

INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO

Organisation:

Name: Ms Tanya Plibersek

Telephone:

Date Received: 26/04/2004

Theme:

Summary

- ORIGINAL TO FOLLOW BY POST -

Chair of the NSW Parliament
Social Issues Committee
c/- Social Issues Secretariat
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2011

Friday, 30 April 2004

Dear Ms Burnswoods,

Please find attached by submission on your inquiry into Social Issues in the Redfern and Waterloo areas.

I would be very pleased to add to my submission during public hearings – there is a lot of ground I haven't been able to cover in my written submission.

The key points I would make are:

- Need to focus on early childhood development, childcare, pre-school, truancy and school completion rates;
- Services need to be allowed to deal with people not paperwork; they need to be allowed to be flexible, and they need to work together to “wrap around” clients, they need stability and long-term funding;
- Affordable housing is vital, as are proper support and services for public housing tenants;
- A history of racism against Indigenous people and dispossession cannot be ignored.

I congratulate the NSW government on initiating this inquiry. I will continue to work at a federal level to defend the interests of all of my residents, but particularly those who suffer multiple disadvantages.

Good luck with the inquiry.

I look forward to seeing its recommendations influencing Carr Government policy.

Best wishes,

Tanya Plibersek MHR

SUBMISSION BY TANYA PLIBERSEK MP TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
ISSUES – April 2004

INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The following comments are subjective. They reflect my own views of the issues facing Redfern and Waterloo. My views have been informed by my contact with constituents and local agencies over the past six years, and in particular by recent doorknocking and community consultations.
- 1.2. In addition, the two recent reports on poverty, "*A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty*"¹ and "*Community adversity and resilience*"² provide useful background against which to consider the local concentrations of poverty that exist in the Redfern and Waterloo areas.
- 1.3. I want to begin by saying that most of Redfern and Waterloo are healthy and vibrant, with a strong spirit of community. Many residents have lived in the area for decades (if not generations) and strongly identify with the local community. People know each other and look out for each other. Most are proud of their history, and have a strong sense of belonging. I am concerned to ensure that there doesn't develop a perception that Redfern and Waterloo are "no go zones". That said, it is also true that in these suburbs are areas where there is an unusually high concentration of disadvantage.
- 1.4. References to Redfern and Waterloo in this submission therefore generally refer to those parts of the suburbs where social disadvantage is concentrated. The contrasts within Redfern in particular are reflected in the fact that Tony Vinson's recent ranking of 542 postcodes in NSW ranks Redfern towards the middle of NSW postcodes in terms of levels of disadvantage (in the 8th quintile, with quintile ranking 1 being the most disadvantaged and quintile 20 being the least disadvantaged). It appears that the wealthy parts of Redfern counter-balance the extreme disadvantage in Redfern's poorer areas in a statistical analysis. Waterloo on the other hand is ranked in the most disadvantaged quintile (quintile 1).³

2. Existing programs and services – Non-Government services

- 2.1. Service providers in the area employ a wealth of highly dedicated, skilled and committed individuals who work extremely hard to address the complex and concentrated social problems occurring in the Redfern and

¹The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2004, *A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty*, Commonwealth of Australia

² Vinson, T. 2004 *Community adversity and resilience: the distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales and the mediating role of social cohesion*, Jesuit Social Services

³ *ibid.*

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

- 2.2. Many service providers, both government and non-government, experience a high staff turnover which makes it difficult for residents to establish relationships with community and family support workers. The lack of relationships and continuity in turn fuels the community's cynicism about programs and impacts on their effectiveness. I believe a major reason for this high turnover is the poor pay and conditions of community sector workers. The pay increase for workers on the Social and Community Sector award last year was hard fought and well deserved. The refusal of the Commonwealth government to fund its share of the increased costs to services of this well-deserved pay increase has had a significant effect on the morale of many workers who felt that the Commonwealth was sending a clear message that their work was not valued. Aside from the poor pay and conditions faced by staff doing this often stressful work, I believe that the administrative burden of constantly chasing funding, worrying about the cost of insurance premiums and filling in mountains of paperwork makes working in the community sector even more difficult than it need be.
- 2.3. Services need to be able to concentrate on looking after individuals and families – not filling in forms. They also need to work together in a "wraparound" model, so that the individual or family has all of the services they need in a co-ordinated way, rather than being sent to four or five different agencies. Councillor Tony Pooley makes the excellent point that if South Sydney Council could provide a "one stop shop" approach which covered everything from dog licenses to building applications, then surely social services are able to be better co-ordinated also.
- 2.4. Although all organisations should meet basic accountability and transparency requirements, some lack the formal management skills required to comply with ever increasing requirements. There may be a local demand for a course, such as a TAFE course, to be designed specifically to meet the needs of community organisations including training in such areas as auditing, financial management, planning, targeting disadvantaged people and setting priorities. Such a course would be particularly useful when seeking to attract community members onto

the management committees of community organisations. The responsibilities attached to such positions are difficult and intimidating.

- 2.5. I have been contacted more than once by Aboriginal people seeking support for their studies in community management and finding the way the Commonwealth pays Abstudy makes it difficult to undertake or complete these studies. I can provide more details of this to your committee should you wish.
- 2.6. The pool of young leaders in the area must be developed. Programs designed to promote leadership skills, confidence and self-empowerment within the Aboriginal community in particular should be encouraged. A successful program of this kind is Youth Matter, a group from Redfern that attended a leadership and cultural exchange with an indigenous youth community in Aotearoa, NZ in 2003. Many Aboriginal youth participated in this program and were inspired. A commitment of government funding for this project, rather than reliance on piece-meal grants and fundraising, would allow projects like this to become an annual event.
- 2.7. Non-Government Organisations need consistency and long-term funding; they need help with their administrative burden and training and support for paid staff and volunteers.

3. Government Organisations: Centrelink

- 3.1. The Commonwealth government has been singularly uninterested in addressing the social problems of Redfern and Waterloo.
- 3.2. Of all of the Commonwealth agencies I deal with, Centrelink is the one which generates the greatest number of complaints. (It also has the greatest number of clients). It has been slow to respond to specific local needs. This is not due to failings on the part of individual staff, but to Commonwealth government legislation and policies which bind the hands of local Centrelink managers and staff.
- 3.3. Residents' needs are not met due to a cycle of misunderstandings, administrative anomalies, payment suspensions, and alienation from their local Centrelink office. Many local residents have problems with literacy, or fail to receive Centrelink forms because they are transient or homeless.
- 3.4. Centrelink's difficulties in meeting local needs have been worsened by the fact that the position of Aboriginal Liaison Officer at the local Centrelink office has been problematic and spasmodic.
- 3.5. The mix and concentration of social issues which are unique to this area (such as high unemployment, high proportion of those in receipt of Disability Support Pension or Newstart Incapacitated Payment, high incidence of drug & alcohol abuse, transient populations, high levels of poverty, and children in state/foster care) requires an individual and comprehensive response from Centrelink, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Centrelink's lack of responsiveness to the unique needs of the

Redfern/Waterloo community, combined with the inability of many residents to articulate their needs and fathom the confusing bureaucratic system, points to the need for much greater flexibility from Centrelink and better support for clients who have been unfairly treated.

- 3.6. I have been pleased to notice a recent slowing in the number of clients "breached" by Centrelink. There was, about two years ago, a massive increase in breaching which caused extreme hardship for Centrelink's most vulnerable clients. People with mental illnesses, the homeless and the illiterate were worst affected. I believe that Aboriginal people are still disproportionately represented in breaching figures, and I am concerned that many are not aware of, or do not make proper use of the appeals process. I believe the developing practice of suspending payments rather than breaching is an improvement; however I believe that further improvements could be found if Centrelink management work with the community to develop a better policy in this area.
- 3.7. I also believe that the Welfare Rights Centre would be able to do valuable and much needed advocacy if they had an extra indigenous worker to help the indigenous community negotiate the maze of paperwork needed to comply with conditions allowing payment of benefits. An outreach service provided by the Welfare Rights Centre, or even a community outreach team such as the one run by Darlinghurst Centrelink which visits people in gaol before release and approaches homeless people in Woolloomooloo would be very beneficial in the area.

4. Targeting Need – Supporting Families and the Most Disadvantaged

- 4.1. Governments and service providers need to understand and respond to the layering of disadvantage which some people experience. For example, it is important to ensure that layered on the double disadvantage of racism and poverty, Aboriginal women do not have to deal with a third disadvantage of sexism in some Aboriginal organisations. Despite the existence of Aboriginal legal services, for example, I am often told by Aboriginal women that they cannot easily gain legal assistance for domestic violence and sexual assault cases as some services refuse to represent one Aboriginal person against another. Aboriginal women are thus forced to access less culturally sensitive services, while the perpetrators of violence get the Aboriginal specific service.
- 4.2. Equally, when it comes to drug use, all young people are damaged by drug abuse, but very young children and girls who are being sexually assaulted in the course of drug use or by associates involved in drug use are being much more damaged than the "average" drug user in the area.
- 4.3. Sometimes it is easier to help someone who needs *some* help than it is to help someone who is desperate. Many individuals and families in the area suffer from multiple disadvantages: a single family unit can experience issues such as drug and alcohol dependence, domestic violence, poor nutrition, over-crowded housing, children with learning difficulties and

unemployment. It is unrealistic to expect families or individuals suffering from such multiple disadvantages to navigate their way through the array of government and community services that may address specific elements of their difficulties. The provision of intensive case management in some of these cases is required. Services need to work together so the neediest individuals or families have a “wraparound” service. For example, the provision of additional funding for community centres such as The Factory and The Shop in Waterloo would allow them to increase the number of case management officers/social workers assisting people in accessing the services they need.

- 4.4. Family support is one of the most important needs in the Redfern/Waterloo area. Programs of this kind in other areas have been successful in reducing the risks faced by children. For example, an intensive family service is provided by Uniting Care Burnside, allowing workers to focus on only two families⁴. The Senate’s report on poverty and financial hardship recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory governments cooperate “to ensure that additional intensive services are funded for disadvantaged families experiencing multiple and complex problems which impact on the care of children. Further, that the provision of such services in Indigenous communities be given a high priority”⁵

5. Childcare and Early Childhood Education

- 5.1. The provision of early childhood services such as childcare and pre-schools is the most important need in the Redfern and Waterloo areas. It is also the area in which society will see the best return on its “investment”. Commonwealth changes to childcare funding saw at least one service close in Waterloo, and a number of others are facing extreme funding shortages.
- 5.2. I believe that early childhood education is beneficial for all children, however children who come from homes where parents are distracted by drug abuse or other problems benefit even more significantly. Childcare provides the most nutritious meals of the day for some kids. Some children in the area start school not knowing how to hold a pencil or which way to look at a book.
- 5.3. Access to childcare should not be restricted to children whose parents are working as it can provide children with positive relationships and a good variety of adult role models. It is worth noting that for young families growing up in high rise housing estates, there can be no unsupervised outdoor play. Childcare centres provide a safe environment for children to play, as well as providing respite to stressed parents. In this sense, childcare should be considered as part of a child protection approach for families under pressure.

⁴ The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, op. cit., p 265-266

⁵ *ibid.*, p267

- 5.4. Early childhood programs can also be used as a vehicle for developing parenting skills, health promotion and improving the school preparedness of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Childcare centres and preschools are generally unthreatening environments to run excellent courses like Positive Parenting Programs.
- 5.5. In areas where there is a significant Indigenous population pre-schools should reflect this. "While early childhood education is universally acknowledged as being a major benefit in overcoming disadvantage, only a minority of Indigenous children attend pre-school".⁶ Improving residents' access to local and culturally appropriate childcare centres and pre-schools should be a priority. The Redfern and Waterloo communities should be consulted about the feasibility of extending the well regarded Murrawina indigenous pre-school model to other pre-schools, childcare centres and schools in the area. New Zealand Aotearoa has a system of Maori preschools which work well with local communities and teach children to be bilingual from an early age. The Senate report on poverty and financial hardship recommends that the Commonwealth provides additional funding to improve affordability of childcare for Indigenous children and that the Commonwealth works with the states to improve access by Indigenous children to early childhood education facilities⁷.
Better access to culturally appropriate childcare and early education would be very beneficial in the Redfern and Waterloo communities. In addition to such structured programs, support and recognition should be given to the Aboriginal aunties who perform a stabilising and caring role for children in the area.

6. School Education

- 6.1. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds experience barriers in terms of their participation in primary and secondary schooling. The consequences of poverty are varied: students may be excluded from fee-based excursions and some school-based activities, they lack access to books and computers, their concentration is impaired by arriving at school without breakfast,⁸ and for indigenous students in particular undiagnosed hearing and sight problems can impede learning.⁹ Overcrowded accommodation can affect sleep, overall health and opportunity to do homework.
- 6.2. This situation is exacerbated by declining investment in public education as Commonwealth funding increasingly moves from public to private schools, creating a two tiered educational system.¹⁰ It is a national disgrace that funding for wealthy private schools continues to grow at the expense of disadvantaged students in public schools. The Senate report on poverty acknowledges the failure of the education system to meet the

⁶ The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, op. cit., p 315

⁷ *ibid.*, p315 and 318

⁸ *ibid.*, p167

⁹ *ibid.*, p314

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p162

needs of disadvantaged children and recommends that the Commonwealth fund the establishment of school breakfast programs in disadvantaged areas and provide additional funding for services for disadvantaged students based on the socioeconomic profile of the school community (Recommendations 27 and 28).¹¹ The schools servicing the Redfern and Waterloo communities could benefit from such initiatives.

- 6.3. Schools in disadvantaged areas such as Redfern and Waterloo need the most skilled teachers (not those fresh out of Teachers College). They need the best resources. They need the most community support.
- 6.4. Truancy and low rates of school completion are significant issues in this area, especially amongst Indigenous young people. I believe schools are well aware of this problem and need to be supported to deal with it. The Alexandria Park Community School has a good reputation and needs all the support it can get. The support of other community organisations is also required to help keep kids in school.
- 6.5. South Sydney Youth Service provides an excellent service for young people with dual diagnoses – drug and alcohol problems as well as mental illness. It is these most vulnerable young people who need consistent support.

7. Support for Non-English Speaking Communities

- 7.1. Redfern and Waterloo, like most parts of the inner city, is culturally and linguistically diverse. Despite the fact that Russian speaking residents represent the largest non-English speaking group in Waterloo (11.7% of the Waterloo population spoke Russian at home based on the ABS 2001 Census)¹² there are many elderly members within this Russian-speaking community whose needs are not being met by existing programs. I am very pleased to note that Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project is beginning the process of providing additional services for members of the Russian speaking communities in Surry Hills, Waterloo and Redfern.

8. Local Employment

- 8.1. Service providers need to increase the involvement and employment of local people in delivering their programs whenever possible. In the case of Aboriginal programs, the employment of Aboriginal staff is essential to ensure services are culturally appropriate and accepted by the local community. This also applies to businesses: businesses should show their commitment to the local community by employing locals. Unfortunately Redfern street and Regent street do not at present reflect a good mix of businesses for the area. They are dominated by “factory outlet” style clothing stores and vacant shopfronts. There is neither butcher nor grocer on Redfern street. The City of Sydney Council should encourage a better mix of businesses in the area, attracting locals to shop in the area, and

¹¹ *ibid.*, p160 and 167

¹² Morgan Disney and Associates *Summary of key statistics for the area based on the ABS 2001 Census*, www.morgandisney.com.au/rwahs/dem_info_wip.doc

helping build a sense of community. Hopefully the location of the Council offices in TNT towers will encourage a greater diversity of businesses in the area.

- 8.2. When the building begins on the AHC accommodation on the Block, it will be vital to engage local tradespeople and create positions for local young people to take up apprenticeships.

9. Affordable Housing and public housing

- 9.1. All areas of Sydney, including the inner city, need to have more affordable housing. Housing stress, both through rental costs or high mortgage repayments are a substantial cause of poverty.
- 9.2. As areas of South Sydney are redeveloped, developers must be forced to provide a section of their large new developments as affordable housing, or to contribute a levy to fund affordable housing in the inner city. The inner city must not evolve into a ghettoised community where some people live in luxury next door to abject poverty. This approach has been used in London, San Francisco and other major cities and is perfectly feasible for Sydney.
- 9.3. I understand that the massive cuts to the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement have made it almost impossible for state and territory housing departments to increase housing stock: between 1992 and 2002 real government expenditure under the CSHA fell by 21%.¹³ The Commonwealth must provide extra funding for public housing and extra support for projects like City West.
- 9.4. Ideally, the Department of Housing would buy or build more homes in small groups or blocks of units in suburbs across Sydney. This housing should be for people who need housing, but don't need a whole range of other support services. In the future, when the Department for Housing is able to build and buy new housing stock in all parts of Sydney, the aim should be increased diversity in housing in the local area, providing a more diverse social and economic environment which in turn will provide more opportunities for local residents.
- 9.5. The Department of Housing needs more of a local presence. Turnaround times for repairs must be improved, and safety issues given a greater priority.
- 9.6. Community housing models such as the City West project should also be extended to areas across Sydney. A City West model could be used to manage the building and running of affordable housing funded by developer contributions.
- 9.7. The Redfern and Waterloo areas need to continue to provide public housing to meet community demand, and services for public housing tenants should reflect the concentration of disadvantage experienced in

¹³ The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, op. cit., p130

public housing estates. Because of the massive waiting lists for public housing, only the very disadvantaged are accessing public housing in the Redfern and Waterloo areas. While historically public housing catered for households on low to moderate incomes,¹⁴ public housing has become the housing of last resort, accommodating disproportionate numbers of residents with problems such as drug and alcohol dependency, disabilities, depression, unemployment and criminal convictions. This concentration provides an opportunity of providing services right “on location” making it easier for people to access services.

- 9.8. Older residents, who moved in when public housing was accessible for average families on low incomes, are increasingly nervous and frightened of their neighbours. Sometimes they feel frightened to leave their homes, and in any case, there are few safe places for them to meet or socialise locally.
- 9.9. I have to stress that because of the extreme need for public housing I would not currently support a “dilution” of the large public housing estates. I also stress that because of the needs of tenants, public housing estates need dedicated resources and services located in public housing estates.

10. Proposals for “The Block”

- 10.1. The housing developments in this area proposed by the Aboriginal Housing Corporation are long overdue and should commence as soon as possible. The deficiency in housing in the area is symptomatic of a more general decline in public housing resulting from the declining real funding of public housing under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) over the past 10 years. Given the Commonwealth’s long established responsibilities for Aboriginal affairs and its rhetoric concerning “practical reconciliation”, the Aboriginal Housing Corporation should be provided with financial assistance from the Commonwealth to redevelop “The Block”. So far the Commonwealth has been uninterested in this project.
- 10.2. All future developments in “The Block” area should incorporate apprenticeships and job creation for the local Aboriginal community. Aboriginal architects should be employed to design the housing, as I believe has been the case with the concept drawings.
- 10.3. The housing should have a mix of socio-economic groups, something like the City West project, which sets rent on the basis of a percentage of income, but does not preclude people who are employed (on about the average wage or a little higher) from accessing the housing.
- 10.4. Preference should be given to Aboriginal people who have a historical connection with the area.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p131

- 10.5. Accommodation from the transient population may be needed, as may accommodation for Indigenous students. This needs to be discussed with the local community.
- 10.6. It will be important to continue to encourage the non-Aboriginal community to feel comfortable around the Block. I suggest that the new Redfern Community Centre be used for a monthly market or fair day with a focus on Aboriginal artists and performers. By encouraging food stalls and entertainment local residents and even tourists would gain the confidence to visit an area that is so often maligned as a no-go zone. I think the employment and tourism potential of such a day would also be valuable.
- 10.7. The Department of Health will have to continue to negotiate with the local community about the location of the needle exchange van. I support a harm reduction approach to drug and alcohol abuse, but the current location (near the new children's playground) does not seem ideal. It is also important to realise that many people in the local Aboriginal community are sceptical about harm reduction – they feel that their young people are being abandoned to a future of drug abuse. Harm reduction mustn't become synonymous with giving up on people, but must be seen as keeping people alive until they can stop their drug abuse, and with reducing the impact on the non-using community.

11. The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project

- 11.1. The Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) has potential to assist in addressing the needs of Redfern/Waterloo. In particular, the locality-based rather than program-based approach taken to the Human Services Review could assist in the development of a coordinated, holistic approach to service provision in the Redfern/Waterloo area. The provision of a locality focus such as that provided in the RWPP is an approach broadly supported by Tony Vinson's "Community adversity and resilience" report: "where an accumulation of problems makes a serious impact upon the well being of residents of a disadvantaged area, locality-specific measures may be needed to supplement general social policy"¹⁵.
- 11.2. It is too early to assess its effectiveness in meeting community needs. Its success will ultimately depend on its ability to obtain cooperation across the three tiers of government, NGOs and the local community to work together to resolve the complex issues present in Redfern/Waterloo. It will also depend on an ongoing commitment. No-one wants to see more one year pilot projects or trials. This area needs a decade of work at least to start to really get on top of the issues.

12. Policing strategies and resources

- 12.1. Policing issues must be approached with a thorough understanding of the long history of conflict between the local community and police. There is

¹⁵ Vinson, T, op. cit., p15

clear evidence that in the past some police have been racist and have harassed the Aboriginal community. Many people in the Aboriginal community mistrust the police because of past personal experiences with police, or because of issues such as black deaths in custody which have touched the whole community. This history combined with the entrenched racism experienced by the Indigenous community makes the development of positive relationships between the police and Aboriginal residents difficult but not impossible.

- 12.2. I believe police showed appropriate restraint during the “riot” in Redfern.
- 12.3. I believe that the investigations into TJ Hickey’s death must be transparent and thorough. If I were managing Redfern police staffing I would consider asking the police officers involved to accept a voluntary transfer to another police station until the investigations are completed. This would not be an admission of any wrong-doing on their part, but might reduce tension in the community.
- 12.4. The mentoring program involving young “at risk” Aboriginal people and the Redfern police is a positive initiative and could be extended to young people who do not necessarily have behavioural problems. (Some residents are concerned that young people see it as a reward for bad behaviour.) The Metropolitan Land Council in conjunction with the Aboriginal Medical Service has also commenced a program of taking “at risk” young people out on bus excursions on Saturdays. This initiative by the Aboriginal community should also be encouraged.

13. Racism:

- 13.1. In order to address the alienation and disengagement of many members of the Redfern Aboriginal community, the entrenched racism of the broader community must be challenged. Reconciliation with the Aboriginal community will continue to be thwarted and insincere until such time as the federal government says sorry on behalf of the nation for the dispossession and unjust treatment of Aboriginal people. The Howard government is perfectly happy to bask in our past achievements as a nation – Federation, the Anzac legacy and so on – but absolutely unwilling to accept any role in acknowledging past wrongs.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. Despite the problems in the Redfern/Waterloo community, many wonderful, inspiring people have made their homes there. The positive stories of people overcoming disadvantage through their own initiatives need to be told in order to provide some balance to the negative media and community stereotypes which have developed. For example, the indigenous group, Brolga Modelling, has launched a business aimed at promoting Indigenous models and fashions. They operate without government funding, despite attempts to obtain funding for over a year.
- 14.2. While the focus of the Redfern/Waterloo inquiry is locality-based, many of the underlying problems of the area must be addressed through national

public policy initiatives. The consequences of failing to do so are perhaps best summed up by Father Peter Norden, Policy Director of Jesuit Social Services:

- 14.3. "Social exclusion breeds social alienation and unless this is addressed in national public policy decisions in the coming years, Australians will continue to observe increased incidences of child abuse and neglect, mental health disorders, youth suicide, substance misuse, and breaches of the criminal law."¹⁶
- 14.4. The locality based approach the state government has adopted in Redfern and Waterloo is an opportunity to work intensively with a community to lift its members out of disadvantage. It is an opportunity to say "this generation of young people are the first who won't replicate their parents' lives of social exclusion and disadvantage." By concentrating on the youngest residents in particular, I believe we can change destinies.

¹⁶ Vinson, op. cit., p 4