

Part 5:

Physical Environment

16 Infrastructure

I would repaint everything so it looks clean and tidy.

Eric, 11, Chinese Australian

16.1 Overview

In March 2002 the NSW Government announced an initiative focused on revitalising the Redfern and Waterloo area. The initiative - the Redfern, Eveleigh and Darlington (RED) Strategy - looks to provide a holistic approach to urban renewal, strengthening the local community and improving urban amenities.

Concurrent with this, a number of stakeholders entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2003. The parties to the MOU included the NSW Government, the then South Sydney City Council, the Aboriginal Housing Company Ltd and the University of Sydney. The purpose of the MOU was to:

- outline a framework for co-operative relations between the parties
- facilitate and encourage effective interaction
- enable the RED Strategy to achieve its economic and social objectives in an efficient, sustainable and responsible manner
- act as a starting point for the development of protocols on consultative arrangements covering issues of mutual interest. (Issues of mutual interest included but were not limited to land use planning and development, land transport linkages, direct and indirect employment generation from related activities, environmental and heritage issues, and local Government and community issues).

The MOU provided a framework through which these agencies would work together to try to progress infrastructure renewal and development in Redfern and Waterloo.

16.2 RED Strategy

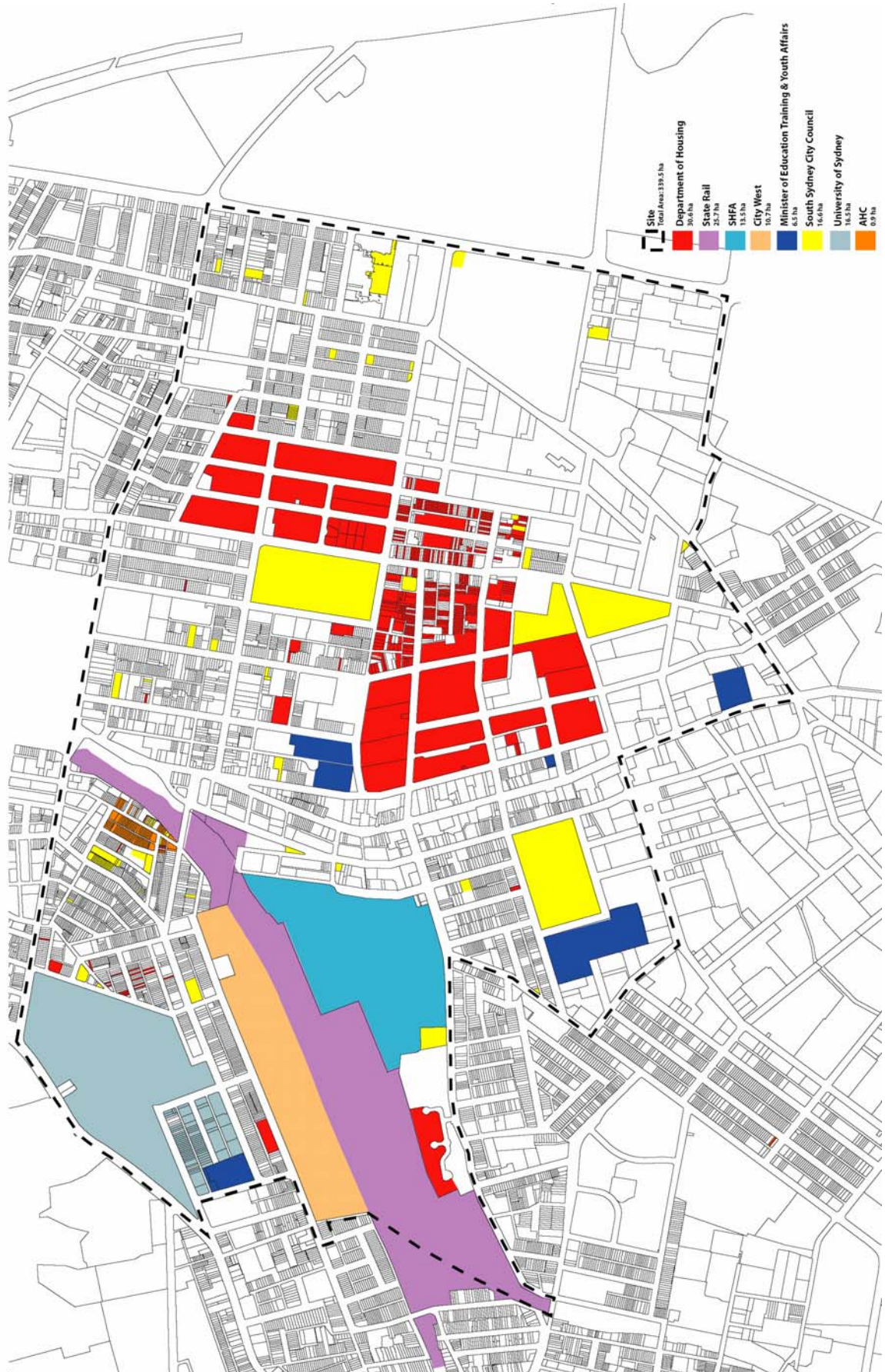
The RED Strategy covers the area west of Macdonaldtown and Erskineville stations and is (broadly speaking) bounded by the University of Sydney; Cleveland, Elizabeth, McEvoy and Fountain Streets; Mitchell and Henderson roads; and Railway Parade.

Figure 6: Area covered by the RED Strategy



As shown in the following map, major landowners in the RED area include the NSW Government, Sydney City Council, the Aboriginal Housing Company and Kimberley Securities (owner of the TNT Towers).

Figure 7: Major land owners in the RED area



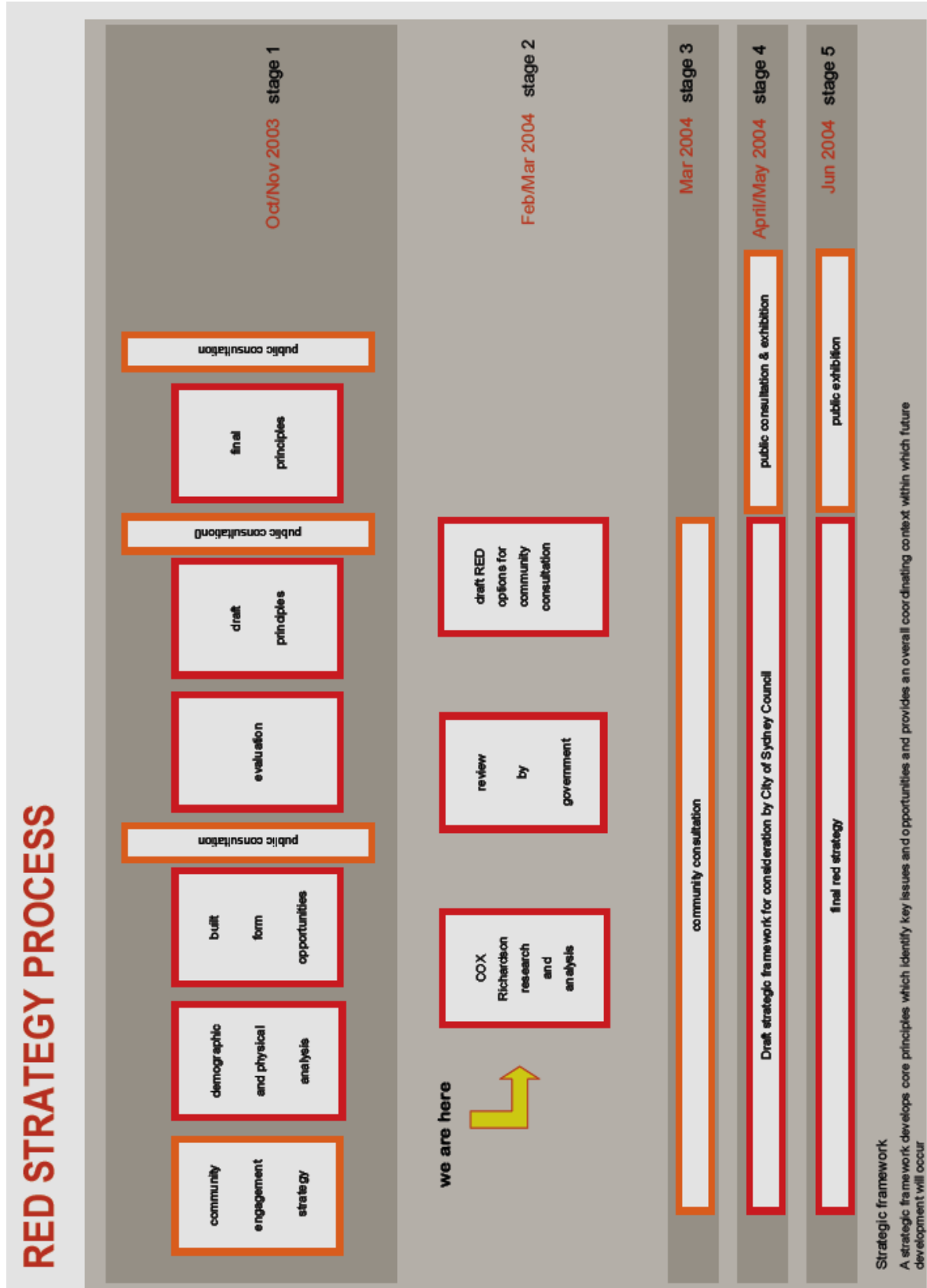
The RED strategy objectives include:

- facilitating urban renewal and regeneration
- setting parameters for the development and redevelopment of specific sites
- enhancing public amenity and the quality of open space
- identifying opportunities for increasing the amount of open space and other public recreational facilities
- promoting diversity of housing choice
- promoting economic regeneration including:
 - revitalising shopping facilities
 - maximising opportunities associated with redevelopment of the Redfern Station
- strengthening the accessibility of the area via all modes of transport.

The development of the Strategy is being funded through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project. The lead agencies for the initiative are the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources and the Premier's Department. After receiving tenders from five urban design and planning firms, the Government engaged Cox Richardson in 2003 to develop options for development of the RED Strategy in consortium with Elton Consulting (Community Consultation), Sphere Property Corporation (Economic and Property Management) and Transport and Traffic Planning Associates (Transport Planning).

The process for developing the RED Strategy is set out below.

Figure 8: RED Strategy process



In 2003 Cox Richardson identified the opportunities and constraints impacting on the RED area. This information informed the development of issues that were taken to the community for comment in mid to late 2003. Since that time, further research and analysis of options has been undertaken. Following consideration by Government, a further round of community consultation will take place. It was originally intended that the RED Strategy options would be taken to the Redfern and Waterloo communities for consideration and feedback in February/March 2004. Due to the complex nature of the issues involved, the project is running slightly behind the proposed planning framework timeframe.

Community views will be incorporated into the final options paper and forwarded to the Sydney City Council for further public consultation and exhibition. The final RED Strategy will then be finalised and put on public exhibition. When developed, it is expected that the Strategy will define in broad terms:

- areas proposed for development and conservation
- broad land use types, activities and community services
- indicative intensity of activity/development
- proposed major accessibility requirements and movement patterns.

16.2.1 Principles of the RED Strategy

The consultations held in mid to late 2003 sought community endorsement of the guiding principles which underpin the development of the Strategic Planning Framework. The Principles are:

Principle 1: Develop a sustainable Town Centre to serve the RED area

- position Redfern as the economic and cultural centre of the area
- reduce the impact of regional traffic on Redfern and Waterloo
- revitalise the retail strips of Redfern and Regent Streets, particularly street front businesses and supermarkets
- undertake streetscape improvements
- provide parking opportunities to support easy access to retail precincts
- increase the number of people living and working in the RED area
- provide links to the North Eveleigh development.

Principle 2: Capitalise on Redfern station's location to support revitalisation of station and Town Centre precincts

- increase employment within 500m radius of the station
- connect main railway entrance to town centre

- improve access to Redfern station thereby facilitating access to regional jobs and facilities
- redevelop the station providing a strong linkage to North Eveleigh, improved access to Sydney University, Australia Technology Park (ATP), and the Lawson Street precinct
- intensify retail and other uses on the station concourse
- improve connectivity between the rail and bus services.

Principle 3: Provide a Safe and Activated Public Domain

- provide intensive lighting to preferred pedestrian and cycle ways leading to the town centre, schools, universities and other community facilities
- built form along these streets to maximise casual surveillance
- traffic calming mechanisms implemented to improve safety and amenity of local streets
- opportunities for pavement enterprise and small neighbourhood retail precincts to be supported
- develop community safety strategy for the public domain pending revitalisation of the area through growth
- introduce temporary use strategies for vacant shop fronts eg; shops as gallery spaces
- the railway station precinct to become an integral component of the public domain
- improve quantity and level of amenity of local parks and develop linkages with regional open space
- prioritise creation and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian routes.

Principle 4: Optimise Social and Economic return from Government Land Holdings

- realise development potential of ATP, North Eveleigh and Redfern Railway Station by exploiting potential synergies
- facilitate a sustainable, balanced and diverse social mix in residential precincts
- review retention of surplus government sites in light of current and projected demand for community infrastructure.

Principle 5: Ensure Social Equity in Public Life

- prioritise safety and security
- facilitate access to economic opportunities for people not in the workforce
- prioritise opportunities for creating local employment and enterprise development
- broker employment partnerships between community and major employers, eg. Sydney University

- provide for efficient and affordable public transport access to local community, recreation, health, education, retail and cultural facilities
- improve access to Redfern Station thereby facilitating access to regional jobs and facilities
- ensure supply of community infrastructure to support social, cultural and economic capability of community
- design of the public domain to ensure opportunities are provided for people with diverse physical, cultural and economic needs so that they are able to use public places
- improve quantity and level of amenity of local parks and develop linkages with regional open space.

Principle 6: Foster Community Identity

- position Redfern Town Centre as the heart of the area
- develop shared sense of place through celebration and conservation of the area's cultural diversity
- develop initiatives that grow cultural enterprises
- develop specific locality branding
- implement thematic unity through treatment of the public domain.

Principle 7: Strengthen Community Cohesion

- implement initiatives in the public domain that build community cohesion eg; Greening the Streets
- create attractive and safe open spaces and meeting places at the neighbourhood level to promote social interaction
- facilitate a sustainable and diverse social mix in residential precincts by increasing affordable housing without reducing public housing
- reduce impacts of physical barriers that create social barriers eg; arterial roads, rail line, Lawson Street Bridge
- provide places for community celebrations and cultural expression.

The Strategy will also identify necessary changes to the Local Environmental Plans and other planning instruments which need to occur in order to implement it.

16.3 Proposed infrastructure developments

A number of major public and private sector infrastructure developments are proposed within the next few years that have the potential to significantly impact on the RED area and which may act as a catalyst in its revitalisation. These include:

- the upgrading of Redfern Station
- the redevelopment of the TNT Towers
- the redevelopment of The Block
- the Australian Technology Park and the North Eveleigh rail yard redevelopment, including the proposed new Performance Centre on that site.

All of these developments fit within the framework of the RED Strategy and are discussed in detail below.

16.3.1 The upgrading of Redfern Station

In November 2003, passenger surveys showed there are more than 35,500 passenger movements through Redfern station each weekday (not including passengers who use the station as an interchange). The station is ranked 8th busiest station in the Metropolitan Rail Corporation network in terms of passenger movements and the second most accessible after Central in terms of number of rail lines that stop at Redfern.

Redfern Station is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It has 12 platforms, 22 station staff on the morning shift (6am to 2pm), 20 station staff on the afternoon shift (2pm to 10pm), and 8 station staff on the night shift (10pm to 6am).

The station is under pressure to accommodate significant patronage growth resulting from development within its catchment. Redfern Station shares the majority of rail/rail interchange movements with Town Hall and Central Stations. Redfern's role in rail interchange is expected to expand in the future.

Any redevelopment of Redfern Station would provide an opportunity to create additional public benefit by:

- providing a focal point for the suburb
- improving the urban environment
- enhancing pedestrian connectivity across the rail lines
- improving the connection with the main streets
- increasing retail and commercial services
- improving visual integration with The Block
- improving safety in the station precinct.

Any possible redevelopment would require an extensive community consultation process which ensures that all stakeholders have a say.

16.3.2 The redevelopment of the TNT Towers

The owners of the TNT Towers located adjacent to Redfern Station have been exploring a range of options for redeveloping their holdings. Within that context, they have also canvassed opportunities for linking with any proposed redevelopment of the adjoining sites including the railway station. The NSW Government considers that any such development would need to be considered in the context of the RED Strategy once it has been finalised.

16.3.3 The redevelopment of The Block

The Redfern and Waterloo communities view the redevelopment of The Block as crucial to the regeneration of the area (McCallum 2003). In order to achieve long term sustainability, any redevelopment must adopt a holistic approach. That is, the infrastructure project cannot be viewed in isolation from the area's social issues. In recognition of this fact, the NSW Government is working closely with the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) – the owners and managers of The Block – and other key stakeholders to ensure that strategies are implemented to address:

- the myriad of social problems in the area, particularly in relation to drug use
- the financial sustainability of the AHC
- the housing needs of current and future residents.

Further detail on the redevelopment of The Block is outlined in Chapter 19 of this submission.

16.3.4 The Australian Technology Park

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is the owner of the Australian Technology Park (ATP) at Redfern. Established in 1995, ATP occupies the site of the former Eveleigh Railway Workshops. The 16-bay Locomotive Workshop is spread over 13.9 hectares.

ATP is home to four university departments and more than 100 businesses, including The *BioFirst* Incubator, which is operated by ATP Innovations (ATPi). ATP Innovations is co-owned by four universities: the University of Sydney, UNSW, Australian National University and the University of Technology, Sydney.

The aim of the *BioFirst* Incubator is to assist companies to fast track the commercialisation of their technologies. The *BioFirst* Incubator provides services including:

- economical access to laboratory space on an as-needs basis
- reduced business operation overheads
- access to mentoring services and assistance with graduation from the incubator environment
- business development support provided through the ATPi bizConnect program.

The headquarters of the National Information and Communication Technology Australia (NICTA) Centre of Excellence opened at ATP in February 2003. In the same year, the Australian Technology Park Precinct Management (ATPPM) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop a building to accommodate National Information and Communications Technology Australia (NICTA) by 2006. The basis of the MOU was the commitment by the State government in its bid of 2002 to secure the federally funded Centre of Excellence for the ATP. Included in the bid was State funding of \$60m. Concept designs have been produced for a development of 15,000 m², of which 5,000 m² would be committed by NICTA and 10,000 m² available for lease.

Under the MOU with NICTA an agreement for Lease is required to be finalised by 30 June 2004. NICTA requires occupancy within the new building by 30 June 2006.

The ATP is approximately 30 per cent developed with the remainder of the site still to be completed. The timeframe for completion of the remaining development is expected to be approximately 10 years. The roads within the park should be fully constructed by the end of 2006 with adjacent landscaping. There are approximately another 13 buildings of up to seven storeys each to be constructed on the site over the development period.

It is expected that the development of the NICTA building will generate a number of flow on effects in the area, initially around employment through construction. It is important to note though, that the actual impact of this on the precincts of Redfern and Waterloo may be limited.

In conjunction with the development of the NICTA building, the North Eveleigh Railway yards are being redeveloped by the Ministry for the Arts, for use as a Contemporary Arts Performing Centre. This is expected to be completed by late 2006-early 2007. Further detail on the proposed Cultural Performing Arts Centre is provided in Chapter 18 of this report.

Also located at the ATP is the Cancer Institute NSW, established in July 2003. The Government has committed \$205 million over 4 years to its operation. The Cancer Institute NSW has the broad purpose of guiding the cancer control effort in New South Wales and enhancing its effectiveness. The Cancer Institute will seek to:

- support and commission cancer research
- enhance prevention and early detection programs
- commission innovative and best practice cancer treatment programs
- develop cancer education and information programs.

A further role of the Cancer Institute will be the management of cancer registries, a role currently undertaken by the Cancer Council. It is anticipated that approximately 100

people will be employed at the Cancer Institute by July 2005. The Cancer Institute is also currently considering the co-location of other related cancer-based bodies the ATP.

17 Public Domain

In community consultations (McCallum 2003) the public domain in Redfern and Waterloo has been seen to be very limited. Participants have expressed a desire for public space to be reclaimed and made more useable and safe. The regeneration and upgrade of the public domain in Redfern and Waterloo has three key elements:

- revitalising the Redfern shopping precinct (the Town Centre)
- developing North Eveleigh Carriage Workshop and Blacksmith's Shop into a cultural precinct
- providing sufficient open spaces and/or access to open spaces for residents and other community members.

Each of these options is outlined in detail below.

17.1 Revitalising Redfern shopping precinct

In advising the Government on options for development under the RED Strategy, Cox Richardson has found that revitalising the Redfern shopping precinct is dependant on addressing five key issues:

- increasing the working and living population in the Town Centre precinct
- reducing the impact of regional traffic
- redeveloping Redfern Station
- increasing safety and security
- improving the urban environment.

17.1.1 Increasing the working and living population

The RED Strategy adopts a holistic approach to the revitalisation and renewal of the Redfern and Waterloo area. Implicit to this approach is the concept that benefits accruing in one aspect of community life will positively affect other aspects of community life.

Many social and infrastructure-related initiatives are being considered under the framework of the RED Strategy. These include redeveloping Redfern station; addressing employment issues for the long term unemployed; ensuring a good social blend of residents through the implementation of a housing strategy that appropriately balances private and public housing; and improving the street-scape and open spaces. In undertaking any or all of these initiatives, it is assumed that the working and living population will increase as businesses and potential residents are attracted to, and move into Redfern and Waterloo. That is, if the local environment is vibrant, diverse, clean and safe, it is more likely that businesses will want to conduct trade, and people will want to live, in the area.

17.1.2 Reducing the impact of regional traffic

Residents of Redfern and Waterloo have clearly articulated their concerns about the heavy traffic flow through the RED area, and the disruptive effect that this has on the community (Elton 2003; McCallum 2003). Information about traffic issues in Redfern and Waterloo is contained in Chapter 18 of the submission.

17.1.3 Redevelopment of Redfern Station

The redevelopment of Redfern Station is strongly supported by the Redfern and Waterloo communities and is seen to be long overdue given its importance to the local community and Sydney University (Elton 2003). The proposal for redevelopment of the station is discussed in detail in Chapter 16 of this report.

17.1.4 Increasing safety and security

Crime and personal safety has regularly been cited by the Redfern and Waterloo communities as their greatest concern (Elton 2003; McCallum 2003). The proposed relocation of Redfern Police Station to the TNT Tower would have immediate benefits to safety in the Town Centre precinct. The TNT Tower is in a prominent position located between Redfern Station and the main shopping streets.

In addition to high visibility policing, the crime prevention initiatives of the City of Sydney Council and the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project are aimed at reducing street crime in the area. Information about these initiatives, including the anti-drug strategy, the community safety plan, crime prevention through environmental maintenance, and police youth strategies is outlined in Chapter 20 of this report.

17.1.5 Improving the urban environment

Redfern and Regent Streets have been the traditional strip commercial centres of the RED area, being the tram routes to Redfern Station. A number of inner Sydney strip centres have been revitalised such as Glebe Point Road, King Street and Oxford Street, however Redfern and Regent Streets are underperforming as the area's retail focus. These streets are not seen as pleasurable experiences due to safety and security issues. Additionally, Regent Street is a regional traffic artery subject to clearway conditions and limited parking.

As the public face of Redfern and Waterloo, a significant improvement of the Town Centre precinct is required to assist in repositioning the area from one of neglect to a revitalised inner city urban environment. The role of local government is critical to achieving improvements to the streets and public spaces.

17.2 RED cultural precinct

Cox Richardson has found that the RED area is in an ideal location to develop into one of Sydney's major cultural precincts. The City of Sydney Council, in partnership with the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project is scheduled to commence working on a cultural plan for the RED area in the latter part of 2004. Integral to this will be the redevelopment of the Ministry for the Arts' Contemporary Performing Arts Centre (CPAC) in North Eveleigh. It is expected that this will become the major arts anchor tenant in the area, thereby providing the opportunity to attract and grow cultural industries in the locality. Key companies such as Legs on the Wall, Gravity Feed, Theatre Kantanka, EARTH, Performance Space, Stalker Stilt Theatre, contemporary dance such as Omeo Dance and Force Majeure, de Quincey Company, and contemporary circus such as acrobat, are expected to present or be housed there.

The NSW Government approved the transfer of the former Carriage Workshop and Blacksmith's Shop from State Rail to the Ministry for the Arts in February 2002. A total of \$15 million was allocated for the site purchase and for the engagement of contractors. Working with project managers Root Projects Australia, a design team headed by Tonkin Zulaikha Greer has been engaged and designs are currently being developed. A Conservation Management Plan has also been prepared for the site and is informing all planning for the future development.

The 2003-04 Budget provided \$34.844 million over four years (\$2.3m in 2003-04, \$6.7m in 2004-05, \$13.534m in 2005-06 and \$12.31m in 2006-07) for the upgrade and fit out of the former carriage works and blacksmith's shop.

Spaces will include a large, flexible performance space complemented by medium/small performance and rehearsal spaces. The facility will also provide workshops and spaces for the manufacturing of sets, scenery and costumes, and a loading dock. At the front will be a foyer that includes a bar and ticketing area, as well as office spaces for resident and visiting companies. It is anticipated that the site will be completed by late 2006-early 2007.

Once complete, it is expected that CPAC will:

- offer Sydney audiences and local, national and international artists a centrally located flexible space to create and present big works possibly such as elements of the Sydney Festival, the Biennale, Pacific Wave, Carnivale, What is Music Festival and Electro Fringe
- make available multiple spaces for particular events to stage their entire program: the National Physical Theatre and Circus Conference, the National Performance Conference, the NSW Writers' Festival, What is Music Festival, the YAPA Youth Arts Conference, the National Aboriginal Dance Festival and Mascon Festival

- collaborate with international and national agencies such as Australian Network for Art and Technology (SA), ACMI (Vic), Australian Dance Theatre (SA), Dance House (Vic), Power House (Qld), Institute of Modern Art (Qld), Asia Pacific Triennial (Qld), Experimenta (Vic), St Kilda Film Festival (Vic) and others, to co-commission and/or present each others' product and
- facilitate regional, national and international artists in programs of exchange and dialogue.

17.3 Open spaces

When benchmarked to other inner city locations, the RED area has significantly less open space. With any increase in the local population, open space provision will be well below the benchmarked standard.

Figure 9: Open space



The RED area is however, in close proximity to three parks; Victoria, Prince Alfred and Moore Park. Additionally, Sydney’s major open space facilities at Centennial Park, Sydney Harbour, Botanic Gardens, Eastern Beaches and Sydney Park are all within 4km of Redfern Station.

Figure 10: Proximity to open spaces outside of the area



As a large proportion of the RED community is less mobile and does not have easy access to these facilities, a number of options are being explored to improve access to open space:

- targeted local and public transport systems that directly link to open space facilities
- facilitated pedestrian and cyclist connections to regional open space

- enhancing the amenities at Waterloo, Henderson Road and Alexandria Parks
- reclaiming Redfern Oval as public open space to be incorporated into Redfern Park
- conditioning development consents on the provision of high amenity open space
- dedicating Redfern School playground to council as public open space.

Whilst the provision of open space is primarily a local government concern, there is a role for the NSW Government to play in the implementation of the above options.

17.3.1 Redfern Oval

Following the amalgamation of the South Sydney City Council with the former City of Sydney Council, Redfern Oval is owned by, and is the responsibility of, the new City of Sydney Council. At this stage, the attitude of the new Sydney City Council on the future of Redfern Oval is not known.

In September 2001, George Piggins (then chair of the South Sydney District Rugby League Football Club) approached the Government about redeveloping Redfern Oval to enable Souths to play its home matches in the National Rugby League competition.

The Government holds the view that Redfern Oval's future needs to be considered in the context of:

- initiatives under the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project between Government and the former Council, in particular ensuring the redevelopment of Redfern Oval
 - is in accordance with community wishes
 - is consistent with the public domain plan being developed for Redfern and Waterloo
 - does not result in a reduction of green space in Redfern and Waterloo
 - enhances public access to Redfern Oval and
 - increases recreational and sporting opportunities for the broader community
- consideration of the NSW Government's Major Venues Strategy
- the feasibility study which was commissioned by the former Council on the future use of the Oval and Redfern Park.

The Government is developing guiding principles as part of its Major Venues Strategy. One of the proposed principles will be to support, as State assets, the major venues that it owns and the major venues in which it has equity. As noted above, the Redfern Oval is not a state asset.

In response to George Piggins' representations, the former South Sydney City Council established a taskforce to undertake a feasibility study for redeveloping Redfern Oval and

the South Sydney Leagues Club site in Chalmers Street as a joint venture with Souths. Government agreed to participate on this taskforce on the clear understanding that its participation did not constitute a commitment to support, financially or otherwise, for any proposal to redevelop Redfern Oval that may have arisen from the feasibility study.

The former Council engaged a consultant (ISFM sports project specialists) to undertake the Redfern Oval feasibility study. ISFM presented 3 options for Redfern Oval to the former Council's taskforce on 2 April 2003:

Option 1 (estimated cost \$7.2 million)

- demolish all existing built forms and level the site
- construct a new community/recreation playing field
- construct a new pavilion including public amenities, change and club rooms
- install new security and field of play lighting
- landscape the surrounds.

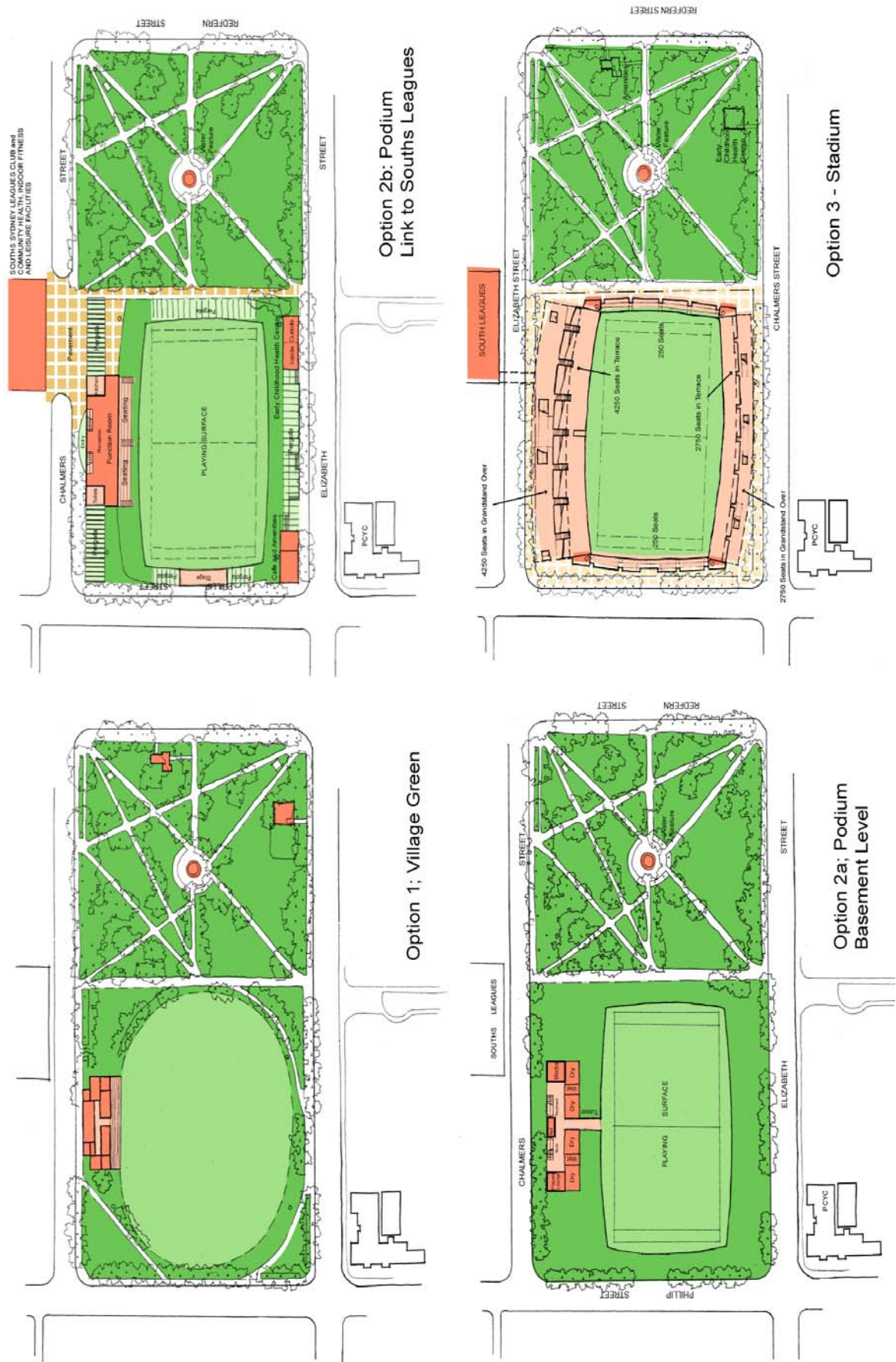
Option 2 (estimated cost \$17.5 million)

- demolish all existing built forms and level the site
- excavate the site to 2 metres and construct a new sports field with grassed embankment seating for up to 6,500 spectators
- construct a new pavilion including public amenities, change and club rooms, function and corporate areas, and undercover seating for up to 1,000 spectators
- install new security and field of play lighting
- operable security fences for ticketed events
- paving to Chalmers Street for markets and parking
- provision of a café, early childhood minding centre and playground, and a dais for concerts/festivals.

Option 3 (estimated cost \$50.5 million)

- demolish all existing built forms and level the site
- excavate the site to 2 metres and construct a new sports field
- construct new tiered grandstands on the western and eastern sides for 15,000 (and possibly more) spectators and include change rooms, food and beverage outlets, corporate suites, public amenities, sports museum, Aboriginal sports centre, café, etc
- install new security and field of play lighting.

Figure 11: Redfern Oval Options



The former Mayor of South Sydney noted that, whilst Council may have been able to fund option 1 in its own right, Government and private sector funding would be required for options 2 and 3. The former Mayor also stated that consideration would only be given to the redevelopment of the Oval. Accordingly, options for an indoor fitness and leisure centre in the leagues club, and a community centre in either the leagues club or the PCYC, would be considered at a future time.

George Piggins advised that, even under option 3, Souths would only play a maximum of 7 home matches at Redfern Oval, essentially against the non-Sydney NRL clubs. Souths' other 6 home matches against the Sydney-based NRL clubs would continue to be played at Aussie Stadium, given the anticipated crowds would be greater than the proposed capacity of a redeveloped oval.

The former Council then advised that:

- a decision on Redfern Oval had been deferred pending clarification of the impact of (then) boundary changes on the former Council's financial position
- whilst the former Council did not support a football stadium on Redfern Oval, it was not prepared to undertake a public consultation process (as recommended by the Taskforce) with the other two options as they both involved investment of several million dollars.

In April 2003, a new board of the South Sydney Rugby League Football Club was elected with Nick Pappas succeeding George Piggins as chair. Souths have recently extended their contract to play home NRL matches at Aussie Stadium until the end of the 2010 season.

18 Traffic and Transport

18.1 Overview

In community consultations (Elton 2003; McCallum 2003) residents have expressed a desire for clean, green walkways away from busy streets. The traffic on Lawson, Gibbons and Regents Streets is seen to be too heavy and fast, with a disruptive effect on the community. The proximity of the railway station is cited as being one of the benefits of living in Redfern. Nevertheless, many problems are associated with it, including crime and security, noise, ugliness, frontage, and the lack of pedestrian access. This chapter looks at traffic issues in the area as well as the provision of public transport to the community.

18.2 Regional traffic impacts

In developing options for the RED Strategy, the consultants Cox Richardson have advised that reducing the impact of regional traffic on Regent and Gibbons Streets is critical to the development of an integrated main street and station precinct. A calm and pedestrian environment is seen as essential to making the Redfern Town Centre an attractive and usable community space.

Eight lanes of regional traffic, including heavy transport, currently divide the main shopping streets from the station. There is also expected to be an increase in traffic activity to the south during the next decade through proposed development at Port Botany, Sydney Airport, Cooks Cove, Wolli Creek and Green Square.

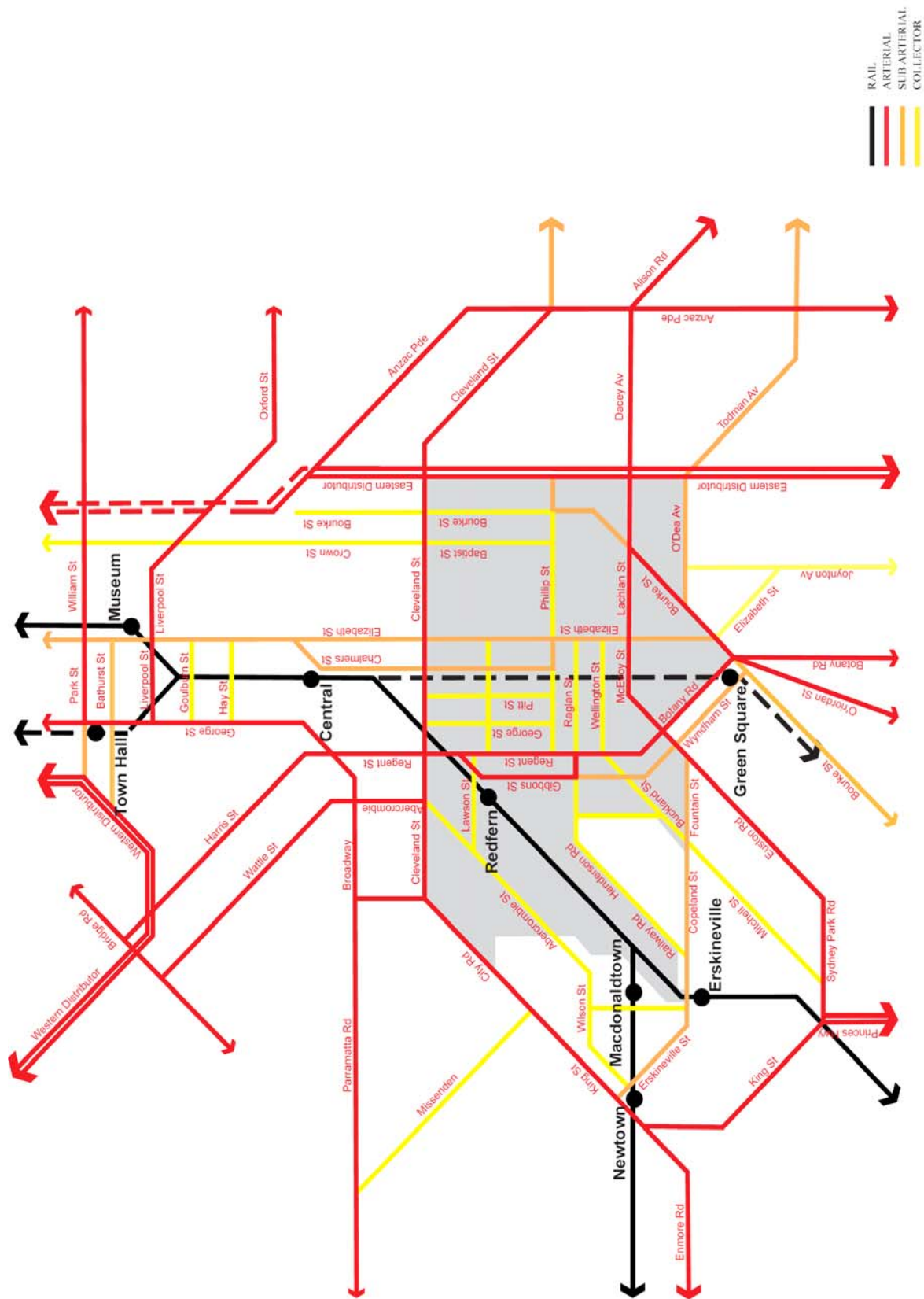
The Cox Richardson report has identified several options for reducing the impact of regional traffic on the Town Centre precinct:

- traffic management options
- long tunnels
- short tunnels
- pedestrian bridge
- pedestrian underpass.

Any resolution to the regional traffic issues will be considered within the context of current regional transport planning which is being undertaken by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources. The RED area is part of this study.

The current road structure of the RED area is set out below.

Figure 12: Road structure



18.2.1 Road safety enhancements

Remedial works are planned at the Elizabeth Street/Cleveland Street intersection as a result of a high number of pedestrian and traffic accidents. In 2002-2003, 15% of the 13 accidents involved pedestrians. None of these were alcohol related. Over the period 1998-2002 nearly 25% of the 37 crashes at this intersection involved pedestrians.

The remedial works which are planned include relocation of poles, underground utilities and installation of pedestrian fencing. Works are expected to be completed by February 2005, subject to availability of funds.

18.3 Public transport

The RED population has low car ownership and high use of public transport when compared to other areas of Sydney. However, through the development of the RED Strategy, unmet demand for more tailored local transport solutions has been identified, particularly linking the community to facilities and services outside the RED area.

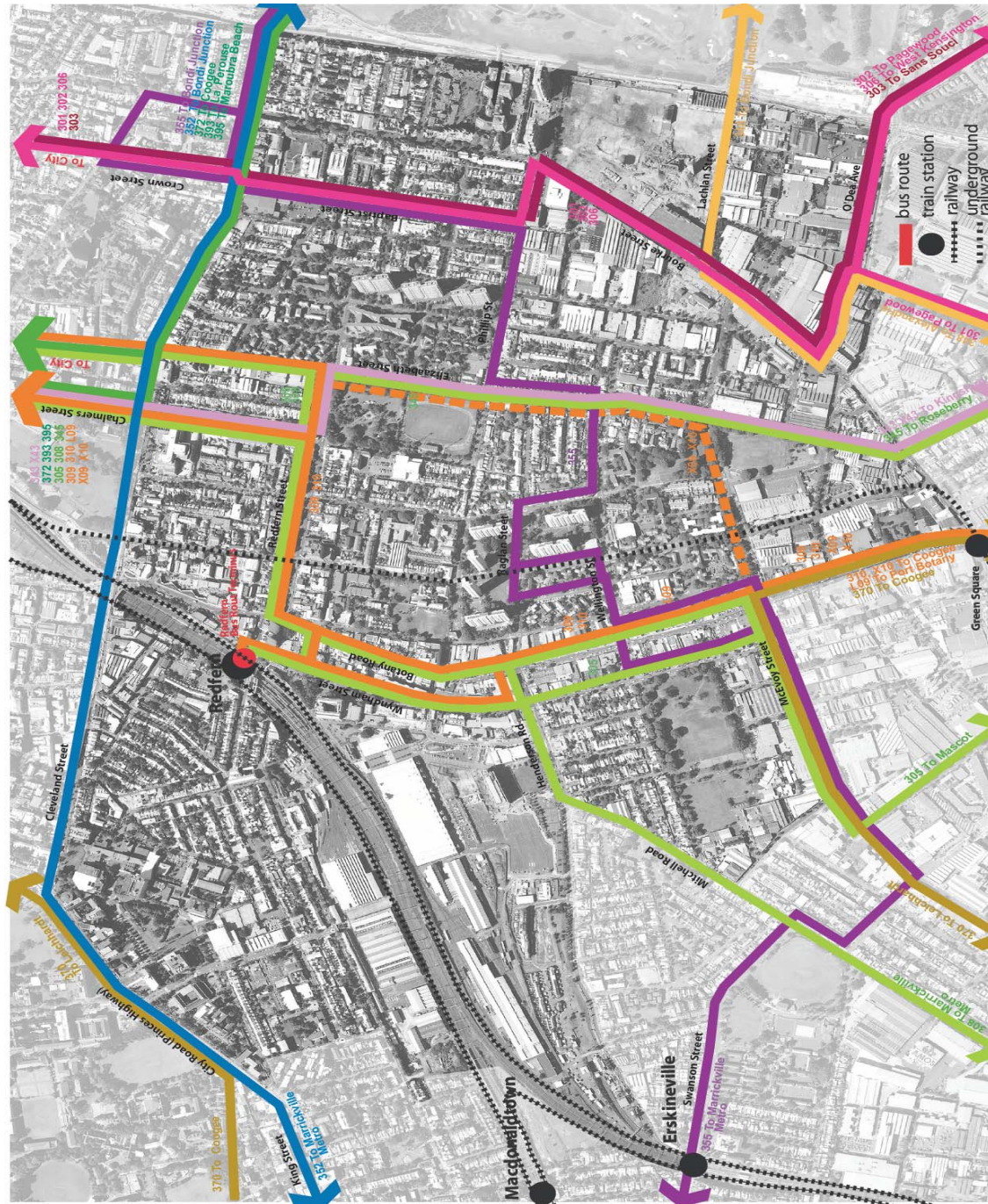
18.3.1 Rail services

The area is well serviced by rail transport. Redfern station is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It has 12 platforms and is ranked the second most accessible station after Central in terms of the number of rail lines that stop there. There is broad community support however, for an upgrade of Redfern Station. Information about the proposed redevelopment of the station is contained in Chapter 16 of this report.

18.3.2 Bus services

There are many bus services in the area such as 302,303, 305, 309, X09, 310, 343, 345 and 355. Many of these services operate very early in the morning until late at night and generate good patronage. In recent years State Transit has introduced cross regional services to provide connections to the regional centre of Bondi Junction and a major shopping centre in Marrickville. Set out below is a map of the bus routes in the RED area.

Figure 13: Bus routes



As part of the RED Strategy, the demographic makeup of the area has been studied and is being used to enhance bus services for the elderly, concession holders, commuters and students who live in the area.

In conjunction with NSW Police, State Transit has operated a safety program called Operation Bus Stop for more than eight years. Using information received about incidents, joint operations are conducted across the State Transit operating area. Further information about crime and safety initiatives is outlined in Part 6 of this submission.

19 Housing

19.1 Outline

The housing issues in Redfern and Waterloo are wide ranging. A large proportion of residents live in public housing and many of those residents have been identified as having high needs. A significant homeless population also lives in the area. The relatively recent gentrification of Redfern has also seen the arrival of more affluent residents, creating a polarising effect on the community. This chapter looks at this issue in more detail in the section on affordable housing. The chapter also looks at the particular issues of public housing, Aboriginal housing, supported accommodation and homelessness.

19.2 Affordable housing

Historically Redfern has provided affordable inner city housing. Factors such as poor image, safety and security concerns, along with interspersed heavy industry sites have traditionally kept rents and home purchase at the affordable end of the housing spectrum. However the area has experienced rapid gentrification since the late 1980s. This has led to the creation of discrete pockets of advantage and disadvantage in the area. Low to middle income families are being forced from the area due to the strong inner city housing market. This pattern looks set to continue, creating an economic divide within the community.

In community consultations, residents have expressed a desire to maintain the social diversity in their communities and to ensure that housing opportunities are provided to less advantaged residents (Elton 2003; McCallum 2003). The physical concentration of public housing within specific precincts is also viewed as unsatisfactory and not conducive to ensuring a good ‘social mix’ in the community.

‘Affordable housing’ is defined as housing for low to moderate income earners. It is priced at such a level that allows sufficient income after paying housing costs to meet other basic needs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education. While the term encompasses public and community housing (generally called social housing), it is more often used to describe other forms of assistance targeted at people who are either not eligible for social housing or who tend not to be able to access it.

Affordable housing can be provided in the form of rental or home purchase products. Most affordable housing in New South Wales is provided as rental housing. Research has found however, that affordable home purchase assistance mechanisms would be ineffective in the Redfern and Waterloo area, given the strength of the inner Sydney property market. Rental schemes are therefore, the most effective approach to providing affordable housing in the area.

The key features of affordable housing are that it is:

- provided to a mix of income groups – the target group for affordable housing is generally households with incomes of up to 120% of the median income (\$67,100 in Sydney). (This estimation of median Income is based on 2001 Census figures and indexed to August 2003 using the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Index of Average Weekly Earnings). This therefore includes households in some form of employment
- priced below market levels – generally, rents or house prices are set so that a renter pays either a set portion of income in rent or a discounted market rent. Affordable home purchasers receive some type of discount against market value and there is often a caveat on the property so that this benefit does not result in an immediate capital gain to the purchaser.

19.2.1 Affordable housing and the RED Strategy

The challenge currently faced by the NSW Government is how to manage the redevelopment of the area so that it builds a strong and integrated community and revitalises the local economy. International experience supports the principle of government intervention in securing a supply of affordable housing in inner city areas. Without such intervention, housing prices force essential industry workers to relocate to the city fringes. This relocation to the fringes has, in cities in Europe and America, created labour shortages in service and key industries.

Affordable housing has been endorsed as a key element of the RED Strategy. It can play an influential role in meeting a number of the principles that have been endorsed to guide development of the strategy:

- development of a sustainable town centre to serve the RED area
- capitalising on Redfern Station’s location in the RED area, infrastructure potential, and position in the metropolitan rail system to support revitalisation of the Redfern station and town centre precincts
- provision of a safe and activated public domain
- optimising social and economic return from Government land holdings
- ensuring social equity in public life
- fostering community identity
- strengthening community cohesion.

The Centre for Affordable Housing (CAH) of the Department of Housing has completed the first stage of research into the provision of affordable housing in the RED area, and has identified mechanisms for the provision of affordable housing as follows:

- inclusionary zoning
- density bonuses

- development agreements or
- incentive based development approach.

Inclusionary zoning is primarily used when land is rezoned to a higher use (e.g. from industrial to residential). It enables part of the increase in value due to the rezoning to be captured in the form of affordable housing.

Inclusionary zoning can only be applied when development occurs in an area identified as an area of affordable housing need in a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) and must be authorised by a Regional Environment Plan or Local Environment Plan made in accordance with a SEPP. When these conditions apply, affordable housing conditions can be sought where the consent authority is satisfied that the regulations provide for the development and that it:

- would not reduce the availability of affordable housing in the area
- would create a need for affordable housing in the area
- was allowed only because of the initial zoning or rezoning of a site (inclusionary zoning).

Density bonuses can be used to target small or large redevelopment sites, but only where the increased density has no environmental impact on the surrounding development. Larger density bonuses and sites with higher land values provide opportunities for a higher return in affordable housing.

Development agreements are usually used as a way of negotiating affordable housing contributions with developers on large sites. They may involve Councils offering incentives, such as density bonuses or car parking incentives, in return for affordable housing contributions, but in some development circumstances it may be possible to negotiate contributions through other means.

An incentive based development provides developers with the option to develop land at the current permissible rate or higher levels. If higher levels are chosen it is acknowledged that there will be a need for higher infrastructure provision, which could include affordable housing.

Through the CAH, and in consultation with DIPNR and the Premier’s Department, the Department of Housing has proposed investigation of the amount of affordable housing that could be sustained both on new private developments and on Government sites in the RED area.

19.3 Public housing

There are 4,137 units of public housing accommodation in the RED area. 35% of all residents live in public housing and 50% of the total housing stock in the RED area is

public housing. The concentration of such disadvantage in an area experiencing population decline has meant that community capacity has been reduced below a sustainable level. The situation is further exacerbated as long term tenants are replaced by people with complex needs. The Department of Housing has advised that 30% of public housing tenants are in receipt of a Disability Support Pension.

The statistical breakdown of public housing tenants in Redfern and Waterloo is set out below.

Table 31: Profile of tenants in public housing in Redfern and Waterloo

	Redfern	Waterloo
Average age of tenant	60	60
Average age of resident	56	49
Average weekly income	\$273	\$302
Percentage of single person households	69%	62%
Percentage of tenants in receipt of Disability Support Pension	29%	24%
Percentage of tenants in receipt of Age Pension	37%	37%
Percentage of tenants born overseas	48%	47%
Most represented language groups	Russian, Chinese, Greek, Spanish	Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish

Source: Department of Housing

19.3.1 Services provided to residents

The Department of Housing has two Client Service Teams delivering tenancy management services in the Redfern and Waterloo areas. The Surry Hills/Redfern Client Service Team is located at 31 Belvoir St, Surry Hills. This Team provides services to the Redfern and Surry Hills areas and provides an on site outreach service at the 17 storey Poets Corner high rise complex at 43-57 Morehead St, Redfern. The Waterloo Client Service Team is located at the Drysdale Building 232 Pitt Street, Waterloo.

Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) involves managing public housing from an on-site location, with increased and specialised staffing. The purpose is to enable a more responsive housing management service, develop local partnerships to improve access to services and promote community capacity building. The Redfern Hill Intensive Tenancy Management (ITM) Team operate from the 8 storey McKell high rise building at 55 Walker St, Redfern and provide intensive tenancy management for this building and nearby 3 storey walk up apartment complexes. The Redfern Hill ITM was established in late 2001 as an initiative under the Department's then Community Renewal program.

19.3.2 Residents' views

In September and October 2003 the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) organised ten precinct meetings that attracted more than 220 people wanting to express their views on what they liked and disliked about the area and about the public housing in which they lived.

The participants talked positively about the strong community feeling amongst them, the benefits of having long time residents with a long association with the area, the community garden and community room for Russian people at the McKell Building, and the good mix of retired and aged people in the area.

They also spoke of their need for improved lighting, improvements in the condition of their buildings, windows that lock, a security guard for each building, a greater police presence, a community notice board, and a recycling scheme.

In other community consultations (McCallum, 2003), the fact that the majority of public housing is concentrated in high rise apartment buildings has been seen by many as inappropriate and poorly designed for the needs they are trying to fill. Additionally community members have expressed concern about the over-concentration of high-need people in the area (people with drug and alcohol addictions, mental-illness and disabilities).

19.3.3 Future infrastructure plans

A potential redevelopment site for public housing in Redfern has been identified by the Department of Housing. The site currently comprises 106 dwellings bounded by Elizabeth, Walker, Morehead and Kettle Streets. The Department of Housing and the former South Sydney City Council have conducted extensive community consultations in relation to the potential redevelopment.

In February 2003, Council approved the Department's Development Application Masterplan. The Department has advised affected residents of the need for eventual relocation to other accommodation and the opportunity to return to the site following completion of the redevelopment. Relocation of residents is unlikely to take place until late 2004, early 2005. The Department intends to employ a Liaison Officer to support the relocation process.

The benefits of the redevelopment include:

- the rejuvenation of the area
- a more diverse social mix that should have the added benefit of supporting local businesses

- an overall increase in the number of bedrooms available to house more Departmental clients as well as having brand new public housing in a high demand inner city location
- Departmental clients will have access to more appropriate housing (accommodation will include terrace-style family homes with private open space, and smaller dwellings designed to suit older residents)
- Accommodation will be modern and have mobility access
- The construction project should provide employment opportunities for local people and enterprises.

19.4 Aboriginal housing

The majority of Aboriginal people living in Redfern and Waterloo reside in dwellings managed by the Department of Housing. The other major provider of housing to Aboriginal people in Redfern and Waterloo is the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC). This section looks at the specific issues related to Aboriginal housing, particularly in relation to the governance and sustainability of Aboriginal Housing providers.

19.4.1 The Aboriginal Housing Office

The Aboriginal Housing Office was established by the *Aboriginal Housing Act 1998*. The Act created, for the first time, a single agency with Aboriginal governance that is responsible for planning, developing, delivering and evaluating housing programs and services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in New South Wales.

This approach pools Commonwealth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and State Government Indigenous housing funds with the AHO and centralises program planning and management. As a result, there have been great improvements in coordination of programs and avoidance of service gaps and program duplications. Aboriginal involvement in decision-making about Indigenous housing programs has also been enhanced.

Following the establishment of the AHO, approximately 4000 Department of Housing dwellings managed under the Housing for Aborigines (HFA) program were transferred to the AHO. There are an additional 4000 dwellings owned and managed by Aboriginal communities in New South Wales, the funding of which also became the responsibility of the AHO.

The principles underlying the AHO's program are:

- strategic planning and pooling of funding to overcome service gaps, duplication and administrative barriers
- needs-based allocation of funding

- targeting limited funds to organisations that meet minimum management standards so that investments result in long term benefits
- capacity building in relation to management standards, service standards and financial viability
- sustainability of infrastructure through asset management
- self-determination through an all-Aboriginal board, and an Aboriginal Employment strategy for AHO staffing, community control of properties, and enhancing the employment of Aboriginal people in the construction and building industry
- community consultation.

The overriding objective for the AHO has been to bring the Indigenous housing sector onto a sustainable footing. This has seen a focus on:

- sustainable services – an ability for housing providers to cover the operating costs of providing housing services and the skills to manage housing organisations
- sustainable assets – an ability for housing providers to cover repairs and maintenance costs to ensure properties are in a satisfactory condition
- sustainable growth – an ability for the sector to meet future Indigenous housing needs.

The AHO has worked on a number of fronts to build the capacity of Aboriginal Community Housing providers in general to manage their organisations effectively so as to provide satisfactory levels of services and to survive financially.

The AHO has used its funding agreements as a mechanism for improving management processes. In order to receive funding from the AHO, housing providers must sign a funding agreement, which sets out the minimum standards an organisation must meet in acquiring, allocating and managing houses, and reporting to the AHO Board.

Providers that sign funding agreements are required to meet Minimum Management Standards. The key for assessing management standards cover matters such as:

- development of policies, procedures and systems
- rent levels
- rent collection
- rent arrears management
- repairs and maintenance
- liquidity
- audit status
- insurance

- rates.

The AHO has also been active in addressing the low skill levels of Aboriginal Housing providers and the absence of support mechanisms. The Kungala Sector Support Unit was established within the AHO to provide the training and education required to enhance the management skills of housing providers. Activities have included the Housing Our Mob Everywhere housing management course, which has recently been accredited and upgraded to a 12-unit Certificate IV in Community Services (Social Housing) which will now be delivered through TAFE. These have been important steps towards a sustainable Indigenous housing sector.

Other relevant activities by the AHO aiming to improve the sustainability of the Aboriginal Housing Sector include:

- development of an accreditation program
- encouraging amalgamations
- the development of more effective management arrangements through the Management Models Project.

The AHO's activities have focussed to a large extent on asset management, which is crucial to arresting the deterioration of Aboriginal housing. The AHO has developed an Asset Management Plan for its own properties that included identifying its annual maintenance liabilities, planning a maintenance program (cyclical and responsive) to address these liabilities, and developing strategies to provide for maintenance funding.

In addition, the AHO has worked to encourage Aboriginal Community Housing providers to develop their own Asset Management Plans. A model plan was published in 2001 and distributed to Aboriginal Community Housing providers.

The AHO is committed to ensuring that existing housing is maintained to an appropriate standard at all times. Importantly, the AHO has taken a strategic approach to repairs and maintenance, noting the need for ongoing, cyclic maintenance as well as responsive repairs. AHO-owned properties have been systematically upgraded to bring the standard of AHO houses up to an acceptable level.

The upgrading program has ensured that all former HFA dwellings underwent upgrading, resulting in functional dwellings that require no major maintenance work for five years. This reduces ongoing maintenance costs and increases the houses' lifespan, thus enhancing the sustainability of the sector. Some 3175 AHO properties have been upgraded at a cost of \$60 million.

The AHO owns 2 dwellings in Redfern and 11 dwellings in Waterloo. Of the 2 dwellings in Redfern, 1 is up to AHO standard. Of the 11 dwellings in Waterloo, 10 are up to AHO standard.

19.4.2 The Block

We want to purchase a block of land in Redfern. It is bounded by Eveleigh, Louis, Vine and Caroline Streets. The project contains sixty-eight houses, and two factories and in this we hope to renovate and build the houses and shorten all backyards so as to make a communal yard in the middle. We want to have a child minding centre, an Aboriginal Family Education Centre, at one end and a community hall at the other end and house a lot of the Aborigines in Redfern who are being pushed out by the white developers. It's not going to be a free rental system though – most people are sick of the handout system... And it won't be a ghetto either – a least any more than Redfern is already. There's one or two houses in the block which whites still occupy. They are prepared to live in the same area with Aborigines and go along with the project. And by all means they can stay. They're welcome. Bob Bellear, cited by Gilbert (1973)

One of the Aboriginal Community Housing providers that the AHO fund is the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC). The AHC is the owner and manager of The Block.

In 1973 the AHC – then known as the Aboriginal Housing Committee - received a grant from the then Federal Government which enabled it to purchase and restore 21 terrace houses in the block of land bounded by Louis, Vine, Eveleigh and Caroline Streets. The first steps toward urban land rights in Australia, this area later become known as The Block.

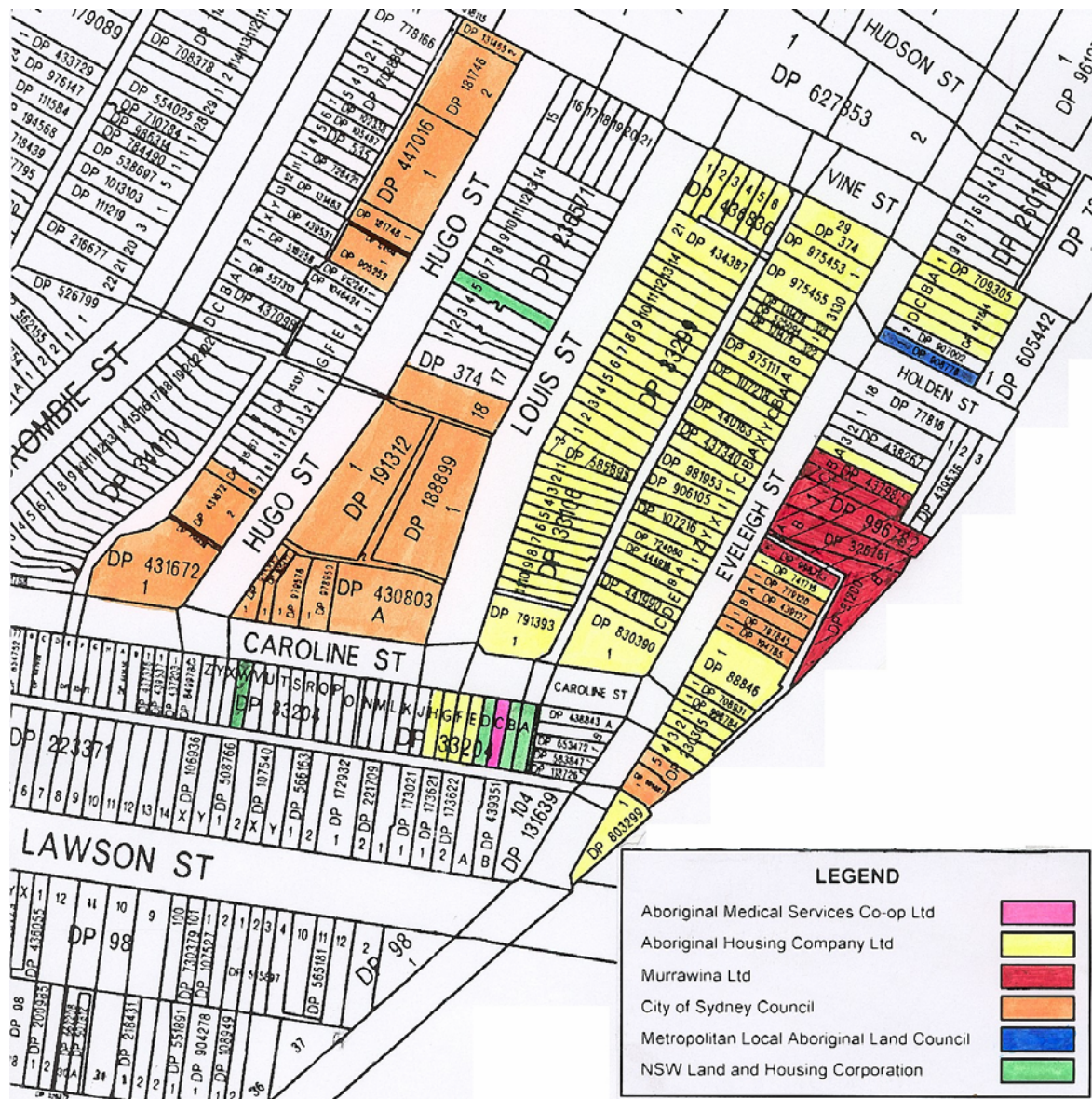
19.4.2.1 Current environment

Over time, additional houses were purchased to supplement the original grant to the AHC. 15.2% of Aboriginal people living in the Redfern and Waterloo area now reside in the AHC dwellings in the precinct around The Block. 30 years after the establishment of The Block, the social and economic situation of the AHC tenants has substantially deteriorated.

There are 15 tenanted houses on The Block and one apartment building with 3 units in it. The AHC also owns 2 terraces adjoining The Block on Eveleigh Street. There are 3 houses on The Block that are currently vacant and boarded up and another 4 houses boarded up on Eveleigh Street adjoining The Block. (Some community members, both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal, have an alternative interpretation of the boundaries of The Block and consider the eastern side of Eveleigh Street to be a part of The Block.) The houses that are boarded up are in an uninhabitable condition. The only other building on The Block is Eloura Gymnasium, with the remaining land vacant. The AHC also owns vacant land adjacent to The Block on Eveleigh Street and its office is located on the corner of Lawson and Eveleigh Streets.

Below is a map which identifies ownership of the properties in The Block and the surrounding area.

Figure 14: Land ownership in and around The Block



A high concentration of social disadvantage exists in the Aboriginal communities of Redfern and Waterloo, with few assets, little income, irregular and temporary employment, and poor quality housing. These problems are associated with poverty, and many Aboriginal people, in Redfern and across Australia, find themselves trapped in a poverty cycle. The problems relate to:

- poor levels of education and literacy due to lack of access to education
- difficulties in accessing employment outside government departments
- difficulties in accessing the private rental market
- shortages of suitable housing leading to overcrowding
- low life expectancy and more rapid deterioration due to ill health and stress, substance and alcohol abuse as a form of escapism

- pressures associated with a high transient population
- drug and alcohol related crime.

The stigma of The Block as a drug ghetto and an area of conflict and poverty has further reduced opportunities for residents.

19.4.2.2 Redevelopment options

One of the most notorious Aboriginal Communities in Australia is the “Block” at Redfern, now 30 years old and at the end of its third wave of self destruction and renewal. (James 2003)

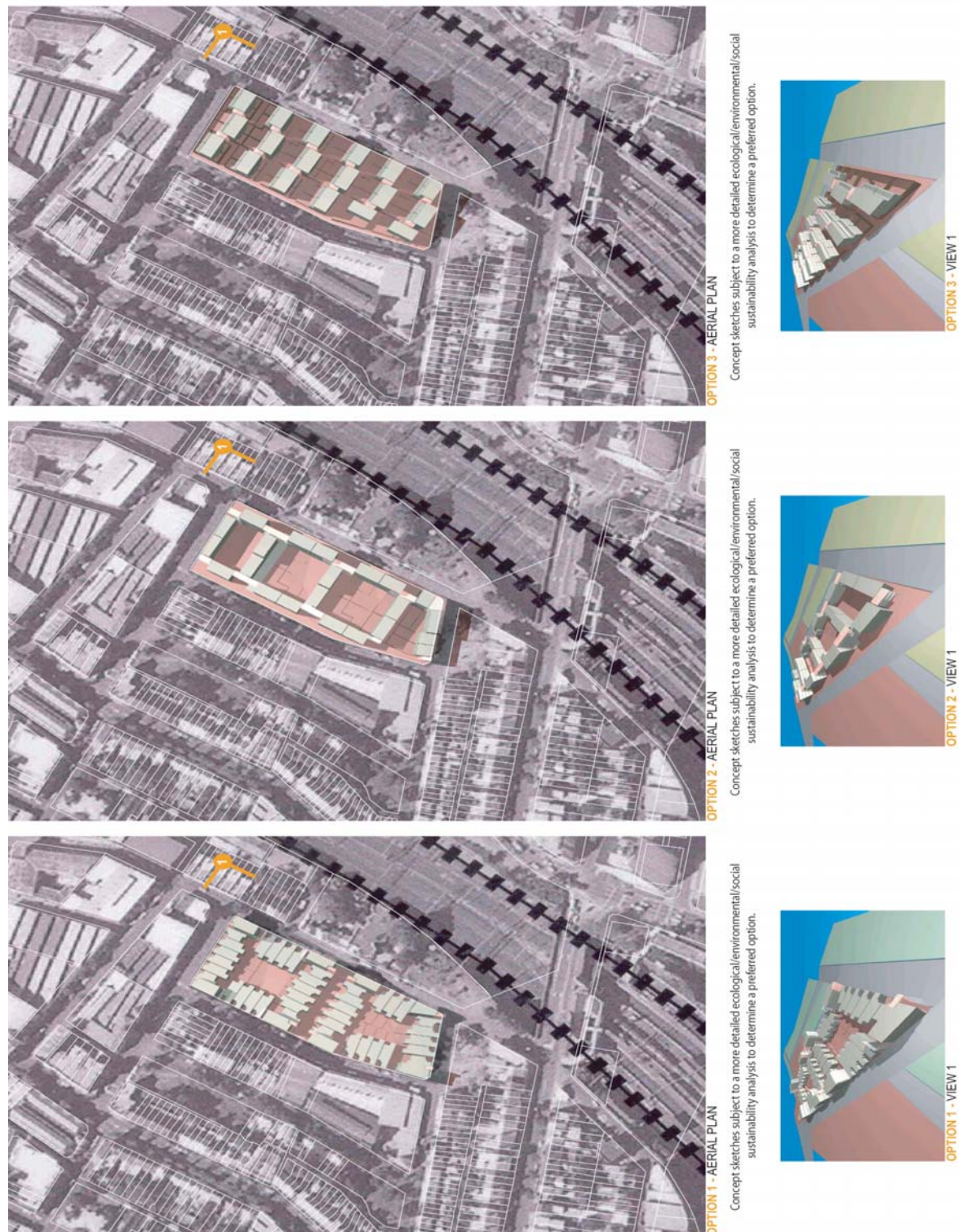
Community members in Redfern and Waterloo have expressed strong support for redevelopment of The Block (Elton 2003). In discussions about the RED Strategy, people have seen the redevelopment of The Block as integral to the broader infrastructure development of the area. The AHC has supported this by agreeing to be a partner in the RED Strategy.

The success of The Block’s redevelopment will be dependent upon many factors, most significant of which will be the financial viability of the AHC; arresting the prevalence of drug use in the neighbourhood; and addressing the social problems associated with substance abuse.

The NSW Government is committed to supporting the AHC and the local Aboriginal community in their efforts to redevelop The Block. The Merrima (Aboriginal) Design Group from the Government Architect’s Office has reviewed the AHC’s design proposal for the site. This occurred in response to concerns raised about the original design concept being institutional and limited in scope.

To further assist the AHC in exploring alternative design solutions, Merrima developed three preliminary concept plans. The three themes which have been developed explore the relationship between private and public spaces, dwelling types, the interface between internal and external living spaces, and the relationship of the development to the local area. The concept designs include a combination of terrace and apartment dwellings that optimise the site’s location in terms of street address and sustainable building principles. The Government Architect’s Office is currently further refining the concept plans prior to their being taken to the community for consultation.

Figure 15: Concept plans for redevelopment of The Block by the AHC



These design options will be presented in a three dimensional format to facilitate a visual understanding of the redevelopment proposals, as requested by the Aboriginal community.

As part of this process, the Government will support the AHC to undertake stakeholder consultation on the proposed design options. Following the consultation process, the AHC will nominate a preferred redevelopment option to be used for exploring financing options.

19.4.3 The Aboriginal Housing Company

In order to realise the aspirations of the local residents and the broader Redfern and Waterloo community, the redevelopment of The Block must be economically viable and sustainable into the future. This will only occur if the AHC, as the owner and manager of The Block, is functioning successfully.

The AHC was incorporated on 25 July 1973, under the New South Wales *Companies Act 1961* (now the Corporations Law), as a company limited by guarantee. The AHC operates from its administrative premises located at 104-106 Lawson Street, Redfern and owns considerable property in Redfern, the Sydney metropolitan area and across country New South Wales and Queensland.

19.4.3.1 Government funding

As noted above, the AHO provides funding to the AHC. At the time of the establishment of the AHO in 1998, the AHC was in receipt of a recurrent grant from ATSIC of approximately \$70,000 to assist with operating costs. However, when the minimum performance standards were set by the AHO Board as a condition for funding, the AHC failed to meet those conditions.

In the year 2003/04 the AHC received \$77,000 from the AHO. It should also be noted that Aboriginal Housing Office physically performed and funded repairs to a number of AHC properties over the last 2 years due to their being in a poor state of repair.

The AHC also receives funding from the Australian Government through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission for the Eloura Gymnasium.

The AHO has attempted to work with the AHC to bring its housing management up to a standard that will facilitate the financial sustainability of the AHC's housing operations. In 1999, following the failure of the AHC to meet the board's minimum standards for funding, a number of reform targets were set in consultation with the AHC's management. These included:

- development of a business and asset management plan
- improvements in Corporate Governance
- improvement in methods of allocating properties
- improvement in methods of setting and collecting rent.

In the meantime, the Board of the AHO resolved to continue to provide recurrent funds to the AHC on the grounds that removing them would result in a large loss of housing availability for Aboriginal people in the area. The AHO has also performed urgent health and safety repairs on 43 properties owned by the AHC (although these are not on The Block). There are currently 3 AHC properties in the Redfern area that are being upgraded, with a value of \$53,410.

Since 1999, the AHO has continued to work with the AHC with the objective of improving governance, management planning and reporting, as well as management of tenancies and properties. This has involved:

- joint meetings of the AHC Board and the NSW Aboriginal Housing Board
- allocation of a senior project officer to assist the AHC to improve management practices
- clear guidance to the AHC about the management actions necessary to secure funding in the future
- continuation of funding with special conditions to assist the AHC to meet funding requirements in the future.

For various community and governance related reasons, the AHC has not implemented the recommendations made by the AHO that would have enabled it to meet the minimum standards. In spite of the AHO's assistance, the AHC's financial statements for 2002-2003 suggest that its financial management, organisational governance and operations have not yet reached a sustainable level.

The AHO now considers that it has assisted the AHC to the limits of its capacity within the parameters of the program principles of sustainability and needs-based allocations. With funding for Indigenous housing strictly limited, the AHO has judged it essential that funding be targeted to organisations which meet the minimum management standards required for sustainable operations. In effect, this has meant that any future AHO funding support in the absence of major organisational reform will be problematic.

19.4.3.2 Strengthening the capacity of the AHC

The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) shares AHO's views about the need for the AHC to undertake organisational reform and sees the ongoing sustainability of the AHC as vital to the successful redevelopment of The Block. The Government is therefore working with the AHC, through the RWPP, so that it can appropriately manage the redevelopment, as well as its ongoing property management and maintenance programs. The specific concerns that the Government currently holds about the AHC, include:

- the financial and property management skills of the Board and AHC management

- the adequacy of the company’s reporting and property management systems, including its maintenance program
- the processes in place for tenant selection and rental collection
- the effectiveness of the Company and Governance structure (particularly whether they are the most appropriate structure to achieve the aims of the Company)
- the financial viability of the AHC, in the absence of government funding
- the mixing together of different businesses in the same financial management system.

In order to address these concerns, the Government recently commissioned IAB Services to examine and assess the financial position of the AHC, by conducting a forensic review of the company’s financial statements. It is expected that the report will be finalised and provided to the Premier’s Department by mid May 2004.

The need for such an audit was supported by the Board of the AHC and the Terms of Reference was signed off by the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Company.

In undertaking its assessment, IAB Services has been asked to investigate and report on:

- causes of the present liquidity position
- adequacy of existing financial systems
- analysis of fundamental business viability, now and in the future
- recommended actions to strengthen the financial position
- proposed implementation strategy.

The forecast and viability assessment (points 3 and 4) will analyse income and expenditure trends. Opportunities to increase recurrent income from rent are being asked to be assessed as well as threats to existing rent and grant income streams.

IAB has also been asked to report on opportunities for sales of non performing assets, together with any impediments to such proposed asset sales. Expenditure patterns are also being assessed and benchmarked, where possible, with best practice organisations. The sale of non performing assets does not include the housing stock on The Block.

The audit will also examine and report on:

- the processes that are needed to be established to ensure that rents are collected and that the housing stock is maintained on an on-going basis, particularly following the redevelopment of The Block
- housing allocation policies and processes
- how best to manage the capital works associated with The Block redevelopment so that these are carried out on time and within budget

- the adequacy of the record keeping and IT systems of the organisation and, if inadequate, the estimate of the cost to remedy these and
- the extent of the company's liabilities that may exist including with the Australian Taxation Office.

The audit will also review relevant AHC policies and procedures relating to such issues as the AHC's:

- corporate and project financial accounting
- corporate and project budgeting
- management and Board reporting (if applicable)
- management review of financial reports
- assessment of relevant staff member's skills and experience in financial accounting and reporting and
- documentation of relevant policies, procedures and training manuals.

A schedule of recent years' comparative statements of AHC's financial position, cash flow and reconciliation of financial statement to cash flow will be prepared, to demonstrate the depletion of retained earnings and cash reserves between (say) June 2000 and June 2003. A forecast will also be prepared for expected outcomes for the 2003-04 financial year, including a cash budget and an estimate of additional funds required for the balance of the current financial year, based on information to be provided by the CEO of the AHC.

The NSW Government has also commissioned Resitech to undertake a valuation of The Block. The primary objective of the valuation is to ensure the AHC's assets are properly valued and included in its financial statements.

The Block is to be valued as a consolidated site (with a single title) on the basis of a Current Market Valuation in accordance with the three costed design options prepared by the NSW Government Architect's Office.

Resitech will also undertake a valuation of all AHC properties. Resitech will undertake a 'Fair Value Valuation' or a 'Market Opinion of Value,' where an inspection or access is not appropriate. Specifically Resitech will provide:

- the fair value of the individual properties comprising The Block
- the fair value of the associated 28 properties owned by the AHC
- a desktop market opinion of the 12 properties owned by the AHC in New South Wales and Queensland.

On behalf of the AHC, Macquarie Bank has undertaken an initial economic feasibility analysis of the proposed redevelopment program to test the sustainability of the approach.

19.4.4 Other Aboriginal land

In 1983 the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* was established to compensate Aboriginal people for the loss of land in New South Wales. Under land rights legislation Aboriginal Land Councils can be established and claim crown lands or purchase property on the open market. Aboriginal Land Councils are independent organisations and are not funded by the Aboriginal Housing Office.

The boundaries of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) include Redfern and Waterloo. Metropolitan LALC owns two houses in Redfern (in Renwick and Eveleigh Streets) and one commercial building in George Street. All three properties are currently vacant and Metropolitan LALC is considering their future development potential.

19.5 Supported accommodation

Supported accommodation can take many forms. Assistance is provided to high need people (including people with drug and alcohol addictions, mental-illness and disabilities) and may take many forms, including shopping, cooking, cleaning, or personal care. Outlined below are three supported accommodation models that operate in community housing in the Redfern and Waterloo area and one model which is in development, and which will be run by a non-profit housing company. ‘Community housing’ is housing that is supported by Government but managed by non-profit organisations. Some community housing is managed by tenants as part of a co-operative.

19.5.1 The Mercy Arms/South West Inner Sydney Housing Co-operative Transitional Housing Project

The Mercy Arms/South West Inner Sydney Housing Cooperative Transitional Housing Project (665 – 667 Elizabeth Street, Waterloo) commenced in 2001. The project was established in response to the identified need for short to medium term supported accommodation for financially disadvantaged homeless, or marginally homeless, older people in inner Sydney.

The Project is a collaboration between three major partners:

- Mercy Family Centre Ltd - a non government community service organisation that provided some initial capital expenditure for the Project as well as ongoing support services for the Project’s tenants
- South West Inner Sydney Housing Cooperative, a non government community housing provider which provides property and tenancy management
- The Office of Community Housing, the business unit within the Department of Housing responsible for administering community housing in New South Wales, which provided capital funding to acquire the properties.

The Project operates from three, 2 story terrace houses renovated to provide bedsit accommodation for 10 people, share bathroom facilities and office space for support workers. The terrace houses adjoin the Mercy Arms and are therefore ideally located for the Mercy Arms to provide support to residents. Potential tenants are assessed and selected by The Mercy Arms. Using a case management model, the Mercy Arms provides a range of services including life skill assessment, temporary practical assistance with the tasks of daily living, linkage to needed community support services and assistance to identify and access longer term housing and support options.

19.5.2 The Women’s Housing Company

The Women’s Housing Company bed-sit project (109-111 Phillip Street, Waterloo) is a ten unit project providing transitional accommodation to single women in the inner city. Clients of the project often have established support packages (eg. mental health) at the time of entering their tenancy with the Women’s Housing Company. This is incorporated into a service agreement between the service providing the support and the Women’s Housing Company. The focus of this project is to provide up to two years supported accommodation including a transition to a long-term tenancy with the Women’s Housing Company in a one or two bedroom unit.

19.5.3 Bondi Youth Accommodation Services

Supported accommodation is also provided at 5/40 Morehead Street, Redfern. The property is a two-bedroom unit that forms part of a portfolio of six properties managed by Bondi Youth Accommodation Services. This is a long established Department of Community Services funded provider in the Eastern Suburbs/Inner City delivering crisis and transitional supported accommodation to young people.

19.5.4 South Sydney Youth Services

The RWPP and the Department of Community Services have funded South Sydney Youth Services to establish a demonstration project to provide housing and support to homeless young people with drug dependency and mental illness.

19.5.5 Bennelong Housing Company

The Department of Housing is establishing a new non-profit housing company to provide supported housing in the inner Sydney area. The company is one of several initiatives the Department is undertaking to create new options for clients with complex housing needs and better link housing and support services to achieve sustainable social housing tenancies. Households vulnerable to homelessness and Aboriginal households with complex needs have been identified as priority groups for the company in its first phase of operation. It is anticipated that members of the Redfern and Waterloo communities will be strongly represented amongst households housed by Bennelong Housing Company.

The company, currently called Bennelong Housing Company, will house people who need support services to live independently in social housing in the inner City, inner West and Eastern Sydney areas, including Redfern and Waterloo.

The company will house around 200 households in its first phase of operation and will have formal partnerships with support services operating in the inner Sydney area to provide support services for its tenants. The primary focus in acquiring properties for Bennelong is to find reasonably priced properties that meet the needs of the company's client base. Specifically properties that:

- Are located near to transport links
- Offer reasonable access to hospitals, shops and other services
- Meet the housing needs of specific client groups housed by the company.

The Department of Housing is currently developing the Company's property acquisition strategy. It is expected that the company's first properties will become available for tenanting in late 2003/04.

19.5.6 Guidelines for intervention

A reference group has been established by a wide range of Government and non-government services including Mental Health, Community Health, Housing, Local Government, Police, Fire Brigade, RSPCA and the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. The group is close to completing a set of guidelines for intervention in cases of severe domestic squalor. The group provides another example of positive interagency collaboration, with a focus on identifying solutions to the significant problem of people living in squalor in Redfern and Waterloo.

19.6 Homelessness

Redfern and Waterloo has approximately ten services and programs that provide crisis and supported accommodation to homeless people or people at high risk of homelessness. The former South Sydney City Council has identified the following as the general profile of people sleeping rough in the area:

- male, aged between 25 and 40
- of Anglo-Australian descent
- probably from interstate
- very low standard of education
- with either a current chronic dependency or a history of battling a dependency
- in less than satisfactory physical health
- with little or no income or assets

- in receipt of either the Newstart benefit or the Disability Support Pension
- with a family background characterized by the experience of multiple trauma events, such as parental rejection or violence of one horrific form or another.

There is very little data available on the extent of homelessness amongst non-English speaking communities and no specific data available on homelessness in the Indigenous community.

19.6.1 The Partnership Against Homelessness

In 1999, the Government formed the Partnership Against Homelessness. The Partnership consists of 11 agencies that fund or administer programs for homeless people. It aims to help homeless people access services; co-ordinate support services; improve access to temporary or crisis accommodation for homeless people; and facilitate the move to long term housing.

The Partnership has developed an Inner City Homelessness Action Plan which covers the areas of Redfern and Waterloo. The action plan focuses on the particular groups that are most vulnerable: women, ex-inmates, Aboriginal people, young people and people with complex needs.

The following two initiatives result from the Inner City Homelessness Action Plan: the Homelessness Action Team Support and Outreach Service and the Inner City Aboriginal Homelessness Project.

19.6.1.1 Homelessness Action Team Support and Outreach Service

The Homelessness Action Team Support and Outreach Service (HATSOS) operates in the Redfern area and provides a street based outreach service for homeless rough sleepers.

The HATSOS Outreach and Support workers work closely with the Redfern community, with a regular presence in the area (approximately 3 times per week) at various times of the day. Outreach staff work in pairs, approaching rough sleepers to engage them with appropriate local support agencies as required.

The Team undertakes quarterly baseline data collections to inform the operation and monitoring of outreach and support services operating in the inner city. The baseline data is collected over three key times 6am, 12 noon and 9.30pm.

In May 2003 on average, 17 people were identified as sleeping rough and/or were congregating in specific locations and may have been homeless or sleeping rough in the Redfern area over the three times shown above. This ranged from three people at 6am to 38 people at 12 noon. In September 2003 on average, 25 people were identified as sleeping rough and/or were congregating in specific locations and may have been homeless or sleeping rough in the Redfern area over the three times. This ranged from four people at

6am to 54 people at 12 noon. HATSOS currently have 73 recorded clients/contacts in the Redfern area.

19.6.1.2 Inner City Sydney Aboriginal Homelessness Project

Approximately eight locations in the inner city have been identified by the former South Sydney City Council, as locations where Indigenous people congregate. These include Redfern Park, Alexandria Park, and the derelict houses on The Block. Consultation undertaken by the Department of Community Services in 2000 identified particular sections of the Indigenous community as likely to be at risk of homelessness:

- people from interstate
- people from rural areas
- single fathers
- people living transitional or itinerant lifestyles
- people coming to Sydney to visit family in gaol or juvenile detention centres
- young people escaping violence, drug and alcohol problems and family breakdown
- women escaping domestic violence
- children with single parents
- people ousted from their families
- people banned by refuges or Government departments
- people leaving areas with punitive laws and treatment of Aboriginal people (especially WA and Queensland)
- people who come for funerals and grieving
- people following or looking for their families.

This profile forms part of a very small amount of information known about homeless, Aboriginal people. In recognition of this, the Aboriginal Housing Office is currently leading a research project on Inner-City Sydney Aboriginal Homelessness. The project is an initiative of the Partnership Against Homelessness, and a key component of the Partnership's Inner City Homelessness Action Plan.

Indigenous community representatives suggest that few services for homeless people actually reach Indigenous people. The Partnership has therefore agreed that a research project examining the specific needs of homeless Aboriginal men and women in the inner city would assist agencies in developing appropriate strategies and responses.

The project was put to public tender late last year. The successful tender (Paul Memmott & Associates) is from Queensland and has extensive research experience working with

groups of Indigenous homeless and public place dwelling people; specifically in analysing their problems and developing strategic responses to their needs.

The research work will commence in May 2004 and is envisaged to be completed by September 2004. The research work will be overseen by a Project Advisory Committee. The Committee is yet to be convened but is likely to consist of representatives from the Partnership Against Homelessness and the Metropolitan LALC.