Co-Creating Stronger Social and Community Services in Regional Queensland

community*central*

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ENERGISING
Communities

Executive Summary

On 17 April 2013 at the Ithaca Hall, a workshop was convened to explore what government, social planners, resource companies and community and social service providers could do to deliver stronger services in regional Queensland.

The event was attended by thirty – six senior representatives from key organisations in these sectors across Central and Western Queensland, Mackay, Gladstone, Hervey Bay, Brisbane, Logan and the Gold Coast.

"Rather than focusing on more money lets spend it differently"

The top strategies emerging to create stronger social and community services were:

- An on-going partnership approach across the four sectors to planning for, and delivery of, social and community services
- More frequent, cross-sector collaboration for strategic regional planning
- Building the capacity within the social and community services industry for representatives to be able to strategically advocate their needs and plan with other sectors
- Development of standardised data sharing, the use of data, establishment of measurement frameworks to monitor impacts and/or track service performance
- Advocacy and advisory from state and local government on behalf of social and community service providers.

To deliver these outcomes it was suggested that the State government be approached to consider enabling *Royalties for the Region* funding allocated for social infrastructure to also be available to enable strategic planning sessions to occur across the four sectors in regional areas.

These sessions could reveal operational efficiencies for service delivery, enable knowledge and systems sharing, identify joint training opportunities, business partnerships, more strategic investment across a region and service incubation support.

In addition local governments and resource proponents in known regions (Surat, Bowen Basin, Galilee Basin) could collaborate more at a regional level to ensure social impacts were mitigated at a regional level and that adequate support and consideration were given to the on-going delivery of social and community services. The need for data and measurement frameworks to benchmark progress in the social and community services sector was highlighted.

"We all have the same goal – Better Social Outcomes"

Workshop Overview

Community Central and Energising Communities initiated a workshop to bring together a diverse range of professionals who have a direct influence and impact on social and community services outcomes.

"It's about doing things differently"

The workshop was in response to discussions held by both organisations with many rural social and community service providers who are experiencing difficulties including an ability to attract and retain staff, meet increasing demand for services, undertake strategic planning and deal with the escalating social issues arising from the resources boom. The professionals invited to the workshop included representatives from social planning, not for profit social and community service organisations, resource companies, research companies and local government.

The aim of the workshop was to capture what the four key industry sectors – resource, government, social planners and social and community service providers thought could be done differently to support social/community service delivery in rural Queensland and present the workshop outcomes, if appropriate, post a participants review, to the Premier's Office.

To set the scene **Mr Mark Henley**, CEO, Queensland Council of Social Services presented on Social and Community Service Research and Emerging Trends. Providing a snapshot of other roles and responsibilities in contributing to social and community services were:

- Resource Sector

  Ms Bronwyn Story: Community Development & Environment Policy Adviser, Queensland Resources Council

- Local Government

  Mr Logan Timms: Team Leader Advocacy - Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations, Local Government Association of Queensland

- Social Planning

  Ms Andrea Young: Social Planning Chapter representative, Planning Institute of Australia

Following the presentations facilitated table discussions occurred.

To build understanding between participants the first two discussions focussed on the strengths of the four sectors followed by each professional giving an example of how they in their professional capacity had provided a local solution that contributed to a stronger social or community outcome. The results of these discussions are the verbatim summaries captured by each table's recorder.

"We need to be supporting each other to achieve our goals"

Q1. What are the strengths of your industry in contributing to community and social service outcomes?				
	Social and Community Service	Resources	Government	Social Planning
Group 1	• Individual focus • Linking to community and other services	• Place based solutions • Presence in community • Funds - $$ • Innovation of service delivery	• Place based solutions • Grass roots relationships • Proactive planning • Influential social outcomes through project design	• Providing an evidence based practice • Influential social outcomes through project design
Group 2	• Cohesion and positive catalyst • Enable liveability and sustainability • Brokerage model • Provision of solutions	• Commitment to community investment	• (Local Gov.) Brokerage, strong partnership model with community • (State/ Federal) strategic approaches to funding	• Skills/ Experience in articulating needs and responsibilities • Holistic approach to a "liveable" community
Group 3	• Intellectual property • Collaboration skills • Local knowledge – inform local decision making and place based responses	• Willingness to collaborate • Financial contribution • Legislative commitment • Accountability	• Coordination • Facilitating outcomes • Transparency • Legislative framework	• Planning and research • Strategic overview • Measure social outcomes
Group 4	• Close to local people • Experienced workers / expertise in vulnerability understand what works / doesn't • Proactive community development approach • Collaborate • Partner • Information to build evidence base. Systems may not make best use/support. • Significant part of local economy	• Diversity of approach (+ve,-ve) • Employment • Capital investment • Conditioned to provide affordable housing by DG • Resources Council can address cumulative impacts of several projects	• Advocate • Leverage • Marshal community voice • Identify population influx/impacts and advocate for your social infrastructure and resources • Bring parties to the table • Independent body/licences to everybody • Close to people • Understand local impacts • Conditions of approval • Address cumulative impacts	• Evidence of what is happening • Understanding needs and capacities • Anticipating how change may affect capacities • Provides leverage to set resources to mitigate impacts • Identify connections and bring CD procedures • Social impact assessment (good and bad) • Commitment to follow through • Entity to influence approach • Need to maintain a strong legislative and policy framework to support social outcomes
Group 5	• Hear what the community is doing and identify needs at systemic areas local and state-wide • Can see policy and trend issues and impacts • Coalface of people with issues • Humanity and stories • Identifiers of gaps in service provision • Deliver services • Local knowledge	• Money, planners and people • Some objectivity • Develop skills and partnerships • Capacity building - learn the language	• Local government close to the community • Multi-faceted • State government can understand the big picture • Frontline (local) framework	• Cost benefit • Neutrality and objectivity • Conduit between many areas

Q2. Each person should reflect on how they applied their professional strengths to provide a local solution that supported or delivered better regional social outcomes and share their story.					
	Social and Community Service	Resources	Government	Social Planning	Project Design
Group 1	• Matching skills, Interest and capacity • Re-engagement into community	• Ability to leverage funds with local and state government	• Community planning and engagement • Implementation	• Integrating different professional views into planning	• Reframing the problem
Group 2	• Regional collaborative approaches to energising communities (LGAQ) • Sourcing credible partners and companies to move beyond traditional business model • Facilitating business incubation for local business owners • Institution building - NFP's to initiate model • Local ownership on regional solutions "Roads to Recovery Program"				
Group 3	• Horizon – Local Roma office, work with private sector-Miles • QCOSS – Set up project , purchasing power to local business (local contact) • Church Resources – Provide tools for local purchasing (negotiating, benchmarking) • Arrow – Indigenous businesses - skills and capacity. Endeavour Foundation – "Latch On". • Mackay – Networking. Mapping stakeholder motivation. Involved in planning stages of projects. Share resources and knowledge regionally. Advocate policies and programs. Build capacity of the sector. • CSIRO – Measuring social licenses to operate. Feed into communication. Research perceptions and acceptance.				
Group 4	• Gladstone Affordable Housing – Partnered with BHC (Brisbane Housing Company) - True Partnership. Tenancy management of BHC. Professionalise workforce/organisation. • Mackay Regional Housing – Council formulated HC and handed over council stock, plus state sourced housing. Influence via both roles/advocate for housing company. Board members tap into ULDA and council to obtain land and source finance. Job tendered. Buy in from different areas. Established separate company to manage affordable housing and negotiated donation from council to legal costs. • Mount Arthur Coal; Hunter Valley: SIA – Evidence. Housing issue in region. Demonstrated company affect and cumulative effects. Dialogue & Collaboration between mining companies, housing, state and local Gov., NSW Minerals Council. Provided strategy (small contribution) and beginning to build understanding/relationships. • Gas Company; Several – Interest in developing community planning network capacity. Lack of resources /experience. Local Gov. responding to recent amalgamation. Need for coordination. Opportunity for Royalties to Regions to not just fund infrastructure.				

After having focussed on the strengths and solutions delivered, participants were asked to identify what they needed to overcome to deliver better social outcomes. In addition the group was asked to focus on what needed to continue or could be done differently to deliver stronger social and community services. In asking Question 4 participants were asked to look beyond funding as the sole differentiator. As time was limited some groups only focussed on Question 4.

Q3. From your professional sector's perspective, what do you need to overcome to deliver or contribute to better social outcomes?					
	Social and Community Service	Resources	Government	Social Planning	Project Design
Group 1	• Responsibility/ Ownership	• Better integrate social outcomes to social project design at the beginning of project ensuring linkages and strategies to regional and strategic frameworks	• Limited funding in public purse • Breaking down barriers	• Benefits and managing Social Impact	• Challenge business as usual/ shared process
Group 2	• 'Territoriality' and collaboration • Competitive funding • Networking/ Self-understanding in sector (how and who to work with)	• N/A	• Funding/ Resources • High community expectations	• Certainty • Capacity building • Professional support and knowledge building	• N/A
Group 3	• Change services/infrastructure funding models so that it supports collaboration • Collaboration with the private sector (could do more)	• Access to the latest information	• Skills human resources • Funding	• Access to the latest information	• N/A
Group 4	• Finance • Struggling to keep pace with demand • Operational to strategic view • Lack of skills to conduct/undertake strategic work - lose opportunity • Lots of talk but does not translate into action (sometimes) • Imbalance between paid/skilled prof's v's unpaid volunteers? (sometimes)	• Not wanting to take on others responsibilities/liability (cultural) • Competing interests (competitive), limited view to individual projects, not regions	• Inadequate resourcing to support forward planning at a meaningful level of detail • Commitment to action • Commitment to real partnering	• Fragmented approach (project to project assessment).	N/A
Group 5	• Focused on Question 4				

Q4. After considering your sector's strengths, how you have positively contributed and having outlined barriers to delivery – What does the sector need to do more of or differently to deliver stronger social outcomes?				
	Social and Community Service	Resources	Government	• Social planning
Group 1	• Communication of needs and partnerships • Focus	• Creating partnerships and integrating planning with stakeholders for sustainable outcomes	• Bottom up themed advocacy	• Evidence based value of doing it differently
Group 2	• Data • Advocacy • Collaboration • Directories	• Data • Social investment "CSR"	• Advocacy (State/ Federal) • Data • Strategic view • Planning	• Data • Capacity building • Skills *All 4 Sectors together provide a Business Case for Action*
Group 3	• Market the skills • Conversations about motivation, ethics and shared values • Building relationships across the groups • Shared values • Time to engage • Creating purposeful engagement with clear agenda, timeframes, purpose and measures	• Measuring impacts • Evaluating, capturing impacts • Conflicting priorities • Commercial benefits • Employment of non-resource workers in regional communities • More land, money and resources • Susceptible to Global commodity prices	• Renewal and networking collaboration and service agreements • Local government coordination at a local level - bringing all parties together • Skilled human resources • Better data collection • Local government role in regional planning and funding to do it	• Geographic leadership - centrally • Use of consistent, up to date data (regional) • Role: set a strategic approach, analysis at a regional level • Research: educated/strategic thinking, value of investing in collecting data, Finance to conduct research
Group 4	• Community planning – Vehicle to support forward planning (local government, industry, community, NGO's, state government) • Regional plans used; filters to other areas for planning purpose. • Royalties for Regions; direct funds to support forward planning to coordinate management of social impacts and achieve preferred social outcomes • Stakeholders – peak bodies, QRCM Government, Community LGAQ, QCOSS Initiate process etc. • Partnership approaches reduce costs /the spend, builds trust • Formal arrangements (MOU's and binding agreements) vs relationships (not just one person) • How do we mitigate this to ensure continuance of process/agreements? • Must be related and involve decision makers of all organisations and companies. • Continuing local conversations with stakeholders			
Group 5	• Community as a stakeholder • Direct communication with people who can do something • Someone prepared to take the lead • Matching causes and sustaining support • Preventative vs crisis mentality • Collaboration rather than silo mentality/gatekeeping • Money - local investment	• Clear messages and expectations • Increase capacity and capability • Shared language • Shared community indicators with evidence and examples	• State Gov. - more direct engagement with SCS and Resources • Wrap around performance plan • Increase Capacity and capability • Long term visioning • Parallel planning • Portfolio boundaries (silos) • Quality and SIMPs	• Local content • Full and frank advice • Timeframes; mastering expectations and money.

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Workshop Outcomes

The clear themes emerging from the workshop (particularly in response to Question 4) were of:

- An on-going partnership approach across the four sectors to planning for, and delivery of, social and community services
- More frequent, cross-sector collaboration for strategic regional planning
- Building the capacity within the social and community services industry for representatives to be able to strategically advocate their needs and plan with other sectors
- Development of standardised data sharing, the use of data, establishment of measurement frameworks to monitor impacts and/or track service performance
- Advocacy and advisory from state and local government on behalf of social and community service providers.

"We need to advocate together"

While cross sector conversations can be facilitated by any of the four sectors represented and measurement frameworks agreed, the funding for building capacity and strategic planning could be supported through money already allocated by State government to the *Royalties for the Region Program*. With funding allocated by this program for social infrastructure, the question to be asked is "Could councils seek this funding for strategic planning forums?" These forums would bring together key disciplines to determine the delivery of social and community services, as well as build the capacity within the services sector to be able to advocate more strategically for long-term outcomes which can be measured. In addition, "Can the resource sector operate at a regional level and bring together all resource proponents or operators in a region to have a strategic planning session with councils and state government to determine where time, money and professional support can be allocated to contribute to stronger social and community service outcomes?"

Through the expectations outlined at the beginning of the workshop the need for conversation, the sharing of ideas, networking and building understanding and moving beyond sectors delivering in silos was stated clearly.

This need was reflected by senior professionals across all sectors represented across the State at the event. The workshop hosts were grateful for the input of such senior professionals within the industry and for these stakeholders to make the time to have this important conversation.

The participants' expectations have been reflected in the comments captured with solutions offered. Some excellent examples of locally based solutions which can be replicated are highlighted in section 2. Together this existing body of work and the suggested ways forward to deliver social outcomes can be applied.

Community Central and Energising Communities are keen that the comments made do not remain embedded in this summary document but are applied by the sectors that were represented at the forum.

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About the hosts:
Community Central was established in 2007 to provide cost effective service solutions to the Health and Community Services Industry.
Energising Communities is an organisation committed to strengthening rural communities through business and marketing services.

Participants

Organisation	Attendance
Aecom	2
Arrow Energy	1
Brisbane City Council	1
Busy at Work	2
Central Highlands Regional Council	1
Central Queensland Local Government Association	1
Church Resources	1
Community Central	3
CSIRO Earth Sciences and Resource Engineering Division	1
Department of Premier and Cabinet	1
Energising Communities	1
Horizon Housing	1
Lifestream Foundation	1
Local Government Association of Queensland	1
Mackay Regional Housing Company	2
Office of the Coordinator General	1
Planning Institute of Australia	2
Playgroup Queensland	1
Queensland Council of Social Services	2
Queensland Resources Council	1
Queensland Shelter	2
Roseberry Community Services in Gladstone	1
Santos	1
Sinclair Knight Merz	1
Wafi-Golpu Services Ltd	1
Waminda Services	1
Wesley Mission Brisbane	1
Western Downs Council	1