



Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand

Certifying Centre for Safe Community Programs

On behalf of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion,
Department of Public Health Sciences Division of Social Medicine, Karolinska Institute, Sweden

Northcott Estate Community



Name of Community: Northcott Estate Community, Sydney, State of NSW.

Country: Australia

Number of inhabitants: 1000

Programme started year: 2002

International Safe Communities Network Membership: Designation year: 2006

Full application available at <http://www.safecommunities.org.nz/sc/nort>

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The programme covers the following safety activities

For the following age group

Children 0 14 years:

- Participation in NAPCAN Foundation Child Safety Week
- Creation and maintenance of a safe playground

Youth 15-24 years:

- A range of activities at the Community Centre
- Issue specific workshops and information sessions and pamphlets.

Adults 25-64 years:

- Blokes Business- Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre- a program to increase social connectedness and isolation amongst men over 55 and single.
- A range of activities at the Community Centre.

Older Adults 65+ years:

- Tai Chi and group physiotherapy onsite.
- 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.

In the following environments

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.

Home:

- All flats are fitted with fire alarms that are tested every 6 months.
- All residents receive safety information and advice.
- The Good Neighbour campaign encourages residents to visit other residents in their home.

Leisure and Education:

- The community centre runs a range of activities for the community and keeps a record of all incidents and injuries that it refers on to the corresponding agency or body.
- TAFE NSW runs an outreach education program at Northcott Estate.



On the estate:

- 2002 and 2006 Safety Audits, which address CPTED safety, issues, lighting, access points, security, fire, falls and maintenance issues.
- Security guards patrol the estate at night.
- The Community Development Worker position was established in 2002. Dominic Grenot has held this position for the period. In summary Dominic's role is:
- Have tenants report an improvement in their sense of community and in turn perceptions of personal safety
- Achieve a reduction in the number of vacancies, indicating increased community stability and a sense of optimism.

- To have tenants regard themselves as significantly more involved in decisions that affect their housing and their community.
- Increase involvement in community activities.

Surry Hills Neighbourhood:

- Police and Community Team (PACT) is a group that has representation from stakeholders across the Surry Hills Community including Northcott Estate and the Department of Housing. This group regularly conducts workshops on issues and topics that affect all residents of the area including businesses.

Violence and Crime prevention:

- The Surry Hills Police Crime Prevention Officer visits the Estate several times a week and runs regular consultation days.
- Surry Hills Drug Action Team runs health education and promotion related to drug use.

Suicide prevention:

- 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.
- Count Me in Group for 25-50 year old males living with mental health and Drug and alcohol issues.

Programmes aiming at “high risk groups”

The population of Northcott can be seen as a high risk community due to a number of factors including age, low socio-economic status, newly arrived in Australia, elderly and frail, people living with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Therefore the range of programs at Northcott covers different aspects of the community life. The Northcott Narratives project has engaged a large number of residents from the different high-risk groups within the estate since it began in 2002.

Surveillance of injuries

Population base: 1000

Started year: 2003

Data relating to the specific number of injuries at Northcott is unavailable due to a range of issues including the lack of estate-specific data available from Health and Police data sources due to the complex numbering system that has been in place at Northcott- resulting in 10,000 different registered addresses within the health, emergency services and police databases. The re-numbering of the estate will be completed in late 2006.

NSW Department of Housing statistics, project evaluation and observation data has been pooled and analysed showing a reduction in evictions, requests for transfers, violent crime and



increased reports of feelings of safety, pride and social connectedness.

Publications (Scientific)

No scientific publications have been produced through this project.

Produced information material, pamphlets, etc:

- The documentary *900 Neighbours* was produced in 2006 and this has been distributed widely and used to promote community development based Safety.
- An interim observation report called "What Have They Done There" was released late 2004. An updated report will be released early in 2007.
- A number of short films, a performance, a photographic exhibition and play script have been produced during the period.
- A Resource Box has been developed with information about Northcott, activities and services and includes materials developed through the Northcott Narratives project- it will be used to welcome all new tenants coming to Northcott and distributed to other estate communities as an example.
- How to be a good neighbour information sheet.
- Emergency contact numbers sheet and fridge magnets have been developed.



Staff

Number: 6

Professions:

- Crime Prevention Officer NSW Police- part time;
- Community Development Worker Department of Housing- full time;
- Centre Coordinators and Chairperson of the Surry Hills Public Tenants Assoc –part time;
- Creative Producer Big hART Inc;
- Independent Evaluator- part time.

Organisation:

- Approximately 30 different individuals, businesses, NGOs and Government Departments have been directly involved in activities at Northcott.

Specific intersectoral leadership group:

- The Safety Committee is the intersectoral group responsible for leading this project in the future. It is comprised of representatives from the Department of Housing, St Vincent's' Hospital, the City of Sydney the Surry Hills Public Tenants Association and NSW Police. This group is a sub committee of the Neighbourhood Advisory Board.



General public health /health promotion group:

- The Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB) 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 Department of Housing, 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.

International commitments:

We have not yet participated in a WHO International Safe Community conference or seminar but hope to participate in 2007 and 2008.

In March 2006 an article regarding the Northcott Narratives project was included in the International Weekly Safe Communities Newsletter.

Other activities include:

- Presentation by tenants and Big hART and the NSW Community Housing Conference, hosted by Australian Federation of Housing in August 2006
- Bonnyrigg Community Safety Forum- presentation by Big hART, DOH and tenants on Social Interventions which lead to crime reduction'- March 2006.
- NSW Safe Communities Conference- Presentation about the Northcott project by Big hART, Doh and tenants in July 2004.