

Social Impact Assessment for SSD housing

This case study is for illustrative purposes. It demonstrates how to consider social impacts in an EIS for an SSD housing project.

Guidance for practitioners

The environmental impact statement should consider the social impacts (positive and negative) of the housing project during construction and occupation. The social impact section of the EIS does not need to be prepared by a social impact assessment specialist.

To consider the social impacts you should draw on relevant social data to identify and assess social impacts. This may include readily available census data or council Profile ID data, council social infrastructure plans, spatial and media analysis. The relevant social indicators to include will vary in response to different projects and communities.

You should also draw on and refer to other sections of the EIS and relevant impact assessments and engagement activities undertaken for the EIS. This avoids duplication and demonstrates how that information informed the SIA.

Where you identify mitigation measures, they should be clearly outlined.

If you identify significant residual social impacts, a Social Impact Assessment in accordance with the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline* should be undertaken.

Example scenario – Mixed tenure housing

Project features relevant to the social assessment

A 25 storey residential development is proposed utilising a 30% floor space ratio bonus by providing 15% of floor space as affordable housing. The State significant development will deliver 220 units, including 35 affordable housing units. 25% of all units will have 3 bedrooms, with most of these as market units (refer to *Table 1 Project Overview*). The building will have a communal rooftop garden that provides open and shaded seating and a BBQ area. Construction is expected to take 2 years.

Indicative social impact assessment in EIS

Social context and baseline

The development is located close to an existing town centre surrounded by high and low density housing. The site has been vacant since a business closed several years ago. High density housing developed over the last 10 years is higher than what was delivered in the two decades before (generally 4 to 6 storeys). A single storey group home with an open internal courtyard is adjacent to the site.

A train station is 450m walk away and several regular bus routes are also close by with the nearest bus stop less than 100m away. The site is well serviced by social infrastructure. The Council social infrastructure study demonstrates there is capacity in existing and planned local and district social infrastructure, including open space, community centres, aquatic facilities and arts spaces (within an 800m walkable distance) to support the incoming residents. There is sufficient capacity in local public schools and a current expansion of a comprehensive private school will create additional capacity. A public hospital is within 800m of the site as is a Super GP Clinic. The local town centre provides access to fresh food, childcare, pharmacies, dental services and allied health providers. The nearest library is 9km, or 2 train stations away. A new library in the town centre is scheduled for delivery in 2032.

The local community has an average age comparable to Sydney and relatively low levels of disadvantage although almost half the community has very low to moderate incomes. Residents of recent higher density developments in the area are typically younger, slightly more likely to be on very low to moderate incomes, and only half as likely to be families with children.

Likely future residents

It is estimated there will be 400 new residents, including 52 in affordable dwellings.

Future residents of the development are likely to have some similarities to those in other recently developed high density housing; such as being relatively young and having low levels of disadvantage. However, due to the increased proportion of 3 bedroom units and provision of affordable housing in the proposed development, there are likely to be;

- more families with children and/or larger families (e.g. extended families)
- more low to moderate income households, including lone person households
- fewer households in mortgage stress.

Relevant engagement outcomes

Engagement with the residents and manager of the group home that was undertaken as part of the EIS identified heightened noise sensitivity for several of the 10 residents. Their experience with previous nearby construction had required use of headphones for music and noise cancelling, and more regular excursions to parks and natural places. While noise insulation in the home is effective, residents use their outdoor courtyard extensively during the day. Therefore noise, even within criteria, significantly impacts their daily lives. Residents and managers suggested and agreed that support for additional respite excursions during the noisiest periods, provision of noise cancelling and music headphones for residents, screening, and provision of mature trees from the commencement of construction would significantly reduce the impacts to acceptable levels.

Impact assessment and mitigation

Impact and Mitigations (if required)	Residual significance
<p>WHO WILL BENEFIT?</p>	
<p>Accessibility</p> <p>Future residents will benefit. The site is walkable to train and bus services and to local social infrastructure and services. Proposed mature plantings will provide shaded routes close to the development. These measures will contribute to a healthy built environment and high levels of active travel are expected from most future residents.</p>	<p>High (Positive)</p>
<p>Way of life</p> <p>A rooftop garden available to all residents will support <i>wellbeing by enhancing access to open space</i> and creating opportunities for resident <i>interaction and building cohesion</i>.</p> <p>The 35 affordable dwellings will likely benefit a range of people similar to those already living in high density housing in the area, but by <i>eliminating housing stress</i>, their way of life and wellbeing will benefit. There is potential for key workers or others from outside the area to access the affordable housing, which if achieved, would benefit them through reduced travel times and more opportunities for social and recreational activities and consequent health benefits.</p> <p><i>Housing for families</i> and larger households will support greater <i>social diversity</i> locally. Council’s Housing Strategy identifies a shortage of 3+ bedrooms. The development would contribute considerably to this need with 25% of dwellings with 3 bedrooms, 15% higher than recent nearby provision.</p> <p>Affordable housing tenants will benefit from <i>high environmental amenity housing and avoiding potentially higher ongoing costs</i> (e.g. electricity cost from mechanised ventilation). As demonstrated in Section 5.2 Environmental Amenity, the development equitably distributes high quality internal amenity between the market and affordable housing units.</p>	<p>High (Positive)</p>

Impact and Mitigations (if required)	Residual significance
<p>WHO WILL BE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED?</p> <p>Surroundings</p> <p>Residents of the group home - The <i>noise and vibration</i> impact assessment (Section 5.5) concluded that construction impacts to nearby properties would be within criteria except during excavation, and at some other times for the residents of the adjacent group home.</p> <p>For group home residents, during occupancy their <i>privacy</i> while using their courtyard would be compromised by overlooking. The visual impact and environmental amenity assessment (Section 5.7) concluded that visual impacts, overshadowing and privacy were not significant for nearby businesses and residences except for the group home.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p>
<p>Mitigations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Noise cancelling headphones for residents for noise management</i> • <i>Support for weekly outside excursions as respite during most intensive noise periods</i> • <i>Construction management plans and a Community Engagement Plan will consider the sensitivities of the group home</i> • <i>A project complaints system will be set up, advertised and maintained</i> • <i>Mature vegetation and screening for the courtyard to mitigate and manage privacy impacts.</i> 	
<p>Accessibility</p> <p>The nearby community will notice minor changes with longer traffic and <i>pedestrian wait times</i>. The traffic and transport assessment (Section 5.8) concluded that traffic movements would increase congestion on adjoining roads and nearby intersections but within acceptable levels of service.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Way of life</p> <p>For new residents, there will be a <i>shortage of library services</i> for approximately 5 years until 2032, which is likely to impact the use of learning and recreational reading services impacting people’s wellbeing, especially families with young children, in the medium term.</p>	<p>Medium</p>