

NORTHCOTT PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE COMMUNITY

APPLICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION SAFE COMMUNITY ACCREDITATION

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Photo by Keith Saunders

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INTRODUCTION

When the residents of Surry Hills' infamous Northcott Building step outside their units, they're not surprised if they trip over junkies passed out on the floor. Tenants often find themselves binning the syringes strewn throughout the corridors. And even children are used to seeing "flat bodies" - those people who commit suicide by jumping from the roof, 14 storeys off the ground. But things are improving. It all started in 2002 with a project called Big hART, backed by the government, which encouraged residents to tell their stories...

The Daily Telegraph 12 January 2006 p.4

Background

John Northcott Housing Estate represents the Department of Housing's (DOH) largest single public housing building made up of predominantly one and two bedroom units. It is unique in Australia in that it is located in the heart of inner Sydney, surrounded by bustling areas of commerce, expensive residential settings and recreational/lifestyle experiences.

Since the late 1990's the DOH and other agencies such as Department of Community Services (DoCS) and the local government authority (City of Sydney) have specifically worked to determine the best form of service delivery to consistently and effectively address the needs of tenants for accessible, adequate and coordinated community services. The 1996 DoCS Report on Northcott was one of the first attempts to encourage collaborative and cross-disciplinary approaches to life and challenges at Northcott.

Different agencies and service providers have understood that community development; advocacy and support and service coordination in tandem with estate improvement and development are all essential steps in improving the wellbeing of Northcott residents.

Our Context

The first tenants moved into Northcott in 1961 and Queen Elizabeth II officially opened it in 1963. At the time Northcott was lauded as 'an outstanding example of what could be done in slum clearance'.¹ Many official documents and anecdotes from residents claim that the area never recovered from the 'slum clearance' and that the new estate never replicated the networks, support and sense of community that were previously there.

¹ Keating, C. "Surry Hills: The City's Backyard", 1991, pp 96-97.

A number of other events in recent history have impacted on life at Northcott. In 1988 the Richmond Report was handed down, which resulted in the de-institutionalisation of people living with a mental illness and disabilities without adequate community resources, affecting people and services across NSW, many of these people ended up in public housing, many in Northcott. In 1994, a restructure of and new direction for the DOH fundamentally changed service delivery and the conception of tenants as 'clients' and a culture of 'total asset management' were introduced. The announcement that Sydney would host the 2000 Olympics saw huge reductions in availability of affordable accommodation such as boarding houses as they made way for backpackers' and bed and breakfasts, further compounding issues for the DOH and at Northcott.

In 1996 the Department of Community Services issued "A report of the Northcott Estate Project", which was an attempt to chart and analyse community need and service delivery. It also made recommendations for the delivery of services and the fostering of community wellbeing at Northcott. The main thrust of the report and its recommendations was that lives and services would not improve unless there was a high level of coordination and collaboration between different government agencies, service providers and a community-led management group (later to become the Neighbourhood Advisory Board).

The 1996 report, other departmental documents, media reports and verbatim accounts paint a picture of a community in crisis in the late nineties and early 2000's. The community experienced a veritable cocktail of issues- family breakdowns, isolation, violence, vandalism, disability and illness, large numbers of people not accessing services, repairs and maintenance problems, feeling unsafe and vulnerable. Northcott was known as the place where people killed themselves or each other. Those that lived at "Suicide Towers" did so in fear and those that did not live there did all that they could to stay away.

In 2002 there was not a day where the DoH Community Development Worker (CDW) did not have someone plead with him to 'get me out of here'. Four years ago in a damning report on Channel 10 News, which followed a spate of horrible crimes, one tenant was asked, what he thought should be done at Northcott. "*They should bulldoze it and start again.*" This tenant was not alone in his thoughts; tenants, the greater community and the government was at a loss as to what to do.... Things had arguably come full circle and fifty years since the first bulldozing, to many it appeared that the slums were back.

Who lives here?

The 1000- people strong community at Northcott is diverse. More than two thirds of tenants are single and 95% receive aged or disability support pensions. Sixty five percent of residents are female and the median age of residents is fifty-eight years. Residents at Northcott were born in fifty different countries and today there is a significant Russian and Chinese population. Children and teenagers live at Northcott and some have three generations of memories at Northcott.

Data that relates to unemployment, median income and other economic indicators describes the Northcott community as a residential area of striking socio-economic disadvantage.

Whilst statistical data regarding the mental health profile of the community is unavailable, many tenants live with a mental illness. Dual experiences of mental illness and substance addiction are not uncommon at Northcott.

Criterion 1: An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community.

How we started

In 2001, the social change arts organisation Big hART Inc and Creative Producer Christopher Saunders began consultations with the Northcott community about a participatory arts program. At the time, the community had been traumatized by a history of murders, suicides and violent crimes. Tenants did not leave their units and there was a culture of shutting the door on other tenants and the rest of the outside world. The public perceived Northcott and tenants fearfully; some service providers and agencies saw Northcott as a waste of time.

In July 2002 the project *Northcott Narratives*² began in the community. At this time the Big hART team of artists and the Creative Producer worked alone. Within 3 months the project had delivered 'wins' for the community and partnerships were formed with the NSW Department of Housing (DOH)- who supported the project through their Community Development Worker (CDW), Dominic Grenot, and Surry Hills Police, who allocated their Crime Prevention Officer (CPO), Senior Constable Brett Degenhardt. This was the beginning of the cross-disciplinary partnerships and relationships that have underpinned the ongoing work and development at Northcott.

Artists and the Creative Producer, the CDW and the CPO went door knocking in 2002. From door knocking the community and its partners have gone on to:

- a play reading at Belvior Street Theatre
- the creation of several short films and songs
- an exhibition of photographic work at the Museum of Sydney
- a sell out large scale site specific performance event as part of Sydney Festival called StickyBrickS
- an ABC documentary, a sold out screening at Sydney International Film Festival
- a Council of Australian Heads of Government Crime and Violence Prevention Award
- affect a change in DOH community development policy
- numerous speaking engagements and community development forums around the state.

² See Appendix 2 Big hART Northcott Narratives Overview

It's not much of a surprise then that the community reports a reduction in crime at Northcott, an increase in social connectedness and pride in the people at Northcott.

Partnerships

Artists from Big *h*ART shared their philosophy: If you know someone's story it is difficult to hurt them. Those that shared their stories felt validated and shared this feeling with others. Interest in story making opportunities 'snow balled'. People began to feel they knew their neighbours and no longer feared them. Differences that once fuelled fear, stigma and discrimination now began to nurture togetherness and a sense of community.

The CDW from the DOH took note of tenants' concerns about their housing and personal concerns. He acted on issues quickly and provided feedback and updates on progress. He attempted to breakdown tenants' negative perceptions of 'the department' born out of years of perceived inaction and lack of care.

The CPO introduced himself by first name and handed out direct line and mobile phone numbers to each tenant he met. He responded promptly and courteously to tenants' concerns about crime and safety. He supported tenants who lived in fear, including those, who for many reasons feared the police. He recognised the diversity of issues and needs in the community and valued individuals' experiences of crime and perceived crime.

Creating opportunities

As tenants began to get to know each other and the partners in the interventions they also began to recognise the need for greater support and involvement in their and the wider community. Links were (and continue to be) forged with a variety of partners in an attempt to further reduce the isolation of tenants.

In 2003 a volunteer tenant committee was established and supported- the Surry Hills Public Tenants Association (SHPTA). They operate a peer-based community centre which runs increasingly more groups, meetings and activities for tenants. The Centre continues to attract more and more people who drop in, socialise, have a coffee, get support or meet with project partners.

Tenants have worked together to identify and address their own individual and community needs. They are resourcing themselves to respond to the needs of their neighbours and those who live in other marginalised and/or isolated communities.

Approximately 30 different individuals, businesses, NGOS and Government Departments have been directly involved in the creating of greater opportunities for the tenants. Many examples of these opportunities and partnerships are

outlined in the two-year observation report, *What Have They Done There?*, included with this application³.

Members of the wider local government area and neighbouring areas are reporting a different 'feeling' at Northcott. Members from the wider community are becoming interested and involved.

A full list of partners is attached in appendix 6⁴.

Documenting experiences

Work is under way to develop a resource kit based on the experiences of all partners and tenants to be used in other marginalised communities. Northcott has a collective story to make and to tell. It is a story that is of interest to other communities and to service providers, government departments and the greater community. Artistic elements of the interventions have resulted in high quality artwork which is exhibited for mainstream audiences.

The New Coalition

The *Northcott Narratives* project is now in its legacy stage and Big hART will complete work with the community in January 2007- 5 years on from those first consultations. The Northcott community has the goodwill, skills and aspiration to keep on the path of community development and create more opportunities for itself.

The Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB), supported by DOH, has been established as a forum for tenants' to report on and address issues that concern their safety and wellbeing at Northcott. The NAB is comprised of representatives from DOH, Surry Hills Police Local Area Command, St Vincent's Mental Health, City of Sydney Council, Department of Community Services, Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care; and local NGO's including Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Central Sydney Community Transport and Northcott tenants.

NAB represents the precise partnerships that are needed to carry on work in the future. All members are able to leverage further support from within their own organisations and others. The NAB is best placed to drive safety promotion work in the future because it models and is supported by the relationships and culture of collaboration that has been developed within and around the community since 2002.

³ Appendix 4 What Have They Done There? 2004 Report

⁴ Appendix 6 Draft Northcott Estate Community Development Plan

A sub committee of the NAB will be directly responsible for driving ongoing safety programs at Northcott. This will be the Safety Committee. The make up of the committee is currently being determined but is certain to include Northcott tenants; DOH, City of Sydney and Health care representatives. The sub committee structure allows us to focus on capitalizing on the experience and commitment of people who have the skills, time and networks to drive this process. This Safety Committee will be able to engage the specific resources and expertise of the wider NAB when required. This option ensures ongoing good will amongst volunteers and agencies and maximizes the use of limited resources.

The Safety Committee will be meeting bi- monthly, reporting to the main NAB bi-monthly as well.

The Safety committee will devise ongoing programs and plans for 2007 and the first part of 2008. It would review its progress and future directions with all partners and stakeholders in July 2008. The Safety Committee's operations will be influenced and responsive to the context of the Northcott Estate Community Development Plan for 2007 and 2008 (draft attached).

How the sustainability of the Safe Community coalition will be ensured

The sustainability of the coalition will be ensured in three main ways:

- Continuation of key partnerships and collaborations already in place
- Ongoing development and implementation of programs
- Incentive to maintain Safe Community status with support from national and international safe community network.

In March 2006 the NSW Minister for Housing extended the CDW position until July 2008. This position is key in the ongoing sustainability of the Safe Community work at Northcott. Since March all partners and tenants have been working to develop a two-year plan for Northcott, a plan that will drive ongoing work here. One of the core principles of this plan is the recognition that the success of ongoing development at Northcott is dependent on the quality of relationships and partnerships within the community.

Letters from agencies/individuals

Attached to this application are a range of letters from partners and stakeholders, speaking to the achievements at Northcott and how the designation as a WHO International Safe Community will further improve partnerships and collaborations within the community⁵. These are Department of Housing, Australia Council for the Arts, NSW Police, Big hART Inc, City of Sydney, Clover Moore, MP, St Vincent's Community Health, St Vincent's Mental Health and Surry Hills Public Tenants Association.

⁵ Appendix 5 Letter of Support

Criteria 2: Long-term, sustainable, programmes covering genders and all ages, environments, and situations.

Criteria 3: Programmes that target high-risk groups and environments, and programmes that promote safety for vulnerable groups.

Safety- the Northcott context

There are many factors that contribute to the actual and perceived 'safety' within a community and many ways of describing, charting and addressing these issues. At Northcott, safety is about social connectedness and relationships; individual and communal agency; physical and emotional well being; a functional and helpful physical environment; a positive image within the broader community, allowing for partnership, support and understanding. To this end the community and partners at Northcott have been working with a conception of safety that aims to:

- increase individual and community sense of ownership of issues around crime, safety and wellbeing
- build community capacity to respond to issues of crime and safety
- support and replicate the community development process which leads to crime prevention, enhances safety and develops individual and community wellbeing.

Programmes

A number of programmes operate and have been operating at Northcott, developed and implemented through the collaboration of different partners. The aim of the entire suite of programs is to increase community connectedness, access to services and activities and to improve community safety and wellbeing.

Injury Prevention for the Elderly 2003- current

St Vincent's Community Health has been running group physiotherapy and Tai Chi classes for elderly Northcott residents. Two separate classes are run weekly at the Community Centre- one is for very frail people and the other is for more able people. The classes aim to improve the physical fitness of the participants, thereby ensuring better health and agility thus preventing falls. The classes also aim to provide an opportunity for social connections and thus reduce isolation amongst elderly people at Northcott.

Safety Information 2002- current

A range of partners produce safety information- everything from emergency services contact numbers to leaflets of drink spiking to information about workshops or groups and activities that are running at the community centre. A selection has been included in the appendix. ⁶Information distribution has been coordinated over the last few years by all partners. Information is delivered to tenants through:

- Mail box drops
- Pin ups on the 30 notice boards throughout the estate
- Leaflets and information posting at the DOH onsite office Leaflets and information posting at the Community Centre
- Distribution to all partners i.e. City of Sydney, SHPTA, DOH, Big hART, DOCS, St Vincent's, NAB, PACT etc.

Police and Community Team Workshops 2003 –current

Police and Community Team (PACT) is a group that has representation from stakeholders across the Surry Hills Community. This group regularly conducts workshops on issues and topics that affect all residents of the area including businesses. In the last year, PACT has run workshops on:

- Reducing Break and Enter
- Drink Spiking
- Minimising Risk of Personal Assault

DOH staff and tenants attend these workshops.

Northcott Narratives 2002-2007

Big hART's work with the Northcott community began in 2002. The aims of the team's work have been to:

1. Use skills based interventions in film, text, music, sound and photography to facilitate tenants' telling their stories, increasing their sense of community, resulting in a decrease in isolation and an increase in feelings of safety
2. Create an opportunity for the life experiences of tenants to be validated, empowering them to move into the next phase of their lives with increased personal skills, to make choices and therefore avoid the atrophy that can be triggered by a culture of dependency
3. Create high quality artworks for national arts forums
4. Affect social and departmental policy in regards to the community development, partnership and service delivery for tenants of public housing.

⁶ Appendix 11 Samples of Safety Information

As Big hART's residency in the Northcott community draws to a close, 5 years on from the first conversations, the company can report that these aims have been achieved. The ripple effect of this work and achievements is significant. The documentary 900 Neighbours⁷ gives a window into the work undertaken. The documentary will screen on the ABC later this year.

Further information regarding *Northcott Narratives* is provided later in this chapter and in the appendices⁸.

Security and Fire 2003- current

Planning is underway for a Personal Safety Alarm project at Northcott. DOH will trial this project with 100 elderly tenants. The aim is to increase feelings of personal safety, increase response times to medical and other incidents.

Fire alarms are fitted in every property at Northcott. These are tested and checked every 6 months by DOH.

At night, security guards patrol Northcott Estate. All tenants have the free-call contact number for the security company. When a tenant regarding an issue or incidents makes a call, the on-site security guards can respond. At present the Surry Hills Police Local Area Command and the Security Company at Northcott are working to develop procedures to share information and increase response times to incidents, particularly at night.

The DoH Community Development Worker 2002-2008

The Community Development Worker position was established in December 2002. Dominic Grenot has held this position from this time. In summary the Community Development Worker role is:

1. Have tenants report an improvement in their sense of community and in turn perceptions of personal safety
2. Achieve a reduction in the number of vacancies, indicating increased community stability and a sense of optimism.
3. To have tenants regard themselves as significantly more involved in decisions that affect their housing and their community.
4. Increase involvement in community activities.
5. Engage, establish, develop and sustain partnerships, relationships and networks across agencies to resource and support the development of the Northcott Estate

⁷ Appendix 9 900 Neighbours DVD

⁸ Appendix 2

Through the key work of Dominic and the partnerships formed through all different programs and the *Northcott Narratives* project, Dominic has been consistently able to report incremental success in all these areas over the last 4 years. Given these successes, the DOH recently took the decision to extend the position until 2008. Originally this position was earmarked to conclude in 2005.

Workshops with tenants and stakeholders working towards a two –year plan have just concluded. The outcomes of this will inform the work of the CDW and the DOH over the next two-year period.

The Community Centre and the Surry Hills Public Tenants Association 2003- ongoing

After many years of limited activity, the Community Centre and the SHPTA have been revitalized and are now a driving force at Northcott. SHPTA is enacting and living its constitution in a very big way. It provides forums for tenants to meet and discuss different aspects of life; it facilitates, develops and organizes tenants' ability to speak for themselves on all issues regarding their tenancy to DOH and other agencies; SHPTA in collaboration with the community centre provides social, artistic recreational and educational activities for all tenants; they have been successful in seeking grants and donations to raise the funds needed for self- determined activities. Furthermore, SHPTA works with DOH, other agencies and the Neighbourhood Advisory Board to address all issues and opportunities relating to Northcott as a safe, healthy and strong community.

In 2006 the Community Centre is a thriving hub of activity- from Tai Chi classes to cooking sessions. It has been the central hub for the *Northcott Narratives* project. The Community Centre is a successful example of the reclamation of space within the community and the harnessing of existing resources, skills and partnerships to deliver positive outcomes for the community.

The Surry Hills Police Crime Prevention Officers 2002- ongoing

Two local Crime Prevention Officers (CPO's) have worked with the Northcott Community and partners since 2002. The key objectives of the CPO's have been:

1. Decrease incidents of and severity of reported crimes
2. Assist the development of a greater sense of safety felt by those on the estate.
3. Move towards positive perceptions of the police and policing on the estate.

In 2006, the entire Northcott Project and the CPO's are able to report effectively against these objectives. There has been a marked decrease in

crimes, particularly violent crimes at Northcott. Police have strong connections with the tenants and are welcomed on the grounds. The work of the CPO's has greatly contributed to the increased feeling and perceptions of safety at Northcott.

Police and DOH have a Memorandum of Understanding so as to best respond to the needs and interests of the tenants. As a result, partners are able to share information regarding tenants concerns, departmental policies and procedures. This relationship and MOU have allowed the partners to present a united and knowledgeable front, lifting their credibility and perceived usefulness within the community, allowing them to respond to the most pressing needs of those with whom they work.

The Northcott Safety Audit 2002- ongoing

The Safety Audit is conducted every three years. Two have been conducted since 2002 and partners report on progress against the plan every 6 months. SHPTA, DOH, NSW Police and the City of Sydney Council lead the Audit and the plan is established through consultation with residents, businesses and other partners. The Audit provides an excellent mechanism through which to prioritise safety and wellbeing concerns with clear responsibilities for action and follow up amongst partners.

The Audit addresses a number of safety issues including lighting; car parks; access to the building; vandalism, building and environmental design; maintenance; drug dealing; policing; tenant mix and amenities.

The 2002 audit again raised the major issue for Northcott of the Unit Numbering System. The system is complex, with over 10,000 different addresses held by Emergency Services for the units in the building. This represents major issues to DOH Staff, visitors, emergency services and police response times, Australia Post and tenants. The re-numbering of the building is underway and expected to be completed by the end of 2006. The 2006 Audit is attached as an appendix⁹

Local Allocation Strategy 2002- current

The Local Allocation Strategy (LAS)¹⁰ was first approved for Northcott in 2003 after the CDW was successful in arguing that it was needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Northcott Community. LAS's are not widespread in NSW. What a LAS effectively does is allow the local DOH team to choose, through the use of a range of specific and locally relevant criteria, who on the NSW Public Housing Waiting List is offered accommodation at Northcott. A procedure called Investigate and Allocate (IAA) is used to implement the LAS policy. With every newly vacant property the CDW

⁹ Appendix 7 2006 Safety Audit

¹⁰ Appendix 8 Local Allocation Strategy

interviews prospective tenants, assesses their suitability according to the criteria and then makes a decision whether to allocate the property to the applicant.

Essentially, the LAS criteria takes into account the current population at Northcott, projections about the make up of the population in years to come (i.e. the impacts of an ageing population, death, mental health etc) and the range of services readily available at Northcott or in the vicinity.

The LAS and the implementation of this through the IAA procedure have had positive outcomes for the Northcott community. In the simplest terms, it has meant that there has been a good mix of tenants at the Estate, and an intake of people that will hopefully have long tenancy's at Northcott, aiding the ongoing development of community identity and ownership of issues. The LAS has also made it possible to ensure that people taking up residency at Northcott are well supported according to their specific needs by a range of partners and that the DOH is aware of the needs of its tenants.

Life Support Network 2006- ongoing

The Life Support Network is an inter-agency network made up of all those people who support (in whatever way) tenants who live in the Northcott Public Housing community (and surrounds). It is a non-prescriptive group that operates informally and also provides structured, formal support that is needed.

Below is a list of the major programmes currently in operation at Northcott. The table demonstrates that programmes operate across the different demographics in the community, and address different environmental locations including the home, communal space and the street. Many programs are created in response to changing data. For example, Dominic Grenot monitors the transfers to and out of Northcott and can pre-empt the need for different programs. Programs have been developed for the influx of Chinese and Russian groups, for spikes in drug use (Across Sydney) and ICE awareness workshops.

Program name and developer	Need addressed	Target Population	Length Of operation	Findings/Outcomes	Partners
Northcott Narratives Developed by Big hART	-social connectedness - isolation - public stigma	Northcott Community	2002-2006	-increased social connectedness -positive public profile -increased community pride and spirit -new artworks created	DOH, NSW Police, Australia Council, SHPTA
Community Development Worker Developed by DOH	- Wellbeing of tenants.	Northcott Community	2002-2008	-increased social connectedness -increased service access and provision to tenants - development of community development policy by DOH -reduced transfers out of Northcott -positive public profile -increased community pride and spirit	DOH, Police, NSW Health, Big hART, SHPTA, ST Vincent's Mental Health.
Community Centre- Developed by SHPTA and residents	provision of safe and inviting space community programs and activities	Northcott community Elderly women Children and teenagers	Centre opened in 1984 but revitalized since 2003.	revitalization, new constitution and management community driven and operated First formal incorporation by tenants	DOH, Big hART, TAFE, DOCS, SHPTA, St Vincent's Mental Health and Community Health
Neighbourhood Advisory Board Developed by DOH	Greater coordination of efforts across agencies,	Public Housing community	1995-ongoing	-greater and ongoing coordination of information and services -problem solving proactive identification of issues Need identified by CDW	DOH, SHPTA, St Vincent's Mental Health, DOCS, DAHHC,
Life Support Network Developed by DOH	Providing formal and informal support to tenants in all aspects of their lives and extra coordination	Public Housing community and partners	2006		DOH, Big hART, TAFE, individuals, Police, NSW Health, City of Sydney, tenants Assoc.
Local Allocation Strategy Developed DOH	Ensuring that the mix of tenants at	Northcott Community	2003-present	- less vacancies -longer term tenancy	DOH,SHPTA, Police

Program name and developer	Need addressed	Target Population	Length Of operation	Findings/Outcomes	Partners
	Northcott increases safety and sustainability of community life			- supported residents -increase in community ownership of the estate and community life	
Tai Chi and physiotherapy Classes Developed by St Vincent's Community Health	Increasing physical health and agility of elderly	Elderly and frail	2003-ongoing	- improved physical health and movement - reduced isolation and depression.	SHPTA, Community Centre
NAPCAN Foundation Child Protection Week	Decreasing isolation Safety and wellbeing of children	Children	2006	- Addressing specific needs of children.	DOH, Life Support Network, NAB
TAFE Outreach- Developed by TAFE NSW	Education needs and interests	Adult tenants	2003-ongoing	- ongoing learning - skills development - employment	Community Centre
Surry Hills Drug Action Team	Health education and promotion related to drug use.	Northcott community	2002-2006	- education programs within community - partnerships with local media and agencies	NSW Health, Police, local media, local government, DOH
Safety Information Developed by all partners	Provision of information to tenants	Northcott community	2003-ongoing	- information provision and distribution re safety, health and emergency information	DOH, NSW Police, City of Sydney, Emergency Services, Community Centre, Big hART.
Crime Prevention Officer- NSW Police and Police Consultation Days Developed by NSW police	- fear of crime -reporting of crime -increased intelligence	Northcott tenants	2002-2006	-increased feeling and perception of safety -increase reporting of crime -reduction in crime on site	DOH, NSW Police, Big hART
Security Guards Developed by DOH Police and Community Team workshops	Night security Specific workshops on topics that affect all residents and businesses in Surry Hills eg, Reducing	Northcott community Surry Hills community	2003-ongoing 2003-ongoing	-more secure premises and reduced incidents at night - increased knowledge and information about ways to reduce crime and increase personal and community safety through specific workshops.	DOH, NSW Police, SHPTA Surry Hills community, Chamber of Commerce, Police, SHPTA, DOH, City of Sydney.

developer	Need addressed	Target Population	Length Of operation	Findings/Outcomes	Partners
Count Me iN Group- Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre Developed by DOH and SHNC	the chance of a Brake and Enter; Minimising Personal Assault; Drug Spiking workshops etc. Information and support to men	25-50 year old males living with mental health and Drug and alcohol issues	2004-ongoing	-increased support and service provision -more effective information provision -decrease in isolation -increased skills development	Community Centre
Blokes Business- Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre Developed by DOH and SHNC	Social connectedness and isolation.	Men over 55 and single.	2004 ongoing	-decreased isolation -increased social support -increased skills development	Community Centre
Unwaged Performances- Belvior Street Theatre	Access to high quality performing arts	Tenants		- interest from residents	Community Centre, Big hART
Central Sydney Community Transport Services	Transport and isolation- transport to shopping centres, individual medical transport and social outings/excursions.	Tenants on a pension and over 50 years old	2004-ongoing	-increased mobility -maintain health -decreased isolation -maintenance of health support	Community Centre
Accelerated Improvement program and Safety Audit -DOH, Police, City of Sydney, SHPTA	physical environment and safety at Northcott	Northcott community Physical environment	2002-2006	- list of physical and structural improvements to surroundings - greater cooperation between groups	DOH,NAB, local govt,police.

A summary of the achievements and outcomes of activities has been included as an appendix to this application as part of the Draft Northcott Estate Community Development Plan¹¹.

The spark and start for Northcott Narratives

The *Northcott Narratives* intervention began as a result of the interest and drive of two individuals; Dominic Grenot, the DoH Community Development Worker and Scott Rankin, Creative Director of Big *h*ART Inc.

Both individuals identified that Public Housing tenants represented a significantly disadvantaged group within the broader, affluent Sydney society. At the time, "Sydney" as a city had no engagement with this community. Furthermore, Sydney's and arguably Australia's premier publicly funded theatre companies (STC and Company B) were both neighbours of significant public housing estates and had never engaged creatively or developmentally with their neighbours.

Once the idea was conceived, Company B responded to the invitation to work with its neighbours. The DOH was also interested in seriously using cultural tools to initiate change within the community. Big *h*ART has been working with marginalized and isolated communities to initiate positive change since 1992. Big *h*ART's model and process of community cultural development had been tried and tested and proven successful and effective over this time.

The national context for community cultural development

Community cultural development is a practice whereby professional artists collaborate with communities as equal partners to bring about social change and to create art.

For over 30 years this practice has demonstrated the efficacy of arts-based engagement in community development and cross-disciplinary collaboration between community, arts and government sectors at a grass roots level.

In the early 2000's there was increased interest in and research conducted into strategies to improve community wellbeing. The Australia Council for the Arts, the federal government's arts funding and advisory body, advocated for the use of and engagement with community cultural development practice by all government agencies as an effective means through which to engage with communities for whom they had a service and wellbeing responsibility. This was known as the Art and Wellbeing strategy and it encouraged the uptake of both instrumental and transformative approaches to the use of arts-based engagement and cross-portfolio collaboration to address seemingly intractable issues.

¹¹ Appendix 6 Draft Northcott Estate Community Development Plan

One of the core assumptions of community cultural development and the Art and Wellbeing strategy is that given the opportunities, skills and support, communities are able to contribute to and drive solutions to local issues. Furthermore the processes involved in community cultural development present an innovative method for connection, consultation and collaboration amongst government, service organisations and communities.

Big *h*ART's work over the last 14 years contributed significantly to the development of the Art and Wellbeing strategy and agenda. Big *h*ART's mission is:

- To provide opportunities for people experiencing the effects of marginalisation and make positive change.
- To foster participation in the arts, creating new work for national and international arts festivals.
- To foster a more inclusive Australian culture and stronger regional economies.

The applicability of Big *h*ART's work with the Northcott community was that it aimed to challenge the DOH to recognise the importance of arts based interventions for both their individual clients and public housing communities and to adopt a policy of support for the replication of projects across the state and beyond. This strategy was strongly supported by organisations such as the Australia Council for the Arts and the City of Sydney.

Northcott presented a difficult combination of government and agency relations, high needs within the community and non-politically appealing issues. Northcott provided the perfect opportunity to explore cross-government, cross-portfolio strategies that built on the strengths of the community and could provide a model for duplication across other sectors or estates. In other words, if the efficacy and benefit of community cultural development could be proven here, it could be proven anywhere.

In July 2006 the Hon Cherie Burton, Minister for Housing released the summary findings of the Twyford Report¹², an evaluation of the Northcott project. The report and the Minister have acknowledged the success of the processes, partnerships and outcomes at Northcott in relation to the safety and wellbeing of residents. The Northcott Project will be further supported for at least two more years and reviewed again. The Twyford Report also encourages the DOH to consider replication of the process at other sites and to clearly model and communicate its policy on community development based on the Northcott example. The work of all stakeholders, partners and residents has driven this result.

Northcott Narratives- the process

Below is a summary of the community development process used throughout the *Northcott Narratives* project by Big *h*ART and project partners.

1. Partnerships from the ground up

Northcott was traumatized at the onset of this intervention. It was vital that all partners worked together. A Crime Prevention Officer, Community Development Worker and Artist

¹² Appendix 3 Summary findings of Twyford Report

began knocking on doors, introducing themselves to the tenants. They handed out direct contact numbers and offered a positive shared vision for the Northcott Community.

2. Building rapport and developing trusting relationships

Workers from all partners began to form relationships with individual tenants and were then able to introduce tenants to each other. If a community were to develop at Northcott people would have to know each other's names and faces.

3. Validating individual experiences and concerns

If you know someone's story it is difficult to hurt them. As creative work evolved on the ground, tenants' stories and experiences were heard and validated. People began sharing their stories and concerns with one another and different agency workers.

4. Open Crowd method

A central feature of the entire process has been the 'open crowd method' of development. This method builds a project structure that recognises that not all people will have direct and immediate involvement in all activities and events. Open Crowd method ensures that regardless of any individual's level of direct involvement, all feel that they have been and can be involved in any activity or event. At Northcott any event or activity is preceded by an invitation to all tenants to become involved.

The open crowd method of intervention allowed for a great increase in the number of tenants coming forward to be involved. Those who participated or told their story felt validated and would go on to tell their neighbours and those they meet about the validation and the experience. Events and activities were highly visible and inviting. Photography shoots took place in lifts, corridors or in the open common areas so as to allow people to see what was going on and test the waters before becoming involved.

Artists from the Big hART team attended barbeques, went to the community centre, hung out in the park and drank cups of tea. They too made themselves accessible and recognised the need for people to 'check them out' before becoming involved in any artistic activities or events.

5. Creating opportunities

As tenants began to get to know each other and the partners, they developed a resource bank of creative work and gained confidence, opportunities for activities and advocacy increased. Big hART's process is designed to be responsive to the pursuit of opportunities that present themselves as well as working hard to create opportunities.

Some examples of this include several media stories, tenants and Big hART were asked to perform and help launch the Art and Wellbeing publication for the Australia Council and Sandy Henderson, the Chair of SHPTA was accepted into the Sydney Leadership Course, run by the Benevolent Society.

6. Fostering shared experiences, new skills and getting it out there

Numerous creative activities have provided tenants an opportunity to show case their work and develop creative, communication and life-skills. A play has been developed and a first reading was held at Belvoir St Theatre under the direction of premier Australian director, Neil Armfield. Music Festivals and jam sessions attract professional musicians from outside Northcott who work hand in hand with the tenants. The results of the photography project tenant by tenant have been displayed at Walk the Streets Exhibition in Newtown and won the Museum of Contemporary Arts' Judges Ward and as part of Sydney Festival at the Museum of Sydney. A short film won a film competition. StickyBricks, a large-scale performance installation sold out as part of the Sydney Festival, 900 Neighbours, a feature documentary was sold out during the Sydney Film Festival in 2006 and will go to air later this year on the ABC. Northcott is telling its collective story and people are listening. It's a lot harder to hurt someone when you know their story...

The Northcott Narratives have featured in numerous outstanding media reports including two full page features in the Sydney Morning Herald and a feature story on the ABC 7:30 Report. The wider community is being provided a very different picture to that they had become accustomed.

7. Learning and sharing lessons

Partners and tenants are approached by other stakeholders and invited to share their experience, skills and lessons. The community is seeking out greater and more diverse opportunities for the tenants of Northcott to share their individual and collective stories.

8. Documenting experiences

Work is under way to develop a resource kit based on the experiences of all partners and tenants to be used in other marginalised communities. Northcott has a collective story to make and to tell. It is a story that is of interest to other communities and to service providers, government departments and the greater community.

Artistic elements of the interventions have resulted in high quality art work which is exhibited for mainstream audiences.

The processes and outcomes of the work have been documented by Big hART, the Department of Housing, two independent evaluations and through partner and tenant planning, brainstorming and evaluation meetings.

9. Leaving a legacy

The tenant run Community Centre is becoming the hub of activities at Northcott. It is a true centre of the community. Tenants are being resourced as support people, trainers, advocates, mentors, facilitators, safety ambassadors, police liaison people and the like. More and more partner organisations and individuals are becoming involved and volunteering their

time, resources and expertise. The community owns the community and cultural development achievements in this work.

The Future

A central aim of Big hART's work with the community and all partners is to ensure an ongoing legacy. Legacy is ensured by building the skills, relationships and the experience of 'success' within and around a community, to support ongoing community-led activities and cross-agency service delivery.

To date this has manifested in the resourcing of residents and the Community Centre, enabling them to facilitate elements of the program previously led by Big hART for example creative and arts activities, social activities, liaison with Police and DOH. Tenant's communication skills have also developed through their self-initiated publication *The Tenant Tattler* and through their involvement in making the documentary 900 Neighbours.

The Northcott community and partners will continue to work for the safety and wellbeing of the residents. A range of very strong networks and relationships exist within and around Northcott. The ongoing commitment to the position of the Community Development Worker; the strength of the Neighbourhood Advisory Board and the vibrancy and pro-active force of the Community Centre and its tenant-lead management committee all contribute to the ongoing legacy for community safety and wellbeing.

The NSW Minister for Housing, the Hon Cherie Burton has recognised the significance of the community development work happening at Northcott and the importance of the community development approach. Support from the highest level for this project and for the consideration of applying this model of community development process statewide is a strong sign that the ongoing safety and wellbeing of Northcott residents will be supported and addressed.

The Safe Community Accreditation process itself is supporting the longer-term future of community safety and wellbeing. The process has been a beneficial tool to engage and encourage partners to discuss, envisage and plan for ongoing programmes, relationships and new aims. SHPTA and partners have conducted a two month brainstorming and planning session, mapping out the aims, activities and strategies for the next two years. These meetings have been part of a range of forums and opportunities for people to come together to inform the 2-year plan.

A significant media strategy around accreditation will be activated should the application be successful. The strategy and ceremony will focus achieving a high media profile for the successes and positive work of the Northcott Community and its partners. The Minister for Housing, the Premier and the Lord Mayor will be invited to witness and participate in the ceremony along with media. The accreditation ceremony will coincide with the launch of the Resource Box in November 2006. The Art Box is another outcome of the work of Big hART, residents and partners since 2002.

The Art Box is a small box created with tenants, full of messages, photos of tenants by tenants, music and films made during the project. It also includes information on and

contacts for a range of community services and agencies. The Art Box will be fascinating to pass around, immediately and clearly illustrating the success of the project in a strong visual, non-literacy manner. The SHPTA, NAB, Community Centre and DOH will use The Art Box to welcome new tenants. Tenants or partners at forums and conferences around the country will also use the Art Box as a promotional tool across government and during presentations.

The accreditation and Art Box launch will signify the end of Big hART's active work with the Northcott community. The event will mark the significant achievements and challenges of the work and provide the springboard for the community and its partners to look to the future and set its sights on further achievements.

Plans

Plans for programs over the next two years will continue to focus on issues that affect the entire community and targeted programs for specific groups in the community. Program areas slated for 2007 and 2008 include:

1. Building Security
2. Personal Safety
3. Drug and Crime Prevention including Domestic Violence, Elder Abuse and vandalism
4. Community Capacity Building
5. Maintenance, Cleaning and Gardens
6. Better Neighbourhood management including relationships and responsibilities of DOH, Police, SHPTA and other agencies.
7. Service Opportunities linked to community needs. Here partners will address basic needs, the needs of the elderly, mental health, transport, communication between parties and agencies, participation in activities, leadership, life skills, employment and volunteering.¹³

¹³ Appendix 6

Criteria 4: Programmes that document the frequency and causes of injuries – both un-intentional (accidents) and intentional (violence and self-directed).

How we know what's going on

"There certainly do not appear to be simple, overarching indicators which have any real meaning." (Matarasso 1999: 13)

The use of crime or hospital statistics or self-reports alone does not provide a true picture of safety in any community. Perceptions of crime and safety and links to social cohesion, social capital, and individual and community wellbeing are equally important. However, these changes are difficult to quantify and even more difficult to articulate in terms of cause and effect. The Big *h*ART approach, utilizing arts based practices to bring about community change, is heavily reliant on partnerships. Each partnership and every action carried out forms part of the change process. No one action can be separated from the other and no one partner from the next. No one outcome results from any single input. This is the beauty of the work and, ironically, the difficulty in explaining its effectiveness.

"...conducting robust evaluations of community arts projects presents considerable methodological challenges." (Newman et al 2003:313)

Currently a range of methods is employed to document issues in relation to community wellbeing, connectedness and safety. The methods combine a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, some of them standard, some a little more creative in their approach. These include:

1. Analysis of Literature and evidence

An extensive literature review has been carried out in 2006. This literature review includes analysis of Crime Prevention and Community Cultural Development projects. The literature review will be incorporated in the evaluation strategies as a means of comparison and to demonstrate the project's effectiveness in terms of the available evidence base.

2. Process Observation

Different project partners and the evaluator observe and document the processes of the project in the hope that any evaluation will be useful in terms of project replication and modification. This process observation aims to contribute to the evidence base illustrating not only the "what works" and "what does not work" but also the "how things work" or "don't". Such a process observation informs project planners and assists to demonstrate the complexity of such innovative work. The 2004 report was the first outcome of such a method.¹⁴

¹⁴ Appendix 4

3. In-depth Interviews direct participants, indirect or observing participants, key partners and gate-keepers

In-depth interviews, based around themes, have been carried out across the project period. They have served to support and inform the documentation of the process observation.

4. Project length Case Studies

Participants – both direct and indirect – have been interviewed consistently over the project in an attempt to measure changes in perceptions of crime, fear of crime, community cohesion, community ownership and any other unanticipated impacts of the work.

5. Analysis of available statistics

Department of Housing Statistics, NSW Police Statistics, Community Centre Records, Audience Numbers etc. One of the single most obstacles to both effective service provision and data collection is the horror of the Northcott numbering system- something which has a logic that tends not to stick. Emergency Services and other agencies have over 10,000 different addresses for Northcott. The Unit-Re Numbering Project should assist greatly in this matter.

6. Media analysis

Regular media collection and analysis or representation is conducted. The full range of media is attached as an appendix to this application.¹⁵

7. Accidents and Incidents Report Book

The Community Centre has an Accidents and Incidents Report Book which is used to record any incidents and accidents that happen around the estate. It works on a self-reporting system. Entries in the book are referred to the relevant body i.e. police , DOH or the Security company.

Looking for meaningful information

There are a number of challenges we face in the collection, analysis and coordination of information and data in relation to Northcott. These challenges range from official national and local agency data collection and availability to the dexterity of partners who are able to share information, particularly that which is collected anecdotally and through process-based activity. The following section gives an overview of these challenges and how information has been useful.

Northcott in its Metropolitan Context

Northcott in Surry Hills falls within the City of Sydney- Australia's largest city and economic

¹⁵ Appendix 10

centre. In the period 1996-2001, the City of Sydney absorbed a massive 28% of the entire Sydney metropolitan employment growth. This employment growth supported and encouraged a renaissance in inner-city living. Since 1996, the resident population of the City of Sydney has increased by just under 50,000 people, over 40 %, and by more than 20,000 since the last Population census in 2001. At June 2004; the ABS estimated the resident population at 146,297. By December 2004, it had just ticked over 150,000, based on dwelling completions.

This rapid growth is expected to continue into the immediate future with the resident population set to increase to 180,000 by 2009, a further increase of 30,000 or almost 20% higher than the June 2004 estimate.

Based on industry-mix and relative occupational wage levels, it is estimated that Economic Activity (GDP) generated in the City of Sydney in 2003-2004 was approximately \$63 billion. This represents over 8% (nearly one-twelfth) of the total national Australian economy, over 30% of the Sydney metropolitan area and almost one-quarter of the GDP of the entire state of NSW.

The City is also Australia's iconic city. Over half of all international visitors come to Sydney and two-thirds of international business visitors.¹⁶

Therefore, much data relating to population, crime, economic and commercial indicators is City of Sydney wide, and this provides little relevant or relative information in relation to life at Northcott.

Northcott in the Surry Hills context

The 2001 Census and the Australian Bureau of Statistics provides data relating to the population within Surry Hills. This provides Northcott with some base-line data about the area but again, this information is limited. For example, ABS data for Surry Hills shows that 33.7% of the population was born overseas. At Northcott we know that 45% of the population was born overseas. The median age for Surry Hills residents is 25-29 where as at Northcott it is 55 years.

Crime Data

Crime data is predominantly accessed through the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSR). Statistics and data available publicly through BOSCR can only represent information down to a Local Government Area. In this case, this is the City of Sydney. Whilst trends for the City have been monitored and used throughout the project, the process for data collection and understanding the issues relating to crime and fear of crime have been augmented by other methods. For example, Surry Hills local police area command has assisted with the provision of data and the analysis of data in relation to types of crime in the immediate vicinity of Northcott. This information has also been supported by analysis of crime 'hot spots'.

¹⁶ City of Sydney Website www.cityofsydney.com.au

Information has also been gathered through the grass roots activities of the Crime Prevention Officers, tenants and other partners through regular community meeting days and direct telephone access to the officers. CPO's listen and observe.

The DOH and Police have a memorandum of understanding that allows for the sharing of certain information. This includes crime-related information. Key areas of concern are and remain traffic through the estate; drug dealing on the premises; opportunistic crime with a largely vulnerable community; building and grounds design and maintenance issues.

Media reportage of crime and perceptions of crime have also been useful in monitoring issues that relate to community safety at Northcott.

The *Northcott Narratives* project has consistently collected anecdotes and stories relating to crime and fear of crime throughout the project.

Combined, these methods assist the community and project partners to understand crime related issues and to plan for effective programs and interventions.

Health Data

A complicating element of Health Data is that much data is provided in relation to the NSW Health Areas, which do not correspond with Local Government Areas and provide little opportunity for cross-referencing or comparison. Specific Mental Health data is also unavailable.

Given Northcott's location in a large and recreational city, and the unit numbering issue - data from Emergency unit from St Vincent's Hospital is also unusable.

Housing Data

The DOH keeps various data that does assist in understanding the sense of safety and wellbeing within the Northcott community. This includes complaints, applications for transfers, and reasons for vacancies. Over the period of the project, almost all data areas have recorded an improvement. This is one of the key data sources that are actually helpful in reflecting on and planning programs.

Story and connection data

The *Northcott Narratives* project itself has built up a good body of information and understanding about the Northcott community through song, music, narrative, image, the Resource Box and major events. Again, the knowledge, information and 'data' created and collected through this process has been invaluable in allowing partners and the community to determine and plan for the future.

Collaborative Processes

Project partners share data, information and observations in this community. Much of this comes together in collaborative project such as the Safety Audit, combining the resources and knowledge of the City of Sydney, SHPTA, DOH and NSW Police.

More collaborative processes around specific tasks, projects and issues would provide better quality information and guidance to all involved in community safety promotion at Northcott. It is hoped the new Life Support Network will contribute to this process.

National Housing Comparison

Northcott is totally unique in Australia. The closest comparable examples are the high-rise estates in Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy in Victoria. There is no comparative data that is meaningful or useful for analysis or comparison.

Information that makes a difference

Project partners and tenants have begun to capture and define the information that is meaningful to them in the progression towards community development and safety goals. However, the Safety Committee and other project partners face significant challenges in working towards change at a local, state and national agency level.

For example, ABS, BOSCRS and Local Government data cannot specify information that directly relates to a public housing community. Specific data would be useful for planning, comparisons and the lobbying of business or government agencies in advocating for changes to programs or policies or in supporting the evaluation of those that are achieving good outcomes.

Data collection and Evaluation Plans for the Future

The current range of methods employed will continue. However, the Draft Northcott Estate Community Development Plan (NECDP) calls for a clear accountability framework. The DOH, as part of its Community Regeneration Strategy (within which the NECDP sits) incorporates monitoring and evaluation framework. Key indicators for the NECDP will be developed within the community. In addition the community has requested a model of Action Research to also accompany the development and implementation process.

Other work that is contributing data and analysis

Northcott is aware of several projects currently being conducted that have the potential to provide significant and useful data and analysis regarding community demographics, wellbeing and safety. One such project is *Department of Housing Neighbourhood Aid Evaluation* conducted by the Centre for Research on Social Inclusion at Macquarie University, NSW. This project involves an evaluation of two pilot Neighbour Aid projects which offer low-level support services to people living in Public Housing who are older or have a disability.

Criteria 5: Evaluation measures to assess programmes, processes and the effects of change.

The Goals

The goals of partners and the Northcott community over the last four years have been to:

- increase individual and community sense of ownership of issues around crime, safety and wellbeing
- build community capacity to respond to issues of crime and safety
- tell the stories of Northcott residents and shift the media and broader community perception of Northcott and residents
- support and replicate the community development process which leads to crime prevention, enhances safety and develops individual and community wellbeing.

The Northcott community and partners have been evaluating the project through a number of avenues. There has been the work of Emily Mayo, an independent evaluator and observer who has provided ongoing reports and information to project partners and participants; the 1996 DoCS Report; the 2002 and 2006 Safety Audit has provided strong information on the progress of work, particularly CPTED-based work. The Department of Housing has monitored progress against some of its key data collection areas such as requests for transfers and vacancies etc. Annual stakeholders forums allow all involved to reflect of activities and plan for the future. Quarterly meeting have been held with Clover Moore- the Lord Mayor of Sydney and local member. These meetings have been valuable for discussing, venting and recording issues at Northcott. They have also served as a means by which to escalate politically certain issues or responses. The NAB provides a forum for discussion and action-led change.

Evaluation

Emily Mayo has been contracted as the project evaluator. Emily has worked in consultation with project partners and participants. The evaluation has incorporated participatory activities and encourages contribution from a variety of the target community and the greater community. Evaluation includes:

- Documentation of monthly meetings with tenants and Police Crime Prevention Officers to assess progress of implemented strategies and to discuss changes and improvements
- Documented Community Council meetings
- Neighbourhood Advisory Board meetings- reporting and addressing issues and changes within the community
- Annual Partnership Progress meeting in December each year involving all stakeholder- run by an independent facilitator.
- Annual partnership report gives detailed documentation of all aspects of the project achievements
- Base line and end line sample conducted with new tenants

The Methods we have used and will continue to use

As outlined in the previous chapter, there are a range of methods used that assist us in recording and charting the frequency and cause of safety related injuries and perception. These methods are both part of the data collection and evaluation process. In summary they include:

- Analysis of Literature and evidence
- Process Observation
- In-depth Interviews direct participants, indirect or observing participants, key partners and gatekeepers.
- Project length Case Studies
- Analysis of available statistics
- Incidents and Accidents Report Book
- Media Analysis

The evaluator is also assisting participants in the development of a community directory and manual of their work and community. Participation levels will be gauged and documented. Levels of usefulness of such a directory will be documented.

Information that relates to 2005-2006 will be made publicly available in February 2007 at the conclusion of the Northcott Narratives project. However at this time we are able to provide a comparison of some statistics from 2002-2004. These statistics are from the DOH and chart indicators relating to vacancies, transfers and evictions. Further data can be found in Appendix 4.

Vacancies

This table illustrates the reduction in properties becoming vacant over the period 2002-2004.

Year	Northcott Estate total 591	% of total	% annual reduction
2002	95	16.1	-
2003	76	12.9	20
2004	70	11.8	8
	Percentage reduction over the period		26

The table below illustrates the changes in the reasons for vacation of properties at Northcott over the period 2002-2004.

Reason for vacating	2002 (n=95)	2003 (n=76)	2004 (n=70)
Rehousing (DOH)	27	19	19
Move to private rental	21	12	13
Death	18	19	18
Move to supported accommodation (includes nursing facilities)	12	8	9
Eviction	6	5	4
Prison	5	4	1
Other (includes abandonment, succession)	6	9	6

The Use and Design of 'Indicators'

The partnership project has broadly aimed to:

1. Increase individual and community sense of ownership of issues around crime and safety
2. Build community capacity to respond to issues of crime and safety
3. Support and replicate the processes of community development which lead to crime prevention and enhance safety

The following table outlines the benefits of the project and proposed manner by which to measure the projects effectiveness.

Intended Community Safety Benefits	Measures and Methods
Reduction of criminal incidents including murder, assault, drug-related, vandalism and theft	Analysis of Crime Statistics Interviews with Crime Prevention Officers Observation
Decrease in inappropriate calls to police	Interviews with Crime Prevention Officers
Decrease in costs associated with damages to the building	Interviews with Department of Housing Staff Observation
Improved response times in emergencies	Interviews with Police Interviews with Tenants
Reduction in feelings of isolation and increased sense of connection to the community	Interviews with Direct and Indirect Project participants Longitudinal Case Studies Analysis of Community Centre Statistics and event/activity attendance
Improved knowledge and access to community resources and services	Interviews with Direct and Indirect Project participants and partners Analysis of participation in events and activities

Intended Community Safety Benefits	Measures and Methods
Positive changes around identity and well being	Interviews with Direct and Indirect Project participants Longitudinal Case Studies
Reduction in police investigative time	Interviews with Police Analysis of Crime Statistics
Increase in intelligence and reporting to police	Interviews with Police Analysis of Crime Statistics
Reduction in antisocial behaviour	Interviews with Tenants, Police and key stakeholders Observation
Reduction in risk taking behaviour	Interviews with Direct and Indirect Project Participants Observation Case Studies
Relationships of trust formed and sustained	Interviews with Participants and Partners Observation Case Studies
Increase in community interaction and participation	Interviews with Participants and Partners Analysis of Community Centre records of activities and events
Change in the public perception of Northcott	Media Analysis Attendance of wider community at events Response of wider community to events Observation

Outcomes so far...

Below is a list of some of the tangible outcomes of the project, many of which were hoped for, all of which continue to exceed expectations.

- Play script developed and support and interest in its production gained from established theatre company, director and actors
- Short film produced – winning film festival
- Tenant photographs of their neighbours to be exhibited in mainstream galleries
- Tenant stories developed to be used to publish resource for new tenants, other communities, and workers from government and non-government organisations.
- Representative, proactive tenant committee established
- Peer run Community Centre open 6 days a week
- Serious crime rates reduced
- Reduction in investigation time and associated costs to police
- Increase in significant intelligence provided to the police
- Greater access to services for tenants
- Less applications for transfer out of the building
- Decreased dumping of rubbish and damage to the building
- Reduced fear of crime
- Greater community involvement and connectivity
- Tenants and partners invited to speak at forums, conferences and meetings about crime prevention, community development and arts based interventions.
- Approximately 30 new community partners established to respond to the needs of individuals and the Northcott community

- Monthly tenant prepared newsletter
- Annual 3 Days in November music performances and workshops
- Several short films completed
- Documentary -900 Neighbours completed and voted one of the audience favourites at Sydney Film Festival and will be screened on the ABC.
- DOH extends Community Development Worker role for two more years.
- DOH 2 year plan has inbuilt monitoring and evaluation framework.
- DOH report recommends replication of the process and activities statewide.
- Sold out season for StickybrickS- Sydney Festival
- Tenant by Tenant Exhibition- Museum of Sydney, Sydney Festival.

Future Plans

As work at Northcott continues the Safety Committee will, in partnership with other stakeholders, continue to evaluate the programmes and activities at Northcott. As part of the development of the NECDP a range of indicators are being developed to measure the outputs of the plan in both a quantitative and qualitative manner. The indicators are framed around the four objectives of this plan which are Building Stronger Safer Communities; Better Housing and Public Spaces; Better Neighbourhood Management and Service Opportunities linked to Community Needs.

There are many challenges in regard to ongoing evaluation and the use of the findings to affect change. These include:

- Accessing specific resources to continue to evaluate programmes
- Tracking legacy projects and activities post Big hART's exit from Northcott
- The collection and access to meaningful data from official agencies.

It will be the role of the Safety Committee will be to examine the needs of the community over the next two years and address these challenges. The mission of the Safety Committee will be to build on the work of recent years including the WHO accreditation process and the 2-year plan, utilizing all support and works accessible to ensure the safety of the Northcott community. The key issues for the Safety Committee will include crime, falls, environmental and building design and access, social support and education across a range of areas. The Safety Committee will also be responsible for ongoing training and support of tenant Safety Ambassadors.

Affecting Change- what the evaluation results will help change

The evaluation of each different program will hopefully illustrate its effectiveness and therefore ensure its ongoing delivery and support.

The cumulative and collaborative efforts of all partners, and the evaluation of the work across the spectrum will be used to support the arguments that significant solutions can only be delivered through collaboration and partnership. This will then feed into major lobbying efforts to alter the data collection systems of key providers including DOH, Police and the City of Sydney.

In a macro view, the findings across all programs will be helpful in making the case to the NSW DOH to approve the continuation of the Local Allocation Strategy and the Investigate and Allocate procedure. There is significant pressure to discontinue LAS's across NSW. The reasons for this appear to include:

- The perception that the LAS and IAA encourages 'queue jumping' and is thus unfair to others on the waiting lists.
- The discrepancies between the needs of DOH for quick turn around times in filling vacancies, for 'service delivery' and income reasons (i.e. a vacant property does not bring in rental income) and the aims of local DOH property teams (such as that at Northcott) to go through a process of Investigation and Allocation- which takes time and resources.

Thus, findings and data that relates to the range of programs at Northcott will reflect that the investment in the LAS and IAA procedure is an investment which yields greater financial results and community development results in the long term, as opposed to the small short term losses incurred by adhering to such a strategy. It is hoped then that the NSW DOH will encourage the development of LAS's and not their discontinuation.

Evidence of evaluation findings used to inform the ongoing refinement of plans, initiatives and/or programmes

Each evaluation tool has been useful in developing the ongoing activities at Northcott. For example Blokes Business came about after the CDW and other partners realized that a very significant proportion of older tenants were living alone, and that most of these were women. It was also recognised that many of the women still had local and family connections. Older men on the other hand had far less of a social and community network.

Annual stakeholder planning days have been very useful in setting the direction of programmes at Northcott. For example Count Me iN is for younger men (25-50) living with mental health and drug and alcohol issues. Through the planning days and DOH data collection it has become evident that this is a growing group at Northcott and that responsive activities and services needed to be created for them.

Late last year, the DOH commissioned the Twyford Report to assess the outcomes and gains of the Northcott project. This report drew heavily from existing evaluation material at Northcott. This report has recommended the ongoing investment in the community development and strong partnership approach to safety and wellbeing at Northcott. This has provided a further springboard for Northcott residents and partners to plan activities for the next two years. The Twyford report recommends that the DOH evaluate this activity again in two years time. The summary and findings have been added as an appendix to this application¹⁷.

¹⁷ Appendix 3

Criteria 6: Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities movement.

The Northcott community and partners will be looking to involve themselves in ongoing activities and networks regarding Safe Communities. We are hoping to attend the Victorian Safe Communities Conference in November 2006 and the International Safe Communities Conference in New Zealand in 2008. Hopefully, a delegation from Northcott will be able to attend the Tehran Safe Communities Conference in 2007. We already receive information from the Victorian Safe Communities network through their e-list service.

The Northcott community and partners will also disseminate information about the presentations we do in the future amongst safe community networks, building knowledge and exposure through different for a nationally. We also plan to make publicly available our ongoing reports and evaluations in an effort to assist other communities and organisations.

Much work has already gone on in the area of networking and information sharing. The table below charts the activities of tenants and project partners in their efforts to share experiences with safe communities at a regional, national and international level.

DATE	FORUM	PRESENTATION	PRESENTERS	LOCATION
2003-2006	Outstanding, consistent and high profile national, state and local media attention.	Media articles A documentary Performances Visual Arts exhibition	Tenants and Big hART Inc	Local, State and national media- newspapers, radio, TV and
August 2006	NSW Community Housing Conference, hosted by Australian Federation of Housing	Presentation and Information exchange	Tenants and Big hART Inc	Newcastle
August 2006	Glebe Public Housing Community- Hope Street Meeting with Safe	Presentation and Information exchange Safe Community	Tenants, DOH and Big hART Inc	Glebe
June 2006	Communities New Zealand Foundation, Dr Coggan	accreditation discussion	Big hART Inc and DOH	Sydney

DATE	FORUM	PRESENTATION	PRESENTERS	LOCATION
May 2006	and Ms Fill Getting to the Heart of Community Development Meeting with Pam Albury,	Presentation and Information exchange	Tenants, DoH and Big hART	Blue Mountains, NSW
April 2006	Meegan Brotherton and Dominic Grenot.	Discussion of DOH policy and Safe Community accreditation	DOH CDW	Surry Hills
April 2006	Federation of Housing "Community Development Forum"	Overview of Northcott project.	DOH CDW	Northcott
March 2006	Bonnyrigg Community Safety Forum	"Social Interventions which lead to crime reduction' facilitated by Burnside.	Tenants, DOH, Big hART	Bonnyrigg
March 2006	Phone meeting with Hank Herberts from Safe Communities Australia	Ongoing email contact and info sharing through bulletins	Big hART Inc	La Trobe, Vic.
March 2006	Phone meeting with Safe Comms NZ and Australian Safe Communities Foundation Rep	Discussion of Northcott intention to apply for accreditation.	Big hART Inc	NZ, Australia
March 2006	Article in International Weekly Safe Communities Newsletter	Article and Photo profiling StickybrickS	Big hART Inc	World wide
February 2006	Phone meeting with Dale Hansen JCU SAFE Communities Mackay	Info sharing about approaches to data and evaluation.	Big hART Inc	Sydney NSW
March 2006	Visit by staff and tenants from Bonnyrigg Housing Estate	Information exchange	Tenants and Project partners	Surry Hills
Jan 2006	Distribution of Northcott Report to SAFENZ, WHO, Australian Safe	"What have they Done there report"	Big hART Inc	Sweden, NZ, QLD, SA, VIC

DATE	FORUM	PRESENTATION	PRESENTERS	LOCATION
October 2005	Communities Committee, Dale Hansen, JCU. UNSW Housing Conference	Presentation of Northcott project	Tenants, Big hART, DOH	NSW
September 2005	Leadership course run by NSW Dept Community Services and Premiers Dept	"Pay it Forward"	Partners and tenants	NSW
September 2005	Community Cultural Development NSW Conference	EMERGE Conference	Presentation by partners and tenants	In NSW, National and International delegates
July 2004	Australia Council Art and Wellbeing Launch	Presentation of artistic work	Tenants and Big hART	NSW, national press
July 2004	University of Sydney Technology, Centre for Popular education seminar	Presentation about the Northcott project	DOH, Tenants, Big hART	NSW
July 2004	NSW Safe Communities Conference	Presentation about the Northcott project	DOH, Tenants, Big hART	NSW, national delegates
July 2004	Goulburn Police Academy, Presentation	Presentation about the Northcott project	Crime Prevention Office	NSW
October 2004, March 2005	Sydney Leadership, Benevolent Society	About the Northcott Project.	Numerous presentations by Dominic Grenot, Sandy Henderson (SHPTA), Christopher Saunders and Emily Mayo.	NSW
October 2004	South Pacific Policing Conference	Community Crime Prevention- the Northcott example.	Crime Prevention Officer	SA, International delegates

How the Northcott community can help to spread the message about the positive effects of safe communities

The community and its partners will be able to do this in four ways:

1. Through sharing experiences through presentations, speaking engagements, advice to other groups/communities. The Northcott example is slated to contribute to the development of an effective community development policy across the DOH and for replication across NSW.
2. Creation and distribution of the Resource Box.
3. Through the media- Northcott is of ongoing interest to the media and the community has developed significant knowledge and skills in harnessing media power/influence.
4. The identification and support of tenant Safety Ambassadors.

International Safe Community Movement – how it will support the Northcott community

Designation as a Safe Community will be very beneficial to the Northcott community and its partners in their ongoing efforts to create a safe and positive living environment. The designation will provide yet another opportunity for the community to generate and attract a positive media profile that would go on to effect a positive image of Northcott in the wider community.

International Safe Communities accreditation based on the World Health Organisation safe communities model will also be a major WIN for the community. It will add to the momentum that has built up over the last four years, and add another positive experience about what the tenants and partners are able to achieve.

The achievement of being the first Public Housing Community to be awarded WHO accreditation would give Northcott tenants a great tool to apply in the political arena.

Accreditation, through the positive media exposure and the cache granted by an esteemed international organisation and movement such as the International Safe Communities Movement and WHO will assist Northcott politically. We hope to harness this force to create political leverage to encourage the DOH and the NSW Government to enact the recommendations of the Twyford Report and fund and support similar initiatives around the state. We also hope that this will lead to a range of processes kicking off that will lead to change, keeping government departments and tenants focused and transparent as they all work together.

Most importantly, International accreditation will provide an ongoing focus for community action in the future. The International network and movement will be new partners providing support and information to the Northcott community on its journey.

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Appendix 3	Summary and Findings of Twyford Report
Appendix 4	“What Have They Done There” 2004 report
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Appendix 6	Draft Northcott Estate Community Development Plan
Appendix 7	2006 Safety Audit
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Appendix 9	900 Neighbours Documentary- 2 DVD's
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Appendix 11	Examples of Safety Information and leaflets