

# Report

## **Addressing concentrations of disadvantage Emerton/Mount Druitt case study report**

authored by

**Hal Pawson and Gethin Davison**

for the

**Australian Housing and Urban  
Research Institute**

at The University of New South Wales

December 2014

ISBN: 978-1-922075-72-7



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This material was produced with funding from the Australian Government and the Australian state and territory governments. AHURI Limited gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from these governments, without which this work would not have been possible.

AHURI comprises a network of university Research Centres across Australia. Research Centre contributions, both financial and in-kind, have made the completion of this report possible.

The authors are thankful for the generous help provided by the numerous research participants who gave up their time and contributed their expertise to this study. We are also grateful for the analyses of census data and media outputs undertaken by our City Futures colleagues Edgar Liu and Ryan Van Nouwelant.

## **DISCLAIMER**

AHURI Limited is an independent, non-political body which has supported this project as part of its program of research into housing and urban development, which it hopes will be of value to policy-makers, researchers, industry and communities. The opinions in this publication reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of AHURI Limited, its Board or its funding organisations. No responsibility is accepted by AHURI Limited or its Board or its funders for the accuracy or omission of any statement, opinion, advice or information in this publication.

# CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Case study area overview .....	1
1.2 Case study research aims.....	1
1.3 Case study methodology and report structure.....	2
<b>2 BACKGROUND TO THE AREA: THE PUBLIC HOUSING LEGACY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 PLACES WHERE DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE LIVE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Overview.....	7
3.2 Specific groups vulnerable to disadvantage .....	8
3.2.1 Single parent families.....	8
3.2.2 Vulnerable immigrant communities .....	8
3.2.3 ATSI issues.....	8
3.2.4 Young people.....	9
<b>4 PLACE DISADVANTAGE IN MOUNT DRUITT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Contextualising place disadvantage in the area .....	10
4.2 Remoteness from employment and service provision .....	11
4.2.1 Remoteness from employment .....	11
4.2.2 Remoteness from services.....	11
4.3 Crime and antisocial behaviour .....	12
4.3.1 Domestic violence.....	13
4.3.2 Domestic burglary and neighbourhood safety .....	13
4.3.3 Antisocial behaviour.....	14
4.4 Area stigmatisation .....	14
4.4.1 Historical perspective .....	14
4.4.2 Contemporary perspectives .....	14
<b>5 THE ROLE OF HOUSING SYSTEMS AND MARKETS IN CONCENTRATING DISADVANTAGE .....</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 The operation of the public housing system .....	16
5.2 The operation of private housing markets—market structure .....	16
5.3 The operation of private housing markets—housing affordability .....	17
<b>6 POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS OR REMEDY DISADVANTAGE ....</b>	<b>20</b>
6.1 Conceptualising Place Focused Initiatives .....	20
6.2 Types of intervention.....	21
6.2.1 Physical initiatives.....	21
6.2.2 Socio-economic initiatives.....	22
6.2.3 Community empowerment and governance .....	23
6.3 Leadership and co-ordination.....	25
<b>7 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>27</b>

<b>APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDY AREA PROFILE: EMERTON.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: IDENTIFIED PLACE-FOCUSED INITIATIVES RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED IN MOUNT DRUITT, 2013.....</b>	<b>59</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Mount Druitt (MD) housing stock by tenure.....	4
Table 2: Distinctive features of Emerton socio-economic/housing profile 2011.....	7
Table 3: Distinctive features of Emerton socio-economic change over time .....	8
Table 4: Net impact of Housing NSW public housing disposal program, 2007–10.....	17
Table 5: House prices and rents in Mount Druitt.....	18
Table 6: Recent Place Focused Initiatives (PFI) in Mount Druitt—Exemplifying the Classification.....	21
Table A1: Anonymised list of interviewees .....	28
Table A2: Study area—Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) score .....	31
Table A3: Emerton demographic profile in comparative context.....	33
Table A4: Emerton ethnic profile in comparative context.....	34
Table A5: Emerton socio-economic profile in comparative context.....	35
Table A6: Emerton incidence of domestic work, personal care or voluntary work—in comparative context.....	36
Table A7: Emerton travel to work data in comparative context .....	36
Table A8: Emerton educational attainment breakdown in comparative context .....	37
Table A9: Emerton incidence of residential mobility in comparative context .....	37
Table A10: Emerton household income and housing costs in comparative context...	38
Table A11: Emerton household type breakdown in comparative context.....	38
Table A12: Emerton housing type breakdown in comparative context.....	39
Table A13: Emerton housing tenure breakdown in comparative context .....	39
Table A14: Emerton population change 2001–11 in comparative context .....	40
Table A15: Emerton ethnicity change 2001–11 in comparative context.....	41
Table A16: Emerton socio-economic change over time in comparative context .....	42
Table A17: Emerton change over time in educational attainment in comparative context.....	43
Table A18: Emerton change in household size and residential mobility 2001–11 in comparative context.....	43
Table A19: Emerton household type breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context.....	44
Table A20: Emerton housing type breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context .....	44
Table A21: Emerton housing tenure breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context.....	45
Table A22: Travel times from Emerton to other Sydney locations .....	51

Table A23: Identified place-focused initiatives recently implemented in Mount Druitt, 2013.....	59
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Public housing in Emerton.....	5
Figure 2: Recently constructed infill private housing in Emerton.....	5
Figure 3: Entrance to the Emerton Shopping Centre .....	12
Figure A1: Emerton location within Greater Sydney .....	30
Figure A2: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas—Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Emerton SSC, 2011.....	32
Figure A3: Emerton local street layout.....	46
Figure A4: Population distribution, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	47
Figure A5: Proportion of low-income households in rental stress*, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	48
Figure A6: Proportion of population aged 0–17 years, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	49
Figure A7: Emerton transport connectivity.....	50
Figure A8: Proportion of households in fully owned homes, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	52
Figure A9: Proportion of households in mortgaged homes, Emerton SSC, 2011.....	53
Figure A10: Proportion of households in private rental, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	54
Figure A11: Proportion of households in social rental, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	55
Figure A12: Proportion of population (15+) unemployed, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	56
Figure A13: Proportion of households with weekly income less than \$600, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	57
Figure A14: Proportion of population who left school at Year 10 or before, Emerton SSC, 2011 .....	58

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Case study area overview**

Emerton is one of a group of suburbs which make up the Mount Druitt area of Western Sydney, approximately 45 kilometres from Sydney CBD. One of six case study locations for the current research; it was chosen to represent 'Type 1' disadvantaged suburbs—that is, socio-economically under-privileged areas with a relatively high incidence of young people and single parent households. This demographic profile tends to be associated with areas containing disproportionate amounts of social rental housing—albeit where private housing nevertheless typically predominates.

For the purposes of case study selection a 'disadvantaged suburb' (DS) is one in which at least 50 per cent of ABS census collector districts (CDs) are ranked in the lowest decile of the national distribution on the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA). Drawing on census data, the SEIFA index is a composite score attributed to CDs and influenced mainly by variables such as income and employment.

Through our detailed analysis of house sales and lettings in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, Type 1 DS areas have been characterised as 'isolate suburbs', meaning that house prices and rents tend to be somewhat detached from those of the surrounding city region.

In practice, since Emerton is a relatively small spatial unit in area and population terms (2011 population: 2393) within a larger area with a fairly strong common identity, much of the case study work relates to Mount Druitt (2011 population: 55 000) more generally rather than to Emerton specifically.

Administratively, Mount Druitt lies within Blacktown City Council (BCC), the third largest local government unit in Australia by population. As defined by BCC, Mount Druitt precinct contains 20 suburbs (in whole or in part). In this report, however, Mount Druitt is generally taken to refer to the 11 suburbs of Bidwill, Blackett, Dharruk, Emerton, Hebersham, Lethbridge Park, Mount Druitt, Shalvey, Tregear, Whalan and Willmot. Importantly, eight of the ten localities other than Emerton are socio-economically similar to Emerton in terms of (a) falling within our definition of 'disadvantaged suburbs' (at least 50% of CDs in lowest decile of national SEIFA ranking) and (b) being classified as 'Type 1' disadvantaged suburbs in terms of their demographic characteristics.

## **1.2 Case study research aims**

The case study work was undertaken as part of a larger project looking into concentrations of disadvantage in Australia's major capital cities—Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The overall aims of the research are to investigate:

1. How concentrations of social disadvantage are conceptualised, defined and measured?
2. What housing and urban processes contribute to the creation and perpetuation of these patterns?
3. What are the consequences of living in a disadvantaged area for the residents concerned?
4. How can policy-makers and others respond to spatial disadvantage in 'best for people, best for place' terms?



The main objectives of the case study work were to better understand the experience of living in a 'disadvantaged area', to explore the pros and cons of their local area from the resident perspective and to investigate the role that housing, planning and associated interventions may play in either exacerbating or tackling local problems.

Higher level aims included exploring the extent to which urban Australia's 'most disadvantaged areas' are seen as such by local people and whether negative 'neighbourhood effects' are operative. This refers to the possibility that living in a 'poor neighbourhood' can compound the impact of poverty and disadvantage affecting an individual (Atkinson & Kintrea 2001). While such a scenario has been evidenced within the context of North American and European cities (Galster 2009), it remains an open question as to whether the scale and depth of spatially concentrated disadvantage in Australia could give rise to such an outcome.

Also important in the fieldwork was to 'groundtruth' or validate the disadvantaged area typology category attributed each case study locality.

### **1.3 Case study methodology and report structure**

Undertaken April-November 2013, the case study work involved five elements:

- Background analysis of 2001 and 2011 census data on the selected suburb.
- Media coverage relating to the selected suburb (and, in this instance, the broader Mount Druitt area).
- Document analysis—government and other reports about the selected suburb (and, in this instance, the Mount Druitt area as a whole).
- In-depth interviews with local stakeholders.
- Resident focus group meeting.

Spanning the period 2003–13, the *media analysis* covered the three major metropolitan papers for Sydney—The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph—as well as radio (ABC) and television (ABC and SBS) news broadcasts, as well as selected documentaries on commercial TV channels.

*Stakeholder interviewee* selection was to some extent guided according to a standard list of potentially relevant participants (e.g. local council social planner, real estate agent, social housing manager, police representative, support service provider, community group spokesperson). However, it also involved 'snowballing'—that is, being guided by interviewee recommendations as to other potentially appropriate contributors. An anonymised list of interviewees is included in Appendix 1. Respondent views represented in this report are not attributed to individuals.

The *resident focus group* involved an ethnically and demographically diverse group of six local people recruited with the kind assistance of a support provider agency with good neighbourhood links.

Stakeholder interviews and residents focus group discussions were structured according to master topic guides common to all case studies within the wider project. However, for stakeholder meetings these were necessarily adapted as appropriate to the area of knowledge/responsibility of the interviewee concerned.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. First, in Chapter 2, we revisit the origins of modern Mount Druitt as a largely State Government-constructed suburb. Next, in Chapter 3, we identify the respects in which Mount Druitt's socio-economic profile suggests a high representation of disadvantaged people, and discuss the population groups particularly at risk. Chapter 4 then investigates the aspects of

Mount Druitt which, arguably, may disadvantaged the area's residents. Next, in Chapter 5, we discuss the structure and operation of the local housing market and the extent to which this contributes to the area's socio-economic status. Chapter 6 then looks at the most significant policy interventions developed and implemented in Mount Druitt in the recent past to counter disadvantage. Finally, in Chapter 7, we summarise some of the key themes emerging from the research.

## 2 BACKGROUND TO THE AREA: THE PUBLIC HOUSING LEGACY

While originally intended to cater for working families rather than specifically for disadvantaged people, Mount Druitt was identified from the start as a low status locality with many residents experiencing ‘entrenched hardship’. The area was immortalized as such in Mark Peel’s seminal work ‘The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty’ (Peel 2003). In this work the area was one of the four socially stressed outer metropolitan suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide where Peel undertook detailed ethnographic fieldwork in the early 1990s. While it has become somewhat more demographically and economically diverse over time, Mount Druitt remains one of Sydney’s most disadvantaged areas—even if, as many local residents and stakeholders would contend, its media portrayal remains unduly negative (see Section 4.4).

Originally developed by the NSW State Government in the 1960s and 1970s as a very large public housing estate (8000 homes), Mount Druitt lies on the outer fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area (see location map in Appendix 2). Like other large NSW estates built at the time, much of the scheme—largely three-bed cottage-style homes—was laid out at low density according to the Radburn model which originated in the USA (Woodward 1997). In Emerton itself, however, the Radburn layout was not adopted.

**Table 1: Mount Druitt (MD) housing stock by tenure**

### a. dwellings

	2001			2011		
	Emerton	Rest of MD	MD	Emerton	Rest of MD	MD
Owned outright	152	3,466	3,618	142	3,179	3,321
Owned with mortgage	178	3,239	3,417	233	4,722	4,955
Private rental	144	2,376	2,520	196	4,022	4,218
Social rental	202	4,332	4,534	203	4,460	4,663
Other	21	298	319	17	311	328
Total	697	13,711	14,408	791	16,694	17,485

### b. % of total dwellings

	2001			2011		
	Emerton	Rest of MD	MD	Emerton	Rest of MD	MD
Owned outright	22	25	25	18	19	19
Owned with mortgage	26	24	24	29	28	28
Private rental	21	17	17	25	24	24
Social rental	29	32	31	26	27	27
Other	3	2	2	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ABS 2001 and 2011 Census.

Notes: 1. Social rental includes ‘Rented: State or territory housing authority’ and ‘Rented: Housing co-operative, community or church group’ for 2011, and only ‘State/Territory Housing Authority’ for 2001. 2. Private rental includes ‘Rented: Real estate agent’ and ‘Rented: Person not in same household’ for 2011, and ‘Other’ column in 2001 data is assumed to include both these categories.

After an initial mass sales program ended around 1975, remaining public rental housing was subject to much more gradual disposals into private ownership. By 2001 the cumulative effects of this activity, along with construction of new private housing had reduced social housing to 31 per cent of Mount Druitt housing stock (see Table 1). The continuation of these processes over the past decade left social rental housing accounting for only just over a quarter of all housing stock by 2011. As shown in Table 1, Emerton is fairly typical of the wider area in terms of its housing tenure profile.

**Figure 1: Public housing in Emerton**



**Figure 2: Recently constructed infill private housing in Emerton**



As many would see it, the main underlying challenge for Mount Druitt remains the need to transcend its origin as a 'housing commission' estate; a problematic inheritance exacerbated by:

- the dominance of the crime-prone and wasteful Radburn layout (although not in Emerton)
- the recent switch towards a public rental sector catering primarily for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

As noted above ongoing property sales have contributed to public rental housing being reduced to only a quarter of all dwellings. Media reports on Mount Druitt nevertheless habitually continue to refer to the area's 'housing commission' status (although the Sydney Morning Herald's historic headline reference to Mount Druitt as 'The Housing Commission Ghetto' (Peel 2003, p.16) might nowadays seem a little outlandish).

While public rental housing provision is now proportionately much reduced at the level of suburbs such as Emerton, as well as across the Mount Druitt area as a whole, the local 'within suburb' spatial concentration of the remaining 4700 social housing

properties is nevertheless widely considered problematic. As emphasized by Mount Druitt police, in any public housing estate the vast majority of residents are law abiding: 'we're not talking about the community at large, we're only talking about a small minority'. Hence, police interviewees stressed the mantra that 'public housing is an address, not an attitude'.

In relative terms, nonetheless, the incidence of criminal behaviour is highest in public housing areas where the spatial concentration of low-income households is exacerbated by allocation policies which may group together tenants with very high needs (e.g. history of alcohol abuse or other health issues).

A concern voiced by some stakeholder interviewees was the generally deteriorating condition of public housing:

Our biggest problem is that the Department of Housing doesn't really take care of its properties. And they don't respond adequately to antisocial behaviour such as graffiti. The [perceived] message that residents aren't respected results in a lack of respect by residents for their homes and their areas. (community representative)

Similarly, tenant interviewees asserted that HNSW had become less responsive to maintenance problems and believed that customer service had 'gone downhill' over recent years.

For their part, Housing NSW respondents acknowledged that maintenance funding had been highly constrained in recent times, although noted that privately owned housing around Mount Druitt was sometimes in a poorer condition. It was also recognized that the generally unsatisfactory state of the public housing stock resulted from the State Government's long-term failure to invest in its upkeep and modernization (resulting in, e.g. the predominance of very old kitchen and bathroom fittings). With originally built-in design flaws never having been redressed, many properties remained uncomfortable to live in:

[Some] Housing NSW properties get so cold [in winter] that people put the oven on and leave the door open. And they can't sleep upstairs when it's hot in summer. (NGO community worker/support provider)

The ways that housing market operation contributes to 'place disadvantage' as this affects Mount Druitt are further discussed in Chapter 5.

## 3 PLACES WHERE DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE LIVE

### 3.1 Overview

As noted in Section 1.1 the selection of Emerton/Mount Druitt as a case study site in this research reflected its designation in the SEIFA index as a 'place where disadvantaged people live'. Aspects of this can be seen in Table 2 which illustrates that the socio-economic profile of Emerton and Mount Druitt differs substantially from that of Sydney as a whole in a number of significant respects. Most notably, at \$363, typical weekly household incomes are little more than half the city-wide norm.

Helping to explain the above finding, a number of groups who would be generally considered vulnerable to poverty are significantly overrepresented in the population. These include single parent families, unemployed people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) households and disabled people (see Table 2). Even those in work were much more likely to be in low paying jobs in Emerton (and to a lesser extent in Mount Druitt more broadly) than was true across the Sydney metropolitan region.

**Table 2: Distinctive features of Emerton socio-economic/housing profile 2011**

Indicator	Emerton	Mount Druitt *	Sydney metro region
Median weekly income (\$)	363	471	619
% single parent households	24.2	18.9	10.8
% population aged 0–14	26.5	25.7	19.2
% working age population unemployed	13.3	9.3	5.7
% population Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	6.2	4.5	1.2
% population disabled**	6.4	5.6	4.4
% born NZ/Pacific Islands***	12.2	6.1	1.9
% working age population employed	39.4	48.2	58.2
% employed persons in low skilled/low status jobs	61.2	48.3	28.0
% population who left school at Year 12****	21.8	42.2	55.0
% population with tertiary qualification****	3.2	11.5	24.1
% living at different address one year previously	10.2	12.6	14.4

\* and surrounding area (SA3).

\*\* needing assistance with core activity.

\*\*\* Top 5 countries of birth in area only.

\*\*\*\* % of persons aged 15 or over.

Source: ABS Census 2011

The remainder of this section discusses the factors affecting social groups significantly represented in Emerton/Mount Druitt and identified by research participants as particularly affected by disadvantage.

## 3.2 Specific groups vulnerable to disadvantage

### 3.2.1 Single parent families

Connected with the vulnerability of single parent families, the incidence of developmentally vulnerable children in Mount Druitt is much above state and national norms. 2012 figures from the Australian Early Development Index (<http://www.rch.org.au/aedi/>) show that in most Mount Druitt suburbs the proportion of children 'vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI' is well above the state and national rates.

### 3.2.2 Vulnerable immigrant communities

One important dynamic is the growing ethnic diversity of Emerton and Mount Druitt as a whole. Whereas these areas were historically dominated by Australian-born and 'Anglo' populations, this is becoming less pronounced over time. While this trend is evident within Emerton mainly in terms of the growing Pacific Islander population (some borne in New Zealand), Filipinos form the largest minority group in the wider Mount Druitt area.

Pacific Islanders are thought to have been originally drawn to the area partly by cheap housing, PI groups have now established a strong presence in the area. Community social capital seems evident from the number of culturally-linked churches to be seen in the area. However, as reported by several interviewees PI groups in Mount Druitt experience high levels of social, health and other needs. These include overcrowded housing (for similar reasons to the ATSI community—see above), teenage pregnancy and offending. Young people are subject to tensions between Australian and PI identities. Economically disadvantaged in the labour market, PI communities are also particularly exposed to poverty because those arriving since 2001 have been ineligible for public housing and welfare benefits, even as New Zealand citizens. Hence, according to the Pacific Islands Mount Druitt Action Network, many have been forced into often overcrowded and unaffordable private rental housing.

### 3.2.3 ATSI issues

Also significant is Mount Druitt's expanding Indigenous (or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander—ATSI) population, said to be the largest in metropolitan Australia. While Emerton now has a significant ATSI community (see Table 2) the ATSI proportion is substantially higher in some surrounding suburbs (over 10% in Bidwill, Tregear and Willmott). Rates of overcrowding are reportedly high due to lack of very large properties which could cater for the extended families relatively numerous within this community. Reflecting the national scenario, the ATSI population is also disadvantaged in relation to literacy, employment and income.

**Table 3: Distinctive features of Emerton socio-economic change over time**

Indicator	Emerton		Sydney metro area	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
% population Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	5.4	6.2	1.0	1.2
% labour force unemployed	14.1	13.3	6.1	5.7
% 15–24s unemployed	23.9	49.5	10.9	18.9
% at different address five years previously	34.4	28.7	38.8	37.2
% social rental	26.7	24.0	5.1	4.9
% private rental	17.6	23.3	23.6	24.6

Sources: ABS Census 2001, 2011

As shown in Table 3, Emerton's ATSI population has been growing and this is also true of other suburbs across Mount Druitt. One factor probably contributing to this will be the growing concentration of ATSI households within public housing. Consequently, in any area where public housing is overrepresented (as it is in Mount Druitt) it is to be expected that the ATSI population will have been expanding disproportionately.

### *3.2.4 Young people*

With almost half of young people in Emerton recorded as unemployed in 2011 (see Table 3), it is not surprising that many interviewees noted listed young people as one group of particular concern. Disadvantage in the labour market was attributed not only to residence in a stigmatised area (see Section 4.4) but to poor educational achievement. As noted by one interviewee some local schools have suffered from a lack of physical investment 'You look at some of the schools around here and I'm sure you could find prisons that look better'. Generally, however, rather than reflecting the quality of schooling, many students were seen as under-achieving due to low aspirations and lack of self-esteem.

While some believed that high rates of youth unemployment stemmed partly from a reluctance of young people to take on employment at minimum wage rates, others saw it as more squarely linked with poor standards of educational achievement as also highlighted in Table 2. For some, this in turn, reflected a culture of low aspirations, and a lack of value assigned to education, sometimes inter-generationally transmitted.

Often youth unemployment is related to poor schooling outcomes and a lack of 'working culture' in the local area—few role models. A culture has developed in [parts of] Mount Druitt where education is not seen to be important. (State Government Housing Provider)

While many research participants believed that Mt Druitt was a place well-provided with welfare support services (see Section 4.2.2), this was less true when it came to youth-oriented activities. However, there have reportedly been some schemes launched for young people in recent years (see Chapter 7).



## **4 PLACE DISADVANTAGE IN MOUNT DRUITT**

### **4.1 Contextualising place disadvantage in the area**

This section of the report discusses place disadvantage as it applies in Mount Druitt; that is, features of the area which negatively impact on residents. It should first be emphasized that, despite the district's external image as a troubled place (see Section 4.4), a strong allegiance to the area and pride in the community are dominant sentiments among Mount Druitt residents. While some may feel trapped in a place they would prefer to leave, these are very much the minority. According to a 2012 Blacktown Council survey, for example, 74 per cent of Mount Druitt respondents felt they 'belong[ed] to their local neighbourhood'. Similarly, while 64 per cent were 'satisfied with the Blacktown area as a place to live and spend time', only 12 per cent were dissatisfied. Moreover, as an indicator of social capital, 83 per cent felt they could count on their neighbours for help (Blacktown Council 2013).

An evaluation of the Housing NSW Building Stronger Communities (BSC) program showed that in 2012 77 per cent of Mount Druitt public housing tenants regarded the area as 'a good place to live' (up from 70 per cent at the start of the program in 2009), while 74 per cent of the 2012 sample felt safe in their homes at night—up from 63 per cent in 2009.

In the 2013 Emerton residents survey undertaken as part of the current research (reported fully elsewhere) 62 per cent of respondents believed that their local area had 'a strong sense of community'. Moreover, corroborating the BCC survey cited above, 72 per cent of the Emerton sample agreed with the statement 'I feel I belong in this neighbourhood'.

Such generally positive views about the place were reflected in many of our case study interviews:

... this is a beautiful area and plenty of people live here by choice. They might have come here in the first place for economic reasons [to access low cost housing] but when their situation improves they stay. There are many I class as millionaires who choose to stay here. (community representative)

[People are] very passionate about Mount Druitt. If you offered them a million dollars they wouldn't move. (NGO community worker/support provider)

Such a view was expressed by all local home owner participating in the research. For example, in a fairly typical response, one focus group member declared 'If I won the lottery I'd still buy around here.'

As recounted by Mount Druitt Police, the strong sense of community prevalent in most parts of the area was illustrated by the 'rallying round' public response to the death of Kiesha Abrahams in 2010 (see Section 4.4).

Phrases such as 'sense of belonging', 'local pride' and 'strong social capital' were recurrent in our interviews although these were often counter-posed by frustration and resentment at the distorted image of the area which continues to be widely portrayed in the media.

Nevertheless, as also recognized by many research participants, the location and certain features of Emerton and Mount Druitt continue to pose problems for local residents.

## 4.2 Remoteness from employment and service provision

As noted in Chapter 1, Mount Druitt lies on the remote Western fringe of Sydney's built-up area, some 45 kilometres from the city CBD. Relevant here is Sydney's highly mono-centric form which has been argued as inherently exacerbating economic inequality (Gleeson & Randolph 2002). This refers to the CBD-focused distribution of employment and services and the consequences for outer metropolitan residents in terms of travel cost and time expended in accessing these. Hence, as identified by Gleeson & Randolph, 'transport poverty' was widespread in western Sydney. This condition relates to households forced to incur more travel costs than they can reasonably afford.

### 4.2.1 *Remoteness from employment*

To what extent do such arguments continue to chime with the perceptions and experiences of Mount Druitt stakeholders and residents? There are two dominant stories here. As far as employment is concerned, Mount Druitt's location continues to be a significant problem because job opportunities remain relatively centralised in and around the CBD rather than dispersed to satellite nuclei or suburbs. As one frustrated local resident explained:

I love the community spirit [but] I hate that it hasn't got enough jobs around here—we have to travel further and further these days—that sucks. (residents focus group)

Despite the close proximity of major freeways, car commuting to major employment centres is highly time consuming as well as costly. And while the area benefits from a rail link to Mount Druitt station, this is not a fast service (travel time to Town Hall station 54–64 minutes). In addition, the rail station itself lies to the southern extent of Mount Druitt, making it fairly distant from many Mount Druitt suburbs. Bus services connect Mount Druitt's suburbs with each other and with the wider city to the East. However, while these make car-less households mobile to an extent, their limited hours of service make them problematic for shift workers.

To the extent that there has been recent employment growth in Western Sydney (e.g. in Blacktown) some of the associated jobs are unsuitable (too highly skilled) for many Mount Druitt residents in need of work. And while there has latterly been some expansion of lower-skilled employment within reach of the area, residents reliant on such work have reportedly been disadvantaged by the recent trend towards outsourcing to 'labour hire' companies which tend to offer insecure positions with no pathway to permanent employment.

Gradually over time Sydney's ongoing expansion is lessening Mount Druitt's spatial detachedness and in the medium term the area should benefit from the nearby State Government-designated Northwest Growth Centre, which is expected to accommodate up to 70 000 new homes in the next thirty years. Perhaps of most significance, a 551 hectare site directly to the north of Mount Druitt has been designated for industrial uses as part of the Growth Centre, with this potentially providing land for 10 000 new jobs.

### 4.2.2 *Remoteness from services*

As regards place disadvantage due to 'remoteness from services', there is a different story. When first established, Mount Druitt was a large housing-led development bereft of local retail or welfare services and disconnected from public transport. Within only a few years, however, shopping centres and other facilities were developed on a substantial scale both in Mount Druitt town centre itself and in constituent suburbs.

Today, the busy Mount Druitt (Westfield) shopping centre houses a wide variety of retail outlets evidently catering for a range of income groups and conveying no impression of being sited in a 'poor neighbourhood'. More locally, the Emerton shopping centre hosts a diverse range of shops and, when visited in September 2013, had only one vacant unit. And although the building's external appearance and surroundings appeared somewhat rundown (Figure 3), a recently submitted development application seemed to indicate a strong trading position for the centre.

**Figure 3: Entrance to the Emerton Shopping Centre**



Moreover, as regards welfare agency and leisure provision, few if any of our interviewees considered Mount Druitt to be poorly served. On the contrary, as seen by a number of participants, the area was considered—if anything—'over-served' in this respect. While only a small suburb, Emerton accommodates a Jesuit Social Services Centre, complete with Men's Shed, 'The Shop'—a retail training centre, a Youth Recreation Centre, as well as a large municipal leisure centre and swimming pool.

The 'reality' of being 'over-served' was, for some, very much at variance with the area's public image:

Everybody always considered Mount Druitt a 'dumping ground' but it is actually an over-served suburb. (State Government housing provider)

Indeed, as voiced by a local community worker, some were concerned that the locally high density of social services (and 'poverty research' studies) might only compound the area's negative external image. Similarly, other participants (including community workers and housing managers) saw a risk that easy local access to such provision might even promote 'welfare dependency'.

It should be however be acknowledged that there were widely divergent views about youth activity provision with some interviewees seeing this as inadequate. For a few interviewees, including local residents, there was a view that because Emerton was well-served relative to some other Mount Druitt suburbs, it had recently been de-prioritised by Blacktown City Council in the provision of services for local youth.

### **4.3 Crime and antisocial behaviour**

Because local government areas form the standard unit for 'local crime statistics' made available by NSW Police, crime data specific to Mount Druitt are not publicly available. However, a recurrent theme in case study interviews was the relatively high incidence of crime and antisocial behavior in Mount Druitt, a factor negatively

impacting on quality of life for many local residents. A major focus of media reporting about the area relates to places where offences are committed or where offenders reside (see below).

In part, the locally high profile of this issue will be linked to the relatively large representation of public housing in the area. Recent NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Reporting analysis confirmed a strong association between crime and public housing and, focusing on changes over time, revealed less favourable historic trends for Housing NSW estates than for the state as a whole (Webber & Legg 2013). While the general incidence of crimes such as 'steal from a dwelling' fell over the period 2006–12, it rose in public housing areas. As a result the association between the two factors has intensified over recent years.

#### *4.3.1 Domestic violence*

Of particular concern from the research participant perspective were domestic violence (DV), domestic burglary and youth disorder. As seen by Mount Druitt police, the locally high incidence of domestic violence (reportedly more prevalent than anywhere else in New South Wales) can be partly attributed to alcohol abuse, drug abuse and social disadvantage. Additionally, although the scale of the problem is longstanding, the recent influx of some ethnic groups considered to have a higher cultural tolerance of DV was also seen as a factor by some interviewees.

#### *4.3.2 Domestic burglary and neighbourhood safety*

Rates of housebreaking in Mount Druitt are also relatively high by Sydney standards although the incidence of such 'high volume' crimes has been falling—possibly at rates exceeding general state-wide trends.

At one time we used to be over 200 break and enters a month; now we're down to around 60 a month. (Police officer)

The relatively high incidence of such offending in the area is attributed partly to high unemployment and poor educational attainment.

Most of the people we arrest are in those groups; many can't read or write. (Police officer)

However, as reported by a number of interviewees, locally committed burglary is generally seen to be an opportunistic offence, typically involving relatively low value items.

The incidence of burglary, theft and assault is likely to be enhanced by the problematic urban design heritage of the area:

The Radburn design layout has created chronic and increasing problems in relation to safety and crime prevention [in Mount Druitt]. (Duarte 2011, p.5)

This refers, in particular, to the 'back to front' dwelling orientation and the separation of vehicular and pedestrian access (insecure walkways and road underpasses), both of which have created extensive public spaces free from passive surveillance. Hidden laneways and footpaths easily become criminal escape routes. The area's numerous road underpasses are another Radburn feature widely disliked because of their tendency to attract antisocial and criminal behaviour including intimidating public drinking and bonfires.

Importantly, it should be emphasized that, because it was built into the original suburban layout, the problematic urban design legacy associated with Radburn layouts affects all residents of the relevant areas, whether or not their house or block has remained in public ownership.

### *4.3.3 Antisocial behaviour*

From the resident perspective it may be antisocial behaviour rather than crimes such as housebreaking that poses the main concern. In particular, a number of interviewees referred to youth disorder as problematic in their neighbourhood. Apart from the perceived threat of violence, the associated vandalism and graffiti were seen as harmful to community self respect.

Many research participants recognised that a key underlying problem was the high rate of youth unemployment found in Mount Druitt—see Table 2. Especially given the extent of joblessness among young people, a number of interviewees pointed to a lack of ‘youth activity’ provision in the area as an associated factor (although, as noted in Section 4.2, there were also contrary views on this).

From the police perspective, alcohol abuse was the single biggest contributor to youth disorder—particularly stemming from under-age drinking. With the increasingly strict control imposed on entry to licensed premises, the nature of this problem had changed over recent years, as the focus of youth drinking has consequently moved from town centre pubs to parties in residential areas. In terms of their disruptive effects on the community and because such events are more difficult to monitor and police, this is a problematic development.

## **4.4 Area stigmatisation**

### *4.4.1 Historical perspective*

Based on his extensive early 1990s fieldwork in Mount Druitt and three other poor urban neighbourhoods across Australia, Mark Peel argued that community life in such areas had already fallen victim to media stigmatization as ‘the chief illustration for stories about a looming social crisis’ (Peel 2003, p.16). Many contemporary Mount Druitt stakeholders and residents would support Peel’s thesis that this characterization has often exaggerated the significance of ‘lawlessness’ and other social problems occurring in the area.

Peel’s assessment should be kept in mind in interpreting the more recent history of Mount Druitt as revealed through our media analysis (see Section 1.3). Social dysfunction looms large in much of this coverage. As regards the recent past, the single most significant single event was the disappearance of six-year old Kiesha Abrahams in 2010, the subsequent discovery of her body, and the trial of her parents. This shocking and widely reported case took on significance as a vehicle for concerns over the social failings of Sydney’s poorer communities, a role openly acknowledged in sections of the media:

Part of our fascination with the story of a missing Mount Druitt schoolgirl, Kiesha Abrahams, is that it speaks to and reinforces various stereotypes we have about class and parental neglect. (Sydney Morning Herald 2010)

The story also became a proxy for discussing broader policy failures around social work, housing management and Indigenous affairs.

### *4.4.2 Contemporary perspectives*

A recurrent theme in stakeholder and resident interviews was the widespread local sense of grievance due to the perceived stigmatization of ‘Mount Druitt’ in the media and the popular discourse. Some recent examples have already been cited above (see Section 3.2). Ignoring the area’s gradual integration into the broader urban social fabric (e.g. as the original dominance of public housing is further eroded), media accounts of the area continued to perpetuate an increasingly outdated and inaccurate

stereotype of a crime-ridden and dysfunctional place. Some research participants believed that this could have a direct 'place disadvantaging' impact in damaging the employment prospects of local people.

As recounted by Mark Peel, the media tendency to distort the reality of disadvantaged areas to sensationalize news events is a familiar experience for Mount Druitt, as graphically exemplified by the instance of the so-called 'Bidwill riot' of 1981. As reported in the Daily Telegraph at the time, this involved '1000 boys and girls from rival schools [fighting] a bloody, no-holds barred battle that held a Sydney suburb in terror' and in the Sydney Morning Herald as 'a two and a half hour street brawl by knife- and chain-wielding schoolchildren spanning several suburbs'. According to Peel's investigation, however, not only was the event's scale substantially overstated by the press, but elements of it were directly stage-managed by media players, themselves. 'It is a strange kind of riot, brawl or battle ... that apparently produced no injuries serious enough to require medical treatment, no reports of property damage, and no arrests ...' (Peel 2003, p.19).

Arguably, in associating Mount Druitt with poor educational standards and other social problems, the media has helped to perpetuate stigmatization and prejudice as embodied in the following recent items:

Not long after Athens declared itself the cultural capital of the known world it was over-run by uncouth barbarians, namely the Macedonians, who then went on to conquer half of Asia. By way of perspective, it was a bit like if Woollahra had been taken over by the residents of Mt Druitt, who then went on to invade New Zealand. (Daily Telegraph 2012)

Charlotte Feldman, a member of the [Darling Point] action group, dismissed suggestions anyone had harassed Mrs Jones. 'This is not Mount Druitt. People know how to behave'. (Sydney Morning Herald 2012)

While not challenging the media's right to report criminal offences occurring in the area, some interviewees strongly objected to what they saw as the unnecessary and gratuitous reinforcement of negative images. One cited instance concerned a 2013 visit to Western Sydney by Julia Gillard when:

... the only people they interviewed in [the Mount Druitt] Mall were people who conformed to the stereotype (tattooed, wearing thongs, appearing drunk)—that's the story they wanted to tell. [Local people] ... do find it really distressing'. (NGO community worker/support provider)

As a result of such one-sided presentation of the area, it was reported by Housing NSW that 'some [young people contributing to a community consultation] claimed they were reluctant to admit where they live in job interviews and social situations' (Housing NSW 2007). The perceived experience of such discrimination was voiced directly by one research participant:

We've had this stigma put on us for years ... I wanted to get an apprenticeship. I sent away 35 applications ... Since I put Mount Druitt on there I was knocked back on every one. My last one—I put St Marys—I got that apprenticeship. (residents focus group participant)

As seen by research participants, the main 'print media' offenders tended to be the metropolitan papers, whereas it was said that 'the local newspaper tries to report positive stories'. Another community worker also concerned at the negative impact of stereotypical reporting was working with an organisation called 'Stronger Voice for Western Sydney' (<http://strongervoice4gws.org.au/>) set up to counter such images by covering 'good news' stories about the area.

## **5 THE ROLE OF HOUSING SYSTEMS AND MARKETS IN CONCENTRATING DISADVANTAGE**

### **5.1 The operation of the public housing system**

With public housing accounting for a quarter of all dwellings across Mount Druitt (higher proportions in some suburbs) the effect of tenancy allocation policies on area-wide social profiles is inevitably substantial. With tenancies now strictly rationed to 'greatest need' applicants, the allocation of public housing vacancies is a clearly a direct contributor to the concentration of disadvantage in Mount Druitt. Therefore, under current policy, the system very deliberately funnels highly disadvantaged people into tenancies.

The majority of those taking up public housing tenancies are people already living in the area (e.g. in unaffordable or otherwise unsatisfactory private rental). To some extent, however, public housing allocations in Mount Druitt involve in-migration of disadvantaged people from elsewhere in Sydney. For many people in urgent need of rehousing in other parts of the city, accepting a Mount Druitt vacancy will be their fastest route to rehousing. Also, as represented by some interviewees, there is a belief that Housing NSW rehouses tenants in Mount Druitt who have 'misbehaved' elsewhere.

In general, tenancy turnover in Mount Druitt public housing is relatively low although this is less true for that minority of the stock involving small flats in multi-unit blocks. Relatively rapid turnover in this form of accommodation is seen by Housing NSW as a symptom of a more general management problem. Across the portfolio as a whole, newly arising vacancies generally result from deaths, local transfers, incarceration or rent arrears evictions. Housing NSW interviewees believed that only a very small proportion could be attributed to 'aspirational moves' where former tenants exit to a 'better area'.

There is no doubt that current lettings policy operates to concentrate disadvantage in the public housing stock in Mount Druitt (and across the state). Nevertheless, as explained above, few vacancies arising in the Mount Druitt public housing stock will result from 'social sifting'—aspirational moves out of the area by more socially mobile residents. Similarly, relatively few public housing lettings in the area involve highly disadvantaged people drawn into Mount Druitt from elsewhere in Sydney. Therefore, it would be something of a caricature to portray the vacancy-generation and letting system in Mount Druitt as predominantly involving socially mobile out-movers replaced by highly disadvantaged in-movers.

### **5.2 The operation of private housing markets—market structure**

In discussing the role of the local housing market in relation to the concentration of disadvantage, we first need to consider the changing structure of the market. Notably, as shown in Table 1 the decade to 2011 saw private rental increasing its market share more quickly in Mount Druitt than elsewhere in Sydney. This tendency, likely to have been ongoing since 2011, has been at the expense of both home ownership and public housing.

Two local factors are likely to have contributed to the above dynamic. First, the ongoing disposal of public housing in the area—primarily motivated by the need to raise revenue (given the financially unsustainable condition of public housing, overall). As shown in Table 4, Mount Druitt area sales have been running at 60–70 homes per

year—around 1.5 per cent of total stock. While a few sales are to sitting tenants or to open market purchasers planning to live in the acquired property, the NSW Land & Housing Corporation estimates that 80 per cent involve a direct shift from public to private rental (albeit sometimes involving a transitional knock down and rebuild process).

**Table 4: Net impact of Housing NSW public housing disposal program, 2007–10**

Suburb	Dwelling stock		
	2007	2010	Difference
Bidwill	362	342	-20
Blackett	405	398	-7
Dharruk	996	957	-39
Emerton	687	659	-28
Hebersham	517	501	-16
Lethbridge Park	111	105	-6
Shalvey	225	215	-10
Tregear	590	563	-27
Whalan	803	782	-21
Willmot	347	324	-23
<i>All</i>	<i>5,043</i>	<i>4,846</i>	<i>-197</i>

Source: Housing NSW

The second factor contributing to the disproportionate growth of private rental housing in the area is the strong interest of investor landlords in the area. Interviewed in September 2013, local real estate agents estimated that investor purchases were at that time accounting for 60 per cent of all local sales—somewhat higher than the Sydney-wide figure (believed around 40%). As well as responding to favourable interest rates, this was attributed to expectations of particularly strong returns from an ‘undervalued’ market. It seems likely that a significant proportion of investor acquisition activity in Mount Druitt involves formerly owner occupied homes as well as purchases of formerly (publicly or privately) rented properties.

### **5.3 The operation of private housing markets—housing affordability**

How affordable is market housing in Mount Druitt? In simple dollar terms, house prices and rents remain fairly low by Sydney standards. As shown in Table 5, houses traded in Mount Druitt in 2011 typically fetched 41–65 per cent of the city-wide norm. Median rents were 73–88 per cent of the comparable figure for Sydney as a whole.

Again in the Sydney-wide context, however, both prices and rents rose more quickly in most Mount Druitt suburbs than across the city in the decade to 2011. This was especially so in the (relatively well-connected) suburb of Mount Druitt, as opposed to less accessible and/or more public housing-represented parts of the area. Hence, the area’s ‘affordability premium’ was being eroded during this period. In fact, defining ‘affordability’ in terms of ‘rental stress’ rates (low-income tenants paying rents equating to more than 30% of household income), the 2011 figure for Emerton (22% of relevant households) was slightly higher than the city-wide comparator (21%)—see Appendix 1.



Although specific ‘affordability’ comparator figures for 2001 are unavailable, interviewee accounts indicated that availability of low price private rental housing has contracted in recent years. A real estate agent perspective linked this with rising standards of private rental provision. A decade ago standard investor landlord practice was to prioritise buying a property cheaply, investing the minimum amount in making it lettable and renting it out at a relatively low price. Nowadays, however, landlords were said to be more inclined to upgrade purchased properties prior to letting and to work to higher standards—such as air conditioning.

**Table 5: House prices and rents in Mount Druitt**

Suburb	Median price— 3-bedroom house 2011		% change 2001–11	Median rent— 3-bedroom house 2011		% change 2001–11
	\$000)	% of city-wide value		\$ per week	% of city-wide value	
Bidwill	267	48	72	320	80	78
Blackett	230	41	54	300	75	71
Dharruk	286	52	63	325	81	76
Emerton	255	46	89	305	76	69
Hebersham	283	51	79	323	81	74
Lethbridge Park	235	42	68	300	75	67
Mount Druitt	363	65	81	350	88	84
Shalvey	277	50	78	320	80	78
Tregear	230	41	71	300	75	71
Whalan	250	45	75	300	75	67
Willmot	226	41	71	293	73	77
Sydney	555	100	59	400	100	67

Sources: House prices—APM; Rents—NSW Rental Bond Board

As noted in Chapter 1, the disadvantaged area housing market typology developed in the current research designates Emerton and surrounding suburbs as ‘isolate’ areas. The significantly lower house prices found in such areas suggests their detachment from the wider metropolitan property market. This appears partially borne out by the accounts of local stakeholders interviewed in the research. Those acquiring properties for owner occupation were believed to be overwhelmingly local in origin. House movers entering Mount Druitt from other parts of Sydney were considered more likely to do so via the rental market. This seems consistent with the message from Table 5 that rents are closer to (‘less detached from’) the city-wide norm than prices. However, as reported by real estate professionals, most recent investor purchasers have involved people based outside the area—mainly inner Sydney residents.

To the limited extent that Mount Druitt draws in-migrants from outside the area, the availability of low cost housing has clearly been a critical consideration. This is seen by some as a double-edged sword:

In some ways this is a problem—because Mount Druitt is affordable [it] attracts people with issues (NGO community worker/support provider).

In combination with the predominance of larger three-bedroom dwellings, low rents are believed to have been an underlying attraction factor for the area’s growing Pacific

Islander population. As regards renters moving into the area 'policy' may play a small role: many low-income households seeking to rent in inner Sydney are counselled by Housing NSW to migrate to more affordable areas.

As seen by one interviewee, the fundamental insecurity of private rental housing made its occupation by the many vulnerable tenants housed in Mount Druitt highly problematic. The same comment applied to the short term tenancies now sometimes offered in public housing. As such the terms on which rental housing is made available was considered as 'sustaining disadvantage'. Related to the point about private rental, real estate interviewees estimated that the average private tenancy duration in Mount Druitt was only 18 months to two years—lower than in 'higher status' suburbs. Whether this instability reflects landlord inclinations to 'cash in' their investments or tenants' inability to sustain tenancies is uncertain.

It is possible that Mount Druitt's expanding private rental provision (see Table 1) is compounding a dynamic which sees the area attracting low-income people on account of its growing supply of available and affordable housing. In this way, it could be argued that the operation of the local housing market is acting to concentrate disadvantage within the wider area. However, with rents 'catching up' with citywide norms (Table 5) and cheaper rent properties becoming increasingly scarce over the past decade (interviewee testimony), this is not necessarily the dominant story.

For most research participants commenting on the issue, the spatial distribution of disadvantage within Mount Druitt was largely synonymous with the distribution of public housing. However, this was not simply a matter of dwelling numbers. More densely built-up developments containing multi-unit blocks were considered generally more of an issue.

The spatial clustering of remaining public housing was widely felt to be problematic.

There's a need for further de-concentration of public housing. Otherwise Mount Druitt will not improve. (Local government officer)

As argued by one research participant such an approach could be beneficial in dispelling the poor reputation attaching to social housing estates:

The trick to getting rid of social housing stigma is to 'spread 'em around'.  
(State Government housing provider)

From the police perspective, for example, much lawlessness was partly attributed to problematic cultural norms and/or lack of exposure to positive role models. In this view, such problems would be less prevalent if housing for high needs people was more geographically dispersed: 'public housing concentration builds bad attitudes' and spatial concentration of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was seen as particularly problematic.

One dissenting contention was that 'de-concentrating' public housing through sales was undesirable where the result was simply to shift homes from public rental to private rental. In this view it would be preferable to vary the allocation policy so that not all public housing is let to the most disadvantaged groups.

## **6 POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS OR REMEDY DISADVANTAGE**

Associated with its longstanding status as a concentration of disadvantage, the Mount Druitt area has been subject to numerous place focused initiatives (PFIs) over the past 10–20 years. The most important ‘originating agency’ here has undoubtedly been the NSW State Government—especially in the guise of Housing NSW, but also through the Department of Community Services and NSW Police. Many such interventions have involved collaborative working with a range of local agencies. In addition, the past few years have seen many PFIs initiated in Mount Druitt by other agencies—especially by Blacktown Council.

This chapter discusses the kinds of interventions that have been implemented locally under this heading. As well as our stakeholder and resident interviews, we draw here on a number of Blacktown Council and Housing NSW documents including the BSC evaluation undertaken by UNSW.

### **6.1 Conceptualising Place Focused Initiatives**

In this section we adopt Randolph’s PFI concept under which such initiatives are defined as policy interventions with spatially focused impacts which are:

- ‘aimed at communities of interest ... [disadvantaged] target groups within the population’, while also
- distinct from ‘mainstream social welfare and economic policies’.

Randolph (2004, p.65).

While their effects are spatially focused, Australian PFIs do not generally conform to the European ‘area based’ policy model where ‘special measures’ are formally targeted on a place within a defined boundary (as in the case of, e.g. the UK’s New Deal for Communities program (Lawless et al. 2010)). Rather, the place-based impacts of Australian PFIs come about due to the local spatial concentration of relevant target groups. In Randolph’s terms therefore PFIs ‘operate in places for people’. This means that ‘they are primarily aimed at the problems facing groups within [localised] areas rather than the problems associated with living in these areas per se’ (Randolph 2004, p.65).

In seeking to list and classify recent ‘interventions’ impacting on Mount Druitt, there is a challenge stemming from the fact that many specific initiatives are often clustered under over-arching funding programs which have fostered highly diverse projects. In recent years two of the most important such programs have been:

- The NSW Government Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy (2004–06).
- The Housing NSW Building Stronger Communities program (2009–12).

While this study has not aimed to catalogue, comprehensively, Mount Druitt PFIs, we have listed those we believe to have been the most important in Appendix 2. As indicated in that table, relatively few of the identified initiatives have involved capital investment—such as large scale housing renewal. Rather, most have related to revenue funding for ‘social projects’ of various kinds—such as support services, community development, crime prevention. A key feature of many such projects has been their time-limited nature—an inherent feature of initiatives funded under overarching State Government programs of the kind listed above. For many research

participants this was seen as often problematic, since it conveyed the impression of state government interest in the area as ephemeral rather than sustained:

State government operates in political cycles—a ‘travelling roadshow’ will come to Mount Druitt ... stay for a couple of years and then disappear ... people have become really cynical about [such] ... programs. (Local Government Officer)

Several community workers believed that this cynicism among local residents often translated into a reluctance to participate in short-term programs, especially where such initiatives had been introduced by state or local government agencies:

[Mount Druitt] residents really hate, particularly, new services that come in. And you know how everything’s really project based and its short term now. It’s really interesting. Residents ... often won’t necessarily use that service unless they really have to, they really have a real trust and respect for organisations that have stuck it out in the long term. And really hate organisations that just come in and whack this program in and then leave. (NGO community worker/support provider)

As shown in Appendix 2, we have classed the majority of recent interventions in Mount Druitt as ‘for people’, while smaller numbers are construed as ‘for place’ and fewer still specifically ‘for housing’. The kinds of initiatives identified, and our proposed application of this classification, are exemplified in Table 6. Along with others, the interventions listed here are further discussed in Section 6.2.

**Table 6: Recent Place Focused Initiatives (PFIs) in Mount Druitt—Exemplifying the Classification**

Category	Intervention
For people	NSW Police—Youth on Track early intervention (crime prevention) program
For place	Blacktown Council—Construction of ‘community hub’ facilities
Housing-specific	Housing NSW— (limited) upgrades to housing stock (Shalvey)

Because some initiatives could be characterised as falling under two of the above headings (or even all three), use of this classification to structure a discussion on the specific interventions concerned is somewhat problematic. Hence, the following discussion distinguishes interventions in terms of whether these have primarily involved physical, socio-economic or governance matters. While recognising that some interventions such as the recently completed BSC program might include initiatives under each of these headings, the next sections look in turn at PFIs under these headings.

## 6.2 Types of intervention

### 6.2.1 *Physical initiatives*

Because they tend to be expensive in terms of up-front capital investment, physical initiatives to counter aspects of disadvantage in Mount Druitt have been relatively limited over the past few years. However, under its BSC program, Housing NSW has implemented substantial environmental works to remedy aspects of urban design militating against community safety (see Section 4.3.2). Some of this activity has been progressed via the Housing NSW Community Environment Project (CEP), a partnership with UTS and UWS formalised in 2011 as a program bringing together design teaching, student creativity and community engagement. Set to run for three

years, the CEP benefited from additional funding sourced from UTS and from the NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General.

Schemes designed under the CEP included community centre renovation, shopping centre re-design and road underpass re-design/replacement.

Implementation of CEP schemes was, in practice, found problematic because of the administrative complexities resulting from the range of stakeholders needing to be involved (e.g. roads department, planning) in addition to Housing NSW, and due to the requirement to secure formal approval through various channels. However, as seen by one informed local stakeholder 'the challenges around implementation of projects [have been] more about availability of funding to implement outcomes of CEP work than problems around approval process[es]'. Nevertheless, there was a view that being seen to progress physical projects helped to bolster community trust and engagement (although there were suggestions that residents becoming involved in such projects tended to be private owners or renters rather than (typically more socially excluded) public housing tenants).

Since it is a generator of revenue rather than a consumer of capital, the Housing NSW public housing de-concentration program is slightly different from other physical initiatives to remedy concentrated disadvantage. Fundamentally, the state government's need for such asset sales is dictated by the unsustainable finances of the public housing system as a whole. Targeting sales so as to 'de-concentrate' holdings in an area like Mount Druitt makes a virtue out of a necessity by helping to 'normalise' the housing tenure profile of localities. In order to progress sales, Housing NSW has needed to invest considerable resources in 'enabling' activity—the disaggregation of 'superlot' titles into individual titles without which sale would be impossible.

Outside of BSC, significant physical investment in community facilities has recently been implemented in Mount Druitt by Blacktown Council. In particular, the construction of community hub buildings has reportedly generated valuable benefits in providing sites for civic activities. For example, containing a library, meeting rooms and sports activity spaces, the recent-completed Mount Druitt hub provides a venue for Council-provided education and training programs—free tutoring and IT training for local residents. Although not as recently constructed, the Emerton Leisure Centre forms a well-equipped sports facility for residents local to that part of Mount Druitt, as well as a venue for mentoring and support activities. These have included council-provided employability programs targeted at the local ATSI community.

### *6.2.2 Socio-economic initiatives*

Both under the BSC program and separately, the past few years have seen a wide range of socio-economic and community regeneration projects implemented in Mount Druitt. Local programs implemented under this broad heading include initiatives focused on:

- education/employability
- crime prevention
- social inclusion and empowerment.

As regards the first of the above categories, a range of Learning, Education and Employment Development (LEED) projects were funded under BSC. These included Housing NSW grant-funded tutoring and literacy schemes delivered by Blacktown Youth College, as well as industry traineeships – including a scheme for Aboriginal people in the building trades.

In the Emerton context, another major local player in this arena is Jesuit Social Services (JSS). Schemes run from the JSS Emerton base include a retail training program, as well as an op shop and food co-operative which provides disadvantaged families with low cost healthy food.

Separate to the designing out crime initiatives outlined above, a number of recent and ongoing interventions have focused on crime prevention. Generally targeting young people, such schemes include the NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General Youth on Track program. This project, operated across Blacktown City municipality as one of a small number of sites across the state, is an intensive casework program for youth offenders rated as at serious risk of re-offending. Blacktown's selection results from the area's high ranking on the number of juvenile offenders judged at high risk of re-offending. An assigned case manager assesses the young person's needs, identifies relevant services and advocates on their behalf to make sure the services can be accessed.

A number of other youth-targeted programs can be seen as jointly inspired by crime prevention and social inclusion objectives. Notable examples include financial support for community groups such as the Pacific Islanders Mount Druitt Action Network (PIMDAN). Originally funded under the NSW Government Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy (2003–05), PIMDAN is an advocacy, lobbying and support provider agency dedicated to this fast growing minority community. Among other activities, PIMDAN works to promote community cohesion—especially as regards the common division between PI young people and their parents which reflects confusions around national and cultural identity. This generational divide has been seen as one factor contributing to disruptive behaviour by some PI youth in and around Mount Druitt.

Working through ethnic/cultural organisations like PIMDAN was described by interviewees as highly valuable in encouraging law-abiding behaviour among younger people:

Groups like PIMDAN have had a massive impact in getting these kids off the street ... [thanks to this] over the past five or so years the gang culture within Mount Druitt has diminished considerably ... I strongly believe these strategies and these groups help places like Mount Druitt and without them we'd be on the back foot. (Police/justice)

Another example of a youth project aimed at crime prevention and social inclusion has been a midnight basketball tournament for 12–18 year old 'at risk' youth, as initiated through BSC seed funding and run by the Uniting Church.

Social inclusion via tenancy sustainment is a major focus of the Housing NSW Mount Druitt community regeneration team. The team's remit is not limited to public rental housing. In seeking to achieve this objective, a major focus of activity is to link vulnerable people to appropriate support agencies.

### *6.2.3 Community empowerment and governance*

As seen by some, official initiatives to address the area's problems have, historically, tended to involve:

Government bring[ing] in pretty heavy handed interventions without consultation. (NGO community worker/support provider)

However, the past few years have seen a strong rhetoric of community participation around the design and implementation of PFIs in Mount Druitt. For example, one of the 'community regeneration principles' underlying the 2009 BSC Mount Druitt

Regeneration Partnership Plan was 'a strong commitment to partnerships with agencies and residents' (Housing NSW 2009, p.4).

As discussed above, community participation in PFIs such as designing out crime projects is seen as important. It is, however, recognised by key agencies such as Blacktown Council and Housing NSW that there is a broader need to promote community governance and empowerment in Mount Druitt. A particular local factor here is Mount Druitt's status as a sub-area within the much larger Blacktown municipality rather than existing as a municipal entity in its own right (see Section 1.1).

Initiated in the early 2000s, a 'community leadership' project formed an important element of the NSW Government's Mount Druitt Community Solutions and Crime Prevention program (as already mentioned above). This project identified 'already active citizens' who were offered a program of mentoring and training to build community capacity. The project aim was, therefore, to empower existing local figures 'to be more confident and effective in their work'. Through this program 37 residents benefited from short courses (some being TAFE-delivered) and other support. This is seen to have had a longer term pay-off in that:

We are now seeing a group of community leaders present in Mount Druitt, many of whom participated in [the community leadership program]. (Local government officer)

More recently, in 2008, the Community 2770 (or C2770) project was established. Taking its name from the Mount Druitt postcode, this project has been termed a 'neighbourhood management board' intended to 'provide a key co-ordination and advisory role to major new initiatives in the area ...' (Housing NSW 2008). In that its members included graduates of the community leadership program, the initiative built on the success of this earlier project. C2770 has some similarities with the Project 2168 initiative set up in Miller (Liverpool) in 1999 (<http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/community/our-community/living-in-2168>). C2770 has brought together a range of residents and local stakeholders. In its original form, the 30-person board was made up of resident members representing specific suburbs, together with stakeholder organisations involved across Mount Druitt or in specific places within the area.

Under the aegis of C2770 community groups and local stakeholders united around an area-wide campaign to tackle alcohol misuse and the development of a Mount Druitt Alcohol Action Plan. This reflects a community perspective that a key factor underlying many of Mount Druitt's social problems is the easy accessibility and excess consumption of alcohol. From the Much though the area appears reasonably well-provided with diverse retail outlets (see Section 4.2.2), several research participants noted the widespread availability of alcohol. 'Some supermarkets have half the space devoted to alcohol' (Local Authority officer). The legitimacy of the campaign was underpinned by a 2008/09 street poll finding that 95 per cent of those surveyed (185 people) 'thought too much alcohol was being drunk' (Blacktown Council presentation).

Campaign activities included consciousness-raising among target groups (e.g. through sponsorship of a youth video on the problem), as well as co-ordinated lobbying against applications for new liquor sales licences and/or extensions of existing licences.

Beyond its action to counter alcohol it appears to have been more difficult for C2770 to evoke such unity of purpose. However, it has recently adopted crime prevention, mental health and disability as its three top priority issues.

More generally, in a bid for greater effectiveness, the group was restructured in 2013 under a smaller board with the aim of focusing on issues relevant to the whole of Mount Druitt rather than more localised matters.

### **6.3 Leadership and co-ordination**

As noted above, most of Mount Druitt's identified PFIs have been initiated and funded by State Government agencies, with Blacktown Council the other main initiating agency. Commonwealth funding has provided a significant contribution to certain projects.

For many Mount Druitt service providers and other stakeholders inter-agency collaboration was certainly wide-ranging as regards operational practice. Some agencies had clearly built up strong relationships and understandings. For example, Police action to tackle domestic violence and youth disorder evidently involved extensive joint working with a wide range of statutory agencies and NGOs. For one NGO interviewee, local service provider partnerships were 'wonderful'. On the other hand, co-ordination between NGO service providers and support agencies—especially those involved in youth services—was seen as weak by some:

Interagency collaboration does happen but it doesn't happen well. (State Government Housing Provider)

Organisations just focus on their own programs, not working with each other. (NGO community worker/support provider)

People talk about working in partnership but they wouldn't have a clue [what that means]. (anonymous)

One challenge to effective partnership working in Mount Druitt, it was suggested, is the sheer scale of the area; such collaborations may be easier to build in smaller localities. Especially where NGOs were concerned, development of strong inter-organisational relationships was also said to be compromised by the typically short term nature of funding programs (e.g. BSC) which limits scope for such joint working to be developed and embedded<sup>1</sup>.

Some research participants expressed concerns that there was a lack of local leadership which had not been fully addressed through the establishment of C2770. Instead, as one participant saw it, too much reliance continued to be placed on Housing NSW:

If Housing walks away nothing happens. (State government housing provider)

While local government might potentially provide such leadership, the scope for such a municipal role is constrained by the limited autonomy, funding and powers available to municipalities under the Australian constitution.

---

<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it should be acknowledged that far from all government inputs into Mount Druitt social and welfare projects are short-term or time limited. For example, Family and Community Services (FACS) and other state agencies provide ongoing funding for facilities and programs such as neighbourhood centres, youth services, children and family services, Aboriginal support services, child protection, disability support services, housing services.



## 7 CONCLUSION

While Mount Druitt still struggles to shed its historic image as a 'problematic place', that is clearly far from the reality of life in the area for most residents. For some, nevertheless, the area imposes significant 'costs' through its stigmatisation and other more concrete aspects of place disadvantage, particularly transport disadvantage, and serves as home more by necessity than by choice.

In its housing market structure and its high scores on various aspects of social disadvantage, Mount Druitt continues to stand out as unlike the city of which it forms a part. Over time, however, it has been becoming gradually more 'normalised' in terms of its local housing system and gradually more spatially integrated with the expanding metropolis. During the decade to 2011 'normalisation' was seen in terms of a more rapidly improving employment profile than Sydney, as well as house prices and rents rising at relatively high rates.

With respect to policy interventions, there was a widespread view among research participants that Mount Druitt was not under-serviced. However, also coming out of interviews, particularly with community workers, was a sense that many community members had become cynical about short-term programs introduced by state and local government agencies, and were often choosing not to participate in them as a result. Related to this, several interviewees believed that the most effective programs in Mount Druitt in recent years had tended to be those that attempted to build leadership capacity in the local community, with these programs having typically benefited from much higher levels of community buy in.

Major challenges for Mount Druitt and Emerton in the future will include ensuring that the local population benefits from the nearby development of employment zones and that the area does not suffer from a continued rundown of public housing. And if the ongoing 'de-concentration' of public housing results only in a transfer into private rental use the transience typically associated with this latter tenure may detract from rather than enhance local social capital.

## REFERENCES

- ABC (2009) Schools worried by Gillard's ranking website; *ABC*, 10 November.
- Atkinson, R. & Kintrea, K. (2001) *Neighbourhoods and social exclusion: The research and policy implications of neighbourhood effects*; University of Glasgow: Glasgow.
- Blacktown Council (2013) Blacktown Council Social Plan 2012—Mount Druitt Precinct—A Snapshot; Unpublished appendix to main report.
- Daily Telegraph (2012) Laziness the key to Greek plan for world domination; *Daily Telegraph* 25 August.
- Duarte, O.C. (2012) Can design support community safety and crime prevention programmes in areas of socio-economic disadvantage? *Crime Prevention and Community Safety* Vol. 15(3) pp223–39.
- Galster, G. (2009) *Neighbourhood social mix: Theory, evidence and implications for policy and planning*, Paper presented at International Workshop at Technion University 'Planning For/with People', Haifa, Israel, June 2009.
- Gleeson, B. & Randolph, B. (2002) Social disadvantage and planning in the Sydney context, *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol. 20(1), pp.101–07.
- Housing NSW (2009) Regeneration Partnership Plan – Mount Druitt; Housing NSW (Unpublished).
- Peel, M. (2003) *The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Randolph, B. (2004) 'Social inclusion and place-focused initiatives in Western Sydney: A review of current practice', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 39(1), pp.63–78.
- Sydney Morning Herald (2009) Teachers to get tough on league table plans; *SMH* 13 July.
- Sydney Morning Herald (2010) Harrowing film opens our eyes to child abuse; *SMH* 8 September.
- Sydney Morning Herald (2012) Locals in a lather over Moran heir's shindigs; *SMH* 25 February.
- Webber, A. & Legg, S. (2013) *Over-representation of Crime in Public Housing*; NSW Attorney General and Justice Department.
- Woodward, R. (1997) Paradise Lost; *Australian Planner*, Vol 34(1), pp25–29.

## APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Table A1: Anonymised list of interviewees

Interviewee type / background	Number of interviewees
NSW Government Police/Justice	Two officers
NSW Government Housing Provider	Five officers
Local Government	Two officers; one councillor
NGO community worker/support provider	Five representatives from five different organisations
Local real estate agent	Two estate agents
Local community	Two Emerton residents
Other	One academic researcher
Total	Twenty interviewees (12 interviews/meetings)

## **APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDY AREA PROFILE: EMERTON**

This document has been prepared as part of a multi-year research project being undertaken by researchers at the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland and Swinburne University, funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute entitled '*Addressing concentrations of disadvantage*'.

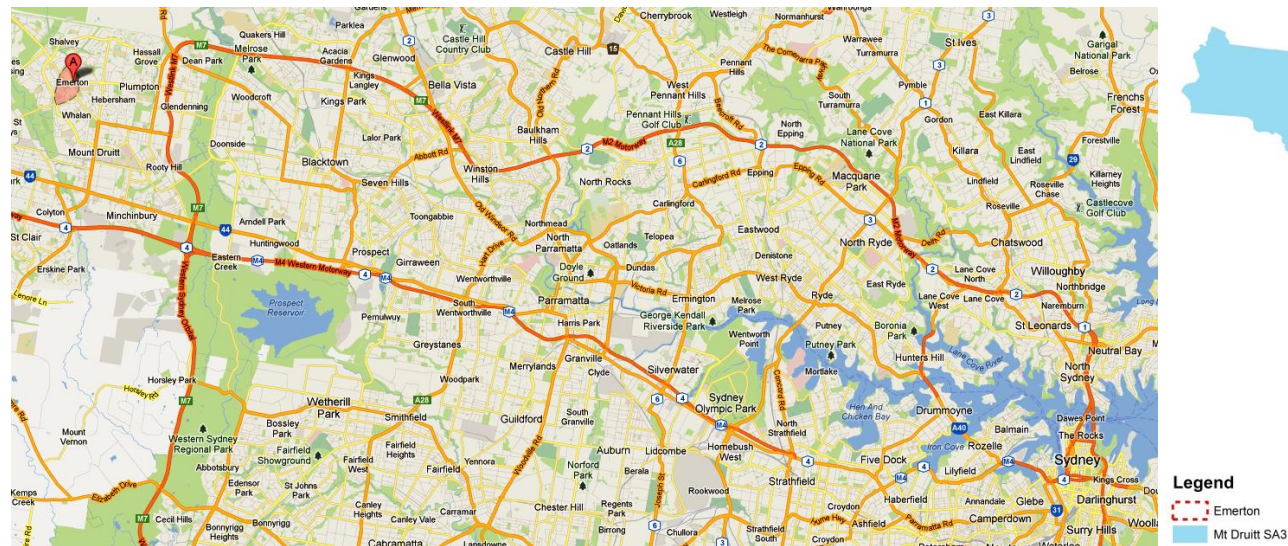
Document prepared by City Futures Research Centre, University of NSW.

May 2013.

This series of documents presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of the case study suburbs selected for further qualitative fieldwork to take place. Each document comprises five sections: (1) the disadvantaged typology as identified through an earlier analysis; (2) 2011 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage; (3) a 2011 community profile, which includes main demographic and socio-economic statistics of the target suburb; (4) a time-series analysis of changes to main demographic and socio-economic statistics between 2001 and 2011; and (5) thematic maps highlighting transport connectivity, tenure profile, unemployment rate, low-income households and early school leavers of the target suburb using 2011 Census and other data.

Emerton is an outer-ring suburb in Sydney, located within the Local Government Area of Blacktown and the Level 3 Statistical Area (SA3) of Mount Druitt, approximately 50 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD (see figure A1). In 2011, it had a population of 2391 residents.

**Figure A1: Emerton location within Greater Sydney**



Source: Google Maps

### *Disadvantaged area typology category*

Type 1: High on young people and single parent households; high on social renting

**Table A2: Study area—Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) score**

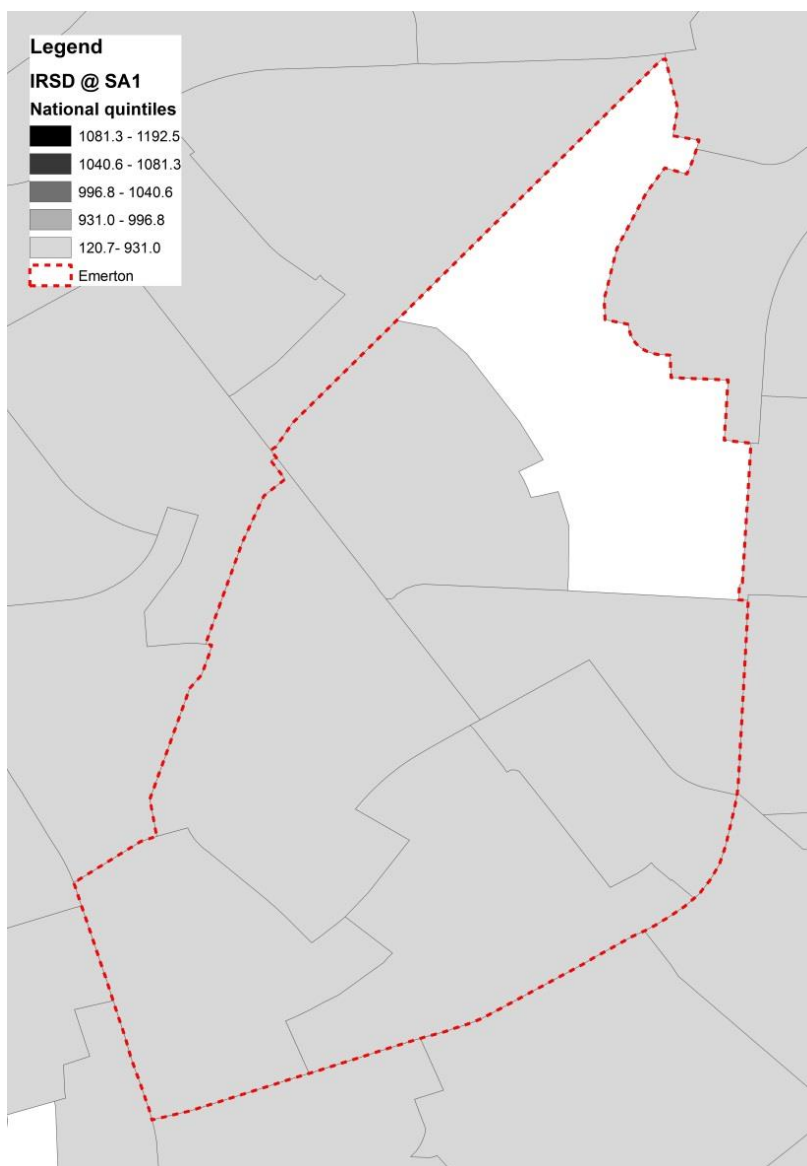
Geography	Name	SEIFA IRSD
Statistical Local Area	Blacktown (C)—South-west	890
State Suburb	Emerton	764.6

In 2011, Emerton was a relatively disadvantaged suburb, with the majority of the SA1s in the suburb belonging to the lowest quintile of SEIFA Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD) within Australia. As shown in Table A2, Emerton's SEIFA score was lower than that for the wider Blacktown SLA which encompasses the area.

A low IRSD signifies the prevalence of the following characteristics:

- low level of income
- high level of unemployment
- high proportion of workers in low-skilled occupation
- low rent
- overcrowding
- high proportion of families with children under 15 and jobless parents
- high proportion of single-parent families
- high number of carless households
- high proportion of non-age-related disability
- poor English proficiency
- high number of separated/divorced residents
- high proportion of households with no or dialup internet connection.

**Figure A2: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas—Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Emerton SSC, 2011**



Source: 2011 SEIFA IRSD

### Community profile

The suburb of Emerton is located within the wider area known as Mount Druitt and as such comprises only a small proportion of the Mount Druitt SA3. It is relatively small in physical size and in population but has a relatively large indigenous population. Its population is also considerably young, with over one-quarter aged 0–14 years compared to 19.2 per cent at the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA) level (see Table A3). It is economically disadvantaged, with median weekly individual income across the suburb about two-thirds that of the Sydney GMA median.

**Table A3: Emerton demographic profile in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metro area	
Total population	2,393		103,728		4,391,673	
Males	1,198 (50.0%)	50.0%	51,099 (49.3%)	49.3%	2,162,219 (49.2%)	49.2%
Females	1,196 (50.0%)	50.0%	52,629 (50.7%)	50.7%	2,229,454 (50.8%)	50.8%
ATSI	149 (6.2%)	6.2%	4,700 (4.5%)	4.5%	54,746 (1.2%)	1.2%
Median age	30		31		36	
% aged 0–14 years	633 (26.5%)	26.5%	26,699 (25.7%)	25.7%	843,218 (19.2%)	19.2%
% aged 65 or older	255 (10.7%)	10.7%	8,788 (8.5%)	8.5%	564,451 (12.9%)	12.9%
% aged 0–4 years	216 (9.0%)	9.0%	8,936 (8.6%)	8.6%	298,900 (6.8%)	6.8%
% aged 5–11 years	295 (12.3%)	12.3%	12429 (12.0%)	12.0%	382,760 (8.7%)	8.7%
% aged 12–17 years	269 (11.2%)	11.2%	10655 (10.3%)	10.3%	325,757 (7.4%)	7.4%
% who needed assistance with core activity	152 (6.4%)	6.4%	5,763 (5.6%)	5.6%	192,325 (4.4%)	4.4%
Median weekly individual income	\$363		\$471		\$619	



Despite a strong Indigenous and Pacific Islander presence, Emerton is still predominantly Anglo-centric, with more than half of the population being of Australian or English ancestries (see Table A4). It also has a higher proportion of the population born in Australia and speak English at home than compared to Sydney GMA (though only marginally). It does, however, have strong representation from residents born in the Pacific Island nations and in south-east Asia (e.g. the Philippines).

**Table A4: Emerton ethnic profile in comparative context**

	Suburb			SA3			Greater metropolitan area		
Top 5 ancestries <sup>1</sup>	Australian	659	27.6%	Australian	26,161	25.2%	English	1,132,105	25.8%
	English	618	25.8%	English	22,090	21.3%	Australian	1,130,300	25.7%
	Samoan	148	6.2%	Filipino	12,435	12.0%	Irish	365,460	8.3%
	Irish	143	6.0%	Irish	4,781	4.6%	Chinese	358,064	8.2%
	Cook Islander	110	4.6%	Indian	4,673	4.5%	Scottish	276,988	6.3%
Top 5 countries of birth	Australia	1,448	60.6%	Australia	59,178	57.1%	Australia	2,632,544	59.9%
	New Zealand	171	7.2%	Philippines	9,329	9.0%	England	151,996	3.5%
	Philippines	78	3.3%	New Zealand	3,410	3.3%	China ^	148,559	3.4%
	Cook Islands	68	2.8%	Fiji	2,927	2.8%	India	87,873	2.0%
	Samoa	53	2.2%	India	2,048	2.0%	New Zealand	84,949	1.9%
Top 5 languages spoken at home	English	1,581	66.1%	English	59,504	57.4%	English	2,732,448	62.2%
	Samoan	100	4.2%	Tagalog	5,950	5.7%	Arabic	178,664	4.1%
	Tongan	66	2.8%	Arabic	4,031	3.9%	Mandarin	133,888	3.0%
	Maori (Cook Island)	56	2.3%	Hindi	3,532	3.4%	Cantonese	132,135	3.0%
	Arabic	50	2.1%	Filipino	3,116	3.0%	Vietnamese	85,028	1.9%
Top 5 religious affiliation	Western Catholic	663	27.7%	Western Catholic	35,799	34.5%	Western Catholic	1,208,757	27.5%
	Anglican Church of Australia	410	17.1%	Anglican Church of Australia	15,554	15.0%	No Religion, nfd	756,138	17.2%
	No Religion, nfd	320	13.4%	No Religion, nfd	10,023	9.7%	Anglican Church of Australia	707,790	16.1%
	Islam	131	5.5%	Islam	8,094	7.8%	Islam	208,149	4.7%
	Uniting Church	120	5.0%	Hinduism	3,792	3.7%	Buddhism	180,421	4.1%

^ Note: excludes Taiwan and the Special Administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau. <sup>1</sup> Based on multiple responses.

Less than half of Emerton's population aged 15 and older were in the workforce, less than compared to the rest of the SA3 and the Sydney GMA (see Table A5). Overall, there were lower proportions of the population aged 15 and older who were employed in full- or part-time jobs, and as such the unemployment rate was comparatively high (more than twice that of the Sydney GMA level). Youth unemployment is also significant higher than in the SA3 and the Sydney GMA levels. Of those who were employed, the majority were twice as likely to be in low-skilled/low-status jobs (61.2%) than other Sydney GMA residents (28.0%).

**Table A5: Emerton socio-economic profile in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% employed full-time <sup>2</sup>	454	25.8%	27,123	35.2%	1,358,192	38.3%
% employed part-time	180	10.2%	10,002	13.0%	584,773	16.5%
% employed but away from work <sup>2</sup>	59	3.4%	2,799	3.6%	120,300	3.4%
% unemployed <sup>3</sup>	106	13.3%	4,097	9.3%	125,588	5.7%
Participation rate <sup>2</sup>	799	45.4%	44,021	57.1%	2,188,853	61.7%
% in low-skilled/low status jobs <sup>4</sup>	425	61.2%	19,293	48.3%	576,817	28.0%
% youth (15-24) unemployed <sup>5</sup>	236	49.5%	1,526	18.3%	41,585	18.9%
Managers <sup>4</sup>	26	3.8%	2,476	6.2%	273,916	13.3%
Professional <sup>4</sup>	55	7.9%	4,767	11.9%	526,563	25.5%
Technicians and Trades Workers <sup>4</sup>	94	13.6%	5,385	13.5%	251,471	12.2%
Community and Personal Service Workers <sup>4</sup>	70	10.1%	3,875	9.7%	182,059	8.8%
Clerical and Administrative Workers <sup>4</sup>	83	12.0%	6,921	17.3%	333,435	16.2%
Sales Workers <sup>4</sup>	52	7.5%	3,686	9.2%	185,951	9.0%
Machinery Operators and Drivers <sup>4</sup>	148	21.4%	6,280	15.7%	118,136	5.7%
Labourers <sup>4</sup>	137	19.8%	5,623	14.1%	151,326	7.3%

<sup>2</sup> % of population aged 15 or older. <sup>3</sup> number of unemployed persons as % of the total labour force. <sup>4</sup> % of employed persons aged 15 or older. <sup>5</sup> % of youths aged 15–24 years in the labour force.

Lower proportions of Emerton did unpaid domestic work than other Sydney GMA residents (see Table A6). Similar proportions provided unpaid childcare or cared for a person with disability. Emerton residents were half as likely to have done any voluntary work in the week prior to the 2011 Census.

**Table A6: Emerton incidence of domestic work, personal care or voluntary work—in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who did unpaid domestic work	927	38.7%	45,646	44.0%	2,399,830	54.6%
% who provided unpaid child care	498	20.8%	22,972	22.1%	969,456	22.1%
% who provided unpaid care for a person with disability	212	8.9%	8,647	8.3%	384,705	8.8%
% who did voluntary work	145	6.1%	7,167	6.9%	535,281	12.2%

Two-thirds of all work/school journeys by Emerton residents were by private car, similar to the rest of the SA# though higher than the Sydney GMA (see Table A7). Residents were half as likely to have used public transport or walked to work/school, partly due to the lack of access to a local railway station and limited bus services in the suburb.

**Table A7: Emerton travel to work data in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who travelled to work by car <sup>6</sup>	460	66.4%	26,912	67.4%	1,200,502	58.2%
% who travelled to work by train <sup>6</sup>	34	4.9%	3,379	8.5%	187,759	9.1%
% who travelled to work by bus <sup>6</sup>	11	1.6%	509	1.3%	107,895	5.2%
% who walked to work <sup>6</sup>	14	2.0%	559	1.4%	84,555	4.1%

<sup>6</sup> % of persons 15 or older who travelled to work or school

Very low proportions of Emerton residents had high levels of educational attainment. As shown in Table A8, only one-fifth completed high school (less than half the Sydney GMA rate), one in eight had post-school vocational qualification (again, half that of the Sydney GMA rate), and only 3.2 per cent have attained tertiary qualifications (7.5 times lower than the Sydney GMA level, and about one-quarter that of the Mount Druitt SA3 level).

**Table A8: Emerton educational attainment breakdown in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who left school at Year 10 or before <sup>7</sup>	849	35.5%	31,425	40.8%	1,061,520	29.9%
% who left school at Year 12 <sup>7</sup>	521	21.8%	32,489	42.2%	1,953,412	55.0%
% with vocational qualification <sup>7</sup>	330	13.8%	17,075	22.2%	856,143	24.1%
% with tertiary qualification <sup>7</sup>	77	3.2%	8,868	11.5%	856,096	24.1%

<sup>7</sup> % of persons aged 15 or older

As shown in Table A9, Emerton does not have a transient population, with the majority having lived in the same home for at least five years.

**Table A9: Emerton incidence of residential mobility in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who lived at different address 1 year ago <sup>8</sup>	221	10.2%	11,901	12.6%	588,905	14.4%
% who lived at different address 5 years ago <sup>8</sup>	624	28.7%	29,982	31.6%	1,522,619	37.2%

<sup>8</sup> % of total population aged five years or older

There were only 846 occupied private dwellings in Emerton in 2011 (see Table A10). Housing cost was relatively cheap, with median mortgage on-quarter lower than the Sydney GMA median and rent one-third lower. As such, this has attracted a higher proportion of households with low income (one-quarter of all households, compared to 16.9% at Sydney GMA), with most not experiencing rental stress.

**Table A10: Emerton household income and housing costs in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
No. of occupied private dwellings	846		35,578		1,720,333	
Average household size	2.8		2.9		2.6	
Median monthly mortgage repayment	\$1,517		\$1,863		\$2,167	
Median weekly rent	\$220		\$250		\$351	
% household with weekly income less than \$600	226	26.7%	6,802	19.1%	289,974	16.9%
% household with weekly income more than \$3,000	18	2.1%	2,384	6.7%	243,749	14.2%
% low-income household paying more than 30% in rent <sup>9</sup>	49	21.7%	1,577	23.2%	60,879	21.0%

<sup>9</sup> % of low-income households with weekly household income < \$600.

Emerton had a very different family profile than compared to Sydney GMA, with higher proportions of single-parent families (more than twice compared to Sydney GMA) and other family households (almost two compared to Sydney GMA) and lower proportions of couple families with or without children (see Table A11). The strong presence of other family households compared to Sydney GMA reflects the concentration of residents from Pacific Island backgrounds, cultures where it is more common for several related families to share a home than in Anglo-centric cultures.

**Table A11: Emerton household type breakdown in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
Couple family household with children	214	25.3%	13,415	37.7%	567,149	33.0%
Couple household without children	103	12.2%	5,183	14.6%	375,858	21.8%
Single-parent family	205	24.2%	6,730	18.9%	186,159	10.8%
Other family household	101	11.9%	3,696	10.4%	107,420	6.2%
Lone person household	166	19.6%	4,776	13.4%	343,812	20.0%
Group household	22	2.6%	635	1.8%	64,949	3.8%

Emerton is a relatively low density suburb, with four-fifths of occupied private dwellings being detached houses (compared to less than two-thirds in Sydney GMA)—see Table A12. As such, there were lower proportions of other dwelling types, especially units/flats/apartments (one-quarter the Sydney GMA proportion).

**Table A12: Emerton housing type breakdown in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% Detached houses <sup>10</sup>	669	79.1%	29,228	82.2%	1,041,856	60.6%
% Semi-detached dwellings <sup>10</sup>	123	14.5%	4,171	11.7%	217,779	12.7%
% Unit/flat/apartment <sup>10</sup>	53	6.3%	2,112	5.9%	453,716	26.4%
% Other dwelling type <sup>10</sup>	0	0.0%	33	0.1%	9,541	0.6%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

Emerton has a high social housing presence (one-quarter of all occupied private dwellings, and four times the Sydney GMA level), and as such there were lower proportions of full ownership (almost half the Sydney GMA level) and owned with mortgage—see Table A13.

**Table A13: Emerton housing tenure breakdown in comparative context**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% Fully owned <sup>10</sup>	141	16.7%	6,551	18.4%	496,459	28.9%
% Owned with mortgage <sup>10</sup>	232	27.4%	13,903	39.1%	579,544	33.7%
% Private rental <sup>10</sup>	197	23.3%	7,290	20.5%	423,623	24.6%
% Social rental <sup>10</sup>	203	24.0%	5,219	14.7%	84,648	4.9%
% Other tenure type <sup>10</sup>	19	2.2%	582	1.6%	34,544	2.0%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

### Time-series profile

The 2001 data was aggregated using data downloaded at Collection District (CD) level. Four CDs were aggregated: 1270405, 1270407, 1270508, and 1270601.

Contrary to the Sydney GMA trend, there was a net population loss of around 800 residents in Emerton between 2001 and 2011 – see Table A14. Losses were most noticeable amongst the younger cohorts (and most likely young families), with the number of children aged 0–14 having decreased by 300. The proportion of older residents (65 and older) doubled during this period.

**Table A14: Emerton population change 2001–11 in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
Total population	3,204		2,393		3,997,321		4,391,673	
Median age	<i>Data not available</i>		30		<i>Data not available</i>		36	
% ATSI	172	5.4%	149	6.2%	38,749	1.0%	54,746	1.2%
% aged 0–14 years	942	29.5%	633	26.5%	798,826	20.0%	843,218	19.2%
% aged 65 or older	170	5.3%	255	10.7%	469,176	11.7%	564,451	12.9%
% aged 0–4 years	290	9.1%	216	9.0%	265,175	6.6%	298,900	6.8%
% aged 5–11 years	461	14.4%	295	12.3%	377,011	9.4%	382,760	8.7%
% aged 12–17 years	369	11.6%	269	11.2%	316,759	7.9%	325,757	7.4%

As shown in Table A15, the cultural makeup of Emerton changed little in the period 2001–11, with Australia and New Zealand-born (mainly Pacific Islander) residents continuing to dominate. The language profile also changed little, with English continuing to be spoken in the majority of homes, followed by very low proportions of other languages, most noticeably Samoan.

**Table A15: Emerton ethnicity change 2001–11 in comparative context**

	Suburb						Greater metropolitan area					
	2001			2011			2001			2011		
Top 5 countries of birth *	Australia	2,064	64.4%	Australia	1,448	60.6%	Australia	245,4424	62.2%	Australia	2,632,544	59.9%
	New Zealand	147	4.6%	New Zealand	171	7.2%	The UK	18,3991	4.7%	England	151,996	3.5%
	The UK	136	4.2%	Philippines	78	3.3%	China ^	82,029	2.1%	China ^	148,559	3.4%
	Philippines	76	2.4%	Cook Islands	68	2.8%	New Zealand	81,963	2.1%	India	87,873	2.0%
	Fiji	56	1.7%	Samoa	53	2.2%	Viet Nam	61,423	1.6%	New Zealand	84,949	1.9%
Top 5 languages spoken at home #	English	2,254	70.1%	English	1,581	66.1%	English	2,625,386	66.5%	English	2,732,448	62.2%
	Samoan	103	3.2%	Samoan	100	4.2%	Arabic	142,453	3.6%	Arabic	178,664	4.1%
	Tagalog	67	2.1%	Tongan	66	2.8%	Cantonese	116,341	2.9%	Mandarin	133,888	3.0%
	Arabic	53	1.6%	Maori (Cook Island)	56	2.3%	Greek	83,915	2.1%	Cantonese	132,135	3.0%
	Spanish	49	1.5%	Arabic	50	2.1%	Italian	79,612	2.0%	Vietnamese	85,028	1.9%

\* Note: The number of countries listed in the 2001 Census tables represents the 31 most common birthplaces across Australia only.

^ Note: excludes Taiwan and the Special Administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

# Note: The number of languages listed in the 2001 Census tables represents the 34 most common languages spoken at home across Australia only.



Similar proportions of Emerton's population aged 15 and older participated in the workforce in 2001 and in 2011, with full-time and part-time employment rates remaining similar, as did the unemployment rate while youth unemployment rate doubled despite fewer youths being unemployed. The proportion of workers employed in low-skilled/low-status jobs declined, though not the same extent as witnessed in Sydney GMA—see Table A16.

**Table A16: Emerton socio-economic change over time in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% employed full-time <sup>2</sup>	634	28.2%	454	25.8%	1,227,661	39.0%	1,358,192	38.3%
% employed part-time <sup>2</sup>	260	11.6%	180	10.2%	532,740	16.9%	584,773	16.5%
% employed by away from work <sup>2</sup>	<i>Data not available</i>		59	3.4%	<i>Data not available</i>		120,300	3.4%
% unemployed <sup>3</sup>	156	14.1%	106	13.3%	118,134	6.1%	125,588	5.7%
Participation rate <sup>2</sup>	1,110	49.3%	799	45.4%	1,934,359	61.4%	2,188,853	61.7%
% in low-skilled/low status jobs <sup>4</sup>	782	81.6%	425	61.2%	1,016,115	55.9%	576,817	28.0%
% youth (15–24) unemployed <sup>5</sup>	59	23.9%	49	49.5%	37,083	10.9%	41,585	18.9%

<sup>2</sup> % of population aged 15 or older.

<sup>3</sup> number of unemployed persons as % of the total labour force.

<sup>4</sup> % of employed persons aged 15 or older.

<sup>5</sup> % of youths aged 15–24 years in the labour force.

The proportion of early school leavers residing in Emerton declined between 2001 and 2011 (see Table A17). This decline in low educational attainment, however, was not complemented with increases in high school completion or post-school qualification attainment, with similar proportions of population with Year 12 or vocational qualifications. The proportion of residents aged 15 and older with tertiary qualification increased by almost 50 per cent, though was still significantly lower than Sydney GMA.

**Table A17: Emerton change over time in educational attainment in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% who left school at Year 10 or before <sup>7</sup>	1,236	54.9%	849	35.5%	1,164,309	37.0%	1,061,520	29.9%
% who left school at Year 12 <sup>7</sup>	473	21.0%	521	21.8%	1,397,689	44.4%	1,953,412	55.0%
% with vocational qualification <sup>7</sup>	331	14.7%	330	13.8%	698,790	43.2%	856,143	24.1%
% with tertiary qualification <sup>7</sup>	43	1.9%	77	3.2%	518,839	32.1%	856,096	24.1%

<sup>7</sup> % of persons aged 15 or older.

**Table A18: Emerton change in household size and residential mobility 2001–11 in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
No. of occupied private dwellings	996		826		1,438,394		1,720,333	
Average household size	3.2		2.8		2.8		2.6	
% at same address 5 years ago <sup>8</sup>	1,574	49.1%	1,349	62.0%	1,925,868	48.2%	2,319,489	56.7%
% at different address 5 years ago <sup>8</sup>	1,103	34.4%	624	28.7%	1,551,851	38.8%	1,522,619	37.2%
% balance <sup>8</sup>	527	16.4%	420	17.6%	254,427	6.4%	250,665	6.1%

<sup>8</sup> % of total population aged five years or older.

Emerton's net population loss during 2001–11 is reflected in the fewer number of occupied private dwellings in the suburb and a lower proportion of the population having a different address five years prior.

Population decline, especially amongst young children, is reflected in the lower proportion of couple families with children (see Table A19). This decline is slightly offset by increases in other family households and a slight increase in lone person households.

**Table A19: Emerton household type breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
Couple family household with children	355	36.9%	214	25.3%	516,969	37.8%	567,149	33.0%
Couple household without children	170	17.7%	103	12.2%	332,080	24.3%	375,858	21.8%
Single-parent family household	265	27.5%	205	24.2%	154,133	11.3%	186,159	10.8%
Other family household	15	1.6%	101	11.9%	21,259	1.6%	107,420	6.2%
Lone person household	154	16.0%	166	19.6%	305,672	22.4%	343,812	20.0%
Group household	23	2.4%	22	2.6%	59,243	4.3%	64,949	3.8%

The majority of loss in occupied private dwellings is accounted for by loss of detached houses in the suburb, with slight increases in semi-detached and higher density dwellings (see Table A20).

**Table A20: Emerton housing type breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% Detached houses <sup>10</sup>	834	79.1%	669	79.1%	907,195	63.1%	1,041,856	60.6%
% Semi-detached dwellings <sup>10</sup>	110	10.4%	123	14.5%	162,320	11.3%	217,779	12.7%
% Unit/flat/apartment <sup>10</sup>	46	4.4%	53	6.3%	343,518	23.9%	453,716	26.4%
% Other dwelling type <sup>10</sup>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11,896	0.8%	9,541	0.6%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

Losses in occupied private dwellings resulted in declines in the number and proportion of social housing in the suburb, but also declines in the number and proportion of fully owned private dwellings during 2001–11. Private rental experienced the biggest increase and is now at a similar level compared to Sydney GMA (see Table A21).

**Table A21: Emerton housing tenure breakdown change 2001–11 in comparative context**

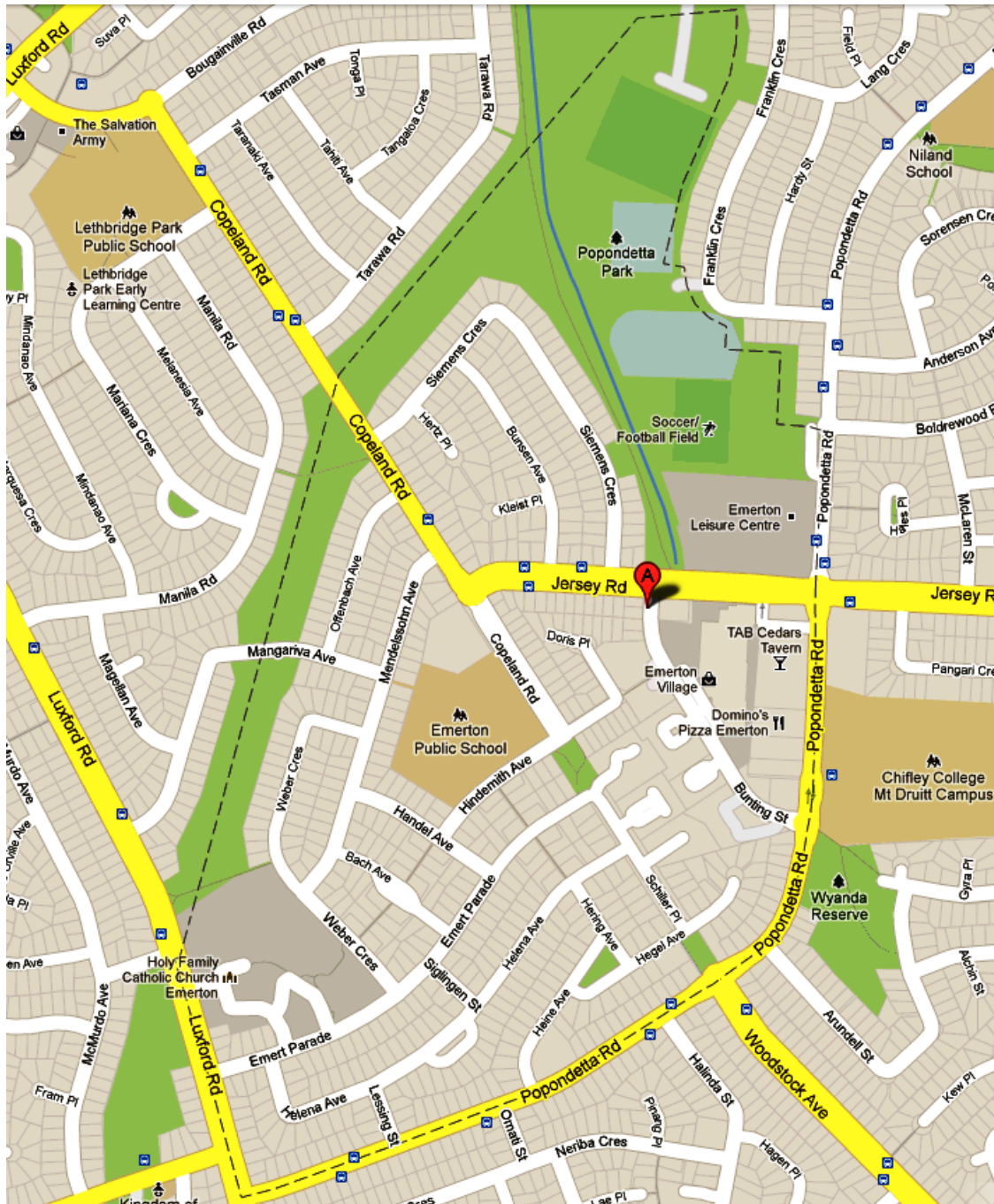
	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% Fully owned <sup>10</sup>	223	22.4%	141	16.7%	561,232	39.0%	496,459	28.9%
% Owned with mortgage <sup>10</sup>	245	24.6%	232	27.4%	329,158	22.9%	579,544	33.7%
% Private rental <sup>10</sup>	175	17.6%	197	23.3%	338,945	23.6%	423,623	24.6%
% Social rental <sup>10</sup>	266	26.7%	203	24.0%	72,724	5.1%	84,648	4.9%
% Other tenure type <sup>10</sup>	21	2.1%	19	2.2%	38,913	2.7%	34,544	2.0%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

### *Thematic mapping*

Emerton is a relatively small suburb dominated by low-density housing. It is bounded by Popondetta Road to the south & east, Popondetta Park to the north, with Jersey and Copeland Roads being the main thoroughfare through the suburb (see Figure A3). It has a number of notable low facilities, including the Emerton Leisure Centre, Emerton Public School, and the Holy Family Catholic Church.

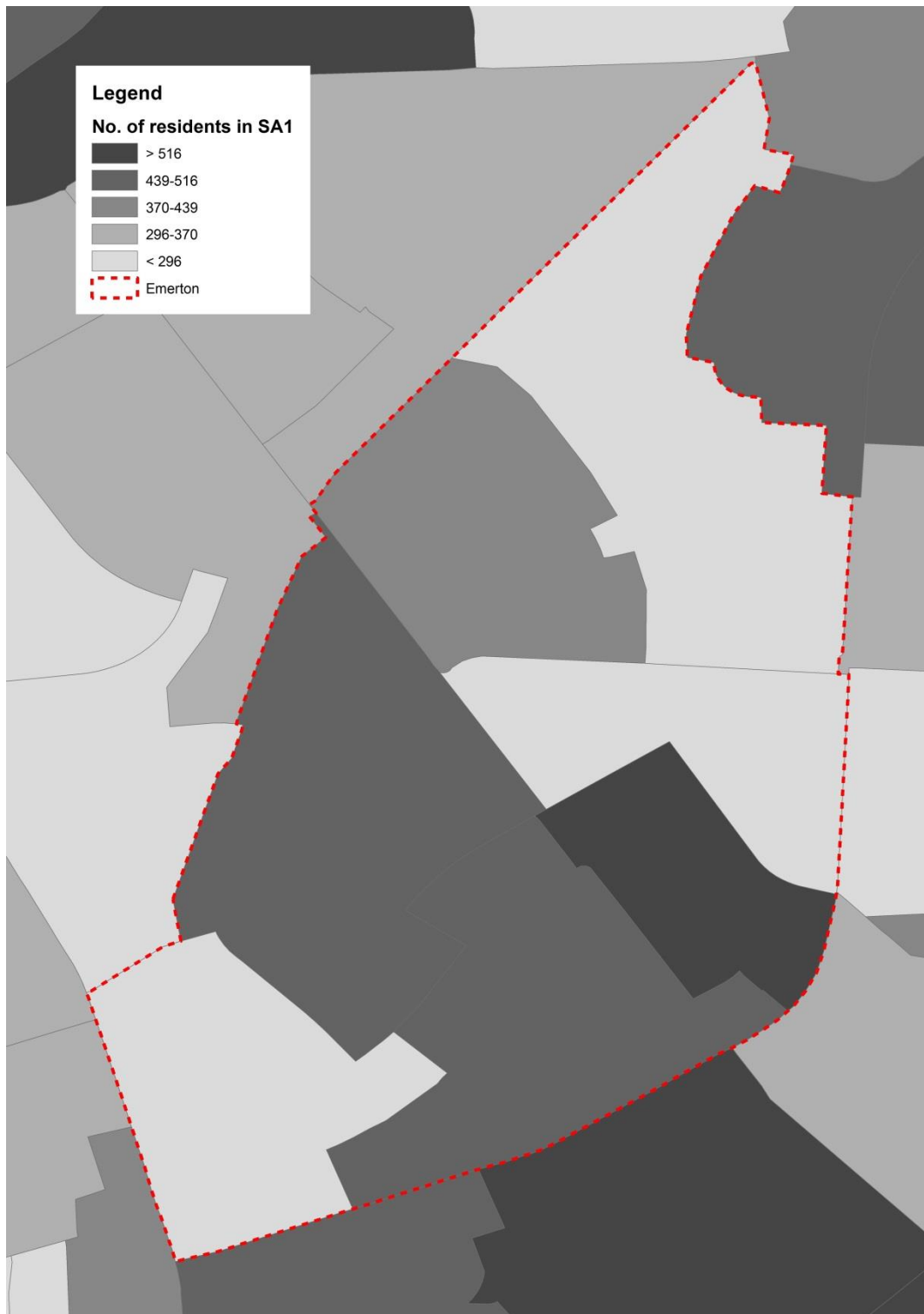
**Figure A3: Emerton local street layout**



Source: Google Maps

## Community profile in detail

Figure A4: Population distribution, Emerton SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Emerton is generally of relatively low density, with half of the SA1s in the suburb belonging to the lowest quintile by population size within the Sydney GMA. Residences are concentrated in the middle of the suburb, and mainly south of Copeland and Jersey Roads.

**Figure A5: Proportion of low-income households in rental stress\*, Emerton SSC, 2011**



\* Number of low-income households with weekly income less than \$600 and paying weekly rent of \$180 or more, as a percentage of all low-income households

Note: Due to data randomisation, cells with anomalous results were deleted prior to mapping. These SA1s appear blank in the map.

Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

With relatively low housing cost in 2011, there were relatively low proportions of low-income households experiencing rental stress. This is highlighted by three SA1s belonging to the three lowest quintile at the Sydney GMA level, and only one in the second highest quintile.

**Figure A6: Proportion of population aged 0–17 years, Emerton SSC, 2011**

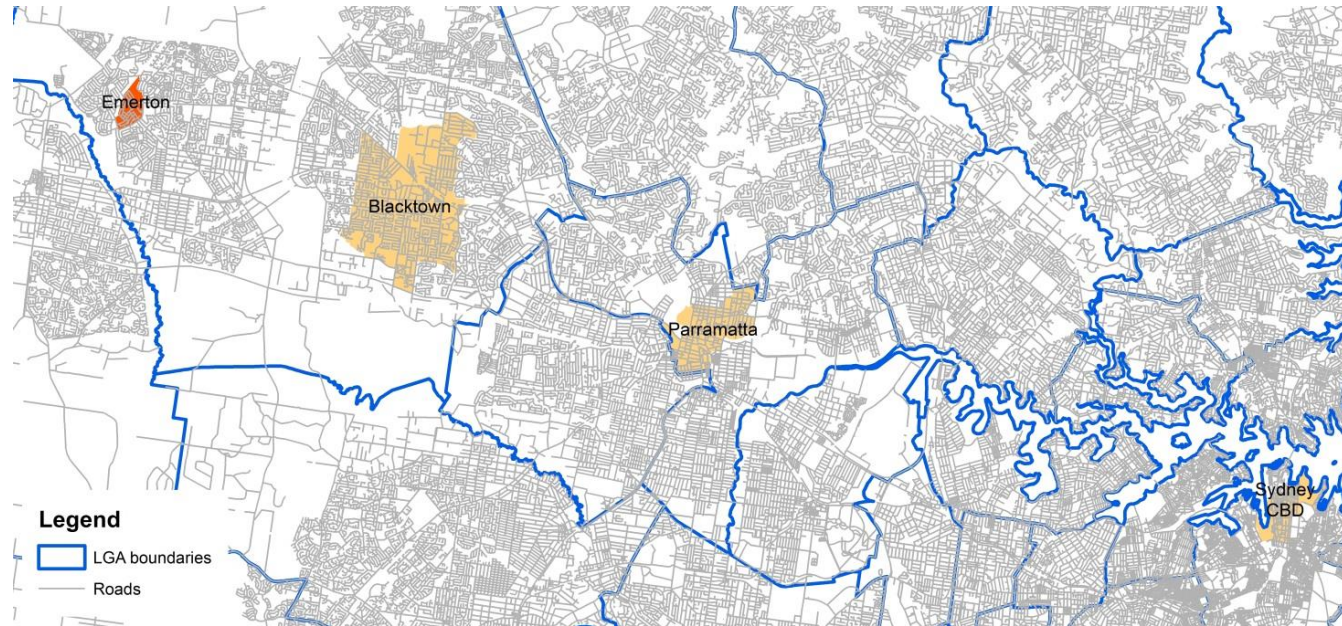


Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Despite the loss of young residents between 2001–11, Emerton is still a relatively young suburb compared to the rest of Sydney GMA, with the majority of the suburb belonging to the highest quintile in terms of residents under 18 years.



**Figure A7: Emerton transport connectivity**



Emerton is a small suburb located towards the western edge of Blacktown LGA and in an area more commonly (and collectively) known as Mount Druitt. While there are two railway stations along the Western Rail Line near Emerton (in Mount Druitt and St Marys, both approximately 6 kilometres away), Emerton itself is not service by heavy rail. There are also limited bus services running through Emerton, and as such private car is the dominant transport mode. Its closest major commercial and employment centres are Blacktown and Parramatta, both of which can be access by rail using the Western Rail Line.

With the lack of major rail and bus services in Emerton, residents' connectivity to the major commercial and employment centres of Blacktown and Parramatta using public transport is poor, averaging more than 1.5 hours if accessed using public transport. Connection to Parramatta using private cars also require on average more than 1.5 hours while Blacktown the average travel time by private car is around one hour.

Connection to the Sydney CBD via public transport takes on average just over two hours during both the AM and PM peak (see Table A22). An car ride from Emerton to the Sydney CBD during morning peak takes on average nearly four hours and just over three hours during the PM peak.

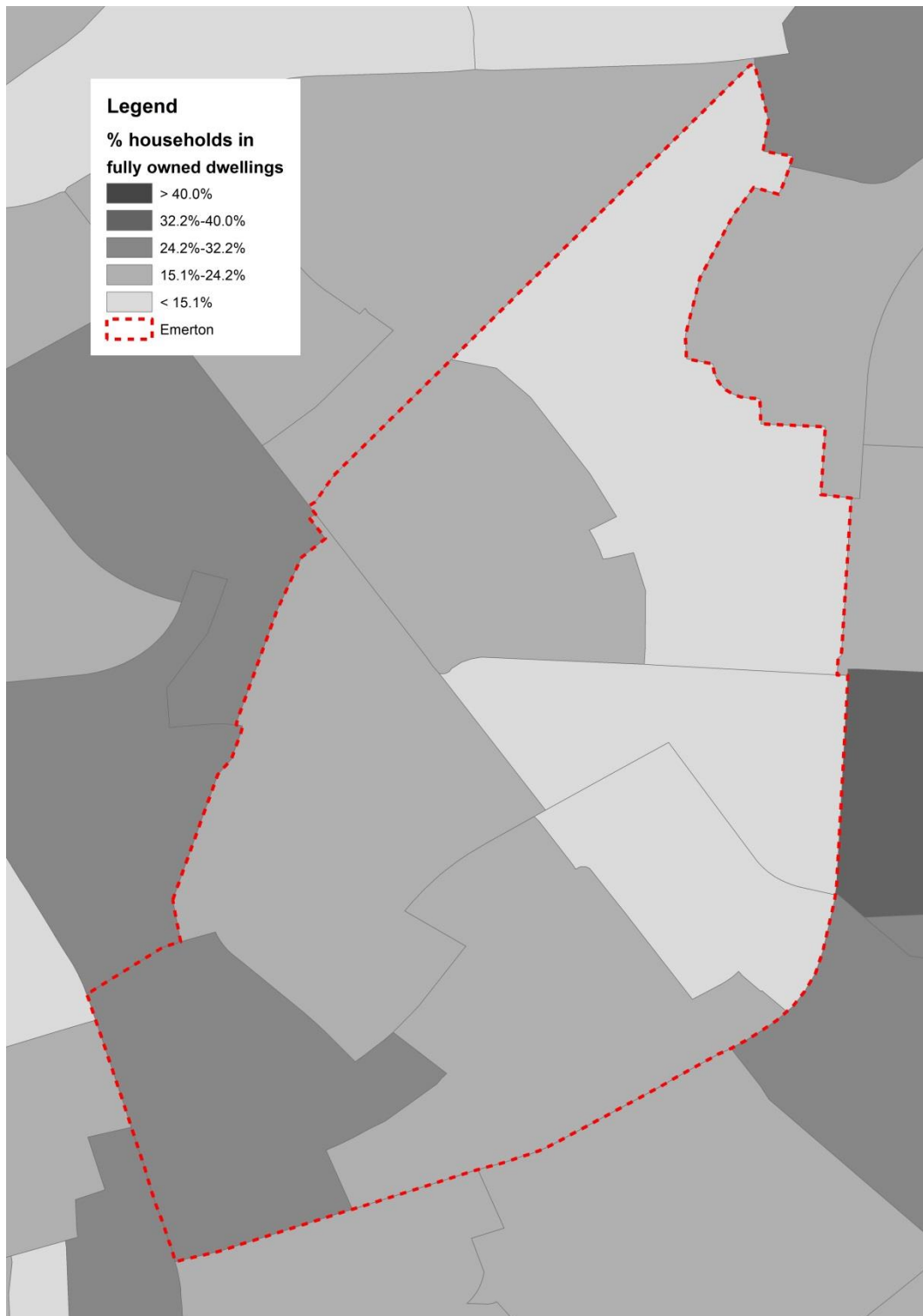
**Table A22: Travel times from Emerton to other Sydney locations**

	<b>To</b>	<b>Total travel time</b>		<b>From</b>	<b>Total travel time</b>
Car (AM peak)	Sydney CBD	237.8		Sydney CBD	206.4
	Parramatta	117.5	Car (PM peak)	Parramatta	105.0
	Blacktown	63.0		Blacktown	58.0
Public transport (AM)	Sydney CBD	126.2		Sydney CBD	121.6
	Parramatta	99.4	Public transport (PM)	Parramatta	96.5
	Blacktown	103.2		Blacktown	99.8

Source: 2011 Household Travel Survey data, as adapted by Dr Peter Rickwood

## Tenure profile

Figure A8: Proportion of households in fully owned homes, Emerton SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Full ownership in Emerton is low, with SA1s in the north-eastern part of the suburb falling in the lowest quintile at the Sydney GMA level. Full ownership is most likely found in the south-western part of the suburb along Luxford Road.

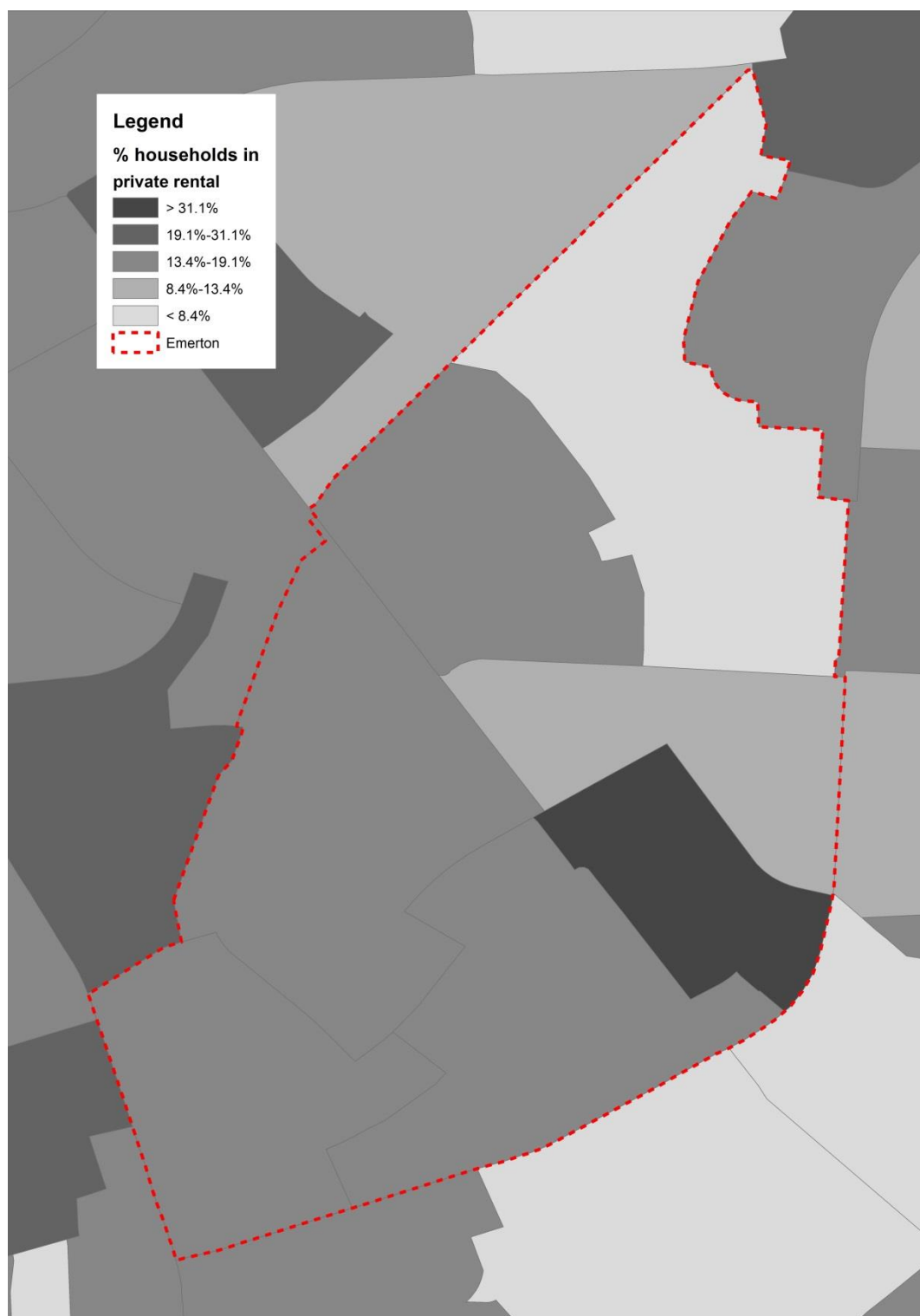
**Figure A9: Proportion of households in mortgaged homes, Emerton SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Ownership with mortgage is uncommon throughout Emerton, with most of the SA1s falling in the two lowest quintiles at the Sydney GMA level. Only one SA1 fell in the highest quintile. This SA1 (along Jersey Road in middle Emerton) is dominated by detached housing and is directly next to the local shopping and service centre to the east, and the Emerton Public School to the west.

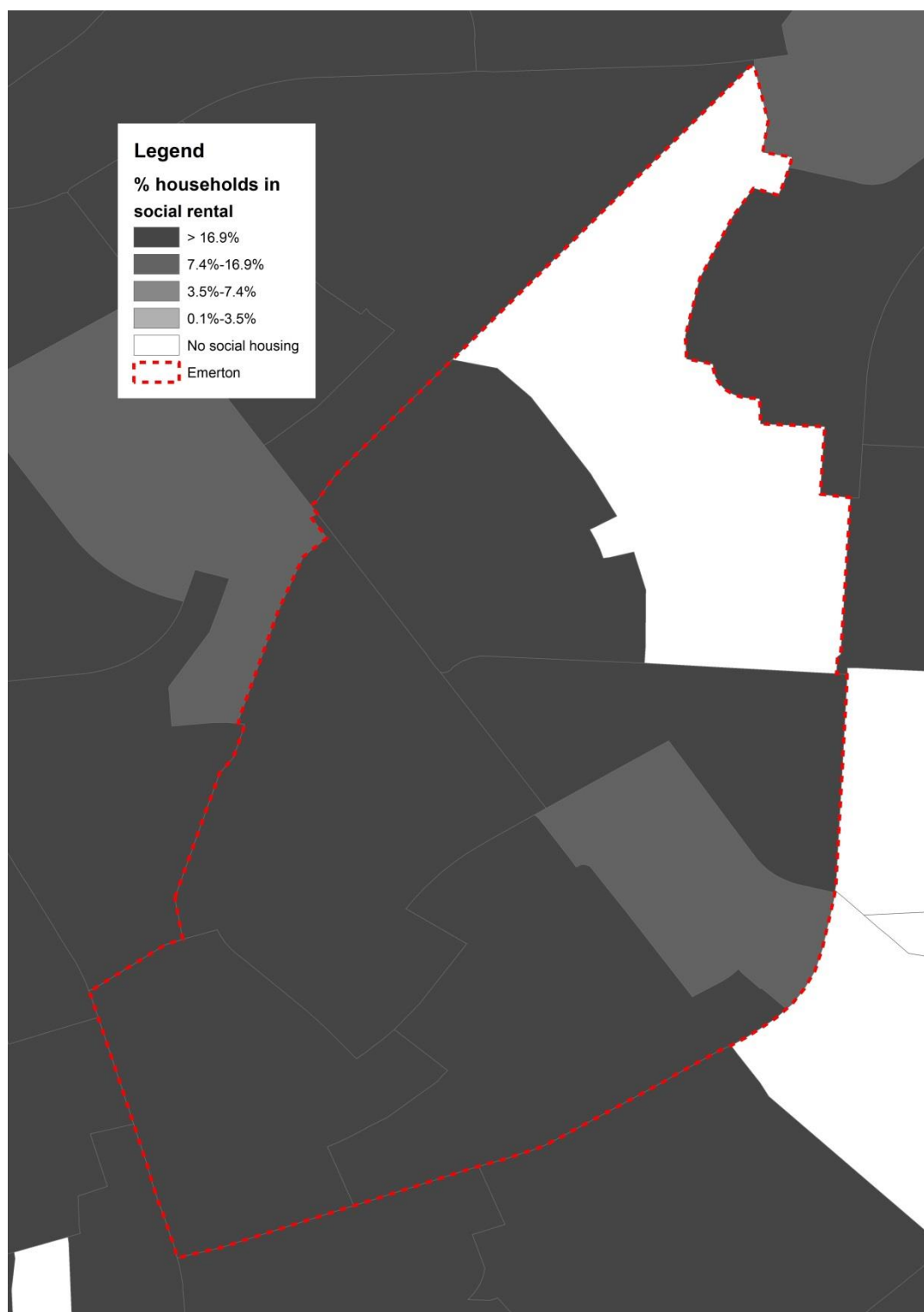
**Figure A10: Proportion of households in private rental, Emerton SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Private rental is most commonly found in the south-western half of the suburb, with levels comparable to the rest of the Sydney GMA.

**Figure A11: Proportion of households in social rental, Emerton SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Social housing dominate Emerton, with the majority of the suburb having high enough proportions falling in the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level. These SA1s generally have around one-fifth of occupied private dwellings being social housing.

## Unemployment rate

Figure A12: Proportion of population (15+) unemployed, Emerton SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Unemployment is high throughout Emerton and has a very similar distribution pattern (in terms of quintiles at the Sydney GMA level) compared to concentration of social housing.



## Concentrations of low-income households

**Figure A13: Proportion of households with weekly income less than \$600, Emerton SSC, 2011**



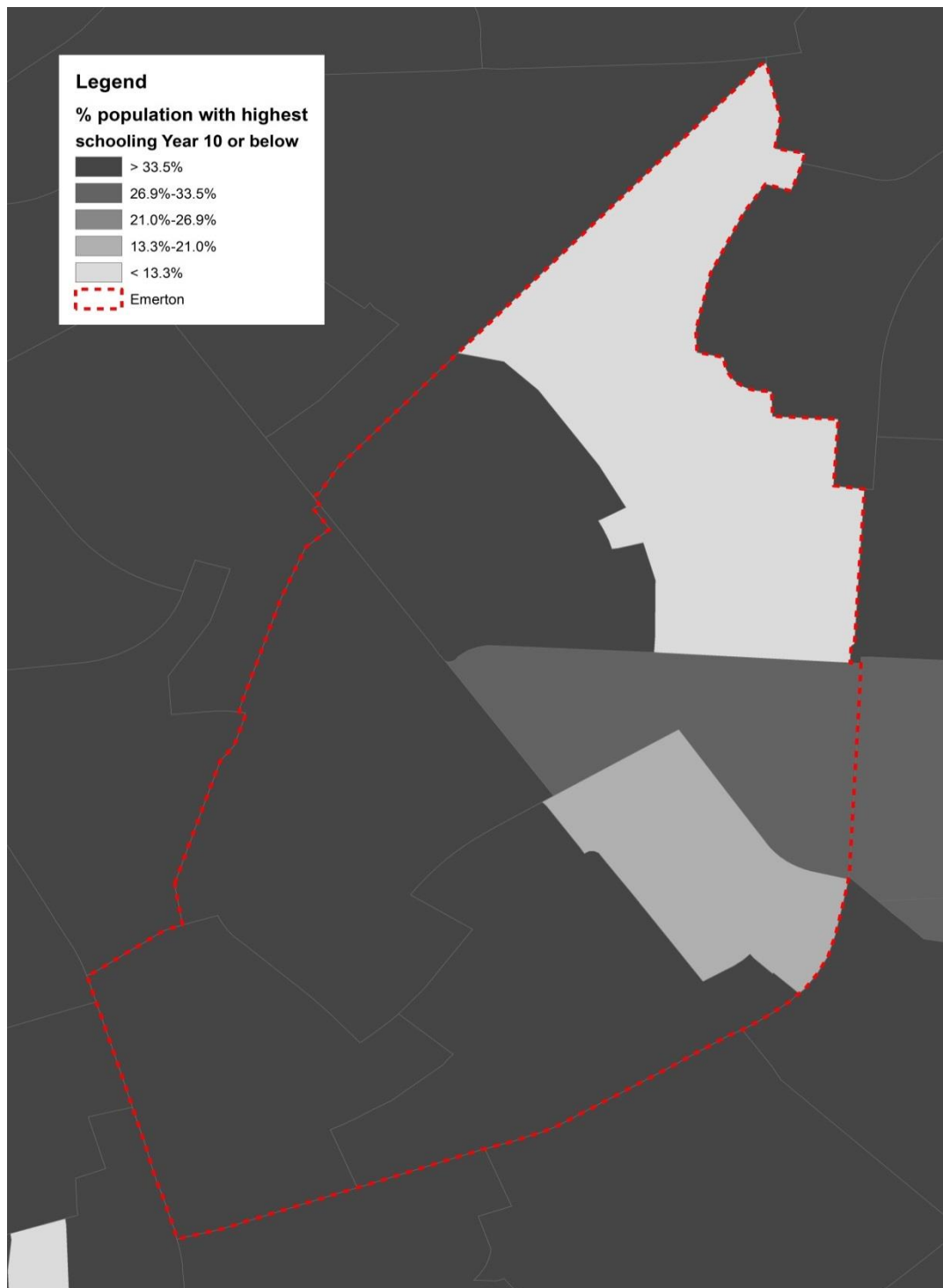
Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Most of the suburb belongs to the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level in terms of high proportion of low-income households. The one exception was the northern-most SA1, which is dominated by Popondetta Park and a small number of detached houses.



## Early school leavers

Figure A14: Proportion of population who left school at Year 10 or before, Emerton SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Emerton has some of the highest proportions of early school leavers within Sydney, with more than half of the suburb having proportions that belonged to the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level. These SA1s have at least one-third of its population having left school at Year 10 or earlier.

## APPENDIX 3: IDENTIFIED PLACE-FOCUSED INITIATIVES RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED IN MOUNT DRUITT, 2013

**Table A23: Identified place-focused initiatives recently implemented in Mount Druitt, 2013**

Intervention	Objective(s)	Funding body/partners	Scale/location	Current or past	For people	For place	Housing
BSC—Public housing deconcentration	Break up estates to promote social diversity	Housing NSW	Selected sites within Mount Druitt; average annual disposals totalling around 60–70 homes	Ongoing		x	x
BSC—Works to public realm in selected suburbs	Improve community safety—e.g. by enhancing passive surveillance, connectivity, public area lighting	Housing NSW, UTS	Focused on Hebersham, Lethbridge Park, Shalvey; scale limited by restricted budget	Ongoing		x	
BSC—Upgrades to housing stock	Improved housing conditions	Housing NSW	Predominantly in Shalvey; scale limited by restricted budget	Past			x
Establishment and support for neighbourhood management board C2770	Empower local community, facilitate community leadership	Housing NSW, Blacktown Council	Whole of Mount Druitt	Ongoing (following 2012 review)	x	x	
Housing NSW Learning Education and Employment Development (LEED) partnerships	Enhance literacy and employability among target groups (esp. young people and ATSI population)	Housing NSW in partnership with various statutory agencies (incl Blacktown Council) and NGOs (incl TAFE, Jesuit Social Services)	Some projects site-specific (e.g. cybercafe, community kitchen), others drawing residents from across the area (e.g. Aboriginal industry traineeships, youth college tutoring program)	Ongoing	x	x	
Housing NSW Youth engagement partnerships	Seed funding for youth engagement programs (e.g. 'Mount Druitt got talent',	Housing NSW in partnership with agencies including	Across Mount Druitt area	Ongoing	x		

Intervention	Objective(s)	Funding body/partners	Scale/location	Current or past	For people	For place	Housing
	midnight basketball tournament) promoted for sponsorship by local business	Uniting Care, PCYC					
Housing NSW Community regeneration program	Social inclusion mainly via promotion of tenancy sustainment (community-wide activities include 'residents fun day' events)	Housing NSW	Whole of Mount Druitt	Ongoing	x		
Construction of local 'community hub' and similar facilities (e.g. Emerton Leisure Centre)	Facilitate community activities and healthy lifestyles	Blacktown Council, Australian Government	Mount Druitt centre and selected suburbs	Past	x	x	
Mount Druitt community enablers program	Boost community capacity by developing leadership skills of already active citizens—as nominated by local agencies	Blacktown Council, TAFE	Whole of Mount Druitt	Past	x	x	
Youth on Track 'early intervention' program	Pro active crime prevention through intensive case management for juvenile offenders at high risk of re-offending	NSW Police	Blacktown municipality	Ongoing	x		
Community solutions and crime prevention strategy (2004)	Pro active interventions to support victims of crime and to build community capacity. Support for community organisations—e.g. PIMDAN	NSW State Government	Whole of Mount Druitt	2003–05	x		

## **AHURI Research Centres**

AHURI Research Centre—Curtin University

AHURI Research Centre—RMIT University

AHURI Research Centre—Swinburne University of Technology

AHURI Research Centre—The University of Adelaide

AHURI Research Centre—The University of New South Wales

AHURI Research Centre—The University of Sydney

AHURI Research Centre—The University of Tasmania

AHURI Research Centre—The University of Western Australia

AHURI Research Centre—The University of Western Sydney

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

Level 1, 114 Flinders Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 9660 2300

Email [information@ahuri.edu.au](mailto:information@ahuri.edu.au) Web [www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)