

**Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage  
National Conservation Incentives Forum**

## **Training Manual for Workshop Participants**

**'Working together -  
Collaborate now: avoid the rush'**

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## **Workshop agenda**

### **National Conservation Incentives Forum: Workshop**

#### **Working together: collaborate now - avoid the rush**

There is a lot of talk about partnerships in natural resource management – the principles, the ideals and the desirable outcomes. However, a large part of the successful of collaborative efforts comes down to the interactions between the participants – both non-government and government. This is never more true than when collaborating to achieve conservation outcomes on private land and the use of incentives to achieve this

In order to achieve partnerships in which people from different backgrounds and interests work together to achieve sustainable landscape management at the individual property, landscape, regional, state and national scales, people need to come together and to understand each others values, goals and the principles and practices by which they operate on a day-to-day basis.

The ‘collaborate now and avoid the rush’ workshops have been structured to facilitate this coming together of different stakeholders, while at the same time allowing people from the various sectors to explore their own perspectives on relevant issues. A special feature of these workshops is the invitation extended to representatives of organisations who are in the throes of forming partnerships with conservation incentive providers. This will give real life to the workshop as contemporary issues of partnerships will abound.

Concurrent and parallel sessions will build on the experience of Mike Williams, principal of Michael Williams & Associates and Board member of NSW Nature Conservation Trust and of Judy Lambert and Jane Elix, all of whom have decades of experience in designing and implementing successful working partnerships between participants in environment and natural resource management. The workshop(s) also aims to tap into the experiences of the participants, and to elicit the practical lessons of their successful AND unsuccessful experiences.

Case studies will be used extensively in this workshop.

2HRS 15MIN – TEA BREAK PROVIDED AT END OF THE SESSION

**Workshop agenda: Working together: collaborate now - avoid the rush**

Topic	Key questions	Key learning (Background materials provided)	Time allocation
<b>1. Plenary Session</b> - All participants involved			
Brief introduction to the workshop – overview of content and context			5 min
Introduction of participants.	<p>Please give us the key words describing what you see as essential ingredients in successful partnership processes with which you have been involved.</p> <p><i>Please tell us briefly about a partnership that you would dearly like to forge in relation to broad natural resource management or conservation incentive outcomes – be as bold as you like</i></p>	<p>Collection of information about the experiences of the group – both positive and negative.</p> <p>Draw on the extra invited participants to contribute lessons learned from their partnerships</p>	20 min
Key principles for partnership success	<p><i>What are the advantages and disadvantages of working together in partnership?</i></p> <p>Facilitators to outline key principles then allow brief facilitated discussion</p>	<p>Facilitators to pull together and talk about themes – possibly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of collaborative processes</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Shared understanding – a common language</li> <li>• Mutual benefits</li> <li>• Power-sharing</li> <li>• Making good use of time, etc</li> </ul>	15 min

**Workshop agenda: Working together: collaborate now - avoid the rush**

<p>Determining when a partnership process might be useful (and also deciding when it will not)</p>	<p>Why work together – what are the advantages and disadvantages?  <b><i>What are the special advantages and disadvantages of working together with those with whom you may not share a similar value set</i></b></p>	<p>Risk/benefit assessment for a potential partnership process including consideration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How accessing of different types of knowledge might help</li> <li>• Opportunities for listening to other positions</li> <li>• Opportunities to get outside support for group efforts</li> <li>• Time, effort and skills are required</li> <li>• Meeting fatigue can set in</li> <li>• Different ways of communicating can lead to conflict.</li> </ul>	<p>20 min</p>
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Workshop agenda: Working together: collaborate now - avoid the rush

Topic	Key questions	Key learning (Background materials)	Time allocation
<p><b>2. Mixed participant groups (assigned beforehand to ensure good mix)</b> Small Groups of around 7 (up to 8 small groups)</p>			5 min to move into separate groups
Getting started	<p>First steps (identified by facilitators and then small group work)</p> <p>This session will draw heavily on Case study experience of both the facilitators and participants and also the invited participants</p>	<p>Deciding on who should be involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal networking</li> <li>• Understanding impact of values</li> <li>• Overcoming scepticism and distrust</li> <li>• Finding a neutral starting point</li> <li>• Data and information sharing</li> </ul>	20 min
Identifying opportunities	<p>Each participant to identify one opportunity for funding or other support for a partnership arrangement.</p> <p>or</p> <p><i>Each participant brings the partnership they would dearly like to forge that was mentioned in the introductory session and small groups selects one to work up into a strategic approach to building and operating the partnership</i></p>	Participants will work on their own possibilities, thus applying some of the material already discussed to their real life circumstances.	20 min


**Workshop agenda: Working together: collaborate now - avoid the rush**

			5 min for groups to reassemble
<p><b>3. Plenary session Groups 1&amp; 2</b></p> <p>What have we learned about working with 'like' &amp; 'other'</p>	<p>Stakeholder groups come together &amp; report back on:</p> <p>What has been learned about working with both like-minded people &amp; those from other perspectives</p> <p>or</p> <p>Small groups that decided to work up a strategic plan of a partnership they would love to forge present their strategic plan</p>		15 min
<p>Wrap-up and distill outcomes for reporting back</p>			10 min

## Partnership experiences: What works & what doesn't

**?** Key question 1: *Please tell us briefly about an example of a successful or unsuccessful partnership process with which you have been involved.*

**?** Key question 2: *Please tell us briefly about a partnership that you would dearly like to forge in relation to broad natural resource management or conservation incentive outcomes – be as bold as you like.*

 **Learning objective:** To identify pointers to consensus-building, based on sharing of past experiences of working in partnerships.

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## Case study partnerships

SPACE FOR NOTE-TAKING

### **Case study: Shorebird Values Mapping – From conflict to ongoing partnership (2003)**

A consensus-based Values Mapping project, completed by Community Solutions for the WWF Australia, Birds Tasmania and the Robbins Passage Wetland Group.

**The aims** of the project were to identify & seek agreement on:

- The values** (environmental, social & economic) of the area
- Issues** relating to current 'health' of these values & their management
- Actions** to be taken to manage the issues raised & to conserve areas of shorebird significance.

**During the preparatory phase of the work**, the Community Solutions team:

- Identified, contacted & gained participation by key players from all sectors
- Conducted phone survey interviews – issues & values
- Encouraged participation in planned visit

**Regular contact, active listening, building of trust were a key focus during this phase of the project.**

**Values Mapping visit:**

- Day 1:** Map /discussion sessions with sectoral **focus groups** – information collection
- Day 2:** **Site visits & informal discussion** of what's valued in the area
- Day 3:** **Facilitated workshop** – shared values (common ground), concerns & possible ways forward together – interactive, consensus-building

The project identified and progressed partnership projects assisting in the conservation of shorebird habitat of significance within a rural production landscape. Community Solutions brought together competing and at times conflict-ridden community and industry groups to develop a partnership which continues to work together on joint projects.

## SPACE FOR NOTE-TAKING

**Case study: Integrating Grassy Box woodland management on farms** (1999—2003)

A project undertaken with Natural Heritage Trust funding to trial a “farmer-extension” project in central NSW looking particularly at the integration of the management of Grassy White Box Woodlands into agricultural and other land management activities. Financial, education, and informational incentives were offered, including involvement in community education networking.

The project team itself was a partnership of different interests brought together and managed by Community Solutions, NSW NPWS and scientists at Ecological Interactions. The team included NSW Farmers' Association, WWF Australia, Charles Sturt University, Greening Australia, CSIRO Sustainable Landscapes, the NSW Department of Land and Water, and the Central West Planning Group.

Much of the basic ecology and the general needs of rural producers, Local Governments and others managing Grass Box woodland remnants were known from previous projects.

Rural landholders, each working part-time for the project and part-time on their own properties, provided one-on-one liaison, shared field days with the scientists and actively sought new remnants to join the project and to participate in a management incentive/devolved grant scheme.

Applicant sites were each assessed for their conservation value and the risk to continued existence of that value.

Considerable effort also went into developing a Conservation Management Network, linking public and private landholders with each other and with scientists involved in improving the conservation management of key sites, and encouraging entry into Voluntary Conservation Agreements.

## SPACE FOR NOTE-TAKING

**Case Study: Ourimbah Protocol**

2003-ongoing

The Ourimbah Protocol is a novel partnership between a diverse range of interests on the Central Coast of NSW including Aboriginal groups, community progress associations, local business interests, conservation interests, art and community support organisations and Forests NSW.

This facilitated partnership was brought together out of a community's exasperation with conflict in forest management and a need for a more human and civil approach to forest management conflict resolution. The unlikely alliance produced a protocol about why and how the group would work together and what the key topics for collaboration should be. Some project funding was successfully obtained from NHT.

**The Ourimbah Protocol**, as the agreement is called, works to ensure that the full range of values of the State Forests of the Central Coast of NSW are revealed, articulated, understood and managed. So the value of the forests to reconnect the disadvantaged and disconnected, the value of the forests for art and music, the value of the forests for spiritual awareness and community wellbeing along with the more traditional recreation, catchment and harvest values are being explored in a civil community dialogue. An increased understanding of the community's diverse ways that they value forests is having more far reaching social effects than first thought possible.

The more difficult implications of this value mapping for forest harvesting are testing the protocols and values of the group. The groups' objective is to collaborate with Forests NSW to produce an Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management Plan for their area of interest and to keep exploring the more palimpsest values ascribed to the forests by the community.

## Pointers to useful partnerships & pitfalls

**?** Key question 1: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of working together in partnership?*

**?** Key question 2: *What are the special advantages and disadvantages of working together with those with whom you may not share a similar value set?*

 **Learning objectives:**

To better understand the advantages and disadvantages of working in partnership.

To assess whether partnerships are formed because of shared value sets as opposed to meeting carefully articulated objectives

To recognise when partnerships are most appropriate and then there may be better ways of working

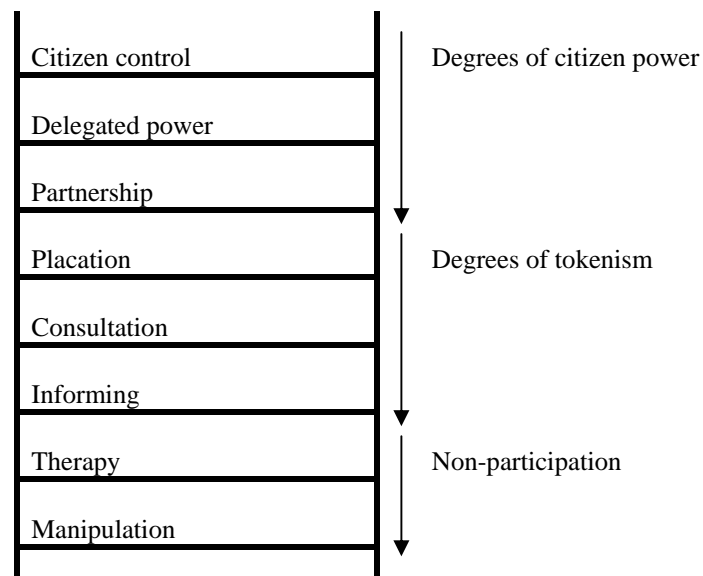
To identify some of the key considerations in establishing a partnership arrangement.

To understand how one manages and nurtures partnerships and responds to the “turncoat” syndrome.

SPACE FOR NOTE-TAKING

## Partnerships: One rung in the participation ladder

As Arnstein<sup>1</sup> identified more than three decades ago, community participation can occur over an escalating range of different levels that are readily represented in the Ladder of Citizen Participation.

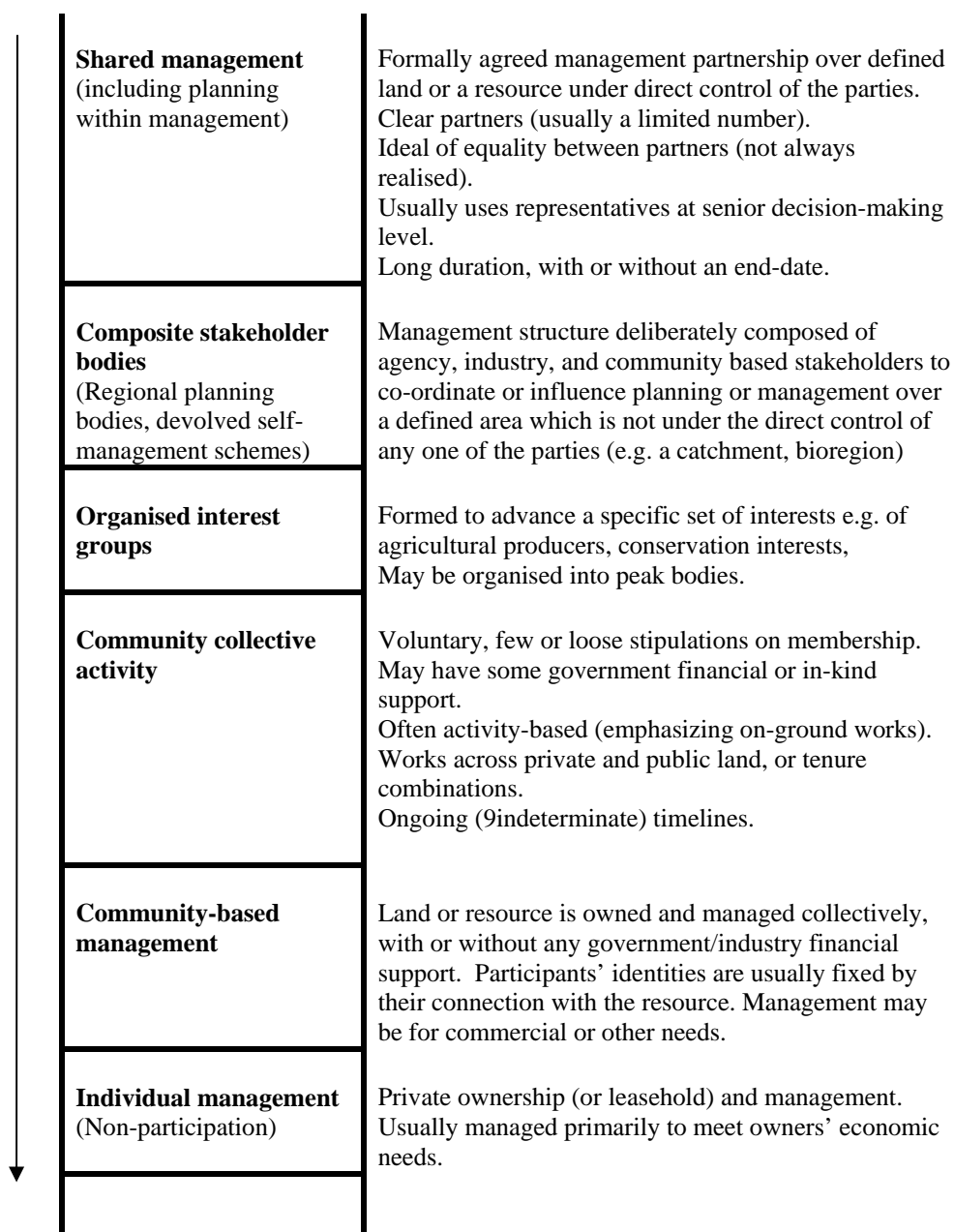


Each of these different levels of participation has a role in different circumstances. However, in Australia, as in many other countries, government expectations of community engagement and participation, and with that, community expectations of greater empowerment have moved participation more towards the upper rungs of this ladder.

When planning to work with others from different sectors, it is important to be clear at the outset, what level of participation, or shared effort all participants are expecting and to ensure that all are equipped to fulfill their expected roles.

<sup>1</sup> Arnstein S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 35, 216-224.

In 2001-02 Helen Ross from the University of Queensland's Gatton College and her colleagues translated Arnstein's ladder of participation, into a ladder describing public participation in NRM in Australia. More details on each of the steps in this ladder can be found in Ross's paper in the Australian Journal of Environmental Management<sup>2</sup>.




From: Ross et al. (2002)

<sup>2</sup> Ross H., Buchy M. & Proctor W. (2002). Laying down the ladder: A typology of public participation in Australian Natural Resource Management. Aust. Journal of Environmental Management 9(4), pp. 205-217.

Kingma & Beynon<sup>3</sup> translate Arnstein's ladder into a Continuum of Government involvement, which is also useful to consider when seeking to form partnerships in NRM.

#### **Minimum government involvement**

- 
- Self-determination – often with little government influence
  - Public information/ education/ awareness assisted by Government input
  - Information feedback with ad hoc involvement
  - Interactive public consultation
  - Joint planning and development, with public participation
  - Implementation of government policies and programs with public input
  - Delegated authority with Government oversight
  - Government dominated implementation of policies and programs

#### **Maximum government involvement**

It is important that all parties to a partnership are clear about, and have a shared understanding of their roles, responsibilities and levels of involvement, not just for their own planning, but also to avoid misunderstandings about relative power and influence within the project especially at the decision making end of the process. Explore where the real decisions will be made and have them acknowledged at the beginning of the process.

The Arnstein ladder and the variations of it provided by Kingma and Beynon and by Ross and her colleagues, should provide a useful basis for exploring and defining these aspects before the partnership is entered into in any formal way.

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<sup>3</sup> Kingma O. & Beynon N. It can't work without people. Conceptual frameworks for analyzing effective relationships between players in natural resource management. Land & Water Australia. Report No. CAG2. [http://lwa.gov.au/downloads/final\\_reports/CAG2.pdf](http://lwa.gov.au/downloads/final_reports/CAG2.pdf), p.15

## Risk/ Benefit assessment

Assessing the risk involved for each of the potential partners is an important considering whether or not to enter into a partnership.

While **risk** is usually considered in terms of the likelihood or probability of physical events happening which change which change the course of events. As Sandman<sup>4</sup> identifies, this aspect of risk can be thought of as **hazard**.

However, as Sandman also identifies

$$\text{RISK} = \text{Hazard} + \text{Outrage}$$

People may be outraged about an issue because they do not understand the hazard involved. However, in any instances in environment and natural resource management, they fully understand the hazard, and are **outraged** because

- They are being coerced to accept risk
- The risk is industrial, rather than natural
- The hazard may be unfamiliar to them and therefore not easily accessible
- The hazard may be memorable by association with a related event elsewhere
- The hazard may bring with it a level of dread
- The risk is of a catastrophic event, rather than one associated with chronic risk
- The potential for damage is not only unknown, but unknowable
- Others may control the level of risk, leaving the individual without control
- The distribution of risk may be unfair
- The risk may be seen as morally wrong
- The sources of risk may be untrustworthy
- The process may be unresponsive to expressed concerns of risk.

Members of the public respond in different ways to perceived risk.

It is important to at least consider these risk/outrage generators when entering into a project partnership, and to the extent possible, to put in place mechanism for dealing with the types of reactions to them..

The **Australian Standard on Dispute Management** provides some useful guidance on assessing the social and political aspects of risk, as it affects government and those associated with government processes. The Australian Standard (AS 4608-2004) that both the probability of a dispute arising (rated from 'almost certain' to 'rare') and the consequences of dispute (rated from 'insignificant' to 'serious') are important in assessing this element of risk.

Thus, for any partnership being planned, it is worthwhile to do a preliminary assessment of social and political risk. This need not be a time-consuming exercise, and can generally be done quite simply using a matrix adapted from AS 4608-2004.

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<sup>4</sup> Sandman P. Risk communication: Notes from a class.  
<http://home.sprintmail.com/~snowtao/risk.htm#rules>

## Risk Ranking

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Serious
Almost certain					
Likely					
Possible					
Unlikely					
Rare					

These ratings are based on the following definitions, adapted from the Australian Standard (AS 4608-2004)

**Table 1. Likelihood**

Label	Description
Almost certain	Existing conflict will continue or new conflict will arise.
Likely	Existing conflict could easily continue or new conflict could easily arise.
Possible	Conflict has already been seen to occur or continue in other situations.
Unlikely	Existing conflict is easily resolvable or will probably not happen.
Rare	It is conceivable that conflict will flare up but only in extreme circumstances.

**Table 2. Consequences**

Label	Description
Insignificant	Little impact on communities or government and no financial or other costs.
Minor	Some impact on communities or government and some productivity lost. No financial loss or major political loss.
Moderate	Disruption to community or government stability and to productivity. Some financial or political loss.
Major	. Serious disruption to community and to industry productivity, and serious financial costs. There is likely to be a major electoral impact on government.
Serious	Very significant disruption to communities and to industry productivity, with financial losses obvious. Government will suffer electoral consequences

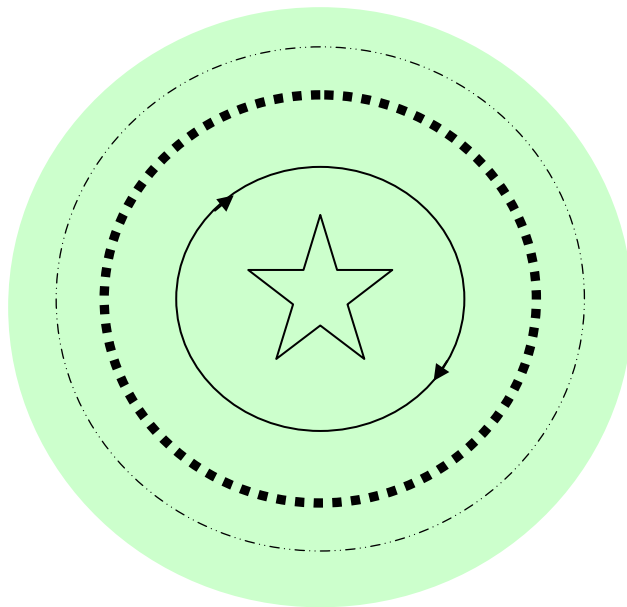
The further a project or partnership lies towards the upper right-hand corner of the Risk Ranking table (towards the serious consequence and almost certain likelihood), the greater will be the need to actively provide for its maintenance and to provide for professional assistance in consensus-building within the partnership. At some point in developing any partnership, this risk assessment must be weighed against the benefits of the partnership to desired outcomes. The adage “to succeed one must be prepared to fail” also needs to be brought into the decision-making when one is in uncharted “partnership territory”.

## Recognising & accessing different types of knowledge

Knowledge comes from several different sources, and is learned in different ways- each of which should be recognised for the contribution it can make to natural resource management. Professor Val Brown and her colleagues at ANU highlight the importance of bringing these different forms of knowledge together in order to achieve holistic and a more integrated approach to knowledge.

### NESTED KNOWLEDGES

(From: Brown V.A. & Pitcher J. Islands and Beaches: Negotiating community knowledges in the transition to sustainability. In: Keen M., Brown V.A. & Dyball R. (eds). *Social Learning in Environmental Management*. Earthscan UK, 2005).



#### CONSTRUCTIONS OF REALITY

- INDIVIDUAL KNOWLEDGE**  
 Personal lived experience, lifestyle choices, learning style, personality  
**Content: Identity, reflections, ideas**
  
- LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**  
 Shared lived experiences of individuals, families, businesses, communities  
**Content: Stories, events, histories**
  
- SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE**  
 Environment and Health Sciences, Finance, Engineering, Law, Philosophy etc.  
**Content: Case studies, experiments, measures**
  
- STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE**  
 Organisational governance, policy development, legislation  
**Content: Agendas, alliances, planning**
  
- ★
**HOLISTIC KNOWLEDGE**  
 Core of the matter, vision for the future, a Common Purpose, the aim of sustainability  
**Content: Symbol, vision, ideal**

Traditionally, rural researchers and the extension staff who have translated that research into information useful to landholders (in Brown's terms those who have 'specialised knowledge') have been seen as the 'experts', and their views have often held sway in decision-making. However, as Millar & Curtis<sup>5</sup> demonstrate in their study of farmer knowledge of management of perennial grasses, 'local' or farmer knowledge, based strongly on personal experience, observation and inherited information, is often valuable in managing natural resources. Furthermore, local knowledge often varies widely, based on the environments in which the farmers live and work, their family and social backgrounds.

It is clear from the work of Millar and Curtis, and others who focus on the human aspects of natural resource management, that in working together, we should all avoid making assumptions about the knowledge that others hold and the nature of that knowledge. "Putting people into pigeonholes" is often unhelpful in forming partnerships for NRM, and as the old adage says "If you want to know the answer, ask the question", rather than assuming you know what someone else is thinking.

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<sup>5</sup> Millar J. & Curtis A. (1998). The nature and role of farmer knowledge in temperate pasture management in the Murray-Darling Basin. *Rural Society* 9(1), 301-312.

## Opportunities for listening & learning

Both in our eagerness to get a partnership established, and our reticence about engaging with others who do not share a common set of values often mean that we do not take the time to listen to what our prospective partners value, and how they view the issues our partnership is seeking to address. To assume shared goals, shared perceptions of the problems, or shared methods for addressing those problems may well lead to problems as the project progresses.

Much of the literature from organisational development stresses the importance of a 'diagnosis phase in organisational change. For instance, Cummings & Worley<sup>6</sup>, in their widely recognised work on organizational development and change, refer to the cycle of engagement that begins with an 'entering and contracting' period in which the parties decide whether they want to engage further or not, and then move into a period of 'diagnosis', which they describe as a critical precursor to planning and implementing new ways of working. It is in the 'diagnosis' phase that organisations choose an appropriate model for understanding the organisation (in our case the new partnership), and for gathering and analyzing information and feed it back into decision-making.

In the field of consensus-building for environment and NRM, Adler and his colleagues<sup>7</sup>, highlight the importance of early listening and research. Although they stress the importance of flexibility in consensus-building, they also provide a template, in which the first three steps of a 9-step process, are all directed to listening and learning.

- A. Gain substantive knowledge- of the issues, language and terminology
- B. Undertake pre-case consultation –of the key players, groups and interests, and the resources available to complete the work
- C. Scoping and conflict analysis – using observation, secondary sources and interviews with the parties involved ...
- D. ...
- E.

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<sup>6</sup> Cummings T.G. & Worley C.G. (1997). *Organizational Development & Change*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. South-Western College Publishing, Ohio, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Adler P., Barrett R>C>, Bean M.C., Birkhoff J.E., Ozawa P. & Rudin E.B. *Managing scientific and technical information in environmental cases: Principles and practices for mediators and facilitators*. RESOLVE Inc., US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution & Western Justice Center Foundation. [www.resolv.org/pdfs/envir\\_wjc\\_pdf](http://www.resolv.org/pdfs/envir_wjc_pdf)

## Communicating effectively: Speaking the same 'language'

Even when working with others who share our country of origin, it is not unusual to find that we use language differently. Particular words assume special meanings, based on our past experience and training. While some words assume everyday use for people working in a particular sector, those same words might be quite alienating to others from a different sector.

As Anna Carr highlights in her book *Grass Roots & Green Tape* "The importance of speaking a common language cannot be overemphasized in stewardship practice. All too often our different specializations come to the fore. Farmers talk of rotational grazing, surface run-off, price squeeze, and phalaris. Agricultural researchers speak of pasture mass, total P, storm events, infiltration capacity, remnant 'veg' and evapotranspiration. Academics, well they talk a language unto themselves according to many environmental practitioners and that language changes from discipline to discipline."<sup>8</sup>

In 1995, National Farmers' Federation representative Alex Campbell<sup>9</sup>, speaking at a Land & Water Resources Research & Development Corporation forum on managing native vegetation in agricultural land, provided some classic examples of the problems of unshared language. As Campbell expressed it, 'calling it something different' had the effect of making a scientist, policy officer or someone else, appear to have "more knowledge or influence than landholders of many years' experience." Campbell went on to use as examples:

- 'rangelands' instead of 'pastoral'
- 'remnant vegetation' instead of 'remaining bush'
- 'biological diversity' instead of 'balance of nature'

While these particular differences may have been overcome with time, new examples continually arise and are worthy of attention in building new partnerships.

It is not just words that are important in building effective communication and trust with others with whom we seek to form new partnerships. We may become more or less risk averse, depending on what sector we work in (for instance engineers are trained to be risk averse, whereas many environmental managers, trained in adaptive management skills, are trained to try new strategies and to be vigilant in monitoring outcomes and adapting to change.

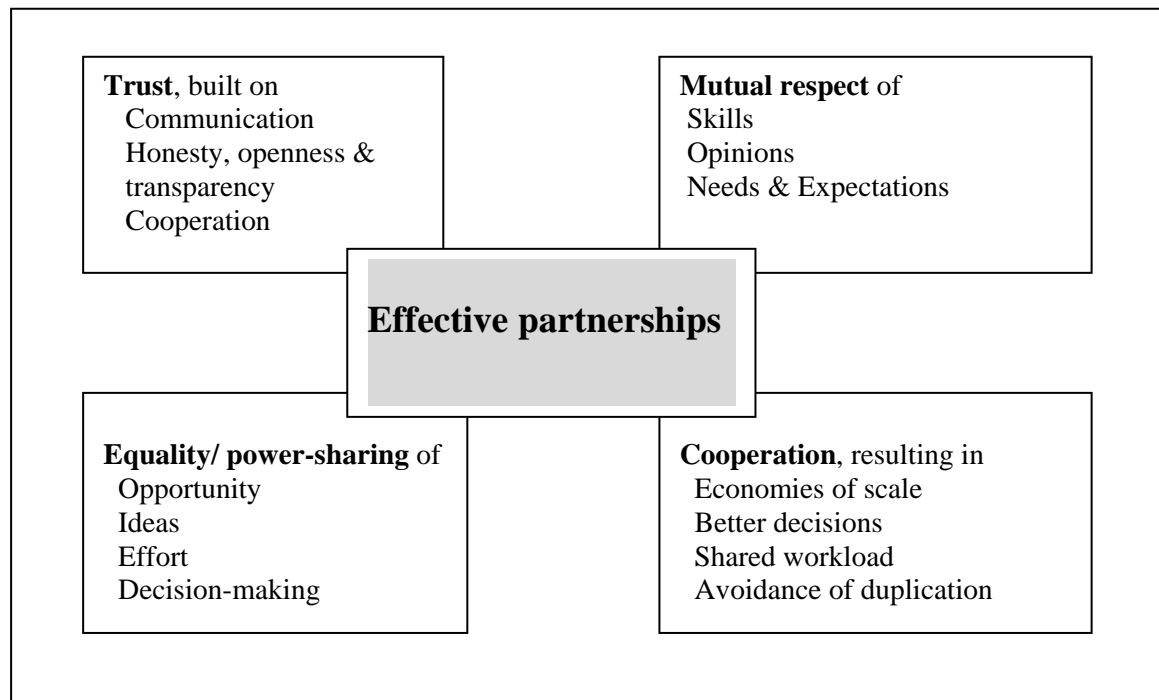
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<sup>8</sup> Carr A. (2002). *Grass Roots & Green Tape: Principles and Practices of Environmental Stewardship*. Federation Press, Leichhardt NSW.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell Alex (1995). What are landholders' attitudes to maintaining native vegetation on agricultural lands? In: Price P(ed). *Socio-economic aspects of maintaining native vegetation on agricultural land*. Occasional Paper No. 07/95, Land & Water Resources R&D Corporation, Canberra

## Working together: Ingredients for success

Through their work over the past two decades, the partners in Community Solutions have summarised the ingredients for successful partnerships in the diagram that follows.



Gunningham & Sinclair<sup>10</sup>, in their paper on **Environmental Partnerships**, propose that

“...with some form of catalyst to start the process, and with a common focus, participants from very different ideological positions, [are] able to achieve a political objective that none of them alone would have had the capacity to do”.

They go on to identify as the factors most conducive to the development of successful partnerships

- **A coincidence between public and private profit-** a “win-win” situation where both the environment and productivity/profitability benefit
- **The prospect of mutual gain for all partners-** sharing responsibilities, benefits, profits and gains, which outweigh any disadvantages of being involved
- **A focus on local issues with readily monitored results-** locally important, with individual behaviours or outcomes readily assessed
- **Providing exposure to ‘green’ markets-** but not necessarily only the final consumer
- **Trading off a public image-** building on a high public profile important to company image
- **Addressing disparities along the supply chain-** not a ‘partnership’ if those up and down the supply chain feel they are being coerced
- **Crisis opportunities for getting started-** rarely do environmental partnerships arise spontaneously, the catalyst may be a crisis or other external event
- **Leveraging commercial third parties-** an opportunity enhanced by NGO intervention

As Gunningham and Sinclair go on to say

“...there will be a range of situations which lack the sorts of characteristics identified above, and where “**no deal**” will be a preferable outcome to a partnership which will almost certainly fail to meet the expectations of at least one of the major stakeholders”.

Gunningham and Sinclair go on to identify several ‘key design features’, several of which Governments are well placed to influence. These include:

- **Provision of adequate incentives** for the various parties to participate –grants, rapid depreciation of equipment, tax credits and reduced fees; reduced transactional costs as a result of less duplicative reporting; and quicker or combined permitting.
- **Appropriate targets**, which are specific and quantifiable wherever possible-the absence of commitment to these by one party may threaten the whole partnership . “Mature partnerships should be performance-based with specified goals, measurable objectives and milestones”. The partnership should start out with SMART goals:

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<sup>10</sup> Gunningham N & Sinclair D(2002).Environmental partnerships: Combining sustainability and commercial advantage in the agriculture sector. Report to the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. RIRDC Publication No.02/2004, Canberra.

**Specific-** clearly defined, so that achievement is well defined

**Measurable-** achievement demonstrable by measurement

**Achievable-** Realistic, credible and possible

**Reviewable-** including sufficient monitoring to demonstrate that the goal has indeed been achieved, or that there is progress made towards its achievement

**Timely-** including a timeframe within which the goal is to be achieved.

- **Transparency & accountability-** through public announcement of operating principles and practices accepted by the partners in evaluating performance and the indicators to be used and the timetables involved.
- **Monitoring and verification-** Preferably independently, using agreed measures both quantitative and qualitative. This builds credibility and trust and may lead to financial benefits over time.

**Flexibility**, encouraging **continual improvement** (adaptive management) and **innovation**, are important in maintaining momentum within a partnership.

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### **Examples of environment & NRM partnerships between groups whose value sets are not generally similar**

**Australian Conservation Foundation** and **National Farmers' Federation** - formation of Landcare in the 1980s, and more recently 'Repairing the Country: A national scenario for strategic investment'.

**Greening Australia** and **Alcoa** – a partnership lasting more than 20 years, providing landscape repair through tree planting, environmental education, improved seed supply and practical skills in sustainable land management.

**The Wilderness Society, Cattle Council of Australia** and **local Aboriginal communities** - the 1990s Cape York Agreement.

**WWF** and the **Fisheries** and **Forestry** industries- resource stewardship agreements.

In these, and many other examples, there have been challenges for environment groups, to ensure that they do not lose credibility with their supporters and become seen to have been co-opted by 'big business'. At the same time, there are challenges for businesses entering into these relationships - risks including excessive demands on staff time and resources, loss of corporate confidentiality, and consumer risks associated with misinformation etc.

Before entering into partnerships with others who do not share your values, it is important to make these risks transparent and to develop risk management strategies to address them.

## Partnerships: Getting them started

The Canadian Round Tables on Environment and Economy<sup>11</sup> identify four basis steps in building a consensus-process:

- Assessment – Talking about Whether to Talk
- Getting started – Talking about How to Talk
- Running the process –Talking
- Implementing and Monitoring the Results – Turning Talk into Action.

It is important to the success of a partnership, whether with like-minded groups and organisations, or with others who have different value sets, to invest time and resources in the 'getting started' steps.

### ▪ **Assessment – Talking about Whether to Talk**

Deciding whether there is a reason to collaborate, whether the subject matter can be addressed at the time, and whether a viable process can be established are all important aspects of deciding whether or not to form a professional relationship with others. Allow time to research and explore these issues, and if necessary involve a skilled and impartial third party to assist – exploring ways to recast issues, point out linkages and common ground, and guide the parties towards consensus.

### ▪ **Getting started – Talking about How to Talk**

Deciding who should be involved

- decision-makers and decision-leaders
- formal and informal networks
- understanding the impact of Values
- overcoming scepticism and distrust
- finding a neutral starting point
- data and information sharing

## Making sure there are agreed 'ground rules' in place

In setting up partnerships and alliances, it is important to ensure that **operating protocols** – what we want to achieve by working together, how we are going to do, what are going to do it, who is going to do what, and how we'll measure whether or not we are achieving what we set out to do, as well as the ways in which we will relate to each other, are important parts of the planning stage.

A partnership or alliance may begin with great enthusiasm and commitment, but maintaining that working relationship through the tough times as well as the good times, also requires careful planning. And when things begin to 'go off the rails' blame may creep in, one partner may walk away, or for other reasons it may be too late to easily define the operating ground rules that could more easily have been agreed at the outset.

Having taken account of these issues, it is important to **get started**. Give it a try, but be flexible, and remember the agreed operating protocols.

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<sup>11</sup> Round Tables in Canada (Aug 1998). Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future. [www.mediate.com/articles/consen.cfm](http://www.mediate.com/articles/consen.cfm) Retrieved 2 June 2004.

## Getting the formalities right

Government agencies, who must be accountable for public money, will not fulfil their obligations if they do not have in place formal agreements that define the rules of expenditure and accountability for those funds.

The challenge in forming NRM agreements, is to find a balance between the time and resources needed to make these agreements binding and at the same time meaningful to all parties, and at the same time not so demanding on the parties involved that the time and 'paperwork' involved becomes a deterrent to the agreement.

Kingma & Beynon<sup>12</sup>, in their study of frameworks for effective NRM relationships, provide a useful summary of the different levels of agreement and the characteristics of each.

<b>Formal contracts</b>	<b>Informal contracts</b>	<b>No contracts</b>
A contractual arrangement involving clients or parties to a project agreement	An informal contractual arrangement involving clients or parties to a project agreement	A situation of likely market failure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure of contract</li> <li>▪ Rules for getting agreed action</li> <li>▪ Rights, obligations, responsibilities and privileges in line with agreed belief protocols</li> <li>▪ Issues of compliance and accountability</li> <li>▪ Means for dispute resolution</li> <li>▪ Monitoring and assessment processes in place</li> <li>▪ Policies for NRM (primarily using regulation &amp;/or economic instruments).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure of 'agreement</li> <li>▪ Property rights/ownership/ commonality of interests</li> <li>▪ Rights/obligations/ responsibilities/privileges</li> <li>▪ Rules for agreed action</li> <li>▪ Rather than 'rights' etc., relies more on communication based on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- agreed belief protocols</li> <li>- evidence of success/failure (links to assessment)</li> <li>- issues of compliance and accountability</li> <li>- policies for NRM (primarily using suasive instruments)</li> <li>- means for dispute resolution and to restructure the 'agreement'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Regulations/laws (i.e. legal approaches) are probably best characterised as having one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- access and equity problems</li> <li>- unwillingness to participate</li> <li>- inability to participate, or</li> <li>- lack of awareness.</li> </ul>

From: Kingma & Beynon (2000), p.26

A member of Department of Environment and Heritage staff and some State agency personnel will likely be present during the workshop to discuss these aspects of partnership agreements.

<sup>12</sup> Kingma O. & Beynon N. (2000). It Can't Work Without People: Conceptual frameworks for analyzing effective relationships between players in natural resource management. Report No.CAG2 prepared for Land & Water Australia, Canberra.

## Deciding who takes what role once a partnership is formed

There are a number of factors that influence who takes what roles within a group. Skills, expertise and resources will all have some influence. So too, will the personalities, strengths and weaknesses of the individual participants.

There is a considerable body of research relevant to organisational behaviour that is worth thinking about when deciding who will do what within partnership between groups.

These are perhaps best captured in Belbin's **typology of group roles**<sup>13</sup>. In brief, people generally are predominantly either:

- **doers** - concentrating on actions required and making decisions
- **thinkers** – digesting information and reflecting on ideas before coming to conclusions, or
- **carers** – ensuring tasks are performed correctly and taking care of logistics.

Belbin's expansion of these roles can be summarised as follows:

- **Coordinators**- providing leadership, encouraging contributions from others - guiding direction and ensuring best use of the group's resources
- **Drivers**- Providing leadership by directing and controlling through strong influence –paying attention to goals and priorities
- **Finishers**- paying attention to detail and follow-up, and instilling a sense of urgency –protecting the group against mistakes and omissions
- **Implementers**- The backbone of the team in accomplishing detailed and practical outcomes- turning concepts and plans into practical action
- **Monitor-evaluator**- the 'devil's advocate' – critiquing ideas and suggestions, analyzing problems – helping the group make balanced decisions
- **Originators**- an 'ideas person' – primary source of innovation, looking for new ways around problems
- **Resource investigator**- developing contacts and liaising with the world outside the group – creating and maintaining external contacts useful to the group
- **Supporters**- maintaining group harmony, member satisfaction and team spirit

Few people will fit entirely within one of these roles, but many people have strong characteristics suited to one or another of the roles.

The strength of any group, and especially a group that brings together people from different life experiences and value sets, will benefit from spending some time early in their process, identifying who fills each of these roles, or at least being conscious of the roles and their importance in sustaining the team and its relationships.

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<sup>13</sup> Belbin T.M. (1981). Management teams: Why they succeed or fail. Heinemann, London. Cited in Vecchio R.P., Hearn G. & Southey G (1996). Organisational Behaviour. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Harcourt Brace & Co, Marrickville NSW, pp. 327-328.

## **Identifying a partnership you would like to forge for broad NRM or conservation outcomes**

SPACE FOR NOTE-TAKING

## **Working together: What have we learned?**

SPACE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO JOT DOWN THEIR OWN 'TAKE-HOME MESSAGES' FROM THE SUMMING UP SESSION.