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Redfern Local Area Command  
**Waterloo Green Safety Audit**  
14 June 2007

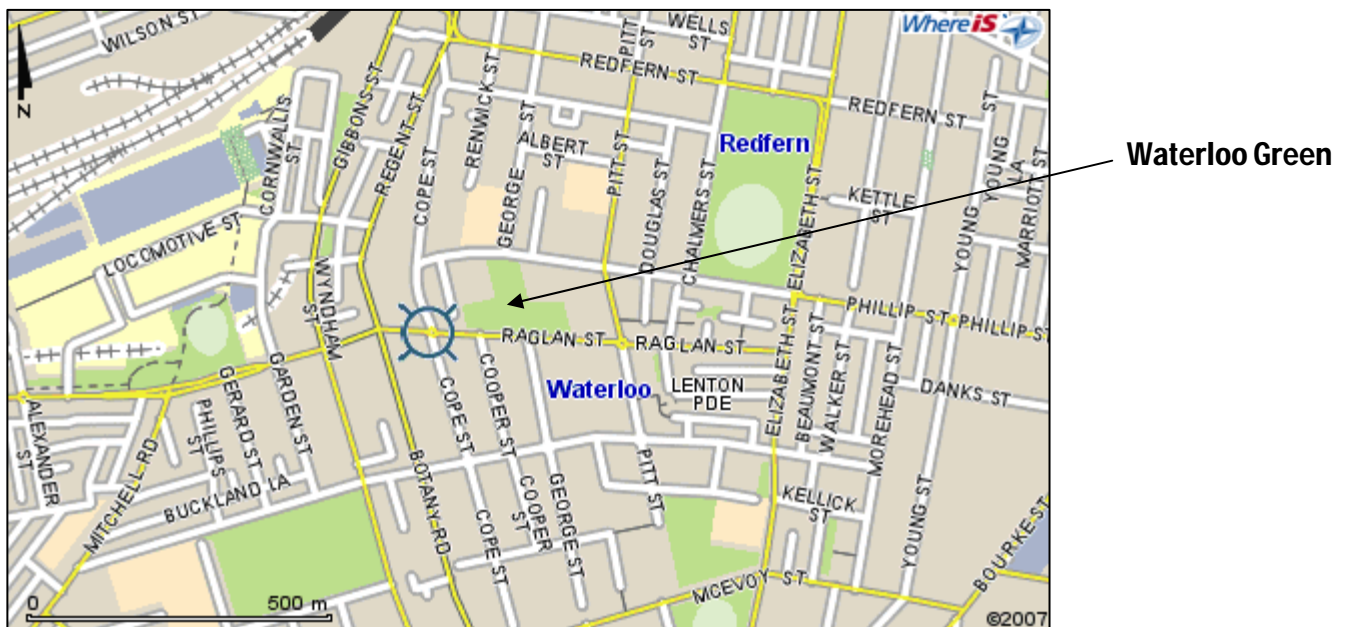
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# Executive Summary

This report reflects the findings and recommendations of a Community Safety Audit Team consisting of fourteen members of the community who conducted an audit on the Waterloo Green area on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2007 between 7:00pm and 8:00pm. The audit was commissioned in response to concerns raised by the local community members using and residing in the Waterloo Green area and the Redfern Local Area Command of the NSW Police Force. These concerns relate to the negative perception many citizens hold in respect to the level of crime and community safety in the area. Community Safety Audits are an excellent means to document current and potentially dangerous locations within public areas that may stimulate the likelihood of crime and increase the level of community fear and concerns

Waterloo Green is parkland that runs between three Department of Housing unit towers: the Marton Building to the west, the Daniel Solander Building to the east and the Matevai Building to the north east. To the north is Phillip Street and to the south is Raglan Street. The Waterloo Green area is located on land owned and serviced by the Department of Housing. Contained within the boundaries of the park are two childrens playgrounds, two covered BBQ complexes, two community gardens, a basket ball court, two car parks, pathways and seating.



The Waterloo Green audit area is an important green space for the Department of Housing Tenants and has a number of worthwhile facilities and activity generators within its boundaries. The general expectation is that the area should be extensively used by families however members of the audit team indicated this was not occurring. Audit team members expressed concern that the area is increasing being used for the consumption of alcohol which often results in anti social behaviour.

The reason for social issues such as street drinking are outside the scope of this report, however the current state of the area is such that illegitimate, anti-social and criminal behaviour is likely to be encouraged, while at the same time discouraging legitimate users.

The audit team identified the following issues:

- The overall impression of the area implies there is no ownership, care or control of the area.
- Maintenance and landscaping in the area is extremely poor. Shrubbery has not been trimmed and maintained. Damage has been left in a state of disrepair for many months.

- The entire audit area has been subject to vandalism and graffiti as have the three residential towers.
- Lighting at night is poor with many of the lights physically broken or not working. The lighting at the time of the audit did not meet Australian Standards.
- Urban decay and the resultant fear of crime is causing residents to avoid using the area. Comments made by audit team members suggest this urban decay is also occurring within the residential towers.
- The existing signage is inadequate and has been vandalised.
- Sightlines into the audit area from the street are obscured by overgrown landscaping.
- Activity generators such as the childrens playground, basketball court, BBQ area and community gardens are in a state of decay and have not been maintained thus discourage legitimate users.
- There are a number of concealment and entrapment points caused by poor design of the residential buildings, car parks, community gardens and general landscaping.
- Pedestrian traffic through the area was minimal and there was limited natural surveillance.
- Members of the audit team indicated that in the past, requests submitted to the Department of Housing resulted in no action. As such members indicated that because of the continual non response to their requests many no longer bothered reporting incidents of damage or crime.

Some of the key recommendations of this report include:

- Implementation of a regular proactive rapid repair and maintenance program that includes the residential towers as well as the Waterloo Green audit area. Damage should be repaired within 24 to 48 hours of the damage occurring.
- Repair of the existing lighting as a matter of priority.
- Undertake a lighting plan in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles that brings the illumination up to Australian Standards and reduces vandalism.
- Implementation of a graffiti control program. The program should include: a proactive graffiti rapid removal program (graffiti should be removed within 24 to 48 hours of the damage occurring), landscape design and defensive plantings to discourage vandalism and the use of graffiti resistant materials to aid graffiti removal.
- Implementation of a landscape maintenance program to ensure sightlines are maintained, lighting is not obscured and garden areas kept neat and tidy.
- Redesign of the Community Gardens according to CPTED principles.
- Encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic into the area by widening and redesigning footpaths in accordance with CPTED principles.
- Encourage community use of the facilities by encouraging community groups, government bodies and sporting organisations to conduct programs in the audit area.
- Clear and concise signage positioned at key locations. The signage should include area maps, rules and place names.
- Fencing and repositioning of seating around the childrens playground area according to CPTED principles to maximise safety and security.
- Remove current seating and replace with vandal resistant seating and position in accordance with CPTED principles.

# Audit Team Representation

The audit team consisted of the following:

## Community Audit Members

Don Stewart  
Warick Sams  
Ross Smith  
Margaret Maljkovic  
Larry Skelton  
Diana Whitworth  
Claire Armstrong  
Mike Shreenan  
Simon Shabshay  
Harry Hardy  
Daniel Petsahs

## NSW Police Audit Team

Senior Constable Phillip Sharp  
VIP Lyn Taylor  
VIP Terry Healy

# Introduction

The primary purpose of this audit was to identify and evaluate safety and security related issues to reduce opportunities of crime anti-social behaviour and the threat of internal and external criminal exposure by:

- Discouraging opportunities for physical violence,
- Reducing the opportunities for crime against property,
- Improving community partnerships between citizens, police and other agencies,
- Providing feedback to management,
- Reducing urban decay,
- Rejuvenating community pride and cohesion.

The Waterloo Green area is owned and cared for by the Department of Housing. It's main purpose is to provide green space to the tenants of the adjoining Department of Housing Buildings. The main concern raised during the audit was the groups congregating in the park to consume alcohol and the actual and perceived crime and fear that these groups brought to the area. Many areas within the area have been greatly neglected and show signs of urban decay. This may have an impact as to the type of users and passers-by frequenting the area. The community audit seeks to address these issues.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies must work in conjunction with other crime prevention strategies and police operations. It does not work alone.

NSW Police has a vital interest in ensuring the safety of members of the community and their property. By using recommendations contained within this document, any person who does so acknowledges that:

- It is not possible to make areas evaluated by NSW Police absolutely safe for the community and their property.
- Recommendations are based upon information provided to, and observations made by NSW Police at the time the document was prepared.
- The evaluation/report is a confidential document and is for use by the person/organisation referred to on page one.
- The contents of this evaluation/report are not to be copied or circulated otherwise than for the purposes of the person/organisation referred to on page one.

NSW Police hopes that by using the recommendations contained within this document, criminal activity will be reduced and the safety of members of the community and their property will be increased. However, it does not guarantee that all risks have been identified, or that the area evaluated will be free from criminal activity if its recommendations are followed.'



# Observations & Recommendations

## 1. General Impressions of Safety

The audit area was not well maintained. The area was dark with a high number of lights either physically broken or not working. Audit members indicated feeling unsafe due to the poor lighting, abundance of graffiti, uncleanliness and poor maintenance of the area. These problems encourage avoidance behaviour that decreases the usage and activity in the area.

The design of the area encouraged groups to congregate however audit members commented that the groups that did congregate often consumed alcohol and displayed anti-social behaviour. This occurred both day and night.



### Issue:

The sign on the front of the Daniel Solander Building is damaged. The sign is in a prominent position above a main entrance to the building from Waterloo Green. The damaged sign overlooks the eastern end of the park and portrays the impression that there is no ownership of the area and building. This encourages illegitimate use, anti social and criminal behaviour.

### Recommendations:

The sign be repaired or removed completely and the awning fixed.



### Issue:

The majority of surfaces in the area were subject to graffiti. The graffiti mostly consisted of profanities and 'tags'. Audit members indicated the graffiti had been in place for months and that the Department of Housing did not have a rapid graffiti removal program or any other approach to control and/or abate this type of vandalism. The amount of graffiti in the audit area indicates there is no ownership of the area. Lack of ownership will increase the illegitimate and criminal behaviour occurring in an area.

### Recommendations:

The following strategies be adopted with regard to graffiti:

- Graffiti removed within 48 hours.
- Defensive planting in front of walls.
- Use of graffiti resistant colours and coatings.
- Use of tiled and painted murals.



#### Issue:

There are two community gardens in the audit area that the audit team indicated are cared for and used by local residents. Although the actual garden beds have been looked after the overall appearance of the gardens was one of disarray.

#### Recommendations:

The community gardens be redesigned using CPTED principles. Consideration should be given to opening up the gardens to create an 'activity generator'. Encouragement should be given to creating a more organised garden feature using defensive planting shrubbery to discourage vandalism.



#### Issue:

The footpaths in some parts are not wide enough and people do not feel comfortable using them.

#### Recommendations:

Pedestrians feel more comfortable sharing wide paths rather than narrow paths. Three metre wide paths facilitate psychologically comfortable pedestrian traffic in moderately busy areas. Consideration should be given to encouraging greater use of pathways by colour coding pathways, cycle-ways, etc. Well used pathways provide excellent natural surveillance for the area thereby reducing crime and fear (see below examples).





## 2. Lighting

Members of the audit team were most critical of the lighting in the audit area. There is an abundance of lights in the audit area however eighteen of the lights were either physically broken or not working. It was difficult to judge if the existing lighting would have been adequate or not with the large number of inoperative lights. Some areas were specifically identified as having poor illumination during the hours of darkness and as such community members would not frequent, creating avoidance behaviour and decreasing activity opportunity.



### Issue:

Much of the existing lighting was either physically damaged or not working.

### Recommendations:

- The existing lighting is fixed ASAP.
- A lighting plan established that includes a rapid repair and maintenance program where lights are fixed within a 24-48 hour period.
- Lighting should meet minimum standards. Crime and fear reduction are specified as key objectives in Australian Lighting Standard AS1158. Effective lighting contributes to public safety by reducing fear, increasing the community activity, improving visibility and increasing the chance that offenders will be detected and apprehended.
- It is recommended that special attention is paid to lighting along pedestrian pathways. Lighting should be sufficient so that there is facial recognition at a distance of 15 metres. Areas beside thoroughfares should also be evenly lit to avoid opportunities for concealment.
- The use of 'colour correct' Metal Halide or Mercury Vapour lights is recommended.
- Signs should be lit so that the information can be seen and understood at night.

### Issue:

Some landscaping is overgrown and obscures existing lighting in some areas.

### Recommendations:

Vegetation, signs and other structures can diminish the effectiveness of external lighting. Keep lighting clear of shrubbery, tree branches and other structures.

**Issue:**

The lighting in the adjoining car parks does not appear to meet minimum lighting standards.

**Recommendations:**

Ensure the outdoor car park lighting meets the minimum standards. Paint the ceiling and vertical structures of the covered car parks white to increase the lux levels and illumination.

### 3. Visibility & Sightlines

Certain areas were identified by the audit team where landscaping, building design and general maintenance contribute greatly to maintain good clear sightlines to enhance surveillance opportunities. Deficiencies were identified by the audit team where a fear of approaching certain locations was increased by poor lines of sight, poor natural surveillance and poor guardianship.

People feel safe in public areas when they can see and interact with others. Criminals are often deterred from committing crime in places that are well supervised.



#### **Issue:**

Overgrown and unkept trees and shrubbery are obstructing natural surveillance and sightlines within the park. Trees and shrubs along the Raglan Street border and northern car park border are blocking sightlines and natural surveillance into Waterloo Green from the street.

#### **Recommendations:**

Public gardens can be both attractive and safe. When well kept they can create the impression of ownership and control over the area. Garden plans should strike a balance between ambience and safety. The garden plan should involve a long term maintenance plan to ensure landscaping in regularly trimmed, kept low and clear of sight lines.

Research and strong anecdotal evidence indicates that vegetation is commonly used by criminals for concealment and to create entrapment pockets for their victims. Plants that block sightlines lessen natural surveillance. As a general rule lower tree limbs should be above average head height and a 900mm maximum height applied to shrubs.

The tree and shrub border along Raglan Street should be regularly trimmed to maintain natural surveillance from the street through to the basketball court.

The tree and shrub border along the northern car park should be regularly trimmed to maintain natural surveillance from the car park to the BBQ and playground area.

#### **Issue:**

Easily accessed concealment and entrapment sites located around buildings.

#### **Recommendations:**

Uneven building set back and uncontrolled streetscape gaps can attract inappropriate activity. Optically permeable gates and fences can restrict access to potential entrapment sites around buildings.



## 4. Signs

Signage in the audit area was identified as being inadequate. Nearly all of the signs were damaged, vandalised or non-existent. In many cases advisory signs were poorly positioned and could not be easily read. No community information signs, notice boards of maps were available to assist the public in locating services.

Well maintained signage implies control and guardianship over an area. Vandalised signs convey the opposite.



### Issue:

No signage to indicate the name of the area and limited signage displaying the rules governing the use of the park.

### Recommendations:

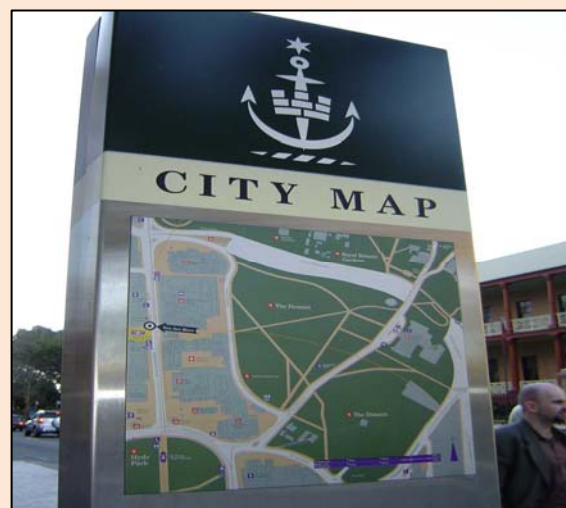
- Clear and concise signage and celebrated entrances should be located at the main access point on Raglan Street and the northern car park. The signage should be lit and include a map of the park identifying the main features. This signage should be large enough and positioned so that it is visible from the street/car park (see example below).
- Clear and concise signage positioned at the eastern and western ends of the park where they can be clearly seen when entering the park from the residential towers.

### Issue:

The majority of signage in the audit area is vandalised and poorly positioned.

### Recommendations:

- All vandalised signage be removed.
- The type, style and positioning of signage reviewed as to its appropriateness and according to CPTED principles.
- A program of regular maintenance to ensure that damaged and vandalised signs are replaced or repaired within a short time frame.





# 5. Provisions of Services & Facilities

The following facilities/attractors were identified in the audit area:

- Basketball court
- 2 x BBQ areas
- 2 x children's playgrounds
- 2 x community gardens
- Outdoor seating and tables
- TJ Hickey Memorial Wall

These facilities can attract and generate positive activity in the area. This assists in increasing pedestrian traffic and surveillance throughout the area. When maintained and used appropriately the facilities can create a sense of community and assist in reducing the fear of crime.

The audit team identified the poor condition of the facilities – most were vandalised with graffiti while others were damaged so badly they could not be used properly.



## Issue:

The basketball court is not well maintained and therefore not used properly.

## Recommendations:

- Youth activity generators are common targets for vandalism, particularly when isolated. The natural surveillance of the area should be maximised by minimising the shrubbery between the basketball court and Raglan Street and maximising the amount of pedestrian traffic with appropriate footpaths.
- A regular maintenance program where the basketball court is regularly checked for vandalism and repaired in a short time period.
- Community and sporting groups should be encouraged to run competitions and coaching clinics on a regular basis.

## Issue:

The BBQ facilities is being used by groups who congregate for the purpose of consuming alcohol. This has caused an increase in the fear of crime for residents. The electric BBQ plates have been disabled by the Department of Housing to discourage the use of the BBQ's as heaters by these groups. The BBQ's have been vandalised by graffiti.

## Recommendations:

Communities with inadequate resources to cope with adult unemployment, boredom, drug and alcohol abuse and other social problems often have to deal with the consequences of these issues. The issue of 'street drinking' is complex and there are a number of solutions that are outside the scope of this report. The issue of 'Street drinking' and should be considered as an issue in



itself.

Switching off the BBQ plates has not discouraged the illegitimate use of the BBQ area. It is not clear if the BBQ's were used by legitimate users prior to being disabled, in any case the area currently can not be used for it's designed purpose. Consideration should be given to enabling the BBQ plates, repairing any vandalism and actively encouraging community groups and families into the area to use the facilities.

#### Issue:

The two childrens playground areas are uninviting and unlikely to be used by families because of their poor condition.

#### Recommendation:

- All graffiti removed and all damaged equipment repaired or replaced.
- Landscaping in the area around the playgrounds to increase the visual appeal of the area and improve sightlines.
- Install visually permeable security fencing around the perimeter of the playground to increase security and create a control barrier.
- Remove all seating in the immediate area around the playgrounds to minimise paedophile activity.
- Locate bench seating with armrests (to prevent lying and sleeping) inside the playground fencing to maximise parental supervision and discourage paedophile activity.
- Implementation of a regular monitoring and maintenance/repair program.

#### Issue:

The two community garden areas are uninviting, have been vandalised and create an entrapment area.

#### Recommendation:

- All graffiti removed and vandalism repaired.
- Redesign the garden to remove the entrapment areas and create an activity generator that increases pedestrian flow and natural surveillance.
- Actively encourage residents and community groups to use the gardens.
- Remove existing seating and replace with bench seating with armrests.

#### Issue:

Outdoor seating is being used for illegitimate purposes such as the consumption of alcohol. Seating is in a poor condition.

#### Recommendations:

- Vandals and illegitimate users target street furniture from time to time. Well maintained furniture will encourage regular use, which in turn can provide





natural surveillance. The design of the furniture can impact on the likelihood of its use (see example below).

- Review the locations of all seating and benches to ensure they are appropriately positioned according to CPTED principles. Remove any seating that is in concealed or 'out of the way' locations. Some seating is located in areas where no passive surveillance exists and as a result, the seating is not frequently used or is used illegitimately.



#### Issue:

The wall where TJ Hickey suffered his fatal injury has hand written notes, memorials and graffiti in memory of his death.

#### Recommendation:

The circumstances of TJ Hickey's death and subsequent public disorder in 2004 is still a sensitive and emotive issue in the Redfern-Waterloo area. The location has considerable notoriety and significance. It is outside the scope of this report to make any recommendations in regard to removal of the written notes, memorials and graffiti. Consideration could be given to a defensive planting along the base of the wall to stop further writing on the wall.



## 6. General Maintenance

With the exception of the lawn, the general maintenance of the audit area was extremely poor. The audit team identified many instances where significant damage and vandalism had not been repaired for some years. In particular the audit team noted vandalism, graffiti landscaping and property damage (including run down buildings which contributed to feelings of worry and apprehension). The community perception was that there is no pride or ownership to the audit area. The audit team also identified that the lack of maintenance also extended into the adjoining department of housing residential towers. For example; the main security doors from the audit area into the Marton Building had not been functioning properly for some time and gave unrestricted access to the building, a number of fire exit doors were open giving unrestricted access to buildings, the graffiti that was widespread throughout the audit area was also prevalent inside and outside the Marton Building.



### Issue:

Entire audit area is poorly maintained as detailed throughout the report.

### Recommendations:

- Clean, well maintained areas often exhibit strong territorial cues. Research shows run down areas negatively impact on perceptions of fear, community confidence, legitimate use of public space and ultimately crime opportunity. Maintenance is a strong indicator of area safety and is recommended a maintenance management plan for the audit area and the surrounding buildings is implemented.
  - The maintenance should be carried out on a regular basis to enhance the appearance of the area.
  - Weekly maintenance checks should be undertaken so that repairs can be undertaken promptly without the need for residents to report a problem before it is fixed – there should be a proactive (rather than reactive) approach to maintenance.
  - Ideally repairs should be completed within a 24-48 hour period of the damage occurring.
  - The maintenance plan should include the residential buildings adjoining the audit area.
- Vandalism can induce fear and avoidance behaviour in public spaces. The act and outcome of graffiti can reward offenders. The display of one's handywork to others can be a strong motivation to repeat the behaviour. The longer 'tags' are left on display, the greater the reward and repetition will occur. A graffiti management plan is recommended.
  - Rapid removal has proven to be a successful long term graffiti management strategy where graffiti is removed within a 24-48 hour period.
  - Graffiti vandals favour permeable building surfaces as 'tags' are more difficult to remove and often a ghost image will remain





- even after cleaning. Graffiti resistant materials are recommended particularly on ground floor levels of buildings.
- An organised graffiti removal program by community groups provides a means for the community to build cohesion, ownership and to remove fear inducing area features.
  - The use of vandal resistant surfaces for seating, tables and the playground equipment is recommended.

# 7. Policing Strategies

Crime prevention strategies can push crime from one area to another. A criminal searching for a target, believing that the necessary risk of effort to commit a crime is too high, or that the rewards are too low may move to another site offering better odds. Most crime is however, opportunistic not premeditated. Typically, opportunistic crimes are only thought about when the right ingredients intersect at the right time – and in the right place. When crime ingredients are kept apart, opportunistic crime is likely to be prevented.



## Issue:

Consumption of alcohol and associated anti-social behaviour in the audit area.

## Recommendations:

- Inclusion of the Waterloo Green audit area as a part of the taskings for general duties police.
- Annual police–community public relations activity to improve the rapport between police and the Waterloo Green Community. For example; NRMA Crime Prevention Van/Community BBQ
- Targeting of nearby licensed premises by the Redfern LAC Licensing Officer for alcohol related supply offences and a review of hotel trading hours.
- Regular high visibility police operations during peak usage and hotspot times.



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