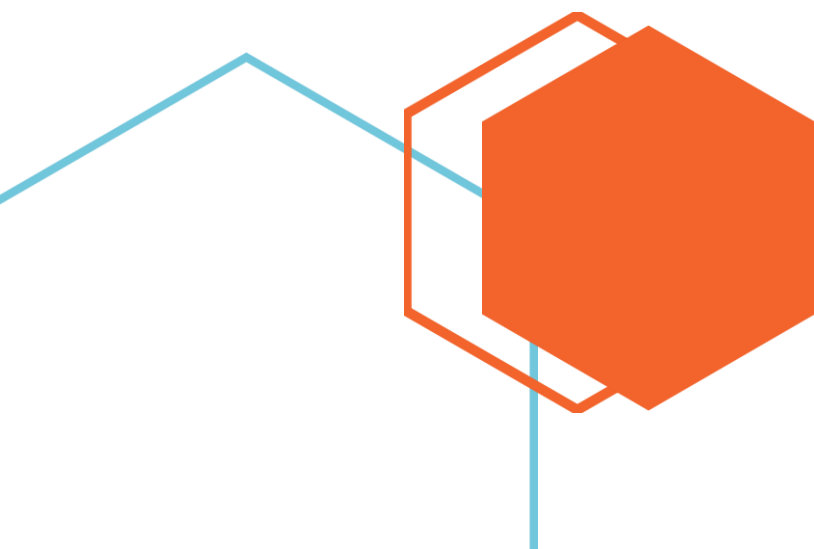




Waterloo Human Services Plan

NGO Background Paper

This paper is to assist those entering the Waterloo Human Services Plan (HSP) discussions to understand the historic context. It sets out what Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) believe can be achieved by a Waterloo HSP.





Waterloo Human Services Plan NGO Background Paper

NGO Background Paper

Contents

Executive Summary	2
What is a Human Service Plan?	3
Why a Waterloo Human Services Plan?	4
State-wide implications	5
Across jurisdiction, department and silo implications.....	6
Appendix 1 – Previous NGO work on Human Service Planning	7
Attempt to Establish an NGO / Government Community Collaboration Committee.....	7
Possible ACT models	7
Work with LAHC on Human Service Planning?.....	7
DCJ District Work	8
SLHD Work.....	9
Local community and service input.....	10
Appendix 2 – Factors impacting Previous Human Service Interventions	11
Appendix 3 – Possible Structure and Governance for an Action Plan	12
Possible Structure and Governance Diagram.....	14

This document was prepared on behalf of Groundswell NGOs who have been driving the Waterloo HSP discussions with LAHC, DCJ and SLHD.

Mike Shreenan, Executive Officer, Counterpoint Community Services

Claire Mennie, Acting Executive Officer, Inner Sydney Voice

Geoffrey Turnbull, Co- Spokesperson, REDWatch Inc



Executive Summary

Since the demise of the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) and its Human Service Plan (HSP), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have discussed with Government Departments the need to improve human services for public housing tenants in Redfern-Waterloo.

NGOs dealing with a large number of public tenants in the area saw many systemic issues identified by clients and services. Priority allocations mean people with complex needs are housed alongside aging tenants, highlighting service issues for different cohorts and the service system.

NGOs have worked with Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), Department of Community Justice (DCJ) Housing, DCJ District, Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) and Police to address concrete issues that an HSP may cover. NGOs have had ongoing discussions with service users and frontline NGOs and Government staff to identify priority areas.

The Waterloo redevelopment will create, expose and raise new human service issues, and the prolonged process has added to tenant stress. Additional service needs will emerge during relocations, and planning for the shape of the post-development service structure must take into account the staged partial developments of Waterloo's public housing. NGOs called for a specific Waterloo HSP to sit alongside the built masterplan. Family and Community Services (FACS) publically undertook to deliver it.

NGOs analysed earlier plans that did not deliver the expected changes. Implementation seemed to have failed due to a mixture of funding constraints for delivering big plans, governance issues and a lack of buy-in from key stakeholders to a long-term problem-solving process.

Key to success seemed to be the involvement of all major service providers from the beginning, to solve the problems identified and have mechanisms to identify and address service and systemic problems. For NGOs, the first step in a new HSP is to address the issues already identified and to put in place mechanisms both within and between service providers to deal with new issues as they arise.

NGOs would prefer to start tackling a few problems as a confidence-building way to build trust and mutual understanding between Government Departments and NGOs. The HSP could grow in stages through this process rather than, as in the past, using a broad mapping exercise to capture everything upfront.

The focus of the HSP will need to change over time through the life of the Waterloo redevelopment as new issues arise. Tackling one systemic issue may highlight another; an ongoing process will need to deal with the unexpected systemic issues those changes throw up.

Front line government and NGO staff, and service users, bring essential perspectives to government service planning. Front line staff continually have to navigate the system on behalf of service users / their clients, so they know where the pitfalls are. Often NGOs reflect back to Government departments the stories we hear from front line government workers that do not make it back through official agency reporting lines. Where issues involve multiple departments or silos within a department, there appear not to be mechanisms to address such issues.

NGOs believe that improved service problem solving and coordination can not only deliver a better outcome for service users but that it will provide more efficient use of limited human service funding by minimising duplication and repeat representations.

We look forward to working with a range of Government bodies to deliver an HSP for Waterloo and hopefully in the process an improved human services system, which could benefit public housing tenants more widely.



What is a Human Service Plan?

An HSP should explore how government and non-government services can work together in partnership with local communities, to design and deliver better services that make a real difference to people's lives, especially those who need the services most. It is not just a plan; it must also include the delivery, evaluation and refinement of the HSP.

Historically HSPs have been large pieces of work looking at particular cohorts or parts of the services system. Much energy goes into preparing the plan, but the follow-through in partnership, delivery and evaluation does not happen. The RWA HSPs are good examples where lack of good buy-in meant they ceased when the RWA was wound up.

A HSP is also something that can emerge from a collaborative process where government and non-government agencies work together to solve identified problems. It is the NGO's view that working together to address the identified problem may create a more resilient alternative to a broad mapping exercise that captures everything but does not have a mechanism or buy-in to solve the problem identified or new problems as they emerge.

The approach to date taken by NGOs is based around trying to get the people, necessary to solve an identified problem, around the table to see what can be done to improve service integration or to better meet service user's needs.

The people needed at the table to work on the problem may be within a section of a department, such as the DCJ Housing team, e.g. If you want to improve tenants' customer experience or how a client service visit can be used to improve tenants' access to human services.

In other cases, such as dealing with service integration improvements say for people, with both mental health and drug and alcohol issues, the people around the table may need to be from different silos within a department or from different departments.

As the Covid-19 response has shown us, other issues will span different departments and will need an interdepartmental mechanism. It currently seems likely that the HSP will require a senior officer's mechanism that interacts with NGO representatives who have local experience.

A piece of work like the [Waterloo Impact Project Recommendations](#) and earlier consultations with agencies and service users identified many issues that should be addressed as part of an HSP. This does not mean that work on these issues needs to wait for an overall governance mechanism – this work can start if you can get the relevant stakeholders around the table.

In the 2013 proposal to SLHD mentioned in Appendix 1, we proposed a mechanism with NGO representatives and regional government officials. That model assumed that there were already mechanisms within departments to deal with elevated issues. It also needed people from the various departmental silos dealing with local service users.

Currently, our thinking is that mechanisms are needed at different places to deal with interdepartmental and intradepartmental responses. In part, we already had some of this from our work with DCJ District and SLHD. Potentially work on the Waterloo Impact Project recommendations could be another task-focused stream.

The NGOs have suggested that for a successful outcome, there needs to be a multi-pronged approach to governance/change delivery that builds on the work we have already undertaken with agencies.



Firstly, there needs to be a coordinating mechanism across participating departments and partner NGOs. This needs to deal with exploring cross-department/NGO issues.

Secondly, there also needs to be a backbone within participating departments and NGOs so that issues raised about how different silos interact with each other and with clients can be addressed.

Thirdly, there needs to be a mechanism for frontline government and NGO workers in identifying and reporting human services issues that should be examined for systemic change or service improvement.

Based on the work to date we have outlined further in Appendix 3, the critical elements of what governance around a human service framework might look like. This will need to be worked through with our government partners in the governance discussions for the development of a Waterloo HSP within the broader context of the government's human service framework.

Why a Waterloo Human Services Plan?

Estates like Waterloo were to get a particular focus in the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord. The policy argued: "With over a third of social housing households concentrated in estates, a cross-agency effort is required to assist in reducing the compounded disadvantage experienced by people living in these environments." The Accord never delivered.

For a reason outlined above, Redfern and Waterloo have been a focus of government human service attention for decades. It is almost two decades since the Premier's Department Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project (RWPP) started its Morgan Disney human service review in the area. Coordination of human services in Redfern and Waterloo has successively been the responsibility the RWPP, then the RWA and after that supposedly by FACS now DCJ.

REDWatch has documented these interventions since the early 2000s in [Human Services in Redfern and Waterloo: A potted history listing of plans, interventions, activities, consultations and reports](#). There have been many interventions, but they have not successfully delivered what they set out to achieve in Redfern and Waterloo.

Central to forming any new plan or interventions is to learn from what has gone before. Why have previous interventions failed? What has been learnt from earlier attempts? What does that mean we need to do differently this time to ensure success?

Answering these questions is difficult from outside government, as we do not have access to any program evaluations that may have been undertaken. In some cases, we saw draft interim reports or early drafts of the final reports, but the final reports were not released. The government gets defensive about evaluations that are not glowing, and any criticisms tend to be masked in case they create fodder for the government's opposition.

An honest discussion about what can be learnt from previous interventions is crucial to the success of any new initiative. In Appendix 2 we have listed some factors that have been said to affect previous HSPs or elements of them negatively

Since the wind up of the RWA Human Service Ministerial Advisory Committee (HSMAC), local NGOs have been trying to re-establish a mechanism for improving the way human services are delivered and coordinated. This is mainly for priority tenants allocated to public housing with complex needs. You can find out more about the human services work we have been involved with historically in Appendix 1.



The proposed redevelopment of the Waterloo Housing Estate seeks to improve the built environment, but it did not address the people issues. In fact, the redevelopment is likely to exacerbate them in the short term due to relocation and construction impacts. The redevelopment also did not address the service problems tenants currently experience, which had been the focus of earlier human service planning – see [can estate redevelopment fix the people problems?](#)

NGOs held discussions with several senior FACS district officials, and after being unable to gain interest from FACS District in developing an HSP for Waterloo, NGOs obtained undertakings from FACS-LAHC that they would develop an HSP for Waterloo. We were told that the FACS Executive had signed this off, and staff within FACS-LAHC were tasked with delivering the plan. You can see the [REDWatch Request to FACS Executive for a Human Services Plan](#) and REDWatch's response back on the [Human Service Plan Goals from REDWatch Perspective](#).

While our prime interest was to address entrenched human service issues in Redfern and Waterloo, tying the HSP to LAHC's Waterloo proposal meant the plan also needed to address the redevelopment.

The HSP or Framework was to address three areas:

1. Existing human service issues as experienced by public tenants, and frontline government/NGO Staff.
2. The increased human service needs arising from the 20-year redevelopment and tenant relocations.
3. The delivery of human services post redevelopment.

In subsequent discussions with LAHC, it was agreed to tie Waterloo HSP to the [NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework](#).

An action plan approach will deal with the first two of these areas. A more detailed plan is expected to be needed to address the last area as such a plan will likely interact with the tendering and governance of any new development. It also will need to deal with how contract requirements interact with, and respond to, the service needs of the surrounding community that are not covered by the new developments. It will also need to deal with any changed service use that might result from moving service delivery from existing services under the redevelopment and management contracts.

State-wide implications

The reshaping of public housing reforms in 2005 aimed to allocate public housing to people of the greatest need through fixed-term leases. Alongside this was to be an [NSW Housing and Human Services Accord](#) that would “enable greater collaboration between all human service agencies to assist mutual clients. This included working together on needs assessments, decision-making about the allocation of clients to social housing stock, supporting these clients over the period of their leases, and reviewing their needs at the end of their leases”.

It is recognised that many of the issues being faced in Redfern and Waterloo are issues across the state. Many are systemic and were supposed to be tackled by the undelivered Accord that was to see improved support for people with complex needs placed into public housing.

There have been some fundamental changes since the formation of the RWA and when the Accord was formulated. The initial Premier's Department and RWA approach brought together state, federal and local government human service bodies with NGO and community representatives to try to produce their HSPs.



With the introduction of aged and disability packages, FACS has wound up Aging, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) making it even more important for there to be some federal involvement. Also, FACS /DCJ has turned its focus to Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) for children and their families.

The aged cohorts of inner-city public housing communities are no longer a key focus for DCJ programs and many of the assumptions of DCJ's broader human service role no longer apply. SLHD is probably the primary human service provider to the Waterloo and Redfern Estates. As a result, NGOs need to work with a more extensive range of interested parties in addition to DCJ.

Across jurisdiction, department and silo implications

Throughout the NGO work on human services, we have been acutely aware of the siloed nature of different service delivery units within government organisations; in the case of Health, areas of clinical specialty or excellence often define these silos. If an HSP is to work, there is a need for all parties to have buy-in if it is to achieve the desired outcomes. This is why we have been working with different parts of the government.

Some of the earlier plans developed by government agencies for Redfern Waterloo aimed to create a comprehensive plan for a sector and then divided implementation between agencies with little long term joint implementation, coordination and review. The task seemed to be to develop a plan rather than to get buy-in and commitment to address the issues the plan identified in the long term.

Covid-19 has necessitated closer working between human service agencies with high-risk public housing tenants, and it is hoped this lays the groundwork for a more co-operative long-term approach across departments and their silos in the future.

A starting point for a new plan is to understand why the many earlier plans did not deliver what was promised. A problem-solving approach, where all those can contribute to the solution of a particular problem is around the table, maybe more successful.

Local NGOs, at different times, have been separately working with LAHC on the broader HSP framework, SLHD on its services to public housing tenants, DCJ District around district initiatives as well as with DCJ Housing around how human services interact with its client services visits. At various times, local NGOs have also had discussions with local police about the issues they deal with, as a last resort when problems escalate, and they need to step in.

You can find out more about this previous work in Appendix 1



Appendix 1 – Previous NGO work on Human Service Planning

Attempt to Establish an NGO / Government Community Collaboration Committee

Between mid-2013 and mid-2015, NGOs attempted to establish terms of reference for an NGO / Government Redfern/Waterloo Community Collaboration Committee, to provide a forum for community representatives, government departments and NGOs to discuss issues of concern that required a collaborative and coordinated approach for resolution. The proposed focus was to be on issues identified as systemic in nature and beyond the influence of grass-roots groups such as the Local Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB) Action Groups.

While its Terms of Reference were discussed with members of the Redfern Co-ordinated Services on Health and Drug-Related Issues, which had stopped inviting NGOs to meetings, the Government agencies decided there was “ample opportunity to receive input and provide feedback to service providers”, and it did not proceed.

The City of Sydney resolved in October 2015 that the Lord Mayor write to the Minister for Health and the Minister for FACS to advocate for better coordination of service delivery and the establishment of a mechanism for community consultation and representation.

Possible ACT models

We have noticed the work done in 2014 in the ACT as the [Human Services Blueprint](#). This work had similar aims to what we are hoping to achieve, and we notice that it had an initial local focus. We have not been able to assess if this program has persisted or delivered on its aims.

We also note in the ACT that [Housing Client Service Visits \(CSVs\)](#) contain human service requirements that are not currently reflected in NSW CSVs nor the Ivy App used by DCJ Housing for CSVs. NGO’s have brought these provisions to the attention of LAHC and DCJ. The inclusion of the following ACT CSV provisions could address some of our human service concerns during DCJ Housing CSVs:

- if there are any issues the tenant may have and link them with support services if required;
- if tenants who need support to live independently, or who were allocated with supports in place, are still accessing those support services;
- if tenants are aware of any community linkages programs that are available to them, particularly in their complexes; and
- if a tenant is considered socially isolated, particularly elderly and disabled tenants, and provide them with information and referral to support services if requested and consent is signed.

Work with LAHC on Human Service Planning?

REDWatch, Counterpoint and Inner Sydney Voice were involved in numerous meetings with the LAHC staff tasked initially with developing the HSP. Between December 2017 and July 2018 work focused on feedback on the planning of three NGO Human Service workshops and comment on material coming out of this process.

In June 2018, we expressed our concerns to LAHC management about the process underway and what looked like a large plan trying to cover everything, and that critical concerns of ours were being



ignored. As a result, LAHC set up meetings for us to work with FACS District and FACS Housing on some specific areas of immediate concern.

At this stage, we disconnected from the work LAHC was doing internally, which we understand moved to focus on the Social Sustainability Study and Community Facilities. A high-level presentation was given in July 2019 to the Waterloo Redevelopment Group. The slides were promised during the presentation, so attendees took a few notes, but the slides were never made available to attendees.

We also attended a meeting with DCJ District and LAHC on 26 February 2020, before the person working on the plan left LAHC. We were advised that the prepared material had been shared with LAHC and DCJ district.

As we had not sighted any of this work undertaken since mid-2018, and have had expressed concerns about the work undertaken up to that point, we are concerned that this work might be used uncritically as the basis for agreements between LAHC and DCJ about future work to be undertaken on a Waterloo HSP.

We have sighted early versions of the following documents:

- Waterloo Human Services Framework Issues Log
- Waterloo Human Services Framework (2018) Table of outcome areas, key priorities and issues
- Waterloo Human Services Framework – Feedback from FACS on issues and suggested strategies
- Waterloo Human Services Framework – cover document including Introduction, Background, Framework development, Principles, Governance, Outcome areas and Critical priorities.
- In August 2020, we were advised that the Housing and Property Group within the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment will lead the Waterloo HSP with support from DCJ.

In August 2020, we were advised that the Housing and Property Group within the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment will lead the Waterloo HSP with support from DCJ.

In October 2020 we were advised that it was proposed to establish a Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Working Group at District level within DCJ. It is not clear how this will interact with human service and community facility planning associated with the Waterloo redevelopment.

DCJ District Work

In one stream of work on a Waterloo HSP, local NGOs agreed with the local FACS District Director in 2018 that Waterloo, as the largest public housing estate in NSW, could be used to pilot improvements that might become business as usual across the district and then the state. This led to several meetings with DCJ Housing staff looking at DCJ Housing processes.

In early 2020, DCJ district committed to working on five areas in response to examples raised by NGOs. Covid-19 delayed this. However, some problem areas received additional attention due to the health emergency. NGO's were advised that tenants over 70 have been given a human services assessment in case of a lockdown, but we have been unable to verify this through questions to older tenants.

The five areas committed to by DCJ District in early 2020 are:

1. To address your concern that newly housed priority housing clients are not getting support, we will undertake an audit of a dip sample of recently housed over the past 12 months to review their support arrangements. We are happy to get your input into the audit questions. The indicative timeframe for completion is by the end of April.



2. To address your concerns about customer service from our Waterloo office, I have asked our Team Leader and Manager, to meet with Counterpoint in the next two weeks and unpack this further to then take action.
3. To address your concerns about letters, unfortunately, we don't have control over changes to letters that are system generated, but I can advise that NOT letters are in the process of being changed. Locally, what we can do is undertake to hand-deliver NOT letters so that a discussion can take place to explain it.
4. To address your concern that letters should reference support services in detail, we will work with Counterpoint to develop a one-page local services sheet to hand out at CSVs where appropriate, or in the office. The timeframe for this is by the end of April.
5. To address your concerns that our CSVs do not unpack support needs sufficiently, we have gained approval from head office, to enhance the CSV questions on IVY and we will deliver training to CSOs to administer this effectively. The enhanced CSV approach will be based on the current pilot running in South West Sydney and Murrumbidgee – we sought approval to bring forward to Waterloo to respond to your concern. We are waiting for the IVY update for our area and hope this will commence in the next 4-6 weeks, so again by end April, but subject to head office completing their part of the process first.

We have not met with DCJ District since receiving this communication due to Covid-19 and uncertainty around the future of the Waterloo HSP commitment.

SLHD Work

One of the common complaints from tenants and NABs was a lack of consistent involvement at meetings by Health. When Health commenced consultations around the installation of an automated needle-dispensing machine (ADM) in Redfern, NGOs took the opportunity to argue that Health needed a broad “community health liaison” role in Redfern and Waterloo. This was modelled on Council’s dedicated public housing liaison position. In 2013, Health agreed to establish a part-time role in drug health. The position was well-received but disappeared when the initial incumbent moved to another position, and community concern about the ADM receded.

Health was also engaged at this time around broader human services issues with the establishment of the Redfern Co-ordinated Services on Health and Drug-Related Issues on which NGO representatives occasionally sat by invitation. Unsuccessful discussions were also held about the establishment of an NGO/Government Redfern/Waterloo Community Collaboration Committee.

In a meeting in mid-2017 between the head of SLHD, REDWatch, ISV and Counterpoint, an agreement was reached for a three-pronged response from SLHD to human services issues in Waterloo. The three areas identified were:

- The need for re-establishing a health linker position for the Waterloo community. This was to be the key local community contact for SLHD to help people to navigate the health system better and identify systemic issues within health specialties and between Health and other government service providers. This position continues with some changes and has recently been evaluated with a view to the model being used in other locations.
- Undertake an Equity Focused Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the proposed Waterloo redevelopment so that health considerations are appropriately dealt with in planning any redevelopment. An HIA was unsuccessfully requested to be included in the Waterloo State Significant Precinct requirements. HIAs were subsequently undertaken on the Green Square redevelopment (dealing with issues raised by that development) and on Waterloo (around stress and anxiety before relocation). We continue to encourage SLHD to run an Equity focused HIA lens across issues around the Waterloo and other public housing redevelopments.
- Undertake some community health forums with a view to SLHD listening to community concerns and then using this information to formulate SLHD’s input into a Waterloo HSP. Two such forums were jointly sponsored by SLHD and local NGOs, with a third in preparation before Covid-19. We have



argued that SLHD needs to engage with NGOs and service users to formulate the health component of a Waterloo HSP.

Covid-19 has seen Health working closely with other human service agencies, and it is hoped that this will form the basis of closer cooperation around working together to tackle human service problems post Covid-19.

These initiatives have resulted in improvements in the operation of the Waterloo human service system, although much needs still to be done both between clinical health areas and between Health and other agencies.

Local community and service input

Counterpoint, Inner Sydney Voice and REDWatch, as part of the Groundswell Redfern Waterloo Agency Coalition, have also been driving HSP conversations on behalf of local NGOs. The agencies partnered with LAHC to hold three NGO HSP workshops as well as with SLHD to hold two Waterloo health forums and other joint initiatives.

NGOs have also undertaken several consultations with local tenants, service users and front line staff to understand better the user and front line service delivery experience. Included in these was a [Request for Human Services Case Studies](#) in early 2018 that led to several case studies being supplied to LAHC and FACS. REDWatch also held a facilitated [Conversation on Human Services in the Redfern/ Waterloo Area](#) with service users about their issues.

Counterpoint Community Services undertook, with DCJ funding, the most recent NGO study and the results are in [Waterloo Impact Project Report 2020](#) and its [Recommendations](#).

Historically HSPs seem to have been grand plans put together between different parts of government and have not had the benefit of input from service users and local on the ground workers, both in defining the problem and in testing the suggested or implemented responses.

Through this process, we have been convinced that a successful HSP is best produced with input from users and local service suppliers. Local NGOs have suggested to government agencies that the best way forward is to focus on finding practical solutions to the problems being experienced by front line workers, agencies and service users.

Working locally would be a strength of the approach we are proposing, even though the issues being explored are often systemic across the state. You can find more information on these human service issues from the [human service tab](#) of the REDWatch website.



Appendix 2 – Factors impacting Previous Human Service Interventions

REDWatch has documented [Human Services in Redfern and Waterloo: A potted history listing of plans, interventions, activities, consultations and reports](#). Below are some factors that have been said to affect previous HSPs, or elements of them, negatively. Where possible, we have indicated programs that were said to have this problem, although other elements of the program may not have had this problem or had different problems.

This list is to suggest areas where problems arise so they can be taken into account in future human service planning.

- No priority is given to services for people with complex needs in public housing
- Lack of long term TEI style financial model for supporting tenants with high needs
- No involvement from federal human service departments – some in RWA
- No Senior Officers Group (SOG) for local SOG to escalate issues too – RWA Implementation SOG (ISOG)
- No involvement from Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) DPC – RWA ex RWPP, Northcott Collaborative after setting up
- Not taking the community with you, e.g. Lawson St health centre, needle bus & Waterloo library
- Joint responsibility promised but not delivered – HSMAC had joint NGO and government chairs initially but then dropped
- The government knows best – RWA HSP priorities, CEOs Steering Group / RWA ISOG
- Government frontline worker experience not reflected in Departmental positions
- Fear by Government line workers in raising issues or contradicting managers about projects
- The government can do it better than NGOs – RWPP Street Team, Redlink
- Government mistakes are not acknowledged and are buried - Street team, Redlink
- Blame / reorganise/ amalgamate the NGOs – RWPP, Morgan Disney, and early RWA
- The government claims credit for NGO success and fails to acknowledge role NGOs played - – Waterloo Green / Concierge
- Throw some money at it – Premier’s Department / RWPP
- Place-based useful – if done in partnership rather than as branding - Beyond Walls
- Opposition if community not taken with you – Waterloo Green / Concierge
- Competitive tendering stops immediate response – 2004 post-disturbance youth support
- Mapping does not solve the problem - Morgan Disney and Cluster Group Reports
- Human Services absorbed by Development Authority – RWA absorbed RWPP human service work in 2005 and applied a different lens
- Government agencies did not want to be told what to do – RWA HSMAC
- Police look through law and order lens rather than human service and first response role
- Lack of mechanism to get issues resolved – NABs / NGOs / Government staff raising issues
- Knee jerk reaction when issue bubbles over into the press – RWPP, Redlink
- Low satisfaction with local FACS Housing staff – RW baseline study & users feedback
- High turnover of front line FACS Housing staff
- Withdrawal of community development funding – FACS/DCJ & LAHC
- Community Development not seen as crucial for Redfern and Waterloo
- No apparent mechanism for front line staff to successfully escalate issues
- A significant degree of buck-passing within agency silos, across silos and departments.
- People say unless Treasury (state and federal) have an interest what gets put together is likely to fail.



Appendix 3 – Possible Structure and Governance for an Action Plan

This suggested structure is based on work already undertaken by Inner Sydney Voice, Counterpoint Community Services and REDWatch on behalf of Groundswell Redfern and Waterloo with Sydney Local Health District (SLHD), Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Region and DCJ Housing around human service improvements.

These Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) were also involved as co-sponsors of the initial NGO Human Services Plan workshops organised with LAHC and of the SLHD Community Health and Wellbeing workshops. These NGOs have also been involved in mapping human service needs and issues from service users and service suppliers. These NGOs extracted an undertaking from LAHC / Family and Community Services (FACS) that as part of the Waterloo redevelopment, there would be a Waterloo Human Service Plan (HSP). These NGO's also agreed with LAHC that such a plan should sit within the broader NSW Human Services Framework.

There are many ways to produce an HSP; we have separately documented the many plans prepared over the last almost 20 years in Redfern and Waterloo. Any new strategy needs to take into account why these earlier plans failed to deliver. For us, we think it is less about developing a perfect plan and more about establishing an action plan to address issues as they are identified. Over time, a plan will emerge, but it is put together by the common focus of tackling concrete problems as they arise.

Groundswell NGOs can continue to work bilaterally with individual government departments as we have in the past, but establishing a Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Working Group provides the opportunity to have buy-in by different parts of government to work with each other and NGOs to tackle the problems identified.

We recognise that some issues stretch across departments, so a multi-department mechanism is needed. The proposed Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Working Group could serve this role.

Some issues are problems within a single department's purview or are issues about how different parts of a department do not work seamlessly together. A mechanism within each department is also necessary to deal with these problems. Each member of the multi-departmental mechanism needs to undertake to have a departmental mechanism to deal with any issues raised. That mechanism would look at its departmental systems and how matters raised with them can be addressed within its department.

There may need to be working groups dealing with critical issues or areas of operations. Cross-departmental issues working groups could be set up maybe around mental health service access and integration. In some cases where an interagency exists, they may be asked to undertake the role of an issues working group and to make a recommendation regarding structural and service issues back to departments and the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Working Group.

It may be useful for departments to consider publically designating a Link Worker, who has the task of assisting service users or seekers navigate the departmental service system, and



to highlight any systemic or service coordination issues to their departmental working group and Collaborative Working Group. We encouraged SLHD to establish such a role and the Council has a similar Housing Liaison role for all public housing across the City of Sydney.

Groundswell agencies have been the NGO coordination group to date as the call for a Human Service Plan was linked to the Waterloo Redevelopment. However, a more comprehensive NGO forum under Inner Sydney Voice (ISV) as the local peak, might be better suited for the NGO element of developing and delivering an action plan. ISV already has an Aged Care Community Home Support Program Sector Support Development Officer role that could feed into this process.

It needs to be noted that much of the work that has been undertaken by Inner Sydney Voice and Counterpoint to date on human services has happened as part of LAHC and DCJ funded projects that are no longer funded. Most NGO funding is tied to funded positions and programs, and there is little room for additional work outside the core funded programs. Expectations of NGOs should be tailored accordingly.

Below we have tried to diagrammatically depict how governance activities interact with the priority issues and activities identified in the Waterloo Impact Report.



Possible Structure and Governance Diagram

1

Human Service Plan Waterloo

Governance Structure Example

