



# NEWS RELEASE

## Premier of New South Wales

### **THE CHANGING FACE OF REDFERN AND WATERLOO: CRIME DOWN, HOUSING PRICES UP, JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Monday 15 February, 2010

Independent data shows that the partnership approach set up by the NSW Government and the local community is transforming Redfern and Waterloo.

The report card was presented by Premier Kristina Keneally, who also holds the portfolio of Redfern Waterloo, and Police Minister, Michael Daley.

“Today’s report card shows that all indicators for the renewal of Redfern and Waterloo are moving in the right direction: training and jobs numbers are up, housing demand is up, and crime has dropped significantly,” Ms Keneally said.

In 2001, the NSW Government made a commitment to the Redfern and Waterloo community to revitalise the area through a partnership approach, focusing on urban renewal, improved human services and job creation. In 2004 the Government passed the Redfern Waterloo Act, creating the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA).

“What we are seeing in Redfern and Waterloo now are the results of a strong partnership between Government and community, including local Aboriginal leaders, creating thriving and safe suburbs,” Ms Keneally said.

Police Statistics released today show that from 2008 to 2009 in the Redfern Local Area Command:

- Robbery offences committed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) juveniles fell 80 per cent;
- Offences committed by ATSI juveniles fell 16.7 per cent; and
- Offences committed by ATSI fell 15.1 per cent.

This complements the most recent statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, which shows that in the Redfern Local Area Command in the two years to September 2009:

- Robbery without a weapon fell 27.6 per cent;
- Robbery with a weapon not a firearm fell 48.8 per cent;
- Motor vehicle theft fell 29.6 per cent; and
- Steal from a person fell 36.8 per cent.

In a sign of investment confidence, Australian Property Monitors statistics show five years of strong growth in Redfern house prices, and two years of growth in Waterloo house prices. In particular, house prices in Redfern rose 12 per cent in 2009 and 6 per cent in Waterloo, despite the global economic conditions.

Between 2005 and 2009:

- The median house price in Redfern increased from \$547,000 to \$757,000 (38 per cent); and
- The median unit price in Redfern increased from \$406,000 to \$450,000 (11 per cent).
- The median house price in Waterloo increased from \$483,00 to \$591,000 (22 per cent); and
- The median unit price in Waterloo increased from \$480,000 to \$510,000 (6 per cent).

Other key achievements of the as a result of collaboration between the RWA and the community include:

- 200 graduates in construction, hospitality and catering – more than 60 per cent directly entering the workforce or further education since 2006;
- 500 job opportunities created principally in the construction fields through job brokerage services since 2005;
- The relocation of Channel 7 to the Australian Technology Park, bringing approximately 2000 permanent jobs to the area;
- Development of the new National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Redfern, in partnership with the Federal Government;
- Creating the Eveleigh Markets, which won the *Sydney Morning Herald's* 2010 Foodies Award for the Best Markets in Sydney, bringing more than 3,000 people a week to the area.
- Approval of the Aboriginal Housing Company's Pemulwuy Project, a \$60 million redevelopment of The Block in Redfern.

Police Minister, Michael Daley, praised the local police and community for their cooperative approach.

"Police from the Redfern Local Area Command have done an outstanding job," Mr Daley said.

"It is clear that a better relationship between Police and the Aboriginal community has significantly contributed to the reduction in crime in the local area."

A range of partnerships between Police and the community have been developed, including:

- Working with the local Aboriginal community through the Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Committee, which includes groups such as the Aboriginal Housing Company, Babana, Wyanga, Mudgin Gal, Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Legal Service and the Redfern Community Centre - City of Sydney Council.

These forge relationships between Police and the community to focus on local issues including health, fitness and crime prevention.

- Clean slate without prejudice: With the advice of three prominent Aboriginal leaders, 10 young males, with a propensity to commit robberies, were selected to participate in this diversionary program. Following this program, no robberies were committed by the participants. A new version of the program is to commence in March, 2010.
- Boxing: From 5.45am to 7.00am, each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Police conduct boxing fitness classes with Aboriginal youth and aboriginal leaders. A number of the youth bring their fathers along.

Oz Tag: Redfern Police sponsor the local Aboriginal Oz Tag team “D’Fern,” which plays against local police teams four times per year.

“These ground breaking programs have built trust and confidence between Police and members of the community – including with the 10 young men with a propensity to commit robberies who have turned their lives around,” Mr Daley said.

“I make special mention of Redfern Local Area Commander, Luke Freudenstein, Deputy Police Commissioner, Catherine Burn, and CEO of the Redfern Waterloo Authority, Roy Wakelin-King, for their efforts in Redfern and Waterloo.

“I also thank Shane Phillips and Mick Mundine, long-serving advocates for the local Aboriginal Community, for their tireless work.”

Ms Keneally said that the lessons learned in Redfern and Waterloo – of NSW Government agencies working together in partnership with the community – will be a model Government can apply in other areas.

“The co-ordinated effort in Redfern and Waterloo has changed the way Government and community work together, removing layers of bureaucracy and creating direct relationships with the people who can effect positive change.”

“The State Government’s long-term plan to turn around crime, education, employment and improve living conditions in Redfern and Waterloo is working, but there is still more to be done,” Ms Keneally said.

The NSW Government is investing \$8 million in the Redfern Waterloo Authority during 2009/10 and 2010/11. Their major focus for this year is sale and redevelopment of key sites, and continuing local human services programs.

## **Background notes**

The Redfern Waterloo Authority’s three flagship plans focus on:

- **Human Services**: Delivering better coordination of health, youth and social services between non government and government organisations in the area;
- **The Built Environment**: Identifying and developing sites within the area for commercial, residential and community uses; and
- **Employment and Enterprise**: Creating business development and job creation in Redfern, focusing on the local Aboriginal community and local enterprise.

Redfern Waterloo Authority programs that have helped rejuvenate the area include:

- **The RWA Aboriginal employment model**, a partnership between the Aboriginal community, RWA and employers. Since 2006, about 200 people have graduated from the RWA's training college in fields including construction, hospitality and catering – more than 60% of whom have then directly entered the workforce or further education. Ongoing mentoring for graduates is provided as part of the model.
- **Job brokering services**, where the Redfern Waterloo Authority actively engages with Government agencies and the private sector to create employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. About 500 job opportunities have been created since 2005, principally in the construction field.
- **The Redfern Waterloo Built Environment Plan**, focussing on developing strategic sites in Redfern to deliver economic and social improvements in the area. Examples include the development of a concept plan for the disused Rachel Foster Hospital, which was then sold to fund the new Community Health Centre on Redfern Street; and development of the new National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in partnership with the Federal Government.