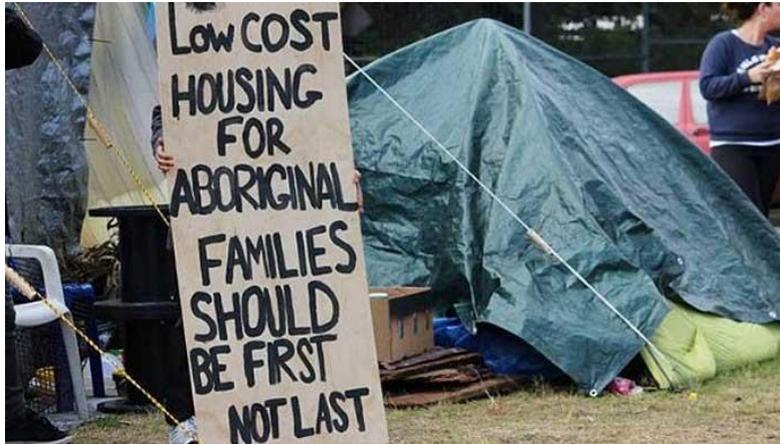


## Redfern First Nations Embassy slapped with 48 hour eviction notices



The tent embassy in Redfern was founded in May 2014 to protest the AHC's proposed redevelopment. | Photo: Peter Boyle/ Green Left Weekly

20 February 2015

**Property investors have been promised a suburb "free of Aboriginals," but protesters in Sydney's most well-known Indigenous community aren't giving in without a fight.**

Indigenous Australians protesting against gentrification of a Sydney suburb were ordered Friday to dismantle their protest camp.

"We will refuse their orders. We will stay here. They will have to move us physically I suppose," Gamillaroi elder and veteran activist Jenny Munro told the Sydney Morning Herald.

According to Munro, occupants of the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy (RATE) were slapped with eviction notices at mid-afternoon, and given a 48-hour window to respond. That means activists must take their case to a court before Sunday afternoon.

"He served it knowing we won't be able to access the courts. It's just more filthy politics," Munro stated, referring to Michael Mundine. Mundine is the CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC), which administers a chunk of the Redfern suburb known as the Block.

When the AHC first began to be handed parts of what would later become the Block in the 1970s, it was widely viewed as a major victory in the battle for Indigenous land rights. The entire area was earmarked for affordable housing for Indigenous Australians.

However, since 2004, low cost housing in the area has been gradually razed, with the AHC pledging to rebuild.



An advertisement aimed at property investors has promised the AHC's redevelopment will deliver a suburb free of Indigenous Australians. | Image: AHC Promotional sketch

Then in 2014, the AHC announced it was planning a AU\$70 million (US\$55 million) commercial redevelopment, which would include office blocks and lucrative student accommodation.

The AHC claimed the commercial side of its redevelopment plans will provide the company with the cash it needs to construct new homes for Indigenous Australians.

Yet an advertisement aimed at property investors has promised the AHC's redevelopment will deliver a suburb free of Indigenous Australians.

“The Aboriginals have already moved out, now Redfern is the last virgin suburb close to city, it will have great potential for capital growth in the near future,” read an advert published by Great Fortune Investments' for property developer Deicorp.

Deicorp has been engaged by the AHC to carry out construction of an apartment block in Redfern.

Without any Indigenous Australians living in the suburb, Diecorp's apartments would offer property investors “good rental return and convenient location,” according to the advertisement.



The Redfern Tent Embassy with Sydney city in the background | Image: The Guardian

Activists have responded by accusing the AHC of selling out. They argue the AHC is cooperating with what they say is a government plan to gentrify Redfern.

“It’s been demolitions and drug addiction under this administration of Mick Mundine. And well, because greed knows no color, there are some of our people who work for the government’s agenda,” Munro said during an interview with progressive newspaper Green Left Weekly earlier this month.

“There have been three purges of Aboriginal people from Redfern — in the late 70s, late 80s and now this latest purge. Redfern used to have the biggest urban population of Aboriginal people in Australia. Now it is western Sydney, as our community has been pushed out of the inner city. So we are saying ‘enough,’” she stated.

Since the Aboriginal embassy was founded in May 2014 to protest the AHC’s redevelopment plans, the site has grown to include vegetable patches and a seed bank, a sacred fire pit, kitchen and a collection of tents.

Yet, activists involved in the embassy say they have been regularly harassed and pressured to leave the Block.



The planned streetscape - Not an Aboriginal in sight. | Image: AHC Promotional sketch

Munro herself claims authorities tried to intimidate her when police charged her with assault in December.

She was accused of engaging in an altercation on The Block with a resident of a nearby area.

In a statement obtained by website New Matilda, Munro’s lawyer Lisa De Luca said the Indigenous elder was “acting in self-defense” and claimed activists themselves are the main victims of violence.

“Since May 2014, Ms. Munro and other occupants have been subjected to threats, intimidation and assaults by people connected with the Aboriginal Housing Company,” De Luca alleged. “All of these acts of violence have been perpetrated against the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy with the sole purpose of stopping the protest.”

More: <http://nationalunitygovernment.org/content/redfern-first-nations-embassy-slapped-48-hour-eviction-notice>