

# Part 3:

# Community Engagement and Community Relations

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## 9 Community engagement

### 9.1 Overview

The NSW Government has designed a number of innovative ways to engage the Redfern and Waterloo communities to reflect and build on their strengths, enhance community cohesion and build capacity. This engagement provides a mechanism for community to be directly involved as a key stakeholder in the whole of government, whole of community approach to community renewal in Redfern and Waterloo. This chapter will provide detail of how Government has engaged the Redfern and Waterloo communities and the mechanisms it has put in place to continue to work collaboratively and build capacity.

Every government agency working in Redfern and Waterloo has its own mechanisms for engaging community members in its core business and in many cases this information is fed through to the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP). In this way, the whole of government/community approach in Redfern and Waterloo has sought to avoid duplicating consultative mechanisms that already exist.

Communities throughout New South Wales regularly inform Government that they have been over consulted; that Government has been repeatedly told what the issues are; and that what they really want to see is positive change in their communities. This does not mean, however, that communities do not want to be actively involved in the implementation and development of policies and programs which impact on their lives.

The community engagement consultancy outlined later in this chapter, conducted by McCallum (2003), found that in spite of the daily stress people feel in Redfern and Waterloo in dealing, *largely successfully, with crime, poverty and drugs, there is a high level of understanding of the complexities of the social issues and problems besetting the community. The community, for the most part, does not want others to come sweeping in and take over. They want to be consulted, included, and to use opportunities to come together with others and work together for sustainable and lasting change. They want to retain and build on what is good about the area, and find ways to bring the community together so it is a safe, tolerant and diverse one.*

The balance between obtaining regular community input and not overburdening community members with continual bureaucratic meetings has necessitated a wide-ranging approach to community engagement in Redfern and Waterloo. This has included:

- establishing mechanisms to ensure ongoing community input to government’s work
- commissioning consultations, where a complete picture of the views and perspectives of community members has been required
- convening meetings, forums and taskforces when the need arises. The Government has made a conscious decision to undertake a comprehensive range of consultation strategies recognising that public meetings are not always a useful mechanism for careful deliberation of community views. In this process, the Government has sought to empower the voice of all sections of the community, particularly those who are not often heard.

The Government uses the information drawn from these mechanisms to inform the whole of government/community approach to Redfern and Waterloo. The RWPP feeds that information back to agencies to inform their work.

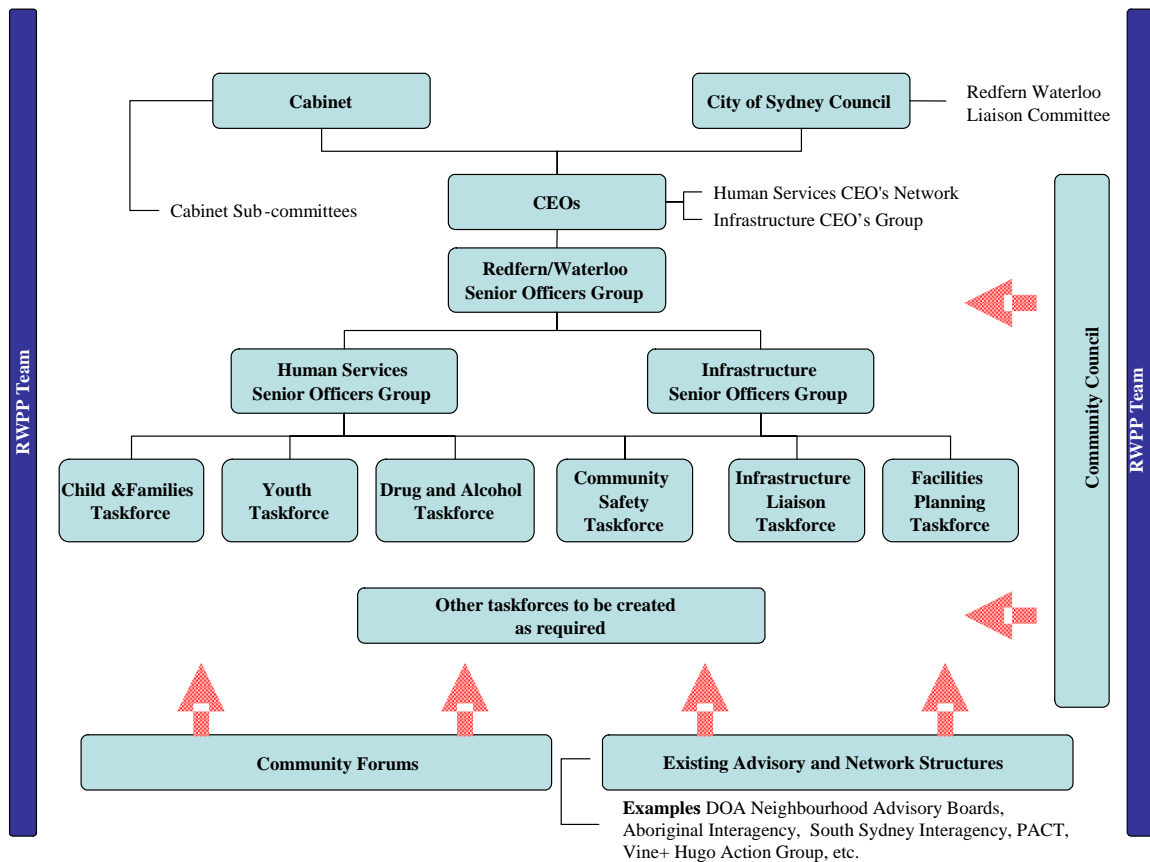
## **9.2 Governance structure for whole of government/community approach**

Some sections of the Redfern and Waterloo communities expressed concern early in the engagement phase that their input has not been valued by Government agencies over the years. As such, there was cynicism towards any renewed Government involvement in their communities.

To overcome this negative community perception an innovative approach to engaging the Redfern and Waterloo communities was required, which reflects and builds on the existing strengths, enhances community cohesion and builds capacity.

The Redfern/Waterloo Governance Structure (Figure 4) acknowledges that Government at all levels have statutory responsibilities which cannot be delegated to the community – for example law enforcement and justice, planning and regulation – but at the same time acknowledges that the community has a right to have input into those decisions that impact on their lives.

Figure 4: Governance model



Direct reporting to Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-Committees, Chief Executive Officers and the establishment of the Redfern/Waterloo Senior Officers' Groups acknowledges the requirement for strong leadership and a commitment at the highest levels of Government.

*The structure, with clear lines of accountability, outlines the Government commitment to necessary changes across agencies both to break down silos and to maximise opportunities for new approaches to public administration.*

The Redfern/Waterloo Community Council represents key stakeholders. Council members reflect the diversity of the community. The Council provides a clear mechanism for accountability to the community and creates an advisory body through which issues and concerns can be raised, ventilated and prioritized.

Members include local residents, elected representatives, representatives from local business, non-government organisations, the Aboriginal community, people with a disability, older people and youth of the area. The Council is chaired by the Mayor of City of Sydney.

The Council is well positioned to address any of the issues raised by the Taskforces, inter-agency networks or from the initiatives of the RWPP.

The Taskforces have strong local community representation and from non-government and Government agencies with key responsibility for related services. Senior Government and non-government representatives from a range of human services, legal and justice agencies, and community services are represented.

The Taskforces have provided the opportunity for community to debate and sometimes challenge Government agencies and for Government to be seen to act where there has been a failure in the past to find solutions (for more detailed role of Taskforces see Chapter 8: Role of the RWPP Team).

### **9.3 Continuing community engagement**

One of the primary mechanisms by which community engages with Government on issues of concern is by speaking with members of the RWPP Team, on the telephone or in person. Additionally, the NSW Government has developed specific mechanisms to regularly engage the communities of Redfern and Waterloo. Added to this, each agency has its own method of engagement with the community which is fed back through and to the RWPP.

The following are indicative of some of the community engagement mechanisms that exist in Redfern and Waterloo.

#### **9.3.1 Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project Team**

The RWPP has a key role in engaging with the community through a variety of means. The RWPP team has developed relationships with many workers from community organisations by attending inter-agencies, the Neighbourhood Advisory Boards and other ad-hoc groups and structures. From the channels set up through the formal governance structure or from Taskforces set up to address issues which arise across the Redfern and Waterloo area, the team provides the pivotal link to community organisations and to local residents involved in the initiatives.

Many associations with individuals in the community have developed as a result of direct phone contact to the RWPP team as a first point of contact for community to Government. This often results in key committed residents taking a further role in the governance structure of the RWPP through the invitation and support of the team. There is a clear intention to strengthen community capacity through the process of developing social entrepreneurs, via the participation of residents in the governance structure.

The residents representing community on the Taskforces have often become more fully involved as a result of initial contact with the team.

More formal engagement methods such as public forums have been conducted as part of the RED strategy and the general community forums to consider issues of concern for the community are another important way the team can meet and provide further information and support to the residents of the area.

Other mechanisms for contact with Government are through the team providing information in a series of newsletters which have been distributed to highlight what the Government has been generating in Redfern and Waterloo. The newsletters have been distributed to all residents in the area.

The website and email to the RWPP is another method of contact for agencies and residents. Many residents log onto the website and follow up with phone or email contact. The overwhelming cause for contact is to request Government support for addressing and reducing anti-social behaviour and crime. In this regard, the Anti-Drug Strategy, Drug and Alcohol Taskforce, RED Strategy, Community Council, and the proposed redevelopment of The Block have all been largely well received by the community.

### **9.3.2 Redfern/Waterloo Community Council**

The Government established the Redfern/Waterloo Community Council as an ongoing mechanism to ensure that the views of the community are heard in the RWPP. The Council members are non-government, local council, business and community representatives. The Council is part of the Redfern/Waterloo Governance Structure.

In July 2003, RWPP convened the first meeting of the Community Council. The role and function of the Community Council is to strengthen the links between the Redfern and Waterloo communities, Government and the former South Sydney City Council. The membership of the Community Council is reflective of the diversity of people living in Redfern and Waterloo and is intended to be representative of individuals within the community. Its intention is to build trust and encourage participation of the local community to address community concerns.

The Community Council has an advisory role to the RWPP on community priorities identified by people living in Redfern and Waterloo. The Community Council will assist Government and the former South Sydney City Council in the progress of RWPP initiatives, and issues which may arise from the Community Forums. The Community Council forms part of the RWPP Governance Model.

According to its Terms of Reference, the Community Council:

- plans effectively for the long term
- ensures people are well informed of decisions affecting their community
- ensures Government is accountable to the community

- will acknowledge, respect and work with the diversity of communities
- is flexible enough to accommodate issues raised by local communities
- recognises that the Redfern and Waterloo communities are different because of culture and geographic location
- will provide community members with the capacity to inform decision making around their futures
- will facilitate the provision of advice to Government on community concerns.

The Community Council was appointed by the NSW Government and is currently chaired by the Mayor of the City of Sydney Council. Members were appointed for a period of 12 months from the following interest areas:

- Aboriginal community leaders/Elders:
  - elected representative from ATSIC (1)
  - Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council (1)
  - Organisation of Aboriginal Unity (1)
  - member of the Gadigal Nation (1)
- Business and Industry leaders
- Employment, training and enterprise development
- Human Services
- Local professionals
- Local Members of Parliament (3)
- Residents
- Special interest groups including:
  - - women
  - - CALD communities
  - - public housing tenants
  - - people with disabilities.

Following the recent creation of the new City of Sydney Council, which incorporates the area covered by the former South Sydney City Council, the NSW Government will appoint all Councillors who live within the boundaries covered by the RWPP to the Community Council. This will ensure a strong link between the City of Sydney Council, the community and the RWPP.

The following criteria are used to select members of the Community Council:

- expertise within a specific area of interest that can contribute to the advisory role of the Community Council
- a strong connectedness to the Redfern and Waterloo communities and/or to particular stakeholder groups
- a thorough understanding of the issues pertaining to the needs of the Redfern and Waterloo communities
- individuals that represent a group which are disadvantaged and who would not otherwise be heard in the decision making process of RWPP and the former South Sydney City Council.

### **9.3.3 Taskforces**

The NSW Government has established a number of taskforces on an ‘as needs’ basis to address particular issues. These Taskforces were created in recognition of the fact that the community and agencies had identified some key areas that should be prioritised. The taskforces bring together representatives of key stakeholders and includes experts who can contribute to the deliberations of the Taskforce. Generally Taskforces include representatives of the community, non-government service providers and Government agencies. Their role is to identify issues and develop solutions.

Taskforces which have been established under the RWPP have included:

- Children’s and Families’ Taskforce
- Youth Taskforce
- Drug and Alcohol Taskforce
- Infrastructure Taskforce (previously known as the Strategic Liaison Group)
- Facilities Planning Taskforce
- Community Safety Task Force.

It is important to emphasise that not all of these Taskforces are led directly by a NSW Government agency but all report, in some instances jointly, through the RWPP. A good example of this is the Community Safety Task Force which reports jointly through both the Partnership Project and the City of Sydney Council, who are the lead agency for this Taskforce. Council and the RWPP jointly support the work of this Taskforce.

### **9.3.4 Linking to existing structures**

NSW Government agencies actively participate in the existing networks and inter-agencies with the Redfern and Waterloo area. These include Koori South Eastern Indigenous Interagency, South Sydney Interagency, and South Sydney Youth Interagency.

Furthermore, agencies also meet with and participate in discussions with resident groups such as the Vine and Hugo Action Group, and the Aboriginal Family Violence Committee.

These structures are critical lines through which agencies can disseminate and receive information and feedback.

### **9.3.5 Neighbourhood Advisory Boards**

In the late 1990s Neighbourhood Advisory Boards (NAB) were established in Redfern and Waterloo. The NABs meet bimonthly to consider community planning and development issues related to their respective public housing estates. Membership is comprised of tenant precinct representatives and representatives from government and community service providers.

### **9.3.6 Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs)**

ACLOs assist Police to resolve issues affecting Aboriginal people and improve Aboriginal/Police relations by improving the channels of communication. Responsibilities of ACLOs include:

- establishing effective communication between Police and local Aboriginal communities
- establishing and maintaining a close rapport with the Elders of Aboriginal communities
- providing assistance on visiting procedures to relatives of Aboriginal prisoners
- ensuring the aims and functions of the NSW Police are understood by the Aboriginal community
- attending interviews which involve Aboriginal juveniles.

As at April 2004, the Redfern Local Area Command advises that it has four ACLO positions, however approval to advertise one position has been given and an officer who is on leave without pay occupies the other. The other two positions are filled on a permanent basis.

## **9.4 Community consultations**

In addition to the ongoing community processes that bring community, state and local government together in Redfern and Waterloo, the NSW Government has conducted a number of specific consultations with the Redfern and Waterloo community. These consultations have been commissioned in order to develop a complete appreciation of the views, priorities and concerns of community members.

In reading the information obtained through these consultations, it is critical that they be considered within the context of the time frame that the consultations took place. In many instances the Government has implemented the recommendations which have arisen from



the consultations. In others, it has been used to inform government priorities, planning and programming. In a limited number of instances, other work being undertaken by agencies has superseded the feedback obtained. The consultations include:

Human Services Review	March 2004
Consultation on the RED Strategy	June 2003
Community Engagement Consultancy	March 2003
Building a Better Future for our Children	September 2002
Redfern-Waterloo Pathways to Prevention Project	July and August 2002
Youth Consultation Report	July 2002
Redfern/Waterloo Youth Services Review	November 1998

It is important to note that the information collected in these consultations has been used to inform public policy and service delivery. Issues have been fed back to individual agencies for incorporation into their planning and programming and RWPP has coordinated the development of individual initiatives as a result of the feedback obtained from community. Following is a summary of the consultations that have occurred, including the methodology adopted, and the findings of each.

#### **9.4.1 Human Services Review**

The NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) has commissioned a review of human services in the Redfern and Waterloo area. The review has been conducted in recognition of the fact that the capacity to deliver additional resources to community needs are limited and in order to meet the highest needs of the community, it may be necessary to redirect existing resources. The findings of the review will be used to inform the reshaping of the existing service network. Details of the Human Services Review are outlined in Chapter 25 of this submission.

In undertaking the Review, the consultants Morgan Disney & Associates have developed a comprehensive communication strategy. The strategy was developed to provide timely information, describe the Review and its methods, to give information about developments over the life of the Review, and to encourage the involvement of all key organisations and individuals. The communication strategy has provided an opportunity to share new developments and ideas to stimulate discussion and feedback about innovative ways to provide human services in Redfern and Waterloo.

The aims of the strategy have been:

- to explain the project, and the process Morgan Disney & Associates will be using

- to provide clear accessible information about the Review and any developments
- to provide an opportunity for the community to participate in the Review in ways that are relevant and accessible to them.

The audiences that the strategy focussed on include:

- the Redfern and Waterloo community including:
  - the Redfern and Waterloo Indigenous population
  - the Redfern and Waterloo culturally and linguistically diverse communities
  - people who are tenants in public housing
  - young people
  - older people
  - people with a disability
  - people living with mental health issues
  - people living with substance abuse issues
- service providers – government and non-government
- clients of services
- the business community
- other professionals
- Government agencies
- Redfern/Waterloo Project Partners
- Human Services Senior Officers Group
- local and relevant State peak bodies of the non government sector
- local Members of Parliament (both State and Federal)
- South Sydney City Council (now the City of Sydney Council).

Consultation with the community formed part of Morgan Disney's communication strategy. The consultants conducted interviews, focus groups, workshops, and household sampling. Specifically, workshops for services providers were held on 18 and 19 March 2004. They attended the Open Day at the new Redfern Community Centre on 11 March and held a Human Services Review Forum on Thursday 18 March 2004 at the Redfern Town Hall. On 24 April 2004 Morgan Disney also held a sausage sizzle for residents of Redfern and Waterloo. The sausage sizzle provided residents with another opportunity to speak with the consultants about their views of, and experiences with, the Human Services system in Redfern and Waterloo. Approximately 85 people attended the barbeque and

responded well to the less formal process of engagement. A further public forum was also held on 29 April 2004.

## 9.4.2 Community consultation on the RED Strategy

In May 2003 the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources engaged Elton consulting to conduct community consultation on the Redfern Eveleigh Darlington and Waterloo Strategy (the RED Strategy).

The purpose of the consultation was to obtain community views and feedback on the draft RED Strategy. The responses received throughout the consultations have been used to further inform the development of the RED Strategy.

The consultation comprised four community information and feedback sessions held between 11 and 25 June 2003; one Community Service Agencies Meeting held on 29 July 2003; and a public meeting held on 2 August 2003. Approximately 520 people participated in the community information and feedback sessions. A total of 104 feedback forms were completed, with a response rate of approximately 20%. Approximately 250 people attended the public meetings.

Calls were also made for public submission to enable people to provide as much information as they wished, or to provide more detailed information on specific issues that they wished to focus on. In total 18 written submissions were received.

### 9.4.2.1 Findings and/or recommendations

Participants saw the issues about infrastructure as intricately linked to the social issues faced by the community. The views expressed by the participants are listed below. The views reported here are the community's views, as reported by the consultant.

- ***Crime and personal safety***: this was the highest priority identified by the community. Bag snatching, illicit drug use, vandalism and intimidating behaviour were the most frequently reported problems.
- ***Traffic and transport***: participants generally supported the strategy of reducing the heavy traffic flow throughout the RED area. Strong support was expressed for a tunnelling option as the most effective means of improving the impacts of traffic. The Central Area Transport Local Bus system was well supported as it presented a flexible approach to local transport. Suggestions were made to upgrade the Redfern station. The lack of a cycling component within the overall transport strategy was identified as a key issue.
- ***Housing issues, services***: The majority of respondents expressed a desire to maintain the social diversity of the RED area. Many people felt very strongly that housing opportunities should continue to be provided for the less advantaged residents of the RED area. A common theme in many of the responses was that the previous practice of

placing a high density of public housing in particular areas was not an effective policy and that a more workable solution would be to integrate public, affordable and private housing options and to ensure they are distributed throughout the RED area.

- **Ongoing consultation:** ongoing consultation was seen as desirable in order to ensure the framework evolves in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the RED community.
- **Town centre:** there was strong support for the creation of a Town Centre and RED Square. There was also strong support for the concept of under-grounding through traffic along Regent and Gibbons streets. Ensuring a pedestrian friendly and calm environment was seen as essential to making the Town Centre an attractive and usable community space. A common criticism of the Town Centre proposal was that it focused too much on one precinct and did not acknowledge the potential benefits of distributing small-scale retail and cafes at a neighbourhood level throughout the RED area.
- **Employment:** many responses acknowledged the need for increased employment opportunities within the RED area. There were a number of reasons for this, including the provision of opportunities for local people, making local businesses more viable, and the view that increased activation of the area would lead to a more vibrant and safer town centre. Encouraging small and medium style business was viewed as important.
- **Public domain:** safety was a major issue in regard to the public domain. Members of the community felt their use and enjoyment of public areas was frequently compromised by crime and intimidating behaviour. Solutions offered included:
  - ensuring streets and parks were well lit
  - maintaining good sightlines and high levels of visibility
  - maintaining business activity beyond working hours
  - orienting new buildings towards the streets
  - closing of “dunny” lanes and laneways near crime hotspots
  - ensuring that “dead end” areas are integrated with other spaces
  - police on the beat
  - providing activities and support for young people.

Where possible the community requested that all spaces should be green space, with significant plantings of street trees and shrubs. The idea of creating a pedestrian network linking parks and open spaces was strongly supported.

- **North Redfern:** many comments were focussed on the redevelopment of The Block which was seen as critical to the future of this part of the RED area.

### 9.4.3 Community engagement consultancy

In January 2003 the NSW Government engaged Dr Sharon McCallum to ask the community to craft a picture of what their community would be like if all parts of it were functioning well.

The aims of the consultancy were to:

- ascertain the one, five and ten year vision of each of the stakeholders for the Redfern and Waterloo area
- gain a snapshot view of these communities as they are now
- identify paths of engagement of stakeholders
- build relationships with the stakeholders and build close working networks with those who can assist in later projects
- develop a governance model and associated action plans.

The consultation was conducted over an intensive eight week period between mid January and mid March 2003. Over 200 contacts were made and analyses of numerous documents undertaken. Due to the large number of youth consultations that had occurred previously, McCallum did not speak directly with young people but rather drew from the consultation reports which had already been prepared on youth issues.

Attempts were made to include the perspectives of all government, non-government, relevant consultants and community organisations, with care being taken to ensure that Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse populations were included. The perspectives were sought in a direct manner wherever possible, with secondary data (previous consultations) being utilised for some family and youth agencies. The decision to draw on secondary data was to overcome the problem of over-consultation of some sectors. Both the youth and families sectors had participated in comprehensive consultancies in the previous 12 months, which involved service providers and clients. In several cases, services declined to participate because they believed they had already made their submissions to recent consultants.

### 9.4.3.1 Findings and/or recommendations

The findings of the study are divided into the following categories:

Community Well Being	• The community
	• Children and young people
	• Aged
	• Aboriginal people, community and culture
	• Culturally and linguistically diverse populations
	• Youth Services
	• Family and domestic violence
	• Education
	• Employment
	• Media
	• Entertainment, activities, recreation and sport
Community Safety and Justice	• Drug misuse and related services
	• Crime and related issues
Physical Environment	• Social mix, public housing and related services
	• The Block
	• Private developments
	• Planning
	• South Sydney City Council
	• Business
	• Railways and buses
	• Pedestrians and cyclists
	• Traffic and parking
	• Public domain
	• Built Environment

The views reported here are the views of the community, as reported by the consultant.

#### 9.4.3.1.1 Community well being

##### *The community*

A large number of residents, community spokespeople, community groups and elected representatives believe that in sectors of the community there is a strong community spirit, while in other areas community spirit needs to be built. In particular, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people were seen to have a strong sense of community.

According to McCallum, these groups of participants believed that the sense of community was more developed amongst those people who know the area well and are comfortable in it. These people were seen to be those who are not frightened or intimidated by the environment and so interact more easily with it.

Many people from these groups of participants wanted a community which was inclusive of people from diverse cultures and made of families, old people and young people. They wanted these people to feel and be part of the community and suggested that community events be undertaken as a way to draw people together and decrease the barriers between them.

The community, according to all sectors who participated in the study, was tired of talking about changes and cynical that change really will occur. It was stated by many participants that the cynicism is due to the many promises the community has received about proposed changes, but that change seldom follows. This has resulted in reluctance for the community to believe that change really will occur and that they would need to see results before they overcame their cynicism.

### ***Children and young people***

McCallum has advised that youth, and their problematic behaviours of vandalism, crime, drug use, and loitering emerged as a major area of concern for residents, members of the non-government and Government sectors, and business. Many participants from the residents, community groups, elected representatives sectors saw young people as intimidating at best, and at worst, dangerous, vengeful and beyond the reach of parents, Police and services.

Some respondents in the study believed that the anti-social behaviour of these young people was a result of complex social issues, including: poor parenting; intergenerational use of drugs and alcohol; lack of success in the education, training and employment sectors; poverty; and absence of meaningful and appropriate recreation, sport and entertainment. Other residents believed that many of the young people were “beyond hope”. Some government and non-government participants expressed concern over the basic health needs of children and youth: that they were not receiving adequate food, shelter and protection.

### ***Aged***

It was reported by residents, community spokespeople and community groups that the aging community (including Aboriginal people and CALD) are relatively well serviced. There was recognition by government service providers that there would need to be an increase of services to these populations as their age and needs increase. The need for the provision of more community-based activities and recreation was recognised by participants from the residents, community spokespeople, community groups and non-government sectors.

### ***Aboriginal people, community and culture***

Several residents, community spokespeople and community groups spoke in McCallum's study of their concern for Aboriginal people who live in Redfern and Waterloo. Non-Indigenous residents and community groups expressed their concern about the future of Aboriginal children and young people as they perceived an absence of strong role models who could be emulated so that children and youth were not caught in the same situations of disadvantage as their parents.

Several Aboriginal residents and Aboriginal community spokespeople stated their strong concern that Aboriginal people are engaging others, particularly young people, in drug misuse. These participants believed that this behaviour is counter to their culture and is doing great damage to individuals, families and the Aboriginal community.

### ***Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations***

McCallum's study refers to the significant CALD groups in the community: Russian-speakers and Chinese-speakers and, to a lesser degree Lebanese and Vietnamese people. Russian-speaking people (mainly Jewish), Chinese-speakers, and Vietnamese people are largely located in the high public housing buildings in Waterloo. These are primarily aged populations which have been in Australia for a long time. The Lebanese community, also a primarily aged community, mainly live in what is becoming known as east Redfern and live in private housing. McCallum reported that this community was seen to be well integrated into the community, having been here for decades, and it was reported that their problems "are the same as everyone else's".

Residents reported a strong sense of community in the Russian and Chinese speaking communities, and between them. Residents from the Chinese-speaking community reported that they experienced some racism from businesses and Aboriginal people. One resident stated that members of the Russian-speaking community also experienced racism from young Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people. According to McCallum, the major needs of the Chinese and Russian speaking communities were activities and outings. Another need, particularly for the Russian-speaking community, was for seating at the bottom of the public housing buildings so that residents could sit and talk. While the CALD communities were generally seen to be well-served, one non-government organisation thought that counselling services might be required for those who are feeling isolated and lonely.

### ***Youth services***

As with opinions about young people, participants from all sectors held a range of views about the effectiveness, value and geographical location of youth services. Generally, youth services were seen to be of poor quality and not achieving their tasks by the majority of participants from each sector. These views were strongly held by the residents,



community groups, elected representatives, government, non-government and local government sectors.

At worst, the opinions of some residents, community groups and government employees were that they were ineffective, inefficient and waste resources. At best, the youth services were seen by participants from the government sector to be located in the wrong places.

McCallum reported that the services were also seen by an elected representative and by some participants from the government sector to be in competition, rather than working in a collaborative manner. Youth services were believed to be competing for ‘good kids’ rather than focusing on a different clientele. The competition for clients was believed to cause the breakdown of programs as young people were lured from one service to another (sometimes by the payment of money or offer of rewards for participation), leaving low numbers of participants for programs which had already begun, and creating a mentality that youth should be rewarded for participation.

This was thought to have serious ramifications as it taught young people to think less about contributing to programs for their personal benefit and the benefit of others (and outcome for effort), and more about what direct and personal reward they would get by participation.

(For information on youth services in Redfern and Waterloo, see Chapter 14.)

### ***Family and domestic violence***

Many Aboriginal community groups and spokespeople, residents, and non-government organisations told McCallum that family violence was the single biggest problem causing damage to the Aboriginal community. Many of the participants expressed a belief that every Aboriginal family in Redfern is touched by family violence.

Family violence however, was seen to be inextricably linked to drug and alcohol misuse and solutions to it could not be found independent of solutions to substance abuse. The Aboriginal family violence committee, and its support by the RWPP, was seen by Aboriginal people as the means of determining how to address family violence in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

(For information on family violence programs operating in the area, see Chapter 14.)

### ***Education***

In the McCallum study, education was seen to be an important part of the infrastructure of the area. The study found that many residents and elected representatives were concerned about the number of children not attending school regularly, with a call for ways to be found for schools to engage children.

Some participants were worried that some youth were too quickly suspended from schools when more attention needed to be paid by administrative and teaching staff to the complex and difficult lives some children and young people live.

Participants from the educational facilities believed that the home-lives of many children and the low attendance at pre-schools and transition classes, meant that many were arriving for grade one, not school-ready. This meant that their progression through the classes would be slow and fraught with difficulties.

(Information about Government initiatives in education is provided in Chapter 12.)

### ***Employment***

Employment did not emerge in the study as an area of concern for many participants. The slight exception here was the suggestion from a community group, a few Aboriginal residents, and a few non-government organisations that the need for employment may become an issue in the future as more Aboriginal families move back onto The Block. Various consultancies undertaken in recent years in relation to youth, however, have pointed to a need for employment opportunities for young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

(For information about employment initiatives and anticipated opportunities arising from planned infrastructure development, see Chapter 13.)

### ***Media***

Several participants from the residents, community groups, business, and educational facilities sectors commented on the number of bad news and sensationalised stories which are run by the print and electronic media about Redfern and Waterloo, adding to the wider community's poor perception of the area. These participants believed that more good news stories should be told. Several residents also thought that better use could be made of the media by using it to advertise community events.

### ***Entertainment, activities, recreation and sport***

Residents, community groups, community spokespeople, government and non-government organisations called for more activities for recreation, entertainment and sport. Activities were seen to be particularly important to the aged population, and were thought to be necessary for young people and children. Clever use of community activities was noted by residents and community groups as being able to draw the people out of their homes and be together. The SSCC was recognised by these sectors as being able to deliver quality large community events and it was thought by several residents that more of these would be helpful if they also catered for people with disposable income: that is, that they did not just

focus on services to the community, but had items that people could buy. This would allow all sectors of the community to mingle.

According to McCallum, sport was seen by residents, community spokespeople and government, non-government organisations as being very important to youth, and several Aboriginal non-government organisations and spokespeople believed this to be particularly so for Aboriginal young people. However, sport was not considered to suit all children and young people. A need for a pool, cooking and drama classes, and cultural and arts activities was stated by several non-government organisations. There were also strong calls from a number of Aboriginal non-government organisations for camps and day trips – this was seen to be a very positive way to bring people together, and to build cross-cultural awareness and acceptance. Of particular need are activities across week-ends and school holidays.

Aged residents and community groups also wanted activities that bring them out of their homes and together in the community. There already exist active multi-cultural cooking, gardening and craft groups which are well attended. There was also a need for additions to these which encourage more people to join and participate – and for activities to be provided for men. One suggestion was for more and better resourced community centres which are equipped with board games, playing cards, a table-tennis table, and language newspapers and books. One non-government organisation reported that many of the Russian-speaking community are well educated and would value book-reading, art, and music sessions, classes and discussions. Another suggestion was for outings, with leaders who speak Chinese and Russian, which would take people on day trips to museums, other locations, and community and sporting events.

One non-government organisation reported that there had been an increase in activities for families with better co-ordination of playgroups and parenting sessions. However, it also stated that there is scope for this to be increased. Families were reported to want places to go where their children can mingle safely, be entertained and hopefully participate in learning environments.

Community activities based on fun, learning and entertainment were seen by several non-government organisations to be positive and easy ways to bring people from different cultures together and increase tolerance. One suggestion was to bring older people from different cultures together to share culture with children and youth. Older Chinese-speaking people, for example, talking to young people about Chinese New Year; older Aboriginal people discussing dream-time stories; older Russian-speaking people inviting young people to share Victory Day with them – were all seen as examples of how the community might come together.

### **9.4.3.1.2 Community safety and justice**

#### ***Drug misuse and related services***

In the study, drugs emerged as a major issue for the participants. Participants believed that drug misuse was largely linked to The Block and public housing precincts (particularly the McKell building), and that drugs are having a major and negative impact on the Aboriginal community.

Some participants recognised that drug dealing can be driven by a range of desires: a wish to buy items that are not available to many people (brand-name clothing, cars, jewellery and so on); greed; power; and as a means to contribute to the household budget. It was also recognised that drugs may be purchased and/or used for a variety of reasons: adventure; excitement; to hide from the grim and harsh reality of life; to give to others so as they will be “well”; fear of retribution, and so on.

The presence of the mobile needle and syringe service on The Block was seen by many residents as being the reason why drug use is so prevalent in Redfern. There was a belief that drug dealers follow the mobile needle and syringe service because it gives them easy access to drug-users.

Most participants, particularly residents, in this study recognised the need for the mobile needle and syringe service, but did not want it based near a residential area, or that it should not be a permanent fixture. Other residents (a very small minority) in this study believed that the service provided by the mobile needle and syringe service should stay, but in a different format – perhaps as a permanent and fully-functioning health service. Others thought that there needed to be rehabilitation services provided and that perhaps a needle-exchange could be offered as part of that service.

According to McCallum, there have been many calls from health providers and some residents for services to people trying to stop drug and alcohol misuse. An effective and culturally sensitive drug rehabilitation which is able to cater for young people was seen as a priority by participants, however the positioning of such a service was somewhat less agreed upon. Some residents thought that such a service should be placed close to the area, while others thought that the presence of such a service would further designate the area as one “for druggies”.

(Chapter 20 contains information about Government’s response to these issues.)

#### ***Crime and related issues***

McCallum has advised that the high level of crime, perpetrated by young people, and linked to drug use was seen by many residents, community spokespeople, community groups as the primary problem facing Redfern and Waterloo. The crime was described by

members of these sectors as low-level, opportunistic crime: that is, bag-snatching, theft, break and enters; vandalism and so on.

Many residents and community spokespeople and groups believed that the reason for the high level of youth crime could be found in the other social issues which exist in Redfern and Waterloo.

Some residents and businesses stated that the level of crime is no worse than other inner-city areas: that break-ins and vandalism are part of the daily life of dense urban living. Others felt that crime is driven by the wide-spread use of drugs and alcohol and that Redfern, particularly, is known as a place where drugs can be easily acquired and used. There was an opinion held by some residents, particularly about The Block, that crime is committed by outsiders. Other residents and non-government organisations dispute this, saying that it is most certainly emanating from a few families on The Block.

McCallum notes that the railway station was cited by residents, community spokespeople, and community groups as inextricably linked to crime. The participants noted that it is the means by which those that commit crime enter and exit the community. They also expressed a view that it has poor security measures in place. Some residents reported that they have noticed an increase in safety with the provision of security officers on the trains and at the station, but that State Rail has some way to go in order to ensure security for passengers.

A prevalence of personal and property crime heightened fear amongst residents and resulted in an increased need for safety and security. Safety was also major concern for residents and businesses around The Block, the railway station, and the dense public housing areas. Night was considered to be particularly dangerous, with very few people venturing out after nightfall.

The Police were seen by residents, community groups, Aboriginal non-government organisations and business as being the service provider which had failed to act to address drug dealing and related crime and violence. It was believed by some participants that the Police, particularly in the past, had not responded to what has been happening on The Block and that, in so doing, had perpetuated drug misuse. It was also believed that the Police had been slow to respond to any complaints emanating from the public housing precincts.

According to McCallum, there was a call from most residents, community groups, Aboriginal non-government organisations and the business sector for an increase in Police presence. Quite a number of people stated that they had observed a higher visibility of Police, with a quicker response time. Most people welcomed this and were pleased with the impact it was having. This opinion was not held by everyone interviewed on The Block. In that case some residents believed that the Police were simply harassing them with no strategy to address drug dealing.

Several residents, community groups and non-government organisations, singled out a few officers as being very valuable to the community. It was also recognised by some members of the community that the resources of the Police are stretched and these people called for more police officers, particularly in the area of crime prevention, and working with youth.

(Information about crime prevention strategies implemented in Redfern and Waterloo is contained within Chapter 20 of this submission.)

#### **9.4.3.1.3      *Physical environment***

##### ***Social mix, public housing and related services***

The public housing precincts, particularly those in Waterloo, featured largely in the study. The major area of concern for participants from across the sectors was the over-concentration of high-need people in the area. (High need people are defined as those with drug and alcohol addictions; mental illness and disabilities.)

In the study, there was widespread agreement across the participant sectors that quality, well maintained affordable housing should be provided in the form of public or community housing, however it was considered that without adequate support and with limited links to helping networks, the current concentration of high need people was placing intolerable strain on the rest of the community.

It was acknowledged by participants of the Government and non-government sectors that some of the public housing buildings were poorly designed for the needs they were trying to fill. That is, that the building design did not allow easy support of high level need populations or combating of crime and anti-social behaviour. There was a strong call from participants in these sectors that the appearance of the public housing buildings be improved.

Several suggestions to address the public housing problems emerged from across the participant sectors. These included selling of part of the public housing to private developers, interspersing high level need people with those who are able to manage better and so can act as social support networks, and increased numbers of intensive management teams.

(Information about housing in Redfern and Waterloo is contained in Chapter 19 of this submission.)

##### ***The Block***

The Block received much attention in the study and was seen by all sectors to be in urgent need of redevelopment. The primary cause of concern to residents, community groups, community spokespeople, and Aboriginal non-government organisations was the

prevalence of drugs. Drugs were seen by these groups as being related to crime, while The Block was seen as an area dangerous to non-Indigenous people.

One Aboriginal leader of an Aboriginal non-government organisation described The Block as being a disgraceful place which “tars all Aboriginal people as being the same as that”. Several Aboriginal participants spoke in a similar vein. Other community spokespeople and residents, while perhaps agreeing with the above statements, saw The Block as “the meeting place”. Most participants agreed that, as the heart-land of urban Aboriginal culture, The Block should be maintained.

While Aboriginal residents, community spokespeople and community groups, and those non-Indigenous residents around it wanted it to be retained, they did not want it to remain in its current form. The people who live on The Block, and around it, wanted the drugs out of there and quality, well-maintained and affordable housing built for Aboriginal people. McCallum advises that several non-Indigenous residents and community groups believed that the Aboriginal Housing Corporation (AHC) had not maintained the buildings, or screened the tenants adequately in the past and that this was one of the reasons that The Block is in its current state. There was agreement between these groups, and from Aboriginal non-government organisations, that the AHC will need to address the social issues which relate to The Block as it is redeveloped.

(Information about the proposed redevelopment of The Block is contained in Chapter 19 of this submission.)

### ***Private developments***

Residents, community groups and non-government organisations recognised that gentrification of the area has started, and it was seen by these groups to be largely occurring in the form of private residential development. This was seen by these sectors to be particularly the case for Redfern, with its higher level of private property.

Most participants from the resident, community groups and non-government organisations sectors saw these changes as positive – provided it brings growth and prosperity, without taking away from the community’s uniqueness and social milieu, and does not occur at the expense of other groups. Some residents said they wanted there to be a range of housing: high quality private houses, affordable housing and public housing, which suits the area and is properly maintained. They want the people who come to live in these properties to be part of the community. They want families, older people, poor people, people from other cultures, singles and alternative lifestyles to be part of the community. They did not want high-density gated communities, in which live people who are not part of the area and do not understand, tolerate or contribute to its complexity and social tolerance and diversity.

According to McCallum, one of the positives of gentrification was seen by some residents and non-government organisations to be the infusion of personal capital into the area. It was thought by residents that the people who come will also create a demand for services and an expectation to receive them. Provided these services are not priced or located beyond the reach of the less-affluent parts of the community, they can be available to all. Some residents hope for a trickle-down effect whereby the resources may be loudly demanded by those with the power and influence of social position and strength, but they can make these claims on behalf of all of the community so all benefit.

### ***Planning***

It was believed by some participants that there are many authorities in the area undertaking some planning, but with little co-ordination between them. This lack of co-ordination was a source of frustration and anger for some residents. Some of these participants did not seem to know what authority was asking questions and setting directions for the community, they just knew through the various consultancies that lots was happening and could make no sense of how it all fit together.

### ***South Sydney City Council (SSCC) (the former)***

Many participants from the resident, elected representatives and business sectors were angry about what they see as neglect in the Redfern and Waterloo area. In particular their neglect was cited in relation to: signage; cleanliness; rubbish collection; community services; planning; landscaping and garden maintenance; provision of rubbish bins and seating; traffic control; and the dirty, grey, unkempt appearance of the streets.

There was some concern from residents, community groups, elected representatives and business that with the change of the geographical boundaries the former SSCC will lose revenue and that this will impact on their ability to deliver services. However, the move by part of the former SSCC to the TNT towers was seen to be very positive, particularly by business, with a belief that once the Council is geographically located in Redfern, it will have an interest in making improvements.

### ***Business***

According to McCallum, the concern about the lack of infrastructure extended to statements from participants about the limited and poor quality businesses available in Redfern and Waterloo. The exception was the increase in cafes in the eastern end of Redfern Street, which is recognised, but not seen as sufficient. People wanted cafes, restaurants, food shops, book shops – the shops that make a community. They wanted the kind of businesses which bring the public out of their homes and into the streets.

Business owners and elected councillors stated that activity was greater when the second-hand clothes companies leased the stores. When this trade moved on though, nothing has



taken its place and service providers to this trade (coffee shops and so on) have slowly closed with it.

Most of the residents with disposable income said they were looking for ways to spend their money and their time near their homes – “give us somewhere to spend our money here, and we will”. They wanted to be able to walk to local shops rather than travel to other centres. They wanted to be able to walk down the street on Saturday morning, see people they know, have a coffee and browse a bookshop. They wanted a choice of affordable restaurants to go to in the evenings.

Many residents in the community, particularly those without cars, want a shopping centre built close to them which is accessible and affordable. This was of particular concern to older residents who could not easily walk the hills to the shops, and had to pay to have their purchases delivered.

### ***Railways and buses***

The railway station came up for much discussion by participants, particularly by those residents who live close to it. The proximity of the station was cited as being one of the benefits of living in Redfern however the participants saw many problems associated with it. These problems included: noise; crime and security; ugliness; cleanliness; inaccessibility; lack of pedestrian access; frontage; and so on. A few residents in the study commented on the lack of bus transport.

(Information on proposed infrastructure developments in Redfern and Waterloo is contained in Chapter 16 of this submission.)

### ***Pedestrians and cyclists***

There was a demand from many residents and elected representatives for clean, green walkways away from the busy streets. Some residents were concerned about the amount of residential traffic, with its potential increase as the gentrification process occurs. It was thought that there should be a concerted effort to discourage the use of cars, and to encourage the use of public transport, bicycles and walking. At the time, walking and cycle use was seen to be hampered by the lack of walkways and bike paths. It was also thought by residents that increased pedestrian and cycle traffic would increase security and create more opportunity for community-building.

### ***Traffic and parking***

Many participants from the residents, community groups and elected representatives believed the traffic on Lawson, Gibbons and Regents streets to be too heavy and fast, and that this traffic had a disruptive effect on the community. There were suggestions from

residents to move the through traffic underground, though the cost of this was seen to make it unfeasible.

On the smaller roads there was a call by residents and businesses for traffic calming devices, particularly in the residential areas. This was seen to be increasingly critical as gentrification occurs and more local traffic is created. There was also a call for parking to be managed and increased – particularly from people living in eastern Redfern with its higher number of private cars. The former SSCC was accused of poorly managing traffic and parking there now at times of events in Redfern Park, or at the Oval.

(The Government’s current work in relation to traffic and transport is discussed in Chapter 18.)

### ***Public domain***

Public domain in Redfern and Waterloo was seen to be very limited by residents, community groups, elected representatives and businesses. These participants wanted public space to be reclaimed and made more useable and safe. They wanted these spaces to be changed into landscaped parks, gardens, and green space, with seating in them. They wanted space to walk, to play with their children, to have family gatherings, and to exercise their dogs. Participants from these the residents, community groups, elected representatives and business sectors also believed that residents should be encouraged to look after their gardens, and use planter boxes and window boxes as ways to improve the aesthetics of the area.

According to McCallum, the Redfern Park and Oval came up for particular mention by some, particularly those who live close by it. The Park was cited as an example of how beautiful green space could look. Fewer people were positive about the Oval and there was some fear by some residents that it would “continue to be locked up and away from the community”. While the South Sydney rugby league team were seen to bring a sense of community pride, the Oval was not generally seen to be an appropriate place for a stadium big enough for home games to be played.

(Information about improving the public domain is contained in Chapter 17 of this submission.)

### ***Built environment***

Very frequently mentioned by residents, community groups, businesses and elected representatives was the poor quality built environment: the street scape and surrounds are seen as ugly and dirty. This group of participants found the dark streets and the shuttered shop fronts at night created an impression that the area is one in which crime frequently occurs. The answer to the poor built environment is seen by these groups of participants as more street lighting, landscaping and beautification of the streets and surrounding areas.

The staff and elected councillors of the former SSCC also thought that the street scenes needed to be improved, and that the area looked as though it needed “economic revitalisation”. Several residents commented that an improved built environment could draw on the heritage and history of the area as a way of creating a unique and interesting environment.

McCallum has advised that the Australian Technology Park (ATP) was seen as one example where the built environment is more positive in that “it has cleaned up the area”. More pedestrian traffic from the Redfern Station to the ATP had made the area feel safer for those who live around it.

#### **9.4.4 Building a Better Future for our Children**

In 2002 the Department of Community Services commissioned a study into the needs of families in the Redfern and Waterloo area, as part of the Redfern Waterloo Partnerships Project (RWPP). A key component of RWPP, and the focus of the report, *Building a Better Future for our Children*, is the development of services to support disadvantaged families.

The objective of the study into the needs of families in Redfern and Waterloo was to develop a model for Family Support Services in Redfern and Waterloo which:

- builds capacity within the existing family support service network
- establishes a new service model that targets high risk families who have significant parenting problems with children aged 0-18 years.

The final report was based on:

- extensive consultation with family support service providers in the Redfern and Waterloo area
- a more limited consultation with families who are currently using services and some other residents
- examination of relevant literature, including models of service delivery in New South Wales and Victoria
- an assessment of the capacity of the Family Support Services within Redfern and Waterloo to expand their current service delivery and to deliver the proposed new service
- an assessment of the needs of the families in Redfern and Waterloo
- the services families in the area require to meet these needs
- the development of a framework, outlining the key components an effective Family Support Service system
- the development of options for the service enhancement funding

- the development of a new service model.

#### **9.4.4.1 Findings and/or recommendations**

The consultation included findings from the following groups:

##### ***Families' views***

Families' views of their needs and the services they require were similar to those of service providers. Many people indicated that they felt unsafe in their neighbourhoods and were afraid to go out. This was particularly the case for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Many of these people are grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. The result is increased isolation for them and a reluctance to use support services.

##### ***Aboriginal women***

Aboriginal women consulted indicated that many Aboriginal families are very isolated and are reluctant to use services because they feel shame and are fearful that they will be judged as poor parents, even though this may not be the case. A holistic and comprehensive approach to service delivery is critical in order to meet the complex needs of families and the loss of cultural identity.

##### ***Culturally and linguistically diverse communities***

There was a strong feeling among people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities that the areas in which they live are very dangerous - they feel unsafe and reluctant to go out, even during the day. The lifts in their buildings are regularly broken, young boys throw stones at them and people use and sell drugs openly in the streets.

The recommendations arising from the report were divided into six categories:

- partnership development
- performance measures and targets
- Kidspeak
- family support service system in Redfern and Waterloo
- child protection protocols.

##### ***Partnership development***

That resources be invested into partnership development and training and development, for Family Support Service providers.

***Service model***

That the new family support service to be developed in Redfern and Waterloo is holistic, comprehensive and provides a range of services that is tailored to meet the individual needs of families. The components of the service should include:

- Assertive outreach: Engaging with families through community and social networks, referring agents, informal activities such as play groups, out-of school hours programs
- Counselling: Children and Families
- Case Work: Assessment, Case planning and Case management
- Practical parenting: In-home support and Groups
- Brokerage: Services and Goods.

That the new family support service model for families in Redfern and Waterloo includes low, medium and high intensity services.

That the new Family Support Service model for Redfern and Waterloo incorporates evidence-based practices that reflect good practice in the delivery of Family Support Services.

***Performance measures and targets***

That data collection and output measures for the proposed new service and the Enhancement funding be consistent with the Community Services Grants Program framework.

That the analysis of these data be used to develop more rigorous output measures and targets for service delivery at the completion of the initial three-year funding period. A mid-term review should be undertaken, to develop interim targets, which can be tested over the remainder of the funding period.

***Kidspeak***

That Kidspeak be incorporated into the new Family Support Service model and that the continuing auspice for the service be linked to the assessment criteria for delivery of the new service. (Information about Kidspeak is provided in Chapter 14 of this submission.)

That an independent evaluation of the program be undertaken, incorporating it into the evaluation framework for the new Family Support Service model. This evaluation must be undertaken by an experienced and independent evaluator.

That the new coordinator, in conjunction with the Committee of Management, develops specific performance measures for the project and begins to collect data in relation to

these. These data should inform the evaluation and the process of developing the program into the new service.

### ***Family support service system in Redfern and Waterloo***

That a strategic approach to funding family support services in Redfern and Waterloo be developed. The approach be based on consultation with service providers to address identified community needs. The new funding system needs to include:

- ongoing funding rather than the annual grants systems
- accountability measures focussing on achievement of outcomes for clients
- mechanisms and processes for defining and moving funding across the service system.

That funding be provided to assess the effectiveness of existing and proposed family support services. This needs to be an independent evaluation of each service that currently receives State or Federal funding.

That the evaluation of services includes an assessment of the administrative and management structures of the organisations.

That training for members of Committees of Management in understanding their governance roles and responsibilities be provided.

That any enhanced or new services funded for Redfern and Waterloo meet the Family Support Association of NSW standards and that staff employed as family counsellors in the services have accredited counselling qualifications or are working towards attaining these.

That strategies be developed to assist established funded services work towards the same standards in service delivery.

That the service audit consider the requirements for renovation and the upgrading of the physical environment of services and that support be provided to agencies in obtaining funding for capital improvements.

The recommendations also proposed that the Department of Community Services (DoCS) work with agencies to identify how efficiency gains could be achieved in the Family Support Service system, with any resource gains being re-directed into service delivery in the area.

### ***Child protection protocols***

That DoCS initiate processes to improve communication between community agencies and the statutory child protection service in DoCS, including:

- clear information about the services community agencies and DoCS have the capacity to deliver
- development of written protocols, outlining referral processes and ongoing monitoring mechanisms between agencies and the statutory child protection service
- development of mechanisms for joint case management between the statutory child protection service and the community agencies, including participation in case planning meetings in which families also participate
- development of strategies which result in a shared understanding of protective concerns and risks and a joint commitment to strengthening families and protecting children.

### **9.4.5 Redfern-Waterloo Pathways to Prevention project**

In July and August 2002 RRWP commissioned RPR Consulting to undertake community consultation about developmental or early intervention approaches to crime prevention (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Pathways to Prevention’ approach).

Ninety-three (93) people were interviewed and two group discussions were convened involving 25 people. Through this approach, the consultants trawled the experiences of five schools, 28 community services and organizations, ten government agencies, 14 children and young people and 26 parents.

#### **9.4.5.1 Findings and/or recommendations**

An Interim Issues Paper was developed in September 2002 which summarises the information and views gleaned. Interviews conducted for the project focused first on the key risk factors in the lives of children and young people up to the age of 14 in Redfern and Waterloo – especially factors which place them at risk of developing problematic behaviours including involvement in crime. The interviews also explored the factors that protect children vulnerable to these risks, and whether these protections were sufficiently present or strong in the service and support systems available in Redfern and Waterloo.

There was a high degree of consistency in the responses provided by community organisations, parents and government agencies; and between their responses and the findings of research. There was also a keen appreciation of the dynamic interaction between different factors at work in the lives of children and young people. To give just two examples:

- Almost all respondents saw a direct link between Indigenous peoples’ experience of dispossession and discrimination (the community/cultural domain) and substance abuse and poor parenting (the family domain). In turn, the substance abuse in the family domain (which affected a wide cross-section of families, not only Indigenous families) had a direct impact on neighbourhood violence and crime

- Parents saw a direct link between population density and housing conditions (the community domain) and their difficulties in properly supervising and monitoring their children (the family domain), as well as in their children's beliefs about aggression (the individual child domain).

#### 9.4.6 Youth consultation report

In July 2002 the Department of Community Services provided the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project with a summary report about youth and youth services. As with each of the consultancies reported on in this Chapter, the report was based on the views of the participants at a particular point in time. This should be taken into consideration when giving weight to the findings of the report.

The objective of the study was to find out from young people how they saw their community at the time, and what they would like to see improved, changed and developed. Specifically, young people discussed current youth services, school, safety, housing and community well-being. They also responded to the Street Team initiative that was being developed by the Department of Community Services.

The study and report was undertaken by South Sydney Youth Services over a period of two weeks in late May to early June 2002. 129 young people (8-20 years) in Redfern and Waterloo were consulted. The participants were people who attended high school, primary school, youth services, emergency services and/or who lived in or frequented the Redfern and Waterloo area. The consultations were undertaken by a team of young people, community members and social work students.

##### 9.4.6.1 Findings and/or recommendations

The results of the study were grouped into eight categories:

- ***Social conscience***: young people expressed their desire for interconnectedness, the importance of friendships and local ownership. There was an extraordinary level of social conscience in young people
- ***Safety and community***: there is ambivalence in the youth community about their personal safety. Some young people expressed that they did feel safe, however a significant number felt scared at night. Young women clearly identified potential violence from adult men as impacting negatively on their feelings of safety
- ***Street Team***: the overall response to the proposal of the Street Team was very positive
- ***Relationship between young people and police***: A major theme throughout discussions was the negative relationship between young people and the police. Young men especially, expressed anger and many have a fatalistic, dead-end sense around these issues believing that nothing can be done to improve the situation. Young people aged 8-20 years made allegations of police violence, inappropriate physical handling, assault



and goading. One consistent theme was that the trust has been broken between young people and police and no one knows what to do about it

- ***Racism/racially-based fear:*** Some young people identified racism and fear of certain cultures as an issue. Many young people said they didn't attend some youth services because the main population was Aboriginal and they didn't feel included
- ***Impressions of existing youth services:*** Young people utilize a range of services in the area. Young people overwhelmingly like their youth services as a place to hang out with friends and do activities. Young people tap into services for a myriad of reasons and many expressed the desire to see more resourcing for activities especially excursions, camps, computer access, sporting activities and general support with homework and friendship networks. The young people that don't use the services said they feel out of place or don't like the behaviour in the places available to them. Some of the young people who don't use local services say they travel to Belmore and Parramatta to go to places they feel welcome. Some young men feel excluded from some youth services because they have turned 16 or older and say they are perceived as a threat to services
- ***School:*** Many young people identified school as a place they love and feel inspired by. Many young people also wanted to see better equipment and facilities within their school environment and knew that their schools were resource poor in comparison with other Sydney schools
- ***Housing, environment and health:*** A common complaint from young people was the sense of disrepair in their neighbourhood. Many young people would like to see a cleaner and more 'kid friendly' environment. Green spaces, public parks and trees featured strongly in young people's list of what they love about the area and what they would like more of.

#### 9.4.7 Redfern/Waterloo Youth Services Review

The Redfern/Waterloo Youth Services Review was commissioned as part of the Redfern/Waterloo Coordination Project. The Coordination Project was established in November 1998 with the aim of improving linkages between Government agencies and key community stakeholder groups. The Project also sought to develop strategies for addressing the complex issues facing the Redfern and Waterloo community.

To manage the Coordination Project, an Inter-agency Management Committee was established, comprising Central Sydney Area Health Service, NSW Police Service and the Departments of Community Services, Housing, Aboriginal Affairs, Premier's and Education and Training.

The Redfern/Waterloo Youth Services Review sought to identify gaps and duplications in services for young people aged 9 to 21 in the postcode areas 2016 and 2017.

The review was based on surveys of young people and service providers; analyses of demographic trends; and discussions with agency staff and key staff from non-government organisations.

The report made recommendations in relation to the strategic coordination of services for young people in Redfern and Waterloo. It also recommended that mechanisms be put in place for involving the whole community in decision making.

Joint funding for positive outcomes was recommended in the report, as was the creation of a coordinated response to the crisis in crime and drug abuse. The report also recommended a joint approach to service provision for young people in Redfern and Waterloo.

Information flowing out of this study has been used to inform the work undertaken through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP). Examples include:

- the introduction of a *Youth Taskforce*, made up of Government and non-Government youth services. The Taskforce was established to reshape services and to improve coordination, collaboration and integration amongst youth services. (Further information about the Youth Taskforce is provided in 1.3.3 in this Chapter.)
- the *Redfern Waterloo Street Team*, which is a new and innovative approach to addressing the issues of children and young people who congregate in public places within Redfern, Waterloo and Darlington and who are at risk of harm or who are engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. The Team operates 7 days per week, 2 shifts per day. (Further information about the Redfern Waterloo Street Team is provided in Chapter 14 of this submission.)
- the development of *intensive family support services*. This service is based on an innovative model that has been developed in Victoria. The model has proven effective for working with children, young people and their families who do not access traditional services. The new service targets the most difficult to engage families and those who have the most complex needs. (Further information about intensive family support services is outlined in Chapter 14 of this submission.)

## **10 Community Relations and Capacity Building**

In addition to engaging community views to inform the development of policies and programs, the NSW Government has developed strategies to reinforce relations between agencies and the Redfern and Waterloo community. In working with community, Government also looks to build the capacity of individuals and organisations to ensure that people are able to work in true partnership with government and participate fully in community life.

### **10.1 Community relations strategies by Police in Redfern and Waterloo**

The mission of NSW Police is to have Police and the community working together to establish a safer environment by reducing violence. To achieve this, Redfern LAC has numerous community focused strategies in place including a Police Accountability Community Team (PACT), crime prevention strategies, and youth strategies aimed at addressing police relations with Aboriginal people.

Redfern LAC has established a PACT. The purpose of the PACT is to:

- ensure that Local Area Commanders are accountable to their local communities
- encourage community partnerships to reduce crime and fear of crime
- develop local solutions to local crime in partnership with local stakeholders
- improve public safety and reduce fear of crime at a local level
- raise understanding of the relationship between policing and crime reduction
- ensure Commanders take into account local community views on Police visibility, Police deployment and crime hot spots when deciding Police tasking and deployment.

Other community relations programs which Redfern LAC is proposing or which is underway include:

- Aboriginal Awareness Program – pilot program involving the Aboriginal Community of Redfern, Tranby Aboriginal College, NSW Police and St Vincent’s Community Redfern. This program is in the planning stage.
- Employment opportunities through the Community Development Employment Program. Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community participate in a three month training/work experience program within the LAC. The scheme is focused on developing members of the Aboriginal community into the role of an ACLO. People under this scheme work a maximum of 25 hours per week at no cost to the Command over a three month period. Two Aboriginal employees have already completed this program and one is currently participating.

- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for staff at Redfern is ongoing. This is a NSW Police approved training course.
- ACLOs have organised for Aboriginal Elders to address Redfern police training days on various issues.
- Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Committee is currently being revisited and an Aboriginal Senior Advisory Committee is to be introduced in the near future, along with an Aboriginal Youth Advisory Committee.
- Redfern LAC worked with the Aboriginal Coordination Team and identified the need to have procedures in place for the management of Aboriginal incidents within the LAC. A draft set of Standard Operating Procedures has been written, outlining activities to be undertaken to improve relations between ACLOs, the Police and the Aboriginal community, and also procedures to be implemented in the event of a critical incident involving an Aboriginal person.
- A further initiative that is being canvassed is inviting Aboriginal role models to come to the Redfern and Waterloo area and speak with all members of the Aboriginal community.

### **10.1.1 RailCorp Aboriginal Network Committee**

RailCorp's Community Relations area supports the work of the RailCorp Aboriginal Network Committee (ANC). This Committee comprises Aboriginal employees from across the RailCorp network. Since 2001, it has staged an annual NAIDOC Day celebration.

On 2 November 2002, the ANC was involved in a community tenant's day held near Redfern station. The aim was to provide the local indigenous community with information relating to careers in RailCorp. A number of other government organisations such as the departments of Health and Housing were also involved.

### **10.1.2 Community greening program**

The Community Greening Program is a partnership between the Department of Housing and the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney that assists social housing residents to create and maintain community gardens and green their homes and communities. The Royal Botanical Gardens provide ongoing support and advice to the Redfern and Waterloo communities for this program.

Community Gardens have been established at the Cook, Solander and Marton high rise buildings at Waterloo. The Department of Housing and the University of NSW jointly fund a coordinator position based on the estate to oversee community gardening committees and other community development initiatives. A residents' community garden group has also been established at the Intensive Tenancy Management project at Redfern.

A research report *A Bountiful Harvest – Community Gardens and Neighbourhood Renewal in Waterloo* was conducted and published in November 2003 via a partnership between the Department of Housing and the University of NSW. The report identifies the following benefits of community gardens:

- the reclaiming of public space
- the building of positive community connections
- the opportunity for gardeners to make new friends and support each other in a range of ways
- the building of trust and friendship amongst gardeners
- the gardens are a multicultural place where gardeners develop an understanding of each other's cultures through sharing recipes, produce and plants from their homelands. (Gardeners spoke of how their participation in the gardens has helped to improve cultural awareness and breakdown negative racial stereotypes)
- the provision of a meeting place for residents on the estates and the opportunity for physical exercise
- the produce generated from some of the gardens contributes to healthy diet and when this produce is shared, the benefits extend across the community
- access to fresh food in communities where households sometimes find it a struggle to meet day to day living expenses.

### **10.1.3 Redfern Estate Neighbourhood Centre**

The Department of Housing has made available a commercial premise at the Poets Corner Shops (43-57 Morehead Street, Redfern) to establish a neighbourhood centre for public housing residents in the Redfern area. A Development Application was recently lodged with City of Sydney Council and consultations have involved precinct representatives on the Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board as well as the Intensive Tenancy Management Team Steering Committee to determine future community development priorities in the Redfern area.

### **10.1.4 WorkVentures Connect Neighbourhood Technology Centre**

The Work Ventures Connect program is a partnership between the Department of Housing and Work Ventures Connect and their partners Microsoft Australia and the Westpac Foundation. The program is piloting neighbourhood technology centres in disadvantaged public housing estates in the Central Sydney and South Western Sydney areas. A neighbourhood technology centre has been established in Waterloo to provide disadvantaged social housing residents with access to information technology, the Internet

and relevant training. The program provides opportunities for residents to improve skills, access employment and training and to strengthen community capacity.

### **10.1.5 Housing Communities Assistance Program**

The Department of Housing funds Housing Communities Assistance Program (HCAP) workers in nine locations across New South Wales. The HCAP worker for the Redfern and Waterloo areas is auspiced by Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development. The HCAP worker supports tenant participation in the community and works in partnership with local agencies to increase access to services and strengthen community capacity.

The worker supports and facilitates tenant participation through:

- coordinating Neighbourhood Advisory Board meetings
- attending precinct meetings with Departmental tenants
- working on community development projects and initiatives
- supporting tenant involvement in initiatives related to the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project.

### **10.1.6 Licensing sessions**

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) began licensing sessions at the Redfern Aboriginal Corporation in November 2003. To date, six sessions have been arranged with about 50 people in attendance overall. The licensing sessions have been held to assist people to gain learner permits and drivers' licences, with the objective of reducing the incidence of unlicensed driving. At this stage it is considered too early to assess the effectiveness of the program through monitoring changes.

### **10.1.7 Learner driver programs**

*Drivin4Employment* was a joint program between the RTA and the former South Sydney City Council in 2002 and 2003. The aim was to assist new drivers to become licensed and for licensed car drivers to gain truck licences. Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program has since awarded funding to South Sydney Youth Services at Waterloo to support the *Driving4Employment* Project. The project currently provides assistance to 27 participants, and to date has resulted in 19 participants obtaining their licences, and seven participants gaining employment.

The RTA is currently planning for a Learner Driver program at the newly opened Redfern Community Centre. The Program is expected to commence in September 2004.

### **10.1.8 Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program**

The Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program aims to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal youth in the south Sydney area. In addition to funding the Driving4Employment Program, it has also provided funding to the former South Sydney City Council to support the Lights Camera Action project. This project aims to give local Aboriginal youth an opportunity to obtain work in the television and film industry, targeting local unemployed and socially disadvantaged youth. The project is a result of strategic planning to address the issues of unemployment and social disadvantage affecting local marginalised youth.

### **10.1.9 Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Premier's Department and BP Australia**

The NSW Premier's Department and BP Australia have developed an MOU as part of their shared commitment to the wellbeing of local communities in New South Wales, where significant socio-economic disadvantage and exclusion is apparent. The two organisations are collaboratively exploring opportunities which may, among other things, strengthen community leadership; build the capacities of non government organisations and other community groups; and build the interest and capacities of business to participate in local place/community renewal projects.

### **10.1.10 Redfern/Waterloo Community Development Project**

The Redfern/Waterloo Community Development Project, is a partnership project involving the University of NSW (UNSW) Faculty of the Built Environment and School of Social Work, the Department of Housing, social housing tenants from Waterloo and Redfern and the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development. The project commenced in the mid 1990s to provide community development support and conduct research projects with strong community involvement.

### **10.1.11 Framework for doing business with Aboriginal communities**

The NSW Government recognises that Aboriginal people are best placed to develop solutions which meet their needs. The Government is therefore committed to building the capacity of Aboriginal organisations, communities and individuals. Similarly, the Government is committed to improving its own capacity to work with Aboriginal communities.

As part of this process, the NSW Government entered into an agreement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council in November 2002. The agreement includes an action plan that aims to strengthen community governance by encouraging and facilitating community representative

structures. This will be achieved by actively supporting Aboriginal service providers and Aboriginal owned businesses, and by building on the capacity of government agencies to work effectively with Aboriginal people and organisations. The Agreement informs the work that all government agencies undertake in relation to Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

#### **10.1.12 Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme**

The Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability operates the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme (EAPA) which provides emergency financial assistance to customers having difficulty paying their energy bills. EAPA vouchers are provided by the Department to charitable organisations in the Redfern and Waterloo area.