

Standing Committee on Social Issues

Inquiry into issues relating to Redfern and Waterloo

Final Report

Ordered to be printed by resolution of the House

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Terms of reference

1. That the Standing Committee on Social Issues inquire into and report on:
 - (a) policing strategies and resources in the Redfern/Waterloo areas,
 - (b) other existing government programs in the Redfern/Waterloo areas, including local, state and federal programs,
 - (c) non-government services and service provision in the Redfern/Waterloo areas,
 - (d) strategies under the current New South Wales Government “Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project”, and the effectiveness in meeting the needs of local Indigenous and other members of the community,
 - (e) proposals for the future of the area known as “The Block”,
 - (f) any other matters arising from these terms of reference.
2. That the Committee table an interim report by 31 July 2004 and a final report by 30 November 2004.

These terms of reference were referred to the Committee by resolution of the Legislative Council 26 February 2004 [Item 12, Legislative Council Minutes No. 41].

Committee membership

- Jan Burnswoods MLC, Australian Labor Party (**Chair**)
- The Hon Robyn Parker MLC, Liberal Party (**Deputy Chair**)
- The Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans MLC, Australian Democrats
- The Hon Kayee Griffin MLC, Australian Labor Party
- The Hon Greg Pearce MLC, Liberal Party
- The Hon Ian West MLC, Australian Labor Party

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Chair's foreword

I am pleased to present the Committee's Final Report on issues relating to Redfern and Waterloo. The Committee's Interim Report was tabled in August 2004. This Final Report, building on the significant issues raised in the Interim Report, deals with matters such as the relationship between police and Aboriginal people, the Human Services Review, the adequacy of government and non government services and the new Redfern Waterloo Authority.

The issues facing Redfern and Waterloo are complex and challenging. During the Inquiry we have spoken to over a hundred people and conducted numerous meetings and hearings in the area. The evidence we gathered throughout this process informs the content of both Reports and I am very grateful to all the participants who gave us their time and expertise. The Committee has endeavoured to provide a comprehensive and balanced overview of the issues and produce practical and forward-looking recommendations.

On behalf of the Committee, I would particularly like to thank the representatives of the many non government agencies who contributed to the Inquiry. Despite its 'consultation fatigue', as one of our witnesses expressed it, the non government sector continues to seek improvements to service delivery in Redfern and Waterloo. We are also indebted to the many members of the Redfern and Waterloo communities who participated, including members of the Aboriginal community, tenants of the Waterloo housing estates, residents and activists of the area and the young Aboriginal people we spoke to.

This Report could not have been completed without the dedication of Committee members and I thank them for their commitment to this Inquiry. I particularly thank the members for their hard work in achieving this unanimous Final Report. On behalf of the Committee I also extend thanks to the Secretariat for their dedication throughout this Inquiry, and particularly to Julie Langsworth who will be leaving us after seven years of invaluable work.

This Inquiry came to the Social Issues Committee as a result of the tragic death of a young Aboriginal man and the subsequent riot in February this year. On behalf of Committee members, I reiterate our deep regret for the death of the young man. The Inquiry has highlighted issues that have been raised many times about the considerable disadvantage experienced by the Aboriginal community, as well as the non-Aboriginal community. The establishment of the Redfern Waterloo Authority, together with the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, presents the opportunity to tackle the significant social disadvantage in the area and make a real difference to the lives of people in Redfern and Waterloo. We urge the Government to adopt the recommendations in our Report in order to deal with the complex issues facing these communities. The Committee will follow with great interest the progress of the Government's activities in Redfern and Waterloo.

I commend this report to the Government.



Jan Burnswoods MLC

Chair

Executive summary

This Inquiry was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Issues by resolution of the Legislative Council on 26 February 2004. The terms of reference were very broad and required the Committee to examine a range of issues and government activities in Redfern and Waterloo. They also required us to table an Interim Report, released in August, and this Final Report.

The Interim Report covered a number of significant issues including the role and effectiveness of the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, the redevelopment of the Block, a number of policing matters and issues surrounding drug and alcohol facilities including the mobile needle and syringe service. It contained 22 recommendations, a number of which have resulted in recent Government initiatives.

In this Final Report we provide a brief update on the matters explored in the Interim Report, and examine and make recommendations on various issues including: policing; the Human Services Review; government and non government services; the Redfern Waterloo Authority, the Redfern Waterloo Plan and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP); and the future of the two suburbs. The two Reports should be read along side each other.

During the Inquiry we conducted 13 days of hearings, with a total of 139 witnesses. In addition, we received 94 written submissions. Having focussed on Redfern in the first stage of the Inquiry, in the second stage we made special effort to consult with residents of Waterloo, so as to address the issues facing both communities confidently. We also conducted a number of private hearings with residents and Aboriginal and non Aboriginal service providers, at the request of participants. We thank all the participants in this Inquiry for sharing with us their knowledge and expertise.

Chapter 2 - Policing issues

In our Interim Report the Committee examined several policing issues including violence against police and staffing. In Chapter 2 of this Final Report we provide a brief update on these matters and examine a number of other key concerns that arose during the Inquiry. One of the most important and challenging is the relationship between police and the Aboriginal community in Redfern and Waterloo. On the basis of evidence presented to us that this relationship is extremely troubled and a matter of great community concern, we have examined and made recommendations on a number of NSW Police strategies.

A great deal of evidence was presented to the Committee on Aboriginal cultural awareness training for officers at the Redfern Local Area Command (LAC), and the overwhelming view expressed to us was that more cultural awareness training is required. We note that additional training recently commenced at the Redfern LAC, and while we encourage this to continue, the Committee recommends that this training be reviewed in 2005 in order to develop the most appropriate program for the Redfern LAC. In addition, we recommend that the Minister for Police extend the Aboriginal cultural awareness education given to new recruits as part of their Diploma of Policing.

The Committee has also examined the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) program at the Redfern LAC, concluding that there are some deficiencies in the program that need to be redressed, although some steps have recently been taken. We recommend that the ACLO program at Redfern be reviewed within six months to determine whether additional changes need to be made. The Committee also recommends that the review of the support structures and training

programs available to ACLOs across NSW, promised by the Government as an outcome of the 2003 Alcohol Summit, be expedited.

Throughout the Inquiry the Committee heard from both police officers and community members about drug related crime in Redfern and Waterloo, particularly in and around the Redfern Railway Station and the Block. Whilst members of the local community expressed frustration at a perceived lack of arrests, police identified the considerable resources involved in policing drug related crime in the area and recent successes in targeting drug crime.

Chapter 3 - Human Services Review

In November the Government released the Report of the Human Services Review, a core initiative of the RWPP which will reshape the human services system in the area over the next ten years. In this chapter the Committee evaluates the Review Report prepared by the consultants Morgan Disney & Associates, in light of the evidence received from participants, primarily non government service providers. We also identify the major issues to be addressed to ensure the success of the forthcoming Human Services Plan. In response to widespread concerns about delays in the Review, we have recommended that this Plan be approved and publicly released on time, in May 2005.

Noting the exclusion of core government activities from the Human Services Review, we consider that a review of these services should occur in conjunction with the Human Services Plan. In response to concerns among non government agencies that the Review did not bring with it additional resources for service provision, we make further recommendations about potential outcomes of the Review in relation to funding, service amalgamations, resource reallocations and service facilities.

The chapter also addresses the issues of coordination and collaboration between services, service infrastructure and support, accountability requirements, and the implementation of the Human Services Plan. The Committee concludes by emphasising that the success of reforms will rest on the establishment of genuine partnerships between the RWPP, other government agencies and the non government sector. To assist this, we have recommended that the Government recognise and resource a local body to represent the non government sector and negotiate with Government in developing and implementing the Human Services Plan.

Chapter 4 - Government and non government services

While Chapter 3 focussed on reforms across the human services system as a whole, in this chapter the Committee documents the key concerns of inquiry participants in relation to a number of specific service systems in Redfern and Waterloo. The evidence gathered during this Inquiry did not enable an exhaustive analysis of all aspects of the service system, but where possible, the Committee has drawn conclusions and made recommendations.

A key concern among participants was the performance of the Department of Community Services (DoCS). Accordingly, the Committee recommends, as a priority, a number of actions on the part of DoCS' Eastern Sydney Community Service Centre to ensure much more effective action to protect children at risk, adequate training for caseworkers, and more effective relationships with other local agencies and with the Aboriginal community. In keeping with many participants' emphasis on the need to support the young people of Redfern and Waterloo, we have also recommended that the RWPP act to improve youth services by immediately reinstating the area's Youth Taskforce, addressing the poor facilities of some services, and ensuring adequate weekend and after-hours services.

One of the pivotal messages for the Committee from Aboriginal service providers was that the Government needs to recognise, show respect for and harness the community's strengths. A key way of doing this, they argued, is to support Aboriginal services. The Committee has encouraged the Government to come to grips with the challenge of developing funding and governance mechanisms that support autonomous services, and has recommended that the RWPP act on a suggestion of the Human Services Review to support a 'community healing strategy'. We return to the issue of respect in Chapter 6.

In subsequent sections of the chapter the Committee has considered and made recommendations in relation to drug and alcohol and mental health services, education, housing, employment, ageing and disability services, services targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and community development programs. We conclude by identifying a number of important responsibilities to be addressed in the forthcoming review of core government services.

Chapter 5 - Redfern Waterloo Authority and Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project

This chapter examines the new Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA). Although the Government only recently announced this initiative, the Committee has sought to provide an overview of the information available to us on the RWA, including the substantial parliamentary debate and public comment on it. The Committee considers the role of the RWA in relation to infrastructure and planning, the provision of affordable housing and employment. We make a number of recommendations in relation to the Redfern Waterloo Plan, including that the Authority produce a draft plan as soon as possible whilst ensuring appropriate consultation with the community, and that information gathered on the RED strategy be considered when developing the Plan. Further, the Committee recommends that the RWA conduct and publish an audit of government assets in the area, that redevelopment occur in consultation with the community, and that monies raised go directly to addressing the needs of the area. In line with this, we consider that the RWA should consult with Department of Housing tenants on any future plan to redevelop housing stock and ensure the provision of affordable housing. The Committee recommends that any future development be subject to a social impact assessment process.

This chapter provides a summary of issues raised in our Interim Report in relation to the future of the Block, and the responsibilities of the RWA in its redevelopment. The Committee recommends that the Government remain committed to its guarantee not to acquire the Block compulsorily, and to work with the Aboriginal Housing Company and the broader Aboriginal community in the redevelopment of the Block.

The Committee also examines the role of the RWPP in the context of the establishment of the RWA, noting the RWPP's extension until 2008 and additional resource allocation. In this section we reiterate the major themes that arose throughout the Inquiry in relation to the RWPP, including the effectiveness of the Project's consultation and communication processes, particularly in relation to the Aboriginal community, and the need for a strategic plan and performance accountability. Given its role in coordinating the implementation of the Human Services Review, the Committee recommends that the RWPP or a similar coordinating body be extended beyond 2008, and that it be adequately resourced, with appropriate performance measurement, so that the serious social issues facing the area are addressed. The Committee strongly believes that the RWA and RWPP must develop measures against which their performance can be assessed. The plans and objectives produced by the RWA and RWPP must undergo a regular process of evaluation and review, and be made public.

Chapter 6 - Future for Redfern and Waterloo

This chapter identifies the many long term issues that need to be addressed in Redfern and Waterloo, including social inclusion, urban renewal, affordable housing and employment opportunity. We note the Government's acknowledgment of the need for a long term strategy through the establishment of the RWA and initiatives such as the Jobs Plan. The Committee recommends that long term objectives and identifiable outcomes be developed and made public, and that the Government ensure that the Redfern Waterloo Plan be integrated into the broader Metropolitan Strategy.

The Committee also believes that the Government, through the RWPP and RWA, needs to conduct its operations with greater transparency, especially with the local community. Therefore we recommend that the Redfern Waterloo Plan, the RWPP Business Plan, the Jobs Plan, the Human Services Plan and strategic outcomes and objectives for the area, all be made public.

We are particularly concerned about the Government's relationship with non government organisations in Redfern and Waterloo, given the significant role that they play in the area. We reiterate our Interim Report recommendation that the RWPP and the RWA work on achieving genuine partnership between all levels of government, the non government sector and the local community in order to address the issues facing the two suburbs.

As noted throughout this Report, a number of significant Government initiatives aimed at addressing the issues in Redfern and Waterloo have only recently been announced. While we welcome the Government's response, it is too soon to know if these initiatives will successfully address the serious issues facing the area. The Committee believes that, in order to assess the effectiveness of these strategies, a further parliamentary inquiry should be conducted in 2006.

This Inquiry came to the Social Issues Committee as a result of the tragic death of a young Aboriginal man and the events surrounding the Redfern riot. In this final section of the Report, the Committee notes the statements made by all sides of politics acknowledging the serious disadvantage affecting Aboriginal people. We recommend that the NSW Government take a lead role in encouraging the ongoing commitment of all political parties and independents to address this social disadvantage.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Page 26

That the Minister for Police extend the level of training received by new recruits in Aboriginal cultural awareness issues as part of their Diploma of Policing Practice.

Recommendation 2

Page 26

That the Minister of Police ensure that the Aboriginal cultural awareness training provided to officers at the Redfern Local Area Command is reviewed in 2005 in order to develop the most appropriate training program for the Local Area Command.

Recommendation 3

Page 33

That the Minister for Police ensure that the Redfern Local Area Command review its Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer program within six months to determine whether the new strategies that have been recently implemented have improved the program and whether any additional changes to the program need to be made. In addition, the results of that review should be included in the Government's response to this Report.

Recommendation 4

Page 34

That the Minister for Police expedite the promised examination of the support and training structures available to Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, as contained in the Government's response to the NSW Alcohol Summit 2003, to determine whether additional support structures and training are required.

Recommendation 5

Page 51

That the Minister for Police undertake his six month review of the package of initiatives aimed at addressing policing issues in the Redfern LAC announced on 16 July 2004 as soon as possible after 16 January 2005. In addition, the findings of that review should be made public as soon as they are finalised.

Recommendation 6

Page 62

That the Government ensure that the Human Services Plan arising from the Human Services Review is approved and publicly released on time, that is, by May 2005.

Recommendation 7

Page 69

That the core activities of government agencies not included in the Human Services Review be formally reviewed in conjunction with the development of the Human Services Plan, in order to determine how those agencies need to change to improve the human services system of Redfern and Waterloo.

Recommendation 8

Page 71

That as part of the Human Services Plan, the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project:

- develop and use specific procedures for dealing with funded agencies in relation to reallocation of resources between agencies and the amalgamation of services
- approve and expedite a process for renovating or improving the facilities of services.

Recommendation 9*Page 72*

That where, during the implementation of the Human Services Plan, the need for additional resources is substantiated, funding be sought from the Federal, State and/or Local Governments.

Recommendation 10*Page 79*

That the Premier's Department act on the findings of the recent Grant Administration Review, to reduce the burden of funding and accountability requirements on non government agencies.

Recommendation 11*Page 84*

That the NSW Government, in liaison with the non government agencies in Redfern and Waterloo, recognise and resource a local body to represent the non government sector and act as a negotiation point with government in developing and implementing the Human Services Plan.

Recommendation 12*Page 93*

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

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

Recommendation 13*Page 98*

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

Recommendation 14*Page 98*

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

Recommendation 15*Page 98*

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

Recommendation 16*Page 102*

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

Recommendation 17*Page 109*

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

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

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

Recommendation 18*Page 109*

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

Recommendation 19*Page 114*

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

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

Recommendation 20*Page 119*

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

Recommendation 21*Page 119*

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

Recommendation 22*Page 125*

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

Recommendation 23*Page 126*

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

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

- ageing and disability services.

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

Recommendation 24*Page 137*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority, produce the draft Redfern Waterloo Plan as soon as possible and ensure that appropriate community consultation occurs in the development of the Plan. In addition, the Redfern Waterloo Authority should ensure that the consultation that has already occurred on the RED Strategy is considered in the development of the Plan.

Recommendation 25*Page 137*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority, as a matter of urgency, conduct an audit of the Government assets in the Redfern and Waterloo area, and publish this audit including an itemised list identifying and describing the assets. The Redfern Waterloo Authority should ensure that any development of these assets is done in consultation with the Redfern and Waterloo communities, and that monies raised in the development of these assets go directly to addressing the needs of the area.

Recommendation 26*Page 140*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority, consult with current public housing tenants on any future plans to redevelop public housing stock.

Recommendation 27*Page 140*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority, consider measures to ensure the provision of affordable housing and allow for affordable housing targets.

Recommendation 28*Page 141*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority, ensure that all future commercial or residential development applications of scale are subject to a comprehensive social impact assessment process.

Recommendation 29*Page 144*

That the NSW Government remain committed to its guarantee not to compulsorily acquire the Block at Redfern. In addition, the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, should work with the Aboriginal Housing Company, and the broader Aboriginal community, to enable the redevelopment of the Block.

Recommendation 30*Page 150*

That the NSW Government ensure that the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, or a similar coordinating body, is extended beyond 2008, is adequately resourced, with appropriate performance measurement, so that the long term social disadvantage in Redfern and Waterloo can be addressed.

Recommendation 31*Page 155*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, ensure that the Redfern Waterloo Plan and the Human Services Plan contain an appropriate set of indicators and performance measurements by which the objectives of the

Plans can be assessed. In addition, the Plans should be made publicly available; and regular evaluation and review should be undertaken and made public.

Recommendation 32*Page 159*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, establish short, medium and long term strategic objectives for the area and key outcomes associated with those objectives. In addition, the Government's performance against these objectives should be regularly reviewed and reported to the public.

Recommendation 33*Page 159*

That the NSW Government ensure that the Redfern Waterloo Plan 2004-2014 is integrated into the broader Metropolitan Strategy.

Recommendation 34*Page 159*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, ensure that the strategic plans for the Redfern and Waterloo area identify and allow for the active involvement of local, State and Commonwealth Governments.

Recommendation 35*Page 161*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, make a commitment to the Redfern and Waterloo community to make all plans, strategies, reports and accountability measures publicly available in a timely manner. In particular the NSW Government should release the following plans, strategies and documents as soon as they are completed:

- the Redfern Waterloo Plan 2004-2014
- the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project Business Plan
- the Jobs Plan
- the Human Services Plan
- strategic objectives and outcomes for the area as a whole.

Recommendation 36*Page 163*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and the Redfern Waterloo Authority, 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 37*Page 164*

That a further parliamentary inquiry into issues in Redfern and Waterloo and measures taken to address them be conducted in 2006.

Recommendation 38*Page 165*

That the NSW Government take the lead in encouraging all political parties and independents to adopt an ongoing commitment to Indigenous issues and work cooperatively with the Aboriginal community to address the serious social disadvantage affecting Aboriginal people.

Acronyms

ACLO	Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer
AHC	Aboriginal Housing Company
AMS	Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Ltd
ASD	NSW Police, <i>Aboriginal Strategic Direction 2003-2006</i>
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
BOCSAR	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
CDEP	Community Development and Employment Projects scheme
COPS	Computer Operations Program System
CSAHS	Central Sydney Area Health Service
CSC	Community Service Centre
DoCS	NSW Department of Community Services
DVLOs	Domestic Violence Liaison Officers
LAC	Local Area Command
LACACC	Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Committee
NCOSS	Council of Social Service of New South Wales
NPSs	Needle and Syringe Programs
PACT	Police Accountability Community Team
RCADC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
RED Strategy	Redfern Eveleigh Darlington Strategy
RWA	Redfern Waterloo Authority
RWPP	Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project
RWADS	Redfern/Waterloo Anti-Drug Strategy
SCC	City of Sydney Council
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

