

# Building from the basics: approaches to governance and collaboration in Australian Collective Impact initiatives

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## Glossary of terms

For the purposes of this report, unless specified otherwise, the following terms are understood as follows.

backbone organisation	one of the five conditions of Collective Impact. An organisation or group of people focused on coordinating the various aspects and stakeholders involved in an initiative.
Collective Impact	a framework for joined-up approaches to effect changes at the community level, described by John Kania and Mark Kramer in 2011.
common agenda	one of the five conditions of Collective Impact. A shared vision for change including a common agreement on the problem and a shared approach to solving it.
community	the population of a geographically contained area. Please note, for the purposes of this paper, community is a geographical concept rather than an ethnic, religious or socio-cultural concept.
community level data	data about the population of a geographically contained area; data related to local populations.
data	a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables.
impact	the longer term outcomes (effects or consequences) of an activity or service.
indicator	a measurable marker that shows whether progress has been made towards achieving an outcome.
mutually reinforcing activities	one of the five conditions of Collective Impact. Activities carried out by members of the initiative that are

	directed towards the common agenda and founded on the shared measurement framework.
outcome	an expected end result, consequence or effect
shared measurement framework	one of the five conditions of Collective Impact. A shared set of measures to track performance, monitor progress and obtain feedback on efficacy of projects and strategies.
targets	desired level of change in an indicator or outcome; benchmark that is set as an aim

## Executive summary

This report presents findings from a research project conducted by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) on the topic of collaboration and governance within and between Collective Impact (CI) initiatives in Australia. It combines a rapid literature review with qualitative data to describe the governance structures and approaches to collaboration by CI initiatives from each state and territory.

A previous report conducted by ARACY focused on the use of community level data by CI initiatives (Gill & Smith, 2017). For that report, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from nine CI initiatives. Findings from those interviews were used, alongside findings from five further interviews; two with previously interviewed representatives, and the rest with representatives from two further organisations engaged for this report.

Interviewees were asked a number of questions relating to: governance and funding structures, stakeholder engagement, collaborative processes, and general comments regarding barriers and facilitators of collaboration.

## Key findings

Key findings and considerations emerging from the qualitative interviews and rapid literature review include the following.

- All of the organisations are part of formal or informal networks of CI initiatives. These networks share key knowledge and experience. As such, most organisations have similar governance structures, with some differences to account for specific location or context variation.
- Trusting relationships are core to successful collaboration. These can either be pre-existing or developed in the early stages of the initiative, but they must be consistently maintained.
- Collaborative efforts require an authorising environment that allows for place-based responses to broad policy allows initiatives and services to meet the specific needs of a community.

- The collection and use of data supports collaboration by creating an urgency for change, highlighting core issues, tracking program success, and driving shared decision making.
- Collaboration enables a greater sense of stakeholder ownership, which can increase engagement in, and sustainability of, CI initiatives.
- Building organisational collaborative capacity through governance structures, training and induction processes mitigates overreliance on key informal relationships or specific individuals.
- Agreement within government based on improved communication within and between relevant departments would support confidence in a common agenda. This would, in turn, support more successful and effective collaboration between government agencies and CI initiatives.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of both the literature review and the qualitative interviews, a number of pathways have emerged through which collaboration and collaborative governance in CI initiatives can be enhanced and supported.

CI initiatives are dependent upon collaboration between a broad range of stakeholders from government, services, business, philanthropy, and community. Depending upon the specific context, CI initiatives engage with a large number of government agencies, which can lead to potential barriers in communication and coordination. **The establishment of a core relationship manager for government funded CI initiatives** would provide a key point of contact for each initiative in their engagement with agencies. They would act on behalf of the funding agency of government and engage with the government agencies whose involvement is required to support the aims of the initiative.

This streamlined communication and decision making process can be enhanced through the **promotion of collaborative capacity building both within key government agencies and within CI initiatives**. This could be in the form of training through webinars or workshops, professional leadership development, and opportunities for mentorships and networking.

To ensure that collaborative processes are effective and lead to improved outcomes, **quality assurance and improvement mechanisms may be put in place through the development or adoption of collaborative health assessment tools**. This



evaluation can be embedded into contract arrangements, with provision for funding to support the development, evaluation, and sustainability of collaboration.

## Introduction

Theory and practice indicates that collaboration is an effective strategy to address complex and interrelated problems involving multiple stakeholders. It is also a way of working that involves systems change, power shifts, and well-considered and maintained governance structures. Integral to successful collaboration is the existence of trusting relationships, ongoing communication, and shared purpose. The development of collaborative governance structures, however, can be a difficult process, hindered by barriers such as organisational cultures, individual capacity, and power dynamics.

Developers and organisers of Collective Impact (CI) initiatives have, in the six years since the concept's creation, developed governance templates that are adapted and used by most new initiatives. These structures are designed to support the five conditions of CI (common agenda, shared measurement framework, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, backbone organisation and function on the basis of collaboration. Two elements in particular – governance and collaboration – are important to ensure effective outcomes for communities through CI. David Lilley, Collective Impact consultant for United way Australia, suggests that, "a desire for change in the community" and the fact that, "[services], government, business and philanthropy are prepared to work collaboratively with the community to achieve change" are essential prerequisites for an initiative to be successful (Lilley, 2017).

Collaboration occurs at multiple levels, with the founders of CI outlining the need for an influential champion who can coordinate high-level cross-sector leaders and maintain their interest and engagement (Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012). Others, including the people interviewed, highlight the importance of collaboration with community from the outset as well as communication and shared learning with other initiatives and peak bodies (LeChasseur, 2016).

This report draws and builds on previous research into the collection and use of community level data by CI initiatives in Australia (Gill & Smith, 2017). The initial report highlighted that data use supports improved child, family and community outcomes. Looking further into improved outcomes, this report provides an outline of the current governance structures and forms of collaboration that are in place within and amongst CI initiatives across Australia and how these initiatives are using collaboration to "move the needle" in key areas of child, youth and family wellbeing.

For the previous report, representatives from nine Australian CI initiatives were interviewed, informed by evidence from international initiatives. The information from these interviews was also used to inform the current report. Further evidence from international initiatives in relation to governance and collaboration informed additional interviews with three of the original representatives, as well as interviews with representatives from two further Australian initiatives. Drawing on the findings from those interviews, this report explores key points related to stakeholder engagement, governance structures and capacity building. It then outlines the identified barriers and facilitators to effective collaboration in the support of successful outcomes for children, families and communities.

A key point to emerge from the research was the interrelated and non-linear nature of governance and collaboration. Whilst good governance supports collaboration, successful governance is not possible without an initial collaborative groundwork. Coordination, meanwhile, emerged as an element of collaboration; something that is already carried by service providers and supports effective collaboration.

## Methodology

This report builds on the research conducted for *Data and community: How Collective Impact initiatives in Australia use data to support action* (Gill & Smith, 2017), with five further interviews conducted with three previous interviewees and two representatives of newly contacted organisations. As such, the methodology for this paper closely aligns with that of the previous paper and is provided in Appendix 1.

## Overview of current evidence

Collaboration, and collaborative governance, is leveraged by organisations, communities, and initiatives across a range of sectors. As such, the literature reviewed goes beyond CI, but remains focused on collaborative practices that improve community outcomes and in particular those outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

Whilst developers, practitioners, and researchers of CI are referenced, industry and academic leaders in the fields of collaboration and leadership for improved community outcomes are also drawn on.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is a creative process that involves a commitment to building trust, sharing power and continuously communicating in a way that delivers improved outcomes in response to complex issues (Aigner, 2013; Gillam, Counts & Garstka, 2016; Hicks, Wilkinson & Snyder, 2016; Lilley, 2017). In this way, collaboration is not a goal, but instead a means by which to optimise service delivery and, by extension, community outcomes in response to specific and complex problems.

### *The importance of collaboration within CI initiatives*

CI initiatives involve a wide range of stakeholders with diverse perspectives, capacities and intentions. It is based on the idea that more can be achieved by a group of people working together than by individual service providers trying, “to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other and exponentially increasing the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress” (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 38). In order to effectively work together, it is vital that silos are broken down between sectors and partners work together within the five conditions of CI. These conditions – a common agenda, a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and a backbone organisation – both require and create a climate of collaboration. This makes collaboration essential to successful functioning of a CI initiative and, by extension, the intended improvement of outcomes for children, families and communities.

A key element espoused by some within CI is the intention to involve community members at every stage of the development and delivery of programs and initiatives

(Cabaj & Weaver, 2016). This is emphasised by theorists and practitioners as a means to address the disconnect that can occur between community members and initiative leaders (Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016). Involving community members - and in particular those with lived experience of the issues being addressed - in design, decision-making and delivery ensures that planning is not made solely by those in positions of privilege and power (LeChasseur, 2016). Misguided assumptions about what is needed are reduced, and the community feel a greater sense of ownership with regards to the initiative (LeChasseur, 2016; Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016). This final point increases the likelihood for the initiative to be sustainable and create, "lasting positive change" (Walzer, Weaver & McGuire, 2016).

### *Stakeholders involved*

CI requires the engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders with a range of cross-sector perspectives. The specific stakeholders involved in an initiative depend on the particular community context, but there is a common emphasis on engaging a mix of government, community, non-profit, business, and philanthropic representatives, as well as those people with lived experience of the issues being addressed (Kania, Hanleybrown & Splansky Juster, 2014).

### *Ways to support collaboration*

A number of strategies to support collaboration have been identified in the literature. Writing for the Tamarack Institute, Cabaj and Weaver suggest that an essential component of CI is the focus on a "**movement-building approach**" (2016, p. 4). This is in contrast to a managerial, top-down approach in the delivering of services and programs. A movement-building approach involves centring cross sector and multi-level collaboration involving a diverse mix of stakeholders, not solely traditional institutions or those "in seats of power" (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016, p. 4). Furthermore, there is an emphasis on common values and narratives in order to build trust and mutual responsibility (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016).

**Trusting relationships** are a key element of successful collaboration; the existence of informal relationships, which involve friendly interactions outside organisational structures, have been found to be the only factor which, on its own, can ensure collaboration between parties (Gillam, Counts & Garstka, 2016, p. 220). Informal relationships help create a group purpose, enable stakeholders to have difficult conversations, and provides a stable foundation that ensures greater chances of survival during times of crisis or uncertainty (Gillam, Counts & Garstka, 2016). It is important, therefore, that collaborations are either built on a foundation of existing

relationships – both formal and informal - or that connections, trust and relationships are explicitly developed and maintained in the early stages and into the future (Blignault, Hawell & Pulver, 2016; Hicks, Wilkinson & Snyder, 2016).

Relationships and trust are based in, and created by, **communication**. Wood suggests that, “[change] occurs more readily when...different actors involved in community problem-solving - government, non-profits, and informal organizations - have consistency and coordinate their activities...through ongoing communication, learning, and feedback” (2016, p. 198).

Gillam et al. outline that a **backbone organisation** is necessary to help explicitly support collaborative processes (Gillam, Counts & Garstka, 2016). These organisations require time and resources in order to implement and manage change; the authors cited evidence that collaboratives where, for example, nine per cent of each organisation’s funding was set aside to support partnerships, were more successful (Purcal, Muir, Patulny, Thomson & Flaxman, 2011, cited in Gillam, Counts and Garstka, 2016).

Evaluation of collaborative work can also determine the success of a collaboration and help to identify areas where improvement is needed (Marek, Brock, & Savla, 2015). Due to the fact that collaboration works best when all elements are functioning, the ability to assess the health and relative strengths or weaknesses of all areas of a collaborative will lead to better outcomes (Marek, Brock, & Savla, 2015). The evaluation of a collaboration, however, requires assessment beyond “traditional performance measures” (Keast & Mandell, 2013a). Collaborative health assessment tools, which often take the form of a survey or questionnaire, are used to evaluate the relational and communication aspects of an organisation, initiative, or partnership (Keast & Mandell, 2013a; Marek, Brock, & Savla, 2015; VicHealth, 2016). The relational areas that should be evaluated by a collaborative health assessment tool have been identified in a fact sheet developed for ARACY as:

- the relationships and processes that enable collaboration
- the level of participation and engagement of collaboration members
- how well the structure of the collaboration allows participants to contribute to and influence the collaboration’s work and outcomes” (Keast & Mandell, 2013a, p. 1).

### *How data supports effective collaboration*

Data can be used to support effective collaboration in a number of ways. It can support and inform decision making processes, create an urgency for change, support improved collaborative leadership by providing opportunities for working together to set strategic direction, and encourage mutual action and responsibility through breaking down of silos.

Wood outlines two American initiatives that were successful in part due to the use of data. The Alliance for Building Community in Quincy, Illinois began collecting data on a number of indicators. One of those, childhood obesity, emerged as a key area of concern and became a focus “only after a review of critical community indicators” (Wood, 2016, p. 200). Making decisions based on data has the potential to draw a broad range of stakeholders together around a mutual point of interest and support collaboration between partners who may otherwise resist partnership. Wood goes on to outline that data is also a vital aspect of creating an urgency for change as it can highlight the severity of a problem to both the community and service providers (Wood, 2016).

Measurement frameworks can work to help track progress and provide stakeholders with mutual accountability. Results Based Accountability and Results Based Leadership (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016) both provide a consistent framework against which to track and improve outcomes. In this way, stakeholders have access to a feedback loop in which they are able to recognise that increased collaboration can lead to enhanced results.

The use of data in this way has proven to be a success in the New Zealand Public Service. The Better Public Service Results program, implemented in 2012 by the New Zealand government, is a series of ten interagency performance targets that are designed to encourage collective responsibility and increased commitment to cross-agency and multi-level collaboration within the New Zealand Public Service (Scott & Boyd, 2017). Agencies were consulted on the identification of the ten indicators, four of which are directly focused on the wellbeing of children and young people. Table 1 presents a summary of the results and targets from a working paper by the New Zealand State Sector Performance Hub, which is based in the State Service Commission. ‘Results’ is used by the initiative to describe the desired outcome, while the term ‘target’ outlines the required degree of change. Each result is categorised into a ‘result area’ and leaders of the relevant agencies are, “collectively responsible for achieving the targets” (Scott & Boyd, 2017, p. 7). This collective responsibility requires collaboration and the development of a crosscutting strategic direction.

This collective identification and focus on a few problems that have a broad impact, which are tracked using a shared measurement system, resulted in more commitment from agencies and increased leverage of trusting relationships. The explicit use of data through feedback loops and the sharing of success stories enhanced motivation. This led to “dramatic improvements for all 10 results” (Donaldson, 2017). This demonstrates that using data against shared goals and indicators can enhance collaboration, which will in turn improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.



**Table 1: Results and Targets of the New Zealand Better Public Service Results Program**

Result area	Result	Targets
<b>Reducing long-term welfare dependence</b>	1. Reduce the number of people who have been on a working age benefit for more than 12 months	Reduce the number of people continuously receiving working-age benefits for more than 12 months by 30%
<b>Supporting vulnerable children</b>	2. Increase participation in early childhood education 3. Increase infant immunisation rates and reduce the incidence of rheumatic fever 4. Reduce the number of assaults on children	98% of children starting school will have participated in quality early childhood education. Increase infant immunisation rates so that 95 of eight-months-olds are fully immunised and reduce the incidence of rheumatic fever by two thirds. The 10-year rise in children experiencing physical abuse will be halted and current numbers reduced by 5%.
<b>Boosting skills and employment</b>	5. Increase the proportion of 18-year-olds with NCEA level 2 or equivalent qualification 6. Increase the proportion of 25 to 34-year-olds with advanced trade qualifications, diplomas and degrees (at level 4 or above)	85% of 18 year olds will have achieved NCEA level 2 or an equivalent qualification 55% of 25 to 34-year-olds will have a qualification at level 4 or above
<b>Reducing crime</b>	7. Reduce the rates of total crime, violent crime and youth crime 8. Reduce reoffending	Reduce the crime rate by 15% AND reduce the violent crime rate by 20% AND reduce the youth crime rate by 5% Reduce the re-imprisonment rate by 25%
<b>Improving interaction with government</b>	9. New Zealand businesses have a one-stop online shop for all government advice and support they need to run and grow their business 10. New Zealanders can complete their transactions with the Government easily in a digital environment	Business costs from dealing with government will reduce by 25%  An average of 70% of the most common transactions with government will be completed in a digital environment (up from 29.9% baseline)

(Scott & Boyd, 2016, p.6-7).

## Governance

The standard governance structure for CI initiatives follows a similar template, with each organisation adapting their structures to fit their particular requirements. The most common structure has, at the top, a committee that leads the strategic direction and common agenda of the initiative, meeting regularly to oversee progress (Bridgespan, 2012; Collaboration for Impact, n.d.a; Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012). This committee, often called a leadership group or collaborative table, is made up of cross-sector stakeholders, including people from the community with lived experience of the issue being addressed. These individuals may have already been developing a relationship, or they may have been brought together by, for example, an influential champion (Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012). This influential champion (or champions), according to Hanleybrown et al., needs to, “[command] the respect necessary to bring CEO-level cross-sector leaders together and keep their active engagement over time” (Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012, p. 30). In addition, the engagement of community stakeholders is a key objective, with some suggesting that it should occur before the convening of sector leaders (Collaboration for Impact, 2012).

The cross-sector leadership group often oversees the activities of sub-committees that are focused on specific issues or areas of interest. These are commonly known as working groups or action groups. They are responsible for coordinating and driving the improvement of their specific outcome areas in line with the common agenda and shared measurement system. These groups are made up of stakeholders with relevant expertise, knowledge or lived experience. These groups can be permanent or arise to deliver a specific program.

The activities and success of these action groups and the leadership group are facilitated by the backbone organisation. This is a neutral team that helps guide the direction of the initiative, facilitates dialogue and alignment between partners, manages data collection and analysis, supports continuous communication, coordinates community and stakeholder outreach, and mobilises funding (Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012). FSG – the consultancy responsible for developing collective Impact – and Greater Cincinnati foundation have developed 27 indicators of backbone effectiveness that align with these core capacities. These are presented verbatim in Table 2. Hanleybrown et al. outline that, ‘[Although] the core backbone functions are consistent across all of the collective impact initiatives we

have studied, they can be accomplished through a variety of different structures” (Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012, p. 6). This flexibility in the delivery of backbone functions can result in a variety of organisations or groups working together to deliver on the 27 indicators. It has been suggested that decentralising these tasks can potentially lead to enhanced collaboration as organisations may be more likely to focus on sharing of roles and power, instead of working within a central power structure (O’Neil & Graham, 2014). This sharing of roles, or leveraging of established structures, mitigates the potential for existing organisations to “feel less ownership and responsibility for the change effort” while also ensuring that resources are not needlessly directed towards to creation of a new entity (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016, p. 10). It is key to recognise, however, that the structure of a CI initiative will be dependent upon the needs and context of the specific community, and its success will be dependent upon the collaborative capacity of those partners involved:

“People who think that just having the key components of CI will lead to success are likely to be disappointed. The high need for a structured approach draws many to think that the CI approach is an answer to building successful collaboration and achieving outcomes. Because CI is based in systems and complexity theories, however, it does not function as an evidence-based model, where fidelity to a set of instructions or guidelines leads to success. Rather, success remains largely elusive, relying on participants to work together in generating solutions to complex social issues”

(Gillam, Counts & Garstka, 2016, p. 223)

Collaboration for Impact suggest engaging a ‘collaborative governance’ model, which places an emphasis on increasing trust and capacity. This is done by developing relationships, readiness and capability through facilitated co-design, co-creation and co-delivery efforts that take place within an environment of ‘appreciative mindsets [which are open to change, discussion and collaboration]’ and ‘deliberative processes’ (Collaboration for Impact, n.d. b).

Table 2: Backbone Effectiveness – 27 Indicators

Guide Vision and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners accurately describe the common agenda</li> <li>• Partners publicly discuss/advocate for common agenda goals</li> <li>• Partners' individual work is increasingly aligned with common agenda</li> <li>• Board members and key leaders increasingly look to backbone organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership</li> </ul>
Support Aligned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners <b>articulate their role</b> in the initiative</li> <li>• <b>Relevant stakeholders</b> are engaged in the initiative</li> <li>• Partners <b>communicate and coordinate</b> efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone</li> <li>• Partners report increasing levels of <b>trust</b> with one another</li> <li>• Partners increase <b>scope/type of collaborative work</b></li> <li>• Partners improve <b>quality</b> of their work</li> <li>• Partners improve <b>efficiency</b> of their work</li> <li>• Partners feel <b>supported and recognized</b> in their work</li> </ul>
Establish Shared Measurement Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared <b>data system</b> is in development</li> <li>• Partners <b>understand the value</b> of shared ideas</li> <li>• Partners have robust/shared <b>data capacity</b></li> <li>• Partners <b>make decisions</b> based on data</li> <li>• Partners <b>utilize data</b> in a meaningful way</li> </ul>
Build Public Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members are increasingly <b>aware</b> of the issue(s)</li> <li>• Community members express <b>support</b> for the initiative</li> <li>• Community members feel <b>empowered</b> to engage in the issue(s)</li> <li>• Community members increasingly <b>take action</b></li> </ul>

#### Advance Policy

- Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly **aware** of the initiative
- Target audience **advocate** for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals
- Public **policy** is increasingly **aligned** with initiative goals

#### Mobilize Funding

- Funders are asking non-profits to **align** to initiative goals
- Funders are **redirecting funds** to support initiative goals
- **New resources** from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiatives

Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation ([http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Backbone\\_Effectiveness\\_Indicators.pdf](http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Backbone_Effectiveness_Indicators.pdf))

## Qualitative research findings

### Interviews

Eleven interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organisations:

- Burnie Works (Tasmania)
- Communities for Children (Tasmania)
- Connecting Community for Kids (Western Australia)
- Go Goldfields (Victoria)
- Grow Well Live Well, City of Palmerston (Northern Territory)
- The Hive, Mount Druitt (New South Wales)
- Logan Together (Queensland)
- Maranguka (New South Wales)
- Sanderson Alliance (Northern Territory)
- Together SA (South Australia)
- West Belconnen Local Service Network (ACT)

The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, with the longer interviews usually being conducted with more than one stakeholder from the organisation at once. Whilst the intention was to work with well-established organisations, the lack of well-established initiatives in Australia resulted in some of the organisations being in the early phases of the collaborative process. This, however, provides an insight into the barriers at all stages and has highlighted that many of the issues are relevant regardless of stage. Details of each organisation is provided in Appendix 2.

### Types of governance structures in place

Whilst all eleven of the initiatives studied map their governance structures on the basic outline suggested by FSG, there are differences that have developed due to the unique contexts of each community. For the most part, these differences arose not as a result of conscious planning, but instead through development over time in response to context and the personalities and preferences of those involved. Go Goldfields, for example, went through a process of governance restructuring in order to better engage members of the community. In this way, governance structures are often evolving and adapting as CI initiatives further develop their practices and procedures.

In the production of this report, ARACY developed a preliminary categorisation of these structures in order to better analyse them. CI governance structures can be

understood as fitting into three broad working categories: linear, interconnected and adaptive. Some organisations, however, demonstrate elements of more than one category. Table 3 outlines the grouping of each organisation, while diagrams of most organisations' governance structures, grouped into categories, is provided in Appendix 4.

### *Linear*

This is the simplest form of governance; a leadership group that oversees individual action groups. These action groups, which are made up of people with expertise, knowledge and lived experience, are responsible for a specific issue and coordinate with service providers to establish responses to these issues. An individual or team, who carry out the key backbone functions, supports these two levels of governance. For some of these initiatives, reference groups and community advisors act as consultants and added sources of feedback. All groups and levels of governance, however, are porous, with individuals able to play more than one role.

### *Interconnected*

In interconnected governance structures, lines of communication and responsibility flow between and amongst different partners and groups within the initiative. In these initiatives, numerous groups or individuals who sit on the leadership or action groups may carry out the backbone functions.

### *Adaptive*

This structure is defined by its flexibility and responsiveness to context and need. In this governance structure action groups may only be created for specific time limited programs, while backbone functions may be carried out by a changing set of groups or individuals.

**Table 3: Collective Impact initiative governance structures**

<b>Governance type</b>	<b>CI Initiative</b>
Linear	Burnie Works Communities for Children Go Goldfields Logan Together Sanderson Alliance
Interconnected	Grow Well Live Well The Hive Maranguka
Adaptive	Logan Together West Belconnen Local Services Network
Unknown	Together SA Connecting Community for Kids



## Effective collaboration processes – what is and isn't working

As summarised by an interviewee, collaborative approaches are most effective when a community agrees to work together in order to “achieve something [it] can't achieve alone”. The collaborative environments developed and leveraged within the initiatives being looked at support a number of processes and perspectives that interviewees suggest lead to enhanced community outcomes. CI, and the collaboration essential to it, acts as, “an organising methodology...that's good for problems where there are many stakeholders and ambiguity or complexity about the problem”.

Collaboration and involvement on the part of the community engenders a greater sense of community ownership and can enhance the sustainability of an initiative. Every interviewee acknowledged or emphasised the importance of community involvement, but also recognised and outlined difficulties around implementing and maintaining this involvement.

Identified barriers to community involvement include difficulties keeping people interested in the decision-making process, potential feelings of discomfort on the part of community members within official interactions such as structured meetings, lack of time, and reticence on the part of other stakeholders to include the community in the process. The following identified barriers remain barriers in many cases because of the time and resources required to address them. Enacting organisational and cultural change involves shifting mindsets and explicitly embedding new processes, which can require training, expertise, and persistence on the part of all stakeholders.

### Barriers to effective collaboration and governance

#### *Individual reluctance*

Thompson, drawing on the work of the Tamarack Institute, outlines that a common issue in collaboration is ‘rigidity’ (Thompson, 2016). This is a reluctance on the part of individuals to adapt to changes within the system and can lead to a lack of decision-making or implementation of new initiatives or programs. One interviewee spoke of an ongoing difficulty in engendering system change and creating a collaborative environment. They outlined the emphasis on the process as, “a learning journey, and that meetings weren't board meetings. They're learning workshops”. However, a number of partners were reticent to develop that mindset. Partly, the interviewee suggested, because of a lack of confidence in their knowledge of the new system, risk

aversion, a lack of trusting relationships, a fear of losing control, and a focus on tasks instead of process.

### *Reliance on individual passion or capacity*

Most interviewees said individual passion and interest was a key element to the success of many of the initiatives, “you tap into people’s passions about an issue and so it’s about trying to get people around the table with the passion to change an issue rather than people at the table because they’re in the right position in the organisation”. This, however, causes sustainability issues, as the initiative risks failing if certain people leave. This became apparent for one organisation during a transition period from a leadership group run by service providers to one populated by diverse stakeholders with a focus on collaboration:

“At the same time that we did that [carry out the transition to a new leadership group], the people who made the decision to do this left [the original service-led group]. The key drivers in the work. And the people who came into that, the three people were very transactional minded people. And were also very organisationally focused. So it was about power and control for the organisation. So we had people implementing change who had never been part of the decision to make change”.

This resulted in stalling of the project and a number of resistant stakeholders leaving the initiative. There is a risk of this happening at all stages of an initiative, indicating a need to build sustainability into the culture and processes of an initiative.

### *Organisational cultures*

It was suggested by a number of those interviewed that much of the reluctance on the part of individuals, as well as difficulties building a sustainable environment of collaboration comes from organisational cultures. Whilst all those interviewed emphasised that almost every agency or organisational partner they worked with contained people eager to collaborate and who were, “able to share power...with people who they traditionally may not have shared power with”, they also identified consistent barriers that arose not as a result of individuals, but of culture.

This occurs when individual members come from organisations of systems that “[operate] very differently from the way collaborative efforts need to operate” (Keast & Mandell, 2013b, p. 2). This system tends to be risk averse, siloed, hierarchical, and structured to encourage competition. As one interviewee outlined:

"You have to consciously set up the environment for [collaboration] to happen in. Because it doesn't spontaneously happen. There's lots of pressures and pushes to stop collaboration from happening at the best of times. But they're even stronger in terms of collaboration for collective impact. Because you're challenging some of the structures that people normally [work within]...There are much stronger pushes to not collaborate in the system".

Risk aversion, particularly in relation to the sharing of data was a focus of the previous report. Interviewees outlined the reluctance on the part of data owners to allow access to information, with a number of those interviewed suggesting that it was as a result of a risk averse culture that, in the past, has not regularly shared data. A further organisational barrier is the existence of silos both between and within organisations. A lack of communication and mutuality can lead to distrust, repetition of efforts and a lack of innovation. This siloing, in addition, can lead to a culture of competition. This is particularly prevalent within the community and not-for-profit sector where there are limited resources.

Interviewees highlighted that there is a fear amongst service providers, and both government and non-government agencies, that the CI initiative may "lay claim on [their] victory", which could impact their deliverables and funding. In the words of an interviewee, this leads to partners being focused on "protecting their turf". The same person then outlined that, "even individuals on the ground, they are concerned that they won't be recognised. And so there need to be assurances that there will be recognition". One organisation, for example, worked with partners to develop a statement in relation to all collaborative efforts: "any organisation or any person can lay claim to the work, but you have to use the tagline, 'but we could only do it because we're all working together'".

#### *Tension between governance and community engagement (over-reliance on governance structures)*

Whilst it is important to, as quoted previously, "set up the environment for [collaboration] to happen", there is a danger for a CI initiative to focus too heavily on building governance structures instead of engaging with the community: "In general, too loose a structure hampers cohesive action while too heavy stifles participation, initiative and innovation. So the emphasis is on having the minimal structure and rules necessary to do the work while allowing participants the space to interact and be dynamic" (Keast & Mandell, 2013b, p. 2).

A number of interviewees cited an over emphasis on rules and structure on the part of organisational partners as a key barrier to engaging the community and designing programs and initiatives. To quote one interviewee, whose organisation is in the early stages of program implementation and governance development, with community members yet to be engaged:

"[Organisational partners] were really worried about doing harm or setting it all back somehow if we weren't really sure on how to invite people in. And real concern about how we would need to change the way we would have a meeting or make decisions in order to be inclusive. There's still a view that actually maybe we had the wrong idea at the start and the leadership group needs to be like an executive and it doesn't need community members... [that] there's still some kind of linear need... There's people who want it to operate like a traditional board".

As outlined previously, an overly engineered governance structure can work to either exclude or discourage the engagement of community members. As a result, there is an ongoing tension between governance and community involvement. One interviewee, in discussing their governance structure, highlighted that a strength was the "organic" nature of its development, which allowed for established structures to be leveraged and new, collaborative processes, to be developed.

### *Confusing governance and consensus*

A number of interviewees described their decision-making processes as being grounded in consensus. There is a danger, however, of focusing on complete consensus more than identifying a shared goal and making the best decision for the situation:

"There are voluntary models, there's no compulsive element in it. It lives or dies on the ability to spot a shared goal that people can voluntarily come together around, and the sweet spot is where everybody agrees on a certain course of action. And you take that course of action. So it's totally unrealistic - and very, very hard to achieve that you'll get all conflicts and differences of opinions and differences of perspectives resolved between all of your partners. You don't need to do that. What you're after is spotting all the things that people agree on and zeroing in and delivering those things, and not getting hung up on the things that people disagree about".

This summary of collaboration over consensus was reflected in a barrier faced by one organisation whose members refused to progress until there was consensus regarding the name of their leadership group. A quick activity turned into a conversation that dominated the entire meeting, and which blocked the making of core decisions. This focus on governance only being achieved through consensus delayed progression and damaged relationships.

### *Absence of an authorising environment*

The function of CI initiatives, and place-based projects more generally, is predicated upon the ability to respond to the unique needs of the communities in which they are working. This can be difficult, however, if the initiative and the organisational representatives involved do not operate within an authorising environment. One interviewee, discussing the challenges of co-designing a project with families that required government support stated, “The government departments...really want to have good outcomes for children and families but [the representatives on the ground] have no authority in their roles, no flexibility in their roles, except to roll out what they’ve been told to roll out”.

Many of those interviewed spoke about the need to be able to make decisions that locally responded to broader policy. One interviewee saw authorisation as, “we will adhere to the policy but we will adhere to them and tick off on all your key philosophical things that you’re trying to deliver...But instead of you telling us how to do it, we will do it locally and tell you how it went”. Decentralisation of responsibility and shift to delivering on broad outcomes, rather than discrete deliverables, can result in greater flexibility, more comprehensive and productive services and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016).

This authorising environment can also be enabled through the existence of mediators and representatives who have the power to make decisions and advocate for the initiative’s goals within their organisation:

“I think a mistake that some projects make is that...this collaboration stuff is second tier, so we’ll put a mid-career community development officer on the job. And that person will struggle to convince a chief executive to do something. You actually need people who understand – who can work at the most senior level, be exposed to...power and politics...and keep going and make change”.

One initiative reported existing within an authorising environment because they did not rely on government funding, allowing them to develop projects that responded solely to the unique needs of the community.

## Enablers of effective collaboration and governance

### *Trusting relationships between stakeholders*

Trust and relationships were identified by many interviewees as the most important element of a successful collaboration:

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"We spent a lot of time on relationships ... It's because of the relationships of trust and commitments to the overall purpose that we've been able to get agencies to participate ... spending lots of time talking about how we can work better together. So lots of breakfasts and cups of coffee".

"A cup of coffee, relationships. That's the grit to me ... have a relationship with somebody that allows you to delve into different options and then be able to take risks together to do things differently".

"People don't love sitting on committees or getting on projects, so they have to be convinced about it. Much of what we're doing lives or dies on personal relationships and trust".

"It's actually about relationships ... The culture is affected by the mix of people in the room".

"Negativity is such an easy thing to breed ... It's trying to build that trust in this new way of doing things".

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These relationships can be pre-existing or can be nurtured in the early days of the collaborative or when new stakeholders join the initiative. Trusting relationships encourage individuals to innovate, enhance communication across sectors and levels, build motivation to engage, and help to address issues of power and competition.

In the case of attracting local businesses to engage, one interviewee outlined that engaging a trusted business owner that other owners had an established relationship with, enhanced the engagement of businesses in initiatives.

### *Capacity building of stakeholders to codify collaborative governance*

A downside of the importance of trusting relationships is the danger of relationships between individuals becoming integral to the sustainability of an initiative. It is

important, therefore, for collaborative governance to be codified in organisational processes. Stakeholder capacity building through, for example, training sessions, mentoring, or induction have proven to be successful enablers of collaboration for a number of interviewees. Go Goldfields, for example, ran training workshops for community members and now carry out an induction process for new partners centred on collaborative processes and power dynamics.

### *Maximise community voice and engagement*

Interviewees cited a number of strategies that supported ongoing community engagement. Key approaches identified by interviewees centred on altering the decision making processes in such a way as to encourage and maximise community voice. Communities for Children, Tasmania host each council meeting in different locations within the community and follow an informal agenda and meeting structure. This, according to the representative spoken to, makes the meetings more inclusive and encourages more input from the community.

Go Goldfields has a similar approach but has embedded it within its governance structure. In 2015 they carried out a series of community engagement seminars called 'Hatch conversations'. These sessions were used to inform their measurement framework and identify key areas of need. After these conversations, participants self-identified as being in one of three groups:

- **Collaborator:** have a role on the leadership or action groups and take part in decision making
- **Consultant:** provide feedback on program design and decisions made by the leadership and action groups
- **Neighbour:** be regularly updated on decisions and programs through newsletters and social media.

To identify harder to reach community members, barbeques were held in, for example, housing commission areas. Attendees were asked to provide feedback and ideas, and were invited to join the initiative.

### *Build collaborative capacity*

Once applications for the Go Goldfields initiative were submitted, key community members were chosen for the roles based on their lived experience, knowledge and connections within the community. These volunteers, along with volunteer business owners, were provided with four hours of training to enhance their capacity, a mentor to provide guidance and support, and child care for those with dependents.

This training was part of a conscious process on the part of Go Goldfields to alter the way in which the initiative worked and enhance collaboration. It focused largely on power dynamics in conversations and what the participants “could uniquely bring”.

This training session was highlighted by the representative as a vital part of the systems change that took place, but a key failing identified was the lack of training delivered to the service providers. This caused moments of conflict during the early stages of the collaborative process, as service providers encountered new ways of working that they were not prepared for. The representative highlighted, however, that the trained community members were able to support the service providers in adapting to the new process. This new process involved, for example, reducing official meeting rules, no longer taking traditional minutes, and focusing largely on collaborative decision making instead of hierarchies. As result of this process, eight of the fifteen people on the leadership table are community members.

### *Engage key individuals*

This process highlighted the importance of working in a relational way that builds communication and shares power and responsibility amongst stakeholders. Part of the process of sharing power and responsibility, according to a number of interviewees is predicated upon having the right people involved. One interviewee stated that, whilst it was important to have, “the right positions squared off”, it was also vital to have the right mix of people who were willing and eager to collaborate. Another interviewee emphasised, however, that it was also essential – as suggested by Kania and Kramer (2011) – to ensure the involvement of people and organisations with the power to enact change within the community:

“We operate with the power systems and the elites that operate in our community. I think a lot of community development initiatives have got an allergic reaction to elites and power systems, and indeed position themselves as a counter balance to those to try and undermine existing elites. And I think it’s proved ... it very rarely works and so what’s important is engaging those elites and bringing them to the table to share power with the community and share leadership with the community ... what you’ve got to do is bring everybody who controls the systems and the resources and the community to the table...you’ve got to have the capability and the infrastructure and the right people who can convince very, very senior folks and also mums and dads and people in the middle, to make the change”.



This is further supported by, according to one interviewee, “starting where the energy is”. Each initiative started from a different point. Connecting Community for Kids, for example, began because of government policy, some initiatives evolved from already-present community programs, others were developed out of service providers identifying an issue and choosing to work together, whilst yet others arose out of community members driving change. The key commonality between these processes were a, “willingness of members and parent organisations to engage in and sponsor new thinking and behaviours” and a, “level of collective commitment to change action” (Keast & Mandell, 2013c, p. 1).

### *Leadership skills*

A number of interviewees cited leadership skills as a core element of driving collaboration. In particular, the importance of adaptive leadership, in which the leader can be either a driver or a facilitator, depending on context and need:

“[Sometimes] it’s just about making sure that people know each other. And some of it is all the way through to owning and driving and steering a particular thing. And everything in between. It’s trying to do the bit that needs to be done for this thing to happen...sometimes we facilitate sessions and sometimes we drive the whole kit and caboodle. So it really depends on the issue at hand and what needs to happen in it...You need to be able to exercise various types of leadership, or to support people to exercise various types of leadership to make it happen”.

This includes system leadership, which is centred around facilitation, collective will, communication, the ability to see the larger system, and an emphasis on reflection. These leaders are, according to two interviewees, emotionally resilient and able to consistently encourage productive relationships: “Bring people together, treat them carefully and kindly, understand what their motivations and fears and frustrations and anxieties are, then all the things that were never possible become possible”.

### *Build a sense of stakeholder ownership*

By working together to identify issues, design solutions, deliver programs and make decisions, organisations build a greater sense of ownership of the task. This can enhance willingness to further collaborate, as well as engage in actions that may not have been thought of before. This sense of ownership and engagement is beneficial

at all levels of the collaborative, not just at the level of community. One interviewee, for example, highlighted the value of a funder being part of the leadership group:

“Everybody was scared about having them there and it has only been positive. I think taking the funder on the journey so that it’s... turned their role more into stewardship than as manager or someone that you’re just accountable to. They can help steward your work within government departments and they can help hold your agenda for you. When something isn’t going well they know the backstory, they know everything that’s happening around it”.

A further benefit of collaboration is that it encourages the provision of in-kind support. Burnie Works, for example, is non-government funded CI initiative that functions almost solely on in-kind support. Their key expenditure is on the hiring of a bus to transport children to visit businesses as part of their Dream Big program. The provision of in-kind support can help address resource or funding issues and enable enhanced outcomes, even in the absence of increased funding.

#### *Support from peer organisations*

Most of the initiatives studied are part of broader peer and mentoring networks. These networks, such as Opportunity Child or Collaboration for Impact, bring together initiatives and experts, allowing them to learn from each other and share experiences. They provide models for new initiatives to refer to, as well as build a community of practice large enough to engage international collaboration experts. Those interviewees whose organisations are part of a network emphasised its ongoing benefit to their professional development, as well as to the development of the initiative as a whole.

#### *Using data to drive urgency for change*

Every interviewee referred to the importance of using data. In relation to collaboration, most cited the way in which thought-provoking or highly relevant pieces of data are useful to drive an urgency for change among organisational partners and decision makers. Data was reported to help groups, “proceed with purpose” and enable them to continually refocus on their shared goals. Furthermore, evidence of short-term improvement or success helps create a positive environment and maintain stakeholder engagement.

Data collection and analysis is an integral part of the CI structure. It allows initiatives to track the success of programs, identify areas of need and make key decisions. By

working to share information and use it to build and utilise a shared measurement system, initiatives are breaking down silos and building a more comprehensive picture of their communities. This encourages and supports coordinated efforts on the part of service providers and the broader community. The three key action groups created by the Maranguka initiative, for example, arose out of a comprehensive life course data snapshot developed by incorporating a range of data, the focus of which was dictated by the community itself. From this snapshot, the Bourke Tribal Council, in collaboration with the Maranguka leadership group, determined that the three areas of focus were the Early Years, 8-18, and the Role of Men.

The role of data as a means by which to identify community needs and build a movement around addressing them was made most apparent by the Sanderson Alliance's 'data party'. During this event, stakeholders and data owners brought pieces of data which sparked conversation. Out of these conversations, the Alliance identified their first area of action; family violence. To quote the representative of the initiative, "We identified that the thing that we could work together on was domestic violence. And we could flip it around and focus on positive relationships...And it was quite a moment because...I didn't think that was the idea that was going to get up at all. Nobody had talked about it before the meeting at all. It was certainly the issue that had surprised people, or captured people...it felt extremely risky [to address it], but together [the stakeholders] could take on something that they felt ill-equipped to face [alone]".

## Key findings

Findings from interviews and the desktop review indicate that CI initiatives are positively addressing the varied barriers that are likely to arise in the development and management of collaborative approaches. This takes the form of iterative governance structures, use of knowledge networks, navigation of power structures, leveraging of trusting relationships, capacity building of stakeholders, and the collection and use of data.

### Key findings

- All the organisations interviewed are part of formal or informal networks of CI initiatives. These networks share key knowledge and experience. As such, most organisations have similar governance structures, with some differences to account for locational or contextual specifics.
- Trusting relationships are core to successful collaboration. These can either be pre-existing or developed in the early stages of the initiative, but they must be consistently maintained.
- An authorising environment is required that allows for place-based responses to broad policy allows initiatives and services to meet the specific needs of a community.
- The collection and use of data supports collaboration by creating an urgency for change, highlighting core issues, tracking program success, and driving shared decision making.
- Collaboration enables a greater sense of stakeholder ownership, which can increase engagement in, and sustainability of, CI initiatives.
- Building organisational collaborative capacity through governance structures, training and induction processes may mitigate overreliance on key informal relationships or specific individuals.
- Collaboration with government agencies is more effective and successful when there is an environment of communication within and between departments, and support for innovative and creative responses to problems.

## Recommendations

### *1. Establishment of a core relationship manager for government funded CI initiatives*

For organisations in receipt of government funding, policy provision should be made for the appointment of a suitably authorised relationship manager. This senior role, established and sited within the funding agency would be responsible for:

- Providing the key point of contact for initiatives in their engagement with government agencies
- Engaging, on behalf of the initiative, with those government agencies whose involvement is required to support the aims of the initiative
- Attending and establishing CI knowledge sharing events for government and non-government agencies, experts, and other CI initiatives
- Making authorised decisions on behalf of the funding agency of government
- Acting as a representative within government for the CI initiative.

### *2. Promote internal collaborative capacity building within government*

Provide opportunities within government to build individual and systemic collaborative capacities through:

- Training of relevant individuals
- Provision of opportunities to share key knowledge and learnings
- Personal and professional development focused on collaborative practices.

### *3. Promote collaborative capacity building within CI initiatives*

Provide opportunities for CI initiatives to develop and support the collaborative capacity of their stakeholders through:

- Webinar series with representatives from leading CI initiatives hosted by government agencies such as Child Family Community Australia
- Support of personal and professional development for leaders through events, networks and mentoring.

### *4. Support ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of collaboration within initiatives*

Provide quality assurance and improvement mechanisms through the development or adoption of effective and relevant collaborative health assessment tools. Embed evaluation into contract arrangements, with provision for funding to support the development, evaluation and sustainability of collaboration.

## Conclusion

Collaboration is an effective approach to draw on when addressing complex and interrelated problems that involve multiple stakeholders. This approach is supported through the establishment of effective governance structures. These act as one element of support in the development of an environment of change that encourages collaboration over competition.

Collaboration is achieved through trusting relationships, shared learning, effective and adaptive leadership, and stakeholder capacity building at all levels. It is most successful in an authorising environment that allows for place-based responses to broader policy.

Building from an overview of the international literature, this report brought together the views of a number of interviewees representing CI initiatives at various stages of their establishment. These views combine to provide insight into the collaboration and governance approaches of CI initiatives in Australia and how that contributes to improved outcomes for children, young people, and their families. Although interviewees identified a number of barriers, particularly in terms of organisational culture and authorisation, they were also positive about the benefit of collaborative approaches in addressing complex community issues.

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## Appendix 1: Methodology

### Desktop review

A brief desktop review was conducted to capture the current evidence for the importance of collaboration and governance for successful CI initiatives. This included the ways in which measurement and evaluation can be used to support collaborative practices.

The insights gained from the literature review, alongside those insights from the previous report on measurement and evaluation, were then used to build the interview question guides for primary qualitative research with Australian initiatives. By analysing the previous interviews carried out, as well as key reports a series of questions was developed that addressed the outlined areas of focus of this report.

A full list of interview questions is included at Appendix 3.

### Identifying organisations

Most of the CI initiatives in Australia are in the early stages of development. In identifying potential organisations to study, the aim was to include an initiative from every state and territory and gather information from those organisations that were most established in their region.

A national spread and the inclusion of established organisations were the key criteria when identifying initiatives for interview. Although growing, the CI community is still relatively small. This made it possible to determine potential organisations through a combination of desktop research and snowballing.

By gathering a national snapshot of governance structures and collaborative practices in CI initiatives, the intention was to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Between states and territories there are differing barriers and enablers. By interviewing stakeholders from across the country it was possible to compare their experiences and determine potential gaps and solutions.

Contacting and engaging with established organisations allowed for a more in-depth look into all elements of governance, collaboration and, to a lesser extent, coordination. Those organisations at the later stages of the process would be able to provide information on how collaboration and governance is developed and managed both in the establishment and the maintenance of a CI initiative, therefore providing a richer data snapshot.

The selection of key representatives for interview was determined by researching each organisation's governance as well as contacting the initiatives directly. Interviewees needed to be in a position of responsibility that required knowledge of governance, strategy, organisational history, funding and data collection, use and management. For the most part these were directors, chairs and coordinators. In some cases, they were accompanied by data analysis experts and key facilitators.

Once an organisation and key stakeholder was identified, they were contacted via email and informed of the scope of the report. If they were willing to participate, a telephone interview was arranged. The decision to conduct the research by telephone was due to time and funding constraints that precluded travel to conduct interviews in person. Once the interview was arranged, the interviewees were sent a consent form and a list of questions that would inform the semi-structured interview.

The consent form outlined how they had been identified as a potential interviewee, including personal recommendations where relevant. It also provided the time of the interview and noted that information collected would only be accessed by personnel working on the report and stored at the ARACY office. It also requested permission to make an audio recording of the interview, use direct quotations and allow for the interviewee's name to be used in any publications resulting from the research. The interview only proceeded if the consent form was signed and returned.

Eleven organisations were studied for the purpose of this report. Due to time constraints and interviewee schedules, however, two of the representatives from the previous report and two new representatives were interviewed with the new questions. Transcripts from the previous interviews were also used to inform this report. A brief description of each organisation is included at Appendix 2.

## Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured, with the questions being sent to the interviewees in advance. When carrying out interviews, as well as recording the conversation, notes were also made to enable clarification and mitigate potential technical difficulties.

The interview questions for the previous report were divided into five parts: an outline of the interviewee's role, background on the organisation, data collection, data use and general questions and comments regarding gaps and solutions. The follow-up questions for this report focused on the governance and funding structures of the organisation, types of stakeholders involved, and collaborative processes. The questions were intended to prompt interviewees to share information

that would form a rich picture of the history, scope and activities of the organisations. They were also structured in such a way as to enable open-ended discussion. In this way the interviewees would not feel constrained by questions and would therefore be more likely to provide useful information beyond the preliminary scoping of the topic.

The semi-structured interview approach ensures that the discussion is relevant and that all points are covered in the time available, but allows for the voice of the interviewee to take precedence. This ensures that the questions asked are less likely to impact on the inferences and recommendations made by the researcher, encouraging a greater focus on the information provided by the interviewees.

### Process of analysis

While carrying out the interviews, notes were made that formed the initial basis of the analysis. The interviews were then thematically transcribed in line with the interview questions. Key quotes were written down, while key concepts were summarised. By transcribing the interview into the questions it was easier to extract information when analysing the data.

The information from the thematically transcribed interviews was then analysed and broken up into key areas of focus: definitions of collaboration, organisational history and culture, governance structures, stakeholder engagement and relationship development, and what tools and strategies are working. By collating the information in this way it was possible to identify similarities, barriers and potential solutions.

## Appendix 2: Participating organisations

### Burnie Works

<http://www.burnieworks.com.au/>

Burnie Works is a non-government funded initiative in Burnie, Tasmania, that runs predominately on in-kind support. Until 2013, the Burnie community had received funding through the Better Futures, Local Solutions (BFLS) initiative to address key challenges outlined by the 2010 *Making Burnie 2030 Community Plan...* After funding was withdrawn, the community adopted CI as an approach, with the Burnie Works Local Enabling Group formed to drive the strategic plan.

Burnie Works has four major initiatives:

- *Dream Big* aims to increase the aspirations of Grade 5 students through visits to higher education campuses and local businesses;
- *BIG* is a collaboration between businesses and schools to promote events and programs that encourage the community to value education and a positive career pathway;
- *Everyday Counts* is a collaboration between 20 government and non-government agencies to provide wraparound support to families with children at risk of school non-attendance;
- The *Employment Partnership Group* are representatives from job Active and Disability Employment agencies who work to identify and address issues that impact job seekers across the region.

For this report the System Leader of Burnie Works was interviewed.

### Communities for Children (TAS)

<https://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/service/communities-children>

Communities for Children is a government-funded program, delivered by Anglicare Tasmania that has been a facilitating partner for child-focused programs and agencies for twelve years. Its scope is to support the wellbeing of children from the ages of 0-12 years in Launceston and Tamar Valley.

In 2012/2013 it carried out in-house training on Results Based Accountability and in mid-2014 released *The State of Launceston's Children 2014* (Launceston Child Friendly City Working Group & Anglicare Tasmania, 2014). This report, using existing

data sources from 2011-2012 formed a snapshot of the wellbeing and health of children in the area. It was then used as the foundation for the development of a Collective Impact initiative called *Community it*, with Communities for Children acting as the backbone organisation. Their flagship initiative is *Every Child Succeeds*, which aims to leverage community capacity to address the needs of the 7000 at-risk children in the region. In 2016 Anglicare Tasmania hosted the Every Child Succeeds conference, a free event which aimed to increase knowledge and provide networking opportunities around Collective Impact.

For this report the Co-ordinator of the Communities for Children Program was interviewed.

### Connecting Community for Kids (WA)

<https://www.connecting4kids.com.au/>

Funded in 2015 by the Woodside Development Fund, the backbone team of Connecting Community for Kids was formed in May 2016. Auspiced through Child Australia, it was founded by The Partnership Forum, a quarterly meeting of leaders from State Government agencies, the not-for-profit community sector and consumer advocates. Its focus is on developing and maintaining a sustainable not-for-profit sector.

The Connecting Community for Kids working group is made up of leaders from the government and non-government sector. The regional focus of Connecting Communities for Kids is the cities of Cockburn and Kwinana, which are part of metropolitan Perth. Their aim is that all children in those areas will be at the Perth average with regard to Early Development by 2020. The organisation is funded until December 2020, which means their key role is to build capacity in order to ensure a sustainable system change that will continue into the future.

The initiative is currently developing a Roadmap for Change, with Telethon Kids Institute providing support in the development of indicators. They will start their first pilot program, which will align the immunization of two year olds with a health check, in March 2017.

The Partnership Director of Connecting Communities for Kids was interviewed for this report.

### Go Goldfields (VIC)

<http://gogoldfields.org/>

In 2010, after the publication of *Gold Prospects* (Perry, 2008), a detailed analysis of the economic, educational and social challenges in Central Goldfields Shire, a group of service leaders developed a three-year plan to address the wellbeing of children, youth and families. In 2012 it was determined that there was a need for a greater focus on system change through leveraging community capacity and 2014 the go Goldfields Alliance adopted Collective Impact as their framework for enabling this change.

In 2015 Go Goldfields ran a series of 'Hatch' conversations; collaborative community consultations that aimed to identify key areas of focus. These were then used as the foundation for the Collective Impact measurement framework. Their key outcomes are to create an environment where family violence is unacceptable, all children are happy, healthy, safe and able to achieve their full potential, youth are able to achieve their full potential and everybody can learn and achieve.

With the Central Goldfields Shire providing the backbone support, Go Goldfields is also funded through a number of external funders including Regional Development Victoria, the ten20 Foundation, Opportunity Child and the Sabemo Trust ("About Go Goldfields", 2016).

For this report ARACY interviewed the General Manager of Go Goldfields and the Early Years Facilitator, whose main role is to align the work of the organisation with *The Nest* action agenda (ARACY 2014).

### Grow Well Live Well, City of Palmerston (NT)

<http://www.palmerston.nt.gov.au/community-services/children-and-families/grow-well-live-well>

Formed in 2014, Grow Well Live Well is a collective of community organisations that wanted to change their practices in order to improve how children and young people grow up in Palmerston. By drawing on collective impact principles, this initiative aims to address complex social problems, particularly those related to child and adolescent development.

Grow Well Live Well conducted an extensive community, service provider, and stakeholder consultation period, as well as other publicly available data, to produce the Palmerston State of the Children report. The initiative is currently creating an action plan to advocate for resources and systems change that supports improving outcomes for children and young people in Palmerston.

For this report, both the General Manager of Child Australia, Northern Territory and the Regional Programs Manager for The Smith Family, Northern Territory were interviewed.

### The Hive, Mount Druitt (NSW)

<https://thehivemtdruitt.com/>

The Hive is a collective impact initiative founded on the principle that children in Mount Druitt deserve the same opportunities in health, education, and life as children in any other part of Australia. Families, community groups, service providers, government agencies, and businesses are all involved. This initiative is motivated by data that indicates that:

- only 1 in 5 people in Mount Druitt complete high school, while less than 2 per cent achieve a tertiary qualification;
- nearly one-fifth of 15 – 24 year olds are disengaged from employment and education;
- adults are twice as likely to be unemployed (12 per cent) compared with Sydney (4.9 per cent) and NSW overall (5.2 per cent); and
- Individuals are four times as likely to be at risk of domestic assault.

The Hive uses a process of co-design, advocates for not duplicating existing services, and has diversified funding sources that allow it to take a long-term view, rather than base their work around funding cycles.

The NSW State Manager of The Hive was interviewed for this report. This role is responsible for overseeing the different pieces of work, with a focus on strategy and systems level work.

### Logan Together (QLD)

<http://logantogogether.org.au/>

Logan Together is a community impact initiative of the local government area of Logan City, which is located to the south of the City of Brisbane. The initiative describes itself as “a long term, whole of community campaign to create the best life opportunities for every child in Logan”. It has 33 locally-based partners, which include education, health, and social service providers.



The initiative, which was set up in 2014, aims to collaboratively establish joint priorities and a culture of continuous quality improvement. So far, Logan Together has developed a framework to connect people in developing a 'Roadmap', which seeks to mobilise community resources to ensure that every child gets the support, love, and care they need to do the best they can.

The Director of Logan Together was interviewed for this report. Prior to commencing at Logan Together, the Director spent a decade at the Australian Red Cross, leading the organisation's human services and community development program in Queensland. The Director is also a member of the Logan City of Choice Leadership Team, and served as an adviser to the Every Child Deserves Every Chance campaign.

### Together SA

<https://www.togethersa.org.au/>

Together SA is a social change initiative that brings together expertise from across South Australia in order to address complex social problems and encourage communities to work towards a better future. The initiative was started by a group of founding partners, under the leadership of Community Centres SA.

By drawing on collective impact principles, Together SA encourages South Australians to make changes on the issues of concern to them and to understand the substantial cultural and systems change this requires.

For this report, a Data and Research Project Officer from Together SA was interviewed. The Project Officer had a background in research, engagement and evaluation, across several sectors.

### Maranguka (NSW)

<http://www.justreinvest.org.au/the-maranguka-way/>

Translated as 'caring for others', the Maranguka Justice Project is a collaboration between Just Reinvest NSW and the Bourke Aboriginal Community Working Party. Before 2012 the Working Party had built a vision for change, engaging Aboriginal families in the community in decision making. In 2012 they approached Just Reinvest NSW, suggesting that Bourke could be site to trial the concept of justice reinvestment. Just Reinvest is an organisation that aims to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system by directing funding away from the justice system and into preventative programs. The money saved is then reinvested into the community.

The collaboration is led by the community, who set targets and strategies. These are then facilitated by Just Reinvest and Collaboration for Impact, a community of practice developed in partnership by the Centre for Social Impact and Social Leadership Australia. Social Ventures Australia has recently been contracted to support the redevelopment of their measurement framework.

In 2015, after an 18 month process of data collection, a snapshot requested by the Working Party was developed which outlined the life course of Aboriginal young people in Bourke. This was made up of government data, as well as primary data collected through data conversations in the community. As a result of this snapshot the Bourke Tribal Council established the *Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong* strategy. This strategy has three working groups, established and managed by the community: Early Childhood, 8-18 and the Role of Men. The initiative is currently in the early stages of the 'Sustain action and impact' phase. They have agreed upon a common agenda, working groups are in place and data is being used to make decisions regarding alignment of resources.

Three key team members were interviewed for this report; the Chair of Just Reinvest NSW who also acts as the Project Director of Maranguka, a key facilitator from Collaboration for Impact who provides coaching and support, and a volunteer data manager who works pro-bono through The Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

### Sanderson Alliance

<http://kindandbrave.nationbuilder.com/>

The Sanderson Alliance is a school-focused initiative founded in 2015 that aims to address the root issues in children's lives from 'cradle to career'. It uses The Nest as a framework and is driven primarily by local schools and non-government agencies. It does not yet run any long term projects.

The role of the backbone facilitator was funded from March 2016 to March 2017 by the Northern Territories Education Department. This facilitator was interviewed for the report.

### West Belconnen Local Services Network (The Network) (ACT)

<https://www.betterservices.act.gov.au/west-belconnen-local-services-network>

The Network is a collective impact initiative that aims to build services and supports around the needs of the local community in West Belconnen. This initiative focuses on ensuring that people and families have a positive experience when accessing services that are simple, respectful, and easy to use; continuing to build the capacity

of people and families to connect with their local community to receive the right support when they need it; and working together with local services, businesses, and people to share resources and to reduce service duplication.

Two representatives of The Network were interviewed for this report: the first was the Executive Officer at Uniting Care Kippax, and the second was the General Manager – Strategic Engagement and Policy Development at the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). Uniting Care’s Executive Officer previously worked in the areas of Indigenous policy and health promotion, while ARACY’s General Manager has a background in population health and child health.

## Appendix 3: Interview question guide

### Initial interview questions:

#### *Background*

- What is the scope and role of your organisation?
- When was the initiative created? What is the current phase/stage of the initiative?
- How would you describe collective impact?

#### *Data Collection*

- How would you describe community level data?
- Was a needs assessment conducted?
- Was there segmentation analysis conducted with needs assessment data? (examining data within specific demographic – gender, post code, school, income etc.)
- How were indicators decided/developed?
- How was type of data to be collected decided?
- Is individual-level as well as community-level data collected? If so, is it identified?
- What method(s) for data collection?
- When did data collection begin? Do you have an established baseline for all/some/any indicators?
- What is the frequency of data collection?
- Use existing data sources?(e.g. AEDC, LSAC, LSIC, School)
- New primary data collected to measure community level outcomes? (e.g. neighbourhood surveys, focus groups, school based surveys,
- If primary data has been collected, what are some practical ways (or tools used) in local communities to collect the data for their local indicators?
- What software is used to collect/analyse/store data?
- How do you deal with issues of attribution?
- How do you control for confounding factors?
- Do you actively seek the views of children and families?
- What is the methodology for including the views of children when collating the data?

#### *Data Use*

- How is data stored? System capacity? Security?
- Who has access to data?
- How user-friendly is system? I.e. Level of education/training needed to pull or view data
- Is data available in real time?

- How often is data analysed?
- How is the data reported/presented? (charts/tabular data/summary reports)
- Does system easily allow integration with systems such as excel/SPSS?
- Who is the data shared with? (stakeholders/community) How often?
- Are penetration rates calculated? (extent that the activities are reaching the target population)
- When is change expected at a community level after an intervention has been delivered i.e. when would it be reasonable to measure impact?
- Do you set targets for specific indicators? (e.g. for 2017 the chronic absenteeism rate will be between 15-20%) How are these targets set?
- How are data quality checks made? (E.g. prevention of invalid data such as males being pregnant)
- Who are the decision makers for how data is used/what changes made based on data?

#### *General*

- Lessons learned re data collection and use? What has worked? What has not?
- What review system is in place for indicators? Data system? Entire collective impact model?
- How could the data be used more effectively/differently?
- Where are the gaps in collection or use of data?
- What would you like to see happen?

## Follow-up interview questions

- How would you describe collaboration in the context of a collective impact initiative?
- How did you establish who would be part of the working group/leadership team/governance?
- What is the make-up of your working group/governance? E.g. government, community members, NGOs.
- How were indicators and a measurement framework developed?
- How are outcomes decided on?
- What is the role of the community in the initiative?
  - How are the voices of children sought?
  - To what extent is their role iterative?
- At what stage were different stakeholders brought in? i.e. were certain groups there from the beginning and did others join later?
- Is data used as a reference point when working with the community or within leadership meetings? If so, how. If not, is there a reason?
- What is the interaction between data and collaboration/co-ordination/governance?
- Who is data shared with?
- Who are the decision makers for what changes are made/action taken as part of the initiative?
- What/who is the source of your funding?
- In your experience have you encountered any barriers to collaboration/governance/co-ordination?
- Looking beyond data collection, what would you need to succeed as an initiative?

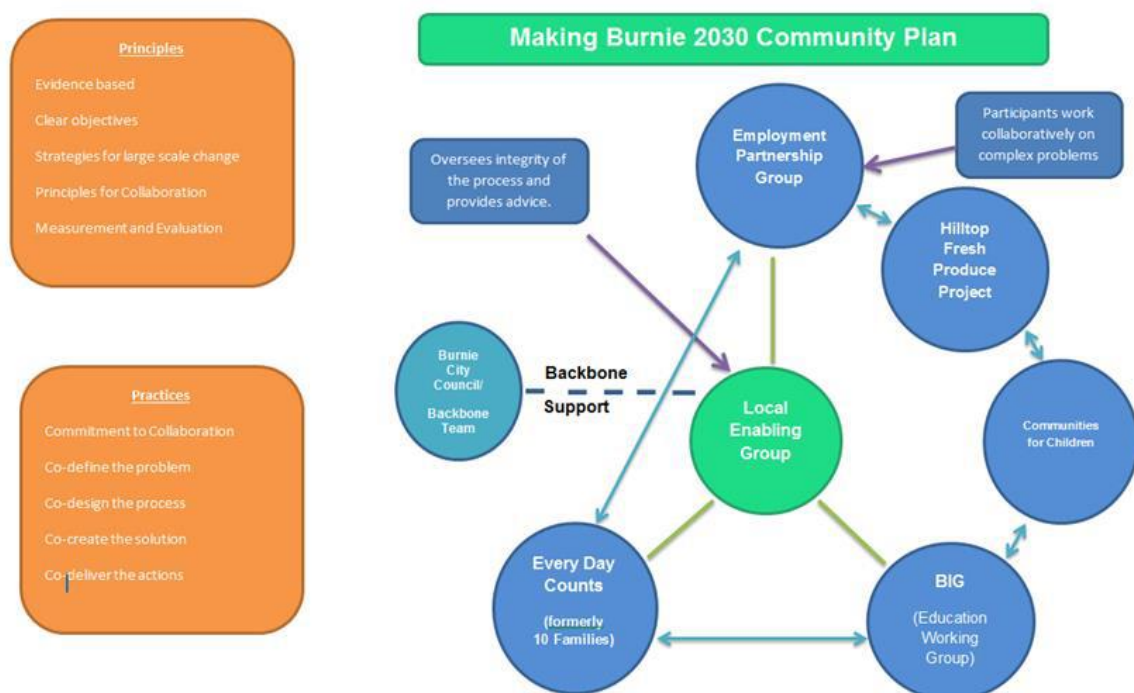
- Did your approaches to collaboration differ dependent on the stage of implementation the CI initiative was at?
- What was most resource-intensive? What resources were required?
- Were there any staffing needs (such as training, organisation structure)? How were resources managed?
- Are there leadership approaches that have been effective in driving Collective Impact? What behaviours/strategies have contributed to sustaining Collective Impact initiatives?
- What feedback loops exist to convey end user feedback to decision makers?
- What tools/strategies (such as training or setting up certain roles) are effective in governance, collaboration and coordination in Collective Impact initiatives in Australia? How are they effective? Are there best practice, tools or documents that can be shared/referenced as part of this review?
- What is your stakeholder engagement strategy (including outreach or hard to reach stakeholders)? How are partnerships fostered to help the community understand the issue and create the necessary supports (including funding) for the interventions needed?
- What worked to get local businesses involved and collaborate? What did not work?
- What are the lessons learnt? What are the risks, dependencies and efforts required?
- Do you think that the Commonwealth Government can provide assistance, and if so, what would this look like constructively?
- In terms of monitoring and reporting:
  - Are there pre and post evaluation/health checks for collaboration wellbeing? What do these reveal?
  - In terms of collaboration and coordination, what monitoring mechanisms are in place? How does each organisation measure progress?
  - How is data tracked? What resources are needed to do this

## Appendix 4: Governance structures of CI initiatives

The following initiatives were unable to provide diagrams of their governance structures:

- Communities for Children
- Connecting Community for Kids
- Grow Well Live Well
- Together SA
- West Belconnen Local Services Network

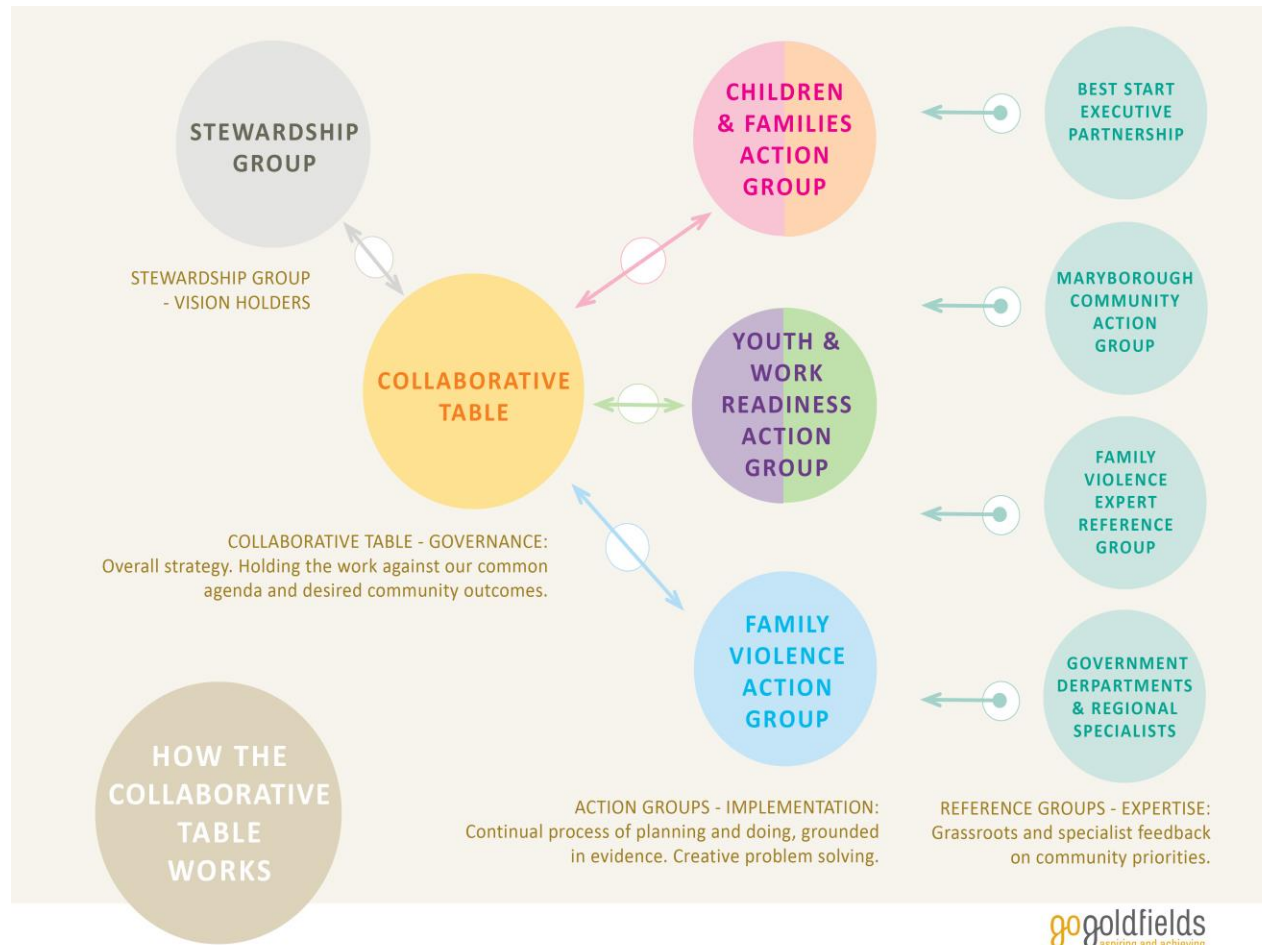
### Burnie Works (Tasmania)





## Go Goldfields (Victoria)

The following image reflects the previous governance structure. The current structure is identical, but with the absence of the Stewardship Group.



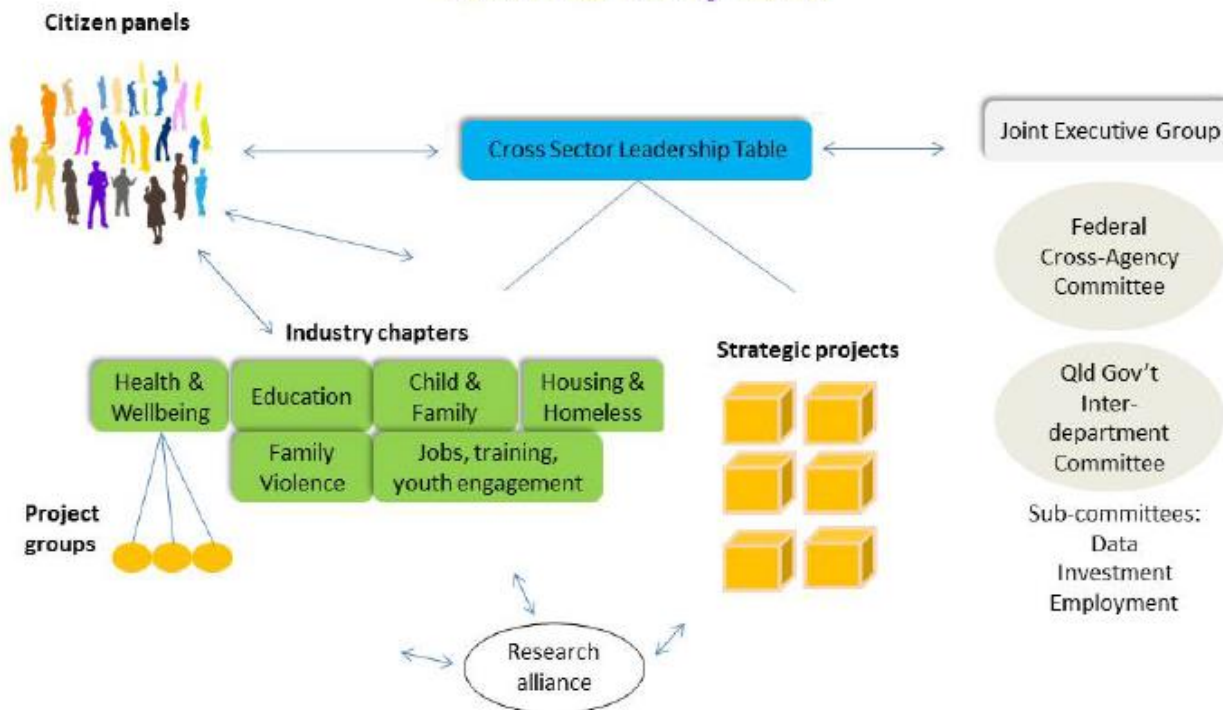
## The Hive, Mount Druitt (New South Wales)



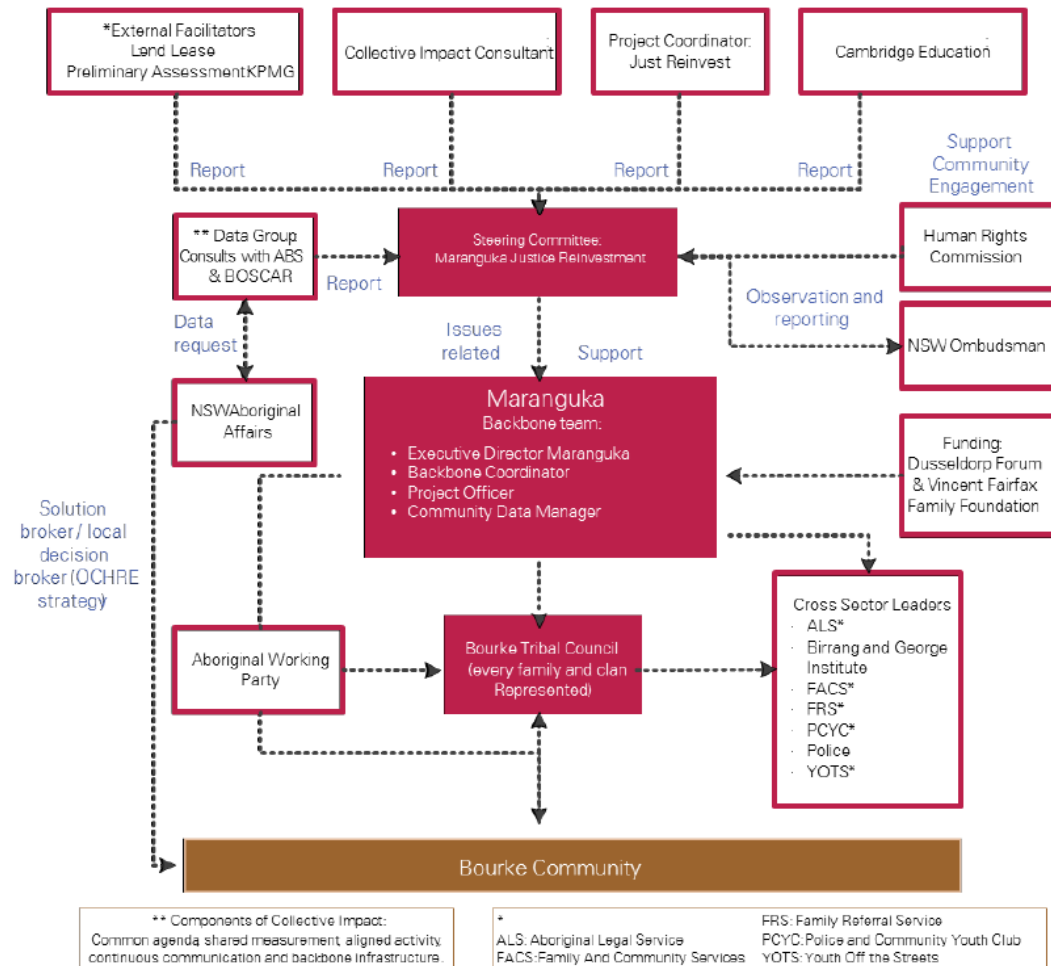
## Logan Together (Queensland)



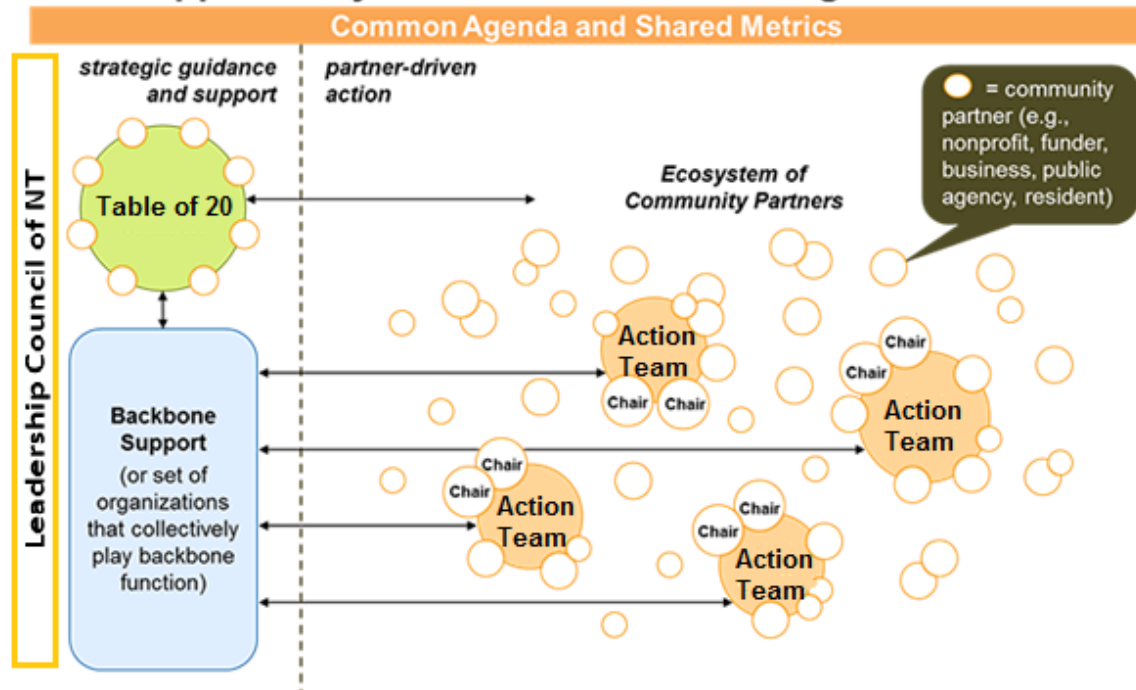
### Governance arrangements



## Maranguka (New South Wales)



## A Broad Set of Partners Work to Achieve the Common Vision, Supported by a Backbone and Steering Committee



\* Adapted from *Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change*, by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.

