

**Sunnybank Hills
Caravan Park
Community
Development
Project**

Project Report

May 2001

Community Praxis Co-op Ltd

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Preamble

For the Community Praxis Team members working on this project this report signifies the end of a delightful process of journeying with both residents of Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park and the Community Development Team of Sunnybank Family Support Inc. It has been a delight to work with so many people and to be welcomed into people's homes. The extension of hospitality to us has been the cornerstone of an ethos that holds this project together – an ethos of mutuality, dignity, solidarity and inclusion. It is that ethos rather than the 'technos' (techniques) that is primary.

It is impossible to reflect in a report the dynamic nature of this project. How do we capture the moments of conflict, anger and then forgiveness and reconciliation; the tentative steps into a park and welcoming into people's homes; of emerging community analysis and energy; the moments of despair, failed projects and wanting to give up; and then the passion, inspiration, action and vision that have emerged at different stages of the project and with deepening conviction?

We have attempted to do this through presenting a report that combines analysis, theory, and technical reflection. We hope that this reflects some of the dynamism, and ensures that the intuitive, story-telling nature, people-centred focus of the community development approach is validated alongside the theory-building and analysis building that is the domain of report writing.

Thankyou

Jim Decouto (Project Worker)
Dave Andrews (Project Supervisor, Trainer)
Peter Westoby (Project Manager, Trainer)

1. Introduction

The Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park Community Development Project was an initiative of the Sunnybank Family Support Inc. (now Kyabra) The needs of residents in Caravan Parks was acknowledged as a priority by the CISP Review and Enhancement – Building a Profile of the Communities served by Sunnybank Family Support Inc. This was supported by the recent work of ONSITE and Brisbane City Council.

The Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park Community Development Project was conducted between June 2000 and March 2001 with the support of a Brisbane City Council Community Development Assistance Grant.

Sunnybank Family Support Inc. contracted a community development team from Community Praxis Co-op to undertake the project.

The Project worked in the site of Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park.

This report presents:

- Acknowledgements
- Recommendations to key stakeholders.
- Project overview and methodology
- The story of the project
- What was achieved – outcomes
- Lessons learnt
- Evaluation

2. Recommendations

Sunnybank Family Support Inc.

1. Seek a commitment from other funding sources to support on-going work within the Caravan Park.
2. Support resource workers through supervision, on-going staff training from within the Community Development Team in their on-going work in the park.
3. Seek other partners which want to establish or enhance local initiatives, and resource them to fulfill their aspirations – e.g. ANA Foresters.
4. Consolidate a vision for the work within the Park, both within the agency and within the Park community itself.
5. Continue to evaluate the community development approach in terms of sustainability, replicability in other caravan parks and replicability in other sites/ places of work.

BCC – South Team

6. Support community capacity building initiatives in Sunnybank Caravan Park arising from the residents actions, and in particular:
 - On-going finance co-ops
 - Food banks
 - Updating of the resource directory
 - Creating linkages to other services and projects

On-site & Brisbane City Council

7. Engage in on-going dialogue with this project around the contribution of the community development method that:
 - Utilizes an outreach model
 - Does not 'rely' on provision of a service to negotiate entry
 - Focus' on relationship building, mutual respect and dignifying processes of social change
 - Responds to felt needs, not agency agenda's
 - Builds community processes and structures to support people rather than the other way around.
 - Focus' on capacities rather than needs
 - Recognises the significance of brokerage approaches
8. Resource a project that identifies agency/ bureaucratic constraints, blocks and barriers to community development approaches in caravan parks, exploring issues such as:
 - Safety within a CD approach as opposed to agency/service delivery approach
 - Structural barriers and Managerial issues
 - The kinds of personalities and inter-disciplinary teams that build community
 - Building of community rather than agency infrastructure and structures
 - The utilization of dialogical approaches within a rights framework rather than adversarial approaches within a rights framework

3. Acknowledgements

In this section of the report we would like to acknowledge all the people that have participated in this project in the many different ways. The outcomes of the project are the hard work and varied contributions of many different people.

3.1 Residents in Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park Participants in the WANTOK training group

Participants in the Finance Co-op development

Participants in the Resource Directory development

Participants in the '8th National Caravan Park Workers Seminar' presentation

Particular thanks to:

- Jennifer Oxley, Leonie Feeney, Lindsay Gregory, Andrew & Susan Rochester for their support in providing space in their homes for meetings, for planning the implementation of the WANTOK training, finance co-op and resource directory and disseminating information in an on-going way to park residents.

3.2 Other stakeholders at the park

- Graeme – Manager of the park – for enabling access to residents and providing information about issues regarding legislation, regulations around parks.
- Diane and Des – Park Owners – for supporting the work in the park.

3.3 Staff of Sunnybank Family Support Inc.

- David O'Tool – CEO - in 'setting free' resources within the agency to support the work.
- Sandiellen Black – CD Manager - who managed and coordinated the resources and staff input and who also had spent much time in the park prior to this project building relationships, trust and negotiating entry.
- John Martin – Resource Worker - for his individual support of residents and on-going support within the community development team around small projects in the park.
- Elizabeth, Becky and Jasmin – Resource Workers - for their individualised support to residents in the park.
- Lyn – administrator at the Neighbourhood Centre – for her administrative, information and communication support for residents and the work team.
- Sue, Donna & Ann – at Runcorn – for communication support between the work team and residents.
- Cathy Muller – a social work student on placement – for writing up stories for residents in the park as part of a publication and for supporting the community development processes.

3.4 Other community organisations/ stakeholders

- Brisbane City Council generally and Kris Saunders specifically for resourcing and supporting the project.
- For ANA Foresters – for providing information sessions and staff support in developing the finance cooperative model.

4. Project overview

4.1 Project Aims:

These aims are part of the original brief negotiated between Sunnybank Family Support Inc. and BCC:

- ◆ To work in partnership with individuals, families, groups, staff and community contacts to identify and address the needs of residents living in the Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park (SHCP).
- ◆ To build and enhance community life for the SHCP residents.
- ◆ To support residents to develop skills, knowledge and resources to meet their goals.
- ◆ To act as an advocate for the needs of residents in the SHCP community.
- ◆ To facilitate the involvement of residents in a range of community processes.
- ◆ To work with residents to utilise the skills, knowledge and resources that exist within their community to address need.
- ◆ To raise community consciousness around the structural causes of inequality and social exclusion.
- ◆ To work with government and community agencies to address the needs of SHCP residents.
- ◆ In conjunction with the Manager – Community Development, develop an operational plan and evaluation process that is consistent with agency and service philosophy.
- ◆ To network with other Caravan Park workers to develop appropriate strategies which identify and address issues of concern for men living in Caravan Parks

4.2 The methodology

At the heart of the methodology proposed by Community Praxis Co-op as way of responding to the project aims was an innovative combination of several methodological approaches:

- ◆ Community development,
- ◆ Appreciative enquiry,
- ◆ Dialogical research.

Community development.

The team brings a strong belief in the integrity of community.

At the heart of this methodology is the understanding that healthy communities are not communities without problems, but rather are communities that have the capacity, resources, resilience and leadership to creatively engage with their own issues and the wider context. Beyond that, soulful communities have developed processes that engage their issues as indicators of potential - with attention, awareness and imagination.

It is a core responsibility of the project to work with developmental community building processes that enhance and enable the development of local community capacity.

Appreciative enquiry.

Appreciative inquiry adds to this methodology the suggestion that we look for what works in a community, create space for those things to be affirmed and enhanced, build on existing momentum for change, and focus on community strengths and assets.

It is a critique of problem-centred approaches that destroy community identity and vision by generating a public discourse that defines communities in terms of their deficiencies.

Dialogical research.

The dialogical research methodology is adapted from the work of Paulo Friere. It requires attention to four processes.

Process 1. Establishing a dialogue: with and between stakeholders.

This framework involves engaging in dialogue to establish relationships, and to begin to understand the context and perspectives of community participants and stakeholders.

The initial task is to identify the various perspectives already engaged in the ongoing discussion of social and community issues in Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park, and to establish the types of opportunities required for the articulation of those perspectives.

The crucial role of affirmation and suspicion in dialogical research.

The methodology requires that the team bring to the process of establishing a dialogue an understanding of the dynamic of *affirmation-suspicion* (described by Chris Brown and Charles Ringma).

An engagement in dialogue requires affirmation - affirming and validating the perspectives expressed. The assumption is that a view expressed is not only valid “from the participant’s point of view”, but that it also expresses something substantial and significant about the whole of the matter (This is Colin Peile’s *holographic research paradigm*.)

Integrity in the dialogue also requires suspicion - working from the assumption that perspectives emerge from a particular horizon, within a significant context; and that they do not represent the truth about a situation but rather express insight, agenda and potential.

Process 2: Developing an analysis.

The second stage involves documenting the various perspectives - giving voice to the views expressed in a way that moves beyond the descriptive and seeks to reflect an emerging understanding that has breadth, depth, and clarity. The holographic paradigm argues that clarity of understanding comes from assembling and validating as many views as possible.

Of course, it is assumed that all perspectives in the discourse are contested. The challenge is to not give any voice the kind of prominence that will allow it to drown out the others, but to hold the perspectives in tension. The methodology requires that the study team hold the tension between contesting perspectives long enough for the kind of analysis to emerge which will bring clarity and the kind of creative synthesis to emerge which can open up surprising potential.

In this framework it is often the perspectives that are considered problematic which open up the possibilities. Dialogue with a hard or critical edge is required to sharpen the analysis.

Process 3: Insight and imagination.

In this methodology insight and imagination come out of the dialogue, and inevitably the most strategic ways forward transcend any particular perspective or agenda.

The task of the project team is to create a fresh space that welcomes the expression of perspective and opens up the possibilities. Insight and imagination come from the “open moment” when participants in the dialogue move to the consideration of the new possibilities – beyond the expression of disappointment, frustration, judgment and preference.

Insight and imagination come when the interaction is characterized by a pause in the expression of opinion; a moment of silence; the risk of offering a tentative rather than a determined view; listening; and affirmation. It is critical that the moment be recognized and valued – requiring the project team to exercise ongoing awareness and attention to the moment.

Process 4: Negotiated outcomes.

In this methodology the processes of dialogue will be carefully and deliberately worked towards negotiated outcomes, as the team is aware that to do otherwise would condemn many a good idea to a life on the shelf as another recommendation in another report.

4.3 The horizon of the project team: building peaceful, just and sustainable communities.

In articulating a dialogical approach to our research process we believe that it is important to be ‘up front’ about the horizon of the project team. The notion of ‘horizon’ simply builds on what is commonly known as perspective. We wish to make explicit our perspective that is informed by personal and organisational values, vision, and ethos.

4.4 The elements of the project

The project team articulated the following work plan as elements of the project – a staged process. What I have added in italics reflects eventual changes in the strategy.

Stage	Strategy
Stage 1	➤ Develop draft work plan with agency
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Negotiate entry ➤ Eyeball ➤ Build rapport/relationships ➤ Identify informal and formal leadership within Caravan Park (CP) ➤ Map agencies and community groups with a stake in the Park ➤ Link up with other caravan park workers (On-Site etc.) <i>The project workers made contact but did not sustain such interaction.</i>
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify individual assets/capacities ➤ Develop community reference group. <i>A community/ park residents group was formed instead.</i> ➤ On-going participation in networks of caravan park workers addressing needs. <i>Sandiellen continued this process via the preparation of the 'on-site' national conference.</i>
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Using participatory method map community assets (internal & external) & issues. <i>Replaced by a community training process and many informal discussions.</i> ➤ Develop working groups around key issues (include men's group) ➤ Identify community training needs. <i>Residents group identified these needs themselves.</i> ➤ Conduct stakeholder consultation (survey & interviews). <i>Was never conducted.</i> ➤ Develop issues/assets paper. <i>Was never conducted.</i>
Stage 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support working groups & key individuals ➤ Develop & implement training strategy (peer, parent, community analysis & skilling) eg. '....utilize building a better world' course ➤ Form stakeholder working group (integrated service delivery). <i>Never developed.</i>
Stage 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build structural links between working groups and appropriate agencies (eg drug/alcohol, employment, tenancy/housing, youth, DV etc...) ➤ Consolidate stakeholder working group

5. A version of the story of the Sunnybank Caravan Park Community Development Project.

Project Team Entry & Beginnings

June: The project worker (Jim) negotiated entry into the park. This was facilitated by Sandiellen Black with introductions to park residents that she knew, to the park manager and included briefings of earlier engagements with the park. (It is worth noting here that Sunnybank Family Support Inc. had received money from BCC for this project with only negotiations with the Park Manager. This is a risky strategy for entry.)

July – August: The project worker spent time with individuals. People were curious, suspicious, and even cynical about the project. Several residents developed an interest firstly as individuals and then introduced Jim to their other networks in the park.

Through this process informal groups started to emerge – there were discussions around residents individual and group needs. Areas of need were identified.

August: Links with Sunnybank Family Support Inc. resource workers and park residents were developed to support individual needs. A focus group with Sunnybank Family Support resource workers was organised by the project worker and Sandiellen to explore ways of engaging with individual needs and potential for supporting community/ group processes.

Community and Team Analysis

August: Residents, the co-op project team and CD manager identified potential strategies for meeting group needs. The potential for cooperative self-help models, a men's group, an arts and craft group, a food bank and car pool, a formal needs analysis and a resource directory were discussed. It was decided that a community training course could be a good catalyst for supporting and strengthening what was already starting to happen and would create a safe space to explore the potential of new projects.

Residents and the CD worker made a recommendation to Sunnybank Family Support Inc. to resource a 'Building Better Communities/ Stronger Families' course within the park. (A course run by Community Praxis Co-op Ltd in a number of communities within Caboolture and Brisbane)

Group Formation & Training

September: The training course was initiated by a community collective of residents called WANTOK and ran through September, October and November with regular sessions on Wednesday mornings and then once a month for December, January and February. The formation process of WANTOK was critical in enabling residents to identify their own training needs, develop an information brochure to publicize the course and to recruit other residents. This was a group action that in itself was central to the process of mobilisation and action-ing of future projects. (See lessons learnt section).

August- September: During these two months several groups were formed – an arts and craft group, a plant and veggie group and a car pool. The former two collapsed due to conflict, the latter continued and was consolidated at a later stage of the project.

December: Discussions and planning were initiated around the formation of a finance co-op, food bank, consolidation of the car pool and men's group. These discussions were initiated within the training course and then continued on amongst residents and with the project worker.

A Cultural Shift & Consolidation.

December – January:

Project workers and residents started to experience a cultural change in the way people related to one another. Discussions within the groups were now concentrating on inclusion/ exclusion issues within the park. (See lessons learnt section for comments).

During this period the project experienced the consolidation of groups.

Several specialised agencies were involved in the support of such processes. ANA Foresters supported the process around setting up a finance co-op. The project workers from Community Praxis Co-op, ANA Forester's and resource workers from Sunnybank Family Support were involved in the development of a finance co-op constitution, tools for accountability and record keeping etc.

A Resource Worker from Sunnybank Family Support and Community Praxis was involved in supporting the men's group formation and consolidation process.

There was also an expression of interest from a group of residents wanting to form a second finance co-op and food bank. The project supported this group in a parallel process.

Last week of January: Residents opened a bank account and launched the WANTOK finance co-op. (transformed from a residents action and training group).

January-March: A group of residents and the project worker were involved in the development and printing of the resource directory.

Evaluation & Exit

February: The final session of the WANTOK training group provided an opportunity to discuss and document participant/ resident evaluations, to explore how residents were feeling about the exiting of Jim, and to consider ways forward for the project.

There were further discussions with park residents regarding the withdrawal of Community Praxis Team (CD worker and trainers) and options for on-going engagement with Sunnybank Family Support Inc.

March: A stakeholder workshop at Sunnybank Family Support Inc. was conducted to identify resources and strategies for on-going supportive work within the park and to start to explore a short-term, medium-term and long-term vision for transformation.

A combination of discussions with residents and stakeholders facilitated by Sunnybank Family Support Inc. resulted in the development of a submission to BCC to resource and maintain the on-going development of the WANTOK finance co-op.

A finale to the project was the participation of a group of residents presenting dimensions of their personal and collective stories at the 8th National Caravan Park Workers Seminar.

6. What was achieved by the project - outcomes:

- ◆ People have an understanding and experience that they can band together to take action as a group.
- ◆ A community needs analysis was conducted through informal and formal group discussions that led to actions.
- ◆ Some residents are now more comfortable engaging in formal processes within the park – they have had positive experiences that has demystified formal work.
- ◆ The WANTOK group was formed initially as a training group. Some of the key training outcomes are:
 - People from different groups within the park built networks with one another and different groups.
 - An understanding of the process of bonding and banding.
 - An understanding of group process and conflict.
 - Some residents learnt how to run groups in a more positive way.
 - Some residents engage with one another in more constructive/ positive ways.
 - A bridge for people was built between non-accredited and accredited training – some participants felt confident enough after the course to enroll in accredited training.
- ◆ The WANTOK training group ‘re-invented’ itself as a finance cooperative (at the end of the training project). The 8 members are amongst the most marginal residents within the park.
- ◆ A second finance and food cooperative for working people in the park has been established. This cooperative is self-sustaining.
- ◆ A submission has been developed to resource seed money to the WANTOK finance co-op enabling people to pay off their existing debts and ‘break the poverty cycle’.
- ◆ A project proposal has been submitted to develop a food bank for 8 people under the auspice of WANTOK.
- ◆ A men’s social, recreational and discussion group of 5 residents has been developed supported by one of the resource workers of Sunnybank Family Support Inc.
- ◆ A resource directory – identifying relevant services for residents has been developed, printed and circulated.
- ◆ Several car pools have been initiated – residents opting to share a car.
- ◆ There are now key residents who are acting as peer resource volunteers brokering access to a number of services for other residents. Building on this, the Manager of the Park can now refer people with problems to these ‘more resourced residents’.
- ◆ Established links with resource workers from Sunnybank Family Support Inc. regarding individual (service and advocacy) and group support have been negotiated.

7. Lessons Learnt from the project

Entry strategy: *Workers must be clear about entry processes – where the invitation comes from, who are key gatekeepers. Strategies that could enhance potential project success and empowerment would ensure that park residents are engaged with the project design prior to submission to potential funding agencies/authorities.*

The need to hold parallel processes of:

- meeting the individual needs of residents through linking with services, resource workers etc. and;
- supporting group processes
- supporting community based training strategies.

Clarity of worker role: The worker must be very clear about their role as a community development worker with a developmental and brokerage role, not a service provider. The worker can broker access to services, but not provide a formal service himself or herself. The emphasis needs to be on supporting individuals through non-formal processes, and supporting groups and community processes.

The project needed to ***support homogeneous groups*** – i.e., people who are like-minded and ‘friends’ and also ***facilitate links and the building of a network between heterogeneous groups*** (people who are not like-minded). This builds the potential for a ‘whole-of-community’ process of change at a later stage of a transformational process.

Importance of ***building links with external stakeholders*** – both informal relationships built on trust, and structural links that have clear protocols and procedure.

The ***potential of linking community processes with community training*** – training provides safe space for people to learn skills, model group processes, discuss pressing issues, in an environment that is:

- facilitated (safe)
- consistent and regular

Self-help as a model of mutuality and empowerment is a dignifying way of engaging with disadvantaged people and ‘welfare recipients caught in a cycle of poverty’.

Several groups were started by residents early in the project that ***failed – these were valued as lessons*** by the community worker and residents – people drew on these lessons and the training as a way of doing a ‘better job’ next time.

The model of work enabled the community processes to be ***‘controlled’ by residents***.

No office was located within the park – the ***‘work’ took place within people’s homes***, on ‘their turf’, their space and in their time. This means people are realistic about their needs and realistic about outcomes they want – which would be different if people came into ‘the office’. If people approach a ‘professional service’ they often expect ‘magic solutions’ – whereas if some one works alongside them with a sense of sympathy and solidarity people have less unreal expectations and tend to draw on their own resources more effectively.

A number of people in the park had lost faith and trust in dealing with service delivery agencies. They were tired of no outcomes, referrals, issues of control, on-going assessment rhetoric, etc. This project was timely in that most people know what their issues were, knew the outcomes they wanted, but they were tired of brokering a formal system. This model of work provides informal links with the system and **someone to broker the system** with them.

Workers were **available** to residents 'on their terms'.

The process of formation of the WANTOK training group was the first time that residents felt that they were '**active participants**' in a **community process**. The critical components of that were:

- Enabling residents to identify their own training needs
- Developing their own information brochure
- Validation of their capacity to disseminate the information and recruit people
- Their choice of venue
- Their involvement in making the recommendation to Sunnybank Family Support Inc. to resource the training
- Participants felt they could each take some responsibility for action within that process.

The actual **training process** was a critical intervention / community process in that it:

- Provided a safe space for people to gather, meet neighbours, develop a sense of companionship
- A safe space for discussing issues relevant to daily life in the park
- A forum for community analysis
- Validation of their knowledge and contribution (built on adult learning processes and non-expert models of training)
- Mutuality between the project worker, Sunnybank Family Support CD worker and residents. (the workers were participants alongside the residents – outside facilitators were engaged)
- The training model was built around supporting action, not just discussions, skill-building etc.
- The training processes ran parallel to on-going community work support within the park that supported community processes being action-ed.

Power of stories – initially through the training, but then throughout the whole project method. Story-telling remains central to the empowerment process in that it invites dialogue (rather than expert knowledge), imagination, and engagement. They are concrete rather than abstract. Stories also build on an oral tradition that is more accessible for marginalised people.

Workers need to be clear about the **difference between community processes** (residents in the park) **and stakeholder processes** (included stakeholders such as Sunnybank Family Support Inc. and Community Praxis Co-op) and finding clear mechanisms and processes for when the two meet/ engage with one another.

Overall combination of strategies (worker support, self-help models, community training) was aiming to ***affect cultural park within the park***. Some of the critical dimensions of such cultural change included:

- People being more inclusive, less labeling and stigmatizing
- More pro-active approach to resolving conflict
- Greater awareness and commitment to building links, friendships, networks within the park
- An understanding of partnerships – specifically with agencies

Cultural transformation must remain central to the vision of the work – included individual, inter-personal, group and ‘whole-of-community’ changes.

For most people this cultural shift was a positive experience, but for one resident this cultural shift was a negative experience that resulted in her seeking accommodation away from the park. ***Sometimes people cannot cope with a positive cultural shift.***

The cornerstone of the project was its utilization of the ***‘out-reach’ model of work***. Workers must be pro-active in engaging with people in their places rather than ‘waiting’.

The ***team approach*** should be highly valued within community development processes. Team approaches enable a diversity of worker roles (some focus on individual work, some on group and community processes and some on training initiatives), good resources for reflection and problem solving, and on-going potential for intra-member learning.

8. A Vision for the Park

Vision for Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park as articulated by a group of workers from Sunnybank Family Support Inc. and Community Praxis Co-op Ltd at a workshop on 21/3/01

A Long-term vision included:

- ◆ Security of tenure, ownership of the park by residents , or....
- ◆ ...Caravan Park is part-owned by government and residents.
- ◆ The de-stigmatization of caravan park residents and that form of tenure.
- ◆ Residents are able to support and sustain a vision for the park community.

A Short to medium-term vision included:

- ◆ A model of work built on the foundation of self-help and mutuality that integrates prevention, financial sustainability, group advocacy, tackling poverty, and building structural links with the informal and formal sectors
- ◆ Consolidation of existing community processes and moving towards an opportunity to develop with residents, a ‘whole of community vision’ and a community management structure that could ‘hold’ the vision and an action plan to implement it.
- ◆ The sharing of stories and experiences with residents of other caravan parks. Potential exchange processes.
- ◆ Involvement of residents in broader issues, broader policy and legislative processes and in particular within ‘On-site’.
- ◆ Need for more resources to employ a ‘generic’ resource worker in the park, and peer leaders within the park who can provide informal support, points of information, referral and community mediation.
- ◆ Potential need for on-going community based training to parallel individual support work and community work.
- ◆ SFS has access to resources to sustain initiatives of residents.
- ◆ Ownership/ leasing of the shop within the park by residents as a form on enterprise and co-operative business.
- ◆ New legislation that protected vulnerable adults. Some strategies could include participation in the May men’s forum to explore the cross-sector and community need for such a process.
- ◆ Management unable to evict residents without Residents knowing their rights – ie. Building tenants awareness of their rights within the RTA legislation.

9. Evaluation

The evaluation has involved several processes;

- Participants discussion at the evaluation session of the WONTOK Building Better Communities/ Stronger Families Course – see 8.1
- Stakeholder discussions – see 8.2
- Project worker analysis and reflections that make up the bulk of section 7 of this report (lessons learnt)

9.1 Participant Feedback from evaluation session:

“What I got out of the course and project.....”

- Company and companionship
- A space to be honest
- Taught us to be a little bit stronger in ourselves
- Getting out and being with my neighbours
- Access to ways into government departments that we did not know before
- Community knowledge
- A service (Sunnybank Family Support Inc) coming to the park to enable us to access services that we need
- Place and space to speak my mind
- I learnt that “we can be friendly to all even if not friends with all..”
- Friendship – ‘opening up’ has been an important lesson
- Learning about the strength of people coming together
- Modelling by the trainers – ‘has inspired be to go to TAFE and study community work’.

Some other thoughts from participants.....

- ‘I am terrified of Jim leaving’
- Jim has been a big motivator
- Has been important that we have received real help during this project on our personal problems – have seen real outcomes for people in the park
- Has been the people not programs that have inspired change
- Has been critical to build trust in the park – the transient nature of parks means people find it hard to trust.

9.2 Project team evaluation of project aims:

Project aim	Very Strong outcome	Strong outcome	Medium outcome	No-outcome	Comments
To work in partnership with individuals, families, groups, staff and community contacts to identify and address the needs of residents living in the Sunnybank Hills Caravan Park (SHCP).	*				
To build and enhance community life for the SHCP residents.	*				
To support residents to develop skills, knowledge and resources to meet their goals.	*				
To act as an advocate for the needs of residents in the SHCP community.	*				
To facilitate the involvement of residents in a range of community processes.	*				
To work with residents to utilise the skills, knowledge and resources that exist within their community to address need.	*				
To raise community consciousness around the structural causes of inequality and social exclusion.		*			
To work with government and community agencies to address the needs of SHCP residents.		*			
In conjunction with the Manager – Community Development, develop an operational plan and evaluation process which is consistent with agency and service philosophy.	*				
To network with other Caravan Park workers to develop appropriate strategies which identify and address issues of concern for men living in Caravan Parks			*		Emerged as a low priority once the project was rolling.