

Speaking with: Nicole Cook on union 'green bans', housing affordability and the Sirius building

Written by Dallas Rogers, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University

Sydney's iconic Sirius building was scheduled for demolition by the New South Wales government in 2015. The building – a prominent [Australian example of brutalist architecture](#) – contains 79 apartments for public housing tenants, and residents are furious that they are being moved on to make way for 250 luxury apartments at the gateway of the city.

But this isn't the first time a NSW government has targeted the Millers Point and Rocks areas for redevelopment. When the Askin government proposed development of the area in the late 1960s, residents' groups [formed an alliance with the Builders Labourers Federation](#) (BLF). Through a series of co-ordinated strikes (or ["green bans"](#)), they worked to guarantee affordable housing and community spaces for generations of working-class and union families.

Following in the BLF's footsteps, the CFMEU and Unions NSW put a green ban on the Sirius site [from September 2016](#).

Dallas Rogers speaks with Nicole Cook, lecturer at the University of Wollongong, about what we can learn from the alliance between residents and unions in the 1970s and the lasting impact the green bans had on planning policy.

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Music

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Additional Audio

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William Woods (YouTube) – [Lifetime resident Barney Gardner addresses crowd outside NSW Parliament House](#)

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Tanya Plibersek – [Millers Point Public Housing](#)

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ABC Radio National – Blue Print for Living, [Iconic Buildings: Sirius Building](#)

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Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority – The Rocks: [Jack Munday and the Victory](#)

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Forced Out – The Documentary (Preview): [Pru Goward interview](#)

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Pat Fiske – [Rocking the Foundations](#) (interviews with Nita McCrae and Owen Magee)

Dallas Rogers receives funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation to produce short academic interviews for SoundMinds Radio (<http://www.soundminds.com.au/author/dallas/>). Segments of this interview were played on community radio in January 2017.

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