



Family &
Community Services

Living Communities

Our story and the lessons we learned

31 May 2011



Purpose of presentation

- Outline the Living Communities Approach
- Discuss the approach to community consultation & engagement
- Suggest how lessons might inform practice in other projects.



Creating a new approach

- Focused on creating a great place
- Explicit about de-concentration
- Structured for long term sustainable transformation
- Combined the best of previous approaches
- Grounded in research



Making great places to live

- Outcomes in each of the 3 objectives:
 - Homes and public domain
 - Services
 - Community capacity
- Involve those most affected
- Reduce concentrations of disadvantage
- Raise aspirations
- Build a culture of engagement



Living Communities Approach

- Three integrated goals
 - Improve services and opportunities
 - Build community capacity
 - Renew houses and public domain

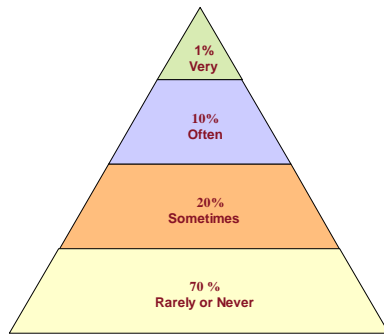
- Two integrated plans
 - Development plan (physical)
 - Community renewal plan (social and economic)



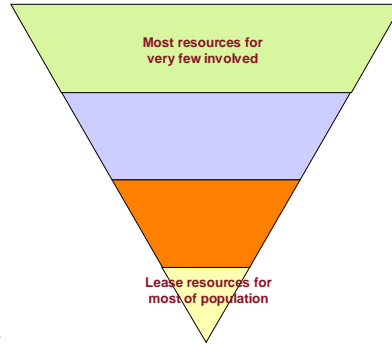
Project Locations

- Bonnyrigg 2004 - 2037
- Minto 2005 - 2021
- Airs Bradbury 2007 - 2030
- Redfern Waterloo 2009 - 2012
(HAF with Living Communities engagement approach)

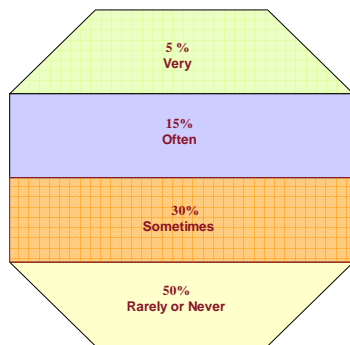
Common Levels of Community Engagement



Common Pattern for Effort and Resources in Community Engagement



Living Communities Resource Allocation



- Training & support to establish Bonnyrigg Reference Group
- Community Reference Group
- Invite to dialogue such as meet the Minister, involve in recruitment
- One to one support for skills development

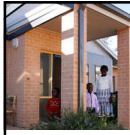
- Community Building Workshops
- Coffee sessions
- Neighbourhood BBQ's
- Site visits
- Language specific sessions
- Large scale forums

- Big community events and festivals
- Family developments
- Library display

- Newsletters
- Upgrading of local services
- Info in local paper
- Info about all activities
- Community Renewal activities
- Advocate
- 1300 number
- Household survey
- Contact for more info
- Info to stakeholder

* Important to note:

- Residents move between categories depending on family and other commitments
- Events held day/evening/weekend to ensure opportunity to participate



Community Engagement Framework

Living Communities Engagement Schema





Summary of lessons learned

Lessons from our work

- #1 Recognise engagement as a key activity and expenditure
- #2 Establish flexible structures for dialogue
- #3 Use a multi level approach
- #4 Invest in the difficult-to-reach groups
- #5 Invest incapacity building
- #6 Continually reflect and strive for best practice



Lesson #1

Recognise community engagement as a legitimate activity and expenditure



Why is this important?

- To enable adequate time and effort;
- To demonstrate the organisation's commitment;
- To demonstrate that participants' input is valued;
- To develop organisational culture of community engagement;
- To optimise outcomes.



How can this be achieved?

- By demonstrating commitment at the highest level;
- By providing appropriate training, support and staffing to teams;
- By building teams with complementary skills;
- By allocating sufficient and flexibly applied resources.



Lesson #2

Establishing flexible structures for on-going dialogue with the local community and other stakeholders



Why is this important?

- To manage key projects risks;
- To build and maintain resident support and enthusiasm;
- To actively mitigate tenant's anxiety/distress;
- To ensure meaningful input and accurate information;
- To manage marketing risk for new housing products;
- To promote social cohesion.



How can this be achieved?

- By establishing a range of reference and advisory groups to ensure input at a range of levels as appropriate to the project. This could include any or all of the following:
 - community reference group of residents, local NGO's and advocacy groups;
 - a steering committee of government partners;
 - an expert committee of advocates and opinion leaders;
 - strategic partnership agreements with local council and key service providers;
 - an internal advisory or control group from different divisions.



Lesson #3

Use a multi level approach
to engagement and
involvement



Why is this important?

- To ensure a variety of engagement options to involve a wider range of people;
- To identify what works for different populations;
- To recognise that committees are not for everyone;
- To maximise possible outcomes.



How can this be achieved?

- By creating a range of activities that meet the spectrum of involvement
- By offering opportunities to accommodate varying intensity of involvement
- Using a range of scale and formality of events



Lesson #4

Invest in the
difficult-to-reach groups



Why is this important?

- To ensure equitable opportunities for participation in decision making;
- To ensure cultural nuances and generational perspectives;
- To ensure the project benefits from a richer range of inputs;
- To avoid mistaking a vocal minority voice as the only voice for the community.



How can this be achieved?

- By obtaining advice from, and involving, key informants and advocates;
- By designing specially targeted activities;
- By devising ways of adopting a multi-lingual approach to larger events;
- By using multi-lingual communication strategies;
- By locating events in environments familiar to the target groups.



Lesson #5

Invest in capacity building



Why is this important?

- To recognise local people are a strong resource for spreading the message;
- To strengthen the community and enable meaningful input;
- To build trust, resilience and confidence;
- To enable a sustained legacy



How can this be achieved?

- By providing training for community members
- By running workshops and site visits;
- By providing opportunities for skills development
- By facilitating interaction between tenants in different localities;
- By supporting resident driven initiatives



Lesson #6

Continually reflect
and strive for
best practice



Why is this important?

- To capture learning through debriefing & reflection;
- To seek and integrate feedback from many sources;
- To record and document the learning;
- To encourage continual development.



How can this be achieved?

- By implementing principles;
- By updating strategies regularly;
- By adopting a professional approach with high standards and expectations;
- By sharing information about the successful & unsuccessful methods and outcomes;
- By scheduling sufficient time for debriefing and reflection;
- By seeking review from external sources.

THANK YOU

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