

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC DISTURBANCES AT MACQUARIE FIELDS

Organisation: Allawah House
Name: Ms Jan Nicoll
Telephone:
Date Received: 9/11/2005

Theme:

Summary

Partially Confidential



ALLAWAH HOUSE

ABN: 20 512 756 029

PO Box 191 Minto NSW 2566

Phone: (02) 9603 4994 Fax: (02) 9824 6022 Email: Allawah_House@bigpond.com

Attention: Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues

Subject: Terms of reference
Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields

Date: October 28, 2005

Pages:

From: Jan Nicoll

To The Standing Committee on Social Issues

Please find attached submissions and recommendations on the societal conditions within Macquarie Fields, prior, during and post riots this year.

I am a community member and lived on the estate of Macquarie Fields for approx 15 years. I am employed long term at a female adolescent crisis refuge SAAP funded service situated in near by Minto.

Thank you

Jan Nicoll

Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields
TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 & recommendations

- An Ombudsman audit of daily movements of Macquarie Fields during riot. Witnessed events not covered in media on any account, of demonstrated intent to incite riot beyond the two evenings on Rosewood Drive at Sapium Way three times. Media was present.
- An Ombudsman's audit of the local police's methodology pertaining to their reaction on mass following the accident 25/3/05. The police are clearly complicit in their role of the riot occurring. Historically the ongoing tensions between the police, young people and their families in Macquarie Fields contributed to frustrations expressed throughout the riot. It was not just youth as continually portrayed. Fear of police retribution continue.
- An Ombudsman's audit of local police and their roles? Significant number of young people state that the police youth liaison availability over the past couple of years is non-existent. They state they are aware of police youth liaison being under resourced.
- Grassroots consultation/collaboration between police and community. After the riot, community meetings were attended by stakeholders. I am aware no one of them present had a relationship with young people in Macquarie Fields. No young people or youth advocate have been invited or involved. When the issue was addressed, the explanation was from a high profile MP was, "well fix things up first before bringing them in". The time frame was the priority, not equitable rights.

Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields

TERMS OF REFERENCE 5

The underlying causes and problems that did contribute to individual and collective acts of violence and social disorder occurred because: The public in general believed that the police had 'once again' been over zealous in their car chase, but this time, had killed two young people who lived in Macquarie Fields.

The community was divided into 2 camps. The strongest felt they had reason enough to openly express that they have just had enough. An individual and collective build up resentment of the local policing and rage that two young people were dead. The smaller section of the community was divided amongst themselves. The significant group was standing by their belief in that the police's role was to do their job and protect the wider community, damned if they do, damned if they don't mentality. Post riot, this group was the most vocal in having lost all faith in the police system due to police's overkill in their tactical response in holding the whole of Macquarie Fields hostage. They resented the intrusion and control.

The community was totally polarized.

1. An equitable social justice environment in Macquarie Fields was for the most part, non existent. Therefore a major breakdown in communication occurs.
2. When there is just the Law, there is no social justice. There was a reaction to militant style efforts to disempower everyone.
3. Suppression can only last so long. The accident on the 25th was the catalyst that caused the top of a festering abscess to burst.
4. Macquarie Fields is geographically at the end of the spectrum in the Macarthur region. Funding always taken from Macquarie Fields to be implemented in more 'supposedly' disadvantaged areas? The community lost its direction and passion at the closure of major institutions and services that provided core elements for community cohesion.
5. Both police and community were in combat mode. Both operated in self preservation And defense mode.
6. Police on the defensive? Having had to recently back foot from the Redfern riot and not present inadequate in managing the Macquarie Fields?
7. The community in general socially abandoned. Scapegoated.

(Please see attached 3 copied pages of general publics comments initially meant for Dave Madden)

Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields

TERMS OF REFERENCE 5: Recommendations

Quote Daily Telegraph March 4, 2005: The real job is to provide services to those now living in social exclusion. A matter of political will, good economy is one that delivers social benefits to all.

Needs intense consultation. Cohesive, holistic societal approach. Harness and utilize present energy in an effective, positive way. To not harness current rage that a large cross section of the community continue to experience, will be detrimental for resolution.

- A comprehensive review of the 'Mac Thing Program'. Operating out of the local youth centre 3 days a week. Program was implemented 1998 following community member (myself) organized a community forum to address the escalating number of young people experiencing long term school suspension and expulsion and congregating at the shopping centre all day. Don Kelly has had sole responsibility past 2 1/2 years, non-paid. His wife resigned approx 2 years ago. She had been paid teachers aid/assistant wages. Both had no teaching experience and no formal qualifications. Majority of young people state that they attend other wise their Centrelink would be stopped.
- Review of Macarthur Youth Services. Re: Macquarie Fields Youth Centre. Local community members and networks have openly expressed the poor quality of service provision particularly over the past 4 year's high turnover of workers due to unrealistic expectations of inexperience. Not enough support networks in place to support workers. Limited time frame in the youth centre results in inability to allocate time to develop community support V no time to develop rapport with young people i.e. workers suffer vicarious trauma and leave.

On the 11th of March post riot, a number of young people contacted myself extremely distressed. A program had been aired on channel 9 stating that community members had met that morning and the local centre was to be closed. Meeting with the young people identified long term frustrations. The centre was hardly opened. They provided a list of 19 workers they had known plus a couple they were unable to recall over a period of 5/6 years and also listed how many programs were no longer available to them. They were told there was no funding. Many traveled to Airds youth centre to access programs. Their most expressive discontent was that when they most needed to access support of youth workers and have a safe place to congregate through out the week of the riot, the youth centre was closed.

Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields

TERMS OF REFERENCE 5: Recommendations

(Existing services are not comparable to the meeting the needs in Macquarie Fields)

The closure of Job Future's, Housing Community Assistance Program and Family Support, also impacted on the many community development projects under their umbrella dependent on their funding.

Community based management committee's established links with relevant networks in the Macarthur region's loss within week's, identified an increase in the number of Domestic Violence incidents reported.

It was common knowledge of the high number of domestic violence incidences that were not being responded to by police. It became common knowledge of the individuals who became isolated due to no support networks available. Finances not available for fares for public transport to travel to get support.

The only open community consultation process young people were directly involved in through the NAB ceased. The elderly on the estate's 'safety and environmental projects' ceased. The increased numbers of families that began to access the local charity services ST Vincent De Paul's and Salvation Army increased considerably. Current isolation and societal abandonment is evident in the closure of core grass roots projects that took place and no alternative options put in place to support the void closures left.

- Both State and Federal Funding to reflect sustainable services and programs.
- - - Funding to reflect realistic time frame. Funding to reflect qualified and experienced positions.
- Intense community and stake holders consultation required for Mental health – Adolescent specialist (closure of Traxside's direct service provision 80% clients from Macquarie Fields), Domestic Violence, Employment and Family support with accompanying services to be in place.
- Consultation to include community members and young people who 'live' in Macquarie Fields.
- Consultation to include religious leaders and the delegated 'Elders' of ethnicity communities.
- Increase of funding to support community grass roots projects through the local schools.
- Provision of DOH, Community Housing stock situated in Macquarie Fields (not on estate).
Family crisis providing resources 9 – 5 daily. Emergency overnight 6pm – 8am.
- Provision of DOH, Community Housing stock situated in Macquarie Fields (not on estate).
Accommodate pregnant young woman 12 – 18 months parallel to existing Macarthur pregnancy Project I currently facilitate through Allawah House providing outreach support.
(see attached 3 pgs confirming high needs in Macquarie Fields. Only 2 beds/stock, currently exist)

For many years I have been a pro-active member of the community.

In the past 2 weeks I have transported young people home safely from the end of Rosewood Drive from football training, they are fearful of police harassment. I have picked young people up from various homes to ensure they get to their destinations safely. I have observed police state to a young person walking home from Hawthorn Place "get out of here or well get you". There was no activity on the street at all at that time. The young person panicked, jumped a fence to avoid the road. The next day the young person said he did not know what they intended but he felt if they wanted an excuse they'd make one, because he noted the number of police in the Thrifty van police were 'hiding' in. Locals now set up their seats to get a view of police activity from their front yards. They don't need to leave their homes. Police activity can be observed in any street all night looking for 'something'. I have observed all media deliberately avoid reporting on people advocating against police invasion on site. Media's obvious and deliberate non reporting of a lone woman standing her ground twice in Sapium Way 4/3/05 when police went in there in convoy to incite a riot. I observed that had she not stood her ground in advocating for the neighbourhood, the police would have boasted many more arrests that night. Prior to police presence, the area was in peaceful quietness. A condescending journalist stated to the woman that police had been notified someone had thrown a bottle. There were numerous media people present, not one reported what really went down. The woman demanded the riot police 'back off' from forcing a quiet group of young people into responding to there presence and from attacking homes with many small children in. What was their intent to have 3 riot police physically attempt to pull a security door from its hinges because a young father was fiercely protecting his home and yelling at them to F--- off, per shown on TV. To the general public it looks as if the tennent's were being violent. Until the police went in en-convoy, they were asleep. Can you imagine being woken to a riot squad blocking off your whole area and little kids, women screaming in fear as the spot lights hit. The media's report on that incident alone demonstrates how corrupt and biased their reporting has now become in Macquarie Fields. Jesse's grandfather visibly attempting to call police off from arresting and harassing anyone they can on the streets. The level of SOCIAL INJUSTICE has risen when Jesse's grandfather has to physically stop Munroe's attempt to putting out untrue information. Media and polices treatment of this family at this time is inexcusably wrong. Many locals and young people state they are too scared to speak out for fear of families being targeted by police or DOH terminating tenancy per rumour's of DOH and Carr coming to an agreement to use Villawood's experience 10 years ago as an example. Consultation with many people in general has identified that any trust with police authority in Macquarie Fields has now been deemed as irrevocably abused beyond any possibility of resolution. Their actions do not indicate they have anything to do with a tragedy on its own merits but an agenda far more sinister simply because a core group of young people emotively responded to over the top police presence the night following the 2 deaths of their peers. When police are not present, there are no incidents.

Following are comments that the community on how both side's, identify current police profile as having Macquarie Fields under SEIGE!

- There is no integrity in media reporting on behalf of Macquarie Fields residents. They are clearly biased with police.
- John Brogdon – What is the reverse of his open statement 'soft touch'?
- NEO NAZI'S and any other groups from outside Macquarie Fields. STAY OUT! Do not think you can come in to recruit potential membership because of the environment police have created here. Stop distributing your foul literature. YOU ARE NOT WELCOME! How dare you manipulate our loss to your mistaken advantage. STAY OUT! WE DON'T NEED YOUR HATRED! Or any other militant group that want to feed on our tragedy. Stay in your own back yard. The whole of Macquarie Fields community will not accept your beliefs or associated behaviour's.
- A lot of children are traumatized by the riots. Who will pay for the emotional fallout?
- Several well meaning locals went to police warning of potential threats. Police are from a large portion of the community supported. Just the noise of the hovering helicopters playing havoc with their much needed sleep for work.
- It was good to see staff from the local schools and Juvenile Justice supporting Dylan's family and friend on Friday. Thank you guys.
- Current level of police activity is now seen to have nothing to do with a car fatality or Jesse Kelly. This is about police terrorism and intimidation.
- Grade ¼ 9 year old. The helicopters light came on my window and I thought they were going to shoot me.
- Many of the police are young. They have families and must wonder if this was their neighbourhood, how would they feel.
- I have known Jesse Kelly for many years. He is not a violent person. Actually he is sweet and is dear to many people young and old. Sure he has made stupid choices and paid for them through the normal processes society expects. I know he will still be in shock from losing his mates and unable to make any decisions. The community knows and understands the unsaid bonds and tie that go with being a bro always. That is why there are no recriminations or blame from those who know him and his family. Together the three made a choice, two have died for that choice but, there are still the three and always will be. They know Jesse did not leave 'them'. Jesse is a loving father. Jesse has qualities that endear's one to him. There is a Jesse other than getting involved in Juvenile crime that the media won't get. We don't condone or justify the tragedy, but the media attention and high police profile has distorted it all out of proportion and appears to be holding the community hostage.

- All the years I've lived in the Fields, (18 yrs) I have never been a victim of any crime. The media has done a great injustice to Macquarie Fields.
- "I'm going to be a policeman when I grow up and make everyone scared too" 6 year old Westringia Place.
- 8 year old, "Will nan be shot dead"? Nan went to Glenquarie for milk.
- 8 year old Guise Public Primary. The police came to my school to talk to us. "What did you learn"? "The dogs are leopard's"?
- Would police leave us alone if Jesse turned himself in? He'll top himself first. Remember Jesse, your've got kids.
- Are police using Macquarie Fields as a tactical training exercise? One local overheard a riot officer ask his companion where he came from. He came from Goulburn. The Police Academy?
- Jesse, we are behind you. There is no blame.
- No evidence of community consultation or accessing community leaders as significant resources to collaboratively reduce crisis mood directly following accident. Lack of community advocacy on behalf of young people obvious.
- I saw riot police fainting of dehydration twice. That's a worry.
- I feel sorry for the riot police. At times they look like they don't want to be there. For example, as they were trampling down Blackwood Street (street completely quiet) the young men were visibly shaking there heads as if, why are we here, this is wrong. It changed my perspective on why is police profile so high and geeing up the locals? Of course young kids will respond. Little kids go out to look in the middle of the road. Theyr becoming used to it.
- I feel sick and tired of all of this. I feel like I want to vomit just worrying about our 2 young sons out there everyday. I am fearful for all the young people. Police are arresting young females for being mouthy. This is stupid and tax payers like me are covering the cost. Not police. These kids are crying for their mates.
- They, the trouble makers deserve everything they get. We'r all sick of it. The police have a job to do. Damned if they do, damned if they don't.
- Large group of locals support police intensity to clean out Macquarie Fields. What is the alternative they ask?

Seminar helps to sort out students

SCHOOL and discipline were on the minds of young people who took part in a seminar at Macquarie Fields last Thursday.

"It was an absolute success, we had 28 students at the seminar with a number of self-referrals," Allawah House youth worker Jan Nicoll said.

The seminar was an opportunity for the community and schools to come together and deal with truancy and suspension, according to Jan.

"It is a problematic issue for society that is finding young people border-lining juvenile crime activities," she said.

Jan conducted a local survey of young people between 12 and 15 years old and found 75 per cent were not attending

school and 25 per cent were involved in court proceedings.

The seminar aimed to offer alternatives to suspending children from school and to give them a voice.

"The kids wanted to have a say," Jan said.

Guest speakers from the Department of Education, the police and Department of Community Services were part of the seminar and the young people were encouraged to talk about their concerns with the different speakers.

To follow up this seminar a parent support group forum will be held next Tuesday from 9.30am to 2pm at Macquarie Fields, Victoria Rd.

Details: (02) 9603 4994.

The "Chronicle" Wed 20 May 1998 pg 19.

ALLAWAH HOUSE OUTREACH PREGNANCY PROJECT REFERRAL
STATISTICS 2003 - 29.10.2004

AGE	13	0
	14	0
	15	1
	16	4
	17	3
	18	4
	19	0
	20	1
	21	1
	22	0
	23+	0
	TOTAL	14

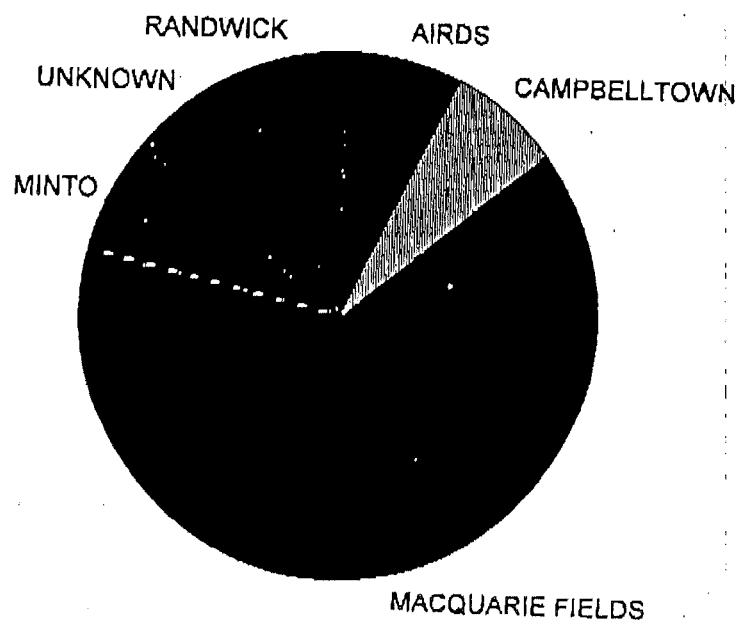
REFERRED BY	SELF	5
	PARENTS	3
	FRIENDS	1
	DOCS	2
	SCHOOL	1
	PARTNER	1
	NAB	1
	OTHER	0
	TOTAL	14

CULTURE	ANGLO	11
	ABORIGINAL	1
	ARABIC	1
	EUROPEAN	0
	OTHER	1
	TOTAL	14

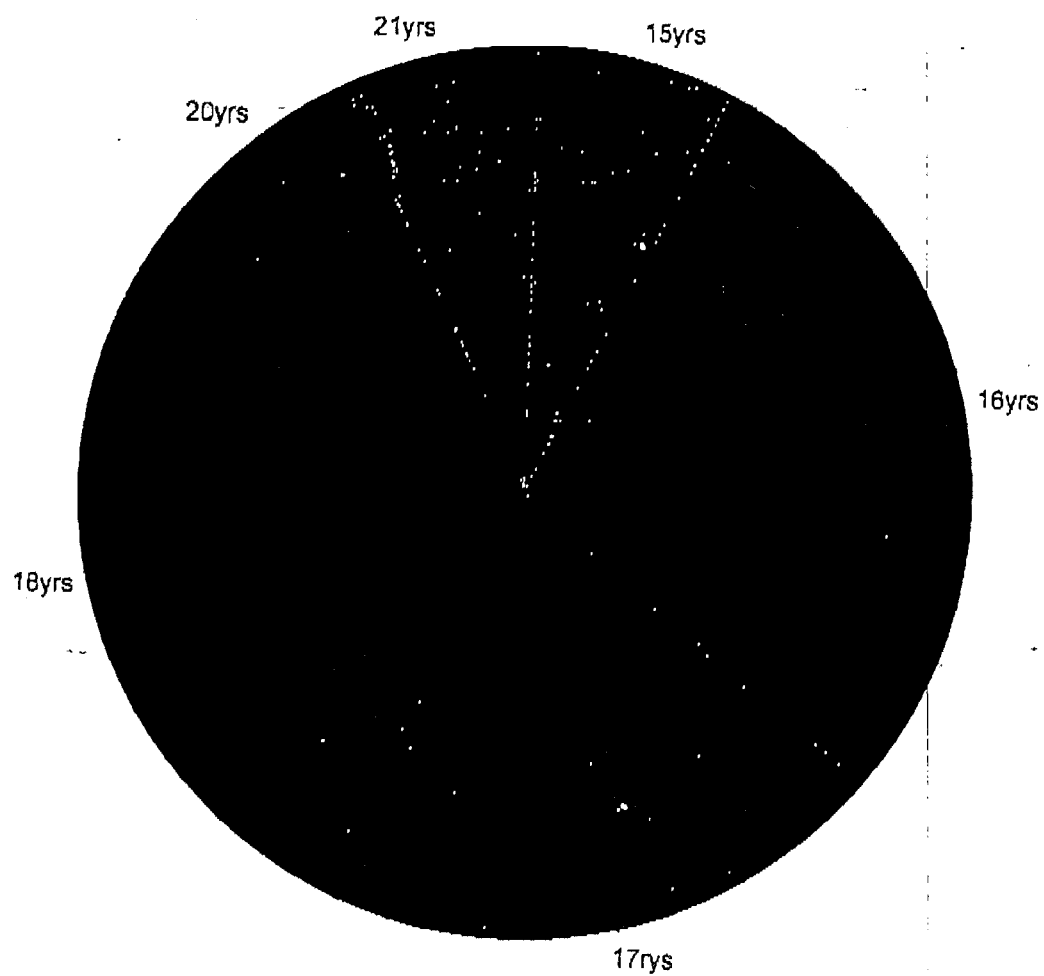
STAGE OF PREGNANCY	NOT GIVEN	2
	1 MONTH	2
	2 MONTHS	2
	3 MONTHS	1
	4 MONTHS	2
	5 MONTHS	1
	6 MONTHS	1
	7 MONTHS	3
	8 MONTHS	0
	TOTAL	14

AREA REFERRED FROM	AIRDS	1
	CAMPBELLTOWN	1
	MACQUARIE FIELDS	9
	MINTO	1
	UNKNOWN	1
	RANDWICK	14

Pregnancy Project Area referred From



Pregnancy Project Age Referral



Inquiry into public disturbances at Macquarie Fields

TERMS OF REFERENCE: 6

Assistant Commissioner Dave Madden was contacted 9/3/05 to organize a meeting requested by local young people to address:

- Young people and community members identifying urgency for consultation and dialogue.
- To improve communication between community and police. How could they support police do their job and support, advocate and protect the young people?
- Access community key people as significant resources.

Following are questions put forward to provide insight into community's general mood.

- The obvious absence of consultation with community leaders i.e: religious, cultural and youth advocates with police immediately following accident 25/2/05.
- Community acceptance of police response, acknowledged doing their job, but why did it escalate to what it did?
- General consensus was that high media and political profile observed, exceeded the 3 young men i.e. Intense combativeness a tactical response and number of police recruited into the area.
- The number of arrests made. To justify media attention and costs ?
- The intensity of visible police exercises and convoys created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Community became divided on issue. Intensity created reactive environment.
- Lack of support and advocates for young people. Young people turned to peer support following accident 25.2/05 creating a cycle of abuse in itself.
- Mob mentality. Both police and community (not just young people) were in combat mode, self preservation and self defense mode.
- Clear up misconceptions about the relationship between community and police. Many individuals were asked by media why there was so much hate between the community and local police.
- Who brought the 'ring ins' by bus from Minto first night of riot? How was it organized so fast? No-one in Macquarie Fields knew how and by whom it was set up by? Journalist were aware of the bus. Not one network addressed it.

Personal experience of the riot was of the overwhelming fear that was the driving force in the sheer visibility and presence of police that evoked a strong reaction and response in extraordinary circumstances. Not about blame, about human condition. No outlet for individual and collective grief has compounded existing rage for a large sector of the most marginalised community members and young people. I have kept a personal account of daily experiences throughout the riot. If this will be helpful to the Standing Committee, I am willing to produce documentation. I am advocating for 3 of the young people that were involved in the riot in the Adult conferencing next week.

Inquiry into public disturbances in Macquarie Fields
TERMS OF REFERENCE 6: Recommendations

- See attached 6 pages (working together in Macquarie Fields handout) compiled from x3 community meetings following riot that indicate significant assistance for children is within the education system. Outside that system young people remain marginalized. From my personal experience and observation of individuals and familial experience of life in Macquarie Fields, the paper is significantly generalized and conservative.
- Funds allocated to provide additional programs to assist Father Riley's current x2 a week outreach Program in Macquarie Fields i.e. Provision of identified programs for young women.
- Provision of employment and social opportunities for young people who live on the estate.
- A Community Centre offering core life-skills programs, job skills, literacy assistance with childcare on the estate.
- Training of community members residing on the estate (peer education).
- Education and training options for unemployed people.
- Transport grants to assist unemployed people to look for work.

WORKING TOGETHER IN MACQUARIE FIELDS

1. Community Profile – Macquarie Fields

Concentration of public housing

- Macquarie Fields is a large estate – around 1,500 properties, with a very high level of public housing (88% ABS, 2001)
- There are bigger estates (Mt Drutt, Green Valley) but they have much lower concentrations of public housing (around 50%) which is interspersed with private housing.

Change in resident profile

- Originally most residents were low income, working families. Now they are mostly welfare dependent families – a concentration of people with high needs
- There is a high level of welfare dependence & unemployment across generations
- A high percentage of people with a disability live in DOH accommodation, but these estates don't have sufficient services to support them
- There is a high number of people with intellectual disabilities in the criminal justice system, and many end up living in public housing

Least preferred area for public housing

- High vacancy rates in all Campbelltown estates
- Shortest waiting list in Sydney
- New residents therefore tend to be people in high need, desperate for placement

Transport difficulties

- Cost, time – bus, rail, bus
- 29.5% have no motor vehicle, Campbelltown LGA 10.9% (ABS, 2001)

Unemployment rate

- 25.4% for Macquarie Fields public housing estate (includes some privately owned properties), for Campbelltown LGA 8.5% (ABS, 2001)

Highest Level of Education Completed

- 30% of people aged 15+ Year 9 equivalent or below, Campbelltown LGA 17.3%
- 17% of people aged 15+ Year 12 or equivalent, Campbelltown LGA 30.9%
- 12% of people aged 15+ post-school education, Campbelltown LGA 29%

Income

- Only 8.5% of people over 15 had an income of greater than \$600/week, Campbelltown LGA 28.6% (ABS, 2001)

A very young population

- 44.9% of people aged under 20 years, Campbelltown LGA 35%, Sydney SSD 26.6%

2. Factors affecting the Community Profile

Unemployment is more likely for young people in an area of high unemployment and low educational attainment. Practical considerations such as transport contribute to this along with lower expectation of success, peer norms and discrimination by employers against residents of particular suburbs.

Unemployment leads to a lack of structured activity and a higher likelihood of poor diet, lack of physical activity, drug and alcohol problems and chronic high stress. Once non-productive patterns are established they are difficult to change, (this is also experienced with injured workers in the return to work process). Lack of productive activity can be expressed as boredom and inertia. The chronic high stress associated with unemployment leads to chronically raised hormone levels, which have significant adverse impacts on health. People are also more likely to behave impulsively when they have high stress levels, rather than considering what is in their best interest. Immediate relief from stress becomes more important than long-term gain.

In these conditions people tend not to travel far from where they live, and therefore are not exposed to a variety of experiences. Without these experiences, opportunities are less obvious as are the means of exploiting opportunities.

Despite these significant barriers to achievement there are some programs and activities that have been shown to make a real difference. Early intervention programs (0-5 years) can have a major impact on high school graduation levels, career and income prospects and crime levels. Strong networks between agencies; developmental programs that focus on people's strengths, and the involvement of participants in the development and running of programs have all been shown to be beneficial.

3. Community, agencies and business responding together

Acknowledging that there are distinct issues

- Policing and community safety
- Immediate concerns of residents, agencies and business
- Long term issues

Building on existing work

- The audit of community services in Macquarie Fields demonstrates that there is already a lot of cooperation between residents and agencies around programs that address community needs.
- Better Towns project work is nearing completion. Council is close to completing a Crime Prevention Plan for the LGA that is relevant to issues in Macquarie Fields.
- The MIG (Local Interagency) and Campbelltown Council have agreed to develop a local plan based on the model developed for AirDs
- The Human Services Senior Officers Group is conducting an audit of government resources going to housing estates in Campbelltown (starting with AirDs), with the view to determining how resources can be applied more effectively

Using methods that have been shown to work

- Early Intervention programs
- Suburb level plans
- A coordinator to bring residents, agencies and businesses together around priority programs
- Some flexible funding for programs

While this paper identifies Macquarie Fields, these matters apply to all public housing estates in Campbelltown.

1. *Breakfast Programs* – Both Curran Public School and Guise Public School provide breakfast programs at school. These programs are organized and run by community members with assistance from teaching staff.
2. *Family Contact Program* – From their Priority Action School Program funds Curran Public School employs a community worker, who is based at the school, to make links with difficult to contact families and assists parents to develop and implement strategies to address home based issues that are impacting on student attendance and behaviour. In addition, this worker supports teachers by liaising with parents, assisting with behaviour plans and facilitating teacher in-servicing with regard to student and community welfare issues.
3. *Anti-bullying programs* – James Meehan High school, Curran Public School and Guise Public School all provide programs designed to raise awareness of and eliminate bullying within the schools.
James Meehan High School has developed a series of "home grown" workshops (Stop All Violence in Education – SAVE) to pro-actively promote an anti-bullying culture in the school. Students involved in violent incidents work through this supervised program.
Curran Public School have their "Bugs (Being Ultra Good Students) not Bullies program. The BUGS program is a positive reinforcement program that rewards children with tokens for displaying appropriate school behaviours, both in the classroom and the playground.
Guise Public School's program is "Bullies Beware" and has a K-6 focus and is developed through a weekly social skills program.
4. *Schools as Community Centre Program* – This inter-agency funded project (Department of Education and Training, Department of Housing, Department of Community Services and The Department of Health) is based in Curran Public School and serves the whole Macquarie Fields community. It is a community information resource that has been running successfully for almost 10 years. Its activities include:
 - a. A free community preschool for one session per week at Curran Public School
 - b. Three structured playgroups per week
 - c. Provision of a community book and toy library
 - d. Provision of child care studies in conjunction with TAFE. (An accredited course to give access to further education opportunities and employment opportunities
 - e. Providing a full range of parenting programs in association with Community Health

- f. In association with Centre Care offers the "123 Magic" program for parents
 - g. A dad's program on Saturday mornings to encourage fathers to develop positive models for interacting and playing with their children.
- 5. *Primary Connect* – A program employing a community worker, based at Guise Public School, targeting K - 6 students and their parents. It provides a wide variety of community and student centred activities that are accessed by students and parents from both Guise and Curran Public Schools. The Primary Connect worker, in addition to developing and coordinating many school based activities, supports the schools in encouraging parental and community participation. Activities that are organised include:
 - a. An after school sporting and fitness program run in conjunction with TAFE which attracts between 60 and 100 students.
 - b. Girls Groups and Boys Groups, where targeted students meet with Primary Connect staff, Aboriginal Education Assistant, assistant principal in groups ranging from 9 to 30 students to discuss current issues and work on social skills.
 - c. Seeing Positives in Negatives (SPIN) is a program run by Burnside targeting boys who are considered to be at risk of developing ant-social behaviours.
 - d. A TAFE computer course for parents and community members who wish to upgrade their computer skills. A group of 25 adults are attending this course.
 - e. Exercise classes for mothers.
 - f. After school art and dance classes for K – 6 students.
- 6. *Blue Light Discos* – These are organized in a partnership between James Meehan High School and the local Police Youth Liaison Committee. Over the last six years these have been run without disruption and attract attendances of between 120 and 200 students.
- 7. *Boys Programs* – James Meehan High School has, for the past two years, been running the "Rock and Water" program, a specific boys program to deal positively with boy related social issues and aggression.
- 8. *Peer Counselling Program* – James Meehan High School has developed their own positive peer counselling program to meet the unique needs of their students. Senior students who have themselves experienced, and

overcome, personal difficulties are trained to work closely with younger students on matters relating to relationships, violence and social behaviour.

9. *Year 7 mentor/coaching program* – Every teacher on the Year 7 team at James Meehan High School mentors four to five students. This means that every student in Year 7 has a member of staff known to them who will assume the responsibility of coaching and mentoring them to assist them in their commitment to their education.
10. *After School Homework Centre* – A supportive homework centre is available free of charge for Year 10 to 12 students at James Meehan High School. There are four teachers providing support for students with their school work two days per week.
11. *Mac Thing Tutorial Centre* – James Meehan High School operates a part time tutorial centre at the local youth centre, three days per week providing literacy and vocational education for post compulsory age students who have left full time schooling. The aim for these students is a return to school, enrolment at TAFE or entry into the work force. Over 200 students have been through this program since its inception in 1999.
12. James Meehan High school is conducting an alternative curriculum delivery and learning structure for Year 7 students. The aim is to provide greater engagement in the learning process through a fully integrated approach to learning involving team teaching in what is described as a Rich Task Experience. The features of the rich task experience are:
 - a. Segregation of Year 7 into a transition area of the school
 - b. Division of the learning curriculum into three unique courses, designed within the school
 - c. Provision of teaching by teams of teachers operating in unison
 - d. Integration of learning in all courses into discrete themes defined each term
 - e. Learning experiences developed around and focused on rich task engagement
 - f. Development of a strong group and team identity within students and a foundation of choice and student centred responsibility for learning.
13. James Meehan High School also offers a home reading tutor program to encourage Year 7 and 8 students to develop their reading skills. James Meehan High School provides and trains the reading tutors who go into

the students' homes once a week to work with them on a structured reading program. This is financed through the school's Priority School Funding Program and is supporting approximately 40 year 7 students.

14. *Business Links* – James Meehan High School has developed an excellent business/school link with the city law firm of Minter Ellison. This innovative program allows students to broaden their life experiences and career horizons by providing opportunities for students to gain work experience and business mentoring. Twenty two employees of Minter Ellison have linked up as mentors with twenty two students from James Meehan High School and have made a commitment to work with the students for one hour per fortnight for the whole of the year.
15. James Meehan High School also offers a wide range of multicultural programs and activities. With 36 different English as a Second Language (ESL) groups in the school they organize a multicultural day each year, run multicultural dance groups, organize a multicultural food day.
16. James Meehan High School, Guise Public School and Curran Public School all have Aboriginal Education Assistants who assist in the development of support programs for indigenous students.