

Chapter 2 Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

In this chapter the Committee considers aspects of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP). We briefly overview the establishment of the RWPP and its progress to date. We provide a summary of the feedback from inquiry participants on the RWPP consultation processes and the effectiveness of its communication with members of the Redfern and Waterloo community. The Committee received a substantial amount of criticism of the Project, particularly in relation to its consultation and communication processes and slowness in the implementation of programs. The chapter also considers the evidence outlining the difficult task facing the RWPP, and the need for a long-term commitment from government, non government and community partners if the complex issues confronting the area are to be adequately addressed.

While this chapter considers certain aspects of the RWPP, issues relating to its role in the coordination of government and non government services will be dealt with in the second stage of the Inquiry and addressed in the Final Report.

Some members of the Committee strongly believe, however, that the RWPP has not been successful, is not appropriately resourced and is not the appropriate lead agency to coordinate the urgent response needed to address the significant problems in Redfern and Waterloo.

Overview of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

2.1 The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project was established in 2002 to provide a whole of government response to the range of complex issues facing Redfern and Waterloo. As explained by Dr Col Gellatly, Director General of the Premier's Department:

The establishment of the partnership project provides leadership and responded to community calls for a coordinated whole of government approach. The high level of support from within the New South Wales Government and from senior managers of line agencies has meant that the partnership project has been able to examine and implement innovative approaches which would not otherwise have been possible.⁸

2.2 As detailed in the NSW Government submission, the Premier announced on 21 March 2002 the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project and a Package of Initiatives. The package committed \$7 million over two years and 'built on Government's previous efforts to address the complex issues within the Redfern and Waterloo communities.'⁹ The aims of the Project at the time of its establishment were:

- enhancing community participation and leadership
- reducing crime and improving safety
- enhancing services for children, young people and families

⁸ Dr Col Gellatly, Director General, Premier's Department, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p4

⁹ Submission 55, NSW Government, p3

- improving health outcomes and reducing drug and alcohol abuse
- enhancing educational and employment opportunities
- promoting enterprise development
- improving urban amenity, public space and planning.¹⁰

2.3 The RWPP is described as a whole of government/whole of community approach to Redfern and Waterloo. The Government argues that this approach is the best way to address the needs of people living in Redfern and Waterloo:

A successful whole of government approach required a shared purpose, teamwork, partnerships and building strong relationships. Strong leadership and a commitment at the highest levels of Government are also required.¹¹

2.4 The RWPP has also been described as a ‘place-based’ approach. The aim of this approach is to allow agencies to tailor their services to meet the needs of people in a specific location in a way that addresses the social, physical, economic and cultural characteristics of that place. The approach has been successful in other locations in the past in addressing issues facing disadvantaged communities.¹² Place-based programs bring together the broad range of agencies and services, including Federal, State and local government agencies together with national, state and locally-based non government services.

2.5 According to the NSW Government, the RWPP is different to other place-focussed approaches in New South Wales in that it attempts to deliver integrated outcomes through improved coordination of services and the involvement of all levels of government. The NSW Government states that the Project is unique in that the Commonwealth and local government are active partners in the Project.¹³

2.6 A number of inquiry participants indicated their support for the place-based approach for Redfern and Waterloo. They suggested that the locality-based rather than program-based approach could assist in the development of a coordinated and holistic approach to service delivery. The Benevolent Society argues there is a need for an integrated multi-partied approach for communities such as Redfern and Waterloo where there are long-standing social and economic needs.¹⁴ A number of witnesses, including the Benevolent Society, pointed to the relevance of Professor Tony Vinson’s comment, that:

... where an accumulation of problems makes a serious impact upon the wellbeing of residents of a disadvantaged area, locality-specific measures may be needed to supplement general social policy ... The stage may now have been reached where expertise and authority needs to be vested in a lead agency to promote and refine ongoing audits of community wellbeing.¹⁵

¹⁰ *ibid*, pp62-63

¹¹ *ibid*, p55

¹² Randolph 2004, UK Government 2004, in Submission 55, NSW Government, p60

¹³ Submission 55, NSW Government, p62

¹⁴ Submission 33, Benevolent Society, p7

¹⁵ 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 and Research, March 2004, p15

Management and funding

- 2.7** The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project is a mechanism through which relevant organisations deliver services in the two suburbs. The RWPP oversees the review of services, areas of need and coordination issues. As described on its website, the Project ‘brings together a wide range of partners to work on improving the quality of life of people living and working in these areas.’¹⁶ The work undertaken by the Project team includes facilitating crisis management responses as well as overseeing mid and long term programs and initiatives. The Project is not, in itself, an organisation responsible for the delivery of services.
- 2.8** A small secretariat is responsible for the day to day operation of the Project. The RWPP is managed by Project Director, Mr Michael Ramsey, with a staff of five undertaking a range of tasks. The current staffing allocation includes two Senior Project Managers, one Project Manager, and one Assistant Program Manager largely responsible for administrative tasks. One of the Senior Project Managers is an Aboriginal person. The RWPP also funds a Senior Project Manager from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) to undertake work in relation to the RED Strategy (see below for information on the RED Strategy).
- 2.9** The Premier’s Department administers the RWPP, with the RWPP team reporting directly to the Premier via Dr Col Gellatly, Director General of the Premier’s Department. The Project team operates from an office located in the Redfern/Waterloo area.
- 2.10** In May 2004, the Premier announced the extension of the RWPP until 2006 with approval for \$2.5 million a year for the next two years. In a press release, the Premier noted that in 2006 the Project can re-apply for funding as part of the normal budget process.¹⁷ The adequacy of the staffing and funding is discussed further below.

Differences between Redfern and Waterloo

- 2.11** While the establishment of the RWPP links the two suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo together, a number of inquiry participants have pointed out the significant differences between Redfern and Waterloo, although acknowledging the two communities have much in common.
- 2.12** The NSW Government submission notes that while the populations of Redfern and Waterloo are diverse, the suburbs share similar problems. These problems, it suggests, include high levels of unemployment, particularly in younger and older sectors of the community, and high levels of crime and drug and alcohol dependence. In addition, the area has significantly less open space and more public housing than other inner city locations. The Government suggests there are a number of families in the area dealing with a complex range of problems including domestic violence, mental health and neglect:

¹⁶ www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au (accessed on 15 July 2004)

¹⁷ Hon R Carr MP, Premier of New South Wales, ‘State Govt extends Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project’, *Media Release*, 27 May 2004, p1

All of the above factors, combined with the policies of past Governments, poor coordination, inadequate accountability across the service system, duplication of services and under-resourced services, have resulted in a markedly complex environment in Redfern and Waterloo.¹⁸

- 2.13** The Committee was told that while Redfern and Waterloo are linked, they do not necessarily share the same characteristics. The State Member for Heffron, Ms Kristina Keneally MP, pointed out there are some significant demographic differences between the two suburbs. According to Ms Keneally, 'Waterloo suffers more so than Redfern on several key social disadvantage indicators.'¹⁹ In evidence, Ms Keneally spoke about the way in which residents in her electorate see themselves:

The residents of Waterloo see themselves as distinct from Redfern, and it is important to note that even if there may or may not be a number of real distinctions, the people who live in Waterloo certainly see themselves as distinct from Redfern. For example, one of the youth services has told me that young people in Waterloo do not mix with young people in Redfern.

Their view is that the mega youth service that tried to cover the whole area would not necessarily work. It will be interesting to see if people in Waterloo make use of the Redfern Community Centre. It is a fantastic new facility and I hope they do, but I think it will be an interesting demographic to track in terms of who is using the Redfern centre. The residents of Waterloo are culturally and linguistically diverse. As was pointed out, 41 per cent of the population is from a non-English speaking background and there are some significant Russian and Chinese communities.²⁰

- 2.14** The Committee notes that there are a number of important differences in the Redfern and Waterloo communities. As evidence to this Inquiry has shown, while the two suburbs also share some significant similarities, communities living in the two suburbs have often very different perceptions and identities. It is important that the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project account for the demographic as well as cultural differences in its consideration of current and future programs and services. This will be vital to ensuring that the needs of all people living in Redfern and Waterloo are adequately met.

Complexity of issues in Redfern and Waterloo

- 2.15** A number of inquiry participants acknowledged that the RWPP has a very difficult job given the complexity of social issues facing the area. The Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) suggested that while Redfern and Waterloo are 'great suburbs', there are many social problems in the area. They claim the community has been 'over consulted' with very few positive outcomes eventuating:

This has made the community jaded, cynical, untrusting, complacent and even hostile. The hostility towards the RWPP is a fear response to what is seen as yet another project bearing lots of promises but with very little hope of delivering.²¹

¹⁸ Submission 55, NSW Government, p13

¹⁹ Submission 15, Ms Kristina Keneally, p4

²⁰ Ms Kristina Keneally, Member for Heffron, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p65

²¹ Submission 42, Aboriginal Housing Company, p6

- 2.16** Ms Tanya Plibersek MP also spoke about the complex issues that exist in Redfern and Waterloo, noting in particular it is an area with generations of entrenched disadvantage:

I am probably getting this quote wrong, but I think it was Chairman Mao who, when asked what he thought about the French Revolution, said, "It's too early to tell." What I have seen so far of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project is very good and very positive. But when you are dealing with a community that has generations of entrenched disadvantage, nothing will be fixed overnight. ... I do not think that we will see solutions in the next week, the next six months or even the next year. I think that it is something that needs a long-term commitment. If you have got children, for example, who are growing up in families where neither their parents nor their grandparents have worked, you are not going to fix that by a three-year project in their suburb. You actually do need to take a very long-term view. As long as the commitment is there for this to be a long-term project, I think it is fantastic.²²

- 2.17** Similarly, the Vine and Hugo Action Group suggest that the Project has a 'Herculean task', given the complexity of social issues in the area and the short length of time the Project has been established.²³

- 2.18** The Committee acknowledges that there are many complex problems that have been allowed to become entrenched in Redfern and Waterloo due to the failure of successive state and federal governments. We note that over the past three decades, no government has adequately addressed the generational disadvantage that exists in the area, particularly among some Aboriginal families.

Current major projects – Human Services Review and the RED Strategy

- 2.19** One of the major tasks of the RWPP is to review the human service system in Redfern and Waterloo to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of existing services. The Review, which commenced in January 2004, is in response to the Government's recognition that the existing system is 'inflexible and lacks capacity to meet the needs of the community'.²⁴ The Government reports that it wants the Review to examine if there are structural issues that are working against the efficacy of the current system. The Review will consider program funding, monitoring mechanisms and accountability requirements as well as new methods and approaches to service delivery.

- 2.20** The Human Services Review (HSR) is currently being undertaken by consultants Morgan Disney & Associates. The Government had expected that Morgan Disney would present a final report at the end of June 2004. The Committee understands that the report is now expected soon. The Committee will consider the findings of the Human Services Review, and the effectiveness of government and non government programs and services (terms of reference b and c) in the second stage of our Inquiry and in our final report.

- 2.21** A number of people commented on the timing and consultation processes of the Human Services Review. These issues are discussed below.

²² Ms Tanya Plibersek, Member for Sydney, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p16

²³ Submission 27, Vine and Hugo Action Group, p25

²⁴ Submission 55, NSW Government, p311

2.22 The Project is also responsible for the development of the RED Strategy. The NSW Government's Redfern Eveleigh Darlington Strategy – known as the RED Strategy - was announced in March 2003 in response to the large number of infrastructure developments slated for the area in the next few years that have the potential for significant impacts on the area. The RED Strategy is funded through the RWPP. The aim of the RED Strategy is to '...provide a holistic approach to urban renewal, strengthening the local community and improving urban amenities'²⁵ and to increase the social outcomes for the community of these projects:

Given the extensive nature of the proposed private and public sector infrastructure developments, they have the potential to act as a catalyst in the revitalisation of the Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo precincts. A public/private sector approach to the redevelopment of this area would allow for better integration between the proposed public/private developments and an increased opportunity to achieve social outcomes for both communities.²⁶

2.23 One of the projects that lies within the RED Strategy area is the redevelopment of the Block. The redevelopment of the Block is dealt with in detail in Chapter 3.

The notion of 'partnership'

2.24 As noted in evidence to our Inquiry, one of the major aims of the RWPP is the establishment of effective partnerships between a range of service providers in the Redfern and Waterloo areas. However, as a number of submission authors noted, while the Project has made worthy attempts to bring agencies together, 'the notion of strategic partnerships between State Government Departments working together on shared issues is still in its infancy.'²⁷ Mr Tony Pooley, former Mayor of South Sydney Council, and currently a Councillor with the City of Sydney Council, also notes that:

... without compulsory joint service agreements (which exist in overseas models) between both government and non-government agencies, then community organisations and the community themselves will continue to feel alienated from this top down approach.²⁸

2.25 While the Government submission states that the Commonwealth Government and the City of Sydney Council are active partners in the Project, some inquiry participants believe this partnership arrangement could be improved. The City of Sydney made this comment and included themselves in this assessment of the Project:

The main weaknesses of the Partnership Project are that:

- The 'Partners' are unfamiliar and unskilled at working in 'partnership';

²⁵ Submission 55, NSW Government, p183

²⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Government and South Sydney City Council and University of Sydney and Aboriginal Housing Company Ltd, March 2003

²⁷ Submission 45, Mr Tony Pooley, p5

²⁸ *ibid*

- The approach has been very ‘top down’; and
- There are no genuine business or community partners, with community and business indicating that they feel disenfranchised by the project.²⁹

2.26 In her evidence, Ms Monica Barone, Director, Community Living, City of Sydney Council noted that people are often confused by the focus of the project:

When people say "the partnership project", I think often people think that means the people in the office in Redfern from the Premier's Department. I always stress that the partnership project is all of us. Every one of us who signed up to be a partner is part of that project. So the question is: How effective have we all been? I think that in some areas we are starting to be really effective. We are learning to work more closely with the community, and we are learning to work more effectively together.³⁰

2.27 In their submission to the Inquiry, the City of Sydney Council recommends that the NSW Government ensure that the Commonwealth Government and the City of Sydney are equal and active partners in the RWPP.³¹ The Committee did not receive any submissions from the Commonwealth Government in relation to this Inquiry, despite our correspondence to relevant agencies. The Committee is very disappointed about this, particularly given the Commonwealth’s constitutional responsibilities for Aboriginal people.

2.28 Others in the community suggest that one of the greatest challenges for the RWPP is to form ‘a serious partnership’ with all stakeholders in Redfern and Waterloo. The Benevolent Society argues that while some progress has been made in developing relationships, there is not yet much evidence on the ground of partnerships or change:

A key missing ingredient to date appears to be a vision of where the community wants to be which is relevant to all stakeholders and which they are all committed to achieving. Related to this is the absence of a coherent set of specific goals that address key issues and for which relevant agencies take both shared and specific responsibility for achieving.³²

2.29 Some witnesses raised concerns about the level of commitment of the RWPP to the development of these partnerships. The Fact Tree Youth Service Board of Management believes the notion of ‘partnership’ to be disingenuous:

The Board has sought on several occasions to establish a meaningful working relationship with the Project, but (has been) unable to progress this.³³

2.30 Since early 2002 the Fact Tree Youth Service have had several meetings with the Project regarding the relocation of the service and as yet has not had the issue resolved.³⁴

²⁹ Submission 84, City of Sydney Council, p3

³⁰ Ms Monica Barone, Director, Community Living, City of Sydney, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p73

³¹ Submission 84, City of Sydney Council, p10

³² Submission 33, The Benevolent Society, p7

³³ Submission 69, Fact Tree Youth Service, p10

³⁴ This issue will be dealt with the second stage of our Inquiry and in our Final Report

2.31 Local residents Lyn and Geoffrey Turnbull said that:

Putting time into building a partnership with the community and the capacity for the community to be an equal partner are not optional extras for the RWPP to achieve its goal; it is the key to its success. Without a genuine partnership with the community the problems of Redfern and Waterloo will not be solved.³⁵

2.32 The Committee believes there is great potential for effective and genuine partnerships between service providers in Redfern and Waterloo. However, the full potential for partnerships has yet to be realised. The Committee strongly supports the City of Sydney Council recommendation that the NSW Government ensures the Commonwealth Government and the City of Sydney Council are equal and active partners in the RWPP. In addition, the Committee urges the RWPP to ensure that strategies are in place to ensure that non government services and the local community are also equal partners. As will be investigated further in the second stage of the Inquiry, consideration should be given, for example, to the establishment of compulsory joint service agreements between both government and non government agencies. The Committee is mindful that without the active participation of all agencies and community members, community organisations and the community itself will continue to feel alienated, and this could significantly limit the success of the Project. The Committee will consider many of these issues during the second stage of the Inquiry and in our Final Report, including the effectiveness of the RWPP in relation to its coordinating role for government and non government services in the area.

Progress to date

2.33 The NSW Government submission provides a list of what it sees as the key achievements of the Government in Redfern and Waterloo since 2002. The submission lists more than 40 achievements, including:

- establishing the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project
- implementing the Redfern/Waterloo Anti-Drug Strategy
- increased policing, particularly in relation to drug-related crime
- assisting the Aboriginal Housing Company with the closure of drug houses and shooting galleries on the Block
- establishing a Community Safety Task Force and the development of a Community Safety Plan
- establishing a Street Team to provide support and advice to children and young people
- establishing the Yallamundi Intensive Family Based Service to provide Indigenous families with home based support.³⁶

³⁵ Submission 65, Geoffrey and Lyn Turnbull, p3

³⁶ Submission 55, NSW Government, pp3-7

2.34 Mr Richard Gilbert, Director of Health Services Planning, Central Sydney Area Health Service, NSW Health suggested that there have been some notable improvements in the coordination between agencies in Redfern and Waterloo:

Yes, I have certainly been hearing that through the review of human services and I think it has been proved in the past that the multitude of services in Redfern/Waterloo have perhaps operated in silos and have not always worked closely with each other. That has certainly improved in the last few years with the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, which does have a number of task forces that enabled that interagency collaboration to occur.³⁷

2.35 The Aboriginal Housing Company praised the RWPP as the best government initiative to happen in Redfern and Waterloo in many years:

We understand that the project has attracted much criticism from certain individuals but from our perspective most of it is definitely not deserved.³⁸

2.36 According to the AHC, the RWPP has assisted them in a number of ways, particularly in addressing crime and safety issues and dealing with drug use on the streets and in shooting galleries on the Block:³⁹

[T]he RWPP has achieved much in the way of addressing issues around crime and safety that have long been ignored. Significantly, the efforts of the RWPP to help tackle drugs on the Block especially shooting galleries and drug premises, has meant that the AHC is no longer doing it on its own.⁴⁰

2.37 RWPP Project Director, Mr Michael Ramsey, told the Inquiry that the Project assisted the Aboriginal Housing Company with the process of demolishing houses on the Block:

That was part of the anti-drug strategy. We relocated the older resident who was living between those two shooting galleries so we could actually demolish them. It took 12 months of negotiating or longer to actually find a house that she thought was suitable. Again, none of these are quick fixes.⁴¹

2.38 The NSW Government claims the Redfern/Waterloo Street Team as one of the major achievements. The eight-person Street Team, currently managed by the Department of Community Services, includes staff from government and non government services. The Team operates 7 days a week, 2 shifts per day, with shifts varying from between 9am and 2am, and is aimed at addressing issues for children and young people who congregate in public places in Redfern, Waterloo and Darlingtown.⁴² A number of witnesses told the Committee that the Street Team is an innovative initiative that has shown some genuine

³⁷ Mr Richard Gilbert, Director of Health Services Planning, Central Sydney Area Health Service, NSW Health, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p43

³⁸ Submission 42, Aboriginal Housing Company, p6

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ Mr Michael Ramsey, Project Director, Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p9

⁴² Submission 55, NSW Government, p313

results. NSW Health's Ms Karen Becker gave this example of the work of the Street Team in linking young people with health services:

We have also done a lot of work with the Street Team so that they can engage young people if they discover that they are pregnant and refer them in early. We are doing some good work in Redfern. Currently we have increased the number of young people coming to Redfern. The last figure that I had showed that we currently have 18 young women between the ages of 15 and 27 in treatment from the Redfern, Waterloo and Glebe areas. So we are making some significant strides there. They are referred straight on to the methadone program and they are being maintained as well.⁴³

2.39 A small number of witnesses criticised some aspects of the Street Team. The Fact Tree Youth Service said that as innovative as the project had been, 'the Street Team has established very few really meaningful connections with local communities.'⁴⁴ The Fact Tree Youth Service put this down to the possibility that staff were ill equipped to drive the project and engage with the local community.

2.40 Other witnesses commented on the development of a number of children's services. The City of Sydney Council, 'as a consequence of the partnership project':

...now participate in Kid Speak along with Barnardos and the Kid Speak committee, which comprises different members of the community who provide children's services. We have developed some additional services in the Waterloo area.⁴⁵

2.41 The RWPP has also coordinated the establishment of the Yallamundi Intensive Family Based Service run by Barnardos:

The Redfern/Waterloo service that was funded under the partnership project provides intensive home visits to families and takes what is called a case management approach - an overall approach. In practice, what it means is active outreach to families who, although they might be known to lots and lots of agencies and services, do not actually engage or make a connection with services. This particular approach is called assertive outreach.⁴⁶

2.42 A number of Aboriginal organisations expressed their dissatisfaction with the way in which the RWPP has seen to the establishment of a number of new services in Redfern and Waterloo, instead of using existing Aboriginal services. Dr Naomi Mayers, CEO, Aboriginal Medical Service told the Committee:

But from my understanding, a lot of the—when they set up the Redfern/Waterloo thing partnership, they kind of funded positions in agencies that they set up—Aboriginal positions—instead of putting the money into the Aboriginal organisations that were already there: like the children's service, like the legal service, like the Murrawina preschool and so on. There were already programs there. Then all of a

⁴³ Ms Karen Becker, Director of Drug Health Services, CSAHS, NSW Health, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p46

⁴⁴ Submission 69, Fact Tree Youth Service, p11

⁴⁵ Ms Barone, City of Sydney Council, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p72

⁴⁶ Ms Deirdre Cheers, Senior Manager, South East Sydney, Barnardos, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p2

sudden—we did not even know—there was street beat, and they put Aboriginal workers in there.⁴⁷

2.43 When asked whether she included Barnados' Yallamundi Intensive Family Based Service in this analysis, Dr Mayers replied:

They just moved in. They were not there. Some of the things that were in the paper there were very derogatory about some of the Aboriginal organisations that had been around for quite some time. We did get a letter from Barnardos apologising. A lot of people did not even know what they were about until the Redfern/Waterloo thing. Yet a lot of the stuff that they do could have been done by the Aboriginal organisations that were already there.⁴⁸

2.44 According to Dr Mayers there was 'not any kind of talking with the community about it. It was kind of done without people's knowledge.'⁴⁹

2.45 In relation to safety in the streets, a resident of Redfern, Mr Ian Thomson, told the Committee that the RWPP has had an immediate and marked impact on behaviour in the local streets:

In our immediate area, we have seen a general cessation of car windows being broken and related behaviour in the area. This speaks of some success arising from the programs in terms of local residents personal & property security.⁵⁰

2.46 According to the Government, while there is no 'magic wand' to solve issues in Redfern and Waterloo, the RWPP has had an impact on a number of problems in the area. When announcing the extension of the RWPP until 2006, the Premier said:

Crime and anti-social behaviour is still at unacceptable levels, but it has dropped since the government set up the Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project. For instance, assaults have dropped by 19.5 per cent and stolen vehicle offences are down by 26.9 per cent.⁵¹

2.47 Some local residents felt there had not been any significant improvements in safety in the area. Some people told us that while minor initiatives such as the increased police presence at the railway station have made that area safer, it has resulted in simply moving the problem to a different spot. According to Mr Stephen Gale, 'we are seeing an increase in crime and anti social behaviour in our streets now.'⁵²

⁴⁷ Dr Naomi Mayers, CEO, Aboriginal Medical Service, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p33

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Submission 19, Mr Ian Thomson, p1

⁵¹ Hon R Carr MP, Premier of New South Wales, 'State Govt extends Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project', *Media Release*, 27 May 2004, p1

⁵² Submission 13, Mr Stephen Gale, p6

Slowness in implementation of programs

2.48 In his submission to the Inquiry, Mr Tony Pooley, who was generally supportive of the RWPP initiative, commented on concerns in the community about the inability of the Project to meet agreed time lines for rolling out programs and:

... the failure to deliver on other promised initiatives such as a comprehensive Youth Services Plan, The Employment and Enterprise Development Taskforce and the Community Building Program.⁵³

2.49 The Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board said that while a number of strategies have been implemented, such as the Street Team and family support service, a number of strategies promised in consultations with the community have not been delivered. These include making funds available to existing services and programs, establishing small grants for community development and an Employment Taskforce.⁵⁴

2.50 Several inquiry participants suggested that the failure to implement a number of strategies was due to unclear and unrealistic timeframes. These participants felt strongly that the timeframes for conducting the Human Services Review and the Community Engagement Strategy were unrealistically short and this has resulted in community anger and frustration. Others, such as the Vine and Hugo Action Group, suggested too much time has been spent on solving industrial relations, communication or infrastructure issues between agencies, and not enough time and resources have been given to social problems such as assisting children and families.⁵⁵ Local Redfern residents such as Mr Ian Thomson also expressed concern about the slow rate of implementation of some of the reforms initially proposed by the Project.⁵⁶

2.51 The Committee acknowledges that many of the issues facing the RWPP are complex and difficult. The role of coordinating a partnership between three tiers of government, non government services and the community is an intricate and delicate task. Coordinating the partnership arrangements is complicated by the complexity of many of the issues facing Redfern and Waterloo. Nevertheless, the Committee firmly believes that the RWPP has failed to deliver on a number of initiatives due, as indicated by witnesses, to unclear and unrealistic timeframes. The Project has not always clearly articulated to the community the reasons for delays and extensions to timeframes. As discussed in detail below, evidence to the Inquiry shows that the Project's communication processes have been, on occasion, inadequate. The Committee addresses the need to improve these processes and the future of the RWPP in the sections below.

⁵³ Submission 45, Mr Tony Pooley, p5

⁵⁴ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p1

⁵⁵ Submission 27, Vine and Hugo Action Group, p25

⁵⁶ Submission 19, Mr Ian Thompson, p1

Consultation and communications

2.52 Since its establishment, the RWPP has developed, in conjunction with key partners such as the City of Sydney Council, a number of mechanisms to facilitate consultation with service providers and community members. The Committee received a considerable amount of evidence on the effectiveness of these strategies. In this section we briefly overview the consultation and communication processes and the criticism made by inquiry participants.

Overview of RWPP consultation and communication mechanisms

2.53 The mechanisms established by the RWPP include the Redfern/Waterloo Community Council, a number of Taskforces and specific consultations with the Redfern and Waterloo community. The Government submission describes the Redfern/Waterloo Community Council as an ‘ongoing mechanism to ensure that the views of the community are heard in the RWPP.’⁵⁷ The Council members are non government, local council, business and community representatives.

2.54 In addition to the Community Council, the NSW Government established a number of Taskforces to address particular issues where priorities have been identified. Youth, Drug and Alcohol, Infrastructure, Facilities Planning and Community Safety Taskforces have been established.⁵⁸

2.55 In addition to these mechanisms, the Government submission notes other specific consultations with the Redfern and Waterloo community. The submission lists the consultations as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Human Services Review | March 2004 |
| • Consultation on the RED Strategy | June 2003 |
| • Community Engagement Consultancy | March 2003 |
| • Building a Better Future for our Children | September 2002 |
| • Redfern/Waterloo Pathways to Prevention Project | July and August 2002 |
| • Youth Consultation Report | July 2002 |
| • Redfern/Waterloo Youth Services Review | November 1998. ⁵⁹ |

2.56 The Government submission provides an overview of the Community Engagement Consultancy process. In January 2003 the NSW Government engaged a consultant, Dr Sharon McCallum, to gain an understanding of the needs of the community to, among other objectives, ‘ascertain the one, five and ten year vision of each of the stakeholders for

⁵⁷ Submission 55, NSW Government, p73

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p75

⁵⁹ *ibid*, p77

the Redfern and Waterloo area.’ Over 200 contacts were made with the community between January and March 2003. The findings of the consultations, covering community well being, community safety and justice and the physical environment, are listed in the NSW Government submission to this Inquiry.⁶⁰

2.57 In its submission, the Government claims it has implemented many of the recommendations arising from the consultations. In addition, the Government suggests the information gathered during the consultations has ‘been used to inform government priorities, planning and programming’:

It is important to note that the information collected in these consultations has been used to inform public policy and service delivery. Issues have been fed back to individual agencies for incorporation into their planning and programming and RWPP has coordinated the development of individual initiatives as a result of the feedback obtained from (the) community.⁶¹

2.58 The Government submission notes that the RWPP has developed a number of mechanisms to communicate with the local community, including:

- attending meetings with inter-agencies and Neighbourhood Advisory Boards
- direct phone contact with individuals and community groups and organisations
- newsletters distributed to all residents with information on Government activity in the area
- website and email contact with agencies and residents.⁶²

2.59 According to the Government, communication strategies have also been developed to deal with specific projects such as the Human Services Review. The Government submission notes that the consultants Morgan Disney have developed a comprehensive communication strategy with a view to involving all the key organisations and individuals and provide timely information and feedback. According to its submission, the consultants conducted ‘interviews, focus groups, workshops, and household sampling’:

Specifically, workshops for services [sic] providers were held on 18 and 19 March 2004. They attended the Open Day at the new Redfern Community Centre on 11 March and held a Human Services Review Forum on Thursday 18 March 2004 at the Redfern Town Hall. On 24 April 2004 Morgan Disney also held a sausage sizzle for residents of Redfern and Waterloo. The sausage sizzle provided residents with another opportunity to speak with the consultants about their views of, and experience with, the Human Services system in Redfern and Waterloo. Approximately 85 people attended the barbeque and responded well to the less formal process of engagement. A further public forum was also held on 29 April 2004.⁶³

⁶⁰ *ibid*, pp81-95

⁶¹ *ibid*, p77

⁶² *ibid*, pp72-73

⁶³ *ibid*, pp78-79

Criticism of the consultation processes

- 2.60** A number of local services expressed considerable frustration with the Project's consultation processes. Witnesses told the Committee that while many people may have been asked a lot of questions, few had been 'engaged' in the process. Agencies and individuals told us they did not feel they had been invited to be active participants in the consultation processes. According to the Fact Tree Youth Service:
- ... the consultative process which was presented as the key point of entry for establishing a partnership has been experienced as being both disingenuous and quite circumspect.⁶⁴
- 2.61** The Fact Tree Youth Service suggested that the assurances that consultations held with young people would result in concrete outcomes have so far proved 'vacuous'. According to the organisation, this lack of action has resulted in considerable frustration among some young people, particularly the consultation participants.
- 2.62** The Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB) suggested that decisions made by the RWPP without adequate community consultation have raised concerns about their honesty, openness, transparency and commitment to the community.⁶⁵ In addition, the NAB was concerned about the failure of the RWPP to engage existing forums and infrastructure in the consultation processes.
- 2.63** Particular criticism was made of the RWPP Taskforces and their consultation processes. It was suggested to the Committee that the Taskforces do not meet on a regular basis and act more like meetings for the exchange of information. Witnesses to the Inquiry said these meetings should be outcome and action-based forums, where participants are included in the decision-making processes and in driving change.⁶⁶ A member of the Redfern/Waterloo Family Taskforce, the Benevolent Society said, in its experience, the Taskforce is more of an 'administrative entity, rather than a place where collective action is taken.'⁶⁷
- 2.64** Other submission makers request greater opportunities for community involvement in the Taskforces. Geoffrey and Lyn Turnbull claim that current mechanisms for community involvement have not been made known, or do not state whether or not they are open to residents.⁶⁸

RED Strategy and Human Services Review

- 2.65** A number of people made specific comments on the consultation processes undertaken for the RED Strategy and Human Services Review (HSR). The Redfern Legal Centre expressed concern about the perception that the RED Strategy was about real estate sales and money flowing to government and developers, and not about the stated objective of

⁶⁴ Submission 69, Fact Tree Youth Service, p10

⁶⁵ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p1

⁶⁶ Submission 45, Mr Tony Pooley, p5

⁶⁷ Submission 33, The Benevolent Society, p7

⁶⁸ Submission 65, Geoffrey and Lyn Turnbull, p8

seeking a 'better social mix'. This perception, they argue, was a result of the information made available by the RWPP.⁶⁹ The Coordinator of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, Mr Charlie Richardson, told the Committee he felt the two consultations conducted in June for the RED Strategy 'were more exhibitions; they were not consultations':

They were not a bunch of people in a room being told things, listening to other people's questions and coalescing around ideas. People were walking around a board at any time between certain times and consultants were speaking to them. No material was given to people to take away to reflect on later or to share with their neighbours. The daytime exhibition was held in a very small park close to the Block, and a lot of people will not go there. The one in the evening was held at the same time as a major State of Origin match, which was televised. When people attend big public meetings there is perhaps 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the meeting when they are able to say something in reply to the information with which they have just been bombarded. A great deal of anger has been expressed at those meetings about the expectation that people are able to comment on such a huge amount of non-information.⁷⁰

2.66 In relation to the Human Services Review, several submission authors noted that while the RWPP announced the HSR at the outset of the Project, they waited until only a few months ago to engage the consultants:

Morgan Disney now has this complex task to complete with such a tight deadline that it is doubtful that it will be able to present a full and accurate summary of the services.⁷¹

2.67 One submission noted that no advance information about the Human Services Review was given to the community:

The initial public forum was poorly advertised and few people knew about it. Many of those at the first meeting only knew about it because they were on our email list. Some streets did not receive the 'Survey for Residents' and the survey was not appropriate for many of those who received it. This meant that the consultants had to conduct interviews based on the survey to get responses from some sections of the community.⁷²

2.68 A number of inquiry participants expressed concern that the RWPP was not able to say how many services were operating in the Redfern and Waterloo area. A wide range of figures up to approximately 100 agencies and around 200 services has been mentioned during evidence to this Inquiry. The Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development said that despite being in the area for nearly three years, the RWPP was unable to supply Morgan Disney with a list of the services in the area.⁷³ In response to questioning on the number of services, Mr Michael Ramsey said:

⁶⁹ Submission 50, Redfern Legal Centre, p11

⁷⁰ Mr Charlie Richardson, Coordinator, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, Evidence, 25 May 2004, p47

⁷¹ Submission 46, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, p5

⁷² Submission 65, Geoffrey and Lyn Turnbull, p6

⁷³ Submission 46, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

I will respond in a broad way, in saying that you can actually look at any other area of New South Wales and if you can tell me how many services exist within those areas or tell me anybody who can identify those number of services, I think you would be surprised. Why it has taken so long and why we actually employed Morgan Disney to do this Human Services Review is we are literally burrowing down to identify every single service that is in Redfern/Waterloo so we can develop a very effective, a very responsive human services system. That is an entirely new approach. This is not just a simple little exercise of creating a directory of services.

This is actually literally going out and talking to everybody to find out exactly what exists. In terms of the difference between 195 and 210, the consultancies are still going on. The consultancy is still going on. The consultancy has not been completed. We said quite clearly in the Government submission that this will not be completed until the end of June and we think absolutely within that context we will tell you exactly how many services exist, what the strengths of those services are and we will be able to then tell how it has to be restructured.

If you want to bring about systemic change, it cannot be done in an ad hoc piecemeal way and so the Human Services Review is intended to bring about systemic change.⁷⁴

- 2.69** A number of witnesses supported the work being done by the Human Services Review team and believe they have endeavoured to consult widely within the limited time available. According to Lyn and Geoffrey Turnbull, Morgan Disney were interested in the concerns and ideas of participants and provided follow up forums with residents and service providers to give reports on the progress of the Review.⁷⁵
- 2.70** As mentioned above, Morgan Disney was due to present a final report to the RWPP by the end of June 2004. The Committee understands the report is expected soon.

Consultations with Aboriginal people

- 2.71** Many people commented on the adequacy or otherwise of the RWPP consultation processes with the Aboriginal community. Witnesses told the Committee that the lack of community empowerment accompanied by a high level of consultation had bred a level of scepticism about the ability of these consultations to lead to results. The Social Justice Committee, Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW), argues:
- In the context of the dispossession of Indigenous Australians, and their continuing disadvantage, not only must particular government attention be paid to their needs, but solutions to any problems must empower the community. It is only by empowering the community to make decisions that the solutions will be effective and culturally appropriate.⁷⁶
- 2.72** Representatives from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council did not believe the consultation process with Aboriginal people had been adequate. Mr Paul Coe told the Committee:

⁷⁴ Mr Ramsey, Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p19

⁷⁵ Submission 65, Geoffrey and Lyn Turnbull, p6

⁷⁶ Submission 64, Social Justice Committee, Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW), p2

I have had one discussion with the person who is running the program. I did not find that process very helpful. I was told quite adamantly that the resources were primarily for Russian immigrants in the area and that they were not for Aboriginal people. So I did not find that meeting to be very successful.⁷⁷

2.73 The Chairperson, Mr Robert Welsh, explained that the Land Council had early consultations when the RWPP was first structured:

I attended quite a lot of the early meetings and basically point blank denied any response. I felt that we were not being given respect, as the main core of the community. After the first couple of meetings we were basically ignored by the whole process.⁷⁸

2.74 As noted earlier in the chapter, organisations such as the Aboriginal Medical Service were critical of the RWPP and the funding of Aboriginal organisations. Mr Lindsay Hardy, Manager of *Tunggaré News*, made the similar point that while there were a number of meetings in the initial stages of the RWPP:

...a lot of the funding that went specifically to Aboriginal organisations was limited. It was one-off funding and there was no guarantee of long-term funding. A lot of that funding was provided to a few of the mainstream organisations, which was really in competition with the community organisations that existed. I will not go any further. There was lack of thorough community consultation to a large extent.⁷⁹

2.75 The Committee heard from a number of Aboriginal people that there are many people who visit the Block and Redfern from other parts of NSW and other states. According to Mr Kevin Smith,⁸⁰ Mr Lyall Munro and others there has not been any attempt to consult people regularly visiting the Block or residing in the area. Mr Munro told the Committee:

I am saying that none of us that frequent the Block or reside at the Block or any of us that were given the right to speak on behalf of the community were involved. We never got any invitations because that is how we are seen. We are out of sight, out of mind. Most people just drive past the Block. ...⁸¹

2.76 Mr Shane Phillips said that he would like to see a better relationship between the Project and the Aboriginal community:

Apart from that, we do not know what their charter is. I do not know whether the Waterloo-Redfern project is being attacked but I would like to know that if there is some resource that our people can access or that can help our situation, let us not go from one extreme to the other and get rid of it; let us make it active. Let us make it work for our people.⁸²

⁷⁷ Mr Paul Coe, CEO, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Evidence, 25 May 2004 p3

⁷⁸ Mr Robert Welsh, Chairperson, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Evidence, 25 May 2004, pp3-4

⁷⁹ Mr Lindsay Hardy, Manager, *Tunggaré News*, Evidence, 25 May 2004, pp3-4

⁸⁰ Mr Kevin Smith, Evidence, 19 May 2004, p50

⁸¹ Mr Lyall Munro, Evidence, 19 May 2004, p42

⁸² Mr Shane Phillips, Evidence, 19 May 2004, p50

2.77 The Aboriginal Housing Company has been satisfied with their contact and level of consultation with the RWPP:

I praise the Redfern/Waterloo partnership because I believe they came to us in the beginning, that is Michael, and asked what is the problem in the community. Before, the Government just used to say, "You do this. You do that." Michael came to us and said, "Mick and Peter and Lani, what is the problem? Let us work from the beginning to the end." He met us halfway and that is why we are working this out with him and that is why we have succeeded so far with what we are doing now.⁸³

2.78 The Committee believes there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on effective and culturally appropriate consultations with Aboriginal people. The RWPP must ensure that the Aboriginal community is part of the decision-making processes and is included in the implementation of programs and services for Aboriginal people. This issue is taken up again below.

Criticisms of communication processes

2.79 A number of organisations suggested there is a poor level of communication between the RWPP and local community services. It was suggested to the Committee that there is little or no follow up and reporting back to organisations on decisions made by the RWPP and stakeholders. The failure to provide feedback regarding the purpose and outcomes of the consultations:

...has led to many community members feeling that their views are undervalued, or when no action is forthcoming, that their community is not worthy of the resources necessary to address the issues they have identified.⁸⁴

2.80 A number of witnesses felt that there was poor coordination and notification of community forums.⁸⁵ The Redfern Legal Centre suggested that while the RWPP was 'very visible' when it first came into the area, with promises of extensive consultation, 'little feedback is received from it regarding information it has gathered and surveys it has conducted.'⁸⁶ Other participants were concerned that documents such as the Community Engagement Strategy had not been made publicly available.

2.81 The Fact Tree Youth Service commented on the lack of updated information on the RWPP website. The Committee has also found the lack of updated information on the website considerably frustrating in the conduct of this Inquiry. We note that the latest RWPP Newsletter on the Website is for October 2003.

2.82 As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Mr Charlie Richardson and others were extremely critical of the information provided during the consultations for the RED strategy. According to Mr Richardson, information on the expansion of the project was not clear

⁸³ Mr Michael Mundine, CEO, Aboriginal Housing Company, Evidence, 19 May 2004, p24

⁸⁴ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p3

⁸⁵ *ibid*, p2

⁸⁶ Submission 50, Redfern Legal Centre, p10

nor easily accessible. The only information available to the community was 'a couple of statements at their exhibition':

All we have from the partnership project is what is available publicly. Among that is the stuff that was exhibited on 11 June last year, which I have to say looks a lot more like an exhibition for would-be developers to look at and encourage them to buy into the area, rather than consultation with the community about what might be best for the future of the area.⁸⁷

2.83 Ms Kristina Keneally MP also felt there had been difficulties with the distribution of information about community meetings in relation to the RED Strategy.⁸⁸

2.84 A number of inquiry participants suggested that the RWPP does not have adequate resources to allow them to effectively communicate with the community. They argue that this lack of resources has led to newsletters and forums provided on an ad hoc, rather than systematic basis.

Improving consultation and communication processes

2.85 It should be said that the Committee did receive some positive comment on the RWPP consultations with the local community. Ms Kristina Keneally MP said that, while the project had not always communicated effectively:

Real efforts have been made to engage in and understand the challenges faced by communities in Waterloo, particularly Russian and Chinese communities and particularly elderly communities. Representatives of those communities have been involved in forums and are involved in the community council. My constituents have conveyed to me views such as, "This is the best thing that the Government is trying to do in this area. The Government has finally recognised that these communities are not sustainable and that the project offers hope." Some of the challenges include things that could be overcome. Some of them may just be part and parcel of this type of community renewal work. The project has not always communicated effectively and efficiently with the local community.⁸⁹

2.86 Other witnesses felt that improvements had been made to the consultation processes. The City of Sydney Council argued that community consultations had improved as evidenced by the consultations undertaken for the Human Services Review.⁹⁰ Mr Tony Pooley suggests that while the consultation processes were not adequate in the beginning, there have been some recent improvements:

I think the project came in with a far bigger agenda than was easily able to be developed, and that takes time. I think some of their community consultation was less than adequate at the start. It is my personal view that it has improved. It is a fairly articulate community and I think there was no shortage of people throughout the community of Redfern and Waterloo that alerted the Partnership Project in the way

⁸⁷ Mr Richardson, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, Evidence, 25 May 2004, p45

⁸⁸ Submission 15, Ms Kristina Keneally, p7

⁸⁹ Ms Keneally MP, Member for Heffron, Evidence, 8 June 2004, p65

⁹⁰ Submission 84, City of Sydney, p3

they were dealing with people, and I think they have taken that on board. I am not suggesting it is perfect by any stretch of the imagination, all I am doing is contrasting the first 18 months with the second 18 months, and I think there have been noticeable improvements.⁹¹

- 2.87** Ms Deirdre Cheers, Senior Manager, South East Sydney, Barnardos suggested that the Project needs to hear from residents who do not usually have a voice, but who are regular users of services in the area:

I think that the Partnership Project, above all else, needs to continue listening to residents from all sectors of the community. The agency opinions and the service deliverer opinions are important, but the consumer view is also very important. In addition - and as I said in my opening remarks - to residents who do have a voice and often a loud voice and who can speak it is very important for the partnership project to attempt to tackle that opinion that nothing has been fixed, the problems are still the same and nothing is changing. One of the ways of doing that, I think, is to look at ways of getting the feedback from the families who are not so vocal and who are living there with the same problems but who are experiencing the problems, perhaps differently, and who are consumers of some of the services that the partnership project has put into place.⁹²

- 2.88** A number of witnesses including Mr Charlie Richardson recognised that the Redfern and Waterloo community is a 'fractured community', and is 'an extremely difficult community to consult and to bring into these processes.'⁹³

- 2.89** The Director General of the Premier's Department, Dr Col Gellatly, acknowledged on the first day of public hearings the criticism made of the RWPP and suggested that improvements could be made to communication and consultation strategies:

We acknowledge that there is some criticism of our communication strategies. It is fair to say that we have had to prioritise addressing crises and other issues at the expense to some degree of our communication strategy. The Government is committed to developing and implementing a more effective communication strategy in the future. Consultation and communication are just two of the many challenges being faced by the Government in the area.⁹⁴

- 2.90** While it is clearly not going to be an easy task, as the majority of evidence to this Inquiry suggests, the RWPP must find ways to improve its consultation and communication with the community. As noted by Dr Col Gellatly, there is a need for a more effective communication strategy. The Committee strongly urges the NSW Government to adequately fund the RWPP to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure there is effective consultation and communication with the Redfern and Waterloo community.

- 2.91** In summary, evidence to our Inquiry suggested that consultations should take place with a specific purpose made clear to all participants. The consultations should occur on a regular

⁹¹ Mr Tony Pooley, Evidence, 25 May 2004, pp56, 57

⁹² Ms Cheers, Barnardos, Evidence, 4 June 2004, p10

⁹³ Mr Richardson, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, Evidence, 25 May 2004, p51

⁹⁴ Dr Gellatly, Premier's Department, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p4

basis with a broad range of services and community members, with participants actively involved in decision-making processes. The RWPP should attempt to hear from residents of the community who are not so vocal, and who may be experiencing different problems. Regular, clear and transparent information should be provided in feedback on the consultation processes. The Committee also believes that the RWPP could make better use of the existing forums and agencies to keep residents informed of issues arising from consultations and action taken by the RWPP and its partners.

- 2.92** The Committee firmly believes there is an urgent need to improve the relationship with the local community, particularly the Aboriginal community. Evidence to this Inquiry suggests that the RWPP could significantly improve its relationships with the local community by more effective communication. The Committee strongly urges the RWPP to establish mechanisms to facilitate capacity building within the Aboriginal community.

The future for the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

- 2.93** While there was considerable criticism of aspects of the RWPP, the majority of inquiry participants did not suggest disbanding the Project. While a small number of witnesses did express a desire for the RWPP to begin again,⁹⁵ most people felt it would be regrettable to have to ‘reinvent the wheel’.
- 2.94** There was broad support for the whole of government, place-based approach to service delivery in Redfern and Waterloo. However, a number of people identified the fact that without the commitment of all participating agencies to change their current operating methods and improve how they work together with agency partners, the model is limited in what it can achieve.⁹⁶ The Committee believes the place-based approach to service delivery represented by the RWPP is the appropriate model for service delivery in the area. Nevertheless, based on the evidence to the Committee, we believe that the Project has not yet been effective in achieving a number of the stated aims of the whole of government approach to Redfern and Waterloo, particularly in relation to enhancing community participation and leadership⁹⁷ and ensuring that partners work together.
- 2.95** There is considerable expectation within the community that the Project will be able to deliver significant improvements to Redfern and Waterloo. The Committee acknowledges that there are major and complex issues facing Redfern and Waterloo, many of which will be addressed in our Final Report. We note that ‘quick solutions’ to the generations of disadvantage being experienced by many Redfern and Waterloo families will not work.
- 2.96** One of the significant challenges for the RWPP will be to ensure coordination of the broad range of services in the area. A considerable investment has been made by the NSW Government to improve coordination and service delivery in the two suburbs. We note that the success of the RWPP depends on the full commitment of all partners, including Commonwealth, State and local government agencies, non government services and the

⁹⁵ For example, Mr Richardson, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, Evidence, 25 May 2004, p51

⁹⁶ Submission 45, Mr Tony Pooley, p5

⁹⁷ Submission 55, NSW Government, p62

community. The Project has a very big task ahead in connecting the vast range of services in the area, including health, police, infrastructure, employment, education and community and social services. The success of the RWPP will depend on its ability to obtain a real cooperation across the three tiers of government, NGOs and the local community as well as an ongoing commitment. As we have already pointed out, the Committee will be looking closely, in the second stage of the Inquiry, at the effectiveness of the Project in its role of coordinating service delivery in the area and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the community.

2.97 The Committee believes there is great potential for effective and genuine partnerships between government and non government agencies and other community partners in Redfern and Waterloo. Evidence to this Inquiry suggests that the full potential for partnerships has yet to be realised. We are convinced that without the active participation of all agencies and community members, community organisations and the community themselves will continue to feel alienated and this could significantly limit the success of the Project. For this reason, we believe that the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project must, as a matter of priority, ensure that all participants in the RWPP become genuine partners. The establishment of these partnership arrangements will be crucial to the successful implementation of the findings of the Human Services Review.

2.98 The Committee notes that the final report of the HSR was due at the end of June 2004. The fact that the final report is now overdue is a matter of concern, given the importance of the Review in the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of existing services. The Committee believes that the RWPP should expedite the completion of the Human Services Review. In addition, we ask that the Committee be provided with the Human Services Review Report as soon as it is completed. The Committee is not able to fully assess the effectiveness of the RWPP in meeting the needs of the local community until the completion of that and other reviews. These issues will be addressed in our Final Report. In particular, during the second stage of the Inquiry we will examine the Government's establishment of clear timeframes and projected outcomes for the implementation of the Review. In addition, we will consider the need for a thorough process of evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its implementation.

2.99 Many witnesses suggested that there needs to be a long-term commitment of funding to the RWPP. Lord Mayor of Sydney, Ms Clover Moore MP, called for a ten year commitment:

The City of Sydney Council supports and is an active member of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP). It is vital that the RWPP continues and is refined over at least a decade so that real change will occur.⁹⁸

2.100 NCOSS's Director, Mr Gary Moore, argues that a long term commitment to Redfern and Waterloo should be made by the NSW Government and the City of Sydney Council, similar to the ten year UK Government programs such as the 'New Deal for the Communities' program or the US and Canadian urban regeneration projects. According to Mr Moore, the four year horizon of the RWPP does not command the broad community credibility required to drive such regeneration initiatives.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Submission 84, City of Sydney Council, p2

⁹⁹ Submission 56, NCOSS, p3

- 2.101** The Committee notes that the NSW Government recently announced the extension of the RWPP until 2006 with approval for \$2.5 million a year for the next two years. We note also the comments of the Premier that in 2006, the Project can re-apply for funding as part of the normal process.¹⁰⁰ The Committee heard from many witnesses that the Government needs to provide a long-term commitment to Redfern and Waterloo. Based on this evidence, and the fact that by the Government's own admission, many of the problems facing Redfern and Waterloo are not going to be solved overnight, we believe that a long-term commitment to the area is essential to the needs of the community. We note that successive governments have failed to address the significant and complex problems in the area. The Committee firmly believes the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project and its partners should be supported by a long-term commitment from the NSW Government, beyond commitment of funding to 2006.
- 2.102** Some of the most critical evidence we received concerned the RWPP's consultation and communication processes. The Committee believes that the RWPP must find ways to improve its consultation and communication with the community. We note Dr Col Gellaty's comment that there needs to be a more effective communication strategy. The Committee strongly urges the NSW Government to adequately fund the RWPP to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure there is effective consultation and communication. In particular, the RWPP must work to improve its relationship with the local community, particularly the Aboriginal community. The Committee would like to see the RWPP establish mechanisms to facilitate capacity building within the Aboriginal community.
- 2.103** In conclusion, the Committee is hopeful that the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project can make a real difference to the area. The Committee believes the place-based approach is the appropriate model for service delivery in Redfern and Waterloo. As many witnesses pointed out, there have been a number of problems with the management of the Project, including slowness in implementation of programs and with consultation and communication processes. Nevertheless, other witnesses argue that improvements have been made and the Project can succeed. According to Mr Tony Pooley:

I think it can. Once again I will just extend my personal view. I think what the project has learned, particularly over the last two years, I would hate to now see cease because I think they have a much better grasp of the issues involved. That is obviously the personnel and the structures they have got in place, the way they run community consultation; I think it has improved and I think we need to build on that rather than stop and start again, although I acknowledge Charlie's [Richardson] view that if the world was a different place they might have approached it differently at the start. But it did take a long time to get the street team up and running, particularly the second shift; it did take a long time to let the contract for the intensive family support services and for them to subsequently set up their shop front; we are still waiting for the draft options associated with the RED project and, not surprisingly, in their early enthusiasm, it had been suggested that those things would have been resolved earlier.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Hon R Carr MP, Premier of New South Wales, 'State Govt extends Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project', *Media Release*, 27 May 2004, p1

¹⁰¹ Mr Pooley, Evidence, 25 May 2004, p57

2.104 A number of community groups in the area are also hopeful and would like to see the Project continue. The Vine and Hugo Action Group said:

Has it made our lives better? Not yet, but we'd like to see it continue and fulfil its role of improving the quality of life of people living and working here.¹⁰²

Recommendation 1

That the NSW Government continue the place-based approach represented by the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, despite the criticisms made of the Project, and make a long-term financial commitment to the Project beyond the funding already committed up to 2006.

Recommendation 2

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, take all possible steps to achieve genuine partnership between State and Commonwealth agencies, the City of Sydney Council, the non government sector and the local community in order to address the issues facing Redfern and Waterloo.

Recommendation 3

That the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project develops and implements a comprehensive strategy to ensure there is effective consultation and communication with the Redfern and Waterloo communities. In addition, to improve its relationship with the local community, particularly the Aboriginal community, the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project should establish mechanisms to facilitate capacity building within the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 4

That the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project expedites the completion of the Human Services Review, and that the NSW Government provide a copy of the Human Services Review report to the Committee as soon as it is completed. Further, that the plans for reform of government and non government services and their coordination which arise from the Human Services Review be communicated to all the partners in Redfern and Waterloo and to the Committee as soon as possible.

¹⁰² Submission 27, Vine and Hugo Action Group, p25