

Midtown MacPark

Delivering safe homes and stronger communities in Sydney's north



Midtown MacPark is an innovative partnership between Frasers Property Australia, Mission Australia Housing and the State government to redevelop a former public housing estate into a vibrant, mixed tenure, high-density, master planned community in Macquarie Park on the north shore of Sydney, NSW.

Over the next decade, the development will deliver 3,300 homes, including 954 social and 130 affordable dwellings alongside private housing. Stage 1 was completed in 2024 and the first residents moved in during April of that year.

Establishment and Early Implementation Evaluation

Mission Australia's Centre for Evidence and Insights conducted an independent evaluation of Midtown's integrated housing and support model, covering establishment, early implementation and the first year of service delivery.

The integrated housing and support model pairs long-term housing with coordinated wraparound supports for people living in Midtown's social and affordable housing, alongside community development and chaplaincy. This partner-funded approach differs from traditional community or public housing models, where support and community development rely on residual rental income after property management and maintenance. The additional funding enabled more on-site staff and higher levels of support combined with community development activities from the outset.

Evidence demonstrates that this extra investment in the integrated housing and support model had a profound early impact on resident and community outcomes.

Midtown has enabled 613 residents (including 111 children) to rebuild routines, improve their wellbeing, maintain their tenancies, and regain a sense of safety and dignity.

At Midtown MacPark, residents gain more than a place to live. They achieve:



Safe and stable housing



Pathways to increased independence



Enhanced health and wellbeing



Community resilience and strength

Key evaluation findings include:

- Residents were highly satisfied with their early tenancy experiences which were consistently better than comparable NSW community housing benchmarks.
- The high-quality design, presentation and overall standard of housing played a significant role in shaping their early experiences of Midtown.
- There was a very high level of tenancy stability (close to 100%) and low levels of rental arrears.
- Almost one in ten tenancies (mainly young people) successfully transitioned out of social and affordable housing, most commonly into private rentals.
- Almost nine in ten residents were satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live, and three quarters agreed that Midtown was a strong and connected community. Community connections appear to be stronger between social and affordable housing residents compared to homeowners.
- Nine out of ten residents in social, affordable and private housing felt safe in their homes and walking in daylight.

Midtown MacPark is an innovative project that demonstrates:

Mixed-use high-density development including social, affordable and market housing can create thriving communities

Public, private and CHP collaborations can achieve significant quality and scale housing developments

Tailored supports and community connection provides the foundation for sustainable tenancies and thriving lives

While emerging outcomes demonstrate the early success of the model, Midtown is still in its formative phase.

As the precinct grows in size and scale, maintaining and strengthening outcomes requires funding and resourcing that matches the development and the increasing size, scale and diversity of the forming community.

What worked and what to scale

1. Investment in integrated models of housing and support is fundamental to tenancy sustainment, wellbeing and community cohesion

Successful mixed-tenure communities require upfront, fully funded investment across housing services, support and community development, not just buildings. This recognises that some residents may need extra support at times and some with complex needs may need more intensive support.

2. Strong partnerships and shared values are the foundation

Strong partnerships between government, business and the not-for-profit sector, built on shared values, are essential to achieve large-scale redevelopment, drive innovation and ensure lasting success.

3. Quality housing is the anchor, but not enough on its own

Safe, modern, well-designed housing underpins wellbeing and tenancy sustainment, but must be complemented by on-site presence, responsive support and community infrastructure.

4. Community must be built deliberately and resourced for the long term

Cohesive, safe and vibrant communities do not happen organically. Intentional culture-building, early engagement and sustained community development investment are essential.

5. Person-centred, relational approaches drive engagement and independence

Trust, flexibility and person-centred practice, balanced with access to on-site support and Housing First principles, enables a range of resident supports and pathways.

6. Adaptability, data and evaluation is critical to evidence long term impact

Autonomy for frontline teams, strong systems, data quality, and long-term evaluation are key to learning, improving and demonstrating the value of the model over time.



Consistent, relational support as the foundation for independence

A young Midtown resident, Sally*, received an offer to move into Midtown in early 2024 after being referred by Mission Australia staff. She had only rented privately and felt uncertain about moving into social housing. But knowing that support staff are on site gave her confidence to accept the offer.

"I was worried about moving into social housing as someone who has never lived in social housing before. I know that in the past, social housing hasn't felt entirely safe - especially to females and young women, but the space that I get to live in, I have for the first time in a long time felt like I have a home. And that's a really big thing for my mental health and making sure that I feel okay."

Sally highlighted that the consistent and relational support received early in her transition into Midtown was crucial. She recalled moments where she had felt uncertain or in need of company and shared that staff had gone "above and beyond", providing her with a sense of safety, comfort and stability. This, along with having secure housing, allowed Sally to focus on other aspects of life like employment and building connections.

"I have this solid foundation now. For the first time I sort of felt better, and that has allowed me to get a job, and in getting that job, I'm now getting more income and feeling like I am contributing, and that makes me feel even better."

Sally's experience highlights that consistent, relational support can help residents move beyond initial uncertainty, establish a sense of confidence and security, and serve as a foundation for building independence.

*Name changed for the purpose of this report

The Midtown MacPark Establishment and Early Implementation Evaluation

offers comprehensive insights into how to create successful high-density, mixed tenure master-planned communities. The full report is available from the [Mission Australia website](https://www.missionaustralia.org.au). Meetings can be arranged upon request by contacting researchandpolicy@missionaustralia.com.au.