

# Evaluation of Two Community Sector Development Projects: Final Report

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For the  
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**Kathleen Clapham**

**Pam Grootemaat**

**Freidoon Khavarpour**

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## Acronyms and other terms used in this report

AHSRI	Australian Health Services Research Institute
CSDP	Community Sector Development Project
CHSD	Centre for Health Services Development
CUAC	Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation
LGA	Local Government Area
WCC	Wollongong City Council ('The Council')
WRF	Warrawong Resident Forum Inc.

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## Executive Summary

### *Description of the Program*

In 2011 Wollongong City Council (“the Council”) obtained a three year funding grant from the New South Wales Government through Community Services, Department of Human Services (“Community Services”) to develop and implement the Strengthening Communities - Community Builders Project. A Capacity Building Program was developed and implemented with two established community organisations in the Illawarra region of New South Wales. These were the Coomaditchie Community Hub operated by the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation (CUAC) for and for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch operated by the Warrawong Residents Forum Inc. (WRF). The Capacity Building Program (‘The Program’) consisted of a series of activities implemented at each site by external consultants between July 2012 and June 2014.

The Centre for Health Services Development (CHSD), a research centre of the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI) at the University of Wollongong was commissioned by the Council in August 2012 to conduct the evaluation of the Capacity Building Program at the two sites.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information to the Council and two community organisations, about how organisational capacity building could be achieved over the course of the funding period and how it could contribute to improving the sustainability of the Projects in the face of predicted future funding difficulties. It recognised the importance of understanding how the capacity of local leadership of the organisations could be enhanced.

The series of capacity building activities were developed and implemented reflect the priorities of the funding body and the Council around good governance, planning and improving partnerships between community organisations and the business sector. The activities implemented were:

- Policy and Procedures Manual update
- Planning Days
- Business Plan development
- Social Enterprise/ IT Development (for the Coomaditchie Community Hub only)
- Assets Audit (for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch only)

### *Evaluation Approach*

A formative approach was seen as the most appropriate approach for the Program evaluation as it provided a framework for developing an understanding of the process of change and for finding out what works, what doesn’t and why. A formative approach encompassed process as well as outcomes elements, and address the following questions:

- How was the Capacity Building Program implemented at each site?
- To what extent was the Program successful in producing worthwhile results in the short, medium and long term?

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- What were the enablers and barriers to participation in and impact of the Program at each site?
  - To what extent did the Capacity Building Program contribute to the sustainability of the two organisations?

### *Description of the two Projects*

#### *Coomaditchie Community Hub*

The Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation was established as a community organisation in 1992 because of the neglect and lack of service provision to the Coomaditchie Aboriginal community. The organisation has provided welfare and advocacy services to the community for over twenty years since its incorporation in 1993, as well as being active in bush regeneration, art projects and cultural heritage and community development programs CUAC.

The Coomaditchie Community Hub provides information and referral services to clients who are unable, or unwilling due to past bad experiences, to use other service providers. Services are offered flexibly to meet the needs of its clients. The Hub was described as providing a 'stepping stone' to other services. The organisation has a strong network of community and other partners across the Illawarra region. It creates a bridge between local Aboriginal residents and the services available to them that can ensure that Aboriginal people have the confidence to operate as citizens in the broader society. In addition to providing welfare services CUAC is strongly committed to promoting pride in Aboriginal culture and heritage through its community art program and bush regeneration programs. These programs operationalise CUAC's commitment to community cultural education as a way of breaking down barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The important cultural focus of the Hub makes it a unique and valuable resource for the region.

Although it does not limit its services to Aboriginal people in the immediate neighbourhood, its name, being embedded in the local community, its historical association with 'the mission' and the Coomaditchie Lagoon, as well as its historical ties to historically important Aboriginal leaders and activists, distinguish it from other 'welfare' agencies. The Coomaditchie Hub also has a different funding mechanism from other organisations, making it somewhat vulnerable in hard economic times. The 'survival' of the Hub was expressed as a central concern for those involved in the evaluation process.

The primary target groups for the Coomaditchie Community Hub are the Indigenous population, the residents of Coomaditchie as well as those living in Warrawong with some of the non-Indigenous people living in the area, particularly Aboriginal children and young people. The geographical spread includes areas covered by the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Local Government areas. Many of these locations include people who are socio economically disadvantaged.

Funding was made available through the Community Builders funding scheme for four days a week for an administrator. This funding is divided between the three paid workers: the Coordinator, who works seven hours a week (on Mondays); the other 14 hours are

divided between the two Aboriginal Community Workers. *The staff are assisted by a number of volunteers. A Management Committee meets four times a year.*

### *Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch*

The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch was established in 2003 to meet the food needs of socio-economically disadvantaged people living in and around the Warrawong area of NSW. The purpose of the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch Project is to provide a nutritious meal, four times a week, to people in need within a safe environment free of judgement or discrimination. The Kitchen/Lunch also provides a 'pivot point'; while meeting people's basic food needs, it brings people together, engages with them, provides information and facilitates their contact with service providers and community development programs.

The purpose of the Project is fundamental to the overall mission of the WRF which is to empower the local community and enhance lifestyle through effective community management and participation and commitment to services. The underlying philosophy is one of social justice philosophy and empathy. Individuals, groups and communities are assisted to identify their needs and address the issues that negatively affect their lives. Through a range of services, programs and practical activities the WRF provides basic needs and access to services to the disadvantaged in the local community with the aim of helping improve people's life circumstances.

The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch services two main population groups: those who are socially and economically disadvantaged and those who live in the local areas of Warrawong Lake Heights, Kemblawarra, Berkeley, Port Kembla or Cringila. Clients include the elderly, young and middle aged, male and female, single parents and those with young children. The Kitchen/Lunch originally catered primarily for those with a health card or pension card, but this was deemed as discrimination and so now a free meal is provided to anyone who comes to the Kitchen/Lunch.

The operations of the Kitchen/Lunch are conducted by a highly experienced and skilled team of staff. The overall management of the Kitchen/Lunch Project is the responsibility of the Warrawong Resident's Forum Inc. (WRF). The Manager looks after finances, manages multiple projects, overseas information, referral and community events, organises staff development activities, conducts public advocacy campaigns and media communications and undertakes the 'hands on' community development work with clients within the Kitchen/Lunch project. The day to day operations of the Kitchen/Lunch are coordinated by the Lunch Coordinator. The WRF Management Committee meets monthly.

### ***Key Learnings from the Literature***

The first stage of the project involved searches for relevant literature to inform the evaluation. A targeted literature review was conducted focusing on capacity building in the non-profit sector. Three key review questions were considered as most relevant for the present evaluation:

1. What is organisational capacity building?

2. What are the key elements of organisation capacity building for small community based organisations?
3. How is organisational capacity developed and sustained?

Research demonstrates that non-profit organisations play a vital role in bringing people together, mobilising collective action and developing the social capital that enables communities to function well (Putnam 2000). Building capacity in these organisations strengthens both the individual organisations and the community (Boris 2001). Capacity in such organisations is a multifunctional concept which includes the ability to provide skills, pass on the knowledge and obtain financial resources. However there is always the issue of adequate time in the capacity building process.

The literature recommends that there must be "extended" time made available in order for change to occur and outcomes reached (Winer and Ray 1994). Program delivery and impact are the primary reasons for the existence of non-profit organisations. To be successful however, they also require strategic relationships, resource development, internal operations and management. Leadership and governance are important in order to 'keep all parts aligned and moving' (Connolly and York 2002). Capacity building efforts that focus on an organisation's structure, its staff, management and even clients, can contribute to the functioning of the organisation and create effective outcomes. The result is that the organisation can properly and effectively operate under uncertain and constantly changing circumstances to achieve its intended goals and missions.

Organisational capacity building in small non-profit organisations requires certain strategies commencing with identifying the organisational needs, assessing the benefits of capacity building and identifying any possible disadvantages. Building organisational capacity requires new ways of thinking for successful outcomes. In small organisations demands on time, effort and particularly resources are often so great, and to some extent impossible, that it can leave less time and energy to reach the intended objectives. Issues such as staff turnover and restraints in resources, particularly budget, can make capacity building activities impractical. The use of consultants and technical advice is frequently used to guide organisations.

### **Methods**

#### *Development of a Program Logic Model*

A program logic model was developed to obtain a clear picture or model of the underlying rationale or logic of a program. That is, it shows how and why a program will produce the expected outcomes (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2005). For the evaluation of the Community Sector Development Program, a semi-structured interview protocol derived from the evaluation literature (Gugiu and Rodriguez-Campos 2007) was adopted in order to facilitate the development of a logic model of a program's activities and outcomes. The graphical depiction of a generic logic model illustrates the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, impacts and outcomes (both short- and long-term) of a program. The completed model was used to frame and guide the evaluation.

An evaluation framework was developed which provided a guide to the evaluation process by aligning the program logic model, the evaluation questions and indicators and the sources and methods of data collection.

#### *Data Collection*

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. The following sources of data were utilised:

- Program data, documents and reports from both sites
- A total of 24 qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted over a two year period
- Researchers conducted regular site visits to observe Management Committee and other events organised by the projects. They also provided an opportunity to monitor the progress of each project and provide regular ongoing feedback to local stakeholders
- A further set of interviews with key staff at each of the two Programs was undertaken. For each of the capacity building activities researchers asked the following questions.
  - What capacity building activities occurred?
  - Who conducted the activity?
  - Who was involved in capacity building (as participants)?
  - When did the capacity building activity occur?
  - How were the capacity building activities conducted?
  - How appropriate was the activity?
  - How successful was the activity?
  - Did they build capacity?
  - How/in what ways did they build the capacity?
  - Was it sufficient?
  - What else needs to occur to build capacity in this area?
  - Can they make the organisation more sustainable? How?
- Quantitative service data was also obtained and analysed in order to describe the main client activities

### *Main findings*

The Evaluation found that the Capacity Building Program was successfully implemented at each of the sites. The activities involved the staff, volunteers and Management Committee members at both sites and some of the clients in the case of the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch. The findings report on the Program implementation, Program achievements; and the Barriers and Enablers to implementation and success.

#### *Policy and Procedures Manual*

The updating of the policy and procedures manuals for each of the Projects was the first of the Council's capacity building program activities. The aim of the activity was to ensure that each of the organisations operated effectively and efficiently and conformed to the principals of good governance for community based programs, consistent with the objectives of the Community Builders Program. The work was carried out, as planned, over a period of one to two months during the first half of 2012 by an external consultant. Although the activity was an appropriate capacity building activity, participants at both of the Projects reported that their expertise was underutilised in the development of this activity. Its implementation overlooked the considerable level of experience and skill in the governance of small community based organisations which existed in the staff and Management Committees of both Projects leading to some resentment from the Project staff.

The focus on policy and procedures as a capacity building activity was regarded as somewhat unnecessary as these documents already existed and it was seen to add little to nothing to the sustainability of the organisation. The timing of the activity was also problematic as it was not an identified priority for the community organisations at the time of its implementation. On the other hand, positive comments were recorded from other participants, including Management Committee members, who thought that the document was well written, easy to read and understand, and was valuable because it contained everything that is needed about how to operate the service, for example, staff management, assets, issues around volunteers and conflict resolution. These comments suggest that the Manuals have contributed to a more transparent and open processes and a better understanding of processes by people outside of the core staff group.

Despite the objections raised about the way the activity was implemented there is some limited evidence that good governance principles are increasingly being reflected in effective and efficient practice as a result of the production of the Manual. At CUAC one immediate consequence of the development of the Policy and Procedures Manual was that staff appraisal procedures were subsequently carried out with three staff members. At the Warrawong Community Kitchen new staff and volunteers as well as Management Committee members were requested to read the document. The revised documents were taken to each of the Management Committees for formal approval. At CUAC the Policy and Procedures Manual was taken to the Management Committee and ratified in November 2013. Moreover, the revised Manuals are a way of showing that the community organisations have developed clear indicators of good governance and good practice and that their organisational processes align with their aims and objectives. The updated Manual is likely to be viewed positively by potential funders to whom grant applications may be made.

### *Planning Days*

The second capacity building activity initiated by the Council were Planning Days with each project. An external consultant facilitated two separate Planning Days, one for each of the projects, in May-June 2013 at an external venue in Port Kembla. The activities consisted of discussion around the past and the future of each organisation. Discussion of the Past focused on the achievements of each of the projects over the period during which they have operated, identifying the most significant achievement and reviewing how the organisation has been able to accomplish these achievements.

The need for the planning day was identified by the Council as an activity that could contribute to the capacity and ultimately to the sustainability of the two projects. The planning day provided an opportunity for both organisations to identify the factors underlying their considerable achievements, and indeed survival, over a long period of time and to reflect on their future. Participants were asked to identify both short term goals for the next 12 months and their longer term goals. The consultant provided some guidelines for moving forward, and produced what was considered a valuable document created by a skilled report writer.

The Planning Day activity resulted in an output of a Capacity Building Action Plan for each of the organisations. The Plan provides a clear Statement of Purpose, a Situational Analysis and a section on the Constraints Inhibiting Capacity Development. While participant feedback from both organisations was positive about the way the Planning Day was conducted, they expressed uncertainty about the extent to which the activity was a worthwhile or successful event. Both groups considered the focus on planning to be good in principal but felt that little new information or knowledge was gained from the activity. This is not surprising as both organisations are well established, have had longstanding management practices in place and have a clear vision for their future. For both organisations the key issue is the urgent need to obtain sufficient resources to realise that vision on a sustainable basis. Participants therefore, expressed a level of frustration with the processes being almost thrust upon them in relation to having to go through the motions of organisational planning.

### *Assets Audit*

The Assets Audit was an activity implemented as intended at the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch by an external consultant under the auspices of the Wollongong City Council. The Assets Audit activity was conducted in August/September 2012 and the detailed report and resulted in the production of the People Assets Mapping Project Report (Hall 2013). The Report provided the Management Committee of the Warrawong Residents Forum (WRF) with information for planning and development in the Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch. It also provided the WRF with information that may be beneficial in the seeking of funding for the Kitchen's continuation beyond its current source. The document produced is well written and provides a vivid portrayal of the difficult circumstances facing many of the Kitchen/Lunch clients as well as an indicating the strength and resilience of these clients.

### *Social Enterprise*

The social enterprise activity was conducted by an external consultant at the Coomaditchie Hub only. The activity was implemented through the development of a website after limited consultation with the Hub staff. Initial discussions late in 2013 at Coomaditchie resulted in some ideas being generated about the sort of website which would work for the organisation, including developing the website for production art. The need for an improved website for the purposes required by the Hub was a clearly identified priority both by the Council and by CUAC. For CUAC, the website is important from an information perspective of providing useful information to the community and also as a sales tool. The website development was also identified in the Action Plan as an important activity to support the future commercialisation of art products. It was understood by the Coomaditchie staff that the activity would involve improvements of the existing website currently hosted by Webation [www.coomaditchie.org.au](http://www.coomaditchie.org.au), however this did not occur and rather a new website was developed. It was the Hub's preference that the existing website be updated because it was considered to serve the purpose.

While the social enterprise resulted in the development of a new and very attractive website (<http://web.verbsyndicate.com/transfer/>), the results of the activity have been disappointing to date as the product developed was not seen to meet the needs of the organisation in terms of its ability to represent the full range of CUAC's activities. An additional problem identified was that the activity did not produce the detailed marketing plan which was part of the original brief. Since the uptake of the website by the Hub would involve additional costs (in addition to their existing website), it has not been used to date.

### *Business Plan*

The Business Plan activity involved an external consultant working with each of the Projects to identify opportunities for developing mutually beneficial partnerships with private entities. This activity offered the Projects with alternative ways of getting income, other than grants. The approach was based on a US based 'Itasca' model (Brainerd, Campbell et al. 2013) which involves the cooperation among the private, public, and non-profit sectors in order to address community problems. Of all of the activities in the Capacity Building Program, the business plan was seen to most closely address an identified need.

The Business Plan activity is seen as the most 'successful' of the Capacity Building Program activities. Perhaps this is because, being the most recent activity, it builds upon the groundwork already laid in the other parts of the Capacity Building Program, particularly the Planning Day where action plans were developed and new ideas floated. Participants at both sites were very positive about the work conducted by the Business Plan consultant. The potential for making real change was recognized by participants at both sites, although it was noted there has been no actual development of a costed business plan as understood by the organisations. The Business Plan activity has opened up communications between the Project and the wider Illawarra community, letting them know what the organisations are doing.

On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 the 'Warrawong Project' was formally launched by BlueScope Steel which was presided over by Wollongong Mayor Gordon Bradbury. The event brought together three community organisations: The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch; the Coomaditchie Hub; and Urban Grown.

In the short term the Capacity Building activities have led to increased commitment by the Business Leadership group. BlueScope has also helped each of the organisations apply for and obtain an internal BlueScope grant of \$10,000-15,000 for the 'Warrawong Project'. In the medium term there has begun an ongoing relationship with the business sector by connecting the local businesses sector to the planning of the Kitchen/Lunch activities. The longer term goal for this activity is that through the relationships being established with the three groups, the community organisations will increase their connection with the business sector.

### ***Enabling factors***

Many factors contributed to the successful implementation of the Capacity Building Program at the two community organisation sites. Firstly the Program took a systematic approach to organisational capacity building commencing with the identification of needs. The Council conducted an initial needs analysis, planned the series of activities and monitored their implementation. Importantly the Council acted as an 'entrepreneur connector' bringing together external consultants with key stakeholders at each of the Project sites. There was strong commitment from the Coordinator of Community Partnerships and Safety at the Wollongong City Council throughout the Program. Participants at both projects acknowledged the considerable effort which has been put into the capacity building program by the Wollongong City Council Coordinator. Particularly valuable were the efforts taken to seek out skilled consultants to work on capacity building activities with each of the Projects, make the introductions and try different approaches. By taking a flexible approach it was possible to 'try out' various capacity building strategies in order to find those which had the best fit for each of the organisations.

Both of the Projects developed an interest in the Program over time which enabled it to be successfully sustained over a two year period. The program could not have been implemented successfully without the support of strong and resilient staff at each site who became the key points of contact for the Program over a two year period. Staff and management at each site are supported by highly competent staff, and supportive Management Committees at both sites who also enabled the implementation of the Program. Finally the willingness of local business leaders to engage collaboratively with the community organisations has been very important particularly in the final phase of the Program.

### ***Barriers to successful implementation***

There have also been several barriers to the implementation of the Capacity Building Program over the past two years. Decision making around the capacity building activities was initially a 'top-down' approach driven by Council and the funding body. In particular, the lack of negotiation or choice around the particular capacity building activities in the early stages meant that some activities seemed unnecessary and redundant to the Project

staff and Managers. The poor communication between some consultants and the Projects were barriers to some of the Program activities. A more consultative approach at both sites may have increased the level of alignment of priorities of the Council and the two Projects. It may also have increased the level of satisfaction with the way some of the activities were implemented.

One important factor was the lack of consideration given to the considerable existing capacity and achievements of both Projects. The focus of the Program activities on capacity building rather than capacity enhancing activities implied a lack of capacity in both organisations. This was contrary both to the organisations view of themselves as resourceful and successful and their track records in terms of service provided, numbers of people supported and outcomes achieved, on very few resources.

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

The Capacity Building Program was successfully implemented over a two year period in two Community Sector Development Projects between 2011 and 2014. It brought together Wollongong City Council staff, external consultants, staff, Management Committee members, and volunteers at the Coomaditchie Community Hub and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch around a Program designed to enhance the capacity of the organisations to deliver much needed services to their disadvantaged clients.

The Program focused attention on the underpinnings of strong and effective organisations – good governance; vision, goals and objectives aligned with organisational capacity, the use of knowledge to inform service delivery, and the need to adopt innovative ways of addressing future uncertainties. The Program has resulted in a number of outputs: revised Policy and Procedures Manuals for both of the Projects; Capacity Building Action Plans for each of the Project; a People Assets Mapping Project Report.

The Program has achieved many of its short and medium term outcomes, including those around improved knowledge and skills in good governance principles and processes; an improved understanding of current organisational situation; and the capacity for short and long term planning. The knowledge gained from research such as the Assets Mapping project should inform service delivery and provide the support future funding. Perhaps the most important outcome to emerge in the short and medium term is that the Project staff and Management Committees have not only become better informed about potential business collaborations but partnerships between local business leaders and the community organisations have already been established.

The implementation of the Capacity Building Program was facilitated by a systematic approach to organisational capacity building but also a large degree of flexibility and creativity in trying out various strategies in order to find those which had the best fit for each of the organisations. The most success was achieved when the consultants were willing to listen and respond flexibly to the needs of the organisations.

One of the key strengths of these community based organisations is that they are flexible and willing to adapt to changes in the environment. The recent experience with the

Business Leadership group clearly demonstrates this ability of the Projects to incorporate new ideas and to give new ways of doing things a go. The leadership of the Council in supporting their transition to working better with business as this will continue to be important into the future.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

In 2011 Wollongong City Council (“the Council”) obtained a three year funding grant (“Community Builders”) from the New South Wales Government through Community Services, Department of Human Services (“Community Services”) to develop and implement two Community Sector Development Projects. A Capacity Building Program was developed and implemented with two established community organisations in the Illawarra region of New South Wales. These organisations were the Coomaditchie Community Hub operated by the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation (CUAC) and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch operated by the Warrawong Residents Forum Inc. (WRF). The Capacity Building Program (‘The Program’) consisted of a series of activities implemented at each site by external consultants between July 2011 and June 2014.

The Centre for Health Services Development (CHSD), a research centre of the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI) at the University of Wollongong was commissioned by the Council in August 2012 to conduct the evaluation of the Capacity Building Program at the two sites.

### 1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information to the Council and two community organisations about how organisational capacity building could be achieved over the course of the funding period and how it could contribute to improving the sustainability of the Projects in the face of predicted future funding difficulties. It recognised the importance of understanding how the capacity of local leadership of the organisations could be enhanced.

A formative approach was seen as the most appropriate approach for the Program evaluation as it provided a framework for developing an understanding of the process of change and for finding out what works, what doesn’t and why. The evaluation was intended to go beyond the minimal mandatory reporting required by the funding body. In particular, it was understood that qualitative data should be collected in addition to the quantitative data required in the Service Agreement with Community Services. A formative approach would encompass process as well as outcomes elements, in order to address the following questions:

- How was the Capacity Building Program implemented at each site?
- To what extent was the Program successful in producing worthwhile results in the short, medium and long term?
- What were the enablers and barriers to participation in and impact of the Program at each site?
- To what extent did the Capacity Building Program contribute to the sustainability of the two organisations?

### 1.3 Scope of the Report

The purpose of this Report is to present the key findings of the evaluation of the Capacity Building Program. The Report comprises six main sections, including this Introduction. Section two presents an overview of the Capacity Building Program. Section three describes the methods used for the evaluation. The findings are presented in section four and the conclusions and recommendations in section five.

The Report also includes a list of References and three large appendices. The Semi-structured interview protocol for constructing logic models is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B contains the review of literature which informed the evaluation. Appendix C *The Coomaditchie Community Hub*, and Appendix D *The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch* provide an overview of each of the community Projects, their background and contextual factors, a description of the activities conducted and the outcomes of these activities at the individual and family, organisational and community levels. These two appendices have been included in this Report to provide additional information about the contexts in which the Capacity Building Program was implemented, the processes of delivery and the impact on the two community organisations.

## 2 Overview of the Program

### 2.1 Program background

The Wollongong City Council initiated the development of a Capacity Building Program at each of the two community organisations in July 2011. Overall coordination of the Program was provided by the Council's Community Partnerships and Safety Coordinator and overseen by the Council's Project Control Group which included Council staff, representatives of the funding body and external stakeholders.

The Capacity Building Program developed by the Council was intended to create greater sustainability for the two community Projects following the end of the three year Community Builders funding. It took into account the current political climate of reduced government funding for community based initiatives and the risk of closure if the Projects simply continued with normal business. In the first year of the Program the Council undertook a need analysis consisting of a Self-Report: Service Procedures Health Check and Needs Assessment, based on Community Services Best Practice Guidelines, to determine where capacity needed to be built. The Self-Assessment Service Procedures Health Check was to be implemented by the Council with the two community organisations' Management Committees as a web-based survey over a two year period; however this did not prove to be feasible.

The series of capacity building activities were developed and implemented reflect the priorities of the funding body and the Council around good governance, planning and improving partnerships between community organisations and the business sector. The activities implemented were:

- Policy and Procedures Manual update
- Planning Days
- Business Plan development
- Social Enterprise/ IT Development (for the Coomaditchie Community Hub only)
- Assets Audit (for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch only)

### 2.2 Program funding

The Community Builders Funding Scheme targets communities in NSW, especially the disadvantaged members of those communities. This includes groups of participants who live in the same place or area or participants who share a common identity feature. Community Sector Development Projects (CSDP) are undertaken with organisations which work with certain target population communities and priority groups. Community Sector Development projects build partnerships between organisations working collaboratively on issues affecting the communities they service. These projects aim to enhance the capacity of local community sector networks.

The Communities of Location for the Coomaditchie Community Hub Project and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch Project are the Wollongong, Shellharbour and

Kiama Local Government Areas (LGAs). Despite the small size of these CSDP projects, they were strategically important for the Wollongong City Council because of their history of service within the region with underserved populations, and with the Aboriginal population in the case of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation (CUAC).

### 2.3 Program aim

The goal of the Wollongong City Council Capacity Building Program aligns with the overarching goals of the Community Builders Funding, that is, to enhance communities' social infrastructure in order to increase community participation and engagement for their target population communities.

### 2.4 Program objectives

The overall objectives of the Capacity Building Program were not specified as the Program was developed as a series of individual activities. However they can be derived from the documentation developed by each of the capacity building activities. The following table illustrates how the Program objectives align with the evaluation questions:

**Table 1 List of evaluation questions and Program objectives**

Evaluation Questions	Program Objectives
How was the Capacity Building Program implemented at each site?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure that the Projects conformed to the principals of good governance for community based program.</li> <li>▪ To analyse the current situation of each Project and to and develop a capacity building action plan.</li> <li>▪ To provide the Management Committee of the Warrawong Residents Forum (WRF) with information for planning and development that would be beneficial in the ongoing seeking of funding for the Project.</li> <li>▪ To develop a website appropriate for the needs of the Coomaditchie Community Hub.</li> <li>▪ To initiate partnership development activities which link business leaders with the two Projects.</li> </ul>
To what extent was the Program successful in producing worthwhile results in the short, medium and long term?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To produce an updated Policies and Procedures Manual that would ensure that the Projects operate effectively and efficiently.</li> <li>▪ To provide an opportunity for both projects to identify the factors underlying their success and to reflect on their future.</li> <li>▪ To identify the skills and interests of clients accessing the Community Lunches and identify their preferences for services and activities.</li> <li>▪ To produce a website that meets the social enterprise needs of the Coomaditchie Community Hub.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To establish a business-community forum that would enhance future funding possibilities for both projects.</li> </ul>
What were the enablers and barriers to participation in and impact of the Program at each site?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy and Procedures Manual</li> <li>▪ Planning Day</li> <li>▪ Assets Audit</li> <li>▪ Social Enterprise/ IT Development</li> <li>▪ Business Plan</li> </ul>
To what extent did the Capacity Building Program contribute to the sustainability of the two organisations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy and Procedures Manual</li> <li>▪ Planning Day</li> <li>▪ Assets Audit</li> <li>▪ Social Enterprise/ IT Development</li> <li>▪ Business Plan</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Program model

The first question in a process evaluation is to determine what was done and whether the activities were implemented as planned. The following table sets out the main program elements for each of the capacity building activities.

**Table 2** Program model

Capacity Building Activity	Program Elements
Policy and Procedures Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SWOT analysis and Feedback</li> <li>▪ Production of Manual</li> </ul>
Planning Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program data analysis</li> <li>▪ Workshop to review of past achievements and future goals</li> <li>▪ Production of Capacity Building Action Plan</li> </ul>
Assets Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assets audit using qualitative methods</li> <li>▪ Production of Report</li> </ul>
Social Enterprise / IT Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initial consultation</li> <li>▪ Development of website</li> </ul>
Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Theoretical model</li> <li>▪ Initial consultation</li> <li>▪ Network with business leaders</li> <li>▪ Bring parties together to explore common interest</li> <li>▪ Establish collaborative 'Project'</li> <li>▪ Launch Project</li> </ul>

## 2.6 Program logic

In order to obtain a clear picture or model of the underlying rationale or logic of the Capacity Building Program a program logic model was developed. A program logic model shows how and why a program will produce the expected outcomes (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2005). A graphical depiction of a generic logic model illustrates the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, impacts and outcomes (both short- and long-term) of a program. The completed model can then be used to frame and guide the evaluation.

In a logic model 'inputs' refer to what is invested in the program, typically staff, funding, facilities, equipment, partnerships and other resources. Activities or outputs describe what has actually been done, and may include workshops, services delivered, materials developed, training; the model may also identify the participants involved in those activities. The outcomes (or impacts) should be aligned with the program objectives and may occur soon after the implementation of the program activity (short term impact), or in the medium term (medium term impacts). Long term impacts or outcomes would be expected to reflect the changes that a program aims to produce over time, often expressed as 'goals'.

While there is considerable variation in the way logic models are used by evaluators, including the degree of complexity in the logic model, the primary purpose of a logic model is to articulate the underlying assumptions about how the expected outcomes of a program will be reached in the short, medium and long term. The underlying theory has also been called a 'theory of change' or 'program theory' because it sets out a causal path and can be read as a series of "if-then" statements. Sometimes the relationships between the elements of a program are connected by as a series of arrows that represent the causal links between elements. To avoid clutter an alternative method is to assign each element with a unique identification code and replace the arrows with the codes of the related elements (Rodriguez-Campos and Rincones-Gómez 2012). In the model below (Figure 1) the unique identification code is shown in bold prior to the element descriptor. The related elements are shown in plain italic text after the element descriptor (IN1, A1, P1, ST1, MT1, LT1 etc.). The model uses colour to highlight the logical outcomes of each of the Program activities.

The development of a logic model does not assume that a program is static or unchanging. Community programs are usually dynamic and continually evolving; the logic model can be thought of as a 'snap shot' in time in relation to a program and can be revised over the course of a program's life. Program logic models are frequently developed as part of the design phase of a program to ensure that the program elements will generate the desired impact and outcomes. For established programs the logic model provides the basis for a shared understanding about how the program works, and informs the development of an evaluation framework, systematic data collection and reporting. Alternatively the logic model may be reviewed after an evaluation is completed to ensure that the program learns from the evaluation findings and adapts appropriately. This process is most effective when it is collaborative and done through involvement of key stakeholders (Yeatman, Quinsey et al. 2013).

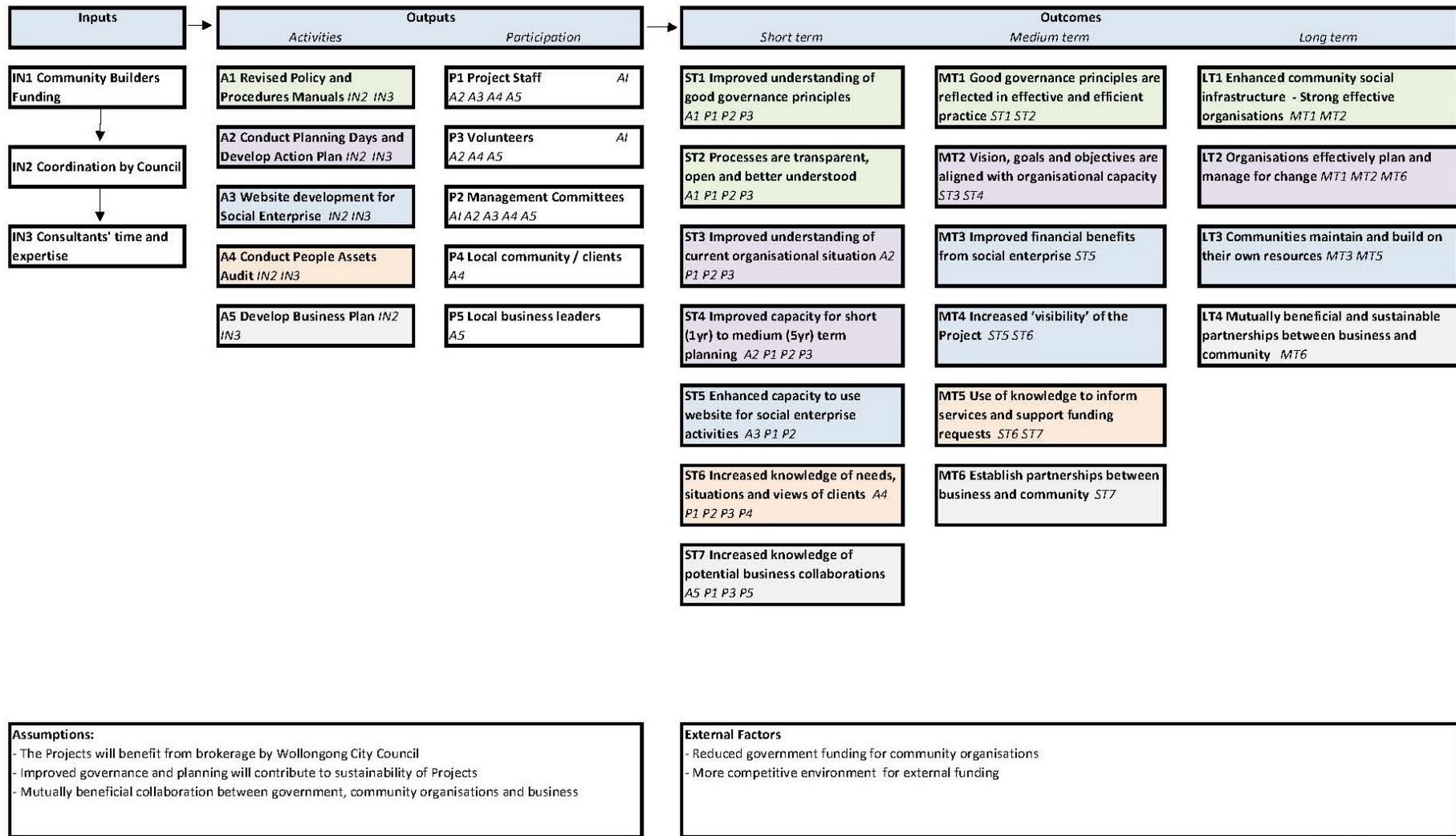
The Wollongong City Council Capacity Building Program logic model is presented below in Figure 1. The model situates the Program as being implemented between 2011 and 2014 at Coomaditchie Community Hub and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch. The inputs in this model are all the major resources that are necessary for the Program to operate, that is the funding for the Capacity Building Program obtained by the Council from the Community Services through the Community Builders funding scheme which enabled the Council to employ skilled consultants to work at each of the Project sites under the coordination of the Council Coordinator. The activities in this model are the five Capacity Building activities. There are five types of participants identified: the staff and volunteers at each of the Projects, the Management Committees, local community or client groups, and local business leaders. The model then links inputs, activities and participants to the short, medium and long term outcomes. The short term outcomes in this model are the immediate indicators or improved organisational capacity which can be expected as a result of the proposed activities. The medium term outcomes refer to the changes in organisational capacity that can be expected to have been accomplished that will support the longer-term goals.

There are a number of assumptions underlying the Program. These include the assumption that the two community Projects will benefit from brokerage by Wollongong City Council, that improved governance and planning will contribute to sustainability of the two Projects and that closer collaboration between government, community organisations and business can be mutually beneficial. The external environment in this model includes the reduced government funding for community organisations and the increasing competition for any external funding.

**Figure 1 Capacity Building Program Logic Model**

**Program:** Wollongong City Council Capacity Building Program Logic Model

**Situation:** The Capacity Building Program was implemented between 2011 and 2014 at the Coomaditchie Community Hub and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch .



Revised 20/08/14

## 3 Methods

### 3.1 Evaluation approach

Formative evaluation processes were planned to take place throughout the evaluation period to document activities and processes, monitor progress, and provide opportunities for reflection. Formative evaluation is inclusive of several evaluation types including: implementation evaluation to monitor how closely the program conforms to the way in which it was intended; and process evaluation to assess how the program was delivered. The processes put in place through the formative evaluation are intended to assist in the production of reliable and consistent evaluation data (e.g. templates for reporting attendance and participation, meetings minuted, formal and informal discussions documented, events documented, photographic information collected where appropriate etc.).

The formative evaluation for the Capacity Building Program included the following key elements:

1. Key insights and understandings derived from relevant literature, policy directives and previous work
2. A process evaluation undertaken through the collection and analysis of qualitative data to document ways in which the Capacity Building Program were undertaken, and assess the processes by which project activities were implemented at each of the sites.
3. An evaluation of the short and medium term outcomes of the Program
4. Provision of workshops at each Project site to introduce the evaluation approach and provide milestone points for feedback and monitoring of progress;
5. Exploring of opportunities for empowerment and information sharing
6. Building research and evaluation capacity within each of the projects.

The most useful evaluation research that should be conducted within programs, as part of everyday good practice, is process evaluation (Hawe, Degeling et al. 1991). The assessment of reach, quality, implementation and satisfaction helps to develop and (re)form new programs (formative evaluation) and be used routinely to see if programs remain on track (quality control). A process evaluation was undertaken by the researchers in order to document ways in which the Capacity Building Program was being undertaken, and assess the processes by which the activities are being delivered or implemented.

### 3.2 Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework provides a guide to the evaluation process by aligning the program logic model, the evaluation questions and indicators and the sources and methods of data collection. The evaluation framework in Table 3 has been adapted from Connolly and York 2001

**Table 3 Evaluation Framework**

(Connolly and York 2002)

Objective	Question	Indicators	Data Collection	
			Sources	Methods
<b>INPUTS</b>				
	What resources are available to generate or support each of the activities?	Amount \$ invested Personnel time invested Facilities Equipment Other resources	Council Staff Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Face to face Interviews Program data
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>				
Process	What new or existing activities were provided?	# number of program activities	Council Staff Managers	Face to face Interviews Program data
	How was the program implemented?	# sessions # assessments # referrals # materials distributed	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Face to face Interviews Program data
	Were the activities delivered as intended?	Level of program Quality of program Timeliness of program Accessibility and convenience of activity Location Timing of activity Staff availability Accuracy, adequacy, relevance of assistance Courteousness	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Face to face Interviews Program data
Attendance / Participation	Who participated in the activities?	# number of participants Types of participants Types of activities participated in Extent of participation	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Counting, documenting, and describing participants' characteristics and participation rates.
Quality of Program	What was the quality of the activities?	Activities reflect best practices and current knowledge Relevance of activities Participant satisfaction with the activities Participant likes and dislikes	Council Staff Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Identification of best practices and determination if programs incorporate them. Direct observation of activities. Interviews with participants after engagements
	What factors facilitated the delivery of an	Feedback from participants	Consultants	Observation

	effective program?		Managers Staff Management Committee	Interviews with Consultants Interviews with participants after engagements
	What were the barriers to the delivery of an effective program?	Feedback from participants	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Observation Interviews with Consultants Interviews with participants after engagements
	Were there any unexpected outcomes of the program?	Feedback from participants	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee	Interviews with Consultants Interviews with participants after engagements
	How was information produced / disseminated?	Number and quality of materials produced	Managers Staff Management Committee	Review of materials Interviews with Consultants Interviews with participants after engagements
<b>SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (the immediate effect of the capacity – building activities on individual participants)</b>				
Impact Measures	What did individual participants learn, or what skills did they acquire, as a result of the capacity-building activities, and how did the learning occur?	# number of capacity building activities # number of activities attended Level of improved knowledge Level of Improved skills and confidence		Participant observation Interviews with participants after engagements
	To what extent have attitudes and beliefs of participants changed regarding the issue being addressed?	Self-perception	Managers Staff Management Committee	Interviews with participants after engagements Participant observation Focus group/workshops
	To what extent and how did the participants or the organisation apply what was presented during the consulting engagement? What have they done differently as a result?	Self-report	Managers Staff Management Committee	Participant observation Focus group/workshops Interviews with participants after engagements
<b>MEDIUM AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES (the longer term and subsequent effect of the program on the organisation, the organisation's clients, and the community)</b>				
Organisational management and governance	How did overall organisational management capacities (i.e. governance, leadership, management, human resource development, financial management, communication, community outreach etc.) improve as a result of the capacity building activity?	Procedural change Policy change Funding acquired Formal partnerships established Communications More effective management	Council Staff Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee External Stakeholders	Interviews and focus groups with Board, staff, community partners, and collaborators. Review of financial and operational data. Monitoring of progress on strategic plan implementation.
Organisational level	In what ways (directly and/or indirectly) was the quality of services improved? In what ways was program capacity increased (scale, reach, or extent of impact on target population)?	Performance information about program operations. Client feedback	Consultants Managers Staff Management Committee External Stakeholders	Interviews with staff who deliver programs, Service data

Organisation's Clients	What cognitive, affective, and/or behavioural changes have constituents shown as a result of receiving programs and services? How have the organisation's clients lives improved?	Client feedback	Program documents	Review of program documents
Community	How have the organisations improved, on the whole, in a given community? How has the performance of the organisations in addressing community challenges improved? How have changes in management and governance and program delivery affected the community? What impact have these changes had on the community? To what extent have community conditions improved?	Increased resources Increased productivity Increased partnerships Improved relations with clients More effective management More engaged staff Staff able to apply increased skills	Program documents Council Staff Consultants Managers Management Committee	Review of resource acquisition in a given community (new grants, contracts, individual donations, etc.) Review networking/collaboration activities in a community.

### 3.3 Stages of the data collection

#### 3.3.1 Stage 1: Background and context of the two Projects

The evaluation was undertaken using a staged approach. Over the first 12 months the researchers were engaged in setting up the Project, reviewing the literature, establishing a relationship with the key personnel through site visits, attending Management Committee meetings, preparing applications for ethical review, conducting preliminary workshops at both sites and preparing the program logic model, evaluation framework and data collection instruments.

The researchers established initial contact with each of the Projects in July 2012. The Wollongong City Council Coordinator facilitated the initial introduction to the Managers at each of the sites. The Managers then provided the researchers with an orientation to each of the services and identified program data and other documents which could inform the evaluation. Following the initial consultation a detailed project timeline, stakeholder contact list, and a broad evaluation framework were developed and workshops planned. The research team was invited to attend the regular Management Committee meetings in each of the two Community Projects and a number of additional key stakeholders for the evaluation were identified.

Data collection commenced in November 2012, following approval from the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee. The initial data collection period focused on obtaining an in-depth understanding of the goals, objectives and activities of each of the Projects, the role of staff, volunteers and the Management Committee. Stage one activities provided the opportunity to engage with the key stakeholders at each project site and gain an appreciation of the underlying values and philosophies that guided their activities, their relationships with their target populations and their network of partnerships and collaborations.

A semi-structured interview protocol derived from the evaluation literature (Gugiu and Rodriguez-Campos 2007) was adopted in order to facilitate the development of a logic model for each of the Projects. The protocol presents a series of questions, which can be asked of specific program informants, that are designed to: (1) identify key informants basic background and contextual information, (2) generate logic model elements, (3) model program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, (4) build a rational theory, (5) develop a program theory, (6) prioritize logic model elements, and (7) build a graphical or tabular logic model. Feedback on the progress of the evaluation was provided at regular intervals to the key personnel at each site (See Appendix A).

The researchers also initially proposed the collection of a limited number of 'stories' from clients in order to assess how capacity building, organisational change and service improvement impacts on clients, staff and volunteers and the community. However, following advice from each of the community organisations a decision was made to focus only on stakeholder interviews and program data for the evaluation to reduce the burden on clients and community members. Secondary sources for client perspectives (Coomaditchie

United Aboriginal Corporation and Shellharbour TAFE 2012, Hall 2013) were used to ensure that the voices of clients and community members were included in the evaluation report.

### **3.3.2 Stage 2: The capacity building program**

Following the initial period of data collection the focus of the evaluation narrowed more closely to the Capacity Building Program which was implemented at the two sites between May 2012 and May 2014. A review of the Capacity Building Program materials and outputs was undertaken in addition to a further set of interviews with key staff at each of the sites, two of the consultants. For each of the capacity building activities initiated by the Wollongong City Council researchers asked the following questions.

1. What capacity building activities occurred?
2. Who conducted the activity?
3. Who was involved in building capacity building (as participants)?
4. When did the capacity building activity occur?
5. How were the capacity building activities conducted?
  - How appropriate was the activity?
  - How successful was the activity?
6. Did they build capacity?
  - How/in what ways did they build the capacity?
  - Was it sufficient?
  - What else needs to occur to build capacity in this area
  - Can they make the organisation more sustainable? How?

## **3.4 Data sources and data collection processes**

### **3.4.1 Program data, documents and reports**

A wide range of Program data was utilised for the evaluation. Documents and reports were obtained from the Project Manager or Coordinator at each site, or from the Council. They included:

#### ***Coomaditchie Community Hub***

- Coomaditchie briefing paper 2010. This document which outlines the background, historical significance, objectives, partnerships and current funded activities of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation (CUAC Undated).
- SWOT analysis (2012). Provides details of the outcomes of the SWOT analysis undertaken for the development of the Policy and Procedures Manual.
- CUAC Policies and Procedures Manual. This document was the outcome of the capacity building activities undertaken by the external consultant (CUAC November 2012 Revision).
- Minutes of Management Committee meetings. These documents provide details of matters discussed and members present at Management Committee Meetings.

- CUAC Capacity Building Action Plan (2012). This document provides details of the outcomes of the Planning Day activity.
- Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation Media File. Located in the CUAC office this hard copy file of media clippings, newsletters and notices of events is a useful source of information about the how the organisation and its members have been perceived in the public media over the past ten years.
- Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation Website (<http://www.coomaditchie.org.au/>) provides contact details for the organisation as well as an outline of its history and significance in the area. In particular it highlights the art work.

### **Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch**

- Warrawong Residents Forum Constitution 2009 (Warrawong Residents Forum Inc 2009).
- Warrawong Residents Forum Annual Report 2010-2011.
- Planning Document and Report.
- Minutes of Management Committee Meetings. These documents provide details of matters discussed and members present at Management Committee Meetings. They include Coordinators Reports to Management Committee meetings, Community Lunch Coordinators Reports to Management Committee meetings, and Profit and Loss Statements Reports to Management Committee.
- Warrawong Residents Forum Inc. Policy and Procedures Manual (Warrawong Residents Forum Inc. July 2013 Updated).
- People Asset Mapping Project (Hall 2013).
- Warrawong Community Centre Community Kitchen/Lunch, Review of Community Lunch Program (Johnson 2009).
- Nutritional Analysis of the Warrawong Community Kitchen Menu (O'Shea 2005).

Also reviewed were:

- Community Builders Fixed Term Service Specification for each Project.

### **3.4.2 Site visits and Workshops**

Researchers conducted regular site visits to observe Management Committee and other events organised by the projects. Site visits were conducted at both sites providing an opportunity for the evaluation team to have informal discussions, observe, monitor the progress of each project and provide regular ongoing feedback to local stakeholders. The following types of activities were attended:

- Management Committee meetings
- Day to day project activities (e.g. the Kitchen/Lunch program; use of the Coomaditchie hall by young Aboriginal people and older community members)
- Project events including art exhibitions,
- Community celebrations such as the end of year lunches.
- Workshops were held on site with Project Management Committees.

### ***Workshops***

The researchers subsequently held a series of workshops in order to maintain a dialogue with stakeholders at each of the Projects to, obtain information, clarify details and provide feedback on the progress of the evaluation. The workshops were fairly informal and held during the Management Committee meeting times.

Two workshops, one with each of the Project Management Committees, were conducted in September 2012. The evaluation team introduced the formative evaluation approach, outlined the scope of the projects, proposed process evaluation questions, identified data sources, and modified the evaluation plan accordingly. The workshop resulted in the development of the ethics application.

The second series of workshops was also conducted with the two Project Management Committees in October/November 2012. Researchers provided the opportunity to further develop the methodology, finalise questions, identify any additional data sources, initiate the data collection process, and identify appropriate feedback mechanisms. Subsequent attendance at these meetings by researchers enabled the research team to gain committee support for the research protocol. Each of the organisations provided written support for the research.

A third workshop was conducted approximately six months later (May/June 2013) with each of the organisations, and provided a further opportunity for the evaluators to give back details of the evaluation process undertaken to date, to share some emerging themes from the first round of data collection and to obtain feedback from the organisations. Some of the themes explored were: strengths of the organisations; opportunities and current challenges; the importance of partnerships; success factors and barriers; issues impacting on the sustainability of the Projects; and progress being achieved in the Capacity Building Program.

### ***Attendance at Management Committee meetings***

The researchers continued to attend Management Committee meetings over the period between June 2013 and June 2014 in order to provide feedback, observe and monitor progress, collect additional program data and obtain new updated information on the progress of capacity building activities.

### ***Audit of news media audit***

An audit of news media was undertaken based on the media file which is regularly updated by the administration officer. This file provides interesting insight into the impact of Coomaditchie Community Hub on the Illawarra community. The file includes local newspaper clippings, flyers and copies of the local newsletter Port Call which includes a regular update of events at Coomaditchie (Coomaditchie Yarning).

### **3.4.3 Qualitative data collection - Interviews**

A total of 24 semi-structured qualitative Interviews were conducted between December 2012 and February 2014:

- Eight recorded interviews with a total of staff at the two Projects
- Eight recorded interviews with Management Committee members at the two Projects
- Four recorded interviews with external stakeholders

- Two recorded interviews with Wollongong City Council Officers
- Two interviews with external consultants
- Additional interviews and informal advice was obtained at regular intervals from the Project Managers over the course of the two years.

Written consent was obtained from all interviewees. All interviews except one were recorded digitally and notes were taken from one interviewee who preferred not to be recorded.

### **3.4.4 Quantitative data collection – Service data**

Service data for each of the community Projects was obtained from the Wollongong City Council for the evaluation. This data consisted of the records kept by each of the Projects for the actual levels of services delivered for each of the agreed tasks under the Wollongong City Council service agreement. These tasks are described in more detail below.

#### ***Coomaditchie Community Hub Service Data***

According to the Department of Community Services Model for the Community Builders Funding, Community Hubs work with individuals, service providers and community groups to provide a locally based, single point of access to information, resources and services that are accessible to all members of the community.

The Community Hub connects individuals to information and services to promote community capacity, increase resilience and improve safety in the community. Community Hubs may also provide a location for the delivery of a range of community based, non-profit services including visiting and/or co-located agencies as well as supporting self-help groups to contribute to community capacity building.

The key result areas for the Coomaditchie Community Hub are:

- Communities maintain and build on their own resources
- Communities effectively plan for and manage change
- Communities identify, address and overcome disadvantage.

The two key objectives for the Coomaditchie Community Hub are:

- Enhance communities' social infrastructure to support desired community results
- Enhance the evidence base about what makes communities stronger.

There are eight Key Community Hub activities carried out at Coomaditchie:

- Information & Referral: clients 'connected to information'. This means that the Project provides information every time it is open. This is the equivalent to 4 days per week for 50 weeks a year (200 occasions of service). Thirty individuals per week are expected to be connected with information (a total of 1500 individuals per year).
- Information & Referral: Clients referred. Clients are referred every time project is running, that is 4 days per week for 50 weeks per year (a total of 200 occasions of

service). Six 6 individuals are expected to be referred to services per week (a total of 300 referrals per year).

- Service Delivery & Coordination: Services Coordinated through the Hub. The number of services delivered varies according to the type of service. Five types of services are expected to be delivered through the Hub (e.g. TAFE, Centrelink, NILS), providing an expected total of 62 services per year.
- Service Delivery & Coordination: Using Community Infrastructure. Clients are expected to use community infrastructure each time project is opened. This is the equivalent to 4 days per week for 50 weeks a year (200 occasions of service). Thirty individuals per week are expected to be connected with information (a total of 1500 individuals per year).
- Community Engagement. Two events per year are planned, one larger event such as an Art Show involving 100 people and one smaller event, involving 50 people.
- Community Engagement: Community Consultation. Two community consultations per year each involving 15 people or a total of 30 people per year.
- Community Engagement: Community Plans. Two plans are targeted for with an expected average of 20 people having input into each plan, thus involving a total of 40 people.
- Connecting the Service System: Partnership Projects. Ten partnership projects are targeted for each year. This consists of one large project working with eight organisations and nine smaller projects, working with two organisations.

The project covers two priority groups:

- Priority Group 1: Socially and financially disadvantaged people
- Priority Group 2: Aboriginal people living in the community of location.

Further details of the service activities provided by the Coomaditchie Community Hub are found in Appendix B.

### ***Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch Service Data***

Under the Community Builders Funding Agreement, the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch is a 'Community Capacity Building Projects'. Community Capacity Building Projects aim to build stronger communities by developing stronger links between community members and assisting members of disadvantaged communities to participate in community life and activities. They also aim to increase members use and knowledge of existing community resources. The Key Result Area for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch is 'increased connectedness, resourcefulness, trust, respectfulness or participation in the community'.

The two key objectives for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch are to:

- Enhance communities' social infrastructure to support desired community results
- Enhance the evidence base about what makes communities stronger.

There are four Key Community Capacity Building Tasks activities carried out at the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch:

- Linking people through social inclusion programs. This involves providing free lunches to clients (95% of whom are socially and/or financially disadvantaged), four days a week for 50 weeks of the year to an average of 60 people a day (a total of 12,000 individuals per year).
- Providing community programs such as nutrition, budget or cooking programs on at least four occasions per year with an average of five participants (a total of 20 individuals per year)
- Providing information (referred to as 'connecting clients to information') on average of one client each occasion of service, during the four days of service for 50 weeks of the year.
- Providing information through resource development, e.g. pamphlet, news sheet, or a recipe provided at lunch, at an average of one resource per month over 10 months for an average of 60 people at lunch (600 resources)

There is one Skills Development Task activity carried out at the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch, and that is,

- Training of volunteers each time the lunch occurs (200 training sessions). An average of 20 volunteers is trained on a daily basis as well as 10 more formal training sessions when new volunteers commence.

The project covers one priority groups:

- Priority Group 1: Socially and financially disadvantaged people

Further details of the service activities provided by the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch are found in Appendix C.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

#### **3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis**

All of the qualitative data collected was entered into NVivo Software (QSR International Pty Ltd 2012). A project was set up in the NVivo computer program and interview transcripts were imported into the program along with researcher notes and observations program data, documents and literature. The audio recorded interviews were transcribed professionally. Interview transcripts and tapes were securely stored on password protected storage space on the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI) server at the University of Wollongong.

The semi-structured interviews were auto coded to provide answers to each of the 60 questions in the interview schedule designed to facilitate the development of a logic model for each of the projects (Gugiu and Rodriguez-Campos 2007). Interviews were also analysed thematically to provide a more grounded analysis of this data. This involved identifying additional topics of interest and the views and perspectives of participants. Electronic versions or summaries of the program data collected and also entered into NVivo. A content analysis was undertaken to provide background information about the projects, the communities they service and details of program activities.

### **3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis**

Quantitative data was obtained from the Council describing the provision of services to their clients and communities over a two year period 2011-2103. A descriptive analysis of the service data was undertaken by the statistician and relevant tables and figures drawn up.

### **3.6 Ethical issues and approval**

Prior to commencing data collection ethical approval was obtained from for the University of Wollongong's Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee for the evaluation to be conducted at both sites. The ethics application included formal letters of support from the Management Committees of both projects.

### **3.7 Limitations of the methods**

There are known limitations to the evaluation of community based programs. Traditional evaluation approaches and standards are often inappropriate or ill-suited to small community development initiatives (see for example Minkler et al 2008, p298).

There were a number of limitations in this evaluation. For the formative qualitative component there is a potential source of bias in the reliance on a relatively small number of people as the key sources of qualitative data. These individuals were had the most knowledge of the operations of the Program but they also have at stake in the success or failure of the evaluation. These included Council staff, the managers and staff of both sites, Management Committee members and the external consultants. The evaluation also sought out other sources of data in a small number of external stakeholders who provided a broader perspective on the operations of the two organisations.

## 4 Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation. It considers three main aspects: Program implementation; Program achievements; and the barriers and enablers to the Programs implementation and impact. The discussion of Program implementation and achievements looks in turn at each of the capacity building activities.

### 4.1 Program implementation

A process evaluation of any program focuses on program design and implementation. It includes questions such as:

- How was the program implemented? Was it implemented as intended?
- What were its activities and who was involved?
- What was the reach of the program?
- How appropriate was the program?
- To what extent did the Program address an identified need?

#### 4.1.1 Policy and Procedures Manual

##### *How was the activity implemented? Was it implemented as intended?*

The updating of the policy and procedures manuals for each of the Projects was the first of the Capacity Building Program activities. The aim of the activity was to ensure that each of the organisations operated effectively and efficiently and conformed to the principals of good governance for community based programs, consistent with the objectives of the Community Builders Program. The work was carried out, as planned, over a period of 6 months during the first half of 2012 by an external consultant.

Some of the benefits of an updated policy and procedures manual include:

- Management Committee members and the general public have a clear outline of the organisation and how it works
- Processes are more open and transparent
- New members of the organisation are quickly oriented by reviewing and becoming familiar with the system of operation in the organisation
- It facilitates the communication between outside organisations by clarifying the aims and objectives of the organisation
- It reduces time and effort spent in recreating policy
- It provides a detailed job description and orients job recruits, new members, directors and contract workers about the purpose of the organisation
- It provides continuity and consistency in the decision making process and promotes a positive approach to present and future issues
- It helps to avoid conflict and potential for misunderstanding of issues.

### ***What were its activities and who was involved?***

The consultant met on multiple occasions with the manager and staff of each of the Projects during 2012 and conducted workshops to identify the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing each of the organisations. The consultant's SWOT analysis was then returned to the staff groups for further comment and feedback.

At the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch all of the staff and some members of the Management Committee were involved in the early discussions around the revision of the Manual. The consultant took the primary role in revising the document. At the Coomaditchie Community Hub the consultant developed the revised Manual based on their existing document and in consultation with the Hub staff. Drawing from the SWOT analysis and the existing Project policy documents, the consultant produced a revised version of the policy and procedures manuals of each of the organisations (Warrawong Residents Forum Inc. July 2013 Updated, CUAC November 2012 Revision). The document covers: Organisation and Governance; Policies and Procedures; Human Resources; Forms and Templates in addition to an Appendix on the Role of Board Members.

The Policy and Procedure Manual is made up of Four Parts and an Appendix. Part one deals with Organisation and Governance of the organisation. It covers issues such as aim and objectives, code of conducts, right and responsibilities, access and equity and conflict of interest in the governing board. Part two deals with the actual policies and procedures and discusses funding, confidentiality, financial management, insurance policies, equipment and strategic planning. Part three discusses Human Resources and issues related to the staff and people working in this organisation. Issues related to work health, working hours, recruitment of staff, induction of the new staff and volunteers, issues related to salaries and employment condition, student placement in the organisation, dealing with grievances, procedures for student placements and use of equipment and services are discussed in this section. Part four, covers the forms, templates, and agreements in use. Finally, an Appendix deals with the roles and responsibilities of Management Committee members and the role of the centre coordinator or manager.

The Manuals produced are consistent with the requirement of the by-laws of non-profit organisations. They include the organisational aims and objectives and the statement of the purpose of the organisations. They also suggest an annual reflection on the application of the Good Governance and Practices indicators as a means of evaluating the quality of organisational procedures. The Policy and Procedures Manual provides a general framework for the decision making process by the Management Committee and staff and provide the clients and the community with the information about the processes by which the decisions are made.

### ***What was the reach of the activity?***

The policy and planning manual activity reached the staff and volunteers of each Project. The Management Committees of both organisations formally endorsed the revised Manuals.

### ***How appropriate was the activity?***

Although the activity was an appropriate capacity building activity its implementation overlooked the existing level of experience and skill in the governance of small community based organisations which existed in the staff and Management Committees of both

Projects leading to some resentment from the Project staff. Participants at both of the Projects, participants at both sites felt strongly that their expertise was underutilised in the development of this activity. At the Coomaditchie Community Hub, both of the community workers have community management training and the manager has relevant qualifications and teaching experience in social welfare. At the Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch the manager and the lunch coordinator have relevant tertiary qualifications in community management. Given the level of qualification and years of experience in the community sector, staff felt that they already had the requisite understanding of good governance principles and the skills to ensure they were embedded in practice.

#### ***To what extent did the activity address an identified need?***

The activity resulted in the production of a revised Policy and Procedures Manuals for each organisation. The need for an updated manual was agreed upon by the Project staff at both sites. It was an important output for the Capacity Building Program and addressed an identified need of the funding body. However participants did not agree about whether the activity addressed an identified need. There were differences of opinion from those interviewed about the value of this activity. The focus on policy and procedures as a capacity building activity was regarded as somewhat unnecessary as these documents already existed and it was seen to add little to nothing to the sustainability of the organisation. The timing of the activity was also problematic as it was not an identified priority for the community organisations at the time of its implementation.

On the other hand, positive comments were recorded from other participants, including Management Committee members, who thought that the document was well written, easy to read and understand, and was valuable because it contained everything that is needed about how to operate the service, for example, staff management, assets, issues around volunteers and conflict resolution. These comments suggest that the Manuals have contributed to a more transparent and open processes and a better understanding of processes by people outside of the core staff group.

#### **4.1.2 Planning Day**

##### ***How was the activity implemented? Was it implemented as intended?***

The second capacity building activity initiated by the Council were Planning Days with each project. An external consultant facilitated two separate Planning Days, for each of the projects, during May and June 2013 at an external venue in Port Kembla.

##### ***What were its activities and who was involved?***

The activities consisted of facilitated discussions about the past and the future of each organisation. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the successes of each of the Projects over the period during which they have operated, identifying the most significant achievement and reviewing how they had been able to be accomplished.

For the Coomaditchie Community Hub these achievements were listed as a) art; b) community support; c) bush regeneration; d) cultural competency training. Discussions around the future focused on the creation of a 5 year plan for each of these achievements, reviewing the capacity to achieve the vision over the next 5 years, including staff capacity, and considering whether the organisation needed to grow and how that would occur. The

possible development of a cost benefit analysis tool was also for consideration. The Coomaditchie Community Hub planning day was attended by the manager, Sue Leppan, the two community workers Narelle Thomas and Lorraine Brown and one of the volunteers.

Around 15 people participated in the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch Planning Day, including Council staff, members of the Management Committee, three to four Volunteers and few clients. The Planning Days provided an opportunity for the staff and volunteers to work with the consultant around the impending funding 'crisis', options for the future of the Kitchen/Lunch and innovative ideas. The members were encouraged to think about turning negatives into a positive, for example the need to generate positive media stories.

### ***What was the reach of the activity?***

The Planning Day activity reached those immediately involved in each of the Projects, i.e. the staff, volunteers and Management Committees of both organisations. Some of the clients were also involved at the Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch. Coomaditchie Hub Management Committee members were unable to attend the Planning Day small size of the Management Committee and the limitation on their time. Some key Management Committee members, for example, are part time workers and were not available on the designated day.

### ***How appropriate was the activity?***

The views around the appropriateness of the activity varied somewhat. Participants from the Coomaditchie Hub were positive about the skilful way in which the consultant facilitated the planning day. They also felt that the timing of the event was appropriate, the venue was convenient and that the day was focused and well organised. However they expressed the view that the approach to planning in general was overly bureaucratic and did not suit the cultural style of CUAC.

*This is an organic organisation we meet every Monday morning when we can and we talk. That has worked for the ten years.*

*(Coomaditchie Community Hub Worker)*

Participants from Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch also expressed positive views about the implementation of the planning day. The venue was convenient and the overall facilitation was well considered. Moreover the planning day covered most of the important issues including capacity building for the Kitchen/Lunch and opportunities for future funding. Novel ideas were also discussed including the idea of having a celebrity chef campaign such as Lorenzo to come out and cook.

### ***To what extent did the activity address an identified need?***

The need for the planning day was identified by the Council as an activity that could contribute to the capacity and ultimately to the sustainability of the two projects. However it did not reflect the immediate priorities of the two Projects, and was not seen as contributing to their sustainability, largely due to the confidence which each project has in its own processes and skilled workers, and the impending funding crisis which each faced.

Participants at Coomaditchie recognised the importance of using the opportunity of a planning day to take stock and have a good look at what they were doing. However they expressed the view that it offered nothing particularly new to participants who have been

working together for many years. Again the view was expressed that to build capacity you need projects – and to run projects you need someone to help you to write grants.

*They could have provided grant writing then we would just keep going.*

*(Coomaditchie Community Hub Worker)*

### **4.1.3 Assets Audit**

#### ***How was the activity implemented? Was it implemented as intended?***

The Assets Audit was an activity implemented as intended at the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch by an external consultant. The Assets Audit activity was conducted from August to September 2012 and the detailed report, the People Assets Mapping Project Report was produced in March 2013 (Hall 2013).

#### ***What were its activities and who was involved?***

The research on which the Report is based utilises an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach which focuses on people's strengths and (non-physical) assets, past and present, rather than their problems and needs. The qualitative methods used in the research consisted of a 51 item questionnaire administered to 20 clients of the Kitchen/Lunch to elicit clients' views and of the Centre and its activities; it also includes the researcher's observations and an analysis of the synthesised material.

#### ***What was the reach of the activity?***

The activity involved the clients of the Kitchen/Lunch (20 were involved as questionnaire respondents) as well as the staff, volunteers and Management Committee. The production of the Report however makes the reach of the activity potentially much greater. There is no indication that the Report has been widely disseminated, however it is a useful resource for planning and sections of the information could feasibly be used in funding applications.

#### ***How appropriate was the activity?***

The activity was regarded as very appropriate for the organisation both in terms of the underlying philosophy of a strength based approach, the respectful involvement of many clients, and the production of what was seen as a useful document. The Report also focuses on clients' experiences and their 'assets' but does this from the organisation's point of view and in a very positive way. The process used by the consultant was considered 'very good' because it provided a basis for people to talk about the Kitchen/Lunch and enabled the clients to have a say about what they wanted. This is highly consistent with the philosophy and values of the organisation.

#### ***To what extent did the activity address an identified need?***

The aim of the Report was to provide the Management Committee of the Warrawong Residents Forum (WRF) with information for planning and development in the Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch, and to provide WRF with information that may be beneficial in the seeking of funding for the Kitchen's continuation beyond its current source. The Report achieved this aim. The document produced is well written and provides a vivid portrayal of the difficult circumstances facing many of the Kitchen/Lunch clients as well as an indicating the strength and resilience of these clients.

#### **4.1.4 Social Enterprise / IT Development**

##### ***How was the activity implemented? Was it implemented as intended?***

The social enterprise activity was conducted by an external consultant at the Coomaditchie Community Hub. The activity was implemented through the development of a website after limited consultation with the Hub staff. Initial discussions late in 2013 at Coomaditchie resulted in some ideas being generated about the sort of website which would work for the organisation, including developing the website for production art as a social enterprise.

There were a number of difficulties in the implementation of the Social Enterprise activity suggesting that it was not implemented in as intended. Firstly, there was a considerable time lag in the period between the initial stages of development of the concept in 2012 and the final product. This was partly due to the inability of the Hub staff to provide the necessary information to the consultant in order for him to proceed with the work. Secondly, progress appears to have been hampered by poor communication and a lack of appreciation of the time constraints of both parties.

##### ***What were its activities and who was involved?***

The activities involved discussions between Coomaditchie staff, particularly the Manager and the consultant.

##### ***What was the reach of the activity?***

The activity has had limited reach as the website has not become a 'live' website. Further development and agreement about how to proceed with the website may result in a considerably greater reach for this activity.

##### ***How appropriate was the activity?***

Social enterprise was initially considered to be an appropriate activity in which to develop capacity. It was thought that the Coomaditchie artists could engage in production art for example by having a small range of products sold through tourist shops and other local venues. The primary purpose of the website development therefore was to promote and sell this art. A new website with beautiful graphics was produced, however it was seen as not being appropriate for the organisation. The problem expressed about the new website was that it focuses solely on the art and therefore does not reflect the way in which CUAC wants to portray itself and its core business. It was felt that the Hub did not have the capacity to focus solely on art and therefore needed to communicate its broader focus, particularly its social welfare focus. An additional problem identified by Hub staff was that they pay for an existing website that more or less meets their needs, despite the fact that it is outdated. The organisation also required a fully costed business plan and an opportunity for marketing, and was disappointed when this was not produced.

##### ***To what extent did the activity address an identified need?***

The need for an improved website for the purposes required by the Hub was a clearly identified priority both by the Council and by CUAC. For CUAC, the website is important from an information perspective of providing useful information to the community and also as a sales tool. The website development was also identified in the Action Plan as an important activity to support the future commercialisation of art products.

It was understood by the Coomaditchie staff that the activity would involve improvements of the existing website currently hosted by Webation [www.coomaditchie.org.au](http://www.coomaditchie.org.au), however this did not occur and rather a new website was developed. It was the Hub's preference that the existing website be updated because it was considered to serve the purpose.

#### **4.1.5 Business plan**

##### ***How was the activity implemented? Was it implemented as intended?***

The Business Plan activity involved an external consultant working with each of the Projects to identify opportunities for developing mutually beneficial partnerships with private entities. This activity offered the Projects with alternative ways of getting income, other than grants. The approach was based on a US based 'Itasca' model (Brainerd, Campbell et al. 2013) which involves the cooperation among the private, public, and non-profit sectors in order to address community problems.

##### ***What were its activities and who was involved?***

The activity involved a period of initial consultation in which the consultant familiarised himself with the organisations and their needs. The discussions commenced from November 2013 and continued until March 2014. There were several meetings at both Project sites and the business leaders were given the opportunity to see and hear about the work being done by the community organisations. Discussions included ideas for fund raising. The consultant subsequently used existing networks and set about making contact with potential business people who would be willing to support the community organisations. The process was time consuming but eventually led to bringing together managers and staff from each of the Projects with business leaders who cared about the community in a series of workshops about what would be possible for each of the projects. Numerous ideas were floated including initiating a forum for exploration of common issues and opportunities.

A meeting was held at the Wollongong Novotel Hotel on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March, bringing together business leaders from three groups who have subsequently continued to work with both of the Projects.

- BlueScope Steel leadership group
- EDMEN (Eddie Di Gabriel) [www.edmen.com.au](http://www.edmen.com.au)
- Novotel

##### ***What was the reach of the activity?***

The initiative is fairly recent and to date has involved a small group of business people. The activity has the potential to have a far greater reach as outcomes are achieved. This could be aided by the development of a communications strategy, which would include website development.

##### ***How appropriate was the activity?***

Comments from participants at both sites were overwhelmingly positive both about the appropriateness of the activity and the approach of the consultant. He was seen to have some good ideas and is flexible and creative, an approach which the organisation values. One worker, for example commented that,

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*He takes on board the things that we tell him. He's not looking for opportunities that aren't possible.*

*(Coomaditchie Hub Worker)*

The idea of bringing community and business together has been embraced by both Projects.

### ***To what extent did the activity address an identified need?***

Of all of the activities in the Capacity Building Program, the business plan was seen to most closely address an identified need. An idea currently being discussed is corporate team building activities; to identify organisation/s that would be interested in CUAC being involved in the implementation of part of their team building exercises. While this is seen as a good idea it is not yet clear as to the amount of revenue which could be gained by the activity. The initiative is seen in a positive light and could possibly have commenced even earlier in the funding period.

## **4.2 Program achievements**

This section reports on the achievements of each of the Capacity Building activities by asking the question - to what extent was the activity successful in producing worthwhile results in the short, medium and long term?

### **4.2.1 Policy and Procedures Manual**

As mentioned previously, the updated Policy and Procedures Manual provided an important output for the Capacity Building Program. The updated Manual provides a written document which can be viewed by staff, the Management Committee, clients or funding bodies. It articulates the principles of governance and good practice underlying the organisation and it shows how their processes align with their aims and objectives. It can also be referred to in funding applications to potential funders.

In general the Policy component of the Manuals answers the 'why' and 'what' questions about the day to day activities of the organisation, whereas the Procedures describe how these policies are implemented. One weakness of the Policy and Procedure Manuals produced is that they fail to discuss why, what and how the Manual should be operationalised. There is no information about the purpose and aims of the Manual, how it came about or who was responsible for its development. There is no indication what the Policy Codes of Conduct are, what version of the Policy it is, when the date of endorsement is and how and when the reviews were made.

Participants at both projects expressed mixed views regarding the success of the policy and procedures manual as a means of building organisational capacity. While participants at both sites regarded the focus on updating the policies and procedure as good in principal there was general agreement that little new information or knowledge was gained from this activity. These was primarily because the core staff of both Projects are qualified and experienced in community management and therefore have a very good understanding of good governance principles and understand the need for transparent and open processes. The activity was not seen as a good use of the workers time, therefore, particularly given the constraints on available staff resources. The revised document was regarded as being mostly

the same as the existing policy and procedures manuals but had been tidied up, updated and included a few additional policies.

Despite the objections raised about the way the activity was implemented there is some limited evidence that good governance principles are increasingly being reflected in effective and efficient practice as a result of the production of the Manual. At CUAC one immediate consequence of the development of the Policy and Procedures Manual was that staff appraisal procedures were subsequently carried out with three staff members. At the Warrawong Community Kitchen new staff and volunteers as well as Management Committee members were requested to read the document. The revised documents were taken to each of the Management Committees for formal approval. At CUAC the Policy and Procedures Manual was taken to the Management Committee and ratified in November 2013.

Moreover, the revised Manuals are a way of showing that the community organisations have developed clear indicators of good governance and good practice and that their organisational processes align with their aims and objectives. The updated Manual is likely to be viewed positively by potential funders to whom grant applications may be made.

#### **4.2.2 Planning Day**

The planning day provided an opportunity for both organisations to identify the factors underlying their considerable achievements, and indeed survival, over a long period of time and to reflect on their future. The activity was successful in focusing the attention of core staff, volunteers and Management Committee members about the current organisational situation on the need to adopt new ways of addressing current problems. Participants were asked to identify both short term goals for the next 12 months and their longer term goals. The consultant provided guidelines for moving forward, and produced what was considered a valuable document created by a skilled report writer. The Planning Day activity resulted in an output of a Capacity Building Action Plan for each of the organisations and therefore improved their capacity for undertaking short (12 months) and medium (5 year planning).

While participant feedback from both organisations was positive about the way the Planning Day was conducted, they expressed uncertainty about the extent to which the activity was a worthwhile or successful event. Both groups considered the focus on planning to be good in principal but felt that little new information or knowledge was gained from the activity. Many of the participants interviewed, however, felt that they already had a good understanding of the context in which they operate and that the activity did not add anything new to their stock of knowledge. This is not surprising as both organisations are well established, have had longstanding management practices in place and have a clear vision for their future. For both organisations the key issue is the urgent need to obtain sufficient resources to realise that vision on a sustainable basis. Participants therefore, expressed a level of frustration with the processes being almost thrust upon them in relation to having to go through the motions of organisational planning. The following quotes need to be understood in the context of the considerable concern which staff felt about the future survival of both Projects,

*I am looking at the end of the barrel, when there is no money and not jobs.*

*(Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch Worker)*

*We could have spent the money and used it for other ongoing projects.*

*Everything that has been done for capacity building has been an inordinate amount of time and we have got no further – in fact we have got behind*

*(Coomaditchie Community Hub Worker)*

In summary, participants felt that they had work to do, they know what that work entails, they believe strongly in the value of that work, and so they just want to be enabled to get on and do it.

Despite these concerns, the Plan is useful in that it helps to align vision, goals and objectives with organisational capacity by providing a clear Statement of Purpose, a Situational Analysis and a section on the Constraints Inhibiting Capacity Development. The Capacity Building Action Plan for the Coomaditchie Community Hub recognized the Project as being vibrant and providing 'a real focus that enhances the identity of the Coomaditchie community in the Warrawong/ Port Kembla environs', it also identified a number of important constraints that need to be addressed. They include the lack of recurrent funding, the limitations of one job shared position and the heavy work load this involves, as well as the lack of resources for upgrading and purchasing technology that would enhance future operations. The current website was also identified as a significant issue to be addressed, particularly for its future commercial use in relation to art product sales. The Action Plan identified 4 key task areas for CUACs work into the future: Art; Bush Regeneration; Community Support; and Cultural Competency Training (Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation 2013).

The list of actions which emerged from the Planning Day activity has proved to be a useful way of recognizing short-term achievements and identifying where work still needs to be done. Many of the activities listed in the Action plan have now been done, and can be 'ticked off', while others are in progress. For example, the Project successfully applied for funding for a Men's Shed project and is in the process of obtaining funds for a Bush Regeneration project. CUAC has obtained tax exemption status. A homework centre has been established and a funding application has been lodged with the Community Development Support Expenditure (CDSE). The December art exhibition went ahead and a modified version of the Southside Festival was held in 2013. Other activities are still outstanding. The Cultural competency package was not done but is being planned. Considerable work has already been done with TAFE and schools and discussions are underway about developing a package for cultural competency to send to hospitals.

The Planning Day for the Warrawong Community Kitchen Lunch resulted in the staff, Management Committee, volunteers and clients being able to focus on thinking of new ways of obtaining funding for the Kitchen/Lunch. One idea which eventuated from the Planning Day was the idea of getting a celebrity chef to raise awareness of the work of the Kitchen. This happened in Poverty Week in 2013 when a celebrity chef challenge was organised at the Kitchen/Lunch. Fine dining chef Lorenzo (of Lorenzo's diner and bar in Wollongong) cooked a gourmet quality meal for \$2 a head and lunch was served by Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbury (Anti-poverty week calendar of events 2013).

### **4.2.3 Assets Audit**

The Assets Audit activity resulted in the production of the People Assets Mapping Project Report (Hall 2013). This report provides a rich and detailed source of information about the Kitchen/Lunch and the profile and views and suggestions of its clients. Although the staff and Management Committee of the Kitchen/Lunch have a good understanding of their clients, the Report helps to increase the knowledge and raise awareness of other people about the needs, situations and views of the Kitchen/Lunch clients. The stories contained in the Report are moving and powerful. This information is expected to be extremely useful for planning purposes, funding applications and for other communications about the Project.

The Report is made up of an Introduction, three sections and four appendices. Section 1 provides an overview of the Kitchen/Lunch clientele, their location and ethnicity, and provides a synthesis of the material derived from the questionnaire responses. This includes a summary of the personal 'assets' which were identified, their suggestions for services and activities, additional information about other local services, and feedback on the kitchen/lunch. Section 2 presents the researcher's observations and assessment of how the Kitchen/Lunch is operating, the community centre, other services and the capacity building activities of the Kitchen/Lunch and the WRF. It contains a summary of the suggested activities from the questionnaire responses. The questionnaire instrument and detailed findings of the report are contained in Section 3 of the Report.

### **4.2.4 Social Enterprise / IT Development**

The social enterprise activity resulted in the development of a new and very attractive website (<http://web.verbsyndicate.com/transfer/>). However results of the activity have been disappointing to date as the product developed was not seen to meet the needs of the organisation in terms of its ability to represent the full range of CUAC's activities. An additional problem identified was that the activity did not produce the detailed marketing plan which was part of the original brief. Since the uptake of the website by the Hub would involve additional costs (in addition to their existing website), it has not been used to date. The expected improved financial benefits and increased 'visibility' of the Project, therefore, have not yet emerged as a result of this activity.

CUAC is currently reconsidering the feasibility and risks of social enterprise. The website is not live and further discussion would be required to achieve this goal. For the Coomaditchie Hub there is an unresolved tension between their role as a community welfare organisation and the need for a commercial arm. Paradoxically while the success of the organisation is due to its strong cultural orientation and service to community, it seems to have to struggle to keep hold of this basis as it moves towards a more sustainable future. It seems unlikely that given the limited staff and other resources that the organisation can run as a business as well as being a welfare agency. This has been achieved in other non-profit organisations through a 'shop-front'. But this is not the preferred future for the organisation. The focus on social enterprise is now seen as potentially taking away from the time available for CUAC staff to focus on its core business, which is to support the community through referral, advocacy, provision of information and support.

### **4.2.5 Business Plan**

The Business Plan activity is seen as the most 'successful' of the Capacity Building Program activities. Perhaps this is because, being the most recent activity, it builds upon the

groundwork already laid in the other parts of the Capacity Building Program, particularly the Planning Day where action plans were developed and new ideas floated. Participants at both sites were very positive about the work conducted by the Business Plan consultant. The potential for making real change was recognized by participants at both sites, although it was noted there has been no actual development of a costed business plan as understood by the organisations. The Business Plan activity has resulted in an increased knowledge of potential business collaborations for each of the Projects. It has also increased the visibility of the Projects by raising awareness of a much broader group of people in the business community about the work of the Projects. Importantly it has opened up a line of communications between the Project and the wider Illawarra business community.

Initially BlueScope Steel supported leadership groups (three 'champions') who engaged with the Coomaditchie Hub staff around selling artwork. The short term impact of the Business Plan activity for the Coomaditchie Hub was to assist them to have a frank and open discussion about the risks and benefits of establishing a social enterprise. Although the activity began with an expectation that a social enterprise would emerge, there has been a reconsideration of this idea and CUAC is now exploring an idea with BlueScope Steel to see how to start a social enterprise as a separate entity from CUAC.

At the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch a breakfast fundraiser was held in March 2014 and attended by 65 people including the Senior Executive Australian and NZ BlueScope. The short term outcomes for the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch of this engagement was: an increased and more widespread understanding of the Kitchen/Lunch clientele and their situations; a raised awareness and increased the 'visibility' of the important work of the Kitchen/Lunch; an increased likelihood of the possibility of donations through payroll deduction; and short term funding for the continuation of the Project.

On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 the 'Warrawong Project' was formally launched by BlueScope Steel which was presided over by Wollongong Mayor Gordon Bradbury. The event brought together three community organisations: The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch; the Coomaditchie Hub; and Urban Grown.

In the short term the Capacity Building activities have led to increased commitment by the Business Leadership group. BlueScope has also helped each of the organisations apply for and obtain an internal BlueScope grant of \$10,000-15,000 for the 'Warrawong Project'. In the medium term there has begun an ongoing relationship with the business sector by connecting the local businesses sector to the planning of the Kitchen/Lunch activities. The longer term goal for this activity is that through the relationships being established with the three groups, the community organisations will increase their connection with the business sector.

Another very important outcome of the Capacity Building Program has been the release of additional Capacity Builders funding by the funding body to the two Projects based on progress made with the Business Plan activity. An additional \$40,277 was obtained from the Council for both Projects in June 2014.

## 4.3 Barriers and Enablers

This section identifies the factors which enabled participation in and impact of the Capacity Building Program as well as those factors which acted as barriers to successful implementation and impact of the Program.

### 4.3.1 Factors which enabled the Capacity Building Program

Many factors contributed to the successful implementation of the Capacity Building Program at the two community organisation sites. Firstly the Program took a systematic approach to organisational capacity building commencing with the identification of needs. The Program was conducted under the auspices of the Wollongong City Council using Community Builders Funding. The Council conducted an initial needs analysis, planned the series of activities and monitored their implementation. Importantly the Council acted as an ‘entrepreneur connector’ bringing together external consultants to the key stakeholders at each of the Project sites.

A key enabling factor in this process was the strong commitment of the Coordinator of Community Partnerships and Safety at the Wollongong City Council to successful outcomes for the Program. Armando Reviglio was responsible for coordinating the program and reporting to the Council’s Project Control Group on its progress. Participants at both projects acknowledged the considerable effort which has been put into the capacity building program by the Wollongong City Council Coordinator.

Particularly valuable were the efforts taken to seek out skilled consultants to work on capacity building activities with each of the Projects, make the introductions and try different approaches. By taking a flexible approach it was possible to ‘try out’ various capacity building strategies in order to find those which had the best fit for each of the organisations. As one participant noted,

*He has endeavoured to be creative to find ways to build the organisations capacity that meets the requirements of the funding body and the requirements of (the organisation) – he has had to think outside the square.*

*(Coomaditchie Community Hub Worker)*

The most success was achieved when the consultants were willing to listen and respond flexibly to the needs of the organisations.

For any organisational capacity building activity to work it is essential that the organisation’s stakeholders—staff, board members, and volunteers—actually believe that capacity building will produce tangible benefits for the organisation and the community. Both of the Projects developed an interest in the Program over time which enabled it to be successfully sustained over a two year period. The program could not have been implemented successfully without the support of strong and resilient staff at each site who became the key points of contact for the Program. In such resource poor environments it was no simple matter for the staff to allocate time to engaging with a Program about which they were quite ambivalent at the outset. Alongside overseeing the Project and undertaking the day to day welfare work with

clients who experience multiple disadvantages, the Managers attend to the overall management of their organisations, including budgeting and managing staff and volunteers, reporting to funding bodies and their Management Committees, preparing funding applications, advocacy and a myriad of other tasks which present to a community welfare organisation. Not only were they skilled, experienced and well qualified, importantly, these Managers are highly respected within the regional community services networks and were able to draw on a strong support base of partner organisations to support their efforts.

Staff at each site are supported by Management Committees who also enabled the implementation of the Program. Both of the organisations struggle with the problem of attracting members on to their management boards. This is particularly the case with Coomaditchie due to the relatively small percentage of Aboriginal people within the population and the high level of educational disadvantage. Nevertheless the current board members at both organisations serve the organisation very effectively. The membership of each of the Committees provides a good representation of the local community. They are respectful of each other and function well as a committee and provide a tangible benefit in the advice and support they offer to the Manager/Coordinator and staff about the direction the organisations should take.

The resilience of the two community organisations is an inspiration to others, not just their immediate clients but also the wider community who hold both groups with great respect. The key personnel in both organisations have been the past recipient or awards and recognition for their services to the community, including Maxyne Graham, Aunty Lorraine Brown, Aunty Narelle Thomas (Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation 2014) and Uncle Vic Chapman (recipient of the Wollongong City Council United Nations International Day for the older person award 2013).

Finally the willingness of local business leaders to engage collaboratively with the community organisations has been very important particularly in the final phase of the Program.

#### **4.3.2 Barriers to the implementation and impact of the Program**

There have also been several barriers to the implementation of the Capacity Building Program. Decision making around the capacity building activities was initially a 'top-down' approach driven by Council and the funding body. In particular, the lack of negotiation or choice around the particular capacity building activities in the early stages meant that some activities seemed unnecessary and redundant to the Project staff and Managers. The poor communication between some consultants and the Projects were barriers to some of the Program activities. A more consultative approach at both sites may have increased the level of alignment of priorities of the Council and the two Projects. It may also have increased the level of satisfaction with the way some of the activities were implemented.

One important oversight was the lack of consideration given to the considerable existing capacity and achievements of both Projects. It is also important to avoid a deficit model. The focus of the Program activities on capacity building rather than capacity enhancing activities implied a lack of capacity in both organisations. This was contrary both to the organisations

view of themselves as resourceful and successful and their track records in terms of service provided, numbers of people supported and outcomes achieved, on very few resources. Both the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation and the Warrawong Resident's Forum Inc. have successfully obtained, administered and implemented projects over many years. Their staff are skilled and experienced and have a deep understanding of the needs of their organisation and their clients. Similarly the Management Committees at both sites have members who are highly committed and well respected individuals. The apparent lack of recognition of the strengths of the organisations at the outset in addition to the way the funding was obtained was an initial barrier to the smooth implementation of the Program.

Another barrier to the implementation of the Program was the considerable time constraints on the Manager/Coordinator. This was particularly burdensome for the Coomaditchie Community Hub because the distribution of the paid work amongst three workers meant that the Coordinator was only available for one day of the week. Because of the number of consultants engaged to undertake the capacity building and evaluation activities a large amount of time was spent with consultants and the evaluator to orient and educate them as well as provide them with the necessary information for their work. At times this was over burdensome and unhelpful in that it took valuable time away from service delivery and project work. Participants at both sites expressed the view that a lot of money was being spent on consultants (including for the evaluation) which could have been more usefully used by the Projects. For example, 'what we really need is for someone to write grants'.

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Capacity Building Program was successfully implemented over a two year period in two Community Sector Development Projects between 2011 and 2014. It brought together Wollongong City Council staff, external consultants, staff, Management Committee members, and volunteers at the Coomaditchie Community Hub and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch around a Program designed to enhance the capacity of the organisations to deliver much needed services to their disadvantaged clients.

The Program focused attention on the underpinnings of strong and effective organisations – good governance; vision, goals and objectives aligned with organisational capacity, the use of knowledge to inform service delivery, and the need to adopt innovative ways of addressing future uncertainties.

The Program has resulted in a number of outputs: revised Policy and Procedures Manuals for both of the Projects; Capacity Building Action Plans for each of the Project; a People Assets Mapping Project Report.

The Program has achieved many of its short and medium term outcomes, including those around improved knowledge and skills in good governance principles and processes; an improved understanding of current organisational situation; and the capacity for short and long term planning. The knowledge gained from research such as the Assets Mapping project should inform service delivery and provide the support future funding.

Perhaps the most important outcome to emerge in the short and medium term is that the Project staff and Management Committees have not only become better informed about potential business collaborations but partnerships between local business leaders and the community organisations have already been established.

The implementation of the Capacity Building Program was facilitated by a systematic approach to organisational capacity building but also a large degree of flexibility and creativity in trying out various strategies in order to find those which had the best fit for each of the organisations. The most success was achieved when the consultants were willing to listen and respond flexibly to the needs of the organisations.

Over the past three years both of the organisations have consistently demonstrated an enormous resilience and capacity to continue as a strong community presence in the face of the challenges facing them to survive as a community welfare organisation. Over the past two years both the Coomaditchie Community Hub and the Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch have been actively engaged in developing strategies for their future. Staff have generously participated in the Capacity Building Program despite some apprehensions about its value for the organisation. Staff of CUAC, for example, spoke with one voice when they insisted that the Program had survived for the past twenty years by piecing together bits of funding and it will continue after the Community Builders funding expires. This confidence in their future recognizes the commitment and personal investment of the skilled workers. The closeness of the Program to the community means that the workers will continue doing what they are doing with whatever project funding they can obtain.

One of the lessons learned from the evaluation is that a consultative approach is needed when working with grassroots community organisations. Community organisations are well positioned to understand their own needs and understand the threats and challenges they face. It is important to take advice from the organisations about what works best for them. The organisations' view of what would be needed to build the capacity within their organisation needs to be prioritised in any capacity building program.

It is crucial to recognize that the strength of the two organisations in their strong community development role. Both organisations are expert in having developed both a deep knowledge and a broad vision of their community and the skills to ensure that the organisation's actions can serve the community's broader needs. The strength of both is their strong commitment and connection with their client base; it is the key to their survival.

Another important strength of both organisations and a factor influencing the sustainability of the outcomes of the Capacity Building Program is the considerable networks and relationships they have established. Both organisations can build on the very large amount of good will which they have developed with partner organisations over many years. Formal and informal connections have the ability to enhance any organisation's work and expand its capacity (DeVita, Fleming et al. 2001). Both of the Coomaditchie Hub and the Warrawong Kitchen/Lunch have the capacity to capitalize on their new business relationships in the future and to draw on these and existing connections to bring in new financial contributions, help identify potential board members or volunteers, improve operations, or meet a variety of other needs within the organisation.

There was an initial weariness from Project staff about the Capacity Building Program which is expressed in the following quote from a Project worker,

*Everything that has been done for capacity building has been an inordinate amount of time and we have got no further – in fact we have got behind*

But this has eventually given way to a tentative sense of hope that something positive will come out of the concerted efforts of the Council, the Consultants and the Projects. By mid-year 2014 when funding should have expired, both of the organisations were provided with an additional \$40,000 of funding. This coupled with the additional funds from BlueScope steel will enable the organisations to survive for a few more months. The new relationships being forged with the business community have provided a renewed sense of hope in the Projects.

One of the key strengths of these community based organisations is that they are flexible and willing to adapt to changes in the environment. The recent experience with the Business Leadership group clearly demonstrates this ability of the Projects to incorporate new ideas and to give new ways of doing things a go. The leadership of the Council in supporting their transition to working better with business as this will continue to be important into the future.

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## Appendix A Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for constructing logic models

Reference: Gugua, P. C., & Rodriguez-Campos, L. (2007). Semi-structured interview protocol for constructing logic models. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 30, 339–350.

<b>Identify the key informants to interview</b>	
Prospective or actual targets of the Project	What population or target group is the Project designed to serve? Will family and/or friends of this population benefit from the service provided to the target group?
Staff	Who are all the Project staff, either paid or volunteer, that work on the project? Are there any unfilled positions? If so, what are their positions?
Those indirectly impacted by the Project.	What groups do you think indirectly benefit from the services offered to the target population? Are there any other groups that may have a stake in the Project?
<b>Background</b>	
The Project	What is the name of the Project? When did it start? Who started it and why? Is it similar to other existing Projects and how?
Purpose of the Project	What is the purpose or philosophy of the Project? Do you agree with this purpose? What problem or set of problems is it designed to correct?
Financial situation	How is the Project funded and why is it funded in that way? What is the total budget of the Project? For how long is the Project guaranteed funding? How the funding is received?
Capacity of the Project	How many clients does Project serve per week, month, quarter or year? How long will clients receive services?
<b>Contextual questions</b>	
Contextual factors that may affect the Project or evaluation	Is there anything happening now that could affect the Project in ways that might distort the evaluation findings? Under what conditions or circumstances do you think the Project works best? Worst?
Social factors that may affect the Project or evaluation	What organisational or community factors help or hinder the Project from achieving its goals? Are social attitudes in the community supportive of the Project? How does the Project take into consideration different cultural perspectives?
Settings that facilitate or impede meeting client needs	What effect do things like the facilities, location, transportation; child care etc. have on the Project? What community groups or community leaders may contribute to the success or failure of the project?
<b>Modelling Project outcomes</b>	
Individual- and familial-level	What changes to individuals and families might occur because of the Project? What skills or knowledge will participants learn from the Project? What changes in behaviour or performance might one expect to see in Project participants? Are there any other benefits family members may gain?
Organisational level	What organisational changes have occurred because of the Project? What directions, career options, enhanced perceptions or improved skills have staff acquired? What service capacity has the organisation developed or enhanced?

Community-level	<p>What community changes have occurred because of the Project?          What environmental changes have resulted from Project activities?          What social changes have you observed because of the Project?          What economic outcomes has the Project had on the local community?</p>
<b>Modelling Project activities and outputs</b>	
Individual- and familial-level	<p>What new or existing activities does the Project provide to Project clients and their families?          When and where do these activities take place?          Who conducts these activities?          Are clients being referred for any services?          What client needs are these activities designed to meet?</p>
Organisational-level	<p>Does the Project provide any activities to staff?          When and where do these activities occur?          Who conducts these activities?          What staff needs are these activities designed to meet?</p>
Community-level	<p>What new or existing activities does the Project provide to the community?          When and where do these activities take place?          Who conducts these activities?          What community need are these activities designed to meet?</p>
<b>Modelling Project inputs</b>	
Resources and Resource gap	<p>What resources (facilities, equipment, materials, personnel, money and other resources) are available to generate or support each of the activities just mentioned?          May the evaluation team obtain a copy of the Project's budget plan?          Is there a gap between the resources necessary to operate the Project and the available resources?          What is the size and nature of the gap? How will this gap be filled?          If the gap cannot be filled, which Project activities or components are in danger of being cut or curtailed?</p>
<b>Questions on the evaluation</b>	
Identify the evaluation key stakeholders	<p>Who will be the primary consumers of the evaluation?          Who will see, has the right to see or should see the evaluation findings?          Which groups stand to gain/lose the most from this evaluation?          Is there anyone else you would recommend us to talk to?          Are there any other comments or are there any questions you think we should have asked?</p>

## Appendix B Literature Review

### *Scope of the Review*

The first stage of the project involved searches for relevant literature to inform the evaluation. A targeted literature review was conducted focusing on capacity building in the non-profit sector. The search strategy for this literature review was targeted at Australian as well as international literature. The aim of the search was to find literature that focused on capacity building programs and small non-profit organisations, including in Indigenous populations. Government funding was also a selection criterion.

Three key review questions were considered as most relevant for the present evaluation:

4. What is organisational capacity building?
5. What are the key elements of organisation capacity building for small community based organisations?
6. How is organisational capacity developed and sustained?

### *Search strategy*

Relevant papers were obtained by searching across the following databases:

- Informit - a collection of databases were selected
- ScienceDirect
- EBSCO: Health Business Elite; Business Source Complete; Psychology & Behavioural Science Collection; SocINDEX; Academic Search Complete & Humanities International Complete

Searching was limited to the years 2000 to 2013.

Once a search across a database was performed, the list of documents was then sorted by relevance so that the most relevant items appeared at the beginning of the results list. Searches were performed using a combination of the following terms across the above mentioned databases. The results of each search are outlined in the table below:

**Table 4 Literature search strategy**

Search Terms	Database	Result hits
"capacity building" AND government funding AND community	Informit	67
"capacity building" community program* AND government funding non-profit (narrowed with term indigenous)	ScienceDirect	1031 (with indigenous 331)
"capacity building" AND community program* AND government funding AND non profit	ScienceDirect	675
"capacity building" AND community program*	EBSCO	2

Search Terms	Database	Result hits
AND government funding		
"capacity building" AND program* AND government funding AND community development	EBSCO	45

A total of 1820 articles were found. These results were sorted by most relevant, of which 61 articles were selected. Of these 61 only 30 were deemed relevant to the topic. The resultant literature was entered into an Endnote database.

### ***Introduction: Defining capacity***

There is a broad body of literature which defines individual, community and organisation capacity building. Individual capacity building focuses on assisting an individual to understand the importance of performing and completing their responsibilities in a given time within the organisation they work and function. The aim is to assist them to take the initiative and use strategies to respond to the emerging needs of the communities which they serve. The underlying argument for organisational capacity building is the notion that it leads to local implementing organisations that are better able to serve and address the issues facing the community over short and long time periods. Community capacity building, as both a concept and a strategy, has relevance to all communities and to society as a whole. It is commonly applied to disadvantaged communities and population groups.

There are many definitions of capacity building, either for individuals or communities, but Linnell's (2003) definition is most suited and provides a framework for this evaluation. According to this author, capacity building is a 'continuum of interventions...that improve an organisation's ability to achieve its mission' (Linnell 2003)p.13.

Other definitions come from the international literature. The United Nations Development Program defined capacity building as,

*... a concept which is broader than organisational development in that it includes an emphasis on the overall system, environment or context within which individuals, organisations and societies operate and interact (and not simply a single organisation).*

(United Nations Development Programme 1998)

The World Bank combines the efforts of organisations, community and individuals in reaching their destined aim in their definition of capacity as:

*...combination of people, institutions and practices that permits countries to reach their development goals...Capacity building is...investment in human capital, institutions and practices.*

(World Bank 1998)

AusAid on the other hand sees the concept as a process which leads to a sustainable improvement in the life of the community. According to AusAid capacity building is:

*The process of developing competencies and capabilities in individuals, groups, organisations, sectors or countries which will lead to sustained and self-generating performance improvement.*  
(AusAID 2004)

There are also those who emphasise the concept of capacity building within the context of what the organisations are engaged in and what services they provide to their relevant communities. In this case, the degree to which a community can develop, implement and sustain various actions to expand its control over physical, economic and cultural entities, is the degree to which the capacity building notion has developed in the community (Littlejohns and Thompson 2001). For others like Howe and Cleary, the ability to manage and work collectively towards a certain goal and sustain a positive change by individuals, organisations and communities is the hallmark of capacity building (Howe and Cleary 2001). Capacity building has also been defined as a process of coping with uncontrolled and unestablished outcomes such as economic hardship or changing environment. Such processes require the development of skills, strengthening abilities and improve process which helps organisations to adapt themselves with the conditions beyond their control in the financial or environment domains (Kapucu, Healy et al. 2011).

Capacity building can be described as a process that develops skills, strengthen abilities, and improves processes, in order to stimulate organisations to adapt themselves financially to hard times and thrive in changing environments. McPhee and Bare build their definition on the 'ability of the non-profit organisation to fulfil their mission in an effective manner (McPhee and Bare 2001).

The ideas around individual, organisational and community capacity building are not new. The 'community development' school in the non-profit sector has its origins in the 1970s in Australia when there was a strong push towards fostering the ability of people, through a collective action and working together, to take greater control over their lives, community and environments. The more recent concept of community capacity building, as opposed to community development, is based on an understanding that all communities have strengths and assets which can be used and acted upon. Understanding this concept means then that communities are not deficient for having disadvantaged people but instead have a great deal of assets to work with.

### ***What is organisational capacity building?***

In recent decades non-profit organisations have played an increasingly important social role in providing primary services to the community across a broad range of areas and taking on a public advocacy role, with limited government input. The increasing reliance for service provision on the non-profit sector has led funding bodies who support these organisations to become more interested in strengthening the management and governance of non-profit organisations through activities aimed at developing organisational leadership, strategic planning and governance in order to increase program impact (DeVita, Fleming et al. 2001, Connolly and York 2002). Research demonstrates that non-profit organisations play a vital role in bringing people together, mobilising collective action and developing the social capital that enables communities to function well (Putnam 2000). Building capacity in these organisations strengthens both the individual organisations and the community (Boris 2001).

### ***Key elements of capacity building for small community based organisations?***

Non-profit organisations have existed for over a century. They fulfil many purposes which contribute to building and maintaining 'civil society'. Non-profit organisations provide social, economic and cultural services to members of local communities. They enable people to take a more active role in the work and function of their community and play a part in the running and welfare of their day to day life. They are also instrumental in the development and provision of various structures for the establishment and running of social networks and community cohesion. They facilitate building and maintaining a worthwhile relationship between individuals, the community and outside organisations.

Capacity building has become an important tool for organisations that are involved in and deal with community based programs. This is because the organisations themselves are often in the best position to provide the training, technical assistance and other resources need for the organisation to reach its intended outcomes. Capacity in such organisations is a multifunctional concept which includes ability to provide skills, pass on the knowledge, and obtain financial resources. However there is always the issue of adequate time in the capacity building process. The literature recommends that there must be "extended" time made available in order for change to occur and outcomes reached (Winer and Ray 1994). This raises the questions of what level of change must occur to have an effect and impact on the capacity of the organisation and at the same time how does the organisation know that sufficient community capacity has been reached.

Program delivery and impact are the primary reasons for the existence of non-profit organisations. To be successful however, they also require strategic relationships, resource development, internal operations and management. Leadership and governance are important in order to 'keep all parts of aligned and moving' (Connolly and York 2002). Capacity building efforts that focus on an organisation's structure, its staff, management and even clients, can contribute to the functioning of the organisation and create effective outcomes. The result is that the organisation can properly and effectively operate under uncertain and constantly changing circumstances to achieve its intended goals and missions.

### ***How organisational capacity is developed and sustained?***

Organisational capacity building in small non-profit organisations requires certain strategies that need to be addressed from the outset. Identifying and defining the need to be fulfilled by the organisation in question is the first element that should be prioritised. Beyond this short term issue, understanding what would be gained by this exercise, and identifying possible disadvantages facing stakeholders is crucial in the long term. Building organisational capacity requires new ways of thinking for successful outcomes. In small organisations demands on time, effort and particularly resources are often so great, and to some extent impossible, that it can leave less time and energy to reach the intended objectives. Issues such as staff turnover and restraints in resources, particularly budget, can make capacity building activities impractical. One way to deal with the issue of staff turnover is to encourage partnerships between established community enterprises such as schools, religious entities and other already organised and functioning community organisations. Changing the emphasis of the organisational objectives is another way of dealing with the issue.

Beside the issue of turnover and further training of the staff organisations working and giving service to the community there is a need to look beyond the organisation's resources and find ways that they can bring badly needed assistance. One method by which this process can be developed is through using consultants. Stone Motes and colleagues define the concept by using 'consultation' as a means to describe the processes by which professionals are consulted and provide the necessary advice to resolve problems (P Stone Motes, Whiting et al. 2007). Such measures are reached by examining and reviewing organisational documents, conducting interviews with the stakeholders and making recommendations.

Capacity building also takes the form of 'technical assistance', including training for management or staff and assistance with planning. Such activities may take place with the assistance of an outside consultant tasked with researching and providing advice and recommendations to guide the organisation towards greater effectiveness and ultimately efficiency in its operation (P Stone Motes, Whiting et al. 2007).

### ***Evaluating organisational capacity building***

According to Hawe and colleagues there are no evaluation approaches that are fit for all purposes (Hawe, Shiell et al. 2009). Others have noted that evaluation takes place in a wide range of settings that constrain researchers' choice of interventions to evaluate and their choice of evaluation methods (Craig et al 2008).

Connolly and York identify three key challenges to the evaluation of capacity building programs in non-profit organisations (Connolly and York 2002). Firstly, the lack of a financial bottom line to appraise makes it difficult to develop measures for assessing organisational effectiveness and management assistance success. Secondly, the large number of variables reduces the feasibility of using experimental or comparison group methods to measure impact. The third and most relevant challenge, for the present study is the difficulty of linking capacity-building interventions to outcomes and ultimate social impact. These authors provide a useful framework for the evaluation capacity building in small non-profit organisations. They argue convincingly that systematic evaluation helps 'management assistance providers' to increase their accountability, articulate the value of their work, and compare the effectiveness of different capacity-building activities. It also allows funding bodies to improve their capacity-building grant making strategies.

The process begins by determining who will conduct and participate in the evaluation and understanding the multi-layered nature of capacity building. The next steps are stating evaluation questions and potential success indicators and developing a framework for the evaluation design. The process concludes with implementing evaluation methods and using and sharing the results (Connolly and York 2002).

### ***Outcomes of capacity building in small non-profit organisations***

Capacity building can have both short term outcome and long-term outcomes. It may improve the capacity of the organisation to improve their current performance at the same level. It may also improve the organisation's ability to do better, help them to face future changes, and be able to adjust and function better in a new environment. However, establishing the processes to evaluate the changes taking place, in the short or long term can be challenging. This is because capacity building is resource intensive.

The issue of how a small organisation can mobilise the badly needed resources, financial in particular in both the short term and the long term, is an important aspect of an organisation's capacity building process. The ability to negotiate the financial needs of the organisation is an indication of a high degree of skills and ability by the members of the organisation. Current economic and political environment trends-involving the reduction of government budget allocation to small organisations and increase in need and requirements of at-risk populations, have implications for small non-profit organisations throughout Australia. These adverse economic conditions have forced small organisations to adjust and cope within their services and regulate themselves to the changes taking place and fulfil their intended outcomes.

One effective way small organisations have traditionally used to manage financial stress is to increase its reliance on volunteers. These are often people who have been laid off due to economic restructuring, and people who are willing to give back. The integration of these unpaid workers can benefit the organisation and allow them to continue to function.

### *Effectiveness and Collaborations*

The fundamental aim of capacity building processes is to increase the capacity of the organisation to address crucial issues related to the community and develop actions to identify and rectify the problems and challenges ahead. McKinsey and others have developed an inclusive framework called The McKinsey Capacity Framework (McKinsey & Company 2001) .

**Table 5 The McKinsey Capacity Framework: Factors for Capacity Building**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Aspirations	Vision, Mission, Goals, Purpose, Direction
Strategies	Actions, Programs, Initiatives Used To Fulfil The Organization's Goals
Organisational skills	Performance Measurement, Planning, Resource Management, External Relationship Building.
Human resources	Experiences, Potential, Commitment of everyone in the Organization, i.e. Staff, Volunteers, And Board Members.
Systems and infrastructure	Planning, Decision Making, Administrative Systems, Physical Assets, Technological Assets
Organisational structure	Legal and Management Structure
Culture	Values, Practices, Behavioural Norms, Social Capital, Organization's Perspective on Performance

The purpose of this model is to classify the function of capacity building processes. The model illustrates ways in which organisations are able to manage their activities, and deliver services to their potential clients.

Doherty & Mayer (2003) identify organisational development, asset development, community linkage and program activities as the areas of greatest need for capacity building in non-profit organisation. Support from outside the organisation was one of the 'elements

that work' in organisational capacity building (Doherty and Mayer 2003). The involvement of the organisational leaders in the activities and sharing information with other people from other agencies was seen to help improve the capacity building efforts of non-profit organisations, and also assist in helping them to find potential partners for future funding opportunities. Finally, the success of the organisation depends very much on its ability to involve and engage community members in its activities. One way to reach this objective is through the involvement of community members in the running of the organisation, planning processes and various networking processes.

### *Considerations for evaluation of Aboriginal programs*

According to Aboriginal academic Ian Anderson, leadership, capacity building, and community engagement are important considerations in the evaluation of Aboriginal programs (Anderson 2011). Moreover such evaluations need to understand the broad contextual factors surrounding programs and include the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. They also need to place value on participatory approaches which are likely to increase the capacity of Indigenous people to lead and meaningfully participate in evaluation studies (Anderson 2011). This view is supported by Laverack et al who identified that building capacity strengthens participation, organisational structures and local leadership, allowing Indigenous people to take community based action on the underlying causes of their powerlessness (Laverack, Hill et al. 2009).

### *Conclusions*

Non-profit organisations play a vital role in providing services and programs to their communities. Such organisations frequently fill a gap in community service provision left by government and business because they have the means to access hard to reach disadvantaged communities (Boris 2001). They can be instrumental in providing health, social and welfare services. In addition to their service provision role, non-profit organisations also engage in a range of other prevention, advocacy, and relationship building activities that contribute to the well-being of communities.

Building capacity in non-profit organisations has the potential to strengthen not only individual organisations, but the community as well. Underlying the rationale for organisational capacity building is the notion that the process will lead to the implementation of projects at local levels in the short term and address the needs of the community in the long term. It is clear that capacity building activities are needed to improve organisational effectiveness to bring about changes in how organisations, particularly small ones, work. But these activities are difficult to measure. A critical factor is the absence of baseline data to measure the effectiveness or efficiency of the outcomes. The difficulty of compiling the evidence for their effectiveness makes them vulnerable to funding cuts from governments and funding bodies.

Efforts to build capacity in non-profit organisations are primarily about performance, change, and innovation. Performance, however, should be broadly measured and considered in terms of social capital, cultural bonds, networks, and other factors that add value to a community (Boris 2001).

The literature on capacity building within small community based organisations confirms that evaluation should be an ongoing process, rather than a one off event. Periodic

evaluation can clarify whether activities are getting results or proving unproductive, identify strategies to refine or abandon and detect unforeseen challenges or benefits. A combination of program evaluation and organisational assessment is important for evaluating capacity building efforts. Underlying the rationale for organisational capacity building is the notion that the process will lead to the implementation of projects at local levels in the short term and address the needs of the community in the long term. It is clear that capacity building activities are needed to improve organisational effectiveness to bring about changes in how organisations, particularly small ones, work.

Capacity building is a broad topic and comprises a range of tasks and responsibilities such as finance, management and provision staff training, coaching and using various techniques to work with other organisations. Capacity building efforts need to be applied systematically throughout the structure of the organisation. Staff, management board and clients using the service of the organisation can contribute to building the capacity of the organisation if they are included in the process. Through collective measures organisations can successfully become more effective and efficient in providing the required services and reaching its intended outcomes. However this is not always straightforward. There are a variety of internal factors which need to be taken into consideration, for example, unrealistic organisational aims and objectives, or unclear outcomes.

Capacity building in small community based organisations is a long term process. It also requires community support to be effective and bring about long term changes. Together both the community and the organisation can develop and sustain a high performing level of organisational process with a clear mission, shared vision and practical strategies which support the function of the organisation. Finally, there needs to be a defined framework that presents a systematic approach to organisational capacity building in order for the identified needs to be reached.

## **Appendix C The Coomaditchie Community Hub**

## **Appendix D The Warrawong Community Kitchen/Lunch**