

Standing Committee on Social Issues

Inquiry into issues relating to Redfern/Waterloo

Interim report

Ordered to be printed according to the Resolution of the
House

New South Wales Parliamentary Library cataloguing-in-publication data:

New South Wales. Parliament. Legislative Council. Standing Committee on Social Issues

Inquiry into issues relating to Redfern/Waterloo : interim report / Legislative Council, Standing Committee on Social Issues. [Sydney, N.S.W.] : The Committee, 2004. – p. 190 ; 30 cm. (Report 32, August 2004)

Chair: Jan Burnswoods.

“Ordered to be printed according to the resolution of the House”.

ISBN 1920788034

1. Aboriginal Australians—New South Wales—Redfern.
2. Aboriginal Australians—New South Wales—Waterloo.
3. Aboriginal Australians—Social conditions.
4. Redfern (N.S.W.) —Social conditions.
5. Waterloo (N.S.W.) —Social conditions.
- I. Title
- II. Burnswoods, Jan.
- III. Series: New South Wales. Parliament. Legislative Council. Standing Committee on Social Issues. Report ; 32

305.8991 (DDC21)

How to contact the Committee

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Issues can be contacted through the Committee Secretariat. Written correspondence and enquiries should be directed to:

The Director

Standing Committee on Social Issues

Legislative Council

Parliament House, Macquarie Street

Sydney New South Wales 2000

Internet www.parliament.nsw.gov.au

Email socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Telephone 02 9230 3078

Facsimile 02 9230 2981

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

Table of contents

	Chair's foreword	10
	Summary of recommendations	15
	Acronyms	19
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
	Background to the Inquiry	1
	Conduct of the Inquiry	1
	Events of 14-16 February 2004	2
	Other inquiries	3
	The suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo	5
	The structure of the Interim Report	7
	The second stage of the Inquiry	8
Chapter 2	Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project	9
	Overview of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project	9
	Management and funding	11
	Differences between Redfern and Waterloo	11
	Complexity of issues in Redfern and Waterloo	12
	Current major projects – Human Services Review and the RED Strategy	13
	The notion of 'partnership'	14
	Progress to date	16
	Slowness in implementation of programs	19
	Consultation and communications	20
	Overview of RWPP consultation and communication mechanisms	20
	Criticism of the consultation processes	22
	Consultations with Aboriginal people	25
	Criticisms of communication processes	27
	Improving consultation and communication processes	28
	The future for the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project	30
Chapter 3	Redevelopment of the Block	34
	History of the Block and the Aboriginal community in Redfern	34
	The Aboriginal Housing Company	37
	Company structure and funding	38

	The Block and other properties owned by the AHC	39
	Current financial and management status of the AHC	39
	The future of the Block	44
	Options for the future of the Block	44
	Redevelopment in the context of broader social change	46
	Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project	47
	Overview	47
	Preparation of the site for redevelopment	48
	Social Plan and previous consultations	49
	Current concept development stage	50
	Type of housing that is appropriate	51
	Community consultation and communication	53
	Employment of Aboriginal people in the redevelopment	54
	Allocation of housing to tenants	56
	Ongoing maintenance and tenancy management issues	58
	State Government involvement in the redevelopment	59
	Funding for the redevelopment	60
	Conclusion	63
Chapter 4	Policing strategies and resources	66
	Policing in Redfern and Waterloo	67
	Redfern Local Area Command	67
	Crime in Redfern and Waterloo	68
	Violence against police	70
	Incidents of violence	70
	Extent of violence and recording incidents	72
	Preventing violence against police and minimising harm	76
	Police resources	78
	Redfern Police Station	78
	Staffing	80
	Proposal for an Operational Support Group	96
	Policing robberies	100
	Conclusion	105
Chapter 5	Mobile needle and syringe service	107
	Addressing drug and alcohol issues in Redfern and Waterloo	107
	Drug use in Redfern and Waterloo	108
	Principles of harm minimisation	111
	Redfern and Waterloo fixed and mobile needle services	112

	The effectiveness of the anti-drug strategy and harm minimisation	114
	Concerns about the mobile needle and syringe service	115
	Health and Police views on the mobile needle and syringe service	115
	Location and operating hours	118
	The image of a drug culture at Redfern	122
	'Honey pot' effect	123
	Number of needles provided to users	124
	Referral services and other drug related services	128
	Other options to the needle van	130
	Different approaches to drug and alcohol issues	131
	A way forward for the mobile needle and syringe service	132
Appendix 1	Submissions	137
Appendix 2	Witnesses	140
Appendix 3	Maps of Redfern and Waterloo	143
Appendix 4	The Block and surrounding area	144
Appendix 5	Redfern Local Area Command	145
Appendix 6	Crime statistics	146
Appendix 7	Redfern/Waterloo Drug Strategy Update	147
Appendix 8	Minutes	162
Appendix 9	Dissenting statements	188

Tables and figures

Table 1	Redfern and Waterloo Community Profile	p6
Table 2	Resist/hinder/assault officer incidents under section 58 of the Crimes Act	p72
Figure 1	Locations of mobile needle and syringe van and demolished houses	p114
Figure 2	Distribution statistics for the Needle and Syringe Program - Redfern	p126

Chair's foreword

I am pleased to present this Interim Report of the Committee's Inquiry into issues relating to Redfern/Waterloo. The terms of reference for this Inquiry arose out of the tragic death of Thomas 'TJ' Hickey and the subsequent riot in Redfern in February this year. For many participants it has been a challenging Inquiry, and I would like to express my thanks to the 89 submission makers and 60 witnesses who have participated in the Inquiry so far. I would also especially like to thank members of the Aboriginal community for their participation.

In this Interim Report the Committee has examined several significant issues that were raised during the first stage of the Inquiry and in relation to which we received sufficient evidence to enable a comprehensive examination. Our broad terms of reference raise many other issues which we will further examine in the second stage of the Inquiry and address in the Final Report, due on 30 November.

The issues facing the Australian people and the NSW and Commonwealth governments in relation to the Aboriginal community go back to the beginning of European settlement in 1788. Many would say we have little to be proud of in that long history. The time is long overdue for us to face the deep-rooted problems of poverty, disadvantage and racism, which beset many Aboriginal people in Redfern and Waterloo and throughout NSW. If the events of 14-16 February and the work of the Committee ultimately contribute to addressing these issues, then we will have gone some way towards reconciliation.

My thanks are due to the Committee members for their hard work and dedication in participating in what has been, at times, a difficult Inquiry. Their commitment has been manifest in the hours of debate, drafting and redrafting we have put into trying to achieve an Interim Report we can all agree on. I am proud that in the end we have adopted 17 of our 22 recommendations unanimously, and that there are only a few places in the report where we have needed to record the differing views of some Committee members.

On behalf of the Committee I would also like to extend thanks to Julie Langsworth, Rachel Callinan, Victoria Pymm and other members of the Secretariat for the dedication, skill and sheer hard work they contributed to the report. Without their patience and good humour this report could not have been produced.

I commend this Interim Report to the Government



Jan Burnswoods MLC
Chair

Executive summary

The terms of reference for the Inquiry were referred to the Standing Committee on Social Issues by the Legislative Council on 26 February 2004. The terms of reference are broad and require the Committee to examine a range of issues that relate to the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal community.

The terms of reference require the Committee to table an Interim Report by 31 July 2004 and we have taken this opportunity to address several significant issues that were raised in submissions and in evidence. The Final Report is due on 30 November and the Committee has much work to do to complete its examination of the remaining aspects of the terms of reference.

The Committee has understood the importance of engaging the Redfern and Waterloo communities, particularly the Aboriginal community, to ensure that a broad range of views are heard and that effective, practical recommendations can be made. We are grateful for the considerable input by members of the Redfern and Waterloo communities as well as other inquiry participants. The Committee has to date received 89 submissions and heard evidence from 60 witnesses.

Redfern and Waterloo

The suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo have been identified as being among the most disadvantaged postcodes in NSW with low employment, high drug and alcohol misuse and poor health. The two suburbs, however, have a diverse ethnic and linguistic make-up and a concomitant richness of culture and community spirit. The Committee acknowledges that, as emphasised by many inquiry participants, the two suburbs have as many differences as similarities and often cannot be considered together. An overview of the demographics of the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo is set out in Chapter 1.

Redfern and Waterloo are also unique in their significance to Aboriginal people. According to the 2001 Census, 311 people living in Redfern and 403 in Waterloo identified as 'Indigenous persons'. This represents 4.4% of the population of those suburbs, compared to 1% of Sydney as a whole. These statistics only tell part of the story. As many Aboriginal people who participated in our inquiry told us, Redfern is a place of great importance to Aboriginal culture. It is the birthplace of many autonomous Aboriginal services, including the Aboriginal Medical Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service and it holds a central place in the Aboriginal civil rights movement. The Block has been described as the 'black heart' of Australia with Aboriginal people all over the State maintaining strong connections with the area, coming to Redfern to visit family and to access Aboriginal specific services not available elsewhere.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The Inquiry was precipitated by the tragic events that occurred on 14-16 February 2004. We would like to express our heartfelt sympathies to TJ Hickey's family and friends and to the local community. A number of inquiries were established to investigate the circumstances of TJ's death and the police response during the riot. Our terms of reference do not deal directly with these events but an overview is contained in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

The terms of reference require the Committee to examine the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) and the effectiveness of its strategies in meeting the needs of the local Aboriginal community and other members of the community. The Committee received much evidence about the work of the RWPP and a range of views were expressed about its effectiveness. Further examination is required before the Committee can draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the RWPP and the issue will be further examined during the second stage of the Inquiry.

There were, however, several important aspects of the RWPP's work that required examination in this Interim Report. The Committee received a substantial amount of criticism of the Project in relation to its consultation and communication processes and slowness in the implementation of programs. The Committee has recommended that the RWPP develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure there is effective consultation and communication with the Redfern and Waterloo communities. The Committee has also recommended that the RWPP expedite the completion of the Human Services Review.

The Committee has considered the evidence outlining the difficult task facing the RWPP, and the need for a long-term commitment from government, non-government and community partners if the complex issues confronting the area are to be adequately addressed. While there was considerable criticism of the RWPP, the majority of inquiry participants did not suggest disbanding the Project. There was broad support for the whole of government, place-based approach to service delivery in the area. The Committee has recommended that the Government continue the place-based approach represented by the RWPP and make a long-term financial commitment to the Project beyond the funding already committed up to 2006.

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

Chapter 3 Redevelopment of the Block

The terms of reference require the Committee to examine proposals for the future of the Block. The Committee is aware that the long-term future of the Block and its residents is a complex issue requiring initiatives to address social and economic disadvantage experienced by the local Aboriginal community. These issues will be examined in the second stage of the Inquiry and addressed in the Final Report.

In this Interim Report, the Committee has focused on the future of the Block in terms of the redevelopment of housing. The Committee's purpose is not to decide what the future of the Block is to be, since that must be determined by the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) and the Aboriginal community. Rather, the Committee has gathered together the views expressed during the Inquiry, to explore the issues surrounding the AHC's Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project and its progress.

It is clear to the Committee that the redevelopment of the Block is an important and iconic project for Aboriginal Australians and the local Aboriginal community in particular. The Committee believes that it is of the utmost importance that the redevelopment be completed and that the Block remain under the ownership and control of Aboriginal people. The Committee has recommended that the NSW, Federal and local governments join together to assist the AHC to undertake the redevelopment, by providing funding and other forms of assistance.

The Committee is aware, however, that the AHC is currently facing financial and management difficulties. The Committee has recommended that the NSW Government continue assisting the AHC to improve its governance and management practices. The Committee has also recommended that the provision of government funding must be contingent upon the AHC agreeing to certain conditions regarding the management of the Pemulwuy Project, community consultation and other matters.

Some Committee members believe that a decision about a funding commitment and the source of funding is premature until these issues are resolved.

A great deal of uncertainty about the redevelopment project and scepticism about its fruition has been expressed during the Inquiry. The Committee has recommended that the RWPP provide assistance to the AHC to keep the local Aboriginal community, as well as the wider community in Redfern and Waterloo, regularly and comprehensively informed as to the progress of the redevelopment of the Block.

Chapter 4 Policing strategies and resources

The terms of reference require the Committee to examine policing strategies and resources in the Redfern and Waterloo areas. The Committee received a great deal of evidence on this and has identified some issues to be addressed in this Interim Report including violence against police, resources, staffing, and strategies to deal with robberies.

A number of other issues fall within this term of reference, including the relationship between police and the Aboriginal community, policing strategies dealing with drug related crime and coordination between NSW Police and other services. These issues will be examined in the Final Report.

On 16 July 2004 the NSW Police Minister released a package of initiatives based on the recommendations of Strike Force *Coburn* (the internal police investigation of the police response to the riot) that are aimed at addressing policing issues in the Redfern Local Area Command. The Committee has not yet received a copy of the Strike Force *Coburn* report and has called upon the Minister to release the report as soon as possible. Some of the Minister's initiatives relate to the issues examined in the Interim Report. The Minister announced that the initiatives will be reviewed in six months time and the Committee has recommended that certain matters be taken into account in that review. The Committee has also recommended that an 18 month review be undertaken to assess the longer-term effect of the initiatives on policing and the local community.

Chapter 5 Mobile needle and syringe service

Drug and alcohol use and misuse in Redfern and Waterloo has been the subject of some debate. The Committee has heard a range of views on the extent and the seriousness of drug related problems, the impact of government policy and service delivery. The substantial debate about the adequacy of government and non government drug and alcohol services in Redfern and Waterloo will be dealt with in the Final Report.

In this Interim Report we have examined the Redfern/Waterloo Anti-Drug Strategy, an important initiative aimed at addressing many of the serious drug problems in the area. The Committee is concerned about the slow pace with which a number of elements of the Strategy have been implemented. The Committee has recommended that the RWPP, NSW Health and the City of Sydney Council work together to ensure that the Strategy is fully implemented.

One particular area of concern for the local community is the mobile needle and syringe service currently located on the Block. The Committee has addressed this issue in the Interim Report due to the level of concern expressed. The Committee has examined the range of views put forward on the needle van, including its location, the image of a drug culture at the Block, the potential 'honey pot' effect, the number of needles provided and referral services.

The Committee strongly supports the principles of harm minimisation. There is overwhelming evidence that needle and syringe programs are effective in terms of health outcomes for drug users and the broader community. We believe that there is currently a role for a needle van in the Redfern/Waterloo area though the current location of the van is causing significant problems for the local community.

There was a great deal of evidence that the service should not be located directly adjacent to children's play areas or near the Redfern Community Centre and preferably should not be located in a residential area. The Committee is also concerned that the location of the van near the Block gives the impression that the Aboriginal culture is a 'drug culture'. The majority of the Committee believes that the needle van should be relocated. The Committee has therefore recommended that the van be relocated within three months to Hudson Street, which is an industrial area around the corner from the Block. The Committee has also recommended that an education campaign be conducted to alert users to the change of location and that a review process and evaluation of the impact of the relocation of the van be undertaken.

Concluding remarks

In this Interim Report the Committee has examined several issues that were raised during the first stage of the Inquiry and in relation to which we received sufficient evidence to enable a comprehensive examination. Our broad terms of reference raise many other issues which we will further examine in the second stage of the Inquiry and address in the Final Report.

We are conscious of the important task we have in finding solutions to some very difficult problems. We are aware of the need to address many of the systemic issues that lie beneath the considerable disadvantage experienced by a high proportion of the Redfern and Waterloo population, particularly the Aboriginal community. In the second stage of our Inquiry, we will look particularly at the adequacy of government and non-government services, identify where there are gaps and propose recommendations to improve service provision.

The Committee welcomes further submissions based on the information contained in this Interim Report, or on any other issue arising out of the terms of reference.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

page 32

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

Recommendation 2

page 33

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

Recommendation 3

page 33

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

Recommendation 4

page 33

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

Recommendation 5

page 65

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, continue its constructive working relationship with the Aboriginal Housing Company and the provision of in-kind assistance to the Company, with the aim of ensuring that the Company is able to redevelop and manage the Block.

Recommendation 6

page 65

That the NSW Government expedite the completion of the audit of the financial affairs of the Aboriginal Housing Company and the valuation of its properties.

Recommendation 7

page 65

That the three tiers of government make a firm commitment to the redevelopment of the Block by the Aboriginal Housing Company, subject to the requirements set out in Recommendation 8, and in particular that:

- the NSW Government make a substantial funding contribution to enable the completion of the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project, and that it facilitate access by the Aboriginal Housing Company to other funding sources
- the Federal Government be approached by the NSW Government to make a substantial funding contribution to the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project
- the City of Sydney Council make a substantial contribution to the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project, which might take the form of in-kind assistance, such as handing over freehold title to laneways or waiving rates for a period of time.

Recommendation 8*page 66*

That the commitment of funds to the Aboriginal Housing Company for the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project identified in Recommendation 7 should be made dependent upon strict requirements relating to:

- creation of a representative development control structure to manage and oversee the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project
- continued involvement by the NSW Government in improving the governance structure and management practices of the Aboriginal Housing Company and ensuring its sustainability
- the incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the design of the redevelopment
- extensive consultation with the local community
- the transparent and equitable allocation of housing to tenants
- establishment of an ongoing program for maintenance of the new housing stock
- the employment, where possible, of Aboriginal people in the Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project.

Recommendation 9*page 66*

That the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project provide assistance to the Aboriginal Housing Company to keep the local Aboriginal community, as well as the wider community in Redfern and Waterloo, regularly and comprehensively informed as to the progress of the redevelopment of the Block.

Recommendation 10*page 75*

That the Minister for Police establish a specific system of recording incidents of violence against police sustained in the course of duty. The system should enable the type and location of each incident to be recorded, as well as the details of the officer(s) concerned (and any other relevant details). The system should enable statistics to be collated and monitored in relation to each Local Area Command and State-wide and comparisons between Local Area Commands to be made.

Recommendation 11*page 78*

That the Minister for Police initiate a review of the level and type of violent incidents against police officers in the Redfern Local Area Command over the past 10 years, in order to ascertain the precise extent and nature of problem and to identify measures to minimise the number of violent acts against police officers. The review should compare Redfern with other Local Area Commands where violence against police is similarly a problem.

Recommendation 12*page 78*

That NSW Police take into account the level of violence against police when considering the allocation of resources to the Redfern Local Area Command in the future.

Recommendation 13*page 84*

That the Minister for Police, as part of the six month review of the initiatives announced on 16 July 2004, carefully examine the impact of the increase in officers on the ability of the Redfern Local Area Command to investigate crime and on the local community. The review should also identify the actual and authorised strength of the Redfern Local Area Command, the number of officers on leave and whether the new positions and secondments and the existing vacancies have been filled.

Recommendation 14*page 93*

That the Minister for Police, as part of the six month review of the initiatives announced on 16 July 2004, carefully re-examine the level of experience among officers stationed at the Redfern Local Area Command, including:

- whether it is in the interest of the Redfern Local Area Command and the local community to extend the suspension of the placement of probationary constables beyond the initial 12 month period
- whether any 'directed transfers' have been made
- whether any other measures or incentives to encourage officers to go to the Redfern Local Area Command and/or to remain there for a constructive length of time are necessary.

Recommendation 15*page 95*

That the Minister for Police undertake an audit of the implementation of the initiatives contained in the *NSW Police Aboriginal Strategic Direction 2003-2006* in the Redfern Local Area Command and that where relevant initiatives have not been implemented the Minister make their implementation a matter of priority.

Recommendation 16*page 95*

That the Minister for Police, as part of the six month review of the initiatives announced on 16 July 2004, consider the impact of the initiatives on the local Aboriginal community with reference to the *NSW Police Aboriginal Strategic Direction 2003-2006*.

Recommendation 17*page 105*

That the Minister for Police, as part of the six month review of the initiatives announced on 16 July 2004, should incorporate an assessment as to whether sufficient resources at the Redfern Local Area Command are dedicated to robberies, with regard to crime statistics and the views of the officers working to target robberies.

Recommendation 18*page 106*

That the Minister for Police, in addition to the six month review of the initiatives announced on 16 July 2004, undertake an 18 month review of the initiatives. As part of the 18 month review the matters addressed in Recommendations 13, 14, 16 and 17 should be examined.

Recommendation 19*page 106*

That the Minister for Police release the final report of Strike Force *Coburn* as soon as possible with, if necessary, parts relating to the Coroner's Inquiry into the death of TJ Hickey or to sensitive operational matters, kept confidential.

Recommendation 20*page 136*

That the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, NSW Health and the City of Sydney Council work together to ensure that the Redfern/Waterloo Anti-Drug Strategy is fully implemented including:

- the relocation, within the next three months, of the mobile needle and syringe service away from the residential areas to a nearby industrial area on Hudson Street, Redfern, with comprehensive information to users of the needle and syringe Service about the relocation
- a comprehensive review process and evaluation of the impact of the relocation of the mobile needle and syringe service, including the changes in demand patterns for Redfern and Waterloo
- as a matter of urgency, a Memorandum of Understanding between NSW Health and NSW Police on the mobile needle and syringe service with appropriate guidelines and operating procedures for front line police and health workers
- adherence to the limit set on the number of needles distributed to users per contact
- continuation of the needle and syringe clean-up program and review of services provided in other jurisdictions including the installation of disposal units in all public toilets and 'sharps sweeps'

- appropriate maintenance of the syringe bins currently in place in two locations in Redfern and Waterloo
- ensuring there is access to the overdose management response team.

Recommendation 21*page 136*

That the NSW Government, through the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project, liaise with the Central Sydney Area Health Service, relevant Aboriginal organisations and representatives from the Aboriginal community, to ensure there are adequate referral services for Aboriginal people with drug and alcohol problems in Redfern and Waterloo. In particular, consideration should be given to the feasibility of establishing detoxication and other drug and alcohol related services, particularly for Aboriginal people, at the Rachel Foster Hospital site or another appropriate site.

Recommendation 22*page 136*

That the NSW Government, together with the City of Sydney Council, undertake a community education campaign in the Redfern and Waterloo area providing information on the rationale for harm minimisation, the Redfern Anti-Drug Strategy and the needle and syringe service with a view to improving community understanding of the benefits to the health of illicit drug users as well to the wellbeing of the broader community.

Acronyms

AHC	Aboriginal Housing Company
AHO	NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
AMS	Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Ltd
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
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
OSG	Operational Support Group
RED Strategy	Redfern Eveleigh Darlington Strategy
RWPP	Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project
SCC	City of Sydney Council

Chapter 1 Introduction

The terms of reference require the Committee to provide this Interim Report by 31 July 2004 and the Final Report by 30 November 2004. This chapter sets out the background and conduct of the Inquiry and reports on the Committee's progress. The events of 14-16 February 2004 that prompted the Legislative Council to refer this Inquiry to the Committee are also briefly examined. The chapter also provides an outline of other inquiries being conducted into issues relating to Redfern and Waterloo, and a brief overview of the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo. The content and structure of this Interim Report, and the issues to be discussed in the second stage of the Inquiry and Final Report, are outlined at the end of this chapter.

Background to the Inquiry

- 1.1 The terms of reference for this Inquiry were referred to the Committee by resolution of the House on 26 February 2004. After intense debate in the House, a motion to establish a select committee to examine the events of 14-16 February 2004 was amended and the House voted to refer wider terms of reference to the Standing Committee on Social Issues. The terms of reference for the Inquiry are set out at the commencement of this report.

Conduct of the Inquiry

- 1.2 The Committee advertised the Inquiry and called for submissions on 6 March 2004. The closing date for submissions was 16 April 2004, however the Committee has continued to accept submissions since that time. The Committee has to date received 89 submissions from a range of individuals and non government organisations as well as a whole-of-government submission representing the views of approximately 30 agencies.
- 1.3 All public submissions were placed on the Committee website following consideration by the Committee. A number of submission authors requested confidentiality, and others asked that their submission be made public with their name suppressed. The Committee granted all requests for confidentiality and name suppression. In a small number of cases, the Committee decided to suppress material in submissions in order to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned. Committee documents, submissions and evidence remain confidential to protect witnesses and maintain the integrity of Committee proceedings until the Committee decides to make them public after proper consideration and advice on procedural fairness issues. The unauthorised release of a Committee document has the potential to interfere with the operations and effectiveness of a Committee.
- 1.4 The Committee notes that there was an unauthorised disclosure of a Committee document during the early stages of this Inquiry. This means that a document was released by persons other than the Committee without the authority of the Committee to do so. The unauthorised disclosure of confidential committee documents can impede the effectiveness of parliamentary committees and lower confidence in the Parliament. Any person who discloses confidential committee documents may be deemed guilty of contempt of Parliament. While the Committee considers the issue of unauthorised disclosure seriously, we have decided to take no further action at this stage.