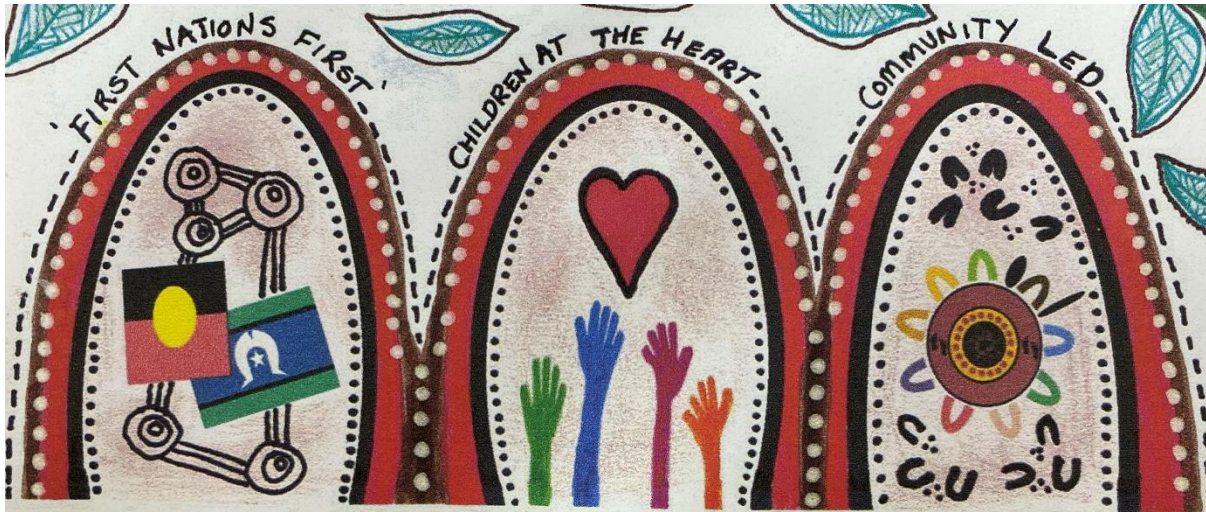




Creating social cohesion through shared decision-making

Logan Together Insights Paper
June 2023



Acknowledgement

Logan Together pays respect to the Traditional Owners and custodians of the Land on which our community lives, works and plays, the Yugambah and the Yuggera people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and seek their guidance and wisdom to ensure all children get the best start in life. We extend our respect to all Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Logan and across Australia.

Contents

Acknowledgement	2
Glossary	4
Executive Summary	8
Scope and Context	8
Our mutual obligations through Shared Decision-Making	9
Table 1: Value proposition of Shared Decision-Making by sector	11
1. Setting the scene	14
1.1 Walking Together for Logan’s Children event	14
1.2 Time to act!	15
2. Community assets and the ask of government	16
2.1 Modelling Shared Decision-Making	16
2.2 The assets of community-led collaborations – levers for change	17
2.3 What do we ask of government in Shared Decision-Making?	17
2.4 Shared Decision-Making ground rules at Logan Together	18
3. Systems challenges to achieving Shared Decision-Making	19
Table 2: Cross-sectoral views of the challenges to achieving Shared Decision-Making within the current system	20
4. Value proposition of Shared Decision-Making	27
4.1 Overarching value of Shared Decision-Making	28
Table 3: Cross-sectoral views on the value of Shared Decision-Making	28
4.2 Shared Decision-Making – Growth in social cohesion	31
Table 4: Shifting systems conditions linked to observed increase in social cohesion	32
Table 5: Shared Decision-Making – Collective experience of the emergent growth in Social Cohesion and links to ‘Measuring What Matters’	35
5. Conclusion	37



Glossary

There are some key terms and concepts that are used throughout this document that may mean different things to different people.

This section outlines what they mean in this document and in the work of Logan Together.

Collective Impact	Collective Impact is a community led and cross-sectoral collaborative approach to achieving strong community outcomes. Collective Impact initiatives recognise the unique strengths, opportunities, and challenges of each place. Collective Impact is practised in Logan through workstreams and mindframes aligned with 6 principles:¹ • Container for change • Community Mobilisation • Two-Way learning • Strategic Learning • High leverage Actions • Sustainability
-------------------	---

¹ Collective ed. (2019) *Intermediary Roadmap: The Pathway to Enabling Population-Level Social Change*

Eagleby Together	In 2021, Logan together co-created a strategic approach to take us into the next phase of community-led Collective Impact. This phase included a commitment to maintain a focus on the entire region, through policy influence, Early Childhood awareness campaigns and offerings, and targeted, evidence-based responses. At the same time, the Leadership Table identified that, in order to gain the impact required by community, we would also need to work deeply alongside a series of focus communities in place. Eagleby Together is the first of these communities. It comprises its own local Leadership Group and local Backbone Team, and - at the same time - engages in two-way learning with Logan Together in terms of advocacy, shared partnerships, data collection and evaluation and the Collective Impact approach. Eagleby Together and Logan Together are connected profoundly through the 3 Pillars and a focus on Logan's children, aged 0-8 years.
Middle space	The middle space is where governments and communities come together to identify common language and develop shared goals. It's a space where both groups are willing to listen and learn from one another, and it's where we co-design new ways of working together to achieve those goals. The middle space challenges the old ways of thinking and doing things. For governments, this can mean giving up ingrained patterns, models, and methods; being ready to listen and learn; and committing to the delivery of solutions that are identified by the community. For community, this can mean finding their voice, and stepping up and into leadership.
Most Significant Change	'Most Significant Change' is a participatory methodology which involves stakeholders in identifying the changes they individually see as being of highest value within a change context. The approach generates qualitative data which is then interrogated collectively to determine significance. At Logan Together we have commenced a long-term Most Significant Change process which is revealing important information garnered from our governance and action groups and key cross-sectoral agencies. As this information bank continues to grow, we will sense-make with community to adapt strategy and action.
Shared Decision-Making (SDM)	Shared Decision-Making (SDM) is about people and communities determining their own futures by having a genuine and informed say about what happens in the community and sharing the power to influence local outcomes.

	Community-led initiatives are seeking the opportunity to share the responsibility for how policies, programs, service delivery and funding are developed, designed and aligned to community needs, at the guidance of community members and local governance groups, while sharing the accountability for risk management, evaluation, impacts and outcomes.²
Social cohesion	At Logan Together, we understand that even the strongest individual initiatives will not create change for our children and families without a commensurate focus on developing social cohesion. Our Theory of Change and our re-imagined Early Childhood System therefore require a corresponding focus and investment on strengthening community. We have defined social cohesion as the relationships and assets of society, including the social connectedness, informal networks, attributes, capabilities and skill sets, social inclusion and levels of equity.
Social impact	In this context, social impact refers to the 'net effect of an activity on a community and the well-being of individuals and families.'³ At Logan together, we are working towards measuring the tangible and intangible impact across the ARACY Nest domains of holistic wellbeing.⁴
Social value	Social value is the effect our approach is having on society: • intended and unintended • positive and negative • short and long term⁵. For example: How does engagement in employment impact young people, families and communities? What are the effects on children in kinship care arrangements? Social value is about understanding the relative importance of changes that people experience, and using the insights we gain from this to make better decisions.⁶ • What change has/is occurring and for whom is the change occurring?

² Stronger Places Stronger People partnership and Backbone Alliance Group: Shared Decision-Making Paper April, 2023

³ Collaboration for Impact Website

⁴ Australian Research Association for Children and Youth, Nest Framework

⁵ Social Value Institute Journal, 2022

⁶ Faivel, S: *SROI revolution nor evolution?* SVA Quarterly April 26, 2018

	• How valuable is that outcome based on its relative importance and how much was due to the intervention? The central questions around social value are therefore: • 'To what extent is this a causal relationship linked to our involvement and/or intervention, and what is the value of these changes to our community?'
Systems change	Systems change refers to the shift in the ecosystem surrounding a child: • family foundations • strengthened communities • aligned and integrated services • policies which reflect the needs and priorities of community • environmental domains. Our Collective Impact approach seeks to achieve systems change to improve population-level outcomes for children across generations. To achieve this, we work to create the conditions within tier of the ecosystem which will enable children to thrive.

Executive Summary

Shared Decision-Making is about people and communities determining their own futures by having a genuine and informed say about what happens in the community and sharing the power to influence local outcomes.

Community-led initiatives are seeking the opportunity to share the responsibility for how policies, programs, service delivery and funding are developed, designed and aligned to community needs, at the guidance of community members and local governance groups, while sharing the accountability for risk management, evaluation, impacts and outcomes.⁷

Scope and Context

Since 2015, Logan Together has increasingly worked with cross-sectoral partners to achieve a joined-up approach to address challenges within the Early Childhood system. More recently, as Logan Together has entered a new phase of **community-led**, place-based Collective Impact, decision-making has involved community at the core, centring the knowledge and experience of community to make decisions about the futures of their children. This Shared Decision-Making with community at the heart, is, in itself, producing extraordinary social outcomes. In Logan, we are currently tracking this change through a 'Most Significant Change' methodology.

In June 2023, Logan Together hosted the 'Walking Together for Logan's Children' event (WT4LC event); an opportunity to come together as a group of communities and partners working within the Collective Impact field. Our aims included both stretching the practice, and highlighting our collective findings nationally. The event embraced the Department of Social Services *Stronger Places Stronger People* Annual Learning Event.

This learning offering provided a further opportunity to record and sense-make of the common high-value experiences of Collective Impact practitioners and partners nationally as they worked to embed a Shared Decision-Making approach. Throughout the event therefore, Logan Together and communities across Australia deeply explored and further practised Shared Decision-Making (SDM) with our cross-sectoral partners, focussing on:

- the conditions that are needed for SDM
- how we understand and measure the value of SDM
- how to interrogate, adapt and strengthen the use of SDM

This document consolidates two key elements of both our collective learning through Walking Together for Logan's Children, and the tracked experiences of Logan Together over the past two years.

⁷ Stronger Places Stronger People partnership and Backbone Alliance Group: Shared Decision-Making Paper, April 2023

Specifically, the paper explores:

1. the conditions required to achieve SDM, specifically in relation to the involvement of government, corporates, business and investors⁸
2. the increase in social cohesion evidenced through the act of Shared Decision-Making

The paper does not describe the concurrent early evidence of impact for children and families which we are also seeing unfold through SDM and community-leadership locally and nationally. That evidence of impact has been captured in a range of other papers shared by Logan Together and Collective Impact initiatives across Australia.

At Logan Together, and in many other ready collectives across Australia, we believe that through Shared Decision-Making, we are de-risking the situation for government, providing the accountability, the alignment, the civic infrastructure and the buy-in to create real traction and impact. Beyond simply mitigating the risk, though, **we believe the act of Shared Decision-Making, itself, can achieve holistic benefits for communities, governments and the economy alike.**

Our mutual obligations through Shared Decision-Making

Prior to the WT4LC event, in early 2023, a Logan Together Leadership Table Working Group identified our key requests of Government as we moved towards the 'middle space', in a spirit of Shared Decision-Making.

We asked government to:

- sit with us in Circle to build relationships that will last, as equal partners
- integrate government priority indicators to align with our vision
- gradually embed the Equity Agreement within all funding documentation
- commit to funding agreements which require collaboration
- align with the Collective Plan and priority indicators
- include Logan Together in funding and procurement decisions
- share the data – our data – that offers us deeper insight into areas of hope and concern
- work across Commonwealth and State governments to align new investment around the Collective Plan
- work alongside us to reallocate funds and to pool funding using our plan
- consider the streamlining of reporting for efficiency across government departments
- communicate both upwards to central offices and Ministers, and outwards to communities
- leverage the existing 'Stronger Places Stronger People' Collaboration Agreement between the State and Commonwealth governments
- allow the time for us to sit Circle with community for authentically SDM.

⁸ The companion paper, **The Logan Together Journey to Shared Decision-Making**, will dive more deeply into the required community conditions for SDM. (Due for release December, 2023)

Our work with our national partners and colleagues through the WT4LC event added detail to Logan's request of government, identifying critical existing factors within our current system which might limit, or, alternatively promote, the success of SDM.

These critical conditions included:

- Trust
- Knowledge and understanding
- Unconscious bias and systemic racism
- Mind frames
- Structures
- Procurement and Commissioning Models
- Burden of the approach
- Legislation
- Data and evaluation
- Human resourcing to deliver on shared decisions

The Value Proposition of Shared Decision-Making

It is reasonable to presume that, given the common expectations, new roles and new ways of working required of Shared Decision-Making, the approach would offer a corresponding and commensurate benefit. To highlight this advantage, participants at WT4LC came together to establish the value proposition and benefits of SDM, as seen through the eyes of each sector:

Table 1: Value proposition of Shared Decision-Making by sector

Sector	Value proposition
Community	Building a pipeline of local people to implement local solutions
	Sustainable outcomes and impact for focus group
	Increased participation in solutions that are designed alongside community
	Strengthened and valued Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
	'Grow our own'
	Self-determination
	Improved use of public infrastructure e.g. school has space for medical clinic
	Clarity of community aspirations through Collective Plan and Roadmap - aligned funding to Plan
Government	Community agency and voice
	Building the community-controlled sector (Closing the Gap (CtG))
	Increasingly relevant cultural offerings which meet the needs of community
	Community connectedness
	Movement towards the 'middle space'
	Shared risk – the involvement of community in decision-making de-risks the situation for government
	Re-shape how funding flows
	Improved ways of working together which in themselves build trust and possibility
	Outcomes achieved across policies e.g. Closing the Gap, Early Years Strategy etc.
	Optimise the rich insights of schools and kindergartens which can predict life outcomes
	Compounding, cumulative investment for impact – Re-Stacking the Odds
	Diversification of funding and co-investment
	High levels of accountability maintained both ways
	Establish effective investment and service provision across policy domains by embedding principles and pillars of community practice
	Deeper, authentic understandings rather than perpetuating assumptions and myths
	Enables the achievement of policy objectives e.g. Health Equity, Delegated Authority
	Prevention – building the relationships <u>before</u> there is any need for intervention e.g. child safety
Services	Community acknowledged as context experts - build aspiration
Philanthropists	Community leadership
	Impact
	Effective use of legacy funding
	Catalytic change enabled through flexible investment, free of shackles
	Increase in community and sector capacity
	Social and economic return on investment

Sector	Value proposition
Researchers/ Intermediaries	Open collaboration and learning
	Minimise the burden where communities need to constantly repeat their stories
	Co-create consistent and common approaches and understandings across the system e.g. Neuroscience, First Nations First
Corporates	Addresses corporate vision, RAP etc.
	Minimises disruption of new initiatives for both community and corporation and maximises economic and social benefit
	Builds respect which in turn means the corporate offering is valued, cared for and respected.

And finally, as a collective of community members, partners and practitioners, WT4LC participants added to the body of knowledge captured through the Logan Together 'Most Significant Change' process, by identifying the evidence and detail of social impact already emerging through SDM across Australia, categorised within the following outcomes:

- Strong, inclusive communities
- Increased civic participation
- Heightened skills and capabilities
- Holistic model of care
- Healing and reconciliation
- Common understanding
- Self-determination

As a practice, we are increasingly aware of the shift in social cohesion directly related to SDM, including the development of community assets and the growth in social connectedness, informal networks, attributes, capabilities and skill sets, social inclusion and levels of equity. While this is a profound feature of so many community-led Collective Impact initiatives nationally, we are yet to identify robust ways to capture our observations and measure the changes we are seeing on the ground. **This paper seeks to further that conversation.**

With this in mind, this document offers a collective, cross-sectoral view of the elements of SDM. It draws together the wisdom of the WT4LC event participants, as well as the Logan Together experience over time, to offer a stand-alone capture of the thinking and the observations as they have unfolded during a unique moment in time. As a nation and as a practice there is more work to do as we continue to refine and document our learnings and embed this in our practice and ways of being – we hope this provides an energising boost!

This paper is a conversation starter. We would welcome your feedback on what we have learned so far via phone (07) 3382 1163 or email: logantogether@griffith.edu.au



Creating social cohesion through shared decision-making



1. Setting the scene

1.1 Walking Together for Logan's Children event

In June 2023, Logan Together hosted the Walking Together for Logan's Children event (WT4LC event). The event was an immersive experience looking at the community-led movement happening in Logan which aims to ensure children aged 0-8 years old are happy, healthy and thriving.

Over the years, an important part of our work at Logan has been to embed Shared Decision-Making (SDM) to create impact and systems change. This means:

- creating the conditions that are needed for SDM
- understanding and measuring the value of SDM
- continuing to interrogate, adapt and strengthen the use of SDM

Bringing this together, at the WT4LC event we ran sessions to:

1. understand the need and therefore the value proposition of SDM
2. identify the conditions and the associated systems challenges involved in attaining SDM
3. identify the indicators of social cohesion created through SDM (as experienced by national, cross-sectoral participants over time)

From these consolidated learnings, within this document, we are focused on the opportunities and challenges involved in achieving:

1. the conditions required to achieve SDM, specifically in relation to the involvement of government, corporates, business and investors⁹
2. the increase in social cohesion evidenced through the act of SDM

The paper does not describe the concurrent early evidence of impact for children and families which we are seeing unfold through Shared Decision-Making and community-leadership locally and nationally. That evidence of impact has been captured in a range of other papers shared by Logan Together and Collective Impact initiatives across Australia.

1.2 Time to act!

What we heard at the WT4LC event and through a long-term 'Most Significant Change' process, offers significant insight into the three aspects of SDM:

- the value proposition and systems challenges
- the conditions required
- the evidence of resultant social cohesion.

This paper consolidates both what we heard at the WT4LC event, and our own findings through 'Most Significant Change'. It collates the information so that our Logan Together movement can continue to strengthen its SDM practice. More importantly, though, it is a resource for all our government partners and other Collective Impact practitioners to use as appropriate, in order to continue to take action in their own communities.

The WT4LC event has set the scene and provided a rare opportunity to bring together the voice and experience of SDM from across all sectors engaged in community-led place-based change. We now offer **this document as stand-alone capture of the thinking and the observations as they unfolded during a unique moment in time**. As a nation and as a practice, there is more work to do as we continue to refine and document our learnings and embed this in our practice and ways of being – we hope this provides an energising boost!

At Logan Together, we will:

- continue to explore this new knowledge, with the view to establishing a social and economic value for investing in community leadership and SDM
- provide this collective information to those currently building a national framework for SDM and support its application to inform the community-facing and cross-sectoral components of this framework.

We encourage you to join us on this journey by:

- applying this collective knowledge in ways that support community-led place-based change – from policy, through to practice.
- working together (locally, at state and territory level, and nationally) to build the conditions and ensure the opportunity for intergenerational change is realised.

⁹ The companion paper, **The Logan Together Journey to Shared Decision-Making**, will dive more deeply into the required community conditions for SDM. (Due for release September 2023)



2. Community assets and the ask of government

2.1 Modelling Shared Decision-Making

Within the Walking Together for Logan's Children event, Logan Together offered an opportunity to observe and participate in a 'Fishbowl for Shared Decision-Making'. This was a chance to engage with a live example of co-investment, wrap-around support, policy shift, service reform and co-design of community-led solutions across sectors.

The 'Fishbowl' panel comprised 15 sector leaders who heard about holistic community-led solutions to Health, Wellbeing and Safety emerging from the Eagleby Together initiative. Panellists were then asked to bring the solutions to life, drawing on the assets and influence available to them. By offering this opportunity, our hope was that, as a practice nationally, we could learn more about the requirements, the barriers and the possibilities of shared decision-making.

To set up the 'Fishbowl', we drew from earlier work in Logan which had identified the:

1. assets of our community-led collaborations and the associated levers for change
2. established the Logan Together 'ask' of government in relation to SDM
3. ground rules for sharing decision-making in Logan

These elements had been generated within the Logan Together Leadership Table over time and extended through the co-design of the event itself.

2.2 The assets of community-led collaborations – levers for change

Over time, ready communities across Australia have been able to establish strong foundations which can serve as assets for our work with Government. These assets mean that place-based, community-led initiatives offer meaningful solutions for change.

At Logan Together, and within Eagleby Together, for example, we have been able to generate:

- well organised and aligned community leadership with high levels of accountability
- increasing community agency and voice
- a collective vision and well-articulated plan
- cross-sectoral partners who are aligning behind the plan
- priority outcomes indicators mapped across the life course of a child, 0-8 years
- a strong and capable triumvirate of governance, including the Logan Together Board, the Leadership Table and the First Nations governance of Gnirigomindala Karulbo
- a commitment and embedded practice which allows us to increasingly operate within the middle space
- the resultant opportunity for targeted funding flows which are aligned, efficient and enable real impact.



2.3 What do we ask of government in Shared Decision-Making?

Building on these assets, at Logan Together, and in many other ready collectives across Australia, we believe we are de-risking the situation for government, providing the accountability, the civic organisation and the buy-in to create real traction and impact. Based on the opportunity of these assets, in early 2023, a Logan Together Leadership Table Working Group identified key requests of Government, as follows:

- sit with us in Circle to build relationships that will last, as equal partners
- integrate government priority indicators to align with our vision
- gradually embed the Equity Agreement within all funding documentation
- commit to funding agreements which require collaboration
- align with the Collective Plan and priority indicators
- include Logan Together in funding and procurement decisions
- share the data – our data – that offers us deeper insight into areas of hope and concern
- work across Commonwealth and State governments to align new investment around the Collective Plan
- work alongside us to reallocate funds and to pool funding using our plan
- consider the streamlining of reporting for efficiency across government departments
- communicate both upwards to central offices and Ministers, and outwards to communities
- leverage the existing ‘Stronger Places Stronger People’ Collaboration Agreement between the State and Commonwealth governments
- allow the time for us to sit Circle with community to achieve deep understanding and broad authentic involvement in Shared Decision-Making

2.4 Shared Decision-Making ground rules at Logan Together

In the lead up to the WT4LC event, we codified the ‘ground rules’ for engaging in SDM in Logan. Our expectations are that individuals and agencies involved would:

- have the authority to make the commitments
- be explicit in how this fit within their own agency strategy
- consider a range of supports and investment, including policy and process reform, two-way learning, financial contribution etc.
- understand that solutions proposed by community will be holistic, in line with its ways of working, and will therefore inevitably cross policy domains, agencies and departments
- understand the commitments will be mutually reinforcing i.e. the work of SDM is about weaving together opportunities that support each other, rather than compiling a list of ‘good ideas’.
- be aware that commitments made in the partnership Circle require time to explore and consider via established community governance protocols and processes, prior to full endorsement. Endorsement will be made as the proposals are mapped against our foundational documents and enacted ways of working: the Roadmap and Collective Plan, the Three Pillars, the Elders’ Values, and the Ingredients for Success in Logan

We applied these ground rules, assets and our ask of government and investors during our ‘Fishbowl’ SDM session during the WT4LC event.

Over a two-hour period, the session attracted around \$13 million of direct investment, as well as adjustments to procurement and recruitment approaches, human resourcing and wrap-around support into a cluster of community-led solutions for Health, Wellbeing and Safety in Logan.

3. Systems challenges to achieving Shared Decision-Making

Challenges inherent within the current system are well known, and these challenges reinforce the need for SDM. Even in resource rich communities, elements such as access, cultural safety, relevance and quality often mean there is no definable outcome resulting from the applied investment. So, how are we currently making these decisions about what matters for community? And how do we improve our focus to create real change?

In the first instance, to enable shared decision-making for impact, it is clear there needs to be a common sense of the desired outcomes for each community; outcomes which are known and embraced across sectors.

In Logan, we have worked to address the dissonance of misaligned vision between sectors and have established frameworks to guide the flow of investment using several mechanisms:

1. Our Three Pillars: First Nations First. Community-Led. Children at the Heart
2. Our Collective Plan and Roadmap
3. Our re-imagined Early Childhood System
4. Our ingredients for successful service delivery¹⁰

It is therefore our experience in Logan that shared aspiration is an essential common ground, enabling the conversations towards Shared Decision-Making to begin. Nationally, through the work of community-led Collective Impact, we are increasingly able to achieve this alignment. There are, however, other critical conditions within our current system which prohibit and limit, or indeed promote and catalyse, the success of SDM.

Through the opportunity of the SDM 'Fishbowl', we were able to capture the following insights from across the community, government, service, philanthropic, corporate and research sector. In [Table 2](#) below, we have used our learnings from the Fishbowl session to identify the current systems challenges which make it difficult to progress SDM. We have also captured the workarounds currently at play to enable and mitigate these barriers to enable SDM in place.

While this capture offers only a snapshot, and is not intended to be exhaustive, it provides strong insights into the current challenges experienced within and across sectors when organising for outcomes and impact.

¹⁰ The 'Ingredients for success in Logan' comprise elements which we advocate should inform any new offering into the region and should provide the basis for review and adjustment within current offerings. We are working to see these ingredients, the three pillars, and the Roadmap outcomes, included within policy, funding agreements, strategic plans and service level agreements across Logan, thus underpinning SDM.

Table 2: Cross-sectoral views of the challenges to achieving Shared Decision-Making within the current system

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
Trust	Pre-existing and historical levels of trust (and therefore the fragility of emerging relationships) can impact the success of Shared Decision-Making approaches	
	Trust development takes time -against political cycles which are time-bound	
	It takes time to create the civic infrastructure to enable Shared Decision-Making, leading to a Collective Plan and common vision - years	Communities currently sharing their learnings independently or through initiatives such as Stronger places Stronger People, to support a scaling up of effort
	High levels of distrust exist for fly-in-fly-out services, pilots and funding rounds	
Knowledge and understanding	Limited transparency for community about what is possible for government and what is not possible	
	A lack of maturity in government and corporates as to how to work with community	NIAA Empowered Communities currently being explored as a model for broader application
	Limited supports and capacity-building opportunities in place by investors to underpin investment and compliance accountabilities within community governance	
	Currently no effective strategy for shifting mindframes in government/services other than 'learning by doing', which is not commonly offered and works based on the generosity of community	
	Limited understanding (and the exertion of political forces) which mean government is unsure and sometimes inconsistent as to where to lean in and where to step away	
	Minimal common language between community, government and the sectors	
	Collective Impact practice is still growing. Each sector needs to understand more about what works	Communities of Practice have had limited success to this point. Drawing on relationships with a small number of collaborations who offer

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
		good will and generosity without resourcing
	Authentic access to community thinking is currently limited and uncommon, impacting decisions. Time-appropriate delivery mechanisms need to be established within funding agreements - how do corporates build the relationships?	Some corporates dipping toes in the water behind their RAP/CSR/Social Value obligations, without the strong relationships with communities
	For corporate investment, technical processes can often be prioritised, technical demands can be high and compliance can be prohibitive or counterproductive without the corresponding support in place	
Unconscious bias and systemic racism	Cultural nuance, preferences and priorities not widely understood within key departments and agencies, leading to unsound interventions and re-stigmatisation	
	Inherent cultural and socio-economic biases will need to be addressed	
	It will take time to address the gap between experience and capability in the middle space. An effective and consistent approach to address the gap between experience and capability in the middle space has not been identified	Individual communities are embedding First Nations First, and the Middle Space into their ways of working and offering government an opportunity to sit at the table in a spirit of co-learning
	Effective solutions to maintaining data sovereignty are not mainstream	Individual communities are currently exploring with their partners how best to maintain data sovereignty
	Community politics could potentially influence decision-making and action – governance needs to be strong	
Mindframes	Perpetual power imbalance	
	For several departments, there is a 'respond and investigate' mentality to crises, rather than a commitment to prevention. This will take time to overcome	Applying more broadly some of the disaster management learnings which rely on engagement with community. Remove barriers within our authority to enable those on the ground to do the work differently and protect and

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
		advocate for these changes more broadly. Individual leaders working to build a critical mass/contagion to grow the required mindframes.
	Sense of a lack of creativity and imagination by government	
	Existing leadership which does not always enable or prioritise community engagement in decision-making. We need the right leaders, with the right values, in the right places	
	Government tends to invest in what is already there rather than innovate	
	Inflexible system which does not allow the time, space and respect for community-led design	Philanthropic engagement as silent partners with community and trusted partners to 'build in' flexibility and allow community-led innovation
	Change is countercultural for some sectors	
	Limited 'skin in the game' due to the protection of bureaucratic structures, practices and procedures. Limited appetite to step into own authority to make the change.	
	Government processes, protocols and structures reflect a deeply embedded low appetite for risk, sometimes to the point of aversion. Little discussion of levels of risk tolerance	
Procurement and Commissioning Models	Procurement is set up with large organisations in mind, excluding smaller community agencies. Small agencies do not have the available grant writers to vie for competitive tenders and the associated criteria and specifications are often prohibitive. Procurement solutions which do not inherently favour the 'usual suspects' will take time to achieve	Small agencies volunteer and draw from the community leaders to address the current shortfalls Pass hat around to community partners to cobble together workable solutions e.g. demountables as basis of Maternity Hub; an accumulation of small funding amounts to contract Connectors etc

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
	Large white organisations typically contracted to deliver through current procurement approaches, with limited understanding of cultural nuances	
	Current recruitment approaches do not always deliver fit for purpose service providers	
	Pace of funding opportunities jars with community rhythms: Fast-paced to push out an initiative within a pre-ordained time frame and rush before end of year Slow moving when community is ready to mobilise and act (formalising new contracts takes significant time and again, diminishes trust) This will take time to understand and adjust	
	Tender process for corporates is so long (sometimes years). When is the right time to talk to community when there is a chance the bid will not be successful?	
	Corporate processes, including multiple layers of Board decision-making for multi-nationals, can take considerable time	
	Holistic solutions typically not valued/ embedded in service delivery. Funding and compliance require deep separation and ring fencing within holistic responses within current models of procurement and commissioning	
Structures	Unwieldy edifice of government departments vs the reality of daily life	
	Transitory nature of government roles which denies relational approach. No one is there for the 'whole journey'	
	Structures which prohibit holistic solutions. Currently there is no cohesive strategy or structure to enable co-investment across policy domains for the general community – this will take time and resources to create	
	No efforts to streamline investment which means some agencies will miss out. Self-preservation can be hard-wired in	

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
	Government structures do not always result in promoting equity, including equitable allocation of resources	
Burden of the approach	Co-design and shared decision-making can exert a further burden on community leaders, even with the civic infrastructure in place to lead these decisions	
	There is a risk that people are increasingly weary of taking on the 'little fights' and are not able to step this up to become a whole of system change that places the weighting on culture, community embeddedness and place	
	Limited available time and space amongst community to enable the people with the expertise to teach and lead how to work effectively with community	
	Shared Decision-Making outcomes and community leadership can promote, and indeed necessitate, a rapid growth in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and small community agencies. Maintaining a sensitive and manageable rate of growth to meet deliverables is essential	
Legislation	Legislation currently prohibits involvement of some community members in the shared solutions due to historical misdemeanours. How do we build participation, support individual growth and value a broad range of voices?	
Data and evaluation	We are not always measuring the right things currently and need to be smarter about our data collection and application	Renewed efforts to identify metrics and exchange and interpret data on social impact
	A lack of common vision about what success might look like for community, which includes intangible outcomes for individuals and families	
	Insufficient sharing of stories of success	
	Limited access to government data within and across departments which means community is not fully informed	
	An inability and/or a lack of consistency about how to measure change	

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
	Data exchange is not conducive to this way of working, despite decades of effort	Multiple intermediaries (ste-wide and national) are emerging to address this challenge at a policy level. On the ground, individual communities are working to build personal relationships which allow data sharing.
	The evidence of impact can be deemed inadequate	Early Evidence of Impact report. Increased focus on lifting high the evidence. Social Return on Investment and Cost analyses underway Stronger Places Stronger People and Connected Beginnings support of evaluation and data collection and interpretation
	Data collection methods are invasive, data sets are not helpful or joined up and data management does not acknowledge data sovereignty	
	No overall clarity/mapping of investment pathways, gaps and opportunities - therefore no 'system' actually	Establishment of small coalitions to streamline funds in line with reimagined EC system. Local services working together to streamline and reallocate funding without access to the full picture. Generating own maps and understandings of the system, the investment and the community perceptions of quality. Move into the new ways of working without formalisation of contracts in order to maintain community trust - services and community take on the risk

Current systems challenges	Detail across sectors	Informal 'workarounds' and mitigation strategies
Human resourcing to deliver on shared decisions	There is a national and global leadership crisis which would impact the success or failure of Shared Decision-Making efforts; both locally and within and across sectors	
	The reality of available workforce. Shared Decision-Making often points to the generation of a workforce 'of community' for reasons of sustainability, continuity of care and cultural relevance. Growing a local workforce can take time. Specifically, delivery and involvement by First Nations and multicultural community members is limited by population numbers, family commitments, the legacy of colonisation and limited transport options, for example; remote regions and those with entrenched disadvantage have troubles retaining professional services. We can co-create, but can we deliver the human resources? What is the corresponding holistic workforce development strategy?	



4. Value proposition of Shared Decision-Making

The conditions and applied behaviours of Shared Decision-Making create social and economic value.

This section outlines what we heard through both the WT4LC event and the outcomes of our Logan Together 'Most Significant Change' process, in relation to the different types of value created by SDM.

Changing how we work to use SDM will have benefits for all stakeholders in the system – the collective approach has a fundamental role to play in seeing social impact, outcomes and change, and making the task of tackling entrenched disadvantage real. We have also seen how SDM can contribute to the success of national policy and investment approaches.

4.1 Overarching value of Shared Decision-Making

Shared Decision-Making is at the heart of our efforts to bring to life the policy objectives that are aiming to make a real and intergenerational difference in our communities and throughout Australia. These include Closing the Gap, as well as the forthcoming Early Years Strategy and Employment White Paper. As acknowledged through Treasury, at its heart, there is significant value in empowering local communities to have a real say in the decisions that impact their lives, to ensure that we nurture healthy, secure and cohesive communities.¹¹

During our SDM 'Fishbowl' session, the 15 panellists identified the value proposition of SDM within their particular sector. There were some commonalities but also some key and unique advantages articulated by participants across the different sectors.

Table 3: Cross-sectoral views on the value of Shared Decision-Making

Sector	Value proposition	Regional economic outcomes	Targeted resource flows	Strengthened ACCOs	Increase in Participation	Increase in Quality of services	Impact for children and families ¹²
Community	Builds a pipeline of local people to implement local solutions	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Achieves sustainable outcomes and impact for focus group	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Increases participation in solutions that are designed alongside community				✓	✓	✓
	Strengthens and values Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations			✓	✓		✓
	Allows community to 'Grow our own'	✓		✓			
	Self-determination	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improves use of public infrastructure e.g. schools house clinics	✓	✓		✓		
	Clarifies community aspirations through Collective Plan - offers aligned funding		✓				
Government	Lifts community agency and voice		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Builds the community controlled sector (CTG)	✓	✓	✓		✓	

¹¹ See further, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP Treasurer, *Hard heads and warm hearts: Address to the 2023 Sambell Oration*, Melbourne (11 July 2023). Available at: <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/jim-chalmers-2022/speeches/address-2023-sambell-oration-melbourne>

¹² As defined within agreed community plans

Sector	Value proposition	Regional economic outcomes	Targeted resource flows	Strengthened ACCOs	Increase in Participation	Increase in Quality of services	Impact for children and families ¹²
Government (continued)	Enables increasingly relevant cultural offerings meeting the needs of community			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Supports community connectedness			✓	✓		✓
	Moves towards the 'middle space'		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	De-risks the situation for government	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Re-shapes how funding flows	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Improves ways of working together, building trust and possibility			✓	✓		✓
	Achieves outcomes across policy domains e.g. CTG, EY etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Optimises the rich insights of schools and kindergartens, enabling prevention and early intervention		✓			✓	✓
	Allows cumulative action and investment for impact e.g Re-Stacking the Odds	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Diversifies funding and co-investment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Establishes high levels of accountability - both ways			✓			✓
	Establishes effective investment and service provision across policy domains by embedding principles and pillars of community practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Avoids assumptions and myths by offering deeper, authentic understanding		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Enables the achievement of policy objectives e.g. Health Equity, Delegated Authority		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Moves towards prevention – building the relationships <u>before</u> there is any need for intervention e.g. child safety		✓	✓		✓	✓

Sector	Value proposition	Regional economic outcomes	Targeted resource flows	Strengthened ACCOs	Increase in Participation	Increase in Quality of services	Impact for children and families ¹²
Services	Builds aspiration and confidence – community		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Philanthropists	Builds community leadership	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Creates impact	✓	✓				✓
	Effectively applies legacy funding		✓				✓
	Enables catalytic change through flexible investment; free of shackles		✓				✓
	Increases community and sector capacity		✓	✓			✓
	Achieves social and economic return on investment	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Researchers/ Intermediaries	Instils open collaboration and learning		✓				
	Minimises the burden where communities need to constantly repeat their stories		✓		✓	✓	
	Co-creates consistent and common approaches and understandings across the system e.g. Neuroscience etc		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corporates	Addresses corporate vision, RAP etc.	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Minimises the disruption of new initiatives for both community and corporation and maximises economic and social benefit	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Builds respect which in turn means the corporate offering is valued, cared for and respected.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

4.2 Shared Decision-Making – Growth in social cohesion

As community-led, place-based collaborations mature across Australia, there is increasing evidence of impact for children, families and young people. This has been documented in a wide range of papers over the past years and new evidence continues to unfold.

Amongst many examples, at Logan Together, we are able to cite the reduction in still births for First Nations babies as being a direct consequence of the co-designed Maternity Hubs in our region (0.3% in Logan against between 1% and 5% in other parts of Queensland). We also reference the significant changes unfolding in reunifications for children in out of home care related to the community-designed Child Safety responses within a cultural context, and the quality-of-life improvements for our CALD community through the opportunity of our bespoke Community Hubs. Our focus on quality play has seen significant and measurable shift in the early years of school, including increased social inclusion, learning attributes, attendance and behaviour.

However, there is another story to be told. As a practice, we are also increasingly aware of the shift in social cohesion directly related to SDM, including the development of community assets and the growth in social connectedness, informal networks, attributes, capabilities and skill sets, social inclusion and levels of equity. While this is a profound feature of so many community-led Collective Impact initiatives nationally, we are yet to identify robust ways to capture our observations and measure the changes we are seeing on the ground.



*The environment around families raising children either makes it easier and supports effective caregiving or can make it harder... The real question is **are we as a society creating a supportive environment so that all families can raise healthy children?**¹³*

¹³ Shonkoff 2000

The Australian Government Department of Treasury's, *Measuring What Matters* framework,¹⁴ reminds us from a policy perspective of the criticality of measuring the right things well. On the ground, Collective Impact initiatives recognise this imperative through the full work stream of 'strategic learning'¹⁵ and associated UMEL¹⁶ frameworks.

Measuring the right things effectively to assess holistic wellbeing is also supported by the OECD. The OECD indicators of current well-being and the predeterminants of future wellbeing identify the importance of the key dimensions of subjective well-being, safety, social connections and civic engagement. Each of these dimensions intersect with the traditional domains of health, housing and employment etc.

Through the WT4LC event, participants identified many of the indicators of holistic wellbeing which are augmented and enabled through the act of SDM. Of critical importance was the focus on human and social capital and social cohesion – an OECD-identified resource for future wellbeing.

At the WT4LC event, a panel discussion unfolded around the observed increase in social cohesion emerging from the opportunity of SDM. Around two hundred and fifty cross-sectoral participants gathered in small groups to consider the shift in social capital they had individually and collectively experienced and/or observed over time. After the event, this information was then combined with an earlier 'Most Significant Change' process undertaken in Logan, involving a further 50 Logan Together partners. The impact was recorded across 7 outcomes:

- Strong, inclusive communities
- Increased civic participation
- Heightened skills and capabilities
- Holistic model of care
- Healing and reconciliation
- Common understanding
- Self determination

[Table 4](#) below shows the systems conditions which participants in both WT4LC and the Logan Together 'Most Significant change' initiative reported as changing as a consequence of Shared Decision-Making and community leadership. These lead indicators of reform were then further linked to observed and experienced improvement in social cohesion.

Table 4: Shifting systems conditions linked to observed increase in social cohesion

Lead Indicators – Systems Change	Observed increase in Social Cohesion
STRONG, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES	
• Mechanisms for energy marshalling • Shared agenda • Shared values • Heightened community-held relationships	Empowered community
	Community connectedness
	Increased participation
	Decreased isolation

¹⁴ See further: <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters>

¹⁵ Weaver, L and Kabaj, M *Collective Impact 3.0*, 2017

¹⁶ UMEL = Understanding, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Lead Indicators – Systems Change	Observed increase in Social Cohesion
	Cross-generational engagement
	Increased strength, power and imagination
	Increased volunteerism
	Increased employment and new employment options and pathways
	Community championing First nations First
	Happy, confident community members
	Aspirational community
INCREASED CIVIC PARTICIPATION	
- Trust in the collaboration - Confidence and participation in the work - Trust in the system - Woven solutions - Access to the most vulnerable members of society - Better relationships with agencies - Co-design	Sense of safety experienced by community
	More community-led responses nationally
	Community at the heart
	New employment pathways and opportunities - pride and purpose
HEIGHTENED SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES	
- Shared learning - Learning by doing - Hearing and listening - Structure and support available to those who require it - Agencies are the ear as well as providing a voice - Language broadened to include social value - Strengths not deficit narrative	Problem-solving capacity
	Data literacy
	Leadership capacity
	Strengthened governance
	Heightened sense of equity
HOLISTIC MODEL OF CARE	
- Strengthened partnerships with key services - Improved feedback loops back to community - Services travel to community members - Co-design from the start - Working on what matters to community - Agencies letting go of embedded practices, processes, frameworks and models	Community-led commissioning
	Focussed and efficient funding flows
	Cultural models of care
	Programs run by community
	Children at the heart
	Continuity of care
	Bespoke services
	Income and profit into community to improve local economy
HEALING AND RECONCILIATION	
- Two-way learning - Different narrative; from deficit to strength	First Nations First
	Diversity of leadership

Lead Indicators – Systems Change	Observed increase in Social Cohesion
- Pride and ownership by community - Greater positivity	Truth-telling
	Increased pride/ reduced stigma
COMMON UNDERSTANDING	
- Service mapping and application - Community involved in evaluation process and findings - Data exchange	Data transparency
	Data sharing for self-determination in action
SELF DETERMINATION	
- Forums for children and community members to share voice - Buy-in from external funders/contributors - Authentic shift in desire to work together - Right people at the table - Collaboration between private and public sectors - Readiness to do the work - Community governance	Operationalisation of self-determination
	Increased risk appetite
	Heightened responsibility
	Strengthened duty of care



In [Table 5](#), these observed indicators of enhanced social cohesion (above) are mapped to the Measuring What Matters dimensions. Some important considerations to note about Table 5:

- This particular analysis relates specifically to the observed impact on **social cohesion**, rather than the outcomes for children and families which our community-led initiatives are also reporting.
- While alignment is evident across a broad range of dimensions, the signs of success seen through SDM do not always relate to the specific indicators identified in this first version of Measuring What Matters and in these cases, we have not registered alignment.
- Given the focus of this paper, the greatest correlation naturally sits with the 'Cohesive' domain, which is described in Measuring What Matters as: *A society that supports connections with family, friends and the community, values diversity, and promotes belonging and culture*

Table 5: Shared Decision-Making – Collective experience of the emergent growth in Social Cohesion and links to 'Measuring What Matters'

Observed increase in social cohesion through Shared Decision-Making	Alignment to 'Measuring What Matters' ¹⁷													
Observed social outcomes through Shared Decision-Making	Mental Health	Access to Health Services	Making Ends Meet	Acceptance of diversity	Creative and cultural engagement	Experience of discrimination	Sense of Belonging	Social Connections	Time for recreation and social interaction	Trust in Australian public services	Trust in key institutions	Trust in others	Job opportunities	Skills Development
	Healthy	Secure	Cohesive									Prosperous		
STRONG, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES														
Empowered community														
Community connectedness														
Increased participation														
Decreased isolation														
Cross-generational engagement														
Increased strength, power and imagination														
Increased volunteerism														
Community championing First nations First														
Happy, confident community members														
Aspirational community														
INCREASED CIVIC PARTICIPATION														
Sense of safety experienced by community														
More community-led responses nationally														
Community at the heart														
New employment pathways and opportunities														
HEIGHTENED SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES														

¹⁷ Australian Government, *Measuring What Matters Dashboard – July 2023* (Department of the Treasury). Available at: <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters/dashboard>

Observed increase in social cohesion through Shared Decision-Making	Alignment to 'Measuring What Matters' ¹⁷													
Problem-solving capacity														
Data literacy														
Leadership capacity														
Strengthened governance														
Heightened sense of equity														
HOLISTIC MODEL OF CARE														
Community-led commissioning														
Focussed and efficient funding flows														
Cultural models of care														
Programs run by community														
Children at the heart														
Continuity of care														
Bespoke services														
Income and profit into community to improve local economy														
HEALING AND RECONCILIATION														
First Nations First														
Diversity of leadership														
Truth-telling														
COMMON UNDERSTANDING														
Data transparency														
Data sharing for self-determination in action														
SELF-DETERMINATION														
Operationalisation of self-determination														
Increased risk appetite														
Heightened responsibility														
Strengthened duty of care														



5. Conclusion

Over the past months, we have gathered rich insights to continue to explore and strengthen our practice and impact through SDM. Our collective, cross-sectoral observations and resultant synthesis provides us greater clarity on the pathway forward and highlights key questions that remain unanswered.

Importantly, the questions we will need to consider further are profound and include:

- How do we build and embed a practice which enables us to move forward together sensitively while concurrently building trust across sectors?
- What are our strategies nationally for building skills and understandings in areas as diverse as:
 1. Mechanisms and language of government?
 2. Technical and compliance expectations?
 3. Re-setting mindframes for authentic collaboration?
 4. Leadership and stewardship of Community-led place-based, Collective Impact practice?
 5. Common language of change across sectors?
- What strategies and learning opportunities will be effective in removing unconscious bias and systemic racism?
- What structures need to be re-imagined to enable holistic engagement for social impact, and in what ways do these structures need to change?

- What will it take to redescribe procurement and commissioning models so they support community-led, place-based work?
- What is the cost of SDM:
 1. At the front end when communities are organising for change?
 2. During the development phases where co-design can place an unfunded burden on community leaders?
- How does legislation need to shift to better support SDM?
- What will it take to create the right pathways for data exchange, interpretation and the application of data findings for SDM, including:
- How can we optimise the energy within communities and across sectors currently to catalyse effective data exchange in a timely manner, and with the right level of granularity, now?
- How can we more effectively and consistently measure what matters?
- What is our strategy to realise data sovereignty across Australia?
- How can we lift high the early evidence of impact in ways that enabling scaling of the approach?
- What is our strategy for mapping the system and investment flows at the local level to enable SDM?
- Extrapolating from the shared decisions that are made, how do we address local skills gaps and support diverse communities to enable community-led solutions to be delivered by local people?
- How do we effectively measure the social cohesion emerging from SDM?

The work ahead is significant and our learnings to date, valuable. We give heartfelt thanks to all participants in 'Walking Together for Logan's Children', the Logan community and the Logan Together Leadership Table, all of whom are committed to undertaking this journey together.

