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ABORIGINAL HOUSING COMPANY

COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLAN

Redfern - Pemulwuy Project

www.ahc.org.au

2nd Edition

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OUR Vision

That Aboriginal people enjoy the same standard of living as all other Australians.

Statement of Purpose

The AHC is committed to improving the living standards, health and self-esteem of Aboriginal people by:

- 🌀 Operating at best practice and providing high quality and culturally appropriate affordable housing.
- 🌀 Restoring and promoting independence by building on cultural values and purging the crippling welfare mentality.
- 🌀 Providing a stepping-stone for Aboriginal people into affordable homeownership.
- 🌀 Forming partnerships and alliances to strengthen our community.
- 🌀 Delivering a showcase redevelopment based on world's best practice planning, design and construction, and by setting new benchmarks in social, economic and environmental sustainability for community housing.



EDITOR'S NOTE ABOUT THE 2nd EDITION UPDATES.

Considerable effort has gone into preparing this 2nd edition of the Pemulwuy Project Community Social Plan. A heart felt thank you must go to all these who contributed with a special thanks to Angela Pitts, the author of the Social Plan, and our dear friend.

Those who have read the 1st edition of the original Social Plan published in 2000 will note some obvious and some not so obvious changes to this new updated document.

Firstly, the format of the plan has been redesigned, primarily to accommodate the government sector, who for one reason or another seem to be adverse or unable to absorb detailed social reporting of this nature. Therefore, in this 2nd edition; how the AHC is addressing the social problems; and the Strategies, Recommendations, Implementation and Outcomes now take a more prominent position and make up the opening sections of the document. The not so glamorous and some would say unpleasant statistics reporting on the disgraceful state of socioeconomic disadvantage Aboriginal people find themselves in, due in no small part to decades of government negligence, have been moved to the end chapters.

The implementation of some of the social planning recommendations over the preceding 5 years has yielded significant improvements for the community, important social planning outcomes, and a disturbing reaction from the NSW Government. Some of these updates have been noted in easy to find dialogue boxes throughout this new document. Secondly, all the statistics have been updated by Angela Pitts to reflect the latest ABS Census data. A sample of specific outcomes as they relate to the Social Planning Criteria is included in an expanded 'Strategies, Recommendations, Implementation' chapter. Finally, many parts of the body of the text have been rewritten to reflect the past tense nature of some of the information provided in the document.

We hope you enjoy reading the 2nd edition of the Social Plan. All feedback is encouraged and appreciated.



DEDICATION

This 2nd edition of Pemulwuy Project Community Social Plan is dedicated to the memory of our beloved sister Jenny. She devoted 17 years of her life to the Aboriginal Housing Company and the Redfern community before her untimely passing. Jenny's caring manner has had a profound and lasting effect on this community. She is, and forever will be, missed by so many people.

Jeanette Lee Mundine
a proud Bunjulong woman
1955 - 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The original Community Social Plan (the Plan) has been successful at providing a platform and process for the Pemulwuy Project [the redevelopment project of the Aboriginal Housing Company's (AHC) properties in Redfern colloquially known as the Block]. The Plan provided strategies, that when implemented, would significantly reform the way sustainable and culturally appropriate housing and associated activities are delivered to the Redfern Aboriginal community in the future. With this aim the Plan began by identifying the most effective and efficient ways to address the complex and long standing problems on the Block. Over time the Plan was recognised by most of the stakeholders as being the most definitive study of the Block in the last three decades.

UPDATE

Over 25,000 copies of the 1st edition of the Social Plan have been downloaded or distributed internationally.

To provide a comprehensive and definitive ethnographic study the Plan collected data from all the available research studies that focused on the Block, and incorporated a fresh analysis based on exclusive and original community participation and oral histories.

At the time this edition was written over 25,000 copies of the original Social Plan have been downloaded from the AHC website and/or hard copies distributed worldwide. By 2003 every NSW government department, several neighbouring Sydney local councils, and the Federal government were given the opportunity to comment and contribute to this update. The feedback since the 1st edition has been predominately positive and encouraging, with significant contributions and support from academics and professionals from all around the world. In 2001 AHC was awarded a national prize for Innovation for its work on the Social Plan and its fresh approach to planning for the Block. In 2004 Angela Pitts won an international award for the crime prevention strategies developed in the Plan.

The Pemulwuy Project represents the most significant urban renewal opportunities on Aboriginal land in Australia and the Social Plan is now recognised as one of the most important social planning strategies in Indigenous community urban renewal projects.

The Block is considered a modern sacred site by Aboriginal people across the nation. The site is historically the first urban land rights in Australia; the birth place of Australia's civil rights movement; and continues to symbolise the struggle



for Aboriginal human rights and self-determination. For these reasons and many others, the future of the Block will have a profound effect on the psychological and physical wellbeing of Aboriginal communities, around the country.

The title, the Pemulwuy Project, is in recognition of the famous Aboriginal warrior Pemulwuy, who led the original people of Sydney in the first major response to the British invasion and colonial rule in Australia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the traditional Sydney language, the word Pemulwuy means 'Earth'.

ISSUES & PROBLEMS

The Plan presents a thorough investigation and analysis of the issues and problems engulfing the Aboriginal community on the Block. Some of the issues covered in the Plan are as follows (not in any order of priority):

- Culturally inappropriate, substandard and inadequate housing.
- Substandard buildings and the resulting ill-effects on health.
- Substance abuse - drug and alcohol.
- Crime, vandalism, drug dealers and criminal manipulation.
- Chronic health problems and the effects on general well-being.
- Children and youth at risk.
- Lack of coordination of services and few children's recreational facilities.
- Cultural misunderstandings and intolerance.
- Mistrust and lack of respect.
- Transients/drop-ins and the homeless.
- Social disadvantage (unemployment, low-income, lack of skills and education)
- Dysfunctional Aboriginal families and the Stolen Generations.

STRATEGIES

Some of the strategies recommended in the 1st edition of Plan included:

- The unsafe and unhealthy housing stock should be demolished and replaced with durable, energy-efficient, sustainable, culturally appropriate and affordable housing for Aboriginal families.
- A safe environment should be created to reduce street crime and drug dealing by incorporating the principles of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and effective support from policing authorities into the redevelopment plan.



- A community safety checklist should be implemented to ensure the Pemulwuy Project creates safe spaces and that building standards incorporate security and safety devices.
- Community and police partnerships will ensure support in the reduction of street crime and drug dealing.
- A clean, well cared for, drug-free environment will discourage drug dealers from re-entering the area in the future.
- Drug strategies for the Block should include designing safe spaces, eliminating alleyways & lanes, phasing out the needle distribution bus, and implementing 'zero-tolerance to drugs' clauses in tenancy agreements to discourage tenants and their visitors from dealing drugs in the houses.
- Interaction and respect among groups and individuals in the community, as well as interaction and harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, should be actively encouraged.
- Avenues for Aboriginal spiritual, cultural and traditional values and expression should be provided and acknowledge the significance of Redfern as a national epicentre for Aboriginal Australia.
- Aspects of the Pemulwuy Project should be diversified in order to reflect and embrace the multiculturalism of Redfern and ensure the Project is flexible enough to accommodate a mix of income and skill levels.
- An appropriate model should be developed to provide opportunities for affordable home ownership for Aboriginal families.
- The Pemulwuy Project should generate Aboriginal skills training and employment and create opportunities to capture the economic benefit of the redevelopment process.
- Supportive interaction and partnerships with agencies and service providers at all levels should be encouraged.
- Community needs should be identified and the relevant service providers should deliver and facilitate a coordinated approach for the planning, funding and accessibility of appropriate services.

UPDATE

Since the 1st edition of this Social Plan the majority of the drug dealers who lived on the Block have been evicted.

UPDATE

Affordable homeownership has become a cornerstone of the social sustainability strategy of the Pemulwuy Project.



- The AHC, the community and government agencies should work together to set up a Whole of Government One-Stop-Shop. The service should provide access to all key government agencies, information, communication, support, case and place management, internet services, tea and coffee, shuttle bus to out of area services, outreach services such as the Homeless Persons Information Service, Street Outreach Services and volunteer networks.
- Facilities and services that support sport and recreational activities and spaces for children and youth should be actively promoted.
- The sustainability of the Pemulwuy Project should be measured by incorporating continuing evaluation systems, monitoring and feedback of the Project's social progress, standards for building performance, quality control and efficient maintenance and management of the site, its buildings, landscaping and spaces.
- Community health and social impacts of the Pemulwuy Project should be evaluated and the health and wellbeing of the tenants should be continuously monitored.

UPDATE

The Elouera Gym will be relocated to a prominent position at the top of the Block overlooking Red Square and Lawson Street.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

The benefits of the Pemulwuy Project will produce an immediate and direct housing and social advantage for Aboriginal people with an increase in social capital and greater access to the Aboriginal services and facilities in Redfern.¹ The Project will also provide a framework for healthy youth and family growth and an urban renewal model for other urban and metropolitan communities.

The direct and indirect benefits of the redevelopment also include, but are not limited to the following stakeholders, as set out in Table 1:

¹ Social capital refers to the structure of effective social relationships and its implications for physical and economic development, crime and health, income and education, and other associated norms that social interactions establish.



Table 1: Direct and Indirect Benefits of the Pemulwuy Project.

Organisation/Group	Benefits (Cost-benefits are implied)
Local Residents	The Pemulwuy Project will contribute to a positive local identity and image for Aboriginal people, for Redfern and surrounding suburbs. It will enhance the lifestyle, living standards, economic status and safety of the local community. It will provide the opportunity to create a cultural precinct that can attract Aboriginal cultural tourism.
Local Aboriginal Community	The Pemulwuy Project will provide significant economic and cultural improvements, high standard housing and social advantage. It will provide greater access to Aboriginal services and strengthen community's capacity to address its own long-term needs. It will increase Aboriginal self-esteem and self-determination. It will bring cultural pride to Redfern.
Local Aboriginal Youth	The Pemulwuy Project will help improve services and activities for youth resulting in a transition of power to younger generation of leaders. There will be fewer youth at risk.
Other Aboriginal Communities in NSW & Nationally	The Pemulwuy Project will be a benchmark for other Aboriginal housing developments. It will provide a positive image for Aboriginal people on a national and international level. It will improve the lifestyle and living standards of other communities. Sydney is the gateway to Australia and the project will raise the national image of Aboriginal people.
Police	The Pemulwuy Project will result in lower local crime rates by discouraging, drug users, drug dealers and opportunistic crime.
Emergency Services	The Pemulwuy Project will foster lower incidents of hospitalisation and deaths from drug and alcohol abuse.
Health Services	The Pemulwuy Project will improve Aboriginal health and wellbeing due to better housing conditions and a clean, drug-free environment.
Drug & Alcohol Services	The Pemulwuy Project will assist in coordinating services and better support systems. It will also contribute to lower alcohol and drug-related dependency.
Homelessness	The Pemulwuy Project will result in a decrease in homelessness and homeless at risk.



Local Businesses	The Pemulwuy Project will provide a safe environment conducive to economic improvements, quality in business, and a willingness to invest in the future.
Community Services	The Pemulwuy Project will assist in greater coordination of services and support.
Department of Housing	The Pemulwuy Project will lessen the impact on public housing.
Local Government	The Pemulwuy Project will lessen the impact on human services.
State and Federal Government	The Pemulwuy Project will facilitate practical reconciliation by directly improving the lifestyle and living standards of Aboriginal people. It will also fulfil the Government's obligation to address disadvantage of Aboriginal people.
Education	The Pemulwuy Project will increase the skill levels and support for Aboriginal education. It will give greater access to education to Aboriginal youth.
Prison Services	The Pemulwuy Project will assist to decrease local crime associated with drug use.
Juvenile Services	The Pemulwuy Project will assist to decrease crime attributed to bored youth. It will also lower the risk of youth being targeted by drug dealers.





"Aboriginal people are still recovering from massive social upheaval and there continues to be casualties in the process. Negative community attitudes and stereotypes can hinder the rebuilding process at a time when it needs considerable support." Commonwealth of Australia.²

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLAN

This Community Social Plan is part of a series of planning strategies commissioned by the Aboriginal Housing Company for the Pemulwuy Project. The aim is to have a social planning agenda direct the master planning for the redevelopment of the Block. The social planning component of the Pemulwuy Project is the most important part of a comprehensive planning process that integrates community responses and aspirations into an overall strategy for the redevelopment of the built environment. The term 'Community Social Plan' is used in this instance to denote the specific intent of this Plan to address the needs of the Aboriginal community on the Block using local community knowledge and experience.

With this Plan the AHC has provided a means of finally addressing the needs of the Redfern Aboriginal community. By investigating the causes and effects of the social disadvantage that plagued the Block the AHC can now deliver, with a high degree of confidence, solutions and strategies that will ensure the community does not descend into social discord and disadvantage again.

The Plan examined the macro-level problems in Aboriginal communities nationally and compared how these problems relate at a micro-level to the local Redfern community. As result of the overwhelming similarities in social disadvantage prevalent in all Aboriginal communities it is anticipated that the Pemulwuy Project could act as a benchmark for other urban Aboriginal communities throughout Australia.³

Social Plans of this scale are usually written by local governments, and are mandatory under *the 1988 Local Government (General) Community and Social Plans Regulation*. On a lesser scale, they are also a required inclusion of all major Development Applications (DA) submitted for planning approval by developers, in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement. However, due to the severe

² Commonwealth of Australia, 1992.

³ This Plan does not presume to speak on behalf of other Aboriginal communities, and does not imply that "one size (solution) fits all."



stress and disadvantage experienced by the local Redfern residents and the continued inaction and impropriety on the part of Government bodies and institutions, the AHC has taken the initiative to develop this Plan with the help of the community. Using innovative urban planning processes this Plan has guided and facilitated the AHC's commitment to rebuild new, culturally appropriate Indigenous homes on the Block.

A SOCIAL PLAN FOR THE REDFERN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

This Plan is the most important planning tool that the AHC has to address the social and economic disadvantage on the Block in a comprehensive and sustainable way. Principally, the aim is to ensure that the Pemulwuy Project, when delivered, will contribute to a high level of amenity for the community. This Plan also continues to provide an avenue for the Aboriginal community to express their goals, aspirations and objectives, with outcomes that have been incorporated into strategies and guidelines for the Pemulwuy Project. Consequently, this Plan has become an effective tool for assessing services and resources within the Redfern Aboriginal community and planning the Pemulwuy Project within the context of the social, economic and cultural needs of the local Aboriginal people.

UPDATE

The AHC has conducted comprehensive negotiations, over a 5 year period, with Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, Government and business stakeholders in relation to what the Pemulwuy Project can and will deliver.

This Plan places a greater emphasis on negotiation with the community and less on consultation. There is a general perception that the community has been over consulted and the consultation processes has failed to deliver for Aboriginal people, especially in complex social situations like as this one. The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation report, 'Controlled Destinies', states that:

*"Conclusions have been drawn that Indigenous perspectives must inform and direct policies and decisions, which impact on Indigenous communities. This would involve negotiation with local communities rather than consultation followed by external policy development."*⁴

⁴ Brennan, F., *et al.*, 2000.



Through extensive negotiations with the Redfern Aboriginal community the AHC has been able to establish a list of aims and objectives that have formed the basis of this Plan:⁵

- facilitate the provision of culturally appropriate, sustainable, easily managed and high-quality homes;
- provide means for reconciliation and social harmony;
- improve accessibility and coordination of services and facilities;
- review community safety and crime prevention measures through urban design;
- improve community/household health;
- support families, women and children;
- acknowledge the significance of Redfern as a centre for urban Aboriginal culture;
- foster a sense of ownership by the local Aboriginal community;
- encourage Aboriginal artistic, cultural and spiritual expression;
- adhere to the principles of environmental and ecological sustainability;
- provide opportunities for training and diverse skills development;
- provide opportunities for Aboriginal enterprise and self-determination;
- provide safe open spaces for children and families;
- provide a meeting place for the Aboriginal and wider community;
- develop guidelines and standards for urban Aboriginal community developments.

This Plan also includes sustainable strategies and recommendations specifically aimed at addressing the social issues on the Block and ensuring the problems of the past are not repeated.

STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

This document is made up of an executive summary; an introduction of the relevant social issues; and seven discrete explanatory chapters. Chapter 1 goes straight into describing how the AHC and the Pemulwuy project are addressing the problems on the Block. The second chapter describes a comprehensive list of strategies and recommendations that were proposed in the first edition of the Social Plan, and a sample of the outcomes that have resulted from implementation of these strategies. Chapter 3 looks at Redfern as a nationally significant place, from a historical and present day perspective, and identifies a comprehensive network of

⁵ The Social Plan Objectives and Criteria in Appendix A provides a comprehensive outline of the aims and objectives of the Plan.



services that establish Redfern as a central Aboriginal meeting place. Chapter 4 provides a profile for Redfern's Indigenous population and presents a comparative analysis between Redfern, South Sydney and national demographic and socioeconomic statistics. Chapter 5 addresses the social and economic disadvantage within the Redfern Aboriginal community and discusses the impact of urbanisation on Aboriginal people. Chapter 6 looks specifically at the key social and cultural issues in the Redfern Aboriginal community and gives greater insight into the causes of the social problems. The chapter also reports the effects of the social problems have had on the Block, identified as 'residential genocide'. The final chapter reports on the results of a needs analysis and assessment of the Block based on the general consensus of the Aboriginal community.

METHODOLOGY

This Plan incorporated the results and findings of various community consultations, negotiations and meetings that have taken place since 1999. During the initial preparation of the 1st edition of the Plan (in 1999), extensive consultations, interviews and community meetings on the Block were being conducted by Sarkissian Associates Planners to assess the redevelopment options of the Wilson Brothers Site on Hugo Street (now the Redfern Community Centre), adjacent the Block.⁶ Concurrently, Marrickville Council and South Sydney Council conducted a number of community consultations as part of a social and community service needs analysis to assist with the development of their respective Municipal Social Plans.⁷

In order to avoid over-inundating the community with repetitive and redundant survey questionnaires, this Plan incorporated the results of the aforementioned consultations with extensive informal interviews and oral histories conducted by the AHC with local residents, past and present, in order to augment the information available on the needs, aspirations and concerns of the community. Moreover, the AHC has met with various community and government organisations to discuss solutions to some of the pressing social problems in Redfern. These included Aboriginal representatives from such organisations as Juvenile Justice, Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service, Department of Community Services, Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service, Redfern Police, and a 2 year partnership with the NSW Premier's Department. It is with some confidence then that the AHC can claim that the views expressed by the community, government and various local organisations are well represented and documented in this Plan.

⁶ Pittendrigh, Shrinkfield and Bruce; Sarkissian, W.; Van Ruth, S., et al. 1999 and Sarkissian Associates Planners, et al., 1999.

⁷ Cultural Perspectives, Pty. Ltd., 1999 & Marrickville Municipal Council, 1999.



The Plan also incorporates data and information derived from sources including: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Reconciliation and Social Justice Library, the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission (ATSIC), Commonwealth of Australia discussion papers and reports, various centres for Aboriginal research, and a range of Indigenous related web sites.





"Our development must be socially and culturally sustainable. The principle of maintaining cultural diversity and enabling social reconstruction to take place and avoid adverse social impact on communities must inform and guide our development agenda." Noel Pearson.⁸

CHAPTER 1 - HOW IS THE AHC ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM?

REDEVELOPMENT PLANS - A GRASSROOTS URBAN PLANNING PROJECT

This Community Social Plan was commissioned by the AHC in an attempt to address the social disadvantage on the Block. The aim of the Plan is to guide and facilitate the AHC's commitment to rebuilding sustainable and culturally appropriate Indigenous homes, as well as to ensure that the Aboriginal community on the Block has access to services, cultural activities and facilities. The AHC's commitment to building culturally appropriate housing for the Aboriginal community will play a large part in solving a very complex set of local problems.

Existing Conditions

The AHC obtained permission from the former South Sydney Council to demolish many of the deteriorated terraces. Tenants who elected to live in other locations in NSW were relocated.⁹ Currently, there are approximately 20 households left on the Block. The original tenants who chose to remain on the Block have been guaranteed security of tenure, and the redevelopment will be carried out in various stages to minimise any further disruption to them. The remaining homes that are proposed by the Pemulwuy Project (approximately 40) will be offered to Aboriginal families who have expressed an interest in homeownership on the Block. In a letter to the Australian Heritage Commission in 2000 by Mick Mundine, CEO wrote:

"It is our intention to continue to provide housing and associated activities for Aboriginal people, including existing residents, who wish to remain but only in new decent housing appropriate to the people themselves. The remaining Victorian terrace houses are now dilapidated, unstable, and pest-infested stock which are totally unsuited for rehabilitation and should be condemned and demolished." ¹⁰

⁸ Pearson, N. & Sanders, W., 1995

⁹ For more detailed information regarding relocations, refer to the FAQ- Frequently Asked Questions page on the AHC's web site at www.ahc.org.au

¹⁰ Letter to Australian Heritage Commission dated 9 August 2000.





An Abridged History of the Pemulwuy Project

This Social Plan has been the first and most crucial stage in developing a master plan for the redevelopment of the Block. To deliver long-term strategic and comprehensive planning for the Pemulwuy Project a planning team was established in 2001 to address the housing, health, crime and safety, and other issues identified in this Plan.

The AHC convened a series of community workshops to test and assess the Social Plan. These workshops were held over 5 days and were attended by government, local NGOs, and representatives from the Aboriginal community and non-Aboriginal neighbours. On day 1 the group discussed and assessed the findings of the Social Plan and the implications to urban planning. On day 2 the group determined what community safety and public domain planning issues were of most concern. On day 3 the important issues of housing health and environmental sustainability were resolved. On day 4 the specifics of what the AHC should consider redeveloping on the Block were debated.

On the final day the group conducted a complete review of the workshop series and determined a set of recommendations for the AHC Board to consider. A key recommendation from the workshops was that the AHC undertake to research and prepare additional reports to expand on the Social Plan's initial fields of research. Based on these recommendations the AHC has prepared a series of supplementary documents including a community safety report, a housing health report, an environmental sustainability report, a public domain planning report, a building standards report, a report on urban planning controls, and a financial sustainability forecast prepared by Macquarie Bank.

Sydney University's faculty of architecture utilised their top final year students to develop 14 conceptual models for housing on the Block, to facilitate the following stages of consultation. The students followed a strict design brief based on ecological, social, and cultural sustainability, the objectives and criteria of this Plan were used as guidelines for the physical planning and design of the projects.¹¹ The student's concept models were displayed for 4 months in the "Dreaming of the Block" exhibit. Through this extensive community consultation process the AHC was able to determine the most appropriate land use mix for the Block, and the types of dwellings that most appealed to the Redfern Aboriginal community.

¹¹ See Social Plan Objectives & Criteria in Appendix A, and the section below titled Social Plan Objectives & Criteria



The next phase included the development of working model based on the community feedback from the "Dreaming of the Block" consultations. The best aspects and amenities from each of student concept models that appealed to the community were incorporated into a single design. 12 months of intensive consultation and scrutiny was conducted, with particular focus on lobbying the NSW Government for support to deliver the Pemulwuy Project. The working model was eventually abandoned because the design failed the objective crime prevention tests the AHC had developed based on well established CPTED principles.

Up until that stage the Pemulwuy Project was strictly a 'grassroots urban planning' project, a 'bottom-up' approach to planning that incorporates community participation and consultation, as well as participation from key community organisations, local council and local universities. It is important to recognise that the redevelopment process was being driven by the AHC and the Aboriginal community through the most difficult early stages of the Plan without any support from government.

In 2002 the NSW Government began to take an interest in the Pemulwuy Project and set up the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project to act as liaison between the community and government. For all intents and purposes the NSW government took direction of the Pemulwuy Project and commissioned the Government Architect's Office to prepare new designs that included 62 homes for Aboriginal families. Although the planning had been taken out of the hands of the community the promises of financial support to deliver the housing project warranted a degree of compromise and cooperation on the part AHC.

Concurrent to the development of the new plans for Aboriginal housing on the Block the Partnership Project commissioned a built environment study for Redfern and Waterloo they called the RED strategy. The study revealed that 1/3 of land in Redfern and Waterloo is owned by the NSW government.

The Partnership Project also assisted the AHC to successfully implement several of the Community Safety Plan's crime reduction strategies. There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that these crime reduction strategies were so successful in interrupting the drug trade on the Block that the operations may have in part contributed to the rising tensions between transient drug criminals who visited the Block and local police, just prior to the Redfern riots in 2004.



The NSW government withdraw its support for the Pemulwuy Project despite the recommendations by the Social Issues Parliamentary Inquiry into the Redfern riots.

The AHC has since put together an advisory panel of academics and experts [the Pemulwuy Vision Taskforce] to oversee the delivery of the Pemulwuy Project. The taskforce is chaired by the **Hon Tom Uren AO**, former Housing, Urban and Regional Development Minister with the Whitlam government and other members on the expert panel include:

- **Professor Ed Blakely** - Chair of Sydney University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning & Chair of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.
- **Professor Peter Webber** - Emeritus Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Sydney University.
- **Dr Vivienne Milligan** - Director of AHURI Sydney Research Centre and founder of City West Housing Company & NSW Aboriginal Housing Office.
- **Colin James AM** - M.Arch (Harvard) & Director of the IB Fell Housing Research Centre.
- **Associate Professor Peter Phibbs** - Head of the School of Architecture at Sydney University.
- **Dr David Leifer** - Coordinator of the Graduate Programme in Facilities Management at Sydney University and former Chair of the International Facility Management Association, Chair of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers.
- **Martin Butterworth** - Managing Director of Space Syntax Australia, B.Des.St, B.Arch, M.Sc, RAIA, specialist in designing Urban Economies.
- **Angela Pitts** - Sydney University PhD candidate & author of the award winning Redfern Community Social Plan & the Redfern Safety Plan.
- **Tony Larkings** - President of the Redfern Chamber of Commerce and Redfern resident.
- **Geoff Turnbull** - Spokesperson for REDwatch and Redfern resident.

For a detailed account of the history and the current progress of the Pemulwuy Project refer to the updates on the AHC's website.



The Redfern Waterloo Authority

The NSW government has now put in place a statutory Authority that over-rides the City of Sydney as the planning authority, has declares the AHC's land state significant, and is proposing to reduce the residential density on the Block to limit the number of Aboriginal families who could live there.

The Minister for Planning through his Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) has expressed publicly his intention to reduce the number of Aboriginal houses proposed on the Block, and disperse at least half the community. However this type of dispersal policy has had a devastating effect on Aboriginal communities, and there no evidence to suggest that the RWA's policy toward Aboriginal housing would not similarly isolate Aboriginal people from their community and family support networks and created cultural conflict in neighbourhoods that were previously peaceable.

The forced assimilation of the Redfern Aboriginal community would be catastrophic and would create the need to provide additional social and human services to substitute for the natural cultural and social supports found in a community setting that would be lost. This is not to suggest that Aboriginal people can not integrate or interact with the rest of society, but that interaction should be natural and above all voluntary.

The consequences of reducing the number of Aboriginal houses on the Block will produce socially undesirable outcomes. Most importantly, it would shift the planned social mix from 2:1 in favour of homeowners [40 private homeowners to 20 renters] to 2:1 in favour of low income renters [20 renters to 10 homeowners]. Reducing the number of homes on the Block will also reduce the number of eyes on the streets, invariably resulting in the surrounding area becoming unsafe, especially at night. No community safety strategies have been proposed by NSW Government to counter balance the loss of natural surveillance.

Redfern is the birth of the civil rights movement and Aboriginal communities from around Australia will retaliate to any attempt to forcibly remove the Aboriginal community or undermine self-determination and autonomy over Aboriginal land.



SOCIAL PLAN OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

The 1st edition of the Community Social Plan marked the beginning of the process to address the social problems on the Block. At the local community level the Social Planning Objectives aimed to end local practices and behaviours that had gone unchallenged and had perpetuated and reinforced Indigenous peoples' disadvantage. At a planning level the Objectives introduce the opportunity to develop sustainable community strategies to alleviate and eliminate the social problems on the Block. Without the comprehensive strategies offered by the Social Plan efforts to deliver change may well have been counter-productive and/or lead to Aboriginal families being further marginalised.

A set of goals and objectives were developed specific to reflect the needs and expectations of the Aboriginal community in Redfern. The Social Plan Objectives and Criteria document in Appendix A is based on the various community consultations that have took place over a two year period during the research stage of this project.¹² The 12 principles or goals identified are as follows:

1. Reconciliation and Social Harmony
2. Appropriate and Affordable Housing
3. Culturally Appropriate Service and Facility Needs
4. Community Safety
5. Supporting Families, Women and Children
6. Aboriginal Health
7. Aboriginal Identity, Culture and Spirituality
8. Training, Skills Development and Employment
9. Ownership and Management
10. Aboriginal Enterprise
11. Ecological and Environmental Sustainability
12. Contact with Nature

¹² Regarding community consultations, see Methodology section in Chapter 1.

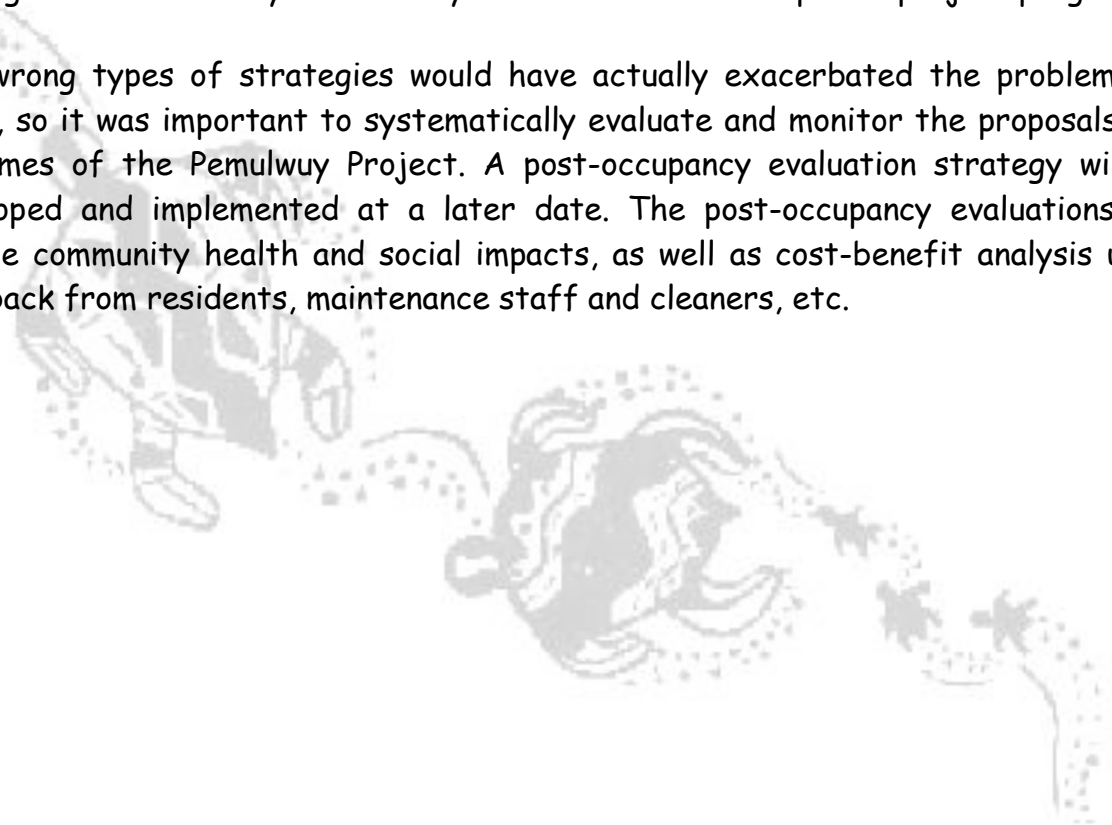


The respective objectives and criteria continue to be applied to key decisions regarding development options, recommendations, conceptual models and strategies.

Measuring and Evaluating Sustainable Outcomes

The Social Plan Objectives and Criteria document (Appendix A) is designed to measure the outcomes of the redevelopment. The performance scoring is used by architects, landscape architects, builders and planners in the development and design of their plans, and also functions as a set of guidelines to ensure the final concept development reflects the expectations of the Aboriginal community. The scoring also is used to systematically evaluate the redevelopment project progress.

The wrong types of strategies would have actually exacerbated the problems on Block, so it was important to systematically evaluate and monitor the proposals and outcomes of the Pemulwuy Project. A post-occupancy evaluation strategy will be developed and implemented at a later date. The post-occupancy evaluations will include community health and social impacts, as well as cost-benefit analysis using feedback from residents, maintenance staff and cleaners, etc.





"They seem to think that because we are 1% of the population we are dismissed...so many liberation movements have shown you don't need numbers, but what you look for is the quality of people who desire a change, and the change will come." Paul Coe.¹³

CHAPTER 2 - STRATEGIES, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION & OUTCOMES

The following strategies and recommendations are the AHC's blueprint for addressing the 12 goals (principles) developed by the Community Social Plan.

GOAL 1: SOCIAL HARMONY AND RECONCILIATION

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to encourage interaction and respect among groups and individuals in the community as well as interaction and harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Work in partnership with residents and community organisations to promote social harmony and reconciliation through various activities in Redfern such as barbecues, multicultural events, educational programs, art exhibitions, etc. Other community participation strategies include implementing neighbourhood watch programs, syringe clean-up and gardening/clean-up activities.
- Use communication tools such as newsletters, community advisory board, information technology (AHC's web site) to keep the community informed of Redfern's activities and programs.

Outcomes

- **The Redfern Community Centre operated by the City of Sydney, working in cooperation with the improved Redfern Elouera Gym, has been a great vehicle for reconciliation.**

¹³ Coe, P. 1973.



- The civic place proposed for the Lawson Street entrance will complete the picture and lead to long term social and racial harmony.

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is to diversify many aspects of the redevelopment in order to reflect and embrace the interaction of multiculturalism in the area and to ensure the development is flexible enough to accommodate a mix of all income and skills levels.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Promote innovative development options such as a mix of housing types, a mix of landscape architectural styles and open space.
- Invite community input to comment on forms of architecture, landscape architecture, design and open space.

Outcomes

- The Pemulwuy Project has been designed as a mixed use development including 62 family homes, a business college, a sports centre, a spiritual elder's area, a retail office building and Aboriginal artist markets.

GOAL 2: MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to provide culturally appropriate and sustainable housing for Aboriginal residents and to provide other housing options as well.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Involve the community in the redevelopment planning process by conducting community consultations at each stage of the redevelopment.



- Work with the community to identifying their needs and develop culturally appropriate housing by including tenants and service providers on the redevelopment planning team. The planning team will consist of AHC Staff, University of Sydney architects and planners, South Sydney Council planners, tenant representatives from the Project area, representatives from the Aboriginal Medical Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service.
- Conduct a feasibility study to examine the potential for a regional trust or building society to provide access to low interest loans for investment in a homeownership program. The study would be undertaken to engage with locals employed in Redfern in homeownership program.
- Ensure redevelopment is flexible enough to accommodate Aboriginal student housing by working with the University of Sydney and DETYA. Also, accommodate housing for older people through other interested community organisations.

Outcomes

- The AHC has design and developed the housing concept plans for the Pemulwuy Project in cooperation with the community and some leading experts in urban design, social planning, and safer by design practices, to ensure a safe, culturally appropriate, and sustainable community.

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is designed to ensure the sustainability of the redevelopment and to facilitate the implementation of the Social Plan Objectives and Criteria. This strategy will ensure that the outcomes of the Pemulwuy project are measurable.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Work with consultants and other advisors who specialise in sustainable projects to assist in the design of the houses, water, waste and energy systems.



- Develop and implement a Housing Checklist to ensure the Pemulwuy project meets the needs of the Aboriginal community.¹⁴
- Monitor and review the implementation of the redevelopment action plan.
- Systematically evaluate the building's performance through feedback from relevant stakeholders, such as tenants/occupiers, maintenance staff and cleaners, the AHC management staff and service providers.
- Evaluate and monitor the impact of the redevelopment project, including community health and social impacts, as well as cost-benefit analysis.

Outcomes

- Pending.

Strategy 3

Our third strategy is to ensure the housing is capable of efficient maintenance and is energy efficient and durable.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Develop and implement a Building Standards and Housing Checklist to ensure the housing is durable, easily maintainable and energy efficient.¹⁵
- Develop and implement a Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) action plan and prevention program.

Outcomes

- The AHC has prepared a Building Standards report based on the research of Healthabitat and the redevelopment experience of affordable housing provider the City West Housing Company, to ensure designers and builders are aware of the high standards expected by the Pemulwuy project.

¹⁴ As a model refer to Sarkissian, W. 1996, Medium-Density Housing: A Checklist for Planners and Designers_ (in this instance the Medium Density Housing Checklist is only used as a model, it does not imply that this development will advocate medium density housing).

¹⁵ As a model refer to AHO 1999, Standards for Building and Buying Aboriginal Housing.



GOAL 3: APPROPRIATE SERVICE AND FACILITY NEEDS

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to identify community needs and report to the relevant service providers who delivery local services, and to facilitate a coordinated approach for the holistic planning and delivery and funding of these services. This strategy will also help avoid duplication of services by complementing the existing services and facilities in the area.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Work with agencies and community organisations to adequately address the needs of Aboriginal people, by setting up a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee to coordinate the delivery and funding of Aboriginal services and facilities. The role of such a committee will also be to ensure that decisions are made from the grassroots, rather than government deciding on the needs of the community. This method will ensure a bottom-up approach to decision-making.
- Work with community and government agencies to set up a Whole of Government One-Stop-Shop. This service will access key government agencies, information, communication, support, case and place management, internet services, tea and coffee, shuttle bus to outreach services, such as the Homeless Persons Information Service, Street Outreach Services and volunteer networks.
- Liaise with City of Sydney Council social planners to ensure facilities and services are culturally appropriate, are Aboriginal friendly, and are delivered effectively to people in the Redfern area.
- Map a comprehensive network of services and support systems for Aboriginal people in the Redfern area, and make accessible through AHC's web page and at the AHC office. Update and revise periodically.

Outcomes

- **The NSW Government's Redfern Waterloo Authority has conducted a review of Human Services in Redfern and has chosen a top down approach [despite**



the AHC recommendation to the contrary] to solve the problems of service delivery to the area. The outcomes of this government initiative are yet to be forthcoming and the community are generally sceptical that the only purpose of the review may be to consolidate services and cut the amount of funding made available to Redfern.

Strategy 2

As the AHC is usually the first point of contact for Aboriginal people who come to the Redfern area in need of services, our second strategy is to help develop an alternative professional primary point of contact to ensure greater accessibility to appropriate services.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- To liaise with various agencies and community organisations to ensure the AHC staff are resourced and trained to access appropriate services for Aboriginal people. This accessibility should include but is not limited to a range of services such as drug and alcohol services, employment services, medical services, supported accommodation, etc.
- To liaise with community and government organisations to provide buses/transport to link services and to set up a systematic information and referral service which may include the creation of an Aboriginal service directory. These both could be achieved through the implementation of a Whole of Government One-Stop-Shop.

Outcomes

- **The Redfern Waterloo Authority has assumed responsibility for coordinating the delivery of human services in Redfern.**



GOAL 4: COMMUNITY SAFETY

Strategy 1

Our main strategy is to create a safe environment and to reduce street crime and drug dealing by incorporating into the redevelopment plans the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Develop and implement a Community Safety Checklist to ensure the project creates safe spaces and encourages natural surveillance and positive guardianship in all outdoor spaces.
- Liaise with the Redfern Police to identify neighbourhood 'hot spots' and review redevelopment plans to ensure the project design does not promote crime areas.
- Provide opportunities for activity during the day and night to increase the levels of legitimate activity on the site and on the surrounding streets, and focus on facilities open at night and on weekends.
- Include in the project Building Standards security and safety devices in all of the homes.
- Include the implementation of a Neighbourhood Watch Program.

Outcomes

- At this stage the AHC has worked very closely with crime prevention experts from Police, urban planners, and the City of Sydney to ensure that the Pemulwuy project concept plans incorporate best practice in safer by design principles.
- In 2004 the AHC won an international award for its community safety planning for the Pemulwuy Project.



GOAL 5: SUPPORT FAMILIES, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to promote facilities, services and activities that support positive parenting, health and family support.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed *(Also refer to Goal 3)*

- Work with the community to identify and increase awareness of the needs of families, women, children and young people.
- Work in partnership with community and government agencies to coordinate funding for projects that provide services for families, women, children and young people.
- Work with community and government organisations to increase access to education regarding health, child rearing, child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, etc.

Outcomes

- **The Redfern Waterloo Authority has assumed responsibility for coordinating the delivery of human services in Redfern.**
- **The Pemulwuy project will provide a natural community support system for women and children by creating a safe supportive environment.**

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is to promote facilities, services and activities which support sport and recreational activities and spaces for youth, and highlight sporting opportunities as a way of building self-esteem and improving health.



Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Liaise with the Elouera (Tony Mundine) Gym to provide sporting opportunities for young people.
- Coordinate with local government and the PCYC to provide facilities for sport and recreation for youth at the Wilson Brothers' site.
- Liaise with agencies to provide greater access to various sporting and recreational events across the City.

Outcomes

- **In the latest Pemulwuy Project concept plan an expanded Elouera Gym will be rebuilt and relocated to a more prominent position at the top of the Block, and will become the focus of a healthy lifestyle for the Aboriginal community.**

GOAL 6: ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to improve the AHC housing stock. Also, refer to the strategies and initiatives proposed for Goal 2, Meeting the Housing Needs of Aboriginal People.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Secure funding for the redevelopment project to provide new high-standard and affordable family housing that is available to established clients and other Aboriginal households.
- Ensure that the unsafe and unhealthy housing stock is demolished and replaced with durable and sustainable houses.
- Develop and implement a Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) Action Plan and prevention program.



Outcomes

- The AHC has rejected offers for funding from the NSW Government to delivery the Pemulwuy Project, and instead will be pursuing other less invasive funding options.
- The AHC has prepared a Housing Health report aimed at providing designers and builders with a set of guidelines to ensure the project is delivered with sustainable health benefits to the community.

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is to discourage drugs and drug dealers on the Block and to create a clean environment.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Liaise with Redfern Police to identify neighbourhood 'hot spots' and review redevelopment plans to ensure the project design does not promote drug and crime spots. Apply CPTED (crime prevention through environment design) strategies.
- Ensure project design discourages alleyways and lanes, which presently are used to shoot up and to deal drugs.
- Liaise with the NSW Health Department, CSAHS and the Premier's Department to phase out the needle exchange bus, which presently acts as a magnet drawing drug users and dealers to the Project area.
- Liaise with the NSW Health Department to strategically place a drug detoxification centre (drug detoxification, methadone/heroin clinic and needle exchange) in a more appropriate site such as the Rachel Foster Hospital in the Redfern/Waterloo area.
- Incorporate into the AHC Tenancy Agreement zero drug tolerance clauses.



- Liaise with the NSW Health Department, CSAHS and the South Sydney Council in developing syringe clean-up initiatives.

Outcomes

- The AHC has removed almost all the resident drug houses through eviction and relocation.
- The Pemulwuy Project incorporates the latest crime prevention practices in design and management. The AHC won an international in 2004 for its Community Safety Plan.
- The Health Dept has resisted all efforts by the community to remove the needle bus from its placement next to a children's playground. The latest proposal by the Health Dept is to upgrade the needle service to a permanent fixed location next to the Block.
- The AHC has been successful in securing a twice-a-day pick of needles that are discarded on the streets of the Block.

Strategy 3

Our third strategy is to improve the health of families and children by encouraging facilities and services dedicated to healthy exercise, diet, lifestyle, drug and alcohol-prevention and reconciliation.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Promote the adoption of a healthy housing program for the Pemulwuy Project. For instance, the successful Health Habitat program operating in the rural areas could be adapted for application in urban and suburban areas.
- See Actions and Initiatives proposed for Goal 5, Support Families and Children Strategies.



Outcomes

- The AHC has developed both a Housing Health report and a Building Standards report utilising Health Habitat healthy housing practices, specifically to address the health issues prevalent in most Aboriginal communities.

Strategy 4

Our fourth strategy is to evaluate the community health and social impacts of the redevelopment project.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Systematically evaluate and review the impact of the redevelopment project and the building performance of the housing. Liaise with AMS to monitor the health of the AHC tenants. Carry out social impact analysis and cost benefit analysis.

Outcomes

- Pending

GOAL 7: ENCOURAGE ABORIGINAL IDENTITY, CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to provide avenues for Aboriginal spiritual, cultural and traditional values through the Pemulwuy project.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Significant involvement of the local Aboriginal community in the planning design and themes and architectural styles of the redevelopment project to reflect Aboriginal spiritual, cultural and traditional values.



- Work with the community and the Redfern Police to alleviate the drug and crime problem that is destroying the Aboriginal spirit and suppressing Aboriginal culture and traditional values.
- Promote facilities and activities which support community cultural and spiritual development, preservation and expression.

Outcomes

- The AHC has prepared a cultural brief for the Pemulwuy project based on extensive consultations with the traditional owners and Redfern residents with a historical and spiritual connection with the Block.
- The AHC has engaged the advice and support of Richard Green a traditional Durug descendant on cultural and traditional history of Redfern and the Gadigal clan.
- The latest Pemulwuy project concept plan incorporates a spiritual place of worship, with specifically the needs of Elders in mind.

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is to acknowledge the significance of Redfern as a national and local centre for Aboriginal Australian.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Encourage project design to include references to the Aboriginal significance of Redfern. Also ensure project develops and maintains Aboriginal history and culture through cultural, environmental and heritage programs.
- Use communication and information technology (e.g. AHC web site) to increase the awareness of the history of Redfern and the local Aboriginal community and to acknowledge the contributions made and the past and current achievements of Aboriginal people in Redfern.



Outcomes

- The AHC's website has hosted over 30,000 visitors. The history and current struggle for the Block and the importance of protecting the Aboriginal community had generated a renewed interest, especially in Redfern.

Strategy 3

Our third strategy is to contribute to a positive local identity for Aboriginal people, for Redfern and for surrounding suburbs and enhance the lifestyle and living standards of the community.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Work with local government, community organisations, and the media to contribute to a positive local identity for Aboriginal people and for Redfern.
- Provide opportunities for non-local Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous people to visit and come to understand Redfern's significance through activities, events, educational programs, and information technology.

Outcomes

- The media has taken a more positive interest in the Pemulwuy project and there is a general recognition growing that there are solutions to the problems of the Block, and there is new sense of hope in the area.
- The AHC is promoting the opportunity for cultural tourism in Redfern that will lead to sustainable Aboriginal enterprise and employment.

Strategy 4

Our fourth strategy is to provide an outlet and space for Aboriginal artistic and cultural expression.



Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Ensure the redevelopment project is flexible enough to accommodate spaces for Aboriginal arts and crafts, for example, use of open space for market stalls and exhibitions, festival/event space, performance spaces, etc.
- Involve Aboriginal artists to express Aboriginality through the site plan. For example, artists involved in illustrating Aboriginal themes in landscaping materials, streetscape, project entry signage, building facades, tiles, etc. Also, encourage the installation of Aboriginal artwork and Aboriginal street names.

Outcomes

- The Pemulwuy project proposal includes a large civic space on Lawson Street for artist markets that will create self-employment opportunities and encourage people to visit the area and break the perception that the Aboriginal community is not a no-go-zone.

GOAL 8: TRAINING, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Strategy 1

Our main strategy is to create opportunities to capture the economic benefit of the redevelopment project.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Ensure the project generates Aboriginal skills training and employment. This may include design, construction, landscaping, material supply, plant hire and subcontracting. Skills training and employment may also include post-construction maintenance and associated infrastructure services, as well as housing management skills training.
- Liaise with local employment centres and employment groups such as Namaroo, the Australian Retailers Association, the health industry, etc. to create job opportunities for the Aboriginal community.



Outcomes

- The RWA has developed an employment strategy for Redfern which has yielded no obvious benefits for the community to date; in fact serious reservations have been raised by the community as to the validity of the claims by the RWA regarding their employment strategy.
- The AHC's proposed business college will be an ideal vehicle to develop incubator businesses, and the artist markets will generate entry level self-employment opportunities for Redfern's Aboriginal community.

GOAL 9: OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Strategy 1

Our first strategy is to foster a sense of ownership and self-determination by the local Aboriginal people and to build trust, cooperation and a sense of responsibility and wellbeing among the local Aboriginal population.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Identify and pursue opportunities for the local Aboriginal community to take advantage of the economic benefits of the Pemulwuy project.
- Continue to advocate for facilities and services controlled and operated by the Aboriginal community.

Outcomes

- The AHC's proposed homeownership program is an ideal way to achieve a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the neighbourhood by local residents.

Strategy 2

Our second strategy is to ensure strong management structures and efficient maintenance of the site, its buildings and spaces.



Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Pursue funding for management and maintenance, and ensure Business Plan is reviewed biannually.
- Prepare a Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) schedules and action plan.
- Develop a comprehensive R & M prevention programs (e.g., care guidelines for tenants).

Outcomes

- The AHC has rejected the idea of pursuing NSW government funding to deliver the Pemulwuy project. The project will be totally self-sustaining and will not require government assistance.
- An Asset Management Plan has been prepared as part of a broader management restructuring and management planning process.
- A new Business Plan was prepared in 2005. By 2007 the AHC expects to be virtually debt free and financially self-sustaining.

GOAL 10: ABORIGINAL ENTERPRISE

Strategy 1

Our main strategy is to support and provide opportunities for Aboriginal enterprise, and to create a positive and thriving business environment.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Identify and pursue business initiatives, and ensure commercial uses are developed with consideration of the needs of the local Aboriginal population.
- Ensure the project is a model development, which will draw/attract other commercial developments.



- Promote and enhance economic development initiatives through coordinating representatives of all sections of the community, including government, non-government and community organisations.

Outcomes

- Approximately 2/3 of the Pemulwuy project incorporates some sort of commercial, cultural or community facility.
- Both the proposed business college and the markets are excellent self-employment opportunities.
- Aboriginal cultural tourism can be a major source of enterprise and employment opportunities for the Redfern community.

GOAL 11: ECOLOGICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Strategy 1

Our main strategy is to adhere to the principles of ecological and environmental sustainability in all aspects of design of the site, its buildings and spaces.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed

- Work with consultants who specialise in sustainable projects to assist in the design of the houses, water, waste and energy systems.
- Work with agencies such as the city of Sydney, NSW Sustainable Environment Development Authority and the NSW Department of Public Works and Services to optimise opportunities and incentives for ecological and environmental sustainability.
- Ensure buildings and spaces are appropriately designed to take into account the local microclimate conditions in selecting materials and vegetation.



- Ensure the development makes a positive contribution to environmental conditions in South Sydney by way of the following:
 - a) on-site water management
 - b) provision of vegetation
 - c) reduction of sealed surfaces, heat islands and hard paving
 - d) contributions to shade and shelter.
- Minimize and discourage the need for vehicles within the residential component of the redevelopment area.
- Promote bicycle, pedestrian and alternative types of transportation.
- Develop and implement an Eco-Checklist to ensure project adheres to ecological and environmental sustainability.

Outcomes

- The AHC has prepared a comprehensive Environmental Sustainability study for the Pemulwuy project.
- The concept plan includes a storm water management system, extensive landscaping including roof gardens, and solar energy sources for common areas.
- The majority of the houses are orientated north - east facing with three sides light and ample cross ventilation.
- In light of Sydney's water crisis it is more imperative now that the storm water will be recycled to flush toilets and water gardens.

GOAL 12: CONTACT WITH NATURE

Strategy 1

Our main strategy is to create safe places where people can enjoy an outdoor lifestyle.

Actions and Initiatives Proposed



- Ensure the project provides open space and landscaping in a form that allows straightforward and efficient maintenance.
- Ensure the project provides native tree and plant species selected to give shade, encourage bird life, and contribute significantly to the greening of the site.
- Apply CPTED principles to the design to ensure public open spaces do not inadvertently become the territory of illicit drug users and dealers.
- Liaise with the City of Sydney and the Redfern Community Centre to coordinate the provision of safe open space in the area, and to ensure the projects complement each other.
- Ensure the Pemulwuy project provides specific areas for specific activities, bearing in mind the recreation needs of Aboriginal people of different ages and groups.
- Ensure design of space is culturally appropriate.

Outcomes

- **The AHC is working very closely with the City of Sydney to provide a variety of public space, while the Pemulwuy project itself provides generous private and semi-private outdoor areas and landscaped spaces.**
- **The final detailed landscaping design will be coordinated with the community.**
- **An ample civic space is proposed at the Lawson street entrance, surrounded by retail, commercial and cultural activities, aimed at encouraging community interaction around recreation and leisure facilities.**



"My expectation of a good Australia is when White people would be proud to speak an Aboriginal language, when they realise that Aboriginal culture and all that goes with it, philosophy, art, language, morality, kinship, is all part of their heritage..... White people can inherit 40,000 or 60,000 years of culture, and all they have to do is reach out and ask for it." Dr. Charles Perkins

CHAPTER 3 - REDFERN AS A NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The traditional owners of the Redfern area were the Gadigal (also often spelled Kadigal or Cadigal) people who lived in surrounding areas for more than 40,000 years before European invasion. Material excavated from the Alexandria Canal in the 1960's and middens along the Cooks River are evidence of Aboriginal occupation in this area. The Gadigal people spoke the coastal Duruk language but are often mistakenly referred to as the Eora people. Eora or as is more correct spelled phonetically Iyora simply means "people" and is not actually the name of a clan, a nation or a tribe. Other clans of the Sydney region, occupying different parts of the Darug Nation, included the Wanegal, the Kamergal, the Karegal, and the Bidjigal (Bediagal). There were two major traditional Aboriginal groups to the north and south of Sydney; they were the Tharawal and Darug (also spelled as Daruk or Dharug). To the best of our knowledge the Gadigal were part of the Daruk Nation.¹⁶

In 1788 the British landed on the shores of Kamay, now called Botany Bay. Significant numbers of Aboriginal people inhabited the district surrounding that bay and the greater harbour region of Tuhbowgule (Sydney Harbour), around which the city of Sydney is now built.¹⁷ At that time the Gadigal clan's lands extended from South Head to Botany Bay out to Petersham, taking in the suburbs now known as Redfern, Erskineville, Surry Hills, Darlinghurst and Paddington.¹⁸ It has also been recorded that the other neighbouring clans of the Darug Nation occupied 1800 square kilometres of land extending along the coast from the Hawkesbury River in the north to the Georges River in the south and inland to the present towns of Campbelltown and Camden.¹⁹

With the arrival of Europeans, the Gadigal population was virtually wiped out in a very short period of time. In 1789 and 1790, a smallpox epidemic swept through the

¹⁶ Kohen, J., 1993

¹⁷ Willmot, E., 1987

¹⁸ Australian Heritage Commission, 2000

¹⁹ Willmot, E., 1987



Aboriginal population around Sydney killing literally thousands of people. It is probable that approximately between 50 to 90% of all the original inhabitants living in the vicinity of Sydney died from this epidemic within the first three years of the European settlement.²⁰ During this period, a large number of Aborigines were also killed during their resistance (led by Pemulwuy) to the violent dispossession and invasion of their land. Those who survived moved out of the area and joined neighbouring clan groups. The traditional Aboriginal society in Sydney is believed to have been completely destroyed by the early 19th century.²¹ The events surrounding the Aboriginal resistance during the European invasion are analogous to the Native American Indian's resistance against British colonial rule. During the French and Indian wars in the 1600's, the British waged germ warfare against the Native American Indians and their leader Pontiac. The British strategically infected blankets with smallpox and distributed them to the American Indians. Smallpox crippled the resistance movement and virtually wiped out the American Indian Nation. This tactic was used throughout the continent to quell the Native American resistance.

The timing of the Sydney smallpox epidemic and the Aboriginal resistance suggest that the British may have used similar germ warfare tactics in Australia during colonisation. Supporting this argument, a recent book review of Henry Reynolds latest book, *An Indelible Stain*, reveals his findings that:

*"Dried smallpox scabs brought to NSW by surgeons for inoculating against the disease may have been used to start the epidemic among Aborigines. Two junior officers of a British commander who had approved using smallpox against Native Americans sailed with the First Fleet, so knowledge of germ warfare was possible."*²²

In 1889 residential dwellings were constructed by the British in the area known as Darlington (incorporated in 1864), stimulated by the need for housing for workers at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. The houses mainly consisted of brick-rendered walls, iron roofs and timber verandas with iron balcony railings. During the 1920's, Aboriginal people from all around NSW migrated to Redfern, drawn by the possibility of regular work on the railways and cheap rent. As work became scarce during the Great Depression of the 1930's, many Aboriginal people sought refuge with relatives in Redfern.

²⁰ Kohen, J., 1993

²¹ Newbury, P. (ed.), 1999

²² Jopson, D, 2001



By the 1940's a large Aboriginal population had established itself in Redfern and the area was the location of a number of civil rights protest meetings and rallies. The 1967 National Referendum gave citizenship rights to Indigenous people for the first time since colonisation. Consequently, more Aboriginal people migrated primarily from the rural areas of NSW and Queensland to Sydney where there were greater opportunities for jobs, housing and education.

In the early 1970s Sydney's Aboriginal population suffered from serious overcrowding and homelessness, with indefinite numbers of people without permanent or adequate housing, following a series of evictions and widespread racial discrimination in the private housing market. The lack of affordable housing for Redfern's increasing Aboriginal population resulted in a group of Aborigines squatting in empty terraces on Louis Street in Redfern, in December 1972. These dilapidated terrace houses were 80 to 100 years old and were largely shabby and cramped, tiny 12 feet wide double storey properties.

Under a 'blind-eye' agreement with the owner-developer, the squatters organised themselves and formed a company (the Aboriginal Housing Company Limited). Thus the first housing collective in Australia was incorporated on 25 July 1973 under the New South Wales Companies Act 1961 (now the Corporations Act) as a company limited by guarantee. Subject to the legal constitution of the Company, an initial grant of \$530,000 from the Federal Government allowed the AHC to purchase and restore the first 6 terrace houses. This initial acquisition in Redfern, facilitated by the Whitlam Government, was the first urban land-rights hand-back in Australia. Wattie Creek preceded the Redfern project as the first actual rural land-rights claim. The Aboriginal population of Redfern tripled between 1976 and 1981 primarily as a result of this housing project.²³

In 1973, Mr. Dick Blair (now a pastor), one of the 11 original directors of the AHC, described the significance of the project:

"The whole aim of the project is to bring Aboriginal people together so that we can live in the way we want to live and share what we have with one another. Many of us are now living in slums and pigstyes because we cannot afford the high rents. It is difficult to get jobs because we have no skills and because white people don't want to employ us. We can't be proud to live in these conditions. But when we are living

²³ Australian Heritage Commission, 2000



*together we will be able to help each other to learn skills and to get jobs and, most importantly, we will be proud of our houses and proud of our community. Our children will be able to grow up with more opportunities than we had and they too will be proud of their community and proud of themselves. All we ask is that we be given a chance to prove that it can work."*²⁴

The current Aboriginal residents of Redfern originate from many different Aboriginal lands and communities, contributing to significant intra-cultural diversity within this local community. Presently, the Block is land dedicated for use by Indigenous Australians, and will remain so as long as it continues under the ownership and management of the Aboriginal Housing Company. This is an area enclosed by Eveleigh, Louis, Caroline and Vine Streets in Redfern, an inner city area of Sydney (see Map 1). The Redfern Aboriginal community on the Block is the only surviving continuous urban Aboriginal community left in Australia.

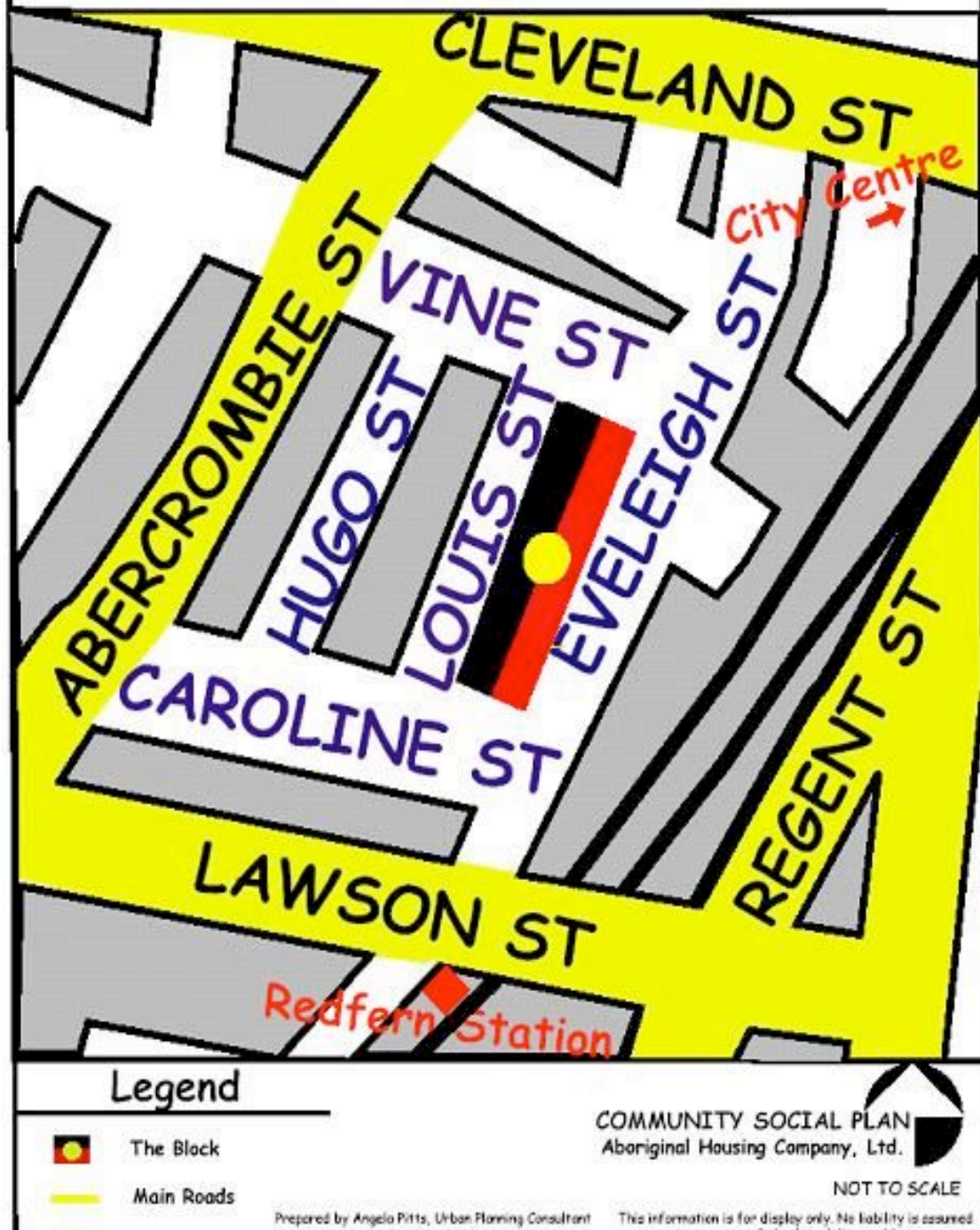


²⁴ James, C. & Jermyn, R., 1973.



MAP 2

Project Site Location





REDFERN - AN ABORIGINAL MEETING PLACE

The Redfern area has a modern tradition of being a beacon for Aboriginal people from around Australia. Redfern provided an opportunity to reunite with family and friends from their hometowns or to simply be with 'their own mob'. Originally, there has been a 'sense of place' here for the Aboriginal community and a sense of cultural and spiritual identity in an otherwise alienating urban environment.

Since 1972 there has been a growing and concentrated Aboriginal population and accompanying services in the Redfern area. The delivery of Aboriginal services is due largely to the efforts of Aboriginal people themselves. Research revealed that the most important reason Aboriginal people move to the Redfern area was a desire to be close to family, friends, and community support groups. In an Aboriginal community survey report prepared for the South Sydney Council in 1999, the research showed that:

*"...68.7% of all respondents cited family, friends and community as the primary reason for living in South Sydney reflecting Redfern's long history of being the epicentre of the Aboriginal community in Sydney. It provides a reference point for those moving into the city from the country and the area has strong cultural and historical significance. Redfern has always been a gathering place and most Aborigines coming from other towns into the city were usually directed straight to Redfern."*²⁵

The 1991 National Housing Strategy Report reveals that Aborigines migrating to mainstream housing areas are often concentrated into Aboriginal 'enclaves' such as Redfern by choice.²⁶ Mick Mundine, Chief Executive Officer of AHC, suggested that the traditional Aboriginal walkabout is the reason there is such a large Aboriginal transient population in Redfern. He describes Redfern as a main meeting place, like a (traditional) Koori watering hole.

"The Aborigines on a 'mission' walkabout sometimes start here (Redfern), may go up the coast and then inland following a circular pattern throughout NSW. These mission walkabouts cover areas up the coast such as Taree, Kempsey, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, then further north near the border to Woodenbong, then inland to Moree, Walgett,

²⁵ Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd., 1999.

²⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, 1991



*Bourke and Wilcannia, circling down through Wagga Wagga (or may take various alternative routes such as going back to Sydney via Dubbo and Wellington) to Canberra, Bega, then up the coast through Bateman's Bay, Nowra, La Perouse and back to Redfern."*²⁷

Even though there is no Aboriginal mission in Redfern, this area is the main crossroad for transient Aboriginal people on their traditional mission walkabouts and sometimes acts as a sort of 'cultural trading post'. Map 2 shows the Aboriginal travel cycles throughout NSW.

Due to its proximity to the Block, the AHC's office acts as a magnet to Indigenous people coming into Redfern from rural NSW and interstate. Although the AHC's primary role is housing, it is also the first contact or first reference point for Aboriginal people nationwide to find family and friends, for the homeless transients to find shelter in the city, and for Aboriginal people to inquire about employment, medical and other services in Sydney. From observations, some days the AHC's administrative staff spent the majority of their time in various de-facto social work roles. This demonstrates a great need for an integrated network of services and support in this area, as well as a need for a centre where Indigenous people can readily obtain consistent, up-to-date information about available services and support.

UPDATE

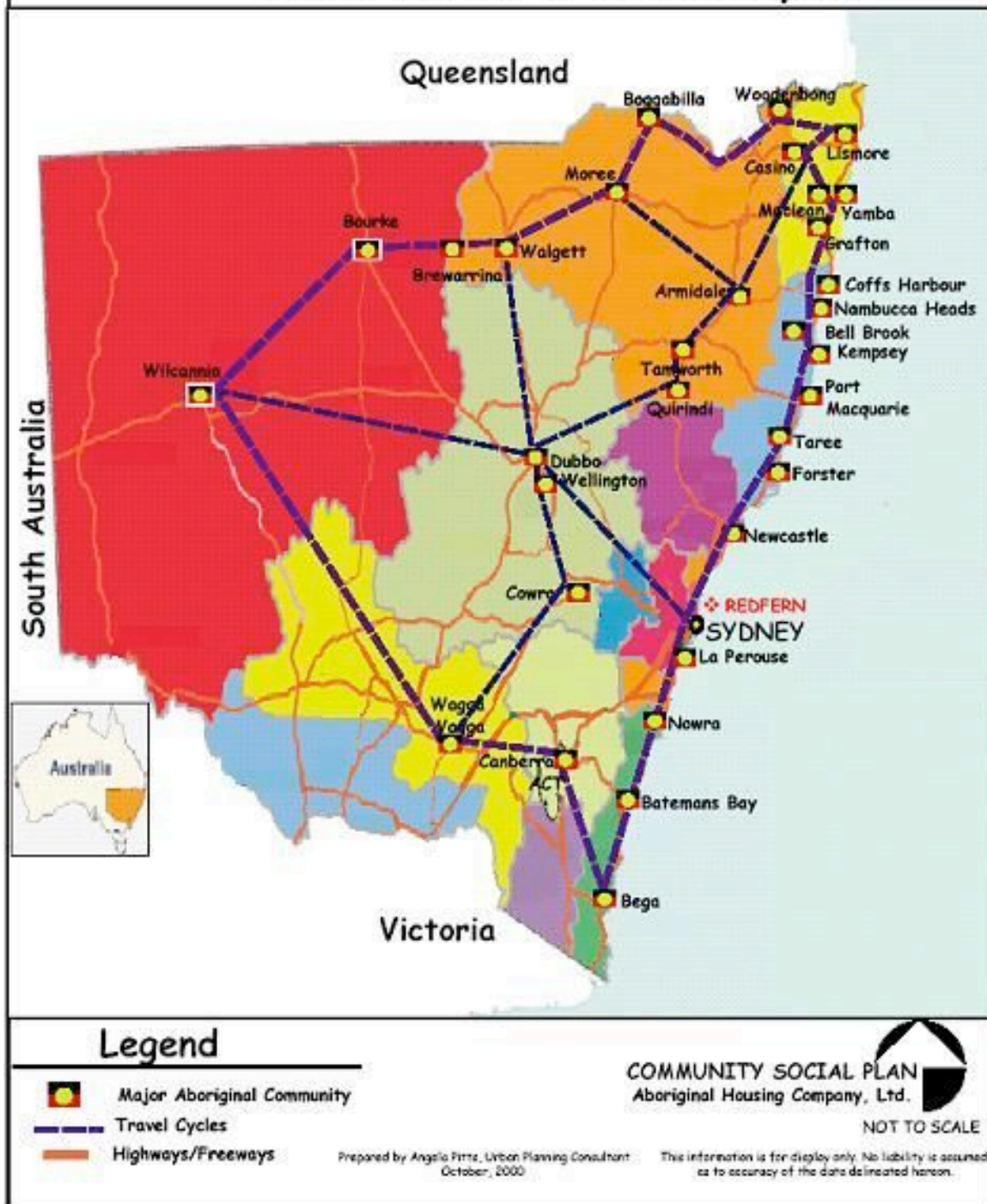
The AHC continues to advocate for a one-stop-shop in the heart of Redfern, and for Government agencies to resume their obligation to provide social services to the Redfern Aboriginal community, allowing the AHC to concentrate on its core business of housing.

²⁷ Mundine, M., 2000, Interview



MAP 3

NSW Major Aboriginal Communities & Travel Cycle





ABORIGINAL NETWORK OF SERVICES

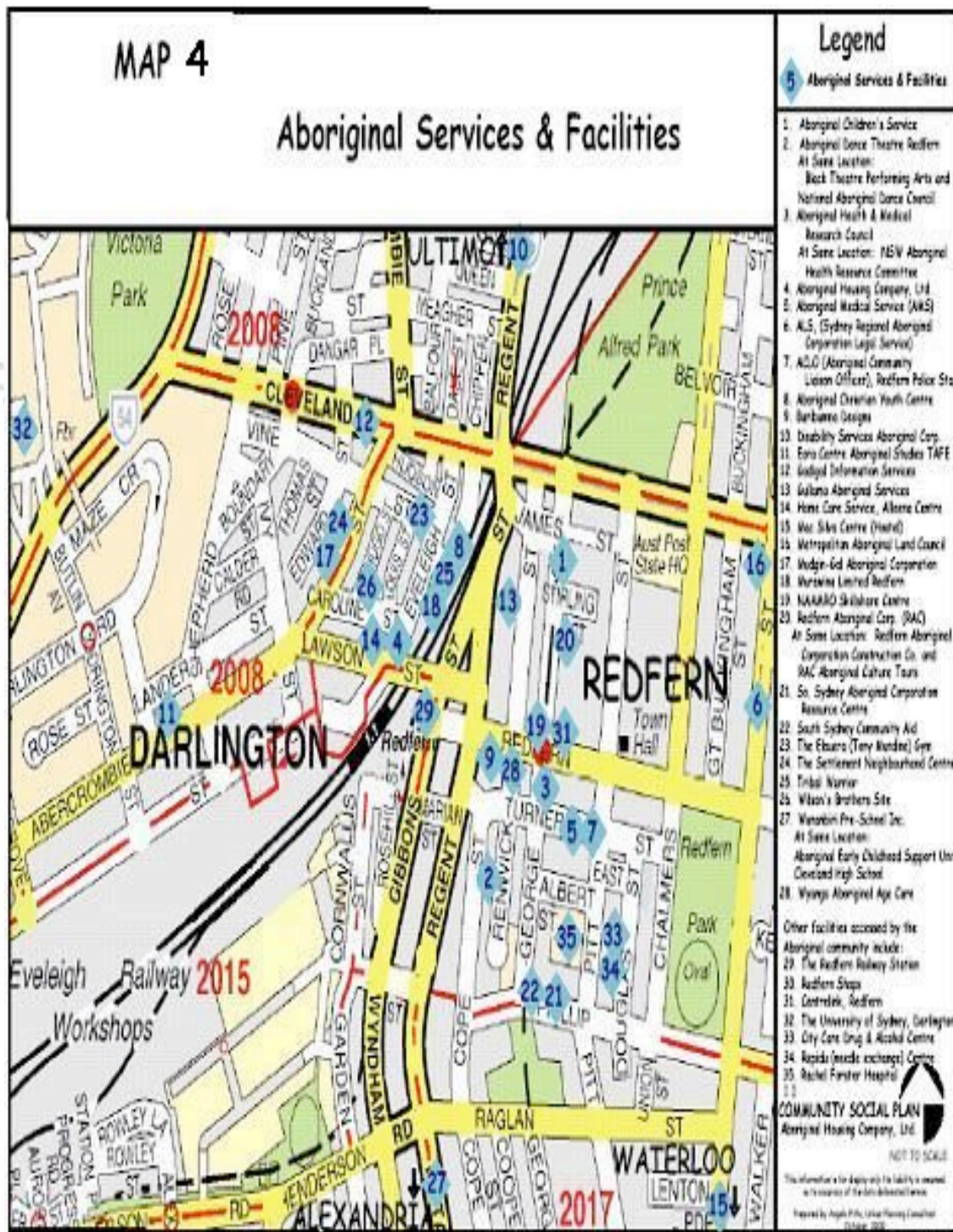
Some of the original Aboriginal residents of Redfern helped develop the first Aboriginal community-controlled services in Australia. The struggle to gain ownership and control of a small parcel of land in Redfern by the Aboriginal community was part of the movement towards self-determination during the 1970s. The first Aboriginal controlled organisations in Australia included the Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service, Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Housing Company, Aboriginal Children's Service, an Indigenous Radio Station, and the National Black Theatre. These developments provided a model for all the other Aboriginal community services and kicked off a social movement focused on self-determination.

Currently in Redfern, a large number of agencies are identified and funded to provide services to Aboriginal people. Over the last three decades in particular the demand for Aboriginal services in the Redfern area has grown considerably. Consequently, the number of services in the Redfern area has tripled since 1986 and the area has become a regional employment centre for Aboriginal people. Some of the services and facilities in Redfern include: children services, educational centres, home care, elderly services, disability support, hostels, community aid, health/medical, employment, legal services, recreation and arts facilities.

UPDATE

Millions of dollars in public funds earmarked for Aboriginal programs are funnelled through main stream agencies in Redfern that never reach the Aboriginal community.

Map 3 shows Aboriginal services and facilities within approximately a one-kilometre radius from Redfern Railway Station and the Block. See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of Aboriginal services and addresses.





"Isn't it reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkable harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians - the people to whom the most injustice has been done?"

Paul Keating.²⁸

CHAPTER 4 - COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter uses an array of data to compile a profile of the Redfern Aboriginal community. A statistical comparative analysis of national Aboriginal figures and statistics from South Sydney will reveal how Redfern's Aboriginal community is reflective of other Indigenous communities around Australia, in the socio-economic disadvantage that is observable. These statistics are further analysed in Chapter Three.

Table 2: Redfern Indigenous Profile

Summary of Facts	%		%
Redfern Indigenous Population is 392		Single-parent Families	63
Children (0-11 years)	28	Couple, with children	72
Young People (12-24 years)	25	Couple, no child	28
Adults (25-54 years)	39	No schooling	3
Older People (> 55 years)	7	Left school before 15	48
Living in Rental Accommodation	83	Higher degree/diploma	3
Live in House Owned/Purchased	9	Income < \$10,400	25
Live in Families	66	Income > \$52,000	0
Live Alone	34	Unemployment rate	33

Source: Compiled from ABS 1996(a) Census - Redfern Indigenous Profile

Diversity

The Redfern community is a vibrant multicultural community of about 6,900 residents from diverse backgrounds.²⁹ At the 1996 Census, 44% of the population

²⁸ Keating, P. 1992

²⁹ ABS 2001a (Redfern Indigenous Community Profile). *The 2001 ABS Community Profile defines Redfern's land area as 0.8 sq. kms, showing a total population of 6,900. However, the City of Sydney statistics defines Redfern's land area as 1.17 sq. kms showing a total population of 10,870. The discrepancy is due to the expansion of the City of Sydney's boundaries since the 2001 ABS Census poll. This report will use the ABS Census 2001 Community Profile Series data.*



spoke a language other than English.³⁰ The major languages spoken in Redfern are Chinese, Russian, Greek, Arabic (including Lebanese), Spanish and Portuguese (in order of highest number). Although Aboriginal lingo is widely spoken in the Redfern Aboriginal community, it is not recorded in Census data as an official language group.³¹

Population

The 2001 census reported that [Australia wide] 458,500 people identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, accounting for 2.4% of the total Australian population.³² Out of a total Australian population of nearly 19 million people, approximately 770,000 people did not state whether they were or were not Indigenous.³³ In 2001 the census data identified 293 as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Redfern, and a total of 1,569 in South Sydney.³⁴ As a proportion of Redfern's population, Indigenous people make up approximately 4%; compared with 2% of the wider South Sydney metropolitan population. Since 1996 the Redfern Indigenous population dropped by 100 persons whereas in South Sydney the Indigenous population has almost doubled. 19% of South Sydney's Indigenous population lived in Redfern in 2001, in comparison to 45% in 1996.³⁵

In 1995 the population of the Block was approximately 235 persons, of which 81% were children under 15 years old.³⁶ By 2001 the population had shrunk to less than about 100 people, 50% of which were children. The catalyst for this exodus was the AHC's relocation and demolition program, primarily to assist families who asked to be moved to safer locations and to facilitate the redevelopment project. As a result of demolishing the abandoned and derelict terraces only 20 households remained. Since 2001 the population haemorrhaging has come to an end and although there has been some natural attrition associated with tenancies the general population numbers have remained stable.

Uniquely, the Block experiences a constant flow of transient people visiting the area, placing additional and unusual pressures on community.

³⁰ ABS 1996(a)

³¹ Aboriginal lingo is defined as a combination of traditional Aboriginal words and Pigeon-English.

³² ABS 2004a (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002)

³³ Commonwealth of Australia 2005 (Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage)

³⁴ ABS 2001a & ABS 2001b (South Sydney Indigenous Community Profile)

³⁵ The 1996 Census data identified 392 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Redfern and a total of 873 in South Sydney - 45% of South Sydney's Indigenous population lived in Redfern (ABS 1999a & ABS 1999c)

³⁶ McDonald, D. & Colin J., 1995



Age Demographic

The age demographic of the Indigenous population is generally very young, largely the result of high than average fertility rates as well as high mortality among the aged. In 1996, 40% of the Indigenous population was under 15 years, compared to 21% of the non-Indigenous population. Conversely, 2.6% of Indigenous Australians were over 65 years, compared to 12% of the non-Indigenous population.³⁷

The national age demographic trend for Indigenous people is also reflected in Redfern and South Sydney. In 2001, 40% of the Indigenous population was under 15 years, compared to 20% of the non-Indigenous population. Conversely, 3% of Indigenous Australians were over 65 years, compared to 13% of the non-Indigenous population.³⁸

Nationally the median age of Indigenous Australians was 20.5 years compared to 36.1 years for the non-Indigenous population in 2001.³⁹

The age demographic data in 2001 showed 22% of Redfern's Indigenous population were children under the age of 15 compared to 6% of the non-Indigenous population. 5% of Indigenous Australians were over 65 years old compared to 16% of the non-Indigenous population. The 2001 statistics revealed a substantial reduction in the population of Indigenous children under the age of 15 in Redfern since 1996 (35% in 1996 to 22% in 2001).

While Redfern's elderly Indigenous population increased substantially from 1.8% in 1996 to 5% in 2001 (see Table 3).⁴⁰ Consequently, the dependency ratio within the Redfern Indigenous population dropped from 59% in 1996 to 39% in 2001.⁴¹ The relocation of families with children from the Block between 1997 and 2001 seems to have influenced these figures.

³⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, 2001

³⁸ ABS 2001c (Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001)

³⁹ ABS 2005a

⁴⁰ ABS 2001a & ABS 1996a

⁴¹ The dependency ratio depicts the number of dependents in a household - it is the number of persons aged 0-14 and 65 years and over divided by the number of persons aged 15-65.



Table 3: Age Demographics - A Comparison of Redfern's Indigenous and Non-Indigenous

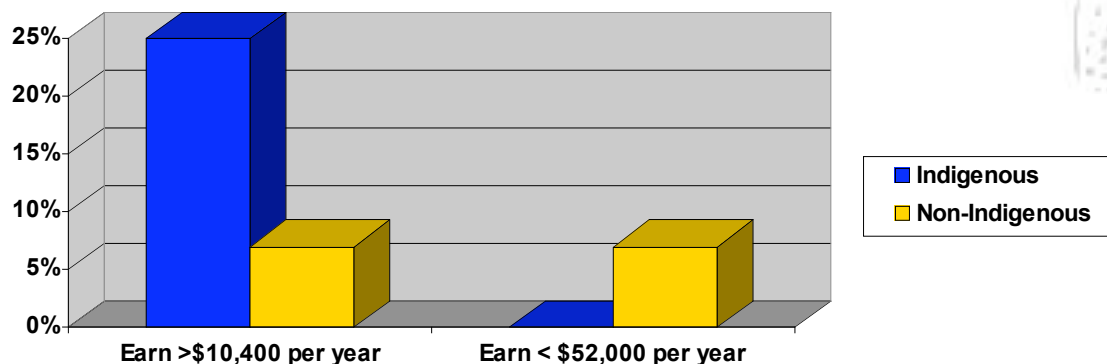
Age	1996	1996	2001	2001
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Under 15 years of age	35%	9%	22%	6%
Over 65 years of age	1.8%	17.5%	5%	16%

Source: ABS 2001a & ABS 1996a

Income

Indigenous Australians are more likely than other Australians to have low incomes and are much less likely to have above-average incomes. In Redfern, approximately 25% of Indigenous families earn less than \$10,400 p.a., as compared with approximate 7% for non-Indigenous families. In 1996 there were no Indigenous households earning over \$52,000 p.a., compared with 7% for the wider Redfern population (see Figure 1 below). The 1996 ABS Census also reveals that the Indigenous median weekly income was \$174 p.w., in comparison to non-Indigenous median income of \$233 p.w.⁴²

Figure 1: Income - A Comparison of Redfern's Indigenous and non-Indigenous Population



Source: ABS 1996a

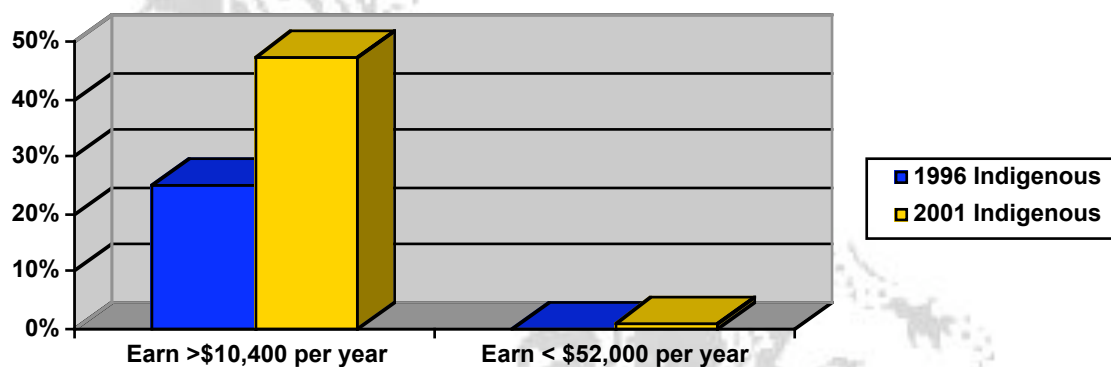
⁴² ABS 1996a & ABS 1996c



Nationally, ABS Census data reveals that in 1994, 59% of Indigenous people received a gross annual income less than \$12,000.⁴³ The overall averaged annual income for Indigenous adults was \$14,200 (1996 dollars) which was 30% less than the average of \$21,000 for the wider population.⁴⁴

According to the 2001 statistics, Indigenous households in Redfern earning less than \$10,400 p.a. rose from 25% in 1996 to 47%. The Redfern census also showed that around the same period Indigenous households earning over \$52,000 p.a. experienced a modest increase of 1% (see Figure 2 below)⁴⁵

Figure 2: Income - A Comparison of 1996 & 2001 Redfern's Indigenous Population



Source: ABS 2001a

Indigenous Australians are more likely to be poorer than non-Indigenous Australians. For instance, the ability to purchase a home is closely related to income. According to 1991 and 1996 Census data, about 30% of Indigenous Australian homes were owner-occupied (includes people paying off their homes), compared with approximately 70% for other Australians (see Figure 3).⁴⁶ This housing inequality is reflected in Redfern where only 9% of Indigenous households owned or were purchasing their homes in comparison to 26% of the non-Indigenous households.⁴⁷

⁴³ ABS 1996d

⁴⁴ Hunter, B. & Gray, M., 1999

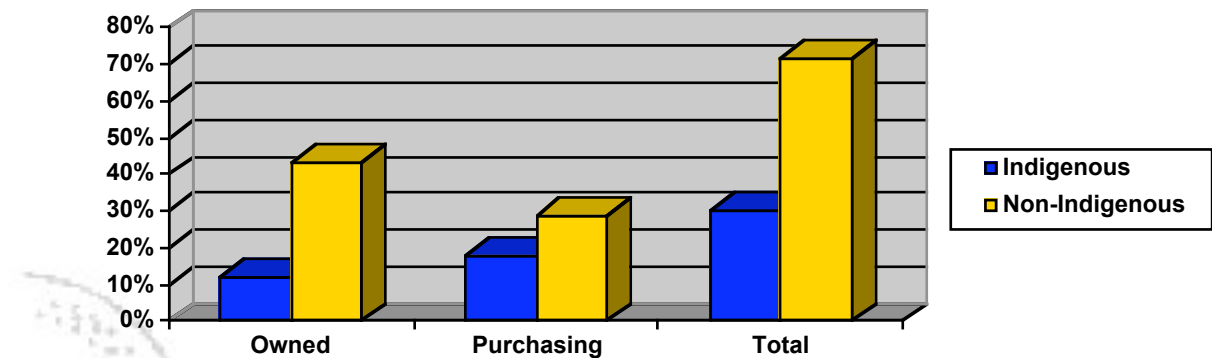
⁴⁵ ABS 2001a

⁴⁶ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000

⁴⁷ ABS 1996a



Figure 3: Owner-occupied Housing - A National Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous



Source: Davidson , B. & Jennett, C., 2000 (based on 1991 and 1996 ABS data)

By 2002 the homeownership inequality gap worsened with a decline in Indigenous households nationwide that owned or were purchasing their homes to 27%.⁴⁸ The decline was comparable in Redfern with only 5.5% of privately owned Indigenous houses according to 2001 statistics.⁴⁹ (Also refer to the Housing section below)

Employment

In 2001 Indigenous people in Redfern were more likely to be unemployed than the non-Indigenous population. The Indigenous unemployment rate was 24.7%, compared with the rest of Redfern with a rate of 9.4% (see Figure 4).⁵⁰ This means that nearly a quarter of Redfern's Indigenous population are suffering directly from all the disadvantages associated with unemployment and underemployment, contributing to the many aspects of the socially dysfunctional behaviour observer in Redfern.

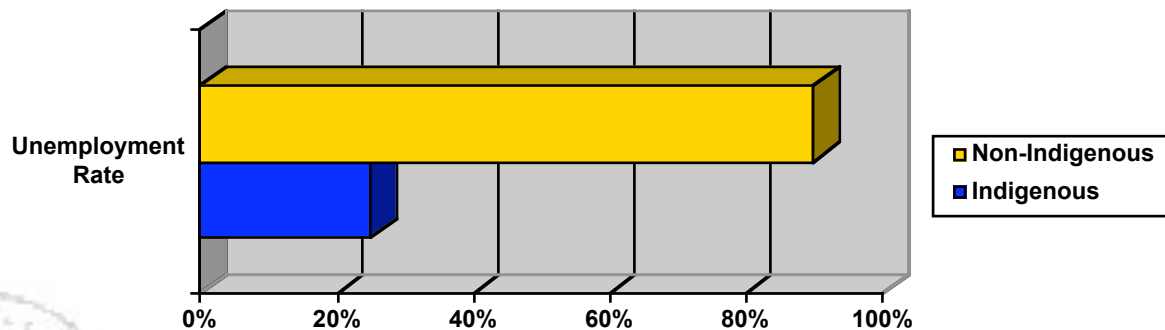
⁴⁸ Commonwealth of Australia 2005

⁴⁹ ABS 2001a

⁵⁰ ABS 2001a



Figure 4: Employment - A Comparison of Redfern's Indigenous and non-Indigenous Population



Source: ABS 2001a

On a national level, employment is another indicator that shows the low level of economic security of Indigenous people. Indigenous people were more likely to be unemployed if they were in the labour force and more likely to be unemployed for a longer period.⁵¹ The 1996 ABS Census reported that of the Indigenous labour force participants, 22.7% were unemployed, whereas the unemployment rate for the total Australian population was 9.2%. In February 2000 the unemployment rate officially fell to 17.6% for Indigenous people, but still more than double the 7.3% for non-Indigenous people.⁵² Official unemployment figures do not include hidden unemployment created by Indigenous people employed on the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). Conservative estimates of the real unemployment rate for the Indigenous population put the figure as high as 40%.⁵³

The 2001 census showed that the unemployment rate worsened for Indigenous people at nearly three times higher than the national average at 20%, as compared with 7%.⁵⁴ During the same period Indigenous adults were half as likely to be in mainstream employment and more than twice as likely to be underemployed.⁵⁵ The employment status of Indigenous people in Redfern is just as dismal as the national state of affairs.

⁵¹ Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 2000

⁵² ABS 1999

⁵³ Commonwealth of Australia, 2001.

⁵⁴ ABS 2004b

⁵⁵ ABS 2005a



Indigenous people who have a job are statistically more likely to be in low-skill and low-status jobs than their non-Indigenous counterparts. In 2001, almost two-thirds (63%) of employed Indigenous persons were working in the two lowest skill occupation groups compared with 44% of the non-Indigenous population. Obviously low skill employment is a contributing factor to the lower incomes of the Indigenous population. This pattern is consistent with relatively low levels of educational attainment by the Indigenous population, and the types of jobs available in more remote areas of Australia, including under CDEP⁵⁶

According to the 1991 statistics Indigenous people had much lower proportion of managers, administrators and professionals in comparison to less skilled jobs like labouring.⁵⁷ The 2001 ABS figures showed that the same trend continues 10 years later.⁵⁸

Education

Statistics over the past decade show that there are very low levels of literacy and education within Redfern's Indigenous community. Almost half (48%) of the Indigenous population in Redfern left school at the age of 15 and under, compared with 27% of the wider Redfern community. These figures are even much higher than in the inner west where about one-quarter of the Indigenous population left school before the age of 15.⁵⁹ A similar situation prevails in South Sydney with 33% of the Indigenous population leaving school at the age of 15 and under. Only 3% of Redfern's Indigenous population have a degree or diploma compared with 25% of the wider Redfern community and 35% of the non-Indigenous South Sydney community. South Sydney's Indigenous population shows a higher educational level (13%) in comparison to Redfern's Indigenous population.⁶⁰

In 2002, 63% of the Redfern's Indigenous population left school before Year 11 as compared to 30% of the wider Redfern population. Only 5% of Redfern's Indigenous population have a degree or diploma compared with 32% of the wider Redfern community (see Figure 5).

⁵⁶ ABS 2004b

⁵⁷ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C. 2000

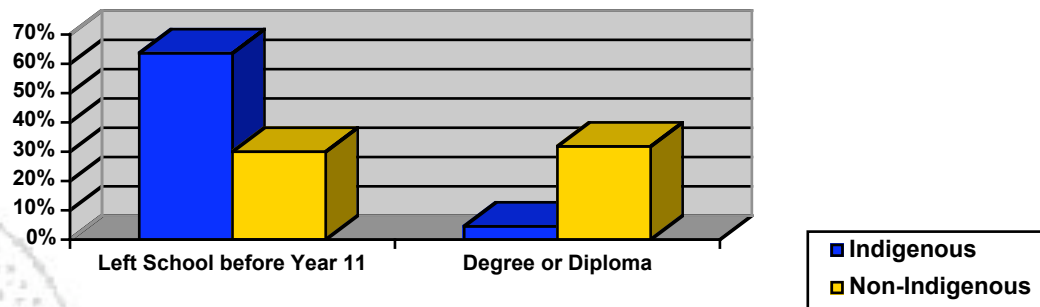
⁵⁸ Commonwealth of Australia 2003 (Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, Key Indicators 2003)

⁵⁹ Marrickville Municipal Council, 1999

⁶⁰ ABS 1996a & ABS 1996c



Figure 5: Education - A Comparison of Redfern's Indigenous & non-Indigenous Population in 2001



Source: ABS 2001a

A Commonwealth study of Indigenous disadvantage indicated that the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from commencement to years 12 is significant and proportional to the year level.⁶¹ The education statistics for Redfern are indicative of the national situation. Redfern's ABS community profile revealed a fall from 57 children attending Year 10 to 17 children in Year 11 (a 70% drop in attendance).⁶² A key message in the Commonwealth study was that Indigenous students have a tendency to leave school once they reach the age when attendance is no longer compulsory. The study also reported that in 2002 non-Indigenous students were twice as likely to continue to year 12 in comparison to Indigenous students.⁶³

Redfern's Indigenous population like Indigenous people nationwide generally leave school earlier and are much less likely to have qualifications at all levels. They are also less likely to be enrolled in post secondary education than other Australians are. According to the ABS Census, in 1994, 18% of Indigenous people aged 15-64 who were not attending school had completed a post-school qualification compared to 41% of all Australians. In 1996, 73.7% of Indigenous 15 year olds were in full-time education compared to 91.5% of all Australian 15 year olds. At older ages, the disparity between Indigenous and other Australians increased, so that by age 19, when tertiary education could be expected to be undertaken, only 12.0% of

⁶¹ Commonwealth of Australia 2003

⁶² ABS 2001a

⁶³ Commonwealth of Australia 2003



Indigenous youth were in full-time education, one-third the rate for other Australians.⁶⁴ Table 3 compares education statistics in 1991 of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians nationwide.

In 2001 33.4% of Indigenous adults left school before the age of 15 years, as compared to 18% of the non-Indigenous population. The same data shows that 3.8% of Indigenous youth aged 15-24 years are now attending university as compared to 16.9% of non-indigenous youth.⁶⁵

Table 4 is a synoptic view of education differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, 1996-2001.

Table 4: Education - A National Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous

Education	1996	1996	2001	2001
	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
Did not go to school (%adults)	3.1	0.7	3.2	1.0
Left school at aged <15 years (% adults)	44.2	35.7	33.4	18.0
Now attending university aged 15-24 years (% youth)	3.4	14.4	3.8	16.9
Post school qualifications (% of adults)	23.6	40.2	27.9	44.7

Source: Altman, J. & Hunter, B. 2001

Housing

⁶⁴ ABS 1999

⁶⁵ Altman, J. & Hunter, B., 2001

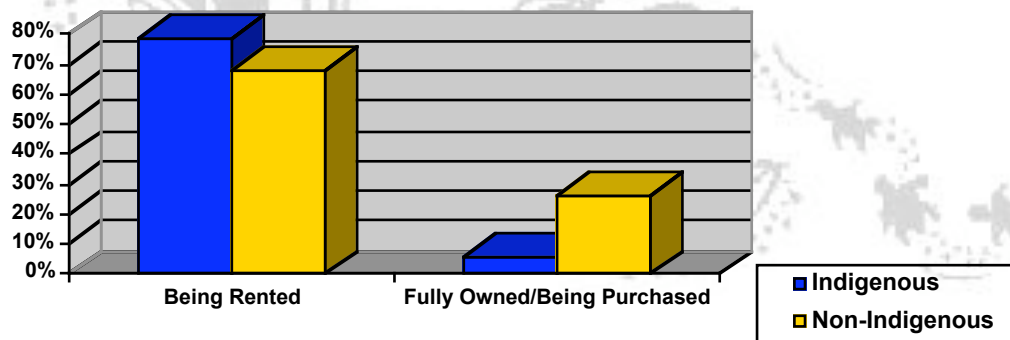


The housing census data reveals the lack of economic and social empowerment of Redfern's Aboriginal population to an extent due to low levels of equity in homeownership and high levels of dependency on rented accommodation.

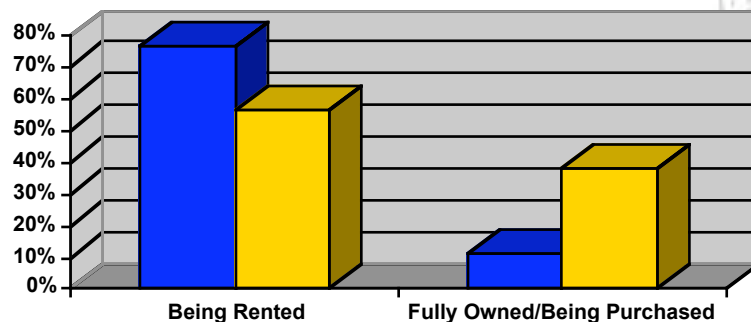
During the 2001 Census period 79% of Redfern's Indigenous households lived in some form of rental accommodation. Only 5.5% of Indigenous families fully owned or were purchasing homes. In comparison, 68% of Redfern's non-Indigenous families are renting, whereas, 26% own or are purchasing homes.⁶⁶ Statistics for South Sydney's Indigenous households show 76% living in rental accommodation, while only 11% own or are purchasing homes. In contrast, South Sydney's non-Indigenous households have a much lower percentage living in rental accommodation (56%), and a much higher percentage that fully own or are purchasing homes (38%).⁶⁷

Figure 6: Housing - A Comparison of Redfern & South Sydney Indigenous and non-Indigenous Population, 2001

Redfern



South Sydney



Source: ABS 2001a & ABS 2001b

⁶⁶ ABS 2001a

⁶⁷ ABS 2001b



The low levels of homeownership in Redfern's Indigenous community are reflected in the national figures. Nationally Indigenous households were also much more likely to be renting than purchasing a home, or owning a home outright. Figure 6a shows that in 2001 63% of households with Indigenous persons were renting (compared with approximately 27% of other households); 19% were purchasing their home (compared with 27% of other households); and 13% owned their home outright (compared with 40% of other households).⁶⁸ Commonwealth studies looking at Indigenous disadvantage report a much lower proportion of Indigenous people (27%) than non-Indigenous people (74%) owned or were buying their own homes.⁶⁹ (Refer to Figure 6b).

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSIS) paints a poorer picture of Indigenous homeownership than the ABS Census data suggests, revealing that in 2002 70% of Indigenous people were living in rental accommodation compared to 24% of Australia's non-Indigenous population.⁷⁰ In the last decade though, there seems to be an apparent decline in the proportion of Indigenous peoples living in rental accommodation, as reported by state/territory housing authorities, from 33% in 1994 to 22% in 2002. Proportionally more Indigenous people (about two-thirds of those in rental accommodation in 2002) were living in accommodation provided through Indigenous Housing Organisations, community housing or other private rental providers (up from one-half in 1994).⁷¹

⁶⁸ ABS, 2001c *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001*, Series cat. no. 4713.0

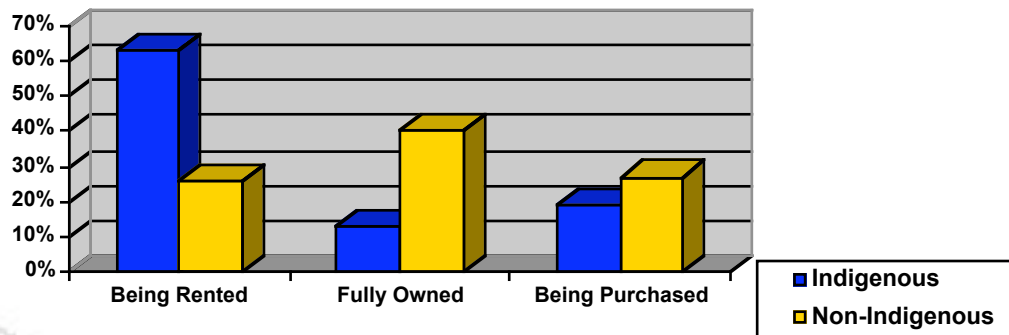
⁶⁹ Commonwealth of Australia 2005 (*Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, Key Indicators 2005*)

⁷⁰ ABS 2004a,

⁷¹ ABS 2004a,

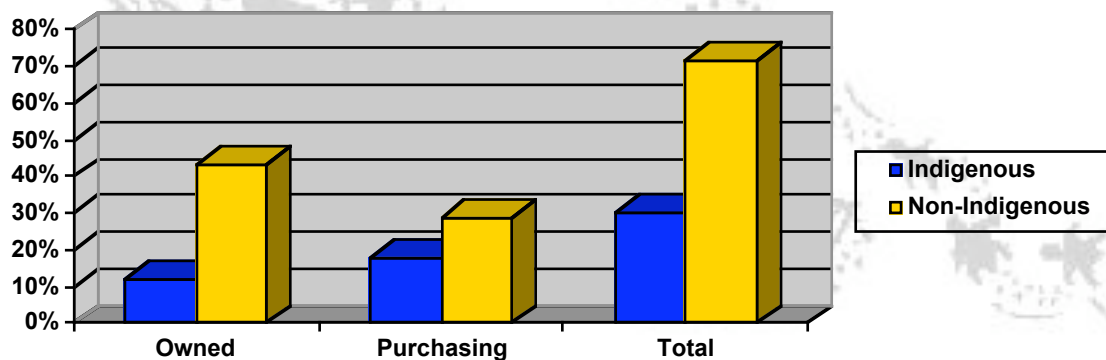


Figure 6a: Housing Tenure - A National Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in 2001.



Source: ABS 2001c (Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001)

Figure 6b: Homeownership - A National Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in 2002.



Source: Commonwealth of Australia 2005 (Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, Key Indicators 2005) & ABS 2004a (NATSIIS)

Overcrowding

Inadequate housing and overcrowding continues to be an issue of some concern on the Block. In 1995, there was an average of 4 persons residing in each household,⁷² where as by 2001 this figure has risen to approximately 6 persons per household.

⁷² McDonald, D. & James, C., 1995



Nationally, as in Redfern, households with Indigenous persons tend to have more residents than other households. In 2001 Redfern's Indigenous average household size was 2.5, where as Redfern's non-Indigenous average household size was 1.9.⁷³ Nationally, there was an average of 3.5 persons in households with Indigenous people, compared with 2.6 persons in other non-Indigenous households.⁷⁴

In 2001, 22% of Indigenous people lived in overcrowded households compared to other Australians at only 4%.⁷⁵ This means that Indigenous people were 5.6 times more likely to live in overcrowded households than non-Indigenous people.⁷⁶ Part of the reason for this disparity can be attributed to the higher number of children in Indigenous households. In 1994, 7.5% of Indigenous households had more than 2 persons to each bedroom compared to 1% of total Australian family and lone person households.⁷⁷ The ABS Census statistics also showed that in 1994, 20% of Indigenous people lived in 8% of dwellings that had 8 or more people. In comparison, less than 1% of the total Australian population lived in households of eight or more people.⁷⁸ The likelihood therefore of more than one Indigenous family sharing a single residence or living in improvised dwellings is 12 times higher than with non-Indigenous households.⁷⁹ Another measure of over-crowding is the availability of bedrooms for household residents. In 2001, 16% of Indigenous households nationally were accommodated in dwellings that required at least one extra bedroom, compared with three per cent of other non-Indigenous households.⁸⁰

National statistics showed that in 2001 Indigenous people were five times more likely to live in multiple family households, and that these types of living arrangements represented the most overcrowded of all Indigenous households, at 80.9%. In comparison, only 40.8% of non-Indigenous multiple family households were considered overcrowded.⁸¹ The same study found that children suffered the most from crowded living conditions as overcrowding occurred more frequently in Indigenous households with children under the age of 15 years, than those without children younger than 15.

⁷³ ABS 2001a

⁷⁴ ABS 2004a, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002 (NATSIS)

⁷⁵ Commonwealth of Australia 2005

⁷⁶ Commonwealth of Australia 2003

⁷⁷ ABS 1999

⁷⁸ ABS 1996d

⁷⁹ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000

⁸⁰ ABS 2004a

⁸¹ Commonwealth of Australia 2003



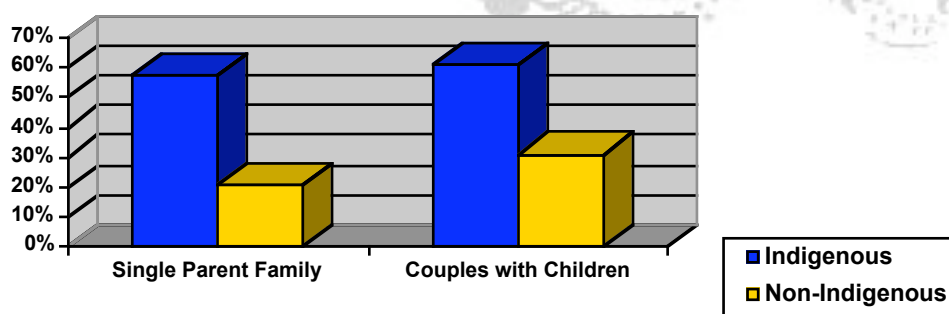
Certain types of household relationships seem to be compounding the problems for overcrowded households. For instance, Indigenous persons were three times more likely to live with extended family members (other related individuals) and relatives other than their spouse/partner or children (6% compared with 2% respectively).⁸²

Family Relationships

According to the 1996 Census data about 66% of Redfern's Indigenous population live in family units, while 34% live alone. In 2001 approximately 57% of Redfern's Indigenous households were single-parent families, compared to 21% of the wider Redfern population.⁸³ Similarly, 51% of South Sydney's Indigenous families had a single-parent, while the non-Indigenous households represent only 15% single-parent families.⁸⁴ In Redfern, approximately 61% of Indigenous couples have children, in comparison to 31% of Redfern's non-Indigenous couples.⁸⁵ This data reveals that the socio-economic problems of Redfern's Indigenous population are compounded by high levels of single-parent families and financial burden of raising children.

Figure 7: Family Relationships - A Comparison of Redfern & South Sydney Indigenous and non-Indigenous Population

Redfern



⁸² ABS 2001c

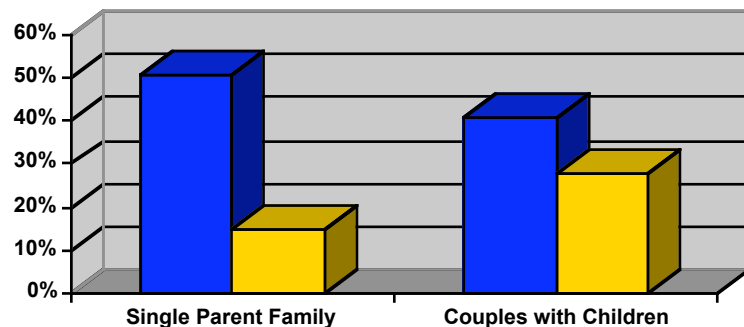
⁸³ ABS 2001a

⁸⁴ ABS 2001b

⁸⁵ ABS 2001a



South Sydney



Sources: ABS 2001a & ABS 2001b

The types of family relationships we find within Redfern's Indigenous community share similar compositions to others nationally. The 2001 Census showed that households with Indigenous persons were more likely than non-Indigenous households to be family households (82% compared with 70%) and less likely to be lone person households (13% compared with 24%).⁸⁶ Indigenous single adult households were also three times more likely to be one-parent families with dependants (31% and 10%).⁸⁷

Health

It is well recognised that Australia's Indigenous population on the whole have a much lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous people, with the life expectancy of Indigenous people around 20 years lower.⁸⁸ During the period 1999-2003, Indigenous males and females died at almost three times the national rate. Indigenous people also had higher rates of mortality from all major causes of death. For instance, mortality rates for Indigenous males and females from endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases, including diabetes, were around seven and eleven times those for non-Indigenous males and females.⁸⁹ There are also high infant mortality rates and high incidence of infectious diseases in Aboriginal communities, and Redfern is no exception. Despite a number of Indigenous-operated community health services set up to help local Redfern people with specific health problems. In 1995 the Block presented very high incidence (50-75%) of Hepatitis B

⁸⁶ ABS 2001c

⁸⁷ ABS2001c

⁸⁸ Commonwealth of Australia 2003

⁸⁹ ABS 2005b



& C (some A) and respiratory problems attributed to substance abuse and smoking. Other common complaints in 1995 included liver related disease, with up to half the residents in the Block (30-50%) diagnosed with some form of liver problem.⁹⁰



⁹⁰ McDonald, D. & Colin J., 1995



"It saddens me to think that after a lifetime of battling for Indigenous rights I'm still arguing for improvement in many of the same areas as when I started." Lowitja O'Donoghue.⁹¹

CHAPTER 5 - SOCIOECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE WITHIN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

THE URBANISATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Urbanisation has had a devastating impact on Australia's Indigenous population. Primarily because the complete scope of urbanisation must be understood in the context of Aboriginal targeted resources and research focusing almost exclusively on remote rural areas, while almost universally neglecting the growing urban Aboriginal communities. Part of the reason for this disparity could be that rural and regional Aboriginal communities have high visibility due to their highly concentrated nature, whereas urbanised Aboriginal families tend to be relatively dispersed, and therefore out of sight out of mind. As a result, the needs of urban Aborigines are not entirely understood by the general public or government and Aboriginal 'ghettos' are becoming all too common in inner city suburbs around Australia; while the associated problems continue to be ignored at every level. It is widely recognised in urban planning circles worldwide that government neglect is the main cause for the creation of ghettos.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project seeks to remedy the disastrous Government strategy of dispersing Aboriginal families from their support networks through forced assimilation.

Housing strategies responding to ghettos which incorporate scattering Aboriginal families throughout suburban neighbourhoods ('salt and pepper') would have and has had disastrous consequences. This dispersal policy would isolate Aboriginal people from their community and family support networks and created cultural conflict in neighbourhoods that were previously peaceable. It would create the need for additional social and human services to substitute the natural cultural and social supports found in a community setting. This is not to suggest that Aboriginal people can not integrate or interact with the rest of society, but it does recognise the human proclivity to mingle and associate with others of similar interests or background; and most importantly it

UPDATE

The NSW government is seeking to limit the number of Aboriginal families that could live back on the Block, by forcing the separation of at least half of the community.

⁹¹ O'Donoghue, L. 1998



recognises the catastrophic social costs of forced assimilation. The trend toward urbanisation in its present form has dislocated families from natural support networks and can only further contribute to the escalating social disadvantage of Aboriginal people.

The rural-urban journey of Aboriginal people begins with a great gap in equality. Those migrating from the rural areas are at a tremendous disadvantage when coming to an extremely competitive urban environment. Indicative of remote rural areas, the Aboriginal experience consists of inappropriate or no healthcare and education services, extreme impoverishment with little or no income, fewer job opportunities (as many do not have much experience in the workforce), substandard housing if any, almost no assets, and endemic racial discrimination.

As emphasised in the 1991 National Housing Strategy Report, a lack of education and urban skills was (and is) an impediment to competing for work in the urban labour market, with racial discrimination further exacerbating this disadvantage.⁹² This inequality is also highlighted in a recent paper on Aboriginal disadvantage - "to parity with the rest of the Australian population within a generation is very unlikely, even if every support were to be given".⁹³ This is certainly the case in Redfern.

Other difficulties faced by urban Aborigines have been brought to national attention by the 1991 National Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The report documented that the majority of the 99 Aborigines who died in custody lived in urban areas with 24 persons in major urban communities and 35 in minor urban communities.⁹⁴ An indication of the impact of unemployment on the lives of many Aboriginal people is the fact that 83 of the 99 people who died in custody were unemployed at the time of their deaths.⁹⁵ Unlike the majority of Aboriginal people in remote areas who are able to gain regular full-time employment with government-funded, community-based enterprise and development projects, urban Aborigines are completely dependent on the labour market and/or government transfers. The cost of living, too, is almost always higher in urban areas.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project with its focus on homeownership, education, enterprise, employment and tourism will provide a holistic response to the disadvantage in Redfern's Aboriginal community.

⁹² Commonwealth of Australia, 1991

⁹³ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000

⁹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, 1992

⁹⁵ *ibid*



Urban-dwelling Aborigines have significant barriers accessing suitable services. The Royal Commission report also went on to say, "various indicators show that urban Aborigines experience significant social and economic disadvantage compared with other urban Australians and cultural insensitivity can also be a significant barrier to Aboriginal people using 'mainstream' services".⁹⁶ While programs and services including those in the mainstream may be more readily available in urban areas many urban Aborigines do not have the skills with which to access them. Our research shows that the Redfern Aboriginal community suffers similar experience of isolation from crucial service providers and is exposed to serious urban stress, as Sydney can be a highly competitive and unforgiving city.

An increasing number of Aboriginal people are drawn to the inner cities of Australia. In 1971, 44% of Indigenous people lived in urban areas, but by 1996 this figure had risen to 72.6%.⁹⁷ Most significantly, Sydney attracts Aboriginal people from across NSW and interstate, with Redfern usually their first point of contact. The National Housing Strategy Report reveals that in 1991 approximately 24% of the total Indigenous population lived in major urban areas and 42% in other urban areas with less than 100,000 populations.⁹⁸ The remaining 35% live in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, a significant proportion of Indigenous people in other urban areas live in fringe camps. In the past transient and homeless Aboriginal people have occasionally set up makeshift shelters on the 'Block' similar to country fringe camps.

In the 1991 Census, a total of 67.6% of Indigenous people lived in urban areas; by the time of the 1996 Census this had increased to 72.6%. In comparison, 85.1% of the non-Indigenous population lived in urban areas in 1991, increasing marginally to 85.9% in 1996.⁹⁹ Figure 7 below, based on 1996 Census data compares the total Indigenous population living in major urban (100,000 population or more) and other urban areas (1,000 to 99,999) and those living in rural and remote areas. This means that in Redfern, it is likely that an increasing number of Aboriginal people will be drawn to the area. Currently, the population density of the area was reported to be increasing with many residents living in extremely small and over crowded living spaces.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, 2001

⁹⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, 1991

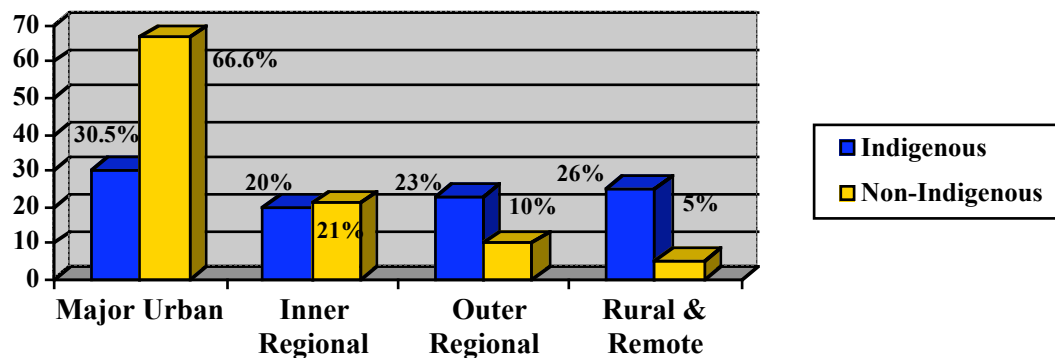
⁹⁹ ABS, 1996d

¹⁰⁰ Sarkissian Associates Planners, *et al.* 1999



Figure 8

Place of Residence –Australia 2001



Source: Commonwealth of Australia 2003, ABS Census 2001

The major Indigenous population centres included Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory while the highest percentage of Australia's Indigenous population lived in New South Wales (29.2%) in 2001.¹⁰¹ However, as a proportion of the total population within each state and territory, the Northern Territory at 28.8% has the greatest number of Indigenous people.¹⁰² A report by ATSIC in 1999 revealed that the largest urban concentrations of Indigenous populations were in Sydney (37,117) and Brisbane (30,325).¹⁰³

Even though many Indigenous households remain relatively remote in geographic terms compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts, there has been a major trend in the urbanisation of Indigenous populations. An important demographic trend at the household level indicated (1991 and 1996 Census) a substantial relative increase in the total number of Indigenous households. An increase of 25%, compared to 9% in non-Indigenous households in that same five-year period, has had a marked impact on the apparent urban-rural distribution of the population.¹⁰⁴ A statistical profile from the ABS Census showed the average annual growth rate of 2.3% for the Indigenous population for the period 1991 to 1996 was nearly twice the rate of the rest of the Australian population.¹⁰⁵

Even with the increasing rural-urban migration and integration into the wider mainstream society, many Aboriginal people continue to hold on to their traditional

¹⁰¹ Commonwealth of Australia 2003

¹⁰² Commonwealth of Australia 2003

¹⁰³ ATSIC, 1999

¹⁰⁴ Daly, A. & Smith, D., 1999

¹⁰⁵ ABS, 1999



values and customs, and this is certainly the case in Redfern. Although, it would be expected that Aboriginal values would be strongest among those living in rural Aboriginal communities, they appear to also be strong among many living in or near predominantly non-Indigenous urban centres. Table 4 below shows the extent to which adults adhere to cultural beliefs and practices, based on data collected in 1994. Naturally, the percentages are higher for those living in rural areas; however, the proportions in capital cities remain relatively high by most measures.

Table 5: Cultural Beliefs and Practices

Cultural Beliefs and Practices	Urban	Rural
Has a place for cultural activities	24%	52%
Identifies with a clan tribal or language group	51%	74%
Believes role of Elders is important	82%	88%
Recognises homeland area	69%	85%
Attended cultural activities in previous 12 months	63%	74%
An Indigenous language is main language	3%	33%

Source: Neutze, M., 1998 *Housing and Infrastructure for Indigenous Australians*

Cultural values and preferences differ greatly among Aboriginal people. In particular, they vary from those that have been largely integrated into the wider society and those who continue to hold strongly to traditional values and customs. The views held by Aboriginal people about housing and the environment thus tend to be greatly influenced by the extent to which traditional Aboriginal values are adhered to.¹⁰⁶ This is seen as well in Redfern where local people express the need for culturally appropriate housing and services, and the acknowledgment of Redfern as a significant centre for Aboriginal culture.

A recent Federal Parliamentary inquiry into the needs of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, documented a number of surveys, including one of Aboriginal people in Sydney's south-west which found that:

*"48% of Aboriginal households still use traditional Aboriginal remedies;
that Aboriginal families visit other members of their families slightly*

¹⁰⁶ Neutze, M., 1998



less than once a day; that 95% of families maintain contact with other Aboriginal families; 82% of Aboriginal families discuss Aboriginal issues regularly within the home; a substantial number of Aboriginal families seek advice from family members at times of illness, and a considerable proportion of those people turn to community controlled services for primary health care".¹⁰⁷

The survival of Indigenous culture in all its diversity cannot be taken for granted. In Redfern valuable cultural knowledge has disappeared and Indigenous languages are falling rapidly into disuse. A disturbing statistic for the Indigenous population in Redfern is that in 1996 there were no Indigenous Australian languages spoken at home.¹⁰⁸ In 2001 statistics show that 10 Indigenous persons in Redfern speaks an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander language.¹⁰⁹ In contrast Aboriginal lingo is widely used in the Sydney metropolitan areas and seems to have replaced more traditional languages.

UPDATE

Mr Richard Green, a decedent of the traditional Sydney tribe the Darug, is an internationally recognised linguist spearheading the renaissance of the traditional Sydney Aboriginal language.

MAJOR INDICATORS OF DISADVANTAGE WITHIN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

There is a high concentration of social disadvantage within Aboriginal communities. Major socioeconomic indicators reveal that most Aborigines live a life with fewer assets, less income, less regular and permanent work, fewer educational qualifications, and lower quality housing. Many of these problems are commonly associated with poverty. The social disadvantage in Aboriginal communities nationally is also reflected in the problems in the Redfern Aboriginal community. The socio-economic indicators below reveal the macro-level problems in Aboriginal communities nationally and how they relate at a micro-level to Redfern.

Assets and Income

Indigenous Australians are more likely than other Australians to have low incomes and fewer assets. Many are trapped in a poverty cycle limiting their choices in housing, lifestyle, education and employment. The highly competitive and

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project proposes to provide affordable homeownership for Aboriginal families.

¹⁰⁷ Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 2000

¹⁰⁸ ABS 1996a

¹⁰⁹ ABS 2001a



commercially driven society that Sydney has become tends to put a greater emphasis on wealth rather than wellbeing. The result is that lower income Aboriginal people are limited in the choices available to them. Assets and income therefore become the primary mechanisms by which the living standards of Aboriginal people are eventually determined. The continuing stigma of Redfern, as a drug ghetto and an area of conflict and poverty, has further reduced the opportunities for Aboriginal residents, trapping them in a seemingly endless cycle of disadvantage.

Education

Indigenous Australians generally have poorer education and literacy due to lower levels of educational access, participation and attainment. This has reduced opportunities for Aboriginal people to acquire skills and knowledge necessary to enable them to generate higher incomes and acquire assets that would help them to achieve better living standards.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project proposes an Aboriginal business college that will promote both higher education and real access to enterprise opportunities.

The curricula of mainstream education providers have often demonstrated a high level of intolerance and misunderstanding of Aboriginal culture and the specific needs of Aboriginal young people. In Redfern, poor participation and retention rates in education among Aboriginal young people have resulted in lower access to legitimate activities and employment.

Employment

The economic wellbeing of an individual and their family is largely determined by their employment status. Indigenous Australians have experienced higher levels of unemployment than the rest of the Australian population. Poor skill formation and fewer educational qualifications are the primary causes of high levels of unemployment and unskilled employment among Aboriginal people. With greater insecurity in employment, unskilled workers are especially vulnerable to being laid off during a restructuring process.¹¹⁰

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project emphasises Aboriginal enterprise opportunities. Redfern is an obvious place for Aboriginal cultural tourism which can lead to real long term self-sufficiency for the Redfern Aboriginal community.

Racial discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people has

¹¹⁰ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000



also restricted the employment opportunities and choices available to them in an already competitive labour market. Furthermore, discrimination by financial institutions and restrictions to start-up capital has meant that Aboriginal people are also less likely to be self-employed or to employ others.

In Redfern, many Aboriginal people find it difficult to access employment outside of government departments, Aboriginal organisations and CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) work-for-the-dole schemes. Although CDEP schemes have benefited community development in other urban and rural areas, in capital cities like Sydney, they have been less successful in providing long-term transferable tertiary sector skills and have disguised the true disadvantage of Aboriginal people by creating a class of hidden unemployed.

Housing

The overall standard of housing for Indigenous people remains well below minimum standards expected by mainstream Australians. The lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities has seen housing delivered in an often inappropriate and haphazard manner. Poor-quality materials and inadequate quality control over housing construction and standards have resulted in unsuitable housing and high maintenance costs. Subsequently, problems with overcrowding have resulted from a lack of culturally sensitive housing.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project represents a new benchmark for high quality culturally appropriate Aboriginal housing.

There are also major difficulties in accessing the private rental market. Some landlords are reluctant to take on Aboriginal families because of expected problems with large Aboriginal households, unfamiliarity with cultural behaviour or general racial discrimination. There is a great need for improved access to mainstream housing and increased Aboriginal housing resources.

On the Block, there has always been an acute shortage of housing and related infrastructure leading to critical levels of overcrowding. An assessment of health issues in the area has revealed health problems such as respiratory illnesses, middle ear infection and skin conditions attributed to overcrowding. National surveys also verify that residents of overcrowded households were significantly more likely to experience fair or poor health, than those living in less crowded accommodation.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Neutze, M., 1998



Health

National statistics show that poor Indigenous health continues to be a major problem. The Indigenous population suffers from high infant mortality, lower life expectancy and higher death rates than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous people are more likely to suffer from a range of diseases such as mellitus, ear disease, eye disorders and some cancers. Disorders of growth and nutrition are also prevalent.¹¹² Further, Indigenous people are more frequently hospitalised than non-Indigenous people. Some of the causes for these high hospitalisation rates include respiratory diseases and some forms of injury that are directly related to poor housing conditions.¹¹³ There is also a high incidence of infectious diseases and the presence of illnesses in Aboriginal communities that were eliminated from the wider Australian communities more than 50 years ago.¹¹⁴

Research shows that in addition to a low life expectancy, Aboriginal people have a more rapid physical deterioration partly as a result of ill health and partly due to stress caused by cultural trauma. The type of cultural stress being experienced has been associated to that observed after major environmental disasters, e.g. earthquakes, where people behave in a disoriented and confused manner, and find it impossible to re-order their lives.¹¹⁵

For some Aboriginal people, substance and alcohol abuse has become a form of escapism to relieve this cultural stress. Within these communities substance abuse is a major cause of health disorders and has also had a huge socio-economic impact on Aboriginal culture. Specifically, alcoholism is a major concern because of the long-term effects contributing to ill health and poverty. Petrol sniffing, among young people, is also a major problem because of its effects on their intellectual development. The use of heroin in Redfern's Aboriginal community appears to result from a similar need for escapism, and its high death toll is another major concern among the local people and the wider community.

UPDATE

The AHC has prepared a Housing Health Report specifically to address the Aboriginal health issues for the Pemulwuy Project.

¹¹² ABS 1996d

¹¹³ Neutze, M., 1998

¹¹⁴ New South Wales Task Force on Aboriginal Health, 1990

¹¹⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, 1991



Families

Another aspect of Aboriginal disadvantage is the poor economic wellbeing of low-income families. In Redfern, Aboriginal households are more likely to contain sole-parent families and on the average, have a larger number of children than non-Aboriginal households. Consequently, greater economic burden is placed on Aboriginal households with high childhood dependency, compounded by high visitor rates, and high rates of adult unemployment. Nationally, more than half of all Indigenous families in 1994 did not include an employed adult compared to less than 20% for non-Indigenous families.¹¹⁶

Aboriginal households were also more likely to be multi-family households. Given the larger size of Aboriginal households, it is highly probable that housing stress could affect more Indigenous households than non-Indigenous households. The ABS Census also shows that in 1994, 8% of all Indigenous households were multi-family households as compared to less than 1% of all Australian households in the same predicament.¹¹⁷ The economic burden and stress experienced by low-income multi-family Indigenous households is significant. In the Redfern Aboriginal community, this housing stress may be a major factor in such issues as the increasing domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, truancy and diminished parental responsibilities.

Dispossession and the Lost Generations

Past wrongs committed against Australia's Indigenous peoples are a major reason for the social disadvantage experienced by many Indigenous communities today. The despondence and sense of hopelessness often witnessed in Redfern's Aboriginal population is clearly a consequence of these dynamics. The landmark 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody found that the major underlying contributing factors to Indigenous Australians' disadvantage were the legacy of history, and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples, particularly, from access to economic, social and political power. It was also well documented that during the relocation of Aboriginal communities to reserves and missions an estimated 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were separated from their families and placed in institutions or foster care between 1900 and 1969. This dispossession was particularly acute along the eastern coastal zone

¹¹⁶ Neutze, M, 1998.

¹¹⁷ ABS, 1999.



where urban and rural settlements were most heavily concentrated.¹¹⁸ Details of some of this disempowerment are described below:

*"Colonial takeover denied Aboriginal people the right to live by their own rules, to decide on their own policies. They were denied the freedom to run their own economic and family life. They were also denied the right to own land...to earn a family wage, to receive welfare benefits, to live where they pleased. Under various policies their private, reproductive lives were under scrutiny by government and missionary officials. They could not necessarily marry the person they chose, fraternise with people of their choice, speak to people of a certain skin colour, live in a particular street or on a particular reserve. They could not decide how many people they shared their house with. They were not eligible for old age pensions, for worker's compensation, for maternity allowances or for child endowment. Even when legislation on such matters changed in the 1940s and 1950s, it was often the manager of the mission or reserve rather than the individual who was paid this money. They could not run their own bank accounts. Anyone who objected could end up exiled hundreds of kilometres away or imprisoned for an unknown time...The law extended its arm into the bedroom and into the post-natal ward. Children were taken from mothers after birth, others were taken once they reached the age of three or four years. Many Aboriginal families were thus denied the right to nurture, to rear and education, to love their own children, to see them grow up. They lost these children, and the children became lost themselves...Often children had been taught to detest everything Aboriginal, and this could extend to themselves once they realised their skin was not white."*¹¹⁹

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 2000 key issues paper addressing Aboriginal disadvantage concurs that the past has had a deep and lasting spiritual and psychological impact on Indigenous Australians and their communities. This emotional scarring has greatly influences the way they relate to the mainstream society and economy. It is more than mere resentment, there is a deep sense of distrust and outrage at the losses and humiliation they and their ancestors have

¹¹⁸ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000

¹¹⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, 1992



been forced to endure.¹²⁰ In Redfern, this is evidenced by the varied and complex social problems present.

According to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Indigenous disadvantage is distinctive in that it is not just a question of material or economic disadvantage. The fundamental problem underlying Indigenous Australian's disadvantage is the continuing lack of control over their lives. These include a widespread loss of self-determination, dignity, self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of identity and spirituality. Greater control over their own lives is essential if Indigenous people are to experience a better future.¹²¹ Aboriginal leader, Noel Pearson emphasises that Indigenous people must understand that self-determination is the right to take responsibility and is critical to Indigenous future progress. In his 1995 discussion paper, 'An Optimist's Vision', he argues:

UPDATE

The NSW Government plan to obstruct an adequate amount of Aboriginal housing from being built back on the Block is a direct attack on hard won gains in Aboriginal self-determination.

*"The social problems which engulf Aboriginal society are for the most part problems that can only be confronted and overcome by Aboriginal people, and the provision of resources must necessarily be matched by an honest commitment by the Aboriginal leadership to rise beyond the shackles of the past, never forgetting the past, but engaging for a future for their people"*¹²²

¹²⁰ Davidson, B. & Jennett, C., 2000

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² Pearson, N. & Sanders, W. 1995



"This is everyone's problem and only if we work together can we fix it. It doesn't matter who we are black, white or brindle." Michael Mundine Snr, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company.¹²³

CHAPTER 6 - ISSUES OF SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE IN THE REDFERN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

KEY SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

This chapter addresses a number of key social and cultural issues affecting the community on the Block at Redfern. From numerous community consultations and meetings with tenants and community organisations, the key issues are identified as follows:

- the transient population problem in the area contributing to homelessness;
- drop-ins from outside the community introducing a disruptive and criminal element;
- drug and alcohol problems which had devastated the Aboriginal community;
- crime and vandalism;
- the drug and alcohol-related crime in the area;
- the health problems and the effects on wellbeing;
- substandard and unsuitable housing;
- dysfunctional Aboriginal families and the Stolen Generation;
- the need for greater access to Aboriginal services and facilities;
- the need for children and youth recreation areas and services;
- community safety issues;
- rubbish and a sense of neglect;
- lack of coordination of services in the area;
- a need for greater focus on services for children and youth;

UPDATE

The AHC has developed several strategies to address the underlying problems on the Block.

1. The AHC's Community Safety Plan has advocated and facilitated the removal of all the drug houses on the Block.
2. There has been a significant reduction in the number of transients on the Block coinciding with the demolition of abandoned derelict buildings.
3. Drug related crime on the Block is at an all time low.
4. Sydney City Council has made incredible improvements to the amenity of the public domain on the Block with daily clean ups.
5. The AHC has successfully coordinated greater cooperation between black and white neighbours.

¹²³ Mundine, M., 2000, Interview



- cultural misunderstandings, rifts in the community and distrust;
- lack of respect;
- indicators of the social disadvantage including:
 - a) family stress
 - b) low-income
 - c) criminal convictions
 - d) sexual assault and child abuse
 - e) unemployment and lack of skills.

In a survey prepared for South Sydney Council in 1999, respondents were asked to identify the five main problems that were most critical to them. Issues of major concern in the Redfern suburb are presented in Table 5.

Table 6: Issues of Major Concern in Redfern

Issue	Redfern	Waterloo/ Alexandria	Total
Drugs and Alcohol	11	13	24
Housing	7	7	14
Crime	6	3	9
Employment	7	2	9
Lack of recreation areas/parks	2	5	7

Source: Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd. 1999 Consultations with the South Sydney Aboriginal Community

The implications of this study for the Block is that, in addition to the general stress of urban living, the Aboriginal community has added pressures relating to serious drug and alcohol problems, crime, and housing issues. Other issues of major concern, that rated high in Redfern, were homelessness; and in Waterloo and Alexandria, personal safety.

GREATER AWARENESS OF THE CAUSES

The social disadvantage on the Block is compounded by multiple socio-economic and health problems; by the lack of cultural respect; and the absence of a spiritual and cultural ownership of place. These social problems are often hidden from the general public and consequently their extent and effects are not always fully understood. However, what is more obvious is the flow on effects that invariably



spill out into the rest of the community. For instance most local people would easily recognise that a few years ago the Redfern area had become one of the epicentres for drug and criminal activity in Sydney; and that if it had been left unchecked this social cancer would have continued to degrade and isolate the whole of the Redfern community.

The Influence of Drugs and Criminal Manipulation

Although drugs are not uncommon in Aboriginal communities around Australia it is unusual for an Aboriginal community to have had such a concentrated and dominant drug culture as was present on the Block. On closer investigation of the reasons why the area was the centre of such high levels of drug activity, we find that some of the community leaders had turned a blind eye to the drug dealing and thus were indirectly perpetuating the problem. Another more obvious reason is that drugs are a lucrative business that individuals and organised groups are eager to defend and sustain. As an international city Sydney represents a massive open market for the illicit drug trade and the accessibility of Redfern by public transport and major arterial roads made the area a natural choice for organised crime. At the height of the drug culture in Redfern criminals had a long term vested financial interest in maintaining the status quo on the Block. They exerted a strong influence on the community, both through intimidation and financial inducement to protect illegal investments. The Block was seen as an easy target and vulnerable to being preyed upon by well organised crime syndicates. Until the residents became aware that they were being marginalised and manipulated by a select few, and until they acknowledged the root cause of the problem, they remained unable to contribute positively to ridding their community of this malevolent influence.

UPDATE

In 2005 local Aboriginal women with the support of organisations like Mujingal and the Metro Land Council got a chance to voice their opposition to local drug dealers through the very successful "Enough is Enough" campaign, putting local Aboriginals on notice that the community would no longer tolerate them peddling poison on the Block.

Those who profited from the continued misery of this Aboriginal community had deliberately caused rifts within the community; similar to the divide and conquer strategies used against the Black Americans during the civil rights movement. As a result many of the AHC tenants who were not involved in any criminal activity relocated away from Redfern to remove themselves from the manipulation of the rest. Of those residents who did remain, some became deferent to the pressures of this area. The AHC and other organisations that were trying to 'clean up' the Block's drug trade became targets of violence and propaganda. A disturbing schism



eventually developed between the AHC and the community. Fallacious rumours circulate that the Block would be sold, which perpetuated a general feeling of fear, angst and anger against these organisations. The efforts to redevelopment the Block had become an uphill battle and at times seemed impossible, in part due to the amount of misinformation compounded by equally misinformed and negative media coverage. The AHC as one of the only private organisations leading the effort to rebuild a respectable and drug-free Aboriginal community through the redevelopment process had come under heavy criticism for its efforts to rid the Block of drugs and crime. The AHC's clean up agenda represented a clear and present threat to those who manipulated the Aboriginal community for illegal gain.

UPDATE

In 2005 a new threat to the community's survival has emerged from the NSW Government Minister Frank Sartor. The Minister said to the AHC if he had his way he would not allow any Aboriginal housing back on the Block and everything in Redfern is negotiable but the Block.

It is obvious now that maintaining the status quo of the Block would have benefited a few, but cause detriment to many. If this problem had been left unchallenged, the community was in grave danger of being further marginalised and ultimately dispersed by the efforts of those who resisted change. Eventually, it would have led to the complete decimation of Redfern's Aboriginal community.

Missing a Sense of Place

Further compounding the social problems is the absence of a 'sense of place'. 'Sense of place', is defined as a situation where people value their neighbourhood for a variety of qualities and are prepared to commit their future to the area. Unfortunately, the 'sense of place' and cooperative spirit initially intended by the original AHC directors in the 1970s and sustained for at least the first decade has been rapidly deteriorating because of the effects of crime and drugs on this community. Moreover, many local people felt that the pendulum had swung too far and the sense of community on Block had been almost completely lost to the dominant drug culture.

The 'sense of place' in most Aboriginal communities has a strong connection to Aboriginal spirituality. To quote an Aboriginal theologian and past tenant on the Block, Raymond Finn:



"The 'Block' is one of the last places left for Aboriginal spirituality...the spiritual roots are still there but they are not receiving nutrients".¹²⁴

The drug problem on the Block was a primary concern, as its effects had systematically destroyed the spirit of the Aboriginal community, resulting in widespread hopelessness and despair. What was even more disturbing was the knock-on effect the circumstances on the Block were having on other Aboriginal communities. The Block established itself as the main crossroads for transient Aboriginal people on their traditional 'mission' walkabouts during the early years of migration when families moved from remote communities to urban centres like Redfern for work.¹²⁵ Consequently, almost all Aboriginal people throughout NSW are exposed in one way or another to the sense of hopelessness that enveloped the Block.

Traditional Elders and the Geo-Politics of Redfern

Extensive discussions with Redfern's Aboriginal community members have identified further community fragmentation caused by the uncertainty and disparity of who are the Elders in the community and what is their role in this modern urban Aboriginal society. Traditionally, Elders were leaders in a community, providing good role models and counsel for their group. They were people whom other members of the tribe would ask advice in their day-to-day activities and spiritual duties, and listen to and obey when they issued orders. Elders were considered to be wise in the knowledge of the Dreamtime law and lores of the tribe, but age was not the only criterion to being an Elder. In fact, traditionally many elderly people were not elevated to the status of Elder. Moreover, an Elder was usually, but not always, a male. The role of female Elders today, as spokespersons for a whole community, is a relatively modern phenomenon of the 20th century. In traditional Aboriginal society, older women often acted as midwives and as authorities on other matters pertinent to their gender, often referred to as 'women's business'.

To understand the role of the Elders, one must understand that Aborigines lived in small family groups also known as clans or tribes. Within the immediate family groups, the eldest males were treated with respect and acknowledged as leaders in as far as they made decisions about the family, like settling disputes or deciding when the group would move camp to a new watering hole. When a number of blood-

¹²⁴ Sarkissian Associates Planners, *et. al.*, 1999

¹²⁵ See Map 2 - NSW Aboriginal Travel Cycles



related families lived together, the Elder of the group was the person considered to be the wisest of the older members. In larger groups that may have consisted of up to several hundred people, a number of Elders met to make decisions on behalf of the group. This became known as an Elders Council. Instead of being a form of government in the European sense, Elders Councils convened for the purpose of performing marriages, burial ceremonies and to conduct initiations.

Usually a group chose its Elders through initiation and ceremony. However, in most modern urban communities, these traditional ceremonies are no longer performed and in most cases the community simply recognises and informally chooses its Elders. In Redfern, the role of Elders is somewhat ambiguous because the community comprises of so many different Aboriginal tribes from many locales. Because of the diverse nature of this community, they have been unable to reach consensus about who will ultimately represent and lead them. The absence of this traditional hierarchical structure has left a political vacuum that has further divided and fragmented the community. As described by Lowitja O'Donoghue:

*"...no matter how bloody, how extreme or how passionate factional [Australian] politics gets, they don't begin to compare with the emotions and the heat that go into Indigenous politics...so much energy is expended on specific, local matters that there seems to be little left over for the other, wider issues. We need to be less naïve and less parochial."*¹²⁶

It is this parochialism and factional infighting that has made the Redfern Aboriginal community so vulnerable to influence by external interests like Government that encourages opposing side into civil conflict.

Historically, the Block lies within the traditional lands of the Gadigal people. The Gadigal are a part of the greater Darug Nation. Presently, no one involved in the community is recognised as a legitimate ancestor of the Gadigal people. To the best of our knowledge the whole of the Gadigal clan consisting of 62 families were eventually wiped out by small pox.

Serious animosity and rivalry between competing Aboriginal tribal or family groups jostling for power in Sydney has led to a lack of respect and mistrust between local Aboriginal people and organisations. A possible solution would be to identify the

¹²⁶ Lowitja O'Donoghue, 1998



legitimate traditional Elders in Sydney and equally recognise those Elders who have a modern historical connection to Redfern and allow them to jointly lead and make decisions for the future of the area. Until this level of stability is achieved, cohesion, social harmony, and respect will continue to elude this Aboriginal community and hamper its progress to real self-determination.

There are also a number of other complex issues, which directly affect the divisiveness in this community, and are not uncommon to most urban dwellers. A Federal Parliamentary inquiry into the needs of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people found that:

*"Because of the lack of data and research into urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander situations it was frequently presumed that they possessed the same cultural norms of remote 'traditional' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This came about because of the misperception of 'community'. It is wrongly assumed that all urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people possess a strong sense of community identification and act solely for the common good."*¹²⁷

The report's research confirmed that urban Aboriginal people possess a distinctive culture that may be localised and individualised in nature.

There is also a divisive non-Aboriginal component in the Redfern area. As recent consultations about the future of neighbouring properties revealed, some residents expressed openly racist views and expressed a desire to rid the whole area of their Aboriginal neighbours. They expressed the view that all Aborigines are criminals, drug dealers and drunks. These negative community attitudes and stereotypes have further mired the reconciliation process in Redfern at a time when it needs substantial support. These problems had been exacerbated by the activities of local real estate agents who support the NSW government policies to relocate Redfern's Aboriginal population for the purpose of gentrifying the area and increasing property values.

The AHC's Dilemma and Response

To further explain the area's social disadvantage, a brief history of the events on the Block needs to be examined. Ten years after the 1973 establishment of the

¹²⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, 1992



AHC, the social and economic situation of local tenants deteriorated. There were a range of issues, including increasing violence, social tensions, drug-related crime, and a lack of diversionary social and recreational activities that contributed to this decline. There was continued negative media attention focusing on what was described as the "Redfern Problem". This had a detrimental and negative effect on the community. The AHC also became a victim of these events, and was unjustly blamed for all the subsequent social problems and issues in Redfern.

Unfounded rumours of bankruptcy, fuelled by inaccurate media coverage, led to AHC tenants discontinuing regular rent payments. The Company was ill equipped to cope effectively with the burgeoning drug problem and recalcitrance of often-violent tenants at the same time. The AHC was overwhelmed by the wide-ranging responsibilities of the dual roles of landlord and social worker. And rather than taking a firm stand with tenants who refused to or were unable to pay the rent, the AHC tolerated rent arrears and met the maintenance obligations by falling further into debt. The situation led to an untenable downward spiral, resulting in very little community confidence and support for the Company. The media continued to exacerbate the problem and the situation was often described as "turbulent". By 1983, the AHC's properties had significantly deteriorated.

In response to the escalating social problems of the early 1980's, the AHC made the decision to demolish the first derelict houses on Caroline Street to make room for a community park. A simple physical solution, like the inclusion of a park, in response to a complex set of social problems is a common error in planning. An example can be drawn from some of the well documented failings of the Radburn design (New Jersey, USA), that were subsequently adopted by the City of Campbelltown's public housing estates.¹²⁸ Today, the failings of physical design on these estates have resulted in unsafe public areas being one of the key problems for locals. The search for simple physical solutions such as the creation of a park and other makeshift additions to the Block, without any long-term planning, has failed the residents of Redfern and had inadvertently accelerated the social unrest. Alleyways and lanes became areas for shooting up drugs, the blocked up houses became shooting galleries and the park space was used for openly selling drugs or permanent parking for the NSW Government's needle distribution van.

From 1985 to 1986, the firm of Sarkissian Associates Planners in association with Colin James (Architecture Department, Sydney University) and Richard Lloyd

¹²⁸ Woodward. R, 1997.



(Architecture Department, University of California, Berkeley) worked with the AHC to consult with the community to find solutions to the pressing social problems affecting the area. In the resulting March 1986 report, *Housing for Aboriginal People in Redfern*, a number of recommendations, design proposals and planning strategies for urgent interim measures were endorsed by the Board of the AHC and presented to a steering committee representing agencies involved in Aboriginal affairs.¹²⁹ However, due to internal financial difficulties and a lack of external funding support by Government the recommendations and proposals were never implemented.

The circumstances on the Block became so intolerable and dangerous by 1992, that for almost 18 months there was support from the community, government or other Aboriginal organisations. During this time only Michael Mundine, the CEO of the AHC, and one other staff member [Jenny Mundine] were left to run the Company. With little rental income and no other external financial support the homes owned by the Company were left without maintenance and so began the rapid deterioration of the stock. As described by Kay Anderson in 1992:

*The streets of Eveleigh, Louis, and Caroline are certainly less neat than neighbouring ones. The number of vandalised homes - a few in Eveleigh Street are no more than shells - is high by metropolitan Australian standards. Alcohol and other substance abuse are more visible than in other districts, as is the legacy of unemployment, boredom, truancy and disaffection among youths. Graffiti is abundant, and many of the cars parked on the rough roads are defaced...And many of the tenants, especially those among them who are children, appear to bear symptoms of crippling poverty, inadequate nutrition, and crowded living conditions."*¹³⁰

For the few tenants who have remained on the Block little had changed in the condition of the properties since that low point in 1992. The housing stock on the Block continued to deteriorate despite significant improvements in maintenance delivery, especially in the area of emergency health and safety.

¹²⁹ Sarkissian, W., James, C. & Lloyd, R., 1986

¹³⁰ Anderson, Kay J., 1992



Peter Valilis, AHC Project Director is quoted as saying:

*"This place [the Block] has been haemorrhaging for years, but in the past only band-aid solutions were offered by Government. This Social Plan represents a chance to get it right once and for all"*¹³¹

The Redfern area continues to suffer the effects of severe social trauma because the disadvantage of the community has been neglected by successive Governments, and the area continues to be politically in the too hard basket. The racial and social unrest that Sydney experienced in 2004 and 2005 and the continued resistance to plans to gentrify Redfern seems to send a clear message that the issues of disadvantage and discrimination can no longer be ignored and swept under the carpet, or for that matter solved through intimidation.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS - RESIDENTIAL GENOCIDE

Sustained government neglect has meant the Redfern Aboriginal community needlessly continues to endure inadequate housing and the serious health problems that are associated with poor living conditions, in addition to numerous drug-related illnesses and deaths.

The effects of social disadvantage in Redfern's Aboriginal community have resonated throughout Aboriginal communities in NSW, and in its present form, the Block is preserving a pattern of 'residential genocide' which is spreading. Redfern is the main crossroad for transient Aboriginal people on their traditional mission walkabouts, acting as a 'cultural trading post'.¹³² Consequently, many Aboriginal people throughout NSW are directly and/or indirectly affected by the drug culture that emanated from Redfern.

The following are some of the effects of the social problems and issues that were faced by this community:

¹³¹ Valilis, P. 2000, Interview

¹³² Refer to Map 2



Health

In the mid 1990s primary health care agents in Redfern identified a very high incidence of hepatitis B & C and respiratory problems attributed mainly to substance abuse, and a similar incidence of skin disease and middle ear infections associated with overcrowding.¹³³ Alcohol-related liver problems and diabetes, and HIV/AIDS were common health problems attributed to lifestyle and hygiene.

UPDATE

The Redfern AMS reports that the last reported case of HIV in Redfern was back in 2000.

Inadequate Housing & Health

High rent arrears have been associated with the social problems and deterioration of the properties on the Block. This vicious cycle hampered efforts to budget for the maintenance of the houses and has culminated in the seriously unhealthy conditions. The 2-3 bedroom terrace houses were over 100 years old and are inappropriate for an average Indigenous family requiring 4 bedrooms or more. The terrace houses were unhealthy with suspended floors that encourage cockroaches, fleas and rats, lack of cross ventilation exacerbating respiratory problems, as well as a lack of sunlight to disinfect and fight mould and mildew.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project proposes to replace all the old terraces with 62 modern and large family homes.

Drugs and Alcohol

Substance and alcohol abuse on the Block was high for many years among the permanent and transient population. This created a need for a detoxification program in the Redfern/Waterloo area, placed strategically away from the Block to emphasise the need to create a clean environment within the community, for people coming out of detox. At least in the short term the establishment of a completely clean environment is unachievable while the needle distribution bus remains on the Block.¹³⁴ The Rachel Foster Hospital in the Redfern/Waterloo area would be a better strategic location for drug-related medical facilities. Some drug and alcohol services are already available opposite the hospital. For instance City Care has set up a drug and alcohol

UPDATE

The detoxification program advocated by the AHC never eventuated but the NSW government still intends to expand its needle distribution program to a building they bought next to the Block, despite an ever decreasing need for such services by the local Aboriginal community.

¹³³ McDonald, D. and Colin, J., 1995

¹³⁴ For the AHC's position on the needle distribution bus and their dealings with NSW Health and CSAH, refer to the FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions page on the AHC's web site at www.ahc.org.au



counselling service directly across the street from the hospital (at 149 Pitt St., Redfern) and there is also a permanent needle distribution building next door (at 151 Pitt St). However, the NSW Government intends to sell the Rachel Foster Hospital for residential unit development. The closest drug detoxification clinic (Langton Centre) is in Surry Hills (195 South Dowling St. Surry Hills).¹³⁵ In discussions with City Care workers, they reported that people have dropped by the centre as a result of its proximity to the needle distribution service.¹³⁶ Ultimately, drug addiction is a sickness and needs to be treated within hospitals or well-planned clinical settings, and not haphazardly in an open-air vacant lot in the centre of this fragile Aboriginal residential area.

Crime

There was a high rate of drug-related crime in the Redfern area. Bag snatching and break-ins consisted of the majority of criminal activity. There was also a high rate of vandalism attributed to a criminal transient population.

UPDATE

The community have reported that Police operations around Redfern railway station and AHC drug house evictions have reduced crime on the Block dramatically.

Transients/Drop-Ins

As well as being a beacon for Aboriginal people from all over the country, Redfern had become a safe haven for transients coming into the inner-city to score their drugs, get high and hang out. This caused major problems for the permanent resident community, as people from other suburbs were directly responsible for the majority of the criminal activity in the area. The transient population placed additional pressure on the AHC's buildings and properties. The majority of the transient population was seeking drugs and a place to shoot up. Several years ago there were a high number of overdoses on the Block and the needle exchange bus used to be a first point of medical contact. Other transient visitors, who used the area like an outdoor pub eventually, started using drugs in addition to street drinking. Alcoholism has always been common among Aboriginal transients in Redfern; however, as the problem was left unchecked it escalated to a lethal combination of alcohol and other drugs abuse. The use of a cocktail of drugs among the transient population increased the

UPDATE

The Block requires a critical mass of people, between 60 and 70 households, to enable natural surveillance and mechanisms to monitor and control problems often associated with unsupervised transient visitors.

¹³⁵ Refer to Map 3

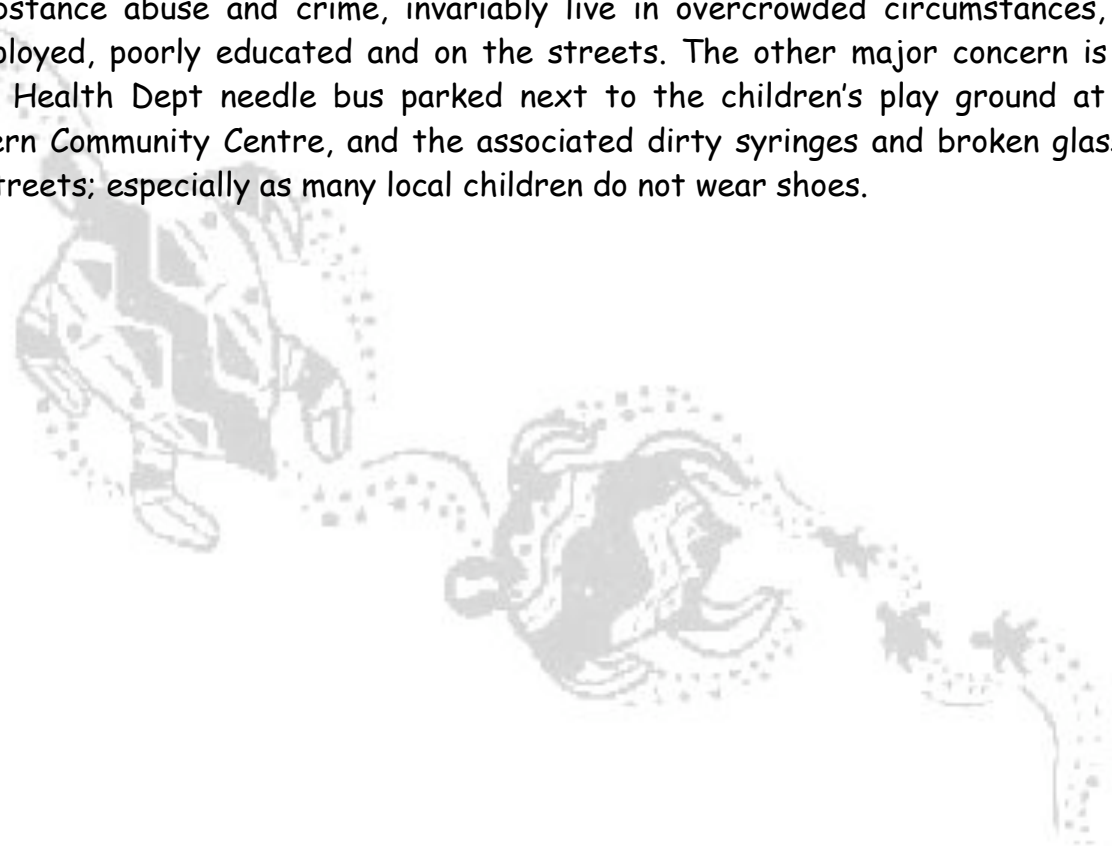
¹³⁶ Coleman, V., 2001, Interview



incidence of street violence, further putting locals and children at risk from anti-social behaviour.

Children and Youth at Risk

A high rate of vandalism attributed to the transients was also attributed in part to bored youth. However, there are still no effective programs targeting children and their special needs. These children are in grave danger of being targeted to become the next generation of drug dealers and/or drug users. Young people on the Block and their friends ('blow-ins'), aged under 15, were heavily involved for several years in substance abuse and crime, invariably live in overcrowded circumstances, are unemployed, poorly educated and on the streets. The other major concern is the NSW Health Dept needle bus parked next to the children's play ground at the Redfern Community Centre, and the associated dirty syringes and broken glass on the streets; especially as many local children do not wear shoes.





"We have to protect the jarjums (children). That has to be our first priority." Daniel Ariel.¹³⁷

CHAPTER 7 - NEEDS ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

This needs assessment was compiled from community consultations and surveys with the Aboriginal community over a 12 month period during the initial social planning research stage for this Plan and is reflective of the general needs and expectations of this community and the Aboriginal people in South Sydney and the Inner West. The following reports also assisted in the composition of this assessment: Health Infrastructure Priority Program; and the 1999 Consultations with the South Sydney Aboriginal Community. Future revisions of the Community Social Plan will examine in greater depth the needs of the Indigenous people living on the Block after the redevelopment project is completed.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

There continues to be a high demand for affordable housing in South Sydney and the Inner West generally. Marrickville Council Social Plan 1999 revealed a high demand for housing assistance and a high number of Aboriginal people who have made contact with the Homeless Person Information Centre. Research also showed that a sizable proportion of Aboriginal people in the South Sydney area are reliant on some form of public housing.¹³⁸ Some of the problems raised in the inner west and South Sydney area in relation to housing were:

- **Insufficient and inadequate public housing.** The standard of public housing is generally considered to be poor and unsatisfactory. Homes are described as run-down and in ill repair, sometimes compared with slums. There is a lack of security measures and no provisions are made for children to play in outdoor areas around public housing. There is also concern about density levels.
- **Lack of private rental opportunities.** Many Indigenous people reported that they are forced to live in public housing due to their socioeconomic status. Many respondents felt that due to increased rental prices for private inner city properties, including Redfern, they would have to move out of the South Sydney area in order to find affordable rental property. Given that the major incentive for settling in Redfern was the support network provided by the existing

¹³⁷ Ariel, D., 1999, Interview

¹³⁸ Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd , 1999.



Aboriginal community, living outside of the inner city is not really a viable or preferred option for many Indigenous people.

- **Low Income Levels.** The income of many Aboriginal people has precluded them from home ownership, as compared with the high home ownership rates of the non-Indigenous Redfern community.
- **Prejudice and Discrimination.** A high level of prejudice and discrimination in the private rental market still exists. Respondents reported that they encountered racial discrimination when they looked for private housing, with a perception that real estate agents would not rent to Aborigines regardless of their economic status.
- **Limited Housing Options.** Respondents reported that there are limited options in housing for Aboriginal women with children.
- **Need for More Aboriginal Housing.** A sizable number of respondents reported that there is a need for more housing designated for Aboriginal people.
- **Other Concerns Regarding Housing.** Increasingly high rents, particularly due to the Olympics; refuge/hostel needed to deal with high levels of homelessness; better disability access in housing; more housing for older people; student housing; better shopping areas; single-parent housing; vandalism of property; desire to own home; and the waiting period for public housing was too long and selection processes were unfair.

Stable Family Housing

On the Block, there is a need for new high-quality and affordable family housing that is available to established clients and others with area associations. The Pemulwuy Project has focused on the provision of two, three and four-bedroom housing and units for predominately homeownership and a portion of rental accommodation at affordable rates.

UPDATE

The Pemulwuy Project will offer 2/3 of the housing development for homeownership and 1/3 for rental.

Indigenous Housing and Building Society

The AHC has developed a homeownership scheme that would be available for both outright homeowners and transitional homeowners [those who rented for a short



period while saving a deposit to purchase their home]. A feasibility study is needed to look into the potential for a regional trust or building society to access low interest loans for investment in a widespread home ownership program for Indigenous families, in Sydney.

UPDATE

The AHC's homeownership program adds a much needed socioeconomic mix to the community. A student hostel adds a further dimension of social diversity to the project.

Aboriginal Student Accommodation

There is need for accommodation for Indigenous students studying at nearby institutions like Eora (TAFE) College, Tramby College, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), and the Sydney Technical College (STC). At present, students are housed in 2-bedroom serviced-apartments or alternatively pay commercial rents. Indigenous students at Sydney University spend on average \$1.5 million a year on accommodation and meals, whereas, this could have a multiplier effect if the accommodation were run by an Aboriginal provider. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) support would be necessary to provide guarantees to maintain levels of subsidies to invest in student housing.

CRIME AND SAFETY

A 1999 survey of Aboriginal people in South Sydney identified crime and safety as two of the most important issues in the area.¹³⁹ The community expressed extreme concern about the high level of crime and risk to personal safety. Table 6 illustrates the issues of safety among Aboriginal people.

Table 7: Safety Survey

Do you feel safe	Yes (%)	No (%)
At Home	68.4	37.6
In Public Places	39.7	60.3
On Public Transport	61.1	38.9

Source: Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd. 1999 *Consultations with the South Sydney Aboriginal Community*.

In the same survey, respondents were asked to comment on the levels of crime and perceived unsafe nature of the area. The reasons for crime in South Sydney are:

¹³⁹ Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd. 1999.



- **Youth boredom**, associated with lack of employment opportunities and a sense of hopelessness for the future, was seen as a major reason for high levels of crime. The youth were seen as the primary criminal offenders.
- **Drug and alcohol abuse** was also closely associated with crime, violence and harassment. Some respondents felt that drug abuse in the area is contributing to the fears about personal safety. Some felt that the problem was so deeply entrenched that it was insurmountable.
- **High-density housing and low incomes** were also contributing to fears about personal safety and poverty.

A number of suggestions for improving safety were offered by the community:

- More police/street patrols.
- Tackle the drug problem.
- More security around public housing and generally.
- Personal alarms.
- Better street lighting.
- More youth programs/places for young people.
- Neighbourhood watch/SAFE houses.

In community consultations conducted for the Wilson's Brothers Site (now the Redfern Community Centre) redevelopment in 1998 and 1999, drugs and crime, including violence and assaults, were of great concern. Some participants described the area as 'severely socially traumatised'; and there was a strong call to address the issue of drug dealing in the area.¹⁴⁰

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED is a method of assessing the relationship between crime prevention and physical design, and the management and planning of facilities and urban areas. It is now widely accepted that there is a linkage between the physical environment and its management in reducing the opportunities for inappropriate and criminal behaviour. CPTED focuses on issues such as ensuring areas are safe from entrapment by creating safe movement corridors; appropriate lighting and landscaping to reduce crime; and discouraging

UPDATE

CPTED principles are incorporated throughout the design of the Pemulwuy Project, in addition to Spacesyntax crime prevention ideas that strangers patrol the streets while locals patrol the strangers.

¹⁴⁰ Sarkissian Associates Planners, *et al.*, 1999.



lanes and alleyways. There is an obvious need to apply these principles to the Pemulwuy Project. By adopting the CPTED principles the AHC's Pemulwuy Project will provide a new opportunity for secure and safe housing, safe public domain, and allow AHC management to contest crime with police in a coordinated manner.¹⁴¹

HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

An assessment of health issues were compiled in the 1995 report, "Health Infrastructure Priority Program". It reported that at the time the Block experienced a very high incidence of Hepatitis B & C (and some A) and respiratory problems that were attributed to substance abuse and smoking. The high incidence of skin conditions and middle ear infections were associated with overcrowding. Common complaints of liver problems - alcohol related and diabetes, obesity, and HIV/AIDS were attributed to lifestyle and hygiene.

In particular, the old terrace houses on the Block were unhealthy with suspended floors that encouraged pest infestation like mice, rats, cockroaches, and fleas. The terraces also lacked adequate cross ventilation exacerbating respiratory problems as well as little sunlight to naturally disinfect and fight mould/mildew. The old houses represented a dangerous health and safety risk to the community. Furthermore, these houses were and are beyond repair and the few remaining will be demolished in order to make way for new, healthy, safe and appropriate residential homes.

In regards to health services, the two major barriers precluding the Aboriginal community in South Sydney from using mainstream services, were a lack of awareness that services existed (or that they bulk billed), discrimination, and a lack of sensitivity to the specific needs of Aboriginal people. Consequently, Aboriginal residents in Redfern found using mainstream services seriously problematic. However, if Aboriginal people helped staff these services it would increase their accessibility. There is also a need for a 24-hour medical centre in Redfern.

Healthy Housing Programs

There is a need to implement a healthy housing program in the area. Issues that need to be assessed include dampness, electrical wiring, plumbing, hygiene concerns in kitchens and bathrooms. For instance, the successful Health Habitat program

¹⁴¹ Refer to Appendix A, Principle 4 - Community Safety, and, Sarkissian W. & Stewart K. 1998.



operating in rural Aboriginal communities could be adapted for application in urban and suburban areas.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

Respondents agreed across a range of surveys and consultations that there are insufficient services and the existing services are inadequate and culturally inappropriate for children and youth in Redfern. It was reported that, compared with other community services, there is a much lower awareness of services for youth. This has led to a sense of despair about the future for the youth in the area. Other issues of concern raised included: lack of employment opportunities; sense hopelessness for the future; fragmented communities; lack of connection with community Elders; lack of supervision and role models; and drug and alcohol problems. It was also reported that many young people are blindly relocating to Sydney from the country areas with high expectations and are vulnerable to exploitation and homelessness.

ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES

Our research reveals a lack of coordination in Aboriginal specific community services within Redfern, while many mainstream service providers remain culturally insensitive. It is also clear from the research that community services would be more accessible if appropriate Aboriginal people staffed them. Another important finding is that a sizable portion of respondents did not utilise community services because they were not aware of their existence. Respondents suggested the need for more services that target youth, elderly and the transport needs of locals.

Whole of Government and a One-Stop-Shop

The Aboriginal Housing Company had become increasingly shackled by its multiple (and sometimes conflicting) roles of catering for all the needs of the Aboriginal community including the following:

- Emergency accommodation: crisis housing, supported housing.
- Youth and community services: meals, cups of tea, handouts, transport to events, CDEP training, new start jobs.
- Drug and alcohol service and support.

UPDATE

The AHC has moved from being a welfare centre to concentrating on its core business of housing management.



- Unemployment services: training and education, job referrals, an address for benefits and pensions.
- Family contact networks: emergency communication, funeral services, medical and dental referrals.
- Crime Prevention: policing, missing persons.
- Media contact

There is an urgent need to establish a 'Welcome to Sydney' One-Stop-Shop in Redfern which will provide access to key government agencies; information; communication; support, case and place management; Internet services; tea and coffee; shuttle bus to outreach services such as the Homeless Persons Information Service, Street Outreach Services and volunteer networks.

Street Outreach Services (SOS)

Homelessness is also a problem in Redfern. Indigenous homeless persons are prominent in some locations in the area. There is a need for a Street Outreach Service, where a team of nurses and medical professionals place homeless persons in care or in self-help options, similar to the program being trialled in Woolloomooloo.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The high level of unemployment in the local Aboriginal community needs to be addressed by increased job opportunities in the local area. There should also be greater coordination between employment services and housing providers. A general sentiment in the community is that employment opportunities simply do not exist for many Aboriginal people, and community members tend to express despondence in relation to this situation. The types of difficulties people reported when seeking employment were as follows: lack of experience/qualifications; discrimination because they are Aboriginal; discrimination because they are mothers, age discrimination, and geographic discrimination due to the stigma of the Block as a drug centre.

UPDATE

The 40 new Aboriginal families who will move into the Block will have stable employment available to them in Redfern.



CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

Although traditional Aboriginal tribes were semi nomadic, because fertile land was scarce and Australia had no native animals suitable for herding, Redfern had a long and rich cultural history stretching back 40,000.

Invasion by colonial Europeans has had a devastating effect on Aboriginal culture, not least of all in Sydney which was ground zero of the racial conflict. The settlers viewed the native Aborigines as barbarians, seizing tribal land, and pacified resistance by force. As much as 80% of Sydney original inhabitants died of disease, starvation, cultural dislocation and neglect. In Redfern the local Aboriginal culture was decimated deliberately through the use of germ warfare.

Aboriginal communities and their cultures continue to suffer the effects associated with the forced dislocation from land, the loss of language which is the core of all cultural identity, and the stolen generations. The abuse of Aboriginal people's human rights to practice and pursue cultural development and self-determination is a disgraceful stain on the Australian nation, not just for its historical context but for its modern application through institutionalised racism that continues to keep Aboriginal communities in abject poverty and underprivileged.

Aboriginal culture and heritage in the Redfern needs to be protected. A better appreciation of Aboriginal history, culture and spirituality both modern and traditional needs to be nurtured within the community. Redfern is an important area for Aboriginal peoples, a modern sacred site, both locally and nationally and the contributions and achievements of the Aboriginal community in Redfern need to be recognised by the wider Australian community.¹⁴²

Regrettably, in today's society Aboriginal people have become invisible to many in mainstream Australia, partly in the hope that "the Aboriginal problem" will simply disappear. But while Australia continues to turn a blind eye to the struggle for survival by Aboriginal communities, entire generations of Aboriginal youth are being lost to drug abuse, violence, prison and early death.

Redfern is the new proving ground. Have we learned from the past or will we continue to make the same mistakes? A rare opportunity now exists to turn another monumental corner in race relations. How will future generations judge us?

¹⁴² Refer to Appendix A, Social Plan Objectives and Criteria, Principle 1 and Principle 7.



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