Inquiry into Service coordination in communities with high social needs

Organisation: City of Sydney

Date received: 18/08/2015

1

City of Sydney

Submission to the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues' inquiry into service coordination in communities with high social needs

July 2015

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

The City of Sydney welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues' inquiry into service coordination in communities with high social needs.

The City of Sydney is home to a diverse range of communities, including communities who have high social needs. The City supports a whole of community approach to improving collective wellbeing and resilience, but we also acknowledge that coordinated and collaborative approaches with government and non-government partners to deliver integrated services to communities with high social needs can be an effective model to address complex and multi-dimensional issues.

The City participates in coordinated service delivery in recognition of the fact that many problems faced in our local area can't be tackled by the City alone – collaboration and partnerships with other government agencies, businesses and the community is essential. In doing so, the City tends to assume a coordinating and facilitating role to support other partners.

While the City acknowledges the effectiveness of the coordinated service delivery approach, it agrees that best practice approaches are important to ensure their success and to address barriers that can limit or prohibit responses.

Below is a summary of the City's recommendations to the inquiry, based on the City's experience, and these are discussed further in the submission below.

Recommendations

The city recommends the following improvements towards better coordinated service delivery to communities with high social needs:

1. Improved strategic planning for community needs across all levels of government and service sector organisations, including more rigour around identifying the needs of communities over time – both at broad whole-of-community level and in regard to particular communities.

2. Improved collection and sharing of data among relevant organisations on changing service needs over time, including through rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes – led by government.

3. Clear agreements among government and non-government organisations around shared vision, outcomes and priorities over specified time periods (short, medium and longer term).

4. Strengthening and empowering interagency forums so that they become more effective forums for sharing data, reaching agreements on collaborative practice, and planning and delivering coordinated service responses.

5. Revisions to government funding agreements with service delivery organisations, so that they require coordination and collaboration among organisations as KPI.

6. Focus on improving partnership capabilities of key government and non-government organisations involved in service delivery.

7. Review of the impact of ongoing sector reforms/restructures with regard to how this may be hindering effective service delivery.

8. Mapping of services to identify gaps and duplication and to ensure resources and funding are used efficiently.

9. Ensuring coordinated delivery models share responsibilities between partners, so that the

---

response is not so reliant on individual partners that it will collapse if they can no longer take part.

2. Introduction

The City of Sydney welcomes the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues' inquiry into service coordination in communities with high social needs.

The City of Sydney is currently involved in a range of service coordination initiatives involving diverse communities with high social needs in our local area, whether as a participant or lead coordinator.

This submission provides insights into how these initiatives are meeting community members' needs through coordinated responses to service delivery.

We offer our insights from the perspective of our city government's involvement in collaborative approaches to addressing community members' needs, which are predominantly local place-based initiatives.

We look forward to the findings of this inquiry and outcomes that may assist in improving service delivery.

3. The City of Sydney context

The local area

The City of Sydney Council is the authority for the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA), NSW ("the City"). The City comprises central Sydney (Sydney CBD), The Rocks, Millers Point, Ultimo, Pyrmont, Surry Hills, Woolloomooloo, Kings Cross, Elizabeth Bay, Rushcutters Bay, Darlinghurst, Chippendale, Darlington, Camperdown, Forest Lodge, Glebe, Alexandria, Beaconsfield, Centennial Park, Erskineville, Newtown, Redfern, Rosebery, Waterloo and Zetland.

More than 200,000 people live within the City's boundaries, which cover 26.15sq.km, sharing the space with about 22,000 businesses. The median age of City residents is 32. The median weekly household income of City residents is $1,639.

The City's population is forecast to reach approximately 270,000 by 2031 – more than double its 2001 population, with an annual forecast increase of about 1.5%.

It is notable that the City is currently one of the highest ranked local government areas in terms of absolute numbers of social housing tenants. According to the 2011 ABS Census data, more than half of the City's resident households are in rental dwellings, and by the City's estimation, approximately 10% of these are social housing properties. This is equivalent to nearly 9,900 social housing tenancies.

City of Sydney communities with high social needs

The City's diverse population includes a number of communities that may be identified as having high social needs or having a prevalence of community members with high social needs.

This includes communities that are traditionally identified 'target groups,' as well as communities who are less typically identified.

Key communities to which the City is responding through services, programs and collaborative initiatives are:

- Children from families who are experiencing disadvantage
- Young people 'at risk' aged 9-14 years
- Young people who are disengaged from education or employment
- International students
- People experiencing homelessness
- Social housing tenants
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- People aged over 55 who are at risk of social isolation
- Seniors aged over 70, and particularly those aged 85 and over
- People with a disability
- Refugees and asylum seekers.

In considering the above list, it is important to point out that the City is focused on addressing the social needs of the whole community through a lens of social sustainability, which is about improving collective wellbeing and resilience.

From that perspective, we are focused on addressing the needs of the *whole* community – and particular community members with high social needs within that framework, rather than simply responding to the needs of traditional 'target groups' through compartmentalised approaches that treat them as separate and distinct from the wider community.

The City's responses to communities with high social needs

From the perspective of supporting whole of community wellbeing and resilience, the City directly delivers a range of activities and outreach initiatives on a daily basis, which address the needs of the broader community, and communities with high social needs within this.

Resilient communities are equipped to help themselves and are also able to reach out and support one another in times of crisis.[1] This is the empowerment and capacity-building approach we aim for in supporting and assisting individuals and communities, including those with high social needs. It is a perspective we consider important in effective service delivery, as well as broader holistic community-based responses – as discussed in the case studies provided in response to Question (d) of this inquiry.

---

[1] Australian Government, 2009, *Building inclusive and resilient communities*, Canberra, p2

Many of the City's activities to support collective social wellbeing and resilience are outside the bounds of its statutory role under the *Local Government Act 1993* and other legislation.

The *Local Government Act* does require councils to, among other responsibilities:

- Protect health and provide for the welfare, wellbeing and interests of the local community

- Establish and support organisations and programs targeting the local community.

We deliver a range of programs and services that meet broad-based community needs, which often include specific subsidies or operational components that address communities with high social needs, including:

- Early childhood education and childcare services, which include subsidised places for children from a disadvantaged background

- Out of School Hours Care services

- Youth programs and services, including services targeted as 'at risk' youth, who may be disengaged from education or employment or facing some form of disadvantage

- Services for people experiencing homelessness

- Support and lifestyle programs for older people

- Community transport services

- Food services – including meals on wheels frequently accessed by frail elderly people

- Education and training programs available to a broad cross-sector of the community, and

- Funded social activities

- Place-based and other community programs and initiatives targeted at supporting new residents, including overseas-born residents, residents moving into urban renewal areas, and international students

- Community health and safety initiatives and programs to keep people safe and well, including harm minimisation initiatives and crime prevention strategies and campaigns.

Our decision to participate in coordinated service delivery is in recognition of the fact that many problems faced in our local area can't be tackled by the City alone – collaboration and partnerships with other government agencies, businesses and the community is essential. Typically, the City's role in coordinated service delivery is as a participating organisation in local place-based initiatives, where it will often play a coordinating and facilitating role.

The City's proximity to its community gives it a unique understanding of local conditions and issues. Our strong relationship across communities, service sectors and governments also means we can provide a valuable supporting role in coordinated service delivery responses. This can include bringing partners to the table, negotiating a shared agenda, coordinating cross partnership responses, facilitating regular communication and dialogue between partners, setting up processes for managing data collection and analysis and mobilising funding. While other partners will generally assume a leadership role within these partnership models, the City considers that the support it can give allows the responses to remain cohesive, efficient and focused on its goals.

The City also has a role to advocate on behalf of the community with other levels of government, and to lead and facilitate joined-up local governance arrangements.

Given that the City does not typically fund ongoing service delivery by government or non-government organisations, we do not have funding mechanisms to require participating organisations to collaborate or perform to a particular standard. Therefore in cases where we assume a leading role, our primary focus is one of advocating and encouraging the delivery of desired outcomes through the collaboration.

From the City's perspective, addressing the wellbeing and resilience of the whole community through the lens of social sustainability underpins effective approaches to addressing the needs of members of the community who may have high social needs. The City is shifting away from the traditional approach to service delivery, which focuses on identifying and responding to particular 'target communities' towards a holistic approach to supporting community wellbeing that takes into account whole-of-community factors. This recognises that all members of community can have high social needs at some point or stage in their life, over their life cycle.

Addressing community wellbeing holistically focuses on building the resilience of community members and whole communities. It aims to improve people's ability to independently adapt and thrive when they face changing circumstances that may result in higher social needs, thereby potentially reducing their reliance on direct service delivery in the first place.

The case study over page illustrates the City's approach from this perspective.

Beyond service delivery: holistic responses to support the wellbeing of social housing tenants

The City aims to support the wellbeing of social housing tenants in many ways that go beyond direct service delivery. Holistic responses can support improved wellbeing among members of high needs communities, potentially reducing their reliance on direct services.

The City's direct action and advocacy activities in this area, intended to support effective service delivery, includes the following:

- In 2009, the City of Sydney and Housing NSW signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish protocols for collaborative planning and service delivery to public housing and surrounding communities. This allows both organisations to coordinate their resources to improve the amenity and safety as well as the social and economic outcomes for social housing residents and to ensure the alignment of urban and social planning.

- The City is committed to ensuring that the levels of amenity, safety and services available to social housing residents are equal to those afforded to private housing residents. The City's MOU has resulted in it providing services such as recycling and waste collection and community events. Changes to legislation also enables us to establish alcohol prohibited areas where needed on public housing open space. The City hosts regular meetings and forums with social housing to raise any concerns that they have and to discuss what the City and other agencies can do to address them.

- Through its policies, the City also recognises that ensuring all community members can benefit from economic growth requires targeted efforts.

- The City is also currently working with tenants, state government services and the non-government sector to develop a *Social Housing Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan*. The Action Plan will determine what role the City can play to support its social housing community - to develop a sense of place; create a connected, cohesive and empowered community; ensure access to health services and healthy choices; build a safe and liveable local neighbourhood, and coordinate accountable, integrated, service delivery and local governance.

- The City engages tenants to understand their concerns and issues and to develop an evidence base to inform our policy responses. The City collaborated with UNSW in late 2013 to survey social housing residents about their experiences as residents and the determinants that influenced their safety and wellbeing. This research is informing the development of the *Social Housing Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan.*

- Many social housing tenants live in properties that are not adequately maintained and report a lack of prompt, accountable and effective tenancy services. As well as impacting on residents' health, this can give the message that tenants this can give the message that tenants are not valued and should accept lower standards. The City employs a specialist social housing project manager who supports tenants' safety and wellbeing, and will follow up tenants' concerns on their behalf to Housing NSW or other agencies to address the barriers they face seeking support.

- See page 19 for case study of RedLink, a holistic response to support the wellbeing of social housing tenants.

4. Responses to key inquiry key issues

(a) The extent to which government and non-government service providers are identifying the needs of clients and providing a coordinated response which ensures access to services both within and outside of their particular area of responsibility

The City recognises that there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that well planned coordinated service models at the local level can not only reduce social needs but promote safer and more sustainable communities.

While not all the needs of communities of high social needs require coordinated responses, people within these communities often have issues or problems that are complex or multi-dimensional. Bringing people and organisations with a range of specialist skills and knowledge to work collaboratively can allow these problems to be addressed effectively and holistically.

In the City's experience, the extent to which clients' needs are being identified and effectively responded to in our local area is varied.

Coordinated responses by government and non-government service providers are not working as effectively as they could, and in some cases are not operating at all in response to communities with high social needs.

There are a number of barriers to coordinated needs identification and service delivery that need to be overcome, which are discussed in Question (b). These barriers are inhibiting effective responses and often leading to inadequate outcomes for communities.

At a broader level, there is a lack of proactive, coordinated approaches among government agencies and non-government service providers to supporting improved whole-of-community wellbeing and resilience. This is inhibiting the development and delivery of preventative community-strengthening strategies, which would reduce individuals and communities reliance on services when they face shocks and stressors in the first place.

In the City's view, whole-of-community social needs and resilience must be better addressed in the first instance, particularly in areas such as health and education service provision. This will require improved collaboration across all levels of government in leading on ongoing monitoring, evaluation and information-sharing to inform the development of proactive as well as reactive coordinated responses to community-wide issues.

These issues are discussed further below with regard to the two components of the question.

Identifying the needs of clients...

Effectively identifying the needs of clients - and the wider community of potential clients with regard to service delivery requires effective collection and sharing of information on community needs over time.

This is currently not happening effectively. In the City's view, nothing less than a significantly improved whole-of-government approach to data collection, analysis and sharing among government and non-government organisations is needed.

Key examples of where inadequate needs analysis is impacting on effective service delivery from the City's perspective are:

- **The early childhood education and care needs of the community**: As a result of lack of data available from state or federal government on supply and demand for ECEC services across the state, the City undertakes its own detailed analysis of supply and demand in our local area on a regular basis. This information has assisted the City to proactively plan for the delivery of new ECEC to the wider community and to community members who are experiencing disadvantage, including low income earners and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Other local governments who lack the resources to undertake their own analysis face a significant lack of supply and demand data available from other levels of government to inform planning to meet community needs.

- **The education (primary and secondary school) needs of the community**: The City has worked closely with NSW Department of Education & Communities demographers in recent years, to share our data on current and forecast growth in numbers of primary and secondary school students in our local area, to inform planning for new/expanded schools that are needed. It has taken some time for NSW Government to recognise and respond to the need for new schools across the inner city and provide any indication of medium to long term planning to meet demand. The result of this issue has been considerable concern in the community of the adequacy of existing infrastructure to meet demand.

- **The service needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:** The *Going Home Staying Home* reforms announced by NSW Family & Community Services in 2012 restructured the delivery of the specialist homelessness services system in NSW, with the aim of improving planning and resource allocation. The City considers that a more comprehensive analysis and understanding of the issues and service needs of the homeless community and of the service sector could have led to better planning and delivery of the reforms. This would have prevented some barriers to effective service delivery in the sector that have arisen since their introduction. It could also have been used to demonstrate the need for the health sector to be part of the service delivery, as their limited involvement has hindered effective and holistic responses to the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

- **The service needs of young people, including those who are disengaged from education or employment**: The City delivers a range of programs and services to meet the needs of young people in our local area. In seeking to deliver these services and programs effectively, we have experienced great difficulty in obtaining any data or needs analysis from NSW Family & Community Services (Community Services) (DoCS). In addition, from the City's perspective the youth services sector appears to be fragmented, with ineffective information-sharing towards needs identification and responses, in part due to ineffective coordination of the sector by NSW Government.

In seeking to improve these issues, the City would welcome the opportunity to further address needs analysis opportunities and barriers with the inquiry.

Identifying the specific needs of communities with high social needs requires strong communication and collaboration with members of those communities, as well as governments and other organisations who work closely with them.

Through their local activities and operations, local governments typically have a deep understanding of their local communities. The City regularly engages with local communities to understand their needs and wants, to inform strategic planning and operational activities.

Also, through engaging with communities through our regular operational activities, we have opportunities to not only respond directly to needs that have been identified, but also monitor and respond to emerging needs on the ground as they arise or change over time.

For example, the City employs public space liaison officers who visit people who are experiencing homelessness and are sleeping rough in our local area to determine their needs and link them with any support services they may need.

We also employ a social housing outreach worker, responsible for engaging with local social housing tenants and providing some day-to-day support to them, by representing their needs to relevant state agencies and brokering and negotiating support and other services from those agencies and non-government organisations. The City also runs community meetings in social housing estates where tenants are able to raise issues directly with City staff as well as police and NSW Family and Community Services (NSW FACS) staff.

At a broader cross-sectoral level, the City participates in information-sharing and service planning for communities with high social needs through participating in a number of interagency forums. These forums include organisations involved in service delivery in the homelessness, youth and over-55s communities.

In the City's view, interagency forums have potential to be far better utilised to develop and deliver effective service responses. This will require more rigorous structures around these forums and remit to deliver:

- Information sharing and analysis, including demographic trends and information on what is working or not working well in the service delivery space;
- Developing and planning collaborative service delivery responses, and
- Monitoring and evaluating these responses over time, and sharing that information for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Currently, it is not clear how interagency forums are effectively addressing service needs in the community and delivering concrete outcomes.

Providing a coordinated response which ensures access to services both within and outside of their particular area of responsibility…

Leading on from the issues raised above, coordinated responses to community needs are frequently inadequate, in part due to inadequate data sharing, evaluation and monitoring of community needs and responses over time.

While there are examples of good practice coordinated service approaches that appear to be working effectively in our local area (see case studies provided at Question (d)), responses could be much more effective and better coordinated.

Firstly, there needs to be improved proactive identification of community needs and agreement on priorities across among all levels of government and non-government stakeholders. Collaborative

forums are needed that will identify key service priorities in the short to medium term and set clear objectives towards their delivery. Interagency forums that exist are currently not operating in this directive, outcomes-focused way.

More effective information and data sharing across government agencies and relevant organisations to support strategic planning for service delivery is essential. An agreed common purpose for all organisations involved is also essential. Currently, none of these factors are working well across the board to deliver effective services in the community.

Secondly, effective coordinated responses are being hindered by the way funding for non-government organisations is distributed, which is typically based on competitive processes that are an inherent barrier to joined-up service delivery. In the City's view, funding contracts for service delivery should require collaboration and coordination outside agencies/ organisations (sometimes relatively-narrow areas of responsibility), as a core KPI.

Leading on from this, coordinated responses require partnership capabilities and again, KPIs around partnership capabilities would benefit improved capacity in this area to support more effective service delivery.

Providing coordinated responses to individuals and communities with high social needs is by nature challenging, due to the often complex, multifaceted nature of those needs and the range of organisations that need to collaborate to deliver effective responses. Localised, place-based responses driven by local perspectives can be an effective way to approach such issues.

Coordinated service delivery approaches should improve outcomes for clients and provide them with a service system that they perceive as accessible and seamless. Achieving this can depend on a range of factors, including the needs of the clients, the stakeholders that need to work together and the service setting.

In the City's experience, trust, transparency and the willingness of government agencies to collaborate are key to the effectiveness of these service provider and affiliate collaborations. The will of participating organisations to work towards a common vision of positive outcomes for the communities to whose needs they are responding, and to commit to play a particular role in the solution, is essential to the success of these initiatives.

An example of a coordinated service response which has been evaluated as having been effective in meeting the needs of the high needs community at whom it was targeted is the Complex Needs Coordination Project, which was established by the City in 2007 to help chronically homeless people enter long-term housing. During the three years of its operation, 36 people who had been homeless for between one and 20 years were assisted in accessing housing.

In its evaluation of the initiative, the University of NSW's Social Policy Research Centre[2] found it:

- Was one of the first in NSW to adopt the Housing First model, where accommodation is provided without prerequisites including mental health or substance abuse treatment and that support for these issues follows provision of a stable place to live;

- Improved collaboration between homelessness services in the inner-city;

---

[2] McDermott, S. & Jasmine, B., 2010, *Evaluation of the Complex Needs Coordination Project*, prepared for the City of Sydney by the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, October

- Increased knowledge of services available among people with complex needs;

- Contributed significantly to identifying and overcoming issues in entrenched homelessness, and

- Led to enduring outcomes for clients where all other interventions had failed.

Further examples of systemic, issues-based and individual coordinated service responses to communities with high social needs that the City has been involved in are discussed in our response to Question (d), with regard to their effectiveness in addressing these needs.

In seeking to improve effective responses coordinated service delivery, the inquiry is recommended to consider the following factors, which are evidenced to be critical to effective responses:

- A needs analysis to determine gaps or needs

- A shared agenda

- Team composition with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each partner

- Leadership – ideally this should be shared to ensure the continuity of the response if a partner leaves

- Trust and mutual respect

- Resourcing and funding that is aligned with the delivery's goals

- Processes for sharing information and communicating progress among partners

- Efficient organisational support

- Agreed processes for review and evaluation.

(b) Barriers to the effective coordination of services, including lack of client awareness of services and any legislative provisions such as privacy law

Key barriers to effective coordination, in the City's experience, are having the right resources and structures in place from the outset, including a shared vision and outcomes, funding commitments, and clear agreements on the roles each organisation in the collaboration will play.

Underpinning this approach, the ability of all relevant organisations to access shared information/ data on service needs in the community is essential. This data must be available, ideally transparently provided by lead government agencies.

The process essential to coordinated responses – including regular meetings, consistent communication among all partners, and agreed processes and protocols - can be time and resource intensive.

It requires an organisation to take up a leadership role and bring adequate resources and skills to undertake it effectively. Sometimes there is no organisation willing to take on this role, which makes it difficult to bring partners together and maintain a coordinated response.

Currently, funding structures and mechanisms often inhibit coordinated responses. Many non-government organisations that work with communities with high social needs are reliant on government funding, for which they must compete with other non-government organisations within their service sector – their potential partners in collaborative service delivery initiatives. Competitive funding has fostered some unwillingness between organisations to share caseloads and information regarding best practice, and this has been a significant barrier to overcome to foster trust and coordination that is essential to collaborative service delivery.

A further barrier is that many of the complex issues experienced by communities with high social needs require responses by state or federal government agencies with legislated authority and responsibility or by services with specialist skills. These include issues such as education, health, housing, training and employment. Systemic, coordinated services responses need to effectively bring together services from different systems under a structured collaboration, with funding. For this to happen, lead agencies need to recognise an issue – whether proactively or reactively – and then take the lead in bringing together the collaborative coalition of organisations to address it.

In the City's experience, some issues 'fall between the cracks' as a result of this not happening, and at times the City has chosen to step in and play a role in an area which is not clearly delineated as a local government responsibility. Our current work in looking at ways to improve the wellbeing of social housing tenants who reside in public housing estates within our local government area is a case in point (see page 7).

The structure of governments at state and federal level may help or hinder the effectiveness of coordinated services delivery responses, particularly at a place-based level. One key barrier is various agencies being structured across different geographic boundaries – ie their jurisdictional service areas not matching. In this regard, we welcome the restructuring of NSW FACS agencies across consistent boundaries, which should support more coordinated service delivery.

In addition, the scope of agencies' service delivery remit is sometimes relatively narrow, which doesn't readily lend itself to responding flexibly to changing or emerging needs in the community through collaborative responses.

Governance can also be an issue that impacts effective coordination. Often partners will need to work together to respond to a rapidly emerging situation or crisis that requires immediate responses. Flexibility is needed to act without the usual strategic coordination instruments that take time to establish, such as MOU's, terms of reference, shared consent forms etc. Again, the absence of a designated coordinating organisation or organisations to ensure that these governance and administrative procedures are established and followed after actions have taken place can be a barrier effective coordination delivery.

Another barrier to effective service coordination is that people with high social needs will often be coping with high levels of stress and living in 'survival mode;' this makes planning, organising and retaining information challenging. Clients' previous experiences with institutions or bureaucracies may lead to mistrust of service providers and unwillingness to consent to shared service provision. This can be a barrier for stakeholders who need to work together across services to address multiple needs. It can also lead to numerous people having multiple case workers, so that information is unable to be shared in a coordinated and effective manner.

Client awareness can be a barrier for effective service coordination because of the challenges of engaging members of communities with high social needs. This can even be a challenge for an organisation like the City, which regularly engages with the community with a commitment to equitable and inclusive practice.

c) Consideration of initiatives such as the Dubbo Minister's Action Group and best practice models for the coordination of services

City of Sydney case studies, which we consider examples of good practice in addressing the needs of communities with high social needs are discussed on pages 19 to 23 below.

The City of Sydney also recommends the inquiry considers the *90 Homes for 90 Lives* initiative, a coordinated response to the concentration of people experiencing homelessness in the inner city suburb of Woolloomooloo, in which the City participated. At the time, around 90 individuals were identified sleeping rough in Woolloomooloo, despite numerous organisations involved in addressing homelessness in the area.

The City of Sydney played a key role in establishing the initiative, which brought together cross-sector partners from government, corporate and non-profit organisations with the aim of providing the 90 people a permanent pathway out of homelessness. These partners included United Way Australia, City of Sydney, Herbert Smith Freehills, UBS, Neami National, Colliers International, Bridge Housing and Lend Lease.

The initiative began by surveying a sample of the rough sleeper and collecting data – information about their demographics, health and housing history and the duration of homelessness. This data was able to be used to plan actions for the initiative and provide baseline information against which progress and success could be measured.

The Centre for Social Impact provided social and economic modelling to support the initiative. This demonstrated that the cost-benefit of providing a permanent exit for homelessness for people in Woolloomooloo would save the government $4.5million over three years. This information was used to advocate to the NSW Government, who awarded funding to two of the *90 Homes for 90 Lives* partners – Neami National and Bridge Housing – to permanently house and support 70 rough sleepers in Woolloomooloo through private head leasing.

The *90 Homes for 90 Lives* initiative then shifted its focus to supporting Bridge Housing and Neami National to secure private rental opportunities. Corporate partners helped to develop a business case for private head leasing, to help convince private landlords to provide their properties for rental. They were consequently able to increase the success rate of securing private rental opportunities from 11 per cent to 44 per cent. As a result the target of housing 70 people experiencing homelessness was met within 18 months allowing the partners to continue towards their initial target of 90.

Other factors considered key to the success of the initiative include:

- Common agenda: the initiative had a common agenda of addressing homelessness in Woolloomooloo using a Housing First model.

- Shared measurements: Success was able to be measured by the number of rough sleepers that were housed in permanent housing (as opposed to temporary shelters). While the ultimate target was for 90 people to be housed, the initiative also set incremental housing targets. Bridge Housing and Neami National reported on progress during the initiatives meetings

- Mutually reinforcing activities: the initiative included partners from across government, corporate and non-profit sectors, each with different skills and expertise that could be used towards addressing a common goal.

- Continuous communication: members of the initiative met every four to six weeks to discuss progress and to continue to plan how to address the common goal, and there were excellent internal communications in place for partners to share information. External communication was also a key to the initiatives success – it allowed the partners to bring on board the public and to communicate progress to governments.

- Shared coordination: the coordination and facilitation functions of the initiative were shared across partners – some provided administrative and communication support, others, like the City of Sydney provided leadership and used their networks to influence policy makers and build public support. As mentioned Bridge Housing and Neami National were responsible for ensuring the reporting of data and sharing of information around the initiative's progress. Sharing the functions of a backbone across a number of organisations meant that one organisation did not have to take all of these responsibilities on board.

For more information on *90 Homes for 90 Lives* see the Centre for Social Impact's report on the initiative (from which some of the above information was taken): http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/90Homesfor90Lives-Website-Final-280114.pdf

The Queensland Government's **500 Lives 500 Homes** initiative is an example of best practice similar to 90 Lives for 90 Homes, which the inquiry may also wish to consider. The campaign is a coordinated response aimed at breaking the cycle of homelessness for families, young people and

adults in Brisbane who are experiencing homeless or vulnerably housed. The campaign brought together a coalition of a government and non-government agencies supported by the Queensland Government's *Home for Good* initiative and Brisbane City Council. The campaign connects with the Queensland Government's *Homelessness to Housing Strategy 2020* to deliver a coordinated approach to ending homelessness in Brisbane.

More information about the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign: http://www.500lives500homes.org.au.

Case study: RedLink

Systemic response: RedLink

Community with high social needs: Social housing tenants

Issue: The Redfern social housing estate forms one of the most concentrated areas of public housing in the Sydney District, with around 1,500 tenancies. Local residents and service providers raised concerns about the high levels of anti-social behaviour, community safety issues and the high misuse of alcohol and other drugs within the estate.

Through the City's engagement with the Redfern community, it became apparent that people were not utilising existing services until they reached crisis point. Barriers to accessing local services included the fragmentation of service delivery across the system, and clients with multiple and complex issues who be linked with a service but required an integrated plan across a range of services to address different issues. Some estate residents told the City they felt stigmatised by negative media attention and marginalised with the increasing affluence of the wider Redfern community.

Response: NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) have worked with local stakeholders to develop RedLink, a coordinated service delivery model which aims to reach directly into the estate to engage with those most marginalised community members and create sustainable pathways out of disadvantage. More broadly, RedLink aims to 'break the cycle of disadvantage' in Redfern, to improve community safety and to create sustainable pathways out of disadvantage. The model links local service delivery across the Redfern public housing estate in partnership with the community in a person centred approach to respond to a range of complex social and wellbeing needs.

RedLink addresses the systemic barriers that many social housing tenants face to access and navigate the health system. A range of community service providers will offer services at an integrated service space at the bottom of the McKell high-rise social housing estate in Redfern, with outreach services like mental health and other health services for families and children; and drug and alcohol services including outreach to street drinkers and tackling methamphetamine use on the estate provided.

FACS have worked collaboratively with the City of Sydney and community partners to develop the model and have identified the following key principles for RedLink, which they hope will address systemic barriers that prevent social housing tenants from accessing services:

- Deliver a sustained change in service delivery onto the Redfern social housing estate.

- Focus on early intervention and prevention approach to provide timely and appropriate services before situations reach crisis point.

- Tackle the most complex issues such as dual diagnosis through an integrated person centred model.

- Implement shared assessment, referral and pathway tools across services.

- Develop a framework to ensure that appropriate services are available in Redfern to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of the Aboriginal community in Redfern.

- Increase community capacity and leadership to drive positive sustainable positive change.

Partners: The core partners of RedLink are:

- NSW Department of Family and Community Services

- The Redfern Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB)

- Sydney Local Health District (Child and Family Health, Drug Health, Mental Health)

- City of Sydney Council

- The Factory Counterpoint Connect

- Legal Aid NSW

- Redfern Legal Aid

- Weave

- Redfern Police

The City of Sydney's role: The City is to use its knowledge of the Redfern community to facilitate and enable relationships between partners and to use its influence advocate to the NSW Government for outcomes for the community.

Outcomes: The RedLink program a trial program has just been launched, and its impacts will be evaluated as it progresses. The following outcomes have been identified by the community as key goals that they hope that RedLink will achieve:

Improved community mental health outcomes: including early intervention and prevention, crisis management and community education and peer support.

Reduce drug and alcohol misuse across the community: including targeted approach to tackle street drinkers, improved management of used needles across the estate and ways to tackle methamphetamine use.

Community safety and crime prevention.

Improved outcomes for the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal community members

Deliver a range of pathways and activities to reconnect socially isolated tenants.

Targeted strategies to interrupt pockets of intergenerational disadvantage.

Key partners, including the City of Sydney will monitor and evaluate the progress of RedLink, and this may include considering how it could work in other locations.

Case study: City of Sydney Homelessness Action Plans

Issues-based response: City of Sydney Homelessness Action Plans

Community with high social needs: People experiencing homelessness

Issue: Belmore Park, in Sydney's CBD has a history of rough sleepers whose numbers have fluctuated over time. Since late 2014 numbers have grown substantially, increasing from 4 rough sleepers in November 2014 to more than 50 rough sleepers in 41 tents by July 2015. The community of rough sleepers is highly transient with individuals only using the park for short periods of time, making it difficult for services to support them to complete the process to obtain housing or accommodation. The majority of the rough sleepers have come from regional locations in NSW.

Belmore Park is adjacent to Central Station and is a major thoroughfare for Sydney CBD with hundreds of people walking through the park daily. NSW Police report an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area with crime relating to drug and alcohol use and instances of serious assaults on pedestrians and other people sleeping rough.

Response: The City of Sydney's Homelessness Unit together with NSW Police and NSW Family and Community Services convened a specific group of stakeholders to coordinate a response to issues of decreased amenity, increased homelessness and anti-social behaviour. The group included; Specialist Homelessness Services, NSW Department of Family and Community Services, local non-government organisations, health services and specialist Aboriginal services to facilitate a collaborative action plan. The City facilitated stakeholders to agree to a common agenda with specific roles for each organisation to maximise their available resources to achieve shared outcomes. The roles were outlined in a collaborative action plan to improve the local amenity, increase support provided to people sleeping rough and reduce anti-social behaviour. Stakeholders made a commitment to work together in a flexible way to reduce homelessness and its impact in the park.

A case coordination group was formed from the action plan to increase housing outcomes for rough sleepers in the park. A targeted reconnection program with the goal of gathering information about rough sleepers place of origin and supporting them to rapidly reconnect to their linkages and supports utilising properties where applicable through Connect100, a NSW government program that assists homeless people who drift into the inner city from their home town or suburb to find services that can help them.

The City's Public Space Liaison Officers and other outreach services visit the park daily, approaching each person in the park, gathering information about their support needs, e.g. drug and alcohol issues, mental and physical health issues. This information is then shared with the specialist group that includes St Vincents homeless health, Neami, Mission Australia, Launchpad youth services, Innari Housing, Aboriginal housing Company, Housing NSW and NSW Police attend the park together weekly to follow up with people referred, trained nurses conduct medical assessments, provide tickets and bus fare to return to other areas and continue the process to access housing attending the bank to gather statements, the GP or the housing office for interviews.

A significant number of the rough sleepers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and to the specialist Aboriginal services are able to ensure a culturally appropriate approach to offering support.

The group identified barriers for rough sleepers and also created a number of processes to stream line access to housing and support these include:

- Regular Joint Street based outreach for consultation, engagement of new rough sleeper's data collection and updating service users. Initial daily patrols shared across organisations.

- Flexibility provided from the department of housing on issues of temporary accommodation, inactive applications and housing debt on the advice of the coordination group.

- When required Police can provide written referral in place of Identification documents which people who are sleeping rough often lose and find difficult to replace. It's also very difficult to get ID without ID.

- Created an MOU between relevant agencies to allow sharing of info and meaningful collaboration.

- Created a one page assessment form to reduce the need for outreach providers to fill in unnecessary paperwork

- One person one plan multiple organisations completing actions to achieve case plan priorities for individuals.

- Providing brokerage and support to help to reconnect the rough sleepers with the place they had come from and where their support systems were.

- Housing NSW offices visited the park to deliver services directly to clients, including at out of office hours which has overcome procedural barriers that prevented rough sleepers accessing support.

Weekly case coordination meetings are held with all the partners to assist rough sleepers exit homelessness. Through these meetings the group identified barriers for rough sleepers, such as a large number of people who could not access services as they had no identification. In response, local Police agreed to write personal references using their ID database and Housing NSW then agreed to accept the referrals.

Innovative approaches to addressing complex needs including a targeted reconnection program with the goal of gathering information about rough sleepers' place of origin and supporting them to rapidly reconnect to their place of origin utilising properties where applicable through Connect100 This program supported 9 people in 5 weeks to obtain a housing outcome in their place of origin.

The City of Sydney's role: The City has taken a facilitative role to coordinate the service delivery response in Belmore Park. The City brought key partners together to agree a common agenda and drafted the original action plan. The City ensured that there was resourcing and infrastructure in place for regular communication between partners to maintain the response. The City had recently lead two collaborative responses to address homeless in Walla Mulla Park in Woolloomooloo and Wentworth Park in Glebe and was able to adapt these models and its learning to respond to the particular circumstances in Belmore Park. The meetings and regular communication is shared between the City of Sydney, NSW Family and Community Services and NSW Police. The City's Public Space Liaison Officers continue to visit the park daily and have fostered positive relationships with people sleeping rough in the area, linking them to specialist homelessness services and other support.

Outcomes:

Through this collaborative process of 11 services working towards a common goal, 32 people have been supported to exit homelessness.

A unique NSW Police position of Homeless Persons Sponsor has been appointed who is dedicated to supporting efforts to reduce homelessness and its impact at Belmore Park. This position is the first of its kind in Sydney.

Partners continue to work together to monitor the park, and now have the flexibility to respond to any issues quickly as they arise and to any changing circumstances.

Case study: Inner City Youth at Risk Project

Individual response: Inner City Youth at Risk Project

Community with high social needs: Young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Issue: Kings Cross and surrounding inner city areas were attracting significant numbers of young people (up to 25 years of age) who were at risk of becoming entrenched in a high risk lifestyle involving long term homelessness, substance abuse issues, mental health, violence, problematic sex work, criminal activity, and self-harm.

Partners: The project drew many stakeholders together, and some of the key partners included South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, St George Community Housing, Salvation Army, Oasis Youth Support Network, Community Services, Juvenile Justice, Yfoundations, NSW Police, Kings Cross Local Area Command, and the City Of Sydney.

The Inner City Youth at Risk Project (ICYAR) was a partnership project which drew together government and non-government agencies to target and respond to young people who are experiencing homelessness and or at risk of homelessness in Sydney's inner city.

The Project was overseen by a Steering Committee which provides a central point for the development, implementation and monitoring of the project. This Committee was established in 2005 and meets monthly. It comprises representatives from the following agencies: South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, St George Community Housing, Salvation Army, Oasis Youth Support Network, Community Services, Juvenile Justice, Yfoundations, NSW Police, Kings Cross Local Area Command, and City Of Sydney.

An Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC) that brought together many service providers and agencies met monthly, and acted as a forum to share knowledge and resources and negotiate appropriate service responses to address emerging issues for young people and the community.

The City of Sydney's role: The City provided funding towards brokerage for the project and coordination support to the stakeholders.

Outcomes: The project delivered a range of services and outcomes that achieved excellent results in:

- The management of a Brokerage Fund. The Fund provided eligible at risk young people with tailored support packages aimed at breaking their street-based lifestyle on a sustainable basis.
- The provision of social housing and support packages for young people with high needs.
- The implementation of regular Joint Outreach Sweeps conducted from 8pm until 2am. Sweeps collect data on the numbers and profiles of young people at risk.
- The facilitation of an Inner city Outreach Coordination Committee, consisting of 17 partner agencies, to provide a coordinated case managed model of care, to implement a range of practical joint ventures and investigate options for further service integration.

d)   Any other related matter.

Not applicable.