

## Case Study

# Redfern Community Centre

**Commissioned by**

**Community Hubs and Partnerships**

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# Case Study 9: Redfern Community Centre



New South Wales, Australia

## Overview

Redfern Community Centre is one of the fifteen community centres in the City of Sydney operated by the “City Space” division in the City of Sydney. Redfern is an area of concentrated disadvantage with 7,000 public housing tenants, and 4% of the population is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait origin compared with 1% across the wider Sydney Metropolitan Area.<sup>2</sup> The centre was established in 2004 and serves as a multi-purpose facility that offers a range of social services and community services<sup>1</sup>. The centre is open to all groups but has a relatively large user base of population with origins of Aboriginal or Torres Strait and Asian.



Source: City of Sydney

## Context/setting



## Service mix



**Education**, including training classes and programs for both children (e.g. preschool music classes) and adult (e.g. employment programs for young indigenous people, Microsoft Word training, life internet skill and hospitality training courses)<sup>2</sup>.

**Health**, including the Aboriginal Medical Service running diabetes checks

**Community infrastructure**, including a commercial kitchen, performance spaces and a number of meeting rooms. All are available for with subsidised rates for community organisations and not-for-profits

**Community services**, including counselling, legal services, Centrelink training sessions, and cultural activities (including recording sessions)<sup>2</sup>

**Wellbeing**, including a sound recording studio and an outdoor amphitheatre and market areas suitable for open air concerts, performances, expos and markets. Various classes are offered such as tai chi, pilates and yoga<sup>2</sup>

## Level of integration

There are natural synergies that exist among the suite of services that operate within the centre, with opportunities for cross referrals.

## Site characteristics



**Brownfield**, building was repurposed from a former factory<sup>1</sup>  
**Urban**

## Funding



**Public**, City of Sydney, \$3.2 million, funded through the sale of Council assets<sup>2</sup>

## Partners (inc. lead agency)

**Lead agency:** City of Sydney

**Partners:** City of Sydney leases rooms and spaces to different groups and service providers, through an Expression of Interest grant program. Examples of user groups include the Redfern Residents for Reconciliation, the Redfern Aboriginal Corporation, the Settlement, Renew, and the Chippendale Residents Wilson Bros Factory Site Action Group<sup>3</sup>

## Foundations for success

This hub exhibits two key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



*Focus and vision*



*Collaborative and detailed planning*

### Focus and vision

The Redfern Community Centre has been particularly cognisant of changing community needs and continuously reassessing and realigning its vision, adapting its facilities, offerings and programs to adapt to changes in community needs to best service the community.

### Collaborative and detailed planning

The City of Sydney undertakes the central planning of the centre on an organisational strategic level. The planning managers work very closely with program and service providers to design programs, ensuring that these are constantly evolving and reflective of the community they service.

## Outcomes

No formal evaluation has been undertaken of the centre, although pre and post-surveys were conducted internally on a regular basis. Some of the outcomes that have been reported anecdotally are outlined below.

### Service awareness and access

As a result of the adaptable and wide variety of programs and services the centre provides, the centre was able to reach a more diverse community base.

Cross referrals are common among program providers, which is reported to have increased service awareness and easier access for users, resulting in better utilisation of the centre.

### Community networks, cohesion and engagement

There is anecdotal evidence that the personal networks communities are able to form through the platform of the community centre is strong and long-lasting. The networks formed at the centre is reported to be particularly beneficial for people living in isolation, for example, the elderly population.

### Connecting culturally diverse populations

The centre provides a venue to showcase Indigenous culture and heritage by hosting cultural celebrations, performances and community events, contributing to increased culture awareness. The connection of different cultural groups created fusions of ideas and sense of community belonging for participants.

### Educational outcomes

The various employment and training programs provided opportunities for program participants, especially young Indigenous people, to broaden their skills base.

## Lessons

- Community centres usually needs to service vastly different needs from the community. Therefore providing a wide spectrum of different services is key. The Redfern Community Centre in its planning has chosen to collocate as many relevant services as it can accommodate.
- Maintaining an area-focused approach by taking into account the particular needs of the serviced community is important in selecting the appropriate types of services to house in the centre.
- The planning of the facilities should consider multi-purpose design and usage where it can.
- The subsidised and free programs enabled equity of access for community members with varying ability to pay.<sup>2</sup>

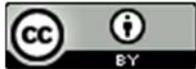
## References

1. City of Sydney, 2017, Redfern Community Centre, <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/facilities/community-centres/redfern-community-centre>
2. Landcom and UrbanGrowth NSW, 2016, Community Centre Guidelines - Ideas Bank
3. Barani, 2017, Redfern Community Centre, <http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/redfern-community-centre/>

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