Reframing governance and service delivery by ‘place and partnership’: some ideas and lessons from Queensland

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The social inclusion and place based disadvantage workshop was held on the 13th of June 2008 at the Metropole Conference Centre in Fitzroy, Victoria, under the auspices of the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Research & Policy Centre and the Victorian Government’s Department of Planning & Community Development. It was hosted by Paul Smyth, facilitated by Allison McClelland, and coordinated by Kristine Philipp. These proceedings are aimed at fostering, informing and stimulating public reflection, discussion, debate, research, and policy initiatives to address one of the central challenges facing contemporary Australian governments, industries and communities.

The following papers were presented at the workshop:
Associate Professor Scott Baum – Making space for social inclusion.
Dr Zoë Morrison – Place, social inclusion and ‘cultural justice’: reflections on the British experience – a place-based social exclusion policy case study
Professor Paul Smyth – Social inclusion down under
Professor Ruth Fincher – Issues of scale: a place-based view of social inclusion centred on redistribution, recognition and encounter
Mr Damian Ferrie – Social inclusion and place-based disadvantage: what we have already done that is valuable for the future
Dr Tim Reddel – Reframing governance and service delivery by ‘place and partnership’: some ideas and lessons from Queensland
Professor William Mitchell – A return to full employment is a precondition for social inclusion
Dr Jo Barraket – Social inclusion, employment and social enterprise
Mr Tom Bentleigh – Places and mainstream services
Professor John Wiseman – Strengthening social inclusion through place based action to improve mainstream services
Professor Bill Randolph – Locating social exclusion: the case of Sydney
Dr Kathy Arthurson – Urban regeneration, scale and balancing social mix

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Introduction
Embedded in the resurgence of policy interest in more engaged, integrated and place-focused public policy and service delivery is the implicit assumption that ‘inclusion’ will enable more sites of participatory democracy and deliver improved outcomes for local communities, particularly those disadvantaged or ‘excluded’ from traditional political and policy systems. These theoretical and public policy aspirations, while intimately linked, remain underdeveloped in mainstream program development and service delivery. Network governance literature, particularly new institutionalist analyses, provides conceptual and practical direction by highlighting the complexity of modern governing, policy making and practice (see Lowndes & Wilson 2003; Geddes 2006). Of particular relevance is the interaction of formal and informal rules or what Granovetter (1973) labelled ‘the strength of weak ties’ in an increasingly fragmented institutional environment. New institutionalism offers a pathway for exploring the linkages between disparate policy actors across various organisational, professional and agency boundaries and importantly a means of linking representative and participative forms of democracy and a focus on community outcomes within a local governance framework (Geddes 2006, p.77).

Focusing specifically on policy activity by Queensland, this short paper posits an institutional framework for local governance in attempting an institutional balance between state and civil society. Several place based initiatives since 1998 focussed on improving outcomes for disadvantaged communities and peoples will be discussed. In particular, the challenges of the Indigenous policy directions characterised by the Rudd Federal government’s commitment to ‘close the gap’ in life outcomes for Indigenous peoples, the contentious Northern Territory emergency and the forthcoming Cape York Welfare Reform trial, highlight the contested nature of place, community capacity, public sector reform and individual agency.

Partnerships - governance, the state and community
Multi-organisational and community-based partnerships have become dominant social inclusion methodologies, particularly in promoting more joined-up strategies to address cross-cutting community issues. Such partnerships as enacted in urban regeneration programs, local action zones and regional development initiatives reflect a confusing mix of market and collaborative principles. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) argued that partnership is an organisational form that can operate in different modes of governance based either on markets, hierarchies or networks. Dangers exist, therefore, in uncritically focusing on technical constructs such as partnership without a systemic analysis of underlying governance modes and outcomes.
### Social governance mode

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The table proposes a seven-part typology of governance modes focusing specifically on the relationship between state and civil society actors. In addition to the accepted notions of market, corporate/managerial and network or associational governance, social democratic, radical pluralist, corporatist and conservative communitarian modes of governance are discussed. Social democratic modes of governance are seen to be more interventionist and state-centred while promoting enhanced citizen participation in the political and policy institutions of liberal democracy. Radical pluralists challenge the traditional boundaries of social democratic approaches with a preference for non-institutional forms of collective political behaviour often as responses to unresolved societal tensions. From a more conservative pluralist tradition, corporatism involves representation by a limited number of hierarchically organised interests in governance and policy processes based on mediation and negotiation between these interests and the state. Communitarianism traverses a variety of philosophical and conceptual positions including neo-liberal and more radical perspectives. Of particular interest is the conservative dimension which is often aligned to market governance modes with a strong preference for minimalist or passive state interventions complemented by a strong civil society, albeit one based on mutual obligation and a shifting of social responsibilities to under-resourced community associations. In contrast, ‘associational’ governance relies on diverse networks and strong partnerships encompassing the public, private and civil society sectors. Importantly, local engagement of these diverse networks together with less...
organised and traditionally disengaged groups is supported by effective pathways to more centralised political and policy institutions of the state.

**The Queensland experience: management, engagement and [more or different] ‘new’ governance?**

Queensland provides a relevant site for examining in some depth the intersection of the paper’s theoretical and public policy concerns with the network, participatory and outcome dimensions of local governance. Despite a chaotic and reactionary political legacy, the last decade of policy making and program development in this Australian state provides data for examining the practice of local governance in increasingly complex, fragmented and contested political, policy and governance environments.

Initially responding to the electoral success of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party in 1998, the Beattie government in Queensland has constructed a range of initiatives around the need to address increasing citizen alienation and disillusionment with traditional political and policy processes (Smyth & Reddel 1999). These initiatives and later the citizen engagement agenda of the Beattie/Bligh governments should be seen in some contemporary historical context. The previous Labor Party Goss government sought to reform the state’s institutions after 32 years of conservative rule, based on the discourse of openness, accountability and responsiveness, in contrast to Queensland’s legacy of political corruption and citizen disengagement (see Reddel 2002). Complementing these institutional reforms was the limited rediscovery of improved agency coordination, service integration and community consultation (Reddel 2002). A short-lived minority National and Liberal Party coalition government (1996–1998) replaced the Goss government. Significantly this period also saw an emerging place and community trend in Australian public policy. Increasing momentum for more community sensitive policies was informed by a developing research agenda on locational disadvantage, together with the increasing recognition of the political dimensions of spatial inequality as exemplified by the One Nation Party (Davis & Stimson 1998).

In response, the Beattie government elected in 1998 promised more responsive policy development and program delivery (Smyth & Reddel 1999). A whole of government approach emphasised multidimensional responses to the needs of clients and communities, centred on more responsive government policy processes and improved place-based service delivery (see Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2001). The language of community, participation, engagement and cross-government practice has been used to describe the broad intent of these initiatives. There is an implicit view that traditional notions of consultation and centrally managed community input into the policy process are no longer sufficient to manage community expectations and the complexity of modern political life (Davis 2001, p.230). Multi-sector partnerships and various forms of citizen engagement appear central in the Beattie government’s policy and program announcements (Queensland Government 2001, p.10).
Since there is limited evaluated or analytical documented research regarding these initiatives, three programs have been selected to illustrate citizen engagement and local social governance in Queensland. These initiatives encompass political, program delivery and integrated service models of policy practice and engagement. From this examination, the effectiveness of these approaches will be discussed and the theoretical and policy implications for new forms of local governance explored.

**Community Renewal Program**

The re-engagement of disaffected citizens and places is an accepted policy benefit of local social governance and has been a key feature of one of the Beattie government’s major social/economic program initiatives – the Community Renewal Program (CRP). Its primary aim is to reduce the level of disadvantage and raise the confidence and image of identified disadvantaged communities. Key features of the CRP include a place-based focus; delivery of services across a range of government activities; participation by government officials, elected political representatives, local community members, community organisations and the private sector; and an emphasis on the collection and analysis of indicators of community well being. The CRP is administered by the Department of Housing, with a program budget of approximately $84 million for 1998 to 2004 which is distributed to fifteen local communities across Queensland.

The planning, implementation and governance of the CRP involve a complex network of networks and interests. The CRP has attempted to develop new methodologies of citizen engagement, local partnership and inter-agency collaboration. Given its place focus, these methodologies have varied across program sites, but network building and an integrated view of local community needs have been critical strategies. Community involvement in program decision making and engagement with local networks have been formalised by establishing area-based community reference groups comprising local residents and community groups (Walsh & Butler 2001). These groups vary in their representativeness, resources and overall decision making capacity. The formal evaluation of the CRP raised concerns about their representativeness, particularly observing they were ‘drawing on those who are already engaged’ (Walsh & Butler 2001, p.33). Some concerns also lingered about the capacity of community reference groups to allocate considerable funds to local community projects.

Regardless of the existing stocks of local social capital, the need to enhance engagement across diverse communities and build local accountability remains a challenge for the CRP. Structures such as community reference groups should be seen as only one pathway into a community. Engaging diverse local groups and interests (such as young people) requires innovation, leadership, skills development and dedicated resources (Walsh & Butler 2001, p.34). Building a more formal partnership capacity involving political representatives, government agencies (state and local government) and the community sector is critical for enhancing the governance
arrangements of the CRP. Significantly, partnership building encompasses existing institutions and structures while also exploring the viability of new central and local governance arrangements. However, the precise mechanisms to formalise inter and intra-government partnerships and local engagement (e.g. formal protocols or memoranda of understanding) remain undeveloped (Walsh & Butler 2001, p.42).

This overview and evaluation has been complemented by a localised account of CRP and related interventions in one of the most disadvantaged areas of South East Queensland – the suburb of Goodna, thirty kilometres west of Brisbane. The Goodna Service Integration Project (SIP) highlights some key lessons for developing more participatory, engaged and integrated service and local governance models. SIP’s model was based on an alignment of local community outcomes with state government priorities and a measurement model based on social and community well-being frameworks. Strategic leadership was provided by government, community members and a local university research centre, complemented by community learning strategies involving stakeholders ranging from local residents to elected representatives (Woolcock & Boorman 2003).

Community forums were a fundamental engagement method used in SIP. Their primary goal was ‘to provide a sustainable and participatory mechanism by which diverse members of the Goodna community can have input into service provision’ (Woolcock & Boorman 2003, p.94). This goal was operationalised through an eleven-part organising framework outlining SIP agency roles and responsibilities, complemented by less formal processes to engage marginalised groups and strategies to build collaborative relationships with government agencies. These strategies included shared communication and decision making protocols and opportunities for shared learning. Communication tools such as quarterly updates that documented actions arising from SIP’s community forums which were distributed widely across stakeholders proved especially effective in sustaining momentum and authenticity.

From a local governance perspective, SIP highlighted the strength of collaborative network arrangements, the need for defined community goals and outcomes to guide these networks and the accepted ‘messiness’ of government and community relations (Reddel & Woolcock 2004). It also showed that effective citizen engagement needed to resource relationship building at multiple levels within and between government agencies and community associations and across the three tiers of government.

**Brisbane Place Management**

Reflecting local social governance’s attention to joined-up spatially sensitive policy agendas, the Brisbane City Council (BCC), the Queensland government, local community agencies and business groups collaborated in progressing a ‘place’ approach to address social and economic disadvantage in several Brisbane communities. Three communities (Inner City Brisbane, the suburbs of Stafford and Zillmere and the South West Corridor) have been targeted as ‘place projects’, under the collective title of the ‘Brisbane Place Project’.
A recent evaluative study provides a comprehensive account of the Brisbane Place Project (Thompson et al. 2002). The institutional arrangements and methods of engagement varied across the three locations. The Inner City place project’s development and operation has been impacted by the complexity of issues (such as community safety, homelessness and illicit drugs) and the number of stakeholders from government, community agencies and businesses located in this area. In contrast, the Stafford/Zillmere place project was characterised by limited existing networks, services and community infrastructure. The presence of the CRP in Inala had important implications for the development and operation of the South West Corridor place project. CRP through its resources and associated local planning activities has impacted not only Inala but also the surrounding areas of Carole Park and Darra.

Each of the three projects has developed at its own pace and been influenced by factors such as differing demographic characteristics, the level of government and community activity and individual and collective interpretations of processes and outcomes. The evaluative study found that the Brisbane Place Project has been characterised by its developmental character. This has been a major feature of all three projects and appears inevitable given the overall Project’s focus on local collaboration and the lack of a cross-government strategic framework for a place-based approach. The study found that operationalising this ideal of collaboration, while supported by the majority of stakeholders, remains a challenge for all sectors. It is not easy to achieve an appropriate balance between government leadership, the statutory responsibilities of public sector agencies and calls for more participatory and localised decision making reflecting the diversity of communities.

Two specific themes of the evaluative study are relevant to this paper. First, the three place projects have in differing ways attempted to operationalise key local governance dimensions such as networks and partnerships between sectors, appropriate organisational structures, devolved decision making, integrated service delivery and enhanced local institutional capacity. Progress was made, particularly in the Inner City project, in developing leadership and building networks and partnerships between sectors. The South West Corridor project addressed particularly the role of resident participation. The three place projects to varying degrees have brought together groups from diverse sectors (local and state government, business, community agencies and residents), resulting in new, or stronger, sectoral relationships.

However, the long-term authority and strength of these local governance arrangements remain untested. At the strategic level, the links between the three place projects and key governance bodies such as regional managers from government agencies were largely undefined. Enhancing the regional planning and decision making role of regional managers was seen as a critical factor in formalising these links and strengthening local governance arrangements in Brisbane. The capacity of
local partnerships, particularly in achieving equity in decision making between
government, community and business sectors, is untested. The distinctive
organisational and professional cultures and systems of different sectors remain a
significant challenge. The role of traditional local coordination and planning
structures such as steering committees and working groups in promoting dialogue
between stakeholders, engagement with diverse groups and local decision making is
underdeveloped. Notions such as integrated service delivery and devolved decision
making based on these traditional structures have been promoted through the Place
Project but require further development within limited resources and existing program
arrangements.

Second, the Brisbane Place Project has achieved a high level of participation and
representation between the diverse government, community and private sector groups
involved. The three place projects have achieved cross-sector participation, with some
variation of stakeholders at both the steering committee and working/reference group
levels and variation in the method of involvement, particularly in terms of engaging
local residents and business interests. Local government has been the one strong
consistent player across the three projects. Factors such as the Project’s objectives and
outcomes, the diversity of community expectations and the available resources have
impacted on the extent of participation and representation.

*Cape York Partnerships*

The *Cape York Justice Study Report* (Fitzgerald 2001) highlighted the
multidimensional nature of social and economic problems in Cape York communities,
pointing to ill health, poor education outcomes, alcohol, violence, crime and the way
these were interlinked with issues of land rights, governance and economic
development. Economic development, the report emphasised, could not be separated
from social development – a point given added weight by the critique of so-called
‘welfare dependency’ by the Indigenous Cape York leader, Noel Pearson. The report
emphasised the central link between economic and social policy and enhanced local
community action when making its recommendations (Fitzgerald 2001, p.369).

The Beattie government’s response, *Meeting the Challenges, Making Choices* (Queensland
Government 2002), proposed such an integrated model and demonstrated a greater
willingness to experiment with new forms of governance and citizen engagement
through systems such as the Cape York Partnership Unit, which uses negotiation
tables linked to action plans and regional budgets. These negotiating tables facilitate
structured dialogue between government departments and local communities as the
basis for action planning and resource allocation. Action plans have been negotiated
in each local community and are designed to meet the immediate needs of the
community (such as reducing alcohol-related social problems) and to promote
economic development opportunities. These plans recognise the rights of the local
community: ‘to country, culture safety, security, education and health’. A community
governance strategy has also been implemented, based on reform and support of the
existing Indigenous community councils and improved planning and service delivery.
by state agencies. In addition, a system of ‘community champions’ was established, with Directors-General of state government departments nominated or approached by local communities to ‘champion’ specific communities. Their role includes advocating for the community in government decision making, encouraging private investment and infrastructure, and developing ongoing positive working relationships with local communities. Significantly, the state government’s response not only focused on improved planning but also directly addressed key economic and social issues such as achieving better health and educational outcomes and alleviating rampant substance abuse and community violence.

In recent times the overarching Indigenous Partnership Agreement signed in 2007 by the Premier Bettie and the mayors of the 19 discrete Indigenous communities in Queensland reflect a new approach to institutionalising partnerships and engagement. The agreement signifies a partnership between the Queensland Government and 19 nominated Indigenous communities to reduce the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of Queensland. The agreement is for three years - from 2007 to 2010 - and each community will negotiate its individual Local Indigenous Partnership Agreement (LIPA). LIPAs will be reviewed every six months, and progress towards each goal will be recorded. Specific goals will be established for each community. In December 2007, the Federal indigenous affairs Minister, Jenny Macklin, agreed that the Commonwealth would participate in the LIPA process with the intention of ensuring that each community will have a joined-up process of planning and engagement involving all levels of government.

**Cape York Welfare Reforms**

Arguably the most innovative and contested episode in local governance in Queensland to date is the Cape York welfare reform trials. The genesis of the trial was the approach by the Cape York Institute (CYI), an independent policy think tank led by Noel Pearson, to the Commonwealth government in December 2005 with a proposal to develop and pilot a new approach to welfare in collaboration with four Cape York communities. Following a period of challenging policy development and debate involving the Commonwealth and Queensland governments and CYI, on 21 December 2007, the two governments agreed to move quickly to implement a program of welfare reform in the four Cape York communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and Coen. The trials aim to restore social norms and local Indigenous authority and change behaviours in response to chronic levels of welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion. As part of the trials, the Queensland Parliament has passed the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*, which establishes the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) as an independent statutory body comprising a full time Commissioner and local commissioners from each of the four trial communities. The FRC is scheduled to start operation on 1 July 2008. The FRC can make a range of directions with respect to members of the trial communities, including referral to support services and a direction that relevant income support payments can be income managed.
The Commonwealth and Queensland government’s joint commitments include significant funding for complementary initiatives to support the trial and assist people to meet their obligations. These initiatives include support for employment, economic development, education, housing tenancy reforms, enhanced services and activities to reduce harms associated with alcohol and other dysfunctional behaviours.

A theme of the trial, not given much attention, is the reform of the tools and institutions of governance at national, state, local, community, family and individual levels. Specifically, the trial suggests a rebalancing of improved government investment in public goods and needs such as health services, housing and education together with redirecting service delivery and corporate activity to build human capability and individual agency. The public sector needs to be reformed to rescale the scope of government to promote real choice and build individual, family and community capacity to make positive life decisions, promote positive social norms and rebuild local Indigenous authority. Localised solutions, processes and institutions based on a mix of market, state-centric and associational modes need to be built to support and sustain a rebalancing of governance to include individual and family responsibility together with public, private and civil sectors.

**Contemporary Indigenous place-based policies: tensions, contradictions but new directions?**

The philosophical and policy underpinnings of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial are hotly debated. The trial agenda has been influenced by a mix of ideas including Lawrence Mead’s propositions regarding welfare dependency and the ‘culture of defeat’ in the United States and particularly Amartya Sen’s notion of human capability. Noel Pearson’s writings include a strong focus on Sen’s belief that poverty needs to be understood as more than a lack of income. It is more fundamentally a lack of opportunity and freedom to exercise meaningful life choices (Pearson 2006). Ken Henry, Secretary to Commonwealth Treasury summed up many of the key concepts underpinning the trial’s agenda and broader Indigenous policy in a recent speech. Henry (2007) outlined Sen’s concept of disadvantage as capability deprivation and lack of substantive freedoms – including political and civil liberty, social inclusion, literacy and economic security. Critically, these capabilities not only include primary requirements around nutrition, education and health but also the capability to live without shame and to participate in community life. These foundations reduce the passivity of solutions, creating ownership of both the problem and the solution by individuals and communities. He argued that this approach is fundamental to Indigenous self esteem and identity. Importantly he also argued that this focus on individual agency and responsibility must be linked directly to family/community safety, early childhood development, supportive home environment, access to primary health care, human capital investment including education and employment opportunities, improved engagement in policy making and strengthened governance systems.
There are however some critics of this ‘new agenda’ of Indigenous reform. Philip Martin has argued recently that the Cape York Welfare reform trial will do little to promote real opportunity and freedom. Martin (2008) states that:

By focusing primarily on community dysfunctions and individuals' deficits identified independently from community members, and imposing welfare and behavioural obligations which tie Aboriginal people to services they already know to be oftentimes inadequate and inappropriate, [the] Family Responsibilities Commissions (FRCs) threaten to add yet another complicating factor to the bizarre daily spectacle of law and order in communities.

http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events08.php#spec

He sees the trial and the FRC’s interventions as simplistic and punitive rather than addressing complex individual and social needs including alcohol abuse and family violence. Martin concludes that the quality and relevance of the support and intervention services are less important than the regularity of individuals' attendance at their FRC appointments. The trial should focus on reforming the historically ineffectual and poorly resourced service system operating in Indigenous communities.

As Westbury and Dillon (2007) have also queried; do governments have the capacity to sustain the commitment required to see through such an ambitious agenda in what is arguably the most complex and least successful area of public policy in Australia?

In response to these concerns, key tenets of Cape York Welfare reform trial do include local community ownership and improved resourcing and investments in support services and programs to promote mobility and economic opportunity. It is also important to reflect on the recent attention to Indigenous affairs including the national commitment to ‘narrow the gap’ in life outcomes. The Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) agenda for Indigenous reform includes commitment to engagement and partnership with Indigenous communities to improve policies, programs and services. Recent critiques of Northern Territory ‘emergency’ intervention (see Altman & Hinkson 2007) highlight the need for better engagement and more partnership approaches rather than unilateral action. Ken Henry in his 2007 speech highlighted the importance of improved engagement with indigenous peoples.

(There are) … three interdependent foundations to Indigenous disadvantage: poor economic and social incentives; underdevelopment of human capability; and an absence of effective engagement of Indigenous Australians in the design of policy frameworks that might improve those incentives and capabilities (Henry 2007 p. 9).

Recognising the policy and particularly the implementation failures of governments in Indigenous affairs is critical. Over the past three decades there has been a fundamental failure in the governance of governments in relation to Australian Indigenous affairs. Symptomatic of this failure is that governments have failed to engage effectively at an institutional level with Indigenous citizens and communities. This has been the key
contributor to the downward spiral of dysfunctionality and disadvantage which so perplexes governments and others. (Westbury & Dillon 2007)

*Partnerships, Indigenous Governance and Policy Implementation*

'Engagement' in its many incarnations is therefore seen as a key ingredient for Indigenous governance and policy reform more generally. Place based partnerships and tailored approaches rather than unilateral action are held up as important precursors to improved life outcomes for Indigenous and other socially excluded communities. There is a political and policy consensus that a ‘new way’ is required based on a mix of individual capability, community building and public sector reform but there remains a lack of clarity about the strategies and methodologies for design and implementation. Significant policy milestones in the last few years such as the abolition of ATSIC in 2005 and last year’s Northern Territory emergency intervention highlight the challenges in developing credible and effective place based engagement and implementation strategies. Recognising Indigenous cultures while also addressing the material conditions of Indigenous communities remains a significant challenge. As Rowse (2007) asks: can a focus on individual agency and responsibility inherent to the ideas of Pearson and Henry coexist with self determination and collective self-governing? Indigenous, rights, customs, cultures, practices influence local rule making and governance systems and must be understood with the ‘technologies of bureaucracy and financial oversight’ (Rowse 2007, p.60).

Recent work by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) *Indigenous Community Governance Project* (Hunt & Smith, 2007) addresses some key design issues. The CAEPR work proposes design principles based on relational autonomy and subsidiarity including:

- Networks (local, regional and central)
- Balancing localism with central representation
- Capacity building at all levels

Building on international research on Indigenous governance including the Harvard Project of Indian Economic Development (see Sullivan 2007), Hunt and Smith (2007) suggest several critical themes for design and developmental attention: cultural legitimacy and contestation; authority must be organised (systems/structures) and exercised (processes/rules); building and sustaining external and internal dimensions of networks; and the governance of government.

As discussed earlier, new institutionalism offers a pathway for aligning these different systems and practices. Informal conventions, as well as formal arrangements and rules, the role of values and power relations or structures, and importantly the interactions between individuals and institutions, must all be taken into account (Lowndes 2001: 1953). Institutions are not simply administrative and political organisations. They comprise a set of networks, interrelated norms, routines and incentives that have the capacity to generate order and promote a collective
understanding of meaning. Indirect and direct processes of meta-governance are required to regulate network actors through strategic resource allocation, managing patterns of participation and direct intervention in network conflicts (Sorenson and Torfing 2004, p. 15). The linking of network governance and new institutionalist theoretical traditions provides some direction in key areas such as clarifying the roles of state and non-state actors and the need for new rules, values, institutions and procedures to capture the interactive dimensions of contemporary governance processes. Placing networks as the core mode of governance requires personal, organisational and political effort and resources. Policy makers need also to influence the attitudes and perceptions of local policy actors, service providers and other interests to be actively engaged in networks and partnerships (Damgaard 2006, p.689). Such meta-governance needs to carefully balance central direction with an appreciation of local diversity, power differentials and the need for formal network structures. Critically, however, the efforts necessary to build and sustain networks and partnerships must be outcome-focused for excluded peoples and communities.

Turning these ideas and lessons into a viable program of activity is challenging. There are clearly dangers in treating partnerships, engagement processes and networks as commodities to be codified through a government program. A clear theme highlighted throughout this scan of Queensland place based initiatives is the need for behaviour change – by individuals, families, service providers, local/ regional/ central institutions, and policy makers. Aligned with behaviour change is the need for improved knowledge transfer between all these actors. Moran (2008) distinguishes between local knowledge held by consumers and leaders and administrative knowledge held by services providers. Bringing these two types of knowledge together can improve Indigenous governance and service delivery, particularly from a place based perspective.
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