

DAY 1
Discovery

DAY 2
Re-imagining

DAY 3
Creating

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SHARE
RISK AND
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SOCIAL
ISSUES THAT MATTER TO **our**
COMMUNITIES ?

From
last time
→

Home
homelessness

INCLUSION
exclusion
social isolation

violence
crime

STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

September 2017



ANTI DISCRIMINATION
COMMISSION QUEENSLAND



marsdenfamiliesprogram

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STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS



Figure 1 Event Venue – Marsden Youth Services

What will it take to share risk and responsibility for the social issues that matter to our communities?

Concept

Stimulating innovation and collaboration were at the core of the aims of the second Strategic Conversation event. Addressing unmet social need is the driving force behind social innovation and events such as the Strategic Conversations provide environments that stimulate greater collaboration and innovation in the social services sector.

The 3-Day Strategic Conversation was an event held in Kallangur on the north side of Brisbane. The event ran for three full days from 9am – 4pm. The event was directed at bringing together Government, service providers and community to work collaboratively and innovatively. The Strategic Conversation provided the opportunity for attendees to connect with likeminded, innovative thinkers and join together in creative and collaborative problem-solving sessions that meaningfully engaged diverse perspectives to tackle some of our most challenging issues facing the community sector.

Social Innovation is not a new idea, people have always sought to find new solutions to address pressing social issues. Social innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for the

community by addressing social issues, but also enhance individuals' capacity to act. Social innovations rely on the inventiveness of citizens, grass roots community organisations, local communities, businesses and public servants and services. They are an opportunity for the non-government, government, communities and private market sectors to combine their skills, knowledge and resources to create solutions that better respond to broader collective social and community need.

Hosts

The event was a collaboration between a local Family Intervention Service, Marsden Families Program (MFP) and the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ). As a collaboration, MFP and ADCQ funded and accommodated the event to enable many attendees to attend at little or no cost.

The event was hosted by Mary-Alice Arthur ([Get Soaring](#)) with a support team from ADCQ, MFP and participants in the Engaging Families Project.



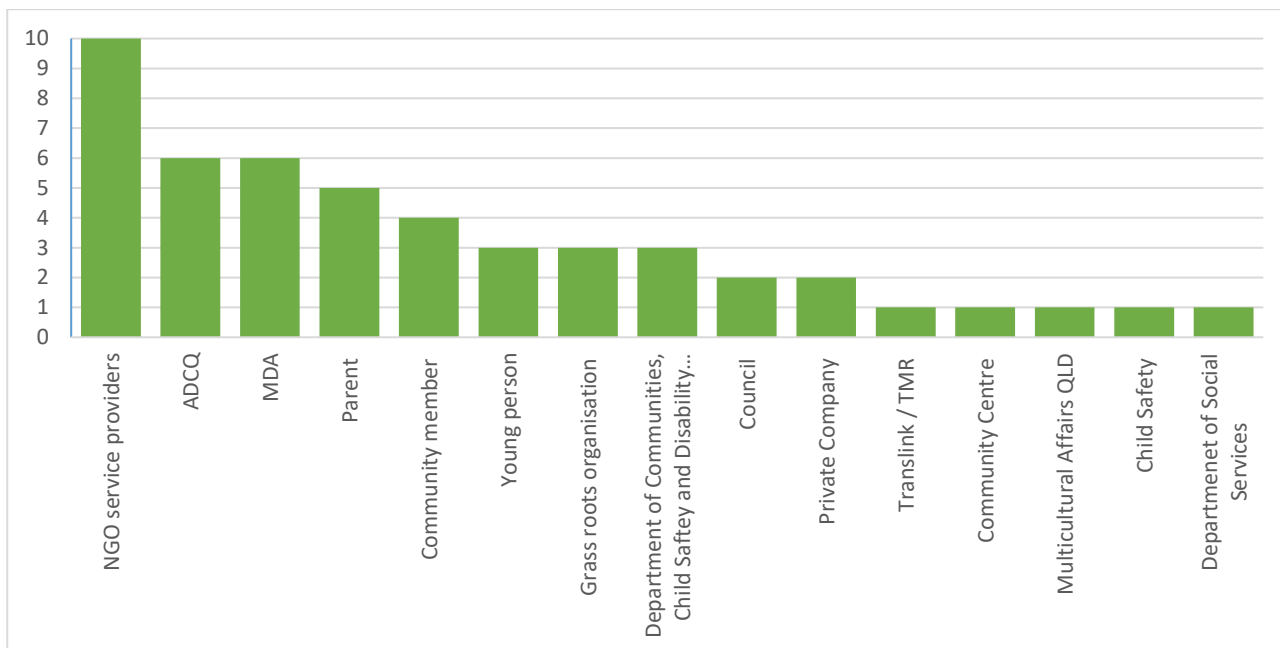
Figure 2 Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Kevin Cocks

Attendees

Approximately 50 people representing a range of stakeholder groups attended the event. This included representatives from a range of non-government service providers, Anti-discrimination Commission, Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Two councils were represented with staff attending from the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Council, and the Moreton Bay Regional Council.

Three officers from the DCCSDS attended; from the Strategic Communication and Engagement Team, Multicultural Affairs Queensland and Principal Child Protection Practitioner from the Moreton Bay Region. Graph 1 below shows the complete range of representatives in attendance.



Graph 1 Breakdown of attendees

Event focus and structure

The event was designed to call people together to develop actionable responses to the question *“What will it take to share risk and responsibility for the social issues that matter to communities?”*

Over three days, the flow of the event guided people through the following broad segments:

1. Discovery: using data, and story and lived experience to develop a shared understanding of the social issues that matter
2. Reimagining the Future; working together to deepen our understanding of the issues from various points of view and exploring the question *“what does different look like?”*
3. Creating; working together to explore ideas that are already in place, or new ideas that provide innovative responses.

The flow of the event was loosely based in Theory U and used participatory leadership methodologies such as world café, open space technology and market place, circle way, triad conversations, and collective story harvest. Attendees were supported and guided throughout the event to support their process and developing their responses from idea to prototype, and to build their skills in the facilitation of participatory leadership processes.

The pitch

Attendees were guided to develop the key elements of a prototype project to ready for implementation. On the afternoon of the third day groups and individuals pitched their idea and highlighted the aims and benefits while outlining their implementation plan.



Figure 3 Event participants



WHAT MATTERS ? WHAT IS IN OUR HEART?

Young generations & mental health

Good communication
across generations

Community leadership

Acceptance and tolerance

INEQUALITY

Being a good neighbour

Media and technology

Family and partnerships

Courage

Acts of kindness

BELONGING

to act

Employment

Cultivating safe spaces

Social

PRIVILEGE

Inclusion

Families & parenting

Ending domestic and
family violence

Guidelines and support for youth

**BEING BETTER
AT BEING, TO
BE BETTER
AT DOING**

Focusing on

**what connects
us, rather
than what
divides us**



**OUR HEART
HEART**



Figure 4 When asked what mattered to them, attendees answered.

Day 1. Discovery

Using story and lived experience to develop a shared understanding of the social issues that matter

After acknowledgement of country, welcomes and introductions, the group discussed what the three days would involve, the flow of the session and opportunities for learning and skill building.

The first day together had attendees began to explore why they were there, what they were up to, and how each person contributes to the possibility that together communities can collectively respond in a more human and effective way to the social issues that face communities.

Why people attended

It is relevant to consider some of the key themes arising from attendees when they were asked why they chose to attend. This is particularly relevant when considered alongside the list of attendees and the organisations they represented.

When asked what matter to them, attendees spoke of a desire to work together collaboratively, and be part of a community, and to build their own resilient communities. People were excited about learning to work together in diverse ways, develop new connections and share the momentum to move forward and effect change. Figure 4 illustrates the full range of responses from attendees.

What do we already know to be true?

Using *World Café methodology*, attendees delved more deeply into the issues that mattered to them and what they knew about those issues. Using the *Iceberg Model*, groups then teased out the beliefs that impacted each issue and the assumptions that underlay those beliefs.

All attendees come together to explore the *Certainty Continuum* and began to uncover what it would take to change fixed views.

Stories that challenged what we thought we knew to be true

In groups of five, attendees shared stories of their own experiences of when their fixed views were challenged. The groups shared stories about the impact that had on their life and the ways in which their world view changed as a result. This was a powerful session, after which the large group nominated five of the most powerful stories to be shared. The following images are a direct harvest from the powerful stories shared.



Figure 5 Some people are bridges between the worlds



Figure 8 This is who I am



Figure 7 Courage



Figure 6 Your own way

Day 2. Reimagining the future.

Working together to develop a shared understanding of the issues from various points of view and exploring the question “What does different look like?”

The second day focused on what might be possible and exploring what those possibilities might look like when put into reality. Open space methodology was used to provide attendees with the structure to explore the question “What does different look like?”

Attendees silent guided walk in nearby bushland to distil and prioritise their emerging ideas. In the quiet space of nature, they were invited to delve deeply into the questions “What do I need to let go of?”

After a silent guided walk in nearby bushland to distil and prioritise emerging ideas, attendees formed project teams to begin working on their key project. Together the teams developed a focused idea to move forward with and crystallised a shared understanding of purpose.

Each team work through a series of guided questions to more deeply explore the potential and possibility of their idea. The questions were as follows:

1. *What is our greatest aspiration?*
2. *What are the challenges and risks?*
3. *What do we know works?*
4. *What do we need to understand better?*
5. *Who can we work with and partner with to make it happen?*
6. *How do we make sure no one is left behind?*

Attendees spent their afternoon diving deep into these questions and working together on their ideas that had potential to be real solutions to the issues that they saw as important in their communities.



Figure 9 Exploring the question “What do I need to let go of?”



Figure 10 The potential and possibility of each idea



Figure 12 Exploring ideas



Figure 11 Deep dive in to a reimagined future

Day 3. Creating

Working together to explore ideas that are already in place, or new ideas that provide innovative responses.

The morning of day three was heavily centred on project teams bringing their ideas to life and to prepare to pitch their ideas. Attendees were coached on how to prepare to pitch their ideas and were provided with support by team members who were not deeply embedded in a pitch team.

After lunch the group listened as teams and individuals pitched their ideas before a panel of judges. The judging panel included:

- Kevin Cocks – Queensland Anti Discrimination Commissioner
- Marlene Butteriss – Strategic Communications and Engagement; Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.
- Les Morgan – Fredrick Marsden Youth Centre

The winner received a \$2000 seed funding grant to further their project idea to prototype stage. To be in the running, each pitch was judged on the following criteria:

- The idea had a clear purpose
- The idea was aimed at solving a problem
- The idea was creative and original
- Sustainability was built into the idea
- The idea was inclusive



Figure 13 varied images of participants

The Pitch - From little things, big things grow

Pitch – What if Bundaberg was a place where the multicultural community was cherished and appreciated?

Amy asked pitched a solution that is aimed at addressing issues of social isolation for multicultural people in Bundaberg. Amy highlighted that 12% of Bundaberg’s population was born overseas and she wished to respond to the social isolation this group felt by creating the “Bundaberg Diversity Hub”. The seed grant would provide Amy with the boost she needed to register the hub, and to begin to offer networking and relationship building opportunities by funding community coffees that would bring people together.



Figure 14 Pitch – Amy making her pitch

Pitch – Creating jobs and opportunities for migrants to build their own business.

Pacifique and Kerry pitched a solution to provide opportunities to migrants in the Logan area who were experiencing difficulty getting work. Pacifique highlighted that 37% of the migrant community is unemployed, but that most are eager to work and build new skills. Through Pacifique’s organisation he provides training opportunities to unemployed migrants via Skilling Australia funding. Pacifique proposed to use the Seed grant to start a no interest loan scheme that would provide two training graduates with the funds to buy essential cleaning equipment and start their own small business. Pacifique talked about how this approach creates independence through employment, builds confidence and self-esteem and supports the creation of small business.



Figure 15 Kerry and Pacifique making their pitch

Pitch – The sisterhood project

Grace and Zanette shared their experiences with women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who did not speak English and the extreme isolation this causes, particularly as the women age.

Grace and Zanette pitched an idea of building a social group to assist these women to build relationships and learn English. Gace and Zanette aim to empower CALD women to take control of their own situation and create employment and wellbeing for them and their community.



Figure 16 Zanette and Grace making their pitch

Pitch – CALD communities coming together to address family violence.

Abel pitched his idea about running a forum in the Logan area that that would create awareness about the ways to address domestic and family violence, with a particular emphasis on educating perpetrators about the impacts of domestic and family violence. Abel highlighted the need to target community elders who have influence to share information and learnings widely across CALD communities.



Figure 17 Abel making his pitch

Pitch – What if children and their families had access to the support and tools that they need, through the lens of the family

Colleen and her team talked about the issues that families face and the need to keep mothers and children safe while building the capacity of the family. Colleen and her team pitched their idea to undertake an audit of the services and programs that exist in the Brisbane north area, and then undertake a gap analysis to understand what is missing. After completing the local service review Colleen and her team proposed to connect with local families to understand what needs are not able to be met under the current systems. Through this process, Colleen and her team will collect stories of resilience to share with others.



Figure 18 Leah and Colleen making their pitch

While the seed grant would be used to undertake a local review and connect with families, in the longer-term Colleen and her team proposed to investigate the potential for a peer support group that utilised lived experience of peers to support families to build their resilience and their capacity to succeed.

And the winner is.....

The judging panel saw a merit and potential in all the projects, however Colleen and her team met all of the criteria on their pitch. Colleen's team will be supported and mentored to move forward with their project.



Figure 19 The winning pitch; Prue, Colleen, Leah and Mel

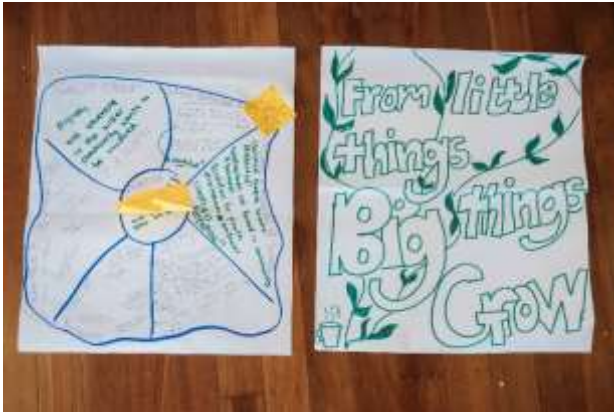


Figure 20 Varied images from the pitch

Closing round

As the afternoon on the third day came to a close, attendees were asked to share what it was they were thankful for from their experience in the last three days. Some of their responses are as follows:

WHAT ARE WE GRATEFUL FOR?

The SHIFTS in my THINKING

The opportunity to share my voice and my experiences

Leadership and courage to act

Being part of these projects

STORIES

The people who have taken the time to come together here .

The facilitated space and the intentions of everyone.

Acts of kindness MARS DEN & ADCQ HOSTING THE EVENT

Time SHARING

I HAVE HEARD STORIES &

A SAFE SPACE

LEARNED FROM THEM

Deeper connections to my community

Sharing & learning

The people who have the same heart and the commitment to make a change so that my children, and my grandchildren will experience peace.

FOR THE INVITATION TO COME HERE AND FOR REBUILDING MY HOPE IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO BE COMPASSIONATE

Working in a sector where I can be of service to humanity



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Conclusion

It is argued that the creativity and innovation is found outside insular governments and organisations, therefore governments and organisations should collaborate openly with service providers, community and people using servicesⁱ. This is particularly true of social innovation, where the output required is most often a collaborative process that meets a social need. Events like this Strategic Conversation provide the environment, tools and knowledge that facilitate the kinds of fresh thinking that creates value and innovation.

Creating events such as these provide opportunities for cross sector collaboration which often takes the form of creative matching amongst attendees. This can be the assembling existing assets and capabilities in an unfamiliar way to generate something that is new and uniquely responsive. The development of projects and ideas as those outlined above, which are developed with colleagues and partners in different sectors. The winning pitch for example had a core team of parents, child and family sector workers, people with lived experience of domestic and family violence, and of the child safety system, foster carers and a scientist. The different skills, tools and experience that comes with each of these individuals provides a broader range of responses than can be established in isolation.

This event received overwhelmingly positive feedback and a third round is being planned in the near future.



ⁱ Chesbrough, H., *Open Innovation: A new imperative for creating and profiting from technology*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2003)