



8 March 2009

Mr Gwynne Williams
Asset Manager
NSW Department of Housing
9 Darby Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

**RE: Rapid Deterioration of Unused Public Housing Asset in
Dowling Street, Nelson Bay**

Dear Mr Williams

The Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association (TRRA) has noted that over the last 12 months there has been a rapid deterioration of a valuable NSW Housing asset located on the eastern side of Dowling Street, Nelson Bay. The twenty three housing units (approx) would appear to be 25-30 years old and until they were vacated some 12 months ago, were in good repair and set in excellent surroundings. Following their closure the unsecured site has been the subject of serious vandalism including damage to the structures and copious graffiti. The non maintenance of the grounds marks the site as derelict. We have noted that lawns have been mown and graffiti removed in the last week and commend the Department for this action.

Everyone in this area is aware that this very visible site is a NSW Housing property and our Association has been asked by its members to make inquiries as to what your Department's intentions are for this property.

TRRA has discussed this issue and concluded that:

1. The buildings are not very old and of solid brick construction and would seem to be a State asset worthy of refurbishment and continuing to provide much needed, affordable housing.
2. The closure of the site for public housing without any security, apart from boarding up all windows and doors, has been an open invitation to vandals and graffiti artists.
3. The very noticeable site on a main through route to Shoal and Fingal Bays, if allowed to deteriorate, detracts from the visual quality of our urban environment which is a major tourist destination.

Initial inquiries with Housing NSW Newcastle, indicates that there is consideration being given to the possibility of redevelopment of this site and

that it may be desirable for any future occupation to have on-site management. Recent press reports have indicated that significant new funding has been allocated to the State, specifically earmarked for the renovation of public housing. We suggest that the Dowling Street property would be a project which could be commissioned quickly to take up the Commonwealth funding.

Our Association would appreciate your early advice on what the proposals are for the site and how soon we can expect it to be either refurbished or decommissioned. Whatever the plans are, we would ask that reasonable maintenance be kept up.

Yours sincerely

Robert Young
Chairman
Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association

CC. Mr Craig Baumann,
Member for Port Stephens