

1.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL – ASHWOOD, ASHBURTON AND CHADSTONE AREAS

(COM39:FH)

Responsible Director: Andi Diamond

RECOMMENDATION

1. *That Council notes the progress to date of the Ashwood, Ashburton and Chadstone Neighbourhood Renewal Program.*
2. *That Council approves \$15,000 towards a Community Development Position for a further 12 months.*

INTRODUCTION

This report provides Council with an update on the Neighbourhood Renewal Program in the Ashwood, Ashburton and Chadstone (AAC) areas.

BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) is a Victorian State Government initiative that provides for the capacity of local communities to work in association with the State and local providers in improving local infrastructure, employment, education, safety and health and well-being. Within the Department of Human Services (DHS) Eastern Metropolitan Region, the Ashwood, Ashburton and Chadstone area formally commenced as a NR site in July 2003, funding has now been committed until 2011. The levels of relative disadvantage experienced by local residents when compared to neighbouring suburbs and other parts of the State contributed to the selection of this site.

The six objectives of Neighbourhood Renewal Project are to:

1. Increase people's pride and participation in the community;
2. Lift employment and learning opportunities and expand local economies;
3. Improve personal safety and reduce crime;
4. Enhance housing and the physical environment;
5. Promote health and well-being; and
6. Increase access to services and improve government responsiveness.

In implementing NR in the area, a number of committees/working groups have been established. These committees include Pride and Participation, Employment and Learning, Crime and Safety, Housing and Environment and Health and Well-Being. Apart from the Whole of Government Co-ordination Group, it is intended that all working groups will have a membership consisting of 50% residents.

A range of City of Monash staff continue to be involved in the Neighbourhood Renewal program including at Board level and in a number of the working groups. In addition, Councillor Banerji attends the monthly Board meetings.

An updated Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan has been completed. This Action Plan will inform the actions and strategies to be undertaken by the working groups and the NR team in 2008/09.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since 2004, Council has provided part funding of \$15,000 per annum to the employment of a Community Development Worker to specifically resource Monash residents and activities in the AAC area. This level of support is again recommended for 2008/09.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Participation in the Neighbourhood Renewal program is consistent with Council's 2007/08 Business Plan target of *participate in the Neighbourhood Renewal Project for the Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone area.*

CONSULTATION

All Neighbourhood Renewal Projects are set a target of 50% resident participation on the Board, and all working groups, to ensure that activities and actions are resident driven. This continues to be a challenge for the project to maintain participation from residents at this level. A residents group has been developed to generate interest and ownership of the project.

ANALYSIS

As a result of the position part funded by Monash, there have been a number of key outcomes. A number of these outcomes for Monash for 2007/08 are:

- **Governance restructure**

Following an internal review in 2007, the AA&C NR Board decided to restructure its governance and community linkage arrangements of the two local government areas. As a result, two separate committees are being formed that represent residents and key stakeholders from within Monash and Boroondara respectively. Since January 2008, the Monash committee focus is on Ashwood and Chadstone only.

In addition, the Community Development Worker positions are now geographically aligned rather than issue based across the whole AA&C catchments. These positions are now employed directly through MonashLink and Inner East Community Health Service rather than NR. Sally Nadj commenced her employment in the Monash role in October 2007.

- **Civic participation activities**

- The NR Team and Events Group worked closely with Monash Council's Cultural Development team in the lead-up to the October 2007 Ashwood and Chadstone Family Fun Day. Adopting the festival theme of community safety, the NR team rewarded 150 families with a free safety show bag for

successfully completing a safety quiz which involved children talking with the major safety services and groups present on that day.

- The Homework Group at Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre in Chadstone is continuing to operate and assists around 26 local children (mainly year 5 to 8) who need support and encouragement with their homework. Local volunteer tutors provide this support. Funding is provided from DHS/NR, Monash Council, Ashwood Lions Club and the Ross Trust.
- A new mental health in local schools project called the “*Festival for Healthy Living*” is now operational. This two year project involves six schools including Ashwood College, Ashwood School, Parkhill Primary and St Mary Magdalene’s. A budget of \$130,000 has been secured for 2008, including \$60,000 from DHS. The project places artists in residence in schools to work with students, teachers and associated health services to improve mental health and well-being of the school community. The first major Festival event is planned for August 2008.
- A second Community Survey was completed in April 2007. This large project involved recruiting 21 residents to be interviewers and 300 local residents to be interviewed. The Final Report was presented to the Board on 3 August 2007. Refer to Attachment 2 for key findings.

- **Housing and Environment**

- \$856,000 from DHS has been allocated for improving public housing in Ashwood and Chadstone in 2007/2008. At least 43 houses have received immediate improvements, and at least 31 houses have received major upgrades. Immediate improvements were undertaken by a community enterprise providing one job to a local resident. This brings the total investment in villa improvements in AA&C to over \$7 million since the start of Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Council installed the shade structure at the playground at Batesford Reserve, Chadstone through a joint funding arrangement (\$17,000 DHS/NR; \$12,000 Monash Council). In addition, the BBQ funded by the Waverley Basketball Association is now operational.
- Significant joint planning between Monash Council and the NR Team has been undertaken for a proposed extension to the Jordan Street Maternal and Child Health Centre. This project arose from a proposal to build an extension to the Council building in Burton Street Chadstone that incorporates a maternal and child health centre and a former preschool that is used (on a sessional basis) for playgroups, occasional child care and a toy library.

The proposed extension was to include two consulting rooms and a small group room. Funding for the project is available from Neighbourhood Renewal and the Community Support Fund. In 2006, Council gave in principle support to an extension being built on the current centre on the basis that the State Government and Council’s contribution, being the land, and other “in-kind” involvement, fund it. It was anticipated that the new

facility would have some local community service organisations as “anchor tenants” using the facility for a number of days each week.

A design for the facility was developed by Council’s Urban Design and Architecture unit and in late 2007 agencies were asked to advise the services they could provide from the venue and the extent to which they could use it per week. Due to changes in the strategic priorities of these services over the last year it became apparent that they would not be in a position to become “anchor tenants”. Discussions were held with a range of other possible agencies about the possibility of them providing sessional services from the site. Some indicated they could utilise the facility sparingly whilst others reported that the facility would not be suitable for their services. Given this, it was determined there would be insufficient use of the facility to justify the level of capital expenditure required. Accordingly the project has been put on hold.

- In March 2008, the Minister for Housing, Richard Wynne, announced the Ashwood Gateway Project, which involves the redevelopment of six sites in Ashwood to create at least 100 new social housing units built and owned by a housing association, to be chosen through a competitive process during 2008. The two largest sites involve the demolition of walk-ups and townhouses in Power Avenue and Elliot Street, creating a new precinct in this gateway area to Ashwood.
- Neighbourhood Renewal assisted Power Neighbourhood House to successfully apply for \$190,000 (mainly from State Government sources including NR) to extend the capacity of the house and make it fully disability accessible. The renovation will take place during 2008.

A comprehensive listing of the activities that relate to Monash are outlined in Attachment 1.

CONCLUSION

The AA&C Neighbourhood Renewal Project is set in a complex environment with key agency and resident stakeholders across two municipality boundaries, as a result of the restructure this work should only be strengthened by the focus on the two municipalities separately. However, strong leadership and further developing robust partnerships with all key stakeholder groups including residents, service providers and Councils still needs to be maintained.

*ATTACHMENT 1***ASHBURTON, ASHWOOD AND CHADSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL****Progress and outcomes for 12 months April 2007 to March 2008 relevant to the City of Monash**

A&C = Ashwood and Chadstone (Monash)

AA&C = Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone (Boroondara and Monash)

NR = Neighbourhood Renewal

DHS = Department of Human Services

Our overall approach

- Following an internal review in 2007, the AA&C NR Board decided to restructure its governance and community linkage arrangements to focus on Ashwood and Chadstone separately from Ashburton from January 2008.
- The Board is overseeing the restructure, which involves:
 - The establishment of an Ashwood and Chadstone Steering Committee (achieved)
 - The facilitation of a resident-based Ashwood and Chadstone Community Network (in train)
 - An Ashwood and Chadstone Action Plan for 2008 (achieved).
- This follows and complements the creation of an Ashwood and Chadstone-focussed Community Development Worker position located at MonashLink Community Health Service in Ashwood. Sally Nadj commenced her employment in this role in October 2007.
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Employment and Learning Coordinator funding is to be retendered shortly following the planned exit by the current co-ordinator, Pam Jess, in June 2008 and advice from Gateway LLEN, her employer, that it supported another agency taking up this role.

Objective 1: To increase people's pride and participation in the local community.***Resident participation***

- Since October 2006, 31 ***Community Action Grants*** of up to \$1,000 have been allocated to groups of six or more residents to support resident-led local community improvement, including 13 grants to A&C groups to:
 - Enjoy art therapy activities for frail aged people;
 - Have an environmental education bus tour of CERES for local residents lead by Residents for Ecological Development;
 - Beautify the garden around Jordanville Community Centre;
 - Hold a bush dance at Ashwood Memorial Kindergarten as a community strengthening and fund-raising event;
 - Establish English conversation classes for overseas-born residents;
 - Hold an open day at the Ashwood Children's Centre to showcase services available to local families;
 - Hold a community trivia night with an emphasis on family participation in a safe, welcoming environment;

- Hold a Question and Answer Forum for local public housing tenants;
 - Establish a women's gambling support group;
 - Advance a multicultural community garden at St Mary Magdalene's;
 - Establish a playgroup at St Mary Magdalene's;
 - Buy display equipment for Residents for Ecological Development;
 - Research the neighbourhood about a potential new enterprise activity called Pet Pals (low cost domestic pet and home assistance).
- **The AA&C Public Tenants Group** is operating from Power Neighbourhood House in Ashwood, with around 15 tenant members attending monthly meetings (\$4,300 from DHS).
- The Group held its second **Question and Answer Forum** with the Office of Housing on 29 May 2007 at Jordanville Hall in Chadstone with 50 tenants attending.
 - The PTG is the successful applicant of a Monash Council grant to support a **performance group of older public tenants**.
 - In September 2007, the Group and Power Neighbourhood House, using a grant from the Office of Housing, purchased cameras for local public housing tenants and displayed the results in a photographic exhibition called "Our Homes, Our Community", which was opened by the Minister for Housing as part of **Housing Week 2007**
- **The NR Events group** co-sponsored, with the Waverley Historical Society, the local launch of Jeff Turnbull's local history: **Once was Jordanville** at the Jordanville Community Centre on 14 November 2007. This excellent event was attended by about 100 people.
- The NR Team and Events Group worked closely with Monash Council in the lead-up to the October 2007 **Ashwood and Chadstone Family Fun Day**. Adopting the festival theme of community safety, the NR team rewarded 150 families with a free safety show bag for successfully completing a safety quiz which involved children talking with the major safety services and groups present on that day.
- **The NR Events group** together with Harrison Community Service, organised a **2007 Christmas Toy Shop** for low income families across AA&C. 135 toys were given to children of 59 AA&C families in December 2007 (estimated \$3,300 of donated toys through Harrisons)
- **NR Xmas Party** at 13 Amaroo Street, Chadstone, on 14 December 2007 was attended by 45 AA&C residents, service providers and government reps (\$500 from DHS/NR).
- Local residents make up 50% of the membership of the Board and Ashwood and Chadstone Steering Committee.

Resident skills development

- Jean Roberts delivered two training sessions to residents on effective meetings and chairing effective meetings in August and September 2007 attended in total by 18 residents.
- A new project called the ***Community Learning Partnership*** has been created through a partnership lead by Alamein Community Committee (the major adult and further education-funded service in AA&C) and including Ashburton Support Services, Power Neighbourhood House, Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre, Waverley Adult Literacy Program, Inner East/Craig Community Health Service, MonashLink Community Health Service and the NR team.
- The Statewide Adult Community and Further Education Board granted the project \$30,000 to be matched by \$30,000 of in-kind resourcing from across the partnership, to encourage and assist residents in the AA&C NR area to gain skills and build on skills, interests and passions they already hold, in order to provide a pathway to community contribution, community leadership and employment, learning and enterprise. The project is operating from October 2007 to March 2009.

Community Information

- Two editions of the AA&C ***NR Newsletter*** were produced and distributed to 2,000 households in Ashwood and Chadstone as well as 4,000 Ashburton households (\$6,000 from NR). The newsletter is delivered by around 8 resident volunteers.

The Edge Community Fund Inc

- The Edge Community Fund Inc is a local charity established in 2006, to support children under 18 years of age from disadvantaged families, living in AA&C, so that they can participate in educational and recreational activities.
- To date, over \$20,000 has been raised from both raffles and donations.
- To date, the fundraising has supported 49 activities for disadvantaged children in the local area, including 17 children to attend kindergarten and the balance for other purposes such as attendance at school camps.
- The Edge is a partnership between local leaders and residents, businesses and the NR Employment and Learning Coordinator.

Second Community Survey

- The second community survey was successfully completed in April 2007. With a budget of \$50,000 from Central Office, this large project involved:
 - Commissioning Victoria University to train and supervise resident interviewers, and analyse and write up the results of the survey
 - Recruiting 21 residents to be interviewers and setting up training sessions in local neighbourhood houses
 - Recruiting 300 local residents to be interviewed and organising most of these interviews to occur in local neighbourhood houses
 - Provision of \$20 per interview to each interviewer and each interviewee
 - A Celebration Dinner for all the resident interviewers at Matthew Flinders Hotel on 23 April 2007
 - Provision of all the completed surveys to a data processing company, which was also provided with the results of a centrally-organised

telephone survey of 150 residents who live in areas near AA&C to provide comparative data.

- The Final Report was presented to the Board on 3 August 2007.
- Three sets of data are available:
 - The overall AA&C results compared to the telephone survey
 - A supplementary set separating Ashburton from Ashwood & Chadstone
 - A supplementary set separating public housing residents from private housing residents
- Community feedback sessions have been held and the results are the subject of ongoing consideration by the Steering Committees and NR partners.

Objective 2: To enhance Housing and the Physical Environment

- \$856,000 from DHS is being spent on ***improving public housing*** in Ashwood and Chadstone in 2007/2008. At least 43 houses have received immediate improvements, and at least 31 houses have received major upgrades. Immediate improvements were undertaken by a community enterprise providing one job to a local resident. This brings the total investment in villa improvements in AA&C to over \$7M since the start of Neighbourhood Renewal.
- The ***Shade structure at playground at Batesford Reserve***, Chadstone was installed by Monash Council through a joint funding arrangement (\$17,000 DHS/NR; \$12,000 Monash Council), and the BBQ funded by the Waverley Basketball Association is now operational.
- Significant joint planning between Monash Council and the NR Team has been undertaken for an ***extension to the Jordan Street Maternal and Child Health Centre***, and State Government capital funds have been earmarked. Unfortunately, the key agencies intended to be anchor tenants for the extension advised late in the planning process that changing circumstances meant that they would be unable to re-locate services to the new extension, which is now on hold. Formal advice to Council is being prepared.
- In March 2008, the Minister for Housing, Richard Wynne, announced the ***Ashwood Gateway Project***, which involves the redevelopment of six sites in Ashwood to create at least 100 new social housing units built and owned by a housing association, to be chosen through a competitive process during 2008. The two largest sites involve the demolition of walk-ups and townhouses in Power Avenue and Elliot Street, creating a new precinct in this gateway area to Ashwood.
- In the light of this, Neighbourhood Renewal assisted ***Power Neighbourhood House*** to successfully apply for \$190,000 (mainly from State Government sources including NR) to extend the capacity of the house and make it fully disability accessible. The renovation will take place during 2008.

Objective 3: To lift employment and learning opportunities and expand the local economy

- **Since 2003 to date, Neighbourhood Renewal has helped 92 residents into employment and 260 residents into training.**
- The ***Homework Group*** at Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre in Chadstone is **continuing** to operate and assist around 26 local children (mainly year 5 to 8) who need help with their homework from local volunteer tutors. Funding to support the Group has included funds from DHS/NR, Monash Council, Ashwood Lions Club and the Ross Trust.
- A second ***Directions project*** is operating in 2008 at Mt Waverley Secondary College targeting students who live in AA&C. This follows a successful project at Ashwood College assisting Year 10 students to develop skills through martial arts training, onpassing this knowledge to younger students, and visits to TAFE, Penfold Motors and Centrelink. This project was funded by Monash School Focussed Youth Serviuce and Gateway LLEN.
- An ***Employment Support Initiative*** was funded in 2007 by NR for \$14,000 to train and support 8 AA&C residents in work in hospitality. To date 3 residents have found employment.
- A ***Workforce Participation Partnership*** to place 21 AA&C residents into work was undertaken between August 2006 and December 2007, using \$200,000 State Government funds.
- ***Get Connected***, funded by NR, assisted 12 residents in 2007 with pre-vocational personal development, with several moving onto training and work.
- 50 AA&C NR Residents accessed ***free IT Training*** at Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre during the calendar year 2007 (\$4,000 from NR).

Objective 4: To enhance personal safety and reduce crime

- Power Neighbourhood House in Ashwood lead the ***Safer Homes, Safer Communities*** project, with \$15,000 Commonwealth crime prevention funding and \$15,000 in-kind support from TESA. This project involved the installation of safety devices into 50 low income households across AA&C, and two community education forums.
- See also the Ashwood and Chadstone Family Fun Day above.

Objective 5: To promote health and well-being

- The ***Healthy Kids in Monash*** project to support healthy eating and physical activity in local primary schools, initiated through Primary Care Partnership funding, is now being supported through the recurrent budget of MonashLink

Community Health Service, amongst others.

- *Community gardens* are thriving at Parkhill Primary School (total DHS funding of \$37,000) and Power Neighbourhood House in Ashwood (DHS funding) and Ashwood College (DHS funding of \$10,000).
- A new mental health in local schools project called the “*Festival for Healthy Living*” is now operational. The project involves 6 schools including Ashwood College, Ashwood School, Parkhill Primary and St Mary Mags. A budget of \$130,000 has been amassed for 2008, including \$60,000 from DHS. The project places artists in schools to work with students, teachers and associated health services to improve mental health and well-being and will operate for 2 years. The first major Festival event is planned for August 2008.
- Small grants totalling \$3,000 were allocated through an NR working group to support several *resident-based arts projects* that increase residents’ understanding and language around mental health including:
 - \$500 to Amaroo Neighbourhood House to purchase materials for art classes for people with disabilities to produce art work for the annual Amaroo Art Exhibition, and to make puppets and perform a puppet show
 - \$1,000 to Power Neighbourhood House and Glenreach Rehabilitation Service for people with a mental illness to produce two beautiful Patchwork quilts.

Objective 6: To increase access to services and improved government responsiveness

- This objective is pursued through service provider and government representation on the NR Board, Steering Committees and working groups, and through actions under other objectives.

Report prepared by Jeff Herd, Manager, AA&C NR
April 2008

ATTACHMENT 2



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Second Community Survey,

Neighbourhood Renewal, Ashburton, Ashwood & Chadstone
Final Report, July 2007

Executive summary and recommendations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighbourhood Renewal is a whole-of-government initiative that brings together the resources and ideas of residents, governments, local businesses and community groups to tackle disadvantage in areas with concentrations of public housing. Neighbourhood Renewal aims to reduce inequality, build more cohesive communities and make government services more responsive to the needs of communities.

Neighbourhood Renewal is being implemented in a number of sites across Victoria, including in Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone (AA&C) in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The Neighbourhood Renewal program is part of the Department of Human Services.

The AA&C project commenced in July 2003 and is funded to June 2011.

The success of Neighbourhood Renewal is measured by the extent it achieves the six key objectives of the reform:

- increasing people's pride and participation in the community
- lifting employment, training and education opportunities and expanding local economic activity
- enhancing housing and the physical environment
- improving personal safety and reducing crime
- promoting health and wellbeing
- increasing access to services and improving government responsiveness.

The evaluation framework of Neighbourhood Renewal includes data from Government departments, and survey data collected via a biennial community survey of at least 300 local residents. This survey generates statistically valid information specific to the AA&C area, including demographic data and data on resident perceptions of current conditions and change.

A shorter survey is conducted by telephone of 150 residents selected from areas surrounding the Neighbourhood Renewal area that are grouped into socio-economic categories ("high", "middle" and "low"). This data provides a basis for comparison with the AA&C data.

This report is of the second survey. The first survey was conducted between October 2003 and April 2004 (the 2004 survey).

For the second survey, the Department of Human Services contracted Victoria University to recruit, train and supervise 21 local residents who carried out the survey. Information was collected from 305 AA&C residents and the resulting data, along with telephone survey data, has been analysed by Dr Wally Karnilowicz of the Victoria University who wrote this report.

In the appendices to the main report, the following data is presented:

- demographic data and resident perceptions data results of the AA&C survey, compared with results from the adjoining regions (note not all questions asked in AA&C were asked of the adjoining residents)

- key results in terms of perceptions about conditions and whether conditions have changed over the previous twelve months, including data comparing the 2007 results with the 2004 results.

Summary results of 2007 AA&C resident survey:

A. About your Neighbourhood

Generally, respondents considered AA&C as a positive place in which to live. In particular, respondents valued the close proximity of services such as shops and transport, the positive relationships with neighbours and the general quietness of the area. The problems within the area revolved around housing, traffic, lack of tidiness, transport and issues associated with public housing. Suggested changes and improvements included footpaths, housing, lighting and nature strips, a reduction in disruptive behaviour, improvement in local services and increased community activity.

B. Housing and the Physical Environment.

The respondents indicated strong satisfaction with housing in the area and with the physical environment. This was particularly reflected in positive satisfaction ratings associated with changes in the standard of the housing. This positive perception was counterbalanced by concerns related to local traffic and speeding and graffiti and vandalism. It was perhaps not surprising that the suggested improvements were residential improvements, home maintenance, the maintenance of parks and local areas, increased traffic safety and parking and transport. 10% of respondents wanted to reduce public housing, while 9% wanted to increase and maintain public housing.

C. Transport, Services and Better Government

Residents were extremely positive in their perceptions of the public transport system in general and in the quality and accessibility of transport services. However, there was still the expressed need of increased weekend, public holiday and evening bus services, increased number of bus routes and an extended number of buses and service times. In addition, while there was significant confidence in the local council, there was a general lack of confidence in the state government and especially with the federal government. Residents in particular wanted the government, through its associated bodies, to listen to and become aware of local issues, increase government funding, and increase and maintain public housing and health and care facilities.

D. Employment, Education & the Local Economy

Residents positively rated opportunities and facilities in the neighbourhood to get education and training. There was also a degree of satisfaction in the opportunity to get satisfactory employment in the neighbourhood or nearby. Overall, there were positive ratings of education services including kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, adult education services, TAFE, University and the local library along with the state of the local economy. Nonetheless, residents rated negatively the quality and availability of local services and agencies to help find work. Residents felt it necessary to improve information and advertising related to the

availability and importance of education, free education or affordable fees and increased government funding. In terms of the local economy, among the reasons for the lack of investment in the area included a lack of local and governmental support and a lack of business viability eg, infrastructure and nearby competition.

E. Health and Well-Being

AA&C respondents positively rated the quality and availability of local health services. This was particularly the case with the local doctor or clinic, the maternal and child health centre, the immunisation program, income support and emergency relief and social, health or recreational clubs. The personal ratings of health were also positive along with their satisfaction with life. However, the ratings of the general health and well-being of the neighbourhood was only slightly positive with the predominant problems being poor financial resources, the prevalence of non-healthy activities eg, alcohol and drugs and factors associated with mental health such as self-esteem, stress and depression. Consequently, factors considered important in improving health and well-being in the neighbourhood included improving health services, increasing health facilities and activities and the control and increase of personal finances.

F. Personal Safety and Reducing Crime

In terms of personal safety and crime, residents felt that the neighbours looked after each other in an atmosphere of trust. However, they considered crime and safety a priority given negative ratings associated with and including dangerous driving, alcohol or drug use, poor street lighting, instances of domestic violence and house robberies or theft. This was associated with negative perceptions of personal and children's safety despite the positive perceptions of the local police. Factors considered important in improving personal safety and reducing crime were largely behavioural and centred around greater police presence and greater neighbour communication and diligence eg, neighbourhood watch. Other important considerations were to improve lighting and domestic security and fencing.

G. Pride and Participation in the Community

The positive aspects of the community and how it related to pride and participation centred on the connection to the neighbourhood and community. The residents felt a sense of connection and belonging. They regularly communicated with neighbours, visited friends locally and helped out with neighbourly responsibilities such as helping in the collection of rubbish. Nonetheless, pride in the neighbourhood was lacking as was participation in community activities such as a lack of involvement in public meetings with the feeling of little influence or control over decision-making. Consequently, the residents considered that involvement in community activities eg, BBQs, outdoor events, improvement in neighbourhood features such as houses, gardens and the surrounding area and promoting a positive awareness of the area would increase pride in the area. In addition, local participation could be initiated by an increased promotion of the area and increased funding and development of local activities and facilities.

A comparison of general trends between 2004 and 2007

Prominent among the trends with AA&C residents across the two survey periods were:

- A more positive perception of job opportunities in 2007 than in 2004.
- Fairly stable positive perceptions of own housing, housing in the local area, community services and physical environment.
- A less, but still positive perception of the neighbourhood generally, public transport, education and training opportunities, own health, health and well-being in the area, rating of own health, local economy within the NR region in 2007.
- A more negative perception of own household income, crime and personal safety, pride in neighbourhood and participation in local activities in 2007.

A comparison of perceived changes in key conditions in the previous 12 months by NR residents between 2004 and 2007 indicated:

- A less positive perception of housing, rating of own health, community pride and community participation in 2007 compared to 2004.
- A significantly more positive perception of the local economy, local education training opportunities and health and welfare services in 2007 compared to 2004.
- A more negative perception of government performance, the physical environment and crime and safety in 2007 compared to 2004.

21% of the 2007 AA&C residents reported having completed the 2004 survey.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon considerations of improvement and or change. Consequently, the options offered are negative in nature and do not adequately consider the positive aspects of the community. Most of the positive factors centred on the neighbourhood, housing and the physical environment, the quality and accessibility of transport services, the quality and accessibility of local services, positive ratings of education services, the state of the local economy and opportunities to get education and training. As much as the following negative factors require consideration, the positive elements need also to be highlighted and emphasised in changes and improvement within the area. The negative factors which require attention are as follows:

- Traffic and speeding.
- Graffiti and vandalism.
- Low confidence levels associated with the federal government in particular and also the state government.
- Consider crime and safety as a primary cause of concern mostly revolving around issues of dangerous driving, alcohol and drug use, poor street lighting and house robberies and theft.

- Develop strategies to improve upon the pride related to the neighbourhood including the involvement of residents in decision-making processes and increase participation in local activities.

For further information about Neighbourhood Renewal, Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone, please phone or drop into the Office:

Neighbourhood Renewal Office, 13 Amaroo Street, Chadstone 3148, telephone number 9807 5841