

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As public funded government entities, local councils are ethically responsible to ensure funds are utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible. The majority of Council funding is incurred through rate revenue, however income is also sourced through events, building leases, sporting clubs and parking tickets, all of which were impacted by Covid-19. The loss of this additional income has required innovative ways of accessing and utilising resources.

Collaborations provide an opportunity to achieve better outcomes for Council and our communities. Through pooling of budgets and resources, Councils can access a wider range of opportunities and provide services or infrastructure they wouldn't necessarily have been able to provide on their own.

Collaboration can also facilitate innovation, by providing a wider range of resources, and hence a wider skill set and knowledge base. Ideas generated by one Council, may be able to be realised through utilising the specialist knowledge or skill set from another Council.

**The purpose of the project was to develop guiding principles that can be adopted by local councils to improve the likelihood of successful collaboration ventures.**

An evaluation of eight collaborative projects was undertaken, with projects selected to represent the different functions of local governments. Information was gathered around the successes and failures of the collaboration and what contributed to these outcomes.



The following were identified as contributing to the success of their collaboration:

- Long-term, formal agreements
- Understand your partner (structurally and culturally)
- Formal governance structure addressing ownership to ensure accountability and transparency
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Importance of trust, respect, goodwill, commitment, aligned values and equality between collaborating partners
- Positive culture within participating staff and Project Management Group
- Focus on greater good with demonstrated benefits to the community
- Improved service delivery by really listening to community feedback
- Planning and open communication is critical
- Strong leadership by like-minded CEO's / Executive Teams / Mayors to drive collaboration
- Middle and upper-level management involvement is vital to ensure the end result meets everyone's needs
- Self-confidence and desire to learn from one another. Be comfortable with being uncomfortable so help creates traction and is not seen as a threat
- Create a culture where collaborating becomes second nature.



Challenges that were encountered include:

- Convincing staff that it is worth collaborating
- Staff feeling threatened by change, loss of control and evidence of a lack of performance
- Staff members fear of data – reveals the truth
- Implementing the same service standard across more than one council
- The lack of delegation for decision-making by project officers and resulting delays
- Lack of agility to be flexible for partner's individual way of doing things and ideas
- Managing different Council chambers. The politics may differ between partnering councils
- Overcoming opposition from the community

Learnings from the collaboration and areas for improvement include:

- Strengthen the link with executive management in the governance model
- Be adaptable for improvement or change, for example a change of leadership
- Fully investigate the project scope prior to the agreements being finalised to ensure budget is adequate.

**In summary, collaboration can be used to help alleviate the increasing financial and political pressures, but can be impeded by societal, process and leadership barriers across local government.**

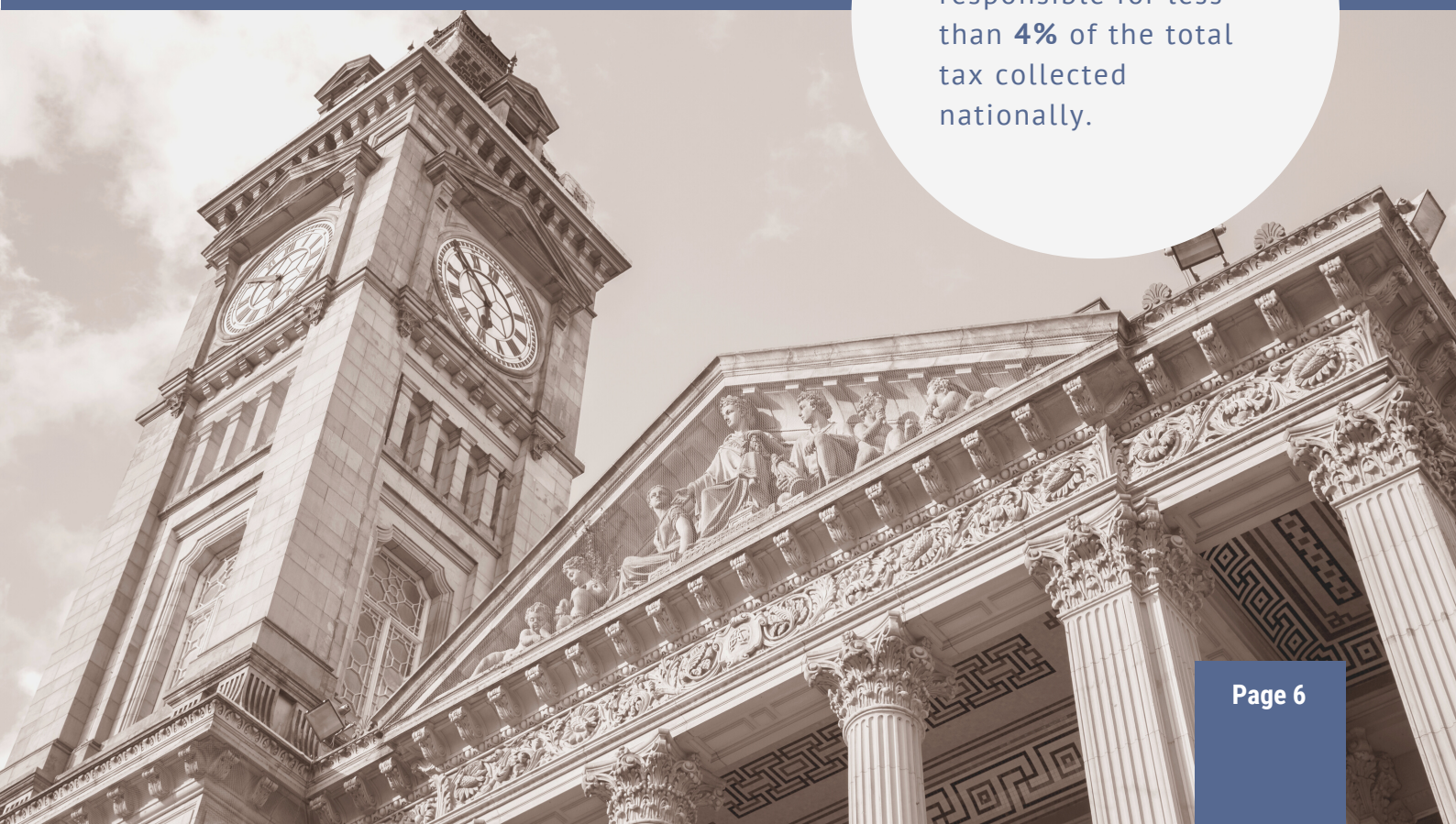
# BACKGROUND

As public funded government entities, local councils are ethically responsible to ensure funds are utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Local Government Association of South Australia (2021) states “Councils collect less than 4% of taxation, while providing hundreds of facilities and services that improve their communities”. The majority of Council funding is incurred through rate revenue, however income is also sourced through events, building leases, sporting clubs and parking tickets, all of which were impacted by Covid-19. The loss of this additional income has required innovative ways of accessing and utilising resources. Collaborations between councils or with external organisations provides an opportunity to achieve better outcomes for our communities.

**Cross Council Collaboration is proposed as one of the biggest opportunities facing Local Government in South Australia in the next five years.**

## **Did you know...**

Local government is responsible for less than **4%** of the total tax collected nationally.



# Purpose



The purpose of the project was to develop guiding principles that can be adopted by local councils to improve the likelihood of successful collaboration ventures.

## Project Objectives



### Research

Research the theory of collaboration to gain better insight into factors that improve the likelihood of delivering successful collaborative projects.



### Evaluate

Evaluate existing collaborative projects of local councils to assess the successes and failures and what contributed to these outcomes.



### Develop

Utilise the results of the above two activities to develop a set of guiding principles that aim to assist and support the delivery of successful collaboration projects, supported by real-life examples.



### Identify

Identify benefits of collaboration to local government and the community, and triggers for collaboration opportunities.

## Outcomes



Outcomes in the form of guiding principles will be formulated in a manner that can be easily applied in a practical setting and are flexible to suit the diverse nature of local government.

# What is collaboration?

For the purpose of this project, collaboration is defined as any collective action between two entities or more, that combine to work towards a common goal, to gain benefit and achieve more than if they had acted independently.

Collaborations may be formal or informal and can be used to help alleviate the increasing financial and political pressures faced by Councils. However, they can often be impeded by societal, process and leadership barriers.

**"Collaboration involves two or more organisations working towards a common goal and creating a new product beyond what they would have achieved individually"**

(Oseland, 2017)





# Principles



Common principles identified through the literature review that enhance successful collaboration include:

## **Trust and Respect**

Successful collaboration requires a cooperative spirit and mutual respect between the partnering entities. Partnerships based on trust, rather than top-down control, improves the capacity for people to work effectively together.

## **Agreement**

Agreement involves a clear definition of the problem, strategic direction and time frame. All perspectives and interests need to be respected in a fair and open process. Commitment to a shared vision, aims, goals and benefits encourage the growth of trust.

## **Equality and Mutuality**

Partners in a collaboration need to feel ownership and shared responsibility of risk and rewards to effectively contribute.

## **Leadership**

Some individuals may need to be convinced that a collaboration is the best way forward. Committed, passionate and creative champions with engagement skills of communication and emotional intelligence contributes to broad commitment and also builds trust.

## **Continuous Learning**

Monitoring performance and acknowledging weaknesses in a system creates an opportunity for improvement and success. Adaptability enables responsiveness to shifting priorities and unforeseen issues.

## **Public Interest**

A focus on the greater good and community benefit has been identified as a critical success factor for collaboration in a local government setting.

## **Collaboration is a process but collaborating well is a skill that's honed over time (Mosely, 2021).**

The assumption that collaboration will happen naturally should be viewed cautiously. Collaboration methodology and skills discussed in the literature to enhance successful collaboration include:

### **Communication**

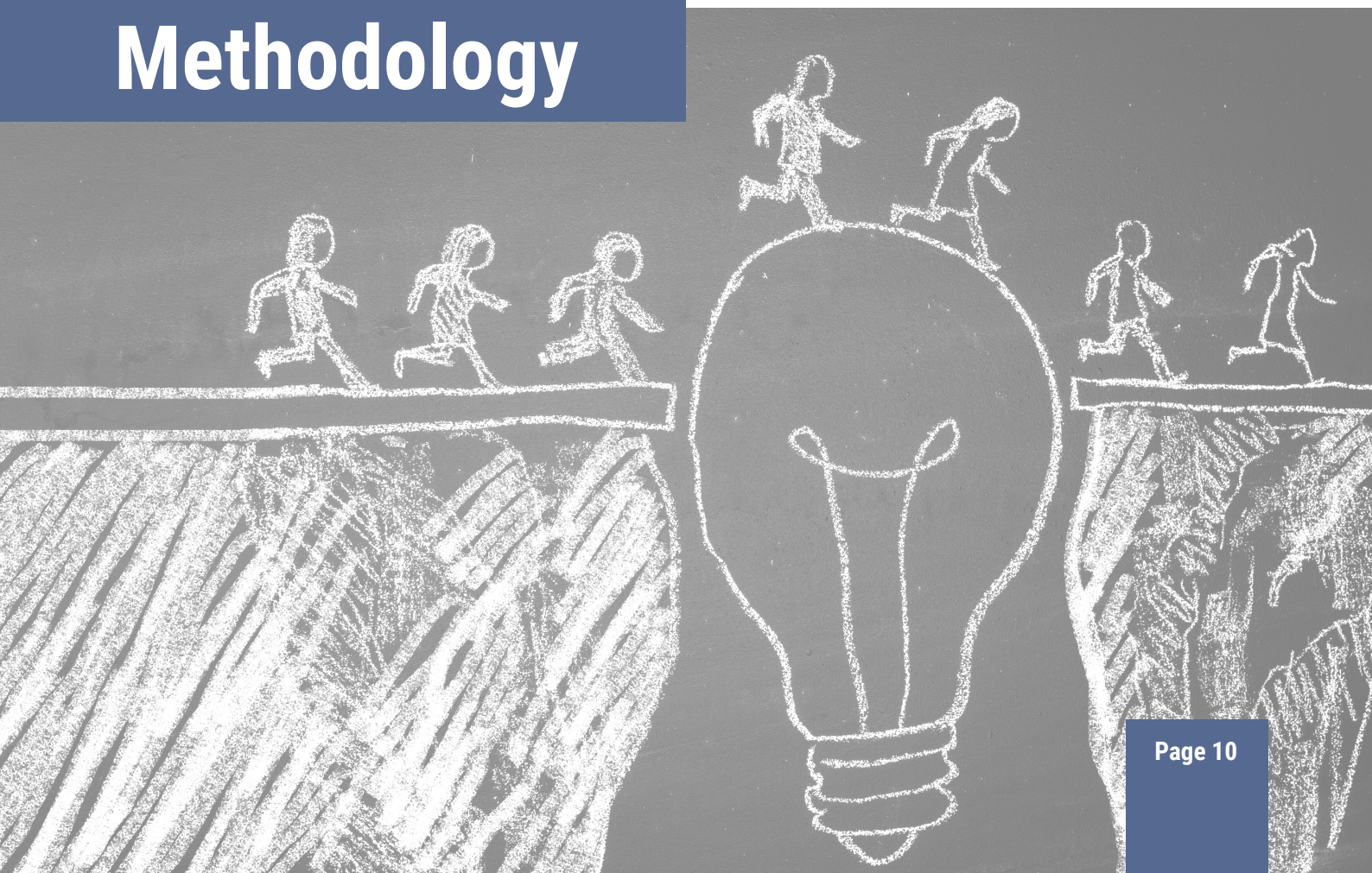
Dialogue is considered to be an essential (but not the only) prerequisite for success; it is critical for building trust, mutual respect and understanding (Hrelja et al, 2021).

Communication should be open, transparent and continuous, ensuring that anything that may affect outcomes or commitment from the partners is shared. Collaboration has a social component and therefore other highly desirable skills include engagement and emotional intelligence.

### **Like-minded Culture**

Like-minded organisational culture between entities is preferable, especially with respect to the value placed on collaboration. Complementary organisational culture reduces the likelihood of conflicting management styles that can hamper engagement and detract from the formation of trust, respect and commitment.

# **Collaboration Methodology**



### **Management Participation**

Establish an advocacy group and expand discussions with mid and upper level managers to foster support for the passionate champions who drive the collaboration. Management's involvement enhances capacity to deal with the complexities of a collaboration and secure executive and political commitment. Organisations forced to collaborate do so half-heartedly.

### **Know the 'Why'**

An agreed definition of the problem and shared purpose paves the way for a strong strategic alliance. When goals are not clearly articulated and a clear road map isn't laid out, individuals can find it difficult to collaborate and contribute.

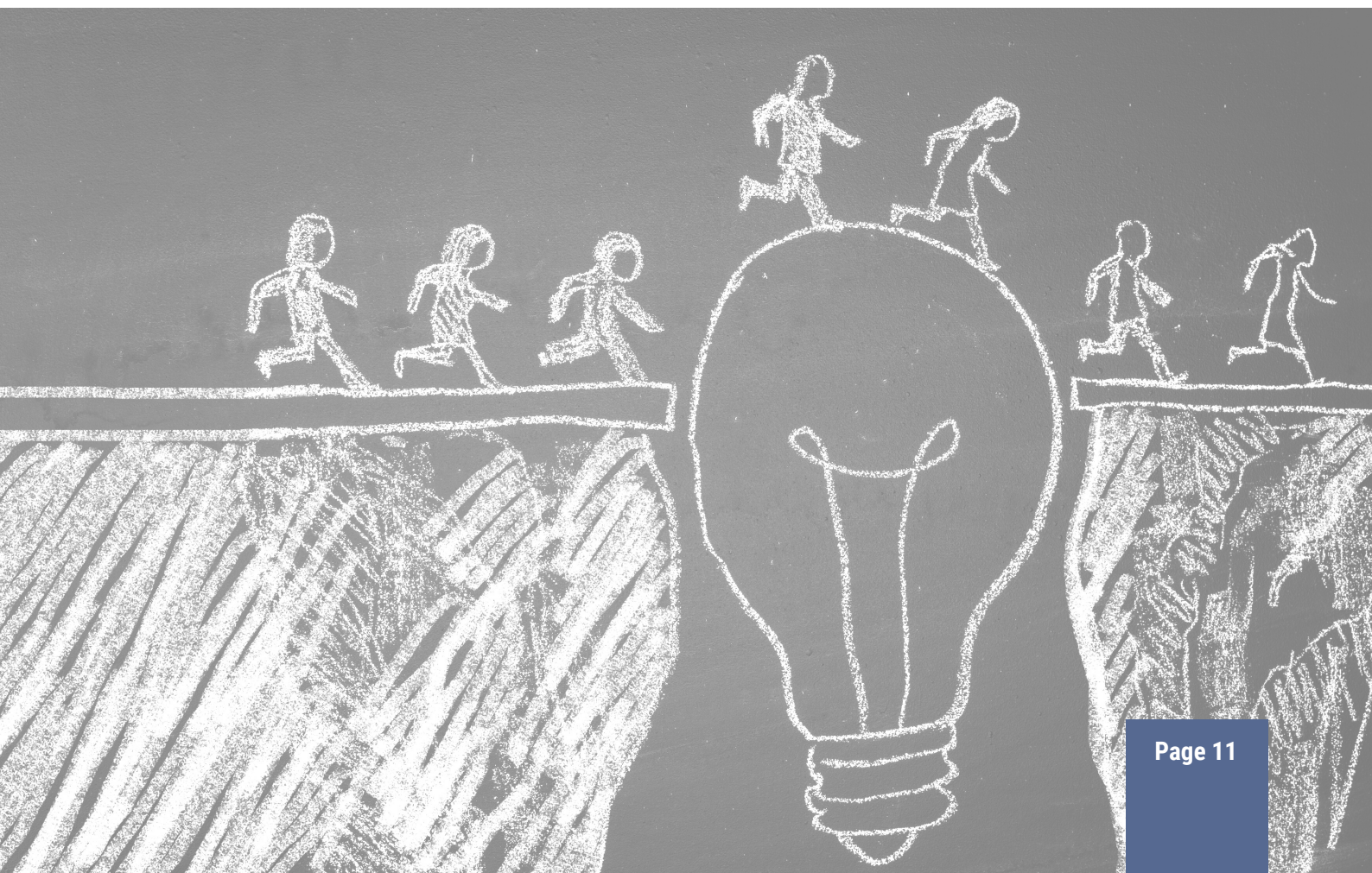
Knowing the 'Why' ensures the outcomes achieved match the initial goal and helps resolve any misunderstandings or conflicts.

### **Good Governance**

Governance arrangements including memorandum of understanding (or similar), budgets, accountability structures, performance monitoring and reporting, ensures the collaboration keeps to task, delivers objectives and provides the opportunity to be upfront when deadlines can't be met. Establish a governance group to oversee progress and encourage continuous learning and improvement.

### **Resource Commitments**

Elicit resource commitments and ensure adequate and equitable resources, ensuring a fair balance from both parties.





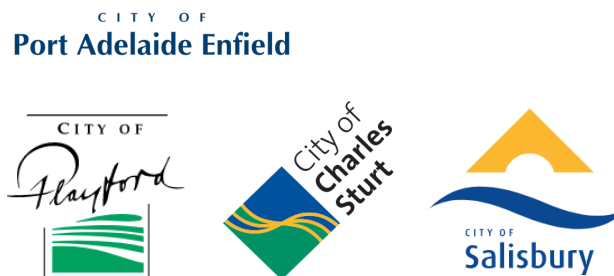
# Consultation

A qualitative evaluation of eight collaborative projects took place over a three-week period during August-September 2021. The projects were selected to represent the many different functions of local governments, including service delivery and infrastructure development. Duration and status was also a consideration, i.e.: short-term vs long term and infancy vs maturity.

A series of questions were posed and information gathered about the successes and failures of the collaboration and what contributed to these outcomes.

The interview questions (appendix 1) were formulated using the findings of the literature review and addressed factors relating to the establishment of the collaboration, key participants, governance framework, benefits and learning opportunities.

We thank the representatives of the following collaborations who agreed to participate:



# Consultation Findings

Consultation participants identified that the following contributed to the **success** of their collaboration:

- Long-term, formal agreements
- Understand your partner (structurally and culturally)
- Formal governance structure addressing ownership to ensure accountability and transparency
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Importance of trust, respect, goodwill, commitment, aligned values and equality between collaborating partners
- Positive culture within participating staff and Project Management Group
- Focus on greater good with demonstrated benefits to the community
- Improved service delivery by really listening to community feedback
- Planning and open communication is critical
- Strong leadership by like-minded CEO's / Executive Teams / Mayors to drive collaboration
- Middle and upper-level management involvement is vital to ensure the end result meets everyone's needs
- Self-confidence and desire to learn from one another. Be comfortable with being uncomfortable so help creates traction and is not seen as a threat
- Create a culture where collaborating becomes second nature.



## Challenges that were encountered include:

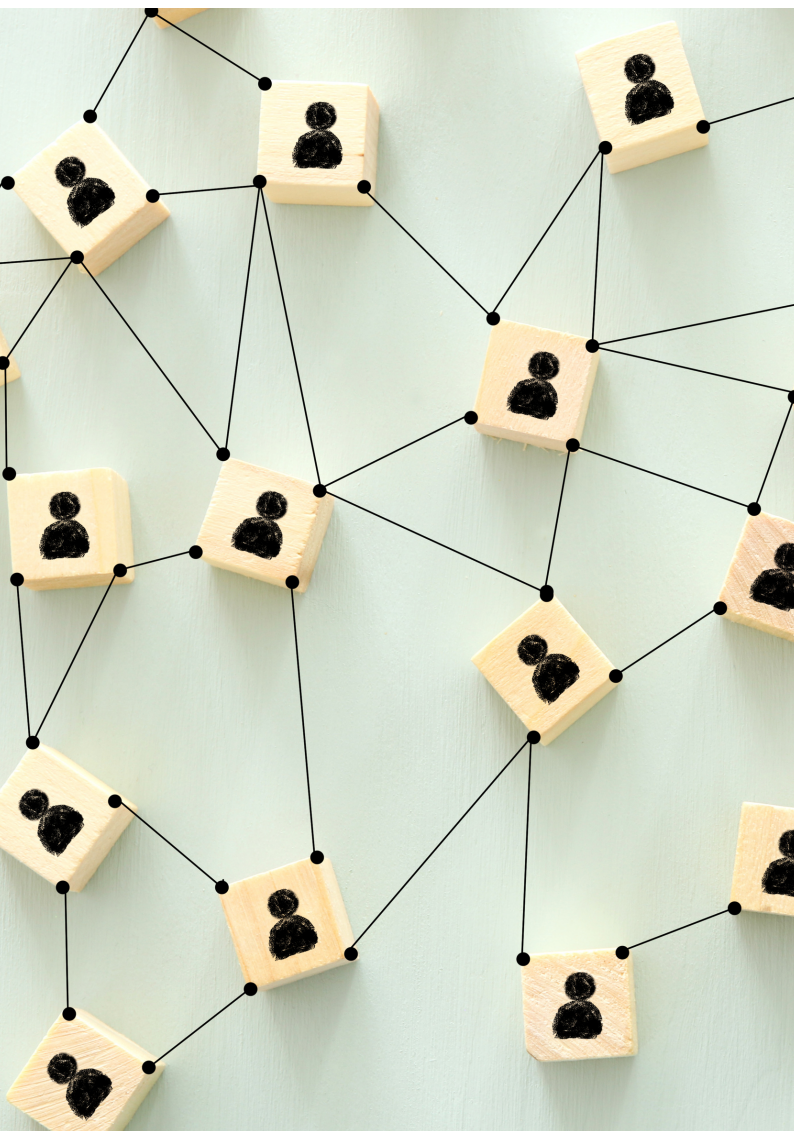
- Convincing staff that it is worth collaborating
- Staff feeling threatened by change, loss of control and evidence of a lack of performance
- Staff members fear of data – reveals the truth
- Implementing the same service standard across more than one council
- The lack of delegation for decision-making by project officers and resulting delays
- Lack of agility to be flexible for partner's individual way of doing things and ideas
- Managing different Council chambers. The politics may differ between partnering councils
- Overcoming opposition from the community



Human resources and the management of people was one of the biggest challenges identified to pursuing a new collaboration. Originally it was thought that this might have been a less complex area for councils. Convincing staff that it is worth collaborating was required on a daily basis. Staff felt threatened by the change due to multiple reasons.

Consultation participants were able to discuss **learnings** from the collaboration and areas for improvement:

- Strengthen the link with executive management in the governance model
- Be adaptable for improvement or change, for example a change of leadership
- Fully investigate the project scope prior to the agreements being finalised to ensure budget is adequate.



Our research also identified many individuals working within Local Councils collaborate with a **network** of people in other councils which form/or function as an informal collaboration. These informal collaborations provide access to valuable support with personnel in similar occupations or fields of work.

Every person who provided their feedback on the value of participating in this type of informal collaboration advised without this collaboration their organisation would incur significant costs as they would be paying consultants and legal professionals for specialist advise, plus increased time and effort creating certain documents from scratch.

Interviews with personnel participating in informal collaborations identified there were a range of very similar **benefits** obtained from this style of collaboration, including:

- Access to other's experiences/ findings and learnings on a similar "issue"
- sharing of legal information/outcomes – cost savings
- expansion of personal knowledge
- exposure to a broad range of ideas and perspectives on an issue/topic
- sharing of Policies/Procedures and Practices
- sharing of templates, spreadsheets, and other documents
- frank and honest discussion and information provided/shared

Whilst the case studies included within this report focus on formal collaborations it is acknowledged the importance that informal collaborations play in providing numerous benefits to Councils.







# Discussion

Several themes emerged from the consultation that correlate with the literature, as visually represented in table 1.

All projects were pursued for a greater good, whether that be economic purposes, “to save the world” as stated by one participant, alleviate demands on employees and volunteers or provide the community with local facilities. The literature cautions local councils from focusing on cost reductions and instead aim to improve service provision. A report titled ‘Local Government Victoria and Collaborative Councils – an Evaluation 2008-2016’ states:

**“many staff are motivated to provide better public services, which improves morale and job satisfaction leading to sustained benefits”**

(State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning 2016, p. 17).

Eight projects had agreements in place that outlined the strategic context and established commitment to a shared vision. Complementing this, governance arrangements featured strongly. Strong governance arrangements provided guidance to staff involved and ensured the project remained to task or outcome.

Features of successful collaboration that received fewer mentions included continuous learning, equality and mutuality, and trust and respect. Some participants commented on the importance of a positive culture within the collaboration however, the principle of ‘like-minded organisational culture’ between partnering entities was mentioned by one participant only. This participant’s feedback reflected the essential nature of communication, engagement, trust, respect and equality.

There is the opportunity for councils to improve the success of their collaborations by addressing these less tangible factors.



Taking the time to consider the organisational culture of partnering council, communicate co-operatively, engage and build trust, lays the foundation and has the potential to improve commitment of stakeholders, whether they are employees, management, elected members or the community.

Spending the additional time up front to address these less tangible factors is worthwhile considering the merits of collaborating. Collaboration across local government can achieve a wealth of benefits for both the Council and their ratepayers. The most tangible of these benefits is the cost savings that occur when two or more Councils collaborate.

Through pooling of budgets and resources, they are able to access a wider range of opportunities and perhaps provide services or infrastructure that they wouldn't necessarily have been able to provide on their own. In the current climate of reducing budgets, limited resources and increasing demand on services, this is invaluable.

When Councils collaborate, they can reduce duplication of services and infrastructure, providing cost savings

through reduction of initial start-up costs, resourcing costs and ongoing maintenance costs. Collaborations also result in improved economies of scale, resulting in cheaper pricing.

Collaboration also facilitates innovation, as working across Councils provides a wider range of resources, and hence a wider skill set and knowledge. Ideas generated by one Council, may be able to be realised through utilising the specialist knowledge or skill set from another Council.

Consultation participants highlighted a wide range of benefits that emerged and were additional to the original purpose of the project. Some of these additional benefits included; improved access to funding and grants, improved economies of scale, procurement alliances, accelerated progress and information sharing.

Outcomes of one project were shared with other regions and the State, and have been set up as examples of best practice. Additional community benefits were also seen through improved access to climate change programs.

# Table 1 - Principles & Methodology Mentioned in Consultation

Case Study	Trust & Respect	Formal Agreement	Public Interest	Good Governance	Equality & Mutuality	Management Participation	Continuous Learning	Like-minded Culture	Transparency / Communication	Resource commitments
Central Adelaide Waste and Recycling Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Northern Waste Management Authority		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Kangaroo Island Bushfire Response		✓	✓			✓				✓
Animal Pound	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Resilient South Regional Climate Partnership		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Fleurieu Aquatic Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Networking collaborations	✓		✓				✓			
Multiple Collaborations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

# Guiding Principles

*for successful collaboration*

This project has identified the factors that improve the likelihood of delivering successful collaborative projects. Through research into contemporary literature and evaluation of collaborations pursued by South Australian local councils, the following guiding principles have been prepared.

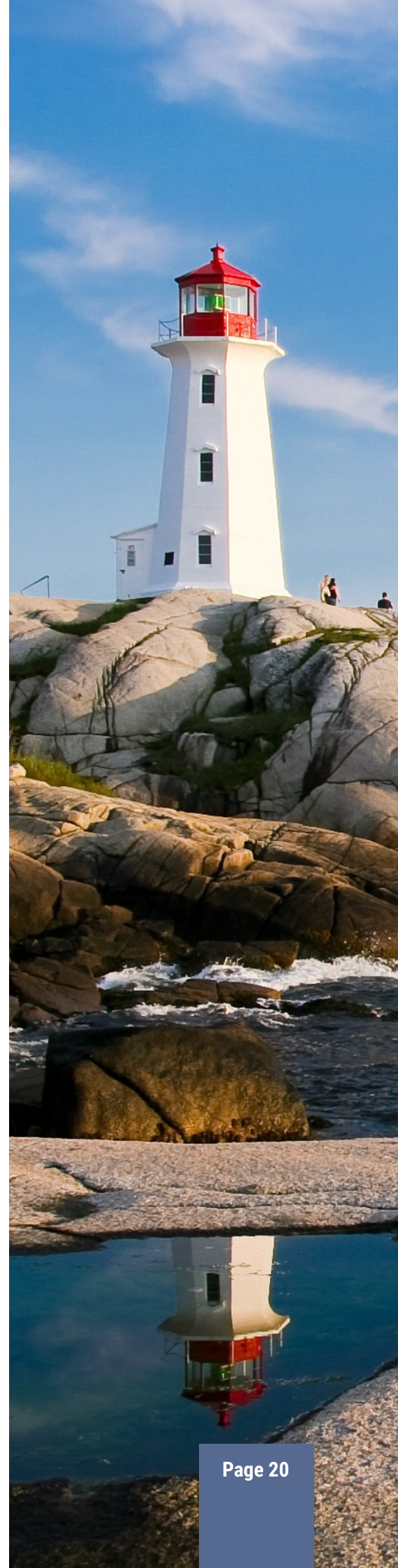
These principles, implemented together with the methodology tips on pages 10-11, are recommended to councils who wish to pursue a successful collaboration.

The challenges encountered when pursuing collaborative projects by consultation participants and their learning opportunities are reflected within the principles and methodology tips.

As discussed in this report, the social nature of collaboration warrants greater focus on the less tangible principles (eg: trust and respect, equality and mutuality), in addition to those principles that are being applied well (eg: public interest, agreement).

The principles can be revisited over time to maintain and secure long-term commitment.

In conclusion, it is anticipated Local Government will be presented with more opportunities and reasons to collaborate as an effective means of providing improved outcomes to society. We hope this report and the Guiding Principles may prove to be a useful tool for local Councils to collaborate successfully.



# Guiding Principles

*for successful collaboration*



## Trust & Respect

Successful collaboration requires a cooperative spirit and mutual respect between the partnering entities. Partnerships based on trust, rather than top-down control, improves the capacity for people to work effectively together.



## Agreement

Agreement involves a clear definition of the problem, strategic direction and time frame. All perspectives and interests need to be respected in a fair and open process. Commitment to a shared vision, aims, goals and benefits encourage the growth of trust.



## Leadership

Some individuals may need to be convinced that a collaboration is the best way forward. Committed, passionate and creative champions with engagement skills of communication and emotional intelligence contributes to broad commitment and also builds trust.



## Equality & Mutuality

Partners in a collaboration need to feel ownership and shared responsibility of risk and rewards to effectively contribute.



## Continuous Learning

Monitoring performance and acknowledging weaknesses in a system creates an opportunity for improvement and success. Adaptability enables responsiveness to shifting priorities and unforeseen issues.



## Public Interest

A focus on the greater good and community benefit has been identified as a critical success factor for collaboration in a local government setting.

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# Appendices





# Consultation - What we asked

1. Why was the project conceptualised? Was agreement on the vision, the problem to be address and strategy to address the problem?
2. Is the collaboration:
  - a. Short or long term
  - b. Formal or informal
3. Who proposed the collaboration (& at what level)? Are other entities affiliated?
4. Is there a history of the partners collaborating previously? Was consideration given to the organisational culture each partner brings to the project and the similarities or differences?
5. Is there an agreement or similar in place that addresses each partners ownership, responsibility and contribution to the collaboration?
6. Who has led the collaboration? What skills have those staff brought to the project?
7. What role has mid and/or upper level management played in the collaboration?
8. Have governance arrangements been established? What do these include?
9. How was the collaboration received by staff?
10. What have been the benefits of collaborating:
  - a. To each partner
  - b. To local government
  - c. To the community
11. What would you do the same?
12. What would you do different?
13. What did you find challenging?



# Case Study Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority (FRWA)



The Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority (FRWA) was created to achieve efficiency gains in waste managements across the region that were identified as part of the Fleurieu Peninsula Waste Strategy in 2007. The Strategy was endorsed and adopted by the four Councils with one of the actions being to form a regional subsidiary to manage waste. The four Councils worked together to develop a Charter, Authority and Board.

Collaboration is ongoing and needs to be reinforced as the composition of the respective Councils, both Elected Members and Administration, change over time. It is the role of the Authority to continue to communicate and promote the benefits of the collaboration otherwise they forget and undervalue the benefits.

This collaboration has provided the respective Councils with professionals with expertise in waste management that they would not have been able to afford without pooling their resources.

To the community this collaboration has resulted in significant financial savings and improved environmental outcomes in particular diversion of waste from landfill. The community also has access to waste education resources that they didn't have previously. The collaboration has also allowed regional waste management infrastructure to be developed with the costs shared between the City of Victor Harbor and Alexandrina Council.

A challenge has been getting the four Councils to agree on the same services. In 2014, the FRWA recommended that the councils change from weekly Municipal Waste and monthly Food Organics Green Organics (FOGO) and Recycling collections to fortnightly kerbside collection for all three waste streams. The additional costs of the services provided a perfect opportunity for cross Council collaboration.

Alexandrina Council, The City of Victor Harbor, the District Council of Yankalilla and Kangaroo Island Council came together to collaborate on a project to effectively implement fortnightly collection of all three waste streams across the Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.



# Case Study

## Kangaroo Island Bushfires

In 2017, the revised State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) designated that the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) is responsible for coordinating the response from Local Government sector during an emergency event.

During the summer of 2019/2020, significant bushfires burnt across half of Kangaroo Island (KI). As the scale of the emergency rapidly escalated, the Kangaroo Island Council (KIC) reached out to the LGFSG under the SEMF. This instigated a collaboration framework for the local government sector to assist the fire-fighting effort being managed by the Country Fire Service (CFS).

The LGFSG managed the collaboration of 23 SA councils in response to this emergency and it required mobilisation to KI within a relatively short timeframe. Remaining committed, flexible and focussed on the immediate task were in some instances difficult; but remained paramount in executing and closing out directions assigned by the LGFSG which ranged from:

- Establishing control lines to protect key infrastructure (e.g. communication towers)
- Traffic management (e.g. closing roads)
- Tree management
- Remediating civil infrastructure
- Supporting relief centres
- 

As the devastation of the emergency unfolded, it presented unique challenges for the LGFSG to manage, which included

- Relative small population of KI (around 4,700) limited local resources to lead/assist external support
- Fatigue of available resources as the emergency response time period continued to grow
- Competing concurrent priorities associated with fire suppression and fire recovery

Managing the emergency situation was also compounded with Kangaroo Island Council (KIC) resources being overwhelmed by the initial magnitude of the fire event and suffering from fatigue. As the LGFSG co-ordinated the collaboration efforts of various volunteer council resources, the importance of respecting local relationships (i.e. understandings between the KIC and Kangaroo Island CFS) and open communication facilitated a relatively smooth transfer of responsibility.

Key learnings coming from the collaboration of the Local Government response to this emergency flagged that although the LGFSG has a well-defined plan (and supported with Joint Operating Guidelines) some directions are unable to be closed out due to the constantly changing conditions on the fire ground. This is where flexibility at all levels of the LGFSG is needed in order to remain committed and focused on suppressing the impact of the fire for the local community.



# Case Study Fleurieu Regional Aquatic Centre



After decades of investigations and planning, followed by a 21-month construction period, the Alexandrina and City of Victor Harbor communities' dream of an aquatic facility on the Fleurieu Peninsula's south coast was realised in March 2017.

The \$21 million project was a joint initiative of the Alexandrina Council and City of Victor Harbor, with funding support from the Australian Government and State Government's Community, Recreation and Sport Facilities Program; and a generous land donation from Beyond Today.

The project was initiated by the communities of the South Coast who had been calling for an indoor swimming facility for nearly 30 years. Given neither Council could afford the project on their own, the two Councils leadership teams formed a project working group in 2007, following ongoing investigations by the City of Victor Harbor to establish an aquatic centre within the region.

The project group was run in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was developed and authorized by both Councils. As the project got traction a formal working agreement between the Councils was established which outlined how the two Councils and their administrations would work together on the development and planning of the project – leading to the final delivery of the Authority and the regional aquatic facility.

The Fleurieu Aquatic Centre is jointly owned by both Councils and is managed via a subsidiary (Section 43 Authority), the Fleurieu Regional Aquatic Centre Authority (FRACA). The aforementioned agreement is built into the Charter for the FRACA as well as a detailed reporting mechanism which allows the Council to be regularly updated on the project.

Whilst an active oversight model of management, where the facilities is managed via an external contractor, has been put in place the constituent Councils still have a level of control to ensure that the facilities continues to be accessible and affordable to all community members.

The City of Victor Harbor and Alexandrina Council have been working together for many years on the delivery of a range of services to the South Coast communities however this project is the biggest collaboration to date. Without this collaboration it is likely that the South Coast would still be without an aquatic centre.



# Case Study Multiple Collaborations



Since early 2017, the Cities of Charles Sturt, Marion and Port Adelaide Enfield have been forging a collaborative partnership, working on a range of performance improvement initiatives utilising shared resources across the three councils, including; irrigation construction, shared procurement, joint fleet procurement, shared utility bill validation, joint ICT Project Delivery to name a few.

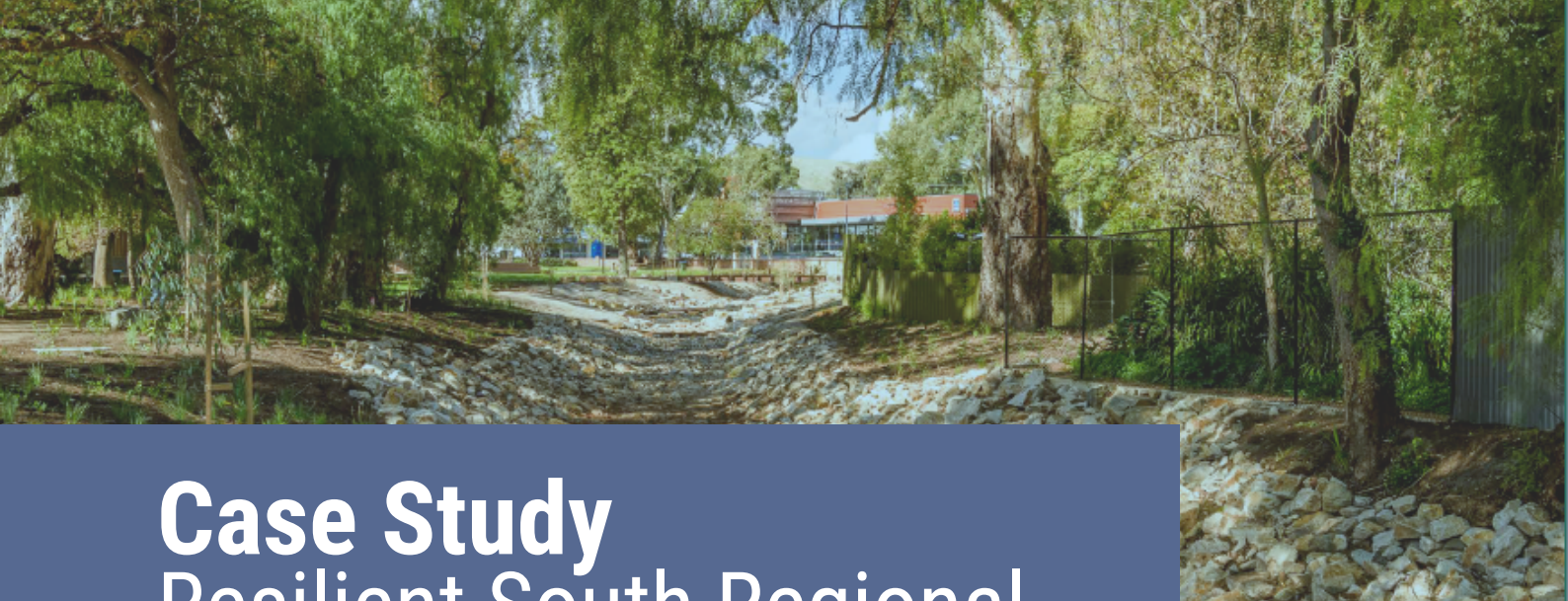
Following service reviews analysing the data and financials of each individual partnering Council, it was identified that there were multiple opportunities for the Council's to join together to reassess service quality and quantity. Collaborating would not only realise savings to ratepayers, but efficiencies in service delivery.

The current collaborations in place are setup as long term, formal arrangements with governance structures that include a collaboration framework, shared philosophy's and principles, head and initiative agreements and commitment statements. Different arrangements are in place dependent on the collaboration type.

The success of the collaborations has been credited to being led by like-minded CEO's who have a strong desire to learn from one another, the trust, respect and commitment in the relationships (between CEO's and between CEO's and Council Members), ownership of previously poor decisions in order to improve, change and benchmark, equal contributions by partners, involvement and support of middle and upper level management and most importantly, the focus on the demonstrated benefits to the community through financial savings, public good and service improvement.

Overall the existing collaborations have been received well by staff, with a culture of collaboration building at each of the Councils and it becoming second nature to collaborate and engage with partnering Councils on potential future projects.

Following the existing collaborations in place between the Cities of Charles Sturt and Port Adelaide Enfield, the joint initiative of the Central Adelaide Waste and Recycling Authority (CAWRA) was formed. "CAWRA's new Materials Recovery Facility will utilise the latest in optical sorting technology to produce clean commodities ideal for developing local markets." In late 2020 the first sod was turned at the MRF site in order to commence construction of the facility. Whilst this particular project and collaboration is still in the early stages it is evident that the project demonstrates the neighbouring Councils "commitment to work together to find the best solutions to make improvements for our communities."



# Case Study

## Resilient South Regional Climate Partnership



Resilient South is a partnership between four southern Adelaide councils and the South Australian government. The collaboration aims to strengthen the resilience of the region so that business, community and the environment can tackle the challenges of climate change and make the most of opportunities.

Partners include the Cities of Holdfast Bay, Marion, Mitcham and Onkaparinga, Green Adelaide and Department for Environment and Water. It is a mature project that commenced in 2011.

Prior to Resilient South, there was a history of the partnering councils collaborating informally. The Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act was the driver for the Mayors to enter a formal agreement and commit to work on climate adaptation collectively. A sector agreement and associated plans define the project's strategy and supporting governance arrangements including investment, ownership of intellectual property, reporting and evaluation. Sustainability and environmental specialists comprise the Program Management Committee and a good culture exists.

Collaborating on the project has benefited each partner, local government and the community. There is improved access to funding and grants, improved economies of scale, a procurement alliance, accelerated progress and information sharing. Outcomes of the project are shared with other regions and the State as examples of best practice. The community benefits through improved access to climate change programs and mutuality in policy and projects between the State Governments and local councils.

To further enhance the value of the project, it has been identified that there is an opportunity to revisit the governance model and strengthen the link with Executive Management. Additionally, greater agility and flexibility to be responsive to local initiatives is also sought. The lack of delegation for decision-making by project officers can be challenging.



# Case Study Animal Pound



A collaboration between the Cities of Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully has recently been created to fund a new dog pound that would service both Council areas. Currently the collaboration is in its formative stages, with the design of the compound just underway.

The decision to collaborate on the project stemmed from both Council's intent to cost-save with the current City of Salisbury pound outdated and requiring significant repairs and Tea Tree Gully coming to the end of their current leasing arrangement where their pound operates. A joint-use facility would bring advantages, including shared operating and capital costs and the replacement of existing assets with a new, contemporary one. (Advertiser 21 August 2021). There have also been discussions around future collaborations by expanding the venture to include two additional councils, if the current collaboration is deemed successful.

This collaboration was proposed by senior management at the City of Salisbury to the City of Tea Tree Gully. It is a long term, formal arrangement with a formal governance structure. There is a Memorandum of Understanding, endorsed by both Council, which defines roles and responsibilities, ownership of intellectual property, and the Terms of Reference. A Project Management Group (PMG) has also been established to oversee the initial design and construction of the compound.

As it was such a large investment, budgets were also agreed up front and the cost sharing determined based up usage of the facility

The collaboration has been positively received by staff and to date some of the successes have been identified as the communication and culture of the collaboration, with clear and honest communication being promoted at PMG meetings. This is to ensure correct decisions are made with all available information and to ensure the requirements of both Councils are met. Input into the collaboration has been from both Councils and through all levels of staff that will be involved in the facility.

One of the learnings that has been realised already, was to invest more time upfront in research. Some of the original decisions were made on outdated information, which is creating some budgetary impacts.

# EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM 2021

## GROUP PROJECT PROJECT GROUP 4

Course facilitated by Dr Lindsay Ryan



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