



CREATING A CULTURE OF WORK
IN THE REDFERN WATERLOO AREA

Arrilla - Indigenous Consultants and Services
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	5
1.1	Executive Summary	5
1.2	Aim of the Study	5
1.3	Project Focus	5
2.	MAIN FINDINGS	8
2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	What is Meant by a 'Culture of Work'?	9
2.3	Why do we Need a Culture of Work?	10
2.4	Building Self-Image -- the Key to Creating a Culture of Work	10
2.5	Arrilla's Approach	11
KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:		
3.	YOUNG PEOPLE, 0 – 5 YEARS	14
3.1	Key Issues	14
3.2	What we Need to Achieve	14
4.	YOUNG PEOPLE, 4 – 12 YEARS	16
4.1	Key Issues	16
4.2	What we Need to Achieve	16
5.	YOUNG PEOPLE, 12 - 18 YEARS	18
5.1	Key Issues	18
5.2	What we Need to Achieve	18
6.	INDIGENOUS YOUNG PEOPLE, 12 – 18 YEARS	19
6.1	Key Issues	19
6.2	What we Need to Achieve	19
7.	ADULTS - GENERAL	22
7.1	Key Issues	22
7.2	What we Need to Achieve	22
8.	ADULTS – INDIGENOUS MALES	25
8.1	Key Issues	25
8.2	What we Need to Achieve	25
9.	ADULTS – INDIGENOUS FEMALES	27
9.1	Key Issues	27
9.2	What we Need to Achieve	27
10.	SINGLE PARENTS	29
10.1	Key Issues	29
10.2	What we Need to Achieve	29



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	31
Young People, 0 – 5 Years	32
Young People, 5 – 12 Years	36
Young People, 12 – 18 Years	40
Indigenous Young People, 12 – 18 Years	49
Adults – General	55
Adults – Indigenous Males	62
Adults – Indigenous Females	69
Single Parents	74
APPENDIX 1, CONSULTANT’S APPROACH	78
APPENDIX 2, BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES	83

Note: The term ‘Indigenous’ within this document refers to Australians of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.



1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing a 'culture' of work in the Redfern Waterloo area is vital to the creation of a community in which social and economic benefits are broadly shared.

Most people who address the problem of unemployment and social disadvantage tend to focus on job creation, skills development and finally, jobseeker support. Few consider - nor directly target - the concept of what inspires people to want to work in the first instance. It is this idea is central to this study.

For many, the notion of working is inherent in the way in which we operate, initially nourished by an environment (normally a family) with strong education and work values. But for some, these values and learned behaviours are absent and, combined with the underlying causes of disadvantage, contribute to an absence of interest or confidence to work.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The Redfern-Waterloo Authority's (RWA) Employment and Enterprise Plan states that it "aims to directly challenge the area's social and economic disadvantage by fostering jobs, educational and life opportunities and a higher standard of living".

It further states that in that young people and the Indigenous community in Redfern-Waterloo suffer high levels of unemployment. Engaging this demographic, which makes up 39% of the community population, is one of the many priorities of the Employment and Enterprise Plan.

Some of the reasons for which this demographic is challenged by a work ethic are likely to include a lack of skills or opportunity, physical or mental disability, family caring arrangements which inhibit normal work patterns, generations of family members being unemployed, discrimination, stereotyping and knock-backs from prospective employers.

And as mentioned earlier, a home environment that provides working role models and/or work values offers familiarity with the concept of working.

1.3 PROJECT FOCUS

The project, commissioned by RWA, sought to identify the barriers for creating a culture of work (in consultation with the local community) and to develop a series of strategies aimed to overcome such barriers.

Methodology

- a) Review of relevant documents
 - RWA Employment and Enterprise Plan

- RWA Human Services Plan
 - South Sydney Young people Services Bi Annual Report 2004 - 20055
 - Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Response to RWA Employment & Enterprise Plan
 - Work Ventures Indigenous Young people Employment Consultants Program Summary
 - Plan-It Young people Report
- b) Interviews with a range of agencies/organisations in the area, the aim of which was to gain an understanding of current programs and services offered. This took in more than 30 services.
- c) A series of workshops were held with key stakeholders to identify issues, including.
- Representatives of Redfern Waterloo Indigenous Authority
 - Representatives of the Inner Sydney NGO Consortium
 - Board members of Mudgin-Gal Indigenous Corporation
 - Young people on board the Tribal Warrior and the Deerubbun
- d) Assessment of findings.
- e) Best practice models for addressing issues and research.
- f) Strategies were developed in a follow-up workshop with people who had been previously interviewed or who had participated in earlier workshops.
- g) Draft report with recommended strategies was prepared and shown to RWA Project Oversight team for comment and feedback.
- h) Final report drafted.

Key Outcomes

Main barriers/obstacles to developing a culture of work included:

- Negative view of employment due to past and present prejudice/racism experienced from prospective employers
- Anger and mistrust passed on from adults to young people - intergenerational trauma
- A perceived expectation that, even if trained, local businesses will not offer employment as they prefer experienced people
- Low self-esteem & sometimes due to low literacy/numeracy level & can be due to truancy, only exam-focused curriculum etc.
- Few/no family role models of anyone going to work
- Work is not a high priority - family issues are more important
- Young people have little vision of their future, and the options are available
- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Disability - physical and/or intellectual
- Physical and mental illness



- A perception from Department of Housing tenants that they will be financially disadvantaged if they develop an income
- Many Indigenous women have children at a young age which can preclude them from continuing their education
- Education is not valued

Creating a positive self-image:

Building a positive self-image was identified as being an essential element to building a culture of work. Please see 2.4 'Building Self-Imagine - the Key to a Culture of Work' for more details.

Strategies to address or overcome barriers:

The proposed strategies are aimed at - either directly or indirectly - building a positive self-image through building self-esteem and releasing creative potential.

For children in the 0-5 and 5-12 age groups, strategies are directed at supporting a nurturing home environment and a creative learning environment at home, pre-school and primary school. Strategies for the 12-18 age group are directed at strengthening programs that assist students to make the school to work transition. For adult groups the strategies are aimed at both building self-esteem and creating opportunities to acquire new skills.

Naturally, personal strategies are only part of the puzzle. Potential employers also need to provide supportive work environments, mentoring and training.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Redfern Waterloo area is on the verge of an historic program of regeneration, on a scale rarely seen in Australia.

Over the next few years the full potential will be realised as Redfern Waterloo emerges as a major employment centre and cultural destination. Many billions of dollars are expected to be invested in the community by the Government and private enterprise.

It is important that all members of the Redfern Waterloo community be able to fully participate in the many opportunities as they become available in the next few years. But how can the broader community share in the social and economic benefits of this exciting period?

Creating a culture of work in the Redfern Waterloo area is seen as one of the keys to sharing the benefits more widely.

Creating a Culture of Work is the central issue that Arrilla has been engaged to address:

- What is a culture of work?
- Why is it needed in the Redfern Waterloo area?
- How does a community develop a culture of work? In other words, what inspires people to want to work?
- What are the barriers to developing a culture of work?
- How can we overcome them, or find ways around them?
- What programs have worked in other places?
- What can we learn from these?
- What strategies will help deliver a culture of work amongst those in danger of being left behind? What can be done for young people and Indigenous people, the two groups in the community most at risk of missing out?

2.2 WHAT IS MEANT BY 'A CULTURE OF WORK'?

While there is no universal understanding of what constitutes a culture of work, it can generally be characterised as a culture in which:

- Parents nurture their children from birth, providing the basis for good physical, intellectual and emotional health over the longer term.
- Parents and others instil a sense of self-worth in children from an early age.
- School, and the education it provides, is seen as a contributor to a fulfilling life.
- Individuals have a sense of who they are and what they would like to achieve in life.
- The community offers training and employment opportunities to all who seek them.
- Individuals want to engage in work, as they see it as rewarding and personally fulfilling.
- The community provides special help to those who find it difficult to participate in a culture of work.
- Individuals have the opportunity to engage fully in a rich community life that supports the culture of work.

2.3 WHY DO WE NEED A CULTURE OF WORK?

Creating a culture of work is an important step in ensuring that the benefits of the future are broadly shared in the community. It will take time to achieve this - perhaps a generation or more.

Some 39% of people in the Redfern Waterloo area do not participate in the workforce and are at risk of living lives of disadvantage. Whilst this figure is particularly high, it should be tempered by an understanding that the Redfern Waterloo area has a disproportionately high number of older people and people who, for many reasons are unable to work.

There are many people, however, who could be encouraged or, more particularly, assisted to find their way into the workforce.

Creating a culture of work requires that we take a 'whole of life' view. The issues that impact negatively on individuals can occur at any stage in life, although they are most critical in younger life.

Children who do not receive adequate emotional, intellectual and physical care from birth, or who do not successfully make the transition to school will be at a disadvantage in gaining life-long learning skills.

Children who do not gain adequate literacy and numeracy skills in primary school may fall behind in high school, disengaging from their studies and dropping out of school before they have obtained the skills needed to fully participate in working life.

Beyond school, there are many more factors that can create barriers to work.

Many of the barriers to work in the Redfern Waterloo area are not experienced in other communities - at least not on the same scale.

Typical barriers to employment include:

- Lack of skills and training opportunities.
- Physical and mental disabilities
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Family caring arrangements that can inhibit 'traditional' work patterns
- Living in a family unit devoid of working members
- Loss of motivation to work, through poor experiences of the past
- Participation in training courses that lead nowhere
- Discrimination and stereotyping
- A lack of personal essentials as a driving licence or a suitable set of clothes for employment
- Being excluded due to a criminal record

2.4 BUILDING SELF-IMAGE - THE KEY TO CREATING A CULTURE OF WORK

Building a positive self-image was seen as an essential element in building a culture of work.

Our behaviour is largely determined by the image we have of ourselves - and by the story we tell



ourselves - about how we relate to other people and to the community/society in which we live.

Some young people have an image of themselves as poor students, while others have an image of themselves as being capable of doing anything. Therefore, a person's self image can lead to success - or sometimes to failure.

According to our consultation sample, it is perceived that many people in the Redfern Waterloo area who find it difficult to find employment and participate in a culture of work have a low self-esteem or a poor self-image.

People need to experience success in their lives to build skills and confidence. This is not dependent on an intellectual understanding but on positive experiences at every level of life - at home, school, with friends and in the broader community. Engaging people in a broad range of positive experiences can lay the foundation for a culture of work.

People particularly need opportunities to build their skills and to hear from potential employers that they will be valued as employees. Should this be absent, it is perceived that some skills training and a positive experience of work (even through a work experience program) can break down self-image barriers to employment.

Creating a positive self-image begins at an early age and is influenced by the messages we receive from many sources as we grow.

Therefore the community's challenge is to encourage rich environments for very young people, and break poor-image cycles for those whom are older.

2.5 ARRILLA'S APPROACH

To help determine how one creates a culture of work in the Redfern Waterloo area, Arrilla has taken a broad look at the many issues impacting on cultural change - issues that impact before birth, and right throughout our lives. The following groupings guide these considerations.

Young People, 0-5 Years
Young People, 5-12 Years
Young People, 12-18 Years
Indigenous Young people
Adults - General
Adults - Indigenous Males
Adults - Indigenous Females
Single Parents

For each of these groups, Arrilla has:

- Reviewed documentation (RWA planning documents in particular).
- Reviewed current programs that might impact on the central issue (over 30 organisations contacted - many face to face).
- Conducted six workshops across all groups - held with representatives of key community groups and RWA.
- Looked at best practice examples of what is working in this, and other communities.



- Identified the key issues facing each of the eight key groups.
- Identified specific needs for each group.
- Considered the provisional gaps.
- Suggested strategies to provide these groups with every opportunity to participate in a culture of work. In doing so, we acknowledge that local strategies are essential.

To report on these findings, this report appears in three parts:

- Key Issues and Recommendations: which outlines our findings and then, what we need to achieve
- Implementation Strategies: which outlines a needs and status analysis of each group, as well as proposed strategies for the future
- Appendices: Consultant's approach and best practice examples



KEY ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

3. YOUNG PEOPLE, 0 - 5 YEARS

3.1 KEY ISSUES

Health data in the RWA's Human Services Plan December 2005 indicates substantially poorer health for people at risk, such as Indigenous children and children born to mothers who are substance abusers. Babies of Indigenous mothers are twice as likely to be of low birth weight, a key lifetime predictor of poor health outcomes. It also reveals that some children are being raised in homes where they suffer neglect, often teamed with poor parenting skills.

Interestingly, there are low levels of engagement of children into formal children's services in Redfern-Waterloo. Yet, interventions targeted at the first five years of life improve overall lifetime health outcomes for families and children.

Particularly important are:

- Home visiting for new mothers
- Using schools as community centres
- Measures aimed at improving school readiness
- High quality early childhood support

A child's full potential is ultimately realised when raised in a nurturing and protective environment.

3.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

DEVELOPING PARENTING SKILLS IN DISADVANTAGED HOMES

Not all parents have the skills needed to become successful parents, particularly in disadvantaged homes. Additional strategies are needed to help parents and to increase the chances for young children to live a healthy life.

Introduce the Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting Program - this successful program has operated in South Australia for several years. It has been so successful that the program is now being extended to all teenage, Indigenous and socially isolated mothers who need support at home.

The program is also being trialled in South West Sydney by the Departments of Health and Community Services, and coordinated by the University of New South Wales.

The program provides a nurse to regularly visit the homes of young parents both before and after the birth of their child, providing support and encouragement and teaching basic parenting skills so that their children get a better start in life.

MAKING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

Much can be done by parents to prepare their children for school. Community programs in other



areas have proven to work well and are perceived to have potential in the Redfern Waterloo area. These include the following.

Transition to school program, 'Headstart' - conducted at preschools for children who will be starting kindergarten the next year. Tutors help with reading and math skills. Interest in reading can also be stimulated in pre-school children by a teacher from a nearby primary school bringing children from years 4, 5 and 6 to the pre-school to read to the children. Would not require additional budget.

'Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters' (HIPPY) - helps children develop reading and math skills through a home tutor program and parent support package. Targeted at disadvantaged families. Has been working successfully in the La Perouse community. Note: The RWA Human Services Plan incorporates the introduction of this program as part of a strategy to lift local school numeracy and literacy levels.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE, 5-12 YEARS

4.1 KEY ISSUES

It is perceived that some children within this target group are not part of a positive educative environment, usually due to poor participation in a school environment by their parents or carers, as evidenced by low literacy and numeracy skills.

The attainment of satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills is vital to future achievement at school and fundamental to making a successful high school transition.

Both the home and school environments have an impact; parents are particularly influential on how well children learn at home and at school.

There is a danger of children disengaging from school, particularly where they need to do school work at home and are not supported - once behind, it is very difficult to recover.

The school environment needs to be recognised as the centre of a 'learning community' and be supported by programs that achieve this.

Absenteeism and suspension impact negatively on student performance and general achievement. This can impact life-long social and economic success.

It is important to create a home environment that supports and encourages learning and to involve parents/carers in their children's education.

4.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

INVOLVE PARENTS/CARERS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

It is recommended that the RWA act as a broker to support and expand school programs that encourage parental interaction, such as those described below.

'TTALL' (Talk to a Literacy Learner) - a program which has been successfully used by many disadvantaged groups in NSW to increase literacy skills. TTALL works best when a trained primary school teacher acts as a TTALL facilitator, working with parents of children attending school. Children improve their literacy and numeracy skills and parents themselves gain confidence as well as increased skills.

'Parent School Partnership Initiative' - a program funded by the commonwealth government and is targeted at increasing numeracy and literacy skills in schoolchildren, improving attendance levels and year 10-12 completion. It is competitive and submission based.

Indigenous Student Support and Awareness (ASSPA) committees received funding in past programs and had a proven history of engaging Indigenous parents in school activities. This program was abolished thus reducing Indigenous parent participation in schools. Additional funds would be required to reinvigorate this program.



IMPROVE STANDARDS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

It is vital that primary school age children enter high school fully prepared. Further support could be considered in two key areas:

'Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme' (ITAS) - this valuable scheme provides for a Federal Government funded tutor to Indigenous children at their local school to improve numeracy and literacy skills. Funding has been more than halved in recent years leaving many children without support. It is recommended that the RWA broker an agreement with the NSW Department of Education and Training to fill the gaps/shortfalls within this program.

Additional speech therapy resources - speech therapy students could be engaged to run groups one day per week at community centres attached to primary schools. Historically, making appointments with outside specialists has not worked.

Tutorial assistance - The Exodus Foundation in partnership with RWA will establish a Tutorial Centre to improve literacy among disadvantaged children, and RWA will support other specialised literacy intervention programs (e.g. Reading Recovery, Early Literacy) which help students who are behind in reading and related skills make significant gains in reading accuracy, word recognition, spelling and reading fluency. NOTE: This strategy - amongst others targeting literacy issues - is included in the Human Services Plan.

OTHER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

Homework Centres - local experience with Homework Centres came through during the consultation phase of this document. Darlington Public School, Alexandria Park Community School, The Settlement and Redfern Community Centre have all tried Homework Centres but in all cases they have failed. It appears that children with behavioural problems attend and disrupt those who want to work. The Supervisor spends time dealing with unruly children rather than helping with homework.

Out of School Hours/Vacation Care - there are a significant number of 'Out of School Hours and Vacation Care' programs run by a number of organisations in the Redfern-Waterloo area (see list compiled and distributed by South Sydney Community Aid).

Schools as Community Centres - the school becomes the centre of learning in the community, linked closely with parent and other support groups. Glebe Public School has a successful program and Redfern Connect has a similar program in Redfern Waterloo

5. YOUNG PEOPLE, 12 – 18 YEARS

5.1 KEY ISSUES

The Redfern Waterloo Employment Enterprise Plan offers detail regarding this target group. It reveals that the area experiences a high level of young people unemployment (16%) and that young people who experience unemployment early are more likely to experience joblessness and lower earnings in the future.

Some young people grow up in a home environment where there has been no culture of work for two to three generations. Consequently they do not have immediate role models of people going to work every day. Many young people therefore have low self-esteem.

Children and young people who feel connected to their environment (eg family, other adults, school and their communities) are more likely to make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood.

We need to capture young people's imagination and engage them in activities that build self-confidence and skills.

Education and employment training is the key to escaping social and economic disadvantage.

5.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD A CAREER

Teenagers need to see first hand the benefits of continuing their education. Seeing people like themselves achieve in life may offer the inspiration young men and women need to make the best of their opportunities. Recommendations include the following.

Initiate a Local/National Heroes Program - RWA could establish a program of face to face visits to schools or local young people centres, including speakers by who have succeeded in business, sport or the arts at either the local or national level, and/or people who have simply enjoyed a regular job for a significant period of time.

This program could be supported by media coverage of their visits and their achievements.

Such a program would see local people - both Indigenous and non-Indigenous from many backgrounds - talk with young people in years 9-12 about their work and opportunities in their industry, thus helping to break down perceived barriers to enter the workforce.

National heroes would inspire young people to achieve.

NOTE: this program would need to be coordinated by the RWA and would have budgetary implications.

BUILDING SELF CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Engaging young people in imaginative and fun activities is a proven way of building confidence and skills.

While a wide range of young people focussed activities are offered in the Redfern Waterloo area, for example:

'ReStart Art Project' - uses art as a means of empowering young people. Functional artworks and recycled furniture provide the basis of the art. This program has been successful in Redfern, Waterloo, Darlington and Alexandria in recent years. ReStart Art is an initiative of the South Sydney Community Aid Cooperative and has received sponsorship from the City of Sydney. It may need RWA support to gain funding in future years.

Some additional programs that have potential are recommended.

'The World's Largest Art Gallery' to engage young people in a high visibility art project that will gain national attention and help build the confidence of local young people.

Young people artworks generated for the exhibition could be displayed at Redfern Station and other sites in the Redfern Waterloo area, creating the world's largest art gallery.

The World's Largest Art Gallery could be displayed for a month and be supported by commercial sponsors.

Note: This program would require funding however as mentioned above, could be complimented by commercial sponsorship.

Engaging Young people through Music - music is an outstanding medium for engaging young people in activities that are creative and that build skills and confidence qualities that are essential to building a culture of work.

A successful, similar program is the annual Combined High Schools Music Event and, at the local level, musical activities at the Redfern Community Centre.

It is recommended that RWA, in developing its cultural strategies, place particular focus on musical activities for young people.

VOCATIONAL EXPOSURE

Many young people are challenged by making career and vocation decisions. Often they have limited awareness of what is available or what might best suit their skills and interests.

Two studies completed for the Smith Family by the Australian Council for Educational Research concluded that Years 8 and 9 were the critical years where young people make up their minds about future directions.

Recommendations to increase their awareness of what is available, includes the following.

Vocational Taster Courses - could be conducted by TAFE in association with targeted



industries (particularly those with skill shortages). A two week vocational training course could be followed by work experience in the same industry.

School Based Traineeships - it is recommended that the school-based Traineeship program be expanded. This is a well-established and successful program of the Department of Education and Training.

Careers Expo - it is recommended that, in addition to the vocational guidance students receive at school, RWA support the Careers Expo being planned by Centrelink in December 2006.

6. INDIGENOUS YOUNG PEOPLE

6.1 KEY ISSUES

High school retention rates for Indigenous young people are half that for non-Indigenous young people.

Indigenous young people often have low self-esteem and low levels of engagement with school and community. They experience high levels of unemployment - and some have been exposed to a lack of culture of work that spans generations.

Young people who experience unemployment early in life are more likely to experience joblessness and lower earnings in the future.

Children and young people who feel a sense of connectedness (eg to their family, other adults, school and to their communities) are more likely to make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood.

There is a need to capture young people's imagination and engage them in activities that build self-confidence.

Education and employment training is the key to escaping social and economic disadvantage.

Young people need to value education as a path toward employment or tertiary level education.

The challenge for Government and community groups is how best to engage Indigenous young people in school and community life.

6.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

Recommendations are outlined below.

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE

Local and National Heroes Program - these programs need to particularly include local and national Indigenous heroes.

BUILDING SELF CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The ReSTART Art Project - local Indigenous coordinators need to be part of the ReStart Art Project, as noted earlier.

Note: This may require additional funding

The World's Largest Art Gallery - a section of the display could be designated for Indigenous art/artists, as noted earlier.



KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE IN JOBS

Establish a hostel for apprentices in Redfern Waterloo - Indigenous Hostels could be approached to consider establishing a hostel for Indigenous apprentices from the area to provide young people with a place to live free of the distractions associated with disadvantaged homes.

Indigenous Hostels currently operate such hostels in some locations for young Indigenous people who are in trades, apprenticeships or traineeships under the IYMP (Indigenous Young people Mobility Project) funded by DEST.

7. ADULTS - GENERAL

7.1 KEY ISSUES

A major issue is the absence of a culture of work amongst some members of the community.

The RWA Human Services Report found that 39% of the available labour force are not participating. This figure should be tempered by a recognition that many are too old or unable to work through disability.

Of those who are in the workforce, unemployment in this location is higher than the NSW average (7.6% Redfern; 16.6% Waterloo). Young people and the Indigenous community in Redfern-Waterloo face high levels of unemployment and non-involvement in the labour force.

These figures are in contrast to the availability of 12,500 jobs in the Redfern Waterloo area.

Unemployment and inadequate job skills are major contributors to social and economic disadvantage.

Local job seekers need greater training and skills to secure and maintain jobs in either the local area or the adjoining central business district.

There is a clear need to develop additional strategies that will engage people in programs and activities that will build their skills, as well as their confidence.

7.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

SUPPORTING JOBSEEKERS

Continue to develop and enhance the Adult Mentoring Program - mentors should be both paid for their work and properly trained to ensure commitment and results from the program. Mentoring programs should include support for jobseekers as well as those recently into jobs. NOTE: This program is already a component of the Employment & Enterprise Development Plan.

ENCOURAGING CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Keeping people in employment requires that they see a long-term future for themselves; one that includes progress and advancement.

Influencing policy -- the RWA has -- and will continue to have - contractual partnerships with companies undertaking work in the local area. It is recommended that the RWA continue to include prerequisites for engagement, including Indigenous employment and development. Where there is no contractual partnership, the RWA should encourage local companies to provide career assessment and development programs, as part of their human resource strategies. These should become part of employee contracts and demonstrated within traineeship/apprenticeship programs.



IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH JOB SEEKERS

Many jobseekers are not aware what is required to apply for/secure a job.

Communicating more effectively with jobseekers - RWA could partner with Job Network Providers and others to develop a Communication Action Plan.

Jobseekers need to be made more aware of support structures available to them such as assistance in how to prepare for a job, obtain a driver's licence, a set of suitable work clothes, overcoming a criminal record, impact of new industrial relations laws etc.

Broad distribution of this message, across many different media is critical to success if low literacy levels can hamper vital communication.

8. ADULTS – INDIGENOUS MALES

8.1 KEY ISSUES

62% of Indigenous people of all ages are not in the labour force. Of those in the labour force, 31% are unemployed. This widespread non-engagement in the workforce is a major contributing factor to the social and economic disadvantages facing the community.

Indigenous men can be categorised by the following:

- Often experience a lack of confidence and low self-esteem.
- Often lack the skills required by employers; there are a limited number of entry level jobs in the area.
- Some Indigenous men have little expectation of employment because of poor experiences.
- Some Indigenous men have a criminal record (including gaol sentences) that may exclude them from employment opportunities.

8.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

SUPPORTING ENTRY INTO THE WORKFORCE

RWA's Indigenous employment model (construction industry) is seen by some as best practice in addressing the issue of Indigenous unemployment. It is recommended that this strategy be extended and further supported, the components of which include:

Continuation of support models for Indigenous employment creation - As the Indigenous Employment Model is further established, it is expected that it will be expanded to other local industries such as hospitality. Further deployment of this model could be expected to provide major benefits to Indigenous men.

Mentoring Indigenous adults to get jobs - a mentoring program for Indigenous adults may be required to pave the way for job entry. Such programs have operated in other areas with some success. e.g. Black on Track's 'Mentoring our Mob' program in the Hunter region.

Providing support to the Men's Group - the Men's Group would benefit from having a special space - or a 'Shed' - for men to work through trauma and help them to gain employment. The Men's Group would also benefit from professional assistance in getting themselves better organised for their valuable support role.

Note: These programs will need additional funding.

KEEPING PEOPLE IN JOBS

Recommendations include the following.

Expand Mentoring Program - Additional mentors are needed to support people placed in employment. A strong mentoring program results in satisfied employees and long term employment for the individual. This could complement the Mentoring Programs mentioned earlier in this report.

Supply Aboriginal Cross-Cultural training for local businesses - many local businesses would benefit from knowing why the RWA is interested in encouraging Indigenous employment and what value there may for them to get involved (eg dismantling the facts from the myths, stereotyping, managing workplace issues, incentives and support etc).

SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESSES

Indigenous people need to be empowered to take responsibility for their own future. However, start-up capital and business experience are often lacking.

A new business development strategy aimed at supporting the growth of Indigenous enterprises was launched in 2006 as a joint initiative of the NSW Government and RWA. It has three main focus areas in an Indigenous enterprise service, enterprise workshops and an Indigenous young people business program.

The following initiatives are recommended:

The establishment of a Business Hub - RWA is currently negotiating the establishment of a Business Hub with the Metropolitan Indigenous Association. The Hub could be enhanced by introducing assistance for those in the establishment phase of business development.

9. ADULTS – INDIGENOUS FEMALES

9.1 KEY ISSUES

In the Redfern Waterloo area, 105 Indigenous people receive Single Parent Income Support, 196 receive New Start Allowance and 84 receive Disability Support.

Our consultation feedback, combined with accepted statistics for this demographic, describe how adult Indigenous women in the Redfern Waterloo area may be characterised.

- Young mothers managing young families many with a higher than average number of children.
- Family commitments that generally inhibit the opportunity for Indigenous women to participate fully in education or employment opportunities.
- Caring for the family is generally regarded as more important than following one's individual pursuits.
- Many Indigenous women suffer from a low self-esteem.
- Indigenous women can be victims of domestic violence, or live a domestic violent environment.
- Many want to get into paid employment but don't have high expectations (eg a perception that they will be paid poorly and/or exploited).
- Indigenous women have to cope with a high number of deaths in the family - lose hope - lose motivation.
- While there are many apprenticeship opportunities for men in construction and other industries, there are fewer opportunities for women.

9.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

WORKFORCE ENTRY PREPARATION

Indigenous women in Redfern-Waterloo have expressed a desire to find employment that uses existing skills. They also want to learn new skills that would be recognised by employers. We recommend the following strategies

Undertake a generic skills audit of Indigenous women - those who seek employment could be invited to participate - UTS or Sydney University may be engaged to conduct the assessment.

Develop a pre-employment training package for Indigenous women - designed to build self-esteem, confidence and skills. Such a course would need to be accredited to gain employer recognition. Women's' Camps to build self-esteem in a supportive environment could be part of this program. Partners could include RAC, Mudgin-Gal, the Chamber of Commerce and Job Network providers.

INCREASED CHILD CARE CENTRES/OPTIONS

Enable access to low cost child care for Indigenous women, and develop additional places where possible – acknowledged an issue of national concern, this would enable



Indigenous women in the rea to overcome some of the current barriers to employment. A specific quota of the 100 new affordable childcare places planned (as determined by The RWA's Human Services Plan) could be allocated to Indigenous women/carers. Some women may also benefit from learning more about existing services for childcare assistance.

ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is recommended that:

RWA support community based organisations to offer formal traineeships -

Community based organisations are well placed to help build skills for Indigenous women yet there are few traineeships available. There is an opportunity for local community-based organisations to offer traineeships, which provide a non-threatening environment in which to learn critical job skills and receive accreditation (through TAFE) at the end of the trainee period.

10. SINGLE PARENTS

10.1 KEY ISSUES

There are 550 people receiving a single parents allowance in the Redfern Waterloo area. 105 are Indigenous and 39 are Vietnamese, representing the two largest groups in the area. The other 406 are not specifically identified.

Many single parents do not have recent workforce experience and many others lack basic computer skills necessary for employment today.

Furthermore, many of these parents cannot afford day care to allow them to pursue further training or job opportunities.

It is difficult for single mothers to secure part-time or job share opportunities that suit family arrangements. This emphasises the need for 'family friendly' work/organizations as well as the need to ensure that carers are aware of the childcare support available to them.

A recent change to the Single Parents allowance requires parents to look for work when their youngest child is 6 years of age. This change is expected to financially disadvantage many single parents in the Redfern Waterloo area. (Ref: Tenants Union of NSW, Reshaping Public Housing & Work Disincentives).

The following recommendations complement those that appear in section 9.

10.2 WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE

Need for Flexible Employment Opportunities

Single parents are often mature, reliable employees but yet matching their skills and commitment with the needs of employers is a challenge. Therefore the following is recommended.

Identify 'family friendly' organizations and employment - some employers have recognised the need to provide parents with facilities at work (such as childcare) and provide flexible working hours to suit single parents. These employers need to be identified and we need encourage other businesses to follow suit.

Identify employers who can offer part time or non-standard work hours - some employers may seek employees for peak periods of the day (eg lunch time, 4pm – 6pm rush hours) or non-standard hours. Once identified, these kinds of positions should be communicated to this target group so they may respond.

Preparing for Work

There are not enough community-based programs in the Redfern Waterloo area to assist single parents to gain job skills and prepare for work (resume preparation etc). Therefore the following is recommended.



Additional community based job preparation programs - Glebe Schools as Community Centres works with Centacare who fund childcare services while parents undertake job skills training courses. A similar program may benefit single parents in the Redfern Waterloo area.