8

Shining a Light on the Black Box of Collaboration: Mapping the prerequisites for cross-sector working

Robyn Keast

Introduction

Collaboration continues to be the go-to solution for government (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007; O'Flynn 2009; Keast 2011). Its allure is compelling. If only we could collaborate better we could overcome budget deficits, solve protracted and emergent complex social problems, overcome economic and environmental problems, deliver seamless and integrated services, reduce duplication and inefficiencies, develop coherent policies and programs and, finally, be more innovative and productive. The drive for 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham 1996) is not restricted to government, with both the community and the private sectors also relying on it to generate new and future-driven directions and resources.

Despite confidence that collaboration will deliver enhanced outcomes, its design and implementation are often treated as forming somewhat of a 'black box'—full of mystical properties and practices with little clear direction. Yet, over time, the spotlights of research and practice have uncovered substantial insights into and knowledge of what goes

on in this black box to generate successful collaboration. For example, the different drivers and distinctive characteristics—that is, what makes collaboration different from other forms of working together— are well known, as are some of the processes and competencies required for authentic and successful collaboration (Gray 1989; Thomson and Perry 2006; Innes and Booher 2010). Even with this insight, research across several sectors suggests that more than 50 per cent of collaborations fail to achieve their purpose (Dacin et al. 1997; Fyall and Garrod 2009; Spyrisadis 2002; Kale and Singh 2009; Lunnan and Haugland 2008).

It has been well argued that these failures can be overcome or prevented by paying greater attention to the dynamics of collaborative working and, in particular, by focusing on the design and application of processes that facilitate the interactions needed for collaboration to work (Gray 1989; Wood and Gray 1991; Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Thomson and Perry 2006; Keast 2011). As Innes and Booher (2010: 10) succinctly state, 'it is the doing of collaboration'—the interaction processes—that is least understood. However, despite there being numerous exemplars of collaboration (see Appendix 8.1), rarely have the specifics of the processes been subject to detailed interrogation.

This chapter addresses this gap by drilling into the minutiae of collaborative processes to understand how they are selected and function. It begins by outlining collaboration's distinctive characteristics, illuminating the relational aspect as well as the supporting mechanisms. The secondary analysis research approach is then set out, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. Finally, a conclusion is presented that may provide a new focus to guide the work, particularly of network leaders and managers.

Differentiating collaboration

Governments and other bodies have long had available to them a range of interorganisational relationship forms to address their varying needs and challenges (Cropper et al. 2008). These options—summarised here as the 'five Cs' (competition, cooperation, coordination, collaboration and consolidation)—are set out schematically in Figure 8.1, which also highlights their key linking mechanisms and purposes (Keast 2016).

The close grouping of cooperation, coordination and collaboration (the 'three Cs') (Brown and Keast 2003; Keast et al. 2007) at the centre of this relational continuum has led to a tendency to use the three terms in an undifferentiated way, despite growing agreement that collaboration exhibits distinctive characteristics to the others (Himmelman 1994, 2002; Hogue 1994; Gray 1989; Wood and Gray 1991).
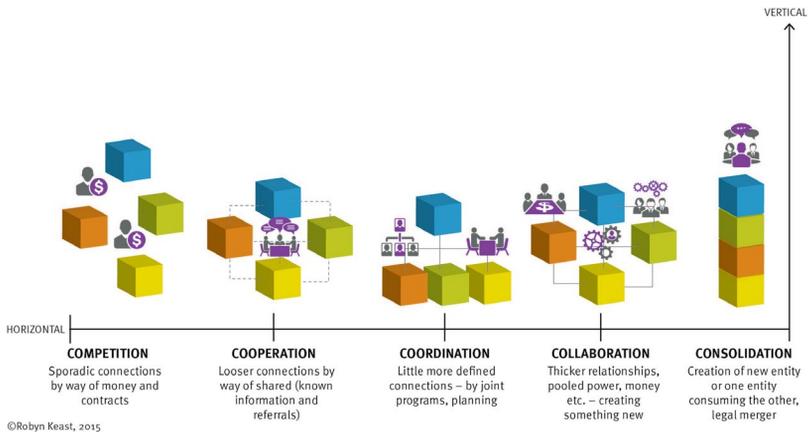

Figure 8.1: Continuum of interorganisational relationships: The five Cs
Source: Created by the author.

The differences pointed to in Figure 8.1 in relation to the three Cs are made more apparent below.

Cooperation is defined by short-term, mostly informal and largely voluntary relations between organisational entities or individuals (Hogue 1994; Cigler 2001; Lawson 2002). In cooperative arrangements, while participants might share basic information, space or referrals (Mulford and Rogers 1982), they remain autonomous and rarely share resources. Cooperative behaviours are established to achieve individual, rather than collective, outcomes (Mandell 2002). As Schermerhorn (in Mulford and Rogers 1982: 13) notes: 'cooperation entails the deliberate relations between otherwise autonomous organizations for the joint accomplishment of individual operating goals.'

Coordination is applied when there is a need to align resources or orchestrate people-tasks and specialised interventions in an ordered relationship to meet predetermined or set goals (Litterer 1973; Dunshire 1978). It does not rely on goodwill but rather has some force of a formal objective or mandate, with one organisation generally

taking the lead responsibility for the work—that is, a lead department or central agency. Because it is located on both the vertical and the horizontal axes, coordination can draw on both influencing and compelling behaviours to act in desired ways (Dunshire 1978: 16–17). In practice, then, coordination moves beyond the basic information sharing of cooperation to involve joint planning and programming (Mulford and Rogers 1982). Coordination refers to the formalised institutional relationships among existing networks of organisations, while cooperation is 'characterized by informal trade-offs and by attempts to establish reciprocity in the absence of rules' (Mulford and Rogers 1982: 13).

Whereas cooperation and coordination are focused on doing the same things, although more efficiently, *collaboration* is about doing something new or different—for example, new programs, products or service models. Collaboration is about systems change (Cigler 2001; Keast et al. 2007; Innes and Booher 2010). This degree of change requires that members acknowledge their interdependencies—that is, they are reliant on each other to achieve individual and collective outcomes— and therefore must forge strong interpersonal relationships to work together more closely (Mandell 2001). Such relationships require comprehensive interactions: multiparty planning as well as dense and well-defined communication flows. A high level of trust is key and the relational time frame is longer, with some research indicating that it can take upwards of three years to build relationships of sufficient strength for collaboration to be successful and sustained (Annie E. Casey Foundation 1993; Keast 2004). Together, these factors position collaboration as a distinctive and higher-order level of collective action (Gray 1989).

Collaboration and process

As the above highlights, collaboration comprises a distinctive set of intersecting relational dimensions. While various distillations of these dimensions for collaboration exist (Gray 1989; Huxham and Vangen 2003; Ring and Van de Ven 1994), there is a consensus that the following are involved: an interpersonal orientation (trust, reciprocity, respect, reputation), interdependency (shared reliance on each other for results), mutuality (common vision, values and communication)

and the undertaking of joint programs that meet both individual and collective goals (the collaborator's dilemma). Such elements are enabled by processes that address governance, administration, organisation, mutuality and norms (Wood and Gray 1991; Mattessich et al. 1992; Cropper et al. 2008).

To enact these relational elements and dimensions and deliver collaborative value creation, interactive processes and mechanisms that nurture, facilitate and leverage the connections need to be established and implemented. 'Process' here refers to a series of actions or steps needed to deliver the end result of collaborative actions and outcomes and can include, for example, procedures, activities and events (Vandeventer and Mandell 2011; Keast 2011). To guide the process orientation of collaboration, several authors have developed process-oriented models, with some adopting staged approaches in which members move through levels of intensity (Hogue 1994; Himmelman 1994); others, such as Gray (1989), suggest stepwise sets of actions such as problem setting, direction setting and implementation. Increasingly, however, the consensus is that collaboration emerges from synergistic interactions and is therefore more likely to be an iterative and cyclical process than following a direct plan of action (Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Thomson and Perry 2006). Adding to the challenges of prescribing collaboration processes are the different contexts and purposes that require divergent processes to meet various outcomes (Cigler 2001; Huxham 2000; Huxham and Vangen 2003, 2005). Gray (1989) identified two key process approaches: those designed for resolving conflict and those for advancing common vision.

Each of these process approaches proposes different types of interaction mechanisms. Specifically, the goal of achieving a common vision calls for events and actions that open up communication and encourage participants to facilitate a better articulation their ideas, visions and purposes. Process mechanisms best suited to this function are centred on appreciative planning and collective strategies, including, for example, community gatherings, world-café sessions and other similar forums. By contrast, the goal of resolving conflict requires actions that bring together disagreeing parties to explore their differences, clarify points of departure and convergence of agreement. Processes that open up the dialogue between participants, gather information, check facts

and, through these steps, identify their shared interests. Mechanisms facilitating these process steps would include negotiated agreements, policy dialogues and community panels.

As the above suggests, far from being a neat set of defined processes, collaboration is often messy, unfolding and relies heavily on often emergent processes to mould relationships that create synergies to be leveraged. Understanding how these processes function and unfold is crucial to successfully managing the kinds of multiparty and multi-organisational relationships involved in collaborative arrangements.

From this it can be seen that collaboration requires a number of process factors to be addressed, including: the nurturing of new and building on existing relationships, implementing events and mechanisms that help to establish trusting relationships, forging agreements on what and how to work together and strategies for identifying and managing conflicts. How these tasks and relational issues and actions are handled is considered core for achieving effectiveness.

While offering many important insights, extant collaboration case studies do not always provide sufficient detail on the process to inform how or why they did or did not work.

This chapter unpacks and examines a set of collaborative endeavours to identify the processes employed and their impact, and comment on the adequacy of these to reach collaborative outcomes.

Research approach

Seven cases that have all been identified broadly as collaborative are examined specifically to uncover details on the processes employed. The cases differ in their scale, ranging from state to regional and local initiatives, and cover social as well as physical infrastructure topics. Thus, they provide some differentiation in terms of focus, participants, process designs and interactions.

The study uses a secondary analysis to re-interrogate data collected, collated and analysed previously on the selected cases: the Sacramento Water Forum (WF) (Connick 2003, 2006; Innes and Booher 2010), the Services Integration Project (SIP) (Keast et al. 2004, 2007; Boorman and Woolcock 2002; Woolcock and Boorman 2003; Klijn and Koopenjan

2015), Family and Youth Network (FYN) (Keast 2004; Ryan 2003), Gold Coast Homelessness Consortia (Keast 2004; Keast et al. 2008, 2012), Collaborative Research Network (CRN) (unpublished internal reports and participant interviews, 2012–15), the Adelaide Oval Redevelopment (CRC for Construction Innovation 2008) and the Pacific Motorway Project (Waterhouse et al. 2001). All cases were constructed from interviews and/or focus groups as well as being informed by extensive documentation including project reports, negotiation agreements, internal correspondence and minutes from meetings.

Secondary analysis of these existing datasets enabled different lenses to be applied to distil new or different insights that were related to, but not directly considered in, the original study (Heaton 1998; White 2010). Specifically, this study sought to more deeply examine the processes employed in each of these cases and how these worked in practice. Following the quality recommendations of Heaton (1998, 2004) and others (for example, Irwin and Winterton 2011), the author either had direct involvement in the original research design, data collection and analysis for the cases or was able to draw on readily available case background information. Thematic analysis was used to identify the process strategies applied in practice, their elements and impacts (Denzin 1984).

Findings and discussion

The findings show that all initiatives instituted some form of process or set of actions to facilitate the interactions needed for collaboration to take place. Table 8.1 outlines the array of processes applied across the cases. The primary processes identified ranged from the use of interest-based negotiation for the WF, a Graduate Certificate in Inter-professional Development for the SIP, different types of sense-making and consensus-building events, such as community gatherings and workshops for other social services groups (FYN and the Homelessness Consortia), to the use of collective orientation events (CRN) and pre-project workshops, coupled with relational contracts in the infrastructure arenas (Adelaide Oval and Pacific Motorway).

Table 8.1: Summary of the key presenting processes used

Case	Collaboration process mechanisms
Services Integration Project	Graduate Certificate in Inter-professional Development, breakfast meetings and gatherings, appreciative planning, structured meetings and agendas, dedicated facilitator
Family and Youth Network	Structured program of pre-workshops and sense-making conference, appreciative planning, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), colocation of services, joint projects
Homelessness Consortia	Coalition building, appreciative planning (strategy of inclusiveness), joint training events, symposia, MOUs and informal relational agreements
Collaborative Research Network	Contract, structured program of events (scheduled meetings, workshops), agreements and planning documents, strong previous relationships
Sacramento Water Forum	Interest-based negotiation, single text document, dialogic events, communication mediums, shared meals, expert facilitator
Adelaide Oval Redevelopment	Pre-project workshop, social events, computer-aided design (CAD) drawings providing neutral facts for shared understanding/agreement
Pacific Motorway	Pre-project workshops, relational contract, media and communication strategies, community stakeholder meetings

Process selection

The WF's selection of negotiation and consensus building reflected a long history of conflict over water in the region, for which planning was not a strong enough process. The process began with a conflict-assessment tool 'to see if the conditions were favourable for a consensus-based process and subsequently to identify the range of interests involved' (Innes and Booher 2010: 45). Following the negotiation path, the WF also used the strategy of a single text negotiation document as a way to keep track of their various agreements.

By contrast, the social services and research collaborations (SIP, FYN, Homelessness Consortia and CRN) started from a position of agreement and were focused on forging a plan for how to work together. Accordingly, these bodies used processes aimed at advancing their common visions and developing plans for action, including community meetings (SIP) and practitioner/researcher workshops (FYN, Homelessness Consortia and CRN) to articulate their values and

establish agreement on how to go forward together. The value of these 'communicative' approaches in forging a collective view for going forward was captured in the following:

> A public meeting was subsequently called to which the general community service providers were invited … The Process was designed to facilitate general discussion and input for direction. Through the various processes of coming together, we were able to see the big picture, not just our little individual bits. (FYN in Keast 2004: 168)

> [B]efore we started putting things down on paper we went through a long process of talking and sharing to achieve that agreement on what our goals were for the work we agreed to do together and how to work together … The process allowed us to communicate, to share goals and understanding of what we are all about and what we are doing together. (SIP in Keast 2004: 195)

> The first thing we did was get together and say okay so we have set some targets … What are we going to do together to be able to achieve that? So we planned a series of writing fellowship programs … and other various workshops to build up our relationships and practices of working together. (CRN Interview 3, 2015)

The physical infrastructure projects also used communicative processes to smooth over different working approaches and facilitate different disciplines working together, with both opting for pre-project workshops, coupled with a relational contract (CRC for Construction Innovation 2006: 3). As Waterhouse et al. (2001: 9) explained of the Pacific Motorway Project, but equally relevant to the Adelaide Oval project, '[t]his type of approach seeks to alter the traditional adversarial relationship to one based on trust and the pursuit of common goals'.

The analysis highlighted a link between the choice of process adopted, the focus or purpose sought and the outcomes to be achieved. This suggests a level of strategic deliberateness in process choice or, as has elsewhere been noted, fit-for-purpose process designs (Keast et al. 2007; Innes and Booher 2010). For example, the cases looking to achieve systems change, such as the social services bodies and the WF, employed more relationally intense linking mechanisms than the infrastructure projects, which sought more of an adjustment to the normal business process than all-out change. The differences required in time and commitment between these two process models are evident below:

> The cooperative intentions of the contract were reinforced by a full-day workshop at the start of the project which aimed to encourage 'best-for-project' thinking … backed up by regular collaborative meetings and ad hoc social events such as barbeques and cricket matches. (CRC for Construction Innovation 2006: 3)

> In this [Graduate Certificate] course SIP members spent 16 full days over two semesters learning new ways of working and unlearning old behaviour, developing shared language and skill sets … we learnt about each other in ways that would not have been possible if we had just been going to meetings once a month for a couple of hours and having a cup of tea and a bit of a chat. (SIP in Keast 2004: 137–38)

Significantly, participation in the graduate certificate was not limited to core SIP members, but rather was eventually extended to many members of the broader community, providing an indication of the scope and scale of the change in behaviour sought and eventually achieved (Boorman and Woolcock 2002; Woolcock and Boorman 2003).

Supplementary process

Returning to Table 8.1, it can be seen that, alongside the 'primary or presenting' process, the cases also employed several supplementary processes, often run simultaneously. These ranged from the relatively conventional linking mechanisms, such as scheduled programs of meetings (SIP, WF and CRN) to the use of MOUs (FYN, Homelessness Consortia and WF) and contracts (CRN, Pacific Motorway and Adelaide Oval) that provided some parameters around the exchanges.

While they might seem counterintuitive, it is apparent that the use of strong administrative processes played a central role in many of the collaborations. Such processes included scheduled meetings and clear agendas as well as personnel and processes dedicated to monitoring inputs and outputs. As one SIP member explained: 'These keep us going—stick the pins in and keep us on track' (Keast 2004: 141). The FYN members developed the 'velvet glove' metaphor to describe their leader's monitoring approach, which was simultaneously gentle but directive.

Communication strategies and tools of various types were also used by all seven cases—some more extensively than others. Connick (2006: 31) provides some insight into the complexity of the WF's dynamics and therefore the reach and importance of the extensive communication process:

The group also addressed issues of communication and accountability that ultimately resulted in each caucus writing and adopting a detailed strategy for how its members would communicate with their constituents, keeping them apprised of Water Forum developments. This latter item was critical in developing participants' confidence that they were working with individuals who were able to negotiate on behalf of their organizations and, to a certain extent, broader constituencies.

Other processes followed more informal approaches—for example, relying on ad hoc social events such as barbecues and attendance at cricket matches, coffee/chat meetings or mentoring (CRN) as the means to build or extend their connections and keep people on the same page. The mix of relationship-building mechanisms variously undertaken by the cases are very similar to those outlined by Vandeventer and Mandell (2011: 57), who added to the list shared meals and structured team trust-building activities as well as field trips to neutral but mutually relevant settings.

The benefits of existing relationships in quickly building or 'turbocharging' collaborative teams were frequently noted across several cases, particularly within the research collaboration project. For instance, one of the CRN project leaders spoke of adopting a 'conscious partnering approach' (CRN Interview 5, 2015), while another noted that having existing relationships helped to smooth over some of the early 'getting to know you' steps and enabled easier transition into joint works (CRN Interview 6, 2015).

It is interesting to note that while those initiatives described as being more genuinely or more strongly collaborative (SIP and WF) did draw on conventional processes, they took care to reframe and rename these processes or events to better reflect and model the type of focus and behaviour sought. For example, SIP and FYN meetings often used the term 'rules of engagement' instead of 'terms of agreement' to signal the type of behaviour sought in their interactions.

The need to be careful with the implementation and rollout of processes was also stressed, particularly taking into consideration context and past relationships. The FYN leader made this evident in the following statement: 'There is a lot of history at play. So you have to move slowly. If you move too quickly they will think they have been railroaded … and you will go backward' (Keast 2004: 177).

This issue of pressure was also raised regarding government funding stipulations for collaboration and particular collaborative processes. For example, FYN and the Homelessness Consortia were obligated to enter into a collaborative arrangement as part of their funding agreements. Huxham and Vangen (2003: 15) warned of a relationship between process, power and funding, suggesting '[t]hose who choose who to involve are obviously powerful, but those who choose the process of who to involve may be more so'. It is interesting to note that while both cases acknowledged the potential influence of the funds on their practice, they stressed that they had entered into the collaborations because it was the 'right thing to do'; the funds were secondary.

Process impact and adjustments

It is evident from these cases that taking time to create and implement the right processes had a positive effect on the interactions and outcomes. As one SIP member noted:

> Everyone was involved in the setting of the protocols. So there were no surprises, demands or ideals that we did not think we could sustain. At the outset we made a commitment within the team around equity and quality input … I felt that it was a very equitable, caring, supportive environment for the discussion of these difficult issues. (Keast 2004: 140)

In addition, there is some evidence from most cases to show that the more deliberate and strategic they were in their selection and implementation of processes, the more extensive and sustained were the results.

Noticeably, the priority of the processes sometimes shifted in accordance with the life-cycle stage of the collaborative endeavour. As an example, in the two infrastructure projects, early in the relationship-building stages greater attention was directed towards processes that brought members together, largely to establish 'best-for-project' procedures (CRC for Construction Innovation 2006). Once the relationships were established and consensus was reached on working arrangements, it was possible to implement the actions via the procedures outlined and agreed to earlier in the relational contract. A similar, if less dramatic, lessening in process intensity can be seen in the social infrastructure arena, where there was generally a strong investment up-front in events and mechanisms that built relationships and consensus of purpose, contribution and working

arrangements. Over time, as processes and behaviours became embedded—frequently encapsulated in the phrase 'this is how we work together'—the need for such constant relational nurturing and oversight reduced. Nonetheless, more successful collaborations regularly and deliberately employed specialist facilitators and used other processes, such as check-back, to ensure they were 'still on the same page, still going forward together' (FYN and SIP).

A life-cycle explanation for the changes occurring in collaborative endeavours and associated shifts in process forms has been put forward (see, for example, Lowndes and Skelcher 1998). However, as Cropper and Palmer (2008) argue, and as this study attests, the social and contextual dynamics of collaborative interactions lead to processes that are iterative, intertwined and unfolding rather than linear or perfectly iterative and unfolding. Ring and Van de Ven (1994: 96) state that these processes 'are continually shaped and restructured by actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved'. This hybridity and fluidity are best encapsulated in the following: 'There are lots of things that we did … there is no blueprint' (CRN Interview 6, 2015).

Together, the cases distil some important insights about macro-collaboration processes. First, it is apparent that a mix of processes is in play and that these often cut across and defy Gray's (1989) dual model. For example, several cases shaped their interactions using both communicative and negotiated processes. This hybridity adds to the complexity of collaborative working and calls for more dexterity in its management. Second, there is evidence of deliberate and strategic thinking in action regarding the selection of process as well as implementation. That said, the overwhelming sense is that collaboration and its processes continue to defy any prescriptive recipes for implementation. Each case, while having some similarities, remains highly individual and requires processes that match its unique purpose, context and features.

The importance of micro-processes

While the macro-processes of structure and procedures clearly are important to delivering collaboration, deeper analysis of the cases, especially those defined as more collaborative or successful,

highlighted some additional characteristics located at what several authors have termed the micro or practice level (Huxham and Vangen 2005; Hibbert et al. 2008). The emphasis at this level seems to be less on the doing of collaboration and more on perfecting the different patterns of thinking and types of behaviours that enable the level of engagement for genuine collaboration. Here attention is directed to members' interaction with or treatment of others:

> At first the relationships … the dynamics were terrible. It took a lot of time and effort to really learn how to talk to each other, how to be present and listen and pay attention to how we treat each other. (SIP in Keast 2004: 165)

> WF members spent the first year learning about each other and how to deal with each other. (Mandell 2011: 183)

> How can I help you with that? How can I take a load off with that? Being careful with [the] use of language to re-enforce collaborative practice and model behaviours sought and gently instil the values. (CRN Interview 8, 2015)

By focusing on and strengthening relationships, understanding and appreciating colleagues, helping them out and not apportioning blame, actions emerge that help to smooth over differences and difficulties and prepare the ground for synergistic working.

It also seems that reaching out beyond superficial engagement to genuinely understand and appreciate others—or, as Mandell (2001: 142) says, 'step into each other's shoes'—is important. Case respondents perceived these micro-relational processes to be 'transformational'— that is, focused on moving relationships and behaviours beyond just going through the motions of talking and sharing to generate the space for reciprocity and mutual gain to emerge. These small, but powerful actions were seen to provide a push beyond the practice norm, as articulated here: 'It is the extra things you do because of the relationships that makes the difference. Having a coffee and a talk in an informal atmosphere and being completely honest and occasionally putting yourself out to help someone else meet their goals' (Homelessness Consortia in Keast et al. 2008: 80).

Several of the cases also posited that through their changed demeanour they were able to forge shared understandings: 'We just have an understanding between us that this is how things work' (FYN in Keast

2004: 162). Bohm (1996: 6) explains this phenomenon as a 'stream of meaning flowing among and between … which may emerge as new understanding'.

To be most effective, this new way of thinking and behaving has to become embedded or second nature (Mandell 2001; Innes and Booher 2010). Yet, from the cases it was apparent that collaborative competencies did not always come easily to members. One of the more powerful process tools to facilitate deeper dialogue was highlighted in both the SIP and the WF projects and centred on the use of a dedicated facilitator whose role was to help members reflect not only on their progress towards goals, but also importantly on their actions and behaviours in relation to each other. Innes and Booher (2010: 47) provide a telling insight into sometimes complex conflicts in collaborative arrangements and the importance of a neutral person, where the facilitator reminded the group that they were 'living in two worlds' and that they should 'check their guns at the door'. The importance of a process minder or process catalyst (Huxham and Vangen 2003; Mandell and Keast 2009) becomes central.

Implications

The unmistakable importance of both macro and micro-processes for collaboration has implications for both practice and research. First, at the macro level, more time and effort must be directed to following through on perfecting design and implementation. To support this, process variables need to be addressed in more detail and with greater regularity to identify those that are most effective in helping collaborators to reach intended outcomes, thus providing more informed key performance indicators.

Third, for authentic collaboration behaviours and thinking to be embedded in individuals and organisations, it requires regular practice and reflection (Hibbert et al. 2008; Huxham and Vangen 2003, 2005). Innes and Booher (2010) call this process 'praxis' and argue that it is based on extended practical experience deeply informed by theorising and reflection. Moon (1999: 63) describes reflective practice as a 'set of abilities and skills, to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem solving or state of mind'. Such reflection can be achieved through the directed efforts of an experienced facilitator or process minders or occur as a result of individuals' check-back

and review of their behaviour and actions. All of these demand time and effort of people and organisations—not often acknowledged or provided for in collaboration design or budgeting.

Conclusions

This study confirms earlier propositions that successful collaboration relies heavily on good processes and their implementation. Key process factors to be addressed include: nurturing new and building on existing relationships, establishing trusting relationships, forging agreements on what to work on together and how to work together, building new leadership capacities and identifying and managing conflicts. The study also points out that the mix of processes selected is important, especially that they match the outcomes sought. Furthermore, the implementation of the processes has to be authentic and follow the intent of the collaboration itself. As Innes and Booher (2010: 9) succinctly stated, it 'very much matters what the collaborative process is and how it unfolds'.

By shining the light of research more deeply into the black box of collaboration, this study has also illuminated the existence of a complex set of micro-processes that underpin and anchor collaborative processes. These micro-processes, which include as an example the small interactions and interpersonal behaviours that occur between people who like and respect each other, facilitate deeper dialogue and in so doing allow synergies to be enacted and push beyond normal ways of working. While both macro and micro-processes are not new concepts, they are often overlooked in the push for action and outcomes. These findings serve as a reminder to pay attention to the detail of collaboration.

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Appendix 8.1

Table A8.1: Summary of collaboration exemplars

Case and region	Policy issue	Location	Initiator
Services Integration Project, south-east Queensland	Regional services integration and governance	Goodna, Queensland	State government agencies and university
Family and Youth Network, regional New South Wales	Integrated homeless services	Regional New South Wales	Government (funding requirement) and sectoral
Gold Coast Homelessness Consortia, south-east Queensland	Integrated homeless services	Gold Coast, Queensland	Homeless service providers (government and non-government)
Collaborative Research Network, regional New South Wales/ south-east Queensland	Regional research capacity building	Gold Coast, Queensland, and Lismore, New South Wales	Australian Government
Sacramento Water Forum, USA	Regional water planning	Sacramento region, California	Local government
Adelaide Oval Redevelopment, metropolitan South Australia	Infrastructure	Adelaide, South Australia	Private contractor
Pacific Motorway, south-east Queensland	Infrastructure	Brisbane, Queensland	State government and private operator