Holdsworth and Woollahra Council — History of Partnership

Overview

Holdsworth has been part of the Woollahra community for more than 85 years. What began as a children's playground on Holdsworth Street in 1939 has grown into one of the Eastern Suburbs' most trusted and capable community service organisations.

The relationship between Holdsworth and Woollahra Municipal Council (WMC) is one of the longest-standing community partnerships in the area. From its earliest days as a Council-funded playground, through decades of growth, structural change and service expansion, the partnership has evolved continuously to meet the changing needs of Woollahra residents.

History of Partnership — Timeline

Year	Milestone
1939	A children's playground and associated buildings are established on Holdsworth Street, Woollahra.
1940	The playground is dedicated to the "Health and Happiness of Future Citizens of Woollahra" by the NSW Premier.
1960s	An Out of School Hours program is set up by local parents to support children of working families.
1970s	The Woollahra Children's and Community Association is formed in 1974 with financial support from Woollahra Council, aiming to provide recreation, social and educational facilities for all residents. The Association also successfully attracts State Government funding.
1980s	Holdsworth Street Community Centre and Services (HSCCS) is incorporated in 1987. Services expand to include support for people with intellectual disability and community transport. Paid staff are engaged, with wages initially paid directly by WMC.
1990s	HSCCS operates under a Delegation of Authority from Council and becomes the only generalist community service agency in the Woollahra LGA. A Centre renovation is jointly funded by WMC and the Department of Local Government. By the early 1990s, Holdsworth has grown into a multi-service centre drawing funding from multiple sources, including aged care, transport and disability contracts.
2000s	WMC and HSCCS begin discussions to clarify the delegation agreement, including questions around management control, employment and liability. HSCCS begins publishing audited, independent financial statements.
2005	A new Funding and Management Agreement is signed. HSCCS leases its premises from WMC, employs all staff independently, and carries its own risk. WMC agrees

	to allocate funds on an annual basis, with the expectation that HSCCS will continue seeking additional funding from other sources.
2008	HSCCS is registered as a Public Benevolent Institution. A separate entity, Holdsworth Family Services Inc, is created to hold family services. The Management Committee transitions to a Board, and WMC Councillors are no longer mandated members, though they continue to be invited.
2010	A new Funding and Management Agreement gives HSCCS greater independence. A major NSW Government aged care tender is won, increasing HSCCS funding by 30 per cent and extending the aged care contract across five local government areas.
2012	HSCCS takes on the WMC Meals on Wheels service and accompanying government funding. Plans for a joint renovation of the Gaden premises begin.
2014	HSCCS takes on the lease of Gaden, opening it as a community centre and social enterprise cafe.
2015	Holdsworth Family Services Inc is wound up, as the separate entity is no longer required.
2016	The organisation registers as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is renamed Holdsworth Community Ltd (HCL).
2019	A new Funding Agreement is signed, with more specific reference to service delivery, WMC recognition and reporting requirements. WMC provides an additional $50,000 as seed funding to launch Holdsworth's HomeShare service.
2021	HCL has grown to a multi-service provider with a budget of approximately $7 million, holding registered NDIS and Home Care Package accreditation, a Federal Aged Care contract worth more than $2.5 million per annum, and three State Government contracts totalling $700,000. Holdsworth publishes its Theory of Change.
2022	A new three-year Funding Agreement is signed with WMC. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacts operations, halting group activities and prompting a shift to one-on-one clinical and social support.
2023	Post-pandemic growth sees an increase in aged care client numbers and revenue. Holdsworth completes a major rebrand, launches a new client relationship management system, achieves strong results in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission audit, and strengthens internal reporting and delivery processes.
2025	Holdsworth launches a new Strategic Plan for 2025–27. A new three-year program agreement with WMC commences from 1 July 2025, covering Woollahra Life!, Woollahra Connect!, Woollahra Playgroup and Dementia Friendly Woollahra.
2027	Holdsworth secures additional funding to expand the Woollahra Playgroup at Rose Bay Cottage to five days per week, and to launch a fifth program, Our Place, Our Woollahra, delivering a diversity and inclusion program across the LGA.