

"Waterloo"

SYNOPSIS

"Waterloo" - a 50 minute documentary completed in 1981, is an historical account of the 1970's battle by residents of this inner Sydney suburb to save the area from slum clearance and redevelopment by public housing authorities.

In the early 70's the state government initiated a massive scheme to pull down inner city terraces ('slums') to build new high rise public housing estates. However they did not expect the public opposition which this move generated.

"Waterloo" tells the story of residents fight-back and sets out to understand it by looking into the history of the area itself. The film depicts the poverty and overcrowding at the turn of the century, and the impractical, idealistic solutions proposed by the planners. It locates Waterloo in the context of urban housing struggles 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 now world famous Green Bans.

"Waterloo" prompts questions about the planning process, community involvement and bureaucratic accountability. How did the Housing Commission, a public housing authority set up by the State Labor Government in the forties, get to the stage of evicting workers to build more public housing?

