



# Western Downs Regional Council Futures Summit 4 & 5 May 2023

## Summary of Event – key insights

The Western Downs Regional Council hosted the **Western Downs Regional Futures Summit** over the **5 & 6 May 2023**, at the Community Events Centre in Dalby. It was attended by 102 people from the community and business sectors, local government and state government. Collaboration for Impact consultants facilitated the workshop. In designing the workshop, they conducted a pre-summit consultation process to deepen their understanding of the current context for the conversations to be held at the Summit. They joined the tour of the region the day prior to the Summit meeting locals in Tara, Chinchilla and Kogan hearing first-hand about the opportunities and challenges in the region.

**In the months leading up to the Summit the region has experienced unusual challenges, both environmentally and socially, that has had a large impact on the community and local industry. In the design process there was an emergent sense that there is a readiness for people to come together and work differently, 'collaboratively' to effect change on the ongoing issues around housing, employment, health, education and community safety.**

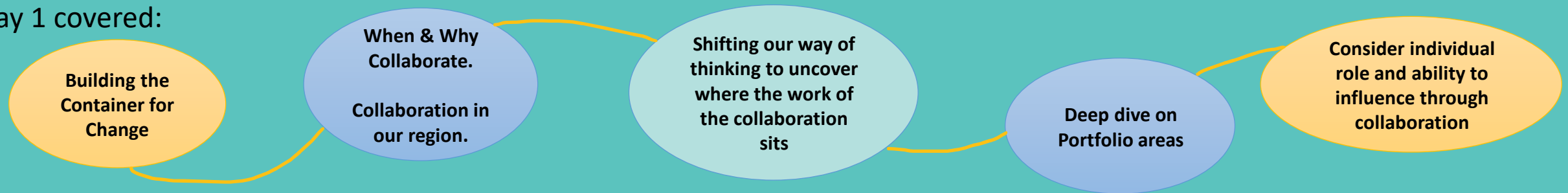
The **workshop approach** aimed to:

- share new information about how collaborative partnerships are best placed to tackle large scale complex problems and,
- provide activities that gave participants practical, experiential learning of how collaborative partnerships work in practice.

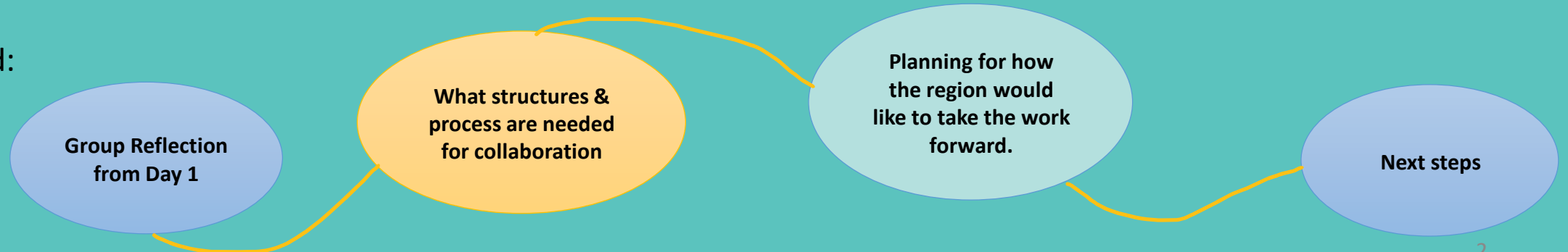
This approach to the workshop aimed to achieve the following **objectives**:

1. To strengthen collaboration by building on the existing partnering and collaboration across the region
2. To leverage the diversity of the communities across the region to maximise outcomes for all
3. To develop a shared understanding of what it will take to make things better across the region
4. To define what we need to continue to discuss and how we will govern this at this early stage

Day 1 covered:



Day 2 covered:

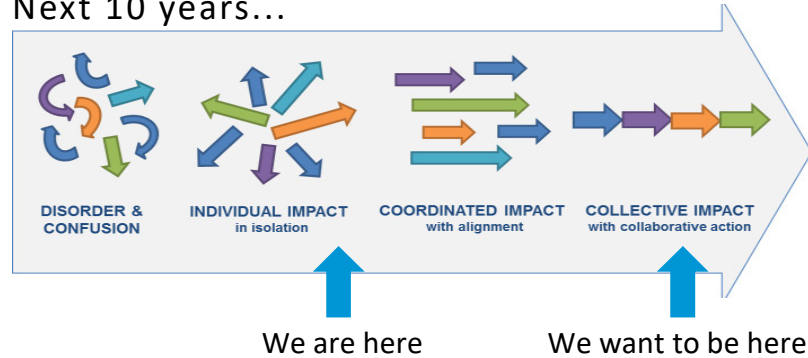


## Building the container for change

# Learning and key insights

Following the warm Welcome to Country by **Aunty Mabry Ann Fogarty, Mayor Paul McVeigh** provided aspirational framing for the Summit. With focused acknowledgement of the challenges faced across the region in recent months, he elevated the rooms thinking with an invitation to participants to consider 'what's possible' if we all come together and work collaboratively to plan for future generations. With the focus of improving the liveability of the region at the forefront, **Daniel Fletcher** Community & Liveability General Manager from Western Downs Regional Council presented an overview including high-level statistics, a history of the region and how some communities are already outlining their aspirations into community action plans.

Next 10 years...



**He also** introduced the concept of **Collective Impact** as a way that the region could come together to collaborate for a long term 10-year focus. It is a methodology that can be used to support large scale efforts of those wanting to solve complex problems. There was a sense that a lot of work is happening across the region to address the issues but as it is done in isolation there is little impact.

**Container building** means taking the time to build trust between those collaborating. It takes time and is an important element of building partnerships which requires continual attention throughout collaborations.

The participants laid the foundations of container building in the workshop through:

- Getting to know each other
- Establishing shared values / principles of working together over the 2 days.
- Building a shared language and understanding of purpose.



## Brave Spaces – Micky ScottBey Jones

Together we will create a **brave space**  
Because there is no such thing as a “safe space” -  
We exist in the real world  
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.  
In this space  
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,  
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,  
We call each other to more truth and love  
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.  
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.  
We will not be perfect.  
This space will not be perfect.  
It will not always be what we wish it to be  
But  
It will be *our brave space together,*  
*and*  
*We will work on it side by side.*

When & Why Collaborate.

Collaboration in our region.

## Learning and key insights

Complex problems require multiple stakeholders to solve them. **Participants explored what constitutes a complex problem and how collaborative practice can address them.** The Collaboration Spectrum, a tool developed by the Tamarak Institute in Canada, helped to demonstrate the different ways people in the system may sit with collaborative activities. As we move left to right across the spectrum, we increase our potential to accomplish together that which cannot be achieved alone. Each level requires an increase in time, trust, and turf-sharing. Participants were invited to place themselves across the room, to show where they feel their collaborative practice is currently in their work. Most participants took up the position on the Communicate / Cooperate section. When invited to move to a preferred position for the future, some moved up to Coordinate and some moved to Collaborate / Integrate.

### Collaboration Spectrum



Participants also gained insight into how Collective Impact can support collaborative partnerships to move along the spectrum through working on the following 5 Key Elements:

1. Creating a **shared vision**
2. Coordinating **high leverage activities** through mutual plan of action.
3. **Strategic learning** for continuous learning and improvement.
4. **Inclusive community engagement** structured through open communication channels
5. Building the **containers for change** structures and processes that can support the on-going work.

It was great to see the genuine discussion about the level of collaboration from participants. Some organisations identified that they have a role to play in coordinating those who have the capacity and role to integrate across the sectors.

### Collaborations from across the region

Participants heard from a panel of speakers about several collaborations already happening across the region. We heard about what makes the collaborations successful and what some of the barriers are.

- **Belinda Walker** Tara College Principal: [Reconciliation Group](#)
- **Robyn Haig** Chinchilla Community Commerce and Industry: [BEST Group](#)
- **Brad McCoy** Executive Director Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy: [Place-based strategies 2023](#)
- **Daniel Fletcher** Western Downs Regional Council: Informal partnership

#### What makes them successful

- ✓ Clarity of purpose
- ✓ Clarity on roles & responsibilities
- ✓ Trust among the group
- ✓ Skills and resources well utilized
- ✓ Leverage existing networks
- ✓ Some have formal agreements some do not.

#### What are some barriers

- ✓ Same people on multiple collaborations
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Time
- ✓ Lack of clarity of purpose can lose people along the way.





# Learning and key insights

Shifting our way of thinking to uncover where the work of the collaboration sits

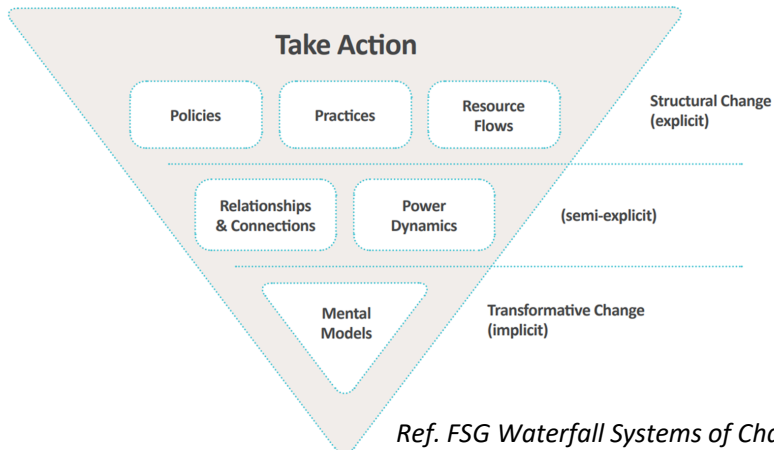
Deep dive on Portfolio areas

Consider individual role and ability to influence through collaboration

*To get a different result you need to take a different approach.*

Participants were guided to think about the opportunities and challenges in the region through the lens of **systems change**. When addressing complex problems, a systems change approach considers all the elements, actors, influencers and linkages that exist within the system. Understanding the interactions that are governed by factors such as relationships, structures, processes, resources and mental models offers insights that previously may have been missed.

A structured group activity invited participants to consider how the issues in the different portfolio areas of **health, education, employment, housing, community safety and social infrastructure** aligned to the 6 conditions of systems change.



Considering the issues through this new lens provided insights into where the work for the collaboration would focus. Some of the work points to creating structural changes and some will relate to shifting attitudes and beliefs. It became evident to participants through this activity the interconnectedness of the issues and that it would require a multiprong approach to generate change.

The participants were invited to **add additional portfolio areas** to the ones that emerged from the Residential Round Tables discussions in March 2023. They were then asked to respond to the following question.

**If we collaborate which priority area, would you choose as the top priority?**



## What participants said after this session

We need a boundless, systems thinking approach. What challenges me is the tendency to lapse into deficit thinking as a result of unconscious bias. Learned there is work to do

There is a lot of goodwill and enthusiasm in the room to work together for our community. Let's do this!

That what Locals believe is important in our region is not the same as what non-locals believe is important for the Western Downs

What structures & process are needed for collaboration

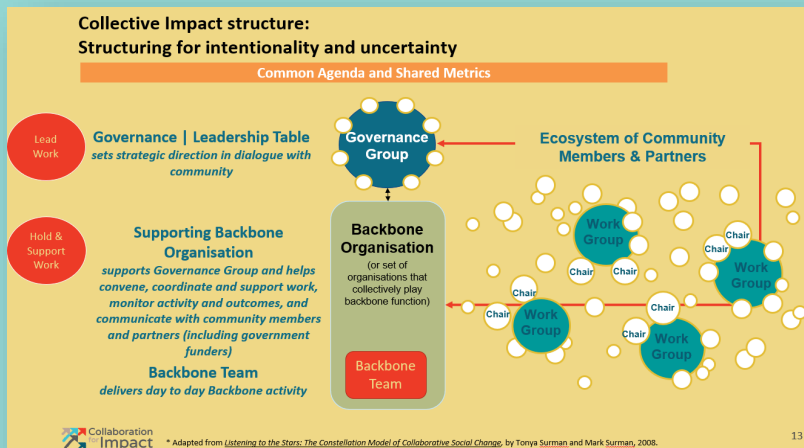
## Learning and key insights: Day 2

The morning session of day 2 aimed to ground the concepts from day 1 in some practical examples from other regions doing similar collaborative work. It was important to talk through the **structures and processes** that are needed to enable the work of collaboration. We talked about power within structures and how established power can maintain the status quo, whereas utilising different types of power around the table can act to disrupt the status quo which can be what is needed to get different outcomes.

The participants heard about two examples of **collaborative governance**: *Youth Outloud 1000 Mackay and Barkly Regional Deal governance group, Tennant Creek*. It was highlighted that in the early stages of coming together, groups can start of small and then as the initiative grows the governance structures evolve.

Usually in Collective Impact models a **backbone** team, provides the coordination support for the steering group. This is a small team which can also grow over time.

A key component of Collective Impact work is that once the structures and processes are in place, partners in the field start to take up different parts of the work. It is not the backbone team that delivers on the shared agenda it is the partnership as a whole.



### Next steps



How do you want to work together?

Participants were invited to spend time in groups considering how they would like to continue to collaborate.

What actions can we take today to continue this work moving forward?

Who needs to be involved?



Planning for  
how the region  
would like to  
take the work  
forward.

# Here is guidance from participants on the way forward.

## How do we want to work together?

### Process

- Consider what data we need / research
- Drive buy-in through **communications strategy** that highlights
  - our goals
  - tracks our progress against our intended outcomes
  - is transparent
  - consider an infographic to demonstrate progress
- Informal communication (one to one)
- Clarify mission / visions / target – we need a clear pathway forward
- Create achievable goals with specific measurable results and responsible owner of actions
- Consider remuneration for participation. Not everyone is paid to do this work.
- Learning and development in this way of working. How to disrupt the status quo.
- Consistent and frequent meetings
- Face to face versus virtual.
- Too big is too hard

### Structures

- Place based governance arrangements
- Right people and get the balance of leadership group right
- Outline roles and responsibilities / accountability
- Change of power
- Create a platform for feedback from community
- Working groups – EOI process
- Empower groups to make decisions

## Who needs to be involved?

- Tap into existing groups – mapping stakeholders
- Expression of interest for community representatives. We need diversity.
- 14 communities we need to communicate with them all
- People to make a commitment as to the role / area they are able to participate
- Identify people from
  - Youth (consider mentors to support them to participate)
  - Federal / state / local government
  - Industry
  - Service providers
- We need visibility of those who can commit
- Community-led
- Grow our future leaders (consider primary schoolers)

## What actions we can take today to continue this work moving forward?

- Long term commitment
- Empower the next generation
- Test with the community
- Design first then communicate with community (plain English) then involve and collaborate.
- Collaborative ethos – mutual obligation to achieve outcomes

*Additional agreed actions are outlined on the following table.*





# ACTIONS FLOWCHART



## WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL FUTURES SUMMIT PROGRESS CHART

RESPONSIBLE	ACTION	8 MAY	15 MAY	22 MAY	29 MAY	5 JUNE	12 JUNE	19 JUNE	26 JUNE
CFI & WDRC	Reconvene Progress Group					Due			
CFI & WDRC	Communications from the Workshop	Due							
WDRC	Draft Agenda			Due					
DCHDE	Data from State Agencies					For input			
WDRC	Stakeholder Mapping					For input			
DCHDE & LGAQ	Local Housing Action Plan								Due
Powerlink	Microsoft Forms stakeholder data					Due			
Everyone	Tell People about the Summit								Due

### AGENDA

1. Decision Making Process
2. Set a Clear Vision & Purpose
3. Governance
4. Portfolio Areas: Objectives



**Support Now**

Ready to get involved now?  
Please email the [westerndownsfutures@wdrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:westerndownsfutures@wdrc.qld.gov.au) and we will connect you to your area of interest.