



Kings Cross Youth Project

REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE KINGS CROSS YOUTH AT RISK PROJECT

July 2005 - October 2008

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The author would like to thank the past and current members of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Steering Committee. Organisations represented on this committee include Kirketon Road Centre (South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health [SESIH]), NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS), Housing NSW, City of Sydney (Council), Kings Cross Local Area Command (NSW Police) and Oasis Youth Support Network (Salvation Army).

The author would also like to thank the past and current members of the Outreach Coordination Committee. Organisations represented on this committee include Oasis Youth Support Network and Street Outreach Service, Kirketon Road Centre, The Crossing, Rough Edges, The Wayside Chapel, The Come In Centre, City of Sydney Woolloomooloo Youth Program, Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Program for Early Intervention and Prevention of Disability (PEIPOD), Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) and Kings Cross Adolescent Unit (DoCS).

This project was originally funded through the NSW Government's Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy and auspiced by South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health (SESIH). The project was additionally supported by the HIV/AIDS and Related Programs Unit (HARP) of SESIH until the end of June 2009.

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Executive Summary

The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project was developed with NSW government funding as part of its 'Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy'. The project aimed to improve the immediate and long-term social, economic and health outcomes for young people in the Kings Cross area and beyond.

Under this funding program the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) established a Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Steering Committee to oversee the development of the project following a review of youth services in the Kings Cross area in 2004. The review was undertaken by Edwina Deakin Consultancy and resulted in a report entitled *Improved Services for Young People in Kings Cross* (Report of the Kings Cross Community Solutions Steering Committee). Following this initial needs assessment the NSW Premier's Department funded the project for a two-year period. South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health (SESIH) auspiced the project and the funding was administered by NSW DoCS.

This review of youth services in the Kings Cross area found that service provision was erratic and coordination between agencies in the area was poor. This resulted in a lack of sustainable outcomes for young people in situations of crisis. The inherent risk of this lack of coordination was that young people at risk in the Kings Cross area may become entrenched and part of the long-term homeless community.

In recognition of the need to have a central point for coordinating all of these services, a coordinator for the project was recruited and commenced at the end of January 2005 with the following responsibilities:

- to establish the Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC);
- to coordinate regular Joint Outreach Sweeps to determine and monitor the numbers and profiles of young people at risk in the Kings Cross area; and
- to establish and implement the brokerage program and monitor its outcomes and impacts.

Joint Outreach Sweeps

Following recommendations from the report of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Steering Committee (*Improved Services for Young People in Kings Cross*) regular Joint Outreach Sweeps were conducted across the broader Kings Cross area by staff from a number of outreach providers. One of the aims of the Joint Outreach Sweeps was to gather standardised data on the numbers, age, locations and needs of young clients in the area to assist future planning and outreach operations.

The Joint Outreach Sweeps were conducted from September 2005 until October 2008. During this time 406 young people participated in a survey. Just over 60% of respondents were male and one young person was transgender. The median age in the year of interview was 21 years. Sixteen (4%) people were 16 years of age or younger when surveyed. Two hundred and ninety seven (73%) respondents identified as Australian, with fifty nine (14.5%) identifying as Aboriginal.

Two hundred and three (50%) young people were receiving a government benefit at the time of interview. Eighty one (20%) young people reported that they had current conventional paid employment and a further 30 (7%) reported that they were employed as sex workers. Eighty four (21%) participants reported no source of income.

Almost half (41%) of the young people were spending the night of the survey in unstable accommodation (e.g. shelter, refuge, boarding house, hostel, homeless or on the street). A further 99 (24%) were unsure about where they would be spending the night or were waiting for the Kings Cross train station to re-open at 4.45am. Fifty two (13%) young people reported being homeless or staying on the street for the night of the interview, 47 (12%) were staying in a boarding house or hostel and 21 (5%) were residing in a shelter or refuge.

Two hundred and sixty six participants (65%) indicated they were not planning on spending the night of the survey at home. Of this group, 119 (29%) were intending to spend the night in Kings Cross. Thirty seven (31%) young people identified as living in Kings Cross.

Data collected beyond August 2006 indicate that there has been an 11% reduction in the number of young people reporting as being in unstable accommodation, a 7% reduction in those reportedly involved in sex work, a 1% increase in those involved in drug-related activity and a 4% increase in the number of young people under the age of 16 years.

Brokerage Program

Based on significant concerns for the longer-term prospects of young people in the area the Committee further recommended that a 'brokerage program' be developed and administered through a Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC). This committee would consist of representatives from a number of government and non-government service providers in the Kings Cross area.

The aim of the Brokerage Program was to broker a range of interventions among 18-25 year old people who had become entrenched in 'high risk' Kings Cross lifestyles. These interventions included assistance with accommodation, food, medical and vocational needs in order to resolve crises and enable them to leave the Kings Cross area. The program also targeted young people who had recently entered Kings Cross to encourage their return to the areas from where they had gravitated, before they could become entrenched in 'high risk' behaviours.

From the commencement of the Brokerage Program at the end of July 2005 until the end of June 2008, 1120 brokerage applications were distributed to 561 unique individuals, at a total cost of \$139,826.

In this reporting period a total of 161 instances of emergency accommodation were provided and 362 food vouchers were distributed. There were 74 occasions of medical support; 57 participants were assisted with housing set up costs i.e. bond and amenities set up and 81 were assisted with housing materials such as furniture and white goods. There were 239 instances of providing transport costs (86 of whom were transported out of area with the intention of permanently settling in that other area). Assistance was provided for educational pursuits to 69 young people. There were 46 instances of the payment of rent and 18 occasions of assistance with the purchase of clothing.

The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project provides a model of best practice that incorporates the coordination of multiple services, and the capacity to broker flexible resources for young people with complex needs. The Project demonstrates that this model results in cost effective, sustainable and positive outcomes that may prevent the development of entrenched risk behaviours and possible homelessness. Funding exists to continue the project until June 2009 and all partners in the project anticipate its continuing success during this period. In order to build on the significant gains the project has made, the following recommendations are tabled for consideration by all key stakeholders in the project.

Recommendations

- That key government agencies consider providing joint recurrent funding of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project;
- That opportunities to implement the project in other high needs communities be investigated by government and other service providers; and
- That Joint Outreach Sweeps continue on a quarterly basis to provide ongoing comparative data on the numbers and profiles of young people at risk in Kings Cross and surrounding areas.

Chapter 1 Background

In late 2001, the NSW Government established a new \$50 million funding program called the Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy. The aim of the strategy was to assist with the development and implementation of community development and crime prevention initiatives in high need communities across NSW. In December 2001, the creation of a 'multi-agency' taskforce was announced to develop public safety, crime reduction and community development strategies for the broader Kings Cross area. In December 2002, a number of new projects for Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo were announced. In addition to these successfully funded projects, there were other proposals which specifically focused on young people at risk in the Kings Cross area. The Cabinet Sub-Committee resolved that the combined funding for each project would be set aside awaiting the outcome of a review. In February 2003, the Deputy Premier announced that funds would be allocated over two years to help older youth who have become involved in the high risk Kings Cross lifestyle. The focus was on coordinating services, working with youth in crisis and ensuring service availability after hours.

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) established a Kings Cross Youth At Risk Steering Committee to oversee the project and review youth services in the Kings Cross area. The committee consisted of representatives from South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health (SESIH) - including its Area Youth Health Coordinator and the Kirketon Road Centre, DoCS (including the Kings Cross Adolescent Unit), Housing NSW, NSW Premier's Department and Oasis Youth Support Network run by the Salvation Army. At a later stage of the project the Kings Cross Local Area Command (NSW Police) and City of Sydney were also invited to participate in the Steering Committee. Following the initial needs assessment, the NSW Premier's Department funded the project. Funding was administered through the DoCS and SESIH auspiced the project. The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Steering Committee continues to meet to ensure collaborative guidance of the project.

The Steering Committee organised an independent review of services in the Kings Cross area. The resulting report *Improved Services for Young People At Risk in the Kings Cross Area* (Report of the Kings Cross Community Solutions Steering Committee, produced by Edwina Deakin Consultancy) was completed in May 2004. The aim of the review was to identify ways to improve outcomes for young people at risk or in crisis, as a result of their insecure accommodation or homelessness, drug and alcohol use and/or their involvement in the sex industry or crime in the broader Kings Cross area.

The review identified that there appeared to be a general lack of joint client planning and collaboration between health providers, accommodation and other support services in the Kings Cross area for young people. The review also identified gaps in service provision. This resulted in many young people in the area having multiple case managers, having to tell and retell their stories and personal histories and having only part of their service needs provided for, depending on the capacity of the service provider. Not having one or two key staff with responsibility to pursue the most appropriate course of action and follow-up, created further challenges.

It was also noted that some young people in the area were fully aware of their service options, and in some cases even took advantage of one service provider not knowing what the other was doing. For other less experienced young people, those with complex needs or dual diagnoses, this lack of

formal collaboration between providers could have created uncertainty as well as prolonged their time on the streets or in other high-risk situations.

It was therefore considered that service planning protocols between key health, accommodation and support service providers in Kings Cross were needed to enable client service planning and case management to be developed and collaboratively implemented. It was noted that with appropriate protocols between providers, and with the client's consent, service providers' concerns about client privacy and confidentiality could be managed.

A range of measures to increase joint initiatives between existing outreach providers were proposed. These included:

- the introduction of regular Joint Outreach Sweeps after midnight using the combined staff of existing outreach providers;
- the establishment of a Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee to implement a range of practical joint ventures (including the outreach sweeps) and investigate options for further service integration including co-location; and
- the establishment of a Community Solutions Brokerage Fund to provide eligible at risk young people with tailored support packages aimed at breaking their street-based lifestyle on a sustainable basis.

To provide leadership and support for these and other initiatives contained in the report, a Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Coordinator was employed and located at the Kirketon Road Centre. A joint Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee was established with representatives from government and non-government services. One of the responsibilities of this committee was to assist in the development and implementation of a brokerage program.

Participating organisations

In March 2005, a Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee was established. The committee includes representatives from the following government and non-government service providers:

- Oasis Youth Support Network – Salvation Army;
- Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) – South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health;
- The Crossing – Mission Australia;
- Rough Edges – St John's Church;
- Street Outreach Service (SOS) - Salvation Army;
- The Wayside Chapel – Uniting Church Australia;
- The Come In Centre – St Francis Welfare;
- Juanita Nielsen Centre Youth Program (JNC) – City of Sydney Council;
- Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) – Uniting Care;
- Kings Cross Adolescent Unit (KCAU)– Department of Community Services (DoCS);
- Program for Early Intervention and Prevention of Disability (PEIPOD) – St Vincent's Hospital; and
- Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) – ACON.

OUTREACH SWEEP RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from report: *Improved Services for Young People At Risk in the Kings Cross Area* (Edwina Deakin Consultancy 2004)

- That regular Joint Outreach Sweeps be conducted across the broader Kings Cross area involving coordinated action by staff from a number of current outreach providers; and
- That the Joint Outreach Sweeps be designed to:
 - provide a critical mass of outreach staff operating in concert across an extended period, and particularly beyond midnight
 - facilitate and coordinate proactive interventions and assistance for specific client groups and individuals; and
 - gather standardised data on the numbers, age, locations and needs of young clients in the area to assist with future planning and outreach operations.

BROKERAGE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from report: *Improved Services for Young People At Risk in the Kings Cross Area* (Edwina Deakin Consultancy 2004)

- That a Kings Cross Community Solutions Youth Brokerage Fund be established to support the Joint Outreach Sweep process specifically by assisting individuals to move off the streets through direct and individualised brokerage packages; and
- That the Brokerage Fund be used specifically to:
 - support actions and initiatives not available through other services and initiatives;
 - facilitate longer term solutions for specific high risk young people frequenting the Kings Cross area, including where possible, entrenched young people; and
 - where necessary, be allocated to implement diversion options for entrenched young people in Woolloomooloo.
- That the Brokerage Fund be administered by the Kings Cross Community Solutions Coordinator based on clear and accountable criteria set by the Kings Cross Community Solutions Steering Committee.

Chapter 2 Joint Outreach Sweeps

2.1 Aims

This report presents data collected during each monthly Outreach Sweep from September 2005 to August 2006 and quarterly sweeps from July 2007 to October 2008. The data will include the number of young people identified during the sweeps, their demographic characteristics, risk factors and connections to health and support services in the area.

2.2 Method of data collection

Joint Outreach Sweeps were conducted on the last Saturday evening of each month during the twelve-month period from September 2005 until August 2006. On these nights five experienced outreach workers from the participating agencies were on the streets of Kings Cross from 8pm-2am locating at risk young people. These young people were approached and asked if they were under 25 years of age to determine eligibility. The purpose of the study was explained to eligible people and participation in a short survey was sought. The outreach workers administered a one-page questionnaire to participants recording their answers on the survey form.

Young people were informed that they were not required to complete the survey unless they wished to and that it would not impact on their access to services in the Kings Cross area. They were also informed that the information collected was confidential and no identifiable data was collected. Participants were not remunerated for their participation.

After the initial 12 months of monthly sweeps the Project Steering Committee agreed that these sweeps would only be performed quarterly due to financial and human resource constraints. It was also agreed that sweeps be conducted on rotating weeknights to ensure reporting on Monday to Friday evening activities.

Comparisons will be made between the two reporting periods to identify any changes in the demographic characteristics and activities of young people on the streets of Kings Cross. The initial reporting period (Sept 05-Aug 06) will be referred to as Period 1 throughout this report. The data collected from July 07 to Oct 08 will be referred to as Period 2.

Period 1 (Sept 05–Aug 06) provided data on 248 young people. Period 2 (July 07-Oct 08) provided data on 158 young people. The total of all individuals surveyed during the project period and included in this report (Sept 05–Oct 08) was 406.

2.3 Questionnaire

A one-page pilot questionnaire was developed in 2005. This questionnaire was changed slightly after being piloted during the July and August 2005 outreach sweeps. The final questionnaire collected basic demographic data such as gender, year of birth, cultural background and the suburb from which the young person came. Information about employment, income, type of accommodation the person was staying in on the night of interview, the suburb in which they were planning to spend the night and the number of nights they had spent in Kings Cross in the week prior to interview was also recorded along with their reasons for visiting Kings Cross and utilisation of the participating agencies.

The survey was contained to one A4 page and could be completed within three minutes.

The survey data allowed the number of young clients at risk in the Kings Cross area on Saturday nights to be estimated as well as giving a demographic profile of these young people. The data also identified risk factors and indicated the connections these young people had with the health and welfare services in the area.

See Appendix 1 for the Data Collection Tool.

2.4 Ethics approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research and Ethics Committee - Eastern Section (SESIH) in June 2005.

2.5 Surveys conducted and response rate

Period 1 (Sept 05–Aug 06) provided data on 248 young people. Period 2 (July 07–Oct 08) provided data on 158 young people. The total of all individuals surveyed during the project period and included in this report (Sept 05–Oct 08) was 406.

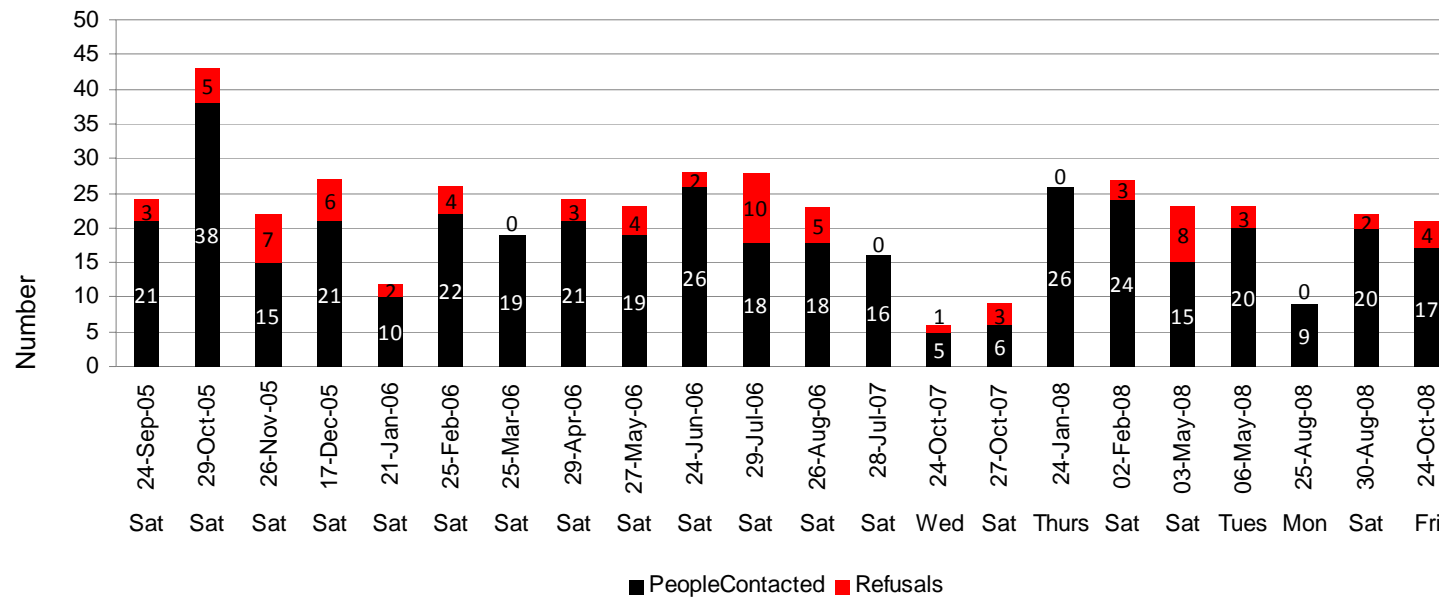


Figure 1 Number of young people surveyed in joint outreach sweeps by date

2.6 Location of interviews and hotspots

The Kings Cross area was divided into two sectors. Sector 1 included the main section of Kings Cross and surrounding back streets including William Street, Macleay Street and Roslyn Street. Two hundred and thirty four (54%) participants were surveyed in this sector. The remaining participants were interviewed in Sector 2 which included Green Park, Forbes Street, Taylor Square and 'The Wall' on Darlinghurst Road.

'Hotspot' areas identified in Sector 1 included the main street of Darlinghurst Road, Springfield Mall, Half Moon Park, Talbot Lane and Roslyn Street. 'Hotspot' areas identified in Sector 2 included Green Park, 'The Wall', Lower Forbes Street, Liverpool Street, Bourke Street and Taylor Square.

Table 1 Location of interviews

Interview Location	Period 1	Average Contacts	%	Period 2	Average Contacts	%	Total Project	Average Contacts	%
Sector 1	135	11	54	99	10	63	234	11	58
Sector 2	113	10	46	59	6	37	172	8	42
Total	248	21	100	158	16	100	406	19	100

2.7 Gender

Of the 406 young people interviewed, 244 (60%) were male, 161 (40%) were female and one person reported being transgender.

Table 2 Gender breakdown of young people interviewed

Gender	Period 1	Average per sweep	%	Period 2	Average per sweep	%	Total Project	Average per sweep	%
Male	146	12	59	98	10	62	244	12	60
Female	101	9	41	60	6	38	161	7	40
Transgender	1	.08	0	0	0	0	1	.05	0
Total	248	22	100	158	16	100	406	19	100

2.8 Cultural background

Two hundred and thirty eight of the interviewees (59%) identified as Australian and fifty nine (14.5%) reported being of Aboriginal background. A further 28 (7%) were from Western Europe, and 10 (2%) identified as being from New Zealand, with another 11 (3%) specifying Maori as their cultural background.

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been an 11% reduction in the number of respondents reporting as Australian and a 9% increase in those identifying as Aboriginal. The number of Aboriginal people that participated in the survey for the entire reporting period might have been higher than 59 (14.5%), as respondents were not specifically asked about Aboriginality.

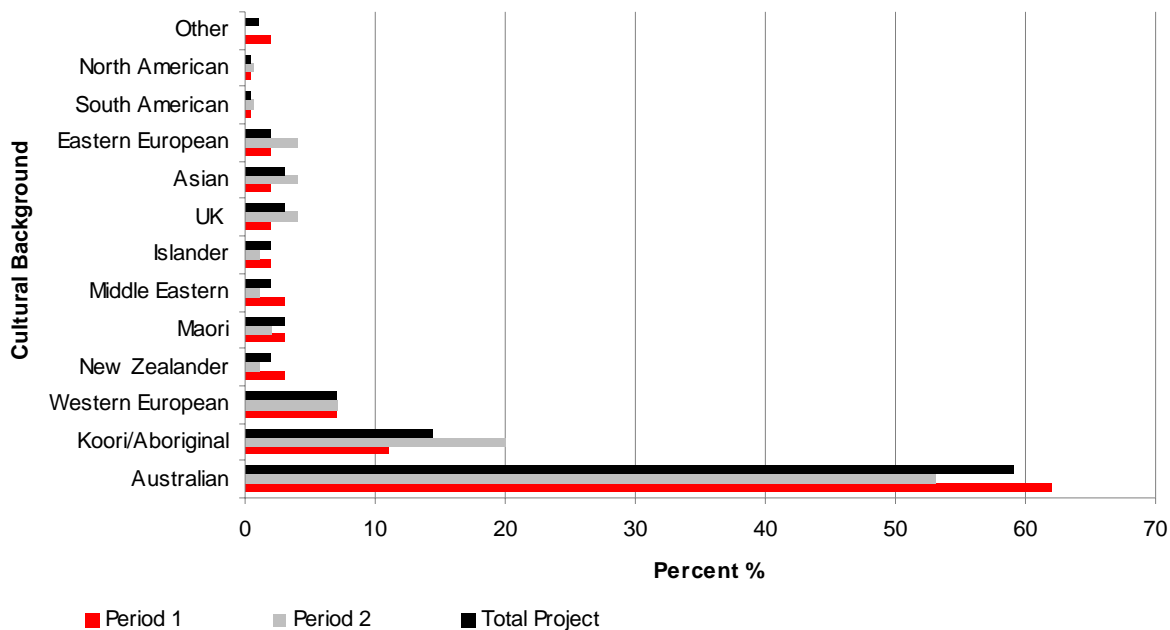


Figure 2 Cultural Background of young people interviewed (%)

2.9 Employment

A total of 81 (20%) young people reported that they were currently engaged in conventional paid employment, while 30 (7%) were involved in sex work and 277 (68%) reported current unemployment. Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been an 11% reduction in those reporting as unemployed and a 3% reduction in young people reporting sex work as their means of employment. There was a 9% increase in conventional employment reported by the young people sampled.

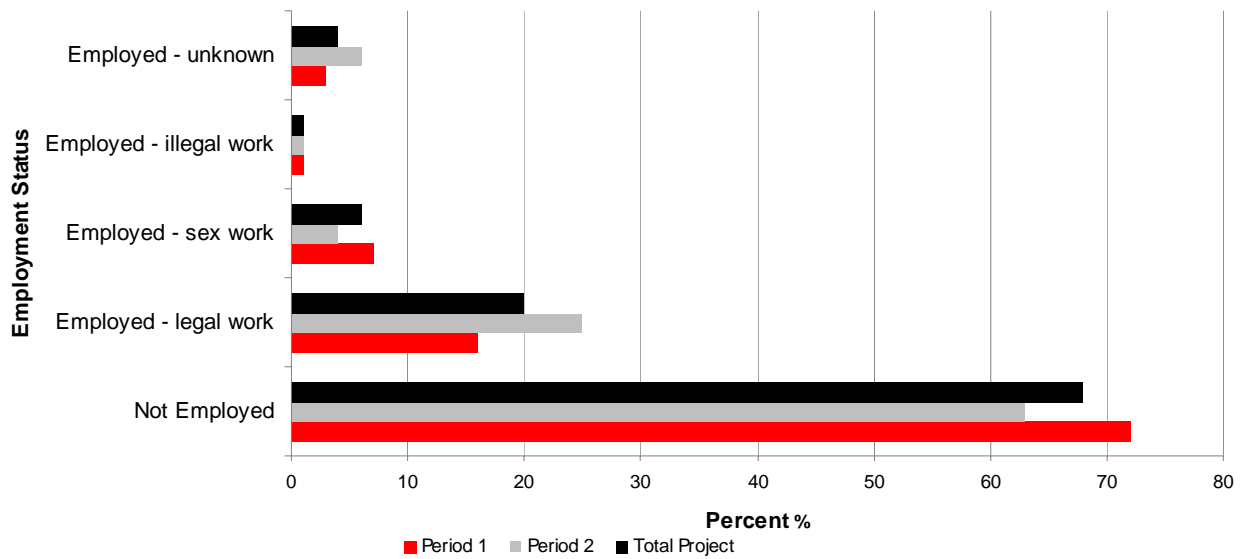


Figure 3 Employment reported by young people interviewed (%)

2.10 Income

Half of all interviewed young people cited ‘welfare’ or ‘benefits’ as their source of income including Newstart, Centrelink, Youth Allowance, Work for the Dole, Disability Support Pension, Parenting Support Pension, Abstudy and DoCS support. Twenty three (6%) young people identified their source of income as sex work. See Figure 4. Eighty four young people (21%) said they did not have an income. Data collected after Period 1 show a 10% reduction in those reporting welfare as their main source of income and a 6% decrease in those reporting sex work as their main source of income.

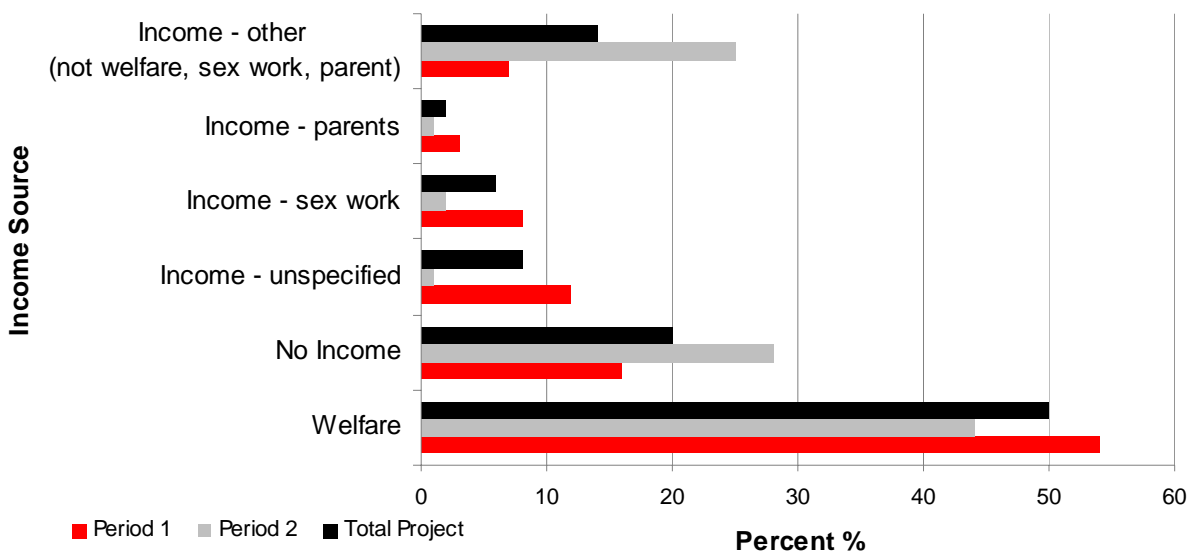


Figure 4 Income source identified by young people interviewed (%)

2.11 Suburb of residence

When asked what suburb they came from 128 respondents (31%) stated they were from the inner city, (which includes the Kings Cross area), and 76 (19%) reported the western suburbs of Sydney. Twenty nine (7%) young people reported being from outside the Sydney area (New Zealand, interstate, regional NSW) and the remainder came from other areas in Sydney such as the inner west, northern suburbs, eastern suburbs and the southern suburbs. (See Figure 5).

Sweeps conducted since Period 1 indicate there were slight reductions in the numbers of young people coming to Kings Cross from regional NSW and interstate. The number of young people coming to the area from the western suburbs decreased 27% and the number of young people coming from the inner west increased 23%.

Fifty eight (45%) of the 128 respondents from the inner city actually resided in Kings Cross.

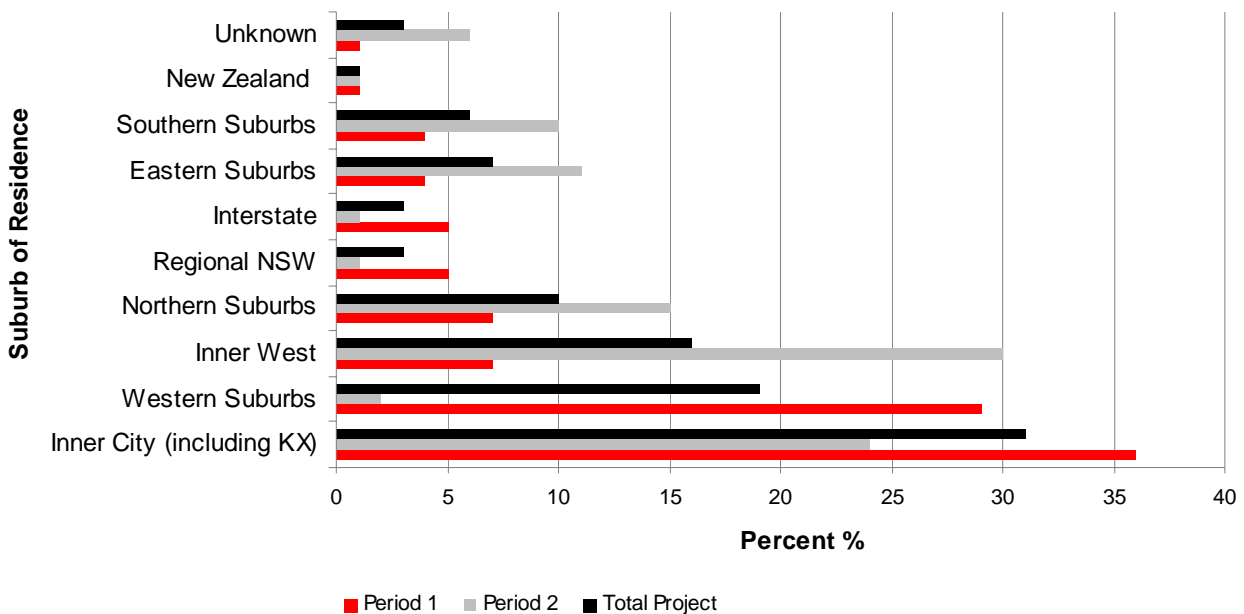


Figure 5 Suburb of residence identified by young people interviewed (%)

2.12 Accommodation on night of interview

When asked what type of accommodation they were staying in on the night of the interview almost a quarter (22%) of the young people surveyed reported they were planning to spend the night at a friend's place. Other frequently mentioned accommodation types were: their own rental apartment/flat by fifty six (14%) and boarding house/hostel by forty seven (12%) respondents. (See Table 3).

Fifty two (13%) young people reported being homeless or staying on the street for the night of the interview and another 55 (14%) were either not sure where they would be spending the night or were waiting for the Kings Cross train station to re open at 4.45am.

Two hundred and sixty six participants (65%) indicated they were not planning on spending the night of the interview at home. Of this group, 119 (29%) were intending to spend the night in Kings Cross, of these 37 (31%) identified as living in Kings Cross.

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been a 4% reduction in those reporting as street-based or residing in a boarding house/hostel. There has also been a 7% decrease in those residing in a shelter or refuge.

Table 3 Accommodation on the night of interview

Accommodation night of the interview	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Friends	55	22	36	23	91	22
Rental house/flat	46	18	10	6	56	14
Street/homeless	34	14	18	11	52	13
Boarding house/hostel	30	12	17	11	47	12
Unsure/unspecified	30	12	25	16	55	14
Parent's place	29	12	33	21	62	15
Shelter/refuge	20	8	1	1	21	5
Own house/flat	4	2	18	11	22	5
Total	248	100	158	100	406	100

2.13 Nights spent in Kings Cross in the previous week

When asked how many nights out of the previous seven the interviewees had spent in Kings Cross, 166 (41%) reported that they had spent all seven nights of the previous week in Kings Cross. Seventy four young people (18%) reported they had not spent any night of the last seven in the Kings Cross area. Most of the remaining young people had spent 1-3 nights in Kings Cross.

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate a 5% reduction in the number of young people reporting they spent all of the previous week in Kings Cross and an 8% increase in those reporting that they had never come to Kings Cross before the night in question.

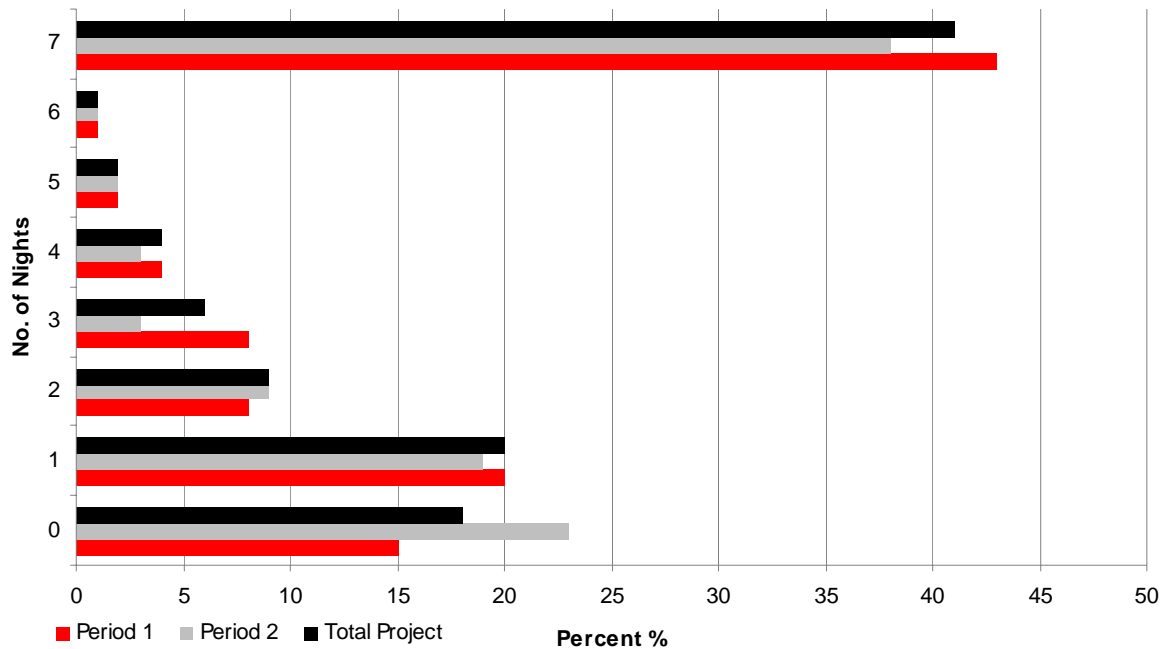


Figure 6 Nights spent in Kings Cross in the previous week (%)

2.14 Reasons for being in Kings Cross

Young people were asked in an open-ended question the reason/s they came to Kings Cross. The answers were grouped into the 10 categories listed in Figure 7. One hundred and nine (27%) young people gave multiple reasons and their answers were included in more than one category (for instance 'sex work and drugs').

The most frequent reason for coming to the Kings Cross area was 'hanging out', with 97(24%) young people stating this. Being in Kings Cross for drug-related activity was the second most mentioned reason by 88 (22%) young people. Other reasons included: seeing friends and family 69 (17%); sex work 51 (13%); and clubbing/partying 24 (6%).

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there had been no change in drug related activity reported and a 7% decrease in those reporting involvement in sex work.

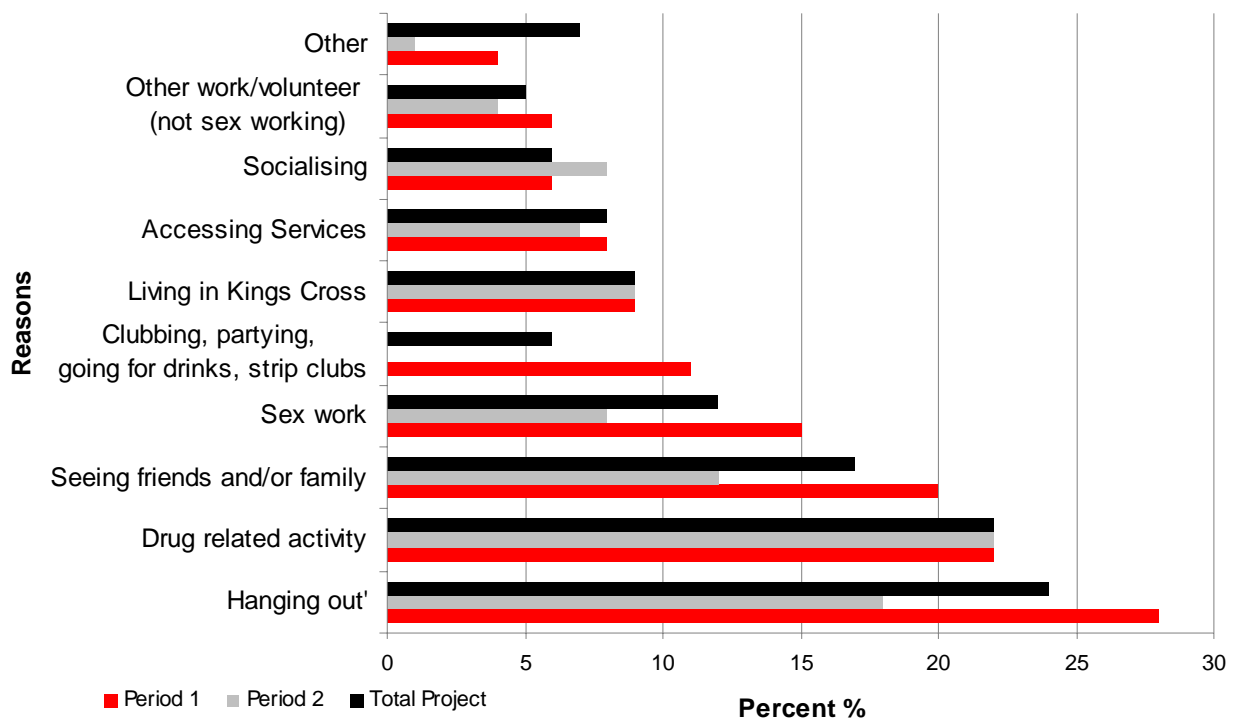


Figure 7 Reasons for being in Kings Cross reported by young people interviewed (%)

2.15 Risk factor: Unstable accommodation

One hundred and sixty seven (41%) young people interviewed did not have stable accommodation on the night of interview. A further 99 (24%) were unsure of where they were staying on the night of interview or were waiting for the train station to open in the morning.

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been a 3% reduction in the number of young people reporting primary homelessness, a 6% reduction in secondary homelessness and a 2% reduction in tertiary homelessness. The number of young people reporting as being in stable accommodation had increased by 7%.

Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003) used data from the 2001 census to examine the size and characteristics of homeless people in Australia and New South Wales. The study distinguishes primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness. Primary homelessness includes all people without conventional accommodation, such as people living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings, or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter. Secondary homelessness includes people who move frequently from one form of temporary accommodation to the other. This includes hostels for the homeless, night shelters, refuges, those living in boarding houses on a short term basis and those residing temporarily with other households because they have no accommodation of their own. Tertiary homelessness refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis.

Table 4 Risk factor: Unstable accommodation, reported by young people interviewed

Unstable Accommodation	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Primary homeless	34	14	18	11	52	13
Secondary homeless	48	19	20	13	68	17
Tertiary homeless	30	12	17	10	47	12
Unknown	57	23	42	27	99	24
Stable accommodation	79	32	61	39	140	34
Total	248	100	158	100	406	100

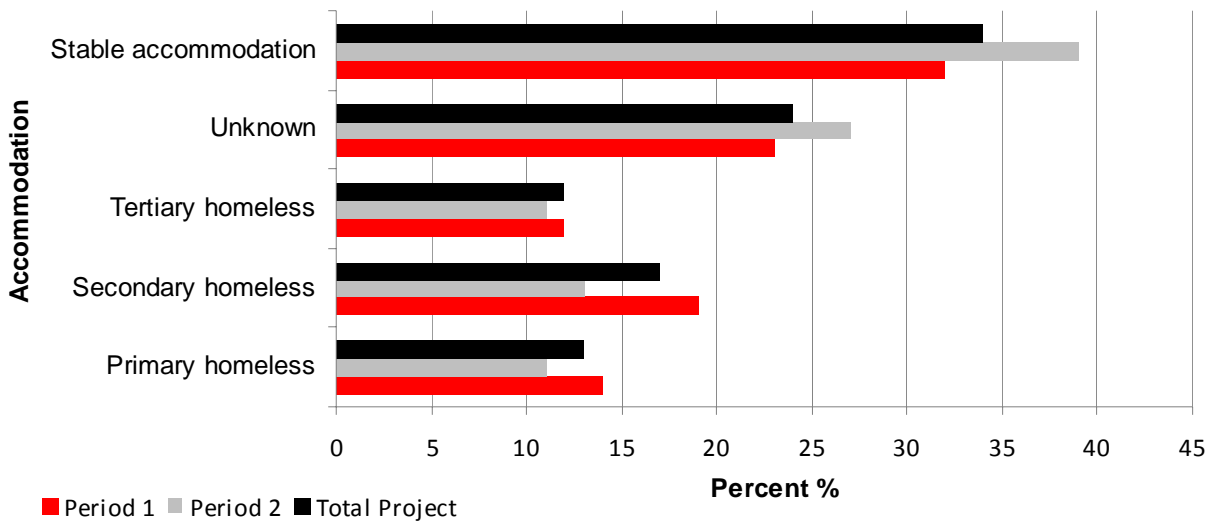


Figure 8 Accommodation status of young people interviewed (%)

2.16 Risk factor: Involvement in sex work

Involvement in sex work has associated risks which may negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of young people. Participants were not directly asked if they were working in the sex industry, but sometimes their answers to other questions, such as those relating to employment, source of income and reason for coming to Kings Cross revealed sex industry involvement. At least 51 young people (13%) were involved with sex work (Table 5). Two of these young people reported that they were helping someone else with their sex work (“protector”) and did not report doing sex work themselves. A small majority (4%) of those involved in sex work were females and only one person identified as being transgender. Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been a 7% reduction in the number of females reporting involvement in sex work and a 9% increase in male participation.

Table 5 Risk factor: Involvement in sex work, reported by young people interviewed

Involvement in sex work	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	17	45	7	54	24	47
Female	20	53	6	46	26	51
Transgender	1	2	0	0	1	2
Total	38	100	13	100	51	100

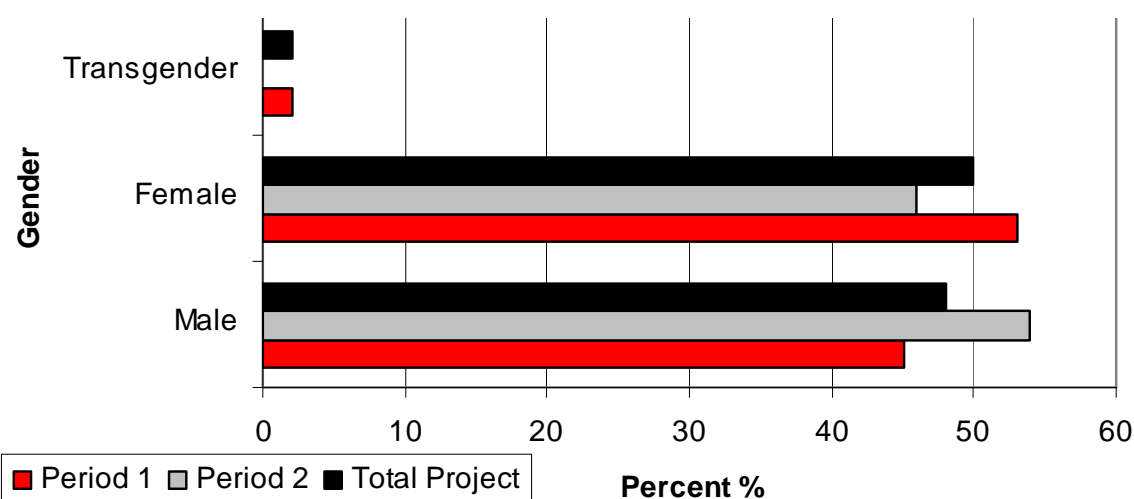


Figure 9 Gender of young people reporting involvement in sex work (%)

2.17 Risk factor: Drug-related activity

Being involved in the illicit drug industry or in drug use negatively impacts on the health and wellbeing of young people. Young people were not directly asked if they were using drugs or were working in the drugs industry, but sometimes their answers to other questions, such as those relating to employment, source of income and reason for coming to Kings Cross, revealed their involvement with drugs.

Eighty eight (22%) young people reported either having income from drug-related activity, employment from drug-related activity or drugs being a reason for their presence in Kings Cross. Some of these 88 young people mentioned they were in Kings Cross to buy drugs, some mentioned they were in Kings Cross to sell drugs, and some stated drugs as a reason for visiting Kings Cross but they did not specify if they were buying or selling drugs or both. There has been a 7% increase in the number of males involved in drug-related activity and a 7% reduction in the number of females reporting involvement in drug-related activities.

Table 6 Risk factor: involvement in drug related activity, reported by young people interviewed

Drug Related Activity	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	31	59	23	66	54	61
Female	22	41	12	34	34	39
Total	53	100	35	100	88	100

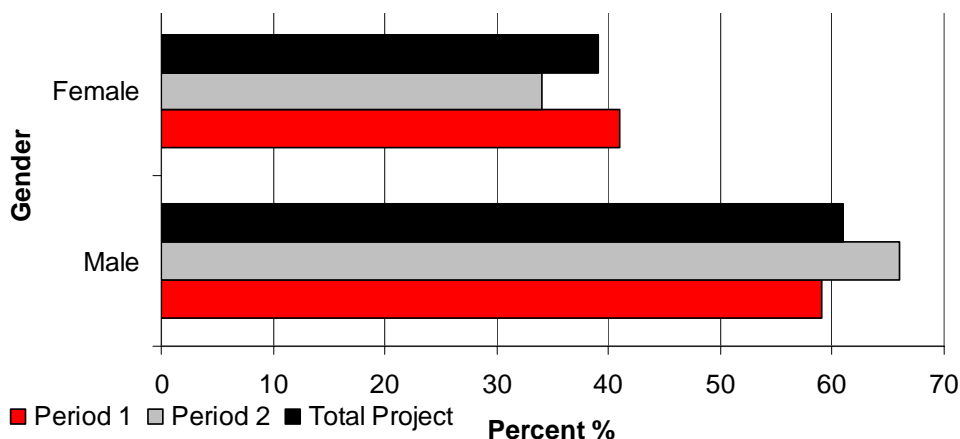


Figure 10 Gender of young people reporting involvement in drug related activity (%)

2.18 Summary of risk factors within the surveyed population

Being particularly young (under 16 years), involved in the sex industry or the illicit drug industry and not having stable accommodation are all considered to be risk factors that might impact on the lives and well-being of young people and their transition into adulthood (Withers & Russell, 1998). Even though the data collection tool did not explicitly address these four risk factors, indirect responses indicate that at least 167 (41%) of those interviewed were in unstable accommodation, with at least 88 (22%) involved with illicit drugs, and at least 51 (13%) involved in the sex industry. Information captured by recording the year of birth also shows that at least 16 (4%) young people were under the age of 16 at the time of interview. The large majority (80%) of the young people who were interviewed had at least one of these four risk factors (Table 7).

Data collected beyond Period 1 indicate that there has been an 11% reduction in the number of young people reporting as being in unstable accommodation, a 7% reduction in those reportedly involved in sex work, a 1% increase in those involved in drug-related activity and a 4% increase in the number of young people under the age of 16 years.

Table 7 Summary of risk factors within the surveyed population

Identified/estimated risk factors	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Unstable accommodation	112	45	55	34	167	41
Sex work	38	15	13	8	51	13
Drug-related activity	53	21	35	22	88	22
Under the age of 16	6	2	10	6	16	4

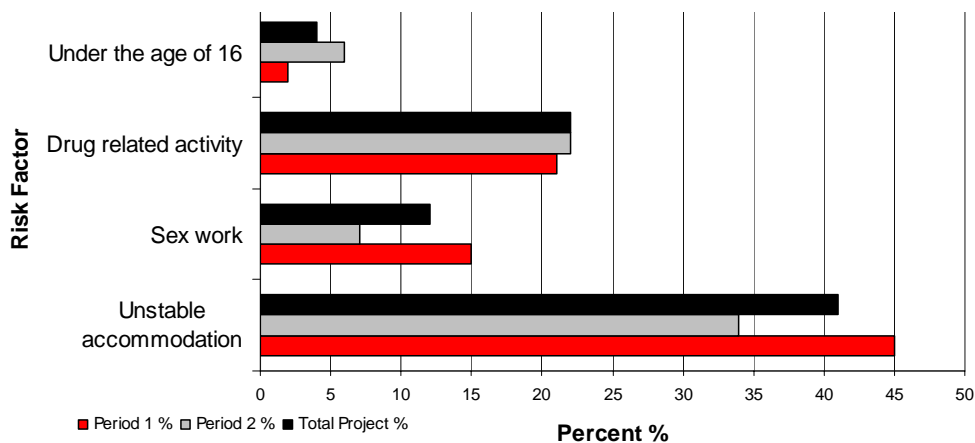


Figure 11 Summary of risk factors within surveyed population (%)

2.19 Agencies accessed

Nine youth related agencies were listed in the questionnaire including Oasis, KRC, K2 (satellite Needle Syringe Program services of KRC), the Come In Centre, Rough Edges, The Wayside Chapel, Homeless Action Team Support Outreach Service (HATSOS), SWOP and The Crossing. Respondents were asked if they had accessed any of the services provided at these agencies. There was also the option in the questionnaire to mention an agency that was not included in the list (Table 8).

Two hundred and forty six young people (61%) had accessed at least one service in Kings Cross. One hundred and seventy eight (44%) of those who had accessed services had visited more than one agency. KRC was mentioned most frequently by respondents with 130 (32%) of those interviewed. This was followed by Wayside Chapel with 118 young people (29%) mentioning they had accessed its services, followed by Oasis (103), K2 (99), Rough Edges (92) and The Come In Centre (46). HATSOS, The Crossing and SWOP were mentioned by less than 10% of interviewees.

In addition, 85 young people (21%) identified other agencies in the Kings Cross area that were not listed on the questionnaire. Forty five (11%) listed the Salvation Army Street Outreach Service (SOS) as an organisation they had accessed.

There was a reduction in the number of young people accessing services between Period 1 and Period 2. This could be attributed to an overall reduction in the number of young people surveyed during outreach sweeps and/or a reduction in the number of young people accessing multiple services due to a reduction in 'service surfing'.

Table 8 Agencies accessed by young people

Agencies Accessed	Period 1		Period 2		Total Project	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
KRC	92	37	38	24	130	32
Oasis	75	30	28	18	103	25
Wayside	71	29	47	30	118	29
Rough Edges	65	26	27	17	92	23
K2	63	25	36	23	99	24
The Come In Centre	35	14	11	7	46	11
HATSOS	16	7	8	5	24	6
The Crossing	11	4	7	4	18	4
SWOP	10	4	5	3	15	4
Other	65	26	20	13	85	21

2.20 Assistance provided during outreach sweeps

The Joint Outreach Sweeps also created an opportunity to provide direct assistance to at risk individuals. During the sweeps 38 young people were referred to health or support services, 6 young people were referred to DoCS and 2 young people received brokerage.

Table 9 Assistance provided during outreach sweeps

Assistance Provided	Period 1	Period 2	Total Project
Brokerage Provided	2	0	2
Referred to health or support service	21	17	38
Referred to DoCS	6	0	6

Chapter 3 The Brokerage Program

3.1 Aims

The issues young people face are varied and multiple. The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project identified that there was a need for emergency responses as well as tailored case-managed packages to address the needs of young people in the area. The aim of the Brokerage Program was to cater for a range of interventions for young people at risk in the Kings Cross area with a focus on their individual needs, identified by themselves or those agencies who work with them. The Brokerage Program catered for a range of interventions including assistance with accommodation, food, medical and vocational needs.

Brokerage funding enabled agencies to support initiatives to address the previously unmet needs of the target group. Brokerage describes the way a system or a particular service or program facilitates a person's access to the pathways appropriate to their needs. It was designed to provide access to sustainable solutions to problems using a strategic approach. The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project had the following long-term objectives:

- engage existing services and provide funding in a coordinated, holistic way to support young people at risk in the Kings Cross area;
- engage key players, both government and non-government, in reviewing, evaluating and monitoring the project; and
- provide an experiential and evidential data collection system to inform policy development for the Kings Cross area.

3.2 Brokerage funds

Brokerage funds were available for emergency brokerage, case-managed brokerage and project brokerage, a total of \$100,000 per year was provided for a two year period.

Emergency Brokerage

Emergency funds were limited to \$150 per individual and could be administered by participating organisations without approval from the Project Coordinator. These funds could be used for the provision of transport, crisis accommodation, food, clothing, medication and other crisis interventions. Petty cash and accounting systems were established and implemented to ensure these services could be provided out of normal operating hours with minimal cash handling by participating agencies.

Case-Managed Brokerage

Case-managed funds were limited to \$1000 per individual and were required to be approved by the Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC) during monthly meetings. If the activity to be funded required a quicker response time, then the agency advocating for the young person was required to outline the proposed activity in an email sent to the Project Coordinator who distributed it to all partners for comment and approval. If a young person exceeded their case-managed funds, the agency identified as the lead support for the young person could advocate to the OCC for additional funds where required.

Project Brokerage

Brokerage funding was available for one or more organisations that wished to provide a project or program which addressed the needs of young people at risk in Kings Cross. Examples of such projects were joint agency recreational activities or group training that improved the capacity of organisations to provide support to the target group.

3.3 Brokerage guidelines

Criteria for inclusion in the brokerage program included being 12-25 years of age, connected to the Kings Cross area, falling through the gaps of existing support systems and needing specialised intensive support.

The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project offered brokerage within the guidelines outlined below.

- Brokerage was to be seen as a tool in the provision of intensive support, whereby the brokerage funds would be readily available to the client to purchase services, materials and resources that would assist in their empowerment;
- No young person was to be given money directly, the service provider must purchase resources required;
- Brokerage was not to be used to purchase resources readily available through existing avenues;
- Brokerage would be used to purchase resources not readily available to this client group;
- The utilisation of brokerage would be unique to the individual being considered;
- Brokerage used for accommodation was dependent on the individual client's age, exposure and experience. It was only to be used if there was no other option available;
- Brokerage used for accommodation was only a short term option unless the client was supported into longer term accommodation through the provision of a bond. The ongoing affordability of the accommodation was to be considered;
- Brokerage used for supermarket items was not to include alcohol or tobacco; and
- Access to brokerage was limited to organisations who participated in the Outreach Coordination Committee.

Application procedures

The Steering Committee in consultation with the participating agencies developed policies and procedures for the administration of brokerage funds. Emergency, Case-Managed and Project Brokerage policies and forms were designed for distribution to partner agencies at the commencement of the program. Contracts outlining the rights and responsibilities of the participating organisations and the auspice for the project, SESIH, were signed before the brokerage component of the project commenced. These included relevant privacy and confidentiality policy documents.

A key element of the brokerage model was immediate access to funds due to the nature of the client group and their experience of crisis situations that required a quick response time. To facilitate the timely delivery of services, accounts were established with a local hotel chain for emergency accommodation; the Kings Cross Newsagency for Travel Tens and phone cards; Woolworths and Street Level Supermarket (subsidised community market – Salvation Army) for food vouchers, and local health providers for the provision of drug and alcohol services and/or other medical procedures. An accounts system ensured that the participating agencies and their clients could have their immediate needs met outside of normal operating hours.

Each agency participating in the project was also provided with a petty cash float of \$500 to ensure they could facilitate emergency applications directly through their service.

3.4 Brokerage results

From the commencement of the brokerage program at the end of July 2005 until the end of June 2008, 1120 applications were distributed to 561 unique individuals, at a total cost of \$139,826. The average amount spent on a brokerage application was \$111. Six hundred and eighty one applications were emergency based, limited to less than \$150. Four hundred and twenty three applications were case managed where a total limit of \$1,000 was available to approved clients. The average number of applications per individual was 1.7.

The average amount spent on each individual client has reduced from \$245 in 2005/06 to \$194 in 2007/08. This is partially attributable to the implementation of account systems put in place with low-cost service providers such as Street Level.

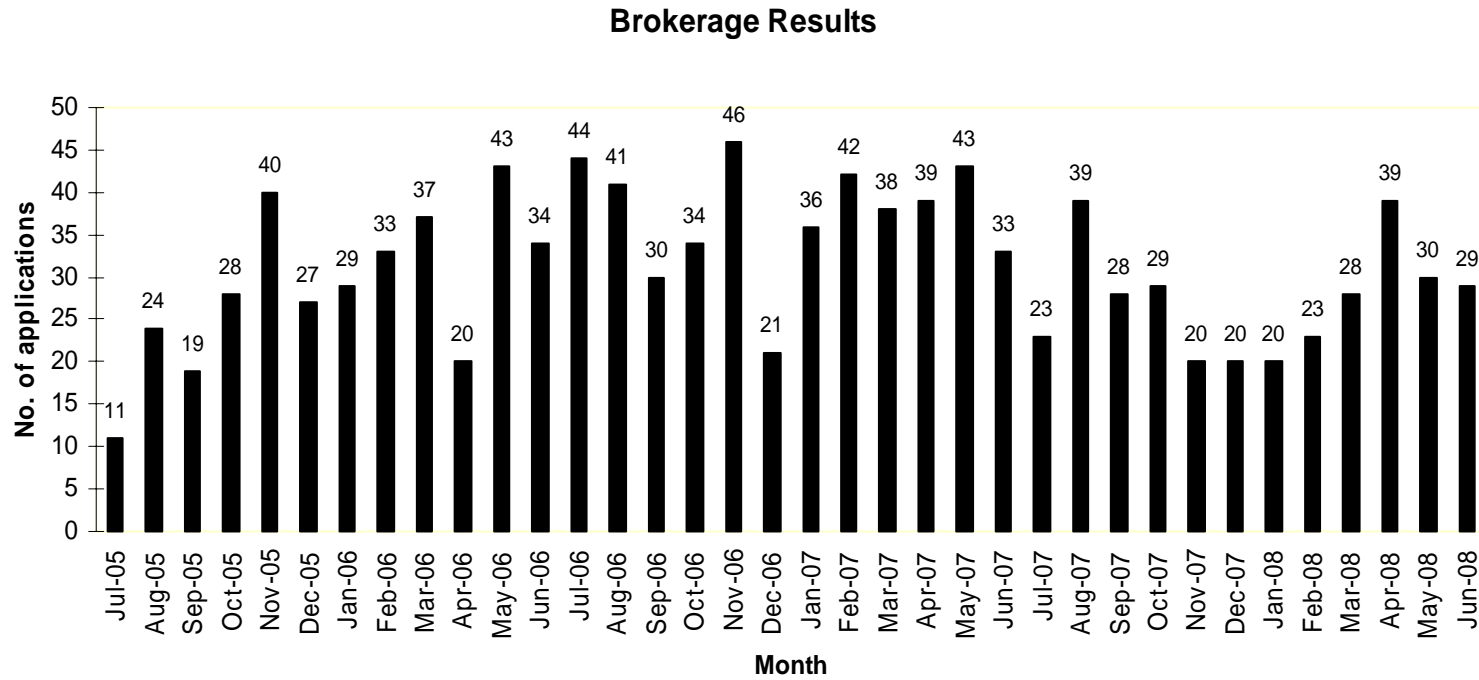


Figure 12 Brokerage results: Number of applications by month

3.5 Gender

There were more male clients (56%) than female clients (43%) accessing brokerage. However females were slightly more likely to be receiving multiple brokerage applications.

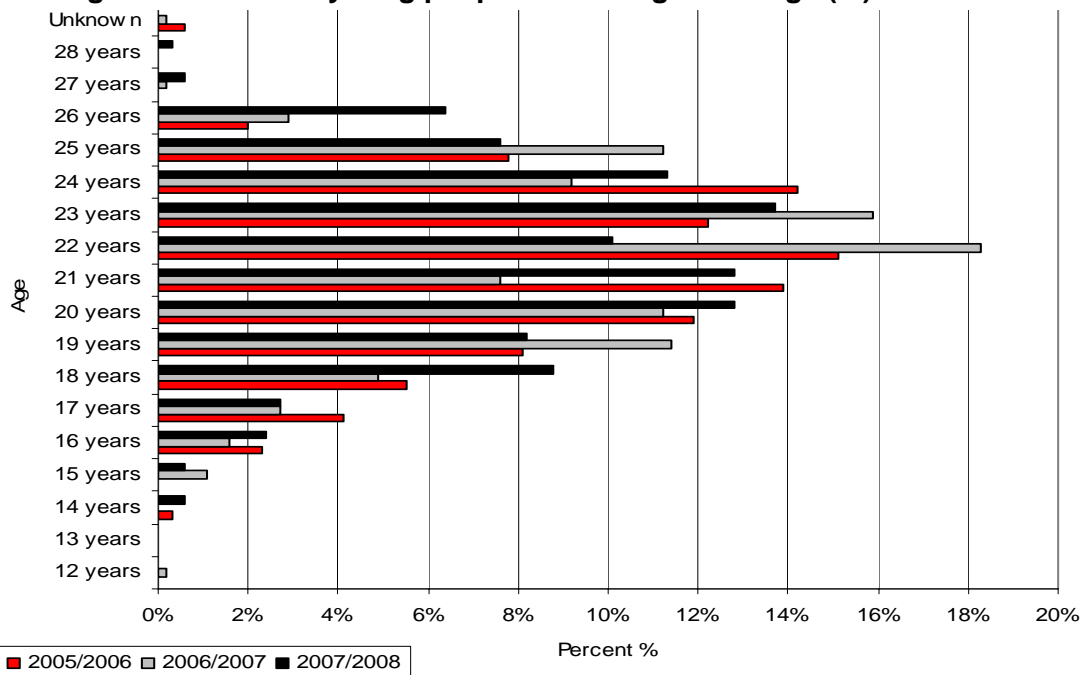
Table 10 Gender breakdown of young people accessing brokerage

Gender	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Female	189	55	215	48	142	43
Male	145	42	225	50	183	56
Not Available	8	2	7	2	3	1
Transgender	3	1	0	0	0	0
Total	345	100	447	100%	328	100

3.6 Age

Clients were 21.6 years of age on average (range 12-28 years) at the time they applied for a brokerage application. One young person aged 12 years was assisted back to her family in regional NSW with DoCS involvement. The 23 applications for young people aged over 25 years of age (non-eligibility age) were assisted when presented for special consideration. Many of these clients had been entrenched in the Kings Cross area for several years and were ready to change their lifestyles. The majority of emergency and case-managed applications (90%) were for clients in the target age range of 18-25 years of age (Figure 13). Sixteen applications (1%) were Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC) projects targeting groups of young people.

Figure 13 Age breakdown of young people accessing brokerage (%)



3.7 Brokerage category

Six hundred and eighty one brokerage applications were emergency-based with the majority being for food vouchers and emergency accommodation. Case-managed applications totaled 423 and were used to purchase a range of services and resources with the additional 16 representing expenditure on OCC activities. There was a 15% reduction in the number of emergency applications from 2005/06 to 2007/08 and a 16% increase in case-managed applications. This may indicate that more participants are moving out of crisis and into more stable situations.

Table 11 Breakdown, by category, of types of brokerage provided to young people

Category	2005/2006			2006/2007			2007/2008			TOTAL		
	No.	Amt	%	No.	Amt	%	No.	Amt	%	No.	Amt	%
Case	105	\$30,776	31	165	\$36,290	37	153	\$32,115	47	423	\$99,183	38
Emergency	233	\$14,198	68	276	\$9,439	62	172	\$8,628	53	681	\$32,266	61
Project	7	\$3,843	2	6	\$3,313	1	3	\$1,219	1	16	\$8,376	1
Total	345	\$48,818	100	447	\$49,043	100	328	\$41,963	100	1120	\$139,826	100

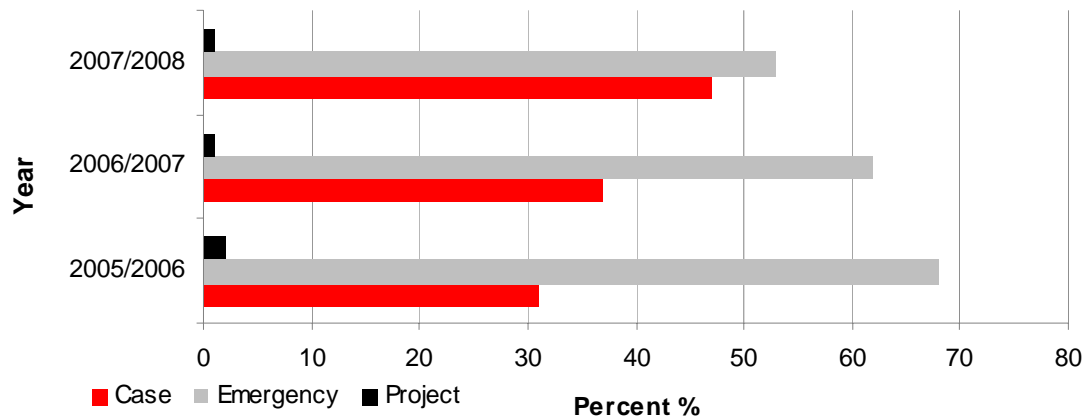


Figure 14 Brokerage provided to young people (%)

3.8 Brokerage expenditure

Funds were spent on different types of applications with housing materials accounting for the highest spending (\$30,492). The second highest expenditure was on emergency accommodation with a total of 161 instances resulting in \$20,065 being spent. A total of 362 food-related applications were administered with a total cost of \$7,236. It is to be noted that while there were 1120 brokerage applications included in this report some applications included multiple categories (for instance emergency accommodation and food vouchers). Instances of the provision of emergency accommodation have more than halved from 82 instances in 2005/06 to 40 instances in 2007/08.

Table 12 Brokerage expenditure

Brokerage Expenditure	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008		TOTAL
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	Amount
Acquiring identification	7	\$344	11	\$701	15	\$711	\$1,756
Amenities arrears	0	\$0	1	\$22	3	\$297	\$320
Baby needs	2	\$107	2	\$593	5	\$797	\$1,498
Clothing	5	\$547	3	\$242	10	\$1,123	\$1,913
Education/vocational needs	20	\$3,280	29	\$4,902	20	\$3,056	\$11,240
Emergency accommodation	82	\$10,551	39	\$3,814	40	\$5,699	\$20,065
Fine payment	1	\$300	1	\$200	0	\$0	\$500
Food vouchers	113	\$2,615	151	\$2,426	98	\$2,194	\$7,236
Housing set up - material	25	\$8,929	25	\$8,586	31	\$12,976	\$30,492
Housing set up - bond	21	\$8,019	22	\$4,835	14	\$4,195	\$17,049
Legal support	1	\$104	3	\$573	0	\$0	\$677
Medical/health needs	21	\$3,512	30	\$6,763	23	\$3,804	\$14,080
OCC activities	7	\$3,843	6	\$3,313	2	\$995	\$8,152
Other	2	\$418	6	\$193	3	\$301	\$914
Phone cards	6	\$113	29	\$230	43	\$215	\$558
Removalist expenses	2	\$672	4	\$1,920	2	\$350	\$2,942
Rent arrears paid	14	\$3,114	20	\$4,719	12	\$2,243	\$10,077
Transport (out of area)	26	\$2,076	34	\$2,894	26	\$1,986	\$6,958
Transport general	19	\$268	83	\$2,110	51	\$1,014	\$3,393
Total		\$48,818		\$49,043		\$41,963	\$139,826

3.9 Types of application per agency

The participating agencies provided a range of different services to young people and were able to use brokerage to fund a variety of activities. Agencies' utilisation of the brokerage funds is shown in Table 3.9. Some agencies provided more of a case-managed service to young people, such as The Crossing and the Come In Centre, and this is reflected in their type of brokerage applications: 119 and 68 case-managed applications respectively. Other agencies dealt with emergency responses to crisis situations and therefore administered more emergency applications such as KRC with 220 emergency applications and Oasis with 108.

Feedback from agencies indicate that brokerage was used to target specific groups of young people such as those who were due for release from Juvenile Justice facilities and those leaving the State Care System. It is widely acknowledged that these young people often fall through service gaps. Project partners indicate at least 52 occasions of support to young people newly released from the Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

Some agencies used very little brokerage and the reasons for this were that they were not youth-specific agencies and therefore may not have been accessed by as many eligible young people. Others had access to alternative sources of funding through which they met the needs of their clients. Such agencies included the Kings Cross Adolescent Unit, the Come In Centre and Oasis, which already had access to brokerage funds for those under 18 years through the Getting It Together Scheme (GITS).

MSIC and Juanita Nielsen Centre had a very low level of applications administered as they joined the project in late 2006. HATSOS had a low number of applications as the service ceased operation in early 2006. The agency performing their former role, Inner City Homelessness Outreach Support Service (ICHOSS), had their own brokerage program for accommodation needs.

Table 13 Applications for brokerage per agency

Service	Type	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008		Total
		No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	Amount
Come In Centre	Case	22	\$8,396	22	\$6,081	24	\$5,286	\$19,763
	Emergency	21	\$1,683	28	\$1,263	18	\$1,920	\$4,868
KRC	Case	13	\$3,153	33	\$10,019	7	\$2,281	\$15,453
	Emergency	65	\$1,466	107	\$2,337	48	\$1,149	\$4,953
Oasis	Case	20	\$6,599	19	\$3,787	17	\$3,177	\$13,564
	Emergency	58	\$5,069	29	\$1,437	21	\$1,413	\$7,920
OCC	Project	7	\$3,843	6	\$3,313	3	\$1,219	\$8,376
PEIPOD	Case	1	\$492	7	\$1,154	8	\$1,241	\$2,888
	Emergency	1	\$15	9	\$97	4	\$372	\$484
Rough Edges	Case	2	\$526	3	\$1,371			\$1,898
	Emergency	2	\$40	1	\$150			\$190
SOS	Case	2	\$173	38	\$4,678	39	\$5,820	\$10,672
	Emergency	47	\$2,868	29	\$1,784	13	\$864	\$5,517
SWOP	Case	3	\$804	9	\$423	2	\$91	\$1,319
	Emergency	5	\$253					\$253
The Crossing	Case	42	\$10,629	39	\$7,817	38	\$10,903	\$29,350
	Emergency	27	\$2,361	55	\$1,307	52	\$1,625	\$5,294
Wayside	Case					6	\$431	\$431
	Emergency	7	\$441	6	\$399	6	\$951	\$1,791
HATSOS	Case			1	\$476			\$476
	Emergency			1	\$79			\$79
JNC	Case			1	\$65	12	\$2,429	\$2,494
	Emergency			1	\$40	3	\$150	\$190
KCAU	Case			2	\$840	1	\$220	\$1,060
	Emergency			1	\$120	4	\$85	\$205
MSIC	Case					1	\$325	\$325
	Emergency					1	\$5	\$5

The Crossing

The Crossing, a long-term case management service in the Kings Cross area, administered the highest number of case-managed applications with a total of 119. Case-managed activities were more costly than emergency-based applications and therefore The Crossing spent the highest amount of money, with a total of \$34,645. The Crossing provided an 'intake pack' when a new client was referred from a partner agency. This accounts for the majority of their emergency applications which have increased from 27 in 2005/06 to 52 in 2007/08.

The Come In Centre

The Come In Centre provided long-term case management and counselling services to young people at risk and administered a total of 68 case-managed applications at a cost of \$19,763 and 67 emergency applications at a cost of \$4,868. The frequency of applications administered had varied slightly over the three year period with a reduction in annual expenditure from \$10,079 in 2005/06 to \$7,207 in 2007/08. Total expenditure for the period was \$24,632.

Oasis Youth Support Network

Oasis Youth Support Network, a multi-disciplinary youth service provider with 18 beds for young people at risk, supported accommodation services and a street outreach chaplaincy team, made contact with young people in Kings Cross late at night. They therefore provided the highest number (61) of emergency accommodations of the agencies involved, at a cost of \$7,757. The number of emergency applications decreased from 58 in 2005/06 to 21 in 2007/08, while case-managed applications had remained steady over the three year period. In the reporting period there was a total of \$21,484 spent.

Kirketon Road Centre (KRC)

KRC was the only participating primary health care service and had the highest number (24) of health-related applications with an expenditure of \$6,158. KRC also saw a high number of clients daily with multiple issues that required immediate assistance such as food and transport. As a result, 220 emergency applications were completed at a cost of \$4,953. As KRC provided a counseling service there was also the opportunity to provide case-managed responses to needs such as housing and referrals for detoxification and rehabilitation. Fifty three case-managed applications were administered in the reporting period at a cost of \$15,453. Total expenditure for the period was \$20,406. The 2006/07 period identified the highest level of expenditure, particularly on housing set up and materials. Feedback from the agency suggested that stronger referral networks had facilitated the referral of younger clients to appropriate services for needs other than health, with successful client outcomes.

Salvation Army Street Outreach Service (SOS)

SOS made contact with young people on the streets of Kings Cross with the aim of returning these young people to the areas from where they had gravitated, as appropriate. Therefore SOS had the highest number of young people transported out of area with 57 instances at a cost of \$3,969. In 2007, SOS changed to a crisis case management service and as a result case-managed applications had grown from 2 occasions in 2005/06 to 39 in 2007/08. There had also been a reduction in emergency applications from 47 in 2005/06 to 13 in 2007/08.

Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC)

There were 16 occasions where funds were spent on activities undertaken by the OCC. Most of these applications related to purchases for the delivery of the project such as outreach phones for outreach sweeps, training or special events. Total expenditure for the period was \$8,376.

Program for the Early Intervention and Prevention of Disability (PEIPOD)

PEIPOD, an early intervention program for young people with mental health issues attached to St Vincent's Hospital administered a total of 30 applications in the reporting period for a range of supports. The majority of its applications related to the provision of emergency accommodation (2) and rent arrears (3) where a client had experienced financial hardship as a result of being hospitalised for mental health related issues. PEIPOD also provided 4 services related to educational/training pursuits. Total expenditure for the period was \$3,373.

Juanita Nielsen Centre (JNC)

The Juanita Nielsen Centre Youth Program, a City of Sydney drop in, case work and advocacy service operating in Woolloomooloo, joined the OCC in late 2006. JNC had only two applications administered in the 2006/07 period, increasing to a total of 15 applications in the 2007/08 period. Total expenditure for the period was \$2,684.

The Wayside Chapel

The Wayside Chapel, a service of the Uniting Church operating in the Kings Cross area since 1964 opened a youth specific space and restructured their youth program. This resulted in an increase in brokerage expenditure and referrals from other agencies. No applications were administered in the 2005/06 period and doubled from six in 2006/07 to 12 in 2007/08. The total expenditure for the reporting period was \$2,222.

Rough Edges

Rough Edges, a drop-in and referral centre for homeless persons based at St Johns Church in Darlinghurst catering for all ages with high needs, administered eight applications in the reporting period. No applications were tabled in the 2007/08 period. However they still attended monthly meetings. The total expenditure for the reporting period was \$2,088.

Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)

SWOP, a state-wide community organisation providing HIV and sexual health peer education and health promotion as well as occupational health and safety information and support for sex industry workers, administered a relatively low number of brokerage applications totaling 35. Only four applications were administered in the 2007/08 period. For the reporting period the highest number of applications was for food (13), transport within the Sydney area (9) and the distribution of phone cards (9). The total expenditure for the reporting period was \$1,572.

Kings Cross Adolescent Unit (KCAU)

The Kings Cross Adolescent Unit, a service provided by DoCS, set up in 1986 to respond to the growing number of young people gravitating to the area, had funds available to support young people at risk. KCAU therefore only used brokerage on three occasions when the activity undertaken did not fit the criteria of its own program. The total expenditure for the reporting period was \$1,265.

Homelessness Action Team Support and Outreach Service (HATSOS)

HATSOS ceased operation in early 2006 and therefore only provided two occasions of brokerage through the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project. The agency performing HATSOS's former role, the Inner City Homelessness Outreach and Support Service (ICHOSS), had a similar brokerage program for accommodation needs and therefore had no need to access this program.

Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC)

The MSIC, a supervised injecting facility for injecting drug users plus the provision of referrals and resources to support their clients, joined the project in August 2006 to build better relationships and referral systems with existing youth service providers in the area. MSIC had a brokerage program to refer clients to drug treatment and rehabilitation, so only accessed the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project for other brokerage on four occasions. Total expenditure for the period was \$330.

Chapter 4 Case Studies

4.1 The Crossing

In 2008 The Crossing supported a young person to apply for brokerage as he was accepted into a live-in drug rehabilitation program outside of Sydney but had no savings to cover the cost of initial fees. Due to the short notice of acceptance into the program the young person wasn't able to save the funds to pay the two weeks board upfront. He had a small amount of money for a coach trip to the program's residence but was advised of their preference for him to fly as it was less stressful and increased the likelihood of him arriving. The Crossing advocated on behalf of the young person through the OCC and brokerage was approved to cover the required costs of upfront board and a one-way flight. The young person completed the six-month, live-in program and returned to Sydney. He is about to celebrate his first anniversary of being drug-free and is currently working towards his goals of long-term secure housing and education.

4.2 The Wayside Chapel

The Wayside Chapel met a young girl (18 years) on the streets of Kings Cross, who informed youth workers that she had been in Sydney for 6 weeks and had come from Perth to be with her boyfriend. Her boyfriend was now unemployed and she had no income. They had been evicted from their tenancy and had spent his Centrelink benefit on accommodation in Kings Cross. Two days later this 18 year old arrived for breakfast at The Wayside, telling staff that her boyfriend was encouraging her to work at a strip club as they had no money, no food and she could not find any other work. For a week options were discussed between her and Wayside workers. She resisted working in a strip club but still wanted to remain in Sydney. A turning point arrived when she informed staff that her boyfriend had spent his Centrelink money and all her jewelry was missing and no rent had been paid. At this time she talked to her parents in Western Australia who did not want her to return to live with them. Contact was then made with a close family friend who offered her a room at their place in Perth. The family friend deposited \$50 into her bank account for a taxi fare but could not afford an air fare. Brokerage funds of \$310 were utilised to fly her home to Perth the next day. Staff were contacted by the young girl approximately 3 weeks later to inform them that she had a job and had reconnected with her parents.

4.3 PEIPOD

A 24 year old male from Korea who was living in overcrowded accommodation in the city and working in a restaurant was linked in with PEIPOD after he experienced his first episode of psychosis in 2007. He was recovering from this experience with very little support and had no family or friends in Sydney. He was struggling financially to maintain his accommodation. As he was not eligible to access Medicare, or other welfare supports, he had been required to pay \$195 to fill a prescription for necessary medications. The brokerage funds paid for the medication and not long afterwards he was well enough to make the decision to move home to Korea.

4.4 Juanita Neilson Centre (JNC)

A 19 year old mother with two infants who was a long term client of the Woolloomooloo Youth Service had accessed emergency brokerage on a number of occasions which enabled her to purchase food, health and medical supplies for her children. Through planned case management and access to brokerage she was able to purchase a freezer for her home to allow her to store food for herself and her children.

Being able to provide brokerage assistance to this client had also greatly enhanced the ability of staff to engage with her on a range of health, educational and vocational issues and to develop a long term therapeutic relationship.

4.5 Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)

A 19 year old transgender sex worker based in Kings Cross had recently become homeless due to domestic violence and was having trouble paying for her methadone and hormone treatments, which could cause considerable side effects if not continued. She approached Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) for assistance. The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Brokerage Program approved an application to cover costs of hormone treatment and a bond for accommodation for the client. The SWOP Outreach Worker also assisted her to find a public methadone treatment provider in Kings Cross. Without the Kings Cross Brokerage Project, this client would have remained homeless and had significant medical issues which would have affected her ability to maintain secure housing and her health.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Summary of Project findings

The report of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Steering Committee *'Improved Services for Young People in Kings Cross'* (May 2004) recommended that regular Joint Outreach Sweeps be conducted across the broader Kings Cross area by staff from a number of outreach providers and that a brokerage program be developed to provide support for young people at risk in Kings Cross.

The number of young people who were located and contacted during the subsequent outreach sweeps fluctuated, ranging from 43 (October 2005) to 6 (October 2007). Most nights (14 out of 22) the number of young people contacted ranged between 22 and 28. The mean number of contacts was 21.9.

A total of four hundred and six young people agreed to participate in the survey. Almost 60% were male and one young person identified as transgender. The median age at the year of interview was 21 years. Fifty nine (14.5%) of young people identified themselves as Aboriginal. Half of the young people were receiving a government benefit at the time.

Just over 30% of young people interviewed were from the inner city and almost 20% reported being from Sydney's western suburbs. A quarter of the young people surveyed were from other Sydney suburbs, while the remaining 10% were from outside Sydney.

Young people gave a number of reasons as to why they came to Kings Cross, ranging from 'hanging out', seeing friends and family, being involved in drug-related activity, accessing services, work (including sex work), clubbing/partying and being in Kings Cross because they lived there.

Even though the survey did not explicitly address any risk factors the young people might have had, statistics on risk factors could be generated via the data collected. It was established that 41% of the young people interviewed were in unstable accommodation. At least one in five young people were involved in drug-related activities, and at least one in eight young people were involved in the sex industry. Sixteen young people were under the age of 16 years at the time of interview. The majority of the young people who were interviewed (80%) had at least one of these four risk factors.

Two hundred and forty six young people (61%) interviewed had accessed at least one youth relevant service in Kings Cross. Three quarters (72%) of those who had accessed services had visited more than one agency. KRC was mentioned most frequently by 130 (32%) of those interviewed. The second most frequently mentioned agency was Wayside Chapel, with 118 young people (29%) mentioning they had accessed its services, followed by Oasis (103), K2 (99), Rough Edges (92) and The Come In Centre (46).

From July 2005 to June 2008 the project provided brokerage to at risk young people in Kings Cross, which was distributed via local health and support services. Fourteen agencies have participated in the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Brokerage Program since it commenced in July 2005.

Over the period of implementation the project assisted 561 clients by granting 1120 emergency and case-management brokerage applications. All brokerage grants were individually tailored to suit the clients' circumstances and needs. Funding ranged from \$3.00 to \$1,517 a person with \$111 being the average amount provided. Brokerage grants covered expenses for accommodation, transport, food, clothing, educational pursuits, medical and health needs. Thirteen applications for project funding were granted during the same period.

The project has proven to be a very cost effective intervention model with only \$139,826 spent over a three-year period (excluding salaries and outreach costs). Successful outcomes have been achieved with a number of clients who have left the area and returned to their families, engaged in vocational training or employment, or resolved significant health and welfare needs. Without the coordination of services and the assistance of brokerage, it is reasonable to assume that many of the young people assisted by this project would still be embedded in the Kings Cross area, utilising multiple services and ultimately becoming entrenched as long-term occupants of the area.

This project enabled the service providers to implement early intervention approaches such as transporting young people back to the areas they had gravitated from as well as offering more intensive support to those young people who had become entrenched in the Kings Cross area.

Without the continuation of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project and the role of the Project Coordinator secured, it is likely that the Outreach Coordination Committee and the high level of collaboration between services would not continue as effectively and respectfully as it does currently.

The first three years of operation have been successful in assisting a significant number of young people with emergency needs and/or achieving sustainable goals in their lives in terms of housing stability and health needs. It has improved the effectiveness of services offered by participating agencies to their clients through collaboration, case-management and referral. Funding exists to continue the project until June 2009 and all parties involved are anticipating its success will continue during this period and beyond.

Another outcome was the improved relationships between agencies that traditionally had minimal contact and collaboration. This lack of collaboration was partially due to competing professional and organisational philosophies and the lack of a forum for services to meet and coordinate their efforts for young people. Joint participation in Outreach Sweeps (through participation in the Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee and Outreach Sweeps) provided an opportunity for all participating organisations to work in partnership to collect data, thus establishing some 'common ground'. The improved cooperation between agencies enabled positive working relationships to develop and also assisted in the creation of clear pathways for referral, resulting in improved outcomes for clients. A relevant example is when agencies that were unable to assist young women with information and support when dealing with an unplanned pregnancy were able to refer the clients onto one of the partnering agencies that were able to provide this service.

5.2 Limitations

Selection of subjects

Utilising experienced outreach workers from the outreach services in the Kings Cross area was a practical and effective way to conduct surveys and assist young people at risk if required. The advantage of using this group for data collection was that these workers were able to identify at risk young people and were trained to contact and engage this group. Some young people also knew the outreach workers and were happy to engage with them. The disadvantages with this approach included the subjective nature of identifying the population of interest plus a possible bias in who was invited to participate in the survey. Young people who were already accessing services were potentially more likely to be included.

Data integrity

Data collected relied on self-report and the information provided by respondents was not verifiable.

Measuring risk factors

A short A4 page survey was used to collect data during the sweeps. The advantage of the data collection tool was that it was short and did not include questions that might be off-putting to some participants, resulting in a high response rate of 83%. However a disadvantage of the tool was that risk factors such as being homeless, being involved in sex work and being involved in drug-related activities were not explicitly addressed in the questionnaire. So while data that was collected provided statistics on the prevalence of these risk factors, these were likely to underestimate the prevalence of these risk factors.

Assessing the needs

The profiles of young people at risk who were interviewed revealed some of their needs, especially when it came to housing, but young people were not explicitly asked about their needs. As a result the information collected through this survey about needs was limited. More questions about the problems the young people encountered, together with more questions on their needs might lead to more valid information. However, this would impact on the duration of the survey.

5.3 Conclusion

The Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project has had major achievements in reducing young people's entrenchment in the Kings Cross area:

- 86 young people moved out of area
- 15% reduction in emergency support required
- 16% increase in case-managed support
- Feedback from project partners indicate at least 52 occasions of support to young people newly released from the Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.
- 11% reduction in the number of young people reporting unstable accommodation
- A slight increase in those reporting drug-related activities as their reason for frequenting the area
- 7% reduction in those reporting sex work as their reason for frequenting the area

Despite these positive outcomes funding has not been secured beyond June 2009. The Project Steering Committee continues to advocate for ongoing funding for this valuable project that aims to improve the immediate and long-term social, economic and health outcomes for young people in the Kings Cross area and beyond.

5.4 Recommendations

- That key government agencies consider providing joint recurrent funding of the Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project;
- That opportunities to implement the Project in other high needs communities be investigated by government and other service providers; and
- That Joint Outreach Sweeps continue on a quarterly basis to provide ongoing comparative data on the numbers and profiles of young people at risk in Kings Cross and surrounding areas.

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Appendix 1 - Outreach data sweep collection categories

Sector		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Date	/ /	Time	:
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender
YOB			
Cultural Background			
Suburb From			Suburb Tonight
Employed	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Income	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

Type of Accommodation Tonight?

- Boarding House / Hostel 1
- Own house / flat 2
- Parent's place 3
- Rental house / flat 4
- Shelter / refuge 5
- Street / homeless 6
- Squat 7
- Friends 8
- Other, specify 9 _____

Nights in Cross

- Previous Saturday 1
- Sunday 2
- Monday 3
- Tuesday 4
- Wednesday 5
- Thursday 6
- Friday 7
- All 8 _____

Why do you come to the cross?

Agencies Accessed

- Oasis 1
- KRC 2
- K2 3
- Come in Centre 4
- Rough Edges 5
- Wayside 6
- HATSOS 7
- SWOP 8
- The Crossing 9
- Other 10 _____

What support was offered?

- Brokerage
- Referral
- None