

# Community Engagement Report – Riverwood 2024

## Riverwood Estate

2024



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## Acknowledgement of Country

Homes NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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# 1

## Engagement in Riverwood

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## 1.1 Community engagement in Riverwood

Homes NSW is leading work to deliver more social and affordable housing, end the cycle of homelessness and deliver quality public housing to our 262,000 tenants across NSW.

We bring together the housing and homelessness services of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO), and key worker housing, all under one roof to make the system more efficient and accessible.

Homes NSW is committed to facilitating meaningful engagement by providing regular opportunities for the community to have their say and provide feedback about a potential development.

In 2024, Homes NSW community engagement staff interacted with around 4,000 community members to share information and obtain feedback about the revised rezoning proposal within the Riverwood Estate.

Ensuring a timely, meaningful and transparent approach to community engagement enables us to:

- have a better understanding of issues and ideas that are important to our stakeholders and the community so we can build better homes
- forecast risks for project delivery
- identify opportunities for strategic partnerships
- be transparent with the community and build trust that Homes NSW acts to benefit the community
- use local knowledge and expertise in a project's design and planning, which can result in a better local outcome
- determine what the community thinks or feels - which can impact the delivery of new homes
- build a good working relationship with stakeholders and the community.

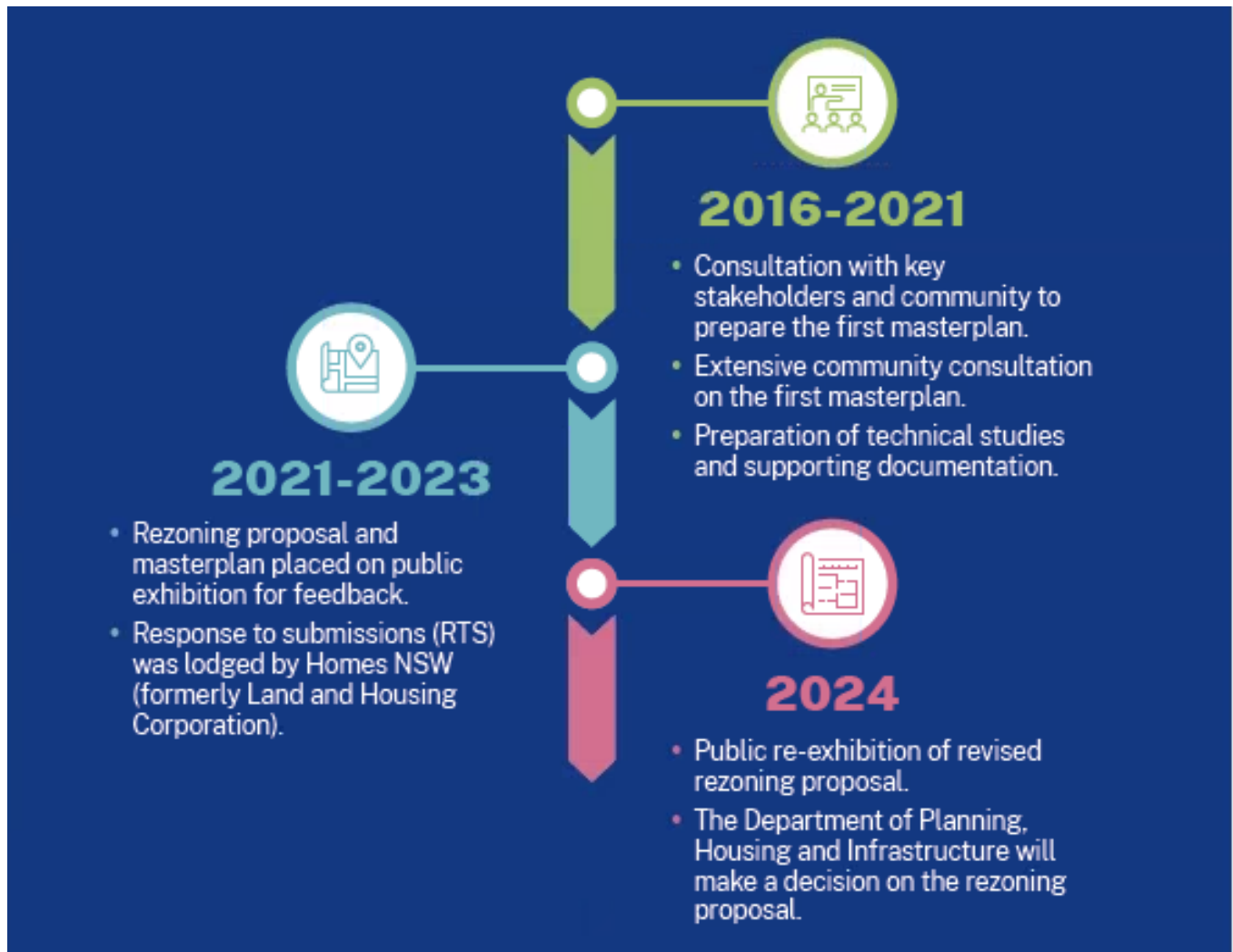
The scope of this engagement was to inform the community and other key stakeholders about the public exhibition and facilitate informed submissions to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Homes NSW did not collect formal submissions and where possible directed stakeholders to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's formal submission process.

Homes NSW's purpose for this engagement was to:

- Promote the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's public exhibition of the revised planning proposal to stakeholders and the local community
- Provide accurate information and answer questions about the revised planning proposal to assist the community in making informed submissions
- Provide access to experts to provide further information about aspects of the project, such as traffic and urban design
- Direct stakeholders to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to provide formal feedback
- Communicate openly and transparently with all interested parties.

## 1.2 Engagement to date

Extensive community engagement with the Riverwood community and key stakeholders has been undertaken since 2016 with a timeline of engagement activities listed below:



Engagement prior to and including 2022 was conducted by consultants on behalf of Homes NSW. In 2023 the Homes NSW Community Engagement team undertook the lead for the planning and execution of the community engagement activities for the revised rezoning proposal.

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# 2

## Engagement activities

## 2.1 Engagement activities in Riverwood in 2024

### 2.1.1 Tenant notification

The Minister for Housing provided a letter for the 59 households who will be directly impacted by the revised proposal. The child care centre, that is also part of the revised area, was notified by the project team in a pre-exhibition meeting. The Minister for Housing announced the revised rezoning proposal in March 2024.

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**The Hon Rose Jackson MLC**  
Minister for Water, Minister for Housing,  
Minister for Homelessness  
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth,  
Minister for the North Coast



Ref: SUR24/14570

**7 March 2024**

**IMPORTANT UPDATE ON RIVERWOOD ESTATE**

Dear Resident,

I wanted to write to let you know that the NSW Government is getting on with the job of delivering and upgrading social and affordable homes in Riverwood.

Last year the former Government cancelled plans for a redevelopment of the Riverwood Estate leaving residents and the community desperately waiting for crucial social and affordable homes to be built.

Our new plan will start by building 420 new homes with 50% of those social and affordable homes. Our new path forward delivers more homes as quickly as possible. The new homes will be modern, comfortable, accessible and sustainable.

NSW is in the midst of a housing crisis, and to make good on our commitment to addressing it, we need to build more homes – I want to be clear about that.

**Important information for you:**

- Tenants are NOT being asked to move yet. You do not need to do anything right now.
- Any resident who may need to be relocated will be properly supported by a dedicated relocations officer to help find a suitable home that meets their individual housing needs.
- **All residents have the right of return** - we know how important community is and residents will be given the opportunity to stay in the local area if they wish to.
- Residents will be given six months' notice before being required to relocate. Tenants will be supported through the relocations process which is expected to begin in 2026. No resident will be left behind.

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Today's announcement is only the first step in our plans to rebuild and improve public housing in Riverwood – this is about getting things moving after years of inaction and stalling.

The revised redevelopment of the Riverwood Housing Estate will go on **public exhibition for your feedback from Friday 8 March until 5pm Monday 8 April 2024.**

Homes NSW will also be hosting online and in person drop-in information sessions for the community to come and learn more about our pathway forward.

For more information about the rezoning proposal and details on the information sessions see [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/riverwood](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/riverwood).

Genuine and meaningful engagement with community is a key focus for me as a Minister and the NSW Government. We are with you on this journey, we support you and we want to hear your ideas and feedback.

If you have any questions or feedback please contact Lynne Welch, Community Engagement Manager, at Homes NSW, on 1800 738 718 (voicemail) or email [CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Rose Jackson MLC**  
Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness  
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, Minister for the North Coast

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Tenant notification letter

### 2.1.2 Online information session

An online information session, comprising a presentation and question and answer, was held in March 2024. There were ten registered attendees who watched the presentation and had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. Upon registration participants were provided an option to write any questions they had prior to the online session.



## 2.1.3 Drop-in information sessions

Two drop-in sessions were held at the Riverwood Community Centre in March 2024 with over 40 attendees. These events offered a face-to-face opportunity for community members and interested stakeholders to speak with the Project Team and representatives from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure about the rezoning plans and proposal for future development.



Drop-in session at Riverwood Community Centre, March 2024

## 2.1.4 Distribution of information

Homes NSW distributed over 3,685 newsletters to owners, tenants, residents and stakeholders. These newsletters went beyond the statutory requirements stipulated to ensure that Riverwood residents, the broader community and key stakeholders were informed about the revised rezoning proposal. An additional 200 newsletters were provided at the drop-in sessions along with 50 simplified Chinese translated newsletters, 50 Riverwood Frequently Asked Questions and 20 Relocations Frequently Asked Questions.

Homes NSW also sent 77 emails to stakeholders with the newsletter, Frequently Asked Questions and link to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure’s webpage for submissions.

The Homes NSW Riverwood webpage was updated with information about the drop in sessions and on-line session, as well as information on how to provide a submission. This page had 527 views during the exhibition period.

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure sent 347 electronic direct mail and posted notification letters to 3,843 registered owners using the same area as determined by each council in the 2022 masterplan exhibition.

As the exhibiting agency, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure also had print advertisements in the Koori Mail and both local newspapers, Bankstown Torch and St George Sutherland Leader. The same advertisement was translated into the Australian Chinese Daily. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure webpage had all the information translated into the top three community languages; Chinese, Arabic and Vietnamese.



Distribution area

## Learn more

Join us at a community information session to ask questions or learn more about the revised rezoning proposal.

Everyone is welcome, including local residents, businesses and community service providers.

### Online

Tuesday, 19 March 2024  
6pm – 7pm

Please scan QR code to register



### In person drop-in sessions

Wednesday, 20 March 2024  
11am – 1pm

Saturday, 23 March 2024  
11am – 1pm

Riverwood Community Centre  
151 Belmore Road North, Riverwood

To speak with our Community Engagement team, please call 1800 738 718 (voicemail) or email [CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au)

## Have your say

Riverwood's revised rezoning proposal is now on public exhibition. You can provide feedback by submitting a formal submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.



Att: Director Eastern & South Districts  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
Locked Bag 5022 Parramatta NSW 2124



Website:  
[www.planning.nsw.gov.au/riverwood](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/riverwood)

Submissions will be accepted until 5pm on Monday, 8 April 2024.

## Translating and interpreting service

This newsletter has been translated into simplified Chinese. Copies are available at: [www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/riverwood](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/riverwood) or at the Riverwood Community Centre and Riverwood Library.

本台新聞簡報有繁體中文、阿拉伯文及越南文翻譯文本。請訪問我們的網站([www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/riverwood](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/riverwood)) 下載簡報或前往

For help with other languages please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450.

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SUB24/14570

## Back and front cover of newsletter

A revised proposal for the new focus area will pursue a mixed-tenure development of about 420 new homes, including 50% social and affordable housing.

The revised proposal means homes can be delivered sooner and supported with existing infrastructure and community facilities. It also enables Homes NSW to deliver more social and affordable housing in Riverwood.

If the rezoning is approved, the community will have the chance to provide further feedback on the development design when a future Development Application (DA) is submitted.

### Previous consultation

Following extensive consultation with the community in August and September 2022, we heard 3 key areas of concern:

- A lack of infrastructure to cater for an increase in population
- An increase of density and possible overdevelopment of the area
- Public safety and the potential for anti-social behaviour.

We listened to the community and revised the proposed 3,900 new homes to 420 new homes. This will guarantee the delivery of supporting infrastructure via state and local contributions.



**Legend**  
▬ Riverwood Estate boundary  
▬ Rezoning boundary

Aerial view of Riverwood Estate

## Inside of newsletter

# Riverwood

Community Update, March 2024



## Have your say on the revised rezoning proposal at Riverwood Estate

### What's happening in Riverwood?

As you may know, Homes NSW has been working on a plan to renew the Riverwood Estate. An initial proposal for the renewal was placed on public exhibition in August and September 2022.

Based on community feedback, the original proposal has been revised to better meet community expectations. This will ensure minimal impact on existing infrastructure and better outcomes for social housing residents.

The revised proposal will go on public exhibition from Friday, 8 March 2024 until Monday, 8 April 2024. This is your opportunity to provide feedback.

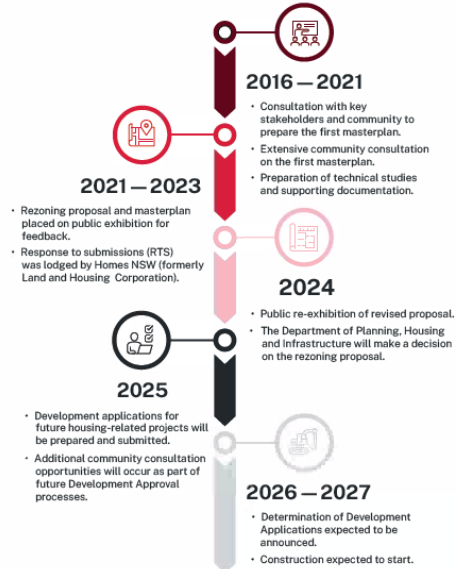
### The revised rezoning plans

The rezoning process for the new focus area will build on the previous renewal work completed at Washington Park in 2017, which transformed mostly old social housing dwellings into a modern, integrated mixed-tenure community.



Image: Washington Park, Riverwood

## Project timeline



## About Homes NSW

The NSW Government is determined to make NSW a place where everyone has access to safe and secure housing, and where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and non-recurring.

At Homes NSW, our role is to actively grow and manage the supply of the right types of housing, at the right time, in the right areas, for people in need in our communities. Access to safe housing assists people to pursue health, education and employment opportunities, which helps to strengthen the communities where we all live.

Homes NSW brings together the housing and homelessness services of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) with NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) and key worker housing.

To find out more, please visit our website at [www.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw](http://www.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw) or by scanning the QR code.



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# 3

## Community feedback

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## 3.1 Feedback themes

Submissions on the revised rezoning proposal were submitted directly to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. There was a total of 93 submissions received with 14 of these in support of proposal, three neutral submissions and two opposing submissions from community organisations. Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure will utilise the feedback to inform the final rezoning package and new planning controls for this area. A decision on the proposed rezoning is expected in mid-2024.

Homes NSW has reviewed and addressed the enquiries that have come through to the community engagement team via phone, email and at online and drop-in sessions.

The information we provided gave community members a deeper understanding of the proposal. Homes NSW provided extensive project details in a transparent and pragmatic manner.

### 3.1.1 Traffic congestion

Impacts on insufficient parking and associated negative impacts from increased car traffic are a concern to the community.

A traffic report has assessed the proposal and concludes that due to the low traffic generation of the proposal there is negligible impact on the adjacent road networks and no requirement to improve local intersections.

### 3.1.2 Housing mix and density concentration

To support the delivery of more homes, The new focus area will pursue mixed-tenure development with 50% social and affordable housing.

Mixed tenure developments have been proven to strengthen the support for social housing residents and creates better community outcomes.

### 3.1.3 Community safety

Social housing delivery is a common concern for residents across NSW. The community raised concerns about social cohesion across the site with the delivery of new social housing.

### 3.1.4 Infrastructure

The community raised concerns about a lack of supporting infrastructure resulting from increased density to the area.

Based on previous community feedback received in 2022, the proposal for future development has been scaled back to around 420 homes, instead of the original masterplan for 3,900 homes.

As part of a development determination, contributions are collected by council from the developer prior to the first approved construction certificate. These contributions assist to fund new infrastructure such as parks, community facilities, paths etc.



*Drop-in session, main room at Riverwood Community Centre, March 2024*



*Staff attending a drop-in session at Riverwood Community Centre, March 2024*

T: 1800 738 718

E: [CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CommunityEngagement@homes.nsw.gov.au)

W: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/homes-nsw>

