

WATERLOO

RAGLAN ST



GOOD OLD HOUSES WERE BUILT
FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE IN
REHABILITATE HOUSES! SAVE HOMES

a film by
TOM ZUBRYCKI

Co-Producer and Editor
Photography
Songwriters

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AN AWARD WINNING
LABOUR HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
ON THE POLITICS OF URBAN RENEWAL
IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT.



In 1972, people living in five hundred houses in the inner Sydney suburb of Waterloo received a letter from the State Housing Commission saying that their area was next in line for slum clearance and redevelopment. **Waterloo** is the story of the residents' struggle to save their area.

Told with music, song and archival footage, the film is set in the context of a fifty year battle by workers, pensioners, and other low-income earners for the right to live in the inner city.

In the 9 years since redevelopment plans were announced, Waterloo has progressively become more blighted and run-down. Following the pattern familiar in most Western cities, the authorities have attempted to drive out the residents and board-up the houses with "the back door wide open", so that time is allowed to do the work of the bulldozer.

The film sets out to understand the residents' fightback in terms of the history of the suburb itself: the poverty and overcrowding at the turn of the century, and the unpractical, idealistic solutions proposed by the planners.

It looks at Waterloo in the context of urban struggle in Sydney: the anti-eviction campaigns of the 30's, the rise of the resident action movement in the late 60's, and the alliance it formed with building unions resulting in the world famous Green Bans.

In the process the film reveals the history of the Housing Commission and the inner city Labor machine, prompting questions about the planning process, community involvement and bureaucratic accountability.

Is it right that state governments can proclaim areas for redevelopment without consulting the people affected?

What should government policy be, given a housing crisis caused by rapidly gentrifying urban areas?

To what extent are Labor Party politicians responsive to the needs of Labor voters?

Is co-option always a threat when an Action Group begins a process of negotiating with government bureaucracy?

Waterloo is suitable for television as well as group screenings for unions, labor party branches, resident action groups and state government departments. It can also be used in courses such as Community Work, Urban Planning, Politics, Australian History, Social Policy and Public Administration. A study guide is available with the film.

"Using a wonderful selection of stills, old footage and re-enactment the film re-creates 50 years of conflict over low-cost housing in the inner city . . . Waterloo is a stirring film which will appeal to anyone interested in Sydney's history."

Meaghan Morris, Sydney Morning Herald.

"Waterloo is an excellent, intelligent and entertaining film."

Miranda Brown, Rolling Stone.

"Waterloo is honest, compelling and involved. Like Harlan Country it is a film made from the inside of a struggle – the point of view of people fighting against an all-powerful state bureaucracy. The combination of newsreels, home-movies, stills and personal accounts works splendidly, evoking a vibrant working class community with a strong tradition of militancy."

Wendy Lowenstein, Historian, author of *Weevils in the Flour*.

"Waterloo is a tribute to the struggle to keep our cities on a human scale. It is the best documentary I've seen on the struggle between planners, profiteers, and people in an Australian city. A must for all students of urban issues."

Leonie Sandercock, Professor of Urban Studies, Macquarie University.

WATERLOO was awarded first prize in the Documentary Section of the Greater Union Awards, Sydney Film Festival 1981.

WATERLOO is 16mm, Colour, 48 minutes. Rental: \$50. Sale: \$900. Video Copy: \$500.

Available From:
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Print sale previews are free of charge – this includes free forward freight to anywhere in Australia.
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