

# Stepping On: Falls Prevention for Priority Populations in Social Housing

**Northern Sydney Population & Health Promotion**

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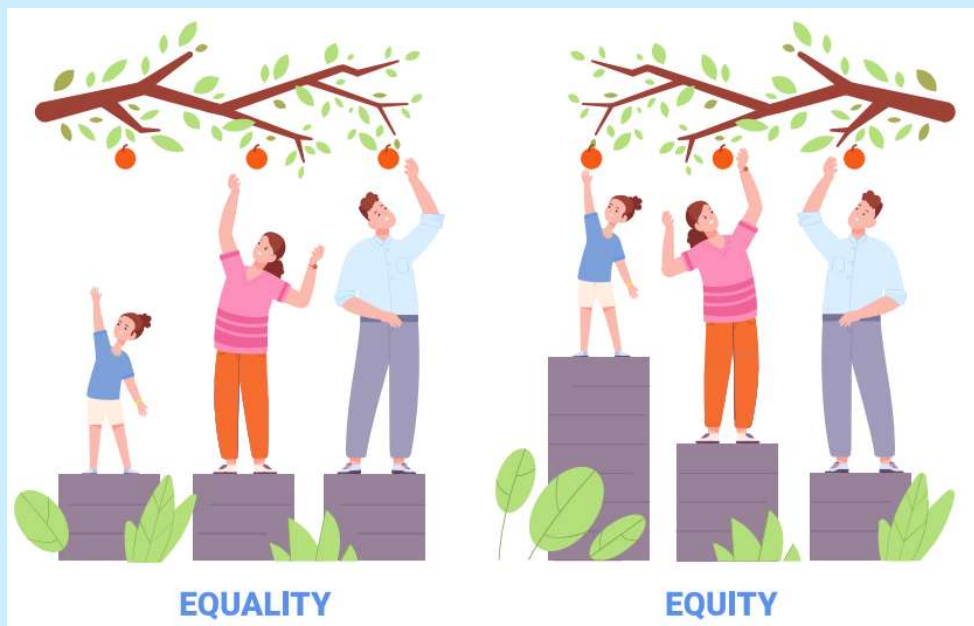
**Margaret Armstrong – NSLHD Falls Prevention Coordinator**

**NSW Falls Forum May 2025**

# Equity Framework



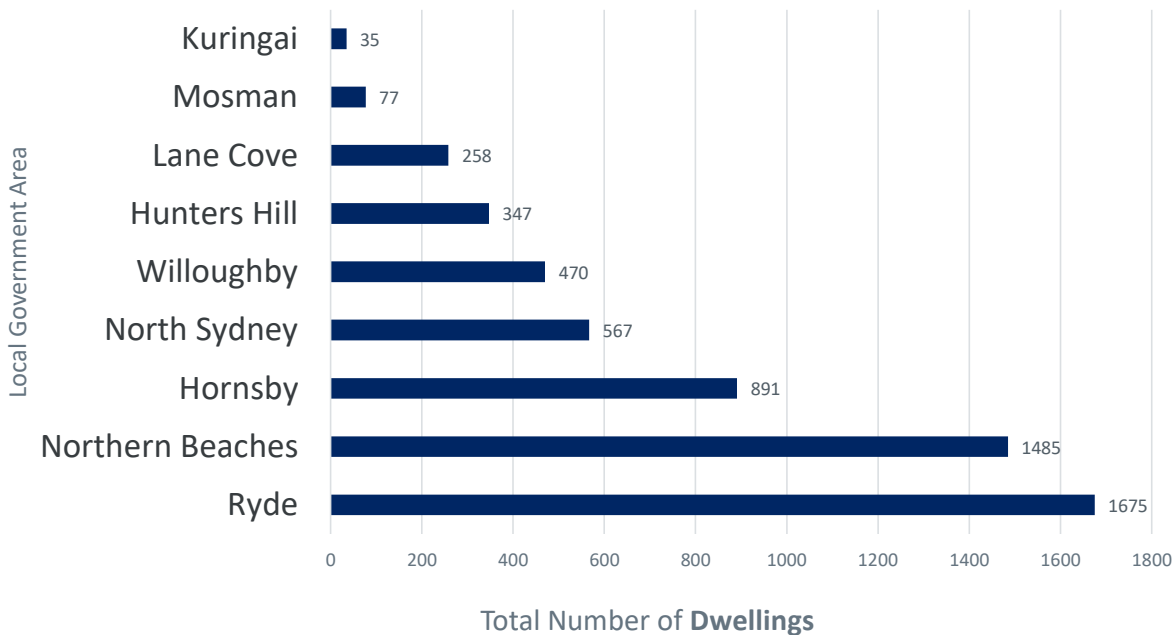
Every plan.  
Every program.  
Every project.



Northern Sydney Local Health District (2024) NSLHD Equity Framework <sup>1</sup>

# Social Housing (Community Housing) in Northern Sydney

## Community Housing in NSLHD



2. Data Dashboard - Community Housing Industry Association NSW (Accessed June 2024)

## Community Housing Providers told us

60%  
aged 55+



Socially  
Isolated



50% Speak another language  
Top languages: Mandarin & Korean



Likely limited access to devices e.g.  
laptops/printers  
and variable Digital Skills

Rely on public  
transport



# Our Partnership: Stepping On in Social Housing

Strategic Alignment: NS Social Housing Service System Coordination Plan 2021-2024<sup>3</sup>

## NSLHD Ageing Well in Social Housing Network\*\*



St George  
Community  
Housing



Link  
Wentworth  
Providing homes, building futures.

### Health and Wellbeing Priorities



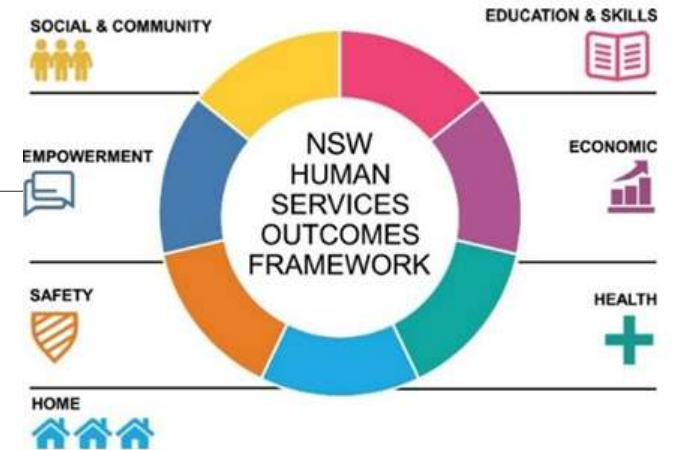
Physical Activity  
Falls Prevention



Healthy Eating  
Food Security



Social Connection  
Mental Health



### NSW Human Services Outcome Framework<sup>4</sup>

#### Examples of Performance Indicators

- Sustain tenancies
- Support tenant wellbeing
- Facilitate access to services
- Prevent early institutionalisation
- Empower tenants and promote health

\*\*To our knowledge, this is the only collaboration to date that specifically addresses tenant health and wellbeing, as confirmed by feedback from our partners.\*\*

# Working with Social Housing

- Offer free program both in English or in-language!
- Collaboration with Community Programs/ Engagement officers.
- Targeted recruitment, SMS to customers, translated promotional material, newsletter, social media, promotion at tenant drop-in sessions.
- Recruiting and training of Bilingual Facilitators.
- Bilingual Facilitators registers CALD participants.


## Accessibility

- Sited programs onsite or close to where customers are familiar with or can get to easily.
- In-language program delivered by bilingual leaders, guest speakers and program resources in-language.
- Offered free transport via Primary Health Network Commissioned services.

Northern Sydney Local Health District

Northern Sydney Local Health District

## 逐步前行，防止跌倒 Stepping On



逐步前行，防止跌倒 Stepping On

Stepping On 是一个为期 7 周的免费防跌倒课程，专为曾经跌倒过或害怕跌倒的老年人设计。



© Clemson and Swann 2019

In partnership with  
**Royal Rehab**  
Ryde



# Insights and Learnings from Social Housing Tenants/Customers

The inability to speak or read English is a barrier to social interaction and can lead to loneliness.

## Many Migrants

- Lose their independence as they are reliant on family for information and transport.
- Lack awareness of the language-based clubs and organisations.
- Struggle to navigate the Australian health system, health screening, support services.

## Recruitment

- The CALD tenants were easy to recruit to the program and desired to be engage in community activities including physical exercise.
- English tenants took longer to recruit!
- Some participants feel unsafe in their neighbourhood.
- A bit of suspicion about govt related programs.

- **Patience** – Build trust and ‘brand recognition’.
- Flexibility with eligibility criteria e.g. allow attendance twice if needed
- Consistent presence at familiar venues.
- Work with Aboriginal Health Services.
- Tricky to identify tenants/customers from Social Housing to track outcomes/uptake.
- Successful at identifying tenant needs at various sites.



## Slide 6

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Queeny Stafford (Northern Sydne, 2025-04-29T07:03:58.289



# Stakeholder and Participant Experience

## Housing Provider

*"Customers have said that they have been able to build strong friendships and support networks with other participants in their group."*

*"The introduction of groups that are delivered in specific languages (such as Mandarin) has made this program accessible to our CALD customers, who previously weren't able to attend."*

*"If it wasn't for Stepping On, we wouldn't have a service to refer our customers to who we know are at risk of a fall/have fallen."*



Consistent presence has gradually attracted more and more participants.

Referral through Word of Mouth has been effective among participants.

Many of the SH providers are funding or applying for grants to provide exercise classes within the facilities.

Gateway to other programs e.g. digital support, arts and crafts, chat groups, book clubs and library bus, and gardening groups.

Participants are sharing knowledge on local social, health and wellbeing services with each other, encouraging each other to access health services.

They let us know about issues of accessibility within their facilities which are raised with the SH provider on their behalf.



# In Summary

- Stepping On has been successful as a **‘Soft entry’** program for **older adults in Social Housing**, ensuring that **vulnerable population are not left behind**.
- It has **improved access** to health information, linkages to **early intervention** services, exercise opportunities, while helping to **address barriers** related to **language and digital exclusion**.
- **Strengthened sector capacity** to actively support and improve tenant wellbeing, resulting in the first-ever **collaboration** between three Social Housing Providers in Northern Sydney.

## Strengthening Relationships with our Stakeholders

- Northern Sydney Primary Health Network (PHN)
- NSLHD Community Falls Committee
- Aboriginal Women’s Group (PHN)
- Bungee Bidjel Aboriginal Health Services
- CASS Korean Services
- Chinese Christian Community Service Centre
- Relationships Australia – Community Builders Initiative
- Hornsby Village Hub
- Local Councils

# Thank you!



## Acknowledgements

- Funding from Sydney North Health Network
- Royal Rehab Ryde
- Community Housing Partners



St George  
Community  
Housing



Link  
Wentworth  
Providing homes, building futures.



phn  
NORTHERN SYDNEY  
An Australian Government Initiative

## Connect with us!

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NSLHD Falls Coordinator

# References and Further Reading

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2. Community Housing Industry Association NSW – Data Dashboard - [Data Dashboard \(maintenance\) - Community Housing Industry Association NSW](#) (accessed June 2024)
3. Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) (2020) NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework (The Outcomes Framework) <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/nsw-human-services-outcomes-framework/how-is-communities-and-justice-applying-the-outcomes-framework.html>
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