

Inner Sydney
Regional Council



for Social
Development Inc.

INNER SYDNEY VOICE

The Journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

**We
Are
Sorry**

PLUS:

Annual Report

Festivals

Social Inclusion

**Electricity
Privatisation**

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Reasons for not privatising electricity in NSW

The decision of the NSW government to privatise portions of the electricity retail business has raised a political furore in NSW with extensive opposition from both inside and outside the Labor government. Community organisations are worried about the negative impacts on low income people, such as high prices for electricity with accompanying loss of basic energy needs for heating, lighting and refrigeration with subsequent public health problems. The other major concern is the impact of the continued generation of electricity using coal-fired power stations on the production of greenhouse gasses.

Premier Iemma and Treasurer Costa both say the state cannot afford the new electricity generators and Mr Iemma argues the private sector needs an incentive to do the job on behalf of taxpayers. The Treasurer says the prime motivation is economic prosperity and it doesn't make sense not to sell when the private sector is willing to be involved.

Why it will not work

Professor Sharon Beder, an international expert on the power industry has demolished the 'for' argument in a submission to the NSW government.

Privatisation will not increase government income

The Government claims that it will use the proceeds from

the sale to fund health and environmental infrastructure. But the international evidence shows that the income from privatisation is generally less than the revenue lost from selling the asset. Economist Professor Richard Blandy concluded that the South Australian electricity privatisation produced "no net benefit to state government finances". Economist Professor John Quiggan also confirmed that there was no net gain from privatisation for the Victorian government.

Privatisation will mean profits come before the environment

International research shows that private companies have to deliver high short term returns to shareholders. They are driven to choose the least cost technology. Governments are not driven by short term profitability and can plan to use emerging and renewable technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Privatisation will further concentrate private control

The private companies that have lobbied for privatisation already own electricity generation and retail assets and have a record of underinvestment, high prices and unreliable service provision in Victoria and South Australia. It is madness for the NSW government to help consolidate private international monopolies. US-Australia Free Trade agreement

did not exclude the private electricity industry, so it will be impossible for governments to ensure any level of Australian ownership after privatisation. Both the AUSFTA and the WTO Trade in Services Agreement (GATS) restrict government regulations in privatised industries that are 'too burdensome' for business.

Privatisation will mean higher prices for an essential service

International research shows that prices increase after privatisation. The NSW government's own figures show that NSW electricity prices are 30% lower than South Australia's and 10% lower than Victoria's, as prices for both households and small business rose steeply in both states after privatisation.

Privatisation will mean more blackouts

International research from the US shows that private companies maximise profits by cutting staff, investment and maintenance resulting in more power failures. Blackouts in Victoria increased by 32% in the four years after privatisation (1994-99). In South Australia in the summer peak period, blackouts have increased and some businesses find the cost of power so high that they can make more money by shutting down and selling the power they would have used.

Why do it?

The Owen Report, commissioned by the NSW government, recommended that the government privatise the sector to secure NSW's long-term power needs. Another supporter, Kevin MacDonald, CEO of NSW Business Chamber, said the decision was right for NSW businesses,

consumers and taxpayers, because it will:

- improve the budget position of the State by \$15 billion
- allow the government the financial capacity to invest further in infrastructure such as railways, roads and schools

- meet the need for a greater base load facility by building another power station and retrofitting existing power stations to make them greenhouse friendly (investment of over \$15 billion).
- secure NSW's Triple A credit rating.

The Apology

"We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry."

– Kevin Rudd, February 2008

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*Festivals – Get out
and meet the neighbours*



Inner Sydney Voice is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

Inner Sydney
Regional Council



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Editorial

Parliament House was the intriguing venue for our Annual General Meeting last November. We were there to make it possible for Kristina Keneally, (Minister for the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care) to launch the new website we had created for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program in Eastern Sydney by our HACC Development Worker. As well as being the relevant Minister, Kristina Keneally is also the local member for a large part of our region and was happy to interact with her local constituents.

Traditionally, we use the edition of Inner Sydney Voice following the AGM to provide some feedback to our readers about what we do at Regional Council each year. The back section of this edition contains an abbreviated version of our annual report. The main report is from the Chairperson, who has the job of providing an overall view of how the organisation fared during the year. We have also included a short report from each of the six local government areas that we cover, since it is our job to know what is happening in a social services context in each one. We are also providing a consolidated income and expenditure statement for all our projects for 2006/07. If any member of the organisation wants the full report, it is available from us by emailing innerv@iinet.net.au. Because this edition has a lot of information about our organisation, we will not be including 'Regional Council News'.

What we do have to talk about is a major change at the top. Our chairperson, Terry Murphy, has stood down after 11 years, not due to a lack of interest, but to a slowing down caused by less than good health. We want to thank Terry for his unstinting, cheerful and often exciting contributions to the organisation, including his close link to Marg Barry and all the 'doings' of the last millennium. We are very pleased Terry is staying on the committee as we would find a complete absence of Terry around our place too difficult to contemplate. The top job now goes to Vivienne Pusey, our long term Vice Chair who provides the clear, calm voice of good sense we have all grown to appreciate over the many years she has worked in the community sector.

The front page photo of this edition is a stop press situation as we respond to the huge interest in the Federal Government's apology to the Aboriginal people for the Stolen Generations. This photo was taken in a very wet and crowded Martin Place and evoked the focus we all had on 'getting it right'. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were at times overwhelmed by feelings of relief, not only for the apology itself, but for the sense a great wrong had been righted. It was rightly one of the first acts of the new Federal Rudd Government and we hope the beginning of many more necessary acts by our national government that will build a strong sense of hope for people in the community sector who have struggling for so long to provide a fair go for all Australians.

Festivals – We love ‘em!

In the last edition of Inner Sydney Voice, we looked at building strong communities. We identified one of the aspects of building a strong community is to have a local get-together, often in the form of a festival. A good festival allows neighbours to get out and interact, seeing each other, talking, buying and selling, dancing, playing, getting and giving information – all providing excellent trust building exercises to improve social capital. The intensive levels of meeting, planning, organising and working together by festival organisers

and volunteers, produce vital connections that flow on throughout the community for the rest of the year. Often local businesses and service agencies are given the opportunity to exercise goodwill to others in the community by donating their goods or their time.

In the Inner Sydney region, each spring and summer, festivals pop up all over the place and we just don't seem to be able to get enough of them. So this issue we are looking at five separate events, trying to see why they are successful, and

whether they are of benefit in strengthening their community, or a mass event which provides entertainment and promotes one aspect of endeavour, often drawing in people from all over Sydney.

The first two: Sydney Life Exhibition in Hyde Park, and the Danks Street Festival are part of the community arts festival program called *art & about* in October. Then there are two large festivals with stalls and stages – Newtown and Glebe and finally the two week *Sculpture by the Sea* between Bondi and Tamarama.

Photos in Hyde Park

The focus of this festival is a display of photographs, each one reflecting an aspect of Metropolitan Sydney. The photos were entered in a competition and the finalists had their works printed on huge canvas sheets and hung along the central walkway of Hyde Park.

Part of the fun for people attending, was to decide which entry best reflected the rich diversity of the inner city. Most of the photos showed people in their community - from the Chinese New Year Festival to a hot day on Manly Beach. It helped to remind us what a colourful and diverse city Sydney is. Our favourite was *Jasmine and Betty's TV watching is disturbed* set in a wonderfully crowded weatherboard house in Lilyfield, where a woman and her dog are looking at something happening outside.

As well as the photo display, Hyde Park itself formed the attraction,



with a lively noodle market that ran on early weekday evenings during October, all adding to the crowds of people around the Archibald Fountain. This *art&about* festival also included art on banners flying from street light poles on George, William and Oxford Streets and deliberate efforts to create interesting events in three laneways off George Street, with bars and live music. The major sponsor was AMP Capital, and a Berlin/Sydney event was sponsored by the Sydney Morning Herald.

Jasmine and Betty's TV watching is disturbed

Although really enjoyable, the festival was not essentially a community exercise. It was professionally organised and commercially sponsored and more about community art than community. It did bring people out to enjoy the centre of their city and to appreciate the depiction of others interacting with their metropolis, but we wonder how many locals bumped into their neighbours?

Danks Street – Is this really a village festival?

*The festival logo was everywhere,
there were lots of stalls*



How to spend a sunny Sunday afternoon in October, we asked ourselves? “Why don’t we go to the Danks Street Festival?” was the reply. After all, the City of Sydney has been lavishly advertising it for weeks. Our previous visit to Danks Street in Waterloo had been to buy a kitchen sink at Winnings, but we noticed some changes since then, such as an expensive looking wholefood shop across the road. The rest of the street was mostly offices or factories converted into art galleries, some up-market.

The festival was an expensive production of council’s *City of Villages* project, without too much ‘village’ about it. There were lots of food stalls, often with very long queues, lots of artists selling their wares, City information stalls including two for children (with lots of adults joining in), a well equipped music stage with chairs and tables and a range of other stalls run by businesses in the locality.

Most of the people attending seemed to be in their 20’s or 30’s.

There were two bric-a-brac stalls for charity and one community organisation – South Sydney Community Aid, but there was none of the diversity that we see in Newtown or Glebe Festivals, although those are much bigger productions. People who were sitting down and listening to the music and those who had got their food (finally) were contented, but those who wanted a shopping afternoon or a carnival atmosphere were, I suspect, disappointed.

Wandering down the neighbouring cross street, we noticed aspects of the locality that helped to explain the nature of this particular festival. On one side of the street were four neat small industrial estates, one had a baker another an auctioneer – both of whom had stalls at the Festival. There were certainly more people than on an average day, as each mini-industrial estate had a sandwich board with ‘Car Park Full’, or ‘Parking only for parents with prams’. Above everything was the sign of the Hillsong Church.

The Church dominates the area because the building is huge and most likely an ex-warehouse or factory. One of five services held every Sunday had just finished and most of the attendees looked to be young people.

Walking the other way along the street, we saw old terraces on one side and new town houses across the road, with the Housing Commission tower blocks in the background.

Waterloo is a working class area dominated by the Housing NSW units and high rise residential blocks. Gentrification has thoroughly started and this festival seems to be a showcase for new residents and new business, ignoring the rich culture and history of the area and the interests of the long-term residents. In the Strengthening Communities article in the last issue, we talked about the importance to Erskineville of retaining the community networking strengths of the older residents, while encouraging new residents to get involved locally.

Here in Danks Street, the City of Sydney seemed to be using the festival to promote the new aspects of Waterloo by promoting the results of gentrification - new residents, art galleries and up-market businesses. Some locals remember with affection the earlier South Sydney Festivals, held in Redfern Park and spilling into Redfern Street, organised by the local Neighbourhood Centre and involving the local residents. A real community building exercise would have been a local festival that encourages the old and new aspects of Waterloo to mix.

Newtown

This is one of the best known and oldest of the inner city festivals and is run as a fundraiser by the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. Unlike other festivals it has festival toll collectors at each entrance (well except for the first one where we all tried to give money to the security guards, who very sweetly said there were plenty of collectors elsewhere in the park).

Open space in Newtown is not plentiful and the park where the festival is held is an odd shape, as it has the St Stephens church and graveyard taking a big hunk out in the middle and therefore one side gets really squashed. Here people really do come to listen to the bands and the larger area has a band stage with a gradually sloping grass area that is completely full. You only leave to get more food and drink, or to talk to friends.

So we talked to a few people around – “It is just like The Rocks, I recognise some of the stalls. But you come here mainly for the people.”

There was a bloke in a wheelchair at the edge of the amphitheatre for the main stage who said: “I like crowds, I like free music...and yes I will probably go to Glebe as well.”

You can't help listening to other people, particularly if they are talking loudly on their mobiles. Here are some of the gorgeous extracts that we just happened to overhear.

There were two young blokes, both with cans of Carlton. “I am so annoyed with myself for getting drunk last night....” I wanted to hear the rest.

I could not help hearing a loud phone call to someone who they obviously hadn't talked to for some

time. “I gave up smoking and John and I got married this time last year.” Well that sums up a year on her life more succinctly than I have ever heard it done before.

There are some people for whom Newtown is the centre of their entertainment universe. Lyn, who I went with, just has to go to things in Newtown. She believes that there are many like her and that is why the festival is so successful. For regular festival goers, some of the attractions are seen elsewhere. She recognised ‘Pudding Lane’ from the stall they had at the St Andrew's School Fair in the city only a few weeks ago. The ‘Animals from Bowral’ attraction was a complete hit with the younger kids. They could get into the pen and play with baby chickens, rabbits and other animals. While we were there, two young women (maybe 15 yrs old) found a mobile phone. They opened it up and rang the first (I presume) person in the phone book. The discussion was complicated...and they could not work out who the phone belonged to, so they rung another. We moved on so I never knew if they found the owner....but so much better than just nicking it.

If you went into Church Street then you come to the oasis of

St. Stephens's church. It was so crowded next door – here you could relax and enjoy the surroundings. There were stalls lined up against the fence, rather sad looking with not very many customers and then there was a coffee and sausage stall doing good business and the coffee was great.

Newtown Festival has many of the elements of a great community festival. It reflects the characteristics of the community. It pulls out the local people (certainly good for people watching and listening). It is organised by a local community organisation and involves local people and businesses. Its posters are a work of community art that galvanise interest in the local community. Due to its size, there are also commercial elements, such as a professional festival organiser and security, professional stall holders and well known bands. All this is to the extent necessary for its size and patronage without losing its local feel.

Any community organisation running a festival has to look at the bottom line. The social capital might be great but are they getting a financial return for the huge effort?



Feature – Festivals

Glebe

This was not as crowded as Newtown Festival, yet appeared full as it was held on a relatively narrow street, with the footpath in a mess from being in the middle of an upgrade with widening that will include expensive paving and fancy kerbing. The crowd was older than Newtown and interestingly the roadside cafes were not full. Bands were the usual low standard – or am I just old and fussy? Sunglasses stalls were everywhere, I counted at least five, but there could have been more. What is it with buying sunglasses in a market – when the two dollar shops and

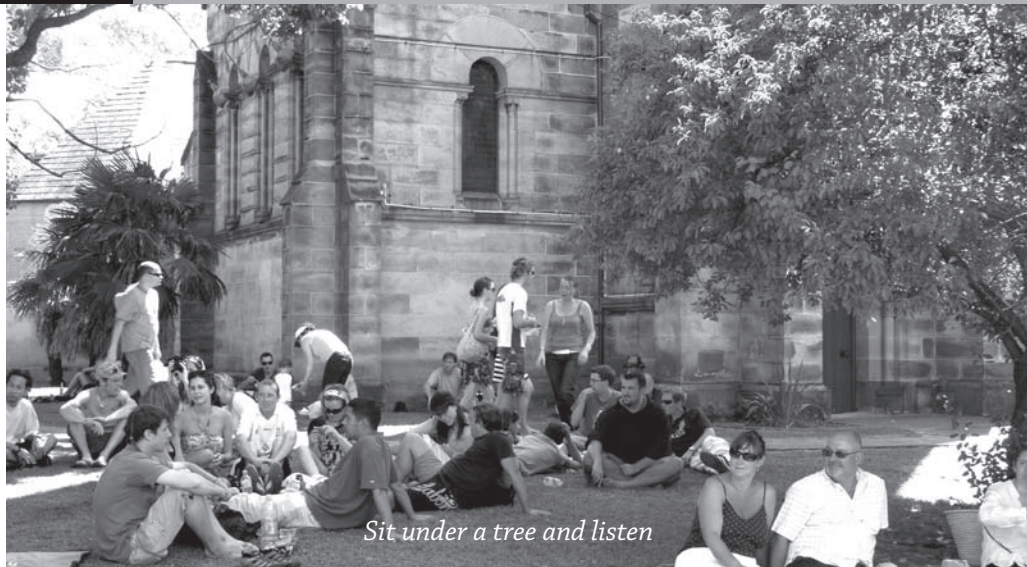


What is it about buying sunglasses at festivals?

even chemists often sell better ones for less? The food stores were more mixed, scattered along the street and did not seem to have the huge queues as at Danks St and Newtown.

Glebe Public School, that formed part of the festival precinct, had been crowded on the Saturday with the weekly market, yet today there was only a bouncing castle, a few other kid's activities and lots of open green space for adults (as well) to have a rest.

The local Federal Member of Parliament, Tanya Plibersek, had a stall – remember this is only two weeks before the Federal election.



Sit under a tree and listen

I knew that the boundaries had changed between Sydney and Grayndler electorates after the last boundaries commission...so why not ask? "Um, we don't know, perhaps you should look at the Australian Electoral Commission website", was the answer. One would have assumed that a stall to solicit votes would at least have a map of the electorate.

I met some locals I knew who seemed to have come for a day out, a feed, perhaps buy something – and maybe hang around to listen to a band or two. Many of them had been coming for years, and thought this year was pretty good.

At the top of the hill where Glebe Point Road meets St Johns Road there is St Johns church – a lovely old Blacket-designed church with grass right up to Glebe Point Road. And there at the crossing was a stall with better bands than the one down the bottom at Broadway. So it was great to buy your food and drink, sit down under a tree and listen, but not too close so you can chat to your friends or have a half snooze. Both Newtown with St. Stephen's, and Glebe with St John's, seem to have an Anglican Church in exactly the right spot for a festival.

This festival has been run for years by Glebe Chamber of Commerce with financial help from the City of Sydney and seems more commercial. Perhaps each year the festival should be including more community building aspects by showing something particular about the area, highlighting a local activity or involving local organisations.

Using the best aspects of the village buildings and open spaces in the community can add to a festival, for example the church precinct with a nice bit of grass is ideal.

Bands were the usual standard



Sculptures by the Sea

We knew this festival gets really crowded at the weekend, so we went at 7am on a Friday morning. We only got attacked by one cranky sweaty jogger who thought she owned the coastal path. This event is so successful, and the sculptors love it, as the number of submissions to be included increase each year.

There is a real skill in making sure that the sculptures fit their location, so the tree of snowpeas



You don't have to be an art critic to enjoy it

and the hills hoist with lemons in green bags in Tamarama Beach Park was a perfect beginning. It is the cleverness of the siting, the wit in the sculpture, or the artistic merit that each of us assessed for ourselves. You don't have to be an art critic to just enjoy the walk, the sculptures, the conversation and even the exercise.

This year we got there before the catalogue stalls were open which was good as we could make up our own minds. We nearly got to Bondi without needing a catalogue and then we were faced with cutout people with ladders climbing the hillside. Someone next to us read out of their catalogue that it was about people climbing and competing to get to the top and the best view...it then made much more sense, but not any better as a sculpture.



You look differently at the locality

This is unashamedly a community arts venture with commercial sponsorship and the involvement of professional artists. Bondi to Tamarama is a major tourist circuit for overseas visitors, a frequent haunt for residents of the Sydney Basin and an everyday walk or run for local residents. We probably shouldn't therefore expect it to be totally local. There is no question that we look differently at this beautiful landscape after visiting these sculptures. Everyone who goes to the festival remarks on the beauty and colour of the rocks and shoreline, as well as which sculptures they liked and are connected by the experience.

How community focussed are these festivals?

Each of these festivals tried to reflect local interests and activities, but in fact a majority of the stalls were professionals, or in *Sculpture by the Sea*, many of the sculptors were from out of Sydney, and most were not from the Eastern Suburbs.

Perhaps the one that succeeded most was the photography exhibition in Hyde Park. It gave families a chance to come into the city in the early evening, choose some noodles and wander up the central walkway looking at these wonderful photos. While Danks Street is still young, this festival seemed out of touch with the area around it and we are not sure how much community action happened in the organising, or was it just on a council employee's workplan?

The other three are highly successful, long term projects, each with different elements to them. Glebe, organised by the Chamber of Commerce, was always intended to showcase Glebe Point Road and encourage people to come back to the shops and cafes. Yes it was noticeable that there were queues for the food stalls, while many of the restaurants were quite empty. The strength of Newtown is that it is locally controlled, and is a crucial fundraiser for the Newtown Community Centre. There were many more activities and stages than Glebe and the local feel was evident. Without the substantial sponsorship *Sculpture by the Sea* attracts this vital aspect of art would be missing for many of us and small sculpture galleries say

that their increase in interest has been because people have seen those sculptures on a beautiful walk between Bondi and Tamarama.

Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi, Glebe and Newtown have outgrown their local roots, yet each year they provide pleasure to many people. Some who visit say they are now too crowded. Perhaps we need many more of the local festivals, such as Summer Hill, or the sadly missed Nanny Goat Festival in Lilyfield. Other community-style festivals that are held in Inner Sydney at other times in the year include the Surry Hills and the Ultimo Festivals. Both these are run by the local Neighbourhood Centre and involve local residents so have a less commercial and more community feel.

Citizens Rights

It's for your own good...

Iwork with local and state governments; they make big decisions allocating millions of dollars, decisions which shape our city. Or so we'd like to think.

But the decisions which really shape our city, and determine how enjoyable it is to live here, are much more mundane. The cult of the individual, as it's often termed, is a constant challenge to the way we need to plan and manage our increasingly dysfunctional cities.

Consider these scenes from a typical day in Sydney:

- In the supermarket aisle, you notice a bag of rice has fallen to the floor. Do you: a) pick it up and replace it, or b) walk around it?
- As you drive through the city, the traffic ahead is moving only slowly as you approach a green light, but the signal is about to change. Do you a) drive into the intersection, blocking the pedestrian crossing once the lights change, or b) wait until the road ahead is clear, and wait for another cycle of the lights?
- You drive to a friend's inner suburban house to find that the next nearest parking space is 30 metres away, and the gates to his/her driveway are closed. Do you a) park in the nearest available spot and walk or b) park at right angles to the road on the approach to the driveway, blocking the footpath.

If you answered a) to each of these questions you are clearly a caring member of society. But my feeling is that, increasingly, you are also in a minority.

If this is so, does it matter? Is that just life in city? Should I stop being a grumpy old man,

whingeing about what I can't change? What does it matter? Someone else is paid to stack the supermarket shelves; it's just a few more steps for a pedestrian in an already chaotic environment; it's not far for people to walk out into the street to get around my car.

The i-podded, blue-toothed, boom-boxed world we live in encourages an inward focus on the individual, often ignoring others' needs. Implicitly we are absolved of any responsibility outside our immediate sphere. Maybe it's just a phase, an era where increased spending capacity, the potency of youth, and the rate of technological change have coincided to undermine our values. We notice the young, because they stand out, and we compare them to what we were like when we were their age, but the attitude pervades all age groups.

It can be as minor as sitting with your feet on the train seat or walking on newly-seeded grass; but it can be as significant as objecting to major environmental controls if it affects your livelihood.

So what's changed?

Remember civic responsibility? It's an old-fashioned, even Victorian phrase, but it's the best I can think of. We are individuals driven by needs and desires that will conflict with others. But above all, we need to compromise and to co-operate in the cause of the public good (another archaic term you don't hear much any more). It's no coincidence that many of the railways, bridges, sewer systems, public buildings and institutions which underpin our urban environment were investments of the halcyon era of civic awareness.

It's not that the Victorian age got it right and we are getting it wrong. Selfish individual attitudes have always been around. The difference now, paradoxically, is that in our closely-scrutinised, post-1984, satellite TV world, de-regulation and globalisation give us choice. We're told we're consumers at the centre of everything. Retailers, banks, car manufacturers, insurance companies spend millions telling us that we are the most important person in the world.

NIMBY – Not in my backyard
NOTE – Not over there either
BANANA – Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything

It's not that far then to say if I am not personally responsible for doing something, I will do nothing. In fact, if it's threatening my interests, or even if I'm just feeling bloody-minded, I'll go out of my way to impede those who are doing something, especially if it affects my individual rights or preferences.

In previous eras, such arrogance would have been squashed or satirised; now it's legitimate.

So how does this outlook make government and public policy more difficult? Well, it was much easier to plan for change and to manage complex issues when people were less assertive



(or narrow-minded, to put it pejoratively), and it was more accepted that progress required sacrifice.

Arguably, more people participate in public decisions, so that has to be good, right? We won't be treated like mushrooms any more; we're all educated people and we have a right to know. There have been some notable large-scale victories: Woolloomooloo; The Rocks; Callan Park (ok, the jury's still out on that one). But what about the other times?

NIMBY, NOTE, BANANA are acronyms that most of us know. There are probably very rational reasons why residents, property owners and protesters feel the need to stand against proposed change. In many cases they will have a very sound case. But, the selfish need is often the dominant one. Trust me, I've fronted public meetings.

So, is this just a rant against unthoughtful people and the decay of modern society? Possibly in some ways. The older I get, the less tolerant I am of selfishness, mindlessness, and inequity. But the welfare state, which helped so many so-called baby-boomers, later portrayed as the nanny state, has become the what's-in-it-for-me state. It can make meaningful progress very hard indeed.

The individual (or the family) perspective determines what our politicians think and how they act, especially in the age of the focus group. It can also be seen collectively in the interest group - a coalition of similarly threatened or affected individuals, selectively bonding for added strength.

Whether it's right or wrong, in

proposing to do anything, our first instinct seems to be: 'Who will this annoy and can I afford to do that?' rather than: 'What's the overriding best option here, and how can I evaluate and explain it?'

The media - the same media that berates governments for not investing in infrastructure or fixing our problems - will often highlight the individual who may be affected by a proposal, rather than emphasising the broader benefits, in an effort to identify with the battler over the bureaucracy, the man over the machine.

Maybe it's not such a problem. Public policy advisers and administrators should just accept reality and concede that, as individual wealth grows and self-oriented behaviour dominates, we just do what we can to keep services operating and make opportunistic gains to manage future risks, compromising to make sure we have the numbers, but, as a result, only doing half the job. If that had been the attitude of previous generations, we would not have the infrastructure and the institutions we benefit from today.

But what could we do?

Better enforcement of basic rules and practices by the authorities and by our peers, could inspire respect for the etiquettes and behaviours which allow people to co-exist in increasingly-crowded places.

We can try to educate people that there are imperatives even greater than their own. Recently, water-supply and the environmental issues give us some hope. Public health campaigns against smoking

and drug use are less successful. The difference? Individuals see low dam levels and feel the effects of climate change. They may be less willing to accept that something they enjoy or are addicted to should be foregone because some killjoy doctor tells them so; it's a personal choice issue, see?

The benefits and downsides of government actions should be stated honestly: too much spin can make everything sound painless and people, while selfish, are not stupid. Individualism and cynicism drink at the same bar.

Faith in public decisions needs to be rebuilt by careful consideration, wise decisions and improved quality of service. For example, give people a decent rail service again and they may treat it with more respect.

Perhaps we should ease the pressure on our politicians a little to encourage the occasional 'courageous decision'. Get the media off their backs a bit; recognise their successes; shift to four-year terms for State government, to ease the cycle which always seems to be in election (i.e. damage-minimisation) mode.

There's still plenty to do; I'm not sure we're heading in the right direction. Meanwhile, I'll try to maintain the rage against the litterers, the crossing-blockers, the walkers-on-newly-seeded-grass. People will continue to think I'm whingeing, but really it's just me being naively positive and optimistic. Some people never learn.

*Trevor Townson
Trevor works as a transport
consultant in Sydney*

Recovering from mental illness involves social connection, not isolation.

Our mental health system is struggling to meet need, so what should we do? The most common response is for more psychiatric hospital beds - but is this really the answer?

The issue of psychiatric beds is again in the media with the closure of Rozelle Hospital at Callan Park. In the light of this, it is worth looking at what makes up good psychiatric care and rehabilitation and what the evidence says about mental illness and recovery.

The Mental Health Coordinating Council recently released its platform document, *Social inclusion: its importance to mental health*, outlining the evidence supporting good practice in recovery, as well as highlighting the crucial part that community based organisations play within the mental health system.

Not surprisingly, the public has lost confidence in community-based mental health care because the shifting of demand from hospital to community has not been backed up with nearly enough resources or services. The prevalence of mental illness among homeless and prisoner populations is often cited as a tragic outcome of this situation, as is the hospital 'revolving door' phenomenon, where people are treated in hospital, discharged with inadequate support, become unwell and return to hospital again, in an ongoing cycle, placing high pressure on families and friends to fill the gaps in care.

However, community-based support is the right approach - it just needs to be better planned and resourced, with more ready

access to community services and better links to hospitals and other services.

What does the evidence say?

Consistently, studies show that people with mental illness who are provided with well-planned, comprehensive support in the community have a better quality of life, develop an improved level of functioning and social contact, and have fewer relapses.

This is due to the positive links between mental health and social inclusion. In short, the evidence tells us:

- recovery from mental illness does occur;
- being included in society aids recovery;
- being excluded from society impedes recovery; and
- attitudes of other people strongly influence how well people recover.

Mental illness is often episodic, which means that while some people may benefit from periodic short stays in hospital, only a tiny percentage actually need long term hospital care.

Prior to the 1990s, it was generally thought that recovery did not routinely occur and this informed how mental health systems were set up and run. It was thought that the condition of people diagnosed with mental illness would, at best, remain constant, and at worst, deteriorate. Mental health systems were therefore designed to maintain people in a state of illness rather than focusing on how to support them to get well.

Today, recovery is an expectation following a diagnosis, if people are provided with quality care and

support. This evidence has come from consumer accounts and a series of outcomes studies over the last 25 years.

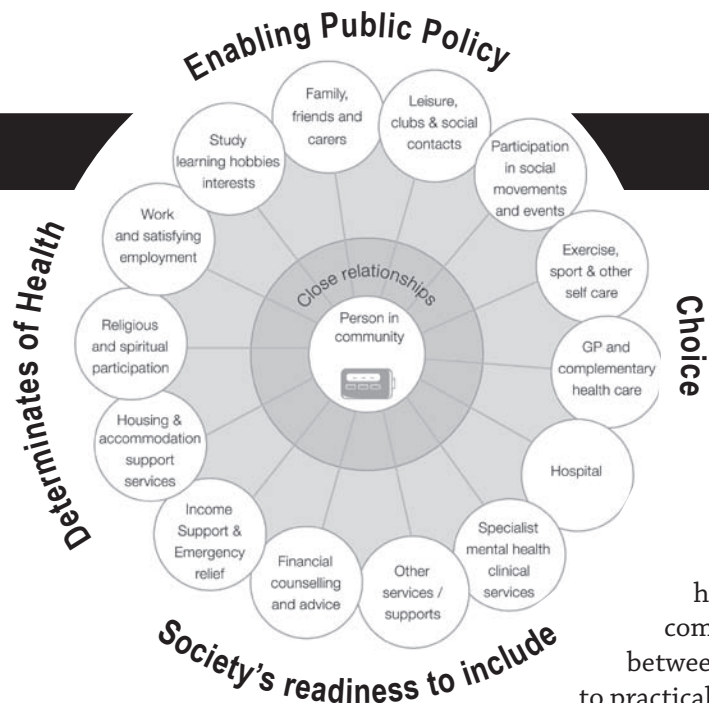
It is important to note that recovery does not necessarily mean an absence of illness. Rather, it is about developing individual ways to lead a fulfilling life whilst managing the effects of mental illness. It is about self determination and self direction.

Recovery is closely tied to connection with other people

Social relationships and social support are important for good mental health for all people, and can play a crucial part of the recovery process for those recovering from mental illness. Social connections include engaging with friends and peers, maintaining employment and economic wellbeing, undertaking education, art, hobbies, physical exercise, leisure and recreation, and social relationships. Engagement in society encapsulates a sense of purpose and agency, feeling safe and secure, being free from violence or the threat of violence, and having hope for the future.

'Social inclusion' is a term that has been widely adopted by policy makers and politicians in recent times. But what does it mean? In short, it's about being able to participate in and contribute to social life - in economic, social, psychological and political terms. Importantly, this requires having personal capacity as well as access to social roles.

This is particularly relevant for many people with mental illness, due to what we may term the 'vicious cycle' of exclusion that



can accompany mental health problems. Mental illness can be a profoundly isolating experience in itself, but when coupled with stigma and discrimination, this isolation is increased. Difficulties with making and sustaining relationships and managing daily tasks can exacerbate low self-esteem and lack of agency, which can spiral the person into further isolation, further stigma and discrimination, and so on. In this way, social isolation can directly impede recovery.

Community based services are a crucial component of the mental health system

Evidence from the last twenty five years confirms that a strong community-based support network, comprising the range of services designed to assist people to re-engage with society, is a crucial part of the mental health system.

While it is clear a reduction in symptoms is important for recovery, it has been increasingly recognised that of equal importance for many people is the need for help to build or re-build their ability to function well (including the daily tasks of living), to re-build their social capacity, and to access resources

and services that enable a sense of individual agency.

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has touched on the complex relationship between people's access to practical support and the more "intangible factors that improve a person's mental health and emotional wellbeing", such as community connectedness, a supportive environment and sense of self determination. A person's capacity to achieve secure housing was shown to be closely tied to these other aspects of their experience. A 'whole person' approach is therefore required, one that supports people to find their own sense of self determination and social connectedness alongside the practical support that community based organisations provide.

For example, some of the items that contribute to people's sense of being included in the community are:

- Space to come together with others;
- Employment or similar activity generating meaning and purpose;
- Stable housing;
- Education;
- Recreation; and
- Freedom from stigma and discrimination.

These areas are core business for many community based organisations, consumer peer support networks and other community based groups. However, increasing social capacity can present more of a challenge when many of the

barriers lie within the context of the broader community.

This is captured in the diagram (left), which outlines the many areas of community life the consumer can access, framed by the 'bigger picture' environment. This includes the impacts of public policy, discriminatory/ stigmatising attitudes, environmental health determinants and the forces that make up an individual's capacity to choose. All this can make the difference between an environment that excludes and marginalises and one that includes and supports.

Our mental health system can provide a quality service, but we need more investment in community-based services and better system coordination. Over the last decade, Australian government spending on mental health has been less than 7% of the health budget when it needed to be at least 12% annually. The proportion spent on community-based agencies, now approximately 8%, needs to almost double to 15% to meet demand.

Whilst it is unhelpful to consider the hospital and community settings as mutually exclusive, the sustained public attention focused on hospital beds at the expense of the community sector ignores the overwhelming evidence that a well coordinated and resourced community-based network is at the heart of quality mental health care.

Authors:

Rachel Merton (Senior Policy Officer) and Jenna Bateman (Chief Executive Officer), Mental Health Coordinating Council. email: info@mhcc.org.au.

Holdsworth Community Centre

Recently, Holdsworth Community Centre has had a new injection of energy, with a new co-ordinator, Michael Ryan, who is looking at defining new directions for the Centre. One initiative is a new staff position to work on community relations. This includes new promotion material and the dropping of "Street" from the old name to show things have changed. Regional Council went to visit to hear about these changes.

"We might be in Woollahra, but here there is the same cross section of poor and disadvantaged residents as there is in any other community. All community provision is thinly resourced, so this community centre is vitally important," says Michael Ryan, the Director of Holdsworth Community Centre.

The community centre is made up of a two storey building on one side, a low single storey block on another side and a lovely park with mature trees just next door. There is a large courtyard full of colourful equipment for the playgroup, with a dramatic shade sail in the middle. When we visited, the playgroup was in full swing out in the courtyard, with a special inside space for younger children. This playgroup is held five days a week throughout the year and is obviously a core project of the Centre.

We are partners with other community organisations

The centre works in partnership with other organisations, in fact most of its programs cannot be done in site, so they are delivered off site with other organisations, or consist of taking groups on outings. Michael gave three examples:

- Eastern Respite and Recreation provide services to adults and children with disabilities across the Eastern Suburbs. They join with Holdsworth to run joint programs. ER&R staff and clients work with Holdsworth staff and clients, benefitting Holdsworth through the extra staff and ER&R clients by the use of the community centre facilities.
- Another example is Bondi Beach Cottage, that is set up to assist parent groups in Woollahra and Waverley. They use the facilities at Holdsworth for their groups where 'reclaiming your life after becoming a parent' is a key concept.
- Jewish Care has fantastic resources, Holdsworth has the programs and we have clients in common.

Woollahra Council owns the building and leases it for a peppercorn rent, as well as providing one third of the funding for the whole centre. The Departments of Ageing Disability and Home Care, Transport, Health and Community Services all provide valuable financial help. The Centre is an incorporated organisation with a Management Committee elected each year (with two councillors added from Woollahra Council)

"We have a concept of combining with other organisations rather than setting up a new program with new funding. We believe that we can, and do, use partnerships in the most efficient way," says Michael. "At present we have forty programs of social support, recreation and community transport throughout the Eastern suburbs".

Everybody involved in the centre is important

The other crucial element of Holdsworth is the merging of helper, volunteer, participant and staff member to provide a total package of benefit to all. There might be a carer (of a husband or wife) who will assist others on outings; there might be students on placement who gain valuable experience for their degree in social work; or energetic people who gain hugely from the social interaction of an outing as a volunteer. Many of the volunteers work up to 15 hours a week, while students like doing a placement here as it can often lead to casual work (maybe 3 hours on a Saturday). Holdsworth supports it volunteers, thanks them all the time and listens to their needs.

Many of the volunteers help with people who are isolated and housebound. They are not a cleaning service, but will take the housebound people to the library or shopping, and gradually get to know them, building an important secure trusting relationship. Many residents are proud, they don't want charity, but they like to be involved, so an activity that takes them out of their home can be seen by them as social rather than charitable.

So when you talk of the people working at the centre it is all a bit difficult to calculate who is what. There are eighteen core staff, fifty staff in total (but most of those part-time), forty regular volunteers and then there are all those involved in programs as carers or as parents at playgroup.





Decent transport services are vital

Community transport is a vital part of all the programs at Holdsworth. The Centre has five buses and three cars to use for its

own services and they can also be hired out to other groups. Again there is a successful merging of different roles, such as assistant on a bus trip, or a carer on a supported outing. Many of these people will now see Holdsworth as their community. Some of these (often elderly people) will be able to change roles within the community. For instance if one of the carers breaks their hip, then next outing they are one of the supported rather than supporter. They are part of the community, not another 'needy person'.

There is an art group who go on social outings. Many of them live in supported housing in the area. This program is funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to ensure that

these residents get out and live life to the fullest possible. Some of these people have had the Centre and its facilities as a crucial part of their lives of more than 20 years. Michael Ryan is proud of the centre "helping to work with and through the system" to provide benefits for these long term users of programs at Holdsworth.

Community transport will soon be starting regular trips within the council area for older or disadvantaged people needing extra support to move around the area, not for those traveling to work. The shuttle will be one day a week – with two buses providing a circular service – in addition to the taking of residents to doctor or hospital appointments (a major part of the funding for this service). This is not an isolated service as there are many connections with Waverley Community Transport and other providers.

The Playgroup

When Inner Sydney Voice visited the playgroup area (the whole of the courtyard!) it was full of parents and children using the toys, the sandpit and the climbing blocks. As we were leaving we met a family of grandmother, daughter and granddaughter. Well that was not quite the whole picture, as the grandmother proudly said that other members of the family came as well. It is not often that three generations happily use a community facility; it shows that Holdsworth has a secure base in the community.



*Stella and Mick caption
Out amongst the tulips*



International Human Rights Day

It was a great morning event – a combined effort of Redfern Legal Centre and South Sydney Community Aid Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre. A significant number of important- enough dignitaries, a goodly number of African Refugees, a smattering of community workers with tables laden with information and boldly striped give away bags. Best of all there was a room full of morning tea goodies put on by the Neighbourhood Centre Chinese cooking instructor and a great African drum band.

Here is what the VIP's said:

Tania Plibersek – Federal Member for Sydney and new Federal Minister for Housing said “International Human Right Day recognises the importance of new and emerging immigrants. Waves of immigrants have been hard-working contributors to nation building throughout our history”.

Andrew Sanco – African academic who has done a study on the integration of African Refugees. He said it was important for refugees to “fall in love with who you are now – not try to be something else”. Events like this morning tea are a symbolic gesture showing Australia’s willingness to change and welcome African refugees, which gives them assurance. Shows Australia’s commitment to tolerance, diversity, respect and a fair go. He also told the African migrants that “education is better than silver and gold”.

Paul Power – CEO of the Refugees Council of Australia. Since the recent Federal election we want to develop a different sense of how to respond to refugees. The Council is very pleased that the ‘Pacific Solution’ is being disbanded, demonstrating the beginning of a new chapter with the negatives of the last decade being turned around. The ‘refugee experience’ is part of the Australian experience. We



have had 700,000 refugees and migrants over the years and if we add their families, we can see that 1.5 million people have been through the migration experience. We have had 45,000 refugees from Africa in the past decade and have found various ways to make African Refugees feel unwelcome. Distress at the Refugee Council was caused by Kevin Andrews as Federal Immigration Minister, raising questions about the effectiveness of African immigration. We are now hopeful that the tide is turning and there is greater understanding of the nature of the refugee experience.

Simon Rice – Australian Lawyers for Refugees said “All humans are wary of the difference in others and are quick to attack. This is a natural yet unthinking response and we should try to get beyond this to see the humanity involved. Over the past several years our leaders have encouraged us to think defensively about others and legal work is not enough - it will not change deep thinking. Work needs to happen not only at the highest levels, but locally, like at this morning tea.

And the final word came from the African Band leader who said “Immigrants are ambassadors for where they come from and bad behaviour gives your home country a poor reputation”.

After that everyone had a dance, plenty to eat, lots of talk and a combined very good feeling.

Stop Press:

In recognition of the great work done by Redfern Legal Centre, it received a prestigious award – the Human Rights Award in the Law Category for 2007.



Annual General Meeting 2007

'Regional Council' held its Annual General Meeting right at the end of November 2007. The location was State Parliament, in the very historic 'Parkes Room' and this was chosen for several reasons. First, Parliament House is a place for all the people of NSW to attend, secondly, our organisation is working to have a presence throughout our region and we often forget that our area of coverage is the city itself. While the city is obviously the centre of the metropolis of greater Sydney, the state capital and an international city, it is also the home of local residents and community organisations and as such is a fitting place for the AGM of a regional organisation.

The other reason for being at Parliament House was that the event was being hosted by one of our local members, Kristina Keneally, who is also the Minister for Ageing and Disability. She was involved in the high point of the AGM, by launching the new website we had developed for the Home and Community Care (HACC) services in Eastern Sydney. We also had input from our HACC Development Officer, Chris Bath, who took us on a



*The Minister and
Regional Council staff*

virtual tour of the website and from John Geerlings, coordinator of the Coast Centre for Seniors, who talked about the use of the internet by seniors (who we hope will be referring to our website). The audience was made up of a great mix of people involved with 'Regional Council', such as community workers in the HACC program (there for the launch) and members of our organisation, some who come from the Redfern and Waterloo housing estates. Everyone enjoyed the experience of meeting, eating and drinking under the gaze of one of our most important forefathers – Sir Henry Parkes, the 'Father of Federation'.

Exerts from the Annual Report

This section of Inner Sydney Voice is traditionally set aside for us to report to our readership about how the past year has gone. The full Annual Report is provided at the AGM and is available to members who did not attend the AGM by contacting innerv@iinet.net.au. The AGM section here includes the Chairperson's Report on how we traveled during the year in a broad sense. We then have a report on the social issues in each of the regions we cover and finally a consolidated financial statement.

Members of our organisation at the AGM



Chairperson's Report

This Chairperson's report outlines to members the main activities of our organisation in the financial year 2006/2007, on behalf of the Board.



This has been a steady year for 'Regional Council'. As well as carrying out our ongoing activities, we developed some special directions to focus on during the year. These planned priorities were:

- Operating across the whole of our region
- Improving information flow across the region
- Supporting community organisations dealing with the impact of Redfern Waterloo Authority
- Moving to new premises.

We achieved our goal of 'Operating across the whole of our Region' in several different ways. We became more involved with community organisations in Rozelle, Maroubra and Redfern as well as

resourcing region-wide forums such as the Eastern Suburbs Interagency, HACC Forum and tenant participation activities. We sourced articles for Inner Sydney Voice from across the region.

As a regional information organisation, we worked to 'Improve the information across the region'. We developed new electronic and hard copy information, such as the new HACC website linked to Regional Council's website and several new brochures. This was part of a promotion strategy that saw the design of a new logo and improved graphic design of all materials. Our main information strategy – the production of Inner Sydney Voice was improved with a new layout and timely distribution. We were also heavily involved in the development of a Mental Health Brochure listing mental health services across the Eastern Suburbs that was very well received. Another information strategy was the series of Focus Forums to provide information on new developments in the sector as well as the state election and community development through the Marg Barry Memorial Lecture.

The year started out with the release of the Human Services Plan Stage 2 by the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA). We provided a lot of information into that process and supported community organisations to respond. The implementation of the plan did not proceed so we then had no further work to do, however the changes to the Built Environment Plan proceeded apace, which may point to the real priorities of the RWA.

We spent a lot of time and energy preparing to move premises to Glebe after fourteen years in 'the bunker', even holding our last AGM in the new premises. At the last minute, the City of Sydney agreed to allow us to stay where we are for another three years while they develop plans for the expansion of the library.

One of the strengths of 'Regional Council' is its dedicated and hard-working staff and the Board would like to thank them for all their solid effort throughout the year. We were sad to lose our Media Officer and the worker who replaced him and we are now contracting out the production and layout of Inner Sydney Voice and our promotional material.

As Chairperson, I have to thank the Board for their excellent governance throughout the year, providing us with first class planning, policies and resource management. We started the year with a full complement of experienced and enthusiastic people, but a gradual attrition through illness and changing jobs saw us lose several members. We want to wish Leta Webb a full recovery from her recent illness and note the many years of exceptional work for the organisation from Debbie Coulter, whose work moved her from Maroubra to Parramatta.

Finally, I want to announce that I will not be standing as Chairperson again as I have not been well and after 17 years, it is time to hand over to another person. I have enjoyed being involved with Regional Council and will stay on the Board as the representative from the City of Sydney.

Terry Murphy

Regional Reports

Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development covers the local government areas of Sydney, Botany, Leichhardt, Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick. The Annual Report includes a summary of social issues in each of these Local Government Areas that make up the Inner Sydney region covered by 'Regional Council'.



There are trees in Redfern Street

City of Sydney

There is a lot of action in the City of Sydney, especially on the development front, with local residents in some cases struggling to deal with the impacts. There are also some positive improvements in the look of local communities and the consultation carried out by City of Sydney Council.

Big Developments

Carlton United Brewery Site

The huge new development on the Carlton United Brewery (CUB) site has the residents of Darlington really worried. The proposed huge increase in building scale, new residents and traffic threatens to swamp the precinct.

Green Square

The other big proposed development is in Green Square.

This joint project of the City and Landcom will make the precinct around the Green Square Railway Station a residential, commercial and cultural hub for the 278 hectare Green Square Urban Renewal Area, the largest urban renewal project in Australia. Regional Council has two concerns.

- The City's contribution to infrastructure and public works will be financed by levies – if the developers don't come, the public works don't happen.
- The second concern that there will be insufficient community services (one council multi-purpose centre for eighty thousand people).

Redfern Waterloo Authority

The authority has huge powers. The fact that most of the population lives in Department of Housing (now Housing NSW) properties and the RWA is not looking at the impact of this housing defies logic. The biggest results achieved by the RWA are in property development, including upgrading the Eveleigh Precinct and selling public property (Redfern School, Rachel Foster Hospital and the old Court House).

Smaller improvements in environment and services

"There are trees in Redfern Street". This upgrade of the footpaths and planting of trees by the City of Sydney Council has given a big lift to the look and feel of Redfern and the upgrade of Redfern Park should continue the improvement.

The appointment of a City of Sydney Liaison Officer for public housing is welcomed. The council has also funded a new *Village to Village* Shuttle Bus service that

is operated by South Sydney Community Transport, with 630 trips in the first two months of operation. It shows what can be done using existing local services that have the infrastructure and people needing support in place and just need enough money to make things happen.

*Annie Parkinson and Helen Campbell
2006/07 Board members
representing the City of Sydney*



Don't need any more boats in Rose Bay

Waverley/Woollahra

Waverley and Woollahra Local Government areas are already highly developed and increases in population are as a result of old houses being replaced with units and large apartment blocks on the fringe of the business district or any underdeveloped spare parcels of land. The cost of housing is high and many long-term residents who are renting or have low to medium incomes are finding they have to leave the district. There is little low-cost housing and the number of boarding houses is steadily declining.

Waverley Community Services

The Mill Hill Centre continues to be an important community precinct, housing council community services, HACC services and ECHO, the local Neighbourhood Centre all working

hard to deliver a range of services to Waverley residents. Waverley Council plays a strong role in delivering services themselves and supporting other small community organisations. Council is involved in supported accommodation, providing housing for 51 people in its 'Waverley Housing for Older People Project and six subsidised rental accommodation places for people with mild intellectual disabilities.

Woollahra Community Services

Provision of community services by Woollahra Council is mostly done in partnership with the Holdsworth Community Centre. Council itself provides a range of aged services, including centre-based respite and Meals on Wheels. Holdsworth Community Centre provides disability services, children's services and aged services but needs more resources.

Rose Bay Marina and public transport

The biggest issue concerning residents in Woollahra is the proposed Rose Bay marina. The number and size of the boats will block views of the harbour and increase traffic congestion.

As in most Inner Sydney and Eastern Suburbs, the biggest transport problem is inadequate public transport, especially in non peak hours. Given the proximity of the harbour in Woollahra, the scarcity of ferry services, especially for commuters to the city, is hard to understand.

*Marie Girdler and Robyn Edwards
2006/07 Board members
representing Waverley/Woollahra*

Botany Report



Botany has a particular struggle that is different from most other Local Government Areas, which has been described as an "ongoing battle between residents and industry, fought on several fronts".

Hazardous industries

The huge industrial complex contains many chemical and oil industries posing risks to residents. Just emerged is a 1983 Department of Planning risk assessment document that recommended 1,000 dwellings be demolished due to the threat posed by the Orica Chlorine plant. In 1985 a modified document was released so that residents would not lose the value in their properties. Today people are still living in this zone. During that time, Regional Council worked with the Urban Environment Coalition to bring the risks of these hazardous industries to the fore. This chlorine plant has the third largest electricity bill in the state.

In August, The NSW Department of

Natural Resources issued an alert regarding a lake of contaminated groundwater spreading from Port Botany to Surry Hills – banning domestic use of groundwater throughout the area. The polluted water has been contaminated with chemicals such as chlorinated hydrocarbons, other solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons and some heavy metals. Regional Council has been writing continually about this problem for years.

Heavy traffic

Another area where industry impacts on residents is the heavy traffic and increased traffic created by industrial areas and the ports. A new industrial road has been built in Banksmeadow called the Port Feeder Road to reduce existing heavy traffic on residential streets. Council is also doing a review of the main road network to see what can be done to reduce the impact of traffic on residential streets, such as restricting heavy vehicles on Botany Road and having them use Foreshore Drive

City Planning

In mid 2006, council's new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) dealt with the impacts of new residential development close to old industrial areas. Zoning is being changed from industrial to mixed residential and commercial/retail with higher residential development. Part of the problem is the impact of industrial contamination and aircraft noise from Port Botany and the airport.

Environment

All areas of green space are seen as precious and are treated that

way. Council also has a problem with illegal dumping on the many unused sites and is looking to put in portable video cameras called 'Dump Cam', to catch the dumpers. There has been a rethink on parks and gardens due to the drought and water restrictions, with new strategies to manage the use of playing fields, replant trees that are more suitable, minimise water use and improve water quality as well as using groundwater for irrigation.

Community Services

The South East Neighbourhood Centre reported that the number of people accessing the Centre over the year has increased to 66,000 incidents of service. There has been substantial growth in the number of children accessing the Centre and so many older people and people with disabilities, that the Neighbourhood Centre HACC services are having to turn people away. There is also a huge demand for services for people from Non English Speaking Background (NESB) and the Centre is running up to seven large English Classes using volunteers, as there is no funding. The Centre's biggest initiative has been to provide centre-based groups for older NESB people that are outreached to suburbs like Beaconsfield, Rosebery and Eastgardens, again using volunteers

The biggest need in the area is for affordable housing. There is huge pressure on existing rental accommodation. This will mean many of the low income residents in Botany now will have to 'go west'.

Leichhardt Report



The Leichhardt Council's *State of The Environment Report* says that one of the greatest threats to community development in Leichhardt stems from the increasing cost of living. Although significant areas of public housing remain, rising property values place pressure on the private rental market and decrease the supply of affordable housing. People then work longer hours to pay rent and are not available to participate in community activities or community development. Despite this, there is a strong community spirit including a thriving Italian community.

Transport

In 2006, Leichhardt Council carried out a *Community Perception Survey* and the issue residents were most concerned about was parking. As with any area that is renovating small houses and making them larger, a big impact is the number and size of vehicles, especially in narrow streets and with people parking on the footpath. This problem is

made worse by the huge amount of traffic on the arterial links of Parramatta Road, Victoria Road and the City West Link. There is also insufficient public transport within the municipality, though council has just set up, with Leichhardt Community Transport, a shuttle service for seniors and people with disability.

Open Space

Another pressure from an increasing population is that of open space, especially if new and renovated housing does not have its own private outdoor space. Council is looking to increase the amount of open space per resident. The upgrading of Ballast Point will help and provide a large addition to the Sydney Harbour Foreshore. There is also a rejuvenation of Mort Bay and parts of the East Balmain Foreshore. A clean up of Whites Creek, which acts as a biological filter for stormwater coming into the harbour, will improve the environment.

Major developments

Rozelle hospital is still a big issue - houses and wards have been boarded up for years and locals want it operational while Dept Health still wants to sell it off for housing. In June 2007, The Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor announced that the NSW Government was in discussion with the University of Sydney over a proposal to expand its presence at Callan Park, once the site is vacated by NSW Health and appointed the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority to undertake the preparation of the masterplan for Callan Park by the end of November 2007.....the saga continues.

The Tiger's Leagues club on Victoria Road is proposing a big new development on their site and Leichhardt council has put requirements on the developers, including funds to support community organisations. The scale of the development will put further pressure on the local roads and business area, although there should be more parking available.

Community services

New residential development puts pressure on community services. There are more children needing Long Day Care places. Council has put forward concept plans for a new Seniors and Baby Health Centre plus a multi-purpose section. Meanwhile, the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, providing services to people with disabilities and child care, struggles with outdated premises in an old church that needs urgent repairs.

*Greg Hawken,
2006/07 Board member
representing Leichhardt*

Randwick Report

Randwick appears to lack the instability and rapid development seen in other council areas such as Botany or the City, perhaps because it is already well developed and does not have large numbers of old industrial sites. The Bundock Street development of the old army site is probably the biggest seen in the area for some time. Even the existing residences are not being changed considerably, as they are already quite expensive. The stability in the area is contributed to by the significant number of long-standing institutions

- Prince of Wales Hospital, University of NSW and Randwick Racecourse as well as numerous health, education and religious establishments. The population itself is also stable, with mostly long term residents and any instability mostly caused by a flow through of students.

A Fragmented Randwick

The area divides in two on a socio-economic basis, with the southern half experiencing severe social problems. There has been a failure by governments to recognise the extent of the problem and provide services with sufficient funding to deal with the issues in this section of Randwick. The needs that have to be addressed include safety problems caused by alcohol, drugs and domestic violence. La Pouse, with its significant Aboriginal population, has also been neglected in relation to the amount of services needed.

Social Plan

Council held a community consultation to get feedback from service providers on the implementation of its Social Plan. Priorities from a similar consultation in 2004 are still not activated. The concern is that Randwick Council's 20 year plan makes no mention of any disability or disadvantage. Social planning does not see council as a community service provider but chooses to have services delivered in partnership with others.

Youth Services

Young people in the south of the Randwick LGA are impacted on heavily by the social problems of that area. Youth services in the area are under strength. The main youth service has 25% Aboriginal young people accessing the Centre and its accommodation is inadequate. There is one tiny youth refuge, so young people mostly have to go out of the area for emergency accommodation.

Community Centre Needs

The Junction Neighbourhood Centre reports that those coming to the centre for support is increasing, for issues such as domestic violence and mental health, also for aged services, in particular respite outings. The Centre thinks this is due in part to their new shop front location giving better access and visibility. The Centre is now full and services are being run from other locations - Family Support from the community centre in South Coogee and groups and classes at the Maroubra Junction Uniting Church.

New Sports Centre

Council intends to upgrade their largest park by putting in a new multi-purpose indoor sports and leisure centre. They will relocate the aquatic centre next door to the new centre, upgrade sports fields, landscape and build new car parking.

*Anna Hartree
2006/07 Board member
representing Randwick*

The Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Inc.

Statement of Financial Performance for the Year Ended 30 June 2007

Income	Newsletter	Resource Centre	Regional Information System	CSGP Special Fund	Regional Council TOTAL	Home & Community Care	HACC Aquittal	Regional Tenant Resource Service	RTRS Special Fund	TOTALS	2006
Grants – CSGP	48,968		48,969		97,937					97,937	94,808
Grants – HACC					–	102,530				102,530	101,075
Grants – HCAP					–					–	25,000
Grants – RTRS					–			111,151		111,151	103,039
Grants – RTRS Special Grant					–				20,000	20,000	20,000
Grants – Other	1,079			20,000	21,079					21,079	1,079
Donations	7	30			37					37	210
Other Income	26,248	87,967			114,215			3,533		117,748	106,005
Interest		2,070			2,070	1,122		1,169		4,361	3,524
Total Income	76,302	90,067	48,969	20,000	235,338	103,652	–	115,853	20,000	474,843	454,740

Staffing	52,901	86,378	46,007	3,000	188,286	85,489		82,092	11,015	366,883	343,340
Communication	7,250	1,111	710	36	9,106	79	937	2,019	59	12,200	11,159
Depreciation	1,113	3,441	227	68	4,850	2,532		3,323		10,705	9,422
Office Requisites	1,696	305	600		2,600	2,991		3,137	27	8,755	11,524
Office Services	721	634	748	2,712	4,814	2,140		2,198		9,152	8,297
Rent	418	278	418		1,114	1,183		1,183		3,480	3,480
Travel	17	–	126	36	179	576		4,958		5,713	6,715
Programs	7,026	–	(302)	1,685	8,409	883	3,500	6,585	7,434	26,811	18,141
Other Expenses	1,317	207	1,769		3,293	4,623		5,435		13,351	39,333
Unspent Funds	–	–	–	9,615	9,615	3,757		–	3,078	16,450	–
Total Expenditure	72,457	92,354	50,303	17,152	232,266	104,252	4,437	110,930	21,613	473,499	451,411

Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	3,846	(2,287)	(1,334)	2,848	3,072	(601)	(4,437)	4,923	(1,613)	1,344	3,329
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