

Chapter 3 The Human Services Review

We need to look holistically at the systems that we are providing in an area like this and change our systems so that we can meet the needs of the community, not the community try to meet the needs of the systems.¹⁹⁹

The Review of the human services system operating in Redfern and Waterloo has been a core initiative of the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project and its implementation will be a major focus of the Partnership Project's work over several years. The reforms are intended to reshape the nature of human service delivery in the area, and thereby, the outcomes for people in Redfern and Waterloo.

Drawing on the evidence of a broad range of inquiry participants, this chapter critically evaluates the Human Services Review. The chapter begins by setting the scene of service delivery in Redfern and Waterloo by identifying the challenges and strengths existing there. It then outlines the scope and purpose of the Review, and its process, before summarising its key findings and recommendations. A detailed critique of the Review is presented, focusing on the key issues of service coordination and integration, accountability requirements, infrastructure and support, and funding. The Committee then identifies the major issues to be addressed to ensure the success of the Human Services Plan. Critical among these is for the RWPP and other government agencies to engage with non government service providers, to gain their trust, and to work with them in a model of shared power. The chapter is focused on the broad system-wide findings of the Review. In Chapter 4 we focus on a number of specific service areas within the broader system, such as child protection services, youth services, Aboriginal services, health services, education, housing, and services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In doing so, we refer to findings of the Review in relation to these 'service clusters'.

The landscape of human services in Redfern and Waterloo

- 3.1** As the Committee noted in our Interim Report, with the establishment of the RWPP, the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo have been linked together, but there are significant differences between the two suburbs and they have their own distinct identities. At the same time, there are many similar issues. The Government's submission provides a detailed description of the social indicators for Redfern and Waterloo, documenting the major differences between the two communities.²⁰⁰ Principal among these is the concentration of public housing tenants in Waterloo, which manifests one of the highest concentrations of disadvantage and need in the State. Redfern, by contrast, is characterised by extreme disadvantage coexisting with socio-economic advantage associated with gentrification. Taken together, Redfern and Waterloo are marked by significant levels of need and by the presence of complex or multiple needs among many residents. Such needs are a key challenge for the service system of the area. This and other challenges for service providers sets the scene for the Partnership Project's Human Services Review.

¹⁹⁹ Participant, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p15

²⁰⁰ Submission 55, NSW Government, pp33-50

Challenges for service providers

- 3.2** Inquiry participants emphasised the demands placed upon the human service system as a result of this environment of significant disadvantage and need in Redfern and Waterloo. As NCOSS stated in its submission:

In substantial parts of both suburbs there are large numbers of low income families (including sole parents), long term unemployed people, and vulnerable young people living alongside an ageing population. Evidence points to ongoing above average levels of domestic violence, child protection notifications and substance abuse in both the Indigenous and non Indigenous communities across the suburbs, with both data and front line human services and police experience confirming the prevalence of mental health issues, homelessness and anti social behaviour in key neighbourhoods.²⁰¹

- 3.3** Participants were also quick to point out that the picture of disadvantage within Redfern and Waterloo was becoming more complex with the demographic change going on in the area. An important aspect of this change was the increasing concentration of need among public housing tenants. As demand for public housing greatly outstrips supply, eligibility has become increasingly targeted to those with high needs such as people with intellectual disability, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependence, refugee trauma and so on; there is also a significant number of ageing residents requiring support services, along with culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the area.²⁰² The South Sydney Interagency explained this changing picture of need and the significant implications it has for service providers in the area:

It has to be recognised that Redfern and Waterloo are particularly difficult areas in which to operate. The huge population of public tenants is quite different to what it was years ago. At one time, public tenants were simply people with low incomes, not necessarily people wracked with social problems. However, over the past two decades, the NSW Department of Housing has necessarily targeted its allocation of dwellings more tightly to people with high needs. This means that there is a concentration of people who, as well as living in poverty, have high levels of physical, intellectual and psychiatric disability. There are also remnants of the original Department of Housing population who are now becoming very old and frail, as well as people recently released from prison. There are dysfunctional families and high levels of permanent truancy, and disaffected youth ... All of these factors have greatly increased the task of the community organisations in the area, while simultaneously reducing the more general population from which community organisations might expect to receive support.²⁰³

- 3.4** Issues raised in relation to public housing, including the impact that such change is having on tenants, are explored in greater detail in the following chapter.
- 3.5** In its submission, the Benevolent Society identified a further challenge that such a disadvantaged community poses for human services in the area: clients with high needs are often very difficult to engage. While the Benevolent Society identified a number of barriers to

²⁰¹ Submission 56, NCOSS, p1

²⁰² Submission 70, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Co-operative, p3; Mr Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p29

²⁰³ Submission 46, South Sydney Interagency, p2

effective delivery of family support services in the area, in the Committee's view, the list could potentially apply to many other types of services in Redfern and Waterloo:

- Families will not seek assistance.
- Families do not understand their strengths, areas for improvement.
- Families often focused on their survival – there is a lack of sense of community.
- Workers often lack the support and skill to deal with very difficult families.
- Many families will always need a level of support – services often funded for a short time only or for short term intervention.
- The community is fractured because families are fractured.
- People find it difficult to trust anyone and it is difficult for service providers to develop trust with children and parents.²⁰⁴

3.6 Within this context of entrenched and escalating need, non government service providers such as those making up the South Sydney Interagency emphasised to the Committee that government funding has not kept pace with the increasing demands placed on them.²⁰⁵ The Department of Housing's Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, which includes a number of tenant representatives, called for more adequate funding to address unmet need for a range of services including tenancy services, services for older people and young people, Aboriginal services, mental health services and drug and alcohol services.²⁰⁶ Likewise, Ms Norah McGuire, a local resident and member of the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board testified to the unmet need for services which could be remedied by more funding:

One of the things I have got to stress again - it is my favourite word - there are children, there are families, there are older people, people with disabilities, people with psychiatric problems, people with other health problems, and the one thing that is a big problem for all of them is the lack of resources ... If half of the money that was spent on researching the problems within the area was given to the area, particularly to people like us, to decide what to use them on, it would make a hell of a difference.²⁰⁷

3.7 The mismatch between demand and funding is further exacerbated by significant increases in costs to non government providers associated with public liability and workers' compensation insurance, as well as rising rents, for which organisations are not necessarily compensated. One service provider told us, for example, that while their insurance costs have risen from \$2,000 to \$10,000, their funding has not been increased in response.²⁰⁸ In addition, many non government inquiry participants reported a significant problem with onerous accountability requirements and associated administrative costs.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Submission 33, The Benevolent Society, p2

²⁰⁵ Submission 46, South Sydney Interagency, p3

²⁰⁶ Submission 30, Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board, p1

²⁰⁷ Ms Norah McGuire, Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Evidence, 15 October 2004, p11

²⁰⁸ Ms Sharne Dunsmore, Executive Officer, Fact Tree Youth Services, Evidence, 26 May 2004, p26

²⁰⁹ Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 2 November 2004, pp22-23

- 3.8** According to the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, even modest increases in funding to community based organisations could help them address identified need and increase their service delivery markedly.²¹⁰ While the Committee understands that large non government agencies do not face the same difficulties associated with service viability that smaller providers face, the Benevolent Society articulated a number of challenges associated with funding, governance and accountability in the non government sector:

The governance and management challenges facing all organisations have significantly increased in recent years. A range of factors are contributing to this including increased accountability and report requirements, legislative changes at both State and Federal levels, the administrative burden generated by multiple funding agreements, occupational health and safety issues, insurance concerns, information technology requirements and attracting and maintaining key staff. Some would also argue that government is expecting ‘more for less’ from service delivery organisations, particularly when funding agreements have expectations that services will be delivered in partnership with other organisations. It is very often the partnership building phase and the maintenance of these partnerships which are not funded by government. This can place significant stress on organisations.²¹¹

- 3.9** Linked to the challenge associated with funding and accountability is that of strategic and integrated planning across the service system. Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Member for Sydney, stated in her submission:

I have some concerns that [some service providers]’ effectiveness is being compromised by the fact that the service delivery system as a whole is not well coordinated and lacks overall planning. New services are sometimes developed in an ad hoc fashion while some existing providers lack the resources or flexibility to respond to new unmet needs. Many services seem to spend too much of their time scraping together running costs from a variety of funding sources. It is difficult to meet the evolving needs of clients, but the best service providers focus on these evolving needs rather than what it is that their service has “always” done. When services evolve in this way, they have to ensure that they still fit in with other service providers in the area.²¹²

- 3.10** Gary Moore of NCOSS explained the challenges facing many small providers in Redfern and Waterloo in the absence of effective government planning and support over time:

It is probably fair to say that the non government and government sector have grown in Redfern over 25 years in a way which has not been aligned and has not had the opportunity to form the most effective network ... There are lots of small organisations in Redfern and Waterloo which are very, very focused on their specific local populations, local client groups. Many of them have significant difficulties with back office viability, capacity to operate effectively, and part of that is because of the historic low funding levels, part of it is because of, I think, historically and culturally, not being able to effectively grow their capacity and deal with the change in environment in which they are operating.²¹³

²¹⁰ Submission 70, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Co-operative, p4

²¹¹ Submission 33, The Benevolent Society, p9

²¹² Submission 49, Ms Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Member for Sydney, p2

²¹³ Mr Moore, Evidence, 28 May 2004, p29

- 3.11** The Committee returns to many of these challenges later in this chapter, when analysing the strategies to take place under the forthcoming Human Services Plan.

Community and service strengths

- 3.12** In addition to the significant challenges outlined above, inquiry participants pointed to the strengths of the community and service providers to be harnessed in a process of reform.
- 3.13** Among the community strengths, according to the Benevolent Society, are a population made up of people in all stages of the life cycle, and which is culturally and linguistically diverse; a diverse economic mix; a robust history of diverse local organisations serving the community; and significant, increasing public and private resources within the community.²¹⁴
- 3.14** Participants such as the Inner City Regional Council for Social Development cited strong links between service providers, and between those providers and the communities they serve. Similarly, local residents Geoff and Lyn Turnbull identified the flexibility and responsiveness of small non government agencies to local needs as a key strength,²¹⁵ as did the Fact Tree Youth Service:

The strength of the NGO sector lies in the bond that the individual providers establish with particular constituencies, and how this bond translates into different support afforded by the NGOs to meet the needs of local residents at different stages of their life cycle. The different range of services, as well as the different operational styles of the various NGOs, provides for diversity and flexibility in meeting the challenges of the Redfern and Waterloo communities.²¹⁶

The purpose of the Review

- 3.15** Within this context of challenges and strengths, in January 2004 the Premier's Department's RWPP contracted the consultants Morgan Disney & Associates to undertake the Human Services Review. The Review ran from January to June 2004, culminating in a report released to the Committee and the public in November 2004. At the time of the release of the report, the Government announced that a Human Services Plan would be developed in response to the recommendations of the Review, and that the plan would be presented to Cabinet by May 2005 for endorsement.²¹⁷ The Plan is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.
- 3.16** The Government's submission to the Inquiry states that the Human Services Review encompassed all Government and non government human services that serve the Redfern or Waterloo population, whether they are funded, licensed, contracted or provided. It included agencies located within the two suburbs, as well as those located outside but which deliver

²¹⁴ Submission 33, The Benevolent Society, p6

²¹⁵ Submission 65, Geoff and Lyn Turnbull, p12

²¹⁶ Submission 69, Fact Tree Youth Services, p9

²¹⁷ Hon Frank Sartor MP and Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC, 'Government Announces Jobs Plan for Redfern Waterloo', *Media Release*, 10 November 2004; the Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC, *Hansard*, Legislative Council, 11 November 2004

services to Redfern or Waterloo residents.²¹⁸ The Review Report clarifies that excluded from the Review was:

the core business of the State departments such as child protection, schools, hospitals and Police but all their ancillary services are included, eg. After School programs, Domestic Violence Liaison Officers and health services including drug and alcohol services and mental health services except hospital based mental health services.²¹⁹

3.17 The Review had a broad and ambitious purpose: ‘to provide guidance as to how to reshape the delivery of services in the area to ensure that resources are matched to need’²²⁰. Accordingly, it involved:

- assessing the level of need in the Redfern and Waterloo communities and how that need could best be met
- mapping current services
- examining the spread of services, including the appropriateness of their location
- assessing the quality of services in light of need
- identifying service gaps
- documenting ways to strengthen services by building capacity.²²¹

3.18 The Government submission stated that the final Report of the Review would make recommendations on:

- how best to structure the service network to better meet the needs of the community
- a methodology to improve cross agency planning mechanisms across the human service delivery system
- an implementation strategy which considers both service design and a model for funding, monitoring and reviewing human services located within or provided to the area covered by the Redfern /Waterloo Partnership Project.²²²

3.19 Appearing before the Committee in May, Mr Michael Ramsey, Project Director of the RWPP, indicated the outcomes the Government was seeking from the Review:

I guess the Human Services Review recognised the fact that the existing service system did lack some flexibility and it lacks the capacity to meet the needs of the

²¹⁸ Submission 55, NSW Government, pp311-312

²¹⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, *Making Connections: Better Services, Stronger Community – Report on Review of the Human Services System in Redfern and Waterloo*, Report for the Premier’s Department, November 2004, p20 (hereafter Morgan Disney & Associates). The full Review Report can be downloaded at www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au

²²⁰ Submission 55, NSW Government, pp311-312

²²¹ Submission 55, NSW Government, p312

²²² Submission 55, NSW Government, p312

community and that is not achieving the best outcomes for the local communities. As we have said, there are issues around coordination, inadequate accountability, duplication, under-resourced services, under-trained and non-viable services, so really the driver for the Human Services Review is to try to create a human services system that is flexible, which moves away from the programme type approach that has existed in the past to one which is responsive and has the capacity to meet the needs of those communities.²²³

Stakeholder expectations

- 3.20** Prior to the release of the Review Report, various inquiry participants indicated to the Committee that they were hopeful about the outcomes of the Human Services Review. As the Review Report was released very late in our Inquiry, the Committee was not able to canvass comprehensively the views of inquiry participants on the Review's findings and recommendations.
- 3.21** The Committee observed much apprehension about the Review's findings on the part of non government providers and some community members in the area. While some non government providers feared that they might lose funding, many such as the Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project were concerned that:
- the Review did not bring with it any additional resources and instead had the aim of looking at reallocating existing resources. Growth money for existing service providers is a key way of improving the delivery of human services in the area. The waitlists ... of organisations are lengthy and are unable to be alleviated due in part to the lack of clients leaving services.²²⁴
- 3.22** Some participants could not see how the Review could adequately take account of, and develop appropriate recommendations for, services that did not fit neatly within the geographical area, or within the boundaries of State government responsibilities. A major concern expressed to the Committee by non government representatives was that the Review might yield simplistic solutions based around service coordination and cooperation. This is discussed in detail in a later section.
- 3.23** Residents Geoff and Lyn Turnbull reported that the Review was initially met with some suspicion on the part of some residents and non government agencies, partly because of the RWPP's earlier interactions with those agencies and the way the Redfern Eveleigh Darlington (RED) Strategy had been handled. (The RED Strategy is discussed in Chapter 5). Also, according to the Turnbells, the community was not given advance information about the Review, and was initially told it would be an audit, when it later became a much bigger initiative. These reservations were inflamed by a less than ideal consultation process, as is discussed in a later section. The Turnbells also reported community apprehension that the findings of the Report might be a foregone conclusion: 'there is community concern that the RWPP may be endeavouring to obtain a report which will be supportive of their solutions for

²²³ Mr Michael Ramsey, Project Director, Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p16

²²⁴ Submission 57, Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project, p1

the area.²²⁵ Again, the Committee observed this concern among many of the people we spoke with.

- 3.24** On the other hand, many service providers indicated a guarded openness to the findings of the Review, while residents such as Mr Ross Smith anticipated a substantial gain from the potential outcomes of the Review such as:

the establishment of mechanisms whereby the community can control the development and delivery of services and facilities that the community itself has identified the need for ... This will result in a massive empowerment of the community for its own benefit and will be of such a nature as to be self-sustaining in the long term.²²⁶

- 3.25** In the Committee's view, the apprehension and resistance of non government agencies in relation to the Human Services Review represents a significant challenge, but one that must be addressed. This will be a critical responsibility for the RWPP, and is discussed in detail at the end of the chapter.

The Review process

- 3.26** According to the consultants' report, the Human Services Review process involved a range of strategies. Key aspects of the consultants' information-gathering included:

- community consultation strategy involving two community forums, three service provider workshops, three focus groups with residents, six focus groups with clients, a specific Aboriginal consultation strategy through which 43 Aboriginal people were interviewed and surveyed, two community events attended by 85 residents, a street survey, a 12,000 letter box drop of a residents' survey, of which 159 were returned, and the creation of a Review website
- an organisational survey distributed to over 200 services delivering services to residents of the two suburbs, of which 108 were returned
- 'key informant interviews' with over 65 people from various stakeholder groups
- 61 service visits including 'in-depth follow up and face to face interviews' with services identified as core services to the area.²²⁷

- 3.27** Overall, the consultants reported that approximately 105 services were assessed in the Review, while 550 individuals participated in it, of whom 20% were Aboriginal and 80% non-Aboriginal, including around 9% from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.²²⁸ Of the 550 individual participants, around 200 were residents and 80 were service providers. Around 50 people participated in the client focus groups.²²⁹

²²⁵ Submission 65, Geoff and Lyn Turnbull, pp5-6

²²⁶ Submission 17, Mr Ross Smith, p20

²²⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp121-122

²²⁸ Morgan Disney & Associates, p122

²²⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p122

3.28 The consultants also documented a number of limitations to the project including:

- difficulties identifying services and establishing accurate contact and service information
- delays in receiving data from funding bodies, with some still not having provided information by the time the report was written
- the exclusion of core services of key government departments
- several Aboriginal agencies refused to participate in the Review
- ‘the short time frame did not allow for the most desirable level of community and client involvement in the project’
- completion of the survey varied across agencies.

Perceptions of the process

3.29 In our Interim Report the Committee documented inquiry participants’ criticisms in relation to the consultation process of the Human Services Review and other projects of the RWPP. In summary, some participants were concerned by the delayed engagement of the consultants, and saw the consultation process as rushed, less systematic than it could have been, and therefore that it did not necessarily capture as much information as it should have. In addition, there was concern that the Aboriginal community was not well engaged. As indicated above, the consultants documented these limitations in their Report. Some stakeholders were suspicious that the processes were more random than systematic, and a number of service providers commented on how onerous and time consuming the survey process was for them.²³⁰ On the other hand, participants such as the Turnbulls indicated that the consultants did endeavour to consult widely given the time available, that the consultants showed genuine interest in the views of residents, and that the follow-up forums to feed back the initial findings were valuable.²³¹

3.30 While the Review occurred from January to June 2004, the consultant’s Report was not released until November. In our Interim Report, released in August, the Committee noted that at the time of writing, the Government was expecting to receive the consultant’s Report ‘soon’. On that basis, the Committee recommended that the RWPP expedite the completion of the Review and that the Government provide the Committee with a copy of the Review Report as soon as it was completed. We also recommended that the Government’s plans arising from the Review be communicated to all Redfern and Waterloo partners as well as the Committee as soon as possible.

3.31 The Committee has observed that the apprehension of some non government stakeholders grew as a result of the delayed release of the Report. As one service provider told us:

Can I say because substantial time and effort has been invested in participating in the consultation with the Partnership Project and more recently the Morgan Disney

²³⁰ Participants, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October p26; Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November; Submission 46, South Sydney Interagency, p5

²³¹ Submission 65, Geoff and Lyn Turnbull, p6

exercise, out of which, without explanation and contrary to written assurances which were given up front to the participants, no report back has been made available. Leaving people with the obvious question, well, what are they actually planning to do and why is it a secret, and therefore, although it may be incorrect, the perception that there is a potential threat to the funding security to those who speak out in a way which may be unpopular, is based on that fact.²³²

- 3.32 Clover Moore, Mayor of Sydney, stated in her submission that the Human Services Review and the RED Strategy were 'seriously undermined by delays in agreed time lines and flawed community consultation processes. This has led to community frustration and suspicion, which may hamper the outcomes of both these processes.'²³³
- 3.33 In addition, while such a comprehensive Review was always going to be expensive - Dr Gellatly, Director General of the Premier's Department, reported that it cost \$149,000²³⁴ - it is not unexpected that cash-strapped community agencies might begrudge the expense.
- 3.34 The Committee notes that when the Report was finally released, it was immediately placed on the RWPP website for members of the public to access, and was also sent out to all government and non government agencies in the area.
- 3.35 In the Committee's view, the delays associated with the commencement of the Review and the release of its Report underscore the need for prompt action with regard to its recommendations, and fulfilment of the Government's intention to develop a Human Services Plan based on the Review findings by May 2005. This will be a crucial step in rebuilding the trust and commitment of the community and the non government sector.

Recommendation 6

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.

The Review's findings and recommendations

- 3.36 In this section the Committee summarises the major findings and the recommendations of the Human Services Review, as well as the major needs it has identified. In doing so, we refer extensively to the Review Report prepared by the consultants, Morgan Disney & Associates. In the following section we critically evaluate key aspects of its findings and recommendations in light of evidence taken from a range of participants in our Inquiry, primarily non government service providers. The focus here is on those aspects of the Review that deal with the service system as a whole.
- 3.37 In summarising and critiquing the Review, the Committee is mindful of the importance of focusing on areas where we can make the greatest contribution, given the evidence we have

²³² Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p5

²³³ Submission 84, Ms Clover Moore MP, Lord Mayor, City of Sydney, p15

²³⁴ Dr Col Gellatly, Director General, Premier's Department, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p17

received. Thus the following section is not exhaustive. Rather, it is intended to inform key stakeholders, especially residents, clients and service providers, of the major aspects of the Review, and also to assess the Review in terms of the major issues raised by those stakeholders. In addition, we seek to identify ways to ensure the best outcomes are achieved from the Review for the communities of Redfern and Waterloo.

Major findings

3.38 The Review Report delineates its findings into three sets: those focused on the needs of the area; those focused on developing the capacity of the service system as a whole; and those focused on improving the capacity of ‘service clusters’ and individual services. On this basis, the Report puts forward a ‘coherent approach to systemic change and improvement’ at each of these three levels at once.²³⁵

3.39 It establishes a ‘locality renewal approach’ as the fundamental plank of reform, articulating its main finding as follows:

The Review has found that the human services system requires significant change based on a locality renewal approach. The NSW Government should facilitate the reshaping of the human services system in Redfern/Waterloo by:

- Strengthening the human services system as one element of a broader locality approach to address the issues in Redfern/Waterloo
- Implementing a community leadership and capacity building strategy for the community in Redfern/Waterloo including the government and non-government services
- Addressing, as a matter of priority, the restructuring and modification of services in certain areas/service clusters
- Approving the development, as a matter of priority, of strategies in priority areas of human service delivery based on Action Plans contained in the Review Report.²³⁶

3.40 Both the Review Report and the Government announcements since that time firmly establish the partnership or collaborative approach as the vehicle for reform. The Report includes a planning and implementation framework as the first step in ‘a 10 year, locality-based commitment to Redfern and Waterloo.’ The Review Report states:

The framework is based on a local collaborative partnership approach to address the problems of the area and involves effective engagement of key stakeholder groups of the local community i.e. service users, residents, community organisations (including e.g. local business organisations, residents groups and church groups etc), the three levels of government, and government and non government service providers ... No one group will be able to achieve the necessary change on their own and the evidence

²³⁵ Morgan Disney & Associates, p83

²³⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p94

from around the world confirms the importance of partnerships to change communities.²³⁷

3.41 The eleven service clusters identified in the Review Report, around which important aspects of reform are to be implemented are:

- family and children's services
- young people's services
- services for Aboriginal people
- services to address domestic and family violence
- health services
- employment support and training services
- services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- services to address crime prevention and community safety
- housing support and services to address homelessness
- services for people who are ageing
- services for people with disabilities.²³⁸

Identified needs

3.42 Drawing on existing demographic and socio-economic profiles, as well as survey data from residents and government and non government service providers, the Review Report documents the following needs as arising from the Review's needs analysis:

- **The need for more supports for parents, families and children** – based on widespread concern for the future of young people, a perceived lack of support for parents, and the need for more after school and school holiday programs
- **The need to strengthen coordination and quality of service provision** – identifying these as 'amongst the highest priority issues to be addressed', and emphasising a stronger focus on outcomes for clients, rather than those for organisations or programs
- **The need for community leadership and opportunities for capacity building** – based on reported needs for both these issues to be addressed
- **The need for strategies to ensure safety of individuals and the community** – with young people highlighted as a focus of community concern
- **The need to improve services for Aboriginal people, people from CALD backgrounds and people with mental health issues or dual diagnosis** – based on the expressed need for cultural awareness and sensitivity across services and for

²³⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p94

²³⁸ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp29-79

more workers from diverse cultural backgrounds, both Aboriginal and CALD, along with a range of specific needs identified in relation to the Aboriginal community.²³⁹

System-wide improvements

3.43 In addition to these needs, the Report identifies a large number of issues common to all services that require improvement across the system, whether government or non government. These issues included outcome based reporting, accountability, governance capacity, client focus, capacity to meet demand, cultural responsiveness, planning, staffing, training, service models, collaboration, value for money, leadership, integrated service delivery and sector development.²⁴⁰

3.44 After detailing its findings in relation to each of these issues, the Review Report observes that ‘the challenges facing the whole human service system are considerable’ and identifies a number of systemic problems for the human services system of Redfern and Waterloo:

- Services are uncoordinated and fragmented
- Complex social needs identified by the community are not well addressed
- Service provision emphasis is currently output not outcome based
- A mismatch between clients expressed needs and perceptions of need by service providers
- Limited sensitivity to cultural diversity among service providers
- No systemic leadership/partnership structure exists to ensure locality based planning, decision making, community engagement or capacity building
- Service delivery models are isolationist, delivered on the basis of historical decisions in the absence of evidence based need and agreed outcomes and objectives.²⁴¹

Review recommendations

3.45 The consultants identify three options for reform, recommending Option 3:

1. To consider a radical and major competitive funding regime which might attract a different range of providers and services to the area and might reduce the number and range of providers receiving NSW Government funding.
2. To consider a selective tendering process for some specific services which might establish a different range of provided and might reduce the number of providers receiving NSW Government funding. This approach would be more incremental.

²³⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp11-13

²⁴⁰ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp19-28

²⁴¹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p29

3. To embark on a radical and developmental strategy which builds on the existing strengths; encourages more integrated service models and approaches, voluntary mergers, amalgamations and collocations; and includes the community in finding solutions.

- 3.46** Appearng before the Committee after the Review Report's release, Mr Michael Ramsey explained that Option 3 was really the only viable option as it emphasised strengths and supported agencies to work towards a more effective service delivery model. By contrast, Options 1 and 2 carried an enormous risk of alienating service providers and undermining the very objectives the RWPP seeks from reform:

I think there is a willingness within services in Redfern and Waterloo to change and I think we will end up with a strong, vibrant, resilient service delivery system if we work down through Option 3. If we picked up options 1 or 2 we would have a totally dysfunctional service delivery system because it would cause anarchy, to be perfectly honest. It would not achieve the outcomes that we all want. Option 3 is the only viable option that was given to us by Morgan Disney.²⁴²

- 3.47** The Review Report concludes with a table setting out five overarching recommendations of the Review, each with identified tasks, mechanisms and system outcomes. This table is included at the end of our Report at Appendix 5. The recommendations are summarised as follows:

- **Recommendation 1 – Planning framework for service system improvement:** That the NSW Government approves a Redfern Waterloo planning framework within which service system improvement occurs through a ten year commitment linked to a locality based model, reorganising the human services system on a locality basis. Tasks include: implementing an engagement process for community stakeholders to develop agreed outcomes for the locality and the human services system; achieving agreement on principles and objectives to underpin the human services system; and evaluating the Human Services Plan using identified outcomes.
- **Recommendation 2 – Implementation framework:** That the NSW Government approves a framework (set out in the Report) for implementing changes to the human services system in Redfern and Waterloo. This will involve the development of a Human Services Plan and the establishment of a leadership, planning and consultative structure made up of a Redfern Waterloo Human Services Senior Officers Group, an Implementation Working Group, and a Taskforce for each service cluster (see section below on implementation).
- **Recommendation 3 – Community leadership and capacity building strategy:** That the NSW Government implements a community leadership and capacity building strategy for the Redfern/Waterloo human services system that involves three elements: staff skills development; professional development on new service models and approaches; and a community leadership strategy for stakeholder groups.
- **Recommendation 4 – Priority strategies and action plans:** That strategies be developed in priority areas of human services delivery, based on action plans set out in the Review Report. Year 1 priorities are identified as: youth services; family and children's services; services for the Aboriginal community; a locality based health

²⁴² Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p25

service providing mental health, drug and alcohol and dual diagnosis services; and domestic violence and family services. Year 2 priorities are: improving access for people from CALD backgrounds; and future planning for people with disabilities and people who are ageing.

- **Recommendation 5 – Restructure and modification of services:** That the NSW Government immediately considers the range of actions to improve the coherence, effectiveness and accessibility of services. Identified actions are: rationalisation or merger of some services; co-location of some services; exploration of the feasibility of a ‘back office’ facility to support merged and co-located services; exploration of more possibilities for ‘outsourcing’; renovation or improvement of facilities for a number of services; performance review of a small number of services; and service improvements in some specific services.²⁴³

- 3.48** Mr Ramsey advised the Committee that the Government had adopted the Review Report,²⁴⁴ and gave a further indication of some of the strategies being considered as part of the Human Services Plan:

That service delivery model will be built around some of the elements that everybody in this room would agree, I think, were good elements for a service delivery system ... things like a common assessment and referral system; information provision, which actually goes across the whole service system, electronic network that goes across the whole service system; resource-sharing between services so, rather than having services being strapped because they do not have resources, making sure that they can share them. We are looking at again creating a virtual pool of funding so that instead of having funding across a number of government agencies you link that to monitoring and evaluation of services, so you monitor and evaluate services on the basis of the total amount of money that they have actually received. In some instances, in partnership with the services on the ground, it may involve some reorganisation of management structures; it may involve physical co-location of services. Some of these services are actually at present in poor facilities. You cannot sustain the level of facilities across the whole area. Maybe we need to co-locate those services so that, in effect, if somebody comes in, they can have a suite of services operating out of the same room or the same facility to meet their needs ...²⁴⁵

The Committee's critique

- 3.49** The Committee has identified a number of key, interconnected issues around which our critique of the Human Services Review, its findings and recommendations are structured:

- the exclusion of core government activities
- funding
- coordination and collaboration
- service infrastructure, support and sector development

²⁴³ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp95-102

²⁴⁴ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p24

²⁴⁵ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p25

- accountability and integrated planning
- implementation.

3.50 Two important and related themes emerge from our discussion, both of which the Committee sees as key messages to the RWPP as it leads the process of implementing the Review's recommendations. They are also key measures against which the success of reforms will be judged. First, non government agencies must be valued and engaged in the process of change. Second, and equally, government agencies need to be engaged, to take up their responsibilities in relation to change, and to find new ways of working with non government services. These themes are discussed at the conclusion of the chapter, in the section on implementation.

The exclusion of core government activities

3.51 The Committee acknowledges the substantial work that has gone into the Human Services Review and the comprehensiveness of its findings. As the consultants pointed out, it was a major undertaking, with no known precedent for a Review of the whole human service system in a location of comparable size, either in Australia or overseas. Thus we also acknowledge the innovative nature of the initiative, and commend the explicitly evidence-based approach it employed.

3.52 At the same time, the Committee commends the vision for Redfern and Waterloo that this Review Report embodies. Our reading of the consultants' Report is that there is a genuine commitment to address the difficult and complex issues currently undermining the effectiveness of the human service system in that area. Broadly speaking, we see value in the Review's recommendations: they provide a clear way forward, with important tools to assist the implementation process. We also acknowledge the magnitude of the task ahead.

3.53 On the other hand, the Committee is concerned that the activities of core government agencies were not included in the Review. The consultant's Report acknowledges this as a limitation of the project:

Whilst the core services of some key government departments [were] excluded from the Review, issues relating to service delivery of these core services was raised constantly during the Review.²⁴⁶

3.54 When asked by the Committee why this occurred, representatives of the Premier's Department explained that it was because the Review was extremely large and complex already, and that the inclusion of the core government services would have made it much more so, and would have resulted in significant delays. They clarified that it was only the statutory government responsibilities which were excluded, with a range of health, school community programs, police liaison positions, and so on included in the Review.²⁴⁷

3.55 While we understand the imperative not to delay the Review's completion, the Committee is concerned about the exclusion of government services on a number of counts. The first relates to the ambit of the Review: it is not as comprehensive as it might have been and does

²⁴⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p122

²⁴⁷ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p23

not furnish information on how key elements of the human services system such as housing, education and child protection need to be improved. These services make up a major portion of the human services system and have a major impact on the lives of residents. Second, the decision not to include core government activities focuses the problems on the non government sector which the Committee has observed is already feeling disempowered, misunderstood and unappreciated by government. It implies that a different standard applies to government and non government agencies.

- 3.56** In evidence Mr Ramsey reassured the Committee that this ‘does not mean there are not issues about some of those core statutory responsibilities ... that may need to be addressed and that will be the next step along the process.’²⁴⁸ The Committee was eager to learn more about the Government’s plans to review government services, but no further information has been made available at this stage.
- 3.57** We note that the Review Report makes it explicit that government agencies will be key participants in the implementation of recommendations. We also note that during government announcements regarding the Human Services Plan, the clear message was given that government agencies needed to engage in the reform process, that they ‘needed to change as well’.²⁴⁹ In a later section we deal with the strong message from both large and small non government agencies regarding poor collaboration on the part of government agencies in Redfern and Waterloo.
- 3.58** In the Committee’s view, the active engagement of government agencies in the process of reform – including reform of their own practices – will be critical to the success of the Human Services Plan. Not only will it be necessary to improve the effectiveness of funding and service delivery; it will also be vital to ensuring the engagement of non government agencies in reform.

Recommendation 7

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.

Funding

- 3.59** As discussed earlier in this chapter, many of the community organisations we spoke with were very concerned that the Review did not bring with it any additional resources for service provision, and that it might result in the reallocation of resources between agencies. Many agencies operate from a very low resource base, and for many providers, unmet need for services is readily apparent. The Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

²⁴⁸ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p23

²⁴⁹ Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC, *Hansard*, Legislative Council, 10 November 2004, p12458

submission embodied the frustration of community-based service providers with government when it stated, ‘They starve us of funds, then blame us for being skinny.’²⁵⁰

3.60 Community-based agencies were also apprehensive about the possibility of forced amalgamations in order to create greater efficiencies, arguing that this might reduce service diversity and thereby, reduce flexibility and responsiveness to local needs, as well as client choice.²⁵¹

3.61 The consultants stated that in their view, Redfern and Waterloo are comparatively well resourced:

This Review has confirmed that there is a substantial investment in human services in Redfern and Waterloo and that compared with many suburbs, these two suburbs are very well served.²⁵²

3.62 The Review Report is also clear that increased funding is not a first-order priority in relation to the bulk of services at least, but it does flag the need for funding increases in some identified areas:

The service system as a whole, and the service clusters, require significant strengthening and capacity building before any decisions on additional resources for the area should be considered. The exceptions to this relate to potential new funding opportunities for family and domestic violence, men’s services and any new funding for disability and /or aged care services.²⁵³

3.63 Nevertheless, the Review team argues for funding only to be increased subject to the strong proviso that the need to do so is well substantiated. It recommends:

That the Strategies be developed from the Action Plans in the Review and from the position that before any increase in resources could be considered the Strategies would need to clearly demonstrate that following reshaping and restructuring the current level of resources cannot provide adequate services to address the agreed outcomes.²⁵⁴

3.64 The Committee also notes as positive the indications given in the Report that additional resources may be spent, for example, on the ‘renovation or improvement of facilities for a number of services’ flagged in its Recommendation 5. We are aware of the overdue promises made by the RWPP in relation to some services and the impact this has had on service delivery in the meantime, as well as on relations between non government agencies and the RWPP. We believe it vitally important that the Government act on this aspect of the Review Report. Doing so will go some way to re-establishing the trust of NGOs and ensuring their participation in the reform process.

²⁵⁰ Submission 70, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, p3

²⁵¹ Submission 55, South Sydney Interagency, p2; Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p19

²⁵² Morgan Disney & Associates, p79

²⁵³ Morgan Disney & Associates, pp79-80

²⁵⁴ Morgan Disney & Associates, p81

3.65 As a result of the apprehension we observed among service providers about the possibility of funding cuts, the Committee sought reassurance from the RWPP that funding to non government agencies would not be reduced as a result of the Review. Dr Gellatly responded:

We cannot give a concrete undertaking that there will never be any defunding of things. All we can say is that the process we have been undertaking under the direction of Government is to look at ways of improving the allocation of the money, not to look at trying to achieve savings, but we cannot give a categorical commitment, that is a matter of the budget process and appropriations and that sort of thing. I am not in a position to do that.²⁵⁵

3.66 The Review Report is careful not to flag the defunding of individual services, but does note the urgent need to review some services, and that more detailed information and recommendations have been provided to the Government on this.²⁵⁶ The Report also states that strategies in service clusters ‘may require that savings are found or that reshaping and restructuring can lead to distribution of resources to cover the arrangements for the respective cluster strategy.’ In addition, the Report recommends actions including ‘rationalisation or merger of specific services’.²⁵⁷

3.67 In the interests of ensuring an effective system and the responsible use of public funds, the Committee accepts that some of these measures might be required, but is concerned to ensure that funding is only taken from an agency as a last resort, with the reasons made very clear to the services involved. In addition, every effort must be made to minimise any negative impact on staff and service users. Similarly, amalgamations must as far as possible be voluntary, with care to ensure that an appropriate diversity of services within all clusters be retained. We recommend that the RWPP develop and use specific procedures to ensure that such decisions and actions are handled with due care.

3.68 More broadly, the Committee recognises that many of the issues facing the human service system in Redfern and Waterloo are mirrored throughout the State, and that in the interests of equity new funds cannot be poured into any one community. Nevertheless, where need for additional resources is substantiated, we urge all levels of government to provide the appropriate funds.

Recommendation 8

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.

²⁵⁵ Dr Gellatly, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p19

²⁵⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p80

²⁵⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p102

Recommendation 9

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.

Coordination and collaboration

- 3.69** The issue of funding is linked to that of coordination and collaboration, and the Committee observed markedly different perceptions of this issue on the part of non government agencies and the consultants who undertook the Review.
- 3.70** Prior to the release of the Review Report there was a very strong message from non government inquiry participants that the Review should not rely on simplistic assumptions that improved coordination and collaboration would solve the problems of Redfern and Waterloo. This was perhaps one of the strongest concerns of non government services expressed to the Committee. In its submission, the Redfern Legal Centre stated:

There seems to be a perception in government that the major problem facing clients and potential clients is that they face a lack of information about services, or that there is no system whereby clients are referred from one service to another. It does not seem to occur to government that its own reform processes are debilitating the services, or that its funding of services is inadequate for the growth of the community sector to meet expanding local needs ... Though there may be a lack of formal arrangements between services, there are strong informal links between them that make referrals easy, casual and fast ... The informal systems work well, provided there is the capacity in the organisation receiving the referral to provide a service.²⁵⁸

- 3.71** Similarly, when he appeared before the Committee, Shane Brown, Director of South Sydney Youth Services argued that in his experience, there is reasonable coordination already, saying: 'I think it is a [perception] from outside of the community that our people do not talk enough and do not collaborate enough, but I think that is a convenient notion.'²⁵⁹ In his submission, Mr Brown cited various ways that collaboration occurs in the youth services system:

Much of the work of our service relies on the good will and collaboration of others, the hundreds of volunteers who contribute time and the joint projects such as Street Beat with the Aboriginal Resource Centre. The sharing of space with the PCYC and our Education programs, The Youth Matter Project (a coalition of youth service providers) and others. The joint work with the Department of Housing and young people with mental illness. The many corporate bodies who support our programs with funding and volunteers. The sharing of resources between services including transport, staff, space. The hours of joint casework and case management that occurs between our service, the Fact Tree, Settlement, Girls Centre, PCYC, Centre Link, DoH, DoCS, Juvenile Justice – the list is extensive.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Submission 50, Redfern Legal Centre, p6

²⁵⁹ Mr Brown, Evidence, 15 October 2004, p4

²⁶⁰ Submission 92, South Sydney Youth Services, p5

3.72 By the same token, non government agencies were adamant that government services had much more trouble collaborating with other agencies, with members of both the Koori Interagency and the South Sydney Interagency singling out the Department of Community Services as a particular offender.²⁶¹ Large NGOs such as Barnardos also highlighted a problem with government agencies.²⁶² NCOSS's submission calls for much greater coordination between Government and non government agencies assisting people in Redfern and Waterloo.²⁶³ The Benevolent Society sees the problem of collaboration and coordination this way:

The issue for organisations working in these communities is not (as is sometimes the case in high need communities), to increase their networking – in some senses there is almost a sense of organisations being ‘over-networked’ in Redfern/Waterloo. Rather, the challenge appears to be how to use this networking for collective action and how to help staff and residents maintain a sense of energy and hope in the face of the daily challenges with which they [live].²⁶⁴

3.73 Nevertheless, service providers also showed an openness to improvements in relation to collaboration and coordination.²⁶⁵ Focusing more on the specialised end of service delivery, participants such as Tanya Plibersek MP did see the need for a more holistic and coordinated approach to service provision for clients with complex needs, with services working together in a ‘wrap-around model’ perhaps through intensive case management, but she also suggested that this should receive additional funding.²⁶⁶

3.74 Strategies in relation to improving coordination and collaboration are indeed a key focus of the Human Services Review's recommendations, listing among the objectives to underpin its improved human services system, ‘to develop effective planned collaborative approaches’ and ‘to develop effective integrated service delivery approaches’.²⁶⁷ Substantiating this recommendation, when discussing the need to improve collaboration across the whole system, the consultants made a very strong statement about ‘distrust’ and ‘disrespect’ within Redfern and Waterloo’s human services:

There are pockets of good collaborative effort across all service clusters and almost every organisation expressed a keen desire for improved collaboration across the human services system. The Review team was struck by the high level of distrust and the lack of respect which permeated the human services system in the area. This is sometimes strong between individual organisations in any service system. It is often seen in child protection or mental health, where few organisations understand the pressures and demands on government services in complex service delivery areas. However in this area we would describe this culture of disrespect as almost endemic. There are very few organisations allowed to provide effective leadership or modelling

²⁶¹ Participants, Koori South Eastern Sydney Interagency, 15 October 2004 p17; Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004 p10

²⁶² Submission 32, Barnardos, p3

²⁶³ Submission 56, NCOSS, p3

²⁶⁴ Submission 33, Benevolent Society, p8

²⁶⁵ Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p19

²⁶⁶ Submission 49, Ms Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Member for Sydney, pp4-5

²⁶⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p96

of collaborative skills and practice. This also manifests in some clients not being referred on to appropriate services.

Development of collaboration is a core strategy required in every service cluster and across the system and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency particularly with modelling effective collaboration from key leaders.²⁶⁸

- 3.75** Working at the coalface of Redfern and Waterloo, non government service providers deal constantly with the difficulties of service delivery to people with significant needs. It seems that they are frustrated by unmet need, and that their hackles are raised by messages that they could address it by working differently. They also report that their informal networks have been devalued and depleted since the Partnership Project itself was established.²⁶⁹
- 3.76** In the Committee's view, the RWPP will need to work very carefully with the non government sector in relation to the objective of improving collaboration and cooperation. Agencies need recognition for what they are doing well, along with clear messages about how and why things could be done differently. Service providers need to believe in the benefits of working collaboratively, both for themselves, and for their clients.
- 3.77** This is also an area where the RWPP must ensure that no double standard applies to the government sector. It is imperative that government agencies improve their practices around collaboration, both to ensure better outcomes for clients, and to gain credibility with the non government sector.
- 3.78** The consultants' Report recommends that as part of the community leadership and capacity building strategy to be implemented in response to the Review, staff throughout the Redfern and Waterloo human services system be trained in partnership skills. In addition, professional development should be provided on areas including integrated service models, integrated case management, out-servicing approaches to integration and co-location.²⁷⁰
- 3.79** The Report states that integrated and coordinated service delivery is based on shared responsibility, an agreed common strategy and service model, and joint training for the workers involved in coordinated work.²⁷¹ A key vehicle through which collaboration and cooperation will be achieved is the service clusters recommended by the Review, and we consider it valuable and prudent that the Taskforces are to develop the strategy for their cluster. It will be very important for all parties - whether government, non government or community members - to come to the Taskforces with a commitment to working together in new ways, for the good of the system and their clients. It will also be vital for the RWPP to support agencies' collaborative efforts through measures such as training and infrastructure support, and to ensure that true partnerships are established and modelled in the Implementation Working Group. Leadership on this issue will necessarily come from the Redfern Waterloo Services Senior Officers Group.

²⁶⁸ Morgan Disney & Associates, p26

²⁶⁹ Participants, 15 October 2004

²⁷⁰ Morgan Disney & Associates, p100

²⁷¹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p86

Service infrastructure, support and sector development

- 3.80** As outlined earlier in this chapter, a number of service providers raised with the Committee the burdens they face in terms of tendering for contracts, governance and accountability requirements, administration, and so on, emphasising the way that these issues detract from the core business of service delivery to clients. The Committee is aware of the difficulties that many small agencies across the State face with maintaining their viability, and of the growing challenges that all funded agencies face in terms of increasing expectations around service management, together with the growing complexity of client needs.
- 3.81** The Review Report identifies a range of measures to address these difficulties as part of its ‘Community leadership and capacity building strategy’ (Recommendation 3). These include staff skills development and professional development, along with:
- A community leadership development strategy across the community stakeholder groups and including the RWPP focusing on community leadership
 - A capacity building strategy for the non-government sector on governance and mutual accountability.²⁷²
- 3.82** In addition, Recommendation 5 refers to ‘Exploration of the feasibility of a back office facility to support merged and co-located services.’
- 3.83** Early in our Inquiry, NCOSS argued the value of both a community leadership development program and a ‘back office’ model in order to build the capacity of and support non government agencies in their role:
- Opportunities do exist to develop and operate a highly engaging community leadership program, which brings together current and future leaders from the different neighbourhoods and encourages them to confront their differences and align their efforts for a better future. The effectiveness of such an initiative, if scoped and implemented with careful thinking and sufficient resources, could be substantial over a few years.²⁷³
- [The plan for Redfern and Waterloo should include] a non government organisations risk management advice and support service, which particularly works with the myriad of small and medium [services] to encourage and deliver shared services and pooled purchasing in the “back office”. This service should be owned by the NGO sector and managed through one of its existing peak networks.²⁷⁴
- 3.84** In the Committee’s view, there is considerable value in the directions and strategies recommended in the Review Report in relation to service infrastructure, support and capacity development. As well as directly helping a potentially large number of agencies to achieve the objectives of the forthcoming Human Services Plan, these strategies will also afford a measure of the effectiveness of the RWPP in providing practical assistance in areas where agencies themselves have sought support.

²⁷² Morgan Disney & Associates, p100

²⁷³ Submission 56, NCOSS, p3

²⁷⁴ Submission 56, NCOSS, p3

Accountability and integrated planning

3.85 Many service providers told us that they would greatly appreciate measures that simplify their accountability requirements. Key issues include the non-compatibility of data requirements across programs, the time that data keeping consumes for seemingly little result, and correspondingly, the fact that it diverts resources from service development and delivery.²⁷⁵ One coordinator told us that he has to keep statistics in four different formats, estimating that about ten percent of funding time is consumed by these requirements.²⁷⁶

3.86 Participants also raised the issue that government agencies need to be accountable for what they achieve as well. As Geoff and Lyn Turnbull stated:

In the same way that NGOs report to their community on their projects and activities, Government departments delivering services in Redfern and Waterloo should report on their projects and activities to the community that they are seeking to service so that these projects can be accountable to the community in the same way as NGO projects.²⁷⁷

3.87 The Committee heard from the Premier's Department about measures to address data compatibility and more user-friendly reporting at the State level:

In the Premier's Department we have just finished a Review right across the Government called the Grants Administration Review. We have been looking at those and we are developing some protocols which the Auditor General mentioned recently in reports about having a common database and having common application forms and reporting requirements, and probably trying to lessen a few of those shorter term lower amount ones, because we have found that some of the reporting requirements for a grant of \$60,000 might be the same as for a few million, so there has to be a bit of risk analysis, saying that we only need the basic facts for the lower one.²⁷⁸

3.88 Dr Gellatly also indicated that there had been discussion between the State and Commonwealth regarding the possibility of achieving uniformity in data collection and reporting.²⁷⁹ While an undertaking was given by Dr Gellatly to provide further advice on this work, at the time of completing this report, no further information has been received by the Committee.

3.89 Mr Ramsey also addressed the Government's plan to move towards 'single agency accountability' in Redfern and Waterloo, indicating that government agencies would be equally accountable under the proposed model:

One of the outcomes of the Human Services Review and one of the things that we will be implementing as part of this new Human Services Plan, is we are moving to one agency Review and monitoring of service delivery, so instead of having

²⁷⁵ Submission 46, South Sydney Interagency, p4; Submission 50, Redfern Legal Centre, pp8-9

²⁷⁶ Mr Brown, Evidence, 15 October 2004, p3

²⁷⁷ Submission 65, Geoff and Lyn Turnbull, p13

²⁷⁸ Dr Gellatly, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p13

²⁷⁹ Dr Gellatly, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p21

accountability across four or five government agencies, we are moving to single agency accountability across the whole of Government.

That will actually address some of the fundamental issues you are saying, so instead of having to report to different government agencies we will have one agency evaluating on behalf of all government agencies. That will streamline the process quite significantly.

What it will also do, which is perhaps even more significant, is it will ensure that community outcomes are delivered rather than program outcomes, so it will break down those silos where the focus is actually on programs ... The single monitoring of services allows that to actually occur. Equally though, what it does is put in another benchmark in terms of increased accountability, and this is accountability of both government and non government services in Redfern and Waterloo. It is all well and good to talk about non government services, but government services in Redfern and Waterloo should also be accountable.²⁸⁰

- 3.90** The consultants also developed a monitoring and assessment framework for the reformed system, which will include a ‘simple low cost data collection tool’:

The proposed Human Services Delivery Plan will require a simple, low cost and manageable monitoring and assessment framework which provides local data and enables an assessment of the restructured human services system.²⁸¹

A simple and low cost data collection tool would be provided which would complement existing reporting requirements and provide improved local data without compromising existing data collections or imposing onerous new requirements.²⁸²

- 3.91** The Report states that the data collection tool would be completed annually, would focus on outcomes, with some basic output data, and would be ‘Developmental in that it would encourage services to think in an evaluative framework and to improve their consumer feedback and participation processes.’²⁸³ The monitoring and assessment framework in the Report is replicated on the following page.

- 3.92** When the Committee asked service providers their thoughts about pooled funding and a single accountability mechanism, prior to the release of the Review Report, the response was cautious, with people wary of a system that might be adopt a ‘one size fits all’ model that did not offer flexibility to respond to the differences between services.²⁸⁴ There was some confusion as to whether and how it might apply to services funded by the Federal and Local Governments as well. The Committee also observed among some inquiry participants apprehension about the move towards outcome based reporting, which they feared might not adequately reflect their work,²⁸⁵ and which will potentially impact on their funding base.

²⁸⁰ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p13

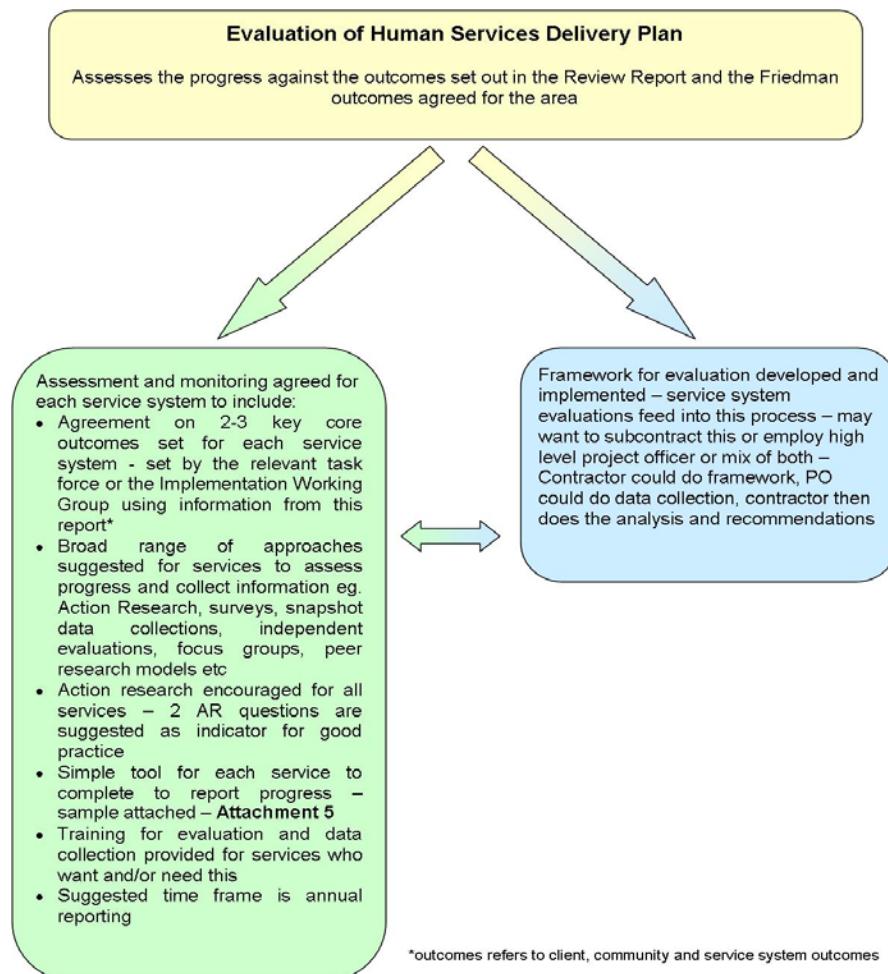
²⁸¹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p90

²⁸² Morgan Disney & Associates, p90

²⁸³ Morgan Disney & Associates, p91

²⁸⁴ Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p23

²⁸⁵ Participants, South Sydney Interagency, 3 November 2004, p25

Figure 3.1 Monitoring and assessment framework proposed in the Human Services Review²⁸⁶

3.93 In the Committee's view, the pooled funding and accountability model implies a whole new way of thinking about the funding, delivery and evaluation of human services that will take some time for both government and non government agencies to understand and feel comfortable with. We consider that the Government's plans for staff skills development in relation to evaluation, continuous improvement and outcomes (as part of Recommendation 3)²⁸⁷ will be vitally important to ensuring a smooth transition towards this brave new world. Both government and non government agencies will require good information, sound leadership and patience as they come to grips with such a radical new funding and accountability regime.

3.94 Few participants raised integrated planning with the Committee but those such as the Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project saw an approach that compelled government agencies to plan in relation to each other as very desirable:

²⁸⁶ Morgan Disney & Associates, p93

²⁸⁷ Morgan Disney & Associates, p100

The fact that health facilities are closed without community transport being allocated additional money for medical transport is one such example of where better and more coordinated planning could have been done to meet the needs of local residents. The necessity for various government departments to communicate with one another would also be facilitated by the creation of a human services department. For example when the Department of Housing groups people from the same language group in particular residences they could share a certain amount of information with other government departments who fund language specific programs to enable them to outreach more effectively while respecting client privacy.²⁸⁸

- 3.95** The Committee sees value in the move towards integrated planning, and again we foresee that education for service providers will be a very important aspect of reform.
- 3.96** Over and above these strategies which are specific to Redfern and Waterloo, the Committee considers that further action to address the issue of accountability requirements needs to be addressed at the State and Commonwealth levels, as a priority. Whilst accountability requirements were a major concern for participants in this Inquiry, they have also been raised in other inquiries we have undertaken. While we have not seen the report of the Premier's Department's Grants Administration Review, we do see merit in the directions arising from it, as flagged in evidence by Dr Gellatly (see quote after paragraph 3.87). These directions involved the streamlining of grants administration, including the creation of a common database, common reporting requirements and uniform application forms, and ensuring that accountability requirements are kept proportional to the funding concerned. We strongly urge the Government to take action on these matters, including through further negotiation with the Commonwealth on achieving uniformity in data collection and reporting.

Recommendation 10

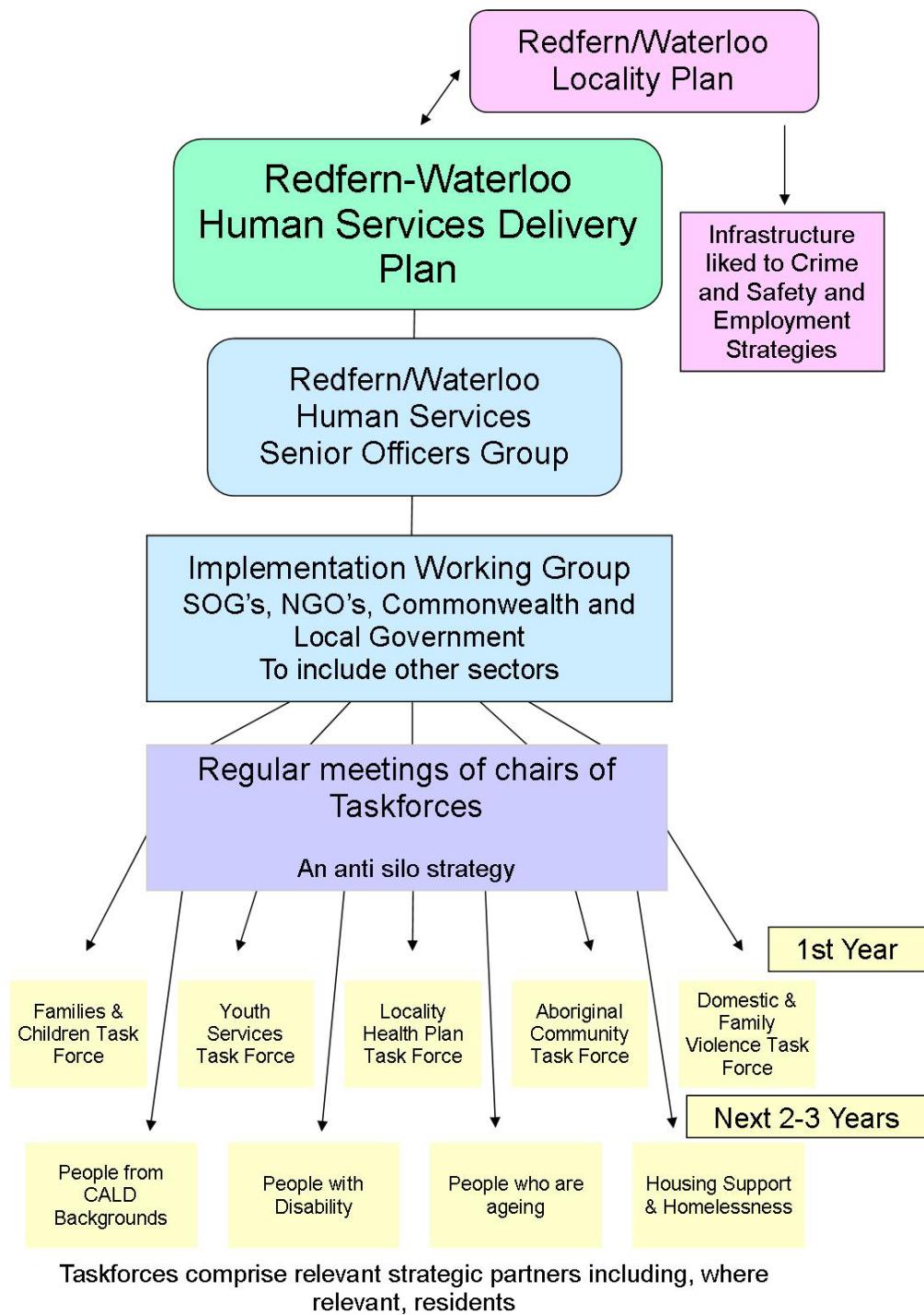
That the Premier's Department act on the findings of the recent Grant Administration Review, to reduce the burden of funding and accountability requirements on non government agencies.

Implementation

- 3.97** As noted above, the recommendations of the Human Services Review will be used to help design a Human Services Plan for Redfern and Waterloo, to be presented to Cabinet by May 2005.
- 3.98** Figure 2 on the following page provides an overview of the various levels of the Government's strategy for reforming the human service system of Redfern and Waterloo, including how implementation is to be driven.
- 3.99** The consultant's Report includes an implementation framework, captured in their Recommendation 2, which identifies the following structures as driving implementation:

²⁸⁸ Submission 57, Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project, p1

Figure 3.2 Outline of the implementation of the Human Services Plan proposed in the Human Services Review Report²⁸⁹



²⁸⁹ Morgan Disney & Associates, p89

- The Redfern Waterloo Human Services Senior Officers Group ... provides oversight and monitors the development of the Human Services Delivery Plan
- An implementation Working Group (IWG) made up of representatives of key human service agencies and community stakeholders ... and supported by the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project develops the plan. The IWG will report to the Redfern Waterloo Human Services Senior Officers Group
- Taskforces involving government, non-government and resident representatives work on service clusters as set out in the Review
- The existing [Redfern Waterloo] Consultative Council provides a mechanism for two way communication with representatives of community stakeholder groups
- The role of other existing consultative mechanisms are engaged to assist in two way communication with the wider community.²⁹⁰

- 3.100** When he appeared before the Committee shortly after the release of the Report, Mr Ramsey indicated that as a first step towards implementation, the RWPP was arranging meetings with community and service stakeholders on the findings of the Human Services Review.²⁹¹ The Committee understands that in keeping with this commitment, in mid December the consultants Morgan Disney & Associates held a number of sessions with members of the public, management committees and service providers.²⁹²
- 3.101** At the hearing towards the end of the Inquiry, the Premier's Department undertook to provide further information on the development and implementation of the Human Services Plan. At the time of completing this Report, the information has not been provided.
- 3.102** In the Committee's view, this implementation framework reflects the need for reform to be driven at a number of levels simultaneously. Prioritising some clusters for the first year and leaving others for years two and three would concentrate energy in those areas that need it most urgently. As discussed below, the success of implementation will rest on real partnership at every level.

The way ahead: genuine partnerships

- 3.103** The tasks ahead in developing a Human Services Plan and successfully implementing it, are massive. The Committee considers that the success of the Plan will rest on the partnerships which are central to the rhetoric and framework of the Human Services Review's findings. As Geoff and Lyn Turnbull have stated:

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

²⁹⁰ Morgan Disney & Associates, p99

²⁹¹ Mr Ramsey, Evidence, 12 November 2004, p9

²⁹² Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project, 'Invitation to Community meetings', www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au/oldsite/pdf/community_meetings.pdf (accessed 10 December 2004)

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.²⁹³

- 3.104** Genuine partnership will require active collaboration on the part of government, the community and the non government sector at each level of implementation. It will necessarily involve an active commitment on the part of all involved to an entirely new way of working and wholesale cultural change. Genuine partnership will rest on change on the part of government agencies - both the RWPP and the various government agencies operating in Redfern and Waterloo - to genuinely engaging with their community and service provider partners. It will mean equal partnership and the sharing of power.

Table 3.1 The new approach to community renewal²⁹⁴

Previous approach	Evolving approach
Centralised or regional planning which is delivered to the local area	A locality based partnership <i>develops</i> a coherent plan to address the social issues and challenges facing the community at the locality level and negotiates with the central government agencies and regional bodies to achieve the horizontal integration and the use of resources to achieve the local goals
Single program or issue funding delivered as vertical interventions into the locality	Horizontal integration and coordination negotiated by the locality partnership across the various funding programs to achieve an integrated service strategy and integrated service models in the locality
Predominance of a top-down view of the locality - a sense that the State level of government 'owns' the locality rather than a balance between a 'top down' and 'bottom up' perspective	Facilitative leadership by the State level of government to build and model partnership with the other 'owners'/stakeholders in the locality – the people who live and work there, businesses, community organisations, Local Government and the Commonwealth Government. These groups are recognised as owners of the area too and as bringing vital resources to the total resource pool
State government level decision-making with consultation with a variety of uncoordinated local parties	State government decision-making involves negotiation (not just consultation) with the locality body. Negotiation is on a win/win basis for the parties
State government and the community focus primarily on state government resources	The wide range of resources in a locality are identified particularly across the three levels of government, and 'virtually' pooled to enable the locality strategic partnership to develop coherent, integrated strategies.

²⁹³ Submission 65, Geoff and Lyn Turnbull, p3

²⁹⁴ Morgan Disney & Associates, p85

- 3.105** The Government faces an enormous challenge in living up to the messages of the Human Services Review Report. Table 3.2 on the previous page, taken from the Report, conveys the genuine power sharing that will be vital to gaining the trust of non government stakeholders and achieving reform over time. The commitment to involving community stakeholders in the development of plans, both the overall Human Services Plan and the cluster action plans, along with the notion of local decision making which is negotiated, not just consulted upon, are very positive. Time will tell if this ‘new approach to community renewal’ is put into practice. Several of the mechanisms recommended by the Review, including its leadership, planning and consultative structure and its community leadership and capacity building strategy, will greatly assist the task, but ultimately, reform will rest on a genuine commitment to working differently.
- 3.106** The RWPP and other government agencies need to work to restore the trust of the non government sector and the community. This will necessarily take time and will be an evolving process. For their part, the community and non government sector also need to be open to change and a new way of working, and to the gains that can flow from reform. They need to be prepared to trust government, to embrace the possibilities of change, and help create a new future for human service delivery in the area.
- 3.107** As Gary Moore of NCOSS stated when he appeared before the Committee in May, change will only occur when people see the benefits of it.²⁹⁵ This means that the RWPP will need to communicate effectively with its partners, and to make the process as positive as possible. In an informal conversation since the release of the Review Report, Mr Moore talked about the idea of building pride among service providers in the work that they do, and the enhanced outcomes that they can achieve for the residents of Redfern and Waterloo through this new regime. He also talked about the importance of equipping the non government sector to sit at the table as an equal partner.²⁹⁶
- 3.108** To this end, Mr Moore suggested that government agencies in the area contribute funds to establish a local body to represent the non government sector of Redfern and Waterloo in the development and implementation of the reforms. The body would be a kind of ‘local peak’ that would represent the entire sector and become a negotiation point with government. He suggested that this could be based on the ‘Region Assist’ model developed by the Premier’s Department, combining the ‘back office’ infrastructure function flagged in the Review Report with this negotiation and representation role.²⁹⁷
- 3.109** In the Committee’s view, this suggestion has great potential as a means of demonstrating a real and practical commitment to partnership with non government agencies. We consider that the non government sector must be equipped and resourced to sit at the negotiation table with government, with its status as equal partner formalised. It may be that an existing agency

²⁹⁵ Mr Moore, Evidence, 18 May 2004, p29

²⁹⁶ Telephone conversation between Mr Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS and Principal Council Officer, 25 November 2004; NSW Premier’s Department, *Non Government Organisation Capacity Building Region Assist, Project Report*, 2002

²⁹⁷ Telephone conversation between Mr Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS and Principal Council Officer, 25 November 2004; NSW Premier’s Department, *Non Government Organisation Capacity Building Region Assist, Project Report*, 2002

could take on this umbrella role, drawing on and supported by the expertise of the interagency groups that already exist in the area.

Recommendation 11

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.
