

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN INTEGRATED HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM — PLACE-BASED NETWORK ANALYSIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Homelessness remains an intractable social problem that limits the overall wellbeing and life chances of many Australian citizens. This research project was conceptualised and developed as a response to a Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' (FaHCSIA) tender to research the problems caused by the complexity of the homelessness problem and the fragmentation evident in the homeless service system.

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research project investigated the efficacy of service integration as a response to homelessness. It used a place-based network analysis and qualitative case study methodology to determine the level of integration within and between service systems in four selected sites in Queensland: Inner City Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns.

The research draws on and extends existing integration level data to generate a longitudinal research data set to better inform the achievement of effective and sustained integration in this sector.

The study addressed the two interrelated research questions:

- a) How do you design integrated and cost effective homelessness service models?
- b) What gaps exist in the service system and how can they be addressed?

KEY FINDINGS

- The study confirmed a modest overall improvement in the level of connectivity across the three original case sites (Townsville, Gold Coast and Inner City Brisbane) over the 2008-2011 periods. This finding suggests that policies and interventions implemented to facilitate integration have had some positive impact. Although not subject to the 2008 study, Cairns also displayed a significant increase in the level

of connectivity (density) between the 2010 and 2011 study phases. In this regard, key interventions included the array of outreach programs, the Homelessness Hubs (Brisbane, Gold Coast and Cairns), Case Management Coordination Groups and the Homelessness Community Action Planning (HCAP) initiative as well as the existence of strong practitioner networks.

- An overall reduction in average path distance was noted over time. This suggests that the service systems are operating more efficiently and this improvement appears to be strongly related to adjustments in coordination mechanisms, in particular, Case Coordination Working Groups (Cairns) and Case Coordination Groups (Townsville).
- All four sites presented evidence to indicate the presence of a core-periphery model of connection, meaning that a solid core of agencies with stronger frequent linkages were in place, surrounded by a web of less connected agencies (the exception to this was Cairns). However, each of the four sites demonstrated variance in their core-periphery patterns.
- Respondents largely identified that the core periphery model was considered an 'ideal model', however, there were variations between case studies as to the extent of centralisation, the patterns of interaction, the shape of the networks overall and the distance and number of connections between the core and periphery. This demonstrates that service systems must be fit for purpose through adaptation to the local context, including the size of the service system, its history and the geography of the area.
- At a program or agency level integration mechanisms manifested themselves in the form of increasingly formalised structures around MoUs. At a systems level it was seen to be reflected more in the establishment and maintenance of varied governance arrangements at a state and local government level.

- The sector continues to place a strong emphasis on the value of building strong working relationships based on trust as the primary vehicle for integration outcomes. However participants also acknowledged the resource intensive nature of this approach to integration and talked about actively searching out alternate approaches to ensuring sustainable connections between agencies.
- Participants highlighted the need and the growing capacity within the sector to build more formalised relationship mechanisms between organisations to achieve integration outcomes. Participants also recognised that culturally this was a significant shift for the sector and one that was yet to be fully embraced by all within the sector.
- The issue of requiring agencies to simultaneously co-operate and compete for funding (Co-competition) continues to be perceived as a significant barrier to achieving integration outcomes in the homelessness sector. Overall it was seen that such an environment drives behaviours counter to integration objectives and as such leads to sub-optimal outcomes.
- Case coordination initiatives (such as the CCWG in Cairns) were presented as effective client level linkage instruments, particularly in Cairns, Townsville and to a lesser extent, Brisbane.
- The moderate levels of integration seem to be adequate in their functionality and were perceived to have contributed to enhanced outcomes for numerous clients, particularly in areas where interaction was tightly clustered around a select group of agencies. This supports the view that service systems do not have to be fully connected, rather that integration models should be built fit-for-purpose to address the local context (issues, history, services, capability and culture). Coherent and informed institutional frameworks are required to provide a coalescing framework.

THE WAY FORWARD

The study highlights a number of points for consideration in the design and formation of future integration initiatives:

- Functional integration can occur within a moderately connected system—not every agency needs to be directly connected to others in the system. The integration model should be designed ‘fit-for-purpose’, matching the level of connectivity to the desired purpose. Such a contingency approach is contended to be more efficient, reducing surplus transactions between agencies and allowing for a more strategic alignment of integration mechanisms.
- The combination of tightly clustered and loosely coupled interaction patterns offers a more effective and cost efficient integration design model. Supplementing horizontal (bottom-up) with vertical (top-down)¹ mechanisms results in more sustainable processes and a broader range of impact.
- Genuine dialogue between stakeholders, such as the HCAP initiative, is a prerequisite to optimal service integration model design.
- The design of integration models and levels of expected connectivity should take into account the local context, including the history, service mix, culture and resources available as well as the capacity to bring these elements together.
- Integration is not easy to achieve nor is it an inexpensive undertaking, it requires dedicated consideration, planning, resourcing and adequate funding. In particular, interpersonal relationships are resource and labour intensive with associated (albeit often transparent) transaction costs and must be legitimised as a ‘core’ element of work and adequately funded.
- Coordination or linking points are critical in holding the elements of the system together and, when necessary, mobilise them to action. This linkage or connector role, taking a variety of forms, facilitates the flow of resources, manages relationships and distributes work.

¹ Top-down concerns authoritative approaches while bottom-up denotes network models and approaches.



BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

PROJECT BACKGROUND

RATIONALE

Complexity and service system fragmentation have been regularly identified in both the homeless services and the general social services literature² and most recently in the Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*,³ as major obstacles to the alleviation of homelessness. It is argued that these entwined problems impede the ability to deliver services to homeless people, especially to those with complex needs who require a range of service providers to assist in providing shelter and transitioning from homelessness to sustained tenancy. The project rationale thus stems from the well recognised need to address service and system level fragmentation.

Despite the ongoing intensive academic and practice focus on resolving homelessness through service integration (SI⁴), it remains difficult to achieve and even harder to sustain.⁵ The outcomes from SI programs and the form that such interventions take have been varied. Prior research indicates that the key to implementing successful integration is to be clear on the purpose to be achieved and build the system 'fit-for-purpose'.⁶ There remains, however, little understanding of the extent and form of integration best suited to different issues with the result that many service integration interventions largely fail to meet their objectives. This project provides a better evidence base on the impact of connections and relationship structures and processes on homelessness integration initiatives and the factors

that help or hinder sustained integration. These are areas in which there have been few in-depth studies. The White Paper⁷ and the *National Homelessness Research Agenda* both highlighted the lack of empirical research on effectiveness and, in particular, the lack of longitudinal data available on homelessness services and their outcomes. This research will provide robust, in-depth insights across the integration policy and programmatic arena for redressing/resolving homelessness and provide a unique longitudinal study of integration initiatives to understand how and under what conditions service integration for resolving homelessness can be sustained.

Solving homelessness requires a continued effort on the part of governments and communities. Further, decision makers and policy providers require historical data that identifies systematic trends and solutions to these problems. As such it is essential that evaluations of integrative efforts reflect an appreciation of its longitudinal nature and those improvements are measured across time rather than relying on potentially misleading cross-sectional snapshots of the sector at any one period in time.

The proposed research project outlined in this application therefore aligns directly with the following research objective, priorities and research questions put forward in the National Homelessness Research Agenda.

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH AGENDA 2009-2013

NHRA OBJECTIVE	NHRA PRIORITIES	NHRA RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Inform and improve the service system and practice, including evaluation	Assessing the effectiveness of interventions, including mainstream services Sustainability and exit points into stable accommodation	How do you design integrated and cost effective service models? What gaps exist in the service system and how can they be addressed?

² Walsh, P. (2003) More than just a roof: Finding beds for homeless people, QUT: Centre for Philanthropy and Non-Profit Studies

³ The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness (2008). Homelessness Task Force, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

⁴Service Integration (SI) is broadly defined as procedures and structures that help several service agencies link their efforts to address the full range of service needs presented by clients. The goals of SI are, first to attain a better match between clients' needs and the services provided and second, to create a more responsive and linked, therefore efficient, service system.

⁵Leutz, W. (1999). Five laws for integrating medical and social services: Lessons from the United States and United Kingdom *The Milbank Quarterly* 77 (1): 77-110; J. (1996). Wolch, J. Community-based human service delivery *Housing Policy Debate* 7 (4): 649-671

⁷ The Road Home, op cit.

Other research questions addressed include related issues such as:

- a) Does service integration improve the functioning of the homelessness service system and what key outcomes can be linked to integration reforms?
- b) How can service integration implemented to resolve homelessness be sustained and what factors inhibit or strengthen service integration?

Longitudinal Focus: Building on prior research (2008)

This study builds on and extends the 2008 evaluation of the impact of initiatives implemented under the *Queensland Government Responding to Homelessness Strategy (2005-2009)* on service coordination and integration. This place-based network analysis project captured a cross-sectional snap-shot of the level of integration within the three key Queensland service locations of Inner-Brisbane, Gold Coast and Townsville. The study found that geographical dispersion, infrastructure maturity and the presence of strong relational linkages underpinning homelessness service initiatives all play a critical role in the achievement of desired integration outcomes. Moreover, the study confirmed previous findings that service integration is context specific and therefore should be designed fit-for-purpose.⁸

While that study achieved significant outcomes of mapping, understanding and evaluating integration initiatives, it was a study of integration at a particular time. The current study extends the original findings to provide a longitudinal study using the prior research as a baseline. It thus addresses the residual gaps in understanding of sustainability in integrative systems by re-investigating the previous sites with the addition of Cairns which is included in this research due to the high level of shared clients in Townsville and Cairns identified in the earlier study.⁹

⁸Keast, R., Waterhouse, J., Brown, K. and Murphy, G. 2008. *Closing Gaps and Opening Doors: The Function of an Integrated Homelessness Service System*, Report to the Department of Communities, Responding to Homelessness Strategy (R2H), Case Studies and Place-based Network Analysis.

⁹ The rationale for selecting these locations includes: (a) major levels of investment across the four sites; (b) the Brisbane site includes key initiatives focused on service integration (e.g. Homeless Persons Information

AIMS

This research provides a comprehensive and longitudinal analysis of selected homelessness initiatives to generate an evidence base of service integration types that enables policy makers and program architects to make more effective and sustained advances into homelessness issues over the next decade.

Specifically, the project delivers a robust and reliable evidence base to inform and improve policy and practice within the homelessness service system, particularly in relation to integrated service models. The development of such an evidence base is an imperative and timely task as governments invest in initiatives designed to promote greater service integration.

HOMELESSNESS POLICY CONTEXT

In December 2008, the Australian Government released *The Road Home*, a policy framework aimed at halving homelessness and offering supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020. In so doing, it emphasised the role of early intervention and prevention programs to address homelessness, as well as new programs offering integrated support to those with high and complex needs. To this end the White Paper identified three strategies where further effort and investment was required:

- Turning off the Tap: where services will intervene early to prevent homelessness.
- Improving and expanding services which aim to end homelessness.
- Breaking the cycle: Recognises that sustained effort is required to address the problem of people moving in and out of homelessness over a number of years.

Queensland); (b) the Townsville and Cairns sites include initiatives/services with an Indigenous focus; and (d) the Gold Coast site includes innovative examples of integration strategies undertaken by the "SAAP" sector.

To support the achievement of the 2020 headline goals and interim targets for reducing homelessness, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) established a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). Under this Agreement, the Australian Government provided additional funding for homelessness to state and territory governments, who agreed to match the Commonwealth funding to deliver capital and services to reduce homelessness.

The Queensland Government has developed an Implementation Plan to meet the interim targets set by NPAH. The plan consists of investment in new and expanded services and development activities to improve the capacity of the community services sector to provide tailored support to people who are homeless and help them move to stable accommodation. The Plan also aims to improve service coordination across specialist homelessness and mainstream agencies and aims to develop a best practice methodology for whole-of-community planning to reduce homelessness.

The Implementation Plan is supported by measures to increase the supply of affordable housing through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and National Partnership Agreements on Social Housing, Remote Indigenous Housing and the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan.¹⁰

Supporting the national agenda, the Queensland Government released its own homelessness strategy titled *Opening Doors: Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011-14*.¹¹ The strategy's vision is 'to end homelessness by ensuring every Queenslanders is empowered to find and keep a home'. The strategy outlines three priority areas that will focus Queensland's efforts to reduce homelessness over the next three years:

- Helping people avoid becoming homeless—by improving housing outcomes for people exiting health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities.

- Helping people get ahead—by ensuring people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have access to safe, affordable, well-located and appropriate housing together with support and increased opportunities to get ahead through participation in education, training and employment.
- Working together for stronger services—better coordinating and integrating policies, programs and services, using and sharing data, and improving local case coordination.

The Homelessness Community Action Planning (HCAP) Initiative is a cornerstone element of Queensland's Implementation Plan and the Opening Doors strategy. The initiative has been established in partnership with the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS). HCAP has been established to coordinate stakeholder input and involvement in local homelessness community action planning and service system development activities in selected sites across the state.

The Queensland Department of Communities (DoC) has also adopted a 'No Wrong Door' approach to service delivery. This approach aims to improve client outcomes by streamlining referral systems and pathways and embedding a more client-centred and holistic approach to service delivery. This approach will be further extended in 2011-12 through the Homelessness Information Management Program (HIMP) that will implement a common assessment and referral tool and vacancy capacity management system to coordinate services within the specialist homelessness service sector.

A central and defining theme of contemporary Australian homelessness policy and programmatic agenda is the assumption that closer integration of specialist homelessness and mainstream services is an important ingredient to achieving a reduction in homelessness.

¹⁰ Walsh, 2003 op.cit.

¹¹ Queensland Department of Communities, *Opening Doors: Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011-14* www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/housing/community-programs/opening-doors.pdf p. 19

THE INTEGRATION RATIONALE

Ever since public services first became differentiated and specialised across agencies and sectors, governments and not-for-profit agencies have been looking for ways to bring the various elements together to reduce the costly problems caused by duplication and provide more effective and efficient services.¹² Indeed, Lynn¹³, 6¹⁴, and Tierney¹⁵ have traced the interest in human services integration across a number of jurisdictions back to the late 1800s. Since then there have been regular attempts to integrate services,¹⁶ with integration becoming the veritable grail for human services practitioners and policy makers.¹⁷ Provan and Milward¹⁸ provide the integration rationale:

The prevailing view among many service professionals, policy makers, and researchers is that by integrating services through a network of provider agencies linked through referrals, case management, and joint programs, clients will gain the benefits of reduced fragmentation and greater coordination of services, leading to a more effective system.

Although rarely successfully achieved, it is increasingly understood that well designed and implemented integration initiatives can translate into better outcomes for users, especially those who experience complex, long-term needs, for example, many of the

homeless populace. Amplifying the push for integration is the increasing number and diversity of services and programs operating within the service system and the layers of integration mechanisms put in place to establish coherence: all of which 'add to that which must be integrated'.¹⁹ Thus integration has both a service level and systems level orientation.

The ongoing emphasis on integration has meant that the term is widely used and has become an 'umbrella concept' for any type of initiative that involves connections between policies, programs, organisations and sectors. Integration can occur at the system, policy or service delivery levels; it can also involve working across sectors. Further, because of its multi-level foci, integration can involve an array of linking processes and mechanisms. As Leutz²⁰ explains:

Integration can occur at the policy, finance, management, and clinical levels. The means of integration include joint planning, training, decision making, instrumentation, information systems, purchasing, screening and referral, care planning, benefit coverage, service delivery, monitoring and feedback.

The resulting variety of structures, processes and mechanisms, with respect to policies and services, coupled with the different purposes for integration has positioned integration as meaning different things to different people. It is argued that the lack of definitional specificity has resulted in '... a confused array of descriptive, normative, and explanatory theory'.²¹ Nonetheless, the extensive literature available on integration has distilled some core frameworks that can be used to critically examine and assess the integration initiatives undertaken in the Queensland homelessness services sector.

¹² Painter, M. 1987. *Steering the Modern State: Central Coordination in Three Australian States Governments* University of Sydney Press: Sydney; Peters B.G. 1998. *Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Coordination* *Public Administration* 76 (2): 295-311

¹³ Lyn, L. 1980. *The State and Human Services: Organizational Changes in a Political Context* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

¹⁴ 6, P. 2004. *Joined-up government in the western world in comparative perspective: A literature review and exploration* *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14 (1): 103-138

¹⁵ Tierney, L. 1970. *Social Policy*, in A. Davies & S. Encel (eds) *Australian Society: A Sociological Introduction* 2nd Ed. Melbourne: Cheshire: 200-223.

¹⁶ O'Lonney, J. 1999. *Making Progress Toward Service Integration: Learning to use Evaluation to Overcome Barriers* *Administration in Social Work* 21 (3,4): 31-63; Brown, K. and Keast, R. 2005. *Social Services Policy and Delivery in Australia: Centre-Periphery Mixes*, *Policy & Politics* 33 (3): 505-518

¹⁷ Jennings, E.T., and Crane, D. 1994. *Coordination and Welfare Reform: The Quest for the Philosopher's Stone*, *Public Administration Review* 54 (4): 341-348

¹⁸ Provan, K. and Milward, H.B. 1995. *A Preliminary Theory of Network Effectiveness: A Comparative Study of Four Mental Health Systems* *Public Administration Review* 61 (4): 414-423

¹⁹ Tomlinson, J. 1981. *Is Band-Aid Social Work Enough?*, Wobbly Press: Darwin

²⁰ Leutz, 1999. *op cit.*

²¹ Halley, A. 1997. *Applications of Boundary Theory to the Concept of Service Integration in the Human Services* *Administration in Social Work* 21 (3,4): 145-168.

INTEGRATION FRAMEWORKS

As the above suggests, integration can be undertaken using a number of different models; each with their own underpinning assumptions, processes and mechanisms. Contemporary issues, including the failure to address wicked social problems which cut across departments, organisations and sectors and the increased demand by citizens to become more involved in localised decision-making, have placed horizontal integration forms as the key way forward.²² From the horizontal perspective, integration is less an end state and more of a continuum or scale that extends from the complete autonomy of separate parts (fragmentation) at one end to, through a series of graduated steps involving more intensive forms of linkage, a fully integrated system at the other.²³

Authors have used different terms or categories to denote the degree of integration and the types of relationships that can occur between organisations. The most frequently used in this context are cooperation, coordination and collaboration, referred to as the 3Cs.²⁴ While these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature and practice, they are increasingly considered to be analytically distinct²⁵ (and therefore located at different points on the integration continuum). Specifically, cooperation refers to low levels of connection based predominantly on shared information; coordination is the alignment of resources and effort, while collaboration is focused on achieving systems change through dense, interdependent relationships.

The value of such a continuum is that it can better guide the design of integration efforts such that they are 'fit-for-purpose'.²⁶ That is, effective integration

can be achieved by more carefully matching the level of relationship, commitment and intervention to the purposes sought. This more strategic approach affords a higher chance of success and, because it aligns purpose with resources thus reducing unnecessary transaction costs, achieves a more cost-efficient approach to integration.

The horizontal integration continuum has turned attention to the more strategic linking integration purposes to different relationship strengths. However, the emphasis only on the horizontal dimension does not fully reflect the complexity of integration in practice. The vertical axis characterised by authority, flat, central control and delegated responsibility, retains its dominant place as a core integration mechanism and therefore remains an essential, if subsidiary, element of integration practice.²⁷

Accordingly, integration efforts are also often described as 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'.²⁸ Top down integration refers to initiatives emanating from the authoritative and management core, usually the political or strategic leadership levels and flow down to management and service levels. In their search for coherency and efficiency,²⁹ these approaches generally adopt tightly coupled forms which allow for standardisation via instruction and guidelines.³⁰ By contrast, bottom-up integration emerges voluntarily from the service delivery front, driven by scarce resources, uncertainty in the organisational environment as well as a desire for enhanced service outcomes.³¹ Bottom-up approaches draw upon informal and formal networks and other relational processes as the mechanisms to link services, resources and people into collective action.

²² Konrad, E. 1996. A Multidimensional Framework for Conceptualising Human Services Integration Initiatives, in J.M. Marquart & E. Konrad (eds) *Evaluating Initiatives to Evaluate Human Services*, American Evaluation Society No: 96 San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 6, P. Leat, D. Seltzer, K. and Stoker, G. 2002. *Towards Holistic Governance: The New Reform Agenda* Palgrave: Hampshire

²³ *ibid*: 6 et al. 2002, op cit.

²⁴ Brown, K. and Keast, R. 2003. Citizen-Community Engagement: Community Connection Through Networked Arrangements, *Asian Journal of Public Administration* 25 (1): 107-132; and Keast, R. Brown, K. and Mandell, M. 2007. Getting the Right Mix: Unpacking Integration Meanings and Strategies *International Public Management Journal* 10: 9-33

²⁵ Winer, M and Ray, K. 1999. *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey* St Paul, MA: Amherst Wilder Foundation

²⁶ Keast, et al. 2007, op cit.

²⁷ Matheson, C. 2000. Policy Formulation in Australian Government Vertical and Horizontal Axes *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 59 (2): 44-55

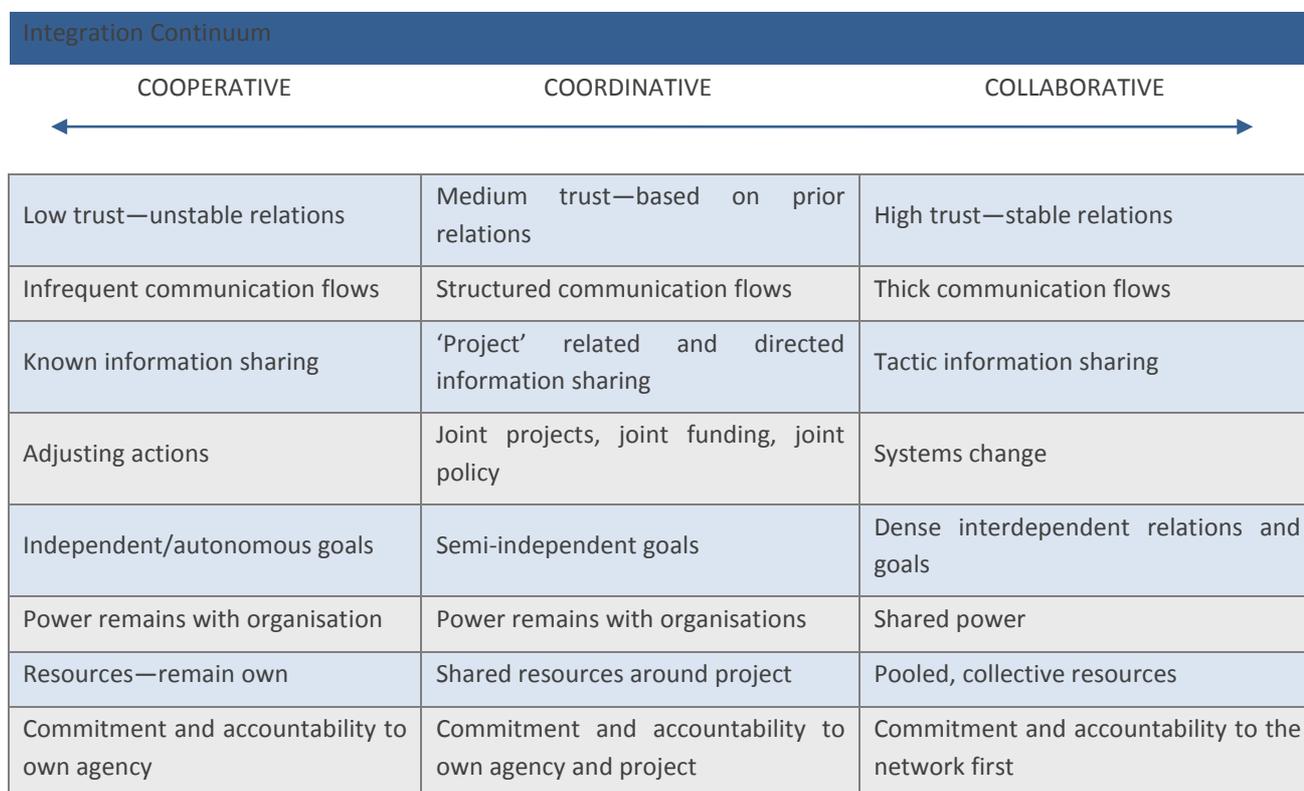
²⁸ Martinson, K. 1999. Literature Review on Service Integration and Coordination in the Welfare and Development Systems Research Paper, Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

²⁹ Ryan, N., Williams, T., Charles, M. and Waterhouse, J. 2008. Top-Down Organizational Change in an Australian Government Agency *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 21 (1): 26-44

³⁰ Kickert, W., Klijn, E-H, and Koppenjan, J. 1997. *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, Sage: London.

³¹ Healy, J. 1998. *Welfare Options: Developing Social Services*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin; and Keast, R. 2010. Joined Up Governance in Australia: How the Past Can Inform the Future *International Journal of Public Administration* 34: 221-231

FIGURE 1. INTEGRATION CONTINUUM



SOURCE: KEAST ET AL., 2007, OP CIT.

Attention has also been directed to the levels at which integration occurs, identifying activities at three levels: macro level of policy, strategic planning and financing decisions; the meso or middle level involving relationships among services in a region and/or integration at the managerial level; and the micro level, which concerns the direct relationships between practitioners and the people they assist.³² More recently, the breadth and depth of integration have come to be considered in the formation of inter-agency models.³³ In this conceptualisation, depth refers to the type or strength of the integration mechanism, for example, co-location, coordination activities or merger, while breadth relates to the extent or degree to which initiatives are spread over a locale or region.

As the above suggests there are an array of integration approaches, including for example tight and loose coupling³⁴; top-down and bottom-up³⁵ and the core-periphery model.³⁶ The choice of integration mode generally is influenced by contextual and situational factors, including the objective being pursued, the institutional context and assumptions employed, the power orientations and the type and availability of resources.

The push for integration as an enabler for service delivery continues, the homelessness sector being no exception. This focus has led to the adoption of various models and combinations of models, which seek to establish greater connections between agencies and their resources. Accordingly there is an array of approaches, models and patterns of connection in which integration can be shaped and structured. Yet, there remains little empirical research

³² Walfogel, J.1997. The New Wave of Service Integration Social Services Review 71 (3): 463-485

³³ Glasby, J. & Dickenson, H. 2008. *Partnership in Health and Social Care* Bristol: Policy Press

³⁴ O'Lonney, 1999, op cit.

³⁵ Martinson, 1999, op cit.

³⁶ Brown,K. & Keast,R. 2005. Social Services Policy and Delivery in Australia: Centre-Periphery Mixes, *Policy & Politics* 33 (3): 505-518

to distil optimal levels and patterns of connectivity in a service system, the most effective linkage mechanisms and how these impact on client outcomes. This study begins to address these gaps and provides an initial integration connectivity knowledge base to guide and assess future work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

The research project used a longitudinal mixed methods approach drawing on case studies populated by expert interviews, synergistic focus groups and social network analysis (SNA). Longitudinal case designs are most appropriate when the phenomenon under investigation is difficult to separate from its context,³⁷ where there is a need to examine complex inter-relationships between people, organisations, policy and processes³⁸ and where there is an interest in observing how and why changes occur over time.

Two phases of case studies were used to unpack, interrogate and analyse homelessness integration initiatives both by individual location and overall and were employed to gain insight into the complex nature of homelessness and the effect of integration initiatives. These case studies provided rich, in-depth qualitative information about the impact of reforms on service integration; examples of innovative practice; as well as local contextual factors that have impacted on levels of SI. Contextual information included: information on community capacity and service supply (i.e. service system mapping),³⁹ demographic profiles, homelessness rates, housing administrative data and information on local regional trends. Specifically, the case studies were designed to determine the impact of current structures, strategies and processes on the homelessness service system and the factors that impact the sustainability of integration initiatives over time.

³⁷Yin, R. K. 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods*. (2nd ed.) Newbury Park: Sage

³⁸Dubé, L., and Paré, G. 2003. "Rigor in Information Systems Positivist Case Research: Current Practices, Trends, and Recommendations," *MIS Quarterly* (27:4) pp 597-636.

³⁹ This information was drawn from service system mapping undertaken by the Department of Communities.

The rigorous technique of capturing key informant and stakeholder narratives as a crucial part of the case studies was complemented by the visual and quantitative power of network analysis and its ability to visually represent the levels of integration present in multiple layers of the homelessness service system. The use of multiple methods allowed the researchers to introduce a high degree of rigour into the findings therefore increasing the confidence in the results and consequently providing a more defensible base from which to make policy and practice decisions. The other key advantages of employing a mixed method approach is that it allows for a number of perspectives to be captured, essential in a case such as this where there are multiple stakeholders with potentially very different perceptions of the issues and how to address them. It was important to ensure that these views were recorded and evaluated. These metrics can be compared to those presented in the 2008 report⁴⁰ to derive a relative assessment of the current state of integration in each homelessness location and advance knowledge about how to sustain integration efforts to resolve homelessness.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND SOURCES

In formulating the methodology, the Research Team liaised regularly with key community based service providers as well as with DoC personnel in Housing and Homelessness Services (HHS) and Regional Service Delivery Operations (RSDO). In addition, formal liaison and governance mechanisms in the form of a Reference Group were used to oversee the project and provide practice level feedback.

The Place-Based Network Analysis and Case Study methodology drew on a mix of expert interviews, participant focus groups and SNA. An initial stakeholder analysis was undertaken in consultation with DoC to identify key agencies/services for participation in the study. This selection was further refined during discussions with respective network coordinators in each of the four sites. The resulting range of interview and focus group participants

⁴⁰ With the exception of Cairns which was not part of the 2008 study.

included representatives from government agencies, funded service providers and community organisations.

Semi structured expert interviews

Based on the team's sector experience, and in consultation with DoC, key individuals and subject matter experts were interviewed. Regional Managers and key personnel from each of the regional sites were interviewed in the first data collection phase. The Regional Managers' interviews, while drawing on a similar suite of questions to that used for service level interviews, gained insights into the models and impacts of higher level integration processes in each region. Interviews with key personnel from both government and non-government agencies at each case site were designed to elicit first-hand information about these expert practitioners' experiences of service integration. By gaining insights from funding agencies, service providers and senior members of the public sector it was possible to compare and contrast perspectives from different types of sources.

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted with key service delivery informants in each of the four sites. Key service delivery informants were identified as those persons nominated as having broad service sector experience and knowledge.⁴¹ The interactive, synergistic nature of focus groups allows participants to clarify and expand upon their contributions to the discussion. Such expanded contributions and explanations are often left under-developed in isolated interviews. Focus groups were conducted using a standard schedule of questions and were approximately one hour in duration. Some participants in the focus groups were also separately interviewed.

⁴¹The 2008 findings were also used to help identify homelessness sector providers to participate in a series of focus groups in three of the four nominated locations.

Network Linkage Survey

A Network Linkage Survey (NLS) was administered to capture the relational or linkage data necessary to construct the network analysis component of the evaluation. The selected integration variables of shared information, shared resources and joint planning provide the basis for building the network maps. Respondents were asked to nominate which agencies they had shared information, resources and been involved in joint planning activities with over the previous six months. The perceived level of value for each of the variables was also sought (high or low), providing an indication of the importance of the activity to integration as well as the level of commitment expended.

The data generated from the NLS provides evidence of the level of connection (integration) between selected initiatives and the broad service system and provides comparisons with similar maps constructed mid-2008.

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE DESIGN

The interview and focus group questions were purposefully designed to elicit broad responses. Semi-structured design ensures that the same core questions are asked of each interviewee or group while allowing for sufficient flexibility for follow-up questions and issues to be explored in more depth depending on the response to initial questions.⁴² Interview and focus group questions were designed in consultation with DoC (Policy and Performance and Homelessness Programs, Housing and Homelessness Services) and approved by them prior to administration. Copies of the interview questions and focus group questions are provided in Appendix 1.

⁴² Burns, A. And Bush, F. 2006. Marketing Research 5th Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall; Neuman, W. L. (2006), *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, New York: Pearson Education Inc

SELECTING THE INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

All participants in the interview and focus group process were selected based on their expertise in the provision of services or policy development to homeless persons, especially the chronically homeless. Key informants were identified as those persons with broad service sector experience and knowledge in homelessness and homelessness services and assessment. Respondents were grouped into three categories: (a) DoC representatives including regional managers and staff from Homelessness and Indigenous Policy, Homelessness Programs and housing service centres; (b) other government agencies both state and federal; and (c) community agencies both as housing service providers and/or support services. Sites for the interviews and focus groups were nominated by DoC (Housing and Homelessness Services) as being representative of main regional and metropolitan areas and included Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns.

DATA COLLECTION PHASES

Extending the research project on service integration undertaken in 2008, data collection for this current project occurred in two phases. The first data collection phase occurred during the latter stages of 2010 (from September–October) and comprised a series of workshops incorporating expert interviews, focus groups and survey methodologies. Where requested by participants the data collection process was digitised using online survey tools. This approach was considered pertinent to provide two key advantages: a reduction on the data collection burden on participants and improved timeliness of feedback. However, many of the respondent agencies, especially the smaller entities, experienced difficulties in accessing and completing the online survey.

The second data collection phase, which replicated the first, was scheduled for early 2011 (February/March). However, during the early part of 2011 Queensland was subjected to a series of natural disasters—Cyclones Anthony and Yasi—in North

Queensland (January and February) and the floods in South East Queensland (January). These events impacted directly on three of the four case study sites: Cairns and Townsville (cyclones) and Inner City Brisbane (flood). Acknowledging the personal trauma engendered by these natural disasters and the significant impact on the service system (and based on ongoing consultation with Reference Group members and sectoral representatives) a decision was made to postpone the second round data collection until June, 2011. In addition, with the consent of respondents, many interviews in this round were undertaken by telephone.

CONDUCT OF FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Focus groups were conducted on a face-to-face basis with key informants in each of the four main evaluation sites (Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and Brisbane). Three researchers were present at all focus groups. The focus groups were directed at gaining an understanding of the local homelessness service system or the sector generally. To minimise disruption of work the focus groups were structured around, and timed to coincide with, existing homelessness services network meetings or other network events.

Network meetings generally included participants from both government and non-government agencies and this mix of participants was able to provide rich and detailed insights into the history, function and operation of homeless initiatives. This method of data collection was beneficial to the integrity of data obtained as participants were accustomed to each other and therefore comfortable meeting in this way. The mix of participants created an excellent dynamic for interaction.

Interviews were conducted with key respondents at their place of employment. Interviewees often identified and offered to include input from individuals with practical experience in service provision. Where this input was offered and available it was always accepted. This approach resulted in a number of interviews incorporating the views of two or more respondents. Where key informants were either unavailable, or chose to do so, interviews were

conducted by telephone or the interview questions were provided in written form so that identified participants could respond in their own time.

A small number of agencies were not prepared to give their consent to be either interviewed or recorded due to their not having received clearance from their parent bodies. In another instance the respondent agreed to be interviewed but not audio-recorded; hand written notes of the interview were used in this instance.

Interviews and focus group sessions both followed a set administrative format including:

- introduction and outlining the background to the evaluation
- overview of QUT ethical requirements (with an emphasis on confidentiality) with participants provided with a consent form to sign as an indication of agreement to participate
- permission sought to audio record the interview/focus group process
- Phase 1 findings were reported back to Focus Group sessions in Phase 2 to provide respondents an opportunity to verify and/or amend findings.

The data collection methods utilised at each case study site and at each data collection phase are outlined in Table 2. The first round of semi-structured interviews and focus groups aimed to establish in general terms, the mechanisms that were in place at each site to address homelessness, how such

mechanisms helped or hindered service integration and how integration affected service outcomes. Interviews and focus groups conducted in the second round of data collection in June 2011 sought to build on the earlier round by asking respondents about recent changes and how those had impacted on service delivery. In addition, this round of data collection looked also at how dedicated specialist homelessness services worked with mainstream services such as the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Centrelink and Queensland Corrective Services, to address homelessness while at the same time asking mainstream services how they saw themselves positioned within the homelessness service system.

A main focus of data collection over the period of study was on the sustainability of the service system networks. Focus Group and Interview questions were especially designed to elicit responses about network sustainability.

This array of data gathering mechanisms has allowed for results to be ‘triangulated’ with the findings of one research tool testing and confirming the results of the others. By its conclusion the study had involved:

- Preparation meetings with DoC personnel; Project Reference Group meetings and Governance Committee meetings.
- Individual interviews with key departmental informants from DoC’s Housing and Homelessness Services (Homelessness Programs and Policy and Performance) and Regional Service Delivery Operations.

TABLE 2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

METHOD	KEY FOCUS	CAIRNS	TOWNSVILLE	GOLD COAST	BRISBANE
Semi structured interview	Individual agency experiences of service integration, enablers and hindrances to integration, mainstream service integration	√	√	√	√
Synergistic Focus groups	Overall service system background, impact and integration of initiatives, differentiation and alternative approaches	√	√	√	√
Questionnaire/ Linkage survey	Organisational demographics actual flow/ exchange of information, resources, referrals	√	√	√	√
Documentation	Policy, historical and evaluation information	√	√	√	√

- Eight focus groups: one in each of the identified case sites at each of the two data collection rounds. The size of focus groups ranged from 8–43 participants.
- More than 80 interviews were conducted in total over the four case sites and two data collection periods.
- Overall there were 240 nominated organisations listed as being operational in the four case sites (Brisbane 90; Gold Coast 48; Townsville 55; Cairns 47) as per the information provided by DoC. From these listed organisations we received 169 usable NLSs, resulting in an overall response rate of 71%.
- In total more than 180 people (this includes those interviewed twice and those participating in both interviews and focus groups) provided insights to, and information for, the evaluation process and results.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection approach generated a significant amount of data requiring sophisticated analysis to allow a suitable level of insight to be gained. The type of analysis undertaken was determined by the data type. To strengthen internal validity all interviews in both rounds of data collection and the focus groups from the first round of data collection were digitally recorded and fully transcribed. Owing to the size of focus groups and the difficulties in achieving quality recordings identified in the first round, it was decided to not record the focus groups in the second round and that extensive notes be taken instead. Quality of the focus group data was assisted by always having at least three research team members present at each focus group to verify and compare notes (important for achieving inter-rater reliability) as well as to assist with focus group facilitation.

Researcher notes were also used to supplement any missing information where possible. This strategy meant that the data utilised for analysis was largely complete. The resultant transcripts were then stripped of information that would identify the respondent except as relates to location and whether they were a government or non-government respondent.

Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative data generated from the interviews and focus groups. Themes were derived at two levels—(1) the case question level and (2) more nuanced themes emerging from a deeper analysis. A substantive thematic approach to the coding was employed involving an iterative process of actively identifying patterns and coding them into meaningful categories to allow the assembling of responses into logical groupings. Issues raised and reported upon in the findings therefore relate to themes that were raised consistently across the data source groups; or which presented as critical to individual respondents.

To aid in the determination of themes and offer both thoroughness and validity, the Leximancer computer program was employed. Leximancer draws on both thematic (conceptual) and relational (semantic) analysis to inform investigators of the strength of association and semantic similarity between concepts and clusters together concepts that occur in very similar semantic contexts. It also uses this information to create a picture or map of the relational (semantic) characteristics of the concepts. This visualisation technique highlights the important concepts in the data set and the relationships between these concepts.

Network maps and metrics

The data generated by the NLS was subjected to a process of network analysis. Network analysis was performed using the Ucinet7 software. The network analysis produced two outcomes: network maps and network metrics. The network maps provide a visual overview or snapshot of the structure of the system under examination. The three key network metrics applied to the research project were:⁴³

- **Density**—measuring the number of connections compared to the total number of possible connections. Density provides a picture of the cohesion connectivity of a network which is an

⁴³ These metrics have been utilised in similar prior studies of integration e.g. Provan et al (2005). The use of network analysis to strengthen community partnerships *Public Administration Review* 65 (5): 603-613

important indicator of collective action towards achieving outcomes.

- **Centrality**—is the degree to which network activity is centred on one or a few actors (the core) providing insights on where influence and power may be concentrated, blockages and patterns of information flow.
- **Average Path Distance**—is a measure of the number of steps that it takes to navigate through a system. It can indicate how quickly information can spread; how easy it is to access resources, engage in planning and programming activity; or make referrals.

The Integration Continuum developed by Keast et al⁴⁴ (Figure 1) provides for the primary analytical framework guiding the analysis and interpretation of the data. This continuum has been widely cited by academics and practitioners as an effective indicator of service integration.

Network analysis: Considerations

Network analysis is a powerful and insightful tool that requires careful management to optimally achieve its purpose. The nature of the data and the specification of the results require a number of considerations:

Response rate: Network analysis relies on a high response rate to generate accurate maps and metrics. Without a good set of responses, there will be linkage gaps and the data may not be sufficient to undertake useful analysis. Due to a number of external factors, including the natural disasters impacting on the case sites and the overall sense of ‘consultation and research fatigue’ identified within the sector, securing a comprehensive data set across the two phases was difficult. Each case site also generated a large number of agencies and connections. Not all of these links were able to be verified. Nevertheless, there was sufficient data accumulated to undertake the analysis and since it was derived from key agencies and was of good quality it can be reported on with a high degree of confidence.

⁴⁴Keast et al (2007). Getting the right Mix: Unpacking integration meanings and strategies *International Public Management Journal* 10(9): 9-33

Privacy of respondents: Network maps and metrics provide strong visual images of the connections and disconnections within a system. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the display of identifiers within the maps to respect respondents’ rights and adhere to ethical standards.⁴⁵ In this report network maps are presented without names.

Snapshots in Time: As with any data set, network data represents the ‘status quo’ at the point of data collection. Since service systems are constantly evolving the results therefore present as a ‘snapshot’ at that time and that any of the patterns of relationships, connections and structures may have changed. As such interpretations of the results should also take into account current contextual considerations.

Benchmarks: All networks and systems are unique and are contextually determined, reflecting the people, history and responsibilities of those operating within the system. This context can impact on how systems operate and the types and levels of connection. Consequently care should be taken comparing across system/network sites. There are no ‘wrong’ or ‘correct’ patterns or metrics. Coupling SNA with other methodologies, particularly case studies, is held to value add and ‘turbo charge’⁴⁶ network results by providing deeper insights and rationales for the patterns. Longitudinal approaches also strengthen the understandings gleaned from SNA studies.

The maps and metrics made possible through network analysis offer a different and important approach to understanding and assessing systems, their patterns of connections and operations. It is important to appreciate that while they can help answer some questions about the structure and performance of a network, the real benefit of this approach is its ability to stimulate genuine and informed dialogue and planning.

⁴⁵ Borgatti, S. & Molina, J. 2003. Ethical and Strategic Issues in Organizational Social Network Analysis *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences* 39 93): 337-349; and Kadushin, C. 2005. Who Benefits from Network Analysis: Ethics of Social Network Research, *Social Connections* 27 (2): 139-153

⁴⁶ Rogers, E. 1997. Problems and Prospects for Network Research: Investigating Relationships in the Age of Electronic Communication Technologies *Social Networks* 9: 285-310

PROJECT GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

A governance committee of departmental members and academics involved in the research together with independent specialists in the homelessness service sector was set up to oversee the research process. This committee helped formulate the aims and design of the research as well as providing valuable links to people and resources in the homelessness service sector. The mix of committee members meant that all stakeholders' needs were taken into account in the design and outcomes of the research in that they met practical, policy and academic rigour requirements.

ETHICS APPROVAL

Ethical approval for the project was received from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Human Research Ethics Committee. The University of Newcastle and Southern Cross University agreed to comply with the requirements and be covered by the QUT ethics approval. The Research Information Sheet is provided in Appendix 2.



OVERALL FINDINGS

NETWORK ANALYSIS INTEGRATION RESULTS

The overall findings for the research study were drawn from two rounds of data collection that comprised surveys and network analysis and, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in each round.

Integration remains an important and sought-after operating principle and approach for the social services' sector. It presents as an appropriate principle and vehicle for addressing these types of complex concerns. Aligning and adjusting the people, structures, resources and policy especially across all public, community and private sectors to create an integrated homelessness system is, however, far more difficult, time-consuming and problematic than the policy intent conveys. Clear leadership to address homelessness at a national level, with *The Road Home* in 2008, was noted as a key driver for the start of a highly coherent and sustained effort in redressing homelessness. Further, and later, the Homelessness Community Actions Plans (HCAP) and consequent implementation also established mechanisms for a new level of support and action for integration.

A key element of this study was the examination of changes over time in the level of connectivity in the case sites, and in so doing, identifying the potential impact of interventions (policy and programmatic) within the system. Overall, the 2011 network data has revealed a slight improvement in the level of integration (as measured by density and average path distance) across the three previously examined case sites (Townsville, Gold Coast and Inner City Brisbane) for the study period 2008 to 2011. To expand, the 2008⁴⁷ data demonstrated a generally moderate level of connection between agencies across all variables and sites (ranging from .001 to .364). Despite the generally low level of connectivity, all three case sites generated quite efficient average path distance measures (Brisbane: 1.5640; Gold Coast: 1.79, Townsville: 2.3), meaning that on average agencies had to go through two agencies to complete an

exchange. Other work⁴⁸ highlighted the general reluctance of people to stay engaged in a transaction process beyond two steps. Finally, the 2008 findings pointed to quite high levels of centralisation (53%: Brisbane; 46 %: Townsville; 40%: Gold Coast) suggesting that for each site a small core of agencies controlled the flow of resources and, therefore, the coordination of the system.

Together, these data led to an assessment of a modestly integrated service system, with pockets of strong connectivity; via for example, long-standing practitioner networks. It was concluded that although the system was functioning at an adequate level there was evidence of some strain, particularly with regard to the amount of activity and effort necessary to secure information and the churn around referrals in and out.

The 2010–11 aggregated data detected a slightly higher level of overall connectivity to that found in 2008. All four case sites followed a variation of the core-periphery model of integration, in which a smaller cluster of agencies occupied more central positions, bolstered by a wider and generally looser web of supporting agencies (the Gold Coast and Townsville in particular) there was a strong emphasis on the role played by key personnel as 'connectors', linking people and resources across elements of the system.

For both time periods, information sharing generated the highest level of engagement, with a significant drop-off in involvement for shared resources and planning because of the higher level of commitment and effort necessary to facilitate these two integration elements. The 2011 data also revealed that for 'high value' exchanges there was very little transference from the core groups to periphery, meaning that core agencies tended to access and hold resources.

The findings points to the need for more attention to be directed toward building the capacity of peripheral agencies to hold resources and participate more intensely in service and sectoral planning (although

⁴⁷ Keast et al (2008) op cit.

⁴⁸ Cross, R. Thomas, B. Dutra, A. And Newbury, A. 2007. Using Network Analysis to Build a New Business, *Organizational Dynamics* 36 (4): 345-362

clearly the HCAP process has made a strong contribution in this regard).

When arrayed against the 3Cs integration framework, the overall level and patterns of connection of the cases as displayed by their core-periphery models points to systems characterised primarily by cooperative (information sharing) actions supported by clusters of coordination (joint planning, programming and case coordination), with isolated pockets of collaboration (systems change action).

INDIVIDUAL CASE SITE NETWORK

METRICS

The second round network metrics for individual case sites also reveal some interesting similarities and variations:

Brisbane

- The Brisbane SNA metrics highlighted the existence of two networks: one of which demonstrated high commitment around information and resource sharing, while the other showed low commitment.
- Reflecting this outcome the Brisbane integration pattern revealed that a strong core of agencies was in place and tended to control the exchanges, and that this was surrounded by a weakly connected set of outer agencies. In this model, periphery agencies are at a disadvantage as they have to rely on other intermediary agencies, to access information and resources or participate in planning activities.
- The data highlighted the presence of a core-periphery structure common to all three network types. In the centre of the network is a core group of 15–17 institutions surrounded by a much larger number of second tier agencies. These peripheral agencies have a smaller, more specific set of interactions characterised by a reduced frequency around the three network types.

- Consistent with the 2008 data the frequency of interaction in Brisbane can be seen to decrease significantly when comparing information sharing to the other two network types of shared planning and shared resources.
- Overall, similar to the 2008 network data the 'density' of the three network types within Brisbane remains in relative terms, low.
- Both the network and qualitative data indicated a geographical dispersion effect—the further out from the Brisbane CBD you travel, the less integrated the system is and the more difficult it is to achieve integrated service provision.

Although the case sites have not demonstrated a significantly higher level of connectivity (integration) over the study time period, it can be argued that the system is working to its capacity, and given the restrictions of capacity, resources and service access, that a fully or even highly integrated system may not produce significantly better outcomes.⁴⁹

Gold Coast

- The Gold Coast also exhibited a core-periphery integration model. However, while the core was sturdy the secondary layer displayed lower integration. This result points to the need to engage more strongly with those agencies occupying the outer-edges of the network.
- Similar to Townsville, the SNA data also revealed that there was a disconnect between the information network, dominated by not-for-profit agencies and the resource network, which seems to have a higher involvement by government workers. This suggests that a focus for the Gold Coast Homelessness Network might be to look at linkage strategies and mechanisms that better connect the two networks, especially to increase the access of service agencies to resources.
- The data also revealed a heavy reliance on one or two key personnel within the sector, which is positive in that there is clear leadership;

⁴⁹ Longoria, R. 2005. Is Inter-organizational Collaboration Always a Good Thing? *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 32 (3): 123-138

however, it does imply a level of vulnerability and the need to build some redundancy into the system or examine succession planning options.

Townsville

- This site generated the highest density measure for all four cases, with some fluctuations apparent over the three data collection points. These variations can, at least in part, be attributed to the initial tensions experienced in the area over the funding and operation of the Homelessness Hub and then the appointment of a dedicated coordinator to the system.
- Network data revealed that one core network and two peripheral networks were functioning in the Townsville site. The core had an information sharing focus and was predominantly clustered around DoC. The second and third were clustered around their focus of service provision—young people (clustered around Queensland Youth Services) and women (clustered around the women’s shelter and FEAT). There was a noticeable disconnect between the core and these two networks.
- The case study site also displayed a relatively high level of centralisation, meaning that a few core agencies controlled the flow of information, resources and planning activity, particularly within the Case Coordination Group (CCG).
- DoC presented as a key actor in the system, again particularly in relation to the CCG. Not surprisingly there was a strong centralisation around DoC who coordinates the CCG.
- Whilst centralisation and density were high, the standard deviation was also high indicating that while some agencies were strongly clustered around the core, others had some considerable level of autonomy.
- The high level clustering around Department of Communities has two implications: first, those organisations not directly connected to the department could be disadvantaged in terms of accessing support, and secondly an over-reliance on one point in the network could present as a problem should the position be terminated or

the person occupying the position move. Therefore, the relative autonomy experienced by some agencies is not necessarily a negative aspect of the system and may provide some network resilience.

Cairns

- A core-periphery model was also in place in the Cairns’ homelessness services domain. This model differed to others in that the core set of agencies was underpinned by an almost equally well connected web of agencies.
- At 0.2756 the combined Cairns’ density (level of connectivity) was higher than both the Gold Coast and Brisbane, but not Townsville. While this is a positive result, Cairns’ smaller sector size means that most members know and interact with others, thus increasing the level of connection between them.
- Cairns’ 2011 (round two) density results were *twice as high* as round one (2010). At the same time there was a higher level of centralisation, and the average path distance decreased.
- The Homelessness Community Housing Action Planning (HCAP) initiative undertaken during this period arguably contributed to this spike in engagement within the sector, with a deliberate effort to bring in a wider array of stakeholders. The existence of two connectors (departmental and non-government) to facilitate this expanded consultation and planning process explains the increase in centralisation and the shortening of the average path distance, as these workers became the core conduits to information and planning.
- The Case Coordination Working Group (CCWG) and the Cairns Housing Outreach Network (CHON) both generated high levels of connection (density), particularly around high value exchanges. Notably there was little or no translation from high value networks to lower, resulting in the resources mostly accessible by the core. Work needs to be done to bring in peripheral members

- CHON displayed a very low level of centralisation (6.6%), indicating that control and action was distributed quite evenly across the network. The result is significant given the challenges of coordinating a network of its size.

INTEGRATION MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

Integration mechanisms are defined as the programs, processes and systems that link together the various parts of the system at different levels of operation.⁵⁰ Reflecting the size, capacity level and diversity of the four service systems under study, a wide array of integration devices have been developed and applied at the client/practitioner, program/agency and systems level of operation.

CLIENT/PRACTITIONER LEVEL

Case coordination initiatives (such as the CCWG in Cairns) were presented as effective client level linkage instruments, particularly in Cairns and Townsville.

We have only just linked in with them [CCWG] in the last three months. We've found that very beneficial as people there are genuinely there to assist the client. Their first thought is about how to assist them, not how does it affect us?

Case coordination thus provides a venue for information sharing and was considered to be a vehicle to forge interagency relationships. Some respondents noted the narrow intervention foci of the case coordination planning entities and expressed a desire for an expansion of the concept to a broader client cohort. In the northern sites, the specific focus on the most publicly noticeable cohort was considered to be politically motivated, drawing attention away from the preventative measures of early intervention and limiting the integrative scope of the initiative.

Assertive outreach programs, including in particular the Health Homelessness Outreach Teams (HHOT), Centrelink and Street-to-Home initiatives, were also acknowledged as valuable integration mechanisms.

The expansion of outreach programs which worked with clients at their own locations were generally considered to be an important additional service dimension, especially for 'more vulnerable' clients and those less willing to present to formal intervention sites. There was, however, some concern expressed by Indigenous respondents that the goals of some outreach programs were not consistent with the 'best needs' of service recipients.

Aligned to the above, an important integration mechanism distilled derived from the 2010/2011 study (and not apparent in 2008) centred on the coalescence of workers around the notion and practice of client centred intervention: 'There is a strong client focus here and that helps us to get over 'turf' issues and work together to help people'.

The client centred orientation was a consistent theme across all four case sites and was particularly apparent in the language used by community sector agencies and workers, who considered the approach as providing a strong driver for integrative working.

The Homelessness Hubs, with the exception of Townsville, also proved to be useful conduits linking clients to services and also facilitating integration between agencies. In regard to the latter, for example, the Cairns Homelessness Hub also acts as the Secretariat for the Cairns Homelessness Outreach Network (CHON). A number of agencies had also established joint program initiatives at the client level. These mostly voluntary arrangements were generally found to offer clients enhanced and targeted services, but were often subject to financial uncertainty and thus, limited longevity prospects. A final mechanism identified as having considerable purchase in linking clients to needed resources (held outside of the presenting organisation) centres on the availability of brokerage funds. This resource was described as being able to 'smooth over referral problems and link clients more quickly to the services and items they need'.

PROGRAM OR AGENCY LEVEL

At this level, integration mechanisms often took a more formalised approach. There was a strong emphasis on translating the largely informal, *ad hoc* or impermanent agreements and service protocols

⁵⁰ Alexander, E. 1995. *How Organizations Act Together: Inter-Organizational Coordination in Theory and Practice*, London: Gordon and Breach.

developed at the service level into more formalised arrangements. Recognising the high transaction costs associated with a purely relational approach and the vulnerability of this when aligned directly to individuals, a number of agencies across all sites were turning to Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) as a way to establish some routine or certainly around the relationships.

A smaller group of agencies were exploring or had adopted higher order arrangements such as Service Level agreements and incorporation to build more permanency and resilience into their inter-agency relationships. Several difficulties arise from the adoption of these formalised processes. First, it was identified that there was often a limited capacity and /or expertise available to agencies to establish and manage these entities, and limited support in terms of funding and time to build such capacity. Secondly, it was noted that MoUs made at the local or regional level were not always formally supported by 'head office'. On a similar line, it was acknowledged that MoUs created at the systems level, often did not translate in practice to the ground.

Cross-agency training initiatives, particularly focused on developing shared case management and case coordination approaches, were also employed at this level with the aim of building a community of practice approach to intervention:

One of the reasons we rolled out service-level training ... case management and case coordination need to be understood from a common framework.

The provision of localised cross-discipline training programs was argued to assist workers to 'push across practice boundaries' and 'develop shared understandings and language', (CFG1) both of which were intended to facilitate the process of working together.

Finally, an array of networks and other forms of cross-agency mechanisms, including committees and working groups, with a focus on direct service provision, straddle the practitioner and agency levels of operation providing expanded access to information, support and resources. Limitations of these include the time allocations needed to deal with complex needs of clients,

integration gaps in the system that create a clear break in service provision and client ability to transverse the pathways out of homelessness.

SYSTEM LEVEL

Key integration mechanisms at the systems level centre on the formalised, top-down instruments developed to set generalised direction, the environment for integrated work to occur and provide incentives around which agencies and workers can coalesce. The layered array of governance and sub-governance ranging from the Queensland Homelessness Inter-sectoral Forum at the top, through to mechanisms such as the Regional Managers' Coordination Networks and Homelessness Taskforces were identified as providing a more coherent integration format for the system.

The systems level also draws upon other top-down mechanisms such as mandates, funding incentives, formalised procedures and reporting regimes as key coalescing agents.

According to most respondents this expansive array of integration mechanisms has been quite effective in achieving the purpose of linking up various elements within the system. At each layer of the system the mechanisms act as viable points of connection and integration between people, agencies and resources. However, most of these mechanisms have been designed to accommodate a narrow integration scope or focus, thus restricting it to localised impact. The CCWG/CCG, with its emphasis on rough sleepers, is an example of this narrow and targeted emphasis. Bottom-up service based networks, despite their immediate local benefits, have also been found to have a limited ability to bridge the resource gaps in the system that create a clear break in service provision and client ability to transverse the pathways out of homelessness.

Top-down integration processes such as the layered regional governance model, also appear to have had positive integrative purchase. Several respondents commented on the increased level of coherence brought about by this vertical integration pathway and the ability to 'refer upwards' to higher decision-making authorities issues that move outside of the

OVERALL FINDINGS

scope and mandate of localised networks. Extending the membership base of these vertically aligned governance networks to include more non-government actors has been widely perceived as strengthening the integration of the system overall. The stronger alignment between the functions and membership or vertical, authoritative arrangements (linked through to related national bodies) with the work and contribution of localised, horizontal, presented as an improvement over earlier systems level models which were argued to be too ‘top-down’ and isolated from the work on the ground. A downside of this more expansive governance and sub-governance system is that, without prior knowledge and experience, it can be difficult to understand; clear processes may be obscured by multiple layers of action and therefore the system is hard to navigate.

This section concludes that while both bottom-up and top-down integration approaches each have merit and application, on their own they are generally limited in their scope and often lack sufficient strength to push through operational layers (up or down) to secure a greater depth or breadth to their activities and zone of

influence.⁵¹ This study and others have found that systemic integration efforts are most sustainable when they have been designed to meet their purpose, combine a mix of top-down/bottom-up elements, include a balanced composition of government and non-government members and have a dedicated driver or management function.⁵²

Drawing on the qualitative data the next section examines more deeply the perceived impact of these integration mechanisms (see Table 3) for clients, organisations and the sector more generally. There was generalised consensus across all four case sites that greater connectivity did generate improved outcomes.

Although respondents identified positive impacts of their integration initiatives on client and the service system, with few exceptions, these were largely based on the ‘perceptions’ of participants’ or were drawn from limited empirical analysis. Furthermore, the optimistic stances related to integration and its

TABLE 3. INTEGRATION INITIATIVES AND THEIR PERCEIVED IMPACT

LEVEL	INTEGRATION INITIATIVES	PERCEIVED IMPACT
Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brokerage funds ■ Programs e.g. Bridges; JUST ■ Case Coordination groups ■ Outreach Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Linking clients more directly to required resources ■ Enhanced referrals ■ More seamless service experience (client centred) ■ Fewer agencies to traverse to access service ■ Enhanced pathways to sustained housing ■ Development of relationships with clients (e.g. young people & rough sleepers)
Organisation/ network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Service delivery networks (e.g. CHON; HOST) ■ MoUs & Incorporation ■ Joint Training programs ■ Joint Network Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expanded array of agencies (e.g. mainstreams) ■ Improved connections to previously isolated agencies/resources ■ Tailored community specific infrastructures ■ Reduced duplication & overlap of resource provision ■ Reduced relational transactions (\$) ■ Local capacity building ■ Spill over effects – outcomes extending into nearby communities (network capital) ■ Agreed ways of working
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy Framework ■ Funding regimes ■ State-wide initiatives (HCAP) ■ Governance networks (state & regional HOST) ■ MoUs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole-of-government approach ■ Additional funding & resourcing ■ Sectoral capacity building ■ Enhanced planning & decision making processes ■ Expanded membership of decision making bodies – more holistic & comprehensive response to issues

and Problems Public Administration 00. 013-042.

impacts should be noted: there was an acknowledgment that participation in many of the activities was often personally satisfying and therefore workers were also likely to experience ‘feel good’ personal outcomes, possibly at the cost of client outcomes.

RELATIONSHIPS

Despite the presence of an array of formalised/structured integration mechanisms, interpersonal relationships were by far the most frequently reported and relied upon integration device. The following statement establishes the relational position: ‘Relationships are everything’. It is well established that relationships are essential to joined-up working⁵³ and, in the context of the social services, acts as the ‘glue that binds’ allowing workers to share information and resources to better meet client needs.⁵⁴ However, taken to extremes, the tendency to rely on informal, interpersonal relational methods may lead other problems including, for example, poor overall information sharing and the loss of clients between information gaps. Noticeable from the data was the highly instrumental use of individual relationships as a means to secure specific information or resources for their client cohorts. That is, relationships were established and nurtured as part of a deliberate strategy to connect to client level resources. It is argued here, that the high reliance on relationships as a linkage mechanism between workers, may be an extension of client–worker relationship required for effective case work.⁵⁵

Alongside the individual relationships, it is evident that workers are also engaged in extensive relationship building at the broader network level. Relational engagement in networks is driven by a different set of objectives and resource implications. At this level the emphasis is on tapping into broader sets of information and resources to create an expanded

resource base which can be leveraged for greater overall benefit, thus supplement individual resource stocks. In this way, network relationships also have a systems capacity building orientation.

The relational approach to service integration has long been held to be an appropriate model in complex and multi-faceted systems;⁵⁶ however, it does not transpire without considerable personal and organisational investment. As one government respondent described the experience:

It is a process that takes time and effort. It takes you a good year or more to get your networks and then you have got to work on those because sometimes they are personality driven. And of course, as state department some NGOs see you as a big bad person and you have to work to change that impression.

In this way there is considerable time and effort directed toward building relationships and maintaining their currency. Time presented as a crucial stress factor: ‘no-one has enough of it’. Research elsewhere⁵⁷ supports the heavy investment of time necessary for deeper integrative models such as networks, indicating an on average 3-year timeline before the benefits of such collaborative action could be secured. The allocation of time and effort to attending the many network meetings was sometimes construed as ‘taking attention away from service provision – the real work’, rather than adding value or saving time in the long run.⁵⁸ Exacerbating this situation was the tendency for workers to be involved in multiple networks, creating a multiplier effect:

Well, it gets really hard. I am supposed to be at a network meeting now. Within [organisation] I’m supposed to be on the Working Committee, Steering Committee for working together for change. I have the Executive group meetings to do and then we all have the outside ones, the community network meetings—the CHON, the

⁵³ Church et al. 2002. Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks, NO 121, Development Planning Unity: University College London;

⁵⁴ Hawkins, R. and Mauer, K. 2011. Unravelling Social Capital: Disentangling A Concept for Social Work *British Journal of Social Work*: 1-18

⁵⁶ Chisholm, R. 1989 *Coordination without hierarchy: Informal structures in multi-organizational systems*, Berkeley: University of California Press

⁵⁷ Annie Casey Foundation (nd); Keast, Brown, Mandell and Woolcock G. 2004. Network Structures: Working Differently and Changing Expectations - *Public Administration Review* 64 (3): 363-371

⁵⁸ Keast, R. 2011 Joined up Governance: How the Past Can Inform the Future, *International Journal of Public Administration* 34: 221-231

CCWG, the homelessness network, then there is the KCO – so there is five just there let alone anything else. Some days, I have three meetings to attend.

Among many respondents there is a growing concern that the current high level relational focus is not sustainable, particularly without additional resources to support this ‘costly activity’. The regularity of personnel changes within the sector also add to the relational workload as new investments must be made each time there is a change of worker in an organisation or department unit. As noted previously, MoUs have been widely employed to overcome the high relational transaction cost and build relational memory and capacity into integration arrangements. Some agency groups have turned to the deeper integration model of formalised incorporation to embed their relationships and relational processes.

At the same time, however, there is a real concern expressed by workers of the ability to institutionalise their relationships. This position is supported by Church et al⁵⁹ who note that ‘It is exceptionally hard to institutionalise network relationships if we acknowledge that in essence they work through reserves of trust’.

A further strategy to reduce the time and effort dedicated to networking, while maximising outcomes, is the development regarding a more strategic approach to their attendance and participation. For respondents, being more strategic took several forms, including a sharing attendance responsibility with other workers, determining which networks provided the best match for service needs and, finally, taking on specific network roles to better facilitate the achievement of organisationally desired outcomes. An additional strategy employed centred on deliberate network membership selection and recruitment to bring the full range of resources and expertise to bear on a problem.

As the above highlights, the homelessness service system is grounded in a strong relational orientation – at both the individual to individual worker and

broader network level. The vitality and sustainability of the relationships established depends to some degree on there being appropriate mechanisms in place to enable and support their outcomes. Table 4 sets out a range of mechanisms identified by respondents as having been employed to build trust and sustain relationships.

TABLE 4: RELATIONSHIP SUSTAINING MECHANISMS

<p>Meetings and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face meetings Open and frank discussions Frequent exchanges
<p>Membership and Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of, and commitment to, local issues Small group of members, similarity of views and interests Clarity and limits about membership and what each member can contribute
<p>Terms of Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus decision making processes Agreed practices and processes

Together the 2008 and current study, have established relationships to be the connective tissue linking together the various dispersed components of the homelessness sector. Relationships supplement and add strength to the other more formalised integration mechanisms and provide the foundation on which most are built. However, relationships come with high transaction costs and on their own do not contribute significantly to integration outcomes; they must be actively mobilised, managed and leveraged to make the connections necessary across the sector. Successful integration efforts require a strategic assessment of the nature, type and strength of relationships in place against the outcomes intended.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Church et al 2002 op cit.; and Newell, S. and Swan, J. 2000. Trust and Inter-Organizational Networking, *Human Relations* 53 (10): 1287-1328

⁶⁰ Keast et al, 2007, op cit.; Gage, R. and Mandell, M. (eds)1990 . *Strategies for Managing Intergovernmental Policies and Networks*, New York: Praeger Books.

CO-OPETITION

Alongside the integrative agenda, sit two other policy/programmatic stances—competitive funding and amplified accountability regimes.⁶¹ The Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations which underpin the national agreement has a strong focus on outcomes based reporting. Also driving these reforms are growing demands by the public and corporate sectors for evidence of the impact of funding allocations on outcomes. Many respondents, particularly within the not-for-profit sector but also government representatives, indicated that the mix of agendas had led to a condition of co-competition, where agencies are simultaneously pursuing cooperation and competitive agendas leading to tensions within the sector, both between agencies and between the sector and the government.⁶² Overwhelmingly competition was seen by respondents as undermining the cooperative gains made by agencies over time, particularly in terms of their functional working relationships. It was agreed that competition did encourage agencies to be more productive and creative. However, the manner in which competition was introduced and implemented was considered to be problematic:

Competitive funding is good but often the way it is done is not good because what it does [both state and federal] is not being used in a healthy way.

Further, there were concerns expressed that because of the competitive conditions some of the deliverables stated in applications were unrealistic and, thus, likely not to be achieved in practice:

People will try to outdo each other Beautiful applications but they can't deliver and they know they can't.

The allocation of funding to new service providers over well established services was also perceived as contributing to tensions between agencies within the sector. Some respondents, generally from older and more established agencies, expressed frustration that their previous good work was not recognised. Further,

there was a sense that government lacked an understanding of the different needs of areas across the state:

The government came and announced what was going to happen ... they didn't really listen to what a lot of us were saying about what was needed in this area, and there was a tendency to replicate what was happening [elsewhere] ... It wasn't really consultation at that time, it was really more information about what was going to happen, and there are clearly lots of different paths.

A consistent observation was that many of the new entrants to the service system were larger agencies who were able to draw on a wider pool of internal resources and capabilities than smaller organisations. Many considered that larger agencies' success in the competitive tendering process was underpinned by their excess organisational capacity and ability to draw on expanded resources in the preparation of their tenders.

There is also a generalised opinion that larger organisations, often head-quartered in other states, lacked an appreciation of the subtleties of local areas and were unable participate fully in local information sharing and decision-making processes:

To tell you the truth, I do have a problem when very big organisations come in. Because a lot of times they [new agencies] don't really have an understanding of the sector at all... They are not connected and don't act as part of our network.

This, it was contended, causes difficulties in terms of immediate decision making and resource allocation and was seen to be problematic to local level integration.

When you are sitting around the table talking about things and planning actions, the small non-government agencies ... are very open ... they tell you everything about their organisation including the funding they get and then you get the larger organisations ... they can't necessarily be [open] ... [they] can't talk about the funding because they don't know, so they can't actually participate.

The one positive drawn from competitive funding was the perceived effect on accountability for funding and

⁶¹ Productivity Commission 2010. *The Contribution of the Not-for-profit Sector*, Research Report, Canberra

service delivery. Most service providers acknowledged the need for increased accountability measures and that competitive funding and stipulated outcomes was a means to achieve this. There was a sense, held by a number of community representatives and supported by some government respondents that some agencies were held to higher accountability standards than others.⁶³ Time, concerted relationship building and attention to fulfilling service objectives have been identified as helping to overcome some of the tensions. The case coordination processes, established networked arrangements and the HCAP initiative have been instrumental in smoothing over some of the tensions as they provide opportunities for agencies to disclose their goals and limitations and, begin to in so doing, provide an alternative source for accountability. DoC has a policy commitment that supports consortia bids and there have been some examples of successful outcomes in this regard. There appears, however, to be an overall lack of awareness of this policy or some perceived operational impediments to its broader uptake and application. Given the limited organisational capacity of many smaller agencies, it may be the case that consortium bids are one further collaborative effort that smaller agencies have neither the capacity nor time to undertake.

CLOSING GAPS AND BARRIERS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE INTO INTEGRATION SYSTEMS

Resilience presents as a useful perspective to understand how the Queensland homelessness service system is working, where the pressure points are and how best to intervene. Resilience is the ability of a person, organisation or system to adequately respond to stressors and recover following crisis. In this context, it is viewed as having two related foci: (1) *adjustment*, which involves the influence of protective factors in facilitating the system to maintain its integrity, functioning and fulfil its goals in the face of

⁶³ For additional information refer to (a) Productivity Commission 2010. Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector: Research Report, Canberra; and McGregor-Lowndes, M. And McBramley, A. Government Community Service Contracts: Restraining Abuse of Power, Australian Centre for Philanthropic and Not-for-Profit Studies, QUT.

risk factors, and (2) *adaptation*, which involves the function of recovery factors in promoting the system's ability to bounce back and adapt in crisis situations.⁶⁴ Drawing from the literature, the level of resilience within a system is determined by the existence of a set of intertwining assets depicted as social, network, human, and infrastructure capital.⁶⁵ The resilience, and therefore sustainability of the system is argued to depend on a balanced interconnection between these capital quadrants.

The following section provides an explanation for each of the four capitals and then applies the findings and analysis to a 'resilience' score card.

SOCIAL AND NETWORK CAPITAL

Social capital is the stock of interpersonal relationship components, such as trust, reciprocity and the set of informal values or norms shared by people that permit cooperation among them.⁶⁶ Its effects flow from the information and shared solidarity that become available from ongoing interactions. The resulting goodwill is valuable resource that can be drawn upon to help individuals or communities. Social capital is often deliberately constructed to generate outcomes, thus presenting an instrumental rather than relational objective.⁶⁷ Bonding social capital refers to a narrower application in which benefits are bound by existing knowledge and resources that are associated with 'getting by'.⁶⁸ Social capital can be extended beyond the individual levels to tap into a broader radius of resources brought about by bridging social capital which crosses organisational boundaries to secure new and novel information and resources and enable people and places to 'get on'. Within these networks, new expanded stocks of relational capital are derived, which can be harnessed to deliver community level change. Network capital thus becomes the stock of collective relationship (social capital) as well as the

⁶⁴ Rolfe, E. 2006: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience: A Multi-Disciplinary Review of Literature for Rural Health. A paper prepared for the Social Cohesion and Community Resiliency Working Group of the Atlantic Canada based Rural Centre.

⁶⁵ Smith, A. 1937: An Inquiry into the Nature And Causes of the Wealth of Nations Book 2 - Of the Nature, Accumulation, and Employment of Stock; Published 1776

⁶⁶ Fukuyama, R. 1997.

⁶⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre (1986). The Forms of Capital.

⁶⁸ Woolcock and Narayan 2001

collective knowledge, processes and procedures which form the residual capacity of the network members to work together in repeated efforts.⁶⁹

The data has also revealed that in addition to using individual relationships, workers participate in an array of networks designed to draw in and integrate a more expansive set of resources for use by members, and/or build the capacity of the network to respond at a higher level to community needs. Again, there is an enormous impost of time and effort being directed toward attending network meetings, with some respondents identifying that they participated in up to five networks. There has been some movement toward rationalising both individual liaison and network involvement; however the knowledge and processes to strategically achieve this remain underdeveloped within the sector.

Most respondents indicated that they were confronted by the dilemma that the time, effort and resources directed to individual relationship building and network activities came at the cost of their 'everyday' work. Further, there were very few respondents with dedicated 'network or relationship building' positions and most undertook this in addition to their work.

This project has found that workers within the homelessness sector rely heavily on their individual social capital stocks to access information about resources to address client needs. Sustaining this by frequently drawing down on social capital reserves requires that workers both reciprocate with similar, if not equal support, and invest time in maintaining the relationship.

⁶⁹ Keast, R. Brown, K. & Gunasakara, C. 2009. Borrowing from my Neighbours' Network Capital in G. Woolcock and L. Manderson (eds) *Social Capital and Social Justice: Critical Australian Perspectives*. Charles Darwin University Press, Darwin; and Hawkins, & Mauer, 2011, op cit.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital is defined as the skills, dexterity (physical, intellectual and psychological) and judgement of individuals (and communities as a whole). Human capital also includes the health and wellbeing of people and their inherent talents. Human capital is acquired through both formal learning and experiential processes which is leveraged for future benefits. Human capital can be improved by several methods, including on-the-job learning/training and formal education.⁷⁰

The social services sector, including the homelessness domain, has a long held reputation for providing dedicated and efficient service provision to disadvantaged and marginalised people. Workers in the sector bring with them an array of discipline orientations, qualification levels and experiences—the diversity of which have previously been core strengths. However, as this study and others⁷¹ have noted, wages in this sector are generally lower than those with equivalent roles, despite a significant increase in the qualifications required. This lower average salary base, coupled with the uncertainty of tenure associated with short-term contracts has led to difficulties in retaining workers which is placing considerable strain on organisations and the sector generally. Workforce shortages are exacerbated by growing number of employees, many of whom are sectoral leaders, nearing retirement age. The dependency on a few key people was highlighted by several respondents as a risk to sustainability. It was asserted that there was a risk the system will lose strength if key people are transferred or burn out.

Respondents have contended that while diversity in discipline orientations provides a broader response set for clients, the different discipline assumptions and terminology are not always conducive to shared practice models. The latter has led to growing requests for joint training, especially around the

⁷⁰ Machin, S. and Vignoles, A. 2004. *What's the Good of Education? The Economics of Education in the UK*, Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press

⁷¹ Walsh, P. 1993; *Welfare Policy in B. Stevens and J. Wanna (eds) Goss Government: Promise and Performance of Labor in Queensland* (pp: 215-225) McMillan Press, SA: Productivity Commission 2010. *Contributions of the Not-for-Profit Sector*, Australian Government Canberra.

practice of case coordination; several such programs have already transpired. Together, these factors suggest that, although there is a solid body of human capital remaining in the system, there is a need to attend to these challenges at a more strategic and systemic level.

INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL

The fourth element, infrastructure capital, refers to the built assets that a community or system has in place which it can use to advance a community. As well as communication and transport networks, infrastructure capital includes 'roads, heavy equipment, factory buildings, houses and apartment buildings'.⁷² Respondents acknowledge the significant financial investment to increase the level of housing capital available to the sector. However, accessing housing remains a persistent concern. Given the time required to produce houses and the limited public funds, there was a push by some respondents to examine alternative means to increase the stock of housing and accommodation, including, for example private rental, supported home ownership and tax concessions toward social housing opportunities.

While hard infrastructure, such as housing is necessary for resolving homelessness, there are other important social components that are required to respond to the full set of problems besetting many homeless people and help them to sustain their accommodation options. Social infrastructure refers to those elements that provide a broader social and communal contribution to an individual or community. These elements are key considerations for quality of life and sustaining society. Also contributing to the creation of a solid social foundation is the array of social services, including health, education and other support programs and services (for example, sporting, cultural and public utilities and spaces).

While acknowledging the service enhancement to the sector brought about by a significant injection of funds through the previous Responding to Homelessness Strategy and more recent dedicated capital works program facilitated by the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, the four case studies nonetheless

identified housing and other accommodation forms as missing from the system. The following comments exemplify the position:

We are all shirting around the main issue and that is about housing capital – we don't have it! If there is no place to put people what the heck can we do, how are we really helping people?

Another thing is the housing stock. You are going to house 20 people. Where are you going to get 20 houses, appropriate stock? It's all and good to have these policies, these tenders and these wonderful new programs but the infrastructure and the referral pathways are often not there.

Other respondents concentrated their concerns on the availability of supported accommodation services and, in particular, emergency or crisis accommodation options. The dilemma facing these workers is encapsulated below:

We have lost 25 funded places ... alcohol places and we wonder why at 4 o'clock in the morning there is no place [to take people].

Respondent concerns regarding both the insufficient level of accommodation options including housing stock to meet needs and the appropriateness of the available housing for various client preferences is also acknowledged in the academic literature. A recent review of the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure program highlighted the inappropriateness of the high proportion of two bedroom houses that had been delivered as part of the government's stimulus package. The former head of the Northern Territory intervention, Dr Sue Gordon, stated that '... two bedroom houses built for Indigenous families create riskier environments for child abuse because families are jammed into small places'.⁷³

While fundamentally, responding to homelessness is about linking clients to housing and other forms of accommodation, the reality is that it is much more than this. It also involves providing support to meet health, employment, social and personal needs. In this regard, the case study sites all identified a need

⁷² Hart, 1988

⁷³ *Weekend Australian* 8-9, 2011:8.

for more specialist mental health care provision, beyond that provided by the HHOT workers in their outreach capacity. The findings indicate that client mental health issues remain a significant challenge to service providers and that this challenge is compounded by lack of access to the level of professional expertise required to adequately address the complex and nested problems of many clients. The northern case sites of Townsville and particularly Cairns were most outspoken regarding the need for additional mental health support for clients. Alongside the push for specialist services respondents expressed a need for general services to support clients across the full range of their personal and social needs.

Respondents recognised that the combination of multiple and complex issues compounded the difficulties of those working in the homelessness services system to resolve homelessness. It was argued that often established programs were not able to cope with added complexity brought on by these nested problems. One interviewee stated the challenge for services was being confronted with multiple, deeply embedded issues surrounding homelessness:

'The reality is the referrals that are coming through nowadays are very [difficult]—they're not complex needs. They're not high complex needs. They are actually multi complex needs referrals.' (IGC2, 1)

Finally, the lack of a comprehensive information management system, including, in particular, a vacancy data base, were also considered to be necessary for the system to work at a more optimal level.⁷⁴

The 2008 and more recently the 2011 study data sets have highlighted that although operating at a functioning capacity, the four homelessness systems experience a level of strain. This finding is further evidenced by the resilience analysis undertaken above which reveals that each of the quadrants is subject to various pressures. For infrastructure capital the strain is caused by limited stock of resources (housing and

support services), while human capital reserves are eroded by the workforce pressures experienced by the sector. By contrast the social and network capital stock reserves are quite high. However, the high level of interaction churn within these quadrants as workers use relationships to compensate for shortfalls in the other capitals. This, coupled with the continual effort needed to retain and replenish the social and network capital, makes them vulnerable to overuse and attrition. From this it could be argued that workers are expending considerable effort in the relational space to compensate for the shortfalls in the others. Overcoming these limitations and building a level of resilience into the system requires embedding some core or institutional and processes to guide, support and sustain integrative endeavour; we describe this fifth element as institutional capital.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPITAL

Institutional capital refers to the specific conditions in an organisation or system that allow for sustained and enhanced operational success.⁷⁵ Three interacting components or pillars of institutional capital have been identified: regulative, normative, and cognitive.⁷⁶

It provides the socially and culturally legitimated behavioural expectations that can be rewarded if followed and sanctioned if violated. The normative element establishes systems and processes that enable sectors and organisations to modify structures, routines and business strategies to facilitate integrative working. The cognitive element internalise norms and values and embeds or institutionalises these into the accepted practice for the sector—the rules of the game.

Consistent with the extant integration literature a number of personal, organisational and systemic barriers were distilled from the cases as impeding integration efforts.⁷⁷ The most frequently articulated are set out below:

⁷⁵ See Bresser and Millonig 2003: 225–2; and Scott 1995: 35–9,

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Fine, M, Pancharatun, K., and Thompson, C. 2005. Coordinated and Integrated Human Service Delivery Models: Final Report, Social Policy Research Centre, NSW.; and Phillips, R., Milligan, V. & A. Jones. 2009. *Integration and Social Housing in Australia: Theory and Practice—Final*

⁷⁴ DoC has commenced planning and implementing Homelessness Information Systems, including a Vacancy Capacity Management Database. (Note. The implementation phase of the VCMS commenced last year in September 2011)

OVERALL FINDINGS

- turf protection, particularly the desire to retain case control over individual clients and client groupings was a frequently identified barrier
- current systems, funding regimes and accountability arrangements which perpetuate a single agency approach were frequently identified working against integration
- competitive funding/tendering arrangements can result in greater fragmentation
- the cost of integration mechanisms and activities, e.g. relationship building and case coordination processes
- different philosophies and disciplinary orientations were found to 'get in the way' of joined-up working
- mis-information or lack of information about the scope of services and their limitations
- lack of agreed performance measures both for general service provision and for integration outcomes
- perpetuation of bureaucracy elements and siloed culture
- long term tensions between government and community organisations
- different data operating systems and weak information sharing protocols.

The case analysis revealed an understanding by many respondents of the need for a core set of systems and integration processes which support integration and build these into the broader operational framework for the sector. Indeed, some described this as the 'need for some form of institutionalisation'. Many were able to articulate the specific components of this institutional framework. The first centred on the need for policy frameworks that provide clear direction for the sector, preferably developed in genuine consultation and collaboration with the not-for-profit sector. Coupled with the agenda for work, is strong leadership that establishes an environment in which integration can be implemented. Leadership in this

Report #129, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. Martinson, 1999

context was described as being 'dispersed' and 'shared' across the system, drawing in the influencer and thought leaders from across the horizontal and vertical axes.

There was a strong awareness that working in integrative ways requires a different skill set⁷⁸ and that training which facilitates and encourages joined-up working and practice. Embedding this skill set and ethos deeply within the psyche of the sector requires a culture which promotes and incentivises working together. Embedding the culture was identified as core: 'it's about building a culture of working together and how you share resources, outcomes and ideas.'

Competitive funding arrangements were identified as promoting an individual rather than collective service emphasis. The creation of alternative funding arrangements such as shared revenue streams, pooled budgets and the formation of independent external funding repositories were presented as necessary amendments to the current funding allocation and monitoring processes. This view is supported by other commentators on joined-up systems.⁷⁹

One area identified as particularly in need of attention is the implementation of a comprehensive information management system, including a vacancy data base and more 'people orientated' data sets to inform sectoral service system planning.

Current workforce practices which emphasise and support integrative working were highlighted as a core part of the institutional change required to better implement and sustain integrative practices. An increase in shared training opportunities and HR approaches which encourage cross-agency experiences were presented as ways of going forward.

The findings of this research support previous studies that effective integration requires a driver who acts as a facilitator of joint action⁸⁰. Such positions need to be adequately resourced in terms of human capacity, funding and institutional support. Facilitators

⁷⁸ Goldsmith and Eggers 2004.

⁷⁹ Ling op cit.; and Mulgan, G. (2005), *Joined-up government: Past, present and Future*, in V. Bogdanor (ed) *Joined-Up Government* British Academy Occasional Paper 5, Oxford; Oxford University Press

⁸⁰Newland, C. (1999). *The Facilitative State and Human Resource Management*. *Public Personnel Management*, 28(4), 637-654.

undertake a critical role in that they introduce new ideas and actors into the integration process, break through barriers of resistance and work at altering perceptions and expectations⁸¹. Evidence from the current study suggests that these functions are being more effectively undertaken by government through key positions within CCWGs/CCGs and Taskforces. There are opportunities, going forward, where government may be afforded opportunities to step back, at the service level, and transfer such roles to non-government agencies.

The four capitals of the homelessness sector are illustrated in Figure 2.

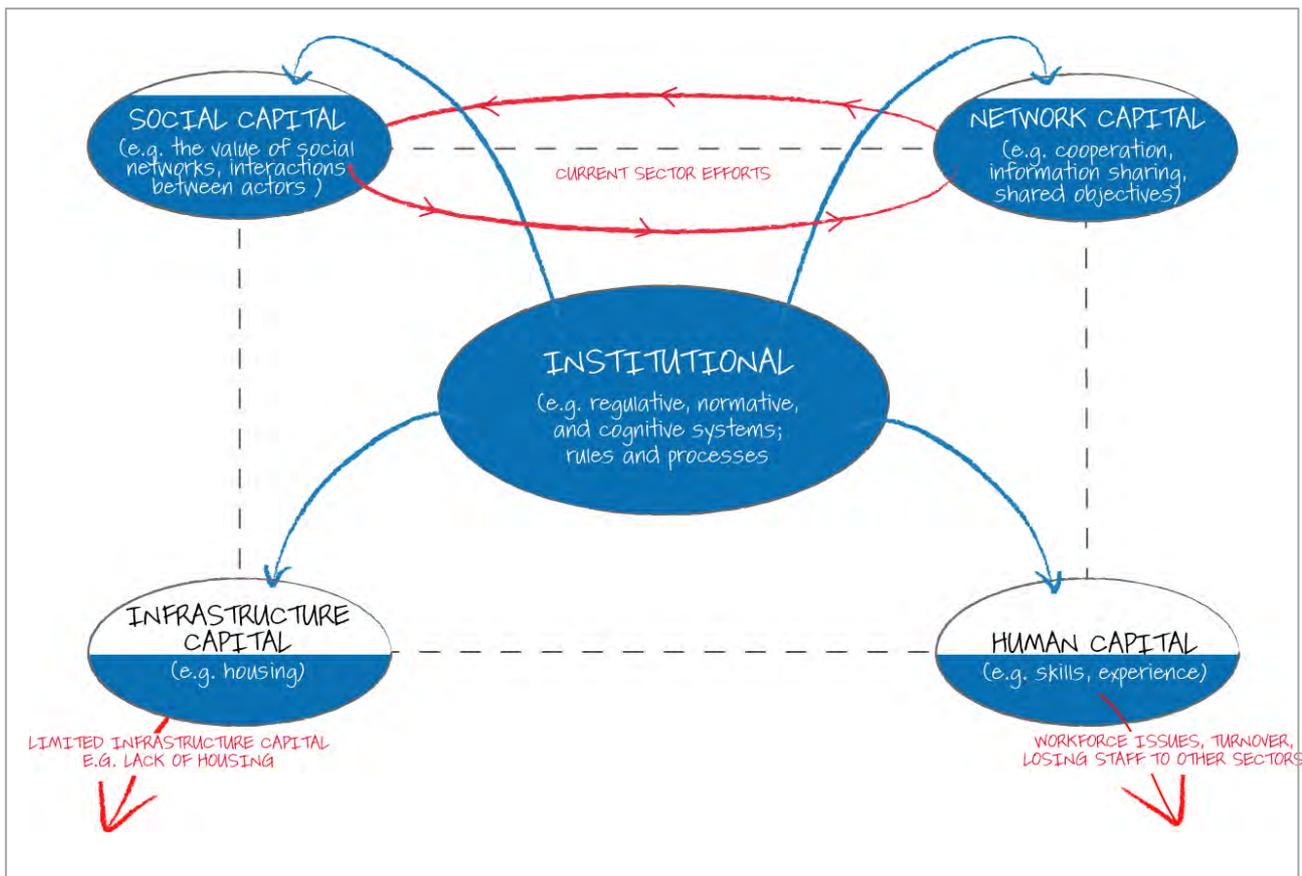


FIGURE 2. THE FOUR CAPITALS OF THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

⁸¹Keast, R. (2003). *Integrated Public Services: The Role of Networked Arrangements*. PhD Thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

DESIGNING INTEGRATED AND COST EFFECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEMS

As has been established, the human services sector has long sought to achieve the administrative holy grail of integration. There is a compelling argumentation for integration—it is assumed to be an inherently positive and effective way forward for service systems challenged by expanding demands and limited resources. There is also a strong underpinning assumption of the benefits of better connected services for client outcomes. However, as numerous studies have found, integration has been hard to achieve and even harder to sustain. There are multiple purposes driving integration, it can occur at multiple and often overlapping levels of operation and can draw upon an extensive array of models and frameworks to shape their formation and implementation. Each of these frameworks or models is underpinned by a set of assumptions about the level of connection or linkage required. The challenge for practitioners and policy administrators is how to design an integration approach that is both effective and cost effective.⁸² The following section combines the study's qualitative and SNA data with the extant literature to provide the design outline for a more cost effective service system. In a perfect scenario an effectively executed sector wide integration model would have the capability to utilise all slack resources in the system when required. Under an optimised model of integration agencies operating within a sector would have full visibility and access to all others (see Figure 3). This of course is attractive for a number of reasons, particularly in a resource depleted sector. Effective integration allows access to a far greater number of specialised services delivered in a shorter period at reduced up-front cost to both the sector and the client.⁸³ Arguably this allows the best possible client outcomes without any one organisation bearing the burden of having the capacity to address, in most cases, multiple complex client needs. It also spreads the risk associated with achieving client

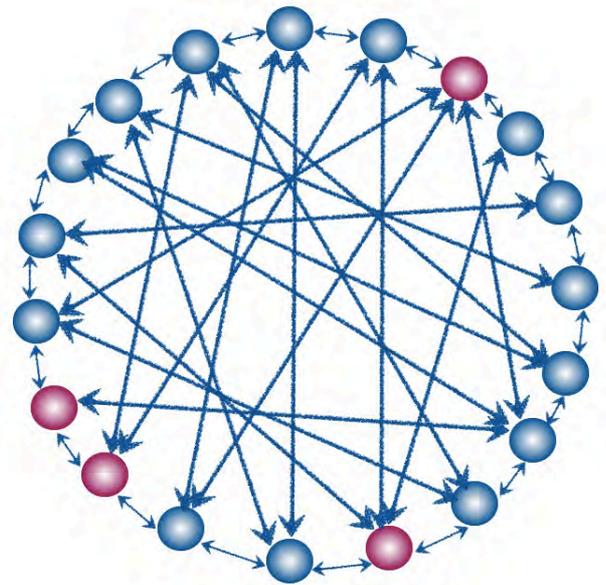


FIGURE 3. FULL (OPTIMISED) SECTOR INTEGRATION

service outcomes, reducing bottlenecks, inefficient allocation of resources and avoids the negative effects of a single organisation failing in their case management.

This ideal state of integration is often hard to achieve, however, for a number of reasons. In particular, full sector integration requires a significant investment in the underlying infrastructure allowing this capability. Integration is a multi-level construct requiring investment, planning and execution at a policy, systems, procedure and behavioural level, all of which are not directly related to the core business of any one agency. Full sector integration in a sector as complex as the homelessness sector therefore has a large number of linkages and dependencies that are often not under the control of any one party in the network. Integration on this scale then has a number of 'hidden' costs and is fraught with the potential for misalignment, breakdowns and a deficient integration infrastructure. 'Occupational tribalism' in an inter-professional setting is where shared values, practices and meanings can be clearly attributed to a particular occupational group. Atkins gives an example of health professionals, including nurses, doctors and allied health as 'tribes' and discusses members of these tribes as being socialised into the culture of their

⁸² Leutz 1999, op cit.

⁸³ Axelsson, R. & Axelsson, B. (2006) Integration and collaboration in public health—a conceptual model. *International Journal of Health Planning Management*, 21, 75-88.

professions. Van Maanen and Barley⁸⁴ explain that individuals learn a set of codes when becoming a member of an occupational tribe with these codes forming the basis of meaningful interpretations of objects, events and persons. For people from different ‘tribes’, interpretations of the same events, objects or people may differ due to their different sets of codes. Having different understandings may hinder knowledge transfer and thus understandings might need to change before knowledge can be passed on effectively. A review of the homelessness sector would identify a number of ‘occupational tribes’ in existence with the presence of social workers, health professionals, public sector and mainstream agencies, those in the legal profession and law enforcement agencies to name but a few having a visible presence. As such, in addition to the structural impediments to full integration being present, there is the added

complication of those belonging to distinct occupational tribes all taking a different perspective on how full integration should be achieved and to what end.

A direct result of this tendency towards fragmentation then is the need to possess some form of integrative capability for entities wishing to solve ongoing and complex issues.⁸⁵ However given the significant challenges faced by full sector integration an alternate approach is required. We propose such an alternate model based on some of the findings contained within this report. More specifically we argue for the need to capitalise on work already present in the sector, and build an integration approach around a localised, ‘cluster-centric’ (rather than sector-wide) model of integration capacity (see Figure 4).

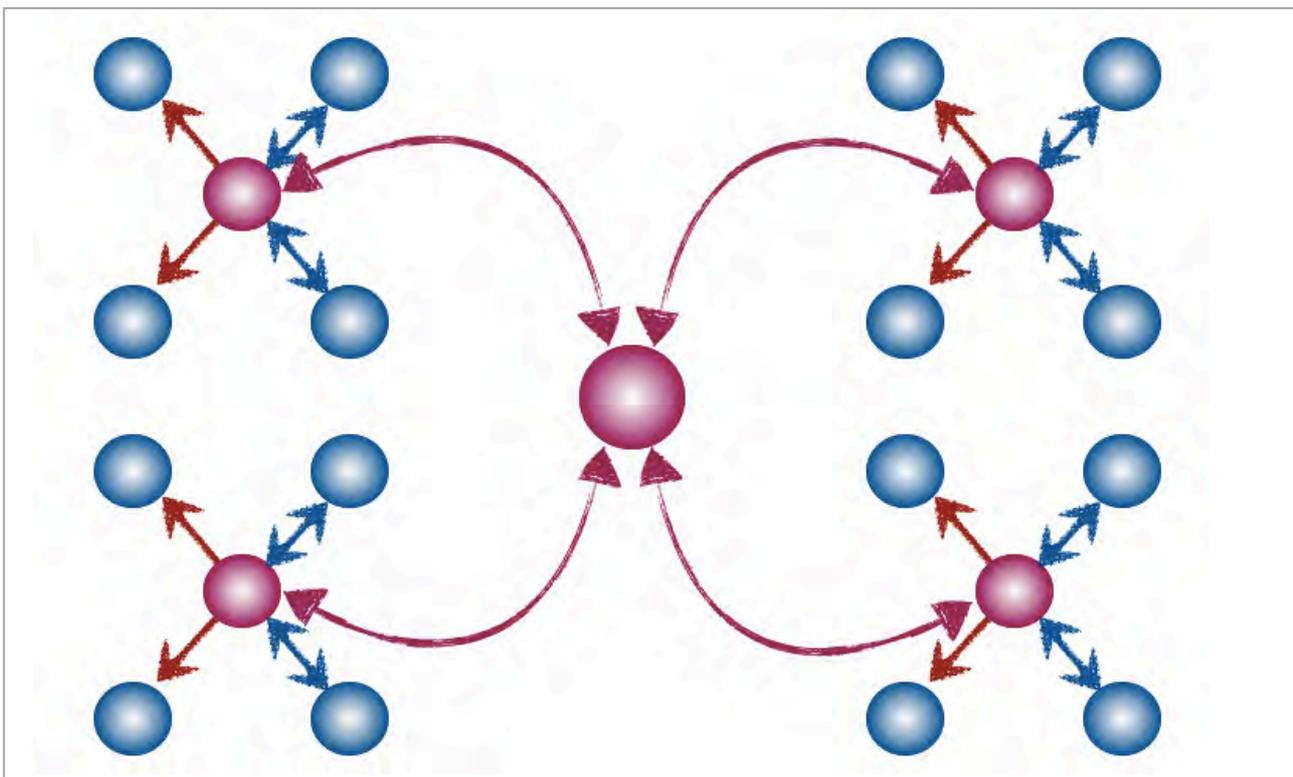


FIGURE 4. CLUSTER CENTRIC INTEGRATION MODEL

⁸⁴ Van Maanen, J. & Barley, S. (1984) Occupational communities: Culture and control in organisations. *Research in Organisational Behavior*, 6, 287-365.

⁸⁵ Bruhl R., Horch, N. & Osann, M. (2010) Improving integration capabilities with management control. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 13(4), 385-408.

Almost all of the case study locations made reference to the success of ‘issues based’, or ‘hot-spot’ initiatives that identified an urgent need, established the boundaries of the working party and worked to resolve the issue before disbanding or re-establishing the boundaries. In these instances typically only agencies with a specific role or function to play in addressing the identified issues would meet, identify the client needs, allocate responsibility and work to resolve the issue. The advantages of engaging in issue specific ‘case co-operative’ approaches are akin to those often described by those involved in crisis and disaster management situations. These advantages were effectively summed up by a respondent who was a volunteer at the RNA evacuation centre in the Brisbane 2011 floods:

So they [agencies] have the same priority and they're not competing against each other. I would say, from my experience working in the community sector, that's one of the biggest issues that we have. We've not always a common goal and always fighting for funds and for staff and resources and for clients, and all of that. You don't need to worry about that in an emergency, so that is incredibly helpful.

... one of the reasons people like working in emergency and one of the reasons emergencies can be fun and really fulfilling, and really rewarding to work in, is that often you get scope beyond your role and the power to make decisions that you don't have normally.

Localised integration initiatives offer similar benefits, establishing a common goal with specific defined outcomes and a high degree of visibility as to whether those outcomes are being achieved or not. Integration efforts are clearly orientated to client outcomes and a clear ‘return on investment’ can be seen by those engaging in integration activities.

Figure 3 indicates such a scenario whereby agencies (identified as blue nodes) invest their integration resources around a key focal point (identified as a red node), rather than attempting to spread themselves across the entire network with potentially little or no return on that investment. Integration requirements

lying outside the focal group are facilitated via a centralised point typically engaging only with group representatives, rather than each specific agency. In this model the benefits of integration are still likely, but without the need to establish a large, expensive infrastructure designed to support it. The transitory nature of the focal groups also affords the sector a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness, allowing members to align their resources to emerging issues where needed rather than being locked into a sector wide integration effort.

Most importantly cluster centric integration activities are regarded as an effective ‘boundary spanner’ between potentially isolated agencies. Bechky⁸⁶ identified that tangible objects or experienced events provided a common ground which could facilitate shared understanding and effective knowledge transfer between workers represented by different occupational communities. These events which create a common ground between occupational ‘tribes’ have been termed boundary spanning objects. Star and Griesemer⁸⁷ describe boundary objects as abstract or concrete objects or events which intersect several social groups and provide information to each group. A boundary object may have different meanings to each group however its structure is consistent enough that it is recognisable across groups. Carlisle⁸⁸ demonstrated how boundary objects create the opportunity for shared language which provides a concrete way of learning and affords opportunities for people to develop a collective understanding of the issue(s) at hand. The J.U.S.T initiative between Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) and QPS described in the Brisbane case is an excellent example of where this has occurred. In this instance an agency with a strong sociological and social work background collaborated with a law enforcement agency around a specific issue and reported a number of positive outcomes as a result. In addition to a number of positive client related outcomes a far greater understanding of each agency was reported:

⁸⁶ Bechky, B. (2003) Sharing meaning across occupational communities: The transformation of understanding on a production floor. *Organisation Science*, 14(3), 312-330.

⁸⁷ Griesemer. 1989.

⁸⁸ Carlisle, P. (2002) A pragmatic view of knowledge and boundaries: Boundary objects in new product development. *Organisation Science*, 13, 442-455.

I have to admit I had no time for the police before doing this outreach - but working with the ones we have had on JUST has been brilliant - completely not what I expected. (BYS employee - J.U.S.T Evaluation Report)

Therefore the key is to develop or identify a common ground, a mechanism that links groups and provides a neutral space to begin defining the scope and nature of the issue, as well as allowing a non-threatening way of sharing and exchanging ideas, knowledge and suggestions. The establishment of cluster centric integration activities act as boundary spanning events, creating the opportunity for agencies to develop a common understanding of client needs and what has to be undertaken by each agency to achieve an outcome.

This section has isolated the benefits of a strong horizontal clustering of workers and agencies around common client groups and issues of concern. It has made a strong and cogent argument of the effectiveness and efficiency of bottom-up or localised approaches to services integration which coalesce workers and resources around their most basic point of common foci—clients. Elsewhere in the study, the value of top-down or vertical integration as an aid to systems wide integration was isolated. It was demonstrated (and supported by other research⁸⁹) that vertical integration helps to embed an overall or systemic approach to integration through its use of authority, legitimacy to act and its greater access to resources.

The conclusion drawn here is that for a system such as the homelessness services arena, a model of integration is required that exhibits a strong horizontal axis comprised of multiple sets of closely coupled entities clustered around client cohorts or service issues. These tightly clustered groupings are then loosely connected to other parts of the system, for example specialist service providers or the resources held by other networks. A suite of ‘connectors’ are also present providing additional points of connection between the system components at the multiple horizontal scales as well as through the vertical channels to higher level governance and decision

making. The value of such an approach is that it better aligns integrative effort; matching purpose to the requisite level of connectivity.

CONCLUSIONS

The network data highlights several important points for consideration in the design and formation of integration initiatives. First, the study has revealed that functional integration can occur within a moderately connected system. That is, not every agency needs to be directly connected to others in the system. Instead, the integration model should be designed ‘fit-for-purpose’: matching the level of connectivity to the purpose to be achieved. Such a contingency approach is contended to be more efficient, reducing the amount of surplus transactions required between agencies and allowing for a more strategic alignment of integration mechanisms.⁹⁰ It has been argued elsewhere that active and genuine dialogue between stakeholders is a prerequisite to the design of optimal service integration models.⁹¹ The HCAP initiative appears to offer a useful instrument through which this collective dialogue and deliberation can occur.

Second, and related to the above point, the design of integration models and levels of expected connectivity should take into account the local context, including the history, services’ mix, culture and resources available as well as the and the capacity to bring these elements together.⁹²

Third, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships between personnel and connections between agencies is resource and labour intensive. Although often invisible there is a transaction cost associated and this activity must be both legitimised as a ‘core’ element of work and be adequately funded. Integration is not easy to achieve nor is it an inexpensive undertaking, it requires dedicated consideration, planning and resourcing. Thus as

⁹⁰ Kickert et al. 1997, op cit.

⁹¹ Longoria, 2005, op cit.; Keast, 2011, op cit.

⁹² Ling, 2002, op cit.

⁸⁹ Kickert et al 1999; Lings, 2002 and Keast 2011

OVERALL FINDINGS

Helling⁹³ argues the beneficial outcome assumptions of integration should be balanced against the impacts of limited ‘... money, time and effort’.

Fourth, the findings suggest that the presence of some form of coordination or linking point is a necessary and efficient component⁹⁴ to hold the elements of the system together and mobilise for action. This linkage or coordination role can take a number of forms, ranging from individual ‘connectors’ (formal and informal) to a secretariat or administrative core, which facilitate the flow of resources, manage the relationships and distribute the work of the network.⁹⁵

Finally, although the study identified a positive shift in the density level, thus providing the basis for better integration, across the four sites, and respondents frequently attributed this higher connectivity to improved service outcomes, it has not provided conclusive evidence of a causal relationship between connectivity and improved client outcomes. Indeed, as several commentators have noted, the integration can deliver ‘feel good’ results for workers⁹⁶ as opposed to improved service outcomes for clients. Nonetheless, it has been cogently argued that the symbolism and rhetoric of integration provides a powerful statement of direction which can galvanise workers into collective action.⁹⁷ However, integrative symbolism can distort the complexity of the challenge and, without adequate funding, resources and commitment, can be a futile endeavour and potentially counter-productive. Figure 5 (over) graphically demonstrates the manner in which the various elements, levels of connections and their associated linkage mechanisms can come together to form an integrated service system.

⁹³ Helling A. 1998 Employer Sponsored and Self-Sponsored participation in collaborative visioning: Theory, evidence and implications *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 34 (2): 222-240 (237).

⁹⁴ Provan, K. and Milward, H.B. 2001. Do network really work? A Framework For Examining Public Sector Organizational Networks *Public Management Review* 61 (4); and Ling 2002 op cit.

⁹⁵ Provan & Milward op cit.; and Mandell, M. 1984. Applying Network Analysis to the Implementation of a Complex Network *Human Relations* 37 (8): 659-679

⁹⁶ Longaria 2005, op cit. and; Keast 2011, op cit.

⁹⁷ Dye, cited in Parson, W. 1995. *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis* Edward Elgar: Aldershot

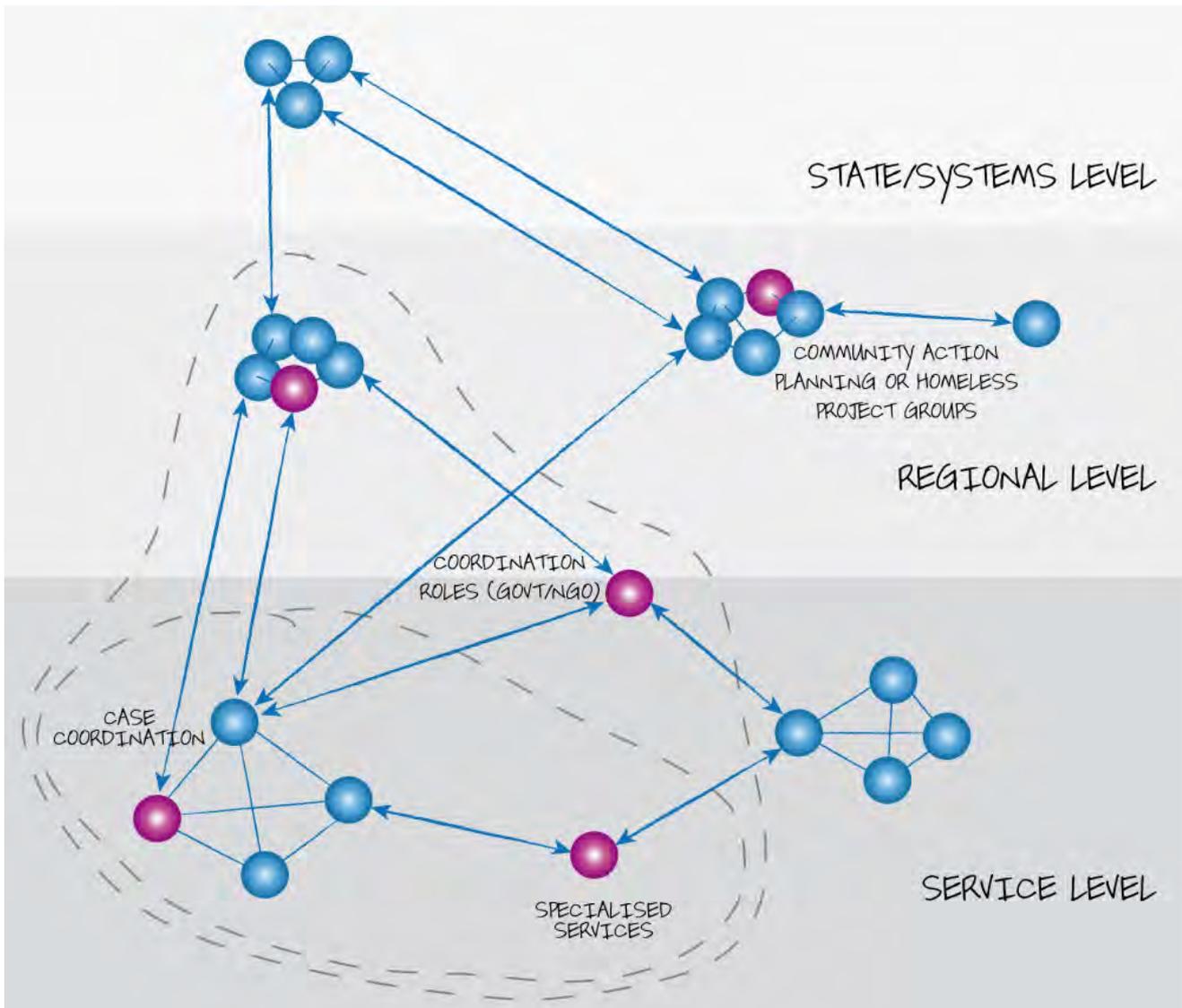


FIGURE 5. PRELIMINARY DESIGN FOR AN INTEGRATED SERVICE SYSTEM

Importantly the diagram provides a design template which can be used to inform the structuring of the service system.



BRISBANE CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND TO BRISBANE

Brisbane is located on the east coast of Australia in Queensland, the state with the uncomfortable statistic of having the largest number of rough sleepers nationwide.⁹⁸ Brisbane itself has a population of approximately 2million, having experienced rapid growth over the last decade. Population growth projections suggest Brisbane can expect a further 22% increase over the next twenty years. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2006) estimated that there were 2,070 homeless people in Inner Brisbane at the last census.⁹⁹ In contrast, in 2008 there were a total of 2237 units of community housing accommodation available in Brisbane for crisis, short-term and long-term (affordable housing, community housing programs). The recent floods have put further pressure on reduced housing stock and have contributed to Brisbane rents to be some of the highest in Australia.¹⁰⁰

Despite these challenges since the Responding to Homelessness Strategy (R2H) funding in 2005–09 a series of local initiatives have been undertaken to address homelessness in the Brisbane sector. For example, '50 Lives 50 Homes' coordinated and driven by Micah Projects was an Australian adaptation of a successful initiative carried out in the United States. In June 2010 over the course of three days the 50 Lives 50 Homes project surveyed 231 rough sleepers as to their tenure on the streets, their existing physical, mental and health conditions with the use of a Vulnerability Index. This data was used to create a registry of people experiencing chronic homelessness and rough sleeping and to prioritise those people most at risk of mortality for housing and support. To date the project has exceeded its initial target, reporting that it has housed over 91 individuals as of October 2011.

Under 1 Roof is a consortium of agencies working as a coordinated service system including 139 Club,

Brisbane Youth Service (BYS), CityCare Brisbane, Mission Australia, New Farm Neighbourhood Centre and the Rotary Club. Those in the consortium meet weekly to discuss individual cases with a view to providing an effective referral and case management approach. Adopting the 'no wrong door' philosophy the consortium acknowledges that the complex needs of their client requires a multi-agency approach. In effect the aim of the consortium is to develop a small, but highly integrated network around a specific set of clients.

HCAP is a similar recent initiative supported by the State Government as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). The HCAP project in Brisbane involves the establishment of local coordination groups in three key geographical areas (inner-city Brisbane, outer north, southwest). In part informed by the work carried out in the 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign and the Under 1 Roof consortium, HCAP is a local planning mechanism. One of the proposed actions is designed to better respond to people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness with complex needs. Ten individuals or families will be identified at a time and the service system will work within a case management approach to provide a coordinated, integrated service delivery approach to assist these clients to find and sustain housing.

The three example initiatives discussed above, along with the outcomes of the R2H funding initiative, are useful background markers as to the relative health of the homelessness sector over the last 3–4 years. In particular it signals an increased shift away from a singular institutionally owned and driven case-management approach, to a more client centric case-co-ordination approach to solving chronic homelessness. However the findings of the study detailed below must also be considered in light of proposed future directions. Policy initiatives such as the Queensland Government *Opening Doors: Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011–14* sets out sector and government priorities over the next three years. The Opening Doors strategy has a strong focus on improving collaboration and integration over a number of areas (see Figure 6).

⁹⁸ White Paper. (2008) *The Road Home: A national approach to reducing homelessness*. Commonwealth of Australia, p. 4.

⁹⁹ Chamberlain C and MacKenzie D. (2009). *Counting the Homeless 2006: Queensland*. Cat. No. HOU 205. Canberra: AIHW (p. 53)

¹⁰⁰http://www.treasury.gov.au/documents/2049/PDF/26_TEM_Impact_of_the_QUEENSLAND_FLOODS_on_House_Prices_and_Rents_110120.pdf

Realignment of specialist homelessness services

The Queensland Government will work with homelessness services over the next three years to better meet the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness.

Realignment will be guided by:

- Collaboration with the non government sector to identify the best set of services and to get the balance right between crisis, short and long-term accommodation and support.
- Better integration of homelessness services with each other and with other services.
- Systems and tools to support effective and coordinated service delivery.
- Better matching the location and type of services with client needs.
- Sustainability of services and delivery of consistent quality of service informed by contemporary models of good practice.

FIGURE 6. OPENING DOORS OBJECTIVES 2011-14

This section of the strategy provides clear direction as to how agencies within the Brisbane sector may wish to overall improve the integration of homelessness services, improve or re-align their 'systems and tools', as well as ensure long-term sustainability of service delivery and outcomes.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS (2008 STUDY)

The framework presented in Figure 1 earlier in the report has been used previously to examine and compare the relative levels of integration within select homelessness sector networks in Brisbane.¹⁰¹ The framework's key premise is that there are varying levels of integration lying on a continuum from loosely to fully integrated, and integration states ranging from cooperative, through to fully collaborative. Each of the 3C's has merit and application depending on the intent of the network and its desired outcomes. As such, based on the framework, the key to achieving successful integration is to be clear on the purpose of the integration and build the system 'fit-for-purpose'.

The reason for this is that a misalignment of integration initiatives not only increases the costs of interaction and integration mechanisms but also limits the attainment of effective results. For example, if the goal is to do the same activities more efficiently

through a better alignment of resources and effort, then coordination is the appropriate integration level. As a general statement then, the bulk of activity within the homelessness service system can be dealt with using cooperation and coordination. The 2008 study into the state of homelessness agency integration within the Brisbane homelessness sector revealed patterns consistent with the continuum set out by Keast and colleagues¹⁰²—that as actors within a network are required to further invest in integration activities, the sparser the network becomes. While the sector in 2008 reported relatively high 'information sharing' activity, this progressively decreased as the activity moved towards 'shared planning' and on to 'shared resources'. Overall the 2008 findings indicated that at the time of data collection the Brisbane network was moderately integrated, with a strong concentration of connections around the two main hubs represented by MICAH and HART4000. A network analysis metric, (Average Path Distance) indicated that each agency/program/auspice in the network could be reached within 2.5 connections—in other words, you would have to initiate a maximum of three institutional referrals to get to any other institution in the network. Overall the study concluded that the Brisbane network was moderately integrated and demonstrated interaction patterns consistent with a co-operative, moving to a coordinative approach as outlined by Keast et al.¹⁰³ Specific issues relating to Brisbane's sector integration included the need for a coherent policy framework, the critical role of relationships and the use of 'bricolage innovation'

¹⁰¹ Keast et al., 2008, op cit.

¹⁰² Keast et al. (2007), op cit.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

by agencies to achieve short-term client outcomes. The current study was viewed as an opportunity to review these findings and to re-map the level of integration in the sector two years on with a renewed focus on mainstream service integration.

CURRENT STUDY

The present study had similar aims to the one carried out in 2008 but with an added emphasis on the role of mainstream services in homelessness sector integration. Over 20 government, non-government and specific mainstream services in Brisbane were interviewed as part of the data collection for this case. In Brisbane particular emphasis was placed on the role played by mainstream services such as Centrelink, Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services), the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Brisbane City Council (BCC).

Consistent with the 2008 study, data collection for this current study comprised of both network analysis data, semi-structured and focus group data. In this current study a total number of 150 agencies, programs or auspices (herein referred to as agencies) were identified as being included in the Brisbane homelessness sector. The total number of institutions were drawn from a list provided by DoC and was supplemented by participants when responding to the network integration questionnaire. Response rates for the network component of the study were lower than expected but adequate to obtain a snapshot of the Brisbane network and draw conclusions from the data. Many sector representatives expressed some degree of 'participant fatigue' when contacted to participate in the study. As discussed later in the case, participants indicated that the high degree of scrutiny experienced by the sector in terms of sequential evaluations, reviews and surveys, combined with the pressures generated by the January 2011 floods had led to a reduction in participation willingness. Nevertheless a representative sample of 20 agencies were interviewed with an additional focus group conducted. The case below first reports on the network data results before reporting on the qualitative data outcomes.

NETWORK ANALYSIS SUMMARY

A key aim of the study was to determine the extent of integration present within the Brisbane network as compared to the 2008 study. Mapping out a network qualitatively helps to give a clear picture of the overall levels of integration as reflected in the tangible actions of sharing information, resources and engaging in co-operative planning activities. A network map for each network (Shared Information, Shared Planning, Shared Resources) is presented in Figures 7–9. As to be expected of a large network such as Brisbane, a visual inspection of the network maps yields very little in the way of detailed interaction patterns. However two characteristics can be identified very quickly when perusing the maps. One, the presence of a core-periphery structure common to all three network types. In the centre of the network is a core group of 15–17 institutions surrounded by a much larger number of second tier agencies. These peripheral agencies have a smaller, more specific set of interactions. Again consistent with the first study, institutions such as the HHOT teams, Roma House, Micah Projects, HART 4000 and Centrelink were reported among this highly central core group. Two, consistent with the Keast et al.¹⁰⁴ framework the frequency of interaction can be seen to decrease significantly when comparing information sharing to the other two network types of shared planning and shared resources. This visual observation is confirmed when examining a selection of key metrics underpinning the network maps (see Table 5).

Table 5 summarises the results of the network analysis and gives an effective picture of the current state of network integration. Confirming the visual maps the density scores report a decrease in the ratio of actual versus possible connections within the network as agencies move from simple information sharing to higher intensity activities such as shared resourcing and planning. An important figure to note is that of Average Path Distance, which has decreased significantly in comparison to the figures reported in 2008 (APD 2008 = 2.5; APD 2010 = 1.5).

¹⁰⁴ Keast et al. (2007), op cit.

TABLE 5. 2011 HOMELESSNESS NETWORK METRIC SUMMARY BRISBANE (HIGH CONNECTIONS)

	SHARED INFORMATION	SHARED RESOURCES	SHARED PLANNING
Network Density	0.07	0.04	0.03
Avg. Network Centrality	54%	39%	33%
Average Path Distance	2.02	2.2	2.4

In isolation the figure suggests that overall the network is relatively well connected with any institution no more than two connections away from any other institution. Further it provides some indication that significant in-roads have been made in the sector to at least improve connectivity within the network, and that initiatives in place since 2008 designed to improve sector integration may be having some effect.

There are however some specific aspects of the network that indicate some work is yet to be done before Brisbane achieves a fully integrated network. Overall the 'density' of the three network types remains in relative terms, low. It is true that the size of the Brisbane network will result in a sparser network than those of Cairns or Townsville.¹⁰⁵ This aside however, one would expect to see a more dense set of connections given the specific nature of the network and the heavy emphasis placed on integration by the key funding bodies. Deeper analysis has uncovered two additional insights directly relevant to the current level of integration within the Brisbane sector.

The first is the high degree of centralisation present within the Brisbane network, evident within all three network types. The degree of centralisation percentages are representative of the inequality in the network, with the higher the percentage the greater inequality. A review of the degree of centralisation figures, path distance and density scores suggest a concentration of engagement and activity around a core group of agencies. One can surmise that those

few agencies that have a high level of sharing resources and planning do so in a somewhat equal fashion. This replicates the findings of the 2008 study which also found a high degree of centralisation present within the Brisbane network at that time. This is likely to reflect a situation where a core group of agencies have been able to invest in, and actively maintain a set of integration mechanisms while others outside this core group continue to struggle to establish and sustain integration mechanisms. These agencies have been identified as the larger agencies likely to be involved in the co-ordination of multiple services such as Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Emergency Department Liaison Initiative and Queensland Shelter for example.

The network data also identified the presence of two distinct network clusters based around their frequency of interaction with other agencies. An analysis of the path length and density scores for the high, low and combined networks for all three networks suggest the existence of two overlapping networks. The first shows a tight cluster of agencies engaging in frequent interactions and information sharing. In this instance approximately nine organisations (DoC, Hart 4000, Centrelink, Micah Projects, Brisbane Homelessness Service Hub, BYS, 139 Club; Roma House, Pindari Men's and Women's Hostels) are seen to be frequently interacting at a disproportionately high level compared to the rest of the network. Interestingly almost all of these organisations are involved in one or more 'case-coordination' type initiative such as 'Under 1 Roof' or HCAP as discussed earlier. In contrast the data identified a second distinct cluster of smaller agencies

¹⁰⁵ Scott, J. 1990. *Social network analysis: A handbook* (2nd Ed.). Sage, London.

that did report some degree of interaction, but with only a 'low' level of frequency. This finding would indicate that these agencies and others like them are at the edges of the network, where integration and coordination is limited and infrequent. The geographical location of many of these agencies may give insight as to the origins of their network activity. Several respondents indicated that support and funding was perceived to decrease the further you travelled out from inner-city Brisbane. Agencies such as the Carina Youth Agency and the Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre are all located in suburban areas and therefore the network data may support this perception that funding and resources vital for integration are concentrated within a 7km radius of the Brisbane CBD.

It should be noted that the nature of longitudinal network data prevents claims to be made with regard to specific network linkages over time. However comparing the 2008 and 2011 networks in their entirety does provide a useful overall comparison of sector-wide integration patterns over a period of time. In summary, while some progress does appear to have been made the level of integration across the sector is inconsistent. While a small core group of agencies appear to have established a set of effective working relationships the remainder of the network remains only loosely connected. While network visualization and metrics give a useful overall 'snapshot' of network activity levels the quantitative nature of the data means that it has little explanatory power in of itself. A series of semi-structured interviews were also carried out at the same time as the network data collection to provide some context to these results. The results of the interview data follow and give some useful insight as to why, perhaps, integration levels in the Brisbane network continue to lag behind other centres such as the Gold Coast or Townsville networks in terms of integration outcomes.

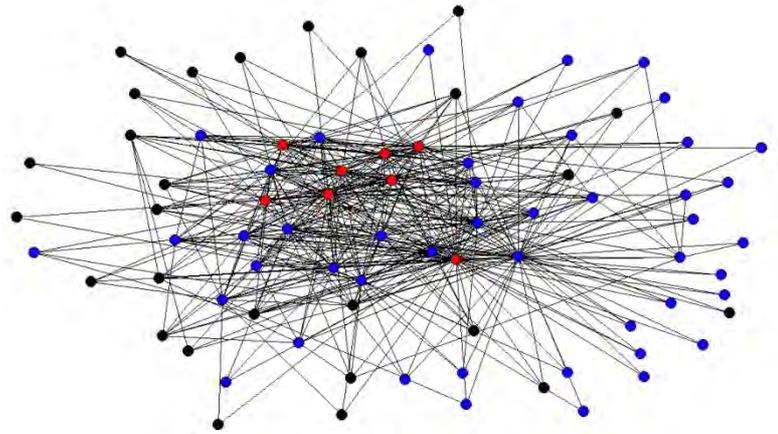


FIGURE 7. BRISBANE INFORMATION SHARING

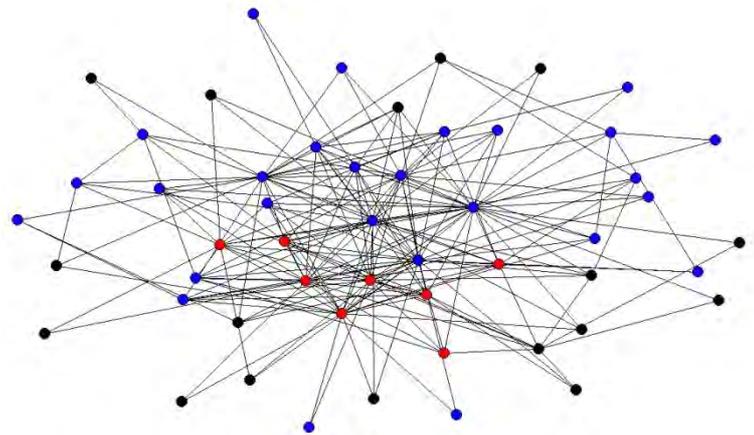


FIGURE 8. BRISBANE SHARED RESOURCES

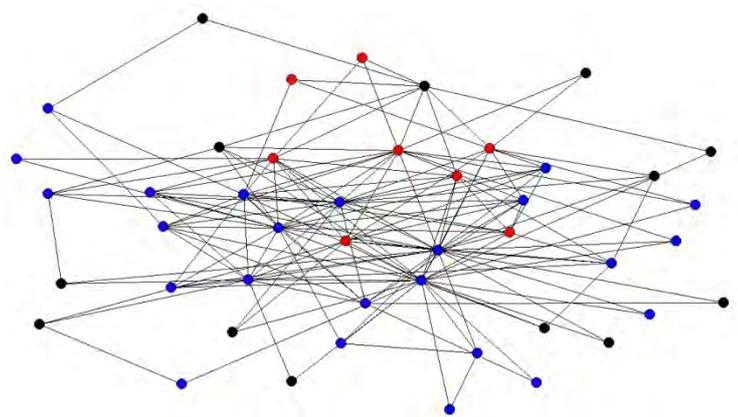


FIGURE 9. BRISBANE SHARED PLANNING

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

As Keast et al.'s¹⁰⁶ integration continuum indicates, being connected and being integrated are not always synonymous. Qualitative data collected in parallel with the network data for this study indicates that full sector integration faces a number of challenges. Participants raised a number of concerns some of which were pertinent sector wide, and some of which were more relevant to their particular institutions and their client specific needs. Some of these more contextually driven issues are listed below and are presented only as an indicator of the broad range of issues discussed by participants at any one time, but may not be pertinent to the sector overall:

- 'Co-optation' versus co-operation—the adversarial/competitive funding arrangements process for funding was perceived by some to be a potential barrier against a seamless integration of agencies.
- Sector personnel capability gaps—institutions lacking the resources or support to assist individuals to adapt professionally to ongoing changes within the sector in terms of service provision, agency co-operation and departmental priorities.
- Sector transparency and visibility—difficulties in establishing integration due to a lack of knowledge among institutions about who is in the network, the role they perform, possible commonalities or opportunities for further co-operation.
- Geographical dispersion—some suggested that the further out from the Brisbane CBD you travel the less integrated the system is, and the more difficult it is to achieve integrated service provision.

Five key issues however were universally discussed as having a significant impact on the extent to which an integrated homelessness service system can be achieved and maintained. These issues related to a) relationships as drivers of integration; b) formalised integration mechanisms; c) information sharing and

data management; d) performance measures as a driver of integration; and e) the use of outreach teams in achieving integration outcomes. These are discussed separately in detail below.

RELATIONSHIPS AS A DRIVER FOR INTEGRATION

A consistent refrain among Brisbane sector participants was that 'relationships are everything'. Homelessness sector professionals, many with strong social-work backgrounds have a strong affinity with the value of relationships as they relate to client outcomes—which can be attributed in part to their professional training and education. When asked to describe key determinants of successful network integration participants would tend to advocate strongly that individuals within partner institutions must work to develop relationships typified by mutual trust, common understandings and establish a clear set of expectations:

Well each [agency] centre can access the data on the client but it's often about the relationships. Plus staff in [the agencies] in Brisbane probably change a lot more than the Coast ...been there for years. There wouldn't be too many agencies in Brisbane that have the same people.

...there has to be a shared value, a shared set of values potentially, when you're working with each other and a certain level of trust and relationship. In terms of a lot of effective case work is built on relationships over time, particularly with really marginalised people.

This association between the establishment and maintenance of positive personal relationships and successful outcomes appears to have a number of consequences, particularly in relation to the way in which the entire sector approaches the issue of establishing and maintaining sector integration. When pressed most would also acknowledge the transient nature of relationships, recognising that the departure of an individual with whom a relationship had been cultivated usually signalled the end of any broader relationship between two institutions. In effect many described situations whereby network integration (represented by the relationship between two

¹⁰⁶ Keast et al. (2007), op cit.

institutions) was in effect really a relationship between two sector professionals, with no guarantee of extended tenure and no guarantee of desired outcomes:

I think there's an enormous amount of goodwill, and I think there's a lot of talking and great relationships being built. I am not entirely confident that we're achieving the outcomes we need to achieve. I don't want to sound really negative, I've just—it needs to be real.

I used to go to the network [meetings]—I think I used to try harder than I do at the moment to go to the network meetings. I think I've come to a conclusion that they are less effective than actually going to the service and talking with the guys, the people about how can we create pathways. So I'm actually making a choice that that's a better use of [time].

The attention paid by sector professionals to the building and maintaining of relationships, and the need to engage in the ongoing process of relationship re-building has a number of significant consequences for the sector. First and foremost there seems an inability in the majority of cases to clearly distinguish between managing client relationships and managing the integration of the broader, institutional homelessness network. The consequences of a continued reliance on relational based informal agreements are significant, some of which are listed below:

- Significant amounts of energy and time are invested in the initiation and maintenance of relationships, with the acknowledgment that due to their relational nature, will evaporate following the departure of individuals party to the relationship.
- There is no clear understanding or appreciation of the costs involved in relational based integration. An integrated system underpinned by a set of transitory relationships has by default a number of significant hidden costs embedded within the system that are un-recorded, un-budgeted and difficult to quantify.
- A reliance on band-aid solutions and a dependence on 'sector heroes'—individuals working at elevated levels of activity to prop up a transient, unstable system of informal agreements. In the long term this is unsustainable, and leads to system variability and inconsistent client outcomes, premature burn-out of sector personnel and un-planned diversion of essential resources. It can also result in a reliance on crisis management and responding to emergent issues. This is in contrast to a more managed focus, concentrating on the effective utilisation of resources and maintaining consistently high client service delivery.

A continued emphasis on relational connections as the primary mechanism to drive integration between service providers is resource intensive, transient and increases ambiguity as to the expectations of stakeholders in contributing to client outcomes. The issues documented above were widely acknowledged by participants, and while some considered it to be an intractable outcome inherent to the sector, others highlighted them as key drivers for moving towards a more formalised set of agreements between agencies, such as Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and the establishment of Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

FORMALISATION OF INTEGRATION MECHANISMS

Service integration mechanisms employed by institutions were varied and appeared to be dependent on the size of the institution, the nature of their service delivery, the extent of existing relationships and client needs. For some it was a case of attending network meetings and building relational networks through professional events. Other larger agencies had worked to set up informal hub arrangements where various services would visit the client on-site (see quote below) whereas others would actively work to facilitate the client's efforts to engage with other services—but off site:

...we're looking at some of those ways to integrate our services. We do have some services come here and actually do a time here. So we've got Centrelink comes up twice a week and that was

really popular—really works well for the guys, so they don't have to go and wait in line.

As discussed previously however a common theme among many participants was the increased recognition of the value of drafting MoUs between institutions. In most cases this was described as an effective way to establish a common understanding of how clients should be dealt with when moving between institutions. However the comment below summed up nicely the growing recognition that the growth of the sector, its increasing complexity and the continued move toward sustainable client outcomes required a shift away from relational based informal agreements. Many expressed the view that while MoUs were a useful articulation of intent, many were never called upon or exercised and in fact were meaningless due to a lack of execution:

*It's not enough. It's like engagement with the client, engagement with the client's not enough either. It's vital but it's not enough. Relationships with another service provider is not enough to create integration either. It's more steps we need now to actually truly see integration. **Well I think it's about formalising a relationship, so it's not about you and I knowing each other, it's about my system knows your system and there's agreement with some principles, various visions** [emphasis added]. How we're going to do this piece of work together and then doing something together.*

Well I mean we certainly looked at having protocols, partnership agreements or MoUs. We have talked about that but the sense I'm getting from, not necessarily from [other agency] but other NGOs is they've now got millions of bloody partnership agreements. It's about how do you make them feasible and worthwhile when you've now got so many.

It's actually putting it down, agreeing this is what's going to happen. Then the next bit—that's not enough either. You can have 55 MoUs, if we like but they're just pieces of paper. Absolutely, I mean and the next bit is actually using those principles and doing it. So I think we just have to move away from relationship/relationship, because that's absolutely vital you can't do any of it without that.'

However while many expressed the desire to move towards more effective formalised integration mechanisms, there was debate as to how this should be accomplished. Some advocated an SLA approach as an extension of MoUs as a way of building in a clear set of accountabilities into the system. Others expressed doubt as to whether culturally and professionally the sector was ready to accept formalised agreements that required strict enforcement and the application of penalties should things go wrong. Some pointed to a dual mechanism whereby strong relational contacts were used to draft a clear set of expectations and guidelines that were then used as a benchmark to evaluate the success or failure of transactions between the relevant institutions. However the key point emphasised was the willingness and the capability to have a professional exchange between parties in the spirit of continuous improvement when incidents occurred and desired client outcomes were not achieved.

Importantly there was little evidence from the participants that few, if any within the sector had real expertise or capability in this area. The establishment of clear agendas and the articulation of formalised agreements are a significantly different skill set in comparison to the one required for the establishment and maintenance of client relationships. Further, there was little evidence of any funding or centralised mechanism in place at either a state or federal level to assist individuals within institutions to develop and build skills related to the negotiation and drafting of service contracts and SLAs.

INFORMATION AND DATA INTEGRATION

One of three key objectives set down by the Queensland Government's 'Opening Doors' Strategy for 2011-2014¹⁰⁷ is underpinned by the sector's 'better use and sharing of data and building a stronger evidence base to guide service delivery'. The Department of Communities has commenced planning and developing Homelessness Information Systems that are designed to improve client pathways through the homelessness service system and access to services. One initiative is the Vacancy Capacity

¹⁰⁷ Queensland Dept. of Communities 2011-14, op cit.

Management System (VCMS) that will provide an electronic register of available services and resources. The VCMS was implemented with 37 specialist homelessness services in September 2011 and will be rolled out state-wide in 2012. Other initiatives include the development of a Common Homelessness Assessment and Referral Tool (CHART) by DoC, and the implementation of the national Specialist Homelessness Services Collection in July 2011 by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). However discussions with Brisbane case participants indicate that a number of fundamental aspects need to be addressed before the Brisbane homelessness sector data can truly be considered integrated.

The extent to which a system can be considered truly integrated is heavily dependent on the capability and capacity of the system to facilitate the transfer and exchange information between system stakeholders.¹⁰⁸ In simple terms the relationship between information and system integration is best reflected by three conditions. One, the more varied the information types and requirements the more complex system integration becomes. Two, the more stakeholders in the system the more complex system integration becomes. Three, the more varied the expectations and requirements of the system the more complex system integration becomes. The Brisbane homelessness sector can be seen to possess all of these characteristics due to the presence of numerous stakeholders both in terms of service provision and in terms of client demographics. Further, a large number of these clients are presenting with increasingly 'complex needs' requiring the involvement and interaction of multiple agencies to achieve outcomes. This is compounded by the large volumes of data present within the system at any one time in multiple formats as dictated by individual agency requirements, leading to incomplete data, replicated data and data that is potentially incorrect or out of date at any one particular time:

We had found people where their birth certificate is at one agency, their pay slips are at another, their front page of a housing application is half

¹⁰⁸ Giachetti, R. (2004) A framework to review the information integration of the enterprise. *International Journal of Production Research*, 42(6), 1147-1166.

done. So there's a real need for us to focus on if we want to get these people housed then the first step is having them on the register and coordinating all that information to put it together so that it actually gets in because people are moving in and out of services so much that sometimes, and the process takes a bit of time.

The capacity of the sector therefore to achieve any meaningful level of integration is hampered significantly by the lack of an information sharing infrastructure designed to promote integration and seamless service delivery. Sector participants rely heavily on the use of relational networks, personal contacts, informal agreements, and sector gatherings such as the monthly network meeting to share knowledge and information.

The level of information sharing within the sector is moderate-high in relation to the exchange of superficial information such as bed and space availability, general sector trends and issues specific to 'shared' clients, or issues with a strong salient common interest (e.g. shortage of housing stock). However a tension exists between the need to share client information potentially considered confidential and the need to share information required to achieve optimal client outcomes in terms of their transition through the system. There appears to be strong agreement on the need for some level of client confidentiality, but a high degree of variability as to what data should remain confidential, when it should be treated confidentially and the extent to which data should travel onwards to a third party after the original transaction. Some institutions regard any and all data surrendered by the client as valid for the current service provision or transaction, that 'ownership' of the data is temporary and for information to be transferred to a third party requires further approval from the client to transfer to that specific agency:

I've read a little bit of research and I agree with it that I think our industry does attract people who can be a little bit on the possessive side of their clients. Maybe that's wrong but I suppose I see—I'm not saying everybody's that way and obviously I have to say well, do I? But I do see some of that. So even in our service that's something we're trying

to—they're my clients and I'll hold onto them but maybe they shouldn't be held onto.

Others take the view that all data collected is collected in 'good faith' and the transfer of client data to other essential third parties is a pre-requisite to achieving good client outcomes. The effective sharing of data is also perceived by some to reduce the administrative burden on both the system and the client. Some observed that while true data integration would be ideal and would improve sector integration the sensitive and often legal nature of the data was a significant barrier to capturing and sharing that information with other agencies. Mainstream agencies in particular appeared very aware of the media and political scrutiny they may experience if it was found that data they 'shared' had been misused.

Others highlighted the challenges faced in eliciting all relevant information from clients, particularly from those with complex multifaceted needs and those that reported poor experiences in the past. This reason in particular often gave rise to discussions surrounding the critical nature of relationship building with clients as a primary mechanism used to overcome barriers such as a lack of trust. Issues such as the perceived need for case/client confidentiality, the transient and in-frequent nature of the client (and occasionally staff), poor levels of trust between agencies at a sector level, perceived loss of ownership/control over data and under-investment in information systems all contribute to a lack of information sharing in a meaningful way:

So because they [the client] are acting out of a point of desperation often it is harder to get consent because it is their interest for you not to get that information.

But there can be real problems with getting the necessary information that is needed for the ongoing care and in the best interests of the person, but we're getting caught up and tripped up in bureaucracy and things like that. I think that a barrier between the NGOs and the government and it limits the integration.

I think that there's obvious barriers between the NGOs and the government in terms of privacy and confidentiality. We do try and get around that, but

you've got to be very particular with your wording and exactly what you're releasing. Because if you can really show clearly that it is in the best interests of the client's say—I'm from [Agency X] and it's very relevant to the ongoing health care of that person, you can very quickly get tripped up on that. People wanting to cover their backs and I personally find that is a big barrier.

The ambiguity and variability in perceptions of homelessness data are of particular importance given the aims of the Homelessness Information Management Program (HIMP). With over \$5.6M being invested over the next four years to develop an integrated homelessness information system the quality of the system data will do much to determine the success of HIMP. The initial findings of this study indicate the potential for the quality of data entered into the system to be highly variable, based on the notion that some within the sector will have ideological, professional, cultural and political objections to entering certain types of data into the system. For example, while some participants talked extensively of the value represented by a common assessment tool others questioned its design, relevance and overall utility given the wide range of data potentially required of clients by various bodies.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AS A DRIVER OF INTEGRATION

For a number of reasons there is a natural tendency for institutions to isolate rather than integrate themselves with other organisations or groups¹⁰⁹ particularly when put in the context of co-optation.¹¹⁰ In sectors such as those dealing with issues such as homelessness however there is a need for a range of specialised services to deal effectively with the increasingly complex needs of clients. The resulting structural differentiation (multiple specialist services required and provided by multiple agencies) leads to fragmentation of responsibility and therefore drives an increased need for integration.¹¹¹ A direct result of this tendency towards fragmentation then is the need

¹⁰⁹ Giachetti, op cit.

¹¹⁰ Keast et al., op cit.

¹¹¹ Axelsson & Axelsson. (2006) op cit.

to possess some form of integrative capability for entities wishing to solve ongoing and complex issues.¹¹² Integrative capability refers to the ability of single units within a larger entity to exchange information both within and between organisational boundaries.

Achieving integrative capacity, by its very nature is a complex and multi-faceted activity—the effectiveness of which is determined by multiple factors and multiple levels of activity within a network. For example, Bruhl et al.¹¹³ discuss integrative capacity as being present within three key aspects—organisation, communication and management control, with each aspect having method, process, team, and technological dimensions to them. In a similar vein, Giachetti¹¹⁴ conceptualised system integration as consisting of four integration capabilities—process (the ability to co-ordinate business process activities across separate units, application (inter-operability of software used by different parties), data (consistency of data type and form across units) and network (degree of physical connectivity between entities) integration. Axelsson and Axelsson¹¹⁵ offer an alternate perspective considering integration as being both vertical (co-ordination between different hierarchical groups across entities) and horizontal (across entities but with similar hierarchical levels). Therefore any expectation that integration should occur as a part of ‘normal business’ could be perceived to be naïve given the complex and demanding requirements of a fully integrated system. Integration (a reduction in the fragmentation of responsibility) can either be achieved by deterministic ‘management hierarchy’ approach, or via a passive ‘market forces’ approach or a network mode of integration—a voluntary co-operation between organisations.¹¹⁶

At this point it is unclear as to what (if any) mechanism is being applied in the Brisbane sector in an attempt to drive integration. In fact there is evidence to suggest that at various points all three

mechanisms are at play, occasionally at cross-purposes. The data collected for this study suggests that many integration activities are undertaken on a voluntary and/or ad-hoc basis and are susceptible to the vagaries of the sector in terms of available resources and goodwill present within the sector. Further, none of the participants interviewed made reference to any institutionalised incentivisation of integration activities embedded within their funding requirements.

A simple but powerful truism is that people measure what is important and act on what is measured and therefore considered important. In an increasingly constrained funding environment performance indicators are no longer the exclusive realm of private practice and industry. Instead, with the increasingly corporatised nature of government performance measures are being increasingly used to drive policy outcomes at a service delivery level.¹¹⁷ It stands to reason then that if integration is an intended key policy outcome then performance measures be aligned along not just to service delivery outcomes but the ‘process’ outcomes related to the way in which agencies and auspices go about achieving sector wide outcomes. Another well understood issue to do with service level outcome performance measures is that they are typically ‘lag indicators’.¹¹⁸ Measures such as occupancy rates by definition defy any retrospective attempts to improve poor performance or positively affect the final outcome. Likewise, a large body of work acknowledges the potential for outcome measures to drive counter-productive and in some cases deviant behaviours in order to achieve the required outcome.¹¹⁹ Flatau et al.¹²⁰ in a review of integration measurement approaches, identified that in addition to measuring the basic functioning or outputs of integration, measurement of integration

¹¹² Bruhl, et al, op cit.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Giachetti, op cit.

¹¹⁵ Axelsson & Axelsson, (2006) op cit.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Walker, R., Brewer, G., Boyne, G., & Avellaneda, C. (2011) Market orientation and public service performance: New public management gone mad? *Public Administration Review*, September/October, 707-717.

¹¹⁸ Walsh, P. (1996) Finding key performance drivers: Some new tools. *Total Quality Management*, 7(5), 509-519.

¹¹⁹ See for example Merchant, K. (1990) The effects of financial controls on data manipulation and management myopia. *Accounting, Organisations and Society*, 15(4), 297-313.

¹²⁰ Flatau, P., Conroy, E., Clear, A., and Burns, L., (2010), *The Integration of Homelessness, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services in Australia*, AHURI Positioning Paper No. 132, ISSN: 1834-7223 ISBN: 978-1-921610-46-2.

should encompass measurement at multiple levels including structural ('tangible mechanisms—what we have') cultural (willingness to integrate—'what we do') and process ('how we do it') elements. They also identified frameworks that consider the levels of measurement that must/should take place such as the EXTENT (the number of services), SCOPE (degree of interconnectedness between agencies) and DEPTH (e.g. the 3C's continuum) of integration that is occurring.

Data collected in this study failed to identify any systematic or institutionalised approach to the measurement of sector integration at an institutional level, either internally by individual agencies or sector wide by state or federal institutions.

When queried on what their organisations were measured on in terms of performance participants typically referred to general service outcomes such as 'beds filled', despite discussions with DoC representatives confirming that 'beds filled' was not a formal measure of performance.

Other programs like—well Housing and Homelessness, for example they will ask us how many people will move to independent housing after asking the service. They'll also ask how many people we're supporting ... and how long people are able to access accommodation while we're supporting them. So there's those sorts of measures.

Another program funded by State government [funded program title]... it's really beautifully generic, doesn't expect too many boxes ticked in terms of work that we do with [our clients], so it allows workers to work across a number of areas depending on the [client's] circumstance.

Our discussions with participants revealed that while integration was regarded as a necessary function of achieving client outcomes, it was not an activity that was used to determine current or future funding or one that was used to evaluate organisations:

Like I said, I don't see the Government directly funding us to co-ordinate the service system—not at all. They fund us to understand the service system to give clients information and options

about what's in it. So it's in our best interest as a business and at a program level to understand the service system to liaise with it, to partner with it and to do things. But would I say we're directly funded to do it? I would say not.

As discussed earlier in the case, integration was largely seen to be a function of personal relationships, either driven by pragmatic short term requirements or at a more informal level by sector network meetings. Very few participants were able to point to performance reporting measures of integration or networking activity directly related to the provision of funding. DoC has commissioned a number of evaluations, such as the evaluation of the Townsville and Brisbane Homelessness Service Integration Demonstration Projects, the evaluation of the Logan-Beenleigh Young person's project and an evaluation of Breaking the Cycle of Domestic and Family Violence in Rockhampton. As discussed 'lag-measures' lengthen the response time to issues and are insensitive to temporal circumstances potentially providing an explanation for the level of integration at the time of data capture. In addition the aggregated nature of system, network or sector integration data makes it difficult to discriminate between those agencies actively engaging in integration versus those relying on those proactive agencies to generate activity among the network.

Arguably one of the biggest issues with the lack of formalised measures of integration outcomes is that integration activities are likely to be ad-hoc, reactive and voluntary, relying on the goodwill of those in the network to participate. Critically, under times of stress (e.g. resource, time or financially driven) voluntary integration mechanisms such as monthly network meetings receive reduced levels of investment and commitment due to the pressures generated by short-term pragmatic demands. In such instances the day-to-day demands present a clear and present danger to the goals of long-term sector integration, especially when the primary integration mechanisms are voluntary, informal and lacking in empirical support as to their efficacy in improving sector wide integration.

This impact was highly visible in the Brisbane area and exemplified with the monthly network meeting attendance dropping from approximately 40

attendees in August 2010 to only 5 attendees in the same meeting twelve months later. Discussions with participants indicated that reduced engagement in network meetings and other informal integration mechanisms was largely attributable to the continued effects of the January 2011 floods. While the direct effects of the floods in terms of service disruption, displacement or logistical difficulties was reported to have been overcome relatively quickly thanks to 'energy and effort' by staff, the combined effect of staff fatigue and increased pressure on housing stocks had reduced the ability of agency and auspice staff to invest in activities that were considered peripheral to their core business.

Overall this would suggest is that if integration is regarded as a fundamental driver of positive client outcomes a greater focus must be placed on measuring and evaluating the way in which integration occurs. It appears that a lack of formalised measures around integration has resulted in a reliance on informal integration mechanisms that are vulnerable to sector and market pressures. A brief review of the literature would suggest that if integration is regarded as essential to reducing homelessness rates then greater emphasis must be placed on measuring the extent to which integration activities do occur. This will have the flow on effect of encouraging people within the sector to examine alternate and potentially more effective ways of driving interaction beyond current practice.

THE USE OF OUTREACH TEAMS IN ACHIEVING INTEGRATION

One of the consistent success stories of the case related to the outcomes achieved by outreach teams in their ability to act as boundary spanners between two or more agencies to facilitate integration and client outcomes. Three examples of outreach teams stand out as exemplars in the Brisbane network. Interestingly all three examples involve mainstream agencies such as Queensland Health, QPS and Centrelink.

Health Homelessness Outreach Teams

In the 2008 report the Health Homelessness Outreach Teams (HHOT) stood out as a key integrating mechanism¹²¹ in the Brisbane network. The HHOT initiative was first established with the aim of providing holistic healthcare of people with primary or secondary homelessness.¹²² In 2008 HHOT's contribution to the Brisbane sector was demonstrated by its high degree of centrality in the network analysis¹²³ and confirmed by the qualitative data with participant's commenting 'health outreach teams are huge elements and are universally applauded as a helpful thing...they deal with our officers, they deal with clients, they go to the hubs. They are a key thing linking everything together'.¹²⁴

HHOT teams are valued as highly flexible and able to respond to a localised need in a customised manner. For example, whereas in the Mount Isa region HHOT teams tend to focus on primary health care, in Brisbane there tends to be a stronger focus on mental health (IB2, 3). The value of the HHOT teams to the Brisbane sector has been again highlighted by this current round of data collection. HHOT representatives attribute the success of the teams to their ability to improve the level, rate and quality of communication between themselves and other participating agencies.

'HHOT gets out... previously any other relationships with Health have been quite negative and Health has historically had a, "we're health, and you have to come to us", whereas HHOT will go out, and the way it's been set up is, HHOT goes to the NGO and says "what do you want us to do"' (IB2, 5)

The HHOT example also clearly highlights the manner in which outreach teams can establish and sustain effective working partnerships by helping to build trust where traditionally good relationships have not always been present.

¹²¹ Keast et al., op cit., p. 60

¹²² Tarrant, D. (2010) The Homeless Health Outreach Team (HHOT): Inner North Brisbane mental health service. Parity, 23(6), 47-48.

¹²³ Keast et al., op cit., p. 42

¹²⁴ Keast et al., op cit., p. 60

Centrelink

Another frequently mentioned example of an outreach model producing consistent positive integration and client outcomes were the Centrelink outreach teams. The role played by Centrelink in the reduction of homelessness is a well acknowledged component, both in its ability to deliver financial entitlements to disadvantaged groups, but also because it is often one of the first agencies able to identify when people are at risk of becoming homeless.¹²⁵ Teams of Centrelink Community Engagement Officers (CCEOs) of which there are approximately 90 located at various locations around the state provide Centrelink services on an outreach basis to people deemed at-risk or homeless. While CCEO teams typically look to establish agreements with agencies and provide scheduled visits on their premises they will visit other locations like public parks and other known congregation areas:

So they're like a mobile office really. It's all about reaching those people who may have difficulties coming in to the mainstream offices....We find it much easier to be able to, I guess establish relationships with people if we're out in their environment instead. So we're like the visitors into their domain, which is a lot better, particularly because we're a Government organisation.

Non-government organisation (NGO) participants described the real value of the Centrelink outreach teams in terms of client outcomes. Both Centrelink and NGO representatives noted that some clients will consciously forgo income rather than deal with the perceived stresses associated with visiting a Centrelink office. Many emphasised the complex needs of clients and pointed out that navigating the often lengthy and involved process of pursuing their entitlements was not one that their clients were well suited to. Participants observed that the potentially stressful nature of this interaction was reduced due to the ability of the client to process their claim on-site with the CCEO teams:

[prior to the CCEO teams]...the violence and the abuse of staff that Centrelink had to put up with—we found it was easier, after a bit of consultation—bring Centrelink to them on their ground, on their turf—it's worked great.... the client's getting the same information, because they're dealing with the same person.

The ability of the outreach teams to attend the client's current residence ensured that the clients were typically less threatened on account of being in familiar surroundings, had access to auspice personnel with existing knowledge of the client's situation and were trained to deal with client idiosyncrasies that may prevent a successful transaction. The outreach team's effective use of mobile technologies has played a big part in allowing Centrelink to provide this service. To some in the sector Centrelink's ability to rollout an 'office in a box' is considered the benchmark standard within the Brisbane sector (IB2, 10). Another side-benefit of the outreach process was that staff reported having a better understanding of each other's organisations. Agencies reported having a clearer understanding of Centrelink requirements and Centrelink staff reported a higher degree of comfort in dealing with a client body that presents its own particular set of challenges while ensuring the best possible outcome for them.

Joined Up Street Teams Outreach Program

The final example of an outreach project reporting successful outcomes is the QPS J.U.S.T (Joined Up Street Teams) initiative—A collaboration between BYS and QPS sought to provide an after-hours outreach service for youth considered at-risk by the QPS in known 'hot-spot' inner-city locations. Trained officers in plain clothes accompanied BYS case workers to known locations to offer 'timely effective intervention, diversion and referral' (J.U.S.T. SOP Ver 1.2, 2011). Importantly the QPS escort allowed BYS outreach workers to operate at times and locations that ordinarily would be considered unsafe or inaccessible by BYS personnel. An evaluation of this program carried out in early 2011 has provided strong support for this collaborative arrangement. A survey of QPS and BYS personnel involved in the project reported

¹²⁵ White paper, op cit., p. 35

that the JUST project had significantly improved referrals, communications and the development of relationships with young people considered at risk in the Brisbane CBD.

However, positive outcomes were recorded not just in terms of decreases in reportable offenses but also in terms of positive relationships between BYS and QPS personnel. Interacting together on a specific project appears to have weakened long standing perceptions of the stereotypical roles that various parties play in addressing homelessness. Further, it has helped build a stronger understanding of the positive role that can be played by mainstream services by either combating homelessness directly or by facilitating the activities of specific homelessness agencies:

I have to admit I had no time for the police before doing this outreach—but working with the ones we have had on JUST has been brilliant—completely not what I expected. (BYS employee—J.U.S.T Evaluation Report)

It has opened my eyes to the places our kids are talking about—it is one thing to talk about the Gardens after dark but when you are there with them it is completely different. I know what the kids are talking about. (BYS employee—J.U.S.T Evaluation Report)

A similar effect was reported as a result of QPS's involvement in the 50 Homes 50 Lives project. In particular the extensive knowledge and relationships with those known as homeless by the QPS came as a surprise to some within the homelessness sector.

Overall the Brisbane case data suggests that the flexible, adaptable and highly engaging nature of outreach teams offers a dual benefit to the homelessness sector. On the one hand there is strong evidence to suggest that outreach teams produce positive client outcomes in a range of diverse areas. On the other there are also good indications that the activities of outreach teams are a powerful integration mechanism. Engaging and interacting with clients and agencies in their environment helps build an understanding of context, and creates a better understanding between sector participants of their respective roles and contribution to solving the intractable issues around homelessness.

CONCLUSION

This case provides an insight to the perceived level of homelessness service integration within Brisbane. Network, interview and focus group data were used to draw some observations as to the current state of integration, what current gaps exist in the system and what are likely to be the requisite components of a good integrated system of homelessness services provision.

A review of the 2010/11 network data as compared to the 2008 network data indicates that Brisbane has made some progress towards increased levels of integration, especially in terms of information sharing. However integration activities such as shared planning and sharing resources continue to lag behind rates of sector information sharing. The network data did provide some early support for the idea that significant in-roads have been made in the sector to improve connectivity within the network, and that initiatives in-place since 2008 designed to improve sector integration may be having some effect. However that progress was largely concentrated around a small number of highly engaged agencies working across a number of case-coordination projects. Other agencies, in particular those not located within the inner city, still reported low levels of integration activity.

An analysis of the qualitative data gave some insight to why full integration was not being achieved. Participant's raised a number of issues but five in particular stood out as being common to agencies/auspices/programs across the network. These issues concerned the barriers relating to information sharing and data integration, the pros and cons associated with using relationships as a driver for integration, the challenges associated with a move towards a more formalised set of agreements between institutions, the need to measure integration activities (not just the intended outcomes of integration) and the success of Outreach teams in driving client outcomes and greater integration between agencies.

Consequently four elements resulting from the data indicate that in the Brisbane sector a number of fundamental changes must occur to substantially

improve the level of integration within the sector.
These are:

1. The issue of consent regarding the sharing of client data needs to be resolved. An integrated system requires a high degree of data sharing and commonality. At the moment divergent views as to what data should be shared, in what form and to whom is a significant barrier to legitimate network integration. Unless this is resolved then any additional investment into sector-wide information portals, data bases or information systems is unlikely to see a return in relation to improved integration outcomes.
2. The capacity of the sector to establish and maintain relationships needs to be optimised. A better understanding of when relationship management is best employed and other alternate, less resource intensive integration mechanisms should be enacted is required by the sector. Further, the sector needs to develop an acceptance of 'agreement enforceability' and an ability to manage formalised agreements beyond personnel changes and or disagreement as to the fulfilment of the agreement's conditions.
3. If integration is an accepted key driver of positive homelessness outcomes then funded agencies should be measured on their commitment to establishing and maintaining positive, productive relationships with appropriate sector agencies and auspices. A range of measures specifically related to integration activities should be designed and employed. Effective measures would be designed to encourage integration activities to occur, but not be so prescriptive as to prevent innovative and novel approaches to integration.
4. The positive elements related to the conduct and execution of Outreach teams should be expanded into non-traditional areas and partnerships as exemplified by the QPS and BYS J.U.S.T. program. Similarly, location or issue based case-coordination teams such as those exemplified by the Project 50 and 'Under 1 Roof' initiatives should also be given greater support.



GOLD COAST CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Gold Coast City is located in south-east Queensland, about 100 kilometres south of Brisbane, bounded by Logan City, Redland City and Moreton Bay in the north, the Coral Sea in the east, the New South Wales border in the south and the Scenic Rim Region in the west. With an average annual growth rate of 3.6%,¹²⁶ the Gold Coast was reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to be the fastest growing area over the eight years between 30 June 2001 and 30 June 2009.

The Gold Coast is a world renowned tourist destination with a higher than average economic dependence on retail, construction and hospitality (accommodation and food services) when compared to the rest of South East Queensland (including Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba regions).

Overall, Gold Coast population statistics¹²⁷ are largely on par with the rest of South East Queensland (SEQ) with the exception that there is a smaller proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17) and a larger proportion of people in the older age groups (60+).

The Gold Coast has a higher percentage of overseas born residents than the rest of SEQ, however the majority of those come from predominantly English speaking countries such as New Zealand and Great Britain; its percentage of residents from non-English speaking countries (predominantly Japan) is similar to that of the rest of SEQ.

Similar to Cairns however, the Gold Coast has large influxes of interstate and overseas visitors and shorter-stay residents (ABS studies report that 54% of Gold Coast residents in 2006 did not live in the area in the five years previous, and 21% lived at a different address in one year prior to 2006, the majority coming from another part of Queensland or Australia). In this

way the population can be considered relatively mobile. Housing availability is in short supply and due to its location in a tourist 'hot spot' is relatively more expensive than other areas. However in contrast the Gold Coast homeless sector reports that the majority of clients are not as a result of the transient population (as reported in Cairns) but instead due to the widening disparity between 'rich and poor' in the region. In particular the Gold Coast Homelessness Network Focus Group (Round 1) noted that while the area did quite well from the federal government's Stimulus Package, 95% of clients were long-term residents. This situation may well have been exacerbated by the recent rise in unemployment figures with the Gold Coast reporting an increase above the national average with a November 2010 rate of 6.2% up from 5.4% in the previous year. Chamberlain and Mackenzie¹²⁸ estimated that there were 2,289 people who were homeless in the Gold Coast on Census night in 2006.

The unusual geography of the Gold Coast comprising a narrow strip of coastal land stretching over 70 kilometres with no large Central Business District and changing local boundaries with resulting structural dissonance between program parameters leads to a difficult area in which to deliver services. There a number of smaller, more densely settled commercial areas that could be considered a series of 'mini' CBDs including Southport, Surfers Paradise and Robina Town Centre. The presence of these decentralised centres means that there is commercial activity and related population dispersal over the length of the Gold Coast corridor and these aspects affect the cost and timeliness of service delivery and location and consequent accessibility of services. The Gold Coast's population characteristics also present specific and challenging issues for the homelessness sector—from the standpoint of a mobile population and the high proportion of tourism visitors relative to local residents, to the increasing influx of residents and widening gap between the rich and poor.

¹²⁶ www.abs.gov.au

¹²⁷ Gold Coast Council, Community Profile, profile.id

¹²⁸ Chamberlain & Mackenzie, op cit.

HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SECTOR

Similar to other regional homelessness sectors, the Gold Coast has a well established complement of services covering a range of agencies from early intervention programs and services; accommodation facilities and support services (for adults, families and young people) offering a range of programs encompassing life skills, self-esteem and substance abuse and drop in centres. Increasingly services are developing links with mainstream services and findings indicate links with other sectors such as Mental Health Services, the Queensland Health's Homelessness Health Outreach Team (HHOT) and Centrelink. Centrelink has developed a strong presence throughout the Gold Coast with the Centrelink Community Engagement Officers (CCEOs) attending drop in centres, rehabilitation centres, hospitals and other service access points for homeless people. There is a difficulty in providing services and a challenge in being a service 'hub' as the geography of the Gold Coast is a long, narrow strip that extends over significant distance:

Because we have that linear nature here on the Gold Coast we've had to cover the area between Coolangatta and Beenleigh...

This distance is around 70kms and while not all organisations are required to cover that distance, providing services over an extended distance on a tight budget has been a challenge for organisations. Innovative ways to manage these difficulties have been devised with a number of access points identified so that workers can connect in different locales and clients can receive services in the area in which they are located rather than travel long distances to specific service providers.

However, despite the depth and breadth of services provided across the Gold Coast, the sector reports difficulties in regard to mental health services. Like other sectors a lack of affordable housing was also cited as one of the biggest problems facing the sector, along with program timeframes which were seen universally as being too short. One participant provided a specific example of the housing crisis:

'Out of 12 beds, 108 clients, we've probably got two about to move on and out of eight we've got one who has been housed. So we are supposed to work with 108 clients and get some sort of outcomes for them.' (IGC1, 2)

Respondents also saw the lack of relationships with the private sector as being a hindrance to good service provision with lack of connection to private boarding houses being given as an example.

As can be seen in the following sections, the Gold Coast homelessness sector has a long history of working together to address homelessness issues including the establishment of the Gold Coast Homelessness Network Inc. (Homelessness Network), the annual Homeless Connect event and the innovative hub delivery model implemented through the Homeless Outreach Support Team (HOST). However, despite its successes, the sector still shows a propensity to rely on personal relationships and experiences a number of barriers to collaborative working including rifts between some areas of government and the homelessness sector and a greater propensity for working partnerships between smaller well-established services rather than larger newcomers to the sector.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS (2008 STUDY)

The Gold Coast region formed part of the *Closing Gaps and Opening Doors: The function of an integrated homelessness service system research carried out in 2007/2008* by Keast et al.¹²⁹ During that study the Gold Coast homelessness sector presented itself as a relatively close-knit sector characterised by a close meshing of agencies interacting around information sharing with a central group of actors integrating to a lesser degree around shared planning and shared resources. The Gold Coast was found to utilise a number of integration mechanisms including the Gold Coast Homelessness Consortium which consolidated into the Gold Coast Homelessness Network Inc. The

¹²⁹ Keast, et al., 2008, op cit.

Homelessness Network meets on a monthly basis and the findings indicate the meetings and connections remain a vital mechanism for integration and action around homelessness. The case management meetings in addition to more informal relationship-based information sharing are important ways of providing support to those in the Homelessness Network.

Of note in the first study was the Gold Coast’s unique response to its geographical constraints—particularly the structural dissonance between program parameters, Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries and geographical boundaries—which prompted it to adopt a linear, mobile outreach service delivery model in order to provide flexibility in service delivery and portability to follow clients. The resulting Homeless Outreach Support Team (HOST), having no fixed address, operated from a variety of access points along the 70km stretch of the Gold Coast with the office being based at Blair Athol Accommodation and Support Service, Bilinga. The Gold Coast Homelessness Network, early intervention services and HOST team are together a consortium of integrated networks using the benefits of HOST and Queensland Health’s Homelessness Health Outreach Team (HHOT).

While the research found the Gold Coast service system was not fully integrated, the system did appear to provide a solid foundation to integration, based in part on a stable mix of government and non-government community organisations in the Network and formal network meetings. In addition, the strength of relationships throughout sector as the primary integration mechanism helped to provide a coherent service hub with a particular emphasis on knowing what everyone is doing, what clients are doing, how client cases are being managed, and clarity of how those involved will each handle or manage any given part activity or issue.

The Consortium comprised a strong core of highly committed services that held an absolute belief in good relationships, collaboration, sharing of information and intense communication efforts as integral to the success of the sector’s collaborative efforts.

As can be seen from the current research project, the Gold Coast Homelessness Network has grown significantly since inception and still remains the primary integration mechanism for the sector. The Network supports and publicises new initiatives including Street Soccer, book exchange, choirs and concerts. However, there are a number of barriers to service integration, including the reliance on informal relationships, a lack of relationships across sectors and some areas of government as well as mistrust of larger, newer service providers.

THE CURRENT STUDY

In the current survey a total of 43 agencies were identified as central to the Gold Coast homelessness support network, meaning the overall response rate was 41.86%. This result is less than ideal, but it is high enough to suggest the network metrics provide a reasonable and solid indication of the overall network structure.

The findings from the Network Analysis are provided in Table 6 below:

TABLE 6. HOMELESSNESS NETWORK METRIC SUMMARY—GOLD COAST

	SHARED INFORMATION	SHARED RESOURCES	SHARED PLANNING
Network Density	0.2221	0.1802	0.2068
Avg. Network Centrality	18.917	14.913	16.783
Avg. Path Distance	1.374	1.341	1.341

Network density results have increased more than fourfold, and mean network centrality has more than doubled. This places the Gold Coast network as slightly less dense than either Cairns or Townsville, but approximately twice as densely connected across all three variables (information, resource and planning sharing) than Brisbane. The sharp increase in these results from the 2010 survey round is not readily apparent, though it is possible that the participants in the second round had a greater awareness of the multifaceted relationships they have fostered with others in the Gold Coast network. Several initiatives may have driven greater connectedness, including the HCAP processes for developing responses to homelessness and greater involvement with mainstream services following the first round of data collection.

An examination of the in-degree scores (a measure of how often an agency is nominated by respondents to the survey) shows both DoC and the Gold Coast Youth Service as being nominated by all other respondents. The Gold Coast Housing Company, Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Centre, Bannister House and Blair Athol were close behind, nominated by approximately 90% of respondents. These agencies are at the centre of the network's core, which is demonstrably denser than the networks in the first round.

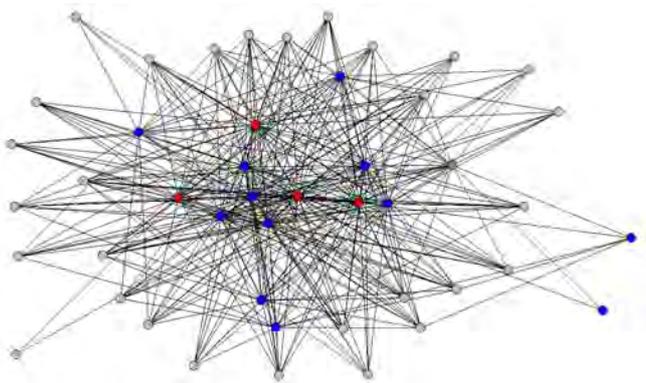


FIGURE 10. GOLD COAST INFORMATION SHARING

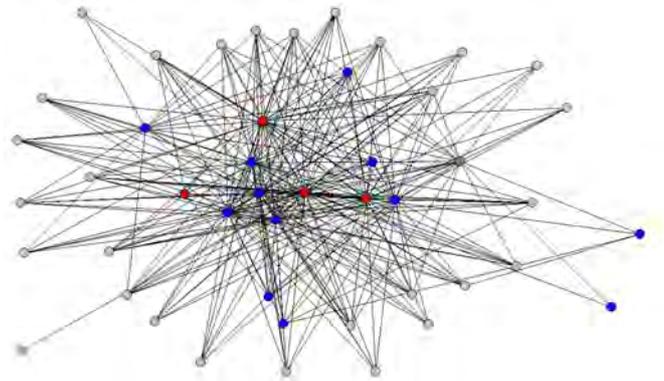


FIGURE 11. GOLD COAST RESOURCE SHARING

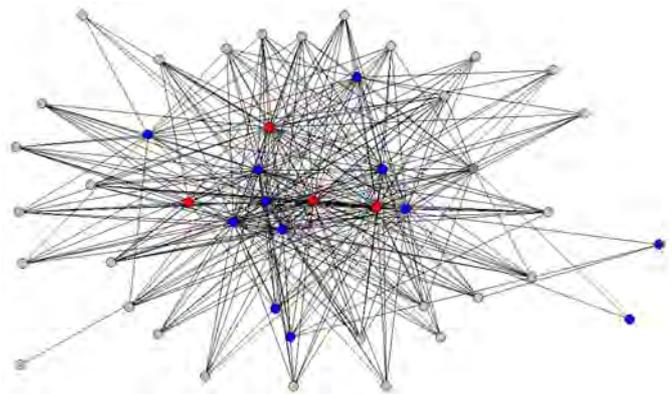


FIGURE 12. GOLD COAST SHARED PLANNING

The core/periphery thesis is supported by this improved modelling of the Gold Coast network, and by the metrics. Each of the three variables has high degree of centralisation percentages: information sharing is 57.91%, resource sharing is 65.25% and planning is 63.23%. This is evidence of a high degree of centralisation in the network, the small number of core agencies are responsible for the majority of connections. However the low average path distances (1.374 for information sharing and 1.341 for resources and planning) indicates not just a high level of integration between the core and periphery agencies, but a not insignificant level of integration between the peripheral agencies as well. This is a useful structural feature of the Gold Coast network, allowing for multiple avenues of access between agencies, and avoiding the issues that come with a central core that can bottleneck the flow of information.

A curious feature of the Gold Coast network is the compartmentalised manner in which agencies in the core seem to be responsible for facilitating information, resources and planning. By isolating segments of the network around individual agencies (egocentric networks) Network Analysis can highlight their position in the overall network. Table 7 presents the network metrics for the egocentric network of Blair Athol.

TABLE 7. HOMELESSNESS NETWORK METRIC SUMMARY—BLAIR ATHOL

	SHARED INFORMATION	SHARED RESOURCES	SHARED PLANNING
Network Density	0.3050	0.2328	0.2645
Avg. Network Centrality	20.718	16.154	17.897
Avg. Path Distance	1.268	1.419	1.337

The density of the information, resource and planning networks around Blair Athol is higher than in the overall Gold Coast network, as does the increase in average network centrality. With less peripheral agencies in this segment of the network the degree of centralisation is reduced; information sharing is 47.94%, resource sharing is 57.82% and planning is 55.76%. This is still indicative of a considerable degree of centralisation in this part of the network, though the spread of connections is more equal.

The lower average path distance in the information sharing network as compared to the overall Gold Coast network would indicate that this part of the network is well structured for sharing information, and can do so better perhaps than when encumbered with the agencies in the whole network. However the higher average path distance in the resource sharing network as compared to the overall network indicates this part of the network is less well structured despite the higher density and average network centrality. This finding indicates that those agencies outside of those connected around Blair Athol are more

significant in the sharing of resources between agencies.

Information sharing is the province of the core agencies in the Gold Coast network, these central agencies around Blair Athol are efficiently structured in order to facilitate the speedy transmission of information. As peripheral agencies are added to the network this efficiency drops, and it takes longer for information to be shared. The initiative of giving new organisations the opportunity to discuss their services at the formal Homelessness Network meetings may be a way of bringing greater information efficiency to the system.

Resource sharing would seem to be more important to the peripheral agencies in the Gold Coast network, these agencies are either better able or more willing to share resources efficiently. As the network around Blair Athol is expanded to include them, the overall sharing of resources becomes more efficient. Sharing of information and resources are not necessarily related and this difference may indicate the use of information as the preferred activity of the formal network and resources are ‘traded’ to assist in service provision for those at the periphery of the services system.

Overall the network results support many of the findings of the qualitative research particularly in relation to the importance of key players and access to shared information in the overall success of integration activities carried out to date.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

2010 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

I think that we have come a long way here on the Gold Coast for services picking up the idea of working together, instead of working in isolation, but I also think that we have still got a long way to go. (Interview participant)

As previously mentioned, the Gold Coast has a history of responding to the needs of homeless people—in particular, investigating various ways to reorganise the sector so as to better match client needs to services as

well as enhance general service delivery within the regions.¹³⁰ Similar to the earlier Closing Gaps and Opening Doors study, participants interviewed as part of the current research all spoke of various integration efforts focussing mainly on service level initiatives with relationships being a predominant strategy. However, participants also spoke of significant barriers, most notably the poor relationships between the community sector and some areas of government as well as the private real estate sector, and a lack of quality consultation. Participants noted that information was critical to their ability to perform in the sector and that a lack of available housing and workforce issues also presented significant problems to ability of services to respond to homelessness issues.

Building on existing collaborative efforts

The Gold Coast utilised a mix of formal and informal integration mechanisms to improve service delivery including:

- the linear mobile hub model delivered through the Homelessness Outreach Service Team
- Gold Coast Homelessness Network Inc meetings with a work plan to address issues regarding homelessness such as such as the annual Homeless Connect event
- other network meetings such as the South Coast, North Coast and Homeless Interagency meetings
- case management meetings
- DoC, Housing and Homelessness Services, RentConnect focus group
- strong personal relationships across the sector.

Overall, participants all recognised the need to work closely with other services and the value of utilising other services to provide full wrap around support for clients:

People outcomes don't just happen solely because of us as a service, we have to reach far beyond ourselves.

Previously, they did their work in isolation and we did ours... the reality is we all need each other to produce good outcomes.

However, it is apparent that the majority of integration efforts focused mainly at the service level through cooperative mechanisms such as information sharing and training:

We also go to interagency meetings...they talk and share information. We have emails coming backwards and forwards all the time giving us what is available, if there is any training coming up.

The HOST team—the mobile unit built on a number of access points at various services where workers can link with people in their own local areas set up to provide a more flexible service response—continued to be an important service integration mechanism, identified by participants as specifically encouraging integration and collaboration.

The Gold Coast Homelessness Network remains critical to service integration and is reported to have steadily grown over the years from the core drivers (less than half a dozen service providers) to over 30 regular attendees. The growth of the network is largely attributed to key personalities within the Network. On speaking about its success, one participant remarked:

I think why it did get to that is that there are a couple of people, there is very strong leadership and if we didn't have the leadership it wouldn't happen.)

Further, the stability of the membership was considered to be an enabler of the Homelessness Network:

'Consistency of personalities and relationships is central to our success.' (Gold Coast Homelessness Network focus group participant).

¹³⁰ Refer to Keast et al., 2008, op cit., for more detailed information on this process.

The breadth of services was also represented in the Homelessness Network:

We have a lot of good services there [Network meetings], we have government and non government, there has been representation from the Department of Communities and Centrelink, not so much Health, but a good cross section.

The notion of having several 'leaders' or organisations committed to 'making things happen' was supported by several participants as a factor common to the Gold Coast sector:

That is one of the things about the Gold Coast, there are providers here who are really keen to make things happen and um it's not because we have got extra money to do it.

However, the primary benefits of the Network appear to exist at the coordinated/cooperative level—namely to promote information sharing and service integration:

A lot of things are achieved a lot [sic] as a network. The Homeless Connect which everyone would have been talking about that was very successful... there has been a lot of ripple effect from Homeless Connect, I think a lot of other services have had a good chance to network at that event... we are quite a purposeful network... it is a really good strong network that manages to work together.

This network works—everyone discusses information.

While relationships with government agencies were reported as somewhat problematic, participants also reported having strong relationships with specific areas of government including DoC—Housing and Homelessness Services, Centrelink and HHOT. As in the first study, government representatives are an integral part of the Network and provide a strong balance—vital to achieving successful integration outcomes. DoC Community Capacity and Service Quality and Housing and Homelessness Services were recognised as key players in the previous and current study while Centrelink emerged as a strong partner in this round of research with a number of participants noting the support provided by Centrelink and their willingness to be involved in integration activities:

We have a lot of good services there, we have government and non government, there has been representation from the Department of Communities and Centrelink.

...so there are those areas where Centrelink work, the community engagement team is fabulous, it comes here once a week... They can also meet at other places, so they often meet at Centrelink Offices, we work really work closely with Centrelink.

The RentConnect project (DoC, Housing and Homelessness Services)—an initiative that engages representatives from the private real estate market, service providers and government—was cited by focus group participants as an important mechanism to improve information sharing and achieve greater service integration with the agents and owners:

...we have a greater understanding of homelessness and now have introduced changes to policy to allow improved access to housing options... before the focus group the only area we were working with homelessness was families at risk with rent arrears...now we know who is available to make referral to obtain extra support to sustain the tenancy.

The bottom line is we need better engagement with the private sector.

While working largely at a coordinated level at this stage, with shared information and education, the group is looking to expand to include joint training and joint work.

Agents were particularly happy with their involvement through the RentConnect focus group with one agent commenting that prior to the focus group they had wanted to be involved but had been left out of the loop because the sector has seen them historically as the enemy.

Information as a service tool

Information was raised by all participants as being vital to the delivery of services and a key tool in achieving service integration. However, information issues predominantly centred around ground level service delivery most often in relation to referrals

which appears to be an area the Gold Coast sector is actively working to improve:

I think you need to network, you need to know what is going on and who it out there, who does what, ah you need to have a clear referral process: who you can refer to without having to then find out your client isn't eligible.

I know what is out there because of my relationships.

Case management approaches also form useful mechanisms to information directly related to specific client needs:

We share information relevant to help that client with their case plan.

It could be holding a meeting with the key people and the young person and generally just keeping in touch and making sure we all work together for the best outcomes.

It would appear from the qualitative research that information flows between agencies predominantly through the network and interagency meetings as well as resulting from personal relationships built throughout the sector. As in other sectors, such as Brisbane and Cairns, trust and goodwill form the basis of these relationships:

Goodwill and commitment are required. When there is goodwill, we can be successful....takes integrity and have to be able to trust others.

Unlike other regional areas such as Cairns, however, the Gold Coast sector does not appear to have the same level of concern or problems regarding privacy, with many participants appearing to speak quite freely to other agencies regarding a client's circumstances or history and rarely raising privacy or confidentiality as a concern, for example:

'I do a lot of calls to other agencies and learn about their [the client's] past histories, and past landlords and find out how that went.' (IGC1, 08)

Sustaining service integration

Participants universally cited relationships as being key to successful integration outcomes—not just

within the sector but with external parties such as government and industry. As was noted:

A key part of the work and getting things done is through relationships. Building relationships with industry.

Although being integral to service integration relationships, are largely built and maintained at a personal level operating at the cooperative level and are not generally supported by formal arrangements such as MoUs although there is a recognised need for this in some areas:

I would like to think that we can get some working protocols or MoUs, something that would tie us together a bit more than word-of-mouth.

I don't think it is defined that we specifically work with any organisation, I think it is just good practice to find the organisations who will be able to support you in a total case management framework.

Barriers to service integration

While the Gold Coast has achieved some excellent results—most notably through HOST—participants spoke of a number of critical issues preventing improved service integration particularly at a more collaborative level.

Workforce issues

A significant problem facing the Gold Coast raised by the Network and other participants is the lack of people resources—both in terms of people on the ground and the significantly high levels of turnover experienced across the sector. The high volume of need and the complexity of the client population create overwhelming workloads:

I need to have four of me to do the job properly and I would still be busy. I just had a look at the statistics and for the last nine months there were 345 families, 135 of which were directly aided into housing; 101 of the 345 were domestic violence, 163 disability of some kind; 63 culturally diverse; 49 were large families; 42 serious; 92 have no prior tenancy experience.

Turnover in the sector is high and in line with the sector characteristics the Gold Coast experiences high turnover rates with the concomitant risk of employee burnout:

...the actual team has probably turned over 200% since I started... you can become very office bound because you are just seeing client after client and when you think about it there is no reprieve from it. It is understandable that workers burn out.

Turnover and burnout are two interlinked areas that require attention in order to provide a fully integrated system. Turnover also is problematic from an organisational memory standpoint as the relational history that has built trust and credibility across organisations may be diminished or lost with high turnover rates. Understanding systems and processes and, who to contact in the homelessness service system takes up valuable time for new entrants to the various workforces and organisations are strongly reporting being 'time poor'. In order to overcome problems of new organisational members without knowledge of the principles and values of the sector and the Homelessness Network in particular, the Homelessness Network has set in place mechanisms for learning through education and training, mentoring and invitations for new member organisations to address the network on their latest initiatives.

The need for stronger relationships across the sector

While participants spoke of having strong personal relationships several noted that these were not replicated at the sector level.

Poor relations with specific government departments, particularly Queensland Health's Mental Health Unit, and conversely the unwillingness of specific NGOs to interact with government agencies posed problems:

There has been a service on the Gold Coast that is anti-government and refuses to work with the CCEOs.

'...but it is a lot of work to do. Certainly lot stronger connections with the community and general public. The Gold Coast City Council and State Government, hopefully it will strengthen

relationships across service just through the process of it.

Queensland Health in particular was identified by participants as a difficult agency to work with unless you know with whom to talk. There was recognition that HHOT structure worked to mitigate some of the difficulties with mainstream services:

Some organisations just go better with some other ones. Health is kind of difficult unless they have taken the initiative there to do that. But that is with links like the Homeless Outreach team come into play and knowing someone who works in an organisation-like headspace.

It is important to note, however, that in relation to specific Queensland Health programs participants have a far more favourable view, for example:

The HHOT team are absolutely wonderful which also comes under Queensland Health.

Other agencies were also recognised as having weak links:

Where we haven't done very well is on the ground with child protection agencies, um, I don't think we've done, we've got early youth services as members now, but I don't feel like we've really related. I think the connections are very weak at this time. So certainly around child protection that sort of stuff. Child protection, it only wants to collaborate when it wants to, it is not reciprocal the other way.

We find the Police without sounding too negative, quite unsupportive of us, we find that they would drop inappropriate clients here, more or less just dump them, under the influence or mentally ill and we can't house them, and we've got them dumped here.

The hospital, maybe the ones we work with, with our clients is the mental health department and we find them very, very unhelpful.

In addition to the need for better relationships with specific government agencies, there was a strong belief that more needs to be done to educate the private sector about homelessness and breakdown

misconceptions—getting them to understand ‘homelessness is everyone’s problem’.

The sector has had some success in bringing real estate owners and agents to the table, particularly through mechanisms such as the Homelessness Symposium. While several individual agencies reported having strong personal relationships with some agents it was agreed by the RentConnect focus group participants that ‘personal relations were developed and are working well but relationships across the sectors are disjointed.’

In addition to weak relationships with some departments, there were several participants who noted a rift between service providers in particular well established smaller services and larger service providers; there was a general belief that it was harder for larger, newer organisations to integrate:

I think that it is the mainstream and bigger services that it is harder to engage with.

This sentiment was particularly echoed by Gold Coast Homelessness Network focus group participants in Round 1:

We have worked together for years. The ability of groups who have been together a long time to work together is stronger. We are like-minded because of this discussion and dialogue and part history of working together. In my organisation I am not the only one who thinks that way.

Consistency of personalities and relationships is central to our success. Consistency in larger agencies is harder to sustain.

Other participants spoke in general terms about the unwillingness of some services to integrate:

Some services are just very insular; they don’t really look at working in with other agencies.

We want new players they are good for the system. But new services don’t want to be part of the integrated services... we need to be putting more money into services that are working.

While others spoke of it in terms of the need for service providers in sectors other than homelessness to recognise their role in homelessness service provision:

Because once they do get housed, we want them to have support to go with them, that is where we come up against it, because there are not enough services, or they are not the right type, they are not um, they don’t get that homelessness is perhaps part of their business you know, they haven’t heard the message yet that homelessness is everyone’s business.

The community centre itself is not very partial to working with homeless people because that is not their core business... I think it is just because we have got to do more work about educating people. People have to get hearing it more, it is something that some services don’t want to talk about; they have capacity issues of their own.

Unfortunately, there has probably been a few people working at certain agencies that weren’t as forthcoming with information as well, and so that impedes on the ability to work closely together and collaborate. Then there is us and them, and people trying to do stuff with the homelessness sector without finding out what the sector is doing about it.

In addition to the need for stronger relationships with government and the private sector (such as agents and owners), some participants recognised the need for more formal arrangements other than ‘word-of-mouth’. It is unclear whether this would be welcomed across the sector. In response to one agency’s formal partnership approach to relationship management one participant noted:

We’ve just got the new [Service] representative... our representative will be looking at the bigger picture and try and create different partnerships and things. Having said that, I think that whilst those positions are great and exciting, you can see too many layers in some other services, I’ve been to a similar partnership process with the [Service] with people who I already know and already work with, but have gone to these meetings where the partnership process has brought us together, because that is what they are funded to do and I think oh okay well, that is a bit of a layer that we don’t need because we already do that...that might work really well in Brisbane or another city,

perhaps it is not necessary on the Gold Coast, because we do have strong networks.)

Program development—good ideas, poor funding and consultation

Another issue raised by the Gold Coast sector was the lack of consultation and appropriate funding for programs particularly by government:

I don't think they [government] have taken enough advice not just from anybody and everybody but seeing people that they should be talking to in communities.

So it is like you know, they had a lot of consultation around that didn't they? We told them what we thought but it didn't change the fact that that is how they still go about it.

The Department of Housing [Department of Communities, Housing and Homelessness Services] are taking our contributions a whole lot more seriously than what they ever used to but there is still a way to go yet I think.

I've worked here a lot of years and I've seen a lot of progress and non progress. I think a lot of the ideas are good, but I think the people that make the ideas should probably come here and work for a month.

The Gold Coast Homelessness Network members also raised problems with the way programs were funded: 'sick and tired of good projects designed and developed but we have not been properly funded to provide the full service' (FGGC1). The problems of underfunding, removal of funding for small niche services and lack of funding for the Homelessness Network were raised as barriers to fully integrating the services.

Summary Round 1

Overall the findings from Round 1 indicate that the Gold Coast continues to have a strong focus on driving increased service integration and delivering housing outcomes for homeless people. Integration is predominantly achieved through the Gold Coast Homelessness Network and the linear, mobile service model that is result of the efforts of HOST—both of

which were identified in previous research. Network analysis indicates that the Gold Coast is steadily increasing its connectivity, evidenced particularly through the increasing size of the Network. While predominantly operating at a cooperative and coordinated level as per the Integration relationship continuum, visible through the project related and directed information sharing, commitment and accountability to each agency and individual resources, there is a commitment by many in the sector to continue to work together to achieve better outcomes. As was the case in earlier research, there is a core contingent of services that drive integration. There are however, other agencies that sit outside integration. Largely referred to as 'newer' or 'larger' services it is unclear whether this is through choice or due to their lack of history in the region.

In addition, while the sector has some very positive relationships with government departments or programs there are several weak links to a number of key government departments as well as to other sectors in general including the private real estate sector. The Gold Coast sector clearly recognises these limitations and is seeking to educate and build relationships through mechanisms such as HOST, Homeless Connect and RentConnect so that all areas view homelessness as 'everybody's business'. The findings of the second round of data collection are outlined and discussed in the next section.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS ROUND 2

The changes to the homelessness service system and service provision that establish a point of difference to the responses to the issues found in Round 1 centre on the interaction with mainstream services and consequently greater ability to work together with a range of services to solve client issues. Better working relationships with mainstream services were acknowledged and some of the responses suggest the driver for this change is the exploration of new layers of organisational engagement by the Homelessness Network. The Network first worked to consolidate its closer ties with a core group and offered information sharing. The next step involved new initiatives and joint activities. It then expanded its sphere of influence to a wider audience which included

mainstream services in order to resolve some of the more complex problems of homelessness. Other areas in which different types of engagement occurred were new programs being implemented that relied on new connections being made to operationalise the new types of grant funding. Private providers of housing are relevant in this regard.

Changes to service system: Building on achievements

The recent changes to the homelessness service system identified mainly concerned the newly implemented Homelessness Community Action Plans, the change to the Gold Coast Homelessness Network status as an incorporated entity and differences with relationships between specialist homelessness services and mainstream services that deal with homelessness issues as a part of their operations.

Homelessness Community Action Plans (HCAPs) were considered a good vehicle supporting integration of services and creating a space for engagement within the sector. While not all stakeholders agreed on the issues, the process of bringing the different industry sectors and organisations together was considered an important element of the HCAPs: 'Not everyone's agreeing ... The common thread really comes through, and we're in the business to try and address homelessness'. The consultation process also allowed a wider focus than service delivery to the impact of homelessness on the society—'thinking about the broader picture of homelessness in the community'. While the process produced an action plan that could be actioned in the near term by the local organisations and had the support of the many different groups, there was concern that the work of CAPs would be slowed or 'watered down'. The lack of resources for the action plans was another concern, although there was recognition that new ways of operating needed to be developed within existing parameters: 'There aren't a lot of resources behind this ... people [need to] to change the way they work or to work with people they haven't worked with before or contribute over and above their service agreement'. These responses indicate a drive to implement high level change and hint at the possibility of systems change. However, the stalling of this process may lead to loss

of impetus and enthusiasm for the programmatic implementation of the CAPs.

HOST was reported to have continued to work very well. HOST is a program of intensive support to those who are homeless with a focus on young people and families who are unable to access the homelessness support system. Immediate needs are met and connection to services established. It was reported that this program has had a positive effect on the service system level as 'clients previously not seen by mainstream services are now linked to these services'. The greater role and inclusion of mainstream services is highlighted in this outcome.

The level of complexity of clients presenting to the homeless services was reported as increasing and this situation causes enormous challenges for service providers. Described by one respondent as multilevel complexity, the crisis of homelessness becomes nested with many other problems and issues.

The model of partnership is well accepted as the way to work by core members of the specialist homelessness services. The lack of resources to deal with homelessness, the intractable nature and persistence of the problem together with the trust built up by the different services have moved the organisations along the integration continuum from co-operation to co-ordination.

...I'm happy to share whatever resources or information I can, whether its policies or budgets or what works and what doesn't work. I'm happy to be in partnership with people because the focus has to be the client all the time.

There is an understanding of the different levels of intensity of integration and a contention that some organisations/sectors have a better record than others:

I think that the general community organisations are very good at collaborating and some of the Government ones are still catching up with, they may collaborate amongst themselves, but I think they are still catching up with how to...

There are signs that the community planning around homelessness could shift the services system to collaboration, although this aspect is too early to

assess. The depth of problems with responding to homelessness has required mainstream services to be considered as a critical component to resolving problems of homelessness.

Mainstream services across the homelessness sector

The connection with mainstream services and other services allied to the homelessness service sector is growing but there is some unevenness in the response of mainstream services. New entrants in the mix are the real estate agents as more attention is given to the private rental market as a viable access point for those who are in need of accommodation. Innovative ways of providing housing such as the provision of transitional housing through the Community Rent Scheme Program have fostered greater interaction with the private rental market: 'We work with some fantastic real estate agents'.

It was suggested that each mainstream service should have a dedicated liaison person to deal with homelessness. Some mainstream services have attempted to provide members to attend the Network meetings and activities but their capacity to engage was reported to be limited by pressures on these frontline staff to undertake their 'core business'. Small initiatives that pave the way for better understanding of the different services have been used: 'We had a Shadowing Day to learn about other services'.

Transition programs that allow clients to engage early through mainstream services are proving successful. The specialist homeless services are then better equipped to deal with the client: 'They've been quite motivated...they've set a pathway for themselves out of their previous situation and commit to something better for themselves'.

There was greater impetus for mainstream services to engage with the specialist services given the federal government initiatives to 'close the gaps' to resolve homelessness. The extension of service integration to include mainstream services creates special challenges with intense competition for time and resources to undertake their core activities. However, those organisations that have embraced the idea that their operations need to consider homelessness and ensure

that they are involved in homelessness issues have eased the stress on homelessness service delivery and allow a start to experience seamless services.

Promoting integrated service delivery

The main mechanisms for integration are the Gold Coast Homelessness Network that brings the different parties together on issues of homelessness; the relationships forged between the different people involved in the sector; and increasingly, technology as an integration enabler.

The Gold Coast Homelessness Network remains the linchpin group in fostering integration across the homelessness service sector. It has established a strong foundation of integration and 'is recognised as ... particularly well integrated collective services already'. The Network has changed its status by moving to incorporation and this greater formalisation has implications for the way in which the Network operates and importantly, the way it is perceived. A shift to formal legal structures moves the Homelessness Network into a new regime of institutional integration. It was anticipated that incorporation would provide a new kind of visibility to the group as an organisation that has a high profile and strategic intent in the area of homelessness: 'that just in itself gives some great recognition'. The new legal status was also seen to give 'a lot more stability to the actual integration and collaboration between the service system'.

There was an expectation that fully and tightly integrated services were not necessarily required for the optimal performance of the service system. A tightly integrated core of members with other services operating 'around the edges' was still considered to be a well functioning model: 'tendency to be on the edge but there're there. They are quite good—they are there when you need them—they don't sit in the middle of the homelessness service system.' This approach aligns to the operation of the 'strength of weak ties' as proposed by Granovetter in 1973¹³¹ with those on the periphery providing an important resource to a network through their own and separate

¹³¹ Granovetter, M.S. 1973 The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6): 1360-1380.

relationships with other groups and the ability to bring other viewpoints and information to a close-knit group. There is also agreement about the superior ability of a smaller core to progress the activities of the Homelessness Network as a very large network would be too difficult to manage:

Really, you can't let the Homelessness Network get too big or it will lose its focus and the work being done will be spread too thinly.

Integration is considered to be driven by overarching philosophy and policies but also by the personal and sustained relationships between the parties:

You need an approach that you're going to actively and regularly meet with various NGOs and other services whether through formal or whether it's going to be with people on the ground.

A response to important elements of service integration is the quality of relationships:

Most important is honest communication and good relationships based on mutuality and respect. We promote opportunities for meaningful purpose-driven co-ordinated responses through case management and effective networking.

You know I think a lot of it is about that relationship, that better—building the stronger relationships and networks.

The strategic alignment of services and using a national funding scheme to deliver resources to services was used to develop relations and resulted in greater integration:

When I talk about integration I suppose it was more the partnership, the building the stronger links with other services that we hadn't had much to do with.

Further, it was suggested that strategic recruitment of the right people played a role in establishing integrated services; 'You obviously want to recruit people with the view that they are able to network and communicate at the level and build good relationships with other partners':

An initiative that brought the services together was the creation of a needs register through the Homelessness Community Action Planning process

'which identified all the gaps which they might be able to utilise further down the track...They got those issues from homelessness, Centrelink, Family Support Services, health services, mental health services, not just within the homelessness sector.

HCAP brought new services into the mix and created the conditions for better integration:

I think it [Network] has probably expanded a little bit, some of the services that we perhaps hadn't had as much to do with have come on board as part of that community action plan, which has been great.

Technology as a service integration enabler

The role of technology is coming to the fore as a key connector for the homelessness service system not just for operational efficiencies between those employed in service organisations and agencies but for those who are clients:

I think the website will become an important tool for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to look up for the service system and navigate it.

The introduction of a website was considered to be a boon for clients as well workers in the sector:

So we see that as being something that's going to be really useful, not only for services and for potential clients, but for new workers coming into the sector they'll be able to get resources from the site.

From this step, it is anticipated that further interconnection can be developed and extended. The use of web-enabled technological solutions has the potential to create a paradigm shift in the way organisations operate. The homelessness sector with mobile clients and a need for mobile services could benefit significantly from these technological advances.

Barriers to service integration

While a core of committed, enthusiastic people is a critical success factor for offering a well-functioning service system, a heavy reliance on one or two people makes the system vulnerable to break-down when that person or those people move on. This situation is common to many organisations and inter-organisational arrangements relying on networks however the homelessness service system is particularly susceptible to problems of depletion of knowledge, difficulties with knowledge management and poor succession planning. The homelessness service system is highly reliant on workers to innovate to make use of limited resources but high turnover and burnout cause gaps in the system. Avoiding burnout and high turnover in the homelessness services sector was a focus of a US study in 2010 and targeted training, career development, registration and professionalisation were some of the ways found to begin to resolve these problems.¹³²

The operation of the service system in training people, undertaking knowledge management activities and cultural change across the sector is important. It is also reliant on those who can make a difference staying within the sector:

When you see really good services, you generally see committed, enthusiastic people behind them, they stand out. When people like that move on, you don't always see the same services replicated.

Building in redundancy whereby several people have the opportunity to retain organisational memory to continue the operation of the service, particularly by training and development initiatives and, adopting principles of, for example, a learning organisation so that the loss of a key person does not adversely affect the service system are ways of avoiding system breakdown.

With the high turnover in the sector, there needs to be mechanisms to stem the high quit rate and at the same time offer innovative ways to retain

organisational memory and, manage explicit and tacit knowledge.

A newly raised issue in Round 2 findings is the question of cross-border service requirements relating to homelessness:

The group has expanded a bit and there are some people from NSW that come across. I think there are significant state to state issues which affect people's experiences.

The Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home* in 2008 was considered to have been a critical component for creating better integrated services as it gave legitimacy to the process. 'We've now got something behind us to add in—policy and direction, then it's a bit easier to get a response'. 'We moved homelessness up the political ladder when Kevin Rudd put it on the agenda'.

It was suggested that the profile of homelessness needs to be raised along with support from individuals with influence:

Homelessness needs a champion at a very high level to speak frankly and honestly but has the power to pull the resources in.

The broad agenda setting with the ambition to resolve homelessness through a national framework has involved an overhaul of the system. The new housing initiatives have been welcome: 'Certainly the more bricks and mortar properties on the ground are a good thing'. However it was contended the funding models have remained relatively unchanged. Increased funding to the sector was identified as a requirement for creating and offering better services but specifically the Gold Coast Homelessness Network's critical role as an integration mechanism could be improved with funding and resources for activities.

Creating an ideal service system for addressing homelessness moving from a reactive to a proactive mode of operation was a key theme in developing an ideal homelessness service system. An approach that redirected policy and program attention to early intervention rather than dealing with crisis with the attendant saving of time, resources and capacity was considered a requirement for the basis of an ideal

¹³² Mullen, J. and Leginski, W. 2010 Building the Capacity of the Homeless Service Workforce, *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 3: 101-110.

service system structure—‘A focus on early intervention as opposed to a crisis only focus is needed’.

The lack of co-ordination between some local services may be addressed by introduction of programs that encourage greater integration through making the client the focus of attention with associated resources:

Dollars need to be attached to the individual client to give services the incentive to engage in co-ordinated responses and link the client along the continuum of support.

Clients transitioning seamlessly along the pathway from homelessness to sustained tenancy is a policy and programmatic aspirational goal and is echoed here by one respondent:

I would like to get to a point where it wouldn't matter where someone turned up- even if there was no service that could assist them right there and then—there was a pathway for them and it was clear.

The ideal is for seamless service delivery that is achieved through highly skilled people and the ideal operational model is based on partnerships:

So you want good quality service, highly trained and skilled professional people. You want good resources to do that. You need partnerships; that approach; involving all stakeholders. So it doesn't matter whether you're in a community organisation or the police or the Juvenile Justice or whatever; it is the same thing flowing through.

Summary Round 2

The changes reported in the round two data collection mainly focus on the changes to integration brought about by the inclusion of new parties in the homelessness system, better connection to mainstream services and initiatives to break down barriers to integration. Homelessness Community Action Plans for responding to homelessness provided a new way of addressing strategically the issue of homelessness. Undertaking this process was considered to have furthered the integration of services and brought new parties into the homelessness arena. The homelessness services

sector was considered to have moved to a better alignment of mainstream services with specialist services, although there was an acknowledgment there was some way to go before the transition was fully developed.

Cross-border issues whereby clients are moving between two systems and services need to deal with structural differences between states were raised as an emergent issue.

The growth of the Gold Coast Homelessness Network was considered to present challenges for its operation although strategies of education and training and, initiatives to bring new members into the group were being implemented.

CONCLUSION

The homelessness service system on the Gold Coast is a mature system that has developed a range of resources through investing in relational capital. The critical issues for the future are those that are common to mature organisations in terms of changing from an establishment phase and a building trajectory to an approach that consolidates the efforts already invested in the activities of the organisations and the network of those organisations.

Better working relationships with mainstream services were acknowledged especially since the first round of data collection, although there was some unevenness. Groups such as real estate agents have emerged as a part of the homelessness services landscape. Mainstream services have improved their engagement with special programs for connecting onsite with homelessness services, transition programs, early responses, greater data sharing (although some problems exist in this area) and access to Information Technology allowing greater connection between the services.

For the Gold Coast homelessness service system and the Homelessness Network in particular, issues such as succession planning, knowledge management and education are the focus of attention. Some steps have been put in place as a start to address these issues but a lack of dedicated funding for the Network has prevented a large-scale programmatic response.

Targeted advice forums for different services, education and training and better communication overall is considered to pave the way for integration.

An implementation strategy that allows projects to be integrated into a seamless delivery network is suggested as contributing to an ideal service system. Issues addressed in this way are transition programs, clearly identified pathways and, specialist services and mainstream services working together with communities to resolve homelessness. The preparation of Homelessness Community Action Plans for dealing with homelessness brought the general community into the mix of public, private and community sector stakeholders in the homelessness sector. This broadening of stakeholders was considered to have opened the way for delivering better integration of services. Network analysis indicated that better connection was evidenced at the time of the second round of data collection. The consistent finding across the interviews and focus groups is that integration is achieved by building strong relationships:

To have the nurses and the doctors and the hospital system, firstly educated about the issue of homelessness and the stereotypes broken down. Then the police, all those support services working together—one point of entry into the system for the region...



TOWNSVILLE CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND TO TOWNSVILLE

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Townsville is situated approximately 1400 kilometres north of Brisbane and is a major gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and surrounding agricultural and mining areas. The city is considered by many as the unofficial capital of North Queensland being the site of numerous government, community and business organisations. Townsville is the largest city north of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland with a population of approximately 190,000 persons. The population is comparably young with more than 53% being under the age of 35 as at 2006.

Comparatively, Townsville has a large Indigenous population. Townsville's Indigenous population as a percentage of its total population was 5.9% compared to the national average of 2.3%.¹³³ As at the 2006 census there were 4,982 Indigenous persons resident in the Townsville Indigenous Area as defined by the Australian Indigenous Geographic Classification. Indigenous people, by any major social measure, are the most disadvantaged of all sub-populations in Australia. Their social disadvantage reflects in their levels of homelessness. In May 2004 Indigenous people comprised 18% of total SAAP clients Australia wide (11% in urban areas)¹³⁴ far exceeding their representation in the general population. The large Indigenous population in Townsville means that the city is an important centre for addressing the social disadvantage and often complex needs of Indigenous homeless people.

The area is also experiencing considerable population growth. In the year to June, 2009, Queensland had the fastest growing population of any Australian state at 2.6% and in that year the population of the local government area of Townsville grew by 3.2%. This

growth rate was only marginally lower than those of the very rapidly growing local government areas of the south-east corner of the state.¹³⁵ Given the city's relative isolation, this population growth has placed considerable pressure on local infrastructure and services. Total dwelling approvals increased dramatically between 2007 and 2008, most probably due to the effects of the Nation Building and Economic Stimulus Package however, approvals fell off substantially in 2009 to approximately 60% of the 2007 total suggesting that the availability of housing is set to again become a major issue.

Economically, the area is also experiencing rapid growth. Unemployment rates have been steadily declining from 5.5% in 2006 to 2.9% in 2009 and average wages are increasing. The defence force has a major base at Townsville and defence is the main employer accounting for over 6% of total employment. Being a major regional administrative centre, education and health are significant employers while in the private sector the main industries are mining (and its associated industries), tourism and agriculture.

HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM IN TOWNSVILLE

The homelessness service system in Townsville is populated by many long serving, dedicated professionals who work hard to provide for homeless people in an environment characterised by a mix of under-resourcing in terms of housing stock, funding and skilled providers as well as some inefficiencies created by fragmentation of the system due to its sometimes problematical history, competition for funding and the extent and complexity of homelessness. The high visibility of homelessness when it is combined with public intoxication and public nuisance has resulted in significant political attention locally. The resulting interested stakeholders including Council, affected citizens and both homelessness and main stream service agencies have

¹³³ Census 2006

¹³⁴ Indigenous Homelessness within Australia, May 2006. Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness and the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and supported by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness Consultations

¹³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Regional Profile: Townsville released 22/11/2010.

disparate views on how the issues should be addressed.

A focus of our previous 2008 research for DoC was to investigate joined up services and how they addressed these often interconnected issues of public intoxication and homelessness. These two concerns have become inextricably linked in public debates to the issue of public nuisance and how to address community safety concerns. In recent reports the Townsville City Council's Community Safety Committee put forward recommendations for the construction of a 'secure complex' at either Happy Valley or Cludon (outlying areas of Townsville) that would provide mandatory treatment for residents in anger management and domestic violence, enforcement of a strict code of behaviour including a ban on alcohol on the premises, buses to transport homeless persons to and from the premises and a curfew placed in CBD open space and park areas to be enforced by patrols. Council later relaxed the idea of a curfew. News reports have tended to not separate out the issues of homelessness and substance abuse, but rather have conflated them, borne out by the following statement in the Townsville Bulletin of 14 May, 2010:

Townsville has one of the worst homelessness problems in the state, costing taxpayers more than \$7 million a year in support services and policing with only two people successfully rehabilitated in eight months last year.

A number of service providers reacted to this story during interview querying the statistic and questioning the meaning and measure of rehabilitation when discussing homelessness. Furthermore, the qualitative findings suggest that the focus on 'park people' in the media tended to blame the homeless person for their position and, importantly, overlooked the more sizeable portion of the homeless population outside parks:

... sometimes there is that strong focus on the group in the park for good reason, there are issues there, but being a service provider for women and children, you know that is often, certainly in terms of media and that, forgotten.

Public intoxication, homelessness and public nuisance in Townsville, particularly with regard to people who gather to socialise and sleep rough in the CBD have been matters of ongoing concern in Townsville for at least 30 years. This problem has been exacerbated in recent years because of the growth of the city and the rejuvenation and development of the inner city. A Government Taskforce was established in Townsville in March 2010 to address this specific issue. This taskforce forms an important basis of the latest qualitative findings presented in this case study report as it has been the genesis of significant change in the focus, structure and nature of the service system in Townsville.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS: 2008

In our research undertaken in 2008 the Townsville service system was identified as experiencing the effects of insufficient resources. A main effect was that much of the energy in the system was necessarily directed to immediate problems and how to share information rather than providing the space to strategise and consider future system needs. Responsibility for strategic planning therefore largely fell to Government agencies. These characteristics of the Townsville homelessness service system evidenced an operational cleavage between non-government agencies and government that clearly delineated the planning and resource role of government and the service function of agencies. The network maps produced at that time therefore demonstrated a high level of information sharing and referrals taking place between agencies but that this was less consistent between non-government and government agencies. The high level of information and referral sharing between non-government agencies was made possible because of the relationships established through the long-term operation of many of the Townsville service providers. The Case Coordination Group (CCG) offered an important means for agencies to communicate with government departments, in particular housing. At that time the CCG's operations were mainly confined to information sharing.

In our 2008 report it was identified that the Townsville service system was not as densely integrated as Brisbane or the Gold Coast. A contributing factor was that at the time there was no Homelessness Hub in Townsville. An attempt had been made to establish a hub, however this failed to fully materialise. The system was quite highly integrated given this fact. Another possible contributing factor to the lesser network density, especially in relation to joint planning and resource sharing levels, is that this may be a product of the history of homelessness in Townsville and political influences that historically directed attention and resources towards complex needs issues, in particular, public intoxication. The current findings outlined in this report now suggest that the previous focus on complex needs issues had been accompanied by a lack of key integrating mechanisms to more strongly bind the system together. One of the main questions emerging from our previous report was therefore whether the service system at the time was fit for purpose or whether stronger integration was required to meet current and future needs. A key finding of our previous report was that the effective establishment of the service Hub in Townsville would require far greater resources and effort than in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Its establishment needed to glean substantial collaborative support from DoC (and, at that time the Department of Housing) and that this was considered critical to the success of any strategic planning and strategic initiatives.

The integration of the service system in Townsville in 2008 was hampered by the extent of the complex problems needing to be addressed combined with a lack of affordable private accommodation and limited service system capacity. Service gaps in the system around these complex needs were identified that resulted in an inability to move those with complex needs along the pathway from homelessness to sustainable shelter. Often those who were homeless were rejected from shelter options as they were considered problematic tenants who were 'burning bridges' with shelter providers. The mix of prior homelessness and intoxication at early stages of shelter resulted in people 'get[ting] into a fight' and

then being unable to return to homeless accommodation provision.

Overall, the findings indicated that Townsville was faced with a growing homelessness problem that was arguably greater than Brisbane or the Gold Coast because of the combined effects of its complexity, politicisation and the capacity of the local sector to respond. Not only did Townsville services need to respond to the complexities and additional issues brought about by the social disadvantage of a large Indigenous population (in terms of both actual numbers and percentage of population), but also the mining boom had affected Townsville more than most regions in terms of increased housing prices and rentals. Given that this was a system under considerable strain, the level of innovation evidenced in activities such as employment and arts programs and the ingenious use of resources to fill service gaps for homeless persons was laudable.

NETWORK ANALYSIS

The networks maps were formed from survey data collected from providers in the Townsville area. Of the 36 listed services in 2010, 18 responded to the survey and of the 55 listed services¹³⁶ in 2011 28 responded. Some reliability can therefore be placed on the results but some caution is recommended in relying on the results by themselves. The qualitative data obtained through the interviews and focus groups provide support for interpreting the network maps; however, there are some anomalies in the earlier data period that need to be taken into account. Spiritus, a key organisation identified in our 2008 report, was omitted from completing the survey document with the result that they do not appear in the 2010 maps but feature quite centrally in the 2011 maps. Further, the Mental Illness Foundation demonstrated a high level of centrality in the 2010 network maps and also a relatively high level of 'betweenness' compared to other agencies yet qualitative data did not support this. A possible explanation may have been the focus on complex needs during that phase of data collection or the emphasis on complex needs in Townsville

¹³⁶ The increase in number in 2011 is attributed to the network meeting held to report back on Round 1 research findings.

generally or that the foundation was related to a key individual within the service system at that time. The 2011 maps show the Mental Illness Foundation in a much less central position than the earlier maps.

The network maps have significantly changed over time. In 2008 agencies were grouped in two main 'spokes' as well as a third sub-hub formed around a group of newly resourced agencies and a set of longer-term providers. The 2010 maps suggested a more singular cohesive mass, but that the system was more fractured and widely dispersed in that a group of key organisations were highly central and working with one another, but other agencies were more disconnected from this central core. The 2011 Maps (see Figures 13-15) provide data related to Information Sharing, Resource Sharing and Joint Planning respectively. The survey instrument requested respondents to identify the level of Information Sharing, Resource Sharing and Joint Planning with other organisations as High or Low. Only those connections reported as 'high' are shown here as the maps that show all connections are extremely dense and therefore difficult to read and interpret. The maps provided relate two stories—that of the CCG and that of the system as a whole.

Despite a clear clustering of the CCG members around DoC, the path distance between CCG members is still relatively high. This suggests that, while all are connected to DoC, the members are not strongly connected to each other. The CCG contains some fairly new members and this is one explanation for this high path distance. Another explanation is that the CCG network is characterised also by a high degree of centralisation in that one or two agencies predominate joint planning and the sharing of information and resources. These characteristics of the network may be temporary; being a manifestation of the newly reformed CCG and the appointment of a coordinator from DoC whose role it is to put in place collaborative processes. These findings suggest that at this point in time, the CCG is not yet well placed for DoC to step back from their coordinating role and that there is further work to be done in relation to preparing the CCG membership for greater self-governing—a desired goal of most in the CCG.

The other story is that of the network as a whole. The overall average path distance is only slightly higher than that of the CCG, however the standard deviation is also high which suggests a core-periphery model in which a number of organisations are very well connected and that most organisations are connected to both the core and a number of peripheral agencies. Of note is that the qualitative findings presented later suggest that most agencies consider that the ideal service system model is one characterised by strong and loose ties and that this is very close to what the service system currently looks like. While the very high path distance for information, resource sharing and planning suggests that a small number of agencies, particularly DoC, control the majority of high level sharing, the system overall is, in fact, quite equalitarian. This finding is supported by the centralisation scores that show much higher inequality of sharing within the CCG where one or two agencies dominate these processes, than in the network overall where sharing of information, resources and planning is spread more evenly over a number of agencies. These lower combined network degree of centralisation percentages suggest that there is limited inequality in the Townsville network resulting in a good level of integration amongst agencies.

The maps suggest there continues to be fairly weak ties in regard to joint planning for those services sitting outside the CCG, however; these services are significantly engaged in information and resource sharing. Subsequent to our data collection in August 2011 a Service Integration Coordinator has been appointed by DoC for a period of six months to provide a resourced position to assist coordination of the broader service system sitting outside the CCG and Taskforce. Critical to the success of this position will be to balance the relative autonomy of this group with a stronger focus on joint planning and without upsetting the good relationships that are already in place. In addition, flexibility around the appointment time frame may also need to be considered should these services perceive the necessity for continuation of the position. Joint planning is currently arranged around DoC and the Taskforce/CCG and there are two sub-networks made up of organisations that provide homeless services for women (and families) and

youth. The maps suggest that services outside the CCG and Taskforce are well connected to each other and, through 'linking' organisations within their networks are also connected to the central members of the CCG. As in our earlier findings and supported by the qualitative data here, this suggests a system that is working together very hard but is still under some pressure due to underdeveloped human and infrastructure capital. There is an ongoing role for government in this regard if the system is to optimise its outcomes.

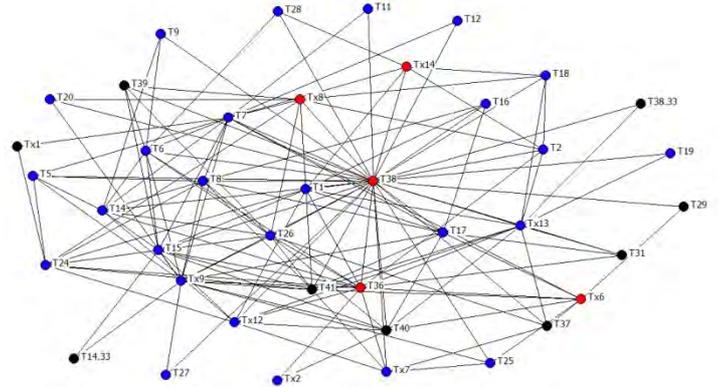


FIGURE 15. HIGH JOINT PLANNING 2011

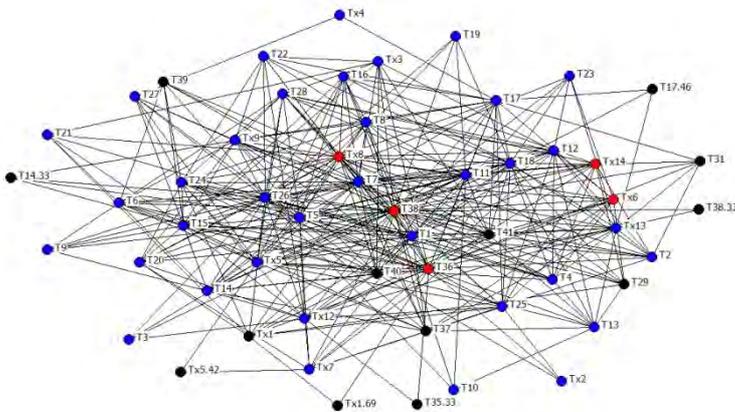


FIGURE 13. HIGH INFORMATION SHARING 2011

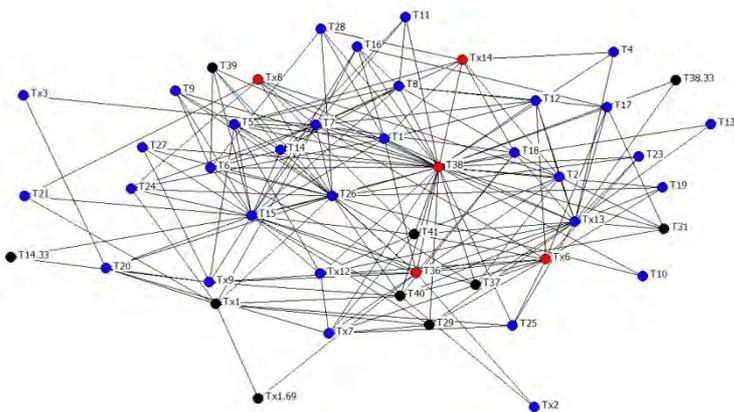


FIGURE 14. HIGH RESOURCE SHARING 2011

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups with service providers and government employees supports findings in regard to the shape and connections of the service system outlined in the network maps. Broadly, the qualitative data evidences that a combination of formal and informal mechanisms are in place that provide the basis upon which integration occurs. The recent establishment of the Townsville Taskforce for Public Intoxication and Homelessness and the resultant reformation of the CCG have provided much needed institutional capital by way of joint strategic planning and training. The findings suggest that at the service level the Hub is looked to for providing an expanded operational and service role beyond that which it is currently undertaking. Personal relationships and personalities continue to form the foundation for both informal and formal integrating mechanisms.

In addition to the mechanisms used for integration, a number of factors that hinder or help integration in Townsville were identified. These factors included knowledge of the service system, trust, how government intervenes in the system, benefits of joint planning, competitive funding and accountability.

MECHANISMS FOR CREATING AND SUSTAINING SERVICE INTEGRATION

The Townsville service system utilises a range of mechanisms to co-ordinate service provision. These extend from highly formalised arrangements such as the CCG, various groups, forums, various meetings, partnership arrangements between two or more individual organisations sometimes underpinned by MoUs. Though changing in importance, there remains also a significant reliance on personal, informal relationships. The major changes to the mechanisms of system integration over the period 2008-2011 were the iterations of The Hub and the further development of the CCG out of the Taskforce set up to address public intoxication.

The Taskforce (TF)

The ongoing issues related to public intoxication and homelessness, in particular, the unacceptable deteriorating health and behaviours of inner city homeless people, has resulted in concern being expressed from the community, Indigenous Elders and businesses. In addition, numerous complaints have been made to council and the local member regarding the behaviour of people in the city parks. The local newspaper has been both sympathetic to the plight of the homeless but scathing in their criticism of the lack of success in addressing the issue. There is a wide range of views in the community and significant pressure to address the problems associated with the joint issues of public intoxication and homelessness:

... there is still very much a lot of victim blaming and I think people are coming very much with different mindsets and that is the bit that makes the integration stuff [difficult]. It is very hard to not get caught up in their arguments around that.

In October 2010 State Cabinet endorsed an Action Plan to address these joint issues with a key goal to reform the service system and the Townsville Taskforce for Public Intoxication and Homelessness (TF) was established. The main role of the TF is to develop and re-model the service system so that it responds better to the issues around public intoxication and homelessness in the inner city. The TF

initially comprised a group of representatives from the three levels of government with DoC providing the lead agency role. The membership of the Taskforce has since been expanded to include five NGOs directly involved in delivering services to the client target group. The members of the TF jointly undertake monthly reviews of plans and progress to date as well as seeking to address any barriers to service delivery. The Cabinet Endorsed Action Plan consists of 21 current actions that range from providing medical and social support (such as the purchase of additional beds), reviews of services and proposals of reforms to the legislative framework to support implementation of schemes. The TF reports monthly to Cabinet on these 21 current issues.

The TF fulfils a key planning and integrating role around targeting a specific client group and was viewed positively by interviewees:

I'm calling it the Taskforce, because that's what it's called, but what it actually is it's an integrated service model. You've got bits of services actually sitting together talking about a common goal. Now, I'm not saying that the goal that's identifies is my ideal, but the process is good. I see that is really good.

The perceived limitation of the TF, suggested in the above quote, is that its current focus is solely on addressing the 39 identified vulnerable 'park dwellers' (discussed under CCG below). There was also cynicism that the decision on the TF's target group was largely politically motivated. There were mixed views on whether or not the TF's target should be broadened, though most were in favour. Coinciding with data collection in August 2011, the number of clients targeted by the TF and CCG increased from 39 to 101. Eleven of these cases have been closed post-data collection. Given the contemporaneousness of this change with the point of data collection the effect was not able to be accurately discerned.

In the main, service agencies outside the TF and CCG or members of those groups with operations beyond the current attention of the TF considered that its focus should be extended. The main concern was then how the service delivery level would be structured to address this broader focus without creating

dislocation in the service system through pockets of organisations forming around particular issues without an integrating mechanism at the service level. There was some support in this regard for expanding the role of the Hub/Homelessness Connect.

The Case Coordination Group

The CCG was established in Townsville in late 2005, however, recent changes to its operation and focus has arguably had the greatest impact on the service system in Townsville in 2010-2011. The Australian Red Cross (with the support of DoC and other CCG members) commissioned the first external review of the CCG's operations in 2010.¹³⁷ The report identified a number of key issues relating to the operations of the group:

- lack of clarity of the target group (who we are here for)
- lack of clear purpose and outcomes focus (what we are expected to achieve)
- lack of explicit performance expectations and measures (how we know if we are getting there)
- lack of appropriate infrastructure and resources (the right tools)
- lack of team development (the right information, skills and team culture).¹³⁸

The report made an overall recommendation that the group refocus its attention on the most vulnerable, namely those with complex needs and occupying public space. A major recommendation was that the CCG offer an 'effective multi-agency/wrap-around service response (Integrated Case Management)' that responds to the client's expressed wishes about changing their circumstances.

The recommendations of the report were largely adopted when in October 2010 the Queensland Premier announced an action plan to reduce homelessness and public intoxication in Townsville. An initial response under that action plan was that Micah Projects Inc undertook a survey of rough sleepers in

Townsville that identified, using the Vulnerability Index, 39 persons considered as highly vulnerable. The CCG has subsequently focused its attention on case managing these clients through a membership comprised of both specialist homeless service providers and an increasing number of mainstream services including QPS, Queensland Health, Queensland Corrective Services, Centrelink and Community Patrol. The CCG sits under the TF and responds at the service level to fulfilling the TF's plans.

The CCG was in its very early stages of reformation and refocus during data collection in October 2010 at which time also a coordinator of the group had just been appointed from DoC. This position has subsequently been critical to the operational integrity of the group, implementing the case management approach, directing the CCG towards the attainment of outcomes and improving communication and information sharing within the group. CCG members were welcoming of the commitment by DoC in assigning this coordinator and also highly complimentary of the individual concerned. This testifies to the importance of appointing people with both the right skills and personality to key roles. It is notable that, in the space of 10 months, the CCG developed into such an important integrating component of the service system in Townsville:

You remember the CCG that they have here in Townsville? They've [Department of Communities] done a lot work with bringing all the organisations together ... they seem to be heading towards cooperation.

Look that position that [Coordinator's name] is doing now and the way that [he] has done that position, has really helped to bring the sector together, to be able to give that one clear message of support to our clients in Townsville. So I really see that the strong leadership that's come with [Coordinator's name] in that role has really been beneficial to the sector in Townsville, because we do have a reputation in Townsville as a dysfunctional sector.

In the final round of data collection, members of the CCG commented favourably on a number of the reforms undertaken including the training in case

¹³⁷ Case Coordination Group Review: Final Report (2010) commissioned by the Australian Red Cross and prepared by Chris Chappell.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* p. 3

management they had received to prepare them for the task at hand. The most significantly successful aspect of the CCG was considered its grounding in a case management approach. It was considered that by adopting case management services were being provided to clients based on the specific needs of the client; i.e. a client-centred approach. The members of the CCG commented that adopting this view of service delivery meant that the various organisations stopped viewing the client as their own and started seeing the client as the centre around which various services come together to help that client. This approach also assisted in reducing duplication of services where clients were previously ‘double-dipping’.

The refocusing of CCG attention on a highly specific group of clients has meant that CCG members are clear on their target and, as a result, have become highly outcome focused. Generally, the CCG was considered very successful in bringing about positive outcomes for clients:

... I've noted that there's been a significant improvement in the communication across the different case managers or agencies ... out of the 36 [clients] that are still remaining there's only about half a dozen to ten that are still sleeping rough consistently.

I think the biggest surprise for me has been just the success of the case management approach ... I must admit I was probably a little cynical about the amount of dollars and resources that it would require.

Part of the cynicism in regard to the resources directed towards the CCG, noted in the above quote, is also due to the client group it manages. As noted in the background section above, Townsville has long experienced problems with public intoxication combined with homelessness. This issue has historically attracted considerable political attention, not just because of the intractability of this group's problems but also because of the public nuisance they create and the safety concerns of locals and visitors within the Townsville CBD. The current focus of the CCG is on this group with the result that some providers, even within the CCG itself, are concerned that it may detract attention away from others in need

such as young people (only one person identified from the Micah survey was under the age of 25) and victims of domestic violence as well as reducing the focus on important parts of the service system, such as early intervention.

As noted above, the focus of the CCG was expanded at the time of data collection. Some CCG members welcomed this seeing it as a positive that vulnerable people, not identified in the first survey, would now receive individualised case management. Others, however, were concerned that the CCG may lose focus and therefore effectiveness. The scope of such forums is an important consideration for the structuring of integrated services. The benefits and disadvantages of bringing together a broader range of service providers outlined above needs to be weighed against the perceived benefits and disadvantages of more targeted groups which, through their more narrow focus, may be capable of providing specific outcomes but which may also risk fragmenting the system overall. Similarly, the extension of the client base of the CCG may require further services to be incorporated into the group with the risk of losing focus—an issue also identified below in the Housing Area Network meetings—or, if the group were to remain unchanged, the result may be that resources become spread too thinly to be effective. The other risk is that the system overall may become more fragmented. Some providers outside the CCG commented on their exclusion and that the focus on the CCG was politically motivated because of the high visibility of their client group. It was considered by some providers that members of the CCG are being favoured and funded as a result and that, given that many of the CCG members are large NGOs, meant that smaller NGOs were being overlooked. Other agencies were more pragmatic in that they accepted that their clients did not fit the CCG profile. The appointment of an additional Service Integration Coordinator to assist coordinate services outside the CCG, noted in the Network Analysis section above, may help address these resource deficits.

In September/October 2010, the Housing and Homelessness Area Network (HHAN) faced similar ‘expansion’ issues to that now facing the CCG. Members of the HHAN noted that when this group

was expanded to include a much wider range of service providers, the group began to lose focus on the specific issue of housing. While the benefits of gaining holistic insights into the issues and the service system were acknowledged, the expanded coverage of the HHAN meant that the range of the discussion was now so broad that it was difficult to stay focused and achieve specific outcomes:

Yeah and it generally just tends to be about information sharing now than actually producing work whereas before we had the ability to respond to initiatives that were coming out and specific responses, or put in some funding to do some specific projects, we have kind of lost that ability now.

The CCG has addressed, to some extent, the relatively limited amount of joint program and service-level planning evident in the earlier round of data collection in 2010. For the members of the CCG, planning at both these levels is now more coordinated around the specific needs of the narrow client base serviced by the group.

The Hub/Homelessness Connect

Service hub models had been successfully implemented in Brisbane and the Gold Coast; however, most service providers interviewed in 2008 did not consider that a Hub was the best model for Townsville. The aim of a service hub is to link people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to appropriate accommodation and support through the provision of outreach, information, referrals, advocacy and brokerage. Hubs are designed to form an accessible point of entry for clients to the overall service system.¹³⁹ As outlined in the introduction to this case study above, a finding of our previous report was that the effective establishment of the service Hub in Townsville would require sufficient resources and significant governmental support. The convoluted establishment of a Hub in Townsville has had deleterious effects on the service system overall.

The Townsville service system has a long history of co-operative working relationships between service providers and it was widely considered that government did not sufficiently recognise these qualities nor did government sufficiently understand the Townsville service system. The result was that the Hub in Townsville was poorly devised and its implementation longwinded and difficult. Most service providers felt that the model had been imposed on them because of the success of such models in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Many respondents considered that government was misguided in implementing a Brisbane style Hub in Townsville and that a model suited to Townsville needed to be designed and implemented. Government's failure to sufficiently support the hub or take into account these concerns and the specific needs of Townsville led, in 2008, to disappointment, fragmentation of the service system and consequences for ongoing relationships:

There are lots of organisations that do work well together, but there are kind of little pockets of that happening around Townsville, there is no linking everyone together and Townsville have expectations that one service would be the lead agency and that hasn't happened. There have been lots of detrimental effects about the relationship because of the [unmet] expectations [relating to the Hub]. (Interview 2008)

Integration? [more like] disintegration ... very sceptical about superimposing some integration process because this will backfire ... it should be left as is where we integrate depending on need. (Interview 2008)

A further attempt to establish the Hub through contract to an NGO was made in 2010, again leading to unsatisfactory outcomes. As a result of these outcomes, funding for the Hub was ceased and the main responsibility for its activities taken over by DoC, operating out of the former Queensland Department of Housing's offices. The new arrangement is 'Homelessness Connect' which serves an expanded role from the former Hub. Not only does it provide brokerage services and a point of contact for clients, but it also is a key provider of information to service providers through its 'insider' knowledge regarding what service organisations are funded to provide. As

¹³⁹<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/housing/community-and-homelessness-programs/homelessness-programs/reducing-homelessness-in-queensland/homelessness-services>

predicted in our 2008 report, a more pronounced intervention from government in this role has led to more positive results. It has taken considerable resources, in housing stock, money, effective government intervention and human capital, to begin to redress the damage done by the Hub's irregular history.

There is now more support in Townsville for the new arrangement under Homelessness Connect, however, there is a perception that such a model needs to be specific to the area, and in particular, it needs to take account of a highly transient homeless population and the needs of the large indigenous population. Many view Homelessness Connect or a Hub as needing to be more like a 'common ground' model where all services are able to utilise space and where the Hub itself is also attached to accommodation, with this accommodation being purposefully designed around the needs of the demography of the Townsville homeless. There is acknowledgement of considerable improvement; however, there is still some way to go before service providers in Townsville consider the arrangements as being fit for purpose:

... the original plan [for the Hub] was that people go, that they would go in there and they wouldn't just be sitting there waiting for their target group to turn up, that they would just be helping in the Hub every day.

I think we came to the conclusion that it's really not a model for Townsville. I think maybe that model worked great on the Gold Coast ... but for Townsville what we need is ... like a common ground program model, where clients in Townsville can come and get everything they need in one location.

These views are in keeping with the need for a mechanism that brings together and integrates the whole spectrum of service providers within the service system. Without such a mechanism the system is in danger of breaking into separate parts. This, in itself, is a natural part of the system—like services tend to collaborate with like services, however; there still needs to be a means and place in which these separate parts can share information, resources and engage in joint planning at the service level.

The Relationships between Providers: Formal and Informal

The service system in Townsville has historically been highly reliant on the personal relationships of those working within the sector that have been developed over many years. The trend that is observable over time is that integration between service providers is shifting from largely informal to formal arrangements. As with any network, the integrity of the service system remains highly reliant on the personal relationships between individuals and that such relationships were grounded in open discussions about expectations:

But we do a lot of informal [networking], you know one to one, you know if there is a problem, say for example we have a problem that our staff may complain or their staff may complain about the service or that, then we will go and make it better and have a chat with them and see what we can do to improve it. I think most of our networking is done informally.

Where a history of met expectations between individuals had been established the system was highly reliable, however, such arrangements are vulnerable to two issues. Firstly, where expectations are not met there is sometimes a need to formalise relationships so as to more clearly define expectations and provide a means to enforce requirements. Secondly, even where expectations are consistently met, the fragility of a reliance on individual personal relationships was acknowledged. Individuals moved out of the service system resulting in a need to institutionalise the relationship at the organisational, rather than the individual level. These issues were increasingly being addressed through partnership arrangements utilising formal MoUs:

... and then there are the detailed service expectations about what support they [agencies] will actually provide because we found that was one of the big gaps for us, because they would assist clients but the level of service that we expected from support organisations wasn't being met so we started developing lots of partnerships around those expectations.

Setting up MoUs is time consuming. Formalising partnership agreements involved negotiations commencing with standard agreements, but often resulted in agreements 'going back and forth numerous times' before finalisation. Furthermore, such agreements once established required ongoing and regular review and revision to ensure their ongoing effectiveness. One agency commented that they reviewed their agreements monthly to ensure the agreements were sufficiently comprehensive in covering expectations and that such expectations were being met.

The Relationships with Government Agencies

Relationships with government agencies occur on a number of different dimensions including the strategic, operational and service levels as well as the relationship with government as a funding body. At the service level there was general satisfaction with government agencies in that expectations at this level were generally met across the entire period of the research. The main state government agencies identified as being engaged at the service level were Queensland Health (mainly through the HHOT) and DoC (Housing). As with the engagement between service providers discussed above, relationships were considered important when working with government agencies:

I must say that there is a really good relationship with Department of Housing [now Communities] for us, because we can just pick up the phone and talk to someone, maybe it is because we have known them for a long time too, and we can always find a solution for someone who is homeless, you know and if there are issues they always come and say can you talk to this client as they are having problems.

It was at the strategic and operational levels that Townsville experienced most change. In 2010 the strategic level relationship between service providers and DoC was inconsistent and was primarily about the failure, in many providers' views, for the department to meet their expectations in a number of areas. First, there was disappointment that DoC did not

consistently hold service providers accountable. Second, there was some consensus that DoC should play a more central role in assisting the system to integrate. Third, many felt that the Hub model and other initiatives put in place were mandated, ignored the specific needs of the Townsville system, had bypassed consultative processes and, as a result, failed to recognise the unique characteristics and needs of Townsville:

... they [DoC] didn't really listen to what a lot of us were saying about what was needed in this area, and there was a tendency to replicate what was happening in Brisbane ... It wasn't really consultation at that time, it was really more information about what was going to happen, and there are clearly lots of different paths.

It doesn't matter whether you are coming from a large organisation or not, and I think to personally get people in Townsville together at the table, is that it takes some leadership direction from our local Department of Communities who I think ... haven't been able to show much leadership.

In 2011 the progress made with the Taskforce and CCG had substantially changed this view, at least for those involved in the Taskforce and/or the CCG. This was countered by one agency who considered that integration that was 'artificially' driven and could not be successful and by another that considered that a non-government agency may be better suited than DoC to a high level integration role. Certainly, most considered that the Hub was not the right mechanism, nor was it well equipped to undertake this role.

Another important relationship with government is the relationship with HHOT and who are members of the CCG. These teams have been consistently recognised as providing an important service to homeless persons and were widely welcomed. Service providers commented on how HHOT filled an important gap in mental health services for homeless people in the area for clients presenting with mental health issues while also providing education for homeless service providers in mental health issues. For the period of the research 2008-2011 the findings have been consistent in regard to the relationship between NGOs and government at the service level.

Where government agencies provide a reliable and beneficial service they are valued. There are, however, operational issues related to the size of government departments and the turnover of staff in key forums such as the CCG and Taskforce. These aspects cause difficulties in building relationships, impact negatively on the ability to develop service integration with implications for service delivery:

And I think that because of the problems with the bigger departments would be they send over a different person all the time and you need to have that relationship building time, but every time they come to a meeting they say, oh I'm getting my head around this, and that goes on for six or seven months so effectively nothing is done by the department because each person is getting their head around what has happened.

The role of government agencies in the service system is a balancing act between being seen to lead and being seen to control. One agency succinctly put it 'people like working with them but not for them'.

Relationships with Mainstream Agencies: The Challenge to Fit In

Mainstream agencies have come to form an integral part of the Townsville service system. Specialist homeless providers consistently welcomed the entrance to the system of mainstream providers including Centrelink, QPS, Queensland Corrective Services, Justice, Community Patrol Officers and Queensland Health (outside of HHOT).

Mainstream services have been very active with Centrelink Townsville being the first Centrelink office to develop and implement an outreach program for complex needs clients. The Centrelink outreach team is a member of the CCG and prior to this, had already established relationships with a number of homeless service providers supported by their regular (usually weekly) visits to a number of sites throughout Townsville such as homeless shelters to assist clients with complex needs with their pension eligibility and collection. This outreach service is highly valued with many homeless system members commenting on its importance to their clients. The extent to which Centrelink is linked to the system is evidenced not

only by the qualitative comments of service providers but also in their high level of 'betweenness' identified in the network maps which is not only a product of their CCG membership. This was also a feature of the 2010 findings.

The success of Centrelink and other mainstream agencies such as Queensland Health through the HHOTs and, in recent times, Queensland Corrective Services, Community Patrol and QPS in establishing themselves within the network demonstrates the importance of building trusting relationships through a sharing of interests in client needs and being able to deliver a consistent and reliable service. Community Patrols in parks, for example, were seen as playing an increasingly important role in linking chronic homeless people with needed services. Whereas in the past, homeless people would be incarcerated or moved on, Community Patrols and QPS were now often contacting homeless service agencies informing them of the whereabouts of known individuals. Council workers were also sometimes engaged in this referral activity. These changes have come about through mainstream agencies engaging more in the service system, learning about what services are available and building relationships with service providers.

In some cases changes to institutional arrangements are also necessary such as the relaxing of privacy restrictions. Queensland Corrective Services have been able to engage more readily within the service system through agreements on information sharing within the CCG about the specific client target group. This has meant that a major gap in the service system—prisoner releases—has been able to be addressed.

There remain some barriers for service providers to successfully engage with some larger state government agencies. The reasons for this were three-fold. First, the larger the department the greater the hierarchy with the result that representatives of such agencies at service forums were often not empowered to share information or make decisions on behalf of their organisations. This was also an observation made of large NGOs. Second, there was no consistency in who represented large agencies at the various forums with the result that one on one relationships with representatives were difficult to form. Third, the size

and complexity of large agencies resulted in difficulties in understanding their processes and procedures making it difficult to navigate their systems.

One of the main principles of the Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness is that homelessness is everyone's responsibility. This is a view widely shared by specialist providers and one increasingly being recognised by mainstream services. However, the main finding in regard to mainstream agencies working within the homelessness service system is that the onus for establishing the relationships with service providers, integrating into the system and providing information about clients falls very much on the mainstream service. Mainstream agencies stated that they had to make the first move into the service system and, once that was made, specialist agencies were not always able to 'see where we could come from'. Mainstream agencies reported that they were 'chipping away' or 'tagging on' and that there was a reliance on them to link in with other organisations rather than the other way round. Some held meetings and events seeking to engage specialist services. Queensland Health reported that specialist homeless services were often reluctant to approach them because of a view that 'Queensland Health knows everything' and that some people found that view difficult to overcome with the result that more open and frank discussions were hampered because mainstream agencies, especially large ones, did not want to 'inadvertently step on people's toes and make them think we're superior'. The price paid for this reluctance of specialist homelessness providers to approach larger mainstream agencies is that important, often long-held information about clients is not being shared.

An important relationship that began to emerge in 2011 is the relationship between mainstream agencies working within the homelessness service system. Several are members of the CCG. There does not seem to be a conscious recognition by mainstream agencies that another agency is also a mainstream in that mainstream agencies discussed other mainstream agencies in a non-differentiating way with specialist homeless services. Trusting relationships are beginning to develop between mainstream agencies based on recognition and knowledge of the work that

each does and a sense of being able to rely on other mainstream agencies to deliver.

SUSTAINING INTEGRATION: FACTORS THAT HELP AND HINDER

The qualitative data highlights a number of factors that service providers considered as assisting and hindering the establishment of an effective integrated service delivery system. The main sustaining feature of integrated service delivery continues to be good relationships and individual personalities. A number of other factors were also identified.

Knowledge of the Service System

In 2010, a reason for the increased use of MoUs and other partnership style arrangements was the introduction of a number of new service providers funded under various government initiatives that created a level of misunderstanding around each organisation's roles and responsibilities and the types of services agencies were funded to provide. When asked to provide information about the other services they worked with, all interviewees described a web of inter-organisational relationships that was extremely complex to the point that it was remarkable that providers were capable of articulating it.

Because of the growing complexity of the system, expectations of what each service was meant to deliver increasingly became based on only limited information or misinformation. This was an issue more clearly identified in 2011. When asked why there were failures of other services to deliver on expectations, respondents recognised that part of the problem was that there was insufficient knowledge about each other's services. There was also recognition that this was beginning to be addressed through a combination of agencies increasing both their informal information exchange and the use of formal mechanisms such as the Taskforce, but that government still had a further role to play:

I think the services have now got a better understanding of each other's work ... It's the service system itself, people taking their own initiatives to better understand each service.

I think that's (non-delivery of services) changed a lot ... because through the Taskforce they've actually been looking at what services are funded to do and driven [that] through the coordinator at the CCG ... Now that's just the CCG participants. We've still got a way to go.

Trust and Ownership of Clients

Effective networks are highly reliant on trust. Trust is the foundation of good working relationships and the ability for services to work together to meet client needs. Where there is a lack of trust, services are not prepared to share vital information about clients and thus claim ownership over them in a bid to justify their funding (see funding below). In 2010 trust was being eroded because the complexity of the network was leading to an inability to: (1) keep accountable fellow providers based on knowledge of the services they were meant to provide, (2) a view that some providers were not meeting their service agreement obligations and (3) that those that were not meeting their obligations were not being held accountable by the funding body.

In 2010 service providers were considered to be claiming ownership over clients and 'falling over each other' to address the needs of the park residents with the result that service provision was often uncoordinated and duplicated. The now rejuvenated CCG is, to an extent, addressing these issues through improved information sharing about individual clients. It is certainly the case that the system is now a more integrated one evidenced by both the network maps and the qualitative data, however, CCG members identified that a lack of trust was continuing to result in some agencies continuing to claim ownership over clients:

I think for me the biggest thing is trust and that's missing ... for instance, I was at a CCG meeting ... and I was listening to two services and ... they were bartering over the client. It was interesting to watch it happen because to my mind they still haven't quite grasped what integrated case management or integrated service delivery is.

It's about trust and it is 'it's my client, I'm not sharing.

These issues are closely related to the competitive funding system that requires agencies to compete against each other and therefore prompts a need for agencies to evidence why they should be re-funded. However, issues of trust also relate to poor communication and occasional failures of providers to deliver expected services.

Government Intervention

Government has multiple roles in operating within networks. They act in a strategic capacity, operational capacity and service role. The roles of government agencies are often multi-faceted and complex. Within the Townsville service system government has historically been 'weak' in providing the operational interventions and frameworks needed to support improved service integration while at the service delivery level government agencies have been considered quite favourably.

Previous studies have suggested numerous roles for government to assist in achieving network effectiveness. One such role is for government to be willing and able 'to position itself at the centre of networks and thereby become able to structure actions, communication and knowledge flow'.¹⁴⁰ Evidenced by both the network maps and qualitative data, it has not been until the final round of data collection in August 2011 that government had taken on this central role in Townsville. The current centrality largely relates to government's role in the Taskforce and CCG. Government's focus in the CCG and Taskforce resulted in organisations outside those arenas reporting that they had lost direction and that their former networks were becoming increasingly uncoordinated. It is interesting to note however, that the network maps suggest that some agencies outside the CCG and Taskforce are as central as government, though not as densely connected (refer discussion on the network maps earlier).

The issue for government in regard to centrality is two-fold. Members of the CCG identified that, going forward, government may no longer need to play a central role in its coordination and that such a role

¹⁴⁰ Lovseth, T. (2009). The State and Social Networks. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 32(3), 272-295.

could, once the group was more firmly established, be undertaken by an NGO or rotated among CCG members. On the other hand, government may need to inject more resources in terms of infrastructure and human capital into those organisations that sit outside the Taskforce and CCG. The form and extent of such intervention needs to be carefully weighted so as not to unbalance the level of autonomy enjoyed by those outside the CCG and Taskforce. One such organisation commented on the leadership role now needed:

So yeah, there's no broad stuff happening in terms of the higher level. It all seems to me to be on the ground stuff ... I think it needs to be led by government. They still need to show some direction. They still need to encourage people to come to the table because the only time when it has worked well has been when they've led it. They can back off eventually, but they do need to actually lead it.

The Townsville service system has historically been strong in terms of social and network capital. Government has recently been active in establishing the institutional arrangements needed to coordinate the service system. Housing shortages have, to some extent, been addressed through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan which was considered a great positive for Townsville with a large number of new houses made available. Lack of housing, however, was still considered by all service providers as an ongoing issue. While the Nation Building and Economic Stimulus Package has brought some relief, housing that was both affordable and suitable remained in short supply:

'We need units. National funding is not going to be enough. We are ten years behind. This is just a catch up under the national funding ...lots of services but no houses.

The most critical ongoing challenges facing the sustainability of service integration in Townsville are its capacity in regard to its human resources and the extension of institutional arrangements outside the CCG. In addressing these issues government may need to 'let go' some of its current activities and direct its resources and activities towards other parts of the system.

Joint Planning

The Townsville case study is an exemplar of the effect that joint planning has on the integration of the service system so that it efficiently and effectively addresses client needs. Earlier findings of the Townsville service system evidenced a system under stress—one that was working extremely hard, that was communicating but which was, because of limited participation in strategic and operational level planning, 'spinning on its wheels'. The network maps and qualitative data all evidence improvement in the extent of planning in the Townsville Service System. Much of the strategic planning was previously being undertaken by DoC without any extensive input by service providers resulting in a lack of ownership of those plans by the service providers. The Taskforce has gone some way to involving agencies in the strategic planning process with positive outcomes in regard to ownership of those strategies. Planning remains concentrated, however, in one or two key agencies.

It was at the operational level that the sub-optimal outcomes of a previous failure to joint plan were most evident. Without a workable mechanism to determine and agree on how to operationalise the strategic plans the focus of providers turned to daily crises rather than working together towards the achievement of agreed goals. The institutional and human capital provided by the CCG and Taskforce includes training in case management coordination as well as a coordinator suitably skilled to be able to provide a forum in which the operational mechanisms of the system can begin to be openly and frankly discussed, planned and agreed to. Operational outcomes include, for example, the setting up of processes for the sharing of information previously restricted under privacy rules:

I mean, with the police, we've had some issues we've been able to discuss and work with around problematic clients and so forth. But this is CCG now, a lot of those barriers are all but gone. (IT2, 1)

Ultimately strategic and operational planning needs to flow effectively into service level planning if good outcomes are to be achieved. There are still gaps between the strategic decisions that are made and

how these are ultimately delivered at the service level. One example is the decisions made regarding the type of housing to be provided. One service provider reported how the style of housing was not suited to the anticipated residents with the result that there were a number of incidents on site requiring police attention. The benefit of good operational planning is that, in this case, the CCG has provided the means by which the service provider has been able to connect with the police service to jointly plan an appropriate service response. Good operational planning is therefore able to respond to unavoidable deficiencies in the service system.

Shared planning is still comparatively loose outside the boundaries of the CCG. If the service system is to glean optimal outcomes then those groups outside the CCG need to be provided with the infrastructure support, including training and funding for collaborative efforts, to achieve this.

Funding and Accountability

The competitive funding regime currently in place within the homelessness service sector attracted significant comment. On balance most service providers considered that the current system of competitive funding and how it was administered was a hindrance to service integration. Service integration relies on relationships and trust as the means to bind a network together. Competitive funding was considered to encourage behaviours that were antithetical to the establishment of that needed trust. While the stated position of DoC is that they support funding offers from consortiums, this has not succeeded in overcoming competition between service providers. For example, CCG members noted that members continued to compete for clients and to claim ownership of them as a means to promote their own successes and benefit their future chances of attracting funding. Furthermore, the processes by which funding is determined, the purposes for which it can be used and the irregularity with which organisations are held accountable for direct service delivery outcomes as specified in their service agreements were all considered detrimental to collaborative practice. DoC has mechanisms in place for monitoring service provision. For example, the

Community Capacity and Service Quality (CCSQ) staff are responsible for monitoring compliance against service agreements (e.g. hours of operation, application of eligibility criteria, privacy, management or risk of harm to service users, how agencies work with other service providers, etc). Processes of accountability are therefore in place but there is a perception held by many providers in Townsville that the process is not totally effective. Overall, these views have been consistent over the entire period of research 2008 to 2011 suggesting this as one area that, in the eyes of service providers, has not been significantly addressed.

The issues identified by service providers in relation to funding are extremely complex. The one consistent positive that was identified was that competitive funding, if administered well, had the potential to have a beneficial effect on accountability. A lack of transparency in regard to what service organisations were funded to provide meant, however, that expectations (whether these were based on correct or incorrect assumptions) were often not met. To some extent, improved communication between service providers (particularly within the CCG) has helped address this issue but it remains problematic. Many of the interviewed service providers and government agencies identified the need for 'harsh communication' to bring these discussions about funding and accountability into the open. Some identified the problem that representatives of larger organisations within the CCG were often not aware of the details of their funding arrangements or that representatives were changed leading to a necessity to re-establish relationships. This suggests a need for careful consideration regarding representation in such forums.

Another issue was that there was no guarantee of continuity of services because organisations were being funded on fixed term bases. This meant that, on occasions, service providers exited the service system, new relationships had to be established and understandings about what new providers were funded to provide needed to be established. An important aspect of this same issue was the growing concern by smaller service providers that funding was increasingly being directed towards larger NGOs and

that smaller providers were being ‘squeezed out’. Some smaller providers were scathing of this trend, identifying that larger agencies had the administrative capacity within their organisations to develop strong grant applications but did not have the ‘on-the-ground’ expertise to deliver. There were suggestions too of favouritism where some agencies were being held highly accountable for outcomes from their funding while others appeared to not be held accountable at all resulting in a view of inequity within the service system. It was considered that the integrity of the reports submitted to the funding agency was not sufficiently checked. Some service providers determined therefore that it was not competitive funding per se that was the problem. Rather, there were weaknesses in how organisations were subsequently held accountable resulting in behaviours that were unfavourable for effective service integration and delivery:

Competitive funding is good but often the way it is done is not good because what it does (both State and Federal) is not being used in a healthy way. Accountability can be executed on a legal basis through audits ... not by having a piece of bread and have five dogs jumping for it. People will try to outdo each other by lying ... beautiful applications but they cannot deliver and they know they can't.

The biggest thing for me is around how we fund. How we fund I think is really divisive. We set NGOs up against each other, they have to compete for the same dollar and we don't obligate them to work in partnership with other NGOs ... we don't obligate them to work in partnership [with each other] to achieve outcomes.

There are organisations that are really accountable and really effective ... But there are organisations being funded and not accountable for the work they do, I think that makes it really difficult, something I've really struggled with.

A contributing issue of the impact of competitive funding on relationships is the purpose for which funding can be used. Two issues emerged in regard to this. The first is that, with the exception of those organisations whose main role it is to coordinate activities, such as the Hub, very few service providers

are funded specifically for integrating activities, yet this was a necessity for all providers and an essential part of the smooth operation of the system. Many identified that a large part of their role within their organisations was related to establishing relationships, networking and setting up partnership agreements or MoUs. The unavailability of funding to engage in networking activities often means that smaller agencies have to absent themselves from meetings. Medium and larger agencies, while not specifically funded for such activities, frequently formalised such roles by included networking as part of a person's job description. Despite the considerable time necessarily spent on relationship development and maintenance, it was commented that funding was rarely specifically provided for such activities:

No, no we are not specifically funded [for integration/networking activities], and I think that is a real gap in the services, when the funding formulas are calculated there is actually no consideration to anything other than direct service delivery and it [integration/networking] is such a core component of the role.

The second issue related to use of funding were the tight restrictions placed on what funding could be used for when assisting clients. Several agencies commented that the need to fulfil governmental ‘red tape’ meant that their organisation's performance was measured more by how well they could ‘tick boxes’ rather than genuinely address the needs and wants of clients. These requirements were contradictory to the focus on client centred services because the system assumed what homeless people wanted and these assumptions were often incorrect. This included the fact that the system was not sufficiently flexible to allow for clients who, for example, did not wish to be housed or did not wish to be housed under the conditions imposed. For service agencies it was of concern that not housing a client would be considered by the funding agency as a failure and that such failure may result in not being re-funded. Many agencies noted that they were therefore still needing to make clients fit the system rather than fit the system to the client. This was an issue acknowledged by some within government who recognised the need to consider the

processes as the outcome rather than being assessed on whether all the right boxes were ticked.

Unquestionably, funding and accountability for that funding remains the most divisive issue for service providers.

CONCLUSION

By and large, the Townsville homelessness service system is one that has undergone considerable change over time and much of this change has been positive for service integration. There are many lessons to be learned from the history of the Townsville service system to date. The system continues to be populated by a number of dedicated people who are genuinely concerned with the plight of homeless people and who have forged good working relationships over many years. Most providers are also largely agreed on the underlying causes of homelessness and, whilst there is sometimes disagreement about the best way to address issues, providers are actively working together to help alleviate homelessness.

Our earlier research in 2008 and even still in 2010 identified a service system that was under pressure due to an over-reliance on the good will developed through personal relationships combined with insufficient, appropriate resources being injected to provide assistance. Government has now intervened in meaningful ways to address a key aspect of the service system being the highly visible and overly politicised area of public intoxication. The service system in Townsville still presents a number of challenges including:

- the fragile relationship between government and service providers outside the CCG and Taskforce
- how competitive funding is administered and the contrary behaviours it encourages
- how accountability is assessed
- the role of government
- ongoing leadership
- the immediate future of the Hub and its role and format in the longer term

- genuine inclusion of mainstream services.

There is a widely held view in Townsville that in the past, system designs have been borrowed from other jurisdictions and introduced with little genuine consultation. This, in conjunction with ongoing funding and accountability issues, continues to cause some tension between government and service providers. At the service level, however, MoUs have assisted in creating an environment in which more information can be usefully shared between government and non-government agencies to assist clients. In future, the key will be the extent to which the institutional structures that have been put in place can become self-sustaining and therefore the extent to which government can step back and allow the system to run itself.



CAIRNS CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

A renowned gateway to two of the world's greatest natural attractions, the Cairns region has grown from a relatively quiet post war city to become a vibrant tourist destination, particularly with the opening of the Cairns International Airport in the early 80s. With a population growth of 2.7% it remains above the Queensland average and is one of the fastest growing regional economies outside of South East Queensland.¹⁴¹ Regional population projections expect the Cairns region populace to increase by as much as 50%, reaching as high as 222,640 persons in 2031. Its current population of 164,000¹⁴² is largely concentrated in suburbs surrounding the city, along the Marlin Coast and along the southern suburbs growth corridor (www.cairns-australia.com). However, despite its regional growth Cairns is currently experiencing a higher than average unemployment rate of 9.1% as at the September 2010 quarter as compared to the national rate of 5.1%. This has largely been attributed to the economic effects of the high Australian dollar which has resulted in a decline in tourism and construction.

As a prime tourist destination, Cairns has a highly itinerant population; according to the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data almost 50% of residents had moved within or to the Cairns Regional Council area within the last five years. Cairns' attraction as a destination includes a myriad of visitors including travellers such as backpackers from Brisbane, Rockhampton and other parts of the country—many of whom become displaced and form part of Cairns' homeless population. As one interviewee put it 'a lot of people come up from Brisbane; the train starts here and finishes here'. Cairns' status as a tourist destination affects the community's view on homelessness. Services report that 'tourism makes a focus on hot spots and homeless people are considered an eyesore'; as such the impact of public intoxication and nuisance laws

and community bylaws are significant issues for the area.

In addition to its highly transient population characteristic, Cairns differs from other lifestyle regions, such as the Gold Coast, in that it has a lower proportion of residents in the 65+ age group and a higher percentage of younger residents within the 25-44 age group in particular, higher than the Queensland average. Adding to the lifestyle attractants, the Cairns Regional Council cites affordable living as adding to the region's attractiveness with lower weekly rent, monthly mortgage and median house prices when compared to other major cities nationally. However, while this has positive benefits to attracting people—particularly backpackers—to the region, it has significant negative effects for the homelessness sector which is constantly combating an ongoing shortage of affordable housing: '... it is one of our concerns; that we will never have enough workers or housing.'¹⁴³

Cairns is also the primary administrative and service centre for the Cape York Peninsula which contains 13 remote Aboriginal communities. While Indigenous people account for only 8.9% of the Cairns' total population,¹⁴⁴ support for displaced or homeless Indigenous persons has been the focus of a number of programs and reports during the 1990s and remains a recurring theme with service providers throughout this study. At least one service reported that 94% of their clients were Indigenous. There are several factors driving the move of Indigenous people from remote communities to Cairns. The conditions of remote communities—often reported to have severe social problems including domestic violence, poor living conditions, chronic alcoholism, violence related to substance abuse and overcrowding—can lead to people choosing to leave communities or being 'pushed out' by community members or groups. One participant (IC1, 8) cited that a recent Australian Housing and Urban Research Centre report noted domestic violence issues as being one cause of

¹⁴¹ Cairns Regional Council. (nd). Invest Cairns.

¹⁴² Cairns Regional Council Community Annual Report, 2010

¹⁴³ Please note: interview numbers do not match those that appear on the network maps.

¹⁴⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006

homelessness for Indigenous men as the interviewee put it, it's a case of 'unintended consequences of good intentions'. Alcohol management policies and reforms are also considered to be a contributor for migration to Cairns and a cause of increased homelessness, with people being forced to leave their communities if they choose to drink alcohol. Once in Cairns, displaced Indigenous persons are not always considered 'stranded' but instead choose to sleep rough, commonly camping in public places. The Chinaman Creek camp is a prominent example of this phenomenon in Cairns. The often highly visual nature of Indigenous 'rough sleeping', coupled with the longevity of the locations has created tension within the sector raising the question of whether the use of public spaces by Indigenous people is one of native title or homelessness.

Similar to other centres, the Cairns homelessness population experience the full range of social problems requiring a comprehensive service system; with a persistent cohort exhibiting highly complex and multiple problems which make them difficult to house and assist.

These unique demographic, social and economic factors impact on the service delivery sector and highlight the need for integration.

THE HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM

Cairns has a wide range of homelessness services from street to home programs (facilitating access to housing); crisis housing and hostel accommodation; client driven drop-in services (centred around young people); early intervention services focusing on providing support to prevent homelessness; and a full range of wrap around support services encompassing medical treatment, life skills, counselling and alcohol and substance abuse support. Uniquely, DoC itself operates a direct client service with a two-person street-based team in addition to funding approximately 32 specialist homelessness services.

A number of the specialist homelessness services have operated within the region for a significant period of time. These services tend to be smaller and reportedly establish close relationships with clients and families—sometimes leading to high levels of 'ownership' of core clients. In recent years there have, however, been some newcomers to the region—most notably Anglicare and Mission Australia. This expansion of the service sector in the region has not always been welcomed, with established services reportedly preferring to 'build on existing service' than opening entry to 'bigger players' who have traditionally been mistrusted. In addition to the apparent fracture between older and newer (and often larger and partially for profit) NGOs, historically communication between government and non-government agencies has also been poor, creating friction with key agencies; as one interviewee put it 'historically relationships between the NGO sector and departments hasn't been quite so smooth'.

INTEGRATION MECHANISMS

Similar to other areas, Cairns has a long history of service integration efforts; many of these were ad hoc in their development, arising from practice needs and therefore limited in their scope and impact, while others were time limited sectoral and governmental initiatives. Since the mid-late 90s in particular, there have been a number of more targeted service integration efforts to address specific homelessness issues within Cairns such as the lack of apparent services available for families with children (*Almost nowhere to go*), investigating the viability of appropriate housing for displaced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (*Somewhere to Sit Down Safe 1995, Safer Places with New Opportunities 2003*) and the Cairns Social Housing Sector Cooperative Protocol, which outlined a set of principles and practice guidelines aimed at improving service delivery through the strengthening of cooperative, coordinated and collaborative capacity. Established in 2006, the protocol was the outcome of a project initiated by twelve participating government and non-government organisations. The Cairns Social Housing Viability Project was another earlier initiative developed as a collective mechanism to respond to

local needs, ongoing policy and service changes in the homelessness sector.¹⁴⁵

In addition to these earlier programmatic and policy integration endeavours, there have been numerous informal and formal networks and inter-agency groups/committees working within the community sector as well as across and between levels of government and the community; some of which have provided the impetus for present day arrangements. For example, the SAAP Network and the Regional Manager's Forum (now the Regional Managers Coordination Network) which respectively provided sectoral and inter-governmental fora for discussion and action on localised place-based issues and provided important links to higher levels of decision-making.

Building on these legacy arrangements and the implementation of a suite of newer integration processes arising from the Responding to Homelessness Strategy and other government initiatives, Cairns now has in place an array of formal governance mechanisms to facilitate homelessness services integration. Located under the state level Queensland Homelessness Inter-sectoral Forum are a suite of regional governance entities including the Regional Managers Coordination Network and its sub program the Homelessness Project Group (taskforce) which has various related working groups: CHON, Cairns CCWG and the Coordinated Care for Vulnerable Young People Working Group. Aligned with these and emerging from the Cairns HCAP initiative are the Cairns Homelessness Planning Leadership Group and the Homelessness Implementation Plan Reference Group.

Augmenting these structured, formalised processes is a medley of practitioner driven networks (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Cairns Housing Network, Cairns Youth Services Network, FNQ Housing and Homelessness Area Network and Cairns Alliance of Social Services) as well as programmatic integration initiatives including, for example, the Cairns Homelessness Services Hub and the Bridges case coordination program, which are directed primarily at

the individual client level. Completing the integration pattern are the service-level working agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), which are in place between various agencies, between some agencies and government departments as well as between selective government departments.

The full spectrum of formal integration initiatives is set out in Figure 16, which highlights the multiple-level functioning (strategic, managerial and practitioner) each with their different foci and form.

It is against this complex backdrop of the ongoing challenge to address the wide ranging needs of homeless people and the resulting amplification of service and systems integration processes that this case study has focused its attention.

NETWORK ANALYSIS SUMMARY: MAPPING AND MEASURING INTEGRATION

Unlike the preceding case sites, Cairns has not previously been the subject of a place-based network analysis study. Therefore, this component of the study is limited to contemporary contrasts between the three other case sites and does not provide for longitudinal data comparison, save for some qualitative insights.

OVERALL SYSTEMS MAPS AND METRICS

The SNA examined three acknowledged integration variables: shared information shared resources and shared planning.¹⁴⁶ Figures 17–21 (the network maps) provide visual illustration of the level of connection for each of the variables, with more detailed insights into the levels of connection derived from the network metrics. In total, 34 government and non-government agencies and services were listed as part of the data collected for Cairns; however respondents were encouraged to add

¹⁴⁵ QCOSS Shared and Collaborative Practice Project Case Study—Cairns Social Housing Viability Project Author: Di Swan

¹⁴⁶ Milward, H.B and Provan, K (1998) Measuring Network Structure, Public Administration 76 (2): 387-407

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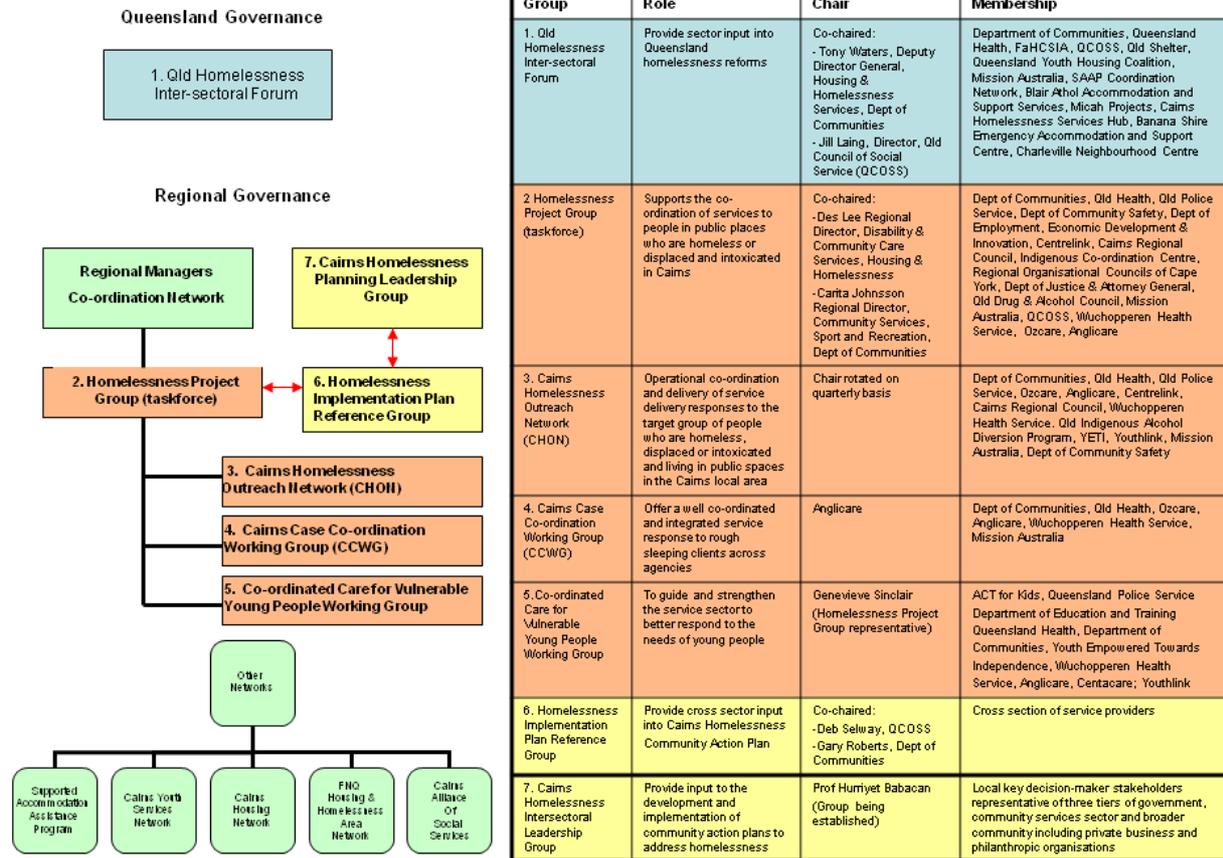


FIGURE 16. FORMAL INTEGRATION INITIATIVES—CAIRNS

to the list provided. The SNA findings are reported below.

Shared Information

The map for the first integration variable, shared information provides a visual indication that the Cairns service system is relatively well connected in terms of their information sharing actions. Figure 17 shows that a small group of services composed of both government and non-government agencies are located at the core of the system with a larger group, predominantly non-profits, occupying the perimeter area. In this core periphery model, a small, tighter cluster of agencies appears to control the flow of information and acts as a hub, which is subsequently linking a broader set of agencies, which are part of a well-connected web.

At 0.2756 the combined density measure for information sharing provided empirical support to the good level of connection demonstrated in Figure 17.¹⁴⁷ The differentiation between the high information sharing density measure (0.1693) and the lower information sharing network (0.1077) is explained by the work of the core set of agencies which are heavily engaged in the formal integration activities brought about by the CCWG and the CHON as compared to the second group which, while still quite well connected, seems to function through other process which do not have the same level of intensity. The presence of a core set of agencies controlling much of the information exchange is indicated by the centralisation measure of 62.72% for the high information network, compared to 40.24% for the low information sharing network. The results highlight a small set of core agencies dominating the flow of

¹⁴⁷ Where 1 = 100% connection

information within the overall service system. The combined average path distance for information sharing (1.314) also suggests a good level of integration both between the core agencies and between the periphery agencies themselves, thus confirming the existence of a core-periphery integration pattern.

Overall, the map and metrics suggest that agencies are involved in a substantial amount of information sharing and thus integration. While the strong information sharing results are positive, the high level of activity around information implies that people and agencies are expending considerable effort exchanging information.

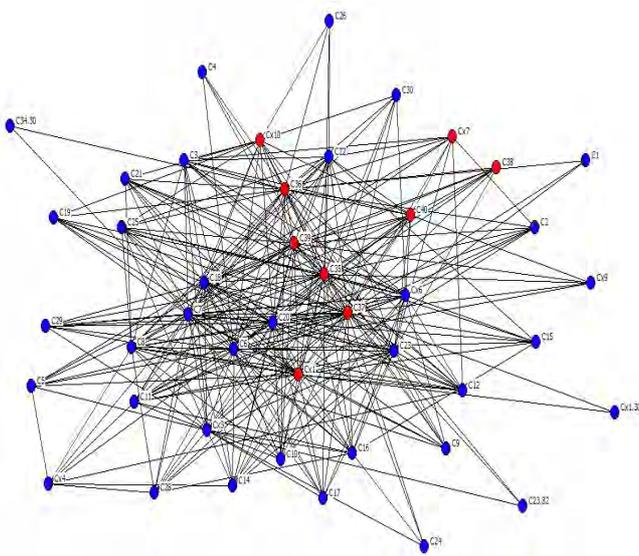


FIGURE 17. SHARED INFORMATION (HIGH)

Shared resources

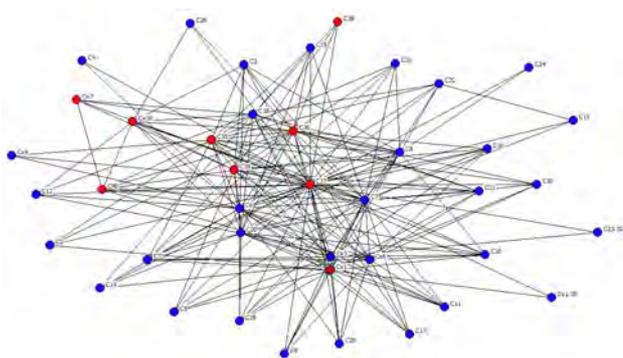


FIGURE 18. SHARED RESOURCES

In contrast to the relatively dense exchanges transpiring around information sharing, the resource sharing activity can be seen to be sparser, particularly on the outer edges of the network. There is some closer clustering around the inner core agencies, suggesting that this group of agencies are more actively engaged in the sharing of resources. Again the network map provides visual indication of the existence of a core/periphery model.

The map for the resource sharing variable has slightly fewer members and a smaller number of connections. The same government and non-government agencies constitute the core agencies at the centre, responsible for the majority of the resource sharing across the network. However, unlike the information sharing networks, the high resource sharing network has the lesser density (0.1006 or about 1 in 10 possible connections). The combined density for the network is 0.2305, indicating that even with the reduced number of network members there is less sharing of resources between the agencies and organisations.

The increase in the combined average path distance to 1.390 indicates that there are fewer avenues in which any of the resources are shared across the network, though it is still possible to get from one point of the network to any other relatively quickly. However, the path distance across the high resource sharing network is considerably higher at 1.763 meaning that the transmission of high value resources between agencies will be harder and take longer than low value resources. This outcome is because low value resources are able to be transacted across both high and low resource networks, whereas high value resources are likely to remain within the high value network.

The degree of centralisation scores are similar to that of the information sharing network; the high resource sharing network stands at 63.7% and the low resource sharing network is 44.8%. These measures are quite high and indicate that the core group of agencies in the Cairns network are shouldering a substantial amount of the burden for the sharing of resources.

Shared Planning

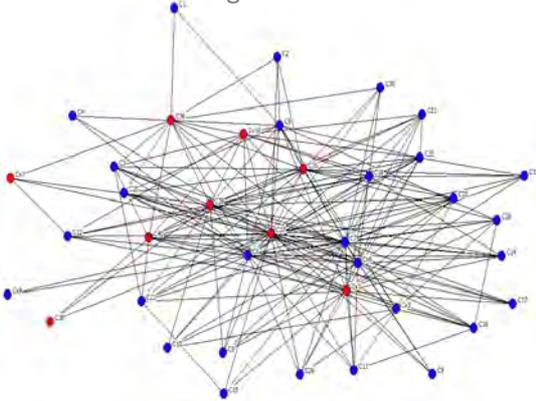


FIGURE 19. SHARED PLANNING

The final integration variable, shared planning, has a network map visually similar to that of the resource sharing network: a solid core surrounded by a sparsely connected series of peripheral agencies, and the same number of network members. The shared planning metrics are also very close to that of the shared resource networks, with similar path distances and densities for the high, low and combined networks. This result indicates that this network has many of the same features, reasonably quick transmission of low intensity shared planning across the networks, but difficulty in sharing higher levels of planning. The overall density of the network (0.2301) is reasonable, with just under 1 connection existing for every 4 possible, thus indicating a moderate degree of coherence toward joint action. The significant difference is a spike in the degree of centralisation of the high shared planning network (73.08%). In this instance the increase has occurred because there is less connection between those agencies on the periphery of the network, which has resulted in the core agencies needing to play a more significant role in the shared planning role.

The relatively high level of activity accumulated around shared planning is likely explained by two factors. First, as with information sharing, planning does not require the same level of commitment as does resource sharing (although it is higher than information sharing). Secondly, the HCAP initiative has been actively engaging organisations (including those conventionally outside of the networks) in joint planning processes.

SUB GOVERNANCE MAPS AND METRICS

Whereas the previous network maps (Figures 17–19) provide an account of the overall level of integration within the Cairns homelessness service system, the following drills down to examine two specific integration initiatives (CCWG and CHON)

Cairns Case Coordination Working Group

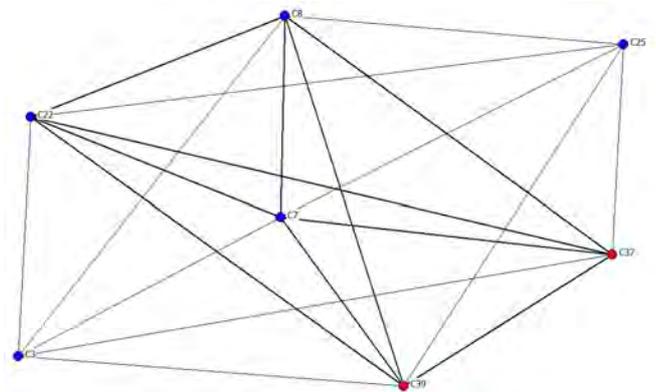


FIGURE 20. CASE COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

The CCWG map shows a small number of agencies, almost all of whom are connected to each other. The reason for this disconnect can be easily explained as two did not participate in the study, and no information about their connection to each other was made available. The overall density is 0.7064, indicating a high level of integration across the different variables. The higher density means that members all know each other and this helps facilitate cohesion and a willingness to work together. The average path length for the shared information, resource sharing and planning for the CCWG is 1.011, meaning any of the agencies can reach every other member agency almost immediately. The degree of centralisation was 6.67% indicating that the CCWG is almost completely decentralised. The degree of centralisation for the high resource sharing (26.67%) and high planning (33.33%) are a result of lower levels of involvement from some agencies. However, these results are still quite low and indicate that the CCWG network is decentralised, even at the higher levels of integration.

Cairns Homelessness Outreach Network

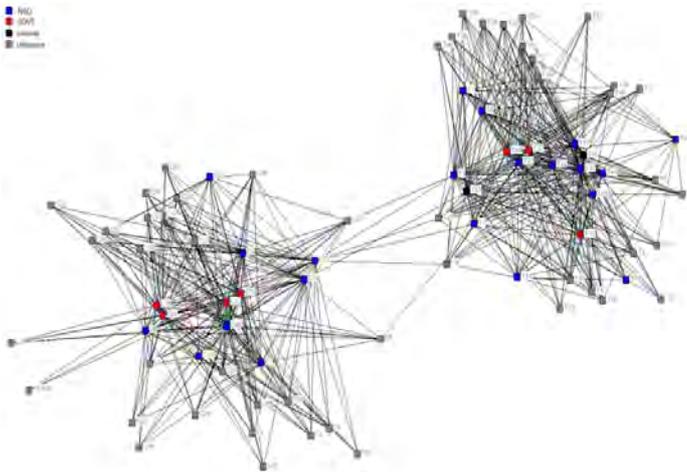


FIGURE 21. CAIRNS HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH NETWORK

The network map for the CHON shows an extremely high level of integration between member agencies across all variables. The density of the network is very high, at an average of 0.6172, indicating a great deal of interaction throughout the network. The average path distance is just 1.136, meaning any information, resources or planning can be disseminated from one point of the network to all others very quickly. The degree of centralisation score of 13.25% indicates an equitable distribution of connections: no one agency is playing a significant role as a central focus for the others. These features of the CHON network are as close to ideal as practicable, given the difficulties in coordinating this number of services in a single network.

The high shared information, resources and planning networks are not quite as cohesively integrated. The average path distance is 1.408 and density is 0.4383 meaning there is no noticeable difference in the number of connections throughout the network and therefore a drop in how quickly high levels of information, resources and planning can be transmitted. The degree of centralisation is 35.86%, which is indicative of the reduced level of integration, but is not high enough to suggest that any of the agencies are central to the network. Though the networks of high shared information, resources and planning are not as efficient as the overall network, it is still demonstrative of a high level of integration in the CHON.

OVERALL METRICS

In terms of overall density, that is how interconnected and coherent the sector is, Cairns presents as a moderately well connected service system, with a slightly higher density result than the Brisbane and Gold Coast but marginally lower than Townsville. It is likely that Cairns' smaller service population and geographic spread accounts for at least some of the greater dispersion across the network as a whole. However, Cairns' agencies reported higher connections for shared planning as compared to shared resources. While it is difficult to determine the reason for this outcome, it could relate to the high levels of strategic level network meetings—accounting for higher shared planning opportunities. However, despite Cairns exhibiting higher connectivity than the other regions, overall the result is still relatively low at 0.3660 (where 1.0 is a fully connected network).

In regards to centrality—how dependent the network is upon a small number of agencies—Cairns reports a relatively high level of overall centrality, however, the CCWG and CHON both display quite decentralised and expansive leadership.

When looking at results for individual respondents, the data reveals that there is an overall spread of agencies engaged in the sharing of information, resources and sharing. Several organisations (both government and non-government) play central roles in the sharing of information through the network. These organisations with higher connections include the Cairns Homelessness Service Hub, Women's Centre, Mission Australia, Youthlink and five government agencies (DoC, Centrelink, QPS, Queensland Health and Queensland Corrective Services). Some of these particular organisations can be identified as more often serving as intermediaries (measured through 'betweenness') and may therefore carry a certain level of influence in the sector. The shared information network has the highest participation rate and the low decentralisation out of the three variables measured, with a substantial proportion of the information being nominated as being at a 'high' level of activity. This finding confirms

previous integration studies (including the 2008 foundation study), which has highlighted the higher propensity for information sharing, partly because it is a basic and fairly low risk activity.¹⁴⁸ However, the finding also identifies a service system under a level of strain where respondent agencies appear to be spending considerable time and effort exchanging information in order to deliver services. These results (Information sharing) are largely mimicked for both shared resources and shared planning with similar key players, although it can be seen that the number of connections and the role as intermediary decreases for both these integration measures, and the importance of the agencies central to the network increases.

The Average Path of Distance results for Cairns indicate that at 1.277 the sector is relatively easy to navigate and therefore quite efficient; meaning that on average network members can obtain the information required in one or two steps. Again, this result is largely explained by the smaller size of the service system; however it does also highlight the high level of interaction occurring within the Cairns system and therefore the potential for over engagement. Further, reliance on a small centralised hub or core of organisations could also be problematic if these agencies leave or the mechanism is disrupted.

A point of interest is that the government departments score highly in both in-degree and out-degree¹⁴⁹ measures, meaning that they are seen as important members of the network by other agencies and they view their own level of integration as being active members engaged in the network.

The 2010 and 2011 SNA metrics display little difference across all variables, suggesting that there has been little change in the system over this period. Overall the network analysis for Cairns largely follows a similar pattern to that found in the previous Closing Gaps and Opening Doors¹⁵⁰ research in that as services move from shared information to shared

planning to shared resources, each of which demand higher levels of commitment, the level of connection decreases.

INVOLVEMENT OF MAINSTREAM SERVICES

A key objective of both the national and state government policy directions and subsequent service initiatives was the increased engagement of mainstream services in the provision of services and support to homeless people, including for example, Centrelink, mental health, child protection and Queensland Corrective Services.¹⁵¹ The network maps demonstrate the presence of several of the mainstream agencies in fairly central locations of the diagrams, indicating that they are core members of each of the networks. More specifically, the application of the in-degree measure (number of ties directed toward a node) highlights the stronger and more central presence of a number of mainstream organisations—DoC, Centrelink, QPS, Queensland Corrective Services and Queensland Health. This finding suggests that mainstream agencies are becoming more involved in the service network and are perceived by other members as having a central role in terms of holding important information, controlling service planning and resource allocations. The clustering of this set of six mainstream government agencies at the higher end of the in-degree measure (i.e. nominated by a large proportion of the respondents) is also be partly explained by their membership in several of the regional governance and coordination groups, for example, the Homelessness Project Group (taskforce), CHON and the CCWG.

Together, the maps and metrics have provided new, previously unavailable insights into the structure and operation of the Cairns Homelessness service system. Taken as a whole the Cairns service system has been revealed to be quite well-connected across all variables; with information sharing the densest activity. Structurally the system exhibits a core-periphery model in which a smaller, core set of agencies are engaged in the higher order exchanges,

¹⁴⁸ Whetton, D.A.(1977). Toward a Contingency Model for Designing Interorganisational Service Delivery Systems *Organisation and Administrative Science* 8: 77-97

¹⁴⁹ In degree counts how many relationships point towards an individual; this provides a simple measure of influence (Freeman, 1979).

¹⁵⁰ Keast et al., 2008 op cit.

¹⁵¹ The Road Home, op cit.

are underpinned by more expansive web of services (still relatively well connected).

The SNA data has also highlighted the important role that the formalised coordination mechanisms have played, particularly in terms of the focusing attention and effort onto narrow issues. Also distilled from the data are the critical and underpinning function of personal and network relationships which provide the foundation or safety-net on which both the more formalised and every-day activities of the system function.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Overall, and as reflected in the SNA data, the Cairns respondents presented a fairly positive view of the integration efforts in place and their impact. The following statements encapsulate the general sense of optimism currently exhibited:

I love where we are now ... There is certainly a lot of work to be done—but it feels like we are moving in the right direction.

I think we do a good job of the jigsaw puzzle.

For some, ‘putting the bits of the service puzzle together’ was facilitated by the layered mix of governance arrangements present in the region. The operation of this layered governance process was explained:

There are networks and they are working together at various levels. So you have got people involved in grass roots level in the trenches, the actual service providers and then you have got the decision makers at the other end. So whatever evolves from the grass roots level heads up to the decision makers who can talk about what role their agency has and what role they can fulfil and how we can support one another. I think if the decision makers continue to listen and make decisions that are in the best interest of community, then things will improve. So I think that works really well.

At the more pragmatic service level there was some agreement that the additional funding arrangements, provided through the Responding to Homelessness Strategy and other government initiatives such as the

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (2009–10 to 2012–13) which led to expanded services, contributed to some of the improvements in integration. For example, the Hub and the aggressive outreach programs conducted by both the government services (HHOT and Centre Link) and the Street to Home Program’ were identified as ‘adding strength to the system’. However, it was the focused and targeted attention to homelessness via the current suit of coordination mechanisms which have made the strongest inroads. The CCWG and the more recent HCAP initiative were both singled out as current good exemplars of integrated action, all be they approach the issue from different levels and foci.

CASE COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

The CCWG was established to bring together the group of services focused on the rough sleeping target group. This entity, which emerged from a community forum was established by DoC with the Cairns Homelessness Services Hub providing the secretariat function. All respondents identified the value of such a targeted and focused approach to addressing the complex set of problems encircling the issue of rough sleeping and the camps (displaced, intoxicated and living in public places). The prioritisation of this group for focused and aggressive intervention was argued to represent a significant transition in the way that homelessness was dealt with in Cairns: whereas before it was just a move on issue—now we are putting real effort and attention to working with this difficult client group’. A client centred approach, coupled with sharing of skills and resources have all been identified as key components of the CCWG:

The client is a client of the group. No one ‘owns’ the client and the agencies work together to solve the issues. We pool our resources and draw on the combination of these to provide the wrap around services necessary for the clients.

The CCWG was beset by some initial difficulties which limited its operation and impact. The conduct of the group, that is how it was managed and facilitated was described as ‘problematic’ (IC3, 3) and ‘tainted by inner politics’ (IC1, 2], thus undermining the ability of participating agencies to work together. There was

also a perception that the target group was ‘... too narrow’ and an associated concern that other groups of clients were ‘missing out’ from the ‘likely benefits’. Along a similar line, at least initially, there was a sense that the specialist nature of the group had set up an ‘elite service set’ which precluded the wider involvement of other workers.

An internal review which introduced operating processes more conducive to joint working, including for example, sharing the chairperson role, which engendered a greater sense of shared responsibility and sharing, helped to alleviate some of these concerns:

They certainly had some problems and for a while there it was not working so well. Towards the end of last year it had a bit of a review and introduced a rotating chair and other procedures to get people to galvanise around the issue and commit: and it is picking up again now.

Coupled with this restructuring was a growing appreciation, if not acceptance, by other groups of the importance of targeted attention to this particularly intractable and costly service cohort. Indeed, there was some discussion both in the interviews and focus groups of the need to develop similar coordination mechanisms to better address the needs of less politically sensitive and highly visible’ groups, such as women and children and young people (Focus Group 1, 2010). In so doing, however, it was also considered that the CCWG model, while effective for rough sleepers, may not directly transfer to population groups with different presenting problems.

Overall, as demonstrated by both the SNA and the qualitative analysis, the CCWG, in its current iteration, is operating well. The SNA metrics indicate that the CCWG has formed a well-connected sub-network in which most of the agencies are actively sharing information, resources and planning with each other efficiently (the average path distance is 1.011), indicating that each agency can contact all the others with little or no problem), and no single agency is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the group (degree of centralisation is 6.67%), indicating an almost perfect distribution of connections throughout the network.

THE CAIRNS HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH NETWORK (CHON)

Cairns Homeless Outreach Network was formed to address issues relating to Indigenous homelessness and housing and to develop strategies to respond to the alcohol and welfare reforms introduced in the Cape York Peninsular communities. The network is made up of all services that deliver services to the Homeless and Rough sleepers of Cairns. This group also provides guidance and advice to the Regional Managers Coordination Network (RMCN), through the Homelessness Project Group (taskforce).

For respondents the role of CHON is about bringing all the people and resources together to bear down on the highly visible yet relatively small target population of rough sleepers. The narrow focus of the target group received some criticism, particularly in relation to what was perceived to be a ‘political agenda’ rather than a ‘service response’. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that although ‘too narrow’ in its scope, the issues to be addressed were ‘big’ and thus requiring concerted action. Several CHON members reflected that participation in this group has extended their understanding of the other member groups and their service boundaries and limitations. ‘I think that everyone knows what each organisation has its focus. This greater understanding and appreciation, it was argued helps to build a sense of community around the issue, rather than the previous siloed and ad hoc approach.

Similar to the CCWG, CHON experienced some engagement difficulties which were identified as disrupting the group’s cohesion. Specifically, it was noted that the needs of some interest groups, in particular the Indigenous outreach workers, were not being adequately addressed in the forum. This resulted in a ‘breakaway’ group (Cairns Aboriginal and Islander Street-based Outreach - CAISO) forming with a focus on culturally appropriate knowledge and skills and some initial tensions in understanding the linkages between the two bodies. Further, there was a level of disengagement within the main CHON membership. It was noted that some agencies had:

... pulled back—they are not intervening as strongly as previously. It's kind of like keeping a watching brief—an eye on things, if you see someone maybe they will connect, but they are not actively trying to influence.

However, as the SNA metrics indicate CHON is now operating at a reasonably high level of integration; the densities for information sharing (0.6484), planning (0.6044) and resource sharing (0.5989) are high and the degree of centralisation is 13.25% indicating that the network is well connected and no individual agency plays a more dominant role. The high sharing networks are much less efficient however: the densities for information sharing (0.5055), planning (0.4359) and resource sharing (0.3736), demonstrate a reduced level of involvement and the degree of centralisation (35.86%) shows a much less equal distribution of connections. Though the latter is not high enough to suggest a strong central component to the CHON, it does indicate a reluctance of the member agencies to commit to higher levels of integration with each other.

HOMELESSNESS COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING (HCAP)

In contrast to the narrow service band of the CCWG and CHON, the HCAP process is seen to provide a mechanism which has brought a wider array of agencies around the table to be involved in discussion and planning to enable the region to better respond to the issue of homelessness. Through media and other mechanisms more than 80 people attended the forum including 'people who wouldn't normally come into contact with the homelessness service sector, but who were doing interesting things that we could learn from' (IC2, 3). From the initial forum a series of fortnightly meetings transpired in which participants worked to generate an agreed plan of action for the region. The HCAP processes are jointly facilitated by government and non-government via a partnership agreement with QCOSS, thus sending an important message of cohesion/integration. HCAP was identified as being successful in capturing a more comprehensive systems wide assessment of the region (FGC2). The benefit of such a systems level perspective is the ability to bring together the full

array of services and programs and thus look at the system from a more holistic or comprehensive vision. Further, several respondents commented that this broader engagement and dialogue involved in the mapping and planning process provided a good opportunity to critically and comprehensively assess the state of the system and make considered and connected decisions on how to go forward. As one government respondent noted, the HCAP process afforded '... a chance to be reflective—to look at where we are and where we want to be and be able to plan for this—on the front foot, not reactive'.

The collegiate nature of the process, rather than using a legal imprimatur to work together, was also identified as a critical element:

It's not binding, we are not going to hold people to it like a legal contract but what we are actually going to do is identify the reasons why it didn't work and how we can actually support each other to make it happen.

Nonetheless, the transparency of HCAP, sitting around the table and signing off on participant commitments was seen as a powerful tool to secure a higher level of accountability than has previously been evident:

They are going to have a piece of paper that you've [agencies] actually going to have to sign off and say that you will support these actions.

It was also described as a forum in which agencies can better communicate the scope and limitations of their services: 'it allows us to clarify what we can and what we can't do'. This clearer articulation of agency roles and boundaries was considered an important element in 'understanding how the bits all fit together' and '... what can/should be expected of services'.

Overall the HCAP, while requiring effort and time, has been widely considered to have galvanised the sector to work toward a common plan of action:

Brought new energy—but took a lot of time and effort! But they were energised because they thought here is our chance to get this plan, to get the core things we are interested in—that are currently in-coherent—together in a coherent way.

The agencies and the NGOs have come together and developed a [Homelessness] Community Action Plan and you have seen a more integrated approach from all agencies.

While acknowledging the positive contribution of the HCAP process, several notes of caution were sounded. First, there was some level of concern that decisions made at the community or regional level of operation would not translate back to the central or head office. On this it was noted:

At the service or regional level I can talk about what my service can do and would be happy to help with but I can't talk about what the [agency] or the greater district or the CEO is going to decide to do, agree with.

Further, it was stated that the new action plan was very expansive in its scope and would therefore require intense commitment and resource input from all agencies to make it work: 'The new action plan—it is very detailed and I think there is going to be a lot to live up to, but if everyone can do their part'.

Following this line, it was also pointed out that for the HCAP to work, agencies will be required to draw from their existing funding base to implement agreed actions. It was suggested that the sense of excitement and coherence surrounding the HCAP may be challenged by the realisation that additional funding will not be accompanying the process. This point was made as follows:

Normally the planning process it is about the allocation of resources—In homelessness, the money has already been spent or allocated. There is not the money and it is about reminding people that this is not about more resources. This is about how we get our service system working better together.

Finally, while most agencies were able to see the real advantages of participating in a broader process, sharing the decision making and planning, a concern was expressed that some, especially more long term agencies may experience a sense of loss of control. This situation is explained:

For many years these agencies had real ownership over the whole agenda at first and that had to be eased away a little bit.'

As one respondent noted this situation called for a '...tricky balancing act' but, it is critical to keep them [older agencies] engaged because they are the '...actual engine room of the section—that keeps it all going—and where the energy really sits'.

Overall, it can be seen that the formalised and focused integration mechanisms have produced a good level of connection, across all variables, and therefore integration. Positive opinions regarding these more structured processes have also been forthcoming from respondents, particularly relating to the information sharing and network development outcomes as evidenced in the following statement:

That sort of stuff is really useful in terms of information sharing and working together ... there is other stuff that pops up, like ... those meetings talking about public space, have led to a separate group being set up to discuss those issues around things like the Coordination Network around Vulnerable Young People.

However, despite the overall positive outcomes from the sub governance mechanisms, several issues were raised as requiring attention. First, there were some concerns raised that the meetings needed to have purpose, and, in particular people were concerned about the length of time it took to discuss issues:

The Forum meets for two hours twice a month, with strategies that are seven pages long. At that meeting the strategies are reviewed, I am not going to a committee that works its way through seven pages ... there is no way we will work through that. It is bureaucracy and it does sneak in.

Another concern raised by a number of respondents was that meetings were often attended by people without the appropriate decision-making power—either through key members delegating responsibility down or by specifically requesting that case workers be involved:

At that more senior taskforce level who are supposed to be tapping into the Directors and the managers, often because those people are

delegating attendance to others ... they are not dealing with the strategic decision makers.

... if you want case workers, you must take into account that they are not decision makers, so when you walk out of a meeting, they are going to have to walk back and talk to their supervisors.

It was argued that delegation or having the wrong level of decision maker erodes the ability of the meetings to make effective and timely decisions and leads to the questioning of member commitment. Member commitment to the 'official' mechanisms was also questioned by several respondents who identified that there were a number of people who attended meetings but demonstrated little intention of participating in the service integration process. One respondent noted that there were really no incentives for coming to the table or consequences for not:

We have some sitting within the integration system while other important actors sit outside of it ... they imply they are involved but nothing occurs with it.

This lack of 'buy in' or 'fence sitting' was attributed, at least partly, to 'personal agendas' or personality issues.

What I find is that for those people who have their own agenda, they couldn't care less, they are just turning up to tick a box ... they sit and then they go off and they have no intention of doing more than that.

Overall, it can be argued that the 'formalised' integration mechanisms introduced into the Cairns region has proven to be quite effective in terms of linking together core agencies; however there are some operational weaknesses around developing appropriate management formats and translating linkages to positive outcomes.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

As well as the structured integration mechanisms a number of programs and service based integration initiatives were identified within the Cairns homelessness services system. Respondents reported positive outcomes from these more client-level programs. The HomeStay service, which involves coordination between Ozcare and Anglicare, was

singled out as a good exemplar of coordination with regular communication and information flows, joint meetings and shared resources (such as staff training). The significance of the resulting 'closer relationships' is apparent in the statement below, which highlights a deeper level of information sharing and engagement:

...so then we made an agreement between agencies that we would always mutually discuss who we nominated up to go into those tenancies...we use facts about the details of the client, but more than that, it is about the type of housing that is available, what we can sustain and can we support it.

The participating agencies and several others noted the increased level of 'working together' as a result of this project. The Hub was also considered to play a central role in linking services and clients and to other services. As one respondent noted: 'The Hub is a key stepping stone to client outcomes'.

In addition to funded coordinative initiatives, respondents pointed to the existence of emergent programs, which are more informally conducted, without a specific funding allocation. The contributions of one these more informal or emergent programs are highlighted:

The Bridges Case Coordination initiative has achieved some strong outcomes with 8-9 successful tenancies and only one failure in the 12 months that it has been operating.

At the direct client service delivery level the introduction of a range of assertive outreach programs, such as HHOT and Centrelink and Street to Home service were identified as linking clients to necessary service and support in the locations in which they are most comfortable. A number of these programs are directed more specifically to Indigenous people, who make up the bulk of the camp/rough sleeping population.¹⁵² It was stressed that it was the client centric focus and the persistence of workers that contributed to the success of the outreach programs... placing the clients at the centre of the work and helping them to transition out of rough

¹⁵² Memmott, P., Long, S., Chahmbers, C., and Spring, F. (2003). Categories of Indigenous 'homeless' people and good practice responses to their needs, Final Report AUURI, Qld.

sleeping [if they want to] (IC2, 5). The value of ‘building working relationships with clients and being in their place’ by the outreach programs was acknowledged as an important boost to service delivery to these often ‘disconnected’ client groups (IC2, 5; IC2, 1). However, there were varied experiences regarding HHOT with some services report with some services reporting only sporadic visits while others stated HHOT visits were ‘very frequent’. Finally, the growing number of outreach programs and therefore outreach workers, identified as including the HHOT, Centrelink, Communities, Parks and Displaced people and Council targeting a fairly small and select client group was thought to be a bit of ‘an overkill’ (IC2, 4). Offering a more critical perspective, at least one respondent argued that outreach services were largely ‘self serving’ as they directed needed funds to mainstream services rather than Indigenous agencies. It was further postulated that outreach was not always the best intervention for Indigenous people, who should be, wherever possible, returned to their communities (IC2, 4; FGC2).

The SNA and qualitative data have highlighted the important role that structured initiatives and programs have made to the integration of the Cairns homelessness services system. However, as is made apparent in the following section these programs and processes are largely secondary to the relationships.

RELATIONSHIPS AS DRIVERS FOR INTEGRATION

Qualitative data have revealed that despite the existence of a range of formalised and structured governance arrangements operating, the majority of service integration happens at the informal network level. These arrangements have been described as the “‘life blood” of the system—what keeps things alive’. The emphasis placed on personal relationships by all participants points to a very strong reliance on maintaining personal relationships in order to facilitate and sustain service integration. Trust, goodwill and respect were key values raised throughout interviews:

Those relationships are probably more important than anything; those relationships have got mutual trust and mutual aspirations.

Face-to-face networking is essential...the personal touch and trust are critical. Trust does not take long to build if you do what you say you will do. Honesty is important.

It’s about individuals and personalities and people getting on with one another.

Offering an alternative perspective one respondent noted that the common commitment of workers to their clients was a key relationship conduit:

I think that what supports a lot of relationships up here is the general amount of client focus we have. Everyone seems to be very, very client focused in this sector. They might not necessarily agree on working from the same framework—but focusing on the clients and really wanting the best for the client can hold it altogether.

Building and maintaining relationships dominated much of the conversation around how services work together and almost all interviewees spoke of some level of information sharing—usually between themselves and other specific organisations. However, it was clear that this was primarily at a service level such as which beds were available or cross referrals as evidenced by the following statements about the value of personal meetings and connections:

So there is more integration there in regards to the knowledge that there are vacancies and what is available.

...we get the run off of the shared information, for example where there might be shared beds in the system.

Relationships also provided the impetus for service program boundaries to be stretched to enable a more effective outcome for the client. ‘We all have restrictions and boundaries but my philosophy is that I will stretch where I can and be flexible and innovative’. The use of relationships to bridge organisational boundaries was a reported key strategy for mainstream services and newer agencies looking to enter the existing system. One mainstream agency

respondent reflected on the process: ‘... we just took it step by step and slowly eased our way in over time’. Time and the need to ‘prove’ yourself and your actions were frequently mentioned entry tactics employed by new community and government agencies.

Thus, for many respondents relationships were perceived in quite instrumental terms, for example, as the ‘stepping stones to client outcomes.’ Despite the issues raised, there was a definite recognition by some services that there is a need to operate at a level higher than simply sharing information about which beds were available. While some respondents aligned the process of information sharing as being ‘collaborative’, others were much more cognisant of the extended effort and commitment required of genuine collaboration. For these workers, collaboration was evidenced by a higher order emphasis on relationship building; such that it resulted in changes in the way they worked together. Agencies reported activity working to build capacity across agencies and systems through informal agreements and the use of potential funding, for example:

...you guys can have two workers, we have one, now if money comes in we get a third and you get two thirds, that sort of stuff.

We have had some key people in this who have pulled in a lot of knowledge and skill and practice frameworks that the sector hasn’t had before.

This capacity building role also extends outside Cairns to state-wide networks with one service reporting to have established a relationship with Brisbane in order to ‘dovetail capacity building’ around specific issues. It was suggested however, that while relationship building was critical to their work, it was often not articulated as a legitimate work role. That is, it was considered almost an ‘add on’ something that was not officially counted in outcomes or factored into budgets. Several respondents suggested that relationship building and maintaining networks needed to be a legitimised role:

Maintain [the] networking function; make sure this is a legitimised role. This is all about being a ‘meeting tart’. It has a loose feel about it but it is very valuable.

A large number of interviewees spoke of better communication across the sector, including with government, as being a positive outcome of recent integration efforts. This also extended to improved communication across traditional government silos.

MECHANISMS TO SUSTAIN INTEGRATION

Recognising resource intensities involved in maintaining relationships and networks and particularly that, maintaining relationships was a ‘face to face’ task, the volume of work and time involved in this process was a frequently identified issue:

We’ve got a few networks running—I am supposed to be on the working committee, steering committee—Some days I have three or four meetings ... Then there is the CCWG, the CHON, there is the Homelessness network, then there is the KCO, so there is five just there let alone anything I do within [own organisation].

As well as the time away from direct service delivery, the amount of time needed to build a sufficient strength of relationship to be trusted and begin to work well together was noted:

It is a process that takes time—it takes you a good year or more to get your networks and then you have got to work on those in terms of—sometimes they are personality driven and sometimes—it is hard for NGO members to see past the fact that you are government.

The dilemma caused by the trade-off between relationship building and actually doing the work was frequently mentioned. For some it was almost like a double edged sword:

How much networking can you do like that because it can take away from what is happening on the ground.

The need to invest heavily in maintaining relationships through attending network meetings was a particular concern for smaller agencies, who noted that they lacked the ‘spare capacity’ available to larger organisations to direct to relationship building and maintaining, yet were cognisant that attending network meetings and inter-agency liaison was critical

to securing good outcomes for their clients. On this it was noted:

You mostly see the bigger agencies there [at network meetings] and some of the little pocket agencies don't get to them.

In response to these issues many respondents are looking to be more strategic with their time and effort. Organisations spoke of strategic service integration is a necessary element to the sector going forward. That is, being mindful of which the most useful meetings to attend are and what roles to take on to ensure that outcomes arise:

We think it is much more effective, we have tripled our numbers in the last 18 months, there has been such a demand that we can't cope, so we need strategic links of getting agencies in here to take kids away, to work with them and support those needs.

The need to be more considered and strategic in their relationship efforts, working out who should be involved and to what extent, was also extended to the system level:

We have talked a lot, around the failure to engage with some state wide organisations...we are going to do some facilitation around our stuff up here...we don't do enough on a state-wide systemic basis.

Although acknowledging the value of relationships respondents expressed concern at the capacity of the individual workers and the service system in general to maintain the high emphasis placed on interpersonal relations. There were others however who see the strength in formalising relationships, recognising the weakness of having a strong reliance on personal relationships and the risk of that person moving.

To alleviate some of the time and work pressure caused by this reliance on relationships to link people up several groups have also turned to more formalised linking mechanisms. The MoU was frequently identified as one such integration tool. The MoU, which does not entail a legal commitment, was presented as a slightly more formal arrangement than the 'gentleman's agreement'. For some respondents the act of writing down the commitment to work

together was a way of overcoming the need to continually re-negotiate 'informal arrangements' when staff moved on:

The good thing is that Auscare and Anglicare now work closer than ever before in achieving results for clients.

As one respondent noted 'MoUs—government to government' are a common feature of the sector (IC2, 2). However, the top down orientation of these mechanisms, for government and larger agencies, meant that they often had to be renegotiated at the ground or practice level:

They [MoUs] need to be fleshed out at a regional level how it would actually happen in practice —we have still got to sit down and see what that really means —making those things living documents.

Similarly, for community sector organisations MoUs provide a way of institutionalising existing relationships into the norms of their everyday work practice. However, there was some trepidation expressed about the potential for MoUs to become bureaucratic and 'getting bogged down' in red tape. Also there was a questioning of the ability to genuinely replace relationships or embed relationships institutionally. Coupled with this was a related concern that MoUs cannot really replace relationships and that the sector and agencies may lose their relational capacity.

The need for people, dedicated positions and organisations to undertake coordination or connecting functions, linking and leveraging people and resources, was also indicated as an important contributor to sustained integrative action. In particular, the role of the network driver was frequently articulated as central to both bringing people together and managing the interactions to secure outcomes. The driving function was explained thus: 'Someone taking up the reins and driving the group to stay on track and met our purpose'. The QCOSS NGO HCAP worker was offered up as an example of one such network driver.

The existence of formalised, structured vertical integration mechanisms—layered from the top down to practitioner level operation—were seen by some

respondents as an important way to build some coherency into the system as well as providing a level of sustainability. The interview data also highlighted the important role of sectoral leadership in driving integration by DoC, particularly in terms of funding regimes which pushed agencies to work together. The injection of support funding and clear direction was also seen as having a positive effect:

...now with considerable pressure to work in a more collaborative way with non-government, we are seeing good stuff. Like a lot of good communication between key people.

However, the downside is the tension funding arrangements and service roles can create between NGOs, changing the interaction dynamic:

...there has been an organisation whose service agreements identify that they have a coordination role in the sector ... instantly that creates an uneven playing field so you then get an NGO whose perception is that there are other NGOs meant to try and tell them to [sic] their business.

Clearly the Cairns system has in place a number of useful mechanisms and strategies to create and sustain their integration efforts. However, as the statement above suggests, sometimes good intentions can have a negative impact and become barriers.

BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

Despite the level of service integration evident in the Cairns system and the examples of successful integration practices, interviewees spoke at length of significant personal, organisational and systemic barriers limiting their integration efforts. In particular, a number of participants perceived there to be players within the sector to be driven by 'personal agendas' and who sit outside the integration system and 'imply they are involved but nothing occurs with it'.

As a further barrier, respondents pointed to the historical 'ownership' of clients and an unwillingness to let go of resources, coupled with a prevailing attitude of 'we can do everything' as opposed to accepting that there are other services that can do it better. As one participant put it: '... the perception is that we can meet all their needs, or we can do the job

better than they [other agencies] can, rather than recognising, that each one will bring an individual skill set. The negative effects of 'ownership of clients, ownership of the sector' were raised by both government and non-government organisations alike:

From my time in the sector I can see a large part of the sector where people have been in it for a long period of time, I can see ownership and I see that as a problem; ownership over core clients.

Related to the client ownership issue, many respondents identified a lack of willingness to share information, or the existence of old systems and practices that prevent this from occurring:

... people have confidentiality rights and all that stuff. I agree they do, but in some sense we need to get through some of those fears about confidentiality and blocking people out, as long as there are mechanisms in place, the thought that we own somebody and need to be careful who we share information with sometimes that stuff can be detrimental).

Issues of privacy hindering the sharing of information were also extended to government departments:

Rules and regulations of individual organisations that exist between departments can hinder efficient client outcomes such as shared medical information.

One respondent went as far as to state that some well-established Cairns organisations were reluctant to share their knowledge:

I can see these organisations have been going a long time, if they worked with people that haven't [been in system long] there would be lots to be learnt. I am not saying get rid of them, I am saying their knowledge needs to be used, shared, or they need to give their knowledge in a better way. They want it for themselves.

Service specialisation, particularly in relation to the cultural requirements necessary for working with Indigenous clients were identified by several respondents as preventing provision of services to client groups. Such specialisation it was suggested '... gets in the way of them working with other agencies,

because the other agencies are not seen as having the right amount of Indigenous staff or might not be seen to be culturally competent'. Conversely, there was an equally strong belief expressed in the need to respond to clients in the most appropriate manner; including culturally sensitive and age appropriate interventions. On this point specialist Indigenous service providers stressed that while there was agreement about the nature of the problem, there was also a departure on how the issues could/should best be resolved (IC2, 10; IC2, 4; FGC2). There was consensus, however, that such specialisation brought with it the challenge of how best to link in with other services, while maintaining some autonomy (IC2, 10).

Another frequently identified factor perceived as limiting the ability of the sector to work better together centred on the different levels of training and experience held by service providers. It was acknowledged that workers were often well aware of the needs of homeless people, but often lacked the training to help them realise these needs. The need for consistency in approach was most frequently identified in relation to case management and case coordination issues:

There are various degrees of professionalism within this sector. Case management is an example—everyone has a different understanding around case management and this can be frustrating and makes it hard to work on same page.

There is an issue around the skills base of the homelessness service system. Obviously there are some very experienced people but at the same time there is not a common language or practice mode.

A number of respondents spoke strongly on the need for joint training, particularly around shared principles and practices for case management and case coordination. This, it was argued, would help to overcome some of the boundaries put up regarding specialisation, information sharing and help to establish a common practice framework with workers '... all on the same page'. For several respondents, on-the-job training, particularly the experience of watching 'good practitioners' and participating in mentoring processes within the networks, was considered to be highly beneficial to integrative

outcomes. Importantly, this modelling was argued to provide the sort of integrative skills and understandings that are not often formally taught:

I learnt a lot by watching different people operate; how they managed themselves and how they connected.

Mentoring and on the job training aside, there was wide consensus that a lack of training and different professions and discipline orientations reduced the capacity of workers to identify client needs and work together to secure housing options. Some respondents pointed to the ongoing issue of failure to share information. However, it was acknowledged that most agencies had moved beyond this and particularly the specialist homelessness services are probably on the same page. Although acknowledging the progress made toward integrative practice, several respondents nonetheless identified, that still missing was an embedded 'culture of working together' within the sector:

I know from discussions with people in government that there is still a real culture of bureaucracy maintaining, rather than looking.

The lack of shared culture and agreed practice models were presented by several respondents as contributing to what was described as an ad hoc, rather than concerted approach to integration.

For many respondents the amplification of competitive tendering funding regimes has undermined the ability and willingness of agencies to work together. Exacerbating these tensions is a perceived lack of transparency of the services agencies are funded to deliver. For some, however, output based funding and competition presented as a way to increase the transparency process.

At a more institutional level, there were calls for stronger leadership and direction regarding the overall sector and its future. In particular, though there was a demand for greater coherency and consistency in the policy direction set and its relationship to the actual conditions on the ground. This view was most vehemently argued in relation to the policy–housing stock disconnect:

There needs to be a commitment to housing—it is one thing to make policies ... we are going to halve homelessness and you roll out money and you give it to these services, but there needs to be commitment and it needs to come from the top.

We're waiting for housing all the time, why roll out a homelessness program if there is no housing?

The complexity of the system, the ongoing changes in policy and funding arrangements and streams were also presented as perennial barriers to achieving integration. It was argued that constant changes made it difficult to understand and navigate the system and this prevented some agencies, especially the newer or smaller ones, from fully engaging in program opportunities or integration efforts.

Finally, a lack of innovative or critical thinking has been promoted as a barrier for service integration. It was suggested that there was a tendency for agencies to get locked into their own way of operating without looking at the bigger picture, and being willing to adjust their actions to create something better. As one respondent lamented:

There is no out of the box thinking—there is no challenging what we do and how we do it.

This is not to say that there was no evidence of innovation in service delivery or organisational responses. Indeed, there were several good examples presented. Notably these exemplars were much more evident at the client or program level than the system or organisational level. As with the 2008 study, therefore, Cairns workers and agencies exhibited a high level of bricolage innovation: that is, 'making do with what you have' and being able to reconfigure existing resources, knowledge, practical experience and relationships to generate an 'on the run' outcome.¹⁵³ While this is clearly beneficial to clients in the short term, over time the continued need to be 'creative' and opportunistic can be problematic for workers in terms of their ability to sustain such action, particularly when it is relied upon as a replacement for additional funding.

While not specifically designated as a barrier, the entrenched and intergenerational nature of the homelessness problem, especially in relation to some Indigenous groups, was frequently identified as impacting on the ability of agencies and the sector to 'crack through and make useful contributions' to the wellbeing of their clients. The endemic nature of the camp scene was aptly described as such:

It's too hard, basically it is pick people up, take to Diversionary Centre and they are back out the next morning. I have been arresting this man for 20 years.

It was argued that the seeming hopelessness and repetition of the situation is distressing and leads to fatigue and burn out of workers regularly exposed to this situation (IC2, 3; IC1, 1).

GAPS

Interviewees and focus group members identified a number of gaps within the service system which presented as barriers to effective service delivery and which hampered integration. The absence of housing was identified by nearly all respondents as a core limitation to their work. The most frequently articulated gap is the lack of affordable and available housing: 'we are waiting for housing stock all the time'. The situation has been exacerbated by the closure of several long standing supported accommodation venues, such as half ways houses and the transfer of other boarding facilities to tourism applications.

It was regularly argued that the lack of housing stock, left workers with 'very few options' (IC1, 2), therefore limiting their ability to assist clients. The lack of housing was stated to have huge impact on people who have short or long term needs and also those with health problems: 'We continuously get really sick people from the Cape communities who are on dialysis or have other health care needs, who are not housed'.

More specifically, respondents stressed that there was a need for a range of housing options located in appropriate areas to facilitate successful transition from homelessness. This was particularly noted by service providers working with Indigenous people who

¹⁵³ Levi-Struass, C. (1962). *The Savage Mind*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago: IL.; Baker, T., Minder, A., and Easley, D. 2003. *Improvising Firms Bricolage: Account Giving and Improvisational Competency in the Founding Process* *Research Policy* 32 (2): 329-276

commented that the common concept of ‘house’ being a permanent, usually suburban, construction housing a nuclear family was very much a white, middle class construct that was not a good match to Indigenous people’s needs. One respondent noted that the differences between Indigenous people’s expectations of a ‘house’ and European expectations of nuclear families co-located within a single dwelling meant that Indigenous people were housed inappropriately for their culture and way of life. This often led to the situation where ‘two [Indigenous] people take up a tenancy and six months later five are evicted’:

Before you can go into housing, you need to look at how they [Indigenous people] live in their community, which is suitable for that setting but then they come to Cairns and live in public or private residential properties ... they don’t have flexibility of choosing how they live.

Similarly, housing young people in dispersed suburban houses was also identified as problematic:

Or we expect them to work in adult models, i.e. in a little unit in the middle of the suburbs by themselves and not expect to have their mates around. It’s not natural for a 15 year old to live by themselves in the suburbs. Many adults don’t want to live by themselves in a unit that’s fairly isolated, so I think that’s particularly an issue as well in terms of placing people in things that are actually going to work for them.

As well as impacting directly on clients, the lack of housing was also identified as placing an additional strain on workers because they had to ‘... constantly do the rounds looking for accommodation, that wasn’t there having to wheel and deal and generally wear themselves out’.

In addition to housing stock, respondents also pointed to the dearth of support services available to people in Cairns. Mental Health services, in particular, were singled out as being ‘missing from this service system as compared to other larger centres’. While acknowledging the important and valuable role played by the Mental Health Outreach workers at the point of contact for initial assistance, it was stressed that

accessing specialist mental health treatment was difficult. As one respondent noted:

‘We are still struggling with the mental health system and what is available for our clients and as you get further north—it gets harder and harder.

It was aptly pointed out that the lack of specialist mental health facilities and services was, not so much an integration problem, but rather a complete absence of service to people in North Queensland. This situation was described as a ‘... terrible position to be in for both service providers and service recipients’.

Similarly, delays in re-establishing closed programs have also been presented as barrier to integration between agencies. This situation primarily relates to the additional strain and stress caused by workers having to identify alternative arrangements and deal with despondent clients:

The two year delay in filling the [XXX] service has actually been corrosive—it introduces a sense of fatigue.

It was argued that having to compete for client services and spend valuable time searching out alternatives makes it difficult for people to push through problems and look for joint or innovative solutions.

Collectively the information presented thus far points to a service system with a relatively good level of integration, supported by a suite of effective mechanisms and processes linking the various elements together. However, as noted above there are a range of gaps and barriers which continue to work against integration.

IDEAL INTEGRATION MODEL

Overall there was consensus that, while ‘not perfect’ the current structure of the homelessness service system and its integration processes were ‘functional’ and ‘mostly workable’: As one respondent noted:

The system mostly works; it just needs a little tweaking—adding in some of the missing bits to round it out.

Most respondents had suggestions for ways on which this ‘tweaking’ could occur to increase service and integration effectiveness. Not surprisingly many of these centred on addressing the service gaps and support gaps identified above. In this regard respondents primarily called for more specialist medical and mental health services, which are currently not available in this region as well as the stronger engagement of key mainstream agencies such as Child Safety and Education.

At a more structural level, frequently mooted was an extension of the CCWG process beyond the narrower focus of rough sleepers to other client groups, for example, women and children or young people. In so doing, respondents were not advocating a direct replication of the CCWG model, but rather calling for alternative processes that brought the same level of focused attention to the group. This notion of focused attention, coupled with a client centred approach, was widely considered to be a core principle of good service and integration practice.

Continuing the client centred theme, several people presented the need for a central building ‘... where the NGOs and government sector can all come together—like an extended hub—with doctors’. This, it was argued, would help to link services better together and provide a more central location for clients—thus integrating both elements.

It was interesting that, when pressed to articulate a structure for an ‘ideal integrated service system model’, the most commonly described centred on the tight coupling or clustering of effort around individual clients or specific client groups, with loose links to relevant but not always essential services:

I certainly don't see the need for constant contact. For me it is more about constant awareness of what is going on and just back out and do some of the work we need to do as an organisation or program.

In this context, several respondents spoke of the important role of ‘connectors’ both from government and the not-for-profit sector in linking these dispersed clusters of activity together and into the broader system. A key part of this ‘connector’ role is the process of bringing all the actors to the table and

facilitating the connections via greater sharing of knowledge about the agencies themselves and their clients: ‘It’s like a marriage you need to know what you are committing to and you need to know what the substance of the relationship is’.

For others, especially government respondents, the connector role, while important, was secondary to the need for more formalised and structured arrangements such as a ‘lead agency’ role. This was described as:

[an agency] who takes the bull by the horns and provides direction for all these other agencies, not necessarily under the one banner, but there has got to be some type of lead agency that has set objectives and achievable outcomes.

A desire for a locally derived service system based on reflection and planning was commonly expressed. Along a similar line, the need to consider the operating context of the service system and its history in the design of service initiatives and integration processes was identified as an important foundation to the construction of an effective system. This point was clearly articulated in the following statement which stressed that the construction of an ideal service system was not imposed but rather ‘... designed around what we understand our local context looks like. There are obviously other models that they have down south that look interesting, but they don’t always translate to the regions’. The message here is that some broader regional assessment should occur before successful program ideas are transplanted and further, that government should be cognisant of the potential to ‘disrupt existing service relationship dynamics’ if such assessment does not occur in a transparent and collective manner. Building on this theme, another set of respondents stressed that an ideal service system should provide mechanisms to strengthen or rebuild the often poor, historical relationships between the government and non-government sectors:

I think that government and non government stuff needs to be worked on a lot more.

More specifically, these agencies were seeking mechanisms which facilitated genuine partnerships between government and non-government agencies and which had as their basis information asymmetry, shared power and decision making.

CONCLUSION

The case study data has found the Cairns service system to display a moderate overall level of integration across all three variables, with information sharing the most interconnected. The integration pattern is characterised by a core-periphery model in which a small core of agencies undertake the majority of the exchanges within the system, particularly the higher value transactions. There is also a noticeable decrease in the level of integration as the focus of connection shifts from information sharing to shared planning and resources sharing, both of which require higher levels of involvement and commitment. When aligned against the Keast et al.¹⁵⁴ 3Cs model, Cairns can be described as exhibiting mostly cooperative actions, with coordination occurring around mechanisms such as MoUs as well as the formalised structures linking upwards to regional, state and national initiatives (e.g. CHON and CCWG), and, finally with pockets of collaboration leading to changed service models. As a consequence of this of integration processes the sector has reportedly seen a marked improvement in communication between agencies and government departments, and a growing commitment to the sector working as a whole to address issues and leverage opportunities to benefit clients.

In achieving its level of integration Cairns is drawing on significant levels of social and network capital. An over-reliance on bonding social capital (interpersonal relations) and bridging social capital (network relations) to provide necessary information, resources and support is highly resource intensive, and can limit the need to adopt a more systemic approach to the sectoral challenges. Outcomes are also hampered by underdeveloped human and infrastructure capitals.

Despite this, the sector has reportedly 'come a long way' and is progressing from the resource intense reliance on personal relationships through predominantly cooperative integration at the network level to more formal coordinative approaches through the sharing of resources and higher level information. However, there are concerns by a number of agencies that there are organisations that sit outside of the integration framework; a belief that while they may attend sector meetings, these players have no real interest in integrating and in some cases actively withhold knowledge from the sector. In addition to a perception of some players' unwillingness to integrate, there is also a general mistrust for newer and often larger players that have entered the Cairns homelessness sector. Adding to this are the complex problems posed in addressing specific Indigenous homelessness and displacement issues such as use of public space, culturally appropriate housing options and the need for more work to be done around Indigenous youth in particular.

¹⁵⁴ Keast et al., 2007 op cit.



HOMELESSNESS SERVICE INTEGRATION: ROUND 2, 2011

Interview Questions

This research examines the processes, service system consequences and policy directions for resolving homelessness. The research project is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and is looking at how service providers work together and share information and resources to address homelessness. In December 2008 the Australian Government released the White Paper *'The Road Home'*. It calls on all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector and the community to join together to reduce homelessness. A needed key reform identified in the report was greater integration of specialist homelessness services with related mainstream services including housing, education, police, health and welfare (The Road Home, 2008 p.39). This research examines whether greater integration of all stakeholders has occurred to work together to reduce homelessness, whether there has been greater integration of homelessness services with mainstream services and if so, what are homelessness service implications and outcomes of integration.

In 2008, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the Queensland Department of Communities undertook an initial evaluation of integrated homelessness services. The current research seeks to provide a longer term view of integration and how it has changed over time since this previous evaluation, and in response to the initiatives implemented under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).

A team comprising of researchers from QUT, the University of Newcastle, Southern Cross University and representatives from the Queensland Department of Communities under the leadership of Associate Professor Robyn Keast is undertaking this longitudinal study.

The first round of interviews and focus groups for this project was undertaken during September to December 2010. This second round of interviews, focus groups and surveys will build on this previous information and findings, examining any changes and improvements in service integration since that time. As with the first study, this follow-up evaluation adopts a Place-Based Network Analysis and Case Study approach. This evaluation will provide information on the level of integration achieved within and across homelessness programs, gain insights into the integration models and practices adopted and how these aspects have changed over time.

To understand participants' thoughts on integration, this interview consists of seven questions and will take approximately half an hour.

A focus group has been scheduled for each case site and will include a short presentation on the findings from the previous data collection phase. During this presentation participants will have the opportunity to comment on the findings and offer additional insights. We will also ask you to complete a short questionnaire. It is envisaged that the second round of data collection will be completed in August 2011, with the final report submitted to FaHCSIA in late September 2011.

Further information

If you have any questions regarding this project please contact:

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 0404 032 182

Round 2 — Homelessness Services Integration

1. What recent changes have most affected integration at the (1) agency or (2) service system level relating to homelessness service provision?

What has worked? Why?

What has not worked? Why?

2. How does your organisation work with mainstream services to address homelessness?

For mainstream services — How does your organisation work with other services to address homelessness?

Prompt: How well do these services work with you? Please give an example to illustrate this? What is being done to bring mainstream services into the local homelessness service system? Are there any barriers to working with mainstream services?

3. What things are most important to (1) you and (2) your organisation in promoting integrated service delivery? What mechanisms are required to support or maintain your involvement in working with other service providers and local networks to resolve homelessness?

- 4. Sometimes agencies are not always able to deliver expected services. Please indicate what local barriers might impact on homelessness services provision and integration.

Prompts: inappropriate referral, gaps in services, other commitments, not funded

Please indicate how your agency responds when others in the network do not deliver on homelessness services expectations?

- 5. How did the recent floods/cyclone affect your organisation's involvement in working with other services to address local needs and reduce homelessness?

- 6. What do you think the ideal service system structure for this area would look like?

- 7. Do you have any final comments about integration of services to address homelessness?

Thank you for your cooperation



About the research project: Round 2

NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH

Understanding Homelessness Service Integration: Place-based Network Analysis

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this research project is to gain a greater understanding of how the homelessness service system works. The project examines how service providers work together and share information and resources to reduce homelessness. This research seeks your views on how integration occurs between different service providers and with government agencies to meet clients' needs, what resources are required to do this, where you think clients may be falling through the gaps and what needs to happen to fix this.

We are now in the second stage of data collection.

The project has been funded by the Commonwealth Government (FaHCSIA) under the National Homelessness Research Strategy. The Department of Communities is a partner on the research project.

The Researchers

The project is being led by Associate Professor Robyn Keast from the Queensland University of Technology in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, Southern Cross University and the Queensland Department of Communities. Robyn has a long history of work and research in the Queensland social services sector, especially in North Queensland. In Cairns and Townsville, Robyn will be assisted by Dr Jenny Waterhouse from the University of Newcastle.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT

It is important that research is grounded in the experiences of stakeholders working across the homelessness sector. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time. There are no consequences if you choose not to be involved. All information provided to the researchers will remain confidential and will only be used for the purposes of the research. The research involves the following activities in which your participation will be greatly appreciated:

Focus Group

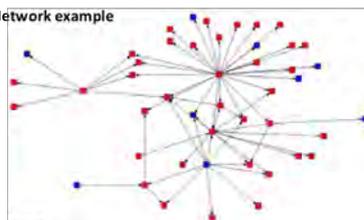
The research team will conduct focus groups in four locations: Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. These focus groups should take about 45 minutes to an hour and will be conducted as a discussion directed by a set of questions, such as:

- What changes have occurred to the service system since our previous visit in Sept–Dec last year?
- How are mainstream services (police, education, health) involved in addressing homelessness?
- How did the recent flood/cyclone affect your homelessness service system?
- What do you consider are the most important elements of a sustainable, integrated service system?

Questionnaires

Focus group participants will also be asked to complete a questionnaire. This will take about 30 minutes of your time. The information from the questionnaire will provide the empirical basis for our understanding of how services link up. We will also produce visual 'maps' of the service system. An example of this is provided below (Figure 1). These maps can be used by the sector to understand how it is working and where the system might need some adjustments and additional support.

Figure 1. Network example



Interviews

Finally, we will ask some participants to take part in an interview. This is to tap into the knowledge of key and experienced service providers and gain a deeper understanding of how the system works, the impact of various changes over time and suggestions for improvement.

WHY YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS IMPORTANT

Integration of service provision is an essential part of assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Integration assists by closing gaps through which homeless people may fall and not receive the services they need. The information and insights generated from your participation will help improve the integration and quality of homelessness services provided. It will also assist in the development of relevant government policies and service initiatives to improve the transition of homeless persons from primary homelessness to sustained long-term tenancy.

We know that you are all extremely busy and very much appreciate your time and insights. We are committed to providing you with feedback of the results of this research either by a workshop or through a range of communication tools e.g. presentation workshop, fact sheets or by email.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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