

Chapter 4 Government and non government services

The terms of reference to this Inquiry required the Committee to examine government and non government services in Redfern and Waterloo. In the previous chapter we evaluated the Government's findings and recommendations of the Human Services Review, to be implemented over the next ten years. In doing so, our focus was on the reforms to occur across the human services system as a whole. In this chapter the Committee focuses on a number of service systems within that whole such as the child protection system, youth services, Aboriginal services, health services, education, housing, and services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

This chapter does not set out to provide an exhaustive analysis of all aspects of the service system; nor does it examine in detail the findings of the Human Services Review in relation to each of Redfern and Waterloo's 'service clusters'. Rather, the purpose of the chapter is to document the key concerns and issues raised by inquiry participants in relation to a number of service types. We also report on Government action to address those issues, where we have taken evidence on this. The chapter provides a summary of the priorities identified by inquiry participants, particularly non government agencies and local residents. As such, the Committee considers that it will be an important resource for the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and other stakeholders as they develop and implement the Human Services Plan.

A complex system

- 4.1 As noted in the previous chapter, Redfern and Waterloo have both similarities and differences that in turn shape the picture of need in the area. While the State Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, is leading the process of shaping the human services system as a whole, responsibility for various elements of the system is shared among the three levels of Government, and reform will necessarily require partnership across each of these levels.
- 4.2 As in every area of the State, the involvement of each tier of government makes for a very complex system. The Commonwealth is responsible for portfolios such as income support, employment and Aboriginal health, while the State administers a broad range of services such as health, housing, education, community services, and ageing and disability services. Local Government plays a major role in areas such as children's services, youth services, and a range of other community services and facilities. Adding further complexity to the system are the joint funding responsibilities of the Federal and State Governments for services such as health, housing, education and disability services, as well as a range of joint programs.
- 4.3 In the previous Chapter, the Committee noted that core government responsibilities were excluded from the Human Services Review. The fact that a range of government services dominated inquiry participants' concerns underscores the importance of the NSW Government acting on its commitment to undertake a formal review of government services in the area.
- 4.4 The Committee is conscious that in undertaking this Inquiry we have not been able to examine many aspects of government and non government services thoroughly, nor to develop conclusions and make recommendations on them. Nevertheless, the Committee feels

strongly that the matters raised by inquiry participants should be fed into future planning processes for government and non government services in Redfern and Waterloo. We urge the RWPP and other agencies to consider the evidence documented in the chapter when developing the forthcoming Human Services Plan and the action plans for each of the human services clusters in the area.

Child protection

- 4.5 Of all the concerns raised in relation to specific service systems during this Inquiry, those relating to child protection and the work of the Department of Community Services (DoCS) were among the most prominent. Many of the matters raised in our consultations with people in Redfern and Waterloo echoed those expressed to the Committee when we undertook our Inquiry into Child Protection Services in 2002. That Inquiry examined DoCS' effectiveness in relation to its statutory responsibilities, policy, programs, planning and operational systems.²⁹⁸
- 4.6 The key issues raised during the present Inquiry fell into five interrelated categories: DoCS workers' practices in relation to children and families; collaboration with other agencies; prevention and early intervention; staffing; and working with Aboriginal children and families.
- 4.7 A number of inquiry participants raised issues in relation to services that are linked to child protection, such as the need for domestic violence services and additional family support services such as the Yallamundi service run by DoCS and the Barnardos Intensive Family Support Service. The former is dealt with briefly in Chapter 2 concerning policing, and family support services are mentioned in various parts of this chapter. The Committee has chosen to focus on the major concerns raised by participants, that is, DoCS and child protection.

Practices in relation to children and families

- 4.8 A number of participants testified to cases of serious abuse which were reported to DoCS where no subsequent action was taken to investigate the matter or remove the child.²⁹⁹ Redfern Legal Centre also reported that DoCS is perceived to be inconsistent and unfair in statutory interventions: that it does not take action where children have experienced significant harm, but does intervene on more minor matters.³⁰⁰
- 4.9 Participants also told the Committee that DoCS takes an unnecessarily defensive approach to liaising with families and removing children. A representative of one agency told us:

DoCS workers in general - and I am not saying they are all bad, there are some very good workers there, but in South East Sydney they don't have a relationship with the community, they don't visit families, they are not open, they don't support families. This would be things that I've evidenced, this would be information I've fed back to DoCS. They are very poor at attending joint interagency meetings. They don't involve

²⁹⁸ For more information see Standing Committee on Social Issues, *Care and Support: Final Report on Child Protection Services*, Report 29, Legislative Council, Sydney, December 2002

²⁹⁹ Ms Kirrillie Moore, Solicitor, Redfern Legal Centre, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p45; Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p14

³⁰⁰ Ms Moore, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p45

families in plans, what they do is they dictate to families, so they are not asking parents what their views are and they are not listening to parents very well.³⁰¹

- 4.10** Similarly, Ms Deirdre Cheers of Barnardos reported a pattern of unwillingness to work with the members of the Aboriginal community and engender their trust. Both she and Ms Kirrillie Moore, a solicitor with Redfern Legal Centre, pointed to a heavy-handed approach to removing children on the part of DoCS, and linked to this, to an over-reliance on police to accompany them when they do consider it necessary to enter a family's home or remove a child.³⁰² Ms Lesley Townsend, an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) with the Redfern Police emphasised the invidious position of DoCS workers, but also suggested that this over-reliance affects the police's own relations with the Aboriginal community.³⁰³ Issues concerning police handling of child protection matters were explored in Chapter 2.

Interagency collaboration

- 4.11** As noted in the previous chapter, participants highlighted poor collaboration on the part of DoCS in relation to other agencies, for example around shared clients, or at interagency meetings. Members of the South Sydney Interagency and the Koori Interagency both expressed frustration about this,³⁰⁴ with the former group reporting an absence of referrals from DoCS to their services, unwillingness to share information about clients (notwithstanding privacy laws), and poor communication post-referral.³⁰⁵
- 4.12** Ms Cheers reported that DoCS does not comply with the child protection interagency guidelines which are government policy, stating that caseworkers are not using them and that managers report that there has been no ongoing training initiative on them. In line with this, she also noted a number of problems around interagency 'protective planning meetings', which are not held as often as they should be, may be poorly chaired, and do not involve the degree of shared decision-making that is emphasised under the child protection legislation.³⁰⁶
- 4.13** Also of concern to the Committee were the widespread reports of poor commitment on the part of DoCS staff to interagency meetings. Members of the South Sydney Interagency told us that this was a long-term problem, an example of not being able to engage DoCS in a local interagency of around 25 early childhood and family agencies, and pointing to the lack of respect that this shows for the professional services of those agencies.³⁰⁷ The Koori Interagency also raised this issue, noting the difference between the DoCS approach and that

³⁰¹ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p21

³⁰² Ms Deirdre Cheers, Senior Manager, South East Sydney, Barnardos Australia, Evidence, 4 June 2004 p8; Moore, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p45

³⁰³ Ms Lesley Townsend, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Redfern Local Area Command, Evidence, 22 October 2004, p10

³⁰⁴ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p11 and 15; Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, p22

³⁰⁵ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p15

³⁰⁶ Ms Cheers, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p4

³⁰⁷ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p11

of agencies such as Barnardos, whose workers go out to the community, liaise with Aboriginal workers, and participate in interagency meetings.³⁰⁸

Prevention and early intervention

- 4.14** Participants also called for DoCS to focus more on prevention and early intervention. The Koori Interagency called for greater provision for and referral to intensive family support, to prevent the need to remove children. They also sought casework practice that is ‘child-centred’, with case planning that supports and empowers families, rather than setting them up to fail.³⁰⁹
- 4.15** Agencies reported that there is no system in place for cases which are assessed as level two, three and four to be referred to family support and other early intervention services. They also spoke of DoCS’ practices which do not adequately assist families, such as paying for only 12 weeks of childcare for a child assessed as at risk, after which the child’s case is closed, as though the family is no longer experiencing difficulties. They called for a much more genuine and long term approach to early intervention.³¹⁰ Participants from the Police Service also called for a more proactive approach on the part of DoCS, to assist children and families well before they reached the stage of risk.³¹¹

Staffing

- 4.16** Related to all the concerns documented above is the inexperience of caseworkers reported by several participants. Members of the South Sydney Interagency stated that this inexperience leads to a disproportionate focus on child protection, with a lack of appreciation for the importance of supporting and working with the strengths of parents. They also reported a lack of continuity in the caseworkers allocated to a family, which makes case conferencing time consuming, frustrating and less effective than it might be.³¹² These concerns were echoed by the Redfern Legal Centre:

The caseworkers are extremely junior. There is a very high turnover of staff. Every time we call DoCS on behalf of our client, there is a different caseworker on the case. They seem to be ill-informed as to the statutory framework in which they are working and there is inconsistency between officers at each level of supervising that the junior DoCS officers receive. So I would say absolutely that it is certainly a matter of training and funding for DoCS.³¹³

³⁰⁸ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p11

³⁰⁹ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p21

³¹⁰ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p22; Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, pp11-12

³¹¹ Submission 29, Sergeant Paul Huxtable, Redfern Local Area Command, NSW Police, p10; Submission 59, NSW Police Association, p9

³¹² Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p11

³¹³ Ms Kirrillie Moore, Solicitor, Redfern Legal Centre, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p47

Aboriginal children and families

- 4.17 The need to work more effectively with the Aboriginal community underpinned all of the issues outlined above. Various participants highlighted the Aboriginal community's distrust of DoCS, borne out of the past policies and practices so culturally and personally damaging to the Aboriginal community. A member of the Koori Interagency stated:

I would like to make a statement ... about the stolen generation. You have got to remember that it was the Aboriginal Welfare Board that made all these Acts, put all our people on missions, and it is actually DoCS today. That agency is actually DoCS. That is where DoCS was born. We are still offended and controlled. That is why there are a lot of issues about DoCS.³¹⁴

- 4.18 This distrust inevitably affects DoCS' capacity to work with the Aboriginal community, and a number of participants pointed to the importance of funding non government agencies to work with Indigenous families.³¹⁵ Some also noted a failure to place Aboriginal children with Aboriginal families, which they saw as acting out of a preference for non-Aboriginal placements.³¹⁶

DoCS' comments

- 4.19 Appearing before the Committee in June and then November, Dr Neil Shepherd, Director General of DoCS, acknowledged the difficulties that the Department has had in delivering effective child protection services. He explained that between 1996 and 2002, with the introduction of mandatory reporting, there had been a massive increase in the number of child protection reports, and that the Department's resources did not increase in line with this demand. At the same time, the systems enabling the Department to fulfil its role, for example its records management system, were functioning poorly. In this context, the Department elected to prioritise only the most serious cases (level one cases), while not allocating or responding to those assessed as level two or three. In recognition of the need to address these serious systemic problems, in late 2002 the Government announced an injection of \$1.2 billion to DoCS. Dr Shepherd emphasised that these funds are to be rolled out over a six year period, commencing 2003-2004, with the bulk of the money coming in the following three years. He told the Committee, 'There will be improvements and they will be significant, but they will take some time.'³¹⁷ As part of the reforms, a total of 875 additional caseworkers are to be employed across the State. At the present time there are 52 full time equivalent staff at the Eastern Sydney CSC, of whom 34 are caseworkers. Over the two years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, 11 new staff (caseworkers and casework managers) will be recruited for DoCS' Eastern

³¹⁴ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p22

³¹⁵ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004; Townsend, Evidence, 22 October 2004, p11

³¹⁶ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p17

³¹⁷ Dr Neil Shepherd, Director General, Department of Community Services, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p2

Sydney office. Dr Shepherd told us that he was aiming to have four of these positions filled by the end of the 2004 calendar year.³¹⁸

4.20 Dr Shepherd acknowledged the perception that the Department is not responding to children that others consider at significant risk of harm, explaining:

... certainly some of the cases ... fall into the basket of level two and level three cases. That does not mean that they do not require a service from government or from non government organisations. Level two and level three cases are serious cases that require intervention, but we have not been able to get to those cases given the massive increase in numbers and the very high numbers of level one cases that we are now dealing with ... The thing about the levels that is important to understand is that level one cases are cases that require urgent intervention; there is something that requires essentially immediate or very quick action by DoCS. The underlying causes of whatever it is there may be equally serious for a level one or a level two case; it is just that for level one, for whatever reason we need to do something in a very short space of time.³¹⁹

4.21 On the other hand, Dr Shepherd challenged the allegation that DoCS was inconsistent in its removal of children, or that it might remove them for relatively minor reasons:

The first thing is that we cannot just remove children willy-nilly; you need the approval of the Children's Court to do that. Secondly, there is extensive training and procedural support for caseworkers around removal; it is the most serious thing we do. Thirdly, the caseworker does not actually have the delegation to remove a child; the Manager Casework has that delegation. All the Managers Casework in Eastern Sydney [whose catchment includes Redfern and Waterloo] are experienced, long-serving officers. They seek other specialist advice from casework specialists, legal officers, and so on, and if it is complex they take it to a Manager Client Services. There is simply not room for inconsistent behaviour by DoCS in relation to the removal of children.³²⁰

4.22 While Dr Shepherd also acknowledged the relatively low experience of caseworkers in Eastern Sydney (just under two years) compared with the State as a whole, he emphasised that they are closely supervised by casework managers, who on average, have seven years experience. He also assured the Committee that the interagency guidelines are a core element of initial caseworker training.³²¹

4.23 In relation to coordination, the Director General reported that Eastern Sydney DoCS staff acknowledged that they could coordinate better with other agencies, for example in relation to shared cases. He and Ms Anne Maree Sabellico, Regional Director for the Metro Central

³¹⁸ Dr Neil Shepherd, Director General, Department of Community Services, Evidence, 3 November 2004, p18

³¹⁹ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, pp4-5

³²⁰ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p5

³²¹ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 3 November 2004, pp 16 and 21; Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p16

Region, flagged that the RWPP's case coordination project and the recommendations of the Human Services Review will help to address this problem.³²²

4.24 With regard to the Aboriginal community, Dr Shepherd reported that in Eastern Sydney, 57% of Aboriginal children are placed with Aboriginal foster carers, noting that that this is well below the State average of 87%. He explained that it is largely because of the Department's difficulty recruiting Aboriginal foster carers.³²³ Ms Sabellico told the Committee that in finding placements for Aboriginal children, DoCS staff first try to identify an appropriate family member to take on the substitute care role, and failing that, they look to Aboriginal foster carers, either attached to the Department or to an agency. They will also liaise with regional staff and with other Aboriginal services before non-Aboriginal options are considered.³²⁴

4.25 Dr Shepherd stated that the Department is seeking to reduce the proportion of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care (the rate is about 25% of all children at present), and to improve its relationship with the Aboriginal community through a number of mechanisms including:

- genuine consultation with individual communities about the services required and the best way to deliver them
- efforts to establish and effectively support services that are run by and for Aboriginal communities
- recruitment and support for Aboriginal foster carers
- recruitment and more effective support for Aboriginal staff in the Department itself
- and continued cultural awareness training for non-Aboriginal staff.³²⁵

4.26 Dr Shepherd reported that the Department recently established the Aboriginal Services Branch to progress major policy and operational issues across the Department, and noted the creation of services such as the Yallamundi Aboriginal Intensive Family Based Service within the Metro Central Region.³²⁶ Ms Sabellico also reported on a number of local strategies intended to build relationships with the Aboriginal community.³²⁷

³²² Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p9; Ms Anne Maree Sabellico, Regional Director, Metro Central, Department of Community Services, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p9

³²³ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 3 November 2004, p30

³²⁴ Ms Sabellico, Evidence, 3 November 2004, p31

³²⁵ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p2 and 6

³²⁶ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 3 November 2004, p25

³²⁷ Ms Sabellico, Evidence, 3 November 2004, p27

The Committee's view

- 4.27** The Committee notes that the development of a Families and Children Strategy will be a first year priority under the Human Services Plan, and that the Strategy is to address intake practices, referral protocols, case coordination and promotion of integrated service models.³²⁸
- 4.28** The Committee acknowledges the substantial investment that the Government has made in child protection, and the work that DoCS is doing on a number of fronts to address many of the problems highlighted by participants.
- 4.29** While we appreciate that reform takes time, we are nevertheless extremely concerned that many children who are notified to the Department as having experienced serious abuse receive no further investigation or action by DoCS. The need to ensure that these children and young people are duly protected was a matter of great anxiety for inquiry participants, and we urge the Department to ensure that real progress is made in this area as a matter of priority.
- 4.30** With the creation of new caseworker positions within the Eastern Sydney CSC, we also urge the Department to establish, as a priority, a process for allocating and responding to level two and level three cases, including by referring them on to agencies such as Barnardos and Yallamundi for family support. Given the relatively low professional experience of many caseworkers and our expectation that this experience will reduce, on average, as large-scale recruitment occurs, we strongly urge the Department to ensure adequate ongoing professional development and support in order to optimise caseworker practice. Use of the interagency guidelines should be a key aspect of this work.
- 4.31** In addition, given the strength of non government agencies' opinion in relation to DoCS' poor collaboration and case coordination, we also encourage the Department to make relationship-building and coordination with other agencies a priority. While interagency work is occurring at the executive and management level, it appears to be mostly with other government agencies. Relationships also need to be built with non government agencies, and need to occur at the caseworker level. As noted in the previous chapter, this is critical to rebuilding the trust so essential to the partnership approach.
- 4.32** Similarly, we encourage the Eastern Sydney Community Service Centre to supplement the work going on at the State level and continue to invest in building its relationship with the Aboriginal community of Redfern and Waterloo. The Committee also considers that child protection services should be included in the formal review of government services that the Government has undertaken to conduct in the area. This final point is reflected in a recommendation at the end of this chapter.

³²⁸ Morgan Disney & Associates, *Making Connections: Better Services, Stronger Community – Report on Review of the Human Services System in Redfern and Waterloo*, Report for the Premier's Department, November 2004, pp31 and 34. The full Review Report can be downloaded at www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au

Recommendation 12

That the Department of Community Services' Eastern Sydney Community Service Centre take the following actions, as a matter of priority:

- establish a process for allocating and responding to level two and level three cases
 - ensure adequate training and support for caseworkers, to optimise professional practice
 - build its relationships with other agencies through better case coordination and interagency participation, including with non government agencies and at the caseworker level
 - build its relationship with the Aboriginal community of Redfern and Waterloo through a more collaborative approach with Aboriginal families and service providers, and interagency participation.
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Youth services

4.33 Throughout this Inquiry the Committee has heard from a wide variety of participants emphasising the need for the young people of Redfern and Waterloo to have the benefit of opportunities that have not been available to them in the past. Young people were often cited as the primary reason for change to occur, in order to help this 'new generation' to break free of the entrenched disadvantage so common in the area, and to realise its potential. The urgency of realising this potential was a message that was particularly strong within the Aboriginal community.

4.34 The Committee held a private briefing session with a group of young people from the Waterloo area so that we could hear directly from them about the issues they thought were important for this Inquiry. During that session, the group highlighted a number of issues:

- police targeting of young people, particularly young Aboriginal people
- some youth services do not have adequate facilities
- suspension from school occurs frequently and is a damaging experience
- there are not enough sports programs and activities for young people in the area
- more services are needed to address drug use amongst young people
- a youth service that is open 24 hours a day is needed
- the Street Team needs more Aboriginal workers
- the area needed more youth services, so young people can access both leisure facilities and counselling.³²⁹

4.35 In this section the Committee explores the evidence taken from a range of inquiry participants on several of the key issues highlighted by these young people: youth service facilities; the

³²⁹ Participants, Youth Forum, 22 October 2004

Street Team; and need for a 24 crisis service. Participants' views regarding police relationships with young people are explored in detail in Chapter 2.

Youth service facilities

4.36 Inquiry participants told the Committee that the majority of youth services in the area did not have adequate facilities. In particular, many told us that the Fact Tree Youth Service was very poorly accommodated. The Fact Tree is in a small building located at a busy intersection and across from a pub. It has no outdoor area for sport and recreational activities, and limited indoor space as well. Ms Sharne Dunsmore, Executive Officer of the service, told the Committee:

[T]he entry and exit point to our service is directly in front of a bus stop. The 355 stops right in front which is very difficult if kids are coming in and out and you have the elderly or anybody getting on and off the buses. There are no outdoor facilities, not to mention that the place is falling down. There is no outdoor space where we can supervise young people kicking a football, playing cricket. I know for a fact that the police have been called on a number of occasions to young people in the area and what they are doing is kicking a football across the road. That is dangerous, it can be a nuisance and the police are called. But if we had a space that was attached to our centre we could supervise that space as well as offering them activities.³³⁰

4.37 During the Committee's visit to the service, it was obvious that the small space did not fully accommodate the young people using the drop-in service, let alone lend itself to other programs staff are keen to implement. Ms Dunsmore described to the Committee the difficulties of providing a range of programs such as job search, the young mothers' group and one-to-one support at the same time as the drop-in, given that the service has such limited space.³³¹

4.38 The NSW Government had also identified the need for more appropriate accommodation for the Fact Tree and some time ago the RWPP advised the service it had allocated funding to enable them to move to a more appropriate location.³³² The RWPP engaged Residential Technologies Australia (RESITECH) to scope out a potential site for relocation, however they were unable to secure an appropriate site by June 2003 and the funding offer expired.³³³

4.39 Representatives of the Fact Tree told the Committee they had received no information as to whether the relocation was still going ahead or whether the funding was no longer available.³³⁴ The delay in providing alternative accommodation, particularly after creating the expectation with staff, the Fact Tree Board and the young people who utilise the service, has undermined the RWPP's relationship with youth services in the area.

³³⁰ Ms Sharne Dunsmore, Executive Officer, Fact Three Youth Service, Evidence 26 May 2004, p20

³³¹ Ms Dunsmore, Youth Forum, 22 October 2004, p22

³³² Ms Dunsmore, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p16

³³³ Submission 55, NSW Government, p260

³³⁴ Ms Dunsmore, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p16

- 4.40 When he appeared before the Committee in November, Mr Ramsey explained that the decision to relocate the Fact Tree had been postponed, pending the outcome of the Human Services Review. The rationale behind this decision was that the needs of one youth service could not be addressed in isolation and that the youth services system as a whole required assessment, to produce an effective distribution of those services.³³⁵
- 4.41 The Human Services Review Report's section on youth services states that 'There are a number of issues in relation to premises that need to be addressed. Some services have premises that are too small, run down, in very poor condition; and unsafe in one case...'.³³⁶ Though the Committee cannot be sure that the Fact Tree is one of the 'five centres' the Review Report is referring to, it seems highly likely, given the profile this issue has had in the Redfern Waterloo community. The report also urges consideration of 'Opportunities for a radical rethinking of the physical infrastructure needs of youth centres'.³³⁷
- 4.42 Consistent with the evidence documented here, in the previous chapter the Committee recommended that as part of the Human Services Plan, the RWPP approve and expedite a process for renovating or improving the facilities of services. The Committee understands that while many human services operate on an outreach basis, youth services generally work from a centre based model, bringing young people together and offering recreational and other activities on-site. It is therefore critical that they have appropriate facilities.

The Street Team

- 4.43 The Street Team is an integrated service made up of several government and non government services working in partnership.³³⁸ It aims to provide 'an outreach service which engages children and young people who are congregating in public space and engaging in anti-social and risk taking behaviour in Redfern, Waterloo and Darlington'.³³⁹ It was established in October 2002 and is led by the Department of Community Services.³⁴⁰
- 4.44 Despite its innovative approach to addressing the needs of children and young people, inquiry participants raised questions about the effectiveness of the Street Team. In particular, some suggested that by introducing the Street Team rather than resourcing existing agencies, and by not adequately consulting with agencies about identified needs, the RWPP had 'a very expensive service that is struggling to find a place in the community and do the work it needs to do ... because it is an imposed service; it did not grow with the community'.³⁴¹ The Committee also heard from a number of witnesses that the service needs more Aboriginal

³³⁵ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p26

³³⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p38

³³⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p41

³³⁸ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p6

³³⁹ Submission 55, NSW Government, p159

³⁴⁰ Department of Community Services, *Annual Report 2002-03*

³⁴¹ Mr Brown, Evidence, 15 October 2004, p5

workers.³⁴² Employing more Indigenous staff may assist the Street Team to engage more effectively with one of its key target groups, the Aboriginal community.

- 4.45** Dr Neil Shepherd, Director General of DoCS, told the Committee that an evaluation of the Street Team has recently been conducted and that the results of that evaluation would help improve the Street Team's service provision:

We have just done a review of how the Street Team operates and we intend to provide an enhanced service from the Street Team, with more direct assistance ...³⁴³

- 4.46** The Human Services Review Report flagged a number of actions in relation to 'services related to crisis intervention and street contact', which the Committee assumes includes the Street Team.³⁴⁴ These actions include considering similar services that have effectively implemented integrated programs for young people at risk, developing agreed client outcomes, and increasing communication of service achievements to the wider community.³⁴⁵

24 hour crisis service and after hours services

- 4.47** The Committee heard mixed opinions on the value of a 24 hour crisis service for young people in the Redfern and Waterloo community. Some witnesses felt that there was a need for such a service because of the limited opening times of existing services and the sometimes urgent needs of young people in an area where a number of social problems co-exist.³⁴⁶ Members of the Koori Interagency supported the establishment of such a service.³⁴⁷

- 4.48** Conversely, the Committee was also told that a crisis centre would not be useful because it offers only a temporary solution to problems that are usually ongoing. Mr Shane Brown, Director of South Sydney Youth Services argued:

If you provide crisis services, you create crisis. I think medium to long term accommodation is really vital and my comment is that the New South Wales Government has not done enough to provide more Department of Housing accommodation.³⁴⁸

- 4.49** Ms Anne Maree Sabellico of DoCS told the Committee that the Department was looking at providing a crisis service and was considering a range of options, in consultation with the community:

In relation to the issue of a crisis centre, I believe there is a need to look at providing a safe environment after hours for children and young people. What form that might take, of course, there is a range of options that you could consider, and we need to

³⁴² Participant, Youth Forum, 22 October 2004, p12

³⁴³ Dr Shepherd, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p1

³⁴⁴ Morgan Disney & Associates, p42

³⁴⁵ Morgan Disney & Associates, p42

³⁴⁶ Ms Dunsmore, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p18

³⁴⁷ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, pp16-17

³⁴⁸ Mr Brown, Evidence, 15 October 2004, p16

look at the pros and cons of all those models. Effectively, you could look at a register of Indigenous carers specifically for Aboriginal children and young people. We could look at a safe house option. We could also look at supporting a Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program service to extend the support it may give to children and young people in a crisis situation or in an immediate situation where we need to find a safe environment. So there is a range of options that we looked at. The significant thing we need to do is talk with the community a lot more about what is needed and how we develop that.³⁴⁹

- 4.50** The Committee is also aware that there has been an issue around weekend opening hours in youth services. In the financial year 2002-2003 the Fact Tree received additional funding through the RWPP which enabled the service to open on weekends for a twelve month period. The following financial year, this funding was not reallocated and the Fact Tree no longer provides weekend services, despite the urgent need identified for them by service providers, young people and recently, the Human Services Review. The Government submission to our Inquiry states that the funding for the youth services enhancement projects, under which the Committee understands that the Fact Tree had received this grant, has been 're-prioritised to brokerage funding ... attached to the case coordination model which will target at risk young people and children in the area.'³⁵⁰ The Committee is mindful that there is an important distinction between the crime prevention focus of after hours services such as the Street Team, and the need for after hours services with a recreational focus.

Findings of the Human Services Review

- 4.51** The Committee notes that the Human Services Review Report does not mention a need for a youth crisis service and does not identify a need for any additional youth services for the Redfern Waterloo areas. It strongly states that the area 'is very well resourced for youth services, especially when compared with many other suburbs and areas'.³⁵¹
- 4.52** Nevertheless, services for young people were identified in the Review Report as a priority area. The consultants emphasised the need for enhanced collaboration between youth services in order to improve service delivery across the youth services cluster. The Review recommended the establishment of a Youth Taskforce to improve cooperation between services and stated that until this lack of collaboration is addressed 'no new resources should be considered'.³⁵² The development of a youth services plan for the area will be a priority for year one of the Human Services Plan.
- 4.53** Prior to the release of the Review Report, a number of inquiry participants told the Committee that collaboration between youth services in Redfern and Waterloo was good and provided examples of collaboration strategies.
- 4.54** As the Committee understood that there was already a Youth Taskforce made up of government and non government providers in existence, we sought clarification on this aspect

³⁴⁹ Ms Sabellico, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p14

³⁵⁰ Submission 55, NSW Government, p149

³⁵¹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p40

³⁵² Morgan Disney & Associates, p41

of the Report's recommendations. The Project Director of the RWPP, Mr Michael Ramsey, explained that the Youth Taskforce has been in suspension, awaiting the outcome of the Review:

There was a Youth Taskforce in place. One of the priorities that we identified that the task force would need to address is the outcomes of the Human Services Review. We said this very early in terms of the terms of reference. We have been just literally waiting for the outcomes of the Human Services Review ... We knew there would be a significant number of recommendations flowing out of the Human Services Review around human services and the taskforce.³⁵³

The Committee's view

4.55 In the Committee's view, strategies that help to increase the life chances of young people in Redfern and Waterloo, and assist them to fulfil their potential, are absolutely critical. The role of the education system in achieving this is explored in a later section. The Committee supports the Review Report's suggestion to make youth services a year one priority, and that the Youth Taskforce be immediately reinstated. In addition, we consider that accommodation for youth services must be addressed as soon as possible, particularly those of the Fact Tree. Finally, the Committee considers that the need for adequate provision of weekend and after hours youth services, including recreational activities, must be considered as a priority under the forthcoming Youth Services Plan.

Recommendation 13

That the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project immediately reinstate the Youth Taskforce and ensure that its membership includes representation of government and non government providers, as well as young people themselves.

Recommendation 14

That, in keeping with Recommendation 8 of this Report concerning the approval and expedition of a process for renovating or improving the facilities of services, the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project immediately consider the adequacy of accommodation for youth services in the area. In particular, the Partnership Project should ensure a speedy resolution of the issue of relocating the Fact Tree Youth Service to more appropriate facilities.

Recommendation 15

That in developing a Youth Services Plan, the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and other members of the Youth Taskforce ensure that there is adequate provision for weekend and after hours youth services, including recreational activities.

³⁵³ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p27

Services for Aboriginal people

- 4.56** Clearly, one of the most critical and challenging tasks for Redfern and Waterloo is the creation of culturally appropriate and long term solutions to the difficulties facing the local Aboriginal community. To be effective, these strategies will need to be driven by the community itself, with judicious and sensitive support from government and the broader community.
- 4.57** A key obstacle to this is the deep, palpable and understandable cynicism within the Aboriginal community towards government that has been borne out of white settlement, racist policies and longstanding political, economic and social exclusion. The cynicism is inflamed by a failure on the part of successive State and Commonwealth Governments to address well documented problems, for example in relation to deaths in custody, Aboriginal health, the stolen generation and so on.
- 4.58** In the final chapter of this Report, we address the issue of finding a new way forward with the Aboriginal community in Redfern and Waterloo. In this section we document the issues that Aboriginal service providers raised with the Committee regarding how services for Aboriginal people need to be empowered and supported both in order to meet community needs in the present, and to help bring about long-term solutions in Redfern and Waterloo.

Supporting Aboriginal services: respect in practice

- 4.59** The Committee took evidence from a number of Aboriginal community members and service providers, and we also held a forum with members of the Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency in order to hear what they saw as the priorities for Redfern and Waterloo. A pivotal message was that government needs to recognise, show respect for and harness the community's strengths. A key way of doing this, they argued, is to support Aboriginal services.
- 4.60** Numerous participants, both from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services, raised the issue of 'imposed services', criticising, for example, the RWPP decision to award the contract for the intensive family support service to Barnardos. While they explicitly stated what a good job Barnardos is doing assisting both Indigenous and non Indigenous families, from the perspective of Aboriginal service providers it seems unfair that 'white' agencies receive significant funding when Aboriginal agencies are struggling to meet great need. As one service provider from the Koori Interagency stated:

In this community people live well below the poverty line, Aboriginal people. So you have got all those problems and all those issues and that encompasses everything, housing, education, employment, health. We have a lack of appropriate places for services. People come to us at [my service], as I said before, with lots of problems. We have places for people ... but there is such a waiting list. Mudgin Gal needs houses to house the women. Safe houses for children are needed. We all work here and we work with very little, we have very little money and human resources, and most of us work hard. It is not a nine to five job either. It is well ongoing there. Like Dr Naomi Mayers said, \$7 million that went into the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Program, as people have said here, why didn't it go to these services here that work hard on the ground with very little resources to meet the needs. We never meet the needs. You feel

inadequate at times when you can't meet some of those needs because there is a multiplicity of needs.³⁵⁴

- 4.61** Another Aboriginal worker emphasised that many agencies are simply not funded well enough to meet the massive challenges that exist in the community, and called for greater investment in professional support for workers, as well as adequate facilities. In relation to professional support, this Koori Interagency member stressed the need for infrastructure that equips and supports individual workers, and that supports team work and collaboration. In addition, mainstream agencies need to better support and utilise their own Aboriginal staff, and to create mechanisms to ensure that information and feedback from Aboriginal clients reaches senior management, thereby helping to change policy and service delivery over time. The Committee also heard that attitudinal change, through cultural and racism awareness is required at all levels of government agencies, including among executive staff.³⁵⁵
- 4.62** In addition to these system-wide needs, some participants identified the need for certain Aboriginal-specific services including an Aboriginal women's refuge, an Aboriginal youth service located in Redfern and a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service.³⁵⁶ They also called for even greater investment in intensive family support services.³⁵⁷

The Human Services Review's findings

- 4.63** The Human Services Review Report is very cautious in its findings and suggested actions in relation to services for Aboriginal people. It gives three reasons for this: because several key Aboriginal agencies did not participate in the Review, although invited to do so, so that the consultants had an 'incomplete picture' of the system; because Aboriginal services need to determine their system's needs for themselves; and because the consultants were reluctant to detract from the need for action across the entire human service system to ensure services are culturally appropriate, accessible and responsive to Aboriginal community needs.³⁵⁸
- 4.64** Within this cautious framework, the Review identified a need for two key strategies in this area. The first, as with other service clusters, is the development of an Aboriginal Human Services Plan, linked to the broader Redfern Waterloo Human Services Plan, in order to ensure both Aboriginal specific and mainstream services are working to benefit Aboriginal people in optimal ways. The Review Report states that Aboriginal services 'should be encouraged to take a leadership role in this initiative' and that 'Recognition of the Aboriginal services network in any future strategies is essential.' The Report states that the initiatives are to be driven firstly, by strengths-based and culturally appropriate approaches, and secondly, by evidence-based information.³⁵⁹ It notes:

³⁵⁴ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, pp27-8

³⁵⁵ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p24-25

³⁵⁶ Participants, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p25; Mr Brad Freeburn, Coordinator, Drug and Alcohol Unit, Aboriginal Medical Service, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p34

³⁵⁷ Participant, Mudgin Gal Aboriginal Corporation Women's Centre, Evidence, 19 May 2004, p2

³⁵⁸ Morgan Disney & Associates, p49

³⁵⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p51

The human services system needs to sit within a wider community plan which addresses economic, cultural, employment and educational outcomes for all Aboriginal families in the area.³⁶⁰

- 4.65** The second strategy proposed in the Review with regard to services for Aboriginal people is ‘community healing’, that is, a ‘community-controlled strategy which recognises the importance of the community being supported to find its own solutions ... within its own services, families and networks’.³⁶¹ The Report notes that Redfern and Waterloo currently lack a community development strategy of the scale of some communities such as Cape York, and others in Queensland and Western Australia, and that such a strategy would necessarily involve training and support for community leaders and role models. It states:

Addressing entrenched and longstanding problems associated with dispossession take time, commitment, wisdom and patience. Finding creative ways of working with the community on a healing strategy is more likely to achieve better outcomes for everyone. This needs to be undertaken as a foundation on which to improve the human services system. Until the need for healing is addressed it is the Review Team’s very strong view that very little will change ... We do not have the answers and would argue against non-Aboriginal people putting forward the detail of the solutions or the process. This must be done by and with the Aboriginal population. The government’s role should be to facilitate discussions on this with the community and assist them to find a way forward.³⁶²

Funding ‘imposed services’

- 4.66** In light of the concerns raised by participants, the Committee asked the RWPP about recent decisions to fund agencies that until that time did not provide services within Redfern and Waterloo. In relation to the decision to fund Barnardos to provide the intensive family support service, Mr Ramsay explained that an open tendering process was used that necessarily met government guidelines to ensure fair and transparent decision-making. He reported that the selection panel, which included an independent member from NCOSS and an Aboriginal member, determined that Barnardos was the organisation that best met the tender selection criteria, especially in relation to demonstrating a capacity to assist families with ‘high end’ needs.³⁶³ Mr Ramsey emphasised that it was a matter of matching up the demonstrated skill set of the agency with the selection criteria. He also reported that a number of smaller agencies from within the community had been selected on the same basis to receive other funding.³⁶⁴

The Committee’s view

- 4.67** In much the same way as we did in relation to the Human Services Review as a whole, the Committee sees significant potential in the Review’s suggestions for a way forward in relation

³⁶⁰ Morgan Disney & Associates, p50

³⁶¹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p46

³⁶² Morgan Disney & Associates, p47

³⁶³ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p6

³⁶⁴ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p12

to Aboriginal services. Again, we believe that it is critical that there be a genuine commitment on the part of government to the sentiments expressed in the Review Report, and a genuine commitment to working differently – including more respectfully – with the Aboriginal community. Re-establishing trust with the Aboriginal community of Redfern and Waterloo will take time, but is essential. It is also critical that this be matched by genuine partnership with the Aboriginal community on the part of the Redfern Waterloo Authority, as is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The Committee considers that the community healing strategy proposed in the Review report, if actively and sensitively supported by the RWPP and other government agencies, has great potential both for the Aboriginal community itself, and in helping to rebuild the relationship between the Government and the Aboriginal community. We encourage the RWPP to pursue this matter as soon as possible by formalising its commitment and by approaching community leaders to ask the community to undertake the strategy.

- 4.68** In relation to the issue of ‘imposed services’, the Committee accepts the RWPP’s explanation for the decision to award the contract to Barnardos. We also note the excellent job that very many inquiry participants, including those that criticised the decision, report that Barnardos is doing in delivering this service. At the same time, we encourage the RWPP and other government agencies to come to grips with the difficult task of developing funding and governance mechanisms that actively support Aboriginal communities to deliver autonomous services. A commitment to empowering services in this way will mean a great deal to the community in Redfern and Waterloo, and others across the State.

Recommendation 16

That the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, as a matter of priority, make a formal commitment to actively supporting a ‘community healing strategy’ in the Redfern and Waterloo Aboriginal community, as proposed in the Human Services Review Report, and that it provide appropriate resources to support this. In addition, the Partnership Project should approach community leaders as soon as possible to ask the community to undertake the strategy.

Drug and alcohol services and mental health services

Drug and alcohol services

- 4.69** Drug and alcohol use and misuse was the focus of some debate in this Inquiry, particularly during its early stages. Various inquiry participants recognised the multifaceted impact that alcohol and other drugs are having on the Redfern and Waterloo communities, in terms of the health of the person involved, the well-being of their family, and the health and safety of the broader community.³⁶⁵ Participants also emphasised that alcohol problems in the area should not be overlooked. In Chapter 2 the Committee considered the implications of this issue for law enforcement, and in our Interim Report we dealt in detail with the issue of the mobile needle and syringe service, making a comprehensive recommendation which included that the

³⁶⁵ See for example Ms Cheers, Evidence, 4 June 2004, pp6-7

service be relocated to a nearby industrial area within three months. We also recommended that there be adequate treatment services for Aboriginal people with drug and alcohol problems. In response to the Committee's recommendations, the Government has announced that a new facility to replace the van would be opened in Redfern.³⁶⁶ In this section we focus on that facility and on the case that participants made for detoxification and rehabilitation services in the area.

The new community health facility

4.70 On 24 October 2004 the Premier announced that in response to community concerns over the needle van and the need for enhanced health services in Redfern and Waterloo, the Government was establishing a new community health facility near the Block. The Premier stated that the facility will replace the needle van and provide a range of measures including drug and alcohol services, psychosocial support services, enhanced Aboriginal health services, and specialist visiting services, including HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C screening and antenatal and postnatal care.³⁶⁷

4.71 A fact sheet on the facility produced by the RWPP emphasises that the facility is aimed at all people in the Redfern and Waterloo area, and that it will take a holistic approach to care:

The community health facility aims to provide a fundamental range of service for people who may not usually access mainstream health services. This facility will include provision of services such as health assessments, treatment and care of drug related injuries, provision of sterile injecting equipment, drug and alcohol assessments and referrals, welfare support, counselling and family support services.³⁶⁸

4.72 The fact sheet states that the new facility is scheduled for completion by the middle of 2005 and will be located on Lawson Street, Redfern. It will cost approximately \$1.5 million to set up, with a \$550,000 annual funding commitment. The facility will work in conjunction with existing services such as Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and complement Aboriginal services already operating in the area.³⁶⁹

4.73 As the service was announced late in our Inquiry, the Committee was not able to widely canvass views on it. Nevertheless, some participants were able to comment, and we are aware of the Aboriginal Medical Service's (AMS) concerns that they were not consulted about the facility, and that it might duplicate existing services. Members of the South Sydney Interagency had a range of views: one member reported that she was pleased to have learned that the service was not being set up to compete with or replace existing Aboriginal services, but rather, that it was intended to enhance the range of services in the area. She also reported that the Minister for Health's office had advised her the AMS would be consulted about the

³⁶⁶ Correspondence from the Hon Morris Iemma MP, Minister for Health, to Chair, 3 December 2004

³⁶⁷ Hon Bob Carr MP, Premier, 'Redfern Mobile Needle Exchange Van to Close and New Primary Health Care Facility to Open', *Media Release*, 24 October 2004

³⁶⁸ Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, 'Community Health Facility', Fact Sheet # 1, November 2004, p1

³⁶⁹ Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, 'Community Health Facility', Fact Sheet # 1, November 2004, pp1-2

facility, and that the needle van would not be closed until the new service was open. Another member was not sure that the service would be used by the broader Aboriginal community who did not have a drug and alcohol problem, given the substantial history and new facilities of the AMS. A further participant registered his disagreement with concerns among some local residents that the facility meant that a needle exchange would remain in a residential area, noting that this is common and acceptable in other parts of Sydney.³⁷⁰

- 4.74** Dr Andrew Byrne, a medical practitioner specialising in drug and alcohol in Redfern, appeared before the Committee just after the announcement was made and gave detailed comment on it. Dr Byrne was very positive about the initiative, which he predicted would meet a community need:

As I understand it, I have only read a press release but it certainly sounds extremely encouraging ... Certainly that is exactly what we need - a primary health care facility with all the services that the local community need. I do not know what all of those are. I know what some of them are - it may be a child vaccination service, a geriatric service. It certainly would involve drug addiction services, counselling and needle exchange. It should probably have a research arm because this is a hot bed of urban problems. Sydney university is only five or six blocks away and there should be someone investigating. I know there are people involved in Aboriginal health and community health so I think it sounds like an excellent suggestion, and I have been calling for this for years.³⁷¹

- 4.75** Dr Byrne emphasised the value in having a range of health care services in the community, welcoming a primary health care service that involved no cost to the consumer, and that provided a broad range of interventions. He noted that the Kirkeon Road Centre in Kings Cross might serve as a worthwhile model, and suggested that a community board be established to oversee it. Dr Byrne also expressed a concern that the mobile van might be closed down prematurely, suggesting that as long as it was being used by a reasonable number of people, it should remain in operation. In principle, Dr Byrne argued for a range of needle and syringe program options, explaining that some people may prefer not to use the facility because it would offer less anonymity than a van, or that they may want nothing more than a needle.³⁷² He also stated that the location sounded positive:

The closer it is to the Block the better and I believe it is going to be in Lawson Street which is ideal from all of our points of view. For some people walking five blocks with two children is insurmountable. Yet, they may have pneumonia, a terrible headache, a substance abuse problem, domestic violence and all of that so the closer a service is, the better for the local residents.³⁷³

- 4.76** When he appeared before the Committee in November, Mr Michael Ramsey, Project Director of the RWPP, emphasised that the facility was not an Aboriginal specific service but was intended to assist the whole community, with a focus on those who may not usually access mainstream health services. He assured the Committee it is not intended to duplicate, but to

³⁷⁰ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p8

³⁷¹ Dr Andrew Byrne, Medical Practitioner, Redfern, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p19

³⁷² Dr Byrne, Evidence, 2 November 2004, pp19-20

³⁷³ Dr Byrne, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p22

complement what is already on the ground.³⁷⁴ He also assured us that there would be no gap in the provision of needle and syringe program services.³⁷⁵ In a letter to the Committee, the Minister for Health stated:

To ensure effective transition of clients of the outreach service to the primary health care service, an education campaign will be undertaken with clients prior to its removal off the Block.³⁷⁶

Detoxification and rehabilitation services

- 4.77** Throughout the Inquiry, the need for detoxification and rehabilitation services close to Redfern was widely reported, to ensure adequate and accessible treatment for people with alcohol as well as drug dependence. Alcohol misuse was noted by various participants to be a significant but often overlooked problem in the area.
- 4.78** Participants told us that it is very difficult to access these services at present, especially since the detoxification units at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Langton Centre ceased operation. Inpatient detoxification is now provided at Rozelle Hospital, but will again be available at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital when the appropriate facilities are rebuilt there.³⁷⁷ The Committee understands that this will occur in two or three years time.
- 4.79** As we noted in our Interim Report, several Aboriginal community representatives, including Mr Brad Freeburn of the Aboriginal Medical Service, Ms Brenda McDonnell of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministries, and Ms Shirley Lomas, a local resident, all highlighted the need for Aboriginal-specific rehabilitation services.³⁷⁸ According to NSW Health, there are eight such services in the State, with one operating in the metropolitan area.³⁷⁹ Ms Karen Becker, Director of Drug Health Services with the Central Sydney Area Health Service, indicated that the area health service would support the establishment of an Aboriginal specific rehabilitation service in the area if the appropriate resources are provided.³⁸⁰
- 4.80** In light of this evidence, in our Interim Report the Committee recommended that the RWPP liaise with the Central Sydney Area Health Service, relevant Aboriginal organisations and representatives of the Aboriginal community, to ensure that there are adequate referral services for Aboriginal people with drug and alcohol problems in Redfern and Waterloo. We

³⁷⁴ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p20

³⁷⁵ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p20

³⁷⁶ Correspondence from the Hon Morris Iemma MP, Minister for Health, to Chair, 3 December 2004

³⁷⁷ Ms Karen Becker, Director, Drug Health Services, Central Sydney Area Health Service, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p46

³⁷⁸ Mr Freeburn, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p34; Ms Brenda McDonnell, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Evidence, 7 June 2004, p21; Ms Shirley Lomas, 26 May 2004, p52

³⁷⁹ Ms Becker, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p46

³⁸⁰ Ms Becker, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p48

noted that particular consideration should be given to the feasibility of establishing detoxification and other drug and alcohol related services, especially for Aboriginal people.³⁸¹

- 4.81** Since that Report, participants have continued to highlight the need for adequate detoxification and rehabilitation facilities close to the area. Ms Helen Campbell, Director of the Redfern Legal Centre, for example, noted that this will be especially important with the opening of the community health care facility at the Block, given the heightened demand for treatment that it will presumably create:

I am a bit concerned that [the Premier's media release about the new facility] refers to ... referrals into rehabilitation and counselling which raises the big question: What rehabilitation and counselling? ... Can we restate the urgent need for appropriate rehabilitation and detoxification facilities. We need culturally appropriate facilities, we need to not forget that alcohol is still a problem and we also, particularly for women with children, need residential facilities that you can take your children with you to.³⁸²

- 4.82** Again, Dr Byrne stressed the importance of a range of treatment options to cater to the needs and preferences of community members. He also emphasised the successes available in those options, and the need for timely access to detoxification and rehabilitation:

I think that a caring society should have access. If your doctor wants you or your sister or kid to go to a detox ward - like going to a hospital with a broken leg or to go for an x-ray with a chest infection - that doctor should be able to make one or two simple phone calls, write out a note saying that the patient has a major alcohol problem and has requested detox or rehab, tear that off and give it to the person to take up the hall or call an ambulance or tell the person to get themselves to such and such a facility and be quite sure that that person will be looked after. That no longer happens in New South Wales. As I said, sometimes it is very difficult, sometimes it takes 25 phone calls.³⁸³

- 4.83** The Committee sought further advice from the Minister for Health about future plans for other drug and alcohol services in the area, besides the new facility. The Minister advised that the Redfern Community Health Centre will be redeveloped, and that drug and alcohol counselling services, and the Magistrates Early Referral Intro Treatment (MERIT) program will be run from this site.³⁸⁴

- 4.84** The Human Services Review does not make a detailed analysis in relation to drug and alcohol services but does state:

The Redfern/Waterloo Anti-Drug Strategy plays a role in addressing health for the people living in the area. It is primarily about supply and demand and a justice and policing strategy which is addressing the symptoms. There is an urgent need for a

³⁸¹ Standing Committee on Social Issues, *Inquiry into Issues Relating to Redfern and Waterloo: Interim Report*, Report 32, Legislative Council, August 2004, p136

³⁸² Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p8

³⁸³ Dr Byrne, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p25

³⁸⁴ Correspondence from the Hon Morris Iemma MP, Minister for Health, to Chair, 3 December 2004

more holistic drug and alcohol health strategy for the local area which tackles some of the underlying causes.³⁸⁵

- 4.85** The Review Report proposes that the action plan to be developed for health services should involve the ‘immediate development’ of a drug and alcohol services plan for the area. We also note that a ‘Locality Health Plan’ to be developed by a Taskforce is one of the five first year priorities under the proposed Health Services Plan.³⁸⁶

Mental health services

- 4.86** Various inquiry participants called for enhanced mental health services, especially in relation to the significant group of people with a mental illness living in the public housing estates. While the Department of Housing is meeting a significant need for accommodation among this group, the concentration of people in Redfern and Waterloo, and the seriousness of their illnesses, engenders a sizeable demand for community mental health services in the area.
- 4.87** The Committee understands that there is a joint guarantee of service between the Department of Housing and NSW Health to provide mental health supports to people living in the public housing estates,³⁸⁷ however both the Redfern and Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Boards (NABs) reported serious concerns about these services. Unmet need for mental health services was verified by a range of participants including Councillor Tony Pooley of the City of Sydney,³⁸⁸ and members of the South Sydney Interagency. One member stated, ‘We have a very small number of community mental health workers ... who have to cope with a very big workload.’³⁸⁹ Another testified that there is a three week wait for crisis mental health services: ‘Crisis is three weeks and that is them trying really hard.’³⁹⁰
- 4.88** Resident members of the Waterloo NAB told the Committee that calls made to the crisis mental health team often receive a delayed response, and that the Police are more sympathetic to and effective with people who have mental health conditions.³⁹¹ They reported that people with mental illness might receive support as they settle into the estate, but that there is poor follow-up and ongoing support.³⁹² Members of the Waterloo NAB also told the Committee with some consternation that earlier this year the mental health team asked a group of residents to supervise the medication of their neighbours who have a mental illness:

³⁸⁵ Morgan Disney & Associates, p59

³⁸⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p60 and 89

³⁸⁷ Mr Richard Gilbert, Director, Health Services Planning, Central Sydney Area Health Service, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p36

³⁸⁸ Submission 45, Councillor Tony Pooley, City of Sydney, p8

³⁸⁹ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p16

³⁹⁰ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p16

³⁹¹ Mr Ross Smith and Ms Betty Bullivant, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, p5

³⁹² Ms Norah McGuire, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, 15 October 2004, p6

Ms McGuire: The suggestion was that because of the lack of resources for people with mental health problems, that perhaps the neighbours could help. We were not told we had to, but making sure they took their medication. Now, that is just not on.

Ms Hillbrink: It is not our responsibility.

Ms McGuire: The lack of resources means that those are the type of silly things they are coming up with.³⁹³

- 4.89** In its submission, the Redfern NAB called for a mental health needs assessment to be carried out in the area to establish the resources necessary to meet demand, and for increased funding to ensure adequate staffing levels at the Redfern Community Health Centre, as well as for outreach and after hours services.³⁹⁴
- 4.90** The Human Services Review Report does not deal comprehensively with mental health services, and makes somewhat contradictory statements on them. It acknowledges, 'Whilst there is a range of mental health services, the adequacy of these services was seriously questioned or noted by every stakeholder group identified', but then calls for this 'perception ... to be viewed in the context of public expenditure on mental health across Australia', as well as the balance that the community is seeking between care for people with high needs and early detection and support for others. The Review Report concludes, 'Until the broader improvements are made to the service system it is too difficult to assess the extent of unmet need and the need for additional mental health services, except with respect to dual diagnosis services.'³⁹⁵ Nevertheless, as with drug and alcohol, it proposes the 'immediate development of a mental health services plan.'³⁹⁶
- 4.91** Few inquiry participants raised a need for dual diagnosis services (for people with mental illness and a drug and alcohol problem) with the Committee.

The Committee's view

- 4.92** The Committee welcomes the announcement of the new community health facility, and the assurances of the RWPP that there will be an appropriate transition between the opening of the facility and the closure of the mobile service. We note the importance of offering a broad range of services at the facility, of ensuring good links with the range of complementary services in the area, and of undertaking strong consultation when designing and developing the service. We also encourage the Central Sydney Area Health Service to consider a formal consultation and oversight mechanism such as a community board, as well as the opportunity for research partnerships.
- 4.93** In addition, we consider it vitally important that the Government, through the RWPP, fulfil its commitment in relation to the Locality Health Plan Taskforce, including that it act on the advice of the Human Services Review to immediately develop a drug and alcohol services plan

³⁹³ Ms Norah McGuire and Ms Barbera Hillbrink, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp5-6

³⁹⁴ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Service, p7

³⁹⁵ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp58-59

³⁹⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p58

and a mental health services plan. In relation to drug and alcohol, this plan must provide for adequate local detoxification and other treatment services, and ensure appropriate attention to the often overlooked problem of alcohol. In relation to both drug and alcohol and mental health, it must provide for culturally appropriate services.

- 4.94** The Committee considers that the level of need for mental health services reported to us is not reflected in the Human Services Review Report. We were greatly concerned by participants' evidence about inadequate supports for people with mental health conditions living in the public housing estates. We strongly urge the Government to properly consider the need for adequate mental health services in the area. This should be done as part of the formal review of government services that the NSW Government has indicated it will undertake. Similarly, we consider that drug and alcohol services must be included in this review. A recommendation capturing all of the areas we believe should be addressed in the review is made at the end of this chapter.

Recommendation 17

That in establishing the community health facility in Lawson Street, the Central Sydney Area Health Service, ensure:

- the provision of a broad range of services at the facility
- the establishment of strong, ongoing links with existing services in the area
- full consultation with relevant stakeholders

and that consideration be given to the establishment of a formal consultation and governance mechanism such as a community board, and to the opportunity for research partnerships.

Recommendation 18

That in implementing the recommendations of the Human Services Review, the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project ensure the immediate development of a drug and alcohol services plan and a mental health services plan. Both must provide for adequate local services and culturally appropriate services.

Education

- 4.95** A quality education provides the tools for children and young people to fulfil their potential, helping to circumvent the cycle of disadvantage that is reflected in parts of both Redfern and Waterloo. In this section the Committee explores several issues raised by inquiry participants in relation to school education.
- 4.96** There are three Government schools operating in the Redfern and Waterloo communities:
- Alexandria Park Community School, for children from kindergarten to year 12
 - Darlington Public School, which accepts students from pre-school level to year 6

- Green Square School, a special purpose school for children with behavioural difficulties, which takes a very small enrolment of 21 students annually.

4.97 At the end of the 2002 school year, Redfern Public School, Waterloo Public School and Cleveland Street High School were closed, and along with Alexandria Public School were amalgamated to form the Alexandria Park Community School, which commenced at the beginning of 2003.³⁹⁷ Other important education programs in the area include the Waratah Program run by South Sydney Youth Services.

Truancy

4.98 The issue of school attendance is a primary concern for many members of the community, particularly in relation to Aboriginal children. When they are not at school, children seem to be highly visible in the Redfern and Waterloo communities and other members of the community felt a strong sense of responsibility and duty of care toward them. The Committee heard from many inquiry participants that not enough was being done to manage this problem. The Committee also understands that a related problem is that of ‘parent-condoned absence’, where a child is absent from school with their parents’ permission.³⁹⁸

4.99 There are a number of programs operating in the area that aim to improve school attendance and support children to stay engaged in the school community. The Director General of the Department of Education and Training (DET), Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood explained the role of the Home School Liaison and Aboriginal Liaison Officers:

It is the same technique in terms of identifying where there is a pattern of truancy, and the home school liaison officer is working with schools to identify that pattern. In so doing the home school liaison officer has undertaken with the Aboriginal student liaison officer how to tackle those issues—is it a repeat process? Is it a new form of behaviour?—to try to work through what is it that is not engaging these kids. If it is truancy it is not a behavioural issue. What is it? Is it that they are having difficulties and they feel that they are not keeping up, hence can we introduce support programs in their literacy or numeracy catch-up programs targeted to their specific needs? Is it other forms? It might be a learning difficulty that is being exhibited that we need to try to focus on. All of this means that we have to do individualised target assessments wherever possible to make sure that we can tailor whatever it is to get these kids back, but we are not always successful.³⁹⁹

Suspensions

4.100 The issue of suspensions or exclusions also loomed large for inquiry participants, including young people themselves.⁴⁰⁰ The Director General told the Committee that the decision to

³⁹⁷ Questions on Notice, Mr Cappie-Wood, Department of Education and Training, 8 June 2008, p1

³⁹⁸ Dr Phil Lambert, Regional Director (Sydney), Aboriginal Education, Department of Education and Training, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p57-58

³⁹⁹ Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood, Director General, Department of Education and Training, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p57

⁴⁰⁰ Participant, Youth Forum, 22 October 2004, p4

suspend a student from school was not taken lightly, but is weighed against the principle that all students and teachers have a right to be 'treated fairly and with dignity, and particularly in an environment that is free from disruption, where there is no intimidation, harassment or discrimination'.⁴⁰¹

- 4.101** In their evidence to us, young people explained the negative impact of suspension on their future contact with the school and also on the wider school environment. They emphasised that students who were suspended felt distanced from their peers and stigmatised.⁴⁰² From a service provider perspective, Ms Deirdre Cheers of Barnardos explained that apart from the gap in their education, suspensions also placed the child at risk as they were more likely to be unsupervised and may engage in dangerous activities while away from school. She also said that other children can observe from suspended students that they do not have to go to school and in turn, model their behaviour.⁴⁰³
- 4.102** In their submission, Barnardos highlighted the major difficulties for both children and parents inherent in long term suspensions from school, and pointed to inadequate efforts on the part of the Department of Education and Training to make alternative arrangements for children excluded for long periods, or to support them adequately when they return to school. They gave an example illustrating these issues:

In early November 2003 Barnardos was referred three primary school aged boys from separate Aboriginal families ... who had been excluded from school. We were asked to coordinate an activity/education program for them for the duration of the school exclusion. Investigation revealed that these young boys spend more time away from school than at school, either through family not sending them to school, or exclusions due to behavioural issues. A 6-8 week education exclusion in early November effectively meant that the children would be out of school for 3 months until school resumed in February 2004, as the 6 week suspension time frame is generally followed by meetings for reintegration at the end of the period, and the end of the 6 weeks would be the last week of school for 2003. This is an obviously grossly inadequate means of ensuring positive re-introduction to the school environment and ensuring school attendance. Barnardos worked with other local agencies including the police, and employed casual staff using [Intensive Family Support Service] brokerage funds, to develop an appropriate alternative day program for these boys. Simultaneously undertaking intensive family support intervention with their families and coordinating other agency involvement. Referrals were made for specialist health and behaviour assessment, activity programs were maintained throughout the January school holiday period, and direct support provided to assist school reintegration at the beginning of 2004. Whilst 2 out of these 3 boys are mostly attending school daily at present, there continues to be ongoing difficulty in the Education Department maintaining sufficient support to children such as these in order to contain them within either the mainstream or available special school environment.

Aboriginal children such as these boys are not catered for adequately within the mainstream education curriculum, nor are proper funded educational alternatives available. Barnardos believes that until schools themselves radically change or an

⁴⁰¹ Mr Cappie-Wood, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p55

⁴⁰² Participant, Youth Forum, 22 October 2004, p4

⁴⁰³ Ms Cheers, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p5

alternative educational facility with Indigenous input is set up, Aboriginal children will continue to be poorly catered for.⁴⁰⁴

- 4.103** This case study highlights the complexity of need among some children in Redfern and Waterloo and the importance of programs which can respond to such needs. In addition, like Barnardos, other inquiry participants raised the broader issue of culturally appropriate education as central to ensuring the engagement of Aboriginal children in education.⁴⁰⁵
- 4.104** It is clear to the Committee that long suspensions have detrimental effects on the student involved, both in the short and longer term. Though Alexandria Park Community School has a Home Liaison Officer and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer to try to maintain a connection between the child and the school, the Committee heard that far more intensive assistance was needed for children who were frequently suspended.⁴⁰⁶
- 4.105** Some intensive reintroduction programs to assist children who have long term suspensions to re-enter mainstream education are available in the area, such as the intensive Waratah Program run by South Sydney Youth Services in conjunction with Alexandria Park Community School, along with the Green Square School, which is a special purpose school for children with behavioural difficulties and mental health support needs. The latter will open a Suspension Centre in 2005 for children who have been suspended from school for long periods of time.⁴⁰⁷ Inquiry participants told us that the Waratah service was very successful, though a lack of resources did not allow the programs to cater to the level of demand in the community.⁴⁰⁸ The Committee also heard about the Exodus Program, a comprehensive service run by Reverend Bill Crews in Ashfield that supports children who 'are in danger of falling away from school and from home and ending up on the street' as well as children who are homeless.⁴⁰⁹
- 4.106** The Committee considers there is a need to ensure that children who have been suspended from school have access to intensive services which will assist their reintegration into the school system, further education such as TAFE, or employment. Without such services, children and young people from Redfern and Waterloo who have disengaged from the education system are likely to have much greater difficulty negotiating their way into adulthood. In addition, there need to be adequate measures in place to intervene early to prevent long-term suspensions.

The closure of Redfern Public School and Cleveland Street High School

- 4.107** Numerous community representatives raised the issue of the closure of the Redfern Public School and Cleveland Street High Schools. Although the amalgamated Alexandria Community Park School was generally seen to have good programs and services, its relative distance from

⁴⁰⁴ Submission 32, Barnardos, p4

⁴⁰⁵ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p19

⁴⁰⁶ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, pp17-18

⁴⁰⁷ Mr Cappie-Wood, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p56

⁴⁰⁸ Participant, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004, p20

⁴⁰⁹ Reverend Bill Crews, Chairman, Exodus Foundation, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p2

Redfern and Waterloo (and consequently from the homes of some of its most vulnerable students) was of considerable concern to various participants.

- 4.108** Councillor Tony Pooley of the City of Sydney, for example, reported that Alexandria Park is well regarded, but that the 'loss of social capital linked to the closure of Waterloo and Redfern Public Schools and the continued uncertainty over the future of the latter site remains an issue of concern to the community'.⁴¹⁰
- 4.109** Before the closure occurred the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1 examined the closure of Redfern School in its Inquiry into the Proposed Closure and Restructuring of Inner City Schools. That Committee's report, released in July 2002, notes both the Department's rationale that enrolment numbers were rapidly dropping, as well as the community's concern that relocation to a site some distance away would reduce even further the number of children attending school. The Report recommended that the Government defer closure until the RWPP investigated the issue further, citing the Partnership Project's responsibilities in relation to children's services, education and employment opportunities and urban and public space.⁴¹¹
- 4.110** In evidence to our Committee, the Director General of DET explained that re-opening Redfern Public School was not an option being considered by the Department. He indicated that the potential to use parts of the school for other educational purposes had been mooted, with the remaining parts of the site to be sold and the proceeds reinvested in other schools including Alexandria Park.⁴¹²
- 4.111** Transportation to and from Alexandria Park is of special importance for children in Redfern and Waterloo, who must now travel some distance, and across three main roads, to attend school. Our Committee heard that the number of buses taking children to Alexandria Park School was not sufficient and that children from Redfern were missing out on this critical service.⁴¹³

The Committee's view

- 4.112** The Committee understands the closure of local schools in Redfern and Waterloo is still a contentious issue. Given that the provision of a comprehensive, adequately resourced bus service is integral to the success of the new school, we strongly urge the Department of Education and Training to address this issue. In an area with high levels of disadvantage, in which many families may struggle to take children to school themselves, the Committee considers that it is essential that adequate transport be provided to ensure that all children can attend school without difficulty.
- 4.113** We also encourage the Department to ensure adequate provision to address truancy, suspensions and exclusions, as well as other programs to ensure that the children and young

⁴¹⁰ Submission 45, Mr Tony Pooley, Councillor, City of Sydney, p6

⁴¹¹ General Purpose Standing Committee No 1, *Proposed Closure and Restructuring of Government Schools in Inner Sydney*, Report 19, pp109-109

⁴¹² Mr Cappie-Wood, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p53

⁴¹³ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p25-26

people of Redfern and Waterloo are given maximum opportunity to fulfil their potential. All of these issues should be considered during the review of government services in Redfern and Waterloo referred to in the recommendation at the end of this chapter.

Recommendation 19

That the Department of Education ensure, as a priority, that there are:

- comprehensive strategies in place in Redfern and Waterloo to address truancy, suspensions and exclusions
 - adequate transport services to enable children from Redfern and Waterloo to attend Alexandria Park Community School.
-

Housing

4.114 In Chapter 3 the Committee documented the increasing concentration of need among residents of the housing estates in Redfern and Waterloo, and the concomitant demand for a range of human services. In Chapter 5 we discuss how under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, funds for housing have fallen in real terms for over 15 years, significantly affecting the capacity of the Department of Housing to build new housing and to maintaining existing stock, especially ageing properties. At the same time the demand for public housing has risen. The waiting list for public housing in New South Wales is now around 80,000 households.⁴¹⁴ At present there are 4,133 public housing properties in Redfern and Waterloo (1,605 in Redfern and 2528 in Waterloo), housing a total of 6,147 residents (2,157 in Redfern and 3990 in Waterloo).⁴¹⁵

4.115 In Chapter 5 we also discuss the Government's plans concerning social housing in the area under the Redfern Waterloo Plan. Media reports have indicated that the Government intends to redevelop the tower blocks in Waterloo,⁴¹⁶ but the RWPP website states that there are no such plans at this time.⁴¹⁷ As these reports came to light at the very end of our inquiry, the Committee has not been able to seek the views of residents and other stakeholders, however we note that a rally was held in relation to the issue in early December. In the absence of evidence before the Committee on these matters, in this section we document a range of concerns raised by public tenants in relation to their present housing arrangements, and then document the Department of Housing's response to these concerns. We conclude with a number of considerations for those aspects of the Redfern Waterloo Plan dealing with public housing.

⁴¹⁴ Mr Mike Allen, Executive Director, Central Sydney Housing Services, Department of Housing, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p3

⁴¹⁵ Answers to questions on notice taken during evidence 2 November 2004, Mr Allen, Department of Housing, p2

⁴¹⁶ Jopson D and Ryle G, 'Towers to be demolished as aid to social levelling', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 2004

⁴¹⁷ Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, 'Frequently asked questions prepared for residents of Redfern-Waterloo', www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au/#plan2 (accessed 8 December 2004)

Tenant concerns

- 4.116** During the inquiry the Committee met with tenant representatives from the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB), as well as a group of people from the Russian community on the estate. We also received a comprehensive submission from the Redfern NAB. Participants raised a number of issues in relation to maintenance, the physical environment of the estate, estate and tenant management, and security and safety, all of which profoundly affect their quality of life. As noted in Chapter 3 and earlier in the present chapter, there was also a strong concern among tenants about the need for more support services for their co-residents, especially mental health services.
- 4.117** Maintenance was a major concern raised by participants, both in terms of their own dwellings and in shared spaces. As some of the Russian people stated:
- Ms LIPKINA:** We have problems with lifts. They do not work very often. They break and also the lighting inside the houses, in the corridors. ...
- Mr SHAPIRO:** The entrance doors to the buildings do not work properly and they also break very often.
- Mr FAINSHTEIN:** It used to be that there was one manager, an on-site manager looking after one or two buildings, and it was all right, they looked after the buildings, but now there is no-one there and we do not know who these people were. So things are left unattended for a long time, rubbish and the doors and the lifts and everything. Now what is happening is, if we have a problem, we go back to the Department of Housing here and we tell them about the problem and they tell us to call the call centre, and in the call centre they do not do anything now and when we call there no-one actually comes and does anything. ...
- CHAIR:** Would everyone agree that maintenance is a big problem?
- INTERPRETER:** Maintenance, many people say yes.⁴¹⁸
- 4.118** Ms Norah McGuire of the Waterloo NAB reported that the maintenance contractor and subcontractors engaged by the Department are not closely supervised, and often their work is not done properly.⁴¹⁹ The broader environment in and around the estate was also a key issue. People wanted more outdoor seating, saw a need for more play areas for children, and told us they had been trying to get a letter box on the estate for ten years.⁴²⁰ They sought better planning around the estates to ensure reasonable access to essential services such as banks, a

⁴¹⁸ Ms Lidiya Lipkina, Mr Michael Shapiro and Mr Mihail Fainshtein, Russian Community, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp1-2

⁴¹⁹ Ms Norah McGuire, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, p14

⁴²⁰ Ms Betty Bullivant and Ms McGuire, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp4 and 8

post office and health facilities.⁴²¹ In addition, both NABs emphasised the need for better and more accessible public and community transport, including better public bus routes.⁴²²

- 4.119** Participants indicated that there is some dissatisfaction with the way the estate, including ‘nuisance tenants’ are managed: Mr Ross Smith asserted that the Department of Housing is too reluctant to use its powers to remove some people, despite the major effect they have on others.⁴²³ Similar issues included a lack of action in relation to dealers living on the estate, and poor decisions around security that affected amenity and leisure space.⁴²⁴ The local Department of Housing office is reported to be understaffed.⁴²⁵ In addition, safety and security loomed large for residents, especially the Russian community: they wanted a much stronger approach taken with regard to children and young people on and around the estates.⁴²⁶

Department of Housing response

- 4.120** The Committee sought the response of the Department of Housing to these issues in a hearing with Mr Mike Allen, Executive Director of the Department’s Central Sydney Housing Services, which covers the area of Redfern and Waterloo.
- 4.121** Mr Allen reported that safety and security was a priority for the Department in respect of all its buildings in the area, and that over the past few years the Department had ensured secure access at the front entry of buildings to try to ensure that only residents can access them. He also stated that fencing had been put in around the perimeter of the estates, with the full support of tenants.⁴²⁷ Mr Allen acknowledged that there are problems from time to time around security, but that the Department is working to address them. He explained the after-hours security service operating on the estates, and stated that the Department consults with residents ‘to ensure that we are addressing any hot spots’. He told the Committee that he was aware of concerns among the Russian-speaking residents about security, and that the Department had run sessions with the Police and tenants in recent weeks on broader safety and security education.⁴²⁸ In response to a question about fear of young people among older residents, Mr Allen stated:

There are certainly problems in the Redfern-Waterloo area, both in reality and in perception. We work closely with the local police to identify whether any public housing tenants are involved in those activities and take some action with the tenant

⁴²¹ Ms Diana Whitworth, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp2 and 14

⁴²² Ms Diana Whitworth, Mr Harry Hardy, Mr Ross Smith, Ms Marlene Newton, Ms Norah McGuire, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp2-3 and 11; Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p11

⁴²³ Mr Ross Smith, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, p7

⁴²⁴ Participants, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, 15 October 2004, p7

⁴²⁵ Mr Smith, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, p14

⁴²⁶ Participants, Russian community, 15 October 2004, p1

⁴²⁷ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, pp3-4

⁴²⁸ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p6

to address them. We also work with a number of local government and non government human service agencies to see what other support might be provided to families in the area if they are having any difficulties or challenges with the younger members of those households to ensure there is active engagement with them if they are getting into trouble. Hopefully we can help them to resolve some of those problems.⁴²⁹

4.122 In relation to maintenance, Mr Allen explained that the Department has a 24-hour maintenance service accessed via a call centre, with the maintenance done by a contractor. Urgent work has a four hour response time, and less urgent work that is still considered a priority, is to be responded to by close of business the next day.⁴³⁰ More minor repairs are to occur within several weeks, and the performance of contractors against those targets is monitored. He also stated that the Department has been piloting a handyman service in Redfern and other locations around the state 'to see whether we can work more closely with tenants around some of the much more minor day-to-day maintenance issues that might come up for them.' In addition, he explained that the Department provides support to the volunteer 'Odd-Jobbers' group established by local tenants.⁴³¹

4.123 In answers to questions on notice from the hearing, the Department acknowledged an estimated maintenance backlog of \$8.5 million for Redfern and \$8 million for Waterloo. Performance against maintenance targets is as follows:

- 92% of maintenance orders are completed before the target date.
- 98.9% of R1 category orders (these require action within four hours) are completed before the target time.
- 89.6% of R2 category orders (these orders should be completed by the end of the next working day) are completed before the target.
- 92.8% of P1 orders (these orders should be completed within 40 days) are completed by the target date.
- 96.3% of P2 orders (these are significant works and can take up to three months for completion) are completed by the target date.⁴³²

4.124 Mr Allen also told the Committee of the Department's strategies to support clients with complex needs, such as the joint guarantee of service with NSW Health and other agencies intended to ensure access to appropriate services for people with mental health conditions. The Department has also established new specialist officer positions (which require social work or welfare qualifications) within its client service teams to work one on one with high needs clients or to support other officers in their work with them. Mr Allen reported that his staff

⁴²⁹ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p6

⁴³⁰ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p5

⁴³¹ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, pp12-13

⁴³² Answers to questions on notice taken during evidence 2 November 2004, Mr Allen, Department of Housing, p4

work closely with the local mental health team, as well as other non government agencies to ensure 'as much as we can' that appropriate supports are provided to tenants.⁴³³

- 4.125** Finally, in relation to estate management, Mr Allen reported that staff are based on-site at Waterloo and Surry Hills with the latter also servicing the Redfern estates.⁴³⁴ In addition, the Department provided information on the Intensive Tenancy Management Service on-site at Redfern which aims 'to improve tenant satisfaction by improving the housing management performance of problem estates'. Key elements of this service are: an on-site housing management team; a flexible local allocations policy; a smaller ratio of tenancies to managers than other areas; a local handyman for small maintenance work; and support for local community development work to enhance community cohesion.⁴³⁵

The Committee's view

- 4.126** Like anyone else, the public tenants of Redfern and Waterloo wish for a peaceful, amenable, secure and pleasant place to live, and the Committee sympathises with the frustration they feel over the lack of control over their quality of life that so many of us take for granted. While we are concerned by the estimated maintenance backlog, and the apparent need for monitoring of the quality (not just quantity) of maintenance, the Committee is satisfied the Department of Housing is listening and genuinely seeking to respond to tenant concerns. We encourage it to seek further improvements in each of the areas raised by inquiry participants. We also note that the Commonwealth has a major role to play in the funding of public and community housing through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, and that declining Commonwealth funds have directly affected the Department's ability to ensure adequate maintenance. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Committee believes that the State and Commonwealth Governments should work together to ensure that there are adequate funds available for affordable housing in Redfern and Waterloo.
- 4.127** We are also concerned that these endeavours remain a priority in the lead up to redevelopment of the housing estates under the proposed Redfern Waterloo Plan: estate and tenant management, as well as safety and security, will remain critical during this time. In addition, tenants must be assured of an optimal physical environment in the interim, with maintenance and repairs necessarily continuing as a key focus of the Department's work. It would be wrong for properties identified for redevelopment to be allowed to fall into disrepair while ever tenants are living in them.
- 4.128** In addition, the Committee considers that given the frustrations of tenants, as well as their rights as consumers, and indeed their vulnerability in many cases, the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Department of Housing must necessarily proceed with extreme care and caution as it undergoes the process of redeveloping the estates and relocating tenants. Consultation, information sharing and maximum tenant choice will all be essential to this task. The outcome of improved housing for public tenants will be a valuable one, but the

⁴³³ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004 p5

⁴³⁴ Mr Allen, Evidence, 2 November 2004, p12

⁴³⁵ Answers to questions on notice taken during evidence 2 November 2004, Mr Allen, Department of Housing, p4

Government needs to ensure that the process is careful and constructive as well. Issues in relation to future financing of affordable housing are discussed in Chapter 5.

Recommendation 20

That the Department of Housing continue to seek ways to address tenant concerns in relation to maintenance, the physical environment of the estate, estate and tenant management, and security and safety.

Recommendation 21

That the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Department of Housing ensure that the process of redevelopment of public housing proceeds with extreme care in order to protect the rights of tenants and the Government's duty of care towards them. In particular, consultation, information sharing and maximum tenant choice must all be ensured.

Employment

- 4.129** Employment was recognised by numerous inquiry participants as fundamental to addressing the disadvantage that exists in Redfern and Waterloo. The Government has also recognised employment as a major plank of the forthcoming Redfern Waterloo Plan, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.
- 4.130** The Government submission contains a detailed summary of the employment statistics for Redfern and Waterloo. Notable among these is the high proportion of people in Waterloo who are not in the labour force, that is, who are living on age, disability or sole parent pensions, the well below average rate of employment, and the well above average rate of unemployment in that suburb. Also noteworthy are the high rates of Aboriginal people not in the labour force in both suburbs, matched with the comparatively low rate of employment among Indigenous people in the area.⁴³⁶
- 4.131** The Committee heard from a number of service providers that employment opportunities for young people in the Redfern and Waterloo areas were scarce, and that it was particularly important to pursue strategies to assist this group. As Councillor Tony Pooley stated, 'Longer term support for training and employment placement remains a key priority particularly for children and young people from families where there exists several generations of unemployment.'⁴³⁷
- 4.132** Primary responsibility for employment strategies, programs and funding lies at a Commonwealth level. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is responsible for the administration and coordination of the Commonwealth government's employment policy. DEWR administers a range of programs including the Job Network, Work for the Dole, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), and

⁴³⁶ Submission 55, NSW Government, p35

⁴³⁷ Submission 45, Councillor Tony Pooley, p6

Indigenous Employment Centres.⁴³⁸ We note that despite requests for input to this Inquiry, the Commonwealth did not provide a submission on issues including employment.

- 4.133** Mr Michael Ramsey emphasised to the Committee the importance of the Commonwealth Government's role in employment initiatives as part of the broader work of the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project:

One of the critical reasons why it was important to get the Commonwealth involved in this process was that the Commonwealth has a primary role to play in terms of employment and if we do not create employment we are never going to resolve the problems in Redfern and Waterloo.⁴³⁹

- 4.134** Vocational education and training are a State Government responsibility, and the Committee understands that Alexandria Park Community School runs vocational education programs. The Director General of DET told the Committee:

We cannot generate the job opportunities but what we can do is prepare them. We work with a wide range of agencies, Federal, State, local, private industry, et cetera, to give those children who are doing vocational education and training in their secondary school work placement, work experience opportunities so that they can see the links between what they are learning and a real job environment. We have to say that for many Aboriginal kids that linkage is not always clear and evident. We have to continue to reinforce that. There are a number of programs available to us and we employ those programs so that those children, be they Aboriginal or otherwise, can see what job opportunities are and the benefit of education and how that can lead them through to work and employment.⁴⁴⁰

- 4.135** Shane Brown, Director of the South Sydney Youth Services, noted the positive effects of the traineeships run at Alexandria Park Community School:

Aboriginal young people are disadvantaged in the work force and need creative opportunities to work within the business sector. Alexandria Park Community School has provided mentorship within this sector in the part, raising young peoples' expectations and giving them greater skills and vision.⁴⁴¹

- 4.136** While the Human Services Review Report considers that employment services in the area are adequate, it notes the current absence of local employment opportunities in Redfern and Waterloo, and calls for a comprehensive employment strategy for the area involving a wide range of stakeholders including industry groups and business representatives, 'as a matter of urgency'.⁴⁴² The Report states:

Access to employment was raised constantly, by all stakeholders, throughout the Review as a fundamental structural issue facing this area and impacting on the human services system. Local residents, providers, policy makers, the Aboriginal population,

⁴³⁸ www.workplace.gov.au/Workplace/WPDisplay.html (accessed 3 December 2004)

⁴³⁹ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p17

⁴⁴⁰ Mr Cappie-Wood, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p58-59

⁴⁴¹ Submission 92, South Sydney Youth Services, p2

⁴⁴² Morgan Disney & Associates, p65

central agencies from both NSW and Commonwealth Governments, businesses, young people, older people and parents all raised the significance of employment to the future of the area ... In every international initiative we examined where locality renewal is occurring in impoverished communities with the characteristics and challenges identical to Redfern and Waterloo, employment is a key component.

We cannot overstate the significance of this to the future of the human services system. Employment remains one of the best routes out of poverty; it is being increasingly examined as an intervention for people with mental health issues, for people with other disabilities and for sole parents living on low incomes and with minimal education.⁴⁴³

- 4.137** The Government's recognition of the importance of employment to the prosperity of Redfern and Waterloo and its residents is reflected in the recently announced Redfern Waterloo Plan, which itself will involve a Jobs Plan for the area. We note that the Jobs Plan is expected to include 'use of Government Procurement contracts for construction projects to create Aboriginal and local training and employment opportunities'.⁴⁴⁴ The Committee understands that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has developed guidelines for Aboriginal participation in employment, but it is unclear to what extent various State agencies comply with them. While we acknowledge the practical difficulties in engaging skilled Indigenous workers, we encourage all levels of government to adopt such guidelines in a genuine effort to improve employment among Aboriginal people in Redfern and Waterloo.
- 4.138** The role of the Redfern Waterloo Plan in addressing unemployment and the need to engage the Commonwealth in the Plan are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Ageing and disability services

- 4.139** In comparison with other issues, ageing and disability services were not a major focus for inquiry participants, but the Committee is aware from past inquiries of the need to enhance these services across the State.
- 4.140** Ms Norah McGuire and other residents on the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board highlighted a lack of resources in this area, as in others, noting that community transport and other Home and Community Care services are vital and in high demand.⁴⁴⁵ A number of participants such as one member of the South Sydney Interagency called for a nursing home to be established in the area, for example on the Rachel Forster Hospital site.⁴⁴⁶ Similarly, Mr Ross Smith, a member of the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board called for nearby medical services to support the ageing population in the housing estates:

We are in the centre of a huge population of aged people. You have two 30-storey towers over here filled with people who are 55 and older, plus the other ones scattered

⁴⁴³ Morgan Disney & Associates, p61

⁴⁴⁴ Hon Frank Sartor MP and Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC, 'Government Announces Jobs Plan for Redfern Waterloo', *Media Release*, 10 November 2004

⁴⁴⁵ Ms McGuire, Mr Smith and Ms Whitworth, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, pp2-3 and 13

⁴⁴⁶ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p9

through the area. There is no close medical facility, whether it was just an emergency service where they would shift them on to a local hospital or not. [The Rachel Forster Hospital] site has sat empty for years now and no one will tell us what they are doing with it, we can't find out what is happening with it, and that could supply immediate access to medical services for such a large population group to use.⁴⁴⁷

4.141 In its submission, the Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board called for the following actions to address the needs of frail older people and people with disabilities in the area:

- Develop Rachel Forster as a nursing home so that frail aged residents can remain living in the area
- Build a purpose built aged and disabled community facility that also meets the needs of members from CALD backgrounds
- Fund existing services to employ community outreach workers on the estates ... to address issues of isolation and to provide information and referral to local services
- Fund existing Neighbour Aid services to support the aged and disabled to access their finances.⁴⁴⁸

4.142 In relation to services for frail older people and people with disabilities, the Human Services Review Report concluded that the area is 'reasonably well served' but also noted that the most urgent needs for older people are for nursing home beds, mental health services and respite care. It found that 'the existing system requires little change at present' but recommends that an ageing strategy be developed over the next four years to address the future needs of older residents in the area.⁴⁴⁹ For people with disabilities, the Report documents gaps in relation to respite care, services for those with intellectual disabilities and supported accommodation. Nevertheless it concluded, 'the disability service cluster is not in need of substantial reform or development. It rated very low for most people interviewed and no major issues regarding access, service models, gaps (unique to this area), or problems were identified.'⁴⁵⁰

4.143 As noted in other sections of this chapter, the Committee considers that it will be important for the review of government services in Redfern and Waterloo to address ageing and disability services, including health and aged care services for older people.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

4.144 The Committee is aware that Redfern and Waterloo have richly diverse populations. The Government submission to the Inquiry states that 37% of people in Redfern and 43% of people in Waterloo were born overseas. In addition, a markedly greater proportion of its

⁴⁴⁷ Mr Smith, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence 15 October 2004, p3

⁴⁴⁸ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p8

⁴⁴⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp78-79

⁴⁵⁰ Morgan Disney & Associates, p79

residents than those in Sydney as a whole do not speak English at home. The major languages spoken in the area are Russian, Chinese, Greek, Arabic, Spanish and Vietnamese.⁴⁵¹

4.145 Issues relating to the human service needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities were raised by only a few participants, perhaps because so much of the focus for this Inquiry was on more controversial topics. The key issues raised concerned interpreters and information about services, so as to ensure access to services.

4.146 Ms Helen Campbell of Redfern Legal Centre reported that people attending Redfern Court have poor access to interpreters, and that this is a particular issue for Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Arabic speakers. She pointed to the way that the justice system is compromised when people have no understanding of what is being said about them in court.⁴⁵² Another worker from a multicultural provider reported that bilingual staff of her service are regularly called on to fulfil an interpreter role, even though they are not qualified or funded to do so. In addition, she reported:

We also have health facilities in the area who don't make usage of the health care interpreter service when they need to, so people are not understanding sometimes and then are reluctant to keep going in for appointments because they have had negative experiences where people have refused to provide interpreters, where they have actually initiated some dental procedures, for instance, without actually telling them about it and understanding what is going on, so it makes them very reluctant to utilise those health services and can lead to conditions worsening because they are not getting early treatment.⁴⁵³

4.147 In terms of information, participants stated that while some groups in the community such as Russian speakers were quite active in making use of services, others such as those from Asian countries were often less aware of what services were available. Service providers saw that information in a range of languages was essential to ensuring access:

I met a lot of people who could not speak English and because of the people's lack of communication and because they cannot speak English they just don't go back to any other agencies in the area, so I think it would be good to organise or advertise information for them so they will get more of what they want.⁴⁵⁴

4.148 The Human Services Review Report observed that despite their significant presence in this community, 'The needs of people from CALD backgrounds have emerged as one of the least developed aspects of the overall human services system in Redfern and Waterloo.'⁴⁵⁵ The Report stresses the value of enhancing the capacity of mainstream agencies to better respond to CALD communities, for example through cultural awareness training, better use of interpreters, translation of promotional materials, and volunteer programs that focus on recruiting volunteers from CALD backgrounds.⁴⁵⁶ It identifies among other strategies:

⁴⁵¹ Submission 55, NSW Government, pp17-18

⁴⁵² Ms Helen Campbell, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p14

⁴⁵³ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p14

⁴⁵⁴ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p15

⁴⁵⁵ Morgan Disney & Associates, p66

⁴⁵⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p67

Proactive recruitment of bi-lingual and CALD workers in all sectors must be a priority and mainstream workers also need to develop their cultural competency skills – this could be part of the capacity building strategy for the service system.⁴⁵⁷

- 4.149** In the Committee's view it is important to ensure that all groups in the community have access to the services they need, and we encourage the RWPP and the range of government and non government service providers to find practical ways to ensure that their services are accessible and culturally sensitive. We see merit in the Human Services Review's suggestion that cultural awareness training occur as part of the broader capacity building strategies sponsored by the RWPP as part of the Human Services Plan.

Community development programs

- 4.150** Finally, a number of participants called for greater attention to strategies that seek to build the community of Redfern and Waterloo. Participants such as the Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, the Benevolent Society and the City of Sydney, all saw a need not just for investment in services that address the needs of community members, but also, for investment in strategies that seek to build the capacity of, and cohesion within, the broader community.⁴⁵⁸
- 4.151** The Benevolent Society, citing Professor Tony Vinson's Community Adversity and Resilience study, noted the special significance that community building strategies can have in disadvantaged areas such as Redfern and Waterloo.⁴⁵⁹ Professor Vinson's report provides evidence that community cohesion can serve as a buffer against the profoundly negative effects of poverty, unemployment, limited education and so on, and it concludes that 'strengthening the connectedness or social cohesion of disadvantaged areas is an integral part of renewing the life opportunities of people.'⁴⁶⁰
- 4.152** The Committee is aware of a number of strategies already existing in the area, such as the University of New South Wales' Waterloo Community Development Project based on the Waterloo housing estate, and its Waterloo Community Garden and weekly multicultural cooking group for tenants. We are also aware of the City of Sydney's contributions to community development, arising from the work of the former South Sydney Council, through community events and facilities such as the Redfern Community Centre. The Kidspeak Program run through the Barnardos Intensive Family Support Service also has a capacity building focus. All of these initiatives seek to bring community members together, to establish opportunities for mutual support, and to build a greater sense of community. Nevertheless, participants sought a more wholesale commitment to capacity-building in the area.

⁴⁵⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p69

⁴⁵⁸ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p2; Submission 33, Benevolent Society, p2; Submission 84, City of Sydney, p2

⁴⁵⁹ Submission 33, Benevolent Society, p2

⁴⁶⁰ Vinson, T, *Community Adversity and Resilience: The Distribution of Social Disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales and the Mediating Role of Social Cohesion*, The Ignatius Centre for Social Policy Research, Melbourne, March 2004, p15

- 4.153** The Redfern NAB's submission calls for better funding for initiatives that will build social capital such as community development grants and other initiatives to support tenants.⁴⁶¹ The City of Sydney goes further, pointing to the role that capacity-building strategies have in engaging the community in real partnership, and empowering community members to drive change.⁴⁶²
- 4.154** The Human Services Review did not assess current provision for community development, but the Committee notes that its recommendations did include a 'community leadership development and capacity building strategy' for the area. While the major focus of the strategy is on service providers, it also includes a 'community leadership strategy for community stakeholder groups'.⁴⁶³
- 4.155** In the Committee's view, strategies which focus on building the capacity and cohesiveness of the Redfern and Waterloo communities are critical to renewal of those areas. While infrastructure redevelopment and reform of the human services system are essential, so too are strategies that seek to strengthen community relationships and engage people in community life, especially given the massive changes that the suburbs are about to undergo. On this basis we urge the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and the City of Sydney, in consultation with key community groups, to develop a community development strategy for the area, the primary focus of which should be community members and community groups. As part of this strategy, we also see merit in the establishment of a small grants program to fund community development activities.

Recommendation 22

That the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and the City of Sydney Council, in consultation with the Redfern and Waterloo community, develop a community development strategy for the area, the primary focus of which is on community members and groups. The strategy should include provision for a small grants scheme to fund local community development activities.

Conclusion

- 4.156** In Chapter 3 the Committee recommended that the Government fulfil its commitment that the activities of government not included in the Human Services Review be formally reviewed in order to determine how they need to change, so as to improve the human services system of Redfern and Waterloo. Throughout this chapter we have identified several areas that we consider must be addressed in this task: child protection services, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, education, housing, and ageing and disability services. In addition, we consider that the review must necessarily consider the cultural appropriateness of services with regard to Aboriginal people and CALD communities.

⁴⁶¹ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p2 and 6

⁴⁶² Submission 84, City of Sydney, pp3 and 9-10

⁴⁶³ Morgan Disney & Associates, p100

4.157 As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Committee is conscious that given the breadth of issues in Redfern and Waterloo, and the fact that significant announcements were made very late in the Inquiry, we were not able to take evidence on and thoroughly examine many aspects of government and non government service delivery in the area. Thus we were also unable to develop conclusions and make strong recommendations on them. Nevertheless, in this chapter we have sought to reflect the key concerns and issues raised by inquiry participants, and we strongly encourage the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and other stakeholders to consider the evidence documented here when developing the forthcoming Human Services Plan and the action plans for each of the human services clusters in the area.

Recommendation 23

That when implementing Recommendation 7 to formally review the activities of government agencies not included in the Human Services Review, the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project ensure that the following core government responsibilities are comprehensively considered:

- child protection services
- mental health services
- alcohol and other drug services
- education
- housing
- ageing and disability services.

In addition, the review should consider the cultural sensitivity of the full range of services, with regard to both the Aboriginal community and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
