

'It's a way to have a connection'

**Evaluating place-based projects on public housing estates –
Community 2168 (Miller) partnership model, South Western
Sydney District**

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Community 2168 is a major community renewal and capacity building partnership located in the 2168 postcode in the City of Liverpool, South Western Sydney. It is sponsored by Liverpool City Council, South Western Sydney Local Health District and NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

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Executive Summary

Purpose of the evaluation

The Community 2168 Project is a major community renewal and capacity building partnership, started in 1999 and focusing on the suburbs within the 2168 postcode. It receives support from the NSW government, local government, human resource agencies and the 2168 community. A Senior Project Officer is employed by council and based in The Hub Community Health Centre in Miller, a 2168 suburb. The Community 2168 Project has been evaluated by CHETRE from 1999 to 2010 using a number of measures to assess the achievements and viability of the project. The current evaluation will report on the following:

- The effectiveness of the projects' partnership model, including governance, strategic plan and processes.
- Its achievements in relation to stated outcomes
- Generation of social and economic benefits or otherwise, to inform future funding

The evaluation aims to:

- Assess achievement of goals, objectives and intended outcomes
- Identify lessons learnt and recommendations
- Examine best practice principles, practices to avoid, project replicability, project sustainability

Evaluation methods

A multi-method approach was used to evaluate the Community 2168 Project, including review and synthesis of existing data and documentation, and the conduct of consultations through both survey and interview methods. The use of a multi-method evaluative approach, 'assists in building stronger conclusions, as the strengths of one approach or method serve to compensate for the weaknesses of the other' (Bazeley and Kemp 2012). This evaluation included:

- Governance structure and documentation review
- Consultation with Management Committee members
- Social and economic benefit review

Results

Community Capacity

The documentation review highlights the importance of the governance partnership model. This is reiterated by a large majority of the committee members in their interview responses and is a central theme throughout the evaluation material. Service providers, residents and local businesses are network partners and are represented on the Management Committee. The project is funded through the major partners within the network (NSW Health, FACS and Liverpool City Council). The partnership creates opportunities and support for shared activities and responsibilities, capacity development and extended networking. A range of knowledge transfer mechanisms have been

generated by the project, including print and electronic resources, inter-agencies, events and project sub-committees. Community consultations ensure that local needs underscore project activities. These include the Employment and Education Expo, community events and social enterprise development such as the Peoples Shed. Regular evaluations provide feedback on progress. Documentation shows there is capacity for problem solving internally but less capacity outside the network. Formal mechanisms including grievance procedures are in place for problem solving and corporate knowledge and evaluation findings can be called upon where appropriate. The longevity of the committee and its activities evidences network partners' ability to work together. Infrastructure investment varies with a high level of policy expertise and substantial service provider and resident involvement. There is social investment and responsiveness within the committee and some financial support via staffing and resources allocated by network partners.

Project effectiveness and suggestions for improvement

Most of the consultation responses highlighted the partnership model as a key strength of the project. Its role in developing formal and informal communication, connection and trusting relationships between residents, service providers and organisations was emphasised again and again as highly effective. The collaborative structure provided a forum that was beneficial for the partners, particularly for residents. The opportunity for shared input and expertise was valued and detailed minuting provided updated information for those who were not always able to attend meetings. The project officer position was also highly regarded as a driver of the project and a channel of communication between project participants and the wider community. The level of influence of service representatives was cited as very important as well as the limitations imposed on the project by broader socio-economic factors beyond its control.

Participants raised concerns over the sustainability of the project with specific reference to funding. The need for increased funding and diversified funding sources was frequently emphasised. The difficulty of representing a diverse resident population on the committee was noted and the possibility of limited membership terms with staggered rollover periods and an orientation procedure was proposed. Increased resident involvement particularly of disengaged and minority groups and across 2168 suburbs, was suggested by numerous respondents. Frequent changes to service provider representation on the committee was also noted for its effect on the functioning of the committee. However it was recognised that this may be unavoidable. Importance was placed on developing a more strategic approach focused possibly on fewer core priorities.

Progress Towards Strategic Plan Outcomes

Recurrent themes include the partnership model, resourcing, concern for marginalised groups, representation and the key roles of the project officer and other project personnel

Most respondents rated the achievement of the Strategic Plan outcomes as 'substantial'. Responses noted

- the variety of effective communication systems that also develop capacity and participation (although some groups are not reached)

- project sustainability being contingent on resourcing. Uncertainty about the future and the a key role of project support for continued capacity development were noted
- police, safety audits and health services as highly valued and the project's role in building opportunities for residents. More activities are needed for youth, families, children and mature people and there is concern about mental health issues, disenfranchised groups particularly around Miller Square and access to fresh food
- the project partnership's crucial role in developing community strength and the important role of the project officer
- open spaces and parklands and the value of activities and facilities developed through the project. The importance of accessing emerging communities is noted as well as concern for marginalised young people. Attention is also drawn to some ageing run-down amenities

Social and economic review

Over the period 2009 to 2012, \$552,339 of project funding, contributions and grants were received by the Community 2168 Project.

The social and economic costs of crime were calculated over the decade 1999-2000 to 2009-2010. There were reductions in the 2168 area in all measured categories of crime other than reported assaults and a small increase in sexual offenses. The 2009-2010 cost to the community of crime was \$5.6 million over two years or \$2.8 million per year less than the community costs of crime in 1999-2000. The costs to the community of property crime have continued to reduce. The rates of crime against the person (assault, sexual offences and particularly domestic violence), however, remain largely stable, or have, in the case of domestic violence, had a large increase particularly over recent years.

Between 2009 and 2012 there was an increase in the number of children vulnerable on the AEDI development domains. Action to maintain vulnerability at 2009 levels or the NSW average, would yield savings to the community of up to \$553,520 in educational costs. While levels of adult year 12 attainment and household income in the 2168 area have both increased, both are still below Sydney levels. The gap between 2168 residents and Sydney residents is increasing on both measures. Miller survey data echoes 2168 crime statistics in that residents have reported reductions in crime-related activity over the past decades.

Between 2009 and 2012 the reduction in crime represents a four fold return on Community 2168 funding over that period, ie. \$3.73 per annum for every \$1.00 per annum spent. However, over the period 1999 to 2010 residents report overall decreasing amenity, including safe children's play areas, recreational facilities and public spaces. There was also an increase in childhood vulnerability particularly in the physical health domain between 2009 and 2012. The increased childhood vulnerability in the domains of learning would amount to an additional educational cost to the community of \$553,520, reducing the overall per annum return associated with Community 2168 Project funding to \$2.73 for every \$1.00 spent.

Recommendations

On the basis of the key points and materials reviewed we have derived a series of recommendations for consideration. The recommendations are based around the three areas of project activities, management committee membership and future directions.

Project activities

It is recommended that the project:

1. Builds on the high quality relationships already developed and explores strategies for further community engagement
2. Addresses prevention and perceptions of crime and safety through increased safety audits across the 2168 area and dissemination of findings to the community
3. Investigates strategies to address the high rate of domestic violence
4. Reviews project working groups to establish their current status
5. Explore strategies to address access to facilities and amenity, particularly as it relates to children and young people.

Management committee membership

It is recommended that strategies continue to:

6. Develop broader community representation on the project Management Committee
7. Encourage senior agency representation and continuity where possible
8. Review membership processes including limited tenures with staggered rollover periods, capacity building mechanisms such as co-chairing, and mentoring

Future directions

It is recommended that the project partners:

9. Maintain and develop the partnership model of project governance
10. Explore strategies for funding diversification
11. Encourage social enterprise development
12. Explore the use of various approaches to social issues that address sustainability and increased community and agency engagement within the parameters of the current partnership model

Introduction

Purpose of this Report

The report documents an evaluation of the Community 2168 Project, and outcomes for the community of postcode 2168. It assesses:

- The effectiveness of the Community 2168 partnership model, including governance and strategic plan, and suggestions for possible improvements, changes to current process or procedures.
- The success or otherwise of the partnership against the project's stated outcomes.
- The social and economic benefits or otherwise of the project to inform future funding decisions.

The broad aims of evaluation undertaken on the Community 2168 Project are to:

- Assess the extent to which the intervention has met its goals, objectives and intended outcomes
- Identify important lessons learnt and make recommendations for the future direction of the project
- Add to the evidence base about the effectiveness of interventions in areas of concentrated disadvantage. This includes understanding best practice principles, practices to avoid, whether the projects can be replicated elsewhere and ways to make the projects sustainable, and
- Share the results of the formal evaluation with stakeholders in FACS, other government and non-government agencies and relevant communities.

This work aligns with NSW 2021 goals by evaluating place-based projects in order to ascertain their effectiveness to better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage.

The Community 2168 Project

The Community 2168 Project started in 1999 and is focused on the suburbs within the 2168 postcode in the City of Liverpool in South Western Sydney. These are Ashcroft, Busby, Cartwright, Green Valley, Heckenberg, Hinchinbrook, Miller and Sadleir. Community 2168 is a major community renewal and capacity building partnership and is one of the major community renewal initiatives in NSW. The project uses a whole of government and community partnership approach to improving outcomes for 2168 residents. It receives support from the NSW government, human resources agencies, local government and the local community. A Senior Project Officer is employed by Liverpool City Council and based in The Hub Community Health Centre in Miller.

Methods

This evaluation used a multi-method approach that 'assists in building stronger conclusions, as the strengths of one approach or method serve to compensate for the weaknesses of the other... The strengths approach implies use of a complementary or extension design for mixing methods to more effectively support the outcomes' (Bazeley and Kemp 2012 p56).

This current evaluation builds upon independent evaluations that CHETRE has undertaken of the Community 2168 Project from 1999-2010. This work has involved:

- Household surveys of residents in the Miller area investigating their perceptions of social, health and community issues and problems (5 sets of surveys)
- Key stakeholder interviews exploring perceptions of project success, barriers and enablers to implementation (3 sets of interviews)
- Reviews of strategic plans and organisational work plans to assess implementation (3 reviews)
- A community capacity assessment of the ability of the Community 2168 Project and its working groups to effect change.
- Developing a model of social cohesion based on the work of the Community 2168 project (1 model)

The evaluation synthesized these existing data and reports, and in addition undertook:

- Review of the Community 2168 Project governance structure and key documents associated with the current funding period 2010 to 2013;
- Consultation with current members of the Community 2168 Management Committee; and
- Social and economic review based on crime and education data from government sources, together with data from the previous five household surveys detailed above.

Governance Structure and Documentation Review

The objective of this phase was to review the existing Community 2168 Memorandum of Understanding, governance structure and documentation along with the Strategic Plan to determine the effectiveness of the project and suggest possible improvements and changes to current Community 2168 Governance process and procedures. We undertook the review using data sources from key documents. Documentation reviewed included: Memorandum of Understanding, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, annual progress report June 2013, and 6 monthly project progress report July to December 2013. Our analysis and recommendations regarding governance was guided by Bush, Dower and Mutch's (2002) conceptualization of community capacity building for intersectoral partnerships.

Over the past decade, the Community 2168 Project partners have undertaken a number of reviews of service implementation, community and key stakeholders perceptions. This evaluation also undertook a synthesis of these existing reports and data presented in those reports to draw conclusions about changes over time.

Consultation with Committee Members

Participants

All members of the Community 2168 Management committee were invited to participate in the evaluation interview process. A total of 15 out of a possible 22 members of the Management Committee took part in the interviews (response rate 68%). Members of the Community 2168 Committee were interviewed in order to gather their views about the past, present and future strategies for the community. An appreciative Inquiry approach was used which focuses on defining and appreciating what participants perceive is working well in the Community 2168 project (Kinni, 2013).

Interview questions were based around:

- Governance processes and procedures; their effectiveness and suggestions for possible improvements and changes
- How each of the strategic plan's proposed outcomes have been achieved in the 2168 area (see Appendix 1 for interview questions)

Analysis

The governance structure, documentation and consultations were analysed thematically, guided by the Bush et al (2002b) list of broad community capacity domains which they apply to the development and measurement of community capacity building within community health programs, illustrated below (Figure 1). The documents and interviews were coded for the level of capacity and sustainability within each domain. Community capacity was assessed for each document and then collated across all documentation of 2168 to present the findings for the body of documentation as a whole. The four domains include:

1. Network partnerships
2. Knowledge transfer
3. Problem solving
4. Infrastructure

	Domain 1 - Network Partnerships	Domain 2 - Knowledge Transfer	Domain 3 - Problem Solving	Domain 4 - Infrastructure
	Levels of Capacity			Subdomains of Sustainability
Increasing capacity ↓	First Level Capacity The network has capacity to identify the organisations and groups with resources to implement/sustain a program.	First Level Capacity The network has capacity to develop a program that meets local needs .	First Level Capacity There is capacity within the network to work together to solve problems.	Policy investments The network has capacity to develop program related policy.
	Second Level Capacity The network has capacity to deliver a program	Second Level Capacity The network has capacity to transfer knowledge in order to achieve the desired outcomes/implement a program within a network.	Second Level Capacity There is the capacity to identify and overcome problems encountered in achieving the desired outcomes.	Financial investments The network has capacity to develop financial capital. Human/intellectual investments The network has capacity to develop human/intellectual capital.
	Third Level Capacity There is a sustainable network established to maintain and resource a program.	Third Level Capacity The network has capacity to integrate a program into the mainstream practices of the network partners.	Third Level Capacity There is capacity to sustain flexible problem solving.	Social investments The network has capacity to develop social capital.
	Increasing sustainability →			

Figure 1: Structure of the Community Capacity Index

Social and Economic Review

The objective of this phase was to determine the social and economic benefits or otherwise of the Community 2168 Project. This step also included a social and economic benefit review of the investment in the 2168 area based on:

- costing data provided by the Community 2168 partners;
- NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Reporting (BOCSAR) incidence of crime data for the 2168 postcode;
- Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measure of the developmental vulnerability of children for the 2168 postcode area;
- Australian Bureau of Statistics census data on social measures for the 2168 postcode; and
- Household survey trend data, from the five previously conducted surveys, to assess community perceptions of change in the community over the time of the Community 2168 project.

The social cost of crime was calculated using the methods presented by the Australian Institute of Criminology in their paper 'Counting the costs of crime in Australia: a 2005 update'. The cost per unit of crime includes costs in anticipation of crime (defense and insurance), costs as a consequence of crime (physical and emotional impact on direct victims, value of property stolen or damaged, property recovery, victim services, lost output and the cost of health services), and costs in response to crime (criminal justice system). The 2005 costs were converted to value in 2010 Australian dollars using the Reserve Bank Australia inflation rate calculator.

Estimates of additional education costs or savings associated with changes in the AEDI reported vulnerability of children at school entry were calculated based on the 2009/2010 costs of education per child in NSW (\$12,540 per full-time primary student in the classroom; \$15,136 per full-time secondary student in the classroom; total \$27,676 per child), and evidence from the literature of the additional educational costs associated with developmental vulnerability. (Marks et al. 2008; Nyden et al. 2008; Pelham et al. 2007)

Ethics

The project received ethics approval from the University of NSW Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel (reference number: 2014-7-13).

Results

The results present an assessment of:

- community capacity in the 2168 area, based on governance structure and document review;
- effectiveness of the Community 2168 Project, based on interviews;
- progress towards Community 2168 Strategic Plan outcomes, based on interviews; and
- social and economic costs and benefits, based on household surveys, crime, education and census data.

Community Capacity

The documentation review was conducted using Bush et al. (2002) Community Capacity Index. The documentation review referred most frequently to the network partnerships and knowledge transfer domains. The domains of infrastructure and problem solving were mentioned less within the documents which were reviewed.

Network Partnerships

It is clear throughout the documentation that the core element of the project rests in the domain of network partnerships. This is evidenced by examples within various levels of capacity. Committee membership is made up of service providers, residents and local businesses. Service providers include government and non-government staff and residents from a range of demographics e.g. mature residents, young people, various ethnic groups. The partnership model opens opportunities for joint activities, such as the ongoing development of the men's health forum. The project is funded through major partners within the project network (NSW Health, FACS and Liverpool City Council). There is evidence of investment from groups and organizations beyond the original sponsoring group, some of these include UNSW, TAFE, CHETRE, Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre. The partnership has supported residents to take responsibility and ownership for various community events e.g. Twisted Sounds music event, Family Health and Fun Day and the production of the 2168 newsletter.

Knowledge Transfer

The documentation shows that the project has produced various channels for the transferring of knowledge. These range from print resources such as the 2168 newsletter, online services such as the e-list and structures such as the Community 2168 interagency meetings, community events and project sub-committees. The strategic plan reviews highlight local needs which generate appropriate activities such as Harmony Day, the People's Shed and social enterprises e.g. community markets. The project has priority areas which are developed via community consultation and activities are developed according to these. Target groups for these activities include residents and service providers. The project has been incorporated into activities of network partners such as TAFE Education and Employment Expo. Regular evaluation provides feedback on the progress of the project and community consultations and interagency meetings complement this process.

Problem Solving

The documentation shows that the project has the capacity for internal problem solving, however there is limited capacity for problem solving outside the network. The project structure provides sources of problem solving such as grievance procedures, evaluation and corporate knowledge. The

ongoing sustainability of the committees and their activities is evidence that they can work together to solve problems.

Infrastructure

The documentation shows that infrastructure investment is varied. There is a high level of policy investment due to the range of expertise in the management and other committees. Some members of the network provide support financially through allocation of resources and staffing e.g. community training programs and evaluations. The level of various service provider and resident involvement (paid or voluntary) shows that there is substantial human investment in the project. Previous evaluations have also noted the importance of the Senior Project Officer position. Progress reports show responsiveness to concerns within the network. The ongoing nature and diverse membership on various committees both illustrate some level social investment in the project.

Effectiveness of Project

Results are organised according to major themes arising from the interviews under three different topics: effective aspects of the project, ineffective aspects of the project and suggestions for improvement.

Effective aspects

Committee Structure/collaboration

- 10 out of the 15 respondents agreed that the collaborative nature of the management committee was effective. This was mainly based around the makeup/members/people 'around the table' of the committee and the way in which this was a strength of the project.
- The project was also seen as a forum to build relationships between residents, service providers and organisations. These formal and informal connections were seen as very important to the success of the program.

Project Officer

- The project officer position was frequently referred to as an essential component of the project. The position was seen as 'the driver of the project'. Enabling effective communication between members and ensuring that someone is dedicated purely to the project.

Forum

- Participants frequently mentioned that the management committee was a very effective forum for people 'around the table' to be heard and to give input into this partnership project. It was particularly noted that residents benefit from this process.

Model

- Place-based, capacity building partnership/collaboration project. The model was frequently referred to by participants as one of the major strengths of the project and it was emphasised that this should not be changed.

Ineffective aspects

Resident Representation

- Participants frequently noted that the resident component of the management committee was highly valued. It was suggested that the resident component could be extended to further reflect the larger and diverse 2168 community.
- However, it was also noted that this may be difficult due to hard-to-reach or disengaged groups.
- Several participants also noted that an extended resident component on the committee, aligning with changing demographics, could enhance the work of the project

Role Changes

- Participants identified frequent changes to service provider roles as an issue which negatively affected the way in which the committee functioned.
- Role changes within government organisations were specifically noted. It was acknowledged that this is, due to the nature of government organisations, unavoidable.
- Role changes are seen as a disruption to the committee and its communication channels. As new members come onto the committee, they bring new priorities, and what is important to one member maybe different for another.

Influence

- Several participants mentioned that although the committee has the overarching aim of improving the 2168 community, it does not necessarily have the level of influence that is needed to do so.

Suggestions for Improvement

Funding

- Several participants suggested that increases to funding for the project were needed to ensure the outcomes are met. This included suggestions for longer funding periods, increased funding from current partners as well as seeking funding from new avenues.
- Several participants agreed that in order to see substantial change in the 2168 community, more investment in the 2168 Project was needed.

Membership

- Need people 'around the table' who are authorized to make decisions and commit resources
- Need more volunteers, more residents
- Increased call for expressions of interest to include a rollover term
- An orientation process for new members to explain why they are on the committee and what their role is.
- Increased committee diversity e.g. ethnicity/background, other suburbs, etc.
- There were also suggestions that, because the committee makeup is seen as such an effective aspect to the project, this needs to be maintained.

Influence

- More influence needed. Suggestion for people sitting 'around the table' having the capacity for more influence.
- Specific reference to project officer influence over small actions e.g. under \$5,000. Suggestion that the chair be authorized to allow the expenditure under delegation. Streamlining of the position.

Focus on Miller

- Focus is always Miller as a hub for services. However, participants often expressed concerns for inclusion of other 2168 suburbs.

Being More Strategic

- In relation to 'not important' things being brought up at meetings
- Being more strategic in focusing on 3-4 core priorities and working on them.
- More strategic focus on larger issues for the community as a whole rather than small pockets.

Engagement

- Several participants mentioned that there needed to be more engagement from the community. This was particularly mentioned with reference to the disengaged in the community and minority groups. Community engagement needs to be more diverse.
- More involvement and input from the community as they may have different needs to the residents on the management committee.

Progress Towards Community 2168 Strategic Plan Outcomes

Community 2168 Management Committee members' views about the outcomes of the Community 2168 Project have been organized according to participants' assessments and observations about the progress towards achieving the potential outcomes listed in the Community 2168 Strategic Plan.

Informed community that engages and participates in local activities and programs

- Variety of information systems work very well via eg. e-groups, newsletter, activities, social media, volunteering, groups
- Committee is a channel for information, capacity building, communication, participation
- Some community groups are not reached
- A good mix of activities

Sustainable community model with capacity for residents to manage local affairs in partnership with service providers

- Sustainability is highly qualified by concerns about resourcing
- Reservations about capacity of residents managing local affairs in partnership due to their reliance on the project for funding and support from committee/project officer
- Capacity continuing to be developed but needs support eg. action-based meetings, opportunities to co-chair, co-minute take.
- Uncertainty about the future (3 year inadequate funding, future redevelopment of the area, future of community facilities)

Safe, healthy, harmonious community with opportunities for families, children and young people

- Overwhelming support for police, with PCYC also mentioned
- Safety audits highly supported; perceptions of crime / safety surveys suggested
- Miller Square a concern for some relating to disenfranchised groups including young people
- Health service (The Hub) access and information good, hospital also mentioned
- Committee builds opportunities for residents, eg. markets, bus trips, organising community events. Need activities for youth, young families, children, mature people.
- Some mixed feelings about resident groups eg. social housing, 'wall-sitters' in Miller Square, unspecified groups 'coming into the area'/need youthworkers, mental health issues in community
- Concern about access to fresh fruit and vegetables, public transport
- Beyond capacity of 2168 project to do this [*make a safe, harmonious and healthy community*], can only do projects (one comment)

Strong community that works together to achieve outcomes

- Community strength is growing but the project plays an essential role
- Committee and community have good relations (but not all community members are involved)
- Project/committee is 'a voice' for the community, partnerships are valuable and work well and develops opportunities for residents

A community that has access to facilities and amenities that reflect its diversity

- Mixed views about this – old facilities mentioned but also improvements to these through cultural activities and projects with local artists. Run-down areas also mentioned (housing, Miller Square)
- Open space and parklands and The Hub rated highly and amenities such as library, community garden, shed, PCYC, Aboriginal Women's group, Harmony Day specifically mentioned
- Young people specified as needing activities, facilities and youth/street worker. One comment on the need for young people to see 'a world outside 2168' to envisage opportunities that might be open to them in future
- Need more information about what emerging communities want/need. The committee needs to reflect the diversity of the community

Recurring themes through-out the interviews

- The need for adequate project resourcing is a major and continuing source of concern throughout
- Concern for disenfranchised groups, social housing residents and especially the groups who frequent 'the wall' at Miller Square who are variously described as 'troublemakers' or the opposite eg. described as having 'good hearts'. Concern includes the effects of government cutbacks on the most disadvantaged
- Management Committee highly valued for partnership work, commitment of members, capacity building with residents, developing opportunities for activities, advocacy and communication. Suggestions include increased representation of community diversity

through limited membership terms (with staggered end dates to retain corporate knowledge) and resident capacity building

- The sentiments expressed by a resident recur throughout – ‘It’s a way to have a connection’ [between agencies and residents]
- The important role of the police and The Hub Community Health Centre recurs throughout
- The role of the project officer is highly regarded across all categories

Social and Economic Costs and Benefits

This section of the results presents the social and economic costs and benefits associated with changes in crime, education, census and household survey data over the duration of the Community 2168 Project 1999-2013.

Project Costings

Over the period 2009 to 2012, the Community 2168 Project received \$552,339 of funding contributions and grants, as noted in Table 1.

Table 1: Funding contributions and grants to the Community 2168 Project June 2009 – July 2012

July 2009 – June 2012		
Funding Program	Project	Amount
Housing NSW, SWS Local Health District	Community 2168	215,590
CDSE 2009	Miller Street Art Gallery	8,500
CDSE 2009	Youth Social Enterprise Project	20,000
CDSE 2009	Resident Action Group	6,000
AAS Grant 2009	2168 Safe and Proud Communities	109,151
Community Builders 2010	2168 Training and Research Centre	170,312
CDSE 2010	2168 Resident Action Group	6,000
CDSE 2011	Ashcroft Community Education and Safety Project	8,836
ClubsGrant 2011	Resident Action Group	7,950
TOTAL		552,339

Benefit Analysis Using Crime Data

Over the decade 1999-2000 to 2009-2010 there have been considerable reductions in all categories of crime in the 2168 postcode area, with the exception of an increase in the reported number of assaults, and a small increase in sexual offences. There have been large decreases in the number of break and enter, motor vehicle theft related crime, theft and malicious damage. Over all, the cost to the community of crime in 2009-2010 was \$5.6million over two years, or \$2.8million per year, less than the community costs of crime in 1999-2000 (Table 2).

Table 2: 10 year cost of crime difference 1999-2000 to 2009-2010

Crime	Unit cost \$AUD 2005	Unit cost \$AUD 2010	1999-2000	2009-2010	Difference	Cost difference \$AUD 2010
Assault	1695	1966	819	938	119	\$233,978
Sexual offenses	7500	8700	134	161	27	\$234,900
Robbery (assumed personal [lower] unit cost used)	2270	2633	147	89	-58	-\$152,726
Break and enter – dwelling	2700	3132	1114	757	-357	-\$1,118,124
Break and enter - non-dwelling	4100	4756	325	80	-245	-\$1,165,220
Motor vehicle theft	7000	8120	632	290	-342	-\$2,777,040
Steal from motor vehicle	1000	1160	848	399	-449	-\$520,840
Steal from retail store/dwelling/person/stock theft/other (all other theft not vehicle)	400	464	732	538	-194	-\$90,016
Malicious damage to property (assumed commercial [higher] unit cost used)	1250	1450	1467	1277	-190	-\$275,500
Two year cost difference						-\$5,630,588
Per year cost difference						-\$2,815,294

Over the five years 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 there have continued to be considerable reductions in all categories of crime in the 2168 postcode area, with the exception of a small increase in the reported number of assaults. The cost to the community of crime continues to reduce, with crime in 2012-2013 costing \$1.4million over two years, or \$0.7million per year less than the community costs of crime in 2009-2010 (Table 3). This reduction in the incidence of crime represents a four fold return for every dollar in funding contribution and grants to Community 2168 in the 2009-2012 period, that is, a \$3.73 per annum return in reduced costs of crime for each \$1.00 spent per annum (average).

Table 3: 5 year cost of crime difference 2009-2010 to 2012-2013

Crime	Unit cost \$AUD 2005	Unit cost \$AUD 2010	2009-2010	2012-2013	Difference	Cost difference \$AUD 2010
Assault	1695	1966	938	1005	67	\$131,735
Sexual offenses	7500	8700	161	139	-22	-\$191,400
Robbery (assumed personal [lower] unit cost used)	2270	2633	89	65	-24	-\$63,197
Break and enter - dwelling	2700	3132	757	680	-77	-\$241,164
Break and enter - non-dwelling	4100	4756	80	53	-27	-\$128,412
Motor vehicle theft	7000	8120	290	237	-53	-\$430,360
Steal from motor vehicle	1000	1160	399	480	81	\$93,960
Steal from retail store/dwelling/person/stock theft/other (all other theft not vehicle)	400	464	538	520	-18	-\$8,352
Malicious damage to property (assumed commercial [higher] unit cost used)	1250	1450	1277	906	-371	-\$537,950
Two year cost difference						-\$1,375,139
Per year cost difference						-\$687,570

Domestic Violence

From 1999 to 2013 the 2168 area had a stable incidence of domestic assault whereas Blacktown (similar SEIFA and population) reported an increase of 4.1% per year and NSW increased by 2.5% per year. However, crime statistics showed that over the 2009-2013 time period, an increase in domestic assault incidence of 12.8% per year was reported for postcode area 2168. This was significantly higher when compared to Blacktown (similar SEIFA), which experienced an increase of 2.3% per year and NSW as a whole, which experienced an increase of 1.5% per year.

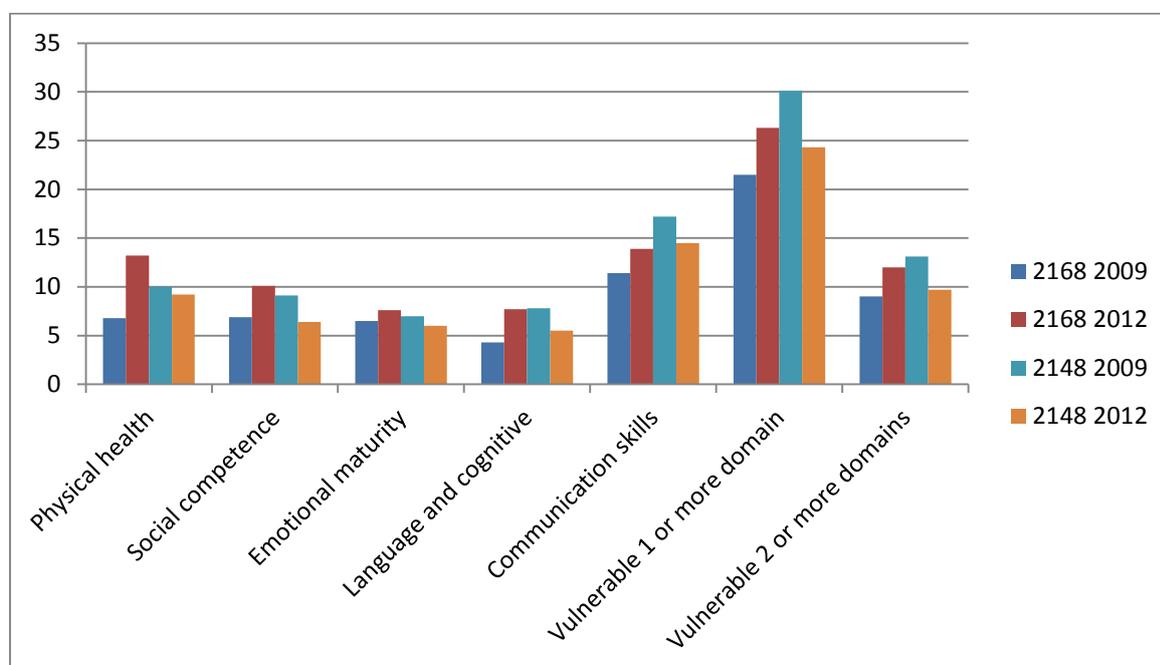
Social Benefit

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results for the children entering schools in the 2168 postcode area in 2009 (that is children experiencing early childhood in the community between 2004-2009) were assessed as having development in most domains that was better than for NSW and Australian children overall. However, children entering schools in 2012 (that is children experiencing early childhood in the community between 2007-2012) were assessed in most domains as having development that was more vulnerable than the NSW and Australian children overall (Table 4). This trend for an increase in the number of children vulnerable on the domains of development between 2009 and 2012 was contrary to the results for NSW and Australia, and for comparable local areas in greater western Sydney, for example, Blacktown, postcode 2148 (similar SEIFA and equivalent numbers of children commencing school in each year) (Figure 2).

Table 4: Children reporting vulnerability at school entry

AEDI proportion assessed as vulnerable in domain	2009			2012		
	2168	NSW	AUSTRALIA	2168	NSW	AUSTRALIA
Physical health and wellbeing	6.8	8.6	9.3	13.2	8.3	9.3
Social competence	7.0	8.8	9.5	10.1	8.5	9.3
Emotional maturity	6.5	7.4	8.9	7.6	6.2	7.6
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	4.3	5.9	8.9	7.7	4.8	6.8
Communication skills and general knowledge	11.5	9.2	9.2	13.8	8.5	9.0
Vulnerable on 1 or more domains	21.5	21.3	23.6	26.3	19.9	22.0
Vulnerable on 2 or more domains	9.0	10.3	11.8	12.0	9.2	10.8

Figure 2: AEDI results 2009 and 2012 for postcode 2168 and postcode 2148



The estimates of additional educational costs of children with moderate learning disabilities range from 1.3 to double the costs of education for children without difficulties. Based on the 2009/2010 costs of education per child in NSW (\$12,540 per full-time primary student in the classroom; \$15,136 per full-time secondary student in the classroom; total \$27,676 per child), the additional educational cost per child vulnerable on 2 or more domains would range from \$8,303 to \$27,676 per child. The increase in the proportion of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains from 9.0% in 2009 to 12.0% in 2012 represents an additional 20 vulnerable children, and an additional education cost of \$166,060 to \$553,520. That is, action to maintain the numbers of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains at the 2009 levels, or the NSW average, would yield savings to the community of up to \$553,520 in education costs. This increase in the number of vulnerable children, and the associated increased school costs, would reduce the return of \$3.73 per annum per \$1.00 spent on the

Community 2168 project gained from reduction in the incidence of crime, to a cost-benefit return of \$2.73 per \$1.00 spent.

The proportion of adults who have completed year 12 or equivalent education is increasing in the 2168 postcode area, however, the proportion remains lower than for Sydney as a whole (Figure 3). Similarly, the average household income has increased, but remains behind that of Blacktown and Sydney (Figure 4). The gap between 2168 residents and Sydney residents is increasing on both measures.

Figure 3: Year 12 or equivalent education

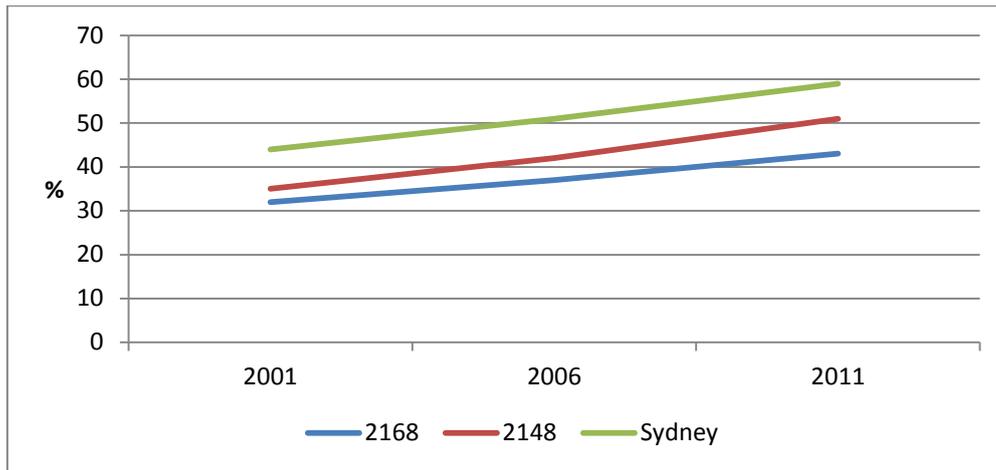
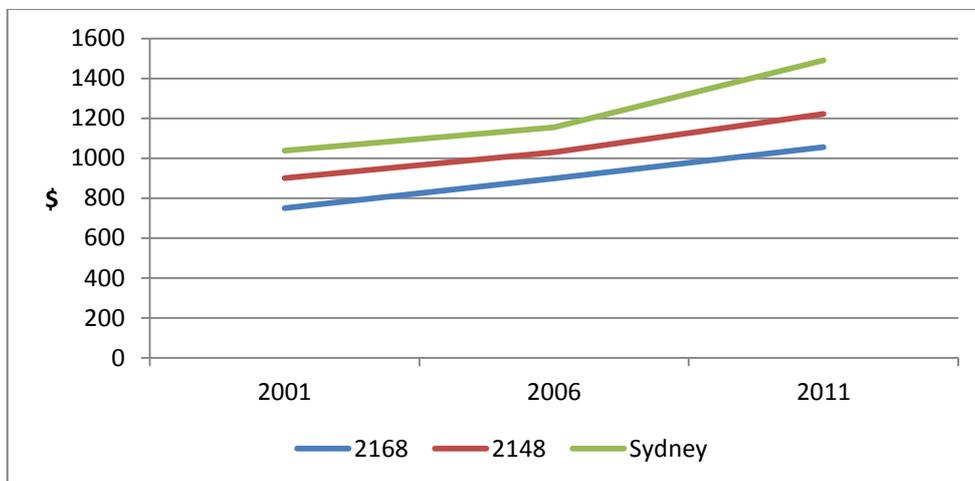


Figure 4: Median weekly household income



The Miller household survey was conducted in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2010. Overall, residents report decreasing amenity in the area over the time period 1999 to 2010. Most commonly, the pattern of findings reports improving amenity in the years 2002 to 2007, with amenity deteriorating between 2007 and 2010, with the proportion of residents reporting problems with amenity increasing to levels higher than those reported in 1999. The following table (Table 5) reports these findings with the trends highlighted in green for those that significantly improved overall, red for those that significantly worsened overall, and amber for those where the trend has been stable over time.

Table 5: Perceived neighborhood problem (weighted to the population)

	1999	2002	2005	2007	2010	Total	χ^2 test for trend
How much of a problem is vandalism/graffiti in Miller?							p-value=0.16
A problem (%)	78.4	56.3	62.4	58.2	66.4	804	
Total	209	334	267	172	290	1272	
How much of a problem is litter and rubbish in Miller?							p-value=0.02
A problem (%)	66.7	47.2	58.2	45.6	73.0	775	
Total	209	334	266	179	291	1279	
How much of a problem are assaults and muggings in Miller?							p-value=0.02
A problem (%)	60.0	42.9	54.6	40.6	45.0	586	
Total	209	334	248	155	286	1232	
How much of a problem is burglary in Miller?							p-value=0.01
A problem (%)	75.2	45.9	55.6	37.7	59.1	675	
Total	209	334	258	161	290	1252	
How much of a problem is speeding traffic in Miller?							p-value=0.05
A problem (%)	76.1	62.0	62.4	64.8	78.8	921	
Total	209	334	267	177	289	1276	
How much of a problem is discarded needles and syringes in Miller?							p-value=0.02
A problem (%)	54.5	33.0	34.7	38.4	38.1	462	
Total	209	334	244	162	291	1240	
How much of a problem is uneven or dangerous footpaths in Miller?							p-value<0.001
A problem (%)	47.6	37.3	45.5	49.8	61.5	654	
Total	209	334	259	169	289	1260	
How much of a problem is poor lighting in Miller?							p-value=0.01
A problem (%)	43.8	44.3	46.5	40.7	55.4	543	
Total	209	334	257	171	291	1262	
How much of a problem is empty houses and shops in Miller?							p-value=0.04
A problem (%)	40.5	32.0	29.4	27.2	26.2	381	
Total	209	334	259	172	289	1263	
How much of a problem is poor state of houses and shops in Miller?							p-value=<0.01
A problem (%)	45.0	40.2	42.7	43.6	56.7	566	
Total	209	334	268	175	286	1272	
How much of a problem is nuisance from dogs in Miller?							p-value=0.58
A problem (%)	37.4	22.7	27.7	26.4	33.3	347	
Total	209	334	269	177	290	1279	
How much of a problem is lack of safe places for children in Miller?							p-value<0.01
A problem (%)	67.5	56.6	67.4	72.6	72.4	740	
Total	209	334	227	148	284	1202	
How much of a problem is lack of recreational activities in Miller?							p-value<0.01
A problem (%)	57.4	56.7	42.2	57.9	66.6	663	
Total	209	334	251	154	285	1233	
How much of a problem is problems with neighbours in Miller?							p-value=0.19
A problem (%)	27.7	16.5	22.7	24.1	22.8	250	
Total	209	334	269	177	290	1279	
How much of a problem is racism in Miller?							p-value=0.48
A problem (%)	23.7	33.6	31.5	44.0	27.3	396	
Total	209	334	256	166	291	1256	
How much of a problem is the poor state of open spaces and gardens in Miller?							p-value<0.001
A problem (%)	39.4	33.0	33.5	30.9	59.2	495	
Total	209	334	263	171	283	1260	
How much of a problem is presence of drug dealers/users in public spaces in Miller?							p-value<0.001
A problem (%)	85.8	56.2	64.8	59.9	59.7	764	
Total	209	334	244	156	287	1230	
How much of a problem is drinking in public places in Miller?							p-value=0.06
A problem (%)	64.8	50.0	56.4	42.6	69.6	708	
Total	209	334	253	165	287	1248	
How much of a problem is antisocial behaviour in Miller?							p-value=0.11
A problem (%)	61.1	50.5	53.1	55.5	66.0	716	
Total	209	334	262	168	289	1263	

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the place-based, partnership model of the Community 2168 Project, and assess the following:

- *The effectiveness of the Community 2168 partnership model, including governance and strategic plan, and suggestions for possible improvements, changes to current process or procedures.*
- *The success or otherwise of the partnership against the projects stated outcomes.*
- *The social and economic benefits or otherwise of the project to inform future funding decisions.*

This section will now discuss the overarching themes that emerged from the conduct of this evaluation.

The evaluation findings suggest that the Community 2168 Partnership model, within its scope and limitations, has been a largely effective intervention for the 2168 area. This conclusion is drawn from both:

- Empirical data collected and analysis undertaken in the conduct of this evaluation (documentary analysis, interviews and meta-synthesis of previous evaluations), and
- Temporal associations between the investment of resources and strategies to improve community outcomes in the area and population level data, including crime incidence and educational outcomes.

It should be noted that neither of these evaluative methods allow for direct causal association between investment in the 2168 community, implementation of the Community 2168 Project, and changes in community outcomes. Nevertheless, the use of a multi-method evaluative approach and the consistency of findings, as highlighted in this discussion, strengthens confidence in the validity of the conclusions about the effectiveness of the Project and the subsequent recommendations.

The findings suggest an overall success of the partnership model. This is reflected in the strength of the social return on the investment over the duration of the Community 2168 Project and strong support to maintain this model. However, whilst there is evidence of improvement and return on investment, the 2168 postcode remains a disadvantaged area where core social determinants of health continue to remain poorer relative to Sydney. An example of this is evident in the proportion of adults who have completed year 12 or equivalent education, which is increasing in the 2168 postcode, but still remains considerably lower than Sydney area as a whole. Similarly median weekly household income in the 2168 postcode area has increased, but still remains behind that of Sydney. The gap between 2168 residents and Sydney residents is increasing on both of these measures.

The core areas of consistent findings were support to maintain the model, outcomes for children, improvement in crime and perceptions of safety, and concerns about domestic violence. Each of these will be discussed below.

Support to maintain model

The report has shown that overall there was strong support to maintain and develop the current partnership model. This was evident through frequently being mentioned in the management committee consultations and previous evaluations, with strong support for the model, specifically noting the partnerships it creates and the importance of the Senior Project Officer.

However the sustainability of the project was often flagged as an issue. Findings from the consultations and previous evaluations suggest that although the partnership model is seen as the main strength of the project and that this should be maintained, its current 3 year funding cycle causes difficulties. Findings suggest that there is a need to explore approaches that address sustainability concerns within the current model.

The management committee consultations and previous community capacity review noted that there was a constant need for increased community participation in the project (and its activities) and representation on the various working groups and committees. This suggestion was frequently made in order to meet the needs of the community and to enable fair representation and input from the entire 2168 community.

Reduction in crime and improvements in perceptions of safety

Over the time period of the Community 2168 Project implementation, findings showed that there was a reduction in crime incidents. These reductions were in crimes against property. Crimes against persons (assault, sexual offences, and domestic violence as noted in the next section) continue to remain an issue for the area. Over the same time period, there was also an improvement in perceptions of safety in the area. The crime data for the 2168 area presented in this report are consistent with the Miller surveys. As overall crime has declined in the area since 1999, Miller residents also reported a reduction in problems from crime related activity in the same time period. The current management committee generally expressed that crime was down in the area however, safety audits were still recommended. Overall, in the period 2009-2012 the reduction in the incidence of crime represents a four-fold return for every dollar in funding contribution and grants to Community 2168 in the 2009-2012 period, that is, a \$3.73 per annum return in reduced costs of crime for each \$1.00 spent per annum (average).

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was seen as a problem throughout the consultations and this concern was validated in the analysis of area level crime statistics. The management committee consultations found that there were a number of members who were concerned about domestic violence in the area. Crime statistics showed that over the time period of the Community 2168 Projects implementation (1999-2013) the area had stable incidence of domestic assault where as both Blacktown and NSW experienced increases in incidence over the same time period. However, crime statistics indicate that in more recent years (2009-2013), the 2168 area has had an increase in domestic assault incidence of 12.8% per year and that this was significantly higher when compared to Blacktown and NSW. These findings suggest that this should be an area of concern and focus of the Community 2168 Project and wider community agencies.

Outcomes for children

Although the AEDI results for children entering schools in the 2168 area in 2009, (that is children experiencing early childhood between 2004-2009) were better in most domains than for NSW, AEDI results have subsequently declined in the area. Children entering schools in 2012 (experiencing early childhood in 2007-2012) were assessed in most domains as being more vulnerable than NSW and Australian children. This decline was in all domains but the greatest reduction was in physical health and wellbeing. This concern about the outcomes and amenity of the local area for children was mirrored in the Miller household surveys and the management committee consultations. There is a well-established link between the quality of the built environment and one's health and wellbeing (Booth et al. 2001). Miller residents reported a decrease in amenities in the area overall over the time period 1999 to 2010. There was brief improvement to amenities in the years of 2002 to 2007, however this deteriorated from 2007-2010. There were specific concerns about problems with safe places for children to play, lack of recreational activities and the poor state of footpaths, open spaces and gardens. This was reiterated in the management committee consultations through the perceived need for safety audits and an emphasis placed on the need for activities, facilities and amenities for young people in the 2168 area.

Recommendations

On the basis of these key points and materials reviewed, the following series of recommendations have been derived for consideration. These have been grouped around the three areas of project activities, management committee membership and future directions.

Project activities

The relationships developed both as a result of the project and as a key feature of the partnership model were frequently emphasised by survey participants. Both residents and service providers stressed that these positive relationships were valued and productive of further community engagement. It was also suggested that project working groups be regularly reviewed to ensure continuing viability. The work of the police and the safety audit program was highly regarded. While there was a significant decrease in most crime categories, the high and worsening rate of domestic violence is of great concern. Addressing perceptions and prevention of crime including through extension of the safety audit program and the dissemination of relevant factual information was supported. The AEDI results showed a significant increase in the proportion of children who were vulnerable, particularly in the physical health domain, between 2009 and 2012. This finding was reinforced by the survey result showing that the outcome in the questionnaire that referred to 'A community that has access to facilities and amenities that reflect its diversity' was the lowest rated. This concern was particularly evident in relation to activities, facilities and spaces for children and young people. The household survey also reflected a significant increase in reporting of problems with safe places for children to play, lack of recreational activities for young people, and the poor state of footpaths, open spaces and gardens.

It is recommended that the project:

1. Builds on the high quality relationships already developed and explores strategies for further community engagement.
2. Addresses prevention and perceptions of crime and safety through increased safety audits across the 2168 area and dissemination of findings to the community.
3. Investigates strategies to address the high rate of domestic violence.
4. Reviews project working groups to establish their current status.
5. Explore strategies to address access to facilities and amenity, particularly as it relates to children and young people.

Management committee membership

A key priority for the Management Committee is its commitment to the continuing development of the project in addressing the concerns of the diverse 2168 community. Committee members recognise the challenge of ensuring that their membership reflects both continuing high level agency representation as well as the changing community demographics.

It is recommended that strategies continue to:

6. Develop broader community representation on the project Management Committee.
7. Encourage senior agency representation and continuity where possible.
8. Review membership processes including limited tenures with staggered rollover periods, capacity building mechanisms such as co-chairing, and mentoring.

Future directions

The overall success of the Community 2168 partnership model is reflected in the socio-economic return generated as a result of investment made over the duration of the project. The Senior Project Officer position was highly valued. However it was felt that sustainability is threatened by resourcing limitations including the short term funding cycle of three years. Interview comments emphasised the very strong support to maintain and develop the partnership model and the need to explore approaches that address future sustainability and increased community and agency engagement.

It is recommended that the project partners:

9. Maintain and develop the partnership model of project governance
10. Explore strategies for funding diversification
11. Encourage social enterprise development
12. Explore the use of various approaches to social issues that address sustainability and increased community and agency engagement within the parameters of the current partnership model

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Appendix 1.

Interview Questions

Consultations with Community 2168 Committee Members

1. What do you think has been effective in the Community 2168 project's governance processes and procedures?
2. Could you suggest any changes that will improve the governance of the Community 2168 project?
3. The Community 2168 Strategic Plan contains a list of potential outcomes for the 2168 community. We will go through each one and I will ask you to comment on how well you think each outcome is being achieved in the 2168 community.

[nb. Respondents were asked to rate the achievement of the outcomes according to the scale below]

Not at all/very limited

**Somewhat
entirely/entirely**

Substantial

Almost

Outcomes

- An informed community that engages and participates in local activities and programs.
- A sustainable community model with the capacity for residents to manage local affairs in partnership with service providers.
- A safe, healthy and harmonious community with opportunities for families, children and young people.
- A strong community that works together to achieve outcomes
- A community that has access to facilities and amenities that reflect its diversity