

2008

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## Recommended Citation

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# Doing What we Know we Should: Engaged scholarship and community development

BRUCE MUIRHEAD AND GEOFF WOOLCOCK

Community Engagement has become a familiar term in the Australian higher education lexicon in recent years. Professor Sir David Watson (2007, p. 1) from the University of London claims that now 'hardly any university, anywhere in the world, would dare not to have a civic engagement mission. The question is: how real, and how effective are these?'. A vital strategy to building and sustaining democracy lies in the unique constellation of intellectual, social and financial capital existing within the modern university. The key lies in the expertise embodied within the university, the socialisation role of mass higher education and the promotion of social cohesion in sustainable democratic societies. Universities and communities have the resources and capacity to co-produce and co-create powerful strategies for firstly, solving global problems manifested in the local community and secondly, helping both to become national and global leaders, which includes defining their identity, building a

foundation for teaching and research, delivering social and economic benefits, and also providing social, cultural and physical capital and infrastructure.

While community engagement has become more familiar in Australian higher education, there is still little institutional infrastructure evident in current Australian universities that directly embodies the principles and sentiment of community engagement. However, the University of Queensland's (UQ) Ipswich campus focus on responsive community engagement and partnership in establishing the Community Service and Research Centre (now UQ Boilerhouse) back in 1999 today provides an opportunity to reflect on the many and varied experiences of the Centre and, more broadly, the context in which university-community engagement took effect during the past decade.

The Community Service and Research Centre (CSRC) was an initiative of UQ's Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (International and Development). The Centre formed an integral part of the University's Community Engagement Strategy. The Centre's initial vision was 'to develop genuinely democratic, mutually beneficial partnerships between the University and the community. These partnerships [aimed] to build a sustainable, inclusive and socially just community' (see [www.uq.edu.au/csrc](http://www.uq.edu.au/csrc)).

The CSRC became a hub for the fostering of innovative ideas, economic and community development programmes, collaborative research projects, consultancy services, interprofessional courses and training programmes, and placement of university students with skills and interests that matched community needs. In its first six years of operation, the Centre became one of the most exciting and active incubators of community-based service and research in Australia, employing approximately forty community researchers and twenty associated adjuncts and research associates to work with more than three hundred partners, including community, government, non-government, academic and private sector organisations. The partners took on varying roles, degrees of involvement, input and responsibilities depending on the project brief, but all were premised on the importance of developing democratic, mutually beneficial partnerships.

The CSRC generated more than \$AUD5 million in localised action research and teaching and learning projects; produced more than fifty reports and publications for community and government agencies; was invited to participate in several international conferences and symposia and hosted two major international conferences on higher education and community engagement. Further, the CSRC hosted almost sixty international academics involved in higher education and community engagement activities and was invited to sit on many expert committees at State and Federal Government level. It also created community-based learning opportunities for UQ undergraduate and postgraduate students by establishing over one hundred and fifty learning partnerships for placements and community projects, partnering with over one thousand individual community members.

The Centre also demonstrated practical responses leading to innovative service and research in the local Ipswich region. The Ipswich community embraced the opportunities presented through access to the University's expertise and resources. Partnerships and collaborative activities developed with a wide range of local organisations and agencies in order to improve the capacity to provide better services to the Ipswich community. Regular interaction with government agencies, business and community groups, local government and individuals achieved a number of significant and successful projects, and over one hundred members a week utilised the Centre's facilities and service programmes.

### **THE DEFINING EXPERIENCE: THE GOODNA SERVICE INTEGRATION PROJECT (SIP)**

For all the activity generated by the CSRC over the period 1999–2005, there was one large project that, in almost every aspect, captured the intent and vision of the CSRC. Ipswich is a former coal-mining and industrial provincial town in the midst of change. It is located 40 kilometres south-west of the Queensland capital city Brisbane. In 1999, a tragic assault occurred there, and seven young people were charged with murder. This incident was one of a number of significant social issues that had troubled the Ipswich community over an extended period of time. However, it was this incident that finally triggered recognition of the need for discussions between the regional government managers involved in human services in order

to begin developing better models of service delivery to address serious social issues.

The CSRC provided leadership for this group of senior regional managers by facilitating discussions and connections with other agencies. Over a period of twelve months, fortnightly breakfast meetings were held. The number of senior executives attending these meetings increased from three to twenty. Consistent themes began to emerge from these discussions such as:

- the need to focus on building community capability
- the need for a holistic collaborative effort across all levels of government with community leaders and community-based organisations
- the difficulties in operating effectively with government programmes organised around 'silos'
- government programmes having difficulty pooling resources and working collaboratively to address identified regional problems
- goodwill between agencies to address these issues.

Key people and agencies that needed to be included in the group were identified. The local Member of Parliament, The Hon. David Hamill, and Ipswich City Councillor, Paul Tully, both endorsed the project. Complex issues and concerns relating to the significant local disadvantage were identified. A climate was established to trial a collaborative project to improve government service delivery focusing on linking agencies and new methods of implementing intersectoral government partnerships based on location rather than on specific programmes. Ipswich City Council was invited to nominate a Chair to lead the group, allowing the CSRC to continue as an advisor and facilitator, providing research, teaching and learning expertise and evaluation skills.

The suburb of Goodna, within the Ipswich City region, was identified as the location for a trial Service Integration Project (SIP). The SIP focused specifically on Goodna for several reasons, including the long recognised problems stemming from significant socio-economic disadvantage in Goodna. Some residents describe the community as 'the doormat 'Brisbanites' wipe their feet on, on the way into Ipswich and Ipswich folk, on their way into Brisbane'. It was also important to gain an understanding of the impact of the

institutional precinct on the Goodna area with many residents frequently reporting feeling 'shuffled' or 'shunted' between these offices in confusing and frustrating attempts to have their often complex needs met. With Goodna already a hub for many Commonwealth, State and Local Government services, there was also an essential opportunity to have front-line staff participating in the project. The importance of having a single location to which the project's multiple activities all had to be ultimately accountable became increasingly evident as the project evolved.

The Goodna SIP was created as a way to respond to the unique and complex issues faced by the community of Goodna, whilst charting a new way for government to 'do business' in multiply disadvantaged communities such as this. Funding for the SIP was provided by three Queensland Government departments: the Department of Families, the Department of Housing and the Department of Employment and Training. UQ, through the CSRC and Ipswich City Council, provided substantial in-kind support to the project. The vision for the SIP was 'working better together for sustainable community wellbeing in Goodna' (<http://www.uq.edu.au/boilerhouse/goodna-sip/>).

One of the primary aims of the project was to align the human services provided by the three tiers of government and the non-government sector, with the needs and aspirations of local residents and the priority outcomes identified by the State Government. The SIP thus established a set of outcomes influenced by the primary aims of each participating agency. Furthermore, the SIP sought to align these outcomes with, firstly, the Queensland State Government's draft managing for outcomes (MFO) performance management framework, and secondly, the eighteen priority needs and aspirations of the Goodna community as expressed through a series of consultation processes held in autumn, 2001.

The overall aim of the SIP then became one that sought to develop a sustainable system of human service provision (including the design, funding, delivery and evaluation phases) by:

- aligning the needs and aspirations of the community of Goodna, the strategies of service agencies in the region and the priority outcomes of Government and consequential resource allocation processes that support that alignment

- building social capital, responding to community wellbeing and facilitating the integration of human services
- building relationships, promoting learning processes and giving emphasis to measurement and modelling as three critical and inter-connected strategies to create systemic change to facilitate community wellbeing.

### **RELEVANT LITERATURE AND MODELS**

In setting the scene for the commencement of the SIP, there was obviously a large groundswell of energy and commitment to 'get going' but there was equally a determination to not repeat the mistakes made by other similar initiatives. Intent on understanding what constituted the leading evidence for undertaking a service integration project, the SIP Team drew on several domains of literature, described below. As is standard for most research projects, the SIP undertook to identify as many examples as possible of best practice in terms of service integration, but it is also important to recognise that there was no standard template to guide effective service integration research and practice. Thus, the Goodna SIP needed to 'write its own book' when it came to developing an integrated system of human services that improved sustainable community wellbeing.

Literature covering a range of disciplines and models was explored, including: community development, social entrepreneurship, community action networks, social capital, community indicator processes, community wellbeing, community capacity building, community visioning processes, sustainability, public sector reform processes, triple bottom line performance measurement, leadership and more. These readings, combined with studies undertaken via the SIP's Graduate Certificate programme and ongoing discussion amongst SIP Team members, contributed to the development of the SIP model.

The initial search surveyed a range of projects/programmes that shared one or more of the desired SIP outcomes for Goodna. The specific focus was to identify case studies of government-led projects that place an emphasis on community consultation and participation. Where possible, this included attempts to integrate human service delivery. The focus also tried to remain upon places that share social, cultural and economic similarities with Goodna.

Beyond specific projects and programmes relevant to SIP, the SIP Team was faced with a challenging task in addressing the key relevant literature for the Service Integration Project. Readings in the first semester of the inaugural Graduate Certificate course (July – December 2000) were capturing the attention of the initial SIP Team with their emphasis on collaboration and inter-professional communication. Many of the key ideas that emerged in the curriculum were carried into the practices of SIP and are highlighted throughout the text below.

However, the SIP also emerged at a time when several significant public policy directions had become prominent, particularly in the activities of State Governments and, more broadly, coinciding with the significant re-thinking of how governments engage with communities, particularly those which are socio-economically disadvantaged.

#### **PLACE MANAGEMENT**

Perhaps most significant of the emerging policy trends was the emphasis on place and developing a range of ideas interested in a more 'place' or spatial focus to policies, programmes and services. Notions such as 'place management', 'place planning' and more recently 'local governance' can be viewed as an overlay on the ideas of 'community capacity' and 'social capital' that add further perspectives to the task of developing effective local community action. These ideas stem primarily from efforts by government organisations to develop more effective approaches to the management of particular localities. In this sense, a place approach can be seen to describe new forms of institutions and service delivery arrangements designed to deliver improved outcomes for identified communities (Croft 1998; Latham 1998; Mant 1998; Botsman & Latham 2001; Edgar 2001; Walsh 2001; Zappala & Green 2001).

The notion of place management has become a popular 'badge' for a collection of approaches concerned with the lack of coherence and coordination in government programmes that all purport to be serving the same place. Place management is often couched in terms of 'breaking down the silos' (that is, particular governmental programmes that have relatively narrow goals), and is also linked to 'third way' ideas of 'joined up government' at the local level. Place management is also concerned with developing more effective

relations among government, market and community (civil society) organisations and groups within a local area.

The SIP Team shared many of these objectives but it also was determined from the outset not to be labelled a place management project with its inferences of a government one-stop shop, or central coordinating agency for Goodna. With no actual new resources to distribute, the SIP Team was eager to acknowledge that there remained sound reasons for agencies to stay in their silos providing specialist services where these were demanded. Instead, the SIP Team emphasised that it was only interested in those areas where integration was seen to be a progressive and necessary response in addressing the complexities of human service provision.

### SERVICE INTEGRATION

Having established service integration as the key applied focus of the project through entitling it as such, the SIP Team received far less guidance from existing literature on this topic. This was somewhat surprising given that integrated human service delivery initiatives have seen a resurgence in light of reduced government spending in the social sphere and the subsequent need for alternate service delivery solutions to improve efficiency, responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

However, despite the concept's popularity at the applied level, there is no universal definition of 'Human Service Integration', and much speculation and debate surrounds the determining of appropriate discourses for defining and referring to service integration (SI). In a most simple and broad definition, Konrad (1996, p. 6) has referred to the embodiment of SI as being where 'two or more entities establish linkages for the purpose of improving outcomes for needy people'. A partnership is formed among human service providers with common goals of meeting complex customer needs. Another definition suggests 'taking existing multiple services delivery and coordinating it into an organised, single service system' (Semmens et al. 1998, p. 7). The Konrad definition seemed particularly suitable for the purposes of the SIP, which was more focused on integrated services at the level of delivery rather than in developing a single system.

Of course the delivery of social services has to date generally been fragmented and diffuse and as such, methods of delivery have

been described as costly, complicated and unfriendly (Lutfiyya 1993). Service integration projects emerging in the 1990s saw a shift in focus from grand SI schemes aimed at meeting all of the needs of people and families at risk, to more modest, concentrated projects, focusing on particular sets of problems or populations (Agranoff 1991). While SI projects in the past have had different emphases, at root they have all sought to make the human service system more responsive to individuals with multiple, interrelated service needs (Yessian 1995).

What the sparse SI literature did strongly reiterate was the need for a long lead time to achieve substantial change in service delivery arrangements, with Austin (1997, p. 7) recommending at least five years. Haste to document outcomes is likely to be at the expense of the development of links between stakeholders and the refinement of effective processes, each necessary to sustain projects into the future. The SIP Team members, many of whom were already established as the first cohort of the Graduate Certificate, were reading material that concurred with the Semmens et al. (1998, p. 21) conclusion that 'shared understandings, shared vision, and shared commitment need to be developed between stakeholders to achieve an outcome-centred approach' and, furthermore, 'that it is not sufficient to recognise shared vision and values in the project proposal without identifying the processes necessary to achieve end goals'.

Keeping these lessons in mind, the SIP Team's interest in the SI literature turned to where it could be utilised as a marker of the effectiveness of projected SI initiatives in Goodna. O'Looney's (1997) tabular presentation of service integration effectiveness offered the most user-friendly tool with respect to assessing the impact of the SIP. Even though his model was based on a preventive service delivery project focusing on improved family wellbeing, he delineated importantly between four levels of service integration – the direct service level, the programme level, the policy level, and the organisational (or inter-agency / whole of government) level.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION/SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Whilst place management and service integration were key interests for the SIP Team, there was an early recognition that the project also needed to demonstrate a commitment to community development and building the social capital of Goodna.

An early belief and commitment that quickly flourished among the SIP Team was the recognition that shared capacity building

processes also help to build social capital. These intentions were consistent with the arguments of Lowndes and Wilson (2001) that social capital can be fostered by government, via:

- relationships with the voluntary sector
- opportunities for public participation
- responsive decision-making
- arrangements for democratic leadership and social inclusion.

The SIP Team undertook a thorough analysis of the social capital literature which provided some empirical evidence of the role of social capital and its potential relevance for Goodna. Much of the existing research provided confirmation of relationships that exist between social capital and the desired outcomes for the Goodna project. While the existence of a correlation does not necessarily mean causality, there was enough evidence, particularly in the Australian-based material (Onyx & Bullen 2000; Winter 2000; Stone & Hughes 2002), to support the potential utility of enhanced social capital for achieving the purposes of the SIP. However, a number of issues needed to be addressed before proceeding further, including the following questions raised at the conclusion of the literature analysis written in March 2001: Why measure social capital? What is the desired effect? What will be measured? How will these measures be used?

The key decision was whether to utilise existing data, which, although problematic, would reduce time and costs, or to develop a specific social capital measurement tool for the collection of primary data in Goodna. While the potential to yield rich data in Goodna existed, it was necessary to question whether this was a primary objective of the SIP, as well as to hypothesise the importance of social capital to integrating human services provision.

The outcomes of this interest in adopting a social capital approach were largely taken on via the SIP Measurement and Modelling group. The more relevant measurement tools for SIP have been in the area of community wellbeing indicators and here the SIP was guided by the comprehensive work of Salvaris (2000), whose overview of the growth and development of the community and social indicators movement in Australia and current work in Victoria

and NSW assisted in the development of an appropriate set of indicators.

### LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The other area of interest that emerged as relevant to the project over time was the growing scholarship on local governance (Badcock 1998; Reddel 2002), most especially the British (Social Exclusion Unit 1998; Lowndes & Skelcher 1998; Atkinson 1999) and European (OECD 1996; Cars 2000) literature addressing notions of social inclusion and exclusion.

The SIP Team was keen to explore how readily governance theories applied to the work being undertaken in Goodna through the SIP. In order to facilitate this exploration, we chose to use the framework developed by Reddel et al. (2001) for the Local Governance and Social Inclusion Project at UQ as a lens through which to take an alternative view of the SIP. A paper written by Boorman & Woolcock (2002) in conjunction with the SIP Team in the latter half of 2001 used examples from the SIP to respond to the four 'key research/policy issues, themes and dilemmas relevant to the study and practice of "local governance"' (Reddel et al. 2001, p. 1):

- is there a focus on community outcomes rather than administrative processes?
- what are the key practice dimensions of local governance?
- what are the new skills base and infrastructure requirements for effective local governance?
- what are the necessary accountabilities and performance measures for local governance?

In their paper, Boorman & Woolcock (2002) expanded on the SIP response to these key questions but the relationships with the Local Governance and Social Inclusion Project were undoubtedly enhanced by participating in the latter project's activities. As the SIP evolved, it was arguably in this area of scholarship – concentrating on issues of regional and local governance – that the SIP had most to offer.

### NETWORK ANALYSIS

The final key domain of literature that somewhat surprisingly became very relevant to the SIP over time was that of network analysis. Even though the SIP Team was aware from the outset of the

importance it was vesting in building relationships between regional managers of government and then, in turn, with the Goodna community, there did not initially appear to be any immediate research methodology that could readily assess these relationship building processes. With the involvement of Robyn Keast, a PhD student at Queensland University of Technology interested in finding case studies for her theories on networked governance and formerly involved with a major networked State Government project, the SIP Team learnt much from not only her analysis but that of other scholars in this area.

Where network analysis coincided neatly with other scholarship on governance was its recognition that the shift to community-centric relations has generated a myriad of activity around broad forms of engaging citizens and that typically these organisational arrangements have utilised various levels of networking. The strength of networked governance analysis was its capacity to go beyond descriptions of networks to aligning the linkage arrangement with the linkage structure. To put another way, networking, networks and network structures are arrangements that organisations enter into and cooperation, coordination and collaboration are relationships between members of these groups.

Keast's hypothesis in her early study of the SIP was that the project seemed to fit many of the criteria for a network structure of collaboration, where not only does integration involve strong linkages among members but the purpose is specific, often complex and usually long-term. Network structures are highly interdependent constructs and rely on members moving outside of traditional functional specialities to create new ways of working (Cigler 2001; Mandell 2001; Lawson 2002). Collaboration is the most stable and long-term type of arrangement. It also has the highest degree of risk. It depends on establishing a high degree of trust among the members and thus is a very time consuming process. It also depends on the members being committed to common missions and to seeing themselves as part of a total picture (Mandell 1999, 2001; Agranoff & McGuire 2001).

In addition, the theory asserts that collaboration through network structures will lead to fully integrated activity. Members of a networked structure see themselves as being interdependent. They are not only sharing resources or aligning activities; they are working

towards systems change (Mandell 1999). They recognise that they need to form into network structures because traditional methods (including networking/ cooperation and networks/ coordination) have not been sufficient.

Each of these areas of the literature was significant in its impact on the evolution of the SIP but, as critical as it was to identify those learnings up-front in order to avoid the mistakes of other social planning projects, it was even more important that the SIP be seen to be helping the Goodna community as soon as possible – it was time to get started.

### **THE INTER-RELATED STRATEGIES OF THE GOODNA SERVICE INTEGRATION PROJECT**

The three critical and inter-related strategies developed by the Goodna SIP Team to effect lasting and sustainable change within the system of human service provision were: teaching and learning (including accredited university programmes developed specifically for the project, short courses, learning events, action learning projects); relationship building (including community-government engagement, intra-community relationship building, cross-government collaboration and enhanced communication and cooperation between local, regional and central processes of government); and lastly, measurement and modelling (including the development of a Regional Information Warehouse, the measuring of community wellbeing and the development of cost-benefit models to enhance child protection). The CSRC was integrally involved in each of these important strategy areas and pivotal to their implementation and assessment.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Crucial to the model of systemic change was recognition of the need to engage with new ideas, to build new skills and to develop new sets of knowledge to tackle the challenges ahead. Equally important was a need to unlearn old ways of behaving, many of which had been reinforced and rewarded for years. Important also was the need to practice new skills relating to collaboration, interprofessional communication, community engagement, distributed ownership and capacity building. The teaching and learning component of the Goodna SIP was considered to be a critical ingredient to creating

sustainable change and involved both community-based and formal programmes.

Community-based learning projects were undertaken by a number of groups working collaboratively to develop local responses to community needs. Staff employed by the Goodna SIP supported these groups to apply action learning frameworks so they could develop ways in which they could respond to a diverse range of community-identified issues. Community-based projects included: enhancing community access to sport and recreation facilities; developing integrated responses to domestic violence; and developing an integrated family support service to reduce the incidence of child abuse.

The formal learning programmes implemented within the SIP included a Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Interprofessional Leadership), Community and Interprofessional Leadership short courses and community learning events. The Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Interprofessional Leadership) was the first accredited learning programme initiated through the SIP. It was run over two semesters and exposed students to the fundamental principles underlying collaborative practice. The students learnt the theoretical groundwork and practical skills for initiating and sustaining collaborative work. They also undertook a Collaborative Community Engagement Project (CCEP), which enabled them to apply the skills of collaboration they learned through classroom and applied learning situations. They did this by working on a real-time issue in the Goodna/Ipswich region that required an interdisciplinary approach. They were supported and guided in this project by the UQ teaching staff, practicing professionals and community representatives. The first cohort of students in this programme were all senior staff from government organisations based in the region, while the second and subsequent cohorts of students also included front-line staff from government and non-government organisations as well as members of community groups.

As the reputation of the Graduate Certificate grew, community demand for enrolment increased. New concerns emerged in the community relating to equitable access to learning and capacity building. These concerns inspired the Centre to develop a series of short courses in Community and Interprofessional Leadership. Participants who completed these short courses and chose to

undertake some assessment tasks could obtain recognition of prior learning and thus entrance into the Graduate Certificate and other accredited university programmes.

Community learning events were also developed to maintain the momentum for ongoing learning, particularly for those who completed the Graduate Certificate. The 'learning events' or 'learning breakfasts' programme involved a one to two hour presentation on a contemporary topic by a local, regional or interstate presenter. In keeping with the interconnected nature of the SIP, these learning events were preceded by an informal breakfast at which participants could build or maintain relationships. More than one hundred and fifty community and government representatives attended these learning events. The Centre also sought to provide free access to community members to attend other relevant university lectures, government briefings and symposia. Exposure to such learning events was a significant avenue for raising awareness, building networks and heightening self-esteem for community members who had not previously been exposed to such forums and who did not have the means to attend without support.

#### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

It was also clear from the outset that the SIP was going to be reliant on sustaining a number of vertical and horizontal relationships. Relationship building strategies were tiered over four distinct levels:

- relationship building within the Goodna community
- relationship building between Government Agencies and the community
- relationship building within and between Government Agencies
- relationship building within the SIP Team.

Perhaps the most significant step in the SIP's first year was the hosting of community forums and subsequent group workshops from April to June 2001. These provided the first and central means by which the SIP Team felt confident of meeting the needs and aspirations of the Goodna community. The SIP Team adopted a straightforward format for reporting back on what was said at these workshops via a four-page *SIP Update* and maintained these *Updates* on a quarterly basis from June 2001 to the end of the project.

The SIP Team was unanimous in its belief that the SIP should be involved in service integration projects in Goodna that accorded with the SIP goals and State Government priority outcomes. At the same time, however, the SIP Team was mindful of not creating a misperception that the SIP was another government agency focused solely on delivering service integration projects but instead emphasised the importance of every SIP-initiated project to work more creatively with existing resources.

The first official SIP 'project' was the expanded use of the Goodna State School's pool. The decision to commit to this as SIP's first project was not taken lightly but it proved to be another crucial learning path about the complexity of working collaboratively. An equally significant project taken on by the SIP, also at the Goodna State School, resulted in the development of a service which became known as the Goodna Integrated Family Support (GIFS). Early feedback received in response to the GIFS trial using unpaid Social Work students has been extremely positive. A further \$AUD195 000 under the Department of Families Future Directions initiative was obtained to trial the service through 2003 and the programme is still successfully running at the time of writing.

Similarly, the integration issues have been substantial in other SIP projects, including the Goodna.net project, an ultimately successful attempt to establish a community website for Goodna; a domestic violence research project addressing domestic violence service delivery issues in Goodna / Gailes; and a Goodna-focused research proposal to recommend an appropriate model of service delivery for people being released from custody.

#### MEASUREMENT AND MODELLING

Looking to generate new ways to measure and model cross-government human service interventions, the SIP Measurement and Modelling strategy group set out to build a set of appropriate indicators to assess wellbeing in Goodna, but also to deliver useful tools to enable more effective regional human service agency resource allocation in Goodna and the region. The participation of the Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR) in the SIP from March 2001 made a significant difference to thinking about the measurement and modelling implications of service integration. The SIP Team soon discovered that each agency

has a distinctly different approach to measuring the success of their inputs, with little capacity to delineate the effectiveness of their spending in a particular place as concentrated as Goodna, let alone in such a complex area as human services.

Another successful SIP project involved the undertaking of a longitudinal community wellbeing study of Goodna in conjunction with the OESR and which provided both paid employment and research skills acquisition for local residents. The survey has been subsequently replicated in Goodna and other disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Other SIP projects had more mixed results, including the attempts to establish markers or indicators of the effectiveness of service integration, the possible establishment of a regional information warehouse and effecting real change in relation to jobs and training and public transport.

Arguably the SIP's most complex project was the Alignment and Resource Allocation Project (ARAP). This project sought to assist efforts to renegotiate the way money is spent to deliver improved community wellbeing outcomes by aligning and linking the needs of the residents of Goodna, the strategies of the regional agencies and the priority outcomes of the State Government. To assist the focus of the pilot study, the ARAP concentrated on child protection, or a focus on programmes that would reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect on the grounds that this continued to be a significant issue for the Goodna community. The project demonstrated to the participating agencies that to get the best results from available resources requires a comparative assessment of the full portfolio of programmes across all relevant agencies before deciding on the size of investment in each.

The emergence of SIP's activities on the ground in Goodna was underpinned by the enormous amount of formative work outlined above. In sum, the SIP was governed by mutually agreed Guiding Ideas. The Vision for the SIP was developed by the multi-agency SIP Team and gave rise to the Project Aim. The Strategies by which the SIP sought to achieve these Aims were Learning, Relationship Building and Measurement and Modelling. The achievement of the Project Aim was reflected in periodical changes to the Project Outcomes. The Elements by which the Strategies were delivered were detailed within Action Plans and Specific Project Plans.

## TRANSITIONING SIP

The range of activity presented via the examples above cannot possibly capture the full extent of the SIP. It does not for instance tell of the significant amount of time spent talking with groups at all levels of government and community about the SIP story. Neither does it fully capture the amount of time devoted by all of the SIP Team to listening and reading about other inventive ways to build relationships, and to learning and measuring, plus the time spent sharing that information and knowledge with so many SIP stakeholders. We also have not written about the several cul-de-sacs that such a multi-faceted project will inevitably go down over its course. The trick was to recognise as quickly as possible that it was a limited path and to move on, always keeping an eye on the big picture of what was sustainable about the SIP. To this end, in addition to continuing to develop many integrated initiatives, the group spent most of the project's second half planning for its transition, and in the words of one SIP Team member, spent longer transitioning the project than 'any other project he'd known'.

Whilst the SIP was established to consider the integration of human services, the learnings and tools of the Project were considered to have broader application to the full range of agencies represented on the West Moreton Regional Managers of Government Forum (WMRMF). The SIP Team thus committed to a process of engaging with people who live and work in Goodna to understand what they wanted 'left behind' in their community and to plan to meet these priorities. A 'design workshop' to develop the idea of a 'Community Forum' in February 2003 saw a large cross-section of the community commit to establishing an ongoing Community Forum through which to engage local residents and service providers in discussion and action relating to community issues.

Summarising the multiple levels and complexity that was the Goodna SIP was always a challenging task throughout the project, let alone assessing its overall effectiveness. What was distinctive about the SIP was not any single feature alone but rather, the way it interweaved elements essential to community development through regional agency core business and intra-governmental, cross-governmental and government-community relations. In doing so, this project prioritised time and resources to this essential task in

order to ensure that integrated services can be developed, respond to local needs and aspirations, and ultimately contribute to enhanced community wellbeing.

Although the SIP Team consistently addressed the issue of evaluation, without the resources to fund an external evaluation the project was reliant on processes of continuous assessment and learning. These internal evaluation methods were consistent with the action learning processes adopted by the SIP Team and were complemented by the network analysis doctoral research of Robyn Keast (2004). Her case study of SIP (incorporated in Keast et al. 2004) showed that, although SIP could be regarded as a network structure that had gone beyond cooperation and coordination to demonstrate genuine collaboration, it remained at risk of being judged on traditional measures. Though the SIP clearly changed the way governments and government-funded agencies do business in the Goodna community, there are very few definitive outcome measures commonly utilised by government agencies that can conclusively demonstrate these changes.

Perhaps the most critical sustainability question inherent in the work of SIP was that if human service integration mechanisms are established in order to respond to disadvantage, can they and ought they be sustained once participants have experienced an improvement in circumstance and the initial 'threat' that caused their establishment has subsided? The experience of SIP suggests that to answer such a question requires a more sophisticated evidence base to guide key decision-making accompanied by a learning agenda to reinforce sound theory informing good practice. Collaborative governance working well is capable of meeting both ends but the reality in addressing such complex human service issues through the lens of service integration is that there is no single 'answer' or magic bullet. The SIP's story is one that instead simply promotes the consistent, rigorous and reflective application of good practice or 'Doing What We Know We Should', the title of the project's final report (see <http://www.uq.edu.au/boilerhouse/goodna-sip/>). It is a practice in which universities ought to be central players, sharing resources unable to be matched by any other social institution.

## CONCLUSION

In Australia, engaged scholarship oriented towards community development objectives has yet to be recognised in funding regimes

as being inherently beneficial in terms of scholarly excellence and university rankings. While the civic role of universities is acknowledged by individual universities, higher education management and at the Federal policy level, they are most often framed as funding problems related to 'community service' rather than as research opportunities which can raise the university's profile by providing the basis for excellent research outputs and community enrichment. The Goodna SIP conclusively demonstrates that community development and engaged scholarship are not only reconcilable, but that they are fundamental in any university's attempts to undertake authentic community engagement, as argued by Benson, Harkavy & Puckett (2000).

While there are many and various approaches to community engagement, there is recognition that effective programmes such as a SIP require common elements to be present. If undertaken solely in the province of the silos of government, community engagement risks being seen as another top-down government intervention (Boxelaar et al. 2006) lacking the institutional flexibility that the involvement of higher education can help to mitigate. It is also well recognised that elements, which are contingent upon the character of particular universities and the environments they occupy, must be present. Some of the work from North America on civic renewal, for example, has already been adapted by Australian universities to positive effect.

It is clear that while there are many benefits for universities and communities that effectively engage with each other, the political will to recognise engaged scholarship as scholarly excellence is constrained by its definition as 'community service'. Incentive structures for community engagement in university funding are clearly lacking.

However, there exist mechanisms and priorities within Federal funding structures which State Governments can take advantage of for the purposes of promoting community engagement objectives. A clear path to funding community engagement activities lies in the framing of community engagement as legitimate academic research, as a form of scholarly excellence. A conception of engaged scholarship that replaces community service is vital to such a role. Furthermore, State support for problem-based community research

can be leveraged to promote whole-of-institution involvement in community engagement objectives.

While the benefits of community engagement are long-term, often indirect, and therefore somewhat less obvious, research shows that the benefits of effective engagement are the result of far-sighted, long-term investment in community wellbeing and, consequently, in a healthy citizenry. If universities are to participate effectively in much-needed urban, regional and community development programmes, steps must be taken to put in place funding arrangements that encourage universities to engage with communities of which they are a significant part.

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