

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNITY CHANGE?

Burnie Works activities in 2020/21 took place in a context of change both for the community and the organisation. The financial year began with the community readjusting to a post-COVID environment, backbone team staff changes, and it ended with the team relocating and transitioning from the auspice of Burnie City Council to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

In this context we have gained the following insights about community change, and these will be integrated into the Burnie Works way of working in 2021/22.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION

Through the opportunities to respond to what was emerging through COVID, we were reminded that something is always already happening in community. Key stakeholders are more likely to gather and share knowledge when it's something that they are facing at that time. The team's role is to listen widely, look for opportunities to create connection in a timely way and include the community's wisdom from past experiences of facing economic and social change.

The examples of innovative change in the case studies all highlight that when people are brought together and the ideas spark momentum, community members are prepared to step up and be involved. In every example, the impact was not necessarily planned at the beginning but evolved because of the engagement and expertise provided by the backbone team.



STRATEGIC LEARNING

This financial year, Burnie Works has revised its theory of change and UMEL (Understanding, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) framework to reflect the interaction of the approaches that drive the way we work and the amplification role of a collective approach, the contribution to the individual and population level change, systems change and changes in the conditions for collective impact .

We have learned that UMEL needs to be embedded throughout the whole cycle of innovative action.



At this stage, the focus is on creating the culture change needed to implement a UMEL framework and we have learned that the first step is to focus on the value of understanding and learning. We are retrospectively implementing measurement and evaluation at the innovative action level and designing measurement and evaluation into new actions/projects as resources allow.

We have learned that to support the complexity of place-based community change, we need relationships across the spectrum of academia and social change organisations. We have learned that what is most important is not data itself but how it comes together so that Working Groups and others can use it to inform their decision-making and sense-making.

In 2020/21 Burnie Works has brokered relationships with external stakeholders to progress the vision of bringing together a place-based knowledge hub. We worked with SEER Data and Analytics to build our capacity to gather and present place-based information for working groups and community.

We are involved in a research project with the ANU's Crawford School of Public Policy, exploring the experience of wellbeing of children and families in Burnie. We have started conversations with the University of Tasmania College about how to support accredited pathways for community members to engage as knowledge collectors. We have been receiving evaluation advice from the University of Tasmania.

We have also received professional support from Tamarack Institute, the Collective Change Lab, Australian Evaluation Society (AES) and the Social Impact Measurement Network of Australia (SIMNA).

HIGH LEVERAGE AND SYSTEM FOCUS

In 2020/21, in addition to supporting a systems change approach across the Burnie Works focus areas, we have responded to the community's focus on F1D. As the case studies show, this has strategically brought together related activities including, capacity building for community storytelling, community driven messaging, families working group initiative, systems mapping and knowledge collection. We have learnt the value of being on the ground where community members gather, to hear the issues that are emerging and respond to support connection of people and ideas. This support includes providing technical expertise that is not generally available within service provider organisations.

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COVID limited the capacity for people to gather in formal ways. This opened possibilities to engage with community members informally, connecting more spontaneously by being on site at the places where they gather. We found that during restrictions professionals were more able to attend Zoom meetings which enabled strong participation in the progress mapping processes.

We have learnt that we need to adapt our approach depending on the nature of the groups, membership, and their stage of life.

We learnt that formal meetings with agendas are important and support our longer serving working groups well. The families and justice groups were new in 2020 and responded to a less formal approach to relationship building initially. Both groups have created shared agendas and are focusing on agreed actions. These meetings were guided by the team responding to the issues that the group members shared. As facilitators, we needed to ensure that the engagement activities provided for opportunities for everyone's contribution, including people with limited literacy.

The work to support the F1D communication strategy is guided by parents who attend informal conversations.

CONTAINER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

Burnie Works is in a consolidating stage. However, we learned through the progress mapping and learning circle processes, that the more we collectively understand the nature of collective community change, the more we need to focus on issues such as power and what is required to evolve and embed collective impact leadership and principles in the new organisational and governance structure.

We are learning more about the functions and roles for best practice collective impact coordination, implementation of larger projects and stakeholder engagement that builds on the capacity of the community to participate in all aspects of collective change in Burnie.

We are learning more about accountability across the Burnie Works ecosystem and what functions and technical expertise the backbone team can contribute to each focus area depending on what is most needed at this time.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

The most significant learning has been acknowledging the power shifts that need to happen within all parts of the ecosystem, this includes internally within the backbone team. In 2020/21 Burnie Works supported Tasmanian Aboriginal Council (TAC) cultural awareness training, Murdoch Institute's Platforms Model and Bridges to Capacity training. Over 200 people participated in these three opportunities. Feedback shows that the training was significant for participants and indicates that personal change is reflected in shifts in organisational practices, including Burnie Work's own practices.

WORKING IN CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY

Service providers work in chaos. It is the reality of being embedded in and working with local community. We have learned that we have a role in being able to host spaces within the chaos for conversations and reflection. We have learned that the role of the backbone team is not necessarily to change the chaos but to help others make sense of it within their environment. From these moments, many of which were opportunistic and unstructured, co-design processes emerged.



CONSOLIDATING LEARNING INTO ACTION IN 2021/22

Burnie Works will take into 2021/22 what we have learned through action, what was achieved and understanding the moment in time in the life of the Burnie community.

PRIORITIES

FIRST 1,000 DAYS

Building on the momentum gained from working with the community on its First 1,000 Days strategy, the community communication campaign will be launched in September 2021. The team will support the families group to collect their own stories from friends and family about the impact of screens on their children, an issue raised by the group as something they would like to focus on.

BURNIE YOUTH

Using the Tasmanian Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, it is the time to create synergies between the existing youth forums, including Burnie City Council to bring youth and other stakeholders together to look at a broader Burnie youth strategy.

EDUCATION

The Education Committee (BIG) will finalise its strategic plan which embeds the UMEL approach into its long-standing activities that build aspiration for young people to follow pathways from education into employment in Burnie and beyond.

JUSTICE

The Justice Committee is building on its youth justice systems map which highlighted a gap in supporting young people from families impacted by incarceration. Members of the group have designed and will implement a pilot project to connect with young people at risk in late 2021. The group is prioritising understanding more about domestic violence and the child protection systems over the next months.

EMPLOYMENT

The Employment Partnership Group will take on a central role to co-design and implement a youth pathway to employment project funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund. It will advise on the implementation of the Tasmanian Government's North-West Regional Employment Hub

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Transitioning to the new governance and organisational structure will include embedding a learning and accountability framework across the Burnie Works ecosystem.

We will continue to encourage community members to become knowledge collectors and sharers to further strengthen the Burnie way of supporting authentic community engagement.

We will also continue to build opportunities to bring data-custodians and academics together with the community to create Burnie knowledge profiles and further understanding of the systemic issues that impact on the wellbeing of individuals and the population.

Burnie Works will partner with the State Government in its implementation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. An ecological model of human development is referenced in the Strategy, particularly the importance of recognising the influence of relationships on children, within the settings of the family, the community, wider society, and the environment. This approach connects with the work and direction of the *Stronger Places, Stronger People* initiative in Burnie, Tasmania.

Burnie Works is a partner of Communities for Children and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Council. We will continue to work towards increasing the synergies between the organisations for place-based work that is effective and the most efficient use of resources and expertise. This includes how we can work together to deepen cultural awareness, build capacity and shared learning in Burnie for this work.

While these are important and significant priorities, we realise that in the current context of COVID and the possibility of further social disruption, we need to continue to be responsive to create the opportunities for impact in 2020/21.

BURNIE WORKS

PATAWAY WORKS

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