery. The organisation has also seen quite a shift in its capital backing. From having to carry arguably disproportionate risk at commencement of the project (resulting in St George being sub-contracted by Spotless), those financial positions have interestingly shifted.

From being something of a minnow, St George now has – given what has happened to Becton and Spotless – the healthiest capital and asset balance sheet within the consortium. Its substantial growth has tracked Bonnyrigg's renewal, and given a strong helping hand from asset transfer following the Nation Building Social Housing Initiative. As such, the terms within which particular aspects of partnership working were initially set have evolved, and this inevitably flows through into healthy debate regarding roles, responsibilities and 'sway' within the partnership's governance arrangements.

The client initiating the renewal process has also seen considerable change over the past 18 months. As part of Ministerial and Departmental restructuring following the 2011 NSW elections, NSW Land and Housing Corporation has been split in two, separating asset and tenancy management responsibilities between a revived Housing and Land Corporation (HLC) in the case of the former and brought under the Human Services portfolio in the case of the latter. The government's ongoing interest in the renewal process in Bonnyrigg now sits within the HLC.

These changing fortunes and capacities expose the risks of the seeming rigidity of a renewal program where the contract plays such a pivotal role. That contract – and the arrangements between the partners defined by it – is likely to be very different if being negotiated today rather than 5 years ago. It is likely that a similar observation will be relevant 5 years hence. The observation here is that those debates, and on occasion, challenging tensions, are seen by all those partners as 'healthy', and the principles of 'best for place, best for people', as well as 'best for project' remain in place. As one stakeholder observed, a degree of tension between organisations is needed for a good outcome for the community and good value for the government.

Delivery of community renewal objectives

Newleaf serves two primary roles: to facilitate the governance of the consortium and deliver community renewal objectives tied to estate renewal. It is a stand-alone entity from the key partners, and is underpinned by a service contract payment (from NSW Land and Housing Corporation, now HLC). As with its constituent partners, Newleaf has undergone change and regrouping over the past 18 months. A new manager has spearheaded a regrouping process internally with greater clarity of purpose between actions instigated by the renewal team and desired renewal outcomes as set out by the partners across the consortium and enforced through the contract. Inevitably, change brings about the need to regroup and re-evaluate from the community's perspective and, as one would expect with residents who have seen promises of change come and go (and indeed 4 managers in the last 5 years), this has taken some time.

The desire to reassess the value of previous approaches meant that the arrival of the 'new guard' has been paralleled by an observed reduction in the amount of activities taking place on the estate. As both the General and Community Renewal Managers concede, in order to develop some coherence to what was being delivered, there was a need to stop funding every idea and interest proposed (often only attracting a handful of residents and often only tangentially related to the broader community renewal goals that Newleaf are tasked with delivering). The team estimates that over 90 previously funded programs and activities have been rationalised down to around

60 in order to better channel available funds but also better align with the outcomes set: the agenda of the early years looked busy but was failing to deliver any meaningful outcomes.

Urbis was commissioned to update the community renewal strategy in 2012, and the team indicates that it represents a more effective framework for programs, activities and initiatives to be more explicitly tied to stated community outcomes. Health and wellbeing remain an important focus, reflecting that people need to feel that they are able to participate and contribute before they are going to do so.

The team now in place continues to echo a perspective captured at the outset of the partnership's approach to community renewal: a desire to see the community becomes increasingly self-sufficient over time, with a conscious effort to ensure that their presence as a place-based 'renewal' agency does not simply act to transfer some form of 'dependency' from one organisation (NSW Land and Housing Corporation) to another. This crosses over into a sense of success or failure of their renewal activities in terms of fostering engagement and leadership within the community, and there are perhaps a number of interesting tensions here. The General Manager reflected on the frustration of having the community ask 'who are you to be making decisions on our behalf' on the one hand but on the other, few willing to engage and to step up into a space where those decisions can be shared.

Figure 24: The Community Reference Group providing feedback on the Community Renewal Services Plan



Source: Newleaf Communities

Reflecting on the interviews across all the stakeholders and the views of a number of residents themselves, there is arguably a more nuanced language and greater clarity across all parties of the parameters around which stewarding community leadership needs to evolve. Newleaf wants to encourage residents to develop the skills and confidence to take increasing ownership of the forward trajectory of community strength in the neighbourhood. However the terms of reference and frameworks within which those potential leadership roles might evolve have themselves not evolved. For example, the Community Reference Group has struggled to develop from its original strengths at the time of mobilisation to reflect the passage of the project. Wider

engagement across the community beyond the original core membership has failed to really materialise, and from a number of interviews, a key theme emerged that this vital nexus in terms of communication and engagement needed to be rethought and worked through.

As such, the Newleaf team clearly share goals for community empowerment that the residents have shown – in earlier stages of the project attached to mobilisation – willingness, commitment and interest, however the means to bring these together appear to be struggling a little now that initial phase has settled into the gradual, long-term realities of delivery. This wavering engagement arguably reflects a series of quite nuanced factors. The first – and perhaps most pervasive – is a sense that residents, rightly, engage on their own terms. As implementation progresses stage by stage, many of those who will not be affected until the latter stages of redevelopment have – again understandably – adopted a ‘need to know’ basis for engagement. However, and secondly, it is also likely to reflect a certain degree of disillusion regarding the effectiveness of that input from residents given the parameters in place for those voices to be heard and actioned.

Community engagement frameworks took a knock in 2012, specifically as a result of the revised masterplanning process where – given fewer opportunities for input than the original plan – many residents observed that they felt that their views and thoughts had been overridden. This sense of retreat, in terms of engagement on the part of the partnership, consolidated concerns that the seemingly parallel retrenchment in the number of activities and events put on by Newleaf during the year signalled that the partnership had become less focused on community interests. For some, the wider sense of drift on the project gave a more general impression that the terms of engagement have changed. A decline in satisfaction amongst residents on matters of communication and engagement was also apparent from the annual community satisfaction survey undertaken by Sweeney Research, and since these measures help contribute to the KPIs set within the contract, this has started considerable debate amongst stakeholders on both sides of the contract as to how one can effectively measure impacts and benefits over time.

The need to regroup and re-establish the hitherto strong levels of engagement was identified in many of our stakeholder interviews. A number felt that without further commitment to these issues, there was a risk that Bonnyrigg’s strong foundations as a community-renewal-led model of redevelopment risked becoming a development with community renewal ‘on the side’ or ‘tacked on’. One stakeholder felt that rather than acting as the fundamental driver and reason for redevelopment, community renewal risked become increasingly ‘corporatised’ within the Bonnyrigg Partnerships structure, and as such risked losing sight of the program’s core aims and objectives. The issue of lack of community representation on the Board was also raised. Whilst a number of concerns and conflicts would need to be managed, it was observed by St George that resident representation had been a successful platform for engagement and transparency in their experience.

Who should take responsibility for community renewal?

The question as to how community renewal should be shaped and delivered in a project of Bonnyrigg’s complexity provided a key focus in many of our stakeholder discussions. In part, this followed on from reflections regarding the relative success or not of renewal activity, but it progressed into a more detailed debate about the nature and form of the partnership itself, and how the dynamics of the partnership team has evolved over time. There were differing views as to whether the initial model – an arms-length umbrella representing the elements of the constituent partners taking responsibility for community renewal – was proving to be the right one as the project evolved.

The outcomes tied to the community renewal activities are the most significant shared metric for all stakeholders involved, and in a number of interviews provided the

context for expressing wider concerns and tensions both within and outside the partnership. For St George in particular, the original terms of partnership meant that whilst on the 'front line', and particularly at the time of relocation, there was a sense of detachment from wider community renewal activity. Others expressed a view that perhaps it might have been more appropriate for responsibilities to lie with St George on the basis that their organisational structure and principles were inevitably more aligned to the need to place emphasis on social outcomes. There was also some concern that creating a distinct entity risked fuelling perceptions that community renewal aspects of the program were simply being 'tacked on', conducted by Newleaf whilst the redevelopment progressed elsewhere. While all stakeholders acknowledged that 'good things' were happening, there was a view that some of the strategic aspects had been left behind: something that the new community strategy and implementation plan should help address.

Having an arms-length entity in place nevertheless provides visibility to the constituent parts of the partnership: a face to engage. It was noted that having Newleaf in place helped tidy up and bring coordination to the multiple agencies and NGOs who have had a longstanding interest and commitment to the community, although this 'territorial claim' also risked having the effect that such organisations started to change their terms of engagement with Bonnyrigg: if Newleaf are assumed to be coordinating (and paying) for these initiatives, then finite resources can be redirected elsewhere.

Members of the partnership themselves acknowledge that if they were putting in place structures again they might do things differently (as indeed can be seen in the recent proposals put in by a team involving St George for the renewal of Airds-Bradbury); however, the strengths and ongoing role of Newleaf should not be dismissed. The not-for-profit model of the organisation is conducive to aims to increasingly act as a facilitator and coordinator: helping leverage grants and enable community capacity building to move towards a more self-sufficient space.

Figure 25: The *Green Wings* team tending to garden beds around Tarlington Reserve



Source: Newleaf Communities

The ability, for example, to maximise grant funding streams to support the development of *Green Wings* points to the role the Newleaf team are increasingly likely to play over time, especially given the success of *Green Wings* in delivering employment and training outcomes². These discussions regarding the future direction of community renewal capture the tensions at the heart of what community renewal should be and can realistically achieve – is it about ongoing stewardship, is it about getting the community to take on the leadership role, thereby avoiding replacing one dependency with another.

Community renewal and contractual obligations

It is perhaps unsurprising that the contract provided the focus for discussions on a wide number of issues. We focus here on issues raised by stakeholders that highlight where the complexities tied into that contract have sometimes hindered best practice outcomes for the community. Certainly at the ‘pointy-end’ of those agreements, it is acknowledged that the nature of contractual relations struggle in the grey areas of a complex project such as Bonnyrigg.

While all PPPs are complex, the additional dimensions of community renewal and tenants add further levels where outcomes and the measurement of those outcomes are hard to identify, track, and assess in ‘black and white’ terms. As becomes apparent in terms of responses by the community to simple (and simplistic) questions in a survey, drawing upon such information as the basis of achieving (or not) a set of KPIs needs to be treated with caution. It works in terms of satisfaction with maintenance response times and so forth, but in tracking issues tied to strengthening human and social capital over time, it is a near impossible challenge and now causing some debate in terms of client and partnership expectations.

Other situations where contractual conditions have struggled to respond to changing circumstances and complexities were reflected upon many stakeholders. For example, the need to ensure occupancy rates and minimise void times led to the need to quickly refill properties following NSW Land and Housing Corporation’s decision to relocate all their tenants early, bringing in a new group of tenants who did not feature, and whose housing needs did not feature, in the original masterplan. Similarly, contractual requirements to ensure that the process of relocation is completed within a certain period following official notification of commencement of the process meant that St George had to hold off informing tenants of shifting timelines as delays set in with Stage 3. As such, effective, open and transparent discussion with the community was constrained, and the contract cited as the offender.

The revised masterplanning process also introduced a need for revision to open and green space provision across the redeveloped neighbourhood. The uplift in numbers in the originally secured open space/population density ratio secured by the LGA would, if that ratio were to be maintained, see a commensurate increase in open space. This has led to some concern that original intentions and aspirations for the renewal risk being compromised in the face of market and economic challenges but,

² To date, *Green Wings* has provided more than 170 employment and training opportunities for Bonnyrigg residents in horticulture and landscaping. Other employment pathways have also been struck up in partnership with the South Western Sydney Institute TAFE, Registered Training Organisation, Job Service Agencies, local high schools, and industry hosts for work placement opportunities. These strengthen the foundation laid by early employment and training strategies by supporting the skills development and confidence building of local residents. Further scoping is currently being undertaken by Newleaf to offer opportunities in broader areas, including personal and home care services, business administration, retail and hospitality.

more crucially perhaps, that these revisions result from a less engaged round of consultation.

While all stakeholders remain committed to the best, most appropriate outcomes for the new Bonnyrigg, it is this perceived reduction in shared engagement that have left external stakeholders feeling an increased need to have recourse to the original contract. In this regard, it was observed that one of the original strengths of the project – that the contract was there, but it remained ‘in the drawer’ and only called upon as and when required – had withered. For those within the partnership, this was seen as a problem. For those outside the partnership, there was a sense that this had become more of a necessity.

Community renewal activities have not suffered as a result of the masterplanning process, but there has, inevitably, been some knock-on from the strain felt across the project more generally. All partners remain very aware that there is no simple solution: without the revised plan, most acknowledge that the whole redevelopment would have been at risk. However, these difficulties have led to some strain between some of the renewal’s greatest advocates – not least some of the residents themselves.

Looking forward

While 2012 was a challenge, it is important not to lose sight of some considerable achievements in these early years of the redevelopment process: not least keeping the community together whilst renewal occurs. Sales of the market housing have been a little harder to achieve in the most recent stages, however compared to the industry more generally in Sydney’s subdued housing market, the product is outperforming its rivals. Most of the stakeholders noted that 2013 will also be a major year for the project: as Stage 3 comes on stream, it will signify the first major burst of private resident numbers in the neighbourhood. There have of course been a number in Stages 1 and 2; however, this represents something of a ‘tipping point’ with over half of the 150 dwellings to be completed in the early months of 2013 home to new private residents.

From a community renewal perspective, stakeholders recognise that this represents a step-change in terms of thinking about the role of Newleaf and the activities, training, support and community-building approach it provides. It may well provide the impetus, that has arguably been absent, to help Newleaf deliver a more effective, integrated community renewal strategy. It may also – initially at least – expose existing tensions and different priorities as to what is required and how it should be delivered. Clearly, community renewal remains primarily committed to, and directed towards, helping build capacity amongst disadvantaged residents. However the model places great expectation on the benefits of tenure and social mix, and observers will be watching with interest to see how both Newleaf and the evolving community respond in this regard.



Source: Newleaf Communities

10

Summary reflections and recommendations

Overview

- The ‘big picture’ principles of the renewal aims, objectives and process are understood, however it is crucial to recognise that households assess the change underway, and the value of that change, in everyday terms
- Residents’ personal experiences demonstrate the challenges of complex renewal such as this – but are not indicative of systematic and widespread failing
- The staged, internal relocation model has helped keep the community together. While this is a substantial strength of the approach, it is not without its challenges and concerns
- Expectations regarding community engagement should be on residents’ terms, and in timeframes appropriate to household context and relative to everything else going on in their lives

The regeneration of Bonnyrigg represents complex urban policy on a number of levels. It is Australia’s first social housing PPP; it has involved the complete transfer of stock and sitting tenants to a community housing provider; and its success in the long term depends on selling a vision of mixed tenure living across 18 different stages and 13 years – a timeframe that will see governments come and go, and economic and housing market cycles rise, fall and stagnate. At the heart of this change are its existing and often longstanding households, progressively joined by new residents attracted to living in the neighbourhood. Bonnyrigg’s context presents a background of commitment to place – especially those who have raised families on the estate – warts and all. There is an understated desire to recognise what’s good, and to see the rest come good.

This first wave of interviews with our residents’ panel has provided unrivalled insight into the passage of urban renewal from those most directly impacted by the process. With around 100 resident interviews undertaken, almost 1 in 10 households across the suburb (and indeed a number of former residents who decided not to stay) have contributed their thoughts, and expressed their hopes, desires and concerns about the rebirth and regeneration of their Bonnyrigg. The breadth of views and experiences heard will not be of surprise to the community renewal team or indeed other stakeholders committed to the project. However, acknowledging and reiterating this diversity is important in the context of this research. You are not going to please all households all of the time; equally, there are some residents who are simply thankful for being assisted and are perhaps more forgiving, tolerant and accepting of less than ideal circumstances.

While consideration, engagement and expectations of households regarding the renewal process are as diverse as the community itself, commonly observed views tend to capture a tension between the big picture of complex renewal (and the multiple demands framing how it gets delivered) and how it translates and impacts in a very everyday sense. The benefits and trade-offs which will eventuate through the process, and the tremendous disruption that goes with it, are understood and evaluated in those terms by households.

A large majority of our interviewees were well aware of the aims, rationale and intentions of the broader renewal process. Arguments about social and tenure mix and density are understood. However, for residents the success of the renewal, and its potential impacts on their lives, is quite rightly filtered through a more everyday lens. A new house might be the prize, but how it is going to translate into a home for them is their more immediate concern: a garden big enough to grow vegetables; a kitchen that

can accommodate a decent size fridge; a living area big enough not to have to consign the dining table to the garage; enough space between them and their neighbours.

That these might be ‘minor’ issues in the broader scheme of things might be seen as a good thing: it would suggest that Newleaf are getting the big things largely right. It also points to a community that has not seen a dramatic, detrimental change in terms of housing services, maintenance and repairs despite NSW Land and Housing Corporation giving way to St George Community Housing and Spotless. There was no sense or indication that there were any systematic, widespread failings – as would have been the case if a consistent and pervasive negative narrative had emerged – in terms of service provision or support. As would be expected, residents were prepared to share their views and express concerns: some felt things had improved (particularly amongst those in their new homes); others that they had deteriorated; but for most, transfer to a community housing provider and life under Newleaf had not changed much at all.

Nevertheless, these everyday filters of the renewal process are far from irrelevant. They are absolutely central to understanding how the process of change is experienced and interpreted by Bonnyrigg households. Factors such as being unable to take much loved pets to their new home, losing their garden, or feeling that expenditure made in their previous property is not taken into account at the time of moving, shape impressions of the wider renewal process.

This first wave report has inevitably focused upon issues that have framed community experiences in the early stages of the renewal process. It was also a ‘getting to know you’ opportunity with our research panel members – finding out more about them and their families, their housing pathways, and life in Bonnyrigg. In future waves, the extent that the neighbourhood’s renewal is affecting residents will emerge more clearly as it matures – not only in terms of disruption and the challenges that accompany change, but also whether it is impacting positively on their family’s health, education, work opportunities and so on.

As a result, the following considerations focus in on a number of procedural, engagement and communication matters that came to the fore in our discussions:

- Providing support, and a route, through difficult decisions
- An engaged community?
- Existing private residents
- The relocation shuffle
- Living ‘in limbo’
- It’s good to sweat the ‘small’ stuff

Providing support, and a route, through difficult decisions

As emphasised throughout this report, Bonnyrigg’s renewal is a big deal. It is a big deal for the consortium delivering Australia’s first social housing PPP and for the NSW Government that set Bonnyrigg and its community out on this trajectory. It is also, of course, a big deal for the residents of Bonnyrigg. For many, the neighbourhood has been their home for the last 30-35 years, and a number of our interviewees had grown up and lived all their lives on the estate. As well as understanding, acceptance and in some cases resignation to what is happening amongst residents living through the process, there was a need for households to decide at a very early stage whether they wished to stay or go.

Providing this option to residents was appropriate on a number of levels: it enabled households who had long wished to transfer to do so; it also meant that those who wished to retain NSW Land and Housing Corporation as their landlord could do so. It was a big decision to make, with far reaching and irreversible implications flowing from that decision. Whilst we can assume that most households putting up their hand to

leave did so voluntarily and entirely for the right reasons (not least because we only managed to speak to a small cohort of ex-residents in this first wave), it would appear that at least for a small number, the decision felt – and continues to feel on reflection – somewhat involuntary.

Amongst the more elderly residents, there was a strong recollection of the anxiety felt at the time of having to decide whether to stay or go; indeed, a desire to minimise the stress and uncertainty spanning out in the years ahead were they to remain was their main motivation to leave. Rather than a proactive choice to leave Bonnyrigg, it was a decision made to minimise the imagined strain of having to move, move again (and possibly again – a number of interviews talked about having been told they might have to move up to three times), and live with such levels of uncertainty and instability in their later years in life.

This is not to necessarily criticise the level of explanation and consultation given to residents at the time when those choices had to be made. However, it is important in such situations to acknowledge that relative degrees of power and powerlessness come into play, regardless of the frameworks and process put in place. A number of residents felt they were put in a position where they had no choice other than to leave. In some cases, it is likely that it was the 'right thing' to do, in as much as disruption and uncertainty will always accompany a complex renewal initiative such as this (and indeed they themselves acknowledged this). In others, it arguably points to insufficient flexibility in the relocation process, and a need to fast-track elderly residents – and certainly those likely to move into apartments or sheltered accommodation in the final mix. A number of our older interviewees awaiting their turn in later stage cohorts questioned why the planned aged units were only being developed towards the end of a long renewal process. Some rather drily suggested that it was all part of the plan, suggesting that they were being left until the end so that they may well be 'gone' before they get rehoused.

Bonnyrigg undoubtedly lost a number of its older residents and, as discussed in this report, for some the ties with their old community have been hard to break in the intervening years. However, it is important to reflect upon the relative size of this group in the departing cohort. NSW Land and Housing Corporation and Newleaf will have a detailed understanding of the household profiles that did indeed elect to leave Bonnyrigg, although the Census community data between 2006 and 2011 captures the main elements of this story. There was some loss amongst the over 65s (although an increase in the over 80s), but this was relatively small: the dramatic declines have been in younger family households, with 212 fewer children living in Bonnyrigg on 2011 Census night compared to pre-renewal.

Nevertheless, the experience of some of our older ex-Bonnyrigg interviewees points to the need for greater support at the time when big decisions are made. It is not simply a case of laying out those options as transparently and informatively as possible, but also recognising that the outcome of that decision can have significant implications for those residents. After 25-30 years of living in one place, a few of our respondents talked of an incredible sense of loss once they moved away, with little in the way of follow-up support or concern and compassion regarding how they were settling into their new home and neighbourhood. For a while, they felt highly stressed and disconnected.

In recognising that a few older tenants felt they had no option but to leave, it does perhaps point to a need for a greater degree of flexibility and reassurance for those the process of change is likely to considerably strain. This might be in the form of additional support and counselling, but also the need for future renewal strategies to 'frontload' aged housing solutions. While the staging process has to stack up in market viability terms, this needs to be balanced with basic principles that ensure the long-term residents committed to Bonnyrigg who wanted to stay felt they were in a position to do so.

Looking back at this time, they are now able to reflect on the fact that, 3-4 years down the track, they are in a better place, but it would seem that a number would have greatly benefited from more transitional support. This might comprise elements tied to helping ex-residents settle into their new homes and localities, but also measures that acknowledge the fact that many regularly return back to their old neighbourhood. They are still interested in, and attached to, Bonnyrigg despite no longer living there.

An engaged community?

Our discussions with interviewees about engaging in the renewal process covered many issues, including whether they had been actively engaged from earlier phases of consultation to the current time and whether they felt fully informed of how things were going. The responses were as diverse as the households themselves. Many felt well-connected: they understood the aims and principles of the approach and where they, and their household, fitted into the overall renewal program. They recollected their involvement in initial discussions, visits to see alternative housing types and participating in design charettes. Others felt disengaged and poorly-informed, or expressed disillusion and a sense of 'it's happening and there's not much I can do.'

As discussed, 2012 has been a challenging year for the program, and this clearly had a number of ramifications in terms of community engagement, not only the actual nature of that communication but also a more general sense amongst residents that there had been something of a 'stepping back' from the partnership. The revised masterplanning process in particular was noted by many as symptomatic of a retreat from taking on board residents' views and, in part, a dismantling of the original aims and plans for the renewal that they had taken some ownership of.

While some expressed a desire to be kept better informed, this needs to be balanced by a more nuanced view of the nature and degree of desired contact across the community as a whole. This should not be seen to justify or excuse deficiencies in engagement. However, there is a need to reflect upon the different needs and expectations across the community and how this will change over the lifetime of the renewal process.

Many of our interviewees commented on receiving material from Newleaf ('most of which just gets put in the bin'), but it was clear that, for many, engagement was on the basis of need. Although all residents have a view on the transformation of the estate, and have a view of the positives and negatives involved, for those not actually affected in current stages of relocation and redevelopment, the renewal process was often very much back-of-mind. For many, everyday life goes on with minimal impact from the demolition and construction taking place.

This is an important point, not only from a community renewal perspective but also academic interest in these debates. Arguably there is a risk of disjuncture between the extent of engagement deemed appropriate – this is a dramatic change to residents' lives – and the actual significance of the neighbourhood's renewal for those residents. In our early interviews, we were often quite surprised by the relative lack of active interest in the process. However, as later interviews progressed and this sense continued to resonate, the reason why was ever-more apparent. Many of our interviewees are dealing with pretty tough decisions and situations on a day-to-day basis, whether dealing with their own health or disability, or that of a partner, child or parent. Many are getting by as best they can. Worrying about how the estate's renewal affects them only rises up their agenda of juggled concerns when it moves from abstract to real, for example when their time comes for relocation.

Given the staged process of renewal, a significant number of our interviewees knew they were many years from having to move, and until much closer to that time, there was little reason why they would seek to get more involved. The layout of the estate, and the incremental clearance and redevelopment working systematically around the neighbourhood means that 'Newleaf', bounded on one side by the new park, Edensor

Road and the curve of Bunker Parade on others, feels quite clearly distinct from 'Old Bonnyrigg'.

If you live in one of the latter stages, in a cul-de-sac off Tarlington Parade, it is quite possible to live in Bonnyrigg and not have any indication – bar the posters advertising new homes framing the periphery of the neighbourhood – of the dramatic changes that are taking place. Although many interviewees have not had an opportunity to see inside one of the new properties, perhaps more surprising was that some – living at most 250-300m from the edges of Stages 1 to 3 – had not ventured over to the new development at any time in the past few years.

Again, for those where the significance of the renewal process is front-of-mind – as it is for us as researchers – this seems almost incomprehensible. But then why should they? There are other things to worry about, deal with, and get on with. For a number of those treating the redevelopment as 'somewhere else', there was a desire to forget about it for the time being. This was fairly common amongst those in the latter stages, and those that expressed being happy where they were and wishing that they could just stay where they were.

The lengthy, drawn out process of staged renewal inevitably presents some distinct challenges for engagement, but the key observation here is that a fairly high level of little or no interest and involvement amongst the community should both be expected. It also provides pointers regarding expectations, and the need to acknowledge and work with the fact that households will feel minded to, and want to, engage with the renewal process in very different ways, at very different times.

Existing private residents

One cohort of interviewees that felt somewhat short-changed in terms of their influence in shaping the renewal process was the private residents. In practice, this is a quite diverse group, made up of those whom have purchased their properties and lived on the estate for some time pre-renewal, to those that have moved into Stages 1 and 2 of the redevelopment. Of particular interest here is the perspective of renewal activity from Bonnyrigg's longstanding private owners.

A number of issues emerged. The first was a sense of disconnect. A number felt that the interests of existing private residents had been somewhat ring-fenced and then somewhat excluded from broader decision-making processes and consultation. In part, this related to concerns that they were not being kept as well-informed, or had the opportunity for as much input, as other residents on the estate. It also reflected concerns that renewal activity was something that 'happened around' the existing private homes, and because those households were not to go through the process of relocation and rehousing, there was relatively little consideration of change upon those residents and how they might be 'passively' impacted. In reality, that impact was not passive: there were concerns raised, for example, about increasing churn in neighbouring St George properties used for housing temporarily relocated tenants. It was suggested that notification and liaison with all residents – public and private – would be appreciated.

From a longer-term perspective, our private resident interviewees felt that the renewal process, and the uncertainty caused by the renewal, had implications for their own property and investment. A common theme raised by a number was the confusion and lack of consistency surrounding whether Newleaf would 'buy them out' – an offer they thought was initially on the table but which was subsequently withdrawn or which had not been followed up. More broadly, it was commented that the incremental nature of development, and the transition of the suburb from a low density neighbourhood to more compact form, had also created a degree of market 'limbo'. Prospective purchasers of these private homes are expected to buy into a street which will see all surrounding built form around them change in the coming years, and a property that in time may stand out as an anomaly against newer, denser stock. While these risks can

be countered, again the issue of concern here for private residents is the uncertainty that accompanies change and, for them, a sense that they have limited control on what is going on around their most valuable asset. Although the number of resident owners pepper-potted around the neighbourhood is small, they are an important part of both existing and new communities and are living through change alongside their social renting neighbours.

The relocation shuffle

Everyday life is tough for many Bonnyrigg households regardless of the renewal process and, certainly in the short term, expectations about how regeneration is helping to improve residents' lives need to be grounded and realistic. However, where the renewal approach itself risks compounding detrimental impacts on the wellbeing of residents, then this has to be of more immediate concern. Again, this is not to suggest the need to wrap the community up in cotton wool – there is widespread understanding that you cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs – but additional or disproportionate risk (or indeed 'harm'; Allen 2010), must of course be avoided.

What was apparent in our discussions was that most residents are taking the considerable disruption caused by having to move multiple times in their stride. This is significant given that the first step of the journey – the temporary move – might be to a property located in a different part of the estate with different neighbours, might be to a property and garden less suited to their needs compared to their original home, and that they might be there for anything up to three years.

- In part, it would suggest that the Newleaf team is getting the relocation process largely right. Although some had issues with the assistance provided at the time of packing and unpacking and reconnection of services, most of our interviewees felt that they had been given adequate assistance at the time of moving.
- It may also be reflective of residents' acceptance of (or resignation to) the fact that it is a necessary part of the process and, in all practicality, that there is little choice.
- It also, however, captures the resilience of Bonnyrigg residents and their commitment to their neighbourhood.

There were, however, a number who have found the process difficult in physical and emotional terms, both given the waiting involved (see below) and actual experiences once relocated into their temporary homes. A number of older residents talked of the upset caused by having to pack up and leave their homes full of memories and possessions, and of the stressed caused by uncertainty. At the most upsetting end of those concerns, as discussed in Chapter 5, one resident talked of the debilitating fear they felt regarding personal and family safety following their move to a temporary home in one of the cul-de-sacs. The resident talked of being 'so scared I want to fall and faint' and that 'no one hears you, no one cares to help'.

Heightened awareness of both crime and the likelihood of being a victim of crime have been pervasive characteristics of Bonnyrigg life from its earliest days. The issue here is that these moves, and the churning they create around the neighbourhood, are an integral component of Newleaf intervention. As such, these potential concerns – which may affect a small number of households, but can be very detrimental when they do – need to be carefully monitored and acted upon.

Living 'in limbo'

Despite the general acceptance of the relocation shuffle and resilience shown by residents, the price paid for keeping the community together on site during the redevelopment process was a pervasive sense of being 'in limbo'. Understanding how

residents are living with this sense of extended transience is a key insight to be drawn from Bonnyrigg's staged renewal process. Most comprehensive renewal projects tend to require the temporary relocation of residents 'off site' whilst reconstruction takes place, and once complete the tenants typically have a right of return. It means that the site can be redeveloped holistically in development terms, but there is a high risk (and one might suspect sometimes deliberate strategy) that once dispersed during relocation, not all members of the community return.

However, the incremental nature of Bonnyrigg's renewal process ensures that things take longer, and for some households living in the final stages of the masterplan, they may still have another 6-7 years to wait before their 'turn' comes up. For those still in their original homes, many said that they had started to avoid fixing things up – putting in new flooring or carpets or investing in the garden, for example – because it would be a 'waste'. There was a sense that there was little point in putting their time, money and energy into the property as it was going to be knocked down, and a view that any such improvements made would not be fully acknowledged. A few interviewees also expressed concern that they were finding it harder to get necessary repairs and maintenance done on their properties or, where they were carried, they tended to be short term 'fixes' on the basis that the properties were destined for the bulldozer. This view was not shared by all, many of whom felt that the service was as before, if not more responsive. Indeed, a few expressed surprise that money was being 'wasted' on properties that would be pulled down in a matter of years.

For those currently living in their temporary properties, awaiting construction of their new permanent home, getting settled was all the harder. While most were told (and hoped) that they should only be in their temporary homes for 18 months to 2 years, it was acknowledged that it might be up to 3 years. This is a long time to wait, and a number reflected that they were aware of delays with Stage 3 and were concerned that their time in limbo was going to be even more stretched. A number talked about living with boxes that remained unpacked whilst in their temporary property.

Collectively, this meant there was a sense of gradual disinvestment in the physical fabric of the remaining old parts of the estate. Perhaps of more concern, a number of interviewees felt that the limbo impeded progress with things they were going to do, and a sense that they could not think about those things until they were settled again. A further dimension of stasis was also suggested by a number of our interviewees, who noted that they had been interested in the possibility of purchasing their home from NSW Land and Housing Corporation but this was no longer an option post transfer of stock to St George and commencement of renewal activity.

In terms of a more considered response to these concerns, Newleaf may wish to reflect upon the implications of the long, drawn-out process for many. With timeframes slipping in the current redevelopment stages, residents have a view on what this might mean for them. Where slippages are experienced or anticipated, then more intensive 'holding' services and levels of maintenance and repair should be fostered to ensure that those playing the waiting game do so from a more comfortable and informed position.

It's good to sweat the 'small' stuff

Although residents clearly have a view about the layout of the redeveloped parts of the neighbourhood, and about the new houses themselves, their opinions were framed in pragmatic terms and shaped by everyday considerations. Thus their concerns about reduced lot sizes or modern house layouts were as much about the impacts that it had on their everyday space – the ability to grow Asian chillies in the garden, having somewhere to place their treasured shed, being able to fit their fridges into the allocated space, or having a dining table in the living area – as much as more esoteric, academic debates about density and social mix.

Given the dramatic upheaval involved in the relocation and renewal process, and the tremendous investment it represents, these seemingly minor matters might be seen as peripheral to the much greater task at hand. However, they are the parameters against which those on the front line and moving into new homes judge its success or not, and for hearsay amongst those awaiting their turn. When given a tour around our interviewees' homes, we saw a number of dining tables set up in the garages of Stages 1 and 2, and amongst those yet to move, the loss of their garden – and therefore something instrumental to their everyday lives – was seen as a real worry.

Inevitably, some of these matters may be easier to resolve than others. It would seem sensible, for example, that kitchen designs are reconfigured to enable the layout to accommodate different sizes of fridge – especially important in larger family homes – and that where possible, slightly larger back gardens are offered to households where it is clear that those gardens, and gardening, play a fundamental role in their lives. Soundproofing also nears the top of the list of concerns. Whilst the new buildings comply with required standards, a case can be made for additional provisions in this regard. Many residents have lived many years without the interference of noise transmission from above, below or next door and, compared to counterparts in the private rented sector, have been protected from the challenges of higher density living. As such, a higher standard of insulation could be seen as a prudent investment not only in terms of allaying fears of those waiting to move, but also, once moved, in helping minimise conflict which inevitably accompanies compact living.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Advertisement in the Bonnyrigg community newsletter



The header of the newsletter features a vibrant orange background with a collage of colorful icons representing community, nature, and urban development. The Newleaf Communities logo is in the top right corner.

BONNYRIGG COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 15, JUNE 2011

Have your say in Bonnyrigg

The redevelopment of Bonnyrigg is now well underway, and Newleaf Communities has engaged the City Futures Research Centre at the University of New South Wales to conduct a study to understand the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project.

The "Longitudinal Study" will look at how the neighbourhood-wide redevelopment affects residents in the local community over the long term. City Futures will be setting up a residents panel – the Bonnyrigg Futures Panel – to be at the centre of this important research.

Who can be involved?

Anyone living in Bonnyrigg can join

the panel. In order to capture the diversity of views and voices across the community, City Futures is looking for 180 households will join the study. We're keen for you to get involved whether you are public or private residents, whether you've lived in the neighbourhood for a long time or just recently moved to Bonnyrigg. We would also like to ensure that households from all cultural backgrounds are able to take part and we'll make sure our discussion can be held in your preferred language.

What does participation involve?

Members of the Panel would be interviewed every 2 to 3 years. Interviews would last for about an

hour, and we will ask you about the experiences of you and your family during the renewal process. As a member of the Panel, you will receive a \$25 voucher each time we interview you for use at Bonnyrigg Plaza to thank you for your time. There will also be an annual social lunch for all panel members to hear how the project is progressing.

How do I get involved?

For more information call into the Newleaf offices at Bonnyrigg Plaza for more information, or call City Futures directly. The research project manager is Dr Edgar Liu, and you can contact Ed on 9385 4245 or email him at: edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au

Appendix 2: Interview questions

Resident/community experience over time: This section is designed to explore residents' experience of living in Bonnyrigg, how they feel about moving out of Bonnyrigg, and capture changes to those experiences as the redevelopment progresses.

- How long have you lived in Bonnyrigg?
- How did you come to living in Bonnyrigg?
- What are/have been the best things about living in Bonnyrigg for you/your family?
- What are/have been the worst things about living in Bonnyrigg for you/your family?
- Have these best/worst things changed over time?
- Has Bonnyrigg been a safe and friendly place for you/your family to live? Has this changed over time?
- How is your/your family's access to (i) job/schooling/training opportunities, (ii) services when you needed them, (iii) shopping, leisure and community facilities? How has this changed over time?
- How do you think your/your family's lives would be different (both positive and negative) if you had been living elsewhere?

Resident/community aspirations: This section covers the aspirations and expectations of residents, particularly what they hope the redevelopment will achieve

- What do you think of the renewal of Bonnyrigg so far?

- How do you see the changes taking place in Bonnyrigg affecting (i) you/your family, (ii) the community more generally?
- What are the most important changes that you think will happen? How do you feel about these changes? Why?
- Do you feel/have you felt part of the changes taking place in your community? Do you feel that the renewal is going in the right direction? What do you think they have got right? What do you think they have not got right?
- What kind of community activities have you/your family taken part in? Have these changed over time?
- Imagine Bonnyrigg in 5, 10 and 15 years' time. Describe the houses, streets, open spaces and surroundings. Describe the characteristics of your neighbours and the types of people/neighbours living in the neighbourhood. How do you feel about the future of Bonnyrigg?
- [For residents who moved away] Did the neighbourhood-wide renewal of Bonnyrigg affect your decision to move out of Bonnyrigg? (positive, negative, neutral)
- [For new residents] Did the neighbourhood-wide renewal of Bonnyrigg affect your decision to purchase/move here? (positive, negative, neutral)

How is it changing lives?: This section explores how residents are personally affected by the redevelopment.

- How have things for you/your family changed since the renewal was announced/since we last spoke to you? (Explore health, safety, schooling issues)
- Do you feel you have more access to education/training/work opportunities?
- To what extent do you associate changes in your personal/family circumstances with the opportunities/challenges arising as a result of the renewal process?
- Have you used any activities/classes/services offered by Newleaf Communities? Do you think they helped you?
- What things/events would have a real impact on you/your family in the coming years?
- How have you felt about living in Bonnyrigg whilst it undergoes the renewal process? Have you wanted to stay/move off/take the opportunity to move into homeownership?

Sense of community and connection: This section explores how both the original and evolving Bonnyrigg community understand and judge how the neighbourhood is changing.

- Do you think Bonnyrigg is a better place to live than before (i) for you/your family, (ii) for most residents in the neighbourhood generally?
- Having lived through the renewal process, is it turning out as you had initially expected? In what ways have the process/outcomes of change better/worse than those expectations?
- How has Bonnyrigg improved/deteriorated (i) physically, (ii) socially, (iii) culturally, (iv) environmentally since the renewal process began?
- Do you feel part of the wider community? How/why?
- Do you socialise with your neighbours (e.g. privately or at community events)? Have you made new friends since relocating/moving into Bonnyrigg/since moving out of Bonnyrigg?
- Do you keep in contact with people who stayed/made the decision to move off-estate?
- How do you think this renewal of Bonnyrigg is going to change people's perception of the neighbourhood?

Final question: Do you think you/your family are better off having stayed living in/moved out of Bonnyrigg?

Appendix 3: Stakeholder interviews conducted

Interviewee	Organisation	Role
Amanda Bray	Fairfield City Council	Policy & Community Development Manager
Andrew Brooks	Becton	Project Manager
Steven Collins	Spotless	Contract Operations Manager
Michael Kourakis	NSW Land and Housing Corporation	Contracts Manager, Strategy Projects
David Lilley	NSW Land and Housing Corporation	Project Manager, Planning and Research
Kieran McDonnell	Spotless	Portfolio Manager
Rachel Nobile	St George Community Housing Ltd	Manager - Bonnyrigg (Housing Services)
Jane Park	Hastings Fund Management	Associate Director, CEO Bonnyrigg Partnerships Nominee Pty Ltd
Richard Spencer	Newleaf Communities Board	Chair
Kreusna Ung	Newleaf Communities	Community Renewal Manager
Karen Walsh	St George Community Housing Ltd	General Manager, Housing Services and Renewal
Peter Williamson	Newleaf Communities	General Manager