



It Takes Two (or more) To Tango

**Research and Options Report to Gold Coast City Council
Best Practice in Participatory Community Engagement**

FINAL REPORT

9 October 2009

Prepared by The Ethos Foundation

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Section 1

Executive Summary

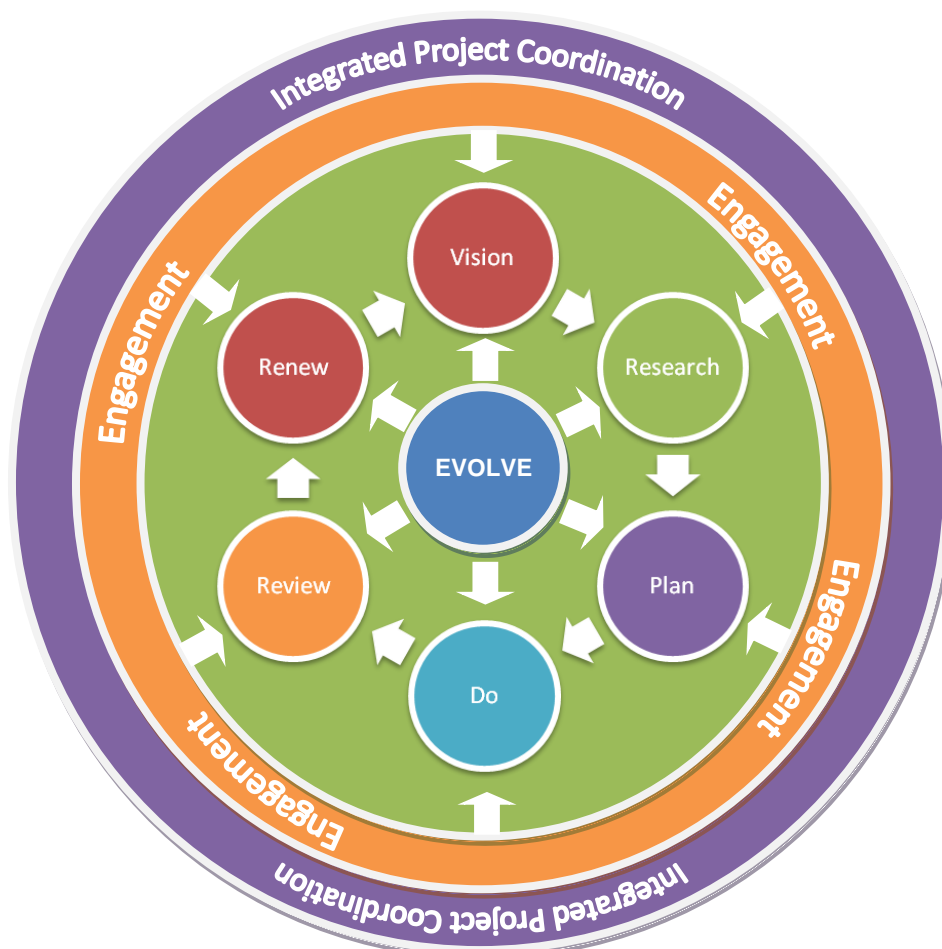
The aim of this research and reporting process was to identify best practice exemplars of local government community participation and engagement practices and to discuss these in relation to Gold Coast City Council's (GCCC) commitment to deliver on the Bold Future Vision and new Corporate Governance requirements for enhanced community participation and engagement in the city.

The Ethos Foundation was engaged by Council in mid-August 2009 to undertake this research and reporting for Council.

One of the key tasks in developing this report was to organise and present the vast field of community engagement and participation theory and practice in a way that was well organised, accessible, reader-friendly and therefore useful and relevant for Council, both within its current operations and with regard to growing its capacity and maturity in participatory engagement practices. This includes recognition of the processes of adaptive management and action learning, both of which are increasingly relevant to local government. It is anticipated that Council's maturing process in the area of participatory community engagement will also occur in line with the integration and implementation of the Bold Future Vision, Principles and Targets; the GCCC Corporate Governance Framework (CGF) and Queensland State Government legislative requirements for long-term community planning in the Local Government Act 2009.

To assist this discussion, the Ethos Foundation created a framework to help guide the presentation of all aspects of this report, titled the Adaptive Project Management and Participatory Engagement Cycle. This framework is informed by the work of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, the Oregon Model of Community Visioning and the Action Learning Cycle.

Adaptive Project Management and Participatory Engagement Cycle



The cycle embeds community engagement within six key stages of integrated project management: Visioning, Researching, Planning, Doing/Implementing, Reviewing and Renewing. At the cycle's heart is the process of Evolving which is relevant to all stages and layers of project coordination, through mechanisms such as action learning and research, and systematic empirical evaluation, in order to enable ongoing organisational maturity.

This report recognises that local governments undertake a variety of roles within the community, all of which at some time have the potential to be enhanced and influenced by community participation and engagement. In particular, this report focuses on the following local government roles:

- **Hard Infrastructure Planning, Provision, Maintenance**
- **Asset Management**
- **Social Infrastructure Planning and Provision**
- **Foresight: Visioning, Planning, Implementing**
- **Master Planning**
- **Natural Resource Management**
- **Natural Landscape Conservation and Biodiversity**
- **Community Development**
- **Economic Development**
- **Service Delivery**
- **Community Planning**

This report uses the Adaptive Project Management and Participatory Engagement Cycle both as a framework to discuss integrated community engagement, and in separate segments to discuss and analyse real life, best practice exemplars of community engagement.

The exemplars selected for discussion in this report are drawn locally, nationally and internationally and are identified as being of best practice standard either because they have won one or more awards and/or because they are recognised within the community engagement sector as exemplars of best practice (via journal articles, books and other literature). Where possible, the report discusses Australian exemplars so Council can more easily follow up these projects should staff wish to better understand their details and nuances.

The report also discusses in some detail, three key community engagement mechanisms of primary interest to Council: (1) Web Portals; (2) Leadership Forums; and (3) Partnership Frameworks. It also discusses training and skills development in community engagement in some detail because of its importance to support capacity building both within Council and the community. We note that Council's two other areas of core interest: Household/Community Panels and Community Scorecards have been addressed in recent detailed reports (see reference section). We also note that Council has reviewed its current consultation work through the report "Current State Analysis of Community Engagement Activities".

This report utilises the work of the IAP2, particularly its *Spectrum of Public Participation* (see Appendix 1) and *Core Values of Public Participation* (see Appendix 2) as a foundation for the discussion of participatory community engagement. The IAP2 focuses on five layers of public participation in its spectrum:

1. **Inform** – to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions

2. Consult – To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions
3. Involve – To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
4. Collaborate – To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution
5. Empower – To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

The report notes that GCCC's Community Consultation Policy (2006) refers to the IAP2 spectrum but utilises the word "Consultation" throughout, to broadly refer to Council's provision of opportunities for:

"people who are affected by, or interested in, a Council decision or directorate initiative, to participate in the activity and or the decision making process in order to enhance the final outcome" (p3).

It is useful to note that over a period of some 10 years, Gold Coast Water has evolved the GCCC definition of consultation as an 'opportunity to participate and enhance the final outcome' to align more closely with the IAP2's notion of Collaboration, particularly through the *Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy* planning program and work of community advisory committees, which is discussed in some detail later in this report.

Griffith University's Professor Paul Burton, in a recent paper about the evaluation of public participation called *"Conceptual, Theoretical and Practical Issues in Measuring the Benefits of Public Participation"*, draws attention to the lack of evaluation undertaken of participation and engagement processes. He stresses the need for effective evaluation to occur more frequently in order to clarify benefits and costs and to enable more effective engagement planning and implementation. This report includes one exemplar that has incorporated significant formal evaluation and that is the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children program (NGCC4C), which worked closely with Dr Anne Ingamells from Griffith University to undertake detailed program evaluation. It is suggested not only that GCCC note the relevance of Professor Burton's call for the inclusion of evaluation processes within Council's engagement work, but also look to the NGCC4C program and its evaluation process as being of potential value to the expansion of its engagement work.

Within his paper, Professor Burton also identifies four key and overarching principles that are vital for local government/participatory practitioners to address within the design of engagement processes, plans and events:

- a. What are the apparent benefits of participation?
- b. Who are you engaging with and why?
- c. What is the scope of decision-making that the public is to participate in – is it strategic, program-based or individual?
- d. What are the terms of participation? (p264, 265)

It is important to note that local governments in Queensland are governed by the Queensland State Government under three key Acts of Parliament and as such, do not in theory (and sometimes in practice) have complete decision making autonomy. The three acts that direct and govern local government in Queensland are:

1. The Local Government Act – note, the Local Government Act 2009 was passed by the State Government in mid-2009 and is likely to be enacted in late 2009;

2. The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 – which is designed to manage growth and protect the region’s lifestyle and environment. The plan responds to issues such as continued high population growth, traffic congestion, koala protection, climate change and employment generation.
3. The Sustainable Planning Bill – which was introduced into the Queensland Parliament in June 2009 by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, Stirling Hinchliffe. In a media release Mr Hinchliffe said about the bill, “An important innovation is the requirement for all new local government planning schemes to have a long-term strategic land use plan...The introduction of this element provides an important link between 25-year regional plans, and council’s land use, community and infrastructure plans.”

While it is yet to be tested how these new legislative drivers might impact on local government planning, community planning and community engagement, it is at least useful to mention their existence here and note that a number of local government representatives are very aware of potential impacts. These may include local government’s inability to fully ‘Empower’ community (as referred to in the IAP2 Spectrum) because in the end the Queensland State Government holds decision making authority. This can be particularly relevant in the planning and development of hard infrastructure that is likely to have regional significance, or master planning that interfaces with regional infrastructure and/or development.

There are at least a few options to consider in addressing this situation:

- Council can focus on collaborative engagement processes as Gold Coast Water has done with its Waterfuture advisory committees
- Council could utilise the full IAP2 Spectrum (including Empowerment) but make clear from the outset of its engagement with community, the structural relationship between local and state government
- In some cities, local government has enabled the formation and operation of independent community organisations to drive community visioning and planning processes
- Council could also proactively partner with a diverse range of stakeholders including State Government to plan and implement relevant projects
- Engagement processes that have collected, collated and can present verifiable data that clearly illustrates the community’s commitment to a particular plan, strategy or project may sometimes be useful in communicating, influencing or negotiating with the Queensland State Government.

This report refers to some of GCCC’s current operational structures in the section Engagement Options for GCCC and focuses on the potential to grow its capacity in engaging with the community in more participatory, collaborative and empowering ways. The report’s aim is to present a series of options which will enable the evolution and maturing of Council’s participatory engagement capacity.

Research Methodology

The research for this report was undertaken in a number of ways:

- Interviews – face-to-face and telephone with email support
- Literature review – books, articles, journals, reports (see reference section)
- Desktop research – websites, articles, journals, case studies, reports (see reference section)

- Informal email discussion with practitioners and project coordinators
- Observation of onground projects and practitioners through Ethos' professional practice
- Ethos Foundation's reflections on our own professional practice

A draft report was reviewed by members of GCCC's community engagement reference group and their feedback integrated into this final report. Interview notes and summaries were reviewed by interviewees and their input, feedback and corrections have been included in this report.

Findings

The following findings underpin the options discussed in the section Engagement Options for GCCC.

- There is a vast amount of literature about community engagement and participation, some of which is accessible online. Much of this literature is of real value and relevance to Council and the community as engagement and participation become more sought-after processes in sustainability planning and development.
- Triple Bottom Line and 4 Bottom Line is at the heart of sustainability: ecological, social, economic and governance. It is important to integrate and synergise all components of sustainability within sustainability planning and development activity.
- Community engagement and participation are important components of Triple Bottom Line and 4 Bottom Line sustainability, particularly within the social sustainability and governance bottom lines.
- There are many and diverse best practice exemplars of participatory community engagement in South East Queensland, Australia and overseas. Many are identifiable through online searches and international project managers and practitioners can be relatively easily contacted through email.
- The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation is a useful guide and benchmark for planning and reviewing engagement processes.
- Evaluation processes and methods are important to the effective and ongoing design and delivery of community participation and engagement and are as yet, under-developed and utilised.
- Adaptive management, adaptive co-management and adaptive governance are important, emerging concepts that are highly relevant to community participation and engagement, particularly as communities and regions begin to factor the need for resilience in social-ecological systems into regional planning.
- It is important to recognise the structural relationship between the Queensland State Government and local governments and the potential implications this has for participatory engagement processes utilised by local government.
- There are many examples of community-driven initiatives which are highly participatory and enhance local government aspirations for sustainability and participation. Resourcing and support for such community initiatives is important.
- There are many positive examples of collaboration and partnering between business, community and local government which proactively address priority areas within sustainability.

- Local government can play a number of roles in developing participatory engagement practices including initiator and driver, collaborator, partner, supporter, resource provision etc.
- There are many existing and emerging community-driven initiatives in sustainability and transition and local government can play an important role in helping to build community capacity and networks.
- The provision of training, education and skills development in participatory engagement planning, design, implementation and evaluation is vital for civic and community leaders and other relevant stakeholders.
- GCCC has developed and implemented some best practice exemplars of participatory community engagement and has the interest and ability to further develop its engagement capacity in integrated, whole-of-organisation ways.
- Increasingly communities are concerned about their future, particularly in relation to climate change, economic security, energy security, health and wellbeing, education and natural resource security such as water supply. In many areas, community transition networks and movements are emerging and are being driven by active citizen leaders.
- Web based technology is rapidly evolving and presenting government and community with many opportunities to collaborate, engage and network. This is tempered by the need to ensure safety and security for local government and community participants.
- Public communication can play an important role in both promoting engagement and participation opportunities to the community and disseminating information to the community.
- Highly effective engagement programs consist of a number of integrated, synchronised and purposeful processes that enable engagement aims to be achieved. It is important to establish engagement aims within the sustainability context as the foundation to engagement strategies.

Section 2

Background to the Report

Bold Future is a 30-year community vision for the Gold Coast developed on the basis of significant community consultation. The Bold Future Vision (BFV) is imbued with the principles of leading edge community engagement in the planning and decisions about the city’s future. As such, Bold Future is seen to be the greatest opportunity the broader Gold Coast community has ever had to shape the future of the city. As a result of adopting the Bold Future Vision (BFV) in early 2009, GCCC has updated its Corporate Governance Framework (CGF) to include significant emphasis on ongoing community engagement.

Specifically, the BFV is about:

- Providing a response to changing legislative, social, ecological and environmental impacts
- Providing an integrated approach to strategy and planning on the Gold Coast
- Delivering an updated vision for a sustainable city and strategic outcomes to 2040
- Mapping a detailed action/implementation plan and partnerships model to deliver on the BFV and outcomes
- Establishing an ongoing adaptive management and community engagement framework.

Having adopted the BFV and the accompanying principles (see below), GCCC is now in Phase 4 – Implementation of the Program – having updated its Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and CGF to include emphasis on further developing and imbuing participation as a fundamental principle of how Council works. The BFV has also been established as an overarching strategic priority for GCCC with all other corporate and strategic plans aligning closely to its vision, principles and goals.

The Bold Future Principles are:

Responsible Decisions	<p>Ensure balanced and transparent decisions, shaped by an informed and engaged community</p> <p>Openly monitor, evaluate and improve through adaptive management of our vision</p> <p>Consider the whole of life costs to ensure value for money and affordability</p>
Responsible Leadership	<p>Commit to and support bold, responsible and visionary leadership that governs the city with equity, clarity and determination</p> <p>Sustain and enhance the quality of life we enjoy for future generations</p>
Collaborative Approach	<p>Empower citizens with a shared sense of responsibility to embrace the challenges and opportunities of change</p>
Environment	<p>Actively protect our unique natural environment and its intrinsic value</p>
People and Economy	<p>Achieve long term economic security, community health and social wellbeing</p>
Design	<p>Recognise and celebrate the value of good design and innovation</p>

There are two Bold Future themes which specifically support participatory community engagement:

- **A city leading by example where:**

- We have strong, visionary leaders in government, business and the community who work collaboratively to achieve our shared vision
- Our informed and engaged citizens shape the decisions and actions on which our city's success is based and celebrate our achievements

- **A city connecting people and places where:**

- We have strong networks for collaboration with other communities both locally and globally

In addition, Council's CGF gives effect to the Corporate Plan focus area: A City Leading by Example which states: "In 2014 we will have a city where:

- 1.1 The community is actively involved in the city
- 1.2 There is collaborative leadership and strong partnership in the city
- 1.3 We respond to current and emerging challenges by working together."

The Bold Future community visioning program in 2008 revealed that the city and the South East Queensland region are now facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities as we move into the 21st Century. From issues that include climate change to renewable energy; personal wellbeing and safety to economic development; natural capital and ecosystem services to city design and transport systems, it is clear that the city's people care about sustainability at many levels and are prepared to address complex and interconnected issues in ways that assist informed, collaborative planning for the future. Given the scope and success of the Gold Coast's Bold Future community visioning program, it is clear that the city is ready to closely examine best practice examples of participatory community engagement with a view to developing and implementing an integrated, meaningful, transparent and strategic program of citizen participation and engagement.

"Deal with people as capable rather than defective, and as community builders instead of isolated integers, and sometimes they will surprise you" Johnathon Rowe

Section 3

Defining Community Engagement

Defining Community Engagement

The Brisbane Declaration was developed in 2005 at the International Conference on Engaging Communities (15-17 August 2005). It was created by representatives of countries and communities including Indigenous peoples, international institutions, national, state and local governments, academic institutions and business and civil society organisations from around the world participating in the International Conference on Engaging Communities. Closely aligned with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the Millenium Declaration and the Millenium Goals for Development, the Brisbane Declaration provides a relevant and appropriate definition of community engagement and is utilised by the IAP2 as its defining foundation. Regarding community engagement, the Brisbane Declaration:

- *Affirms that community engagement is critical to effective, transparent and accountable governance in the public, community and private sectors.*
- *Recognises that community engagement is a two way process:*
 - *by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and*
 - *by which governments and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes.*
- *Affirms that effective engagement generates better decisions, delivering sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits.*
- *Recognises that effective community engagement enables the free and full development of human potential, fosters relationships based on mutual understanding, trust and respect, facilitates the sharing of responsibilities, and creates more inclusive and sustainable communities.*
- *Further recognises that meaningful community engagement seeks to address barriers and build the capacity and confidence of people to participate in, and negotiate and partner with, institutions that affect their lives, in particular those previously excluded or disenfranchised.*
- *Further recognises that inclusive engagement requires that Indigenous peoples and the poor and marginalized, are adequately resourced to participate meaningfully in the broader community and that they have a stake in the outcome and benefit equitably as a result of being involved.*
- *Endorses the core principles of integrity, inclusion, deliberation and influence in community engagement:*
 - *Integrity – when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement;*
 - *Inclusion - when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;*
 - *Deliberation – when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understandings and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities;*
 - *Influence – when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.*
- *Recognises the availability of a wide range of methods and technologies, including new and emerging tools associated with the internet, to facilitate appropriate and effective community engagement.*
- *Affirms the value of education, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge sharing about active citizenship and community engagement processes and outcomes.*
- *Draws attention to the materials and recommendations of the specialized panels and workshops which supplement this Declaration.*

The Brisbane Declaration can be found at: http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/assets/pdfs/brisbane_declaration.pdf

Section 4

Context

Sustainability, Resilience and Adaptive Management

Put simply, sustainability is the ability to keep going.

The United Nations defined sustainability in 1984 as the ability of current generations to meet their own needs without eroding or compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Commission for the Future, 1990). This definition still appears to be in widespread use in government, business and community circles.

A core sustainability concept is that of Triple Bottom Line sustainability, that is, the ability of governments, businesses and communities to plan, design and function in ways that create, integrate and account for not only financial sustainability but also ecological and social sustainability. The concept of the Triple Bottom Line has been widely discussed for well over a decade though it is yet to be fully integrated into the planning processes and operational systems of many governments, businesses and communities around the world.

It is important to note that in some circles a fourth bottom line is now being considered, that of cultural and governance processes, including *citizen participation*. Some organisations are now working with the notion of a Quadruple/4 Bottom Line – Planet, People, Profit and Participation.

In terms of 4 bottom line sustainability and its relationship to participatory community engagement, it is the social and cultural/governance bottom lines which are most relevant. Indeed, governments' ability to design, implement, evaluate and evolve participatory community engagement programs and activities is a key 4BL sustainability plank in their operations.

The notion of sustainability is also becoming increasingly linked with that of resilience and the ability of *social-ecological systems* to maintain their function and form even in the face of unexpected and unpredictable shocks.

As local and regional climate and weather patterns begin to destabilise and impact in unpredictable ways upon regional social and economic systems including catchments, geographical regions, local governments, businesses, industries, communities and even households as a result of climate change, the exploration and recognition of resilience as a foundation for sustainability is gaining momentum. It is an important contextual frame for this report.

One of the most important concepts that resilience scientists have recognised in the past decade or two is that living systems have thresholds or tipping points. It is now understood that when key factors within a natural system – variables which are like the bedrock that maintain the form and function of the system such as landscape-scale native vegetation – are disturbed beyond their capacity to function or recover, the whole system can tip into a different form. The point at which this occurs is known as a threshold or tipping point. Australian resilience scientist Brian Walker (2005) makes three key points about thresholds:

- *Once a threshold has been crossed it is usually difficult (in some cases impossible) to cross back.*
- *A system's resilience can be measured by its distance from these thresholds. The closer you are to a threshold, the less it takes to be pushed over.*
- *Sustainability is all about knowing if and where thresholds exist and having the capacity to manage the system in relation to these thresholds (Walker, 2005, p63).*

Resilience and systems scientists argue that we cannot accurately predict, model or fully prepare for our future because of the highly complex and interconnected nature of living systems. As a result, our ability to create the conditions for collective learning in and from action – a type of adaptive management process – is crucial as we plan our short and longer term futures. Researcher and scholar Karin Schianetz (2009) states:

“... continuous and active community engagement is central to adaptive management of social-ecological systems, as the knowledge of local people affects invariably their environment; it is the communities’ capacity to collectively learn and adapt that is necessary to foster resilience and sustainability in social-ecological systems. Recent research points out that people’s capacity to deal with change is strongly linked to their capacity for governance and co-management.

“...This approach for governance of social-ecological systems, which is now often referred to as adaptive co-management or adaptive governance, fosters the sharing of management power and responsibility, and promotes multi-level institutional linkages among user groups or communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations” (no page reference available).

It is also worth noting here that a community’s levels of resilience can be significantly improved if that community has a high level of social capital including residents who are connected with their community and who feel a strong sense of belonging. By its very nature of supporting social connectivity, effective community engagement and other participatory processes can increase social capital and resilience.

Innovation

Scientists and researchers from many disciplines including ecology, biology, atmospheric science and climate change, as well as political and other social sciences suggest that humanity is now poised on the brink of both immense challenge and creative opportunity. Five ‘Tectonic Stresses’ identified by Canadian political scientist Professor Thomas Homer-Dixon pose energy, environmental, economic and social challenges that are unprecedented in human history and are likely to impact upon the very structures that support contemporary civilization within the coming decade. These tectonic stresses are:

- *population stress arising from differences in the population growth rates between rich and poor societies, and from the spiralling growth of megacities in poor countries;*
- *energy stress – above all from the increasing scarcity of conventional oil;*
- *environmental stress from worsening damage to our land, water, forests, and fisheries;*
- *climate stress from changes in the makeup of our atmosphere;*
- *economic stress resulting from instabilities in the global economic system and ever-widening income gaps between rich and poor people (Homer-Dixon, 2006, “The Upside of Down: Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization”, p 11).*

Thomas Homer-Dixon’s five tectonic stresses have the potential to impact severely and unpredictably upon individuals, communities and economies the world over. One of our dilemmas is that the challenges posed to communities by these stresses can only be met if communities are resilient, adaptive and possess high levels of social capital including social connectivity. Conversely, the stresses also work to undermine social capital and social connectivity through their diverse impacts. Local governments have a number of important roles to play in assisting the maintenance and growth of social capital and the design, implementation, evaluation and evolving of effective and empowering community engagement is a key role.

The potential and need for multidisciplinary, collaborative and creative enterprise and innovation grows daily in our communities. Albert Einstein's argument that the type of thinking required to solve the problems we face is very different to the type of thinking which caused these problems in the first place, has never been more accurate. Complexity, connectivity, systems thinking and solving for pattern all require multidisciplinary thinking and dialogue as well as the capacity to learn in and from action in ways that support adaptive management. Citizen participation is now essential if cities like the Gold Coast and regions like South East Queensland are to proactively and adequately plan and prepare for a resilient and prosperous future in ways that are also transparent, meaningful and accountable to all stakeholders.

Gold Coast City Council's commitment to identifying, analysing, adopting and adapting best practice models of participation and community engagement to its own operations and structure is timely and indeed, essential for the city if its BFV is to be fully realised.

Section 5

Community Engagement and Community Plans for Local Government

The Interface between the Queensland State Government and Local Government

Local government in Queensland is regulated and governed by the Queensland State Government predominantly under the three acts of parliament and a number of legislative requirements. This relationship does have important implications for local governments regarding the depth and level of community engagement undertaken, because at the end of the day, the Queensland Government's legislation governs local government planning. The three key Acts governing local government are:

- South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031
- Sustainable Planning Act (formerly Integrated Planning Act)
- Local Government Act 2009

While not officially confirmed as yet, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) suggests that the South East Queensland Regional Plan is likely to be the lead document to deliver integrated, long-term planning for the SEQ region in a hierarchy of responsibility from State Government to distributed local governments.

Long-term Community Planning (Local Government Act 2009)

As mentioned, the Local Government Act 2009 identifies the requirement for local governments to develop long-term community plans utilising "transparent, effective and meaningful" processes including community engagement. The Act identifies three key local government principles which are directly relevant to community engagement:

- (a) *"Transparent and effective processes, and decision making in the public interest; and*
- (b) *Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; and*
- (c) *Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement"* (Queensland Local Government Act 2009, p 19).

The Local Government Act 2009 also states that long-term community plans (of at least 10 years duration from the time of their implementation), must be developed by local governments as a key planning and accountability document under the Act. The Act states:

"A long-term community plan is a document that –

- (a) *Outlines the local government's goals, strategies and policies for implementation, the local government's vision for the future of the local government area, during the period covered by the plan; and*
- (b) *Covers a period of at least 10 years after the commencement of the plan"* (Queensland Local Government Act 2009, pp 97-99).

At the time of writing, neither of these sections have any detailed discussion or implementation requirements accompanying them though it is understood by the LGAQ that long-term community plans are intended to overarch all other local government plans and strategies. A working party made up of the LGAQ and a number of local governments is currently attempting to ascertain how these community planning and engagement-relevant sections of the Act should be

actioned by local government. The LGAQ suggests local governments refrain from undertaking detailed work in the community planning area until the Act is clarified and the relevant regulations/requirements are available for use.

As mentioned, it is understood that long-term community plans will overarch all other local government plans and strategies. For GCCC, with its Bold Future Vision overarching and integrated within the CGF, Corporate Plan, and Operational Plan this legislative requirement appears to be well in hand and appropriately positioned within GCCC.

“Perhaps the greatest challenge of our times will be to maintain a sense of direction in the midst of turbulence...In riding the rapids of change, those who anticipate the next bend in the river and what lies beyond will have a better chance of meeting this challenge” Steven Ames

Section 6

Web Portals

Introduction

“The term ‘Web 2.0’ has been attributed to Tim O’Reilly of O’Reilly Media, which he used to describe the applications and software that facilitate interaction and the sharing of information between users. It has come to represent a group of technologies which have become associated with the terms: blogs, wikis, podcasts, RSS feeds etc. These facilitate a more socially connected web where everyone is able to add to and edit the information space. If there is a Web 2.0 then we might assume there must have been a Web 1.0. A simple definition of the difference is summarised as follows:

- *Web 1.0 relied upon specialist skills to compose, format and publish content to the web, and consequently was limited to people and infrastructures that had these skills and capabilities. It was also primarily (though not exclusively) used as a broadcast medium for the dissemination of information.*
- *Web 2.0 technology enables anyone to become a web publisher by hiding the (web) complexity behind simple and easy-to-use interfaces, resulting in the proliferation of personal blogs (short for web log). It also facilitates creativity, collaboration and knowledge sharing through web-based communities and social networking sites (eg Facebook)”* (Dale, 2008, p 1).

In Australia’s local government sector, Web 2.0 is predominantly utilised in two key areas – web portals and online community engagement sites. This section of the report overviews two local government web portals: eVillage Melbourne hosted by Melbourne City Council: www.evillagemelbourne.com.au and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council’s permanent community engagement forum: <http://pmhclisting.com.au> as exemplars of web portals that focus on sustainable community visioning, planning, review and implementation. In the area of online community engagement, we discuss the work and insights of Bang the Table (www.bangthetable.com) - arguably Australia’s leading service provider in the online engagement sector. We have also included an extremely useful article about online community engagement from the US non profit research centre the Center for Advances in Public Engagement (www.publicagenda.org/cape) in Appendix 4 with the Foreword and Introduction included in this section.

Web Portals

Definition

The Motive Web Design Glossary (<http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/portal.php>) defines a web portal as “a site (often a system) that creates a single point of access to information collected from different sources.”

“Web portals can be classified as either ‘horizontal’ or ‘vertical’; a horizontal portal caters to a general audience and provides a broad range of content and services; a vertical portal caters to a niche audience and provides more targeted offerings.

Benefits of a portal include:

- *Information structure: A portal offers a structured approach to navigating information, e.g. by subject (category) then sub-category. As the information hierarchy is created by people, it is more likely to relate to the user’s query than a search engine keyword search. An additional benefit is that the information structure may improve a user’s contextual understanding of the subject area.*
- *Consistent interface: Once familiar with the portal, users are able to easily locate (and relocate) information and services. This is often a key driver for the creation of government portals, e.g. govt.nz (New Zealand government), Directgov (UK government).*

Common portal features include:

- *user authentication (log in and password)*
- *personalised content views (portlets); where the user can modify the content displayed on the portal homepage to match specific interests*
- *personalised navigation, e.g. 'quick links' to frequently accessed information pages*
- *directory-based information structure*
- *community-building tools: chatrooms, bulletin boards, emailing lists, etc.*
- *subject-specific search functionality: e.g. synonym-matching industry-specific jargon."*

There are many web portals in existence around the world to showcase and enable engagement with the visions, aspirations, planning, activities and work of people, organisations, institutions, governments, communities and cities. As we consider the increasing momentum of Web 2.0 though, this report focuses on two local government web portals which offer more than static information, but actively encourage, support and enable community participation, networking, storying and contribution.

Web Portal Exemplar eVillage Melbourne

www.evillagemelbourne.com.au

The eVillage Melbourne website was created to bring together all who were interested in participating in Future Melbourne in an online environment. eVillage members used the original site to share their views and opinions on the future of Melbourne. This online format meant users could participate anywhere and at any time they had internet access.

Its use for Future Melbourne was so successful that the City of Melbourne has been re-developing and re-branding the site to take on a broader role as a community consultation forum for a range of City of Melbourne topics.

Community consultation for the current phase of Future Melbourne now occurs through the Future Melbourne wiki website and eVillage members have been invited to register to use the wiki where they can comment, discuss or even directly edit the content of the Future Melbourne draft plan: <http://www.futuremelbourne.com.au/wiki/view/FMPlan>

The eVillage Melbourne website was created by BrandAide Communications. The site is moderated and content is managed by independent community managers. These community managers help to create a secure, appropriate environment for participants. They also help protect participants' privacy.

eVillage includes the following features and sections:

- Sign up section
- Home
- About eVillage
- 'Our Consultations'
- City News including news and forums
- Twitter around Melbourne
- Best Spots in Melbourne
- Visit Other City Sites – Links Section

- Polls
- Conversation Cloud including sections: Food, Safety, Gardens etc
- Forum Rules
- Social Book Marks
- View Archive
- Tell-a-Friend
- FAQs
- View Forums

“Listening” – PMHC Permanent Engagement Portal – A snapshot

<http://pmhclisting.com.au>

In July 2009, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC) launched “Listening” its permanent community engagement portal. The site is a dedicated community consultation platform that works in combination with traditional face-to-face consultation methods in order to allow more people to have their say on issues affecting them and the PMHC local government area. The topics are presented as a range of different questions where participants can lodge a vote on how important the topic is to them, post a comment or add to already published comments. Council staff moderate the site and provide factual input but the discussion is primarily directed by community input. Participants are required to sign up as registered users. The site has been developed by PMHC and Bang the Table.

Online Community Engagement - Discussion

Bang the Table offers local government, business and community an independently moderated space for discussing public policy. Its service includes hosting online discussions for organisations wanting community input to their decisions. The rules of engagement for the Bang the Table and client sites are set out in a community contract which provides the protocols for interaction in any of its online engagement forums. It appears that only one other independently moderated, online engagement provider is currently operating in Australia – the not for profit organisation Open Forum (www.openforum.com.au) which is an independent collaborative think-tank built around an interactive discussion website hosted and moderated by Global Access Partners (GAP). It provides a platform for focused dialogue on social, political, economic, ecological and cultural issues and challenges.

In an interview for this report, Bang the Table founder and director, Dr Crispin Butteriss (who is also Victoria’s IAP2 representative) suggested a number of important issues, themes, principles and learnings about online community engagement in Australia:

- Most people who visit an online engagement site are looking for information about the issue at hand – they want to know what’s going on, what is proposed and so on. Bang the Table dubs these people ‘voyeurs’ and has noted that between 80% and 99% of site visitors are voyeurs depending on the ‘heat’ in an issue. As a general rule and at this stage of Australians’ use of online engagement sites, more entries into sites are focused on obtaining information than on active participation
- If an issue is ‘hot’ within a community there will be a high level of sign up to an online site. In such circumstances, Bang the Table often advises their client to consider implementing a variety of forms of community engagement to

ensure the community's needs for information and participation are met in a comprehensive outreach program. For example, Logan City Council recently started an online engagement process around heavy vehicle parking in residential areas. There was fairly strong debate about the issues and LCC has now taken the site off line and formed a community reference group to focus on the issue. Some of the reference group members have been sourced from the online conversation.

- If pre-consultation information materials are relevant and demonstrate good interpretation of the community's information needs, then there is often high visitation to the online engagement site but low levels of participation. This is often because people are comfortable with the way the project is being implemented but do want to ensure they have access to all relevant information about the proposed project. While Bang the Table can't guarantee that every individual who visits a site and leaves without signing up and making a comment, is necessarily happy with the project, it does draw a strong inference from the behaviour of the 'crowd'. Based on 100+ comparison projects, Bang the Table is quite confident that sites with high visitation and low signup rates are generally of interest but are non-controversial in the community.
- If a safe, well moderated space is provided for people to have their say online, they are more likely to participate. Bang the Table has noticed that the social mores of an online forum are quite different from face-to-face meetings. While politeness is encouraged via moderation, the participants seem much more willing to engage in fairly vigorous debate; to not be dismissed or intimidated by other respondents; to not be concerned about issues such as age, status, seniority etc, that often inhibit discussion in face-to-face settings. Bang the Table suggests this may be connected with the anonymous nature of the forum environment. Forums also give participants the opportunity to respond to issues, questions and challenges in their own time and space, enabling more time and opportunity for reflection, research and thoughtfulness.
- If budget permits, it is preferable and useful to triangulate (test or compare) the findings of a number of community engagement processes, using a variety of techniques including online, face-to-face, telephone etc.
- As with all community engagement methodologies, online engagement tools capture only a portion of the community rather than the whole. Bang the Table suggests that online processes at the very least, give a much larger proportion of the community access to the consultation process than more traditional methods that can require a more significant investment of time and energy. This has been generally borne out by the number of people visiting online forums compared to the numbers attending public meetings.
- Online engagement spaces can remove non-verbal and other forms of power differentials between participants and as a result, enable freer community dialogue.
- Like all forms of community engagement, online engagement can potentially exclude community members or sectors due to issues such as poor internet skills or limited/no internet access; English as a second language etc. Note, community grants are available from organisations including Telstra to assist community groups build capacity in their access to and use of online resources.
- The biggest risk in any consultation or engagement process is that no one knows about it, therefore public relations about the process is a key factor in the success of a project. If a new tool such as online engagement is being used but hasn't been adequately publicised, the online tool may be blamed for a lack of participation (rather than the lack of promotion). It is vital to undertake good PR and information dissemination in conjunction with the online process (a) to encourage people to visit the site initially, and (b) to encourage people to return to the site and engage in ongoing deliberations and discussions.
- It has been demonstrated that while active lobbying and stakeholder groups do get involved in online engagement, a much broader range of the community also participates and often overwhelms these voices. This has a number of

benefits. It can (a) reveal whether the noisy voices are representative of a broader community; (b) expose the noisy voices to other opinions; (c) bring alternative voices into the public conversation to challenge potential imbalances that may have been created in the local media through a long running campaign by minority voices; (d) create the opportunity for broader community perspectives to develop a new 'truth' around the issues; give the decision makers comfort to move forward on the basis of a firmer understanding of community feelings.

- The risk of multiple log ins to a site can be mitigated on a well monitored site. Bang the Table allows only one email address per log in and IP addresses are monitored. Only a handful of people from over 100 Bang the Table projects (75,000 visitors) have ever been banned from its engagement sites.
- Clear, independent moderation and vigilant security will ensure that inappropriate posts (including images and videos etc) are blocked or immediately removed – it is vital that the online rules of engagement are also very clear, monitored and enforced.
- By not establishing a secure, properly moderated online engagement process, project coordinators run the risk of community-led or individual-led sites driving or skewing the public agenda and dialogue. The risk of not establishing online engagement is now generally higher than establishing well-managed and monitored sites.
- In a situation Bang the Table encountered where a client site for online community engagement had been established and an individual wiki site was also established by an individual community member for the same project, Bang the Table ensured transparency and links between the sites. Ultimately the Bang the Table site received much higher visitation which likely indicated the community's higher levels of trust in the credibility and safety of the BTT site.
- Bang the Table believes it is the right of citizens to have a voice in civic life. When people are offered forums where they can be heard and listened to, projects are more comprehensive and effective, implementation is more effective and projects better meet the community's needs.
- Online engagement forums are generally still immature in their use, particularly in Australia, but through a process of iteration (rather than revolution) online engagement is moving towards enabling increased levels of participatory engagement, though there's a long way still to go to enable sophisticated participatory activity.
- In Bang the Table's work to date, only one client has established an online discussion forum where the client was an active participant in the dialogue process. This process was independently moderated, site security was closely managed and the client had adequate resources to support a more interactive forum. However, it is likely that this type and level of client participation will increase in future. For an example of a local government authority providing meaningful responses to ideas raised by the community in an online engagement process, see <http://budget.santacruzcityca.gov/>
- Resource intensity is a concern for local governments in Australia as they begin to utilise online engagement forums, particularly in the area of facilitation and moderation. This can be managed by using a lower intensity modal of interaction with the community. Most of Bang the Table's clients still choose to 'observe' the forum discussion rather than joining in.
- Costs for online engagement can range from a basic site development and independently-moderated process of \$5,000 (including all back up and support) through to a large scale, custom-made site and long-term engagement process of \$25,000 or more.

Foreword and Introduction from "Promising Practices in Online Engagement"

The Center for Advances in Public Engagement (CAPE) is the research arm of Public Agenda, a US non partisan, non profit organisation. For over 30 years, Public Agenda has been providing research that bridges the gap between American

leaders and what the public thinks about issues ranging from education to foreign policy to immigration to religion and civility in American life. Public Agenda was founded by social scientist and author Daniel Yankelovich and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in 1975. Public Agenda's two-fold mission is to help:

- American leaders better understand the public's point of view
- Citizens know more about critical policy issues so they can make thoughtful, informed decisions.

In September 2009, CAPE published an excellent paper and report titled "Promising Practices in Online Engagement" by Scott Bittle, Chris Haller and Alison Kadlec (the full report can be found at: http://publicagenda.org/files/pdf/PA_CAPE_Paper3_Promising_Mech2.pdf).

Due to the highly relevant and contemporary nature of the paper to this report, particularly in its presentation of online engagement principles, practices and case studies, we have attached it in full as Appendix 4 and reprinted the Foreword and Introduction below.

Foreword by Alison Kadlec, Director of the Center for Advances in Public Engagement (CAPE)

"The fact that the Internet is one of the most powerful organizing tools in history is both thrilling and vexing to public engagement practitioners working to create the conditions for more effective public involvement in public life. We know that the Internet supercharges political campaigning and we know that like-minded individuals are more able than ever to connect with one another because of the Internet. But what is still unclear is how the Internet might help build capacity and momentum for inclusive, collaborative and boundary-crossing problem-solving at all levels of public life (from the national level to the local level).

For those who believe that citizens deserve the best possible opportunities to become partners in problem-solving, the public cannot be viewed just as an audience to politics or merely as customers of government. Instead, the public should be treated as a vital resource for effective problem-solving and community-building. In our work at Public Agenda we have seen over and over again that, under the right conditions, the ability of "ordinary" people to learn, get involved and come to thoughtful judgments about difficult shared problems is far greater than most realize. Regular citizens, who may not be intensely interested in traditional politics but who are greatly interested in the government choices that affect their lives, can make a major contribution in shaping policy and can effectively participate in local efforts to improve life in their communities.

From the perspective of public engagement, the seeming disconnect between the rhetoric and the reality of what is made possible by the Internet is perplexing. The rhetoric, and indeed the intentions, of everyone involved in the "digital democracy" movement line up perfectly with the aims of authentic public engagement. Everyone agrees the potential is there to use the Internet to allow citizens to have a greater voice in naming and solving shared problems across boundaries. But so far, the Internet, especially the blogosphere and social networking platforms, is primarily enabling people in partisan silos to network within their own group. A lot of lessons still have to be learned about how to use the Internet effectively.

Introduction

From the Internet's earliest days as a truly public medium in the early 1990s, Usenet and pioneering communities like The Well showed how robust (if unruly) self-governing online forums could be. The early challenge was to find ways of keeping the medium's essential anonymity from spawning bad behaviour, like spamming and flaming, or at least keeping that antisocial behaviour from driving out real discussion. Usenet never solved this problem and consequently has become a

marginal section of the Internet. Others have been more successful. [Slashdot](#) created a thriving technology community by allowing users to rate the comments of others, letting the group collectively reward constructive behaviour and sanction misconduct. [EBay](#) uses a similar concept to allow hundreds of thousands of anonymous buyers and sellers to create a trustworthy market.

But all of these successful sites have one thing in common: They are all communities of affinity; gatherings of like-minded people. That's been true even from the beginning (it is no coincidence that [The Well](#) eventually became part of the liberal e-zine [Salon](#)). The Internet is a powerful tool for bringing together people with similar interests – or similar opinions. Only technologists use [Slashdot](#). Only conservatives post at [Free Republic](#). And the power to police bad behaviour that these sites provide can easily become a way to enforce conformity in opinion. (To test that point, try posting a liberal comment in a conservative blog sometime, or vice versa.)

There have been promising experiments with bringing together those with different views. People have been brought together in Internet forums to discuss a specific topic or task. But these experiments rarely seem to occur naturally in the way that communities of affinity develop spontaneously. So far, reaching out to disparate groups online requires great effort, commitment and funding. In addition to the costs of suitable technology, these experiments require careful planning and consistent moderation.

But perhaps there are pieces of the puzzle out there. Some of the experiments show what might be done and suggest core principles for what, eventually, we're confident will be done. We can glimpse what best practices are for such a community – a few basic rules for tying together the worlds of online community, user-generated content, and public engagement to truly empower citizens.

In this paper on promising practices in online engagement, we want to take a closer look at a selection of online engagement practices, from [high-level national politics](#) to our most immediate public realms, [our neighborhoods](#). The patterns of opinion shaping, dialogue and decision making on each level have changed through the widespread availability of new communication tools. Nonetheless, the differences between scope of engagement and communication tools can be tremendous. At a national level, partisanship strongly affects the political discourse in the general online realm. We will highlight multiple approaches that try to bridge this divide and bring together individuals from all sides in meaningful dialogue.

While we focus here on a range of national and local examples, we have organized what follows according to a number of principles that we think are especially salient:

- Allow citizens to set priorities
- Use citizens as fact-finders
- Generate bipartisan buy-in
- Merge online and face-to-face engagement
- Help experts and citizens to collaborate
- Foster local problem-solving” (Bittle, Haller, Kadiec, 2009, p1).

See Appendix 4 for the full article.

Section 7

Leaders' Forums

Overview

Community leaders play a vital role in shaping and growing local communities. There are community leaders operating in all facets of a city's life in areas including business and industry, social and community services, environment and sustainability, the arts and culture, and sport and recreation. Regardless of their areas of focus, it is vital that these leaders are encouraged to develop a shared vision for the city and through programs such as Bold Future, and to have meaningful and practical opportunities to work together and in collaboration with Council to help action the Bold Future vision through their work. This is especially important as the Bold Future project moves from vision to action.

Leaders' forums can provide a creative and relevant platform to engage city leaders and the broader community in the Bold Future project in an ongoing manner. These events can generate a sense of active and shared citizenship and incite interest and renewal of the city's long term vision. In addition, they can provide skill development and knowledge sharing opportunities that will grow leadership capacity in the community. Leaders' forums also provide a mechanism for dialogue and discussion about local issues, projects and priorities with respect to achieving the targets of Bold Future and as such, help ensure that the vision and its associated actions remain relevant to the Gold Coast community.

There are various models of leaders' forums. They range from small, grass-roots, capacity building events to large-scale, high profile events with international speakers. The style of the event depends on the forum's objective which of course, should be aligned to the city's vision and action plan which in turn, are aligned to high priority community aspirations, priorities and needs. In this report, two case studies have been selected to showcase the diversity and opportunity to establish leaders' forums on the Gold Coast built upon the vision developed in the Bold Future project. The first case study from Western Australia, provides an insight into the development of a grass-roots leaders' forum for community leaders. It highlights the importance of developing leadership capacity and recognising the contribution that local leaders make to their communities. The second case study from Sustainable Sydney 2030, illustrates the potential to develop an integrated program of council-run forums that report and showcase council's efforts to implement the city's long-term vision as well as stimulate discussion on actions and issues relating its implementation. Both of these case studies highlight the strong commitment to public participation and civic leadership present in communities in Australia.

Exemplars

Southern Region Community Leadership Forum

Background

The Southern Region Community Leadership Forum was established five years ago to bring together community leaders from the southern region of Western Australia (WA) to share experiences and celebrate community participation projects in rural communities in this area. As proclaimed on the forum's website, it aims to "support vibrant communities that are supportive, inclusive and collaborative by strengthening leadership development in the southern regions of Western Australia". Annual forums have been held in Bunbury in 2005, Kattanning in 2006, Pinjarra in 2007, Pemberton in 2008 and Denmark in 2009.

The forum is organised by the Southern Regions Community Leadership Group (SRCLG). This group was formed following the dissolution of the Progress Rural WA Future Leaders program run under the former WA Government's Primary Industry Minister, Monty House. With the change of government, this program was axed, however a small amount of funding remained and was used to fund small projects that captured the lessons learnt from the former program. Accordingly, community leaders from the south west region formed a committee and applied to the WA Government for a

grant to establish a forum which ensured there was an ongoing platform to network, recognise and discuss community leadership in the region. This committee later became an incorporated association governed by a committee of volunteer community leaders.

The SRCLG is supported by the South West Development Commission which is an agency of the WA Government. Its role is to foster the economic development of the south west region of WA. The agency provides in-kind support principally in the form of in-kind administration (e.g., photocopying, meeting room space) and advice. It is also an ex-officio member of the SRCLG committee and participates in committee meetings as a non-voting member.

The Forum

The three-day leadership forum provides participants with informative and interactive workshops and networking opportunities. There are keynote addresses on important issues relating to community leadership and engagement. The keynote speakers are encouraged to share personal stories about their involvement and leadership in their own communities. The result is a program of compelling stories and motivational presentations that display and inspire leadership. Examples of some of the topics include: team building, communication skills, grant and sponsorship proposal writing and self-confidence. There are also speed networking sessions, concurrent workshops and case study presentations. In the past, the forum organisers have used paid, professional Masters of Ceremonies (MCs). However, their own committee members are now the MCs as they have found this reflects one of the ideals of leadership (i.e., ordinary people having a go). Every annual forum has a theme. In 2009, the theme was “Your Year To Shine” and to reflect this theme, committee members dressed in shiny shirts.

Community groups, such as Scouts, are engaged to provide the catering for the forum which is a fundraising opportunity for these groups. Local performers and artists supply the entertainment during the forum and at the Gala Dinner and this showcases local talent and skills.

At the end of the forum, the SRCLG hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM). Committee members can nominate prior to and during the forum and from the floor during the AGM. The forum showcases the committee’s work and the friendship and enjoyment experienced as a committee member. This encourages new members to nominate for the committee. The committee has approximately six face-to-face meetings per year and two or three teleconferences annually. Given the rural location of this group, some committee members have to travel long distances (up to 400 kilometres) to attend meetings.

Leadership Awards

An important component of the forum is the leadership awards. This is an opportunity to recognise the smaller projects and activities that happen in the communities that aren’t recognised in the major state awards. There are four awards on offer:

- The **Leadership Through Partnerships Award** - recognising outstanding work by a community group in bringing together a number of groups or agencies.
- The **Leadership in a Project Award** - recognising a community group involved in a project that has a positive impact on people and the community.
- The **Inspirational Community Leadership Award** (2 categories – Under 35 and Open Age) recognising two inspirational individuals who have made a difference by supporting and encouraging others in their community.

The award nomination form is available to download from the SRCLG website (www.communityleadership.net.au). Nominations for these awards are submitted prior to the forum with three nominees short-listed as finalists. During the forum, each finalist has the opportunity to give a three minute presentation on their project or work in their community. Forum participants vote to determine the winner and the awards are presented during the gala dinner. However, the focus of the awards isn't on winning but the recognition received from being a finalist and the opportunity to present an overview of their project at the forum.

Financial Breakdown and Sponsorship

In 2009, 170 delegates attended the forum. There were 150 delegates from community groups and 20 delegates from business/government. Community registrations are sponsored by LotteryWest (value \$30,000), so there is no charge for community leaders to participate. Government and business registration is \$200 for the full forum or \$50/\$100 for a half/full day. The forum also receives sponsorship from Bendigo Bank (\$5,000 per year for 5 years), Alcoa and Capel Vale (a winery). The SRCLG receives no recurrent financial support from the WA government, so relies on grant funding, corporate sponsorship and registration fees.

2009 income:

- \$12,500 from state government grants
- \$4,000 from local governments in the region
- \$6,000 for corporate sponsorship
- \$34,750 for registrations (of which \$30,000 was sponsored through LotteryWest).

Major expenses:

- Venue hire and catering - \$27,575
- Transport and accommodation for committee members and keynote speakers - \$7,500
- Keynote speaker and entertainment fees - \$4,600
- Workshop presenter fees - \$5,139
- Marketing promotion and administration - \$2,950
- Miscellaneous expenses - \$3,365.

Total income was \$57,250 and total expenses were \$51,120 resulting in a surplus of \$6,130. The committee intends that this surplus will assist in funding travel expenses for committee members to attend regular committee meetings. Total in-kind support to organise the forum was estimated at \$22,848.

Future Directions

SRCLG plans to continue running the forum for south west community leaders. They have also started organising capacity building workshops for community leaders in the south west region throughout the year. These workshops will be facilitated by professional training companies on the group's behalf. The group would also like to establish a program of community projects which will involve forming project teams of community leaders located in a close geographic area and over a six month period working on a mini-project. This experience will focus on developing skills relating to working in a team and managing projects which will then be transferred back to the community groups in their towns as well as

providing a network of interconnected communities and projects. The group is also working with the WA Government to re-establish a state-wide community leadership program.

Lessons Learned

Some of the key lessons learnt from this experience include:

- **Keep it real:** It is important that participants are able to connect with the ideas and concepts presented at the forum in order to apply them to their community. Therefore, maintaining a grassroots approach is essential. Becoming too polished and professional detracts from creating this connection.
- **Inspire and motivate:** Ensure you have a good mix of presenters who can motivate and inspire the participants with their personal stories.
- **Be clear and understand your purpose.** This was an important lesson for SRCLG as they were encouraged to run a youth leadership forum, but decided instead to be a whole of community leaders' forum that young people (over 18 years) could participate in. Similarly, this group has decided to limit the geographic representation of the forum to the south west region, though delegates from outside the region are welcome to attend.
- **Make it fun for committee members:** It is important that participation in the committee is fun and enjoyable. New members are also important to avoid volunteer burnout. It has been SRCLG's experience that committee members become good friends, therefore personal relationships are very important to maintain the commitment and energy to organise the forums. To facilitate this outcome, committee meetings should be mix of work and socialising. The social interaction through sharing lunch has become an important aspect of the SRCLG meetings.
- **Evaluate new technology:** Emails have proven to be a better method of committee communication than a wickispace as it is more immediate in capturing the attention of committee members. This may relate to the age of the committee members who are typically aged 30-60 years.
- **Encourage networking and conversation:** Seat forum participants at tables instead of an auditorium style seating. Encourage participants to move tables during the forum. Make sure that entertainment (e.g., the band during the Gala Dinner) is not too loud in order to allow conversation between participants.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 Forums

In July 2008, the City of Sydney adopted the Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision. This vision was developed through an extensive program of community consultation over approximately 13 months. The aim of this project was to develop a vision for the sustainable development of the city for the next 20 years and beyond. The strategy outlined ten strategic directions and 186 actions that aim to transform Sydney into a green, global, connected city by 2030. Over 41 events and consultation forums were held. To develop the plan, 12,000 people were directly consulted, the 2030 website received more than 15,000 website visitors and 200 comments, and more than 2,000 comments were received through the Future Phone. For an overview of the consultation process visit:

<http://cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/2030/thevision/WhatYouToldUs.asp>

As part of the consultation process, a City Talks program was developed involving leading Australian and international expert planners, urbanists, architects and industry leaders presenting to live audiences on their vision for the city. The program also assembled 200 delegates for the "Signposts to the Future Forum" to discuss the community consultation so far and develop additional inputs into the consultation process. Presentations from the City Talks and Signposts to the Future Forum were subsequently available on the council's website via podcast.

Reporting and Engagement Post-Adoption of Vision

Following the adoption of the vision, an ongoing program of community engagement and reporting activities in the form of four different types of leaders' and community forums have been implemented by City of Sydney including:

- **Annual Leaders Report Card Forum:** In June 2009, one year after the vision was launched, the City of Sydney held a half day event, "Sustainable Sydney 2030: Towards a Green Future". The Mayor and senior council staff reported on the three themes of the vision (i.e., green, global, connected) and the progress of its implementation. Pre-recorded and live testimonials on the progress of the City of Sydney to reach its vision were also presented by leading international experts. There were also two 30 minute panel sessions with leading experts and this was followed by question and answer session providing the opportunity for some audience engagement. The panels consisted of experts from academia and industry as well as community groups. These presentations were subsequently made available on the council's website via podcast. Approximately 300 people attended this event. All stakeholder groups who participated in the visioning process or were involved in the post-adoption implementation were invited to this event. This included leaders of community groups, representatives from the various levels of government, business leaders and developers. This event will be held every year on the anniversary of the adoption of the vision. This reporting event is modelled on the visioning undertaken for New York City.
- **Local community forums:** The City of Sydney reports to and engages with the community about the 2030 vision through local community forums in its eight geographic consultation zones. This provides an opportunity for communities within a particular geographic area to engage directly with the council on Sustainable Sydney 2030 and other council projects. Hosted by the Lord Mayor, a forum is held in each zone twice a year. All members of the community are welcome to attend these forums.
- **Business forums:** In addition to the community forum, the City of Sydney also holds business forums to report to the business community about the outcomes and actions of Sustainable Sydney 2030. Approximately 70-100 of Sydney's senior executives and chief operating officers from leading businesses are invited to these events. There have been two business forums since the adoption of the vision in July 2008 and it is planned that there will be four of these business forums each year.
- **City Talks:** In order to generate ongoing support, interest and discussion relating to the visioning process, the City of Sydney organises four City Talks each year. These are free public debates with each event focusing on one of the ten strategic directions in the vision. Some of the recent topics at the City Talks have been integrated travel, climate change and corporate and social responsibility. A leading national and international expert is invited as a keynote presenter at these events in order to stimulate debate and discussion. The event is opened by the Lord Mayor. A presenter from the ABC as usually the facilitator/MC of the event. These events are held at the town hall or a large auditorium. There are 2,000 tickets available for the public. The Sydney Morning Herald is the event's media partner. The community is informed of this event through newspaper advertisements, information on the council's website and through council and partner newsletters. These events are very popular and all City Talks to date have sold out. Hosting the international expert in the city also provides significant media opportunities. Accordingly, the City of Sydney usually organises press conferences and media interviews for the keynote speaker. The City of Sydney does not pay its keynote speakers, instead they prefer to partner with local business groups (such as the Property Council) to attract and host keynote speakers. The keynote speaker may also present at a business forum (if relevant to that audience).

Comparison of Leaders' Forum Examples

	Southern Region Community Leadership Forum	Sustainable Sydney 2030 Forums
<i>Organiser</i>	Volunteer community association - Southern Regions Community Leadership Group (with the support from the WA Government Development Commissions)	Local government - City of Sydney
Location	Rural Western Australia	City of Sydney, New South Wales
Duration	3 days	Annual report card event - half day once a year Community forums – 16 events per year Business forums – 4 per year City Talks – 4 per year Total 25 events per year
Approximate Number of participants	170 participants	Annual report card event – 300 participants Community forums – open Business forums – 70-100 participants City Talks – 2,000 participants
Access to event	Open registration	Annual report card event – invited only Community forums – open Business forums – invited only City Talks – open (ticketed)
Program	Keynote speakers Workshops Gala dinner and awards	Annual report card event – Keynote speakers, testimonials and panel discussion Community forums – Lord Mayor presentation Business forums – Lord Mayor presentation City Talks – Keynotes speaker
Strengths/Benefits	Provides a forum to discuss community issues and share experiences and stories The workshops enable skill development	Provides a report card and opportunity for council's leadership team to speak directly to the community about the implementation of the vision

	<p>Inclusive participation connecting community groups, government and business</p> <p>As an annual event, it provides a regular forum for reporting and future planning</p> <p>Lots of opportunities to network and build relationships with potential partners</p> <p>The awards provide recognition of achievements in this area and the opportunity to showcase community participation projects</p> <p>Delegate voting during the conference provides interactive participation in the awards</p> <p>Gala dinner and awards provide an opportunity to celebrate achievements</p> <p>Free registration for community groups and low cost registration for government and industry removes a potential financial barrier to attendance</p>	<p>Testimonials and panel discussions offer the opportunity for expert third-party opinion on the implementation of the vision</p> <p>The question and answer sessions provide opportunities for key stakeholders to ask questions about the implementation process and key actions</p> <p>Public relations opportunities</p> <p>Presentations and panel discussions available via podcast on the council's website to enable broader community access post-event</p> <p>Provides tightly controlled and managed forums for council to present a report on the vision, thereby reducing uncertainty in the outcome</p> <p>Provides an ongoing program of visioning and debate on the city's future, particularly via the City Talk program</p> <p>Strong commitment to community engagement from the Lord Mayor and management and significant resources for community engagement program (e.g., eight staff in community engagement team and bi-weekly management meetings to evaluate projects and link them into the overall vision program and council's approach to community engagement)</p>
<p>Weaknesses/Risks</p>	<p>Need to ensure the program remains fresh and motivating</p> <p>Time and resources required to organise the forum, awards and manage sponsors</p> <p>Need to ensure adequate delegate registrations and sponsorship/grants to at least breakeven</p> <p>Volunteer burnout, therefore it is important that new members are attracted to the committee each year and the executive positions are rotated</p> <p>Geographic distance of region makes face-to-face meetings difficult</p> <p>Reliance of government grants instead of recurrent funding</p> <p>Use of third party for internet services that don't</p>	<p>Engagement is mostly limited to questions and answer sessions</p> <p>Large groups at events make it difficult to discuss issues</p> <p>Potential public relations issues management given the high level of media interest in the events</p> <p>Significant database management to coordinate invitation list for invitation only events</p> <p>Significant resources required to organise and deliver program of community engagement events</p>

	meet the technology requirements of the event. The committee are currently investigating establishing an independent website	
Funding source/s	State and local government grants, corporate sponsorship and registrations	Local government
Budget	Income: \$57,000 Expenses: \$52,000 In-kind: \$23,000	Significant staff resources and internal funding Media and business sponsorship
Links to the Integrated Project and Engagement Cycle		
The Vision	To support vibrant communities that are supportive, inclusive and collaborative by strengthening leadership development in the southern regions of Western Australia	Broader endorsement for the Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision over the next 20 years and beyond
Plan	Planning to undertake a leadership forum by the volunteer committee through a series of meetings	Development of a program of forums as part of the Sustainable Sydney 2030 community engagement strategy by council's city engagement team and supported by the elected representatives and senior management of council
Do	The forum is organised and run by the volunteer committee members	The council's city engagement team implements a program of community engagement events
Review	An AGM of the association is held at the end of each forum Following each forum, the committee meets to reflect on the forum and discuss successes, failures and improvement to future forums	Programs and projects across council are reviewed to ensure they are aligned with achieving the vision of Sustainable Sydney 2030 The senior leaders of the council's city engagement team review all communication and engagement activities to ensure they align with the overarching program
Renew	A new program of speakers and workshops is developed based on the review of the previous year's forum New members are encouraged to join the committee to bring new and fresh ideas to the committee	A plan for the program of community engagement activities is developed each year to keep the vision alive and discussed in the community

Section 8

Partnership Frameworks

Introduction

The creation of partnerships between two or more organisations can be a highly effective way to tackle onground programs of work that for one reason or another, are difficult for one player to successfully accomplish alone. The potential for GCCC to partner with a range of organisations and businesses to implement components of the Bold Future Vision is positive given its experience in partnership projects at many levels.

It is understood that Council's current procedure for establishing basic partnerships is as follows:

- (a) Agenda Item developed and presented to Council;
- (b) Council approves;
- (c) Memorandum of Understanding drafted and finalised between Council and partner/s;
- (d) Contract drafted and finalised between Council and partner/s. Note, for long projects the contract needs to be renewed annually.

Discussion

The following insights and discussion items are drawn from a number of interviews with Gold Coast-based program managers, Council staff and commercial and community partners and represent a compilation of partnership principles and practices that interviewees believe are essential for effective partnership frameworks.

- Partnerships are usually a learning and evolving process for each partner involved in the collaboration.
- Sometimes a successful (or unsuccessful) partnership comes down to the designated key contact person within Council and whether that person has an interest in/commitment to the partnership's aims, purpose and project. Their knowledge and skill base to help *enable* the partnership in order to effectively develop and deliver the project is crucial.
- The governance of partnerships and alliances is crucial. This includes the way decisions are made, how reporting occurs (particularly financial reporting) and the manner in which partnerships are formed and partners are engaged.
- Governance structures, principles and procedures should be developed and carried out in collaboration between partners.
- Clarifying how much authority and power each partner has within the partnership is very important.
- Finding and maintaining an effective balance between efficiency, decision making rigour and process is difficult but vital in a partnership.
- Effective partnerships have the potential to provide efficient project delivery and innovation.
- Good partnerships require an excellent project manager with a good solutions focus.
- Partnerships need to address the planning, designing and scoping of the onground delivery of the project very early on in their life.

- The key contact person within Council also needs a positive framework about the partnering process in order to: (a) embark on the collaboration process and maintain it; (b) justify and validate the partnership within Council; (c) be a solutions-driven player and find ways to make the partnership and project work, as well as feel empowered to move outside standard approaches should the project require or benefit from doing so.
- Regular face-to-face meetings between the Council representative/s and partner/s representatives to develop and implement the project are crucial (eg) weekly meetings in the lead up to a major event or project launch. It is important that Council officers visit the site or location of the project if it is a physical location out of Council chambers/offices, to familiarise themselves with and be inspired by whatever it is the project is about (eg: arts and culture, transportation, environment, community etc).
- A project plan needs to be fully developed between the partners and should include a budget, financial contributions from each player, clear identification and delegation of tasks and timelines between Council and partner etc.
- Council needs to have a conflict resolution policy and procedure in place should conflict arise within the partnership.
- Council needs to have a partnership dissolution policy and procedure in place.
- Should any substantial changes occur for the partner or Council, or to the project itself, it's crucial that a clear procedure be developed and put in place to enable renegotiation of the partnership and if this is not possible, dissolution of the partnership.
- Council needs to have clear guidelines in place regarding the way it engages, briefs and monitors/supports its designated representative within the partnership.
- There are a number of important issues, risks and pitfalls for Council (and prospective partners) that must be considered in terms of their practical capacity and readiness to collaborate and partner.
- There is a need for Council to be able to monitor and report on the health, progress and effectiveness of its partnerships.
- Often in partnership arrangements, more than one Council department will be involved beyond the initiating department, such as Corporate Communications etc. It is important for these departments to have clear guidelines, templates, style guides, procedures etc available to enable the partnership project to proceed efficiently and appropriately (and not to be held up by unclear internal procedures).
- Effective, ongoing and professional communication pathways must exist between Council and partner/s to ensure the ongoing and efficient rollout of partnership projects.
- Should the officer/representative change on either side of the partnership (eg: annual leave, sickness etc) and the project is delegated to another representative, communication with the other party should be made as soon as possible so that the new representative can continue seamlessly with the project.

Exemplars

Hillsboro 2020 – Partnerships to develop and implement a long term community vision

Background

Hillsboro is the fifth-largest city in the US state of Oregon. The city is home to many high-tech companies such as Intel, that comprise what has become known as Silicon Forest. As of 2008, the city's estimated population was about 89,000 residents (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillsboro,_Oregon).

In May 2000, after three years of collaboration between Hillsboro's community, municipal council, businesses and other key stakeholders, the *Hillsboro 2020 Vision and Action Plan* was adopted by the Hillsboro City Council. In 2005 a new report was developed which included all Action Plan changes made since 2000.

The Hillsboro Vision Implementation Committee recognises that in order for the *Hillsboro 2020 Vision and Action Plan* to remain a viable and effective guide for shaping the community's future, it is important to keep the Action Plan 'tuned up'. To this end, the Committee has implemented three process to allow revisions to the Action Plan:

1. Annually the Committee reviews and if appropriate, recommends minor modifications to the Action Plan
2. Any new actions proposals are considered on an annual basis
3. Every fifth year, a major Strategy Review process is conducted to identify proposed strategy additions and revisions.

To help preserve the integrity of the original plan, which was developed with extensive community involvement, the process includes a city-wide citizen outreach effort to solicit and review new proposals for implementing the original Vision Statement.

Hillsboro 2020 Vision Statement

The Hillsboro 2020 Vision Statement was developed by a citizen Task Force with extensive community input. The Vision Action Plan bring life to this Vision through a broad range of recommended programs and projects. The Vision Statement contains two elements. First, *Hillsboro: Hometown for the Future*, is a one paragraph statement describing the kind of community Hillsboro strives to be by the year 2020. Second, six focus area statements provide detailed language to guide future community planning.

Hillsboro 2020: Hometown for the Future – In the Year 2020, Hillsboro is our hometown. Within a rapidly changing metropolitan region and global economy, we live in a dynamic community that sustains our quality of life. Here, neighbours, generations and cultures connect. We live and work in balance with nature. Hillsboro is a safe and affordable community, a place our children and their children will be proud to call home.

The six topic areas within the Vision Statement are:

1. Strengthening a common sense of community
2. Enhancing all neighbourhoods and districts

3. Preserving the environment
4. Fostering economic opportunity
5. Expanding support for and access to arts and cultural activities
6. Promoting community health and safety

Action and Partnership Focus to Implement Vision 2020

The Hillsboro 2020 Vision Action Plan outlines strategies and actions to bring the Vision Statement to life. It was developed through community involvement and is routinely updated to keep it current with changing community resources, opportunities, and long-term needs. Any proposed updates to the Action Plan must have a basis in the Vision Statement and receive an appropriate level of community review.

The Vision Action Plan is presented in a matrix which lists the 48 strategies and 147 actions adopted by the City Council in July 2005. The matrix is organised by the six Vision focus areas.

The key elements of the Action Plan include:

Strategies: Statements which set a direction and general guidance for implementing one or more elements of the Vision Statement. Each strategy has at least one action supporting it.

Actions: Projects, programs or activities which support implementation of a strategy. Each action has the following components:

Action Description: Text describing a project or program intended to help implement the strategy under which it is placed.

Lead Partner: A community organisation, local government agency, or business that has accepted responsibility for facilitating the implementation of one or more actions. Lead partners are not required to fund their actions, only to champion the implementation effort.

Potential Partners: Organisations or general interests, recommended during action development or by a lead partner, for involvement in action implementation. The potential partners list is intended to provide a suggested group of resources for consideration as the lead partner seeks to implement an action. Additional organisations and interests may be added by the lead partner.

Timeline: A suggested timeframe for implementation of each action. The timeline is divided into five year time periods. Each action is assigned one of these time periods to initiate project/program planning or implementation. It is possible for a lead partner to initiate, implement, or complete an action prior to the proposed timeline.

Strategies and Partners

Within the Hillsboro Vision Action Plan, the six focus areas guide the articulation of related strategies, lead partners and potential partners. The following details present information from Strategy 1: Strengthening and Sustaining Community in the 2020 Vision Action Plan to illustrate the breadth and depth of partnerships embedded within the implementation process. Note, detailed actions and timelines are not discussed below.

1. Strengthening and Sustaining Community

Strategy 1: Develop a citizen involvement plan to promote early, frequent and regular participation in local decisions and actions

Lead Partner: City of Hillsboro

Potential Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, churches, youth organisations, Hispanic and other minority community organisations, Hillsboro school district, Tualatin Valley Community Television, other community groups and agencies involved in the Hillsboro 2020 visioning process, Washington County Vision Action Network (VAN), schools, Heart of Hillsboro, Hillsboro Downtown Business Association (HDBA), community-based non profit organisations

Strategy 2: Make on-line technology accessible and affordable to all residents of the community

Lead Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, City of Hillsboro

Potential Partners: Local public sector including Hillsboro School District and City of Hillsboro, Washington County, Service Clubs, businesses, Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, high-tech and other major employers, telecommunications companies, AARP, OSU Extension Service, Centro Cultural, Veicon, Community Action Organisation

Strategy 3: Establish community information systems that keep citizens informed of city-wide activities and provide citizen access to community networks

Lead Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Worksystems Inc.

Potential Partners: Hillsboro School District, Washington County Fair Complex, media, service organisations, Convention and Visitors Bureau of Washington County, Tuality Hospital, Washington County Historical Museum, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, Capital Centre, Washington County, Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Portland Community College

Strategy 4: Develop a community identity program that reflects Hillsboro's character

Lead Partner: City of Hillsboro

Potential Partners: Various community-based service organisations, interested individual businesses, Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce

Strategy 5: Develop a common 'Hillsboro' address for every home and business within the boundary of the city reflected in all postal addresses

Lead Partner: City of Hillsboro

Potential Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, various community-based organisations, interested individual businesses, Washington County, US Postal Service, civic organisations, homeowners associations

Strategy 6: Identify and promote community events that bring residents together and attract outside visitors

Lead Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Hillsboro Downtown Business Association (HDBA), Oregon International Airshow Board

Potential Partners: Non profits, service organisations, media, business sponsors (Adidas, Nike, Bat Co.), Sister City Associations, Tuality Healthcare Foundation, sports and fitness clubs, City of Hillsboro, Hillsboro School District, Hillsboro Rotary, Washington County Fairplex, Rose Festival Association, sponsors, Hillsboro boys and Girls Club, community service clubs, Port of Portland, Centro Cultural

Strategy 7: Promote the establishment of centres for meetings, conference and other community activities

Lead Partners: City of Hillsboro, Washington County Fair Board

Potential Partners: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Hillsboro Downtown Business Association, arts organisations, churches, other potential users, City of Hillsboro, Washington County, State agencies (Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, Tourism), businesses, Port of Portland, developers, Tualatin Valley Community Television, Washington County Fair Boosters, Washington County Rodeo Committee, Tri-Met, Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission, Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau

For further information and details about the Hillsboro 2020 Vision, Action Plan and overall program, go to:

www.hillsboro2020.org

Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve in Sweden – Partnerships within a social-ecological resilience framework

The following exemplar describes a natural resource based program in Sweden which involves a high level of partnering and collaboration between regional, local and even international stakeholders. It is discussed in detail in the book “Resilience Thinking: Sustaining ecosystems and people in a changing world” by Brian Walker and David Salt (2006). Because of the high standard of the authors’ description and writing, we have reproduced key sections of the case study below.

Background

“The Kristianstads Vattenrike (KV) is a semi-urban area of high biological and cultural importance in southeastern Sweden. It lies within the Municipality of Kristianstad and covers around 1,100 square kilometres of the Helgea River catchment. Its southeaster boundary is defined by Hano Bay.

“KV includes Sweden’s largest areas of flooded meadows used for grazing and haymaking. Many of the unique values of the area depend on these activities and the annual flooding of the Helgea River.

“At the heart of the KV lies Kristianstad, a city of some 28,600 inhabitants. The broader municipality supports a population of 75,000 people. Much of the KV is agricultural land with the sandy and clay soils around Kristianstad being important for agricultural production. The region is one of the most productive in Sweden” (Walker and Salt, 2006, p 127).

In 1975 the area’s ecological significance was recognised internationally under the RAMSAR Convention which protects wetlands and bird habitats and in 2005, the Kristianstad municipality including Vattenrike, was established as a Biosphere Reserve with the United Nations. The aim of the Biosphere Reserve program is to ensure that the countryside and natural resources are utilised in an ecologically sustainable manner in order to preserve intrinsic natural values for future generations.

Water has always played a central role in the life of Kristianstad. Today the groundwater and the entire system of water in the River Helgea with its lakes, watercourses and wetlands, give the area a unique set of natural values.

For several years, hundreds of people and many organisations in Kristianstads Vattenrike have been working together to promote and achieve the following goals:

- To protect and conserve the natural and cultural heritage associated with this water system
- To re-establish natural water-related values that have vanished over recent years
- To recognise the water in the area as a resource that can be utilised for a broad spectrum of purposes in a way that also preserves its intrinsic values.

In 1774, the water system of the area was dramatically altered by local farmers and subsequent flooding which triggered a series of changes to the water flows and wetlands. In more modern times, the use of chemical fertilisers and the intensification of agriculture, then the use of part of the wetlands as a municipal garbage dump created not only ecological crises in the area but also catalysed social conflict within the community. Despite a number of concerted conservation efforts during the 1970s and the declaration of the area as a Ramsar site in 1975, the ecological crises in the Helgea River and the wetlands deepened.

Creating a partnership to manage a social and ecological system

During the 1980s, “a curator of natural history in the Kristianstads County Museum named Sven-Erik Magnusson was actively collecting information on the history and dynamics of this cultural landscape of which the wetlands were one embedded part. He acquired an understanding of how local agricultural practices had shaped the landscape and ecosystems of the lower Helgea River over thousands of years. He also developed a number of ways to communicate this understanding to the public and various stakeholder groups. One way involved the establishment of an outdoor museum (Utemuseum) in which visitors could interpret the wetland landscape as they walked through it.

“Magnusson began studying the Ramsar Convention Site and found that where grazing and haymaking were still practiced the unique cultural values (such as traditional forms of agriculture) and natural values (such as waterfowl populations) were being maintained; however, where they had been abandoned, these values were in

decline. In the mid-1980s he began working with members of the Bird Society of North-eastern Scania (BSNES) who were able to provide bird inventories for the wider region over longer time scales (going back to the 1950s).

“By pooling their experience and knowledge, Magnusson and the BSNES were able to convince the County Administrative Board and National Forestry Board, the bodies responsible for managing the flooded meadows in protected areas, that these ecosystems needed more than just protection, they required active management and a reinstatement of the traditional agriculture to sustain the natural values of these areas. In so doing, the cultural history and continuous use of the wetlands for grazing and haymaking was linked to the ecological qualities for maintaining a rich bird habitat.

“It was through experiences such as these that Magnusson learned the importance of linking the knowledge and experience of actors at different organisational levels. He was aware of different people and groups operating at different levels in a number of activities. This included creating inventories (natural and cultural), running monitoring programs, carrying out restoration, attempting to develop improved land use and management practices. He was also aware that the groups undertaking these activities were frequently unaware of each other. He realised that there was a need to gather these activities into one concept and that concept was the Ecomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike (EKV). The EKV was basically a forum in which the different actors and groups with a stake in KV were given an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and values, and develop a shared understanding and vision for the future of the region.

“To garner support for the EKV, Magnusson focused on specific individuals in key organisations that had some interest in Kristianstad and its surrounding wetlands. This included researchers from local universities, officials from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a former president of the Kristianstad Tourism Board and the director of Sweden’s National Museum of Natural History. With their support and participation, the EKV took form as a body that would play an important role in conflict resolution, information sharing and coordination.

“As the concept grew it engaged support and involvement from a number of other groups including the County Administrative Board, the BSNES, and environmental and farmer associations. The individuals representing these groups became the nodes of an emerging social network.

“In 1988 the municipal executive board acknowledged the growing environmental threat to the wetlands and the potential for a body like the EKV to assist in managing the wetlands as a valuable resource for recreation, tourism, biodiversity and water purification. The following year the Municipality of Kristianstad assumed responsibility for the running of the EKV” (Walker and Salt, 2006, pp 131-133).

Funding

“The initial funding for the EKV depended on the willingness of various actors to contribute to the process. Different parts of the EKV project appealed to different sponsors, and all sponsors made their support conditional on broader participation by other sponsors. The municipality, for example, provided funding for a person to start an EKV project on restoring the flooded meadows on the condition that the County Administrative Board funded an adviser. The WWF was happy to fund aspects of the fencing and clearing if the municipality provided the administration” (Walker and Salt, 2006, p133).

Making Change

“The EKV has subsequently developed into a flexible and collaborative network with representatives from several levels of society, from local to international. It has been involved in numerous interventions since its inception.

The mapping of the flooded meadows in 1989 provided valuable information for how the wetland ecosystems might be prevented from developing to an undesirable state. The response to the threat of the flooded meadows becoming overgrown was to create social structures and processes to secure their continued cultivation. This was also important for enhancing the declining bird populations that depend on flooded meadows.

“In collaboration with the WWF, bird societies, the Swedish EPA, and the County Administrative Board, the EKV compiled a number of ongoing inventories including the mapping of reserves, cultivated areas, bird populations, and nutrient levels. The results were communicated to a variety of actors, including the general public, using a wide range of methods. Creating such feedback loops is a prerequisite for managing complex systems sustainably.

“The EKV maintains a close collaborative relationship with the farmers, making use of their knowledge and understanding of agricultural practices that have often been developed and passed on from generation to generation. An example is adjusting grazing on flooded meadows in relation to biodiversity...The EKV used a variety of mapping exercises of these habitat types to increase the farmers’ knowledge of the unique values of their land in a larger context.

“The EKV has made the wetland landscape area more accessible to the public and has established 13 information sites throughout the wetlands. More than 150,000 people visit these sites each year (Walker and Salt, 2006, pp 134-135).

Collaborating for Complexity

“The success of the EKV in managing the wetland ecosystems of the lower Helgea River has a lot to do with its structure and function. The EKV is part of the municipality’s organisation and reports to the municipality board. However, it is not an authority and has no power to make or enforce formal rules. By serving as a forum that brings together individuals and organisations to discuss emerging issues, build consensus, provide feedback, and share views, the EKV serves a valuable role in building trust and enhancing the resilience of the social-ecological system that is the KV. The very diversity of its membership is a significant part of its effectiveness in dealing with the complexity of the system.

“Depending on the type of problem arising, various affected people are gathered by the EKV to be part of the process of solving the problem. It acts as a facilitator and coordinator in such an event. The actors are part of the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating phases of the learning process. Management practices emerge and are revised as they are implemented.

“In addition to this there are regular meetings of a reference group within the EKV to produce mechanisms for conflict management. The idea is to bring together representatives of any group involved in activities that links to the KV. This builds trust among the representatives, an essential component to the success of the collaboration process. If discussions on collaboration are only initiated once a conflict has arisen, it’s much more difficult to reach consensus.

“Formal agreements and action programs emerge from these collaborative processes. These in turn lead to a change in behaviour and practices in order to improve the management of the wetland ecosystems. The success of the EKV over time would suggest that this approach, often referred to as ‘open institutions’ produces faster and more long-lasting results than making authorities develop rules that force people to change their behaviour” (Walker and Salt, 2006, pp 135-136).

Lessons Learned

“There are several lessons in the KV that contribute to our understanding of resilience in social-ecological systems. The first is that the imposition from the outside of a set of rules to protect an ecosystem, such as the establishment of the Ramsar Convention Site, will not ensure the natural qualities of a region will be preserved over time. One size never fits all, and an understanding of local history and culture needs to be integrated into the management if local values are to be looked after. For that to happen, local people need to be part of the process.

“Another lesson is that the processes and values that influence the management of an area operate over many scales – local, regional, national, and international – so for an organisation to meaningfully deal with this complexity it needs to include representatives from each of these levels in the social network. These representatives need to be engaged in such a way that they will both contribute to the governance of the system and share that responsibility with other representatives and feedback to their relevant organisations.

“Finally, the formation of the EKV took place because several organisations with a stake in the KV were prepared to contribute to a shared vision and build consensus on how the KV might be managed. However, in its earliest stages, the formation of the EKV was catalysed by an individual who brought these various actors together. Leadership is a crucial component in building adaptability and transformability” (Walker and Salt, 2006, pp136-137).

Section 9

Training and Skills Development

While the theory and philosophy of participatory community engagement has been around for some decades and there are outstanding examples of practice, this report suggests that adequate knowledge, training, education and skills development is an essential foundation for successful participatory engagement programs involving local government and civic, business and community leaders . Professional development, training and skills development are essential components of introducing more participatory practices into local government. At the same time, a 'small is beautiful' pilot process is also recommended to assist all participants and players to develop and evolve their skills in a low-risk, action learning/action research process.

There are two key areas of need to consider as we look at training and skills development for participatory engagement:

- Education and training for professional practitioners, particularly those working within or for local government
- Education and training for community, civic, business and local government leaders as well as for community organisations and other community based stakeholders.

Professional Development for Practitioners

Arguably the professional association at the forefront of training and development for community engagement practitioners or local government staff, is the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). The IAP2 is a member-based organisation that offers accredited training and education, workshops, online training programs and webinars as well as an annual member conference. The Australian branch of the IAP2 is active and also has a number of state bases. This report notes that the IAP2's membership base is predominantly government and corporate focused and as yet, the organisation offers no real provision or accessibility for non government organisations in terms of associate membership or lower cost workshops etc. Early in 2009 it began to investigate this issue with a view to ensuring greater equity in future.

University level education is also available for practitioners in centres such as The Boilerhouse at the University of Queensland as well as a number of other universities. Commercial businesses including Bang the Table are now also offering training workshops for practitioners in their areas of specialisation such as online engagement. From a quick scan of the training and education field, it appears that opportunities for professional development in community engagement are expanding.

Community Skills Development

Given the often high levels of interest and activity embedded in community-based sustainability, it is important to consider the value and potential of local government helping to support learning, skills development and capacity building for community leaders and community organisations...particularly in areas such as participatory community engagement and integrated sustainability.

Exemplar

Imagine Chicago Citizen Leaders Program

Imagine Chicago established a Citizen Leaders program in 1996 to bring together groups and individuals in the community in a series of workshops to learn about city and community assets, think about ways to improve their community, and develop innovative solutions to community issues. This program gave Citizen Leaders the

opportunity to participate in capacity building workshops to support their community activities, such as grant writing, budgeting, networking, leadership skills, and project management. Participants were recruited through established community networks and organisations, and public announcements. The Citizen Leaders program can be run city-wide or focus on a particular community (e.g. a neighbourhood or school community). This program can be sponsored by corporate or philanthropic organisations. During the program, Citizen Leaders learn to:

- Analyse the strengths of their community
- Recruit and lead a project team
- Design and write a project proposal
- Create the project with their team
- Document, share and sustain their project

Participants were encouraged to develop and submit project proposals for mini-grants of up to \$500. Each participant was encouraged to share the knowledge and skills gained from this program with their community-based project team. Since its inception more than 100 low-cost community projects have been organised. Examples of projects include: neighbourhood arts programs, a teenage coffee-house, youth clubs, block clubs, neighbourhood clean-ups and community gardens.

Strengths/Benefits

- Focus on educating the community and equip citizen leaders to engage in a meaningful and collaborative conversation and activities
- Works at the grass-roots level to deliver small changes that collectively make a big difference to communities
- Utilises existing networks to market the program, thereby reducing advertising costs
- Acts as a catalyst for the creation of diverse community projects
- Connects community groups and encourages collaboration
- Offers tangible outcomes for community group participation through the grant funding
- Can be supported by philanthropists and corporate sponsorships
- Flexibility to offer the program as required or requested

Weaknesses/Risks

- Community grants are small and focused on small grassroots projects not large city wide initiatives
- Need to ensure the workshop program remains fresh and addresses current issues and needs facing the community sector
- Requires significant database management to maintain and update the list of contact organisations
- Time and resource intensity required to organise the forum and attract and manage sponsors

Citizen Activism

In researching this report, we recognised that there is a considerable amount of citizen activism training and skills development both in Australia (including South East Queensland) and overseas. It is useful to note this strength in the area of citizen activism training which is not generally replicated in citizen training for collaboration, partnerships or participatory engagement – an area of importance to this report and GCCC.

The Change Agency, based in Brisbane, is a growing citizen activist training organisation and network: www.thechangeagency.org which develops and hosts a wide range of workshops and training programs for citizen leaders and not for profit organisations around Australia. Director James Whelan, in 2007, published a thought provoking paper titled “Six reasons not to engage: Compromise, confrontation and the commons” which Wendy Sarkissian et al (2009) summarises in the book “Kitchen Table Sustainability” as follows:

1. *‘Patterns in group behaviour mitigate against environmental management decisions that provide the highest level of conservation.’*
2. *Conflict produces results, whereas reliance on advisory committees, boards, discussions, ‘polite deputations’ and well researched lobbying and letter-writing rarely succeed. Radicalised conservationists can relocate the debate from private meetings and parliamentary hearings to ‘the public space of civil society’.*
3. *Community engagement is ‘a wolf in sheep’s clothing’. This discourse has been applied to the decision-making processes that fall well short of the democratic ideals appropriately associated with community engagement.*
4. *In community engagement, some people are more equal than others. ‘These and similar experiences of community engagement contribute to community sector disillusionment and ‘consultation fatigue’.*
5. *Community engagement takes energy. ‘Active participation in community engagement activities requires time, stamina and considerable personal and economic resources.’*
6. *Community engagement rarely encompasses the full policy cycle. Processes tend to engage community groups and concerns more often at the plan-making stage and less frequently at the plan-implementation and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. This approach does not support sustainability. We need to focus on more comprehensive, long-term and holistic approaches” (p 133).*

The lessons here are two-fold:

First, training and skills development in participatory engagement for both Council representatives and community leaders are important preparatory and capacity building processes as GCCC moves towards evolving its community engagement program to facilitate the implementation of the Bold Future vision.

Second, we can be sure that through citizen activism training opportunities, many community leaders, particularly in the environmental and sustainability areas, are increasing their skills and knowledge in more confrontational activities and are likely to employ these skills should meaningful, integrated, holistic engagement not be available to them or their organisations.

Section 10

Engagement Options for GCCC

Based on and informed by the progress of the Bold Future Vision, informal discussions and informal interviews with GCCC staff, and a review of literature and many diverse best practice exemplars, the following options are put forward for Council's consideration. We recognise the excellent work done by Council's Community Consultation Coordinator Colin Russo to develop, embed and maintain a culture of community consultation in GCCC over the past few years. In putting forward the following options, we also suggest that Colin's contribution to the organisation be recognised and strengthened in order for Council's capacity in the area of community engagement to grow.

The focus of the options presented below is twofold:

1. To meet Council 'where it is at' in its current community consultation program and Bold Future Vision implementation process
2. To extend Council's participatory engagement capacity through a series of achievable steps which also include engagement evaluation and learning processes built in.

The Bold Future Vision and Targets as a Foundation and Guide for GCCC

- Strengthen, integrate and activate the Bold Future Vision, Principles and Targets across all areas of Council's planning and operations
- Utilise the Bold Future Targets as project and departmental targets
- Collectively/collaboratively develop and implement a Bold Future Action Plan between Council and the community, based on the Local Government Act 2009 requirements for long-term community plans
- Monitor, renew and evolve the Bold Future Action Plan annually and in a collaborative and interactive process between Council and the community
- Develop an integrated and participatory community engagement strategy to support the development, implementation, monitoring, renewing and evolving of the Bold Future Action Plan. Such a strategy should look to key platforms and methods such as participatory web portals, an annual leaders' forum, community conversations, community based research, collaborative placemaking and so on.

Revitalise Council's Community Consultation Web Section

- We suggest Council review, refresh and update Council's existing community consultation web section "Have Your Say" (particularly the Recent Consultation page which is filled with listings back to 2007 and a large number of 'Report Pending' tags for dated consultation programs). We feel this section of the site could be presented to the public in a more interesting and contemporary way without identifying a large number of pending reports, which potentially presents Council's community reporting work as a low priority.
- Investigate the potential to develop an internal Council online engagement platform and mechanism which can integrate and coordinate all proposed and existing engagement processes as well as review levels of innovation, transparency and risk

GCCC as a learning organisation

- Identify existing processes within Council that support collective learning and reflection, and strengthen and integrate these more widely throughout Council's operations and departments
- Identify, adapt/adopt new collective learning processes into Council's operations and departments

The Gold Coast is a city of villages

- Recognise the differences between engaging with the whole city and within the villages that make up the city. Generate the opportunities for villages and indeed suburbs and neighbourhoods to actively collaborate and partner with Council for grassroots projects as these can generally be more relevant and creative than a whole-of-city engagement process.
- Better understand GCCC Divisional Grant Officers' roles and explore the potential of their increased involvement in grassroots community engagement projects and processes because of their close relationship between community groups and other community stakeholders, Councillors and Council staff. It is suggested these officers may be well placed to assist Council develop and maintain community-based data bases and provide highly relevant outreach services with community leaders and groups.

Grassroots, Community-based Initiatives can have Powerful Outcomes

- This report notes that many of the exemplars identified and analysed have a strong grassroots, community base which have generated ongoing, meaningful activity within communities. Examples include the Gold Coast North Communities for Children program, the Corvallis Community Action Plan development and implementation process, Imagine Chicago, Bellingham's Local Living Economy program and Western Australia's Southern Region Community Leader's Forum. We suggest that GCCC could more actively collaborate with the villages and communities within the city as well as enable community-based research, participation and evolution by working in partnership or alongside active community groups and leaders.
- In an extension to this option, Council could also explore and consider the potential to help build capacity within community organisations through skills development, training and leadership development with a view to ultimately outsourcing relevant social research and community service delivery to relevant local community organisations and NGOs in integrated place-based programs.

Training and Skills Development

- Evolve Council's internal staff training and skills development in collaborative and participatory engagement. Investigate the costs and logistics of expanding internal Council training and skills development in participatory community engagement
- We note the lack of citizen leadership training and development, and citizen engagement skills development in the space between Council's own professional development and citizen activism. As a result, we suggest that Council explores the potential to work more proactively with citizen leaders in the area of capacity building for engagement (in theory and practice), particularly in highly relevant and motivating forums such as community leaders' forums in the manner of West Australia's Southern Region Community Leaders' Forum

Web Portal

- We suggest the potential for a semi-independent Bold Future web portal similar to Melbourne's eVillage, which is a combined Council and community resource. This portal should develop excellent interactivity over time so that it is a dynamic, story-based, networking tool as well as a site of relevant information about sustainability resources for Gold Coast communities, businesses, organisations, and households. This site needs to be actively facilitated and moderated but also offer a high degree of interactivity to include videos from the community and council, dialogue forums, blogs and online engagement. An effective security system and active moderation must be established and maintained to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the site.
- We suggest Council trial/pilot a small scale online engagement program with Bang the Table and begin to develop a more comprehensive online engagement mechanism which can ultimately be utilised by a number of Council engagement projects in an integrated manner.
- We also suggest Council explore the costs, logistics and value of developing a dedicated community engagement web portal in the manner of PMHC "Listening" for ongoing community engagement.

Annual Leaders' Forum

- We have been most interested to review both the grassroots, Western Australian Southern Region Leaders' Forum and more high profile leaders events within such programs as Sustainable Sydney. With the potential value of both types of events in mind, we suggest that Council undertake a scan of existing leaders gatherings, forums and programs underway in Gold Coast City (eg) Rescue Patrol; Youth Environmental Leadership Program (Gecko) etc to identify how many such forums exist and in what forms. We also suggest Council undertake a review of these local leadership events and forums to better understand their purposes, aims, outcomes, participating organisations and members, aspirations, strengths and needs – with a view to aligning and synergising existing initiatives with the potential development of an Annual City Leaders Forum and Celebration.
- With the above option in mind, it is suggested that Council explore the design and development of an Annual City Leaders Forum and Celebration which offers a combined community-based and high profile annual event. Having reviewed the West Australian Annual Community Forum and the Sustainable Sydney Leaders Forums, this report suggests there may be potential for something like a three-day, city-based event that could include two days of community-based workshops, networking, and capacity building activities which combine with a high profile 1-day celebratory event that focuses on the community's renewal of its Bold Future Vision and Action Plan and a community awards/celebration. We suggest that the event involve grassroots community leaders, young leaders and aspiring leaders, and high profile civic and business leaders. We also suggest that at every level, such an event showcase home grown Gold Coast talents, goods, services and skills including local musicians and other creative artists, leadership, food, catering and so on.

Placemaking and Partnerships

- We believe there is excellent potential for one or more partnership-based, placemaking projects to be collaboratively designed, planned, implemented and reviewed/evaluated by key community players and Council in progressive villages such as Burleigh Heads and/or Currumbin, Kirra etc. We suggest, for

example that a local business focus could combine with a local arts and community-building focus to connect and enhance existing vibrant, onground activities such as community gardens, farmers markets, community markets, grassroots music events, and the integration of community arts in specific business precincts such as cafes and restaurants and so on (eg) musicians, poets and artists in residence. And in this way, seek to build and connect community sectors, community leaders, businesses and organisations, and local economies in a creative celebration of place and community.

Utilise Community Research

- This report acknowledges the excellent community research work undertaken within the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children program and suggests such work could be expanded into other parts of the Gold Coast and other Council planning programs as a valuable grassroots research and capacity building process. We offer a word of warning too, that the standard of community research undertaken by C4C (requiring appropriate time and resourcing) be maintained if the process is to be adopted by Council more broadly. It is vital not to erode the integrity and effectiveness of the program by altering its community-focused, community-based, and detailed nature.

Design and apply relevant evaluation processes for community engagement and participation programs

- We acknowledge the importance of Professor Paul Burton's call for the need to effectively evaluate engagement and participatory programs. This report suggests that Council prioritise the design and application of relevant evaluation processes to appropriate community engagement programs in the city in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding about the features, benefits, costs and potential pitfalls of participation and apply these learnings to the ongoing development of its participatory engagement work.

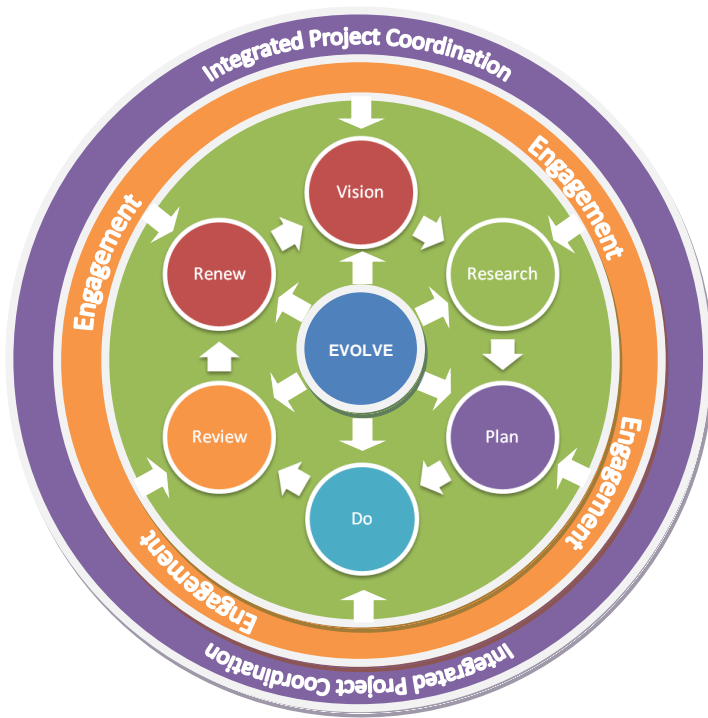
“The future belongs to those organisations, as well as those individuals, that have made an active, lifelong commitment to continue to learn” Howard Gardner

Section 11

Best Practice Exemplars

11.1 Integrated Participatory Models

Let us return for a moment to the Adaptive Project Management and Participatory Engagement Cycle framework, introduced in the Executive Summary of this report. As the cycle shows (below), when taken as a whole, six key stages form the structure of the cycle and continually integrate with an ongoing process of evolution for both projects and engagement strategies.



In this section of the report, we explore two exemplars of integrated participatory engagement which generally align with the six stages of the cycle as well as its evolving intent. The first of these case studies focuses on the city of Corvallis in Oregon, US and the second focuses on the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children Project which operates in the northern suburbs of the Gold Coast.

11.1.1 Corvallis Oregon: Collaboratively creating the world's most sustainable community...

An exemplar of integrated, adaptive project management and participatory community engagement.

Key focus areas: Participatory community visioning; Partnership framework between local government and a non-government/community based organisation

Background

Over the course of a decade the City of Corvallis in Oregon State has laid the foundations for collaboratively creating one of the world's most sustainable communities.

- In 1973, the Oregon State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 100, *The Oregon Land-Use Act*, a landmark piece of legislation that established Oregon's comprehensive land-use planning system. The following

year, the people of Oregon were engaged in an ambitious public process designed to articulate the state's 14 new planning goals. All Oregon jurisdictions were required to develop comprehensive land-use plans in compliance with these goals and then periodically review and update these plans over time. By the end of the decade, every one of Oregon's 278 city and county governments had adopted its plan, creating a strong set of local controls and, in effect, a composite land-use plan for much of the state (Ames, 1997, p3).

- In 1988-89, participatory community and council visioning developed "Charting a Course for Corvallis", a community vision for Corvallis City.
- In 1998, the "Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement" was adopted by Council following a community-wide visioning process. Though Vision 2020 does not refer specifically to sustainability, many of its objectives relate directly to goals encompassed within the context of sustainability.
- In 2003 the City Council adopted an overarching goal of sustainability and the following year adopted a sustainability policy.
- In 2005, the City Council adopted a goal to enhance its own organisational sustainability efforts and hired a consultant to help develop a strategy to implement this goal.
- In 2006, the City Council approved funding to hire a sustainability coordinator to develop a sustainability management plan for city government.
- During this time, residents of the city increased their knowledge of the relationship between environment, society and economy and became increasingly concerned about the impacts of their day-to-day decisions. This led to an awareness of the need for coordinated, community-based actions to address the issues of environmental protection, social equity and economic stability and as a result, the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, a not for profit community organisation, was formed.
- Immediately after its formation, the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition asked the 2007-08 Corvallis City Council to adopt a goal related to community sustainability. The Council responded by adopting a goal to "enhance organisational sustainability efforts and begin to develop a community-wide sustainability initiative." The Coalition was identified as the group to partner with the City of Corvallis on the implementation of this Council goal.
- The partner agreement between the City of Corvallis and the Coalition stipulates that "to best position Corvallis to begin implementing Vision 2020, the partners will work together to develop a Sustainability Action Plan targeted for completion by December 2008."
- During 2008, the Coalition with the assistance of consultants, led an action planning process to establish a comprehensive action strategy that was integrated across environmental, social and economic spheres of the community. The resulting "Community Sustainability Action Plan" presented to City Council in December 2008 and subsequently adopted, is now being implemented by the Coalition and its partner organisations, including the City of Corvallis.

Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement

The Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement was approved by Corvallis City Council on June 9 1997 and was last updated June 23 2008. The visioning process began in 1988-89 with the participatory community visioning that developed "Charting a Course for Corvallis". The original one-year visioning process included three phases: (1) a public input phase during which citizens would articulate community concerns and identify priority areas for further discussion; (2) a visioning phase during which a representative citizen task force would develop a vision for the future; (3) a policy phase in which a formal 'vision statement' would be officially adopted and used in updating the City's land-use plan and evaluating other City policies (Ames, 1997, p6).

The current Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement says:

"We envision that in 2020 Corvallis will be:

- A compact, medium-sized city (population range: 57,500 to 63,500) nestled in a beautiful natural setting
- The historic, civic, cultural and commercial heart of Benton County
- An economically strong and well-integrated city, fostering local businesses, regional cooperation and clean industry
- A university town, a regional medical centre, a riverfront city
- An environmentally-aware community with distinctive open space and natural features, protected habitats, parks and outdoor recreation
- Rich in the arts and recreational opportunities, celebrating the talents and culture of the people who live here
- A community that values and supports quality education, throughout the age continuum
- Known for its comprehensive health and human services, and for its services for the elderly and disabled
- A hub in a regional transportation system that connects Linn and Benton counties and provides a link to the north-south high-speed rail system
- A highly liveable city which employs local benchmarks to measure its progress in areas such as housing, economic vitality, educational quality, environmental quality, and overall quality of life
- Blessed with an involved citizenry that actively participates in public policy and decision making
- Committed in its support for children and families
- A community that honours diversity and is free of prejudice, bigotry and hate
- Home...a good place for all kinds of people to live and to lead healthy, happy, productive lives."

Corvallis Action Plan

The Corvallis Action Plan was adopted by Corvallis City Council in December 2008 and is the result of a year-long community-based process that predominantly revolved around three highly-participatory and democratic town hall meetings and interim working group efforts. The process involved hundreds of Corvallis residents and was led and staffed by community volunteers who contributed thousands of volunteer hours to the effort.

Gathering public input and involving community members in the development of the Action Plan were crucial elements of the process. A variety of promotional messages and tools were used to create awareness and interest in the town hall meetings: Coalition website, Google group announcements, bi-weekly E-Updates (electronic newsletters), posters, mini-flyers, quarterly gatherings of Coalition partner representatives, speaker's bureau presentations to various community groups, newspaper articles, public service announcements and broadcast of the town hall meetings on local cable television.

The first town hall meeting attracted 600 people and involved 50 trained discussion leaders and 50 trained recorders. At the end of the meeting more than 200 people volunteered to join working groups that focused on 12 key topic areas: community inclusion, economic vitality, education, energy, food, health and human services, housing, land use, natural areas and wildlife, transportation, waste and recycling, and water.

About 350 people attended the second town hall meeting where working groups shared their proposed goal and solicited input and feedback.

About 400 people attended the third town hall meeting. The purpose of the meeting was (1) to present working group proposals; (2) engage attendees in committing to action. Electronic keypad polling was used to introduce participants to the topic area goals, gather some demographic information and register peoples' opinions about which goals should be addressed first by the community. Participants were also given an opportunity to commit to home and work based actions as well as register as members of action teams.

The Action Plan is organised around 12 topic areas: community inclusion, economic vitality, education, energy, food, health and human services, housing, land use, natural areas and wildlife, transportation, waste and recycling, and water.

Each topic area includes the following elements:

- Vision – an image or description of what the community desires to become in the future
- Goals – descriptions of the 'end state' the community wants to achieve. Goals are accomplished through implementation of strategies and actions
- Strategies – statements of approach or method of attaining goals and resolving specific issues. Strategies begin to answer the question, 'How will we go about accomplishing our goals?' Strategies describe a general approach or method
- Actions – the projects, plans or activities, ideally prioritised annually, which must be accomplished in order to achieve a stated goal
- Metrics – units of measurement used to help track progress towards a goal

- Baseline – the current situation or the initial set of metrics used for comparison over time
- Potential key organisations – organisations and/or agencies that have been identified as potential implementers of the strategies proposed
- Timeline – anticipated implementation date, selected from 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years.

The Sustainability Coalition's Action Teams, working in collaboration with Coalition partners and other key organisations are responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan. The Action Teams are collaborative groups of volunteers and have responsibility for five key onground activities:

- Implementing Action Plan strategies and actions through work on projects that are selected and designed by action team members
- Identifying and convening appropriate partners for collaborative actions
- Working with other Coalition Action Teams on addressing inter-related goals and actions
- Gathering needed metrics for reporting and planning
- Submitting progress reports and data to the Coalition Steering Committee.

Based on a review of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition website: www.sustainablecorvallis.org the 12 Action Teams are now all active in organising and implementing activities and events that support the goals of their core theme.

Ongoing maintenance, development and revitalisation

From 2010, the Sustainable Corvallis Coalition will host an annual town hall meeting to report to the community about its progress in implementing the action plan. At the same time it will gather ideas from the community around new actions and priorities and early actions that could be dropped because they are no longer relevant or useful.

Four times a year, Sustainable Corvallis hosts a 'Quarterly Team Gathering' that features presentations by two of its action teams and two of its partner organisations to the entire volunteer team. These events have so far proved to be informative and energising for the whole team.

The organisation makes a monthly presentation to Corvallis City Council, in which one action team per month is allotted time at a council meeting to give details and updates about the project they are working on. In addition, Council's Sustainability Supervisor is a member of the Coalition's Steering Committee and the Mayor attends the Steering Committee meetings.

Sustainable Corvallis has also formed a Communications and Marketing Committee that is beginning to publicise the work of the action teams and partner organisations. It also now has a new Membership Committee to work on volunteer recruitment and retention.

Corvallis Case Study Summary

Strengths & Benefits	Weaknesses & Risks	Resources & Costs	Learnings
<p>Excellent levels of community participation at every stage – fit-for-purpose engagement processes based on the project's aims and objectives at each stage</p> <p>Productive partnership between Council and Corvallis Sustainability Coalition</p> <p>Close integration between Corvallis vision and action plan</p> <p>Specificity and breadth of action plan eg goals, targets and alignment to vision and onground activities</p> <p>Ongoing rollout of relevant actions and activities is proceeding efficiently</p> <p>Comprehensive and informative website with capacity to also support Action Team online dialogue, information sharing and integration of activities</p> <p>The involvement of community volunteers and thousands of hours of their time ensured the process of developing the action plan moved forward more quickly than if it relied on Council staff (who lacked equivalent time and resources)</p>	<p>Very high dependence on volunteerism & risks include potential volunteer burnout, potential lack of capacity to fully implement and evolve the action plan</p> <p>Potential lack of resourcing for Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and action plan implementation which could imperil the project</p> <p>Some in Council have felt that because the Action Plan was developed by self-selected volunteers, the plan was not representative of the community. Corvallis Sustainability Coalition says that if it had taken more time for the process, it might have solicited the participation of specific individuals who represented different points of view. However, the Coalition felt a sense of urgency and chose to move the process quickly so the city could move into the action phase</p>	<p>City of Corvallis council grant US\$52,500 to for Corvallis Sustainability Coalition to hire a consultant to assist in the community engagement process and development of the 2008 Action Plan</p> <p>Financial donations worth US\$14,000 raised</p> <p>Cost of three town hall meetings (venue hire, catering, publicity etc) was US\$9,000</p> <p>Total financial budget for Action Plan development was about US\$62,000</p> <p>Tens of thousands of volunteer hours were donated to the Action Plan's development and now its implementation</p>	<p>Need to build capacity in volunteers and Corvallis Sustainability Coalition to ensure quality outcomes, review, and project longevity</p> <p>To embed highly participatory processes in the community, it is possible for councils to partner with and help resource independent community organisations to spearhead community-based activity</p>

Location on IAP2 Spectrum: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower

Useful Engagement Techniques and Methods

- Town Hall Meetings with outcome focus and clear purpose (use of appropriate technology to enable large group prioritisation of actions; use of large numbers of trained facilitators and scribes)
- Information provision to key community stakeholders as well as the broad community through a variety of channels including website, eNewsletters, local media, flyers, broadcast of town hall meetings on local community television
- Partnership framework between Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and Corvallis City Council to enable and empower the Coalition to drive grassroots, onground community participation, planning and implementation
- Comprehensive, informative and interactive website through the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
- Ongoing reporting and updating of the planning and implementation process through website/s, eNewsletters, local media
- The involvement of hundreds of community volunteers and partners who were able to fast-track the Action Plan's development
- Ongoing event promotion through Corvallis Sustainability Coalition website
- Annual Town Hall community event to involve the community in understanding implementation progress and reviewing next steps
- Ongoing and regular communication channels between Corvallis City Council and the Sustainable Corvallis Coalition
- Quarterly whole team gatherings for updates and revitalisation

11.1.2 Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children – Award-winning community research, planning, action and renewal...

An exemplar of integrated, adaptive project management and participatory community engagement. Key focus areas: Community-based research; Partnership framework between layers of government, a non-government organisation and community service providers

Background

Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children (NGCC4C) is a federally funded initiative based in the Gold Coast/Brisbane growth corridor. It includes the communities of Oxenford, Helensvale, Pimpama, Coomera, Upper Coomera, Cedar Creek and Ormeau. Its aim is to connect and create child friendly communities where young children and their families have greater self-reliance and self-determination and are provided with opportunities to maximise their health and wellbeing, learning capacity, emotional support, community connectivity and cohesion.

When the project began in 2005 there were few existing services in the area to support families, there was limited public transport, schools were operating at capacity and there was no planning underway or intended for additional facilities within the next few years. Data highlighting the population explosion in the area at the time and projected into the future, was a key factor in the project being funded.

Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children is funded by the federal government's Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs department (FACSIA), governed through FACSIA's Queensland office and administered and facilitated by Lifeline Gold Coast. During its first phase – 2005-2009, Gold Coast City Council was an active partner within the program and built significant community-based research and local social infrastructure planning into the program.

In July 2009 the program received second phase funding from FACSIA to continue and evolve its work in the Gold Coast's northern communities. As a result, the project team is currently undertaking a strategic review and renewal process which will underpin the evolution of its service delivery from 2010 onwards.

Program discussion

From the outset, NGCC4C was funded to reach families at high risk in the northern Gold Coast suburbs and the bulk of time and resources have gone into developing a non-threatening, highly inclusive and grassroots program that reaches these families through a broad community base and a wide variety of relevant and useful activities (multiple soft entry points). The program has always reached its high-risk client base, but in ways which simultaneously focus on community building to meet all families' needs in a rapidly-changing, fast-paced world.

The program began with, and is still founded upon significant levels of community-based research. The aim of this research process was to clearly identify and understand peoples' specific needs within their community. The preliminary needs analysis stage of the project in 2004 employed a team of local community researchers to meet face-to-face with people throughout the area and conduct informal discussions and interviews about their needs and aspirations. This occurred at school gates when children were collected after school, in childcare centres, at shopping centres, in service and community group meetings, in parks, in homes and kitchens. (It is useful to note that the team of community researchers engaged at the beginning of the project continued to be employed throughout Phase 1 of the program in a

variety of event organisation and outreach roles. At the beginning of Phase 2 in mid-2009, they have returned to their research role to review their communities' needs and aspirations in order to inform the planning of service delivery from early 2010).

Based on the results of the Phase 1 community research and the identified community needs, a Service Delivery Plan and Community Action Plan were developed for the program and then implemented by local organisations and specialists. The program developed five core strategies which were implemented via a wide range of activities:

1. **Strengthening Family Relationships** – by enhancing parents' capacity to cope and skilfully manage their life circumstances and parenting ability. Activities include: Young Parents Program including supported baby playgroups; Family Relationship Program including parenting programs, emotional fitness groups, super parents series, babysitting training program for young women, play base programs and action support groups.
2. **Early Years Hubs** – five early years hubs were created as the first point of call for families looking for information and assistance. The 'buzzing' hubs provide multiple networks of support and include: parent drop-in centres; move2music activities; pram pushing; new mums' group; nutrition and cooking classes; story telling mornings; book worm program; weekly child health nurse sessions; breakfast clubs; infant massage; step stones to prep.
3. **Creating Community Connections** – where community members are employed as community development workers to support, encourage and foster community group interaction. Activities include: mobile community centres throughout parks; assisting community members to develop neighbourhood projects; family fun days and community events; street development party days; community research.
4. **Children's Development** – Four key programs (a) Ready Set Learn program works with child care staff and other service providers to implement functional programs within the daily routines of the centres; (b) Kids In Action program educates children and parents of the importance of an active and healthy family lifestyle; (c) Read and Grow program has fun and interactive storytelling sessions; (d) Small Sports program has group based 'games' which are fun and engaging for children.
5. **Building Social Infrastructure** – had a whole-of-community focus that linked community, government and non-government agencies to leverage services through a 'group voice' and explore innovative grass roots initiatives to improve community wellbeing. Activities include building community groups; working creatively with children advocacy; child friendly cities action paper; community advocacy; GCCC partnership – Social Infrastructure Plan; annual Northern Gold Coast Community Festival.

In its current program review process to develop strategies and activities for the program from 2010, NGCC4C is again undertaking community-based research with local community researchers as well as partnering with Griffith University Gold Coast to work with young people in a photo journey project to revisit and revitalise the program in ways that will have relevance to 6 – 12 year olds (the focus of funding within the new program).

Evaluation review

Griffith University C4C Program Evaluator Dr Ann Ingamells makes some pertinent comments about the NGCC4C program in a recent report case study *“What works in collaboration for child and family outcomes?”* In it she discusses the current silo-based structures in child health and development and the potential for children to fall through the gaps of this system. Dr Ingamells reviews the place-based, holistic work of the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children program in this context and states that “place-based approaches have the potential to overcome some of the limitations of the silo based approach” where the optimised use of resources in a place base (including the community hubs within NGCC4C) can “produce better outcomes for families and children across a wider spectrum of need” (p1).

In assessing the NGCC4C collaborative and partnership approach to program delivery, Dr Ingamells also states:

“Funding flexibility enables each different community to address the specific issues faced by families in their community in ways that suit that community. The Northern Gold Coast experience has been that effective collaboration can simultaneously address a number of quite separate issues in ways that conventional structures are unable to address. It therefore achieves economies of scale and levels of effectiveness that are scarcely possible without a place based focus” (p1).

It is also important to note that NGCC4C made little, if any use of online or web based communication or engagement. Its foundation was built upon interpersonal, face-to-face communication, education, research and development processes and this proved to be both appropriate and highly effective for the program.

Importantly, unlike most other participatory, community-based projects, the NGCC4C program has been formally evaluated and this component of the project may also provide insights for GCCC in terms of how it develops and implements evaluative processes for its community engagement in future.

Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children Case Study Summary

Strengths & Benefits	Weaknesses & Risks	Resources & Costs	Learnings
<p>Community based research enables the creation of programs that are directly relevant and meaningful to a particular community and will have immediate and direct uptake throughout the community</p> <p>This means program development and program rollout processes are very cost</p>	<p>Burnout is a real risk for the project team</p> <p>Finding the right people for the right positions &/or projects is essential</p> <p>Establishing clear role descriptions and project briefs is essential</p> <p>Replacing people as seamlessly as possible when staff or</p>	<p>Phase 1 of the NGCC4C program had an overall budget of approx \$3 million for 4-5 years</p> <p>About 1% of that budget resourced the community research process</p>	<p>Program managers need to learn the bureaucrats’ language and speak that in formal meetings and reports – this is a crucial bridge between the onground project and its resourcing/funding bodies</p> <p>Good, detailed community research takes time including time for community researchers to check and double check their findings and interpretation with the community</p> <p>In employing local community</p>

<p>effective because they're based on real community needs. Marketing costs are reduced because you're not 'selling' a program to a disinterested or disengaged community</p> <p>Community research can dig down into very specific layers of understanding and in this way, ensure the right programs and activities are established to meet community needs</p> <p>Community research outreach is comprehensive enough to generate valid quantitative as well as qualitative data</p> <p>Non government organisations operate leanly and know how to run programs cost effectively – they can be excellent service providers within programs</p> <p>Working with community-based people and organisations in their own community gives programs validity and onground relevance and strength. Everyone has a stake in the success of the program</p> <p>The combined power of voice from people in a community can be very strong when it is backed</p>	<p>contactors leave to ensure the continuation of the program or project</p> <p>Working with government administrative and reporting requirements and frameworks with an evolving and adapting program can be challenging and finding ways to integrate program evolution and integrity with government requirements is essential</p> <p>To address these risks, the program manager needs to work closely with key staff and community partners in a type of coaching role so the team's communication and reporting processes align with regulatory requirements</p>		<p>members as staff or engaging community groups as service delivery contractors, mentoring, training and capacity building is vital to ensure efficient and effective program rollout at all levels</p> <p>The Program Manager's role in meeting regulatory accountability and reporting requirements and milestones is essential</p> <p>Flexibility in funding parameters is crucial to ensure an evolving, grassroots program can be properly resourced</p> <p>Establishing clear and effective lines of reporting and communication between the funding body representative and the program manager is essential</p> <p>Governance processes for the program – between the funding body, program manager and the interface with program partners need to meet accountability requirements and planning and implementation needs of the project</p> <p>NGCC4C's model of employing or sub contracting local community organisations and NGOs to deliver community services in their local area could be utilised and adapted by GCCC (and other local governments) in many areas of operation. It has the potential to meet community needs cost and time effectively and in highly relevant and targeted ways.</p>
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up by community research to prove to government what that community's needs are			
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Location on IAP2 Spectrum:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower

Engagement Techniques and Methods

- Community-based research to identify specific community needs and aspirations
- Community-based research to review and revitalise the program
- Strategic plan development
- Action plan development and implementation
- Employing, engaging and sub-contracting local residents, community organisations and NGOs to deliver services
- Photo journey with young people to review program
- Partnership framework between Program Facilitator, GCCC, Griffith University and other partners that included development of Council's Social Infrastructure Plan for the Northern Gold Coast
- Community celebrations and festivals
- Ongoing, community-based information outreach about activities and projects
- Community directory developed and distributed
- Hubs of activity and information
- Education, learning and training programs
- Capacity building programs for community members and service delivery organisations

11.2 Visioning Exemplar

11.2.1 Future Melbourne 2020

Overview

Over the last decade Melbourne has established itself as an international hub for business, education, medicine, arts and industry. It has experienced unprecedented growth in high-rise developments and residential living in its CBD, and its suburban residential areas continue to grow. In spite of such growth, or even because of it, Melbourne City recognises that significant challenges lie ahead.

Council is expecting that rapid population growth across the metropolitan area will continue to increase demands on public infrastructure such as public transport, and further threaten the affordability of housing, particularly in the inner city. Growth also has potential to increase or cause negative social impacts if it is not properly planned for.

Climate change will continue affecting the city's natural resources and this will impact upon energy costs. Channel deepening will accommodate more freight traffic around the Port of Melbourne, impacting on the city's road network and amenity, and the decline in manufacturing will have some impact on employment.

A plan for the communities of the City of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne is the capital city hub of the wider metropolitan Melbourne area. It is a complex mosaic of communities of business, cultural, educational, residential, and it is a major visitor destination. *Future Melbourne* is a plan by and for these communities. It is a community plan for the future of Melbourne that aims to:

- Engage citizens in creating a vision for the future, setting priorities and contributing to decision-making.
- Value and utilise local networks
- Focus on people and place in ways that require a more flexible and joined-up approach to policy and service delivery
- Connect the top-down and bottom-up policy processes that influence resource allocation

Future Melbourne was drafted in a collaboration process between key agencies with an active interest in the future of the city, and through an extensive stakeholder and public consultation process. At the outset Council appointed a Future Melbourne Reference Group made up of prominent Melburnians to guide and lead the project. .

Future Melbourne builds on and replaces the City of Melbourne's previous strategic plan, [City Plan 2010](#). It sets out six high level Goals for the city, the Pathways that will lead to achieving these Goals and under each Pathway, a range of Outcomes to be achieved over the decade to 2020. *Future Melbourne* highlights outcomes and responsibilities for the City of Melbourne and other stakeholders in Melbourne over the next decade. It is hoped that the successful implementation of *Future Melbourne* will positively shape Melbourne's future as a dynamic, liveable and prosperous city well beyond 2020. The implementation will also meet [the future trends and challenges](#) confronting Melbourne.

Future Melbourne values

By working with Melbourne's diverse groups, organisations and individuals, the City of Melbourne developed seven general themes that underpin Future Melbourne.

A city for health and wellbeing

A city for health and wellbeing "...is one that is continually improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing their maximum potential." ¹. It is a city that is vibrant, liveable and lived in, humanitarian and has a strong sense of place that brings people into happy and harmonious coexistence.

An inclusive city - a city for everyone

An inclusive city provides services, facilities and events that build on our reputation as a tolerant, friendly and compassionate community. This social infrastructure is responsive and adaptable and serves all.

A diverse and convivial city

A diverse and convivial city values and welcomes change. It's a friendly city, where difference is embraced and visitors are welcome. Diverse cities promote equity and accessibility for all (from children to elderly) and celebrate multiculturalism.

An intelligent and creative city

An intelligent and creative city fosters learning and research. It is at the cutting edge of arts, business and education. It is creative, innovative, a leader, dynamic and adaptable.

A safe and democratic city

In a safe and democratic city, people never feel afraid. Ordinary people feel secure and that they have influence. It has human, political and intellectual freedom, with democracy and political robustness, community engagement, social capital and well-connected communities.

A green city

A green city values what we have, uses resources efficiently and cares for its community, future generations and the environment. A green city promotes sustainability, biodiversity, heritage preservation and conservation. It focuses on local priorities such as parks, gardens, fresh air, clean streets and clean rivers and coastline. Global responsibilities are taken seriously, such as the need to use resources efficiently and to address the many issues arising from climate change.

A prosperous city

In a prosperous city, business and enterprise flourishes and people share in the prosperity. It is an entrepreneurial city with strong international connections and connectivity.

Future Melbourne goals

The City of Melbourne is aiming to implement Future Melbourne by 2020.

The values of *Future Melbourne* have been translated into [six goals](#) that set out a plan:

1. **People**
2. **Creative**
3. **Prosperous**
4. **Knowledge**
5. **Ecocity**
6. **Connected**

Implementation and monitoring

To meet the 2020 commitments of *Future Melbourne*, it is critical that its Goals, Pathways and Outcomes are supported by the Victorian Government. It is also essential that the City of Melbourne works with the Australian Government, Victorian Government, local governments across the metropolitan region, sectors such as business and community, and with residents, workers and visitors. Council believes it is vital to share the same vision for a sustainable future as well as a commitment to changing the way Melburnians live and do business.

The City of Melbourne will measure the success of *Future Melbourne* by implementing Future Melbourne's actions. All of Council's business plans and investment will be geared toward meeting these commitments. At the end of each Goal of *Future Melbourne*, a list of Indicators is provided – methods to determine the degree of success of Pathways and their outcomes and how the city is progressing against each Goal.

Collaborations

To help develop *Future Melbourne*, the City of Melbourne collaborated with the University of Melbourne, the Committee for Melbourne, the Victorian Council of Social Services, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Property Council of Australia, the RMIT Global Cities Research Institute and *The Age* newspaper. A Reference Group comprising prominent Melburnians also helped guide its development.

The Reference Group

The Future Melbourne Reference Group was made up of prominent Melburnians with a passion for the city. This group of thinkers, leaders, movers and shakers has championed and guided the development of *Future Melbourne*. The Future Melbourne Reference Group also gave advice on the overall objectives and direction of the Future Melbourne project.

Members comprise a diverse mix of eminent thinkers and civic leaders with wide- ranging experience, skills and knowledge.

Public forums

Five public forums were held in mid 2007 to help develop *Future Melbourne*. Over 500 people attended these forums and various city leaders volunteered their time as guest speakers and participants. The forums generated a diverse range of ideas, and key themes for the forums were:

1. Melbourne's Cultural Identity: What do we Value?
2. Sustaining Melbourne's Prosperity
3. Meeting the Environmental Shocks in Melbourne
4. Change and Social Inclusion
5. Building our City for the Future

The City of Melbourne continued its community engagement collaboration process after the forums through its interactive website (eVillage) and a series of articles in *The Age* newspaper inviting big ideas.

In 2009, the City of Melbourne's *Future Melbourne* community plan was joint winner of the Planning Institute of Australia's Presidents Award alongside Sustainable Sydney 2030.

Future Melbourne continues to be developed in collaboration with the Melbourne people through the Future Melbourne wiki site: www.futuremelbourne.com.au/wiki/view/FMPlan

The site includes numerous information and interactive features including:

- The Future Melbourne Plan
- Participation Section:
 - Guide to Participation
 - Groups
 - Stories of the Future
 - Submissions
 - Policies and Guidelines
 - Netiquette
- Background to Future Melbourne
 - About Future Melbourne
 - Melbourne Now
 - Trends and Challenges
 - Resources
- News about the Plan
- Latest Press Releases
- Recent Changes – wiki entries
- Media Centre
- Video Updates
- RSS Feeds and Podcasts
- Press Centre
- Future Melbourne on the Web:
 - Discussion Blogs
 - Forums
- Future Melbourne Events
- Tools Section:
 - Changes,
 - Users
 - Help

11.3 Research Exemplar

11.3.1 Community Led Research in the Helensvale and Pacific Pines Communities

Overview

As part of GCCC's development of the Northern Growth Corridor Social Infrastructure Plan 2021 (October 2007), which focused on a collaborative/shared analysis, Council partnered with the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children program (NGCC4C), the Queensland Department of Communities and Andrea Young Planning Consultants to undertake extensive research into the social infrastructure needs of the northern Gold Coast area.

Onground, local research was undertaken by NGCC4C community researchers who helped ensure the Social Infrastructure Plan was grounded in the local issues that directly affected residents and families across the northern growth corridor.

The premise underpinning the engagement of community researchers was that the collection, collation and analysis of information and opinions from individual community members, community groups and agencies would increase understanding of the community's real needs and pressing issues, rather than perceived needs.

In line with this premise, NGCC4C produced the report "Community Led Needs and Strengths Analysis: Helensvale and Pacific Pines Communities". This report was a valuable tool to assist with raising awareness of community issues, both within the community and with other stakeholders. It was hoped that the report would assist with advocacy for increased government assistance in the Helensvale and Pacific Pines areas in particular. It was also hoped that by identifying community needs and strengths in the area, these communities could have a high level of influence on future planning, not only to attract additional resources, facilities, service providers and activities to support the local community, but also in catalysing an increased commitment by government to meaningful community engagement and capacity building.

The research process

The first step in the research process was to employ local community members as community researchers. The objective was to gather local information in an informal, non-intrusive and relaxed manner. Their focus was to:

- Make sure people felt safe and comfortable to share their views. Consideration was therefore given to the most appropriate location, timing, transport links, group composition and so on, that would facilitate this.
- Make sure people felt welcome. If community members such as the elderly or young people were not used to speaking at public events or with people they did not know, then the community researchers used venues and locations that they were familiar with. Additionally, refreshments were provided and the type of event and range of activities utilised for information gathering were chosen to support people to feel more relaxed.
- When researchers spoke to non-English speakers, they used interpreters or a facilitator who spoke the participants' language.

- When participants were from a particular religious faith, consideration was given to what the most appropriate time, day and venue were in order to conduct meetings appropriately.

A key difference between many kinds of information gathering processes is the extent of the dialogue that takes place. Dialogue in this program, is defined as the exchange of views, ideas and concerns between different community members and the researcher. The context within which this took place and the objective of the research influenced the method of research and recording mechanism involved. The quantitative information gathering approach involved little dialogue whereas the participation approach focused on a semi-structured interview with prompt questions to encourage continued dialogue.

The benefits of the quantitative approach (utilising a structured survey or questionnaire) included the provision of statistical data about key issues within a bounded framework. However, the extra information gathered by using a more qualitative process through the semi-structured interview approach, enhanced the richness of information gathered and thereby deepened researchers' understanding of peoples' ideas and needs.

In order to obtain key statistics as well as a richness of data, the community research process utilised both a quantitative and qualitative approach and over 420 surveys were undertaken at multiple locations.

The benefits of engaging community researchers were:

- They are known and trusted by community members
- Being community members themselves, they have first-hand knowledge of the community and a desire for positive outcomes
- Due to their common situation, they are often more readily accepted than 'outsiders' and consequently community members often share deeper levels of information than they would to a non-community member
- Community researchers are ideally positioned to obtain meaningful primary data from community members
- Community researchers stimulate people to think through why they are dissatisfied and with what
- Community researchers have proved to be a valuable aid in building community networks.

Information sourced from the report "Community Led Needs and Strengths Analysis – Helensvale and Pacific Pines Communities" by Margaret Spriggs, Lifeline Community Care Gold Coast.

11.4 Planning Exemplar

Professor Sohail Inayatullah is one of Australia's most respected strategic foresight practitioners. He is a skilled exponent of scenario planning – a key engagement tool – which was applied in very practical and at times, technical ways in the development of the Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy 2006-2056 (the subject of the case study below). Recently Sohail published an interesting article about planning in South East Queensland which utilises four scenarios. This article is of relevance to this report and is included in full as Appendix 6.

11.4.1 Gold Coast Water - Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy 2006-2056

An exemplar of adaptive project management and participatory community engagement. Key focus areas: Long term, collaborative infrastructure planning and review

Background

Since its establishment in 1995, Gold Coast Water (GCW) has spearheaded an era of integrated, sustainable urban water planning, management and operation based on high levels of community engagement and consultation in the city. Its work has received awards in areas as diverse as engineering, project management, sustainability, research, water management, planning, community engagement and participation, education, the environment and public communications.

The Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy 2006-2056 is a long-term, overarching water sustainability blueprint for Gold Coast City that achieves first-rate outcomes in ecological, social and economic sustainability. It provides a variety of new bulk water supply sources that are not climate dependent and will meet the city's predicted 100% population growth and projected requirement for 466ML/day by 2056. Initiatives now underway as a result of the plan include:

- Recycled water systems for industry, business and households that use 18ML of recycled water per day
- Desalination for the city and South East Queensland with a capacity to produce 125ML/day
- Regional water system integration in South East Queensland
- Increased capacity for the existing city dam from 191ML/day to 225ML/day
- Pressure and leakage management for the city's water supply network resulting in water savings of 13.5ML/day and an 80% reduction in network leads and breaks
- Water conservation and demand management for industry, business and households that has resulted in a reduction of consumption from 192ML/day in 2004-05 to 134ML/day in 2008
- Rainwater tanks for businesses and households
- Fit for purpose water supply solutions

The development of the Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy 2006-2056 began in 2004 and emerged from a groundbreaking community engagement process undertaken by GCW that was developed out of years of piloting participatory processes on smaller-scale projects throughout Gold Coast city.

Discussion and insights

- Adaptive management is at the heart of GCW's community engagement work. The organisation's commitment to engagement began in the late 1990s and emerged from its customer service satisfaction principles and procedures which developed into a community engagement unit of one or two people. Over about 5-6 years the unit's and the organisation's understanding of engagement grew to the point where engagement moved to the forefront of GCW's planning work. This was the result of a process of informal learning in and from action as well as more formal education and professional development for key staff.
- GCW's commitment to community engagement came from the top of the organisation in the form of its then Director Shaun Cox who positioned engagement at the top of the organisation's decision making processes for infrastructure planning and development. Partly this prioritisation of engagement arose from Shaun's deep understanding of demand management principles and practices and GCW's commitment to implementing a system of total demand management in the city.
- This commitment to total demand management by GCW was underpinned by many years of community education through the WaterWise program and Watch Every Drop communications campaign which helped the broad community understand their role in water consumption and infrastructure planning and development. Gold Coast Water spent years developing an informed 'conversation' with the community about water management and demand management which culminated in the development of the Water Future Strategy 2006-2056.
- Quite early in its existence, Gold Coast Water's community engagement unit sourced and reviewed the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and largely based its work on this resource. It did however, make a highly strategic decision to utilise the collaborative advisory committee model over the empowered citizen's juries model (or similar) because of the regulatory relationship between the Queensland State Government and local governments in the state. This relationship is governed by the Queensland State Government and GCW believed it could not establish a fully empowered model of community engagement with the knowledge that local decisions particularly about regionally-relevant water infrastructure and planning could be overturned by the Queensland state government.
- GCW's track record on advisory committee engagement for planning has been extremely positive and successful within the context of GCCC's approval and governance processes. The advisory committee model has provided Councillors with informed community- and evidence-based decisions which could be justified and defended. GCCC Councillors appear to have generally valued and endorsed the decisions made by GCW's cross-sectoral advisory committees.
- The Waterfuture community engagement process is groundbreaking because of its focus on long-term planning that subsequently impels the whole organisation (GCW) to develop and implement associated short term planning, target setting, milestone setting and the generation of research to support informed and timely action. GCW Manager, Service Delivery, Darren Hayman suggests that community engagement forces the short term pieces of the planning and operational puzzle to be organised and fitted because everyone is aligned on the same long term path. Community engagement has the potential to drive the development of a long term plan which in its implementation requires short term

planning, implementation, monitoring and updating and when this occurs it is possible to generate institutional change and an ongoing process of better planning (interview August 2009).

- The *design* of an engagement plan for long term infrastructure planning is crucial – from the beginning the diverse players and key stakeholders need to be involved in order to develop a design and then a plan that can be operationalised onground. In a sense, the diversity of players involved in design and planning provide ‘ground-truthing’ strength from the outset. For the Waterfuture Strategy 2006-2056 this included scientists, engineers, Queensland Government policymakers and bureaucrats, GCCC Councillors, ecologists, public health specialists, environmentalists, developers, other business and industry representatives, residents, young people and so on.
- Gold Coast dams were down to 30% capacity in 2004 when the Waterfuture engagement and planning process began. A key learning for the engagement team from this time is that it is never too late to start an engagement process and in fact, the investment in good engagement pays off because of its ability to support involvement by the broad community. Darren Hayman suggested that the Waterfuture process enabled all the community’s ‘hand grenades’ and ideas to be put on the table and included in collaborative deliberations, while the urgent actions could be taken in the context of long term planning (interview August 2009). By involving the community so actively in the design, development and review of the Waterfuture Strategy, GCW was able to publicly and transparently work with the complexity of long term, triple bottom line planning in a collaborative and informed way with the community.
- With the introduction of the Queensland Government’s 2007-08 SEQ Water Reform Program, GCW’s participatory long term planning and implementation work has at least for the moment, paused. Its intention to evolve the process even further into areas that engage the community in working with complex ‘capacity to pay’ and affordability issues in a triple bottom line context, is on hold at least for the moment and there is a sense of unfinished business within the organisation as the reform process continues. However, GCW’s community engagement principles, models, processes and techniques have greatly informed the development of GCCC’s community consultation policy and manual which is now utilised throughout Council.
- In terms of adaptive management, the Waterfuture Strategy is a particularly powerful example of:
 - Participatory design of a long term plan
 - Design of short term plans that align with, support and enable a long term plan
 - Ongoing implementation of plans, particularly in areas such as Pimpama Coomera where the Waterfuture plan has been implemented at household, street, neighbourhood and whole suburb scales
 - Participatory, onground monitoring and review involving the community, households and GCW
 - Ongoing adaptation and evolution of short term and long term plans in light of onground monitoring results.
- The Water Future Strategy’s participatory engagement process also exemplified for GCW, the value the community places on the ability of local government to plan effectively for the city’s future. Its customer satisfaction measures pre the 2004 drought showed customer focus was on the quality and colour of the

water coming out of the tap. By the time of the Waterfuture Strategy's release, the customer satisfaction measures clearly showed that the community wanted to know how Gold Coast Water was planning for the water security of the city into the future. Participatory engagement processes answered that question for the community in real time and facilitated an improved organisational 'brand' for the organisation in its interface with the community.

- Approximately 1% of the Waterfuture budget was invested into the community engagement and communication program.

Engagement Techniques and Methods

- A combined community and expert advisory committee tasked with designing the strategy in collaboration with scientific and engineering experts as well as state and local government representatives
- Detailed research, modelling and scenario planning regarding Gold Coast population predictions, water use data and predictions and climate change predictions
- Use of the multi-criteria assessment tool to develop a strategy based on triple bottom line principles. The multi-criteria assessment tool was used extensively through the Waterfuture process with the advisory committee and technical team. It offered a very clear means for technical and non-technical people to work together to develop and assess relevant water supply scenarios for the Gold Coast based on Triple Bottom Line principles.
- A broad community education, information, communication and review process that built on a decade of WaterWise education in the city for schools, residents and businesses
- Alignment and implementation leverage with the Pimpama Coomera Waterfuture Plan and community engagement process
- Draft strategy summary distributed throughout the city for community review and feedback (mail out, online, newspaper insert, at Council offices) – allied with a competition for those who registered their feedback
- Web section on the GCCC website
- Availability of technical reports – online and at Council offices
- Focus groups
- Final strategy summary in Community Report format and broadly distributed online and in hard copy
- Displays at Council offices

11.5 *Doing - Implementation Exemplars*

11.5.1 Bellingham Economic Development

An exemplar of place-based, small business-led project development, management and participatory community engagement. Key focus areas: Partnership framework between small to medium business, local economic development and community; Adaptive program implementation; Website: www.sustainableconnections.org

Background

Whatcom County in Washington US, has a long history of community and business innovation from a wide variety of organisations and volunteer initiatives. Building on this history, in 2002 a small group of local business owners surveyed other Whatcom business owners and they found there was demand for the idea of forming a network of place-based businesses that could support each other toward a shared vision of a sustainable local economy. In April 2002, the new network Sustainable Connections, signed up its first business member with early programs that focused on connecting values-aligned businesses, and taking individual steps – pledges – to improve the sustainability of member businesses. The approach was based on the principle of reciprocity. The goal was to support local business owners to act as stewards of their community and local environment and in turn, ask their community to support them.

Today, Sustainable Connections has grown to 650+ local, independently owned business members, a team of 12 staff, an Advisory Board of local community and government leaders, a Board of Directors of business owners and community leaders, and an annual budget nearing US\$1 million per year. Its members have led Bellingham city to become the nation's top EPA-certified green power community (2008), a leader in green building, in fostering hundreds of new relationships between farmers and food buyers, and in shifting the purchasing behaviour of 3 in 5 households toward choosing independent retailers and services whenever possible. In 2009 the National Resources Defence Council named Bellingham the #1 small City in urban progress toward sustainability in the US. Sustainable Connections is recognised by the Business Alliance for Local Living Economy (BALLE) as a model place-based local business and economy developer.

Guiding Principles

- Place-based: Sustainable Connections aligns with the quote “Find your place in the world, dig in, and take responsibility from there”
- We're all on a path: We meet businesses where they are, and help them make progress with specific, measurable solutions
- We lead by example: We say what we're for, not what we're against
- Humility: We believe in continuous learning and open minds
- Bias for Action: There is not one solution, there are thousands, hundreds of thousands, so we do something well, then something else, then something else...
- Make it a better party: People want to be happy

- Convene the right people: We work with decision makers. We also recognize that relationships are what best motivate people to take action
- Be solution oriented: We develop specific, practical solutions that are useful across multiple businesses
- Form powerful partnerships: we recognise that we are one part of the puzzle, and we honour and support powerful partnerships
- Cultivate a can-do attitude: Creative and positive delivery of our solution messages
- Measure results: We frequently ask our members, our participants and the community whether we are having our intended impact and how to be better
- Create a ripple effect: Good ideas spread fast. We document what we do so that others can take advantage of what we are discovering.

Activities

Sustainable Connections is a non-profit network of local, independently owned Whatcom County businesses and supporters. It facilitates sustainable economy development by providing:

- Education: Facilitating technical assistance for businesses and government that builds the community's capacity to participate in the opportunities of a sustainable economy:
 - Online Resource Centre: maintenance of an up-to-date website of sustainable business practice tips and resources as well as an events calendar that includes workshops and educational activities
 - Business Audits: It recommends that members use the B-Corporation Survey as an annual (free) personalised audit of sustainable business practices
 - Educational Workshops: It surveys its members annually to learn more about their sustainable business needs and interest and then provides the most relevant educational workshops. It offers quarterly workshops for sustainable business practices including Smart Trips, Toward Zero Waste, Watershed Pledge 'quick-cert' Seminars
- Connections: Connecting businesses to each other and to the marketplace:
 - All members meeting and holiday party
 - Bi-monthly new member orientation
 - Monthly member luncheons
 - Member directory
 - Peer mentoring
- Market Development: Engaging in promotion and market development that opens opportunities for sustainable economy businesses:

- Promotion: It promotes leadership businesses as models through local media outreach, promotions, peer to peer connections, and the monthly sustainable practice 'buzz' eNews.
- Campaigns: It engages members with timely campaigns on important and relevant topics. It provides members with detailed 'how-to' information and significant promotion to potential customers.

Sustainable Connections hosts six core programs:

1. Green Building: Promoting healthy, durable, efficient and environmentally responsible places to live, work and play. Note, the organisation recently hosted the "Smart Growth for Sustainable Communities" an annual conference in Bellingham
2. Food and Farming: Supporting and building a sustainable local food system in NW Washington. Note, the organisation hosts Whatcom Farm Tours
3. Sustainable Business Development: Building the number and prosperity of local businesses that creatively address environmental and societal challenges. Note, the organisation hosts a Sustainable Lecture Series and has a project called "Toward Zero Waste"
4. Think Local: Increasing awareness about the personal, community and economic benefits of choosing local, independently owned businesses first. Note, the organisation runs the community education and communication campaign "Think Local, Buy Local, Be Local"
5. Energy: Encouraging green power purchasing, energy efficiency and increased local renewable energy infrastructure
6. Sustainable Connections Consulting: The organisation's intent is to make sure that people who want to understand and leapfrog from its work, have the information they need to do so. To this end, it operates a small business consulting service.

Getting involved

Sustainable Connections offers a number of participatory pathways to members and the community including:

- Membership: members are local, independently owned Whatcom County businesses and supporters
- Donations: are tax deductible
- Volunteering: it relies heavily on volunteers for much of its work
- Internships: it offers internship opportunities
- Partnerships: it works with many organisations to accomplish its goals
- Committees: each program area has an advisory committee that works on overall program direction as well as specific event support

- Events: it welcomes members, supporters and anyone interested in its mission to attend its many events during the year.

Partnerships

Sustainable Connections' philosophy for good partnerships states:

- They are project based and directly in line with the organisation's areas of focus and the goals they have committed to achieve in their strategic plan
- Partners share a common goal
- Have a plan for developing the funds that ensure all partners can pay their staff for project work. 20% of its budget comes from membership, the rest is earned program revenue, contracts, donations and grants
- Create synergy without unnecessary redundancies in skills, abilities, audience etc which helps minimise too much overlapping core expertise on a project
- Involve each partner working collaboratively on the vision and 'ends' outcomes, but with responsibility and autonomy on the 'means' for each entity's part(s) of the project.

1.5.2 Placemaking – City Repair in Portland Oregon

An exemplar of place-based, citizen and community-led creative placemaking in neighbourhoods across the city. Key focus areas: Community engagement and participation, community building and community development at the grassroots level; Hands on arts and natural building framework; citizen participation and empowerment

Website: www.cityrepair.org

“If people have more opportunities to interact with other people and have more variability in their experiences, then they have a chance to do just about anything. To solve their problems. To learn. To advance their ideas. And to have a more fulfilling and creative experience with other people” City Repair.

Background

City Repair is both a non profit community organisation and a city-wide, neighbourhood-based program in the city of Portland Oregon. City Repair was formed in Portland in 1996 by citizen activists who wanted a more community-oriented and ecologically sustainable society. Born out of a successful grassroots neighbourhood initiative that converted a residential street intersection into a neighbourhood public square, City Repair began its work with the idea that localisation (of culture, of economy, of decision-making) is a necessary foundation of sustainability. By reclaiming urban spaces to created community-oriented places, City Repair plants the seeds for greater neighbourhood communication, empowered communities and revitalised local culture.

In describing City Repair’s first project, Co-director of Creative Vision, Mark Lakeman said, “City Repair started in a neighbourhood in Portland where neighbours felt the need to create a public gathering place for their community...the first response of city officials was to say ‘no, you can’t do that, it’s never been done before and besides that’s public space so no one can use it’.

“So we simply stepped across the line together. We broke the law literally and shortly after that, by Ordinance the entire city was allowed to do it.

“We all stood there together – grandmothers, little kids, whole families. Whole families who had never known each other even though they lived across the street from each other for 10 years, were standing there together having painted the street and built these lovely things on the corners. All just saying ‘ours...ours...ours...our village, our turf, our place.’

“Well, as soon as we put these projects in place on the ground, it transforms the bureaucracy and the political leadership.”

The City Repair Project maintains an office in Portland and operates with over 15 largely volunteer and part-time staff, coordinators and assistants. It depends almost entirely on donations and grants as well as extensive volunteer support.

See 8 minute You Tube video “Transform Space into Place”:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVq0exoGySc&feature=PlayList&p=A7463EE90C0AF14D&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=47

City Repair's Placemaking Projects and Activities

- Intersection Repair is City Repair's major project. It is a project where a group of neighbours can transform an ordinary neighbourhood intersection into a vibrant public place by creating huge paintings on the intersection roads, building beautiful structures for people to gather, and creating public art. Materials used are all eco-friendly and include cob and timber structures. It is essential that the Intersection Repair activities and materials are inclusive of all ages, cultures and skill levels. There were more than 50 Intersection Repair sites across Portland as at 2007 and more than 14 cities in the US have undertaken City Repair programs based on Portland's work.
- The Village Building Convergence is an annual, 10-day event which brings thousands of people together in Portland to learn how to undertake intersection repair works through practical planning for their own neighbourhood and hands-on repair work projects in the city. It attracts planners, architects, natural builders, Permaculture practitioners, placemakers and everyday citizens. See 2 minute You Tube video "Village Building Convergence":
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0df5FyrZ2M&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcityrepair%2Eorg%2Fevents%2Fvbc%2F&feature=player_embedded
- City Riparian engages neighbours in a collective process to design and install forest gardens and other Permaculture-informed landscapes on public land (which it calls the commons).
- T-Horse is a mobile tea house, public square and potluck (shared food) activator that travels to neighbourhoods throughout the city in a living demonstration of how a space can be transformed into a place. It offers free tea and encourages people to bring along food to share.
- Earth Day is an annual celebration of local culture, local business and local initiatives that attracts over 4,000 participants and is organised by community volunteers. It includes a morning of neighbourhood service projects and then an afternoon/evening of music, eco-markets and information stalls, workshops etc
- City Repair's Placemaking Guidebook is a print resource for community based projects such as Intersection Repair. It includes physical examples, stories, techniques for community organising and facilitation: How to paint an intersections step-by-step; Detailed methods for communicating with your neighbourhood; Sample agendas for meetings; Personal stories; Make your own block party; Resources etc

Engagement Techniques and Methods

- Neighbourhood focus
- Leaflet drops
- Hands-on, practical and collaborative planning processes
- Citizen based
- Practical, creative and construction projects that require collaborative citizen and neighbourhood involvement

- Creation of public art and public gathering spaces for long-term use
- Learning workshops and conferences
- Process of learning in and from action
- Collaboration between community and council though predominantly citizen and neighbourhood driven
- Website with You Tube videos and blogs
- Practical Guide to Placemaking book
- Mobile tea house and community gathering space
- Annual Earth Day celebration

“We are engaging people where they live and they are building new relationships. They’re creating physical artefacts that encourage them to communicate and gather after the fact. And then, as Portlanders – the general population – move through the fabric of the city, they see these artefacts and they interact with them and the stories continue. The stories broaden and deepen and they inspire” Mark Lakeman, City Repair Project.

11.6 Review Exemplars

11.6.1 The Minneapolis Corridor Housing Initiative and Corridor Development Initiative

An exemplar of partnership-based housing and development planning and review that develops the collaborative and technical capacity of citizen leaders. Key focus areas: Partnership development between diverse stakeholders; Technical and collaborative capacity building; Hands on, detailed planning and review processes involving residents and community groups working alongside technical experts and developers. Focus is on how a development will move forward not if a development will move forward.

Background

Since 2003, the objective of the Minneapolis Corridor Housing Initiative has been to create vibrant neighbourhoods with a mix of housing choices and access to transport options, retail amenities and job opportunities. The initiative models a new way to build consensus around key development opportunities by bringing residents together with municipal planners, developers and technical experts to collaboratively plan and review housing developments. Participants focus on creating proactive partnerships to produce higher density, affordable housing along Minneapolis' major corridors and streets. Facilitators, municipal planning and development staff, neighbourhood partners, design and development experts and stakeholders work together to create guidelines and policies for housing that reflect shared neighbourhood and city goals. Each project has a steering committee with access to market analysis and design resources and is supported by design experts.

In collaboration with the City of Minneapolis, the Center for Neighbourhoods coordinates the Corridor Housing Initiative with support from a team of technical experts, the Family Housing Fund of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and the Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Fannie Mae Foundation.

The process

The initiative is based on the belief that development projects enjoy their greatest success when all interested parties have an equal voice in the outcomes. A typical Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) lasts for six months and is overseen by an advisory group of city staff and elected officials, community and business associates, and volunteer committees.

The advisory group works with the CDI technical team to identify key issues, aggregate current planning reports and studies, and propose specific opportunity sites to be explored for development opportunities. The group is also responsible for:

- Designing and guiding a series of community workshops
- Developing an outreach and communication strategy to recruit participation
- Reviewing the materials and recommendations provided through the CID process

Community workshops – The Block Exercise

During the course of a CDI, three or four community workshops are run including an information gathering one, the Block Exercise and the creation of final recommendations. The interactive block exercise is a hands-on opportunity for community members to explore different development options and find out whether their development ideas are financially viable. The process helps people understand the financial issues and tradeoffs a developer will be working with when considering options for a specific site (ie mix of residential and commercial uses, surface level or underground parking, amount of green space, number of units, integration of affordable housing etc). The goal is to give community members a greater working knowledge of what it takes to make a development project financially viable and to identify a range of preferred development concepts to help guide future development in the area.

Working from a large aerial photo of a hypothetical development site, citizens create development options from block models representing standard unit sizes. Two designers are at each table, one to help with the layout and one to sketch the result.

Development option costs and revenues are calculated by a development consultant during the workshop using standard assumptions about developer fees, subsidies, construction costs, and rental/sales prices.

One model takes about 15-20 minutes to design. Designers photograph the residents' models and then the model is sketched from the photograph as the next model is being built.

Drawings reflect the architectural styles preferred by the participants.

The goal of the Block Exercise is for residents to leave with a deeper understanding about economic constraints of development, design opportunities in their neighbourhood and issues relating to density, land use and housing types.

Combined, the three or four community workshops allow neighbourhood residents to have candid conversations about development scenarios. Most importantly, the workshops provide an opportunity for residents to explore options and alternatives within a framework of city goals, community values and market feasibility. They create their own development scenarios and test them to see if they're financially viable. By the end of the process, participants collaboratively create specific development recommendations to present to community officials.

Program outcomes and benefits

- Property tax base growth
- Urban corridor reinvestment and revitalisation
- Expanded housing affordability and choice
- Increased transit use
- Improved public safety
- Efficient land use, capitalising on existing infrastructure

- High quality urban design
- Walkable, pedestrian-oriented corridors
- Strategic neighbourhood-scale retail development
- Knowledgeable community leaders and spokespeople

Engagement Techniques and Methods

- Project advisory groups guide the process from design to completion
- Community-based workshops – The Block Exercise – very small groups of residents with an intense focus on design and development, working closely with technical experts and developers to create their preferred design within financially sustainable parameters
- High level of technical capacity building for resident participants in the Block Exercise
- Works with active residents in a neighbourhood as key information disseminators and networkers
- High levels of collaboration and integrity – finished community designs are generally implemented
- Links to IAP2's Empowerment level of engagement in the Public Participation Spectrum
- Opportunities for developers and technical experts to reveal their tools and skills around design and development in positive and applied ways.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education" Thomas Jefferson

11.6.2 Bang the Table and Newcastle's Railway Review

The following exemplar is taken directly from Bang the Table's case study "Newcastle Railway: Should it stay or should it go?" It is a very practical example that highlights the usefulness of online engagement in a community review process. The client was Minister for the Hunter, Jodi MacKay MP, the project was called Newcastle Rail Corridor Removal and the case study can be found at www.bangthetable.com/newcastlerail

Bang the Table was commissioned to engage the Newcastle community about the potential of removing a heavy rail line from the central business district of the city. While the rail line provides mass transit into the city centre, it is also perceived to physically divide that centre from the foreshore. The issue is complex and the arguments on different sides of the debate are sophisticated. It had been a contentious and high profile matter in the region for several years and had been re-elevated by an application for a large shopping centre development in the CBD, which sought the removal of the rail line.

The Minister had previously stated a preference for retaining the rail line, but was keen to hear from a broader audience than the regular letter writers and lobby groups, in light of the new development proposal – which had the potential to provide significant economic development benefits for the region by supporting an urban renewal process.

A Bang the Table/Newcastle Rail Corridor Removal web portal was established in two hours and went 'live' for consultation for four weeks. The Minister also sought direct feedback via an extensive door-knocking program and direct lobbying from special interest groups to the Minister, occurred. The site was promoted by the Minister using traditional media channels – the local broadsheet newspaper, local public radio etc by providing editorial content and live interviews. Special interest groups subsequently promoted the site via a range of online social media forums and by writing frequent Letters to the Editor.

The site was browsed by over 430 people in excess of 8000 times – both very large numbers given the localised nature of the issue and size of the local population. Over 800 people signed up to join the online discussion leaving 2800 comments and over 10,000 votes on ideas and comments raised by their fellow community members. More than 540 people voted in the online survey.

According to Bang the Table founders and Directors Crispin Butteriss and Matthew Crozier, the level of visitation and activity on the site was very high and provided a clear indication to the Minister that the public were very focussed on the issue. Crucially, support for the removal of the rail line, measured by the tenor of comments and votes, was around 70%. This contradicted accepted wisdom on the direction of public opinion.

A random, independent telephone survey was later conducted by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation on behalf of the proponents of the CBD development. The survey found that close to 70% of the population were in favour of removing the rail line.

As a result of this consultation, government policy on the future of the NSW Government policy on the future of the rail corridor has now changed.

11.7 Renewal Exemplars

Renewal is a key phase in integrated adaptive management processes, programs and projects, yet it is often overlooked in practice. If it is not undertaken, the core action learning stage of reflection and subsequent evolution are unlikely to occur. Renewal is often best done through conversation, dialogue and importantly, through creative and community arts processes – as presented in the following three snapshots.

11.7.1 City of Perth Community Forums – A snapshot

The City of Perth organises a program of community forums at various locations throughout Perth. These forums enable the community to express their views and hear the views of other community members on important city issues. In 2009, forums were held in four locations. Typically the forums are undertaken twice a year and usually commence at 6pm and conclude by 7pm. Approximately 30 people attend each forum. The presentation is delivered by the CEO and is followed by a question and answer session. The elected member for the area is available to assist with answering questions. Some of the topics that are discussed include: the strategic plan, local government amalgamations, weekend markets, infrastructure projects, car parking and new developments. The topics are tailored to the location of the forum. The forums are advertised on the council website, through a flyer drop to businesses and residents in the area, newspaper advertising and in council newsletters. No RSVP is required. The Corporate Support section of the council organises the general community forums. This section also manages project-specific forums and community engagement activities.

For further information visit: www.cityofperth.wa.gov.au/web/Council/Community-Forums/

11.7.2 City of Melbourne: Melbourne Conversations – A snapshot

Since 2001, the City of Melbourne has undertaken a program of community forums called Melbourne Conversations. These forums are led by an acclaimed local guest speaker. This is followed by a question and answer session which allows the audience to have their say on current city issues. The forums also provide an opportunity to form informal networks of active citizens. Some of the topics that have been discussed at previous events include: homelessness, gender issues, the nature of our democracy, land rights, human rights, religion, sustainability, the financial crisis, terrorism, peak oil issues, international students and the arts. Topics are jointly developed with external partners including state government departments, universities, philanthropic organisations, professional associations, international conferences, festivals, galleries and local community and arts organisations. The events are usually held at BMW Edge at Federation Square, Melbourne Town Hall or at other city-base venues. Since its inception, there have been over 130 Melbourne Conversation events held which over 40,000 people have attended.

www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/Whatson/conversations/Pages/conversations.aspx

11.7.3 River Dart Poem for the Millenium

This project was inspired by work the award-winning UK poet Alice Oswald did with local schools, in which she provided one strand of a long poem and got the children to provide the rest. As a result, she ultimately created an epic poem about the River Dart in Devon, using the voices of all the people who live and work alongside it (see Oswald, A., 2002, "The Dart"). One of the aims of this poem was to reconnect the Local Imagination to its environment - in particular, during years of water shortages and floods, to increase people's awareness of water as a natural resource. But she was also interested, for its own sake, in the idea of a many-voiced poem, a poem that benefits from the freshness and expertise of ordinary people.

Oswald worked with the following groups: Dartmoor prisoners, monks from Buckfastleigh, plumbers and water-purifiers at Dartington and students at the College of Arts, sewage workers, conservationists, workers at the Unigate milk factory and the Totnes industrial estate, railway employees, pleasure-boat drivers, foresters and special needs children from Sharpham, farmers, canoers and swimmers, bell-ringers at Stoke Gabriel, coarse fishers, crab fishers, South West Water Authority, shop-workers, boat-repairers, coastguards and cadets at the Naval College and foreign workers on factory ships in the bay. She also enabled school children to speak on behalf of the animals and insects of the Dart, and the thousands of oak trees which give the river its name. Note, this project was significantly based on community arts and cultural development processes.

Excerpt from Alice Oswald's Interim Project Report - 1999

"Last year, I applied for money to write a poem about the River Dart. My idea was to orchestrate it like a kind of jazz, with various river-workers and river-dwellers composing their own parts. The result was to be a river's story, from source to mouth, written by the whole Dart community.

After working at this for a couple of months, I began to think it was people's living, unselfconscious voices, not their poems, that were most awake to the river. At any rate, some people were overflowing with poetry and some people had a beautiful, technical way of talking about the river; but the two didn't often coincide.

So I decided to take along a tape-recorder. At the moment, my method is to tape a conversation with someone who works on the Dart, then go home and write it down from memory. I then work with these two kinds of record - one precise, one distorted by the mind - to generate the poem's language. It's experimental and very against my grain, this mixture of journalism and imagination, but the results are exciting. Above all, it preserves the idea of the poem's voice being everyone's, not just the poet's.

I've spoken to a huge amount of people. Only a selection of these has found their way into the poem; forester, boat-builder, ecologist, stone-waller, sewage area-manager, canoe-instructor, seal watcher, fisheries officer, salmon fisher, archaeologist.... All are 'working' voices. This reflects my preoccupation with Work as a power-line for language. When a sewage worker talks of liquid being 'clarified', when a fisheries officer talks of the water 'riffing' or a stone-waller says 'scrudging', those words have never had such flare.

Over the past six months, I've concentrated on people in the Totnes area, because of having a small child and no car. I now have two small children and no car, but am beginning to move downriver to talk to people

between Sharpham and Dartmouth. These places are relatively well served by buses. The upper stretches of the river are hard both to research and to reach. I've begun putting out requests for information in two Dartmoor journals, but I shan't be able to follow these up till next year.

I'm now at a point where I can see the shape of what's emerging - a river-map of voices, like an aboriginal songline. The oral nature of the work is very important to me. I'd like the end-result to be performed, not necessarily published. But I certainly can't predict when that will be.

Thank you very much to the Poetry Society for supporting me in this project. It's the most rewarding and surprising work I've ever undertaken."

- Alice Oswald, May 1999

<http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/archives/places/dart/>

"After working at this for a couple of months, I began to think it was people's living, unselfconscious voices, not their poems, that were most awake to the river"

Alice Oswald, Poet

Section 12

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Interviews

Margaret Spriggs – Program Manager, Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children Program

Darren Hayman – Asset Manager Coordinator, Gold Coast Water (check Darren's correct title)

Crispin Butteris – Director, Bang the Table

Rachael Uhr – Social Policy Officer, Local Government Association of Queensland (informal discussion)

Colin Russo – Community Consultation Coordinator, Gold Coast City Council

Julie Harris – A/Executive Coordinator Regional Planning and Urban Design, Gold Coast City Council

Julie Grimson, Corporate and Community Engagement, City of Sydney

Deborah Rice, Committee Member and Forum Organiser, Southern Regions Community Leadership Group
Natasha Hilton, Governance Coordinator Corporate Support, City of Perth
Sustainable Developer
Annette Mills, Sustainable Corvallis – email questions and answers