ENGAGING RESEARCH

INTER-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

MELBOURNE SCHOOL OF DESIGN — TRANSFORMING HOUSING
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SUMMARY

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This report is designed to engage with questions and research agendas developed during the Collaborative Planning Research Workshop held on October 10th 2016. The event was hosted by Transforming Housing, a Participatory Action Research network focused on improving affordable housing outcomes for very low to moderate income households in Melbourne.

The workshop featured Professor Judith Innes, co-author of ‘Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy,’ and brought together researchers and practitioners from a diverse range of disciplines and research interests including health, governance, housing, resilience and transport. The workshop canvassed issues such as models of participatory action research, the possibilities and pitfalls of collaborative planning and collaborative rationality, and the translation of knowledge to action. The event included presentations from Professor Innes, a panel discussion and conversations between participants. It was an opportunity for participants to discuss their mutual interests and resulted in recommendations for future research and potential collaborations. The Collaborative Planning Research Workshop was designed to meet one of Transforming Housing’s key objectives; “Improve the capacity of the University of Melbourne researchers to undertake ‘action research’ in affordable housing, with an emphasis on early career researchers” (Transforming Housing 2016).

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) model embraced by Transforming Housing is defined as a “collaborative process of research, education and action explicitly oriented towards social transformation” (Kindon, Pain and Kesby, 2007, p1). Methodologically, it involves researchers and participants working together to examine a problematic situation or action to change it for the better (Wadsworth 1998). In the context of Transforming Housing, this involves a strong focus on industry partnerships and interdisciplinary research to create applied, context-specific research outputs. This emphasis reflects the multi-faceted and complex nature of housing issues that encompass urban form, economics, health, transport, social justice, governance, architecture and sustainability considerations.

The conceptualisation of PAR bears strong resemblance to the literature on deliberative planning, or ‘collaborative rationality’ as it is termed by Innes and Booher (2010). Both approaches feature an explicit focus on the virtues of participation and an acknowledgement of the benefits of dialogue and the co-creation of knowledge. Professor Judith Innes and her colleague David Booher have been instrumental in advocating for collaborative rationality as a strategy for dealing with wicked problems. They argue that collaborative dialogue can get players to “back off rigid positions and find other options that further their interests, to cooperate in ways that enlarge the pie for all, to learn not just new ways of solving problems, but also to acquire the insights to reframe the wicked into the manageable, and ultimately to rethink goals and purposes to be more realistic” (Innes & Booher, 2016, p8)
This paper aims to address questions about some of the biggest challenges and opportunities for collaborative planning and participatory action research identified in the Collaborative Planning Research Workshop. Professor Carolyn Whitzman and Dr Melanie Lowe discuss a key question for researchers engaged in PAR: who should be involved in the process? Both authors advocate for a range of stakeholders, arguing that involving industry, government and NGOs in research can improve the policy-relevance of outputs, engage with the stakeholders with the greatest power to affect change, ensure decision-makers use the research, and create a shared, though not entirely consensual, suite of solutions to wicked problems.

Dr Andreanne Doyon draws upon Transition Management literature to present an alternative conceptualisation of collaborative processes often applied within sustainability transitions. Transition Management, based on governance and complex systems theory, is a valuable addition to the suite of approaches available to researchers and practitioners who seek to support positive changes in behaviour and outcomes.

The contributions from Dr Kate Neely and Mike Collins focus on the implementation of collaborative research and practice, providing insight into its applicability and reception in the ‘real world’. Dr Neely draws attention to the need to create research that is trusted outside of academia, outlining a range of research formats designed to involve multiple stakeholders in knowledge creation. She argues that one of the drivers of trust is knowing and understanding the people and processes that are involved in research, advocating for personal connections and networks between researchers and those impacted by the research. Mike Collins comments on whether collaborative planning has a place ‘in the real world’ of local government. He suggests there are significant barriers to its implementation but highlights some examples where innovative local councils have succeeded in circumnavigating these barriers.

TOGETHER, THESE SHORT ESSAYS REFLECT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS WITH EXPERTISE IN HOUSING, HEALTH, SUSTAINABILITY, GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING. THEY ARE INTENDED TO BRING A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE TO A COMMON GOAL OF CREATING COLLABORATIVE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO RESEARCH AND ACTION. THIS PAPER IS INTENDED BOTH AS AN INTERROGATION OF SOME OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION AND ALSO AS A RESOURCE FOR RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS INTERESTED IN PERSPECTIVES FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES.

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COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH ‘UNUSUAL SUSpects’ FOR MAXIMUM OUTCOMES

PROFESSOR CAROLYN WHITZMAN, MELBOURNE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

The first precondition of a collaborative process described by Innes and Booher (2016, p. 9) is that participants are diverse and represent different points of view – and that they sometimes include ‘inconvenient’ opponents. This short article will use a case study to illustrate these challenges.

Transforming Housing began with a conversation with three unusual suspects in November 2012: the head of the Property Council of Australia (the peak organisation for developers), the head of the Community Housing Federation of Australia (the peak organisation for non-profit community housing providers), and myself, as a researcher who had undertaken work on Canadian housing policy but had not undertaken housing policy research since my arrival in Australia in 2003. My two informants both felt that this research was very strong in documenting ‘need’ for affordable housing, particularly amongst very low and low income households. The research tended to focus on the small, although key role of public and other non-profit housing, which only accommodates a little over 4% of households (AHURI, 2016).

Their critique was thus two-fold. First, the producers of 96% of housing – the private development sector – were rarely asked by researchers what their research priorities are in relation to affordable housing. It has certainly been argued that private developers, as an industry, seek profit and are not intrinsically invested in the public good (see Boudreau et al., 2009 on Toronto, or Dovey & Sandercock, 2002 on Melbourne). However, in most countries, including the US, the UK, many Latin American countries (notably Chile) and an increasing number of countries in the global South, private developers construct and/or manage an increasing proportion of the low income housing stock in various forms of public-private partnerships (Irazábal, 2016; Kleit & Page, 2015; Morrison & Burgess, 2014). Some countries and cities are more successful in these partnerships than others. However, Australian private developers and investors have been reluctant to engage in affordable housing initiatives (van den Nouwelant, Davison, Gurran, Pinnegar, & Randolph, 2015).

A second aspect of this critique is that while some research has a ‘solutions’ as opposed to a ‘needs’ focus, these solutions rarely involved extensive consultation with all actors involved - for instance, community housing providers, private developers and finance providers talking together with Commonwealth, state and local government. The approach, whether led by government or researchers, is generally to elicit input from these actors separately. Written responses are solicited in response to draft government reports, and interviews and focus groups with various housing actors take place in response to questions set by researchers. Often, oppositional viewpoints are nurtured – either as an excuse for inaction (‘there was no consensus’) or as a way to advocate for a ‘win-lose’ solution.

CRITIQURING EXISTING HOUSING RESEARCH

1. The private development sector is rarely engaged in affordable housing research despite producing 96% of housing in Australia
2. Research generally focuses on ‘needs’ rather than ‘solutions’.

Further, solution-focused research rarely encourages all interested parties to talk together and instead engages with different actors separately.

Transforming Housing is a university-industry partnership which has sought since 2013 to improve affordable housing quantity and quality outcomes in metropolitan Melbourne, through engaging with key government, private sector and civil society actors using a collaborative model. Whenever possible, the development of this collaborative partnership process has privileged direct face to face interaction between sectors.

An example of this approach was the Affordable Housing Summit which took place April 30-May 1, 2015 (Sheko, 2015). The invitation-only list of 30 industry and 15 research attendees included a private development peak body as well as two private developers who specialize in affordable housing; six non-profit developers as well as a peak advocacy body for homeless people; a large superannuation fund and a bank as well as four philanthropic investors; five individual local governments as well as an alliance representing eight other local governments (so a little less than half the 32 local governments within the boundaries of metro Melbourne); and a rather overwhelming eight Victorian government departments or agencies with a role in affordable housing policy and provision.

The two day summit was led by a professional facilitator who specialises in dynamics of group decision-making. Only two hours of the day and a half long, 12 hour Summit was given over to speeches from researchers and political leaders. The focus was on discussion leading to concrete recommendations for action (see Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk, & Berger, 2007 for the model).
There were three sessions for group deliberation during the summit, focusing respectively on policy and regulation, investment and finance, and partnerships and future actions. During each session, attendees had an opportunity to participate in a small (5-6 people) group discussion of their choice, based on the ten ideas outlined in an options paper distributed beforehand (Whitzman, Newton, & Sheko, 2015), which in turn arose from research directions set by these key affordable housing actors. Following each discussion, participants were invited to look at the outcomes of other groups’ discussions and make further contributions by attaching Post-It notes to these summaries.

The discussions did not assume or require total agreement among participants, recognising that partnerships are possible between actors with disparate interests and worldviews. Instead, they aimed to identify shared values and goals, and draw on a wide range of knowledge and experience, to suggest how the options might be refined to produce workable solutions acceptable to most, if not all, key players.

Attendees were also asked to consider what actions they or their organisations could offer towards taking the next steps for affordable housing in Melbourne. In total, 81 offers were made by individuals representing 30 organisations (out of a total of 50 industry participants). In recognition of the fact that some important actions could not be taken unilaterally or under current conditions, there was the option to nominate a “condition” that would be necessary for the offer to be carried out. However, half of the offers were made without conditions.

In the year and a half since the Summit, the options have made their way into government work. However, any agreement is as best a “punctuation mark” or comma, rather than an "end point" or period (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 95). Or as Kaner et al. (2007, p. 20) say, having moved from a “business as usual” approach to encompass divergence, the project is now at the “Groan Zone” where agreements as to problems and principles get subsumed by the dynamics of how these agreements will be implemented. Players have changed, and it is now time to return to the often iterative process of negotiating across difference.

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However, despite best intentions, conducting policy-relevant research does not guarantee its use in policy and practice. The second benefit of engaging with governments and NGOs is that it can aid the uptake and application of research evidence (Giles-Corti et al., 2015; Invaer, Vist, Trommald, & Oxman, 2002). Partnerships between researchers and decision-makers can lead to direct translation of research into the policy and practice of governments and NGOs. Influential NGOs can also act as knowledge brokers and advocates, aiding the dissemination and uptake or research beyond those directly involved (Giles-Corti et al., 2015). For example, by working in partnership with the National Heart Foundation of Australia, the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Healthy Liveable Communities (of which I am a part) has informed the evidence-base of the Healthy Active by Design website, which provides policy-relevant guidance on planning for active living (National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2016).

Addressing complex urban challenges, including growing and ageing populations and rising rates of non-communicable diseases, requires the involvement of many sectors. Thus built environment and health research potentially has a wide range of audiences and applications across government departments and health, transport and social policy NGOs. Engaging with decision-makers from a range of fields can strengthen the cross-disciplinary relevance of research. It can also contribute to integrated planning, by highlighting how interventions can achieve co-benefits across sectors. For example, improving public transport systems can yield health, transport, environment and economic benefits (Giles-Corti et al., 2016; Lowe, 2014).

It must be acknowledged that building trusting relationships between researchers and government and NGO stakeholders can be time-consuming and difficult, partly due to the very different funding, political and organisational contexts in which they operate (Taylor & Hurley, 2015). However, the potential benefits in terms of research quality, relevance, reach and translation more than repay the investment of time and resources into engagement and developing partnerships.

**REASONS TO ENGAGE WITH NGOS AND GOVERNMENT**

1. Engagement can help ensure the policy-relevance of urban research. Working with representatives from governments and NGOs can help researchers to stay in touch with policy developments and understand the policy making and planning context

2. Engagement can aid the uptake and application of research evidence. Partnerships between researchers and decision-makers can lead to direct translation of research into the policy and practice of governments and NGOs.

Dr Melanie Lowe is a Research Fellow within the Place, Health and Liveability Research Program at The McCaughey VicHealth Community Wellbeing Unit, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health.
Transition Management is a theoretical framework and a collaborative practical process to support those that want to affect positive change. It is based on governance and complex systems theory, and is considered one of the core frameworks of sustainability transitions.

A transition is a process of structural, non-linear system change in dominant practices (routines, behaviour, action), structures (institutions, economy, infrastructure), and cultures (shared values, paradigms, worldviews) that takes place over a period of decades (Grin, Rotmans, & Schot, 2010; Rotmans, Kemp, & Van Asselt, 2001). The field of sustainability transitions is concerned with both studying and influencing “radical transformation towards a sustainable society” (Grin et al., 2010, p. 1). Sustainability transitions have been conceptualised as long-term processes of change, and are the result of interacting economic, social, technological, institutional, and/or ecological developments (Markard, Raven, & Truffer, 2012). Sustainability transitions are the transformations by which innovations related to sustainability practices, policies, or technologies are adopted more broadly (Geels 2002). These solutions should be both co-evolutionary, in that systems and sub-system co-evolve and can support or deter a transition, and solutions should come from a place of co-design and learning (Grin et al., 2010), this is more explicit in Transition Management, and emerging theories incorporating governance, politics, and power.

Transition Management (TM) (Loorbach, 2010; Loorbach & Rotmans, 2010) has emerged as a new way to manage complex problems through governance. Informed by practical experiences and applications (Loorbach & Rotmans, 2010), it has continued to be adapted and extended in an iterative and reflective manner (Avelino & Grin, 2016). “This approach is based on (1) bringing together frontrunners from policy, science, business, and society to develop shared understandings of complex transition challenges; (2) developing collective transition visions and strategies; and (3) experimentally implementing strategic social innovations” (Wittmayer and Loorbach 2016). In this way, TM is similar to collaborative planning, yet features a stronger emphasis on experimentation.
These principles are operationalized through the TM framework (see Figure 1.), which consists of four different types of governance activities (Loorbach 2010; Loorbach & Rotmans 2010), they are:

- **Strategic** – structure the problem and establish an arena
- **Tactical** – develop an agenda and derive pathways
- **Operational** – carry out experiments and mobilize networks
- **Reflexive** – monitor and evaluate, make adjustments to vision/agenda/networks

The governance of activities are not sequential, but rather illustrate possible connections and components for the TM process. The framework "assesses how societal actors deal with complex societal issues at different levels but consequently also to develop and implement strategies to influence these "natural" governance processes" (Loorbach, 2010, p. 168). It can be applied to larger systems, as well as subsystems and specific projects. In TM, change can come from different types of societal actors, not only top-down or bottom-up.

Linked to the governance activities are specific TM instruments (c.f. Figure 1). A transition arena is a tool to support experiential governance and is "based on a consensus-driven multi-actor model" (Kenis, Bono, & Mathijs, 2016). Transition arenas are small networks of people from different background and understandings of a problem where possible solutions can be deliberately confronted (Loorbach 2010). Regular policy arenas, according to Loorbach (2010), develop short-term policies that support mainstream solutions with incremental improvements. A transition arena develops long-term solutions that support change agents to ask questions and enable transitions to occur. A transition agenda is the vision co-created by the members of the transition arena, and provides a starting point to transition pathways (Roorda et al. 2014). A transition experiment is a small-scale intervention used to explore possible transition pathways (Kemp & Rotmans 2009). Rather than focus on one pathway, different transition experiments are launched in support of desired trajectories (Kenis et al. 2016). Transition monitoring and evaluation involves "learning-by-doing and doing-by-learning, learning from others, and from one's own experiments" (Roorda et al. 2014, p. 11).

TM has successfully been applied to urban regions (c.f. Ferguson et al. 2013; Wittmayer et al 2014; Roorda et al. 2014; Loorbach et al. 2016), and has the potential to provide a sense of direction, an impulse for local change, and collective empowerment for regional actors to give coherence and direction to transformative efforts (Roorda et al. 2014). "To local governments, transition management is also a learning process during which opportunities are created to build upon the transformative capacity of citizens, businesses, institutions and other organisations" (Wittmayer et al. 2014b).
TRUSTING RESEARCH

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If research is not trusted then it won’t be used. So, what does it mean to have trusted research and how do we go about ensuring that our research is trusted? The answer to this question, for a lot of academic researchers, is “peer review”. Academic integrity is predicated on the system of peer review and journal publication. While peer review has come under significant critique (Arms, 2002; Mahoney, 1977; Wenneras & Wold, 2001), within academia it is still a driver of trust in research outputs.

Outside of academia the picture is quite different, peer reviewed articles rarely make a stir in non-academic environments and the process is obscure enough that we cannot expect that it is broadly understood within our communities. So what can we do to ensure that our research is trusted outside of the academy?

If we assume that one of the drivers of trust is knowing and understanding the people and processes that are involved in research, then it is clear that creating trust in research requires personal connections and networks that build an understanding of process and/or people. Involving the intended end-users of research into the research process is a way to garner trust in the research product (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010).

There are many ways to involve end-users in research and these can be enacted at one or more of the research stages shown in the below diagram.

The next few sections look at processes of stakeholder engagement with research that work at different levels and various stages of the research endeavour. The coloured boxes indicate which research stages the engagement is likely to take place at.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

PAR involves the end users in all parts of the research, from forming the question to doing the research, analysing the results and formulating the outputs. As end users are actively involved across the research cycle they can question, direct and gain firsthand experience with the process. This establishes ownership, democratises knowledge production (Kindon et al., 2008) and creates a solid practical and theoretical foundation for the participants to be able to discuss the research results with other practitioners. Practitioners are often the most trusted source of information for other practitioners so increasing the level of understanding for one practitioner can have significant flow on effects within a homologous network (clique) of practitioners (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).
At the reporting end of the research effort it is still possible to include and engage stakeholders by presenting drafts of outputs (reports and papers) for review. As researchers, we may do this with our peers prior to ‘blind review’ but it is less common to do this with a broader group who may be able to provide input. Lawrence (2014) suggests a ‘code’ of grey literature review that would make this process transparent by including the details of the review process with other bibliographic details of a report.

When participants agree to be part of a research project they may have very specific reasons or interest in doing so and therefore they may form an interested or influential stakeholder group. As a participant they can appreciate the outcomes of the research and either apply it or encourage others to apply it, thus creating impact outside of the academy. It is worth noting that research participants often seem to be overlooked when it comes time to report the learnings from a research program. Undertaking appropriate reporting to research participants is both an ethically sound and good engagement practise.

For researchers, the idea of inviting the end-users of research into the process can be daunting, exciting, challenging and rewarding. In my current research, I am asking other researchers about the barriers to knowledge translation and engagement and one significant theme is ‘time’. It takes time to develop and maintain research relationships, whether that is with a committee member or a citizen scientist. Ensuring communication is appropriate and adequate also takes time that is often not allocated in research budgets.

Of the above engagement methods, PAR is the most engaged form of research at a community level, but it should also be noted that the results of this type of research may be context specific and not generalizable. For research with broader policy implications, appropriately constituted steering committees and advisory boards may be effective in ensuring end user uptake. However, as far as I know, there has been no research on the impact of advisory boards on research uptake.

Overall, choosing a research method and engagement technique that suits the research question and the projected outcomes of the research is highly contextual. It is entirely worthwhile spending time at the outset in developing a strategy that will engage and inform the end users and stakeholders of the research.

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Local governments are an ideal setting for collaborative planning but there are structural barriers which need to be addressed before it can become common practice.

At the Collaborative Planning Research Workshop Professor Innes presented an example of a project in West Oakland where city officials did not work in partnership with the collaborative process. This experience reflected her overall experience of working with local government. The Australian environment is similarly unsupportive of collaborative planning. Research has identified support for collaborative processes in planning (Henderson and Lowe, 2015; McKinlay et al., 2011) but has also found that numerous structural barriers remain. These include legislative and governance frameworks (Schatz and Rogers, 2016) and organisational barriers (Cook & Sarkissian, 2000).

In Victoria, the capacity of the Planning and Environment Act (1987) to allow for the contributions of more than one party is limited. It only enables and allows for a distributive negotiation, that is, a negotiation which is comprised of a dispersed series of individual negotiations, assumes a 'fixed pie' of outcomes being fought over, and also assumes that some parties will win and others lose (Fisher et. al, 1991). This is in contrast to a collaborative, integrative negotiation, where negotiation is approached with the intention to increase understanding between parties, to be flexible in terms of outcomes, and, importantly, that all parties are included and all 'win' what they most need.

A collaborative planning process should include all interested parties (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 28). For example, elected officials in local government may want to be involved to represent the interests of their community. However, the council officers who are responsible for progressing decisions are meant to be protected from political influence. There is a low level of public confidence that existing frameworks can respond to corruption (Masters and Graycar, 2016) while a lack of consistency and transparency in decision-making is endemic (Ombudsman Victoria, 2016).

In terms of land-use planning and the structure of governance, taking the state of Victoria as an example, the prospects for routine collaboration are low. The operation of the planning scheme allows for little collaborative negotiation: it instead involves interested parties and statutory bodies making submissions to amendments and objections to specific schemes. Innes and Booher's (2016) framework includes a requirement that participants meet face to face and that everything is on the table. This framework can rarely be achieved within the current planning system. Achieving the goal of bringing together multiple parties to change the use of land, for example, can be regarded as a wicked problem. In a system which is designed for individual project negotiations between the governing body and those in control of the land (usually local government and developers) creating a collaborative space that can survive years of process and advance an outcome with shared benefits can seem impossible.
Despite all of these barriers, collaborative planning is possible in local government, but it generally requires local governments to think beyond the planning system. There are several examples where innovative collaboration has occurred.

**BURNS ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE - HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL**

Hobsons Bay City Council used expert facilitators in the development of the Burns Road Industrial Estate. The Hobson’s Bay development involves bringing 170 landowners together to overcome an impasse which has resulted in no development taking place on the estate in 100 years (HBCC, 2016). Using expert facilitators is a core part of Innes and Booher’s approach.

**SELANDRA RISE - CITY OF CASEY**

Another successful approach has been reframing the issues surrounding Selandra Rise from land use to community health. The Selandra Rise research project involved a community in a new growth area where the local government, private developer, lead state development agency and the Planning Institute of Australia maintained a commitment to listen to the community through the means of a research project. This project led to changes in the delivery of transport infrastructure and important findings on the role of a community space in building a successful community (VicHealth, 2016).

**BURNIE WORKS - BURNIE CITY COUNCIL**

Burnie Works is an example of a local government’s involvement over time, with a diverse range of stakeholders, to tackle a wicked problem: disadvantage in one of the poorest local government areas in Australia (Smerdon, 2015). Burnie Works is applying an emerging local government framework for solving complex issues, called Collective Impact. Its ‘Five Conditions of Collective Success’ as outlined by Kania and Kramer (2011), bear a number of similarities to Innes and Booher’s collaborative process, including long term change, a common agenda and continuous communication.

**SUMMARY**

Real collaborative planning requires local governments to resist an ingrained culture of being selective of the processes that it lets interested parties participate in. For example, exhibitions of plans and guided discussions about the plans are not collaboration. Many successful projects do exist, however, which demonstrate that by being creative and intentional about collaboration, local governments are able to sidestep the structural barriers that exist within the planning system.

**CONCLUSION**

Collaborative approaches to research and practice are being pursued across academic faculties, organisations and government bodies. As Dr Lowe argues, collaborative research can support research-to-policy translation (Giles-Corti et al., 2015; Innaefer, Vist, Trommald, & Oxman, 2002) and improve the policy relevance of research (Sallis et al., 2016). Similarly, Professor Whitzman argues that getting the right people in a room at the same time can aid in supporting cooperation and creating solutions with a greater chance of implementation. These arguments are partially based on the assumption that, “for knowledge to be influential in public action, it must be built and interpreted through inclusive dialogue so it meshes with understandings of the players” (Innes & Booher, 2010, p168). According the Dr Neely, involving the intended end-users of research in the research process is a way to garner trust in the research product.

Collaboration is particularly important when dealing with complex problems. Given the diversity of actors, interests, definitions, explanations, priorities, data and resources often involved in planning, health, sustainability and governance problems, collaboration can greatly aid in finding and implementing potential solutions. While there are a multitude of recommended frameworks for achieving this, Dr Doyon recommends the application of Transition Management to provide governance for complex problems. Transition Management encourages collaboration between groups with an interest in a problem, helps to develop shared understandings, visions and strategies and aids in implementing social innovations (Grin et al., 2010; Wittmayer & Loorbach, 2016).

Despite significant support for collaborative research and practice, there are a number of legislative and governance framework barriers (Schatz and Rogers, 2016) and organisational barriers (Cook & Sarkissian, 2000) to its implementation. According to Mike Collins, collaborative planning is possible at the local government level but requires councils to think beyond the planning system. Dr Neely notes the time and resource implications for researchers undertaking collaborative projects. Professor Whitzman comments on the iterative nature of collaboration and agreement, pointing out that collaboration requires an ongoing process of negotiating across difference.

The five essays included in this report continue an on-going dialogue about the opportunities and pitfalls of collaborative research and practice, drawing upon insights from planning, health, sustainability, government and local planning practice. This report has endeavoured to tap into some of the rich experiences and knowledge of the Collaborative Planning Research Workshop participants and provide a taste of the multi-disciplinary perspectives available to researchers and practitioners interested in this topic.

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