

**LABOR COUNCILLORS SUBMISSION  
TO REDFERN-WATERLOO DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN**

1. Labor Councillors note the release of the Draft Human Services Plan and applaud its intent to set out ‘a comprehensive framework for revitalising Redfern and Waterloo, address urban planning and infrastructure issues which directly affect people’s quality of life on a daily basis, and contain strategies to increase employment opportunities for local people.’
2. Labor Councillors endorse the idea that this process will be an evolving one, and that the current draft primarily focuses on Phase One of the strategy.
3. Considering that the strategy is not a static one, we do not wish to make extensive comment on the draft at this point, and instead will focus on the draft’s key strengths and policy areas which require some clarification.
4. We look forward to working in an ongoing partnership with Federal and State Governments, all appropriate statutory authorities and the community of Redfern-Waterloo to implement positive changes to the social, cultural and economic character of the area.

**A REAL PARTNERSHIP IN REDFERN-WATERLOO**

5. Redfern-Waterloo must remain an affordable, liveable area whose future is determined by the community that inhabits it. While Labor Councillors generally support the ‘whole of government’ approach taken by the draft, the way forward can only succeed if the community feels empowered and secure.
6. The Redfern Waterloo Authority must offer the community a basic guarantee of adequate, affordable housing, and demonstrate a willingness to engage in an open and constructive dialogue regarding the area’s future.
7. The Redfern-Waterloo Authority needs to recognise the role that many community organisations, NGOs and local Council authorities have played over many years in Redfern. The experience and expertise of these groups and the community at large needs to be harnessed by the new Authority.
8. To this end, the Labor Councillors welcome the consultation processes that have occurred so far in relation to this Draft Human Services Plan, and urge the Redfern Waterloo Authority to continue with and expand these consultation processes.

## **STRENGTHS OF THE DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN**

9. The current draft is an important step forward in the reinvigoration of the Redfern-Waterloo area.
10. Labor Councillors strongly applaud the quite revolutionary 'holistic' approach taken by the draft to both key policy priorities and the service delivery framework.
11. By harnessing the resources of all levels of government, as well as a range of NGOs, the draft plan should ensure effective and co-ordinated service delivery for the community.
12. We are particularly interested in the role assigned to the City of Sydney and are interested in meeting with representatives from the Redfern Waterloo Authority to discuss further avenues of co-operation for the area.
13. Similarly, Labor Councillors generally support the draft plan's phase one priorities which acknowledge not only economic indicators such as unemployment but also seek to offer improved education, health and community justice services for the residents of Redfern-Waterloo.
14. We particularly note the direct focus on early intervention strategies for children and youth including health and nutrition services for young mothers, early childhood nursing services; strategies aimed at improving literacy and numeracy rates for indigenous youth; and the engagement of at risk youth through targeted programs to reduce absenteeism at school. We believe that the recently signed 'heads of agreement' between the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the ILC is a significant positive step towards the achievement of these goals.
15. However, the draft strategy does raise a number of important questions that Labor Councillors believe must be addressed before the strategy can be implemented with any confidence.

## **ISSUES REQUIRING FURTHER CLARIFICATION**

### *Housing*

16. As previously noted, a guarantee that the Redfern Waterloo Authority will ensure an adequate level of affordable housing in Redfern-Waterloo is vital to the success of any integrated human services plan.
17. Affordable housing is the keystone to a strong, secure community willing to invest in its own future.
18. The guarantee of affordable housing is also key to many of the Draft Plan's initiatives. The early intervention programs can really only be

successful if young families have security of tenure and a long term stake in the local community.

19. A spectrum of housing options is vital to the success of the Human Services Plan. The Redfern Waterloo Authority needs not only to plan for housing and support packages for clients with mental health problems whose tenancies are at risk (Priority 4) but look to affordable housing options for families who may need to depart public housing once they find work, but who should not then be forced out of the community.
20. The long term goal for the Redfern area should be to provide a sustainable local community with housing options that support a genuine social mix.
21. We applaud the Minister for Planning's guarantee that the Authority will maintain existing stocks of public housing in the area, but we would like to see this commitment extended to include increasing the availability of a range of affordable housing options for Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh and Darlington.
22. We believe that an affordable housing levy should be set for the entire area of the Redfern Waterloo Authority at a level at least twice that currently existing for Green Square (i.e. 6% or more) and that developers should not have the option of 'paying out' this entitlement. Instead the contribution must be made in the form of actual housing units encouraging the spread of affordable housing throughout new developments.

### *Funding*

23. The draft human services plan is an ambitious document whose success depends upon the commitment of significant resources from a number of State Government Departments.
24. The current draft is largely silent on the issue of funding for the range of initiatives it contains. One example is the reference to increased levels of child care provision. We support this proposal but are unclear as to whether it is in addition to the expansion already proposed by the City of Sydney and whether it is to be funded by the Redfern Waterloo Authority.
25. Labor Councillors would like to see additional funding provided to Departments with lead responsibilities under the plan, to ensure that key services are delivered in a timely fashion. We recognise that Federal and Local Governments also have responsibility to increase their funding for the Redfern Waterloo area.

26. We are concerned that if Departments are forced to find funds from existing budgets either established programs will suffer or the initiatives contained in the draft human services plan will be compromised.

#### *Private sector funding*

27. Labor Councillors note that the draft human services plan proposes that the Redfern-Waterloo Authority broker sponsorship arrangements with the private sector.
28. The role of the private sector is not clearly defined in the draft plan and Labor Councillors believe this role should be clarified at the earliest possible opportunity.
29. In the interim, Labor Councillors have a number of questions regarding the role of the private sector in delivering services to Redfern-Waterloo.

#### *Questions*

30. Will private sector funds be used to replace public funding for services such as recreational cultural and educational programs for youth?
31. What safeguards are in place to ensure that 'PR friendly' causes (which may be more likely to be funded by the private sector) are not prioritised over less "glamorous" issues, such as support for those suffering mental illness? How does the Government ensure that the corporate sector does not end up setting the priorities for funding, albeit in a de-facto manner?
32. What will be done to ensure that programs sponsored by corporate entities don't end up competing with existing community based services?

#### *Consultation and evaluation processes*

33. Although City of Sydney is a key agency in the delivery of services, especially youth services, child care/vacation care and employment programs, under the draft human services plan, Labor Councillors note that Council has little or no role in the evaluation process.
34. If this strategy is to be a true partnership between all levels of government, Federal, State and Local authorities must all have ownership of the evaluation process.
35. With this in mind Labor Councillors believe it is appropriate for the City of Sydney to be represented on the Implementation Senior Officers Group (ISOG).

36. Council's recently released social plan and the extensive range of programs provided through the Redfern Community Centre, Senior's Centres, Waterloo library and local child care centres detail the City's significant contribution to a healthy, active and engaged local community. It is vital that these programs and strategies are integrated into the broader community vision of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority.
37. Furthermore, in the interests of transparency and community confidence, Labor Councillors believe that community consultations should be maintained as an integral part of the evaluation process.

## **CONCLUSION**

38. Labor Councillors thank the Redfern-Waterloo Authority for the opportunity to comment on the Redfern-Waterloo Draft Human Services Plan.
39. We acknowledge the immense effort that has gone into the production of this report and congratulate the Authority on its vision for co-ordinated social service delivery in Redfern-Waterloo.
40. If you require any further information or wish to meet with Labor Councillors don't hesitate to contact us on 9265 9427.