

Walking with Communities

APPENDICES: LITERATURE REVIEW



Centre for
Local Government



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1 Background to the literature review

1.1 This review

This review presents a scoping of the literature and documentation pertaining to community interventions by local governments. It focuses on neighbourhood renewal, and on Australian and international research and models that can be drawn upon to inform the development of tools and approaches to create a tailored and innovative framework for councils in reviews to approaches to local renewal. The literature is used in order to describe theories and approaches that support collaborative place-based approaches and innovations in building skills and opportunities to make communities more self-reliant and sustainable.

1.2 Methodology

A range of databases were used to search for Australian and international literature. These databases included, but were not limited to, Taylor and Francis Online, Sage Journals Online, Wiley Interscience, Academic Search Complete (Ebsco) and Google Scholar. Literature published in English between 2000 and 2015 was sought using search terms including, but not limited to:

- Local government and community
- Neighbourhood renewal/ revitalisation
- Community practice
- Collective impact
- Interventions to address neighbourhood/socioeconomic disadvantage
- Place management
- Evaluation of community interventions.

Unpublished documents were also sourced. Some of these are accessible online, and some were obtained from Penrith City Council.

2 Conceptual foundations

Local government is the connective tissue that holds the disparate elements of community together in a broader process of community building.

(Warner 2010: S147)

2.1 Spatial disadvantage and social ties

Spatial disadvantage refers to 'the tendency for disadvantaged people to be clustered in particular localities, but also to the way that certain features of a locality – such as limited access to employment or services – may serve to disadvantage those who live there' (Cheshire, Pawson, Easthope and Stone 2014: 6).

Problems which beset deprived areas can be linked to economic restructuring processes which operate at sub-regional, regional, national and global scales, including job losses arising from processes of deindustrialisation and the increased segmentation of the labour market associated with service sector-led job growth. Their impacts tend to be spatially uneven, leading to pockets of disadvantage, localised concentrations of unemployment and economic inactivity (North and Syrett 2008: 136).

There is debate in the literature regarding the extent to which social ties and community identities have been reconfigured in modern-day communities (Crisp 2013: 327-329, including those identified as being socio-economically disadvantaged). Key perspectives include the following:

- Social networks have been shrinking under pressure from diverse factors such as fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, physical degradation and high population turnover. This has been referred to as a process of 'community undermined' (Crisp 2013). Urban social relations, eroded by economic and political processes operating at multiple spatial scales, are likely to become more open and associative only if material conditions improve.
- Societies are becoming highly diverse and 'intercultural' (Cantle 2011). A modern sense of identity is shaped in complex and diverse ways in terms of nationality, country of birth, country of residence, city/town/village of residence, religion, ethnicity and neighbourhood or community affiliations. Individuals draw upon these various sources to create hybrid or multiple identities. Social media and new communication networks have enabled people to develop frames of reference which transcend national boundaries and to re-affirm their linkages with people with shared historical perspectives, beliefs and values (which may be termed 'diasporas')(Cantle 2011: 7-15).
- There is the view that urban residents have developed a growing capacity to exercise choice in neighbouring, which has led to greater selectivity in social relations. As public and institutional forms of familiarity have declined, and social ties have become increasingly uncoupled from places of residence, the tendency has been noted for people to prefer more intimate networks of family and friends. This has been referred to as a process of 'community unbound' (Crisp 2013).
- Awareness of the potential support available from neighbours seems to be associated with a broader sense of belonging to place and leads to positive experiences of, or expressed commitment to, neighbouring. Social interactions that generate valuable practical and emotional outcomes are not entirely absent from deprived urban neighbourhoods, and this has been referred to as 'committed neighbouring' (Crisp 2013).

2.2 Application to the Australian context

Concepts and trends such as those described above would only have relevance and utility for the current project when consideration is also given to the specifics of the Australian context.

A tendency towards spatial disadvantage has been well described in Australia, where 'the concentration of disadvantage in specific neighbourhoods is a widespread characteristic of many Australian cities' (Prior 2008: 92). In Sydney, for example, researchers have noted the clear emergence of areas of relative disadvantage and low income in suburbs built approximately between 1930 and 1970:

These are areas sandwiched between the different worlds of inner-city gentrification and the outer suburban ‘aspirational’ fringe, and distant from other more privileged elite, beaches and harbourside localities.

(Randolph and Freestone 2012: 2572)

Drawing on historical, sociological and cultural sources, Skennar (2010: 21) suggests that ‘as a society Australians have a strongly suburban ethos related to a generous spatial quality accompanied by a more limited experience of varied social and behavioural patterns played out in public space’. The suburban experience may bring about resistance to people developing strategies that support their engagement in the public domain. Connections are difficult to make and access to transport is problematic for many people. Engagement in community life can be sporadic and may be limited to activities that are actively encouraged and organised (Skennar 2010: 21-22).

2.3 Role of local government

Local government in Australia is an important site for discussions about, and initiatives on, community services, community development and community wellbeing. Increasing numbers of community services have been devolved to this tier of government since the 1970s (Saggers, Carter, Boyd et al 2003: 19; Pillora and McKinlay 2011).

This is in keeping with a broad international understanding that local government has a role in promoting population wellbeing not only at the material level – through, for example, regenerating the physical environment or contributing to strengthening the local economy – but also at the psychosocial level (Aked, Michaelson and Steuer 2010: 7-8). The latter focuses on people’s sense of how their lives are going, and includes:

- Having a positive outlook in life and feeling good about oneself
- Resilience – the ability to cope positively with change, challenge, adversity and shock
- Feeling connected to others, feeling in control, feeling capable, and having a sense of purpose.

Roles that local government can assume in promoting and supporting the wellbeing of individuals and communities are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Local government’s role in promoting community wellbeing and development

Local government role	Examples of key activities
Providing strategic leadership	Position wellbeing as an overarching framework Allocate resources differently Make innovative use of local government powers and structures
Services and commissioning	Design services with wellbeing outcomes in mind Use established wellbeing evidence in service design Support psychosocial wellbeing through co-producing services
Strengthening communities	Encourage residents to exert control over local circumstances Promote resilient communities that have strong social networks and active citizens who take responsibility for their own wellbeing Unlock doors to release the energy and ideas of local communities, rather than simply devolving decisions from local institutions to communities and individuals
Organisational level activity	Support psychosocial wellbeing at work Support the economic wellbeing of local communities Empower staff to be advocates for wellbeing
Measuring wellbeing outcomes	Understand why you want to measure and whose wellbeing should be measured Consider the measurement options and indicators that are available

Source: adapted from Aked et al (2010: 21-61)

2.4 Approaches to working in communities

Table 2 summarises some of the approaches to working in communities discussed in the literature.

Table 2: Selected approaches to working in community

Approach	Discussion	Example literature
Community development	Community development is a process involving the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that together build a community's capacity to respond to identified issues. There is a focus on the action taken by people locally to improve the social, economic, environmental or cultural conditions of their communities. Once people are working together, this can help them to take action to address inequalities in power and participation, deal directly with issues they think are important, and promote increased local democracy, participation and involvement in public affairs	Saggers et al (2003) Horizons Community Development Associates (n.d.)
Community engagement	This refers to the participation of communities in the relevant decision-making that is based within community interest and enhancement of community wellbeing. Effective community engagement requires authority to legitimise issues and on the ground practice; follow-up evaluation to maintain government-community mutual respect and confidence; formal and pre-set structures, procedures and relationships for the mediation of community engagement; and closely coordinated and clear practical engagement demonstrations to foster future engagement.	McCabe, Keast and Brown (2006)
Neighbourhood Renewal	Neighbourhood Renewal programs target both the physical and social environments in order to improve social capital, social connectedness, and the sense of community and economic conditions of the residents of neighbourhoods, generally identified as being socially disadvantaged. Community involvement is essential in these initiatives.	Social Exclusion Unit (2000) Johnson and Osborne (2013) Jalaludin et al (2012: 1)
Community-level governance	A key trend in much of the public sector reform occurring in various parts of the world at present is that of community-level governance. This refers to a collaborative approach to determining a community's preferred futures and developing and implementing the means of realising them. It involves one or more of the different tiers of government, the institutions of civil society and private sector interests.	McCabe, Keast and Brown (2006) Fontan, Hamel, Morin and Shragge (2008) McKinlay Douglas Ltd (2014)

A focus on 'governing through community' can be seen as an adaptation to one of the historical dilemmas of modern liberal government: how to retain political authority while fostering liberty and autonomous self-government (Meredyth, Ewing and Thomas 2004: 88). Since the legitimacy of government depends on its capacity to maintain security, civil peace and prosperity, this in turn depends on the ability of individuals to 'govern themselves in areas beyond the reach of the state, in commercial, social, familial, and domestic life and in civil society' (Meredyth et al 2004: 88).

The re-emergence of community in public policy practices has been taken up by local governments throughout Australia (Pugh and Sagers 2007: 11). This follows partly on recognition of the adverse effects of federal and state government policies based on privatisation and 'small government', economic restructure and competition policy, corporate government and the 'new managerialism' which became known as New Public Management.

Walsh (2001: 4) points out that government intervention in disadvantaged areas is not new. Over the past four decades or more, a number of Western countries have introduced specific, geographically targeted programs in response to identified problems of disadvantaged, socially excluded or 'distressed' areas.

McShane (2006) suggests that the Victorian government became an early leader in Australia as regards its response to calling attention to local-level concerns and enabling innovative approaches to solving local or regional problems through its focus on 'community'. This led Victoria to adopt community as an overarching administrative logic for local government, through the establishment in 2002 of the Department for Victorian Communities.

There is debate about whether local government legislation should include provisions that enable or even oblige councils to introduce or facilitate a form of community-level 'sub-council' governance as a prerequisite to local government being able to act on behalf of its communities in bringing together stakeholders to seek the preferred outcomes for their communities (McKinlay Douglas Ltd 2014: 52).

2.5 Features of community practice

2.5.1 Community participation and empowerment

Community participation and empowerment are crucial in the quest for increasing democracy, mobilising resources and energy, achieving better decisions and more effective services and ensuring the ownership and sustainability of programs (see Dooris and Heriage 2011: S89; Pillora and McKinlay 2011; North and Syrett 2008; Morgan-Trimmer 2014). At the same time, there is little agreement as to what community involvement entails, based partly on the well-known difficulties in describing the concepts such as 'community' and 'involvement' (Robinson, Shaw and Davidson 2005: 15).

Notwithstanding these definitional problems, there is general agreement that participation of community members can 'empower people, strengthen communities, result in better public services and make regeneration sustainable' (Robinson, Shaw and Davidson 2005: 15). According to these authors, community involvement is often seen particularly as being about governance – the participation of residents in decision-making in local partnerships. This point is also highlighted by Pillora and McKinlay (2011: 15): engaging local communities brings local place-based knowledge and local lived experiences into the knowledge base required for effective decision-making.

Drawing on experiences in the United Kingdom (UK), some of the issues to consider in community involvement in the governance of neighbourhood renewal initiatives include:

- Only a small minority of residents have the confidence, interest or time to become heavily involved in the governance of neighbourhood renewal. It may be unrealistic to assume that there are many people willing to take on this work, irrespective of whether the area is affluent or disadvantaged.
- The 'community' is, in reality, different and distinct neighbourhoods, comprising different communities of interest and identities. The relationship between community representatives and those they purport to represent can be difficult and unclear, resulting in poor communication, frustration and ineffective accountability.
- While residents have much greater experience of local conditions and problems than professionals, they do not have a monopoly of knowledge and experience. Real partnership is important, bringing in the knowledge of other agencies and the knowledge base of the staff, so that a program of projects does not 'reinvent the wheel' and rather that it remains linked to wider experience of best practice.
- Community members are usually unpaid volunteers in the neighbourhood renewal process and the demands on their time can be high.

- Community governance cannot be an alternative to local government, since a neighbourhood renewal program does not have the powers, range of responsibilities or resources that local government has. In order to mainstream the benefits of interventions, an ongoing co-operative relationship between a partnership and the local council is of crucial importance.
- While partnerships are under pressure through funding arrangements to achieve results, there is a need to be patient and allow time for development, experimentation and learning. It is important to expound the principle that the 'natural' timetable of community-led regeneration is very different from the timetables of politicians and funders.

(Robinson et al 2005: 16-21)

According to Boehm and Cnaan (2012: 146), development of a model of community practice that is practice-relevant requires effort in recruiting the participation of citizens and co-operation among the stakeholders. These authors put forward a 'critical-dialectical process' model, which is summarised in the table next. The model 'develops through each community's discussion regarding central community issues and conditions' (Boehm and Cnaan 2012: 154).

Table 3: A critical-dialectical process for community practice model building

Characteristics	Traditional approaches	Proposed approach
Process	Members of a community are presented with a prepared formula for action	Practitioners challenge participants to debate their local reality and elicit their own suggestions following a process of dialectical critical thought. The practitioner encourages, challenges and questions, leaving relevance to be determined by the community.
Community involvement	Models are designed outside the community and are often quite rigid	Models are designed within the community. Developing organically, the process reveals strengths of community members. Overt discussion of major issues may serve to create a social contract among the participants that reflects their agreement and mutual commitment to work together to implement the model that they have formulated and designed.
Deduction/ Induction	The practitioner serves as an expert, following a deductive process of model design	The model is developed as a reflective process, encompassing professional and experimental knowledge. The process integrates inductive and deductive approaches, and does not rely solely upon <i>a priori</i> practice and a fixed set of rules based on theory.
Communication	Formal description is used in model development, with an emphasis on description of goals and means	Discursive communication and deliberative democracy are employed to develop a model. Deliberative democracy assumes that the preferences of different groups in many cases vary and contradict one another, and a free, open and rational discourse is necessary in which each group expresses its view.
Flexibility	The categories of all models are interrelated, but separation impairs rationality	The categories of the model are related to the place and time in which the model develops, allowing flexibility. End models may vary according to the conditions required in each community.
Integration	Policy guidelines often show little relationship to implementation	The model describes guidelines for policy and implementation, including the link between them. The relationship between policy and implementation is essential,

since community practice seeks not only to describe and explain situations, but especially to influence and guide processes of change.

Social capital

Social networks are limited

Active participation from varied formal and informal networks encourages the building of social capital. Social capital is a resource that contributes to social and economic community development and helps individuals and communities better cope with situations of stress or crisis. The three types of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking – are developed.

Source: adapted from Boehm and Cnaan (2012: 147)

2.5.2 Making better use of local government asset portfolios

Writing in the Australian context, McShane (2006: 270) notes that a renewed policy interest at all levels of government in 'community' has led to a developing concern over the asset portfolios of local governments. Key strategic issues for facility planners and managers involved in community building or neighbourhood/urban regeneration projects include:

- The co-location of community facilities and services is one of the most far-reaching policy trends in current facility planning and management in Australia, and there is a strong advocacy for shared occupancy. This is based on factors such as operational and cost efficiencies, the peer support of staff and the social capital benefits created through the existence of shared-use facilities. At the same time, issues of policy, design and operation of such facilities brings about challenges that need to be addressed.
- Questions of ownership and authority of community facilities are complex and often problematic, but are key ethical and strategic issues that need to be addressed in asset rationalisation programs.
- The complex policy environment in which community facilities operate, with an unstable mix of regulation and devolution, can make the task of attracting volunteers to perform governance roles increasingly difficult. New consultative and decision-making frameworks are needed for asset and facility management, which encourage greater dialogue between physical services and social policy areas within local councils, private organisations and community groups.
- There is increasing pressure to identify and measure qualitative outcomes that can provide valid indicators of community value. The conceptual and methodological challenges that lie behind mapping of social assets need to be acknowledged.

(McShane 2006: 271-277)

Measurement issues, and the value of qualitative measures, are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

2.5.3 Cultural activities

Communities need hope and trust in the process and outcomes of regeneration, and there is a strong rationale for including cultural input to area and neighbourhood regeneration, since 'culture is a critical aspect of mediating and articulating community needs', as well as having the potential to empower and animate (Evans 2005: 959). Models of regeneration where culture is a driver, a catalyst or at least a key player in the process of renewal include:

- Cultural activity is seen as the **catalyst and engine of regeneration**. The activity – such as design, construction or reuse of a building for public or mixed use or introduction of an artistic activity – is used to rebrand a place, is likely to have a high public profile and is often cited as the sign or symbol of regeneration.
- Cultural activity is **integrated into an area-based strategy** alongside other activities that are conducted in the environmental, social and economic spheres.
- Cultural activity is not fully integrated at the master planning stage, but **small interventions** such as commissioning local artists to make signs or street furniture or recording the history of their area, can

make an impact on the regeneration process, enhancing the facilities and services that were initially planned.

(Evans 2005: 967-972)

2.5.4 The role of community organisations

Community organisations have become key actors in responding to the conditions of low-income neighbourhoods, and the organisations of the civil society are involved in local development practices, including those focusing on social integration, community cohesion and economic growth (Fontan et al 2008: 835). Such organisations contribute to the visibility of the diversity and complexity of problems and issues at the local scale enabling 'a wider reading of the local reality' (Fontan et al 2008: 850).

Based on a study carried out in Montreal, Canada, Fontan et al (2008) describe the importance of the cooperation between these community organisations and other community organisations, public agencies (such as local governments) and private agencies. The governance arrangements in which community organisations were involved was found to be constituted through networks that were both formal and informal.

2.6 Summary

The concentration of disadvantage in specific neighbourhoods is a widespread characteristic of many Australian cities. While research suggests that the suburban experience may cause people to resist developing strategies that might support their greater engagement in the wider public domain, there is recognition that social interactions that generate valuable practical and emotional outcomes are not absent from deprived urban neighbourhoods. Awareness of the potential support available from neighbours seems to be associated with a broader sense of belonging to place and can lead to positive experiences of, or expressed commitment to, neighbouring.

Local government in Australia is an important site for discussions about, and initiatives on, community services, community development and community wellbeing. As a tier of government, it has a role in promoting population wellbeing not only at the material level, but also at the psychosocial level. Local government does so, amongst others, through:

- Providing strategic leadership
- Services and commissioning
- Strengthening communities
- Measuring wellbeing outcomes
- Organisational level activity.

There is much literature, both Australian and international, that focuses on features of community practice, including the central role of community participation and empowerment, the role of community organisations and the quest for new levels of collaboration that involve such organisations, the contribution of cultural activities to area and neighbourhood regeneration, and making better use of local government asset portfolios.

A key trend in much of the public sector reform occurring in various parts of the world at present is that of community-level governance – a collaborative approach to determining a community's preferred futures and developing and implementing the means of realising them. It involves one or more of the different tiers of government, the institutions of civil society and private sector interests. This debate is ongoing, also in NSW. Approaches to working in and with communities described in the literature include community development, community engagement, community-level or local governance and Neighbourhood Renewal. The following section focuses on Neighbourhood Renewal.

3 Neighbourhood Renewal

Local governments have been identified as potential drivers for renewal initiatives because of their control over physical and social planning at the local level, their awareness of local community needs and strengths, and their ability to integrate these to create responses to local issues.

(Prior 2008: 110-111)

3.1 Understanding Neighbourhood Renewal

Policy interventions at the community level have typically adopted one of three approaches:

- Place-based – targeting designated areas for a range of improvement activities that relate either to the physical environment or some characteristics of the population as a whole
- People-focused approaches – addressing the needs of a specific group or groups who live in a designated area
- Neighbourhood renewal initiatives – an approach to addressing people and place-based concerns in tandem.

(Cheshire et al 2014)

This suggests that use of the concept Neighbourhood Renewal explicitly links place-based and people-focused initiatives. According to Ware, Gronda and Vitis (2010: 2), neighbourhood initiatives include economic and commercial development, regeneration and construction of new physical infrastructure and linkages to the other parts of the urban area, as well as people-based programs that focus on building local skills and greater self-sufficiency. The renewal and redevelopment of public housing estates is one example of neighbourhood renewal that has received focus in Australia (see Judd and Randolph 2006).

North and Syrett (2008) point out that socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are part of the wider economic system and that policy interventions focused solely at the local scale – such as those pursued under a Neighbourhood Renewal agenda – are at risk of being inappropriate and ineffective. If there is a focus on economic and employment needs, for example, there is a need to focus also upon national level labour market policies, and to ensure that the needs of local people are incorporated into economic development strategies at the regional and sub-regional levels (North and Syrett 2008: 145).

Neighbourhood Renewal has been well-developed in the United Kingdom (UK) as official government policy (Social Exclusion Unit 2000), aiming to 'narrow the gap between deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods' (Johnson and Osborne 2013: 147). It emerged in the early 2000s as a reflection of the then-governing (the Labour Party) party's philosophy of the promotion of participatory democracy – that is, the active participation of ordinary citizens in local decision-making – as a means to rectify the perceived ineffectiveness of representational democracy (Johnson and Osborne 2013: 149).

Use of the term 'neighbourhood renewal' gained impetus after the 'National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' was launched in the UK in the late 1990s. This Strategy comprised three interconnected focuses:

- Paying attention to local, primarily supply-side, interventions in order to identify and act upon the linkages within and between the key domains of employment, housing, education, crime and health in low socio-economic status neighbourhoods.
- Rebuilding social capital through capacity building initiatives that enable local people to participate in the decision-making process and provide local communities with opportunities to help themselves
- Encouraging 'joined-up' working through a revitalised emphasis on neighbourhood management to secure greater coherence and responsiveness in localised service provision.

(Social Exclusion Unit 2000; Hall and Hickman 2002: 692-693)

In 2002, Neighbourhood Renewal was adopted in Victoria after successful trials in the Latrobe Valley and Ballarat, which suggested that a holistic and integrated response to the complex problems of poverty and exclusion require the direct tackling of the local sources of disadvantage, and the empowerment of people to become part of the solution (Klein 2004). A whole-of-government approach was adopted in the State, which focused on better coordination between government portfolios ('breaking down the silos') and all of government working with local communities through Neighbourhood Renewal governance arrangements.

3.2 Approaches to Neighbourhood Renewal

3.2.1 Collective Impact

When faced with complex social problems, organisations often seek solutions by utilising an isolated impact model, which Kania and Kramer (2011) describe as 'an approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organisation'. By contrast, the use of 'collective impact' as a collaboration framework capitalises on the premise that complex problems, otherwise known as adaptive problems, have unknown solutions in which 'no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change' (Kania and Kramer 2011).

The two approaches are contrasted in the box below.

Box 1: Comparing and contrasting Isolated and Collective Impact models

Isolated impact	Collective impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders select individual guarantees that offer the most promising solutions • Nonprofits work separately and compete to produce the greatest independent impact • Evaluation attempts to isolate a particular organisation • Corporate and government sectors are often disconnected from the efforts of foundations and nonprofits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders and implementers understand that social problems, and their solutions arise from the interaction of many organisations within a larger system • Progress depends on working toward the same goal and measuring the same things • Large-scale impact depends on increasing cross-sector alignment. Corporate and government sectors are essential partners • Organisations actively coordinate their action and share lessons learned

Source: adapted from Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer (2012)

The isolated impact model faces many challenges when applied to social problems. One obvious problem is the inherent complexity and interdependency of social problems. Just as no one agent or source is completely accountable for a social problem, no single organisation can feasibly eradicate or attempt a holistic solution the social problem. Therefore, collective impact frameworks draw on multiple actors working within a common agenda to facilitate solutions. Conditions for successful collective impact initiatives are summarised in Table 4, drawing on the work of Kania and Kramer (2011).

Table 4: Conditions for successful Collective Impact initiatives

Conditions for successful Collective Impact initiatives	
Common agenda	Agreement between actors on the primary goals of the initiative. A common agenda develops from a shared understanding of the problems and a joint approach for solutions coupled with agreed upon actions.
Shared measurement systems	Agreed upon indicators of progress and a consistent method of measurement. A reliable and consistent system allows all actors to align their efforts to the goal and allows for accountability.
Mutually reinforcing activities	Collective impact draws on the coordinated efforts of multiple actors. These efforts are not all the same, but rather coordinated to support and reinforce the common agenda allowing for actors to capitalise on individual strengths.
Continuous communication	Participating parties must have time to build trust. As relationships are forged, participating actors can be reassured of the objectivity of the initiative. For this to happen, regular meetings and the development of a shared measuring system are important.
Backbone support organisations	To successfully implement a collective impact initiative it is necessary to have a separate organisation and staff tasked with supporting the initiative. Collaboration without a backbone organisation is likely to fail.

Source: Kania and Kramer (2011)

Collective Impact as an approach has gained global traction among many non-government organisations (NGOs) and government agencies seeking innovative and impactful methods for promoting social change. The initiatives, however, do not provide a fast fix. For successful collective impact collaborations, organisations must be willing to truthfully assess the scale of the problem and invest the necessary time to generate solutions. Hanleybrown et al (2012) put forward three phases for the implementation of Collective Impact, illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Phases of Collective Impact

Phases of Collective Impact			
Components of Success	PHASE I Initiate Action	PHASE II Organise Impact	PHASE III Sustain Action and Impact
Governance and infrastructure	Identify champions and form cross-sector groups	Create infrastructure (backbone and processes)	Facilitate and refine
Strategic Planning	Map the landscape and use data to make case	Create common agenda (goals and strategy)	Support implementation (alignment to goals and strategies)
Community Involvement	Facilitate community outreach	Engage community and build public will	Continue engagement and conduct advocacy
Evaluation and Improvement	Analyse baseline data to identify key issues and gaps	Establish shared metrics (indicators, measurements and approaches)	Collect, track and report progress as part of a process to learn and improve

Sources: Hanleybrown et al (2012); Choperema (2014: 12)

Collective impact collaboration offers a fundamental change to the way social problems and solutions are understood, approached and tackled. Progress is cited among many efforts of collective impact including:

- The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) seeks to reduce nutritional gaps amongst people in different socioeconomic levels
- Communities That Care is a coalition that aims to reduce binge drinking in teenagers
- The Tamarack Institute in Canada has implemented the collective impact framework toward issues such as community engagement, collaborative leadership and reducing poverty.

(Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer 2012)

3.2.2 Place Management

In recent years, Place Management has emerged as a potential model for re-casting governments' approach to managing the problems of disadvantaged peoples and places (Walsh 2001). Place Management involves 'individuals in traditional input organisations working towards an overarching goal' (Victorian Government 2008). Unlike project management, place management emphasises the achievement of outcomes rather than outputs (Victorian Government 2008; Mant 2008).

Place Management offers a centralised single administrative unit which coordinates and facilitates integrated and partnered work, yet maintains accountability for an overarching outcome. Central to the model is the Place Manager, an intentionally broad role that is regarded as essential towards enabling various facets of the outcome to align (Crofts 1998). Viewed as particularly appropriate for local governments, the adoption of place management as policy can lead to the appointment of 'Place Managers' to every area of the jurisdiction, instead of having professionally based divisions or departments designed to deliver specialist outputs (Mant 2008: 1).

In publically funded projects, the Place Manager would typically liaise with council staff, service agencies, and key industry stakeholders to ensure a 'coordinated and holistic approach' (Crofts 1998) and would be responsible for a range of areas including 'brokerage, facilitation, and resource allocation' (Victorian Government 2008). Put differently, place management's holistic attempt towards tackling disadvantages aims to break down the departmental silos which segment areas for improvement, yet never address the totality of disadvantage (Walsh 2001).

Walsh (2001) identifies four features of Place Management, illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Features of place management

Features of Place Management	
Equity and targeting	Place management has a fundamental equity objective. It is about redressing significant social and economic disadvantage experienced by particular groups of people in particular neighbourhoods or localities.
Outcomes and accountability	One of the key aspects is the allocation of responsibility and accountability to a designated institutional point (usually a 'place manager') for overcoming key problems and achieving defined outcomes within an area. The aim is to achieve tangible improvements across a number of indicators of community well-being.
Coordination of and integration in service delivery	Improved delivery of coordinated and integrated policy and service responses to the community is required.
Flexible governance	Place management requires an institutional reorientation of the basic processes of governance and public administration. Approaches to funding, decision-making and accountability need to be flexibly applied, and focus should be placed on enabling an appropriate role for the community

Source: adapted from Walsh (2001: 8-9)

Place Management pilots in New South Wales have included the State government's Community Renewal Program, delivered to areas including King's Cross, Cabramatta, Canterbury-Bankstown, Redfern-Waterloo and Kempsey (Walsh 2001). While the King's Cross and Cabramatta pilots were seen to achieve considerable improvements for the areas, the short term nature of the intervention raised questions about the sustainability of improvements (Walsh 2001).

Internationally, Place Management has been incorporated into Neighbourhood Renewal programs in the UK which have implemented an economic focussed strategy (Victorian Government 2008). With its long history in place-based initiatives, the UK is heralded as a pioneer in the place management model even establishing the 'world's first Masters Course designed specifically for Place Managers in 2007' (Victorian Government 2008). Writing within the Australian context, Mant (2008: 9) notes that a move to outcomes management for places can be part of 'a fundamental change to the design of government...where there are clear responsibilities allocated for achieving, over the long term, excellent system and place outcomes'.

Limitations and challenges for Place Management include the re-allocation of power and authority towards a centralised unit, a feat which has proven difficult in many cases (Victorian Government 2008). There is also the challenge of operating within existing governance structures and the tendency for programs to become 'top-down'. They have been previously criticised as lacking community involvement and input (Walsh 2001; Rice n.d.). The model requires strong commitment from a variety of stakeholders.

In a more recent development of the Place Management approach, an international approach known as 'Place Excellence' (Bearing Consulting n.d.) brings together the 'forces of place management, place development and place branding' to work together in coordination toward the same, jointly accepted goals.

3.2.3 Local development through community coalitions

Local development can be defined as:

[a] strategy that aims to change the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political situation in order to improve living conditions in a local territory, by mobilising internal and external actors and resources.

(Fontan et al 2008: 835)

In order to initiate interventions and coordinate interactions, these organisations from inside and outside of the local area are of necessity involved in horizontal collaboration with each other, in addition to establishing partnerships with agencies from the different tiers of government. Processes and outcomes which contribute to 'local governance' need to be manifest, and this requires that attention be paid to collaborative capacity (Fontan et al 2008: 835-836). In this respect, Neighbourhood Renewal exhibits strong parallels with community-level governance, briefly discussed in section 2.4 of this report.

A review of the literature on building collaborative capacity in community coalitions (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson and Allen 2001) finds that attention needs to be paid to four critical levels of collaborative capacity:

- **Member capacity** includes core skills and knowledge (including the ability to work collaboratively with others and build an effective coalition infrastructure) and core attitudes and motivation (including viewing the self as a legitimate and capable member of the collaboration)
- **Relational capacity** includes development of a positive working climate, shared vision, promoting power sharing and valuing diversity
- **Organisational capacity** includes effective leadership, formalised procedures, sufficient resources and an orientation to continuous improvement
- **Programmatic capacity** depends on clear, focused programmatic objectives, realistic goals (including identification of intermediate goals) and ensuring that the program fills unmet community needs, provides innovative services and is ecologically valid.

(Foster-Fishman et al 2001: 243-248)

3.3 Summary

Neighbourhood Renewal explicitly links place-based and people-focused initiatives in an approach that includes economic and commercial development, regeneration and construction of new physical infrastructure and linkages to the other parts of the urban area, as well as people-based programs that focus on building local skills and greater self-sufficiency. Well-developed in the United Kingdom (UK), Neighbourhood Renewal has been adopted in Australian jurisdictions such as Victoria and NSW.

Models that have been drawn upon to support Neighbourhood Renewal include 'Collective Impact', which resets upon the understanding that no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about necessary changes to complex, adaptive problems. Adopting this approach requires a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, backbone support organisations and continuous communication.

In addition, insights from the Place Management model have been applied towards tackling disadvantages in an approach that aims to break down the departmental silos which segment areas for improvement, yet never address the totality of disadvantage.

Building collaborative capacity in community coalitions requires a focus on programmatic capacity, member capacity, relational capacity and organisational capacity. There should also be recognition that socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are part of the wider economic system and policy interventions focused solely at the local scale are liable to be inappropriate and ineffective.

4 Research evidence

The reconciliation of process and outcome in evaluating complex community initiatives can be in part carried out by the introduction of a rigorous articulation of the theory of change implicit in the intervention.
(Hughes and Traynor 2000: 48)

In this section, recent literature is drawn upon to provide some insights into program evaluations and their outcomes, which may be of benefit to the current project. First, we address evaluation issues identified by researchers in this field of practice and study.

4.1 Evaluation issues

4.1.1 Challenges

In keeping with other levels of the public sector, local government in Australia has been increasingly subject to pressures to demonstrate greater efficiency, effectiveness and demonstrated accountability through performance measurement (Saggers et al 2003: 33). Neighbourhood renewal programs, as with other forms of community intervention, pose several challenges at the level of evaluation.

On the broad level of program evaluation, it can be difficult to adequately measure change and establish to what degree the change is due to the implementation of an intervention program (Ware et al., 2010). Programs adopting a neighbourhood renewal approach often work with the premise that effect occurs with a time lag, often making the immediate outcomes less obvious. Issues at the neighbourhood and community levels are complex and it may prove difficult to untangle the web of interacting variables to establish causality.

Based on research carried out in Western Australia, Saggers et al (2003: 20) found that 'workers at all levels of local government are struggling, not simply with the measurement of community development, but also with fundamental definitions of the nature of community development itself'. These authors recognise the difficulties in demonstrating the effectiveness of community interventions, the limitations of measures that can easily be counted – such as attendance at community events – and the inherently more difficult task of establishing valid qualitative measures.

Hughes and Traynor (2000) suggest that the following issues need to be taken into consideration when evaluating community development programs:

- Community members, community development staff and strategic planners may each have a different concept of what constitutes success, and of what its indicators would be.
- Considerations of the timescale that it takes to bring about social change in a community may reflect disconnect between the views of policy makers, planners and funders on the one hand, and community development professionals on the other hand. While the former may want to see change within one, two or three years, the latter may be more ready to recognise that a community which has been in a disadvantaged state for many decades will require much preliminary work in order to perceive itself as able, well-resourced and ready to mobilise towards change.
- There are concerns about how to clearly attribute change or growth to a given social intervention. A range of confounding factors – such as the natural sequence of events, natural demographic change and interference from short-term events – may serve to make attribution difficult.
- In community development, there is a necessary focus on the process of intervention, which is sometimes seen as an end product in its own right (e.g. 'the process is the outcome').

The challenge remains to assist councils to engage in meaningful community practices that reflect their stated goals of empowerment, participation and social justice for citizens, while also balancing issues of corporate accountability (Saggers et al 2003: 35). Some insights from the literature are provided next.

4.1.2 Reconciling process and outcomes

The two perspectives represented respectively by 'process' and 'outcome' need to be reconciled if a planning and evaluation system is to be developed which reflects all reasonable interests (Hughes and Traynor 2000: 39). These authors suggest that a 'Theory of Change' approach may help to overcome these obstacles. Key aspects of this approach when applied to community initiatives are summarised in Box 2.

Box 2: Outline of a Theory of Change approach to community initiatives

A theory of change puts forward the explicit or implicit theories about how or why a program will work. Working jointly with community members, staff and other partners, a definition of long-term outcomes are put forward. All then work backwards from that endpoint to the steps required to get there, as illustrated by:

Step 5 (initial activities) — Step 4 (early outcomes) — Step 3 (intermediate outcomes) — Step 2 (penultimate outcomes) — Step 1 (long-term outcomes, which can be expressed in aspirational terms)

The early stage objectives, characterised by an emphasis on 'process', are defined most explicitly, while the longer-term objectives are expressed both as 'outcomes' and in 'process' terms. This implies that there will be a transition away from process to a greater inclusion of an outcomes focus only as the initiative proceeds. The theory will be tested by the collection of data that correspond to the process and outcomes objectives.

Key elements of a good theory of change include:

- It will be plausible – common sense will tell you that it can be done
- It will be testable – it is explicit enough in its stages to lend itself to observation
- It will be doable – the resources will be there to carry it out
- It is 'results responsive' – it will amend its end goal in light of experience.

There is value in putting forward the principles that inform the community strategy. These may include:

- Participation of people living in the neighbourhood is an absolute essential from the beginning. Engaging with the community is strongly helped by the existence of other voluntary sector work in the area, as well as by focusing on a specific activity, which encourages people to feel they are getting something for themselves before they may feel part of a community.
- A formal structure should be put in place which enables community participation from the outset, such as having local people on the board of management of the project.
- A partnership principle should be applied, incorporating the groups of agencies that are funding the developments and those who exercise some collaborative power and control over the overall approach.
- Any program must be multi-dimensional, but there is benefit in identifying an initial 'interest-rouser', around which other things will cluster, and then ultimately working towards multi-dimensionality.

Source: Hughes and Traynor (2000: 40-46)

4.1.3 Qualitative approaches to measurement

The challenges of measuring impact reaffirm the importance for neighbourhood renewal programs to create robust and reliable tools for evaluation and to collect data at every stage in the program. Focusing on public housing estate renewal in Australia, Judd and Randolph (2006) reviewed studies that had aimed to measure the impact and outcome of such renewal initiatives. The study found that, despite a strong focus among policy makers on 'value-for-money' aspects of renewal, there has been a preponderance of qualitative methods of evaluation, since they 'offer more insightful assessments than quantitatively based approaches' (Judd and Randolph 2006: 97). These researchers point favourably towards a model of evaluation that could be applied in contexts such as public housing renewal programs in Australia. This is briefly summarised in Box 3.

Box 3: The IMPACT Evaluation Tool

The IMPACT Evaluation Tool

This evaluation tool draws on the work of Chatel and Soulet (2001 and Giorgi (2003). IMPACT is designed to provide assessments of social impacts in spatially and temporally defined programs and provides managers with better information about outcomes than do traditional evaluation approaches. The tool assesses the program outcomes on the following dimensions:

- Relevance
- Internal coherence
- External coherence
- Effectiveness
- Performance
- Ethics
- Value for money
- Legitimacy
- Reproducibility

These criteria provide for mixed research methodology, incorporating qualitative approaches such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, scaled attitudinal questions for local surveys, observational techniques, action research or ethnographic approaches.

Source: Judd and Randolph (2006: 108-110)

4.2 Selected studies

4.2.1 Responding to the nature of disadvantage

Based on a study carried out in Australia, Cheshire et al (2014) find that policy and practice has been relatively slow in responding to the changing nature of disadvantage. Three case studies of neighbourhood renewal programs were identified in their study – Housing NSW Building Stronger Communities Program in Mount Druitt (2009-2012); the Victorian Department of Human Services Baybrook Maidstone Neighbourhood Renewal Program (2002-2010); and the Queensland Department of Housing, Community Renewal Program in Logan (1998-2009). Issues that have been raised with these programs include:

- Process-related matters and the degree to which the aspirations of community involvement and local partnerships are fully realised
- The absence of local leadership and concern that initiatives come to an end once lead agencies (such as Housing NSW) leave.
- Community groups tend to attract the same cohort of residents who are already active in their community while failing to connect with the socially excluded groups at whom they are meant to be targeted.

(Cheshire et al 2014: 75-79)

While recognising a diverse range of social, economic and housing market characteristics to be found in places defined as 'disadvantaged', the authors conclude on the basis of their study that suburbs characterised by concentrations of disadvantage are places with substantial social capital and evidence of a spirit of 'community'. Such findings reaffirm the importance of avoiding the stereotyping of disadvantaged areas as 'poverty-stricken sink-holes at the bottom of the suburban pecking order where people live only because they lack the means to escape' (Cheshire et al 2014: 5).

4.2.2 Key elements of effective area-based strategies

One of the earlier large-scale studies into area-based interventions was carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 1990s. It did so by drawing on a survey of the experiences of ten industrialised countries (OECD, cited in Walsh 2001: 6).

This OECD study identified key elements in the development and maintenance of effective area-based strategies:

- Sustainable change in specific areas requires more flexible, coordinated use of mainstream policies. There should be the aim of achieving greater impact from existing investments.
- Neighbourhoods do not exist in isolation from their wider areas. While targeting initiatives to address problems at the local level, there is a need to consider broader regional and central government policies that will enable neighbourhoods to be linked into the markets and service systems of their surrounding areas.
- Policy formulation and implements needs to be based on a partnership approach involving formalised agreements between stakeholders. On the whole, governments have been far more concerned with the challenge of achieving cooperation within government, rather than crating partnership with the private and non-government sectors. Involving the private sector is in particular a key challenge.

(OECD, cited in Walsh 2001)

4.2.3 Best Practice Approaches

In a report commissioned by Housing New South Wales, Ware et al (2010) examined the nature of locational disadvantage and evaluated various methods governments have used to intervene in disadvantaged areas. After consideration of many international and domestic approaches towards addressing locational disadvantage, Ware et al (2010) summarised the best practice approaches shared in successful instances of intervention. Adapting insights from the international literature on locational disadvantage to the Australian context, Ware et al (2010: 3-4) put forward best practice principles, and practices to avoid these are summarised in Figures 2 and 3 below.

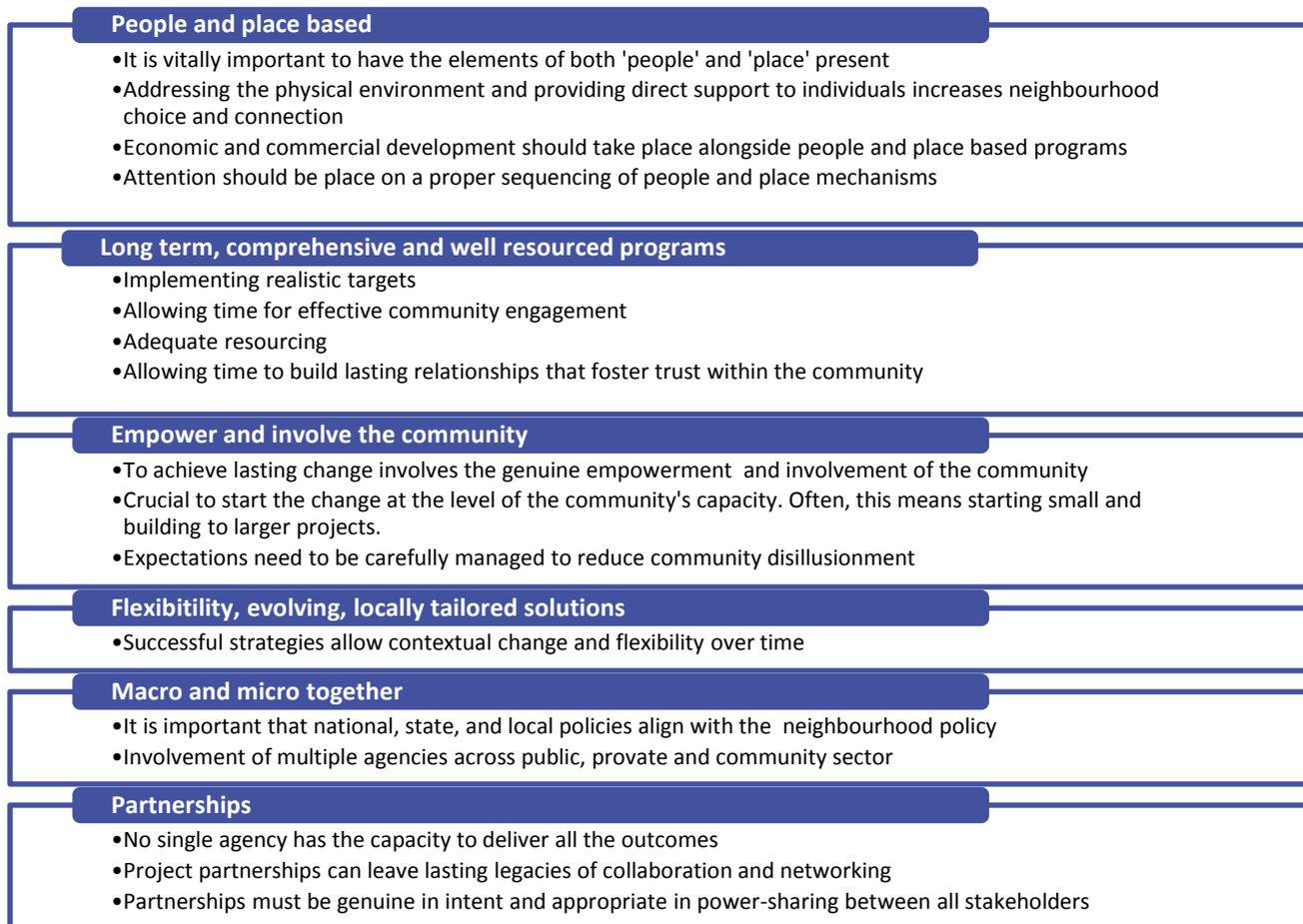


Figure 1: Best practices in Neighbourhood Renewal

Source: Ware et al. (2010: 42-47)

Drawing also on the research carried out by Ware et al (2012), the following are identified as practices to avoid:

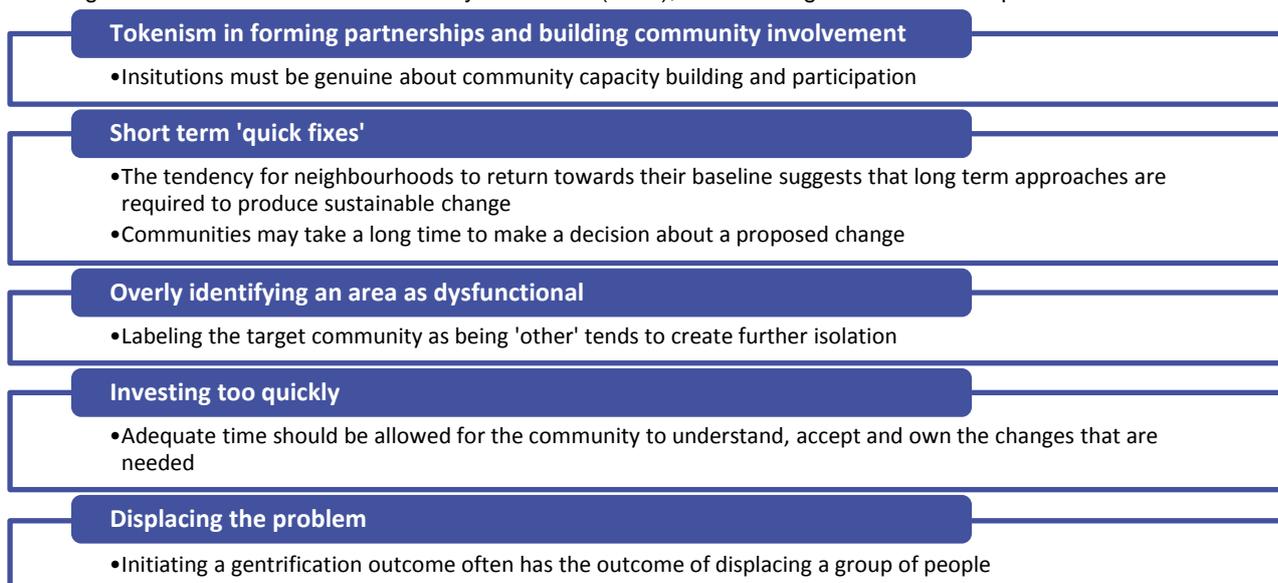


Figure 2: Practices to avoid

Source: Ware et al. (2010: 42-47)

4.2.4 Evaluation of renewal program based on resident perceptions

An evaluative study by Jalaudin et al (2012) assessed the impact of an urban renewal program in south-western Sydney and evaluated the perceptions of the neighbourhood residents. The urban renewal program was conducted over one year and four months. It included internal upgrades, external upgrades and social interventions.

Jalaudin et al (2012) conducted a pre- and post-intervention survey by employing trained interviewers to doorknock on neighbourhood households. The surveys measured sense of community, social capital, neighbourhood participation and self-reported indicators of physical and mental health. Key findings from the evaluation include:

- A greater percentage of householders felt safe walking from public transport at night
- A smaller proportion of respondents felt that it was unsafe to walk in the immediate neighbourhood in the daytime
- Although not statistically significant, a greater number of households responded positively around the aesthetics of their neighbourhood.
- A higher number of households reported satisfaction with their neighbourhood, and a greater sense of belonging
- More respondents indicated that their neighbourhood had a reputation of being a safe place
- More respondents felt safe walking down their street after dark.

(Jalaludin et al 2012)

4.2.5 Connections between neighbourhood renewal and community wellbeing

Other studies have found stronger connections between neighbourhood renewal and community wellbeing. For example, in an evaluative study of Victoria's Neighbourhood Renewal program, Kelaher, Warr and Tacticos (2010) concluded that neighbourhood renewal was 'effective in improving health and life satisfaction among people living in neighbourhood renewal areas compared with those living in control areas'.

4.2.6 Residents' influence over local decision-making

Morgan-Trimmer (2014) conducted a case study of a 'New Deal for Communities' regeneration program, which operated in England between 1999 and 2010, and which had a relatively strong participatory element in its design. Findings from the study suggest that participation initiatives could be improved by developing network approaches, including the role of 'network brokers', defined as those residents who act as nodes and potential gatekeepers, mediating access to decision-making for non-participating residents. Attention needs to be paid to these residents on the periphery, who are dependent on brokers to link them to decision-making structures (Morgan-Trimmer 2014: 470).

The physical location of public service employees appears to be important for networking to take place, and the culture of public sector offices, meetings and events was found to be important in creating welcoming spaces where residents could engage easily. Particular attention needs to be paid to non-participation, and on 'focusing on routes of influence from the periphery rather than numbers represented at meetings' (Morgan-Trimmer 2014: 470).

This is in keeping with the observations by Robinson et al (2005: 18-19), that community members are usually the only unpaid volunteers in a neighbourhood regeneration process. Although they have a more personal interest than paid professionals in improving their area and stand to gain benefits if it works, issues such as the timing, location and format of meetings, childcare provision, access and transport all have an influence on their willingness and ability to participate.

These studies suggests that there is value in focusing on issues such as participation and non-participation, and understanding members of the community as being located at various points in the local network, some more centrally, and others at the periphery.

4.2.7 Linking urban regeneration and community renewal

Rice (n.d.) examined the NSW government's approach to linking urban regeneration and community, using the Redfern-Waterloo area as an example. Key findings from this program, which commenced in January 2005 under the *Redfern-Waterloo Authority Act 2004 (NSW)* include:

- The initiative generated worthwhile benefits, including the development of a better understanding of the processes that are needed to accompany holistic, integrated strategic planning. Both political will and community participation are essential if holistic, integrated planning is to deal effectively with substance as well as process.
- It is difficult to achieve both urban regeneration and community renewal in an integrated way, linked to the complex interactions of people, place and governance. There needs to be greater connects between public policy, public administration and planning, including greater clarity on the language that is used.
- An 'integrated spatial governance model' needs to be developed and adapted to the Australian context.

As summarised by Rice (n.d.: 12), 'the best way of testing implementation and the compromises it entails is to apply it to a specific place'.

4.2.8 Strength of social relationships and the quality of urban life

Based on research conducted in the UK, Crisp (2013) finds little evidence of a direct, positive relationship between the strength of social relationships at the neighbourhood level and the quality of urban life. There is only limited evidence that a focus on enhancing social ties can revitalise disadvantaged neighbourhoods. At the same time, the research showed that the emergence of new threats 'can quickly galvanise residents to act collectively' (Crisp 2013: 335).

4.3 Summary

Research suggests that policy and practice in Australia has been relatively slow in responding to the changing nature of disadvantage. Physical regeneration programs or people-based programs adopted in isolation are insufficient to bring about major change. Both kinds of programs are required simultaneously and need to be well-resourced.

These findings lend weight to the value of the Neighbourhood Renewal approach, which explicitly addresses people and place-based concerns in tandem. Research carried out in Victoria suggests that Neighbourhood Renewal was an effective approach to improving health and life satisfaction among people living in neighbourhoods where such initiatives were taking place, compared with those living in control areas. Interventions which included upgrades to the built environment and social interventions were found in a study conducted in outer Sydney to contribute to residents' sense of safety, belonging and satisfaction with the aesthetics of their neighbourhood.

Neighbourhoods do not exist in isolation from the sub-regions and regions in which they are located. The most successful initiatives address local issues, such as poor quality social services, as well as making efforts to link the neighbourhood to the rest of the urban areas within which it sits.

There is value in starting where there is a felt need, and gradually building the community's capacity to participate. This requires coming with an authentic desire to listen and to adjust plans accordingly, a readiness to accept that governments and community organisations may not have all the right answers, and the flexibility to adjust programs according to what is actually needed in a given local context. Communities may take a long time to make a decision about a proposed change, so organisations need to have the patience to allow change to happen organically.

Effective interventions involve long-term partnership between the public, private and community sectors, suggesting the need for greater connections between public policy, public administration and planning. Community organisations, which often have a more intimate knowledge of the local context, can assist private and public organisations in building rapport with and understanding the target community. Ensuring effective and relevant involvement of the private sector over the long term may be a key challenge to address. Strategies to avoid include:

- 
- Overly identifying an area as dysfunctional
 - Tokenism in forming partnerships and building community involvement
 - Short term 'quick fixes' that do not allow sufficient time for the community to understand, accept and own the changes that are needed
 - Investing too quickly, beyond the capacity of the community to fully participate
 - Interventions which merely displace the problem.

Research suggests that the best way of testing implementation of a program, and the compromises it entails, is to apply it to a specific place.

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