

Rachel Evans

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Chippendale

NSW 2008

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To the Independent Planning Commission NSW

My name is Rachel Evans and I live in a housing co-operative in Chippendale.

I have lived in Sydney for 14 years and loved Redfern as a suburb where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are visible in the streets, the shops and the culture.

My friend Ray Jackson lived in the Redfern-Waterloo Towers and we used to spend time in the main strip, drinking coffee and working on various campaigns. I have worked on a number of community projects in the Redfern Community Centre.

Being involved in local issues around deaths in custody — the Justice for TJ Hickey and Patrick Fisher campaigns — gave me a high regard for Redfern as a site rich in heritage for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

So I am very concerned about the latest version of the Pemulway Project being proposed by the Aboriginal Housing Corporation.

The project does not guarantee affordable Aboriginal housing. The proposed development will contain more than 20 stories of expensive student accommodation. But the Aboriginal Housing Corporation is not intending to build the 62 affordable Aboriginal homes it promised in 2015 to construct.

I think this is an attempt to gentrify the area and send poorer Aboriginal people out to isolated suburbs that have fewer services.

As a poor, queer student living in a housing co-operative in the inner city, I am acutely aware of the high cost of inner city living. The state government sold off public housing in Millers Point. They sold off public homes in Glebe. They are proposing to sell off public housing towers in Redfern-Waterloo.

Government policies have made Aboriginal communities more economically disadvantaged than non-Indigenous communities. We need more affordable housing for Aboriginal communities, not less.

Please note my opposition to this project. Affordable Aboriginal housing should be the priority, not expensive student accommodation.