

## Collaboration

**Build, support and sustain a culture of collaboration between and within Government and the Community Services Sector**

**Collaboration Working Group**

**November 2019**



## Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	1
<b>1. Summary of the literature review findings</b> .....	4
<b>2. Descriptions of the foundations, cultural attributes and behaviours that support effective collaboration</b> .....	6
Case Studies .....	6
Table 1. Characteristics of the 3C's .....	7
Table 2. Collaborative exemplars.....	8
Cultural attributes and behaviours .....	13
<b>3. Practical tools and strategies to support behavioural change and improve collaboration and effectiveness</b> .....	17
Table 3. Summary of core collaboration competencies/capabilities and characteristics.....	19
Table 4. Leadership skills and capabilities .....	22
Table 5. Check list for key mechanisms for collaboration .....	24
<b>4. Recommendations</b> .....	26
<b>Appendix A: Collaboration Continuum</b> .....	31
<b>Appendix B: Case Studies</b> .....	33



### Executive summary

The Western Australian (WA) Premier asked the Supporting Communities Forum (SCF) to provide advice on collaborative practice between Government and the Community Services Sector, including recommendations to break down barriers between agencies and organisations to better deliver services and outcomes for the Western Australian population. The Collaboration Working Group (CWG) was initiated by the SCF to identify the attributes, enablers and barriers to collaboration that will build, support and sustain a culture of collaboration between and within the government and community service sectors.

The CWG conducted a review of the evidence related to collaboration, including identification of the key attributes that would achieve better collaboration and outcomes for Western Australians. It assesses local, national and international evidence to support collaboration. A summary of the findings of the literature review is presented in Section 1 of this report. Additionally, CWG requested submissions for case studies of collaborative initiatives. This qualitative survey across the government and community sectors was undertaken to identify, define and explore collective action as a secondary source of information, grounded in practice.

Willingness to share information openly and for the common good is at the heart of collaborative work. It is the foundation of working collectively and building productive relationships across sectors. The CWG acknowledges and appreciates the openness and commitment of the parties that provided the cases studies, and their reflections and advice arising from their work.

Collaboration is characterised by strong and highly interdependent relationships with decentralised power, equity, shared risks, responsibilities, rewards and agenda for change (Keast and Mandell 2013). It is dynamic and complex (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015) and a way of organising across boundaries to achieve outcomes which cannot be easily or effectively achieved working alone (Himmelman 2002; QCOSS 2018).

The level and intensity of engagement needs to be considered in the context of the different characteristics such as restraints, rewards for effort, resources and risk factors. The characteristics of the case studies show action across the continuum and summaries of these are in Appendix B. Not all are collaboration as defined by Gray (1989) and Keast and Mandell (2013). However, they do show a broad scale of collective working along the continuum and across sectors. Previous relationships, prioritisation of efforts and allocation of resources are sound foundations (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015) and these attributes are reflected in the case studies.

The building of momentum for collaborative action is illustrated in the range and breadth of joint working presented in the case studies. They show a range of joint activity including sharing resources, showing unity, providing holistic care and integrated responses to needs in the community. A quarter of case studies were considered to mostly demonstrate attributes of collaboration (see Table 2). 50% of all cases, show joint working based mainly on attributes



of coordination and 25% are examples of cooperation. They reflect the literature in relation to good practice, across the relationships. Across the case studies, there is evidence of strong relationship building across sectors and within sectors, collective action and increasing steps towards engagement, equity and inclusion between members and with other stakeholders.

Collaboration is built on joint action planning about what to do, when and how to do it using inclusive engagement processes such as co-design and co-production (Smart 2017). Essential mechanisms are effective leadership; ongoing learning to be adaptive; continued involvement of committed sponsors, champions, and facilitators; and flexible governance structures that can adjust to different requirements across the life cycle of the collaboration (2015:1). Mechanisms to cross boundaries enable collective action primarily through relationship building. These relational processes require people who can work adaptively within flexible structures and preferably have formal roles to work across or span boundaries (Carey and Crammond 2015; O'Flynn 2014). Formalisation of collaboration through governance and accountability supports commitment to its vision, principles, actions and achieving collective goals.

Common barriers to collaboration are lack of capacity to act; acceptance of different values norms and culture; and inclusion and equity in participation. Other barriers are absence of policy directives; strong vision; clear roles and responsibilities; and process and structures. Mechanisms for equity, inclusion and shared power must be in place from the beginning. Other key enablers are a supportive policy environment; leadership within the group; collaborative capabilities, capacity and culture (Carey and Crammond 2015; O'Flynn 2014).

Joint working between and within sectors to achieve outcomes within the community is increasingly a focus of many government agencies and community organisations. Findings from the literature review and the 32 case studies submitted to the CWG inform the discussion of foundations, cultural attributes and behaviours that support effective collaboration (Section 2); and practical tools and strategies to support behavioural change and improve collaboration (Section 3).

Not all joint working requires collaboration. Scott and Bardach discuss joint working in terms of a complexity continuum or a maturity continuum. They suggest that interagency work becomes more complex, entangled and difficult along the intensity of the continuum. They also emphasise that “more entangled arrangements such as collaboration should only be attempted when absolutely necessary” (2018:15). They do not see a maturity continuum as following a set progression but do advise that:

“...if agencies feel that they need to collaborate, they should first ensure they can successfully work together in a less complex form”. (2018:15).

In WA there is a history of cooperation and coordination between and within the Community Services Sector and the WA public sector as demonstrated in the case studies. Action has been taken to work collectively on various concerns and there is a readiness to build on this and do more to address community priorities. The community needs to be included in determining where “best effort” and use of collaboration has a chance of producing improved



outcomes. Design processes and structures then need to be based with the ends in mind. Opportunities exist to further improve outcomes for vulnerable and hard-to-reach people in the WA community through collective action and concerted effort with targeted long-term investment in collaboration.

Recommendations are presented in (Section 4) and suggest some actions to translate findings into practice to achieve better collaboration that improves outcomes for the community.



### 1. Summary of the literature review findings

#### ***Collaboration is not the only form of joint working***

Primarily, clarity on what is meant by collaboration and how it differs from cooperation, coordination and networking is essential. O'Flynn warned of the tokenism and overuse of the term collaboration with "a cult of collaboration where everyone believes but few practice" (2009:112). Keast and Mandell (2013) state that collaboration has distinct attributes and understanding the difference between relationships can support better use of resources including not using collaboration for all purposes.

Collaboration is identified as being at the high end of a continuum of engagement and relationships. There are two continuums that are commonly used. These are Himmelman's (2002) model: *networking coordination cooperation, and collaboration* and Gray's (1989) relationship continuum of *cooperation, coordination, collaboration*. These inter-agency relationships build upon each other along a developmental continuum.

Himmelman describes collaboration as "a process in which organizations exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities, and rewards" (Himmelman 2002:3). There are many factors impacting on the choice and appropriateness of the level of engagement. O'Flynn (2008; 2009) recommends assessing planning for working together against the characteristics of continuums or collaboration frameworks. This may assist in appropriate planning, implementation and time frames or deciding that other forms of engagement are more appropriate. It can also provide focus and effort in creating 'real' collaboration. Appendix A depicts the collective working continuum and key mechanisms that enable effective collaboration.

#### ***Collaboration is essential for 'wicked problems'***

Collaboration is dynamic and complex (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015) and is viewed as a key strategy in responding to many issues, such as poverty, unemployment, social inclusion, drug use, family violence, homelessness and young offenders. These issues feature across different sectors and are not addressed by simplistic solutions (Carey, McLoughlin and Crammond 2015). Using collaboration defined by trust, power sharing relationships and open and frequent communication is essential for these purposes (Marjolin, Powell and Muir 2015:12). 'Wicked problems' concern those who are often 'hard to reach' or vulnerable, so every effort must be focused on engaging people, their families, carers and support and advocacy groups.

#### ***Shared power***

Common barriers to collaboration are the lack of capacity to act; acceptance of different values norms and culture; and inclusion and equity in participation. Mechanisms for equity, inclusion and shared power must be in place from the beginning. The differences in the characteristics of collaboration defined by (Keast and Mandell 2013) in their research for Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) are:

- the intensity of the relationship



- communication flows and distribution of power between the participants
- length of relationship
- level of risk and reward.

Collaboration is built on joint action planning about what to do, when and how to do it using inclusive engagement processes such as co-design and co-production (Smart 2017). Collaborative relationship between members or partners should be non-hierarchical with shared power based on knowledge and expertise, rather than role or position (Henneman et al. 1995). Mutuality and power sharing are enablers of collaboration and power sharing relies on clear shared purpose, trust and openness (Lightbody 2017:1).

### ***Focus collaboration sparingly and resource it (time and resources)***

Distinguishing collaboration from other forms of engagement is necessary and often not undertaken in the planning stage (O'Flynn 2008). Collaboration is characterised by strong and highly interdependent relationships with decentralised power, equity, shared risks, responsibilities, rewards and agenda for change (Keast and Mandell 2013). It may be better for less complex partnering to use another strategy that uses less resources (Keast and Mandell 2013; Scott and Bardach 2018) and possibly should be done alone (Huxham 1996; Huxham and Vangen 2004). Collaboration requires more investment of time, effort and other transactional costs than the other forms of engagement (Scott and Bardach 2018).

### ***Core roles, attributes and mechanisms***

Collaboration is built on having policy directives; strong vision; clear roles and responsibilities; and process and structures. Focus can also be affected by issues of size of membership, as complexity is increased by the number of organisations with increased transactional costs (Scott and Bardach, 2018). Learning is a central mechanism to embed core collaboration competencies. Other enablers are effective leadership; ongoing learning to be adaptive; continued involvement of committed sponsors, champions, and facilitators; and flexible governance structures that can adjust to different requirements across the life cycle of the collaboration (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015:1).

The main attributes identified in a review of eight frameworks in research literature are:

- a high level of trust through risk taking
- inclusive participation
- shared understanding of the problem and consensus on a shared vision
- prioritisation of efforts and allocation of resources are based on sound foundations
- commitment to collective goals and actions
- formal advance planning or emergent planning (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015).

Other key characteristics that enable collective work are a supportive policy environment, leadership within the group, collaborative capabilities, capacity and culture (Carey and Crammond 2015; O'Flynn 2014). Also necessary is joint action planning about what to do, when and how to do it using inclusive engagement processes such as co-design and co-production (Smart 2017).



### ***Facilitating collaboration***

It requires cultivating readiness, internal change within an organisation and between partners. Bryson, Crosby and Stone emphasise having “the ends in mind and designing processes, structures, and their interactions in such a way that desired outcomes will be achieved and required accountabilities met” (2015:1). Consensus on long-term goals and outcomes is necessary, but there also needs to be intermediate outcomes (Scott and Bardach 2018) and/or process measures.

Keast (2011) found that failure in achieving collaboration is generally from a mismatch between set goals and the mechanisms used to achieve them. Other barriers relate to Himmelman’s focus on “*time, trust and turf.*” The main barrier identified in a review for the New South Wales State Government was insufficient investment (effort, time, resources, cost) (Nous Group 2013: 7).

Formalising of collaboration is generally embedded in structures such as a governance and accountability framework. These have guidelines to inform decision making such as group consensus, based on a best-for-projects basis and explicit core decision-making pillars. Decisions must be transparent, accountable and open for review by external parties. They also need to show a commitment to agreed collaboration principles.

The gain from working together and achieving what cannot be done separately is collaborative advantage (Kanter 1994). Collaborative work focuses on flexible structures and processes to achieve shared core goals. Keast and Mandell identify four core components of collaboration that support effectiveness:

- governance and structure
- systems and processes
- managing and leveraging relationships; and
- people and culture (2013:1).

These core components are facilitated by having members who are skilled collaborators; who mobilise and energise the group; work across boundaries and frame what is required in joint working; and are able to work flexibly with norms, roles and values as they emerge. Flexibility needs to be inherent in overcoming barriers and involves willingness to adapt; balancing different needs; signalling and maintaining equal responsibility.

## **2. Descriptions of the foundations, cultural attributes and behaviours that support effective collaboration**

### **Case Studies**

The case studies were reviewed using the 3C’s continuum (Keast and Mandell 2013; Gray 1989). The 3C’s model (Table 1) is a useful and practical tool to assess what relationship is the most suitable to fit the purpose of working together. The level and intensity of engagement needs to be considered in the context of the different characteristics such as restraints, rewards for effort, resources and risk factors.





**Table 1. Characteristics of the 3C's**

<b>Relationship continuum: Characteristics of the 3C's</b>		
<b>COOPERATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>COLLABORATION</b>
Loose connections, low trust Tacit information sharing Ad hoc communication flows Independent goals Adapting to each other, or accommodating others' actions and goals Power remains with organisations Resources remain with organisations Commitment and accountability to own organisation Commitment and accountability to own organisation Relational timeframe short Low risk/low reward	Medium connections, work-based trust Structured communication flows, formalised project-based information sharing Joint policies, programs and aligned resources Semi-interdependent goals Power remains with parent organisations Commitment and accountability to parent organisation and project Relational timeframe medium-based on prior projects	Dense interdependent connections, high trust Frequent communication Tactical information sharing Systems change Collective resources Negotiated shared goals Power is shared between organisations Commitment and accountability to collaboration first then own organisation Relational timeframe – long term (3 years) High risk/high reward

The characteristics of the case studies present forms of engagement and relationships across the continuum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Over 30 case studies were submitted to the CWG and summaries of these are in Appendix B. The case studies show a broad scale of cross-sector working along the continuum with longstanding relationship building. Joint working between and within sectors to achieve outcomes within the community has been increasingly a focus of many government agencies and community organisations.

***Relationships spanning the continuum***

All cases studies showed evidence of good practice, building on prior interactions and steps towards collaboration. A quarter of case studies were considered to mostly demonstrate attributes of collaboration (see Table 2). Half of the case studies show joint working based mainly on attributes of coordination and 25% are examples of cooperation. For some of the examples, their level/intensity of joint working was appropriate for their purpose and in achieving the outcomes required. The case studies also illustrate an increasing maturity in stakeholder consultation and engagement across the relationship continuum.

The case studies show the practical reality of developing and implementing relationships across the continuum and the building blocks for successful collaborative work.



**Table 2. Collaborative exemplars**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Sector</b>
50 lives 50 homes	Vulnerable rough sleepers	30+	Community sector led Mixed base Includes government
100 families	Collective action research Entrenched disadvantage of families	8	Community sector and University WACOSS, UWA, 6 community services
Esperance Community Arts	Community arts and cultural identity	3	Aboriginal Arts and Community
My Health Our Health	CaLD Health	4+	Community sector, RPH, CliniPath and GPs
Imagined Futures	Place based – SE metro Vulnerable youth and emerging areas for action. Leadership group and wider stakeholder group	9	Government, community sectors, local residents, businesses
Mental Health Co- Response	Vulnerable people with mental health issues that come into contact with the Police	3	Government WA Police, Mental Health Commission and Department of Health
WA Alliance to End Homelessness	Ending homelessness Over 500 stakeholders engaged broadly	9	Community & Academic also involves Government & Private
Youth Partnership Program	Reduce number of young people entering juvenile justice program Backbone team	11+	South East corridor Perth Government, local government, community sector, sport and culture industries, Aboriginal community

***Foundations that support effective collaboration***

Building relationships and mutuality across the continuum have set the foundations for collaboration and other effective partnerships in WA. The case studies provide evidence of strong relationships between organisations at policy and service levels along the continuum of cooperation, coordination and collaboration. They show that many government and community organisations have been working together for some time, and have developed characteristics and capabilities that support effective joint working. Many of these examples are based on longstanding cooperation, partnerships and working collectively.

Pettersson and Hrelja (2018) identify pre-requisites that form the foundations of collaboration and build a stepwise, trust building and learning process of co-action. The first step is the building block of conditions for action, described as:

- Impossibility of any of the parties achieving the desired outcome on their own
- Honest, open, respectful and inclusive dialogue to investigate mutual benefits



- Action orientation
- Resources, for example finances, knowledge, mandate, leadership.

Additional to these initial conditions is development of the values of mutual respect, trust, engagement, and understanding of the motivations and roles of the other parties. Working collectively, members will take further steps to develop shared creation of value and joint action. Processes to embed collaborative attributes include leadership, commitment, clear goals and agreed outcomes, governance, accountability and communication practices.

### **Formation**

In the exemplar case studies of collaboration, trust and sharing of power are the most commonly identified attributes that support the formation of their collective work with responses such as:

*“... building trust is critical. This is achieved through transparency, honesty, clarity of understanding and focus on common goals, and good governance structures which are inclusive”. (Imagined Futures)*

*“Focus on relationships with and between stakeholders. Building trust and open communication is essential to successful collaboration, and consistency is important to achieve this”. (Youth Partnership Project)*

The case studies show the importance of relationship building with partners, stakeholders and community. Across the continuum, the activity emphasises the inclusion of consumers, families, carers and local communities. The collaboration literature review found that deep engagement is required to include people who are hard to reach (Lightbody 2017). In her research in Scotland, Lightbody found many barriers to equality and that engagement in the community was essential, but often lacked focused attention. Prioritisation of strategies to deepen such engagement is also identified in WA and mentioned in many of the case studies. For example:

*“Having people with lived experience participate meaningfully and safely in a large-scale collaboration is challenging but essential in order to ensure the investment in such a collaboration is having the necessary positive impact for the people its intended to serve, and setting up mechanisms for this to happen successfully takes careful consideration and resources”. (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)*

Valuing and respecting different skill sets and points of view opens the relationship to creating dense interdependent connections and achieve more than can be done alone. Amongst organisations, working together previously or having other involvement through networks and coordination groups is found to be a main success factor. Such activity enables sharing of information which some researchers see as a foundation of building trust which then supports further action. Lessons learnt and shared from the case studies include:

*“By not ‘overreaching’ at the start of this program, the different organisations that do not operate in the same environment learned to work together and trust each other.*



*Once this trust was built, changes and expansion of program were made. These improvements were made without resistance and support of all partners". (Mental Health Co-Response)*

*"Using local networks and asking for help; you never know who wants to be part of the project". (Esperance Community Arts)*

*"Regular opportunities for people to engage and collaborate with an open invitation are essential for creating a safe space for collaboration for both the usual and 'unusual suspects' related to the intended area of impact". (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)*

### **Collaboration readiness**

Readiness requires open dialogue, learning and adaption to continue to expand collaborative capacity broadly and promote leadership skills across members (Keast and Mandell 2013; Chapman 2018). It also requires resources to develop capabilities and capacity. The information from the case studies also highlights the importance of measurement of collaboration to support adaptation and decision-making.

Collaboration readiness in terms of capabilities and competencies can be built within organisations through a core set of competencies:

- an ability to work skilfully across boundaries
- to frame the operating context in a way that prepares members for joint working
- the nimbleness to work with an emerging set of norms, roles and values (Keast and Mandell 2013).

The experience from the exemplars supports this position. Examples indicate that these abilities and capacities, when enacted, make a difference to working effectively and getting results:

*"People and organisations need capacity and capability building in order to know how to collaborate and innovate well". (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)*

*"Resources are required, but the lesson is that with the right approach, the additional resources required are in relative terms not considerable compared with those existing resources which can be leveraged with significantly better impact and effectiveness". (Imagined Futures)*

*"Conviction that what we are doing is important and valued by many; even if not by some of 'the powers that be' locally". (Esperance Community Arts)*

*"Where there is trust and goodwill all challenges/problems are insurmountable. Do the best you can to accommodate other parties even if it requires additional efforts on your part and it may not strictly be within your remit". (My Health Our Health Program)*



Mutuality, flexibility, and early engagement are recognised in the literature as essential. Mutual effort, resulting in gain for the parties, provides reasons to partner around common causes:

*“Collaborations need to be flexible to adapt to changing local, political, theoretical, and best-practice contexts. This can be supported by place-based approaches, ongoing strategic alignment with partners, a commitment to ongoing learning and development, and remaining open to sharing ownership of both successes and failures”.* (Youth Partnership Project)

*“Collaborating and innovating in the context of a complex issue and system requires flexibility and adaptability, which in turn requires flexibility in funding and associated requirements or structures”.* (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)

Readiness for collaboration includes a range of prior interactions and processes to assist in getting started and working in an informed way. This involves effective governance, transparency, accountabilities decision-making through consensus of the group and open to external review with the principle of “best for project basis” guiding the process.

### **Getting over roadblocks**

Barriers can derive from the formation of the collaboration and the initial conditions and drivers as well as the implementation processes and structure of the collaboration (formal and informal). Hudson et al. (1998:75) identify this “*collaborative deficit*” as a barrier. This “*deficit*” is not necessarily from lack of willingness to collaborate or from the absence of policy directives. Structural barriers may arise throughout the collaboration. The deficit may be due to the nature and culture of organisations. Factors include level of risk taking, available budgets or internal staff’s time, reporting timeframes, lack of leadership, and other organisational capacities.

Awareness of potential barriers in collaboration is important, but its attributes, particularly complexity and mutuality, inform us that all collaborations are different and there is no single recipe to succeed. Success relies on appropriate mechanisms and these can leverage the enablers and reduce the impact from barriers.

Factors for overcoming barriers presented in the case studies include:

- Engaging stakeholders as early as possible
- Flexibility with time frames
- Shared values, respect, and reconciliation and listening all the time
- Non-competitive environment of working together, no one is boss, have leaders
- Spend time discussing how the group wishes to run and under what values – can be outsourced to a non-member but needs to be well chosen
- Having group members who are well respected by all other members help to set the tone of how the group acts/interacts
- Address issues (have a pre-agreed process for this). Don’t let problems go unnoticed or manifest



- Supporting each other by yarning over issues; especially when faced with roadblocks by those who hold power in the community (that is not us). Work around, go over roadblocks, think outside the square.

Collaborations often occur due to a window of opportunity (Kingdon 1995) and, although this can be an advantage, partners may not have the enablers in place to support collaboration. Leadership to capitalise on the opportunity, resources and partners may not be oriented or ready at that time (Bryson et al 2015; O’Flynn and Wanna 2008). Networking and forms of working together such as cooperation and coordination contribute to building collaborative capacity. However, it is essential to assess what is required as collaboration is not necessarily the form of working together required for the solution.

### ***Involving partners and stakeholders***

Community members, consumers and carers’ involvement is required in deciding the purpose and mechanisms of cross-sectoral collaboration; and creating momentum. Advanced or emergent planning with community representatives and other interested parties needs to occur early in formation. This can assist members with wider and more informed perspectives, knowledge and support. It helps clarify the problems and produce deeper understanding of needs and values for engagement.

The literature suggests that collaboration has a better chance of being successful if the partners already have a collaborative mindset of valuing working with other organisations and with the community (Chandler 2016; Himmelman 2002; Simonin et al. 2016). This key factor in formation is identified in the exemplars:

*“A further significant outcome of the work has been to build significant impetus for collaboration in our region which extends beyond the work of the group. A number of collaborative projects have been undertaken between member organisations. As a result of the relationships, information flows and trust that have been developed”.* (Imagined Futures)

*“Our partnership project reflect the strong working relationships developed over several years”.* (Esperance Community Arts)

*“The project has worked from the premise that it provides an environment for services to work together rather than a proscriptive framework for how they do their work”.* (50 Lives 50 Homes)

Maintaining equal involvement rather than one leader or lead agency is raised by Scott and Bardach (2018) as a potential area for further study related to goal commitment. Commitment to the collaboration rather than one’s own organisation or community is critical and was also raised in the case studies as a barrier to overcome:

*“Similarly, member organisations must be clear about the benefits of collaboration in terms of helping them effectively meet their own missions, and thereby fully commit to the collaboration”.* (Imagined Futures)



*“Our partnership project reflects the strong working relationships developed over several years... Intergenerational yarning and collaboration is key. Staying neutral to family business is key”.* (Esperance Community Arts)

### Cultural attributes and behaviours

#### **Attributes and behaviours**

Cultural attributes and behaviours are discussed in the literature review and the characteristics of collaboration from the 3C's model are listed in Table 1. Main factors are the differences inherent between collaboration, and other relationships of coordination, cooperation and networking that Keast and Mandell (2013) outline from their research. The key features defining working relationships are:

- the intensity of the relationship
- the communication flows and distribution of power between the participants
- the length of relationship
- the level of risk and reward.

Mutual adjustment and reconciliation are essential attributes as most of the literature finds that conflicts are unavoidable despite high levels of trust. Having members work together constructively in identifying, assessing and resolving conflict is necessary for momentum. These skills and behaviours underpin all collaborative actions. Systems also need to be in place such as decision-making processes and conflict resolution as part of governance to strengthen collaboration. The case studies and the literature find that length of relationship and working through barriers enable more dense relationships. For example:

*“Our partnership project reflects the strong working relationships developed over several years”.* (Esperance Community Arts)

*“Police and mental health practitioners have been working together and dealing with people in crisis for decades, prior to MHCR”.* (Mental Health Co-Response)

#### **Trust and power sharing**

Trust, sharing of power and shared vision are all prerequisites for successful collaboration and maintaining collaborative capacity. One of the exemplars commented that:

*“As the Alliance operated without any external funding for almost 2 years, it relied on co-investment from the founding partner organisations and this could only happen with deep trust between the partners and belief in the vision”.* (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)

If trust is not at the level required it can be developed, however it cannot be created by mandate or force (Wanna 2008). Some of the case studies described barriers to working collectively including concerns and suspicions over partner motivations; expertise not recognised respectfully, unwillingness to share data and communication breakdowns. They



also showed resolution through addressing issues and not letting them go unnoticed, reflective practice and open and constructive conversations.

Trust is essential and requires personal commitment, not just between organisations. Weaver sees trust at the core of collaboration and collective impact. She emphasises that building trust “*takes time. It takes skills. It takes the creation of safe spaces. It needs to be rooted in our current reality. Perhaps more importantly it takes our personal commitment.*” (2017:13).

Successful collaborative work is based on making decisions that also have the interests of others in mind and creating safe spaces for exchange of information, values and feelings. Attributes of trustful behaviour also involve sincerity and reliability in meeting commitments. Some examples are:

*“The trust we have built has enabled us to work together and working together has enabled us to further build trust”.* (Imagined Futures)

*“Ongoing relationship building based on agreed value system (respect, courtesy etc.)”.* (100 Families WA)

Power equity is a key attribute of collaboration in the differentiation of relationships. Equity is seen as a necessary mechanism but difficult to create as it is multifaceted, associated with blurred boundaries and dispersed. Inclusive participation sets the agenda for equity in relation to these differences.

Unequal use of power risks the collaboration’s capacity to achieve desired outcomes (Cook 2015:12). Huxham and Vangen (2008:32) identify various points of power and note it is not just the ‘purse strings’ that produce power. Resolution is through bridging differences, inclusive structures, communication and legitimacy (Bryson et al. 2015). Some ways to balance power have been learnt through the process of working collectively and the perception of risk associated with collaborative work becomes less of a barrier as they develop trust:

*“A shared vision was critical for the success and for parties concerned needed to have a shared understanding of the problem. Free and frank discussions between the stakeholders, initially also involving Hepatitis WA, played a major role in this regard. Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of each party was documented and agreed to and by sticking to them trust between them was never an issue”.* (My Health Our Health Program)

*“New, innovative methods for decision-making, and the sharing of responsibilities and power have been learned and adopted mainly through the coaching from particular people with expertise in these areas”.* (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)

*“A further significant outcome of the work has been to build significant impetus for collaboration in our region which extends beyond the work of the group. A number of collaborative projects have been undertaken between member organisations, as a*





*result of the relationships, information flows and trust that have been developed”.*  
(Imagined Futures)

### ***Shared understanding, common vision and commitment***

The broader literature on collaboration emphasises policy environments that set the scene for working collectively. Creating a common vision to solve problems and resolve conflict are supported by being inclusive, and taking time to listen and focus to mobilise and facilitate others (Keast and Mandell 2013). This was identified in the exemplars and other case studies. Clear focus and vision can prioritise input and actions:

*“Early on, (we) developed a shared vision and common goal and joint principles. It helped working better together to get the right support, to the right young people, at the rights time, so they can thrive in their communities”.* (Youth Partnership Project)

Shared vision or understanding that there is a shared problem enables members to set the intention of the work and rally people to an agreed process and outcomes. For example:

*“With the increase of mental health within the community, WAPOL, MHC and DoH were having to manage an increasing demand of their resources of a common issue”.*  
(Mental Health Co-Response)

Commitment to collective goals and actions build relationships and maintain activity and are shown through the exemplars:

*“All parties were prepared to go the extra mile because individually and collectively they were committed to addressing a significant health issue from a systems perspective and alleviating the morbidity and preventing the mortality of at risk individuals who had Hepatitis and were unaware of it let alone seeking/being treated for it”.* (My Health Our Health)

*“Focusing on a couple of key approaches at any one time helps to align different stakeholders around goals and actions, for example the Alliance advocates and aligns parties around the concept of Housing First”.* (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)

Open networking can broaden capacities and strengthen values for collective action:

*“... is built around a series of working groups – for housing providers, workers with young people and workers with adults/families. These groups are open to any individual workers working with the core client group and focus on collaborative problems solving. They are not networking groups or information sessions, but collaborative discussions of individual cases”.* (50 Lives 50 Homes)

Processes to build commitment can also leverage resources and resilience amongst members to maintain and improve their working relationships and commit to specific joint work.



*“It is important to note that a core principle of the collaboration has been that resourcing of collaborative work must first be sourced from existing collective resources. This has included better use and targeting of programs delivered by members and utilisation of spare capacity. It has also included a commitment to staff time in meetings and coordination activities, with the understanding that this commitment not only progresses collective mission and outcomes, but those of the individual member organisations”. (Imagined Futures)*

### **Collective action and inclusion**

The case studies present the benefits of working in partnership across government, the community sector, universities and other relevant agencies. Inclusive values, strength of connections, shared purpose and vision, equity in relationships, commitment and openness and working collectively are strongly presented in the collaborative exemplars.

These values support the inclusion of stakeholders and community representatives. The evidence from the literature review is shown across the case studies. They indicate expansion and strengthening of partnering with people who may be involved as consumers, carers and community representatives. For example, a case study identified *“taking direction from leaders in the Aboriginal community, elders and emerging elders”* (Esperance Community Arts) as a key enabler. However, some of the case studies raised the issues of tokenism in engagement. Concerns related to not developing shared understanding, particularly social and cultural understanding.

Involvement of a range of people who are often not involved in devising solutions is required. Leaders and interested people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, communities of identity and communities of interest (homeless; family and domestic violence, poverty) can provide deeper understanding and should be encouraged to participate in collaborative efforts.

Place-based approaches are one way of working closely across and within a community to create trust and possibly social cohesion to address the problems being addressed (Ham and Alderwick 2015). However, communities are not only place specific. There are also communities of interest and identity, and broader strategies for change through collaboration are required.



### 3. Practical tools and strategies to support behavioural change and improve collaboration and effectiveness

#### *Understand the context and opportunity in collective action*

Bryson et al. (2015) identify collaboration as dynamic and complex way of organising across boundaries. The context in which members participate is not static and the priorities of members or their representation may change. There are always competing and changing agendas in the policy and operating environment. It can also mean new ways of working for people involved and therefore learning and adaption are at the forefront of effectiveness. Reward is also at stake and the gain is not just the achievements of the members. It is mainly about creating public value through collective efforts (Soo, Chen and Edwards 2018.)

The exemplars illustrate the reality of effort in working to achieve outcomes where power aims to be shared, and also, the reward. They show that power can be balanced to enable equity through “*new and innovative methods for decision-making and sharing of responsibilities.*” Another exemplar, one of cross-sector work, found that power sharing was a key aspect of collaboration and “*it has involved larger organisations and funders being willing to cede some of the power they would ordinarily have.*”

The case examples present useful information, insight and sound guidance on behavioural change and lessons learned in working collectively. Examples of this practice-based evidence are presented in the case studies across the relationship continuum and an overview of each case study is available in Appendix B. Some practical tools and check lists are provided in this report (see Table 1; Table 3 and Table 5). There are also suggested links to other resources online.

#### **Conditions**

Conditions for working together vary and, in the main, they relate to community and political demands to be responsive to community needs and for particular actions (O’ Flynn 2008). Key enablers from one youth focused case study point to “*identifying champions of change and building urgency for change.*” These factors are the basis of shared vision. Community demands include seemingly intractable social issues such as those presented in the case studies of homelessness, family violence, youth at risk, food shortage, mental health, and prevention of alcohol and other drug related harm. Initial conditions include each organisation’s readiness, capability and commitment to engage with prospective partners and share in vision, governance, resourcing and processes.

In readiness for collaboration, organisations will contribute more effectively if they put resources (time, effort, budget) into developing collaborative capacity across the organisation. This needs to happen before the formation of the collaborative work as planning relies on effective skills and values supporting collective action, and inclusive processes. Aiming to do this as collaboration may affect relationship building, especially trust and ownership. Keast and Mandell emphasise that:



“For a collaboration to work there can no longer be ‘business as usual’. Collaboration demands participants forge new relationships and learn new ways of dealing with each other” (2013: 2)

Collaborations fail through inappropriate structures and processes (Head 2004). They require trust, effective coordination and facilitation of the emerging collaboration, and inclusivity in membership participation.

Strategies enabling the collaboration process, derived from the evidence and themes within the literature, are presented in Table 5.

### ***Assess what relationship is best for project***

Increasingly, organisations within the government or community sector work together for the benefits of collective action. The case studies show that a range of joint working occurs within sectors and across sectors in WA. It is generally based on prior relationships. However, there are also opportunities where new working relationships need to be negotiated. This may relate to cross-working with a less familiar sector and loose connections.

Organisations may have previous relationships based on networking or cooperation but have not worked together collaboratively. Engaging in any joint action across the continuum of engagement and relationships requires clear decision-making on the choice and appropriateness of the level of engagement. The attributes of cooperation, coordination and collaboration from the 3C’s model are presented in Section 2. It is a simple, but useful tool to assess if collaboration fits the purpose and assess if the parties have the right attributes or the intention to develop them. It is based on thorough evidence and provides prospective partners with a guide on intensity of work.

Some of the case studies advised on tools they found useful such as the:

*“Collaboration Health Assessment Tool (CHAT) to assess, analyse and prompt discussion on key dimensions of our collaboration which require attention”. (100 Families WA)*

Another case study identified that:

*“A comprehensive service mapping and data collection process was critical in identifying whether there were adequate resources to form a partnership and to identify which services were appropriate to partner with. It also assisted in a shared understanding of the problem identifying the key issues and laying the foundations for the co design process”. (Youth Partnership Program)*

There are various practical tools in the literature and on the internet that support clarity on the relationship required and assess the key features along the continuum. Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) has a collaboration decision support tool available in their Community Door eTraining at: <https://etraining.communitydoor.org.au> and a range of other resources on collaboration to support planning at:



<https://www.communitydoor.org.au/organisational-resources/collaboration>. QCOSS emphasises clear goals, careful planning and a systematic approach to setting up the collective work. Shared vision and values are crucial.

**Reality check on capacity for collective action**

Having a clear and significant goal and a common agenda which is important enough to rally organisations to work together creates the foundations of collaborative action. Collaborative action to gain improvements generally needs to be well resourced and funded. It requires “time, turf and trust” to achieve outcomes. It is not enough to decide to work together, it is essential to do a reality check on what each partner’s vision and expectation is for the collective action, risks, rewards, timeframes and available resources. It may be better to not strive for collaboration. Wolff et al. make a strong statement that:

*“Once community collaboratives have formed using a top-down approach, converting them to models that involve community residents as equal partners—whereby they have real influence over the agenda, activities, and resource allocation—is very unlikely” (2017:8).*

Various processes support equity of participation. For example:

*“Capacity building was an important area of initial focus for the group and contributed to a shared sense of vision and purpose”. (Imagined Futures)*

Organisations, whether government or community sector, intending to work collaboratively need to assess their own capabilities and capacity for collaboration and plan how they will build their culture to engage in collaborative work. Understanding the investment involved in developing capabilities and values within the organisation is critical. It affects readiness to contribute effectively. Assessment of costs and benefits includes development of the capabilities required (Table 3). Lack of time to effectively develop collaborative capacity may be a barrier to engaging in an emerging opportunity.

**Table 3. Summary of core collaboration competencies/capabilities and characteristics**

Getting things done through others	Analysis and planning	Driving the process	Personal attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Relationship skills</li> <li>• Build and maintain nurturing</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Process catalyst</li> <li>• Group process skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening and learning</li> <li>• Problem assessment</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Strategic relationship building</li> <li>• Work planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision setting</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Linking and leveraging relationships</li> <li>• Getting ‘buy-in’ from members</li> <li>• Energise and mobilise</li> <li>• Building coalitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to ‘read’ interactions and exchanges</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Sense of humour</li> <li>• Empathy (step in shoes)</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Perseverance</li> <li>• Commitment</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change management skills</li> <li>• Negotiation skills (interest based)</li> <li>• Deal constructively with conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance measurement and evaluation</li> <li>• Alignment of top down and bottom up processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelling collaborative practice</li> <li>• Community building</li> <li>• Managing relationships/ expectations</li> <li>• Assignment of tasks and people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperative spirit</li> <li>• Strong personal presence</li> <li>• Politically astute/ savvy</li> </ul>
--	---	--	---

Source: (ARACY 2013)

### **Goal, measures and outcomes**

Effectiveness relies on planned action, implementation, evaluation and measurement of progress and effectiveness. Consensus on long-term goals and outcomes is necessary, but there also needs to be intermediate outcomes (Scott and Bardach 2018) and/or process measures. Carey and Harris (2016) believe the focus on end-outcome targets hinders collaboration and process measures are more useful, providing performance information for adaptive management. Comments from the case studies emphasise that enablers are *“Strong mechanisms in place to measure the health of the collaboration,”* and *“Sharing learnings about data collection/evaluation.”* Data can show that the work is having an effect, as referred to in one of the case studies:

*“One of the strongest elements of the project is its ability to provide solid data that helps tell the story of the issues it is trying to address and demonstrate clear outcomes”.* (50 Lives 50 Homes)

### **Advanced and emergent planning**

Advanced planning can take many forms and can also be a risk management strategy as well as a facilitating innovation. One of the exemplar cases describes their use of a prototyping response engaging in a collaboration project with a short-term end in sight to end the work *“and being willing to fail and learn”* (50 Lives 50 Homes). They use a deliberate risk-taking method of exploring potential through micro projects.

This type of activity is an action-learning orientation to the development of collaborative work and balancing high risk/high reward. This strategy reduces a range of potential transactional costs through willingness and agreed adaptive mechanisms.

Adaption and openness to change is considered essential to success:

*“Be open to what will occur along the way, be flexible and respond to emergent needs, based on shared values and what is a priority. Taking risk”.* (Esperance Community Arts)



*“Ability to be flexible and adaptable is built-in to the process by having annual updates to this strategy that can respond to changes in the environment and lessons learned along the way”. (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)*

Advanced planning includes the roles of each organisation and their capacity for collective work. It can be restrained by organisational culture despite well organised structures and processes. The effectiveness of collective working requires processes between members and within the organisation for effectiveness. Collaboration requires review of processes and the adoption of relevant feedback and information supporting best practice.

### ***Co-design and community partnering***

Advanced or emergent planning with partner collaborators; the community; and other relevant stakeholders has to commence early in formation. This can assist in social learning for the collaboration members and provide them with broader perspectives, knowledge and support. It helps clarify the problem, both locally and broadly, and produce deeper understanding of public and other values for engagement in the collaboration. It also identifies other useful information and possibilities for action. Community members, consumers and carers’ involvement is required in deciding the purpose and mechanisms of the cross-sectoral collaboration; develop solutions and create momentum.

*“Formal knowledge (e.g. academic research) as well as informal knowledge (e.g. developed through co-design and co-production) is required to understand the problem and develop solutions that will actually address the problem effectively”. (WA Alliance to End Homelessness)*

The WA Council on Social Services (WACOSS) developed a comprehensive co-design toolkit and other information and resources. Government agencies have also developed resources for collaboration and the Department of Communities is actively developing competencies across policy and service design and other sections.

### ***Components of collaboration***

Keast and Mandell identify four core components of collaboration:

- governance and structure
- systems and processes
- managing and leveraging relationships
- people and culture (2013:1).

Governance was either in place with the many of the case studies across relationships or being considered, particularly as size of membership grows. A key message from the case studies was its usefulness in sorting out differences, ensuring power distribution and defining the values and protocols emerging in their collective action:

*“The governance framework needs to be more than a document structure to determine decision making etc. It should be used to embody the group ways of working and therefore should be meaningful”. (100 Families WA)*



The structures, governance, systems and processes need flexibility for members to adapt to the reality of managing uncertainty (Carey and Crammond 2015). As Keast and Mandell (2013) found, there needs to be “*the nimbleness to work with an emerging set of norms, roles and values.*” Similarly, Carey and Harris (2015) identify leadership barriers to managing change, working across boundaries and resolving barriers. The primary solution from their research is leadership based on adaptive management and governance approaches for managing uncertain environments. All strategies across the core components are necessary to improve collaboration effectiveness.

### **Key roles to work with complexity**

There are key roles relating to managing uncertainty such as leadership, connectors and boundary spanning. Working across boundaries are relational processes that need focused attention. These roles require people who can work adaptively within flexible structures (O’Flynn 2014; 2015).

### **Leadership**

Effective collaborators show leadership through creating a culture of “collaborative professionalism” and taking responsibility for working collectively (Chapman 2018:3). Leadership from all parties must be prominent in the joint working collaboration.

The influence of leadership skills is evident in the literature and is presented as different from top down hierarchical leadership. Leadership in creating a culture of “collaborative professionalism” and working across boundaries. These skills are shown below.

**Table 4. Leadership skills and capabilities**

<b>Leadership to work across boundaries</b>	
Skilled communicators	Emphasise through negotiation and see a situation for a range of perspectives and are genuine and respectful
Excellent networkers	Gain access to settings, seek out and connect with others with common interests and goals
Strategic in orientation	See the big picture and understand how all partners can contribute to achieve common goals
Contextually astute	Understand how opportunities and constraints influence behaviour
Problem-solvers	Think laterally and creatively to seek solutions and connect problems to solutions
Self-managing	Take risks within and have sound organisational skills

Source: Chapman 2018

### **Boundary spanners**

Boundary spanners are involved in the work of the collaboration such as strategic planning, partnering and stakeholder involvement. They are people that have the skills to work





collaboratively. The strengths they bring are the ability to mobilise and energise others; think broadly; appreciate various perspectives and experiences; constructively resolve conflict, coaching of others to work in more collective styles, align top-down policies and bottom-up issues and exercise 'political savvy' (Keast and Mandell 2013).

Boundary spanners could be involved from all agencies, it is not a sole responsibility. These roles can be provided by specific staff, working groups or shared leadership. They need room to be fluid in their work groups across departments or sectors is critical to the success of whole government and joined up working (Carey, Buick, Pescud and Malbon 2017; O'Flynn 2011; 2013).

Carey and Crammond (2015) identified that working across boundaries is a dynamic process working fluidly and flexibly to facilitate the relationships and processes for joint working. They found from their research of case studies for joined-up government that a picture of the set of skills for joined-up working does emerge:

- problem-solving skills, coordination skills (getting people to the table)
- brokering skills (seeing what needs to happen)
- flexibility, deep knowledge of the system, and, for front line workers, knowledge of both how to work with their community and how to obtain information about their community (demographics, needs, and so on)
- a willingness to undertake the emotional labour associated with relational working. (2015:8).

### ***Project management/backbone resource***

Collaborations are complex and the need for a support role was presented across the case studies referred to generally as either project management or backbone support.

*“(We) would not have been able to achieve the outcomes it has without backbone resources which coordinate effort, keep focus, and bring disparate existing resources together. Without this, there would be much good will, but no traction”. (Imagined Futures)*

*“Dedicated project management position to engage stakeholders at all levels around project practices and structured reflective practice processes to review processes and practices across the project team and wider team”. (100 Families WA)*

*“A dedicated, resourced backbone organisation enables shared leadership of collaborative initiatives and makes sure that progress towards shared objectives continues when partners are faced with other internal priorities; because at some point, good will to collaborate isn't enough to complete the tasks needed to achieve results”. (Youth Partnership Project)*

Project or backbone roles supports administration, communication with stakeholders, participation and activity. One organisation pointed out that:



*“A common failing of collaborations is the reliance on stakeholders who have already demanding full-time roles to drive the collaboration as well as undertake the additional work it requires”. (50 Lives 50 Homes)*

### Key mechanisms

Key mechanisms for collaboration across the literature are presented in Table 5 as a checklist. This is not an exhaustive checklist but reflects key factors presented in the literature review and case studies. It is useful for pre-planning, but collaborative readiness requires analysis of members’ capacity and collaboration readiness.

**Table 5. Check list for key mechanisms for collaboration**

Key mechanisms for collaboration – checklist	
A clear and <b>strong vision and values</b> and agreed focus on improved outcomes. The outcomes can assist marketing the project, participation and momentum.	
Strong <b>focus</b> on creating a collaborative culture, adaptive mechanisms and working together for common goals. Developing and supporting shared <b>leadership</b> (diversified and dispersed) and building collaborative leadership skills.	
<b>Membership</b> reflects the multiple levels targeted for change. For example, people with lived experience.	
Negotiation and communication particularly at the outset around <b>trust and mutual interdependence</b> , including identifying tensions beforehand and resolving them.	
<b>Risk management</b> - Appetite for risk taking and sharing risks as well as responsibilities and rewards.	
Using processes that <b>create participation, inclusion, equity</b> and are culturally appropriate with active acceptance of different values, norms and cultures. These include communication, relationship building and maintenance.	
<b>Realistic timeframes with long term commitment</b> from partners. Securing time for all actions as a key resource to plan adequately, act and review appropriate to the scope of the work.	
<b>Outcomes, including intermediate outcomes</b> – use methods such as program logic to connect inputs and KPIs to the outcomes. Developing agreement on evaluation and <b>measuring of outcomes</b> .	
<b>Collaborative action planning</b> about what to do, when and how to do it using inclusive engagement processes such as <b>co-design</b> and <b>co-production</b> .	
<b>Resources are appropriate and sufficient</b> . This involves funding source (internal from members or external source), project management/backbone support and adequate timeframes. Are there enough resources?	
<b>Agreement on sharing of power</b> and supportive structures and processes. Use collective governance and structures that do not signal hierarchy and privilege.	



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM

Power inequalities present risks across all structures and processes including lack of ownership and sense of purpose.	
<b>Governance structures</b> and formal agreements with clear information and responsibility arrangements, risk management, reporting, communication and collaborative decision-making. Flexible governance that adjusts with the collaboration's progress. Clear and inclusive processes for decision-making and problem-solving.	
<b>Shared roles and responsibilities</b> are required including roles such as a convenor role and a secretariat or project role. Care needs to be taken to avoid power asymmetries. People involved need to have the capacity to act.	
<b>People with boundary spanning skills and abilities to work flexibly</b> and constructively through the reality of collaboration – complex and dynamic.	
A <b>learning outlook</b> that builds collaborative capacity and capabilities of members, develops shared leadership and enhances feedback mechanisms, review and adaptation.	
<b>Documentation and evaluation systems</b> that capture intermediate outcomes to help document progress, celebrate accomplishments, identify barriers, and redirect activities when necessary.	
<b>Sharing resources</b> and ensuring adequate <b>technical assistance and support.</b>	
Sound <b>adaptive mechanisms</b> and an understanding that it is a dynamic process. Facilitation is crucial to guide adaptive work based on consensus-based decision making rather than majority rule.	
<b>Monitoring and measurement</b> processes in place with <b>active review</b> and supports learning and adaptation.	

There are evidence-based tools to check how well members are working together. For example, the Centre for Social Impact in Marjolin, Power and Muir (2015) has a checklist *So What? Key Questions to consider* based on ARACY factsheet 10: Evaluating Collaborations that looks at relationships and processes, participation level and structure and control.

There are and other supports available through ARACY. It has a range of publications and resources online and member-only resources at:

<https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-and-resources>

Peak bodies, nationally and internationally, are examples of effective collaboration, managing relationships and processes such as governance, risk management, co-design, strategic capabilities, review and systematic planning. The WA Council on Social Services has a library of resources and includes a set of toolkits about co-design at: [www.wacoss.org.au](http://www.wacoss.org.au). The Queensland Council of Social Services has a range of evidence-based and practitioner informed resources on collaboration online at: <https://www.communitydoor.org.au/organisational-resources/collaboration>



### 4. Recommendations

#### Supporting Communities Forum

1. The Supporting Communities Forum to acknowledge that collaboration is key to successful engagement between parties, and endorse the guiding principles for collaboration between Government and the Community Services Sector outlined in this document.
2. The Supporting Communities Forum to promote the collaboration case studies on their platforms and with members, to share with their networks.

#### Culture and Practice

3. Leadership at all levels of Government to support collaboration between and within Government and the Community Services Sector, where appropriate.
4. The Government and Community Services Sectors to continue to foster a culture of strong relationships through building connections across all levels of government and the community sector, to ensure mutual respect and reciprocity and to buffer against times of disagreement.

#### Procurement and Contracting

5. The Department of Finance to consider incorporating the principles of collaboration outlined in this paper into the next revision of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy.
6. All Government agencies to consider and factor in the real costs and time commitment imposed on the non-government sector when requiring collaborative responses to procurement and grant processes.

#### Workforce Development and Capacity Building

7. Department of Finance, Department of Communities and the WA Peak sector to jointly develop accessible resources to strengthen existing and future collaborative projects within current and future workforce development strategies.
8. Department of Communities to support District Leadership Groups to be collaborative mechanisms for the community through providing strong leadership, conducting effective community engagement, needs analysis, collaborative service design, and role-modelling collaborative practice.

#### Innovation and Celebration

9. Department of Communities to consider re-establishing the Social Innovations Fund to resource backbone organisations to undertake projects that will benefit from effective collaboration.
10. The WA Premier's Awards to incorporate a specific award for cross sector collaboration and collective impact, to celebrate and recognise the good work occurring across Western Australia.



## References

Alakeson V, Bunnin A and Miller C 2013. *Coproduction of health and wellbeing outcomes: the new paradigm for effective health and social care* OPM.

<https://www.healthissuescentre.org.au/images/uploads/resources/Coproduction-health-wellbeing-outcomes.pdf> (20 Oct 2018).

Alford J, Yates S 2015. Co-Production of Public Services in Australia: The Roles of Government Organisations and Co-Producers, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 75/22, 159–175, doi:10.1111/1467-8500.12157.

Blomkamp E 2018. The promise of co-design for public policy, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77/4: 729-743.

Bryson JM, Crosby B and Stone 2015. Designing and implementing cross-sector collaborations: Needed and challenging, *Public Administration Review*, 75/5: 1-17.

Carey G, Buick F, Pescud M & Malben E 2016. Preventing dysfunction and improving policy advice: The role of intra-departmental boundary spanners, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 76/2: 176-186.

Carey G, Crammond B 2015. What Works in Joined-Up Government? An Evidence Synthesis, *International Journal of Public Administration*. DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2014.982292 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2014.982292>.

Carey G, Harris P 2015. Developing management practices to support joined-up governance, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 75/1: 112-118.

Carey G, McLoughlin P, Crammond B 2015. Implementing Joined-Up Government: Lessons from the Australian Social Inclusion Agenda, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 74/2: 176-186, doi:10.1111/1467-8500.12096.

Chandler J 2016. *5 Tips for Nonprofit collaborations*, National Council of Nonprofits. <http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/throght-leadership/5-tips-nonprofit-collaorations>.

Chapman C 2018. *Public Service Leadership: What works?* What Works Scotland. <https://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/public-service-leadership-what-works/> (2 Jan 2019).

Cook, A 2015. *Partnership Working Across UK Public Services Edinburgh*, What Works Scotland. <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WWS-Evidence-Review-Partnership-03-Dec-2015-.pdf>.

Chapman C 2018. *Policy briefing: Public service leadership: Rethinking leadership for collaborative settings*, What Works Scotland. <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/policy-briefing-public-service-leadership-rethinking-leadership-for-collaborative-settings> (12 Feb 2019).

Chrislip DD 2002 *Essential concepts of collaboration* in *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*. Chapter four. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cunning and Chung 2014. Applying Collaborative Capacity and Collective Impact theories to evaluate the Queensland Mental Health Commission, *Queensland Mental Health Commission Evaluation – Final Literature Review*.



[https://www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/WEB\\_QMHC-Evaluation\\_Final-Literature-Review.pdf](https://www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/WEB_QMHC-Evaluation_Final-Literature-Review.pdf) (5 Dec 2018).

Gollagher M and Hartz-Karp J 2013. The role of deliberative collaborative governance in achieving sustainable cities, *Sustainability*, 5: 2343-2366.

Gray, B 1989. *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Ham C, Alderwick H 2015. *Place-based systems of care: A way forward for the NHS in England*, London, The King's Fund.

Himmelman AT 2002. *Collaboration for change: Definitions, decision-making models, roles, and collaboration*, Minneapolis, Himmelman Consulting.

Hudson B, Exworthy M, Peckham, S 1998. *The Integration of Localised and Collaborative Purchasing: a Review of the Literature and Framework for Analysis*, Leeds, Nuffield Institute for Health and Southampton, Institute for Health Policy Studies.

Huxham C, and Vangen S 2018 Doing Things Collaboratively: Realizing the Advantage or Succumbing to Inertia? in O'Flynn J and Wanna J 2008 (eds) *Collaborative Governance: a new era of public policy in Australia?*, Canberra, ANU E press, pp. 29-44.

[http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab\\_gov\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab_gov_citation.html) (30 Oct 2018).

[http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab\\_gov\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab_gov_citation.html) (30 Oct 2018).

Keast R 2011. Joined-up governance in Australia: How the past can inform the future, *International Journal of Public Administration*, 82: 397-419.

Keast R & Mandell MP 2013. *What is Collaboration?* Fact sheet 1, Canberra, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Keast R and Mandell MP 2013. *Collaborative competencies /capabilities*, Fact sheet 14, Canberra, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Kingdon, JW 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Second Edition, USA, Harper Collins.

Lightbody R 2017. *'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement*, What Works Scotland, Edinburgh.

<http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/> (30 Nov 2018).

Marjolin A, Powell A and Muir K 2015. *The Travel companion: Your guide to working with others for social outcomes*, The Centre for Social Impact.

Nous Group 2013. *Collaboration Blueprint*, Prepared for the NSW Public Service Commission. <https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports---data/other-publications/collaboration-between-sectors> (30 Oct 2016).

O'Flynn J 2008. Elusive appeal or aspirational ideal? The rhetoric and reality of the 'collaborative turn' in public policy in O'Flynn J and Wanna J 2008 (eds), *Collaborative Governance: a new era of public policy in Australia?*, Canberra, ANU E press, p. 181-195. [http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab\\_gov\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab_gov_citation.html) (30 Oct 2018).



- O'Flynn J and Wanna J 2008. (eds) *Collaborative Governance: a new era of public policy in Australia?* Canberra, ANU E press. [http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab\\_gov\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab_gov_citation.html) (30 Oct 2018).
- O'Flynn J 2009. The cult of collaboration in public policy, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 68/1: 112-116.
- O'Flynn J 2014. Crossing boundaries: The fundamental questions in public management, In Blackman d and Halligan J (eds.), *Crossing boundaries in public management and policy: the international experience*, pp 11-44, London, Routledge.
- Pettersson F and Hrelja R 2018. How to create functioning collaboration in theory and in practice- practical experiences of collaboration when planning public transport systems, *International Journal of Sustainable transportation*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15568318.2018>. (3 Jan 2019).
- Porter JJ and Birdi K 2018. 22 reasons why Collaborations fail: lessons from water innovation research, *Env. Science & Policy*, 89: 100-108.
- Queensland Council of Social Services 2018. *What is collaboration and collaborative practice*. <https://www.communitydoor.org.au/organisational-resources/collaboration/what-is-collaboration-and-collaborative-practice> (30 Nov 2018).
- Scott RJ, Bardach E 2018. A comparison of management adaptations for joined-up government: Lessons from New Zealand, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12348>.
- Simonin B, Samali M, Zhody N, Laider-Kylander N 2016. *Why and how do nonprofits work together?* <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/columns/the-sustainable-nonprofit/why-and-how-do-nonprofits-work-together> (6 Jan 2019).
- Smart J 2017. *Collective impact: Evidence and implications for practice*, CFCA Paper No.45, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government.
- Soo C, Chen S and Edwards MG 2017. A knowledge-based approach to public value management: A case study of change implementation in disability services in Western Australia, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77/2: 187–202.
- Szirom T, Lasater Z, Hyde J, Moore, C 2002. *Working together: Integrated governance*, Paper to the Institute of Public Administration Australia National Conference, Sydney.
- Wanna J 2008. Collaborative government: meanings, dimensions, drivers and outcomes in O'Flynn J and Wanna J 2008 (eds) *Collaborative Governance: a new era of public policy in Australia?*, Canberra, ANU E press, pp. 3-12. [http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab\\_gov\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/collab_gov_citation.html) (30 Oct 2018).
- Weaver L 2017. Turf, trust, co-creation and collective impact, Tamarack Institute.
- Western Australian Council of Social Service 2017. *WACOSS Co-Design Toolkit*. <http://www.wacoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/co-design-toolkit-combined-2-1.pdf>.
- Wolff T, Minkler M, Wolfe Sm, Berkowitz B, Bowen L, Butterfoss FD, Christens BD, Francisco VT, Himmelman A and Lee SK 2017. Collaborating for equity and justice: Moving beyond collective impact, *Nonprofit Quarterly's Winter 2016 edition*.



<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/01/09/collaborating-equity-justice-moving-beyond-collective-impact/> (10 Jan 2019).

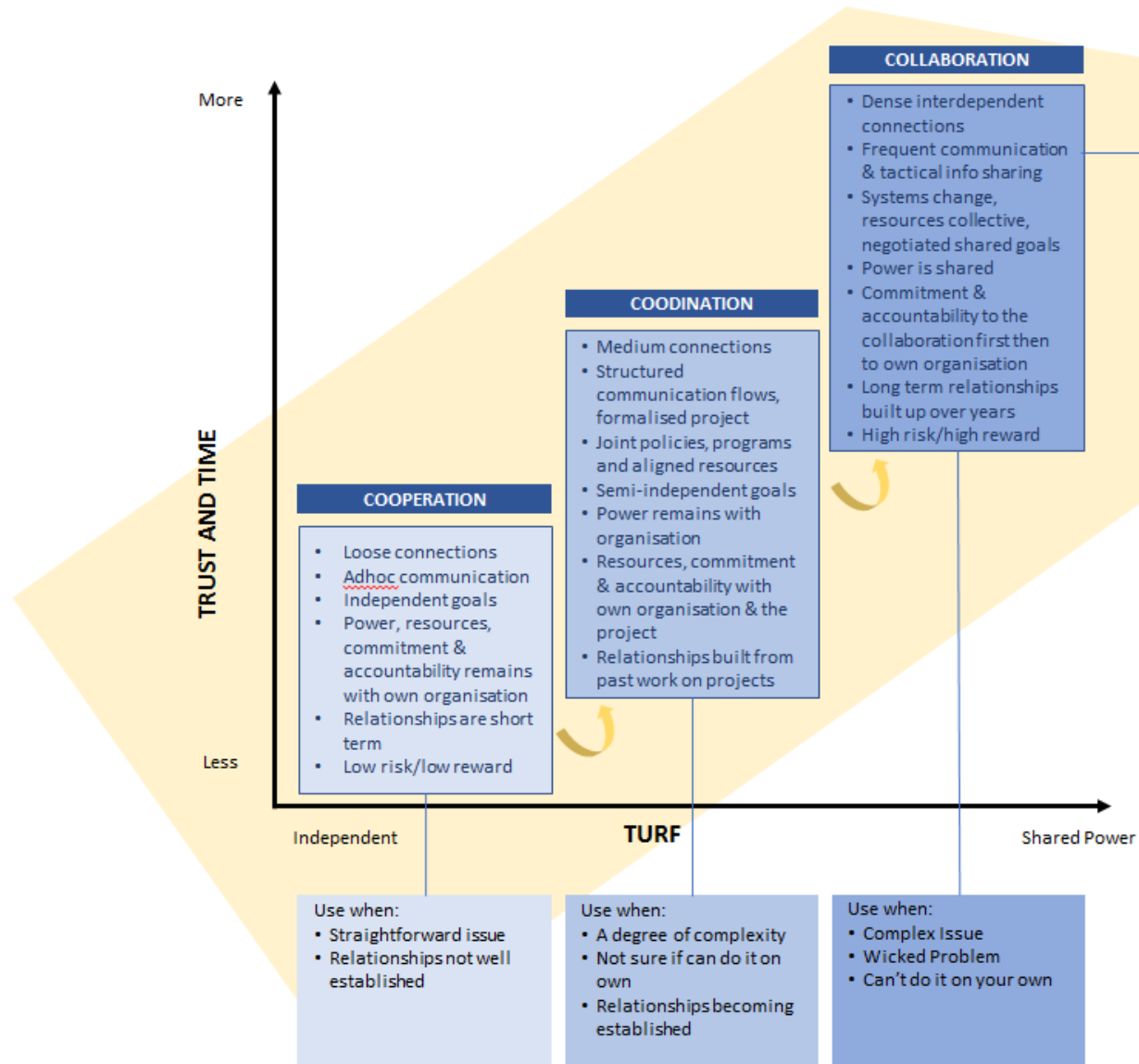




Appendix A: Collaboration Continuum



# Building, Supporting & Sustaining a Culture of Collaboration Across the Continuum



Checklist of mechanisms to enable collaboration:

- ✓ Strong **vision & values** that are compelling for collaboration mechanisms to tackle the issue
- ✓ Group focussed on **collaborative culture**, adaptive mechanisms & working together for common goals
- ✓ **Shared leadership**
- ✓ Membership is **inclusive** & adapted for the subject matter
- ✓ Positive & unrelenting **communication** & deep negotiation around the **trust & mutual interdependence** required to achieve outcomes
- ✓ Risk appetite supports risk taking & **sharing risks**, responsibilities & rewards
- ✓ Processes reinforce **working together**
- ✓ **Realistic timeframes** & long term partner commitment
- ✓ All outcomes, including immediate ones have inputs & KPIs connected to the outcomes, **evaluation agreement** developed
- ✓ **Collaborative action planning**, including co-design & co-production when adds value
- ✓ **Resources** are appropriate, sufficient, shared & are agreed
- ✓ **Governance & structures** are collective, flexible to updated information as progresses, **enhances decision making & problem solving** and used as a mechanism to have agreement on **shared power**
- ✓ Structures, processes and behaviours support the **removal of road blocks** & builds in **agility to adapt to changes** & new information
- ✓ Decision making is by **consensus** rather than majority rule
- ✓ There are shared roles & responsibilities & the **capacity to act** including having **boundary spanning** skills & ability to work **flexibly through collaboration realities**
- ✓ A **learning outlook** to build capacity & capabilities
- ✓ Documentation & evaluation systems deliver **active review** & to capture outcomes, document progress, **quick wins** balanced with **long term deliverables**, **celebrate** accomplishments, identify barriers & redirect activities when needed



## Appendix B: Case Studies

These case studies were submitted through the Supporting Communities Forum and have been edited for brevity.

