Part 2: The Need to Work Together

This section outlines the framework which underpins the current role of Government working with the Redfern and Waterloo communities.

It provides a brief overview of the history of the NSW Government's work to strengthen communities. It also provides a context for the choice of initiatives within the whole of government/whole of community approach being implemented through the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, including the rationale for why and how the approach in Redfern and Waterloo differs from other approaches in New South Wales.

It provides evidence from work in the United Kingdom and Ireland with communities of high need which have strong similarities to the approach taken by Government in Redfern and Waterloo. An overview and analysis of differing methods of locality based work with communities in need across New South Wales is also given.

This evidence supports the Government approach taken through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) as a model of best practice in addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities.

6 Whole of Government/Community Approach

6.1 NSW Government's commitment to strengthening communities

Since 1995 the NSW Government has devoted considerable effort and resources on initiating programs which strengthen disadvantaged communities and enhance the quality of life of all members of those communities. Whilst acknowledging the scale of the challenge in tackling deep-seated social difficulties, the Government has shown a strong commitment to change through:

▪ prioritising issues which affect specific locations

▪ employing a mix of immediate, developmental and preventive strategies that respond to short, medium and longer term goals

▪ recognising and building on the strengths of particular communities – its leaders, networks and facilities

▪ identifying and working with community assets.

Some of the programs established since that time include:

▪ support for families through Families First

▪ programs directed towards at risk children, young people and their families, including the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy and various school based programs

▪ court and other diversionary programs including drug courts, youth conferencing, circle sentencing for Aboriginal youth and prisoner reintegration programs to reduce re-offending

▪ improved health services

▪ a range of locally based initiatives including, community renewal programs in public housing estates and more than 230 projects funded through the Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Program.

From the outset the focus has been on building partnerships, across and within the community, across and within all levels of Government, with the non-government sector and business, and engaging with the communities.

Many of the programs are intended to increase the life chances of socio-economically disadvantaged families and children by enhancing health and increasing the opportunities to education and employment. Often they have wider benefits in that they also prevent crime.

The Government recognised the need for an integrated approach with strategies that addressed poverty and unemployment, abuse and neglect, inadequate schooling and housing, along with strategies that addressed the more immediate, individual, family and community risk factors.

6.2   Why a whole of government approach?

There has been much debate and literature about the historically 'siloed' approach to the delivery of Government services.

Individual agencies are often unable to see the broader context because of their need to focus on their core business. Equally, complex and often entrenched problems cannot be resolved by a single agency approach which can result in agencies competing or even working against each other. According to Stewart-Weekes, working to create strong, effective and prosperous communities with systems which carve up the task into relative watertight functional boxes – education, health, transport and so on - makes little sense (cited by Farland 1998). Farland's paper also cites O'Brien's study of 30 community-based children and family services, which identifies the following attributes as successful initiatives:

- collaboration across department lines

- funds from two or more traditionally separate programs brought together into a pool and made flexible

- pooled funds made available to local collaborative entities.

The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) (2002) quotes that the UK concept of whole of government or joined up government "..recognises that no one has all the knowledge and resources, or controls all the levers to bring about sustainable solutions to complex issues".

A report by the Social Exclusion Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in the UK states that the highly fragmented nature of government programs have exacerbated social trends and economic decline in the most deprived areas.

The IPAA (2002) report also recognises that in order to successfully build neighbourhoods and regenerate areas, initiatives must combine economic, service, education, physical redevelopment and community strengthening elements. Community issues such as renewal and regeneration, safety and health are not the responsibility of any one agency or community organisation and for change to occur, require many different players.

Government agencies must work together in partnership with each other and with non-Government organisations, businesses and the community to achieve sustainable long term solutions.

A successful whole of government approach requires a shared purpose, teamwork, partnerships and building strong relationships. Strong leadership and a commitment at the highest levels of Government are also required.

6.3 International responses to disadvantaged communities

6.3.1 Ireland

At the 2003 IPPA NSW State Conference, the findings of the 1999 IPPA (Dublin) research into the management of crosscutting issues were presented.

The key findings, listed below, are reproduced in their entirety from this paper (pages 17 and 18) as they are a clear articulation of the issues involved in managing change in communities where there are significant and entrenched levels of disadvantage.

> *Crosscutting issues vary in **complexity**. Responses to their management also need to vary to suit the circumstances. Relatively straightforward issues need simple structures, normally under the control of a lead department. More complex issues concerning the integration of policies require actions such as the establishment of*

cabinet committees, a lead role for junior ministers and the use of crosscutting teams. The most intractable and key policy issues may require radical solutions such as new organisational structures, top management and high-level political involvement.

*The management of crosscutting issues is a **time-consuming** process. This can cause particular tensions for those involved if they are placed in a position of having to balance work both for their own organisation and on a crosscutting issue. At senior official level, the amount of time taken dealing with diverse crosscutting initiatives can be considerable. Greater coordination of crosscutting initiatives and channelling them through existing structures at the local level would help address this problem. At the level of day-to-day management, the use where appropriate, of dedicated full-time crosscutting teams can create the time and space needed for staff to begin to address the issues concerned.*

*A **strong bias for action** is needed if crosscutting issues are to be addressed. To facilitate such a bias, there is a need for clarity about the objectives to be addressed and about funding and resourcing supports generally. In particular, issues around whether or not funding is once off, what vote it is allocated through, and how it can be accessed, must be tackled.*

***Empowerment** is an important underlying principle in the management of crosscutting issues. Devolution of appropriate power, responsibilities and accountabilities to those directly involved in coordinating activities facilitates more effective decision-making. Similarly, structures and processes that empower end users of services encourage better joint working.*

***Building a user perspective** into the management of crosscutting issues grounds actions in the reality of users' experiences. When seen from a user's perspective, the need to progress coordination and cooperation is often clearer than when the issue is looked at from an organisation's perspective.*

*There is a danger of separate national level initiatives on crosscutting issues leading to **a proliferation of new initiatives**. Each with their own structure at the local level. These may be uncoordinated and overlapping. The more initiatives which can be channelled through existing structures, particularly local government, the less this is likely to cause major difficulties.*

*There is a need for a meta-strategy or broad vision to guide progress at both national and local levels. Developing this shared vision entails not only developing a common purpose, but also recognising the role of individual organisational purposes. **Clarifying the self-interest motivations of participating organisations and establishing realistic expectations are important tasks**. The creation of a participative process is important if the vision is to be commonly owned.*

*A range of coordinating instruments can be used to facilitate joint working. In particular, regulatory, communicative and financial instruments are available to steer initiatives in the desired direction. Given the central role of budgets in public service provision, **financial incentives can be particularly influential.** The creation of a fund, open to competitive tender, for piloting of coordinating activities is a useful means of generating new approaches. Good practice examples can be identified and lessons drawn from their experience.*

***The precise nature of coordinating structures needs varies with the complexity of the problem**. At the political level, cabinet committees and/or junior ministers with particular crosscutting responsibilities are common approaches used to drive initiatives. At the policy level, lead departments, super-ministers, inter-departmental task forces and crosscutting teams are the main structures used to coordinate activities. A range of implementation mechanisms are available for the delivery of crosscutting services. Four general models to enhance service delivery are: first-stop shops; co-location of services; administrative integration and program integration.*

A strong role for the centre of government is needed. When dealing with particularly complex crosscutting issues, the centre must keep a focus on government priorities, establish the policy framework, engage in information gathering and analysis, and monitor implementation and impact. The development and tracking of Strategic Results Areas (SRAs), or their equivalent, in particular is a key task. Checking that SRAs are stepped down into actionable statements by the agencies involved is vital to their success.

*Cultural factors can often inhibit effective joint working. Attention to understanding of the mind sets and value systems of those involved in crosscutting issues is as important as efforts to improve structural and process mechanisms. **Taking a user perspective on issues can be particularly helpful here, with services being evaluated and audited from a user perspective.***

*Lack of effective coordination is probably one of the most commonly heard complaints about public service delivery. There are now many initiatives underway or being planned to more effectively tackle these difficult crosscutting issues. Central to their success **is a sound understanding of the incentives operating on individuals and organisations** to act as they do, and the opportunities that exist to promote better joint working to arrive at joint solutions to problems. Structures, processes and culture all need to be addressed if effective, well-coordinated government of crosscutting issues is to be achieved.*

6.3.2   United Kingdom

The concentration of disadvantage in specific communities is widespread throughout all advanced economies. In response to increased exclusion of disadvantaged communities, governments in the UK have recently introduced innovative approaches to support communities in addressing the issues they face.

The recognition of the complex long term impact of social exclusion has led to a range of locality based and integrated policy initiatives to assist in tackling social disadvantage in areas of high need in cities. This has now become a mainstream concern of policy in both the United Kingdom and in the United States in recent years (Smith 1999; UK Government 2000; Stegman 1998).

The UK Government (2000) has in its report by the Social Exclusion Unit identified The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies focus on social exclusion as a long term compounding effect of social disadvantage on communities. These Renewal Strategies emphasised reintegration and prevention through local economic revival, increased job opportunities, a focus on children and families and education. They also focus on safe communities, improvement to housing, to transport and renewal of the local environment.

Whilst the UK government is committed to crime prevention strategies, anti-social behaviour is seen as fuelled by social disadvantage and exclusion. Crime prevention initiatives focus on anti-social behaviour resulting from poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, truancy and school exclusion, drug dependency and community disorganisation.

The UK Government (2000) report of Policy Action Team 8 responses recognise that no one agency has the capacity to address these complex issues which ultimately result in crime and breakdown of community resilience.

The Scottish Community Regeneration Programs have set up wider place regeneration approaches which focus heavily on community involvement. They aim to achieve integration across national, regional and local authorities. They have amalgamated community planning and legislative processes and build resilience through empowerment initiatives (The Scottish Executives' Community Regeneration Statement 2002). The Government focus again is on children and youth as well as discrimination of sub-groups as a particular cause for social degeneration.

Mechanisms applied by Government in the UK also include a range of local renewal and partnership approaches. Most are addressed through the Social Exclusion Unit located within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. They are based on a complex system of local partnership and governance with a strong emphasis on consultation and involvement of local community. The experience in the United Kingdom acknowledges some issues which are yet to be resolved including:

- partnership overlap and proliferation

- consultation fatigue

- services that are over complex, not performance managed and offer little accountability to local people.

The UK experience recognises that for community renewal to be effective strong linkages between community and policy makers needs to occur, including influencing forms of funding (Report of Policy Action Team 16, UK Government 2000). The Scottish experience provides further evidence for moving away from funding isolated single outcome approaches which their evidence shows has little impact (The Scottish Executives' Community Regeneration Statement 2002).

Both the UK and Scotland recognise the need for a specialist government workforce which can make the transition from senior bureaucracy to community.

6.4 Overview of place focused approaches in Australia

In Australia the focus on community renewal has emerged from a variety of policy approaches, from federal and state to local government and they vary in their capacity to effect social change in localities. International evidence does show however that a more integrated whole of government, co-ordination approach has more effective results (Randolph 2004). Through such a broad approach initiatives which focus jointly on social, economic and other factors have a greater chance of success.

It has been shown that neighbourhood disadvantage has as great an impact on an individual's wellbeing, as individual disadvantage (Vinson 2004). This points to the idea that initiatives should focus on strengthening whole communities, rather than on providing specific programs to individuals or sub-groups alone.

In New South Wales, place-focused initiatives are being run through at least 13 federal and state Government departments and a host of other regional government agencies (especially health), local government, and non-government agencies (Randolph 2004). They cover a range of target groups or issues through a range of project based grants. Randolph lists the four types of these initiatives as:

- *Targeted Funding Programs* which provide communities with short term resources aimed at physical renewal approaches but are too specific to achieve integrated sustainable renewal

- *Place Integration and Coordination* of services with whole of government approaches often involving multi-agency partnerships and senior government officials. They focus on specific outcomes and are seen by Randolph as limited in their scope for disadvantaged communities

- *Place Entrepreneurship*. These kinds of projects are described as highly variable, are often locally constituted, with a longer-term vision of outcomes based on an analysis of local needs. The value is that they involve a place manager addressing more complex interrelating needs, involving partnership arrangements and multiple funding sources with some local decision making authority

- *Place Management* which involves the appointment of a locally based person to act as a facilitator or coordinator of (usually) publicly funded social interventions within a neighbourhood. These have a strong focus on partnership with local government with an emphasis on community safety, drugs and crime management.

In analysing place focused approaches, Randolph (2004) raises a number of concerns about how public expenditure is applied to address social disadvantage. He calls for new ways of achieving integrated outcomes through whole of government approaches. He recommends more strategic coordination of service delivery and of allocation and coordination at all levels of Government and describes many of the outcomes as 'hit and miss'.

Evidence suggests that locality focused approaches are successful in addressing disadvantaged communities (Randolph 2004, UK Government (2000), The Scottish Executives (2002)). It also suggests that targeted strategic work which focuses on single outcomes, or a component of service delivery alone, will only achieve short term gain. Long-term integrated approaches that include whole of government/whole of community commitment and integrated local program delivery will have the greatest chance of success.

Most reviews support local community renewal programs provided they have a strong and committed agency or focus to drive them. An approach which provides long term integrated initiatives would benefit considerably from a capacity to influence policy directly.

7 Framework for Approach to Redfern and Waterloo

7.1 The Redfern and Waterloo approach

The complex, interrelating social problems of disadvantaged communities in the UK and Scotland are similar to the experience in Redfern and Waterloo communities.

Analysis of demographic data and information collected through the community engagement process showed that Redfern and Waterloo are characterised by unemployment, high crime and re-offending population, poor housing, family breakdown and stress, school exclusion, drug and alcohol dependence, and poor health, (in particular mental health). This mirrors what was found both in the UK and Scotland to be the key issues which have impacted on the whole community and have eroded community resilience.

The establishment of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) as a whole of government, whole of community approach builds on the Government's previous efforts to address the complex issues within the Redfern and Waterloo communities. It provides the framework through which the NSW Government can respond to the needs of these communities using unique ways to build a strong and resilient community which is able to identify and respond to its own issues and needs with the support of Government.

Figure 3: **Scope and purpose of whole of government approach**
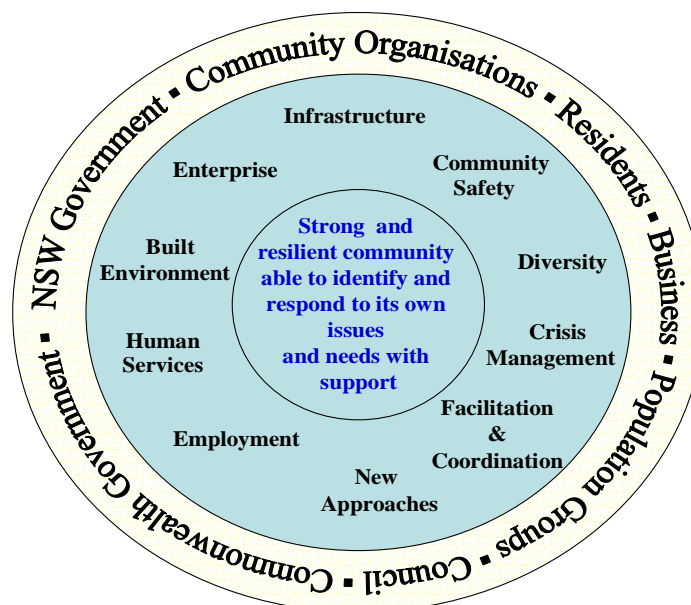
As can be seen from Figure 3 above, this framework acknowledges that for solutions to be sustainable they must take a holistic approach to individuals and communities i.e., the response must acknowledge and take into account the full range of factors that impact on people's lives. For example, addressing issues around infrastructure may present opportunities to address issues around employment and crime. This framework also acknowledges that there is a need to take risks through the development of innovative solutions that breakdown the silos that have developed over time.

Community well being is built on enhancing relationships between government and the local community and building the capacity of members and its services to meet the needs of the community as it changes and grows.

The success of the framework being put into place in Redfern and Waterloo may well have implications for Government in building sustainable change to strengthen other communities. It will also allow for the testing of new methods of sustainability for public administration across New South Wales.

The Redfern and Waterloo approach differs from other place focused approaches in New South Wales, in that it attempts to deliver more integrated outcomes through strategic coordination of service delivery and financial allocations at all levels of government.

To this end the Commonwealth Government was invited and has agreed, to become a partner in the Project. Complementing this is the strong partnership with the former South Sydney City Council, which is expected to be continued and strengthened with the new City of Sydney Council.

This approach recognises no one level of Government, let alone single agencies, have the capacity to address the complex issues which contribute to the issues faced by the communities of Redfern and Waterloo.

The whole of government approach to Redfern and Waterloo is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- enhance community participation and leadership
- reduce crime and improve safety
- enhance services for young people and children at risk or in crisis
- provide additional support for families
- improve health outcomes
- reduce drug and alcohol abuse
- enhance educational opportunities
- increase employment opportunities

- promote enterprise development

- improve urban amenity and public space

- improve planning and service coordination

- enhance relationships between government and the local community

- build the capacity of services and develop innovative approaches to service delivery to better meet the needs of the community.

It is important to recognise that the RWPP has in its initial phase developed a range of innovative responses across human services agencies, infrastructure development and improvements to public domain, employment, enterprise and training strategies. The results achieved and complexities faced in this phase will inform the future approach Government takes in Redfern and Waterloo.

The approach recognises that:

- the service delivery system must provide a quality service and be accessible and responsive with the capacity to meet both short and long term needs

- strategies and actions must be effective, deliver appropriate outcomes and make efficient use of the funds available

- service providers, both Government and non-government, must be accountable to the community and to the taxpayer

- there must be open decision making which includes involving the community in finding solutions

- linked to this, solutions must have the support of, and meet the needs of, the whole community

- the service system must be seamless i.e. people should be able to 'walk' through the service system without concerning themselves about who is providing the service

- partnerships between and within local Council, Government and non-government agencies and the community are essential for solutions to be sustainable

- coordination and integration of activities, programs and services must occur at all levels across and between all partner agencies

- maximization of opportunities and resources must occur through the linking of social, economic and environmental issues in the development of solutions.

Change will not come to Redfern and Waterloo quickly or easily. It will take a long term commitment by all stakeholders if it is to succeed. It will also require all stakeholders to own and move on from past failures.

8 Role of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

8.1 Rationale for the approach

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a high level of government resources is focused on Redfern and Waterloo when compared to many other communities across New South Wales. The question therefore has to be asked why these communities still find themselves in such a serious state of disadvantage.

It is important to note, that in reading the rest of this section, the comments relate to the service system in Redfern and Waterloo and are not intended to reflect on any individual agency or service nor on any particular sector. There is no doubt that there are some exceptionally professionally run services with dedicated and committed staff who have worked well beyond what could be considered reasonable.

Poor or non existent coordination, inadequate accountability across the service system, duplication of services and under resourced, under trained and non viable services combined with the policies of past Governments have all contributed to this situation. In the past agencies have often been program or funding driven to the detriment of achieving effective outcomes for the communities such as Redfern and Waterloo. Past experience in Redfern and Waterloo has also shown that issues at the 'hard end' were left untouched.

The clear move to focus on the client's perspective and away from agencies perspectives and priorities, acknowledges that services and agencies need to change if the issues are to be resolved.

Research and past experiences have shown that for change to happen, there must be strong leadership linked to a potential capacity to 'force' change should this prove necessary. The high level of support from within the NSW Government and from senior managers of line agencies has meant that the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project has been able to examine and implement different approaches which would not otherwise have been possible – examples include the Human Services Review (see Chapter 24) and the Redfern/Waterloo Street Team (see Chapter 12).

The creation of a high level and dedicated Project Team recognises that both time and resources will be required if change is to be effected. The physical presence of the NSW Government in Redfern and Waterloo through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, demonstrates its long term commitment to these communities.

The presence of this Team has raised expectations in the community including from business for answers from Government to the pressing needs faced by the community in particular around managing anti-social behaviour, crime prevention and changes to the

environment through significant infrastructure development in the area. The different perceptions of changes which are likely to result from the Redfern, Eveleigh and Darlington (RED) Strategy (see Chapter 15) together with the possibly related view that Government needs to stand firm against serious crime have driven the greater part of the work of Government in Redfern and Waterloo in the last two years.

The areas that the NSW Government has been targeting in Redfern and Waterloo over the last two years has included:

- enhancing the human service system

- addressing community safety issues

- coordinating and driving infrastructure development

- improving the wellbeing of children and young people with complex needs

- advancing strategies to deal with drugs and crime

- working with business in Redfern and Waterloo to improve employment and training opportunities.

8.2   Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Team

The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) Team plays a pivotal role in driving the whole of government/community approach in Redfern and Waterloo and provides a critical link to both communities.

The Team responds in a number of ways to community and agencies and has, over the first phase in the implementation of the initiatives, been increasingly seen by the community and government agencies as a key driver of change.

The nature of the social and infrastructure issues which underpin the need for social change means that the Team works using multiple strategies that go across traditional agency boundaries to respond either to crises or in working to implement long term sustainable solutions.

The RWPP Team provides government representation on all of the groups and taskforces set up in the whole of government/community governance structure. Taskforces have been established to bring together stakeholders so that actions can be developed and implemented. This structure is discussed in Chapter 9.

The nature of working in a whole of government/community approach and the complexity of the range of issues in Redfern and Waterloo means there must be a capacity to respond flexibly and often urgently to issues as they arise.

Consequently elements of the work fall into a number of categories:

- crisis management responses

- mid term programs

- long term initiatives.

8.2.1 Examples of responses

8.2.1.1 Crisis management responses

Concern from the communities in both Redfern and Waterloo regarding anti-social behaviour of children and young people is reported regularly through both formal consultation processes being driven by Government, through the Governance structure of the whole of government/community approach in Redfern and Waterloo and through requests for urgent Government intervention. *The Redfern Waterloo Case Coordination* approach is intended to set up a longer term systemic approach to both reduce anti-social behaviour of children and young people and to improve their life options. However given the nature of prolonged anti-social behaviour of the children and young people a considerable number of requests for assistance are received by the RWPP for Government to urgently respond with short term case management of high risk children and young people.

As no single agency has the capacity or skills to address the needs of the children and young people in Redfern and Waterloo on its own, the Case Coordination approach has been set up so that agencies work together to affect a more comprehensive case planning process. Until the systemic changes across the Human Services network are in place, where agencies have procedures in place to provide an integrated and coordinated approach to case management, the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project will continue to coordinate the priority responses from all relevant agencies.

The mid to long term effective integrated approach relies on the ability of all relevant agencies to share information about these children, young people and their families. The RWPP has prepared an application for an exemption to the *Privacy Act* (for more detailed information see Chapter 23 on Legislation) so that agencies can work together with sufficient information to effectively address all of the issues involved in each of the cases. (For details on the role of case coordinators see Chapter 12 on Children and Families).

8.2.1.2 Mid term programs

The successful implementation of the Anti-Drug Strategy and the progress towards the new Substance Abuse Strategy has relied on Government driving change through a number of key agencies and has allowed community to be actively involved in solutions. It has been one of the more contentious initiatives to manage and has required strong commitment by Government to stand firm on policy decisions.

The Drug and Alcohol Taskforce has strong local community representation from residents who are concerned about areas of illicit drugs and related crime and from non-government

and Government agencies responsible for related human services. Senior Government and non-government representatives from housing, public health, treatment services, legal and justice agencies, and community services have been responsible for key action areas which were developed in the Anti-Drug Strategy.

Considerable public domain changes have occurred including the demolition of drug houses and shooting galleries and the reduction in numbers of users resulting from more effective enforcement.

The Taskforce has provided the opportunity for debate to occur and for Government to deliver on actions where there has been difficulty in the past to find solutions.

In some cases there has been conflict between agency priorities and community pressure for change. The role of the RWPP has been to manage and drive change. Driving change has required a strong reliance on the existing governance structure behind the whole of government/community approach.

There is significant support from the members of the Drug and Alcohol Taskforce to continue to address the issues in the Anti-Drug and Substance Abuse Strategies.

Alongside the work of the Taskforce, the RWPP receives many requests for action around drugs and crime. In particular, a considerable amount of time is spent responding to the concerns of residents and services to the existence of the Mobile Needle and Syringe Service in a residential street in Redfern and adjacent to a children's playground and Community Centre. This issue is further discussed in Chapter 20 of this submission.

8.2.1.3   Longer term approaches

Preliminary work on the Redevelopment of the Block, the RED Strategy and the new Human Services models has required significant lead up work. At this stage it is difficult for the community and some Government and non-government agencies to see evidence and results. This has resulted in frustration from community and some other stakeholders.

The complexity of managing the expectations of these long term outcomes needs to be constantly balanced with addressing the organisational challenges involved in working across Government and non-government agencies in both infrastructure development and human services delivery.

The RWPP is the mechanism which has evolved to change the pace and scale of Government responsiveness to the issues surrounding social disadvantage in both Redfern and Waterloo.