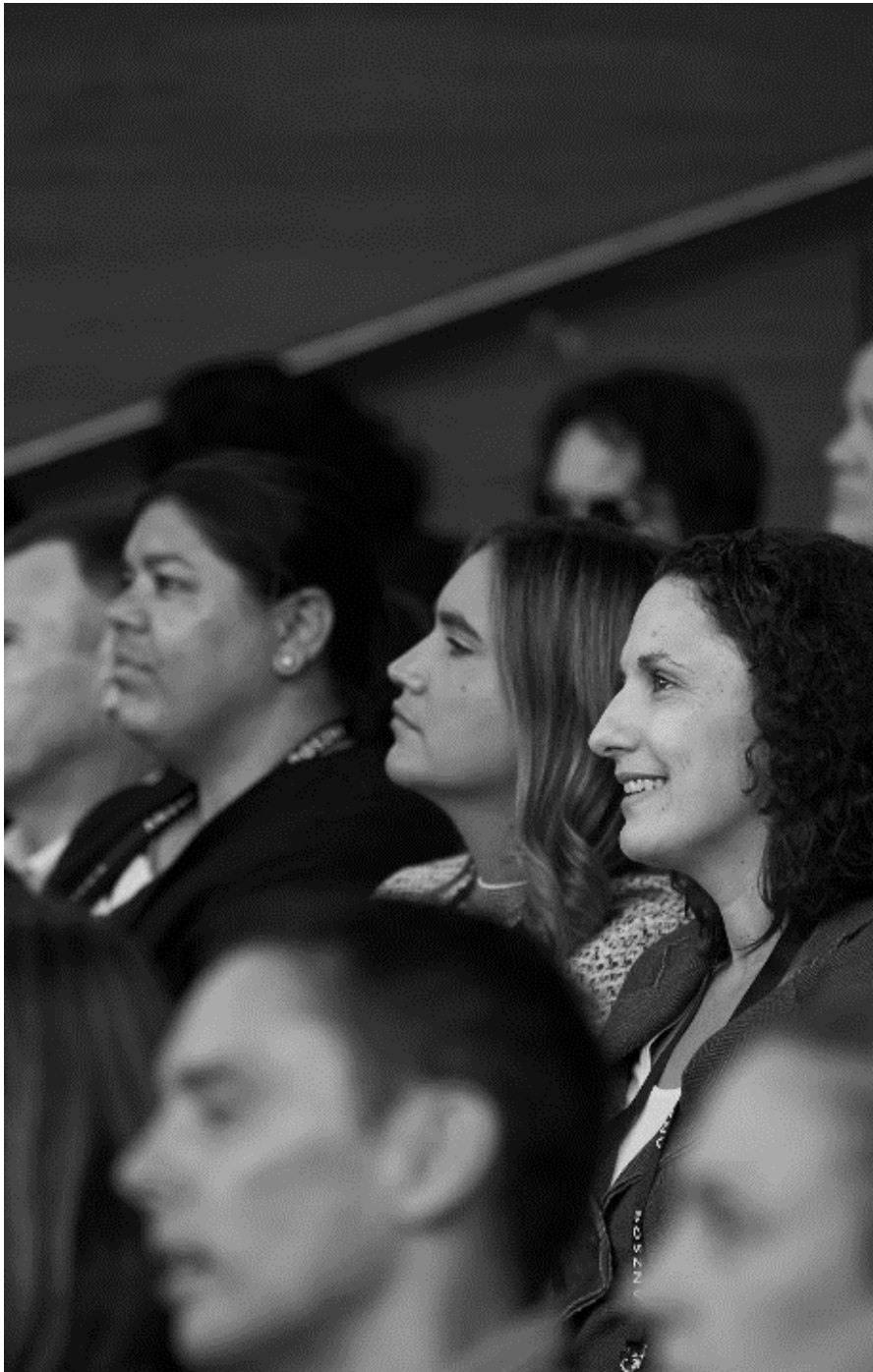# Waterloo

Human Services

Collaborative Group

WATERLOO HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE GROUP

A case study for ANZSOG's project on co-governance and trust in government

12 September 2025
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UNSW SPRC

Acknowledgement of country

We value the cultures, knowledge and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and how this contributes to quality research. We are committed to not perpetuating harms that have been caused by research on and about Indigenous Peoples. We embrace and honour Indigenous knowledges and continue to learn from Indigenous Peoples where we work.

Acknowledgements

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About the Social Policy Research Centre

The Social Policy Research Centre is based in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture at UNSW Sydney. The Social Policy Research Centre makes a positive impact through independent and leading research that tackles critical social issues. For more information see https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/sprc.

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Suggested citation

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ΛNZSOG

ANZSOG

ABBREVIATIONS

ANZSOG	Australian and New Zealand School of Government
CESPHN	Central and Eastern Primary Health Network
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ISV	Inner Sydney Voice
LAHC	NSW Land and Housing Corporation
LCSA	Local Community Services Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAB	Neighbourhood Advisory Board
NCOSS	NSW Council of Social Services
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NGOs	Non-government organisations
SLHD	Sydney Local Health District
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
TOR	Terms of reference
UNSW	University of New South Wales, Sydney
WHSG	Waterloo Human Services Group

1. SUMMARY

This report relates to one of three case studies that form a larger project to identify methods to operationalise and implement co-governance arrangements. This project is being undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), UNSW Sydney, funded by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and the NSW Government (the NSW Cabinet Office, as well as Customer Service, Regional NSW, and the NSW Public Service Commission).

This case study documents the co-governance process for the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group (the Waterloo Group). The Waterloo Group was established in 2021 'to assist with engagement, planning, and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community, in advance of the Waterloo Estate redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the community, specifically those living in public housing' (Waterloo Human Services Action Plan).

1.1. Definitions of co-governance

In this study, co-governance and collaborative governance are interchangeable terms that refer to collective decision-making, formal arrangements, deliberative and constructive processes, involving government and other stakeholders, including community members (Smyth & Bates, 2022). This recognises there is a continuum of co-governance arrangements from informal networks to the creation of formal governance entities.

Collaborative governance involves sharing power between the public sector and civil society, recognising that power comes in various forms (such as decision-making, resources, information and knowledge), and participants recognise the process as collaborative governance. However, **the real power often lies in the decision-making around the rules of engagement** rather than on the substance of the decisions themselves.

A review of academic and practice literature identified **four key stages of co-governance** and their key elements:

- Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial
- Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement
- Implementing collaborative governance
- Identifying and reporting outcomes from collaborative governance. (Smyth & Bates, 2022)

However, the evidence is largely from the perspective of the public sector rather than civil society. There is an opportunity to provide clearer evidence-based guidance to both the public sector and civil society about what collaborative governance is (and is not), where it is most useful, and to provide insights when negotiating collaborative governance arrangements to ensure they address issues of power imbalance (including information, knowledge and skills), resourcing and trust.

1.2 Purpose and approach

There is a growing interest in collaborative governance as it, in theory, involves all stakeholders affected by an issue coming together to engage in creative problem-solving. The purpose of the case studies is to learn from practice, testing and building on what we know from the academic and practice literature, and identify the enablers to co-governance. Ultimately, this will help develop principles that can be applied by different stakeholders to different contexts.

Each case study aims to build on the key stages identified in the literature to identify how to initiate, develop and implement co-governance arrangements from different perspectives. It is not clear whether universal measures or principles of accountability may apply to all co-governance arrangements, or if they need to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

The overall method for the case study has been approved by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Committee Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and ratified by UNSW HREC. Each case study has been codesigned with each co-governance group, and is informed by a combination of data (denoted in italics in the report) from:

- Document analysis
- Observations (for example, meetings of co-governance group or working parties)
- Surveys
- Interviews.

The summary of the research method, research participants, and research instruments are presented in Appendix A and Appendix B.

The remainder of this report summarises each of the key stages of co-governance. For each stage, this starts with a summary of the evidence from the literature. This is followed by observations from the case study.

Note that fieldwork was completed between April 2023 and February 2024. The data in this report therefore reflects the activities of the group undertaken to that date. One of the changes since this study was conducted was that LAHC and DCJ Housing have now combined into Homes NSW.

2. IDENTIFYING WHEN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE MAY BE BENEFICIAL

| Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial | Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement | Implementing collaborative governance | Identifying and reporting outcomes |
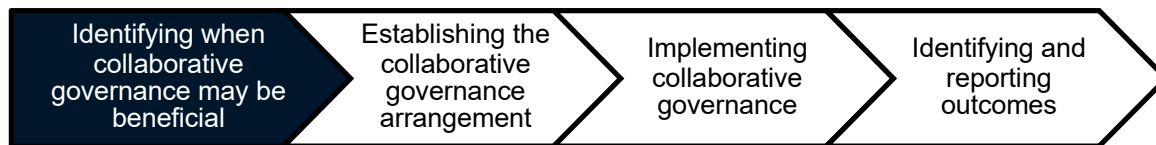
2.1 Evidence from the literature

This first stage of the co-governance process considers when a co-governance arrangement may be beneficial. Factors considered include:

- Who might initiate a co-governance arrangement (who proposed the issue, who were approached at the early stage and who were engaged)

- How was the issue defined/finalised?

- Why a co-governance arrangement might be initiated

  o from an instrumental perspective to address a specific problem and achieve better policy outcomes?

  o from an ethical perspective to ensure communicates have power, resource and information over policy development and implementation

  o or both

- The scope of the co-governance arrangement (aims and objectives, scope)

- What is required to initiate a co-governance arrangement?

  o whether it requires delegated authority or powerful sponsors or champions

  o What was the estimation of resources needed? Was it discussed early on?

- How a co-governance arrangement can be developed.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

2.2 Understanding of co-governance

Participants were first asked to describe their understanding of co-governance and how it was enacted through the group. Understandings were overall consistent with the definition of co-governance used in this study:

- 'coming together and having some **mutually agreed goals**' (*Group 3*)

- 'reaching **consensus on actions and future directions**, and how we move forward to shape the type of environment we are seeking' (*Group 3*)

- 'even though **we have different agendas and come from different organisations, its coming into a space where we agreed to work across** the government and non-government sector' (*Group 3*)

- '**joint planning and decision making** … **participation by the community** is really important – it's the key thing that you need for co-governance' (*Group 3*)

- 'There **needs to be an element of trust** … sometimes you need to put the group together first and trust might come a bit later' (*Group 3*)

- Requires '**mutual respect and willingness to work together**' adding that it was sometimes contingent on personalities, and recognising that while participants may have 'competing priorities, [it was important to have] that willingness to continue to work together' (*Group 3*)

One stakeholder identified that **co-governance came after co-support –** suggesting other co-activities provided the precursor to co-governance. They said, 'part of the thing that this group does well is co-support. So the ideas are out there, the work is happening, and there's support for that work. The next step is co-governance', adding this 'would probably have **equal numbers of staff from every player involved**. That's not the case in this regard' – suggesting there was currently a power imbalance in the group (*Group 2*).

Another participant described how **co-governance appears in different levels and forms** in the arrangement:

So is there a need to map what forms of co-governance exist throughout the collaborative or what the different types of co-governance [are] from the Tri-chairs with the government and non-government, the working groups chaired by government and non-government. You've got collaboration between frontline workers and executing leads or lead projects. You've got co-governance with residents … there's different levels, within the whole plan. (*Group 1*)

Another added co-governance occurs in a **formal** sense and **can also be more organic**:

You've got a governance structure. That mandated collaboration in terms of reference the plan, but then the process I find is quite formative and can take different sort of leads and different pathways depending on sort of what the meetings, the conversations, and the decisions and who's interacting when. (*Group 1*)

Participants acknowledged or referred to a range of co- activities (as defined on the participation spectrum), viewed this arrangement as a distinct activity on that spectrum, but also recognised the importance of other co- activities in supporting this work. That is, **co-governance does not work in isolation**.

2.3   Why was co-governance needed?

The history of the group and why co-governance was needed is well documented. This explains the history of **complex needs** and **disjointed services** in the area. While the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) and NSW DCJ were responsible for housing, other agencies (alongside DCJ) provide other supports – therefore, there was a 'cross responsibility for those issues' identified (*Group 6*). There was recognition that housing agencies would not be able to work alone, and that collaboration, 'in the absence of new funding, [would capitalise] on the existing services and capacities' (*A Framework for Action on Human Services*).

In addition to years of advocacy by community groups, several studies were undertaken (e.g. *Issues Paper*) that involved talking to service users and service providers to identify issues that needed to be resolved – **this provided the evidence base and justification for collaboration** (*Group 3*) and **convinced stakeholders of the need for action** (*Group 6*). Government agencies required evidence from independent studies rather than feedback from front line services and NGOs operating in the area (*Group 6*; see also, Section **Error! Reference source not found.**).

At the time of the **announcement of the redevelopment of Waterloo**, it was argued that redeveloping the built environment was not going to address the broader and more complex problems tenants were experiencing. There were also likely to be further complications for tenants due to potential reductions in social housing, and the relocation of residents either temporarily (during works) or permanently. What was needed was a human services plan to 'run alongside the built environment plan' – and that could not be developed by one organisation in isolation (*Group 3, Participant 10*) given that key stakeholders identified the **response required involvement from multiple stakeholders** (*Group 6*). One stakeholder also highlighted that the need for the collaboration was far

broader than the redevelopment, but the redevelopment provided 'the Trojan horse' that enabled the collaborative arrangement to come about (Group 9).

The Waterloo Group was therefore largely instigated for **instrumental** reasons. Multiple approaches were considered, and collaborative governance was deemed the most appropriate 'co-' arrangement (*Group 6*).

2.4   Who instigated the co-governance arrangement?

Community organisations advocated for government to develop a human services plan for the area and **establish a Collaborative Working Group** to 'have buy-in by **different parts of government to work with each other and NGOs** to tackle problems identified' recognising '**some issues stretch across departments**' (*Background Paper*). The human service system in the area was considered by residents to be 'fragmented, complex and opaque … and unresponsive to the needs of individuals' (*Issues Paper,* 5). The history is well documented by REDWatch; this includes earlier attempts to coordinate human services (which were wound up in 2011) and the steps to initiating the current Group which are not replicated here (see *Background Paper,* REDWatch *Timeline*). During this time there were examples of poor practice of collaboration, including: 'tick box' consultations, part-time engagement (inviting community to every other meeting), no engagement, no leadership, dominant leadership, a lack of co-decision making, and government sanitising reports prior to release *(Participant 1)*.

In August 2017, there was a commitment by government that there would be a 'significant human services stream alongside the masterplan' (*Participant 10*). However, the splitting of the LAHC and DCJ led to a question of who would be responsible for the human services plan.

The instigation of the Group was not straight forward, and stakeholders recognised that those involved had **different perspectives of what led to the group's establishment**, and in particular the tipping point for initiating the group, depending on their length of involvement (*Participant 3*). For example, one said there was a 'shared recognition among stakeholders of a pressing need that required collective action, i.e. a realisation that individual efforts were not sufficient to address the complex issues for Waterloo tenants'; when the group was initiated was 'influenced by changes in the socio-political landscape and a critical mass of stakeholders expressing interest or willingness to collaborate' (*Participant 4*). Another highlighted the role of 'first-class advocacy from the community and recognised NGO networks' while also recognising other things also needed to be in place such as 'relationships with the right people, in the correct position, at the right time, with credibility, shared goals, values and objectives' (*Participant 5*). They added trust and credibility across stakeholders, resourcing of the backbone support, along with a bottom-up approach were key to initiating the group (*Participant 5*). Others focused on the role of one specific agency and its leadership (*Participant 6, 9*), and resources made available in initiating the group (*Participant 6*).

There were bilateral discussions and progress between community groups and DCJ[1], and community groups and SLHD[2], before community organisations were 'advised that it was proposed to establish a Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Working Group at District level within DCJ' in October 2020 – in effect, combining the relationships community groups had established with the two key government stakeholders (*Background Paper*). In parallel, the LAHC had begun some work on human services but realised this was more within the remit of DCJ; the LAHC then funded DCJ staff to develop a human services plan by providing funding for a secretariat (*Participant 2*). The more recent history of the group is documented in the *TOR* which outlines:

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[1] In 2017, then FACS committed to developing and implementing a Waterloo Human Services Framework alongside the Waterloo Masterplan (Action Plan). In 2020, DCJ District committed to: understand support needs for priority housing clients; and address concerns about customer service and meeting support needs. (*Background Paper*)

[2] In 2017, this resulted in agreement between SLHD and community organisations of three priorities: establish a health linker position to support community navigate health system and identify systemic issues; undertake an equity focused health impact assessment on proposed Waterloo redevelopment; and undertake community health forums to listen to community concerns. (*Background Paper*)

- The then Department of Family and Community Services (FACS – now DCJ) commitment to developing and implementing a Waterloo Human Services Framework alongside the Waterloo Masterplan (2017)[3]

- Waterloo Health Forums organised by SLHD to develop strategies to improve health and wellbeing of residents in Waterloo (2017 and 2018)

- Workshops with LAHC, government, NGO service providers and community representatives (2018) to identify current and future needs to support the development of an *Action Plan* – noting community consultations were delayed due to restructure.

- LAHC funded DCJ to deliver the human service plan. 'By only funding a secretariat and not any programmes, the collaborative became about changing business as usual' (*Participant 3*)

- In July 2020, Counterpoint released an issues paper identifying issues in referrals and coordination between service agencies, as well as service gaps (including due to reliance on technology) and poor customer service (*Issues Paper*)

- In December 2020, the Collaboration Group was formed and approved the inclusion of an NGO chair (*Action Log*)

- Workshops were held to define the terms of reference (*TOR*), working practices and priorities (19 and 26 March 2021), and endorsed the setting up of two coordination groups (that starting meeting April 2021). The groups were established in 2021.

As one participant commented, 'the fact that it took ten years to get to this stage was all about that culture and that trust and control' (*Group 1*). While DCJ and SLHD came forward to support the Group, others were observed to have 'stepped back a little' (*Group 3*). Senior staff considering the group to be a high priority was key to government involvement – and participants noted that key senior staff could change, and departments could be reorganised, and therefore this support from the executive may or may not be sustained (*Group 9*).

2.5   What was the proposed scope?

While triggered by the proposed redevelopment of social housing in the area, the scope of the collaboration was identified as the **improvement of human services in the Waterloo precinct** – particularly to support residents during the redevelopment of social housing.

The scope of the group required involvement from all major service providers to identify and address service and systemic problems – not just within but also between service areas. Further, any action needed to be responsive to change in needs over time (*Background Paper*). The community recognised that 'many of the issues being faced in Redfern and Waterloo are issues across the state' (*Background Paper*).

The finer detail of the objectives and priority actions and how they would be managed was workshopped with key stakeholders in the development of the *TOR* for the group (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**).

2.6   Summary of practice: Identifying the need for co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study

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[3] One participant highlighted that the 'splitting of DCJ and LAHC then created a problem as to who was going to do a human services plan, but we had the understanding – we then just had to get it delivered' (*Participant 3*).

Why	How was the need for co-governance identified and defined?	Advocacy by community organisations identified a **clear ['burning'] need** to address complex needs and disjointed services in the Waterloo community associated with the Waterloo redevelopment. The need took time to evidence. The need was 'instrumental' – i.e. to solve a problem.
		Identified **cross-responsibility for issues** faced in the community, and therefore the need to work together. Required stakeholders to be willing to work together – to have **common sentiment and goodwill**.
		Key stakeholders looked at what tools could be used to work together, and co-governance/collaboration was **identified as the optimal solution to focus existing resources.**
Who	Who instigated the co-governance arrangement?	Driven by community organisations who initiated discussions with government stakeholders.
	What was required to initiate the arrangement?	Once DCJ leadership was persuaded of the need for the group, DCJ led its establishment with funding for secretariat from LAHC.
What	What is the aim/scope/ timeframe?	To improve coordination of human services in the Waterloo precinct. While the Group was initiated to support residents during the redevelopment of social housing in the area, the need was there irrespective of the development. However, the redevelopment enabled action.
	Were stakeholders involved in defining the scope?	No set timeframe. This had advantages and disadvantages. While the long-term commitment was welcome, it also created uncertainty.
		The scope, objectives and priority actions were co-designed with key stakeholders (Section **Error! Reference source not found.**)

3. ESTABLISHING THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT

Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial → **Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement** → Implementing collaborative governance → Identifying and reporting outcomes

3.1 Evidence from the literature

The second stage in the co-governance process considers how to establish the co-governance arrangement in terms of institutional design, composition and leadership. Factors considered include:

- The system context and the collaboration dynamics
- Whether/how the group was granted the authority to act, and whether there is senior and middle management support
- Whether there is a formal (visible), credible and independent governance mechanism – with clear and transparent roles, processes, tools and structures around decision-making (how was this mechanism decided, based on what principles and what was the decision-making process?)
- Whether the arrangement includes actors from civil society affected by the initiative in the governance – alongside other organisational actors
- Whether there was an appointment of a clear, independent and skilled leader that instils trust and supports contributions, facilitating collaboration (and how this was achieved)
- The mechanisms needed to enable the group to have the capacity to act, through procedural and institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources
- Whether there is a realistic timeframe to establish and implement the arrangement.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

3.2 Context

As outlined in Section 2.4, the agreement took a long time to establish. Initial conversations occurred between NGOs and DCJ, and DCJ brought in SLHD (#4). The LAHC originally offered to develop a Human Services Plan, but as it did not deliver human services LAHC then offered to fund a Secretariat (1 FTE and 1 Grade 5/6 part time) to support stakeholders to develop and deliver the plan. It took **6-months from in-principle agreement to establish the Group**. This included the LAHC approving the funding of the 'backbone or secretariat staff employed by DCJ', as well as DCJ Deputy Secretary approval and staff recruitment (*Participant 2*).

Community organisations had discussions with DCJ about DCJ elements, and SLHD about health elements, and other organisations about other issues (*Group 3*). As described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, the composition of the group highlights its potential dynamics in terms of size, function and resources. The group comprises large government organisations, service providers, and non-profit organisations; representative and advocacy organisations; and individual community members.

There were differences in how organisations were structured that impacted on how long it took some organisations to seek sign off/approval at different stages. For example, NGOs and smaller organisations often have very flat structures, while many government organisations have tiered structures meaning sign off can take longer (*Group 6*).

> Various members were able to kind of reach decisions quickly where other members had to go up their own hierarchy to get approval and sign-off. And sometimes that dragged out the process. (Group 6)

3.3 Institutional design

Workshops were held to identify priorities and ways of working, which in turn led to the development of an *Action Plan*. The institutional design and governance mechanism was established in the **Terms of Reference** (TOR). The *TOR* were developed out of the initial planning workshops (March 2021). Draft content was circulated to members for comment and approved by the Collaborative Group. This identifies priorities for action, the governance structure, and membership of the collaboration group and two coordination groups (frontline and systems). See **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** below. The process took about 6 months which 'seemed like a long time … looking back now, it was probably a good thing because it set good foundations for ownerships across all the members in terms of the plan' (*Group 6*). **Going through a process was considered important for participants to get ownership** (*Group 6*). For example, some of the priority areas identified through the process were similar to issues previously identified by NGOs (*Issues Paper*) but had greater ownership when identified jointly.

Box 1 Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group has been established to assist with engagement, planning and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community, in advance of the Waterloo Estate redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the Waterloo community, specifically those living in public housing by:

- facilitating engagement, planning and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community
- consulting with resident representative bodies, local residents, service users and key stakeholders
- creating a collaborative effort to effect change in the absence of new funding by capitalising on the existing services and capacities.

The **proposed outcomes** of the Human Services Collaboration Group are as follows:

- better collaboration and coordinated service delivery using existing resources
- better use of and access to services by the community
- improved service culture and provision of customer services
- improved mechanisms for the identification and resolution of local systemic issues impacting service delivery and client experience
- an informed design and development of human services aspect of the built form in the new redevelopment
- a documented action plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals/actions to address local systemic issues.

The Action Plan identifies **six priority areas**:

1. Improved safety
2. Improved health and wellbeing
3. Improved communication and consultation and community participation
4. Improved customer service
5. Improved service integration and service accessibility for all service users
6. Improved responses to systemic issues (and accountability) on an ongoing basis

(source *WHSG Terms of Reference*)

The *TOR* provide the institutional design and shape the actions of the group. One participant said:

> We've all agreed at the start, and we have an action plan, there is that governance around it, there's **documents that shape why we're here** …. (*Group 3*)

The *TOR* are reviewed and adjusted as needed. There are also two parallel processes for single agency issues in DCJ and SLHD (#4).

> There's an **addendum to the plan** that covers, that comes out of discussions between **non-government organisations and DCJ**, and there's another one that's there for those same sort of processes **with Health** and ideally **we'd like to see that with every organisation**, but they're about the bits that just relate to those individual agencies, but they're really important parts to the plan because they cover off areas that have to do with core service providers. (*Group 3*)

There are **no other MoUs or formal contractual arrangements**. Further, the *TOR* are not time limited (*TOR, Group 3*) – the duration of the Group is 'for as long as community engagement is required to address the current and future needs of the Waterloo community, specifically those living in public housing' (*TOR*). The absence of an end date showed a long-term commitment; however, also created uncertainty in that issues may not be resolved in bounded timeframes (*Group 6*).

In addition to the Collaborative Group *TOR*, the coordination groups have their own *TOR* that specify areas of focus, governance, membership and processes.

3.4 Governance structure and leadership

The governance structure comprises the collaborative group and two coordination groups. The **collaborative group** 'is the key governance structure that will approve and oversee all actions in the plan' (*A Framework for Action on Human Services:1*), and resolves issues escalated from coordination groups (*Action register*). The group was set up to 'focus on issues identified as requiring immediate action **including some quick wins**; and address current delivery of human services, and propose **systemic changes**, to improve the effectiveness of service provision to residents' (emphasis added, *A Framework for Action on Human Services:1*). The **coordination groups** report to the main Group meetings and provide an update on progress, share information, seek endorsement of decisions, escalate issues, and identify any gaps in the plan (*TOR*). The coordination groups may also escalate issues to the collaborative group for resolution.

The **Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group** is co-chaired by senior executives from two government organisations and one non-government organisation. The current chairs (up to December 2023) are:

- Briony Foster, Executive District Director, Sydney, South Easter Sydney Districts, Department of Communities and Justice
- Lou-Anne Blunden, Executive Director, Clinical Services Integration and Population Health, Sydney Local Health District
- Michael Shreenan, Executive Officer, Counterpoint.

The group first met in December 2020, and originally met on a monthly basis and since June 2021 meets every 2 months. From January 2024, the group will meet every 3 months.

The *TOR* state:

> The Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group **will report to the Deputy Secretary of DCJ and the Chief Executive of Sydney LHD via the Chairs**. **Members are expected to have decision making delegation within their agencies** so that they can make commitments to actions for their own agencies. If members need to refer matters within their own agencies for decisions, they will be asked to do so within specified timeframes, depending on the urgency of the matter. For **matters that cannot be resolved** by individual agencies or collectively by the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group and require decision making within Government, the Waterloo Human Services **Collaborative Group will refer these to the relevant Departmental Secretaries for consideration**. (*TOR*)

The **Frontline Coordination Group** (outward facing group) is currently chaired by Jacquie Cheetham (Inner City Voice) and Kylie Willis (Housing, DCJ). Membership includes representatives from City of Sydney, Waterloo NAB, Counterpoint, DCJ, SLHD, Mission Australia, South Sydney Police, and Tribal Warrior. One member (NCOSS) had withdrawn. The group first met on 18 May 2021, and met fortnightly (until June) and then monthly. The group oversees several action areas in relation to safety, community engagement, wellbeing checks, community consultation, peer champions, communications, and infrastructure.

The **Service Integration and Systems Coordination Group** (inward facing) is currently chaired by Geoff Turnbull (REDWatch) and Dr Lisa Simone (SLHD). Membership includes representatives from the City of Sydney, REDWatch, SLHD, LAHC, DCJ Housing, Department of Customer Service, CESPHN, DCJ Youth Justice, Inner Sydney Voice, and Counterpoint. The group first met on 24 April 2021 and met fortnightly until April 2022, then monthly. The group oversees action in several areas in relation to improving customer service, case coordination, persistent anti-social behaviour, and referrals.

The **Cross-Chairs Group** is a meeting of the three chairs of the collaborative group and the four chairs of the two coordination groups.

One participant commented, while there were many advantages to having senior staff chair the groups, they were also constrained by their availability.

> The other problem in that is that because we're dealing with senior people, then there their ability to be able to follow some of the minutiae of what's happening or to fulfill a really active role in terms of sort of keeping tabs on what's happening. And then facilitating that process becomes much more difficult because they're basically there with very limited time given the other responsibilities that they have. So I think that's the other bit that sort of gets tricky sometimes. (*Group 3*)

This was mitigated by the Secretariat provided by Robert Bosi at DCJ and a part-time administrative officer.

Other participants were aware of the different agendas' co-chairs had based on the organisations they worked for. These were overcome by developing relationships and ensuring they met outside of meetings:

> For us, it's about sort of **having this relationship where we respect each other's views**. And so we have made a commitment to each other to talk, and **we meet outside the meetings** and the harmony, I suppose, is the fact that **we reach a consensus before we come to the group**. So we understand sort of the shared agenda items and what needs to happen. It's very much directed by the actions of the group, so there is a process. (*Group 1*)

One stakeholder summarised:

> The structure of the collaborative is helpful in achieving the aim to change 'business as usual' to improve services delivery and coordination of services for residents and community members. (*Participant 10*)

3.5   Composition of the group

The membership of the collaborative group is summarised in Box 2 below and includes three distinct groups – government organisations, major service providers (NGOs and government funded organisations), and community members and organisations. Organisational membership and individual representation have changed over the duration of the group's operation; this reflects the resources available and the priorities of different organisations (Group 9).

Box 2 The initial membership of the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group (as detailed in the Terms of Reference)

Government	NGOs	Community members and organisations

NSW Government	Counterpoint	REDWatch
Department of Communities and Justice	Inner Sydney Voice	Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB)
Sydney Local Health District	Mission Australia	Waterloo Redevelopment Subgroup
Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment - NSW Land and Housing Corporation	Aboriginal agency (TBC)	Community members (Tenants)
	Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council	
NSW Police	Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network	
Department of Education		
Department of Customer Service	Redfern Waterloo Affordable Housing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Allies (not incorporated)	
Aboriginal Affairs		
Other	Peak bodies: Tenants Union, LCSA, NCOSS	
City of Sydney Council		
NDIA		

(source: WHSG Terms of Reference; some peaks were involved initially and then did not continue as it was not their core business)

Chairs and Members of the coordination groups were identified through a nomination process, whereby collaboration group members could nominate members for the groups. Members of the coordination groups can include other agency or community members who are not part of the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group.

Due to the size and responsibilities of some government agencies, there are multiple representatives from many of the organisations involved (including DCJ and SLHD) (*Group 3*). However, each organisation has 'one vote' in decision making. One participant flagged concerns about the size of the main group and how to manage a large group:

> When the process was set up, we **argued for a much smaller governance group** than we ended up with … it becomes difficult… because of the way in which government works, health normally needs to be represented by 8 to 10 people because they had different sort of people in that within different silos or clinical cylinders of excellence within health and. And that makes for a very large group of as a governance group. And so **the three chairs become a bit of the gatekeeper into that process**, in the sense of you know, senior person from health, senior person from DCJ, and NGO. I still think that grouping is too big. … (*Group 3*).

One participant commented they were possibly more a support agency than a participant, suggesting there could be different status of members and attendees. The number of participants was sometimes to the group's advantage in making decisions and acting upon them.

> The collaborative involved participants having contact with people at the right level who can respond to issues and enact change. Having multiple decision makers available, allowed issues to be dealt with in a direct way. (*Research Report*: 11)

Several participants highlighted the importance of **ensuring the community's perspective was included** – this appears to be through both representative groups who had a close association with tenants and frontline workers and were very aware of tenant issues (*Participant 10*), as well as individual tenants. One participant highlighted:

> …how important it has been to have that collaboration that is always informed by Community first and that our goals, to improve the access to services for Community and systems for Community, have been front and centre … (*Group 3*)

However, many participants flagged that while **NGOs and community representatives** had an '**equal seat that the table and an equal voice'**, they were **underrepresented** in the Group compared to government staff due to their own **limited capacity and resources** (*Group 3, Group 9*):

> Sometimes it's hard to have an equal voice when you feel so small amongst this big government agency, and it really is **about now having the numbers there and having the capacity to be there** and sometimes things move really quickly. (*Group 3*)

Participants discussed that while resourcing for some groups was an issue, politics also influenced whether or not an organisation participated without additional resources (*Group 6*).

> I think there's definite attitudes within the NGO sector. Some of them will genuinely be a resource issue. Others will be a politically driven motivation, that if they're not funded to do it, 'we're not doing it'. Others will be mission driven and do it. They can be flexible in their approach. (NGO member)

Having a mix of staff involved (in terms of level of staff) reduced power imbalances (power is discussed more specifically in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**). As one participant said:

> I think there's been a **flattening of power** in this project, you know, an equalizing of power. We've got some very high-level staff, mixing with others... I think that there's lots of potential there. (*Group 2*)

While participants mentioned both power imbalances and a flattening of power, there was no way to measure as such whether power was equal. As discussed in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, every effort is made to obtain input and support of all members; further, other organisations and individuals are engaged with outside of, or invited into the group, to ensure their perspectives are included (*Group 6*). As with any group, as one participant said:

> It's not just about actual power and decision-making, it's about the art of influence and persuasion. (*Group 6*).

Finally, participants in an evaluation of the Group highlighted that membership and key decision makers of the Group should be continually reviewed to ensure active participation (Research Report). This review process was observed during meetings of the different groups.

3.6   Resourcing

The only additional resourcing available to the Group is the funding of the Secretariat – funded by LAHC and delivered by DCJ staff. This was intentional – attendance and delivery of actions is expected to be met from existing resources.

> It wasn't about funding any change that then meant that it became changing business as usual. It had to be something that was actually done in the normal course of us doing whatever it is that we do. … Then you're more realistic because of people's limitation on times in terms of how long that process is going to take. But you're also talking about **changes that are likely to be sustainable**, because they're going to **keep going if the money stops**. So I think that that was an important part of the discussion. (*Group 3*)

This created barriers for some organisations to participate in the group or its actions (*Group 1, Group 2, Group 9*).

> So **who does have funding to sit around the table? And who doesn't?** (*Group 1*)

> I know that one of the issues for some organisations, including some that aren't involved, is that the **there's no additional funding for this work**, particularly for the NGOs, I guess, that's a bit of an issue because the NGOs tend to be surviving on less anyway, and less and less staff and multitasking …. So I think that's one of the challenges. And maybe **in terms of power**, that's a bit of an issue with the with the NGOs, and that's certainly why **some of them have said they can't come they don't have the capacity to be involved on top of their work**. But I think that we on the other hand, that everybody does an amazing job by saying okay, this can be part of my work. And you know, fit it in. (*Group 2*)

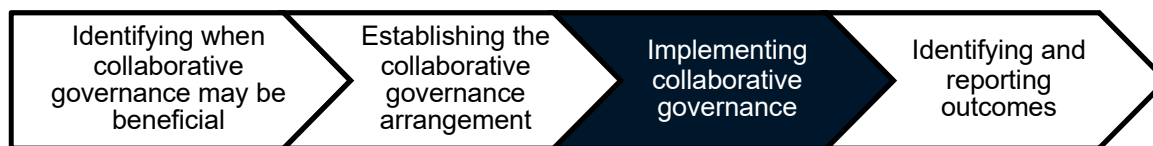This also identifies **systemic issues** about the **way advocacy organisations are funded** and supported.

Finally, one stakeholder highlighted that without additional resourcing, organisations needed to work within existing resources to change business as usual (*Group 9*).

3.7 Summary of practice: Establishing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo case study
Context (including dynamics)	Is the system and context defined? Are collaboration dynamics understood?	There is a long history of the community wanting action. The power to act has rested with government. Collaboration dynamics are driven by role, size and resources of organisations – as well as their legacy (history of involvement in the initiative). Organisations vary in their structure and levels of hierarchy – NGOs are often flat structures, while government often have highly tiered structures meaning that sign-off through organisations can take a long time.
Institutional design	What formal arrangement is needed? What provides the group the authority to act? Does it have senior and middle management support? Is there sufficient time to establish the arrangement?	The formal arrangement is the *TOR*. This establishes 6 priorities, governance arrangements (one collaborative group and two coordination groups overseeing delivery of actions), and membership. Supported by two addendums. The *TOR* is not time limited – duration for as long as required. There is commitment by senior staff to the group. This could be challenged due to restructures and staff changes. The *TOR* requires members to have the authority to make decisions (within their remit) – with a pathway identified for unresolved issues – and has support from across participating organisations. Decision making is by consensus with one vote per organisation. Each organisation may have its own mechanism to authorise their participation. In addition to the *TOR*, the group is supported by formal and informal arrangements, and ongoing work. The institutional arrangement took at least 6 months to establish. While the process took time, going through the process was an important part of building trust that went on to underpin the work of the group.
Governance and leadership	Is leadership clearly defined? How was leadership established? Are the roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making documented? How do chairs support contributions and enable collaboration?	The main group is led by 3 co-chairs (senior staff from DCJ, SLHD and an NGO). The two coordination groups are led by 2 co-chairs (one government, one NGO/community group representative). The leadership of the groups was determined by a nomination process (therefore open to anyone) – and was potentially affected by the resources available to participate. The mix of government and non-government chairs may add credibility to the arrangement. The roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making is well-documented, with actions recorded and tracked by the secretariat. Chairs manage agendas, support contributions from all participants, and facilitate collaboration.
Composition	Is membership representative? Does membership include civil society? Is power distributed equally?	Membership comprises government, NGOs, and community representatives (representative organisations and individuals). Government appears overrepresented in terms of individuals attending meetings; community representatives appear underrepresented. This was attributed to resourcing, capacity, workloads, and politics – and the

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo case study
		willingness of organisations to engage irrespective of resources available.
		Membership does include civil society.
		It is difficult to assess whether power is distributed equally. The process encourages formal equality in power; however, the different representation and capacities of different stakeholders may imply and/or result in unequal power.
Resourcing	Is the group able to act through institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources?	Additional resourcing (provided by LAHC) enables the group to be supported by a secretariat. Otherwise, organisations draw from existing organisational resources and there were examples of organisations funding projects to support the arrangement (evaluation).
		Members are not paid to attend – there was no expectation there would be additional resources. There is no additional project financing to meet actions – all are within scope of the Group. This ensures group is sustainable (not dependent on funding); however, this means that some groups are underrepresented as they do not have the resources to attend.

4. IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial	Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement	Implementing collaborative governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes

4.1   Evidence from the literature

The third stage in the co-governance process considers the implementation of the co-governance arrangement at both the strategic and operational level to ensure it is implemented and effective. Factors considered at the strategic level include:

- Ensuring there is a joint understanding and commitment to the goals and scope (including accountability and desired outcomes)

- Developing mutual understanding, respect and trust (accepting trust may vary)

- Identifying strategies to build trust, including by learning, sharing information and resources, and being transparent

- Ensuring there is a joint understanding of commonalities and differences between collaborators, including different organisational cultures

- Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of arrangement and adapting to changes in the operating environment to sustain the arrangement over the long-term

- Supporting the arrangement to deliver and sustain collective action.

At the operational level (in terms of diagnosis, design, implementation and assessment), this involves:

- Developing a theory of change. This involves a process of discovery, definition, deliberation and determination – leading to a shared theory of change/action or strategy (including measures of success) – fed by, and leading to, trust, understanding, legitimacy and commitment

- Having repeated, face-to-face dialogue and communication, leading to trust-building, commitment to process, and a shared understanding

- Having support from an intermediary (backbone support organisation), which is able to coordinate reinforcing activities across organisations

- Developing additional processes, such as co-creation, to drive innovative outcomes

- Establishing an accountable evaluation system that tracks inputs, processes and outcomes, and provides assurance back to bureaucracies

- Communicating accomplishments as early as possible.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

4.2   Strategic implementation

4.2.1 Agreed objectives, priorities and timeframe

The collaborative was established in 2021. The group developed the terms of reference including the objectives, anticipated outcomes, and six priority action areas (see Workshops were held to identify priorities and ways of

working, which in turn led to the development of an *Action Plan*. The institutional design and governance mechanism was established in the **Terms of Reference** (TOR). The *TOR* were developed out of the initial planning workshops (March 2021). Draft content was circulated to members for comment and approved by the Collaborative Group. This identifies priorities for action, the governance structure, and membership of the collaboration group and two coordination groups (frontline and systems). See **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** below. The process took about 6 months which 'seemed like a long time … looking back now, it was probably a good thing because it set good foundations for ownerships across all the members in terms of the plan' (*Group 6*). **Going through a process was considered important for participants to get ownership** (*Group 6*). For example, some of the priority areas identified through the process were similar to issues previously identified by NGOs (*Issues Paper*) but had greater ownership when identified jointly.

Box 1 Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group Terms of Reference

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Purpose

The Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group has been established to assist with engagement, planning and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community, in advance of the Waterloo Estate redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the Waterloo community, specifically those living in public housing by:

- facilitating engagement, planning and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community
- consulting with resident representative bodies, local residents, service users and key stakeholders
- creating a collaborative effort to effect change in the absence of new funding by capitalising on the existing services and capacities.

The **proposed outcomes** of the Human Services Collaboration Group are as follows:

- better collaboration and coordinated service delivery using existing resources
- better use of and access to services by the community
- improved service culture and provision of customer services
- improved mechanisms for the identification and resolution of local systemic issues impacting service delivery and client experience
- an informed design and development of human services aspect of the built form in the new redevelopment
- a documented action plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals/actions to address local systemic issues.

The Action Plan identifies **six priority areas**:

7. Improved safety
8. Improved health and wellbeing
9. Improved communication and consultation and community participation
10. Improved customer service
11. Improved service integration and service accessibility for all service users
12. Improved responses to systemic issues (and accountability) on an ongoing basis

(source *WHSG Terms of Reference*)

The *TOR* provide the institutional design and shape the actions of the group. One participant said:

> We've all agreed at the start, and we have an action plan, there is that governance around it, there's **documents that shape why we're here** …. (*Group 3*)

The *TOR* are reviewed and adjusted as needed. There are also two parallel processes for single agency issues in DCJ and SLHD (#4).

> There's an **addendum to the plan** that covers, that comes out of discussions between **non-government organisations and DCJ**, and there's another one that's there for those same sort of processes **with Health** and ideally **we'd like to see that with every organisation**, but they're about the bits that just relate to those individual agencies, but they're really important parts to the plan because they cover off areas that have to do with core service providers. (*Group 3*)

There are **no other MoUs or formal contractual arrangements**. Further, the *TOR* are not time limited (*TOR, Group 3*) – the duration of the Group is 'for as long as community engagement is required to address the current and future needs of the Waterloo community, specifically those living in public housing' (*TOR*). The absence of an end date showed a long-term commitment; however, also created uncertainty in that issues may not be resolved in bounded timeframes (*Group 6*).

In addition to the Collaborative Group *TOR*, the coordination groups have their own *TOR* that specify areas of focus, governance, membership and processes.

). Against each of the six priority areas identified in the *TOR*, the **Waterloo Human Services *Action Plan*** identifies **key actions** (informed by workshops, consultations and previous studies), the **lead organisation** for the action, and the coordination **group responsible for monitoring** the implementation of the action (frontline or systems). The Implementation Plan prioritises actions into **'start now', 'start next', and 'start later'** and identifies other stakeholders involved.

The functioning of both groups has been **periodically reviewed to reflect their stages of development and operations** (both reducing their frequency of meetings once well-established). Coordination groups initially met fortnightly and now meet monthly, and the collaboration group initially met monthly, then every 2 months, and from 2024 every 3 months. Further, the Frontline Group, after surveying members, recently changed how it meets (on a trial basis) – with alternate meetings of the whole group providing an opportunity for verbal updates, and written updates provided in the alternate month supported by meetings between the chairs and action leads as needed (at the scheduled time) (*Group 2*). This is intended to reduce burden on members in terms of both attendance and reporting, and reflects the monitoring and supporting role of the group (*Group 2*). Additional meetings take place between key stakeholders in relation to implementing specific actions.

The **cross-chairs group** provides a mechanism to share information between groups, and a way to **escalate issues or seek advice**:

> …where we can talk things through with them before they go to the wider collaborative, which is a huge group. … if you run into a roadblock at the level of the coordination group and you need some guidance and we've had to do this a couple of times, you can go up to the chairs and say to the chairs, 'where do we go with this and get some direction?' … You can then come back and work within that context. (*Group 3*)

The **open-ended timeframe of the collaboration was seen as a key strength** (*Group 3*). This was critical given the time it took to establish the group and to complete actions (one example given was that it had taken 12 months to arrive at a customer service toolkit, *Group 3*).

A recent evaluation found the Group 'is effective: there is a **shared sense of purpose** to working together; the [Group] is distinct; **participation holds potential benefits for individual members/organisations**; and participants **understand the value of their involvement** in the [Group]' (*Evaluation Report*: 20). This was supported by participants in this study, highlighting the group was **solutions focused**.

> Also, what's been really I guess refreshing about this process – it was everyone coming quite solutions focused. We all know that we're responsible for some pretty complex, and let's face it, inaccessible

systems. But there's been a lot of goodwill around the table to actually unpack what that looks like and look at it from a Community perspective rather than asking, well, we've got this process. (*Group 3*)

Actions provide an opportunity for different agencies to work together on projects and in so doing develop further understanding and trust.

ADD note about different timeframes of actions of different groups and the complexity of different actions. Some actions require systemic decision making and significant change by multiple organisations. Systemic change is expected to be a longer process.

4.2.2 Understanding commonalities and differences

There was a **willingness to learn from each other and understand different perspectives and how different concepts were understood differently by different stakeholders**. There were examples of the group discussing terms or issues that meant different things to different stakeholders; for example, 'antisocial behaviour' from the perspective of NSW Police compared to other stakeholders. As one stakeholder said:

> I can use exactly the same words to describe exactly the same issue, and then realize there's ten **people in the room** in the virtual room that actually **have a different perspective** on those words and those issues. I think we've unpacked antisocial behaviour and the subjectivity of it 1000 times in this group, but I think we actually need to, because what we're trying to address is complex. So I think **it has really strengthened the collaboration, strengthened the sense of trust** really and I guess **galvanized the fact that we are all working towards improved health and safety and wellbeing** for our Community and that's why we all exist. (*Group 3*)

Other stakeholders also commented that the groups provided an **opportunity to understand how different organisations worked**.

Participants recognised the very different cultures of the different organisations involved. This related different organisational approaches to **privacy and information sharing** (raised in relation to having common intake forms and consent to share information, Group 4), to **risk** (*Group 6*), and more broadly with regard to **bureaucracy and collaboration** (where sometimes it was easier to work with external stakeholders than achieve things internally, Participant 7). This reflects the different cultures of both organisations and professions within organisations (Keeley et al., 2015), and recognised whatever the cultures of individual teams or professionals, the organisational culture from the top of the organisation (the collective culture) often impacted operations (*Group 6*). It was also recognised NGOs were potentially more agile than government organisations in achieving outcomes (*Group 1*).

Identifying and understanding the different organisational requirements can help identify what can be achieved and what cannot.

There were also examples of the lack of flexibility of individuals within organisations to reallocate their resources (time and or budgets) to actions from the group. This was paramount to the group's success given the absence of any additional resources to deliver the plan. One participant provided the following insight.

> It's a siloed issue… People need to be given flexibility within their roles to step outside, even if it's just 10 per cent of their work, we want all of you to have 10 per cent of your work be with others to build what you do now in a better way. (*Participant 7*)

This point recognises the need to focus on the broader goals of public service and specific agencies, and the need for some flexibility to achieve those goals.

4.2.3 Responsive and sustainable

The groups demonstrated they were responsive to changes in the context and were sustainable in several ways:

- The group responded to the announcement in 2023 concerning the redevelopment of Waterloo by inviting those involved to present to the Group about the process.

- The groups reviewed their membership, recognised some organisations were not attending, and considered how to potentially re-engage them or engage others.

- The groups also demonstrated how they reviewed their ways of working cognisant of the resources required for participants to attend, the change in workload over time, and what systems worked best for participants to track outcomes.

- The group made a choice to rely on existing resources to function to ensure the group is sustainable long-term (i.e. the group is not threatened by the withdrawal of funding).

4.3 Operational implementation

4.3.1 Developing a theory of change

The original *TOR* for the group established the objectives and priority action areas. However, while originally an objective of the March 2021 workshops, it was not until the evaluation of the Group that a program logic (theory of change) was developed through a smaller working group facilitated by the evaluation team. The program logic has not been returned to since it was developed (*Group 6*).

4.3.2 Continual engagement

The *TOR* established the role and responsibilities of members (**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**) which established the 'rules of engagement'. The ways of working together, as well as action priorities, were co-designed as part of a workshop in March 2021.

> So from the beginning we had a proposal for a framework instruction and how we would do the business in this group. And everybody had a chance to review that and agreed on the way that that would work. (*Group 2*)

Box 3 Roles and responsibilities of members

Members will:

- commit to regular and consistent attendance and actively participate in meetings
- provide feedback both to and from the group and feedback to their own agencies or representative groups
- raise issues and risks that the community or their agency faces that requires a collaborative approach to mitigation
- work in partnership to problem solve and implement agreed actions to mitigate risks within agreed timeframes
- provide advice on key risks and issues that need escalating for government decision making
- work together to agree on key messages to be disseminated to the broader community.

Members will work within the following principles:

- The Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group will be action and solution focused.
- Members will operate with respect and trust, acknowledging the different challenges that each member faces within their own context.
- The Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group will draw on all existing service sector resources including mainstream, community and specialist services.
- Members will work together through working groups to develop innovative solutions noting there is no new funding.

> - Members will work together through collaborative, joint problem-solving approaches to address issues identified.
> - Members will maintain confidentiality as specified on issues raised in meetings.
>
> Source: Terms of Reference:3.

The *TOR*, including the roles and responsibilities of members, provided a clear framework for the group to operate within.

> So I think that the strength has been the identification of the objectives, the agreement on working on that collaboration and shared goals. The ability in the space to unpack them, and the ability to change direction when we've needed to and do that as a collective. And that's pretty much the strength that I've witnessed. (*Group 3*)

In practice, the groups did not operate in isolation – members also spoke outside of the groups. As one participant said:

> [the] documents shape why we're here … but it's the practice really … the relationships, how we form those relationships, **how we talk outside of the meeting as well**, not just within a monthly meeting, how we meet with each other outside of the meetings … **the *TOR* sets the governance and who comes together and why**, but **then to actually make it happen is a different story**. (*Group 3*)

Further, while there was a formal process, how it was implemented varied.

> So we have a plan that's agreed to mandated collaboration, but then how it gets implemented is very much up to the people that are driving it. (*Group 1*)

Members of groups were also required to consult internally within their organisations in relation to specific actions – for example, to provide feedback on the draft Action Plan (*Action Register*).

4.3.3 Decision making

One participant described the decision-making process in detail, from the work done outside of meetings to the discussion and voting during meetings – and particularly, the importance of the discussion:

> I think a lot of the times there's a lot of **discussion**, there's forming of **working groups**. There's doing a deep dive into issues. There's using the hand function on the Teams menu, you know in regards to kind of asking for the **majority vote** and how people think. So it is probably a bit old fashioned, but it's really about inviting people to talk about their viewpoint. And I suppose it's about **unpacking issues** too, so it's about **asking for different viewpoints**, **not making an assumption that there's an understanding** … it's really about saying what people think and having that **open dialogue**, being **transparent**, having the **minutes and the action log** as well to kind of guide the discussion too. So that sort of the **documentation helps to have the history of the discussion and the narration and where we move forward**. But it's also about **collaboration**. (*Group 3*)

Another participant added:

> … there are **decisions that are formal decisions to approve things**. So for example, there are formal processes for approval most of the time, it's done on a **consensus basis**. So it's, you know, what do you reckon? Yes, thumbs down No. But there are formal approval processes as well, so that we've got both the kind of **soft and the hard approval processes and that decision making**. … So it's not it's not black and white. I think there are still areas where **we still have discussion about exactly what approval is required for what**. (*Group 2*)

One participant also identified room for improvement:

> I think decision-making has been consensus. I think one of the things we need to improve is about being clear on delegations, so there's a bit of this grey area about what the tri-chairs can decide and what the

collaborative needs to decide. And so far this is based on our gut feeling … and there's a long gap and in between meetings if you have to take something to the collaborative … so I think that needs to be documented. (*Group 6*)

While the process of decision-making was understood, one participant in the Research study highlighted:

While representatives may attend, and agree to actions, **there was a lack of clarity about the level of managerial support that could be provided by organisations in the WHSCG** [Waterloo Group].

The barriers to change are not getting the right management support from senior officers … **Senior management needs to be clear about what it's going to provide support for in relation to these items, and it's not clear**. (WHSCG member, IP2)

Organisations need to be authorized and committed to implementing the plan. Sometimes the person representing an organisation is not the right person to talk about a particular issue. (*HSCG Qual Report draft*:15)

Finally, one participant recognised that while decisions were made in the group, some organisations then needed to seek further permission internally.

So the collaborative group, I think **provides that authorizing environment, meaning permission to do stuff; now some of us in organisations then require further permission.** So it's, again, not straightforward. (*Group 2*)

As one participant clarified, 'during some meetings, the chairs, while ensuring that the meeting ended on time, had to reduce the time allocated to other agenda items' (Group 9).

4.3.4 Understanding organisational differences

Participants in the group recognised the **different cultures** in the different stakeholder organisations, and between the **size** of organisations and their **footprint/scale** of operation and decision-making – and how that 'affects decision making or implementation' (*Group 1*). Participants also recognised the need to build greater understanding of how different organisations worked and the resources they had (or did not have) at their disposal.

I've gotten different insights into how my colleagues work and then also to just acknowledging the **different resources required to even participate in this process**. So who's been able to participate at different times and how that that influences how we approach things. (*Group 3*)

While organisations worked with the same community, they each had specific roles (*Group 3*). Recognising this difference, participants were able to share the different insights they had with the community they worked with.

Understanding organisational differences also included how different organisations understood complex issues. As one participant said:

The strength of this process is that **openness** and talking about where we fall short … openness in unpacking some really tricky issues, and having the patience to discuss similar themes over and over again, understanding that they are really complex issues and that's why they deserve that kind of space. We don't normally get that opportunity for a reflective practice. (*Group 3*)

Working together in this collaborative governance process provided insights about other organisations but also took time. This process started again when new members joined the group.

4.3.5 Representation and participation of organisations

Organisations and individuals could participate in the Waterloo Group in several ways. Either through direct membership and participation of the main group or coordination groups, through ad hoc attendance of one of the groups, or through direct engagement with one of the groups outside of the main meetings. The latter two

approaches had been used to actively engage community organisations, particularly during the strategic planning processes (Group 6).

In terms of formal participation as members of one of the groups, participants in this study were aware of the resources required to participate in the process, and that this may exclude 'already stretched' NGOs from participating (*Participant 10*). One said:

> I think it is really difficult right now, a lot of **organisations are understaffed**. I mean, there's this whole **workforce crisis** that we're going through as well as the **cost-of-living crisis**. (*Group 2*)

Another added:

> If there was even a small amount of funding or other assistance that could be given to organisations it would assist. (*Participant 10*).

Some types of organisations were considered to be under-represented as a result. One participant flagged that NGO representation was quite small from the local level, adding 'peaks are quite high, but peaks aren't really that connected at a local level' (*Group 1*). Participants identified several factors contributing to this under-representation:

> There are a lot of NGOs that feel as though they don't get resourced sufficiently to do what they're doing. And so we've had some NGO's that said 'no, we're not going to be involved. We're not being paid to be involved. We're not getting paid enough to do what was supposed to be doing, so we're not going to be at the table' and that's cut out some organisations. (*Group 3*)

> …because of the history over the years [some organisations] have said, 'we're not getting involved because we've seen this too many times and doesn't go anywhere', that it 'doesn't benefit us', or 'we don't have the resources to participate' … I still don't know what's the best approach to be honest. (*Group 1*)

Particular cohorts were considered to be underrepresented – particularly Aboriginal communities and different cultural groups (*Group 2*) – see also, Section **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Many NGOs experienced the same resource constraints (see also Section **Error! Reference source not found.**). Those organisations that were able to participate therefore did so with resource constraints:

> [They] then have to juggle how they then use their time, because they're under the same sort of pressures as the NGOs that say no ... And that means that their ability to be able to put as much effort into that also becomes a bit problematic. (*Group 3*)

Some participants conscientiously tried to bring others up to speed who were not able to attend meetings, but there was not always capacity or opportunity to do so (*Group 3*). The chair of a group also sought individual input from a member of the group outside of meetings if required (*Group 3*).

> Obviously when we set up a **schedule of meetings, it doesn't work for everyone**. … you know something could happen that day where you have to focus on what you need to deliver that day for the service that you're a part of. So this works more for bureaucrats, not necessarily NGOs. (*Group 3*)

Participants were also working within **their own internal layers of governance**, and recognised the work of the collaborative could be undone:

> There's **another layer of governance** that sets over each of those [representatives]. So, I'm accountable to a board of management and accountable to funders and accountable to residents. [We are] responsible to another director who isn't accountable, another CEO which affects your participation or how you participate one way or another as well. … a **collaborative can decide as much as it likes**, but ministers and deputy secretaries and CEO's. And so **having that buy in from as high up as you can get** is really important … there is times where that's caused the problems. (*Group 1*)

Participants also highlighted the **strength of individual leadership** in the process. While this made the collaboration successful now, they were aware of the potential impacts a change in personnel could have and therefore the **importance of embedding collaboration as 'normal practic**e rather than a goodwill gesture from leaders that get on with each other' (*Group 1*).

As noted in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.** above, power distributions and the decision-making process is a factor of not just who is present, but also the facilitation process and can, like any process, be dominated by stronger personalities (*Group 6*). However, it was evident that participation from all members was encouraged not just at the meetings, but adjacent to the meetings if necessary (*Group 6*). Further, other organisations were also engaged either by invitation to the group or through work outside of the group (*Group 6*).

4.3.6 Representation and engagement with the community

Critical to the group was both representation and engagement with the community, either through the groups or through the actions of the groups. As highlighted in the research report:

> …It's not worth anything unless it is community led – we just need to strengthen that on our agenda of how do we reconnect, and how do we increase the communication between this process and community experiences? (WHSCG member, IP3) …

> We've got two community reps or one, but it doesn't feel like we're still talking to community about it. At all. (Chair, FGP1)

> A key barrier to implementing change were the current communication processes to the community. (Research Report: 16)

One participant identified potential ways to encourage other organisations to engage in the group. They explained:

> The focus when contacting other organisations to be involved would be most effective if it is regarding:

> - The actions and work that is being undertaken – i.e. systems change / activities planned – not on the Collaborative per-se.

> - Assure other organisations that they are not expected to undertake any additional reporting or compliance tasks / meetings.

> - Focus on why their organisation would be so useful and how important they are to achieving real collaborative work and improved outcomes for residents / community members.

> - Inform organisations of the activities planned.

> - Perhaps review and set up a better induction / buddy system for new members (*Participant 10*).

This also highlights the need to support and train members of the group – particularly anyone new joining the group (*Participant 10*).

Most frontline government participants had a long experience of working with the local community. As one participant said:

> When we talk about communities, we actually know people's names, we know their faces, we know where they live. **We actually know our communities quite well and if something is not sitting right, we know exactly how to go out and actually test it with community**. … for our team **we try to amplify the voice of community and experiences.** (*Group 3*)

They added it was **important to consider things from a community (rather than government or service) perspective** (*Group 3*). One participant said their involvement with the group was in raising tenants' concerns and any trends, and providing information back to tenants; however, while this sometimes happened outside of the collaboration it was due to networking opportunities created by the collaboration (*Participant 8*).

It was unclear how community members (other than those who attended the Groups) influenced the Group – or how data on need and unmet need was used to inform future actions. This was clarified by one community stakeholder who actively worked with tenants to seek input and provide feedback and highlighted the various points where the group 'checked back with the community' (*Group 9*); 'we set up sessions to meet with tenants and talk to tenants about what their issues were … you've also got the survey in that various points there's been checking back with the community' (*Group 9*). Documents suggest user experience was largely captured by NGOs and issues reported were consistent (Workshop notes); however, this reflects the experiences of people who have contact services rather than those who have not. How and to what extent members of the group engage with the Waterloo community in terms of sharing information from the group and bringing community input and views into the group is up to the members.

4.3.7 Operational support and evaluation

The role of and delivery of the Secretariat function was essential to the functioning of the groups (*Research Report, Participant 10*). This dedicated secretariat support 'allows the executive to focus on governance and decision-making and not get caught up in trying to manage the process' (*Group 9*). Therefore, there is a risk that the group will not function were these resources to be withdrawn; as one stakeholder said, 'if that was to disappear, then that will have some implications given the resources of other players' (*Group 9*). Participants in the research study flagged that the role should 'probably be impartial' particularly as the Secretariat has the potential to filter information flow (*Research Report*). That said, being hosted by DCJ provided access to broader resources and access to one of the Chairs.

While the secretariat of the group is resourced, there are no additional resources attached to the Waterloo Group. The secretariat supported all meetings and documented plans, actions, and meetings and had access to all group chairs.
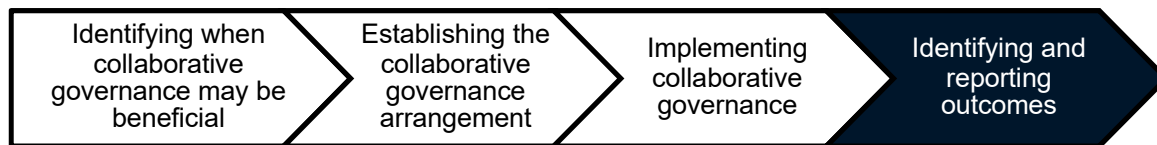
Evaluation and assurance were ongoing, both overall (as reported in the Research Report) and through each of the coordination groups – this is important given the 'organisations have different interests, levels of power, skills, norms and beliefs' (*Research Report*: 19). The evaluation of the *Action Plan* being undertaken separately by UNSW identified the need to continue to review the *TOR*, membership, community engagement, escalation processes, and reporting of processes – particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic as priorities and ways of working may have changed.

4.4 Summary of practice: Implementing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
Strategic implementation	What are the agreed objectives, priorities, timeframe? Is there a joint understanding of and commitment to the objectives? What are the mechanisms to develop understanding, respect and trust, including transparency, sharing information and resources?	TOR establish the six action areas. The *Action Plan* identifies actions for each action area and includes which group will monitor the delivery of that action, who will lead the action, and who else will be involved. There is no timeline for the overall group. Actions are prioritised in terms of 'now', 'next' and 'later'. There is joint understanding and commitment by attendees towards common goals. The action areas and actions were informed by various studies, consultations with community, and workshops with members. Actions provide opportunities for different agencies to work together, and

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
		further develop understanding and trust. Delivery of actions also increases trust with others.
	Is there understanding of the commonalities and differences between collaborators, including cultural?	Examples of group discussing terms or issues that mean different things to different stakeholders – such as anti-social behaviour. Willingness to learn from each other and understand differences in perspectives, ways of working, and resources.
	Is the group responsive to change in need? Is the group sustainable long-term?	The group appears responsive to changes in the context. Following recent announcement regarding the redevelopment of Waterloo, those involved were invited to present to the Group. Group has made decisions, such as concerning resourcing, to enable it to be sustainable long-term.
Operational implementation	Is there a program logic?	Developed as part of a recent evaluation (finalised in 2022).
	Is there an ongoing engagement process? Are organisational differences understood?	Regular meetings, where issues are discussed openly and transparently. Key points are noted and actions are recorded in an ongoing action log. Members acknowledged the different resources and perspectives of different organisations. The group recognised different approaches to privacy and information sharing, as well as bureaucracy and collaboration, by different organisations. This limited the sharing of data and shaped what outcomes could be achieved.
	How are decisions made? How is collective action facilitated?	Discussion is encouraged to ensure decisions are informed. Decisions are then reached by consensus. Each group has one vote. There are different types of decisions – voting during meetings (soft decisions), and more formal decisions (hard decisions). Participants are working to a common purpose. Some actions are business as usual – therefore, not necessarily collective action but working towards a common agenda. Some group decisions then required further approval within organisations.
	Are stakeholders represented?	Some stakeholders are not involved due to resource constraints. Others are limited in their participation. Community is represented directly and through community groups. While the groups work actively to fill gaps in membership or bring others along outside of meetings, some groups are still underrepresented.
	Are stakeholders given the opportunity to engage?	The agenda items of the main group were observed not to run to time – discussion was often dominated by government representatives (given their over representation). However, Chairs prompted non-government representatives to participate and they are heard.
Operational support	What operational support is required?	A secretariat (one full time, one part-time staff member) provides support for all groups and allows the executive to function on the group and decision-making rather than process. Resourcing was provided by LAHC. It was unclear whether the group could be sustained without these resources.

5. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING OUTCOMES FROM COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial	Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement	Implementing collaborative governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes

5.1 Evidence from the literature

The final stage in the co-governance process considers how to identify and report outcomes from the co-governance arrangement. The potential outcomes of collaborative governance can be varied, intentional, unintentional, measurable, unmeasurable, positive, negative, short-term and long-term. Ultimately, the test of whether collaborative governance is successful and increases public value is whether it achieves better policies or programs than would have been the case if decisions had been made by government on its own – reported as outcomes. Co-governance can also have other outcomes related to the *process* of collaboration.

Outcomes from specific actions include:

- Strategic plans and theories of change/action

- Short, medium and long-term outcomes 'on the ground' that have occurred due to the collaborative arrangement (intentional or otherwise).

Outcomes from the process of co-governance may include:

- Redressed power, information and resource imbalances

- Improved relationships, understanding and accountability

- Increased trust in government or service system

- Willingness to engage in future co-governance arrangements.

The absence of outcomes, or reporting of outcomes, may affect continuity of the arrangement.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

5.2 Direct outcomes and outcomes

This section describes both **outputs** from the collaborative process (*TOR*, *Action Plan*, meetings) as well as **outcomes** from delivering specific priority actions. Outputs and outcomes were enabled through increasing synergy across members ('leveraging diverse expertise and resources') and increasing efficiency across common processes ('streamlining processes, reducing duplication…, accelerating decision making') (*Participant 4*).

5.2.1 Outputs

The co-governance group has brought 'people together and promoted a shared vision that has allowed the collective group to detail and prioritise actions and activity' (*Participant 9*). This has led to several key documents that frame the workings of the groups including the *TOR* and *Action Plan* which sets the framework for members to work towards the common goals of the group both as part of the group and independently. This process required key organisations to be willing to act, and in some cases be able to overcome the tension between innovation and bureaucracy within their organisations (*Participant 7*).

The collaborative group meetings provide a forum to raise, discuss and address joint issues, reframe issues, form collaborations across organisations, and improve customer service and accountability (*Research Report*). While the *TOR* identified the need for immediate actions as well as longer term actions, one participant indicated the **group needed to discuss issues arising before plans and actions could be delivered**.

> I think was it the good thing working through some of the wicked issues just to get things moving because at one point it was a lot of talk and then all of a sudden it became more of a plan and actions and all these other working groups and whatever. (*Group 3*)

The meetings provided a forum for shared decision-making (*Participant 5*). This enabled 'multilateral discussions on issues where historically discussions were bilateral' to address complex issues that required support from multiple agencies (*Participant 3*). However, while the potential was there, one stakeholder considered they 'haven't used the potential enough … and should be using those resources more' (*Participant 7*). The collaborative group also provided 'the possibility of a mechanism for identifying and escalating human service problems'; this was considered 'potentially a game changer' that was difficult to see 'happening outside a mechanism like the collaborative' (*Participant 3*). One participant said:

> The Collaborative group has provided opportunities to consider the way we work and look at specific issues facing the community. The additionality of the group has enabled members from different agencies and community organisations to gather as a collective group to explore ideas and processes that could be implemented to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for the Waterloo community. … Further to this, it has **highlighted the nuances and challenges faced by each agency and how interdependent the work is**. (*Participant 9*)

Members of the collaborative recognised there was a significant amount of bureaucratic work in managing the group and its actions (*Research Report*). Some of this bureaucratic work may have had both positive and negative impacts on engagement, relationships and trust over time.

5.2.2 Outcomes

The *Action Plan* identified cross-agency issues across the service sector and therefore was expected to deliver additional outcomes than those that might be achieved from agencies acting alone (*Participant 3*). Participants provided different insights about what outcomes had been achieved so far. One highlighted that 'progress towards many of them [the actions] is underway' and in addition 'facilitated our organisation to make progress on its individual goals' (*Participant 9*).

Another participant identified possible outcomes not just for the Waterloo tenants, but also potentially for other areas if there were similar issues and needs:

> We were also keen to help improve systems and use the collaborative as a model/pilot – with the aim that when systems issues were identified, highlighted and improved in Waterloo, they could also lead to improvements in other areas if there were similar issues/ needs. (*Participant 10*)

Other participants highlighted the outcome of additional work such as the baseline tenants survey and the customer journey mapping, alongside incidental outcomes relating to issues that were raised and resolved as part of the functioning of the group (*Group 9*).

For other participants, it was **unclear what *additional* outcomes had been achieved** compared to what may have been achieved without the group. While progress had been made in terms of process, and from an organisational perspective, 'from a resident perspective, the outcomes or the change has been null' (*Group 6*) – although there was a sense this was going to change.

> We've got a lot of what to do in that space and I think we're, we're gearing up to that now as we've moved into more practical implementations stages and we're improving our communication strategy, but a lot of it has been about trust and collaboration and attitude and recognizing problems and finding systems to kind of work through those issues rather than and that kind of long-term issues rather than day-to-day stuff that

tenants. And what you see on the ground, I'm hoping that changes pretty soon or is in the progress changing. (*Group 6*)

One example was provided of a project that existed prior to the groups establishment that was then included in the outputs of the collaborative – this provided organisations a way to 'be seen to be involved' without necessarily changing anything (*Participant 7*). Progress on some actions was slow, despite being perceived to be quite simple tasks that may have been included as they were seen to be easy wins (thus creating buy-in and building trust). Outcomes from the collaborative to date include developing consistent approaches to customer service (wellbeing checks, referral feedback, active linking/referrals, timely responses) and improving trust between the community and organisations (Workshop summary) – although neither were likely to lead to direct outcomes for tenants in the short-term. The work with peer educators as given as another example:

> …actually involved residents .. they've got something now for that, they've got employment, they've got training, they've got confidence building, so that's something that's more tangible. So we need to work on more tangibles that we're going to bring the community with us. (*Group 6*).

When prompted, participants also started to identify **what the group could achieve in the future**. One participant identified the 'broader and deeper' outcomes that could be achieved as a group rather than what could be achieved by individual actors alone (*Participant 4*). Another identified the group's potential to address wicked problems (systemic issues) that cannot be solved by one single agency' (*Participant 6*). This included identifying and addressing new issues more quickly than before and addressing existing issues that had not been addressed before; this was achieved by working at a whole of community level, understanding issues from all perspectives leading to better solutions, and working collaboratively with existing resources (*Participant 6*).

Indirect outcomes were also evident. One participant said that while they needed more practical support from members of the group in delivering actions, being part of the group had 'endorsed' their work internally within their organisation (*Participant 7*). Another indirect outcome from the peer educators project was identified:

> I noticed that the peer educators' confidence in terms of the participation and other activities in the community has greatly improved. So that ability to speak up [in other forums] …. You see that coming from the peer educators rather than the traditional leaders that are in the community. So that's good to see that that growth. (*Group 2*)

The limited outcomes achieved to date were attributed to the absence of additional resources. And, while there was organisational willingness to support the work of the collaborative, **convincing individuals to shift resources or efforts was more difficult**.

> So, you don't necessarily have to have new resources, you have to get people to allocate their staff to other tasks and try to move work around a bit ... People don't want to step outside their role ever and it's difficult to find space in their work to do other things. I don't think it's because people don't have enough time, I think it's because they don't have the vision of how it improves the work they're already doing. I don't think they really understand the true value of why it might be a good thing to do. So, it's about convincing people of the importance of changing the way they do their work, rather than new resources necessarily. (*Participant 7*)

Many participants agreed in principle that the group operates without additional resources as this enabled relationships to be built. However, now the group is established, one participant thought it was 'a good time for additional resources' to be made available (*Participant 7*).

It was also unclear what outcomes had been achieved for tenants – apart from those directly involved who benefitted from a greater understanding of the mechanisms of different organisations (*Group 4*). As the research report identified:

> In terms of what's not working well? I **want to know how this is impacting the tenant – and more than just the two tenants who are on the group**. It's been implemented now for almost - what is it, two years? How has this changed people's lives? (WHSCG member, IP1) (*Research Report*: 16)

As a result, one of the outcomes of the group has been the development and implementation of a Tenants Survey. The survey will be used to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the Waterloo Human Services *Action Plan* on: perceptions of safety and experience of crime, health and wellbeing; access and experience with government and community agencies; and perceptions of and engagement with the Waterloo community. A baseline survey of 320 tenants was completed in 2023.

5.3   Indirect outcomes including trust

Participants acknowledged there are many benefits of the collaborative that are 'not necessarily captured as outcomes' (*Group 1*). As part of the evaluation of the Group, a Partnerships Analysis tool was used to investigate whether: (1) participants had a shared understanding, commitment and capacity to be involved in planning and decision-making, and could work together collaboratively; and (2) potential barriers to the partnership were being minimised and the partnership was sustainable. The draft findings suggest the partnership is 'based on genuine collaboration', although this was felt more by government than non-government stakeholders – suggesting there was room for further improvement (*Research Report*: 6).

The broader outcomes from the process of co-governance relate to relationships and trust, recognising ongoing power imbalances, and a willingness to continue to engage in this and other co-governance arrangements.

5.3.1   Relationships and trust

The key outcomes associated with the process of co-governance described by participants was that the collaborative had helped build relationships (*Participant 10*) and trust between those involved (*Participant 3, 9*). This included creating a 'closer relationship between individuals in management and on the ground' (*Participant 7*), 'a shared understanding … a shared focus, and accountability' (*Participant 5*), and a 'familiarity, reliability and an understanding of ways of working between government departments and between government departments and NGOs' (*Participant 9*). This ultimately led to 'more productive relationships … more respect and more functional conversations' (*Participation 6*), and enabled stakeholders to move from 'the defensive' to having 'processes to deal with … issues that can and need to be addressed' (*Participant 3*). This was considered to have positive impacts not just now, but also created 'a foundation for future collaboration' (*Participant 4*).

> Trust is essential for success, and trust is not just about trust, it's about believing that you can collaborate and do something with someone, trust is about knowing that you're going to get somewhere … . Trust comes with time and trust comes with action. If you're working with someone, doing something, that's the greatest builder of trust. (*Participant 7*).

The Group enabled participants to have contact with and develop relationships with people in other organisations 'at the right level who can respond to issues and enact change' (*Research Report*: 11). This enabled groups to get guidance from senior staff in the room rather than 'just flounder' if the group 'gets stuck' (*Participant 3*). As one stakeholder said:

> The fact that the organisations are meeting regularly means that issues are highlighted, discussed and resolutions sought in a more efficient and timely manner – there are fewer hierarchical obstructions as there are higher level staff participating. (*Participant 10*)

Relationships developed across different agencies and organisations, and across different levels of staff. As reported elsewhere:

> It's all about **new relationships**, **better relationships**, **improved contact** and **cross contact** with different players, so senior management to frontline services and back, community organisations, NGOs … All of **that mixing builds new relationships that really will be the thing that offers long-term value**. (WHSCG member, IP2) (*Research Report*: 11)

Including residents in the group membership provided residents a 'direct voice and insight into the workings of a large collaborative group' and enabled organisations 'to hear and listen to resident concerns directly' (*Participant 9*)

– enabling a stronger relationship to form between the community and senior staff. This was seen as critical to the groups success and ensured actions were delivered.

> Historically these voices were not listened to within the bureaucracies – getting past lower and middle management has been a major problem to senior decision makers hearing those voices [of community members] and giving responses to them priority. The fact that the Collaborative is led by senior people in agencies helps with issues being followed up rather than being lost in the day-to-day business. (*Participant 3*)

While participating in the group had improved relationships and trust between stakeholders, building 'respect for each other's values, positions and roles' (*Participant 5*), relationships were also strengthened outside of the group as well. As one participant said:

> … **not seeing this in isolation**, that we just come together for the Waterloo and the Co governance just exist within the meetings that have been set up. But it's also informally the fact that **we've established relationships** and **how we do that outside of the meetings**, so that **this type of practice kind of continues and becomes embedded to try and do other things together**. (*Group 3*)

Trust was both a precursor to and an outcome of the co-governance arrangement. One participant said the 'establishment of the group came more down to the relationships, trust and undertakings than it did to data', and suggested trust was a precursor to the initiating co-governance (*Participant 1*). Another highlighted that the group needed to come together first in order for trust to be developed (*Group 3*). **Trust has no doubt improved because of the collaboration and was seen by some participants to be a key outcome from collaboration (*Group 4*).**

> I think I'm speaking fairly accurately when I say that **as time has gone on with this process, the trust has grown between the various organisations, both between government and community, and NGO's and government**, and a variety of things there. (*Group 3*)

> I have seen a growth in the trust. I think, from the first meetings that I participated in, to the ones I sit in now, I've certainly seen a growth in trust. Some of that is about basics, like **if someone does what they said they'll do so that breeds trust**. I think by and large, most people around the tables, the collaborative group and this coordination groups have done what they said they would do or tried to do it. So in some cases, things are moving very slowly. **So some systems change very slowly**. I appreciate that for tenants in particular, watching a bunch of us meeting and forever not something not changing that that must be really frustrating. I've seen people give it a really good go to make those changes. And part of that becomes an authorizing environment. … And sometimes we go away from it. But I've seen a great growth in trust from just collaborating on things, finding issues to resolve, and trying to fix them. (*Group 2*)

One participant recalled an experience in 2014 where NGOs and residents were invited along to a meeting with government agencies. This highlighted how much progress had been made.

> The following meeting, the minutes came out saying that public servants in the room felt uncomfortable having discussions with residents and NGOs in the room. … to come from that to having a human service collaboration which is actually co-chaired with government and NGOs, with residents at the table and nobody feeling uncomfortable, shows how far we've travelled .. what a difference a couple of years can make, a change of leadership, in terms of how its structured. (*Group 2*)

Trust grew from relationships and also through actions leading to outcomes. Prior to the arrangement, a background paper documented that 'NGOs would prefer to start tackling a few problems as a confidence-building way to build trust and mutual understanding between Government Departments and NGOs' rather than spend too much energy planning activities (*Background Paper*: 2). It was recognised that **making progress 'encourages further action'** (*Research Report*: 4) and that **progress helped develop trust** (*Group 1*).

Increased trust also has led to the improved representation or participation of some stakeholders.

> We've now got high representation of some of the groups that weren't as engaged earlier. So I feel like it has evolved in terms of people's awareness of this process and the plan, how it relates to them, and also

developing a sense of trust, that this is actually worth having a seat at the table because there is some value in what the group is. (*Group 3*).

Trust has also improved with the community. One tenant reflected that this provided an opportunity to understand who did what, and who to approach about something in particular, making it easier to deal with different levels of government (*Group 2*). However, it was unclear whether community trust had increased more broadly because of the group.

Trust was also linked to having accessible and up to date **information** (*Research Report*). While the Secretariat provided Word and Excel documents to the group by email, and incorporated feedback to improve those documents, there was no central repository for the group or other interested stakeholders to access them (such as via a website) – discussed further in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**

5.3.2 Power

The Research Report identified concerns of power imbalances, and how they might be resolved:

> There was some consideration about **ways to address different power balances** to avoid future concerns. A participant suggested there could be training for government participants on how to work with different sectors.
>
>> The way government goes about business, works in business and a government business setting, it doesn't necessarily work in a community collaborative setting, and so maybe there's some training for those people facilitating that process about how that works. (Chair, IP5) (*Research Report*:17)

Concerns about power imbalances were ongoing and efforts were made to minimise imbalances. There was also a difference between formal power sharing (such as voting) and informal power sharing (such as levels of representation and influence). One participant highlighted that greater representation of non-government representatives may reduce the current 'power imbalance in the group' (*Group 2*).

> So, we want this more collaborative changed management and responsibility stuff and when you ask for that without talking about addressing power, you get the opposite, which is a – you get a shutdown and a withdrawal. … you get business as usual. (*Participant 7*)

Power imbalances arise for a number of reasons, such as between different types of organisations (government, non-government service provider, community representative organisations), between organisations of the same type (potentially driven by size or political status), within organisations (potentially due to seniority and experience), and within groups of individuals. Having a greater understanding and awareness of how different organisations worked was identified as one mechanism identified to support stakeholders from different sectors working different sectors working collaboratively together (*Research Report*).

Another concern raised about power related to '**who is the most appropriate person [or organisation] to take the lead**' given that 'sometimes the choice of agency did not seem appropriate for a particular issue' or added meaning that was not always intentional (for example, Police taking the lead of anti-social behaviour may suggest it is criminal behaviour) (*Research Report*: 17).

5.3.3 Willingness to continue and apply lessons learned elsewhere

The continuity of the group, both in terms of membership and attendance, particularly by senior staff, indicated the significance of the group and the willingness to continue. While there were some gaps in representation, as indicated earlier, and attendees changed with staff turnover, no participants indicated they would withdraw their involvement.

There was also a broad recognition that there was still a lot of progress to be made.

> I don't think anyone is walking away going, yes we've got this, and we've got all the answers. And I think that's probably a strength. And also to really acknowledge the times that we do need to [acknowledge] that we can't actually deliver and how do we actually create the space for delivery. (*Group 3*)

In terms of the future of the group, while many saw its benefits, there were some suggestions about whether the group needed to be simplified or redesigned to be revitalised – 'so that it's not so bureaucratic and heavy with minutes and meetings, but more with actions and change … because if there was more change they'd be greater buy in wouldn't there?' (*Participant 7*). Suggestions were made to revisit the intention of the collaborative and to check whether its objectives were being bet:

> What is it to do? Is it improving the lives of social housing residents? What's its primary aim? It's supposed to improve service delivery and the lives of those who live in Waterloo, right? … So the question is … what has happened in the period of time since we've been running to improve the lives of individuals? What are the practical outcomes and what's the impact been? We know the impact on relationships, that's been really fantastic, people are talking to each other more and collaborating more. Then, asking where are we falling behind, how can we lift our game, and what other things are unnecessary? What's the bureaucracy in this process? (*Participant 7*)

The benefits of the collaborative identified were wide ranging and were considered to also form the basis of future work both of the collaborative and work outside of the collaborative. The work of the group was found to have positive ramifications on other projects and initiatives – such as through increased consultation with stakeholders prior to taking action (*Research Report*). The learnings from the Group in terms of processes and collaboration also influenced the way organisations worked.

> It's really caused us to reflect how we do business as an organisation … and then how we work with each other and putting it in a perspective of a shared responsibility….' (*Group 3*)

Participants also highlighted that **co-governance is only one part of collaboration and does not necessarily work in isolation of other forms of 'co-'**. In particular, 'co-implementation'[4] (not included in the participation spectrum) (*Group 9*).

5.4   Summary of practice: Identifying outcomes

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
Outcomes from collaboration activities	What organisational outputs has the group achieved? (e.g. plans, theories of change/action)	Examples include the *TOR*, the *Action Plan*, Tenant Survey and theory of change (facilitated through UNSW research project).
	What outcomes has the group delivered that are *additional* to what would have otherwise been achieved?	Examples include the Human Services Collaborative Toolkit, Tenant Survey.
Outcomes from process of collaboration	How have power imbalances been resolved?	Group recognises ongoing power imbalances – although some have been managed.
		Identified need for training and awareness of how other organisations work.
		Recognised that action leads may affect how an action is perceived by others; for example, if NSW Police lead the action on anti-social behaviour, this could imply it is criminal behaviour.

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[4] A point discussed at the Asia and Pacific Integrated Care conference (*Group 9*).

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
	Have new relationships formed, have existing relationships become stronger?	Established new relationships and improved relationships across different agencies and across different levels of staff.
		The Group operates in the context of existing and broader relationships and other co- arrangements.
	Has trust increased?	Trust was required to initiate the arrangement. Trust has increased over time as a result of the arrangement (both due to the process and the progress).
		Trust has grown through incremental action – the group intentionally looked for early wins. This has encouraged further action and increased participation (by previously absent groups).
	Is there a willingness to continue or apply the lessons learned here elsewhere?	Willingness to engage and to continue to engage in the long-term.
		The Group is supported and occurs within a range of other co- activities, including consultation, co-design and collaboration.
		The Group has provided participants with broader learnings and an increase in understanding of shared responsibility.

6. CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

This section is based on data from document analysis, group interviews and observations, and participants (interviews or written data). No Aboriginal community-controlled organisations were interviewed.

6.1 Context

The Waterloo (and Redfern) area is in many ways similar to many other areas in Australia where there is a mix of Aboriginal Controlled Organisations and non-Aboriginal Controlled Organisations with Aboriginal staff providing services and advocacy for the community. The area is considered to be a launching pad for many of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations around Australia and hence local organisations may be more well-established / have longer histories than in other areas. Like any metropolitan area, the Aboriginal community in Waterloo consists of families with different histories and connections to different places.

Key Aboriginal Controlled Organisations in the area include (in no particular order) the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC), the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, the Inner Sydney Empowered Communities Group (ISEC; comprising the La Perouse Aboriginal Alliance and the Redfern Aboriginal Communities Alliance), the Mud-gin Gal, Tribal Warrior, the Redfern Waterloo Alliance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Social Housing Organisations, Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Campaign, the Inner City Aboriginal Interagency Network (not an interagency of Aboriginal organisations, but an interagency for Aboriginal people that worked in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations), Aboriginal staff from Alexandria Park Community School, Redfern Aboriginal Communities Alliance (including Tribal Warrior, Redfern Youth Centre, Burbana). There is no one single point of contact for the Aboriginal community (*Participant 2*).

Other organisations with a strong Aboriginal workforce or providing support for the community included Weave (working with Aboriginal youth), the Fact Tree (also working with Aboriginal youth), and Counterpoint (with Aboriginal housing clients who are actively involved).

Some mainstream organisations held different meetings for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members – which could be seen as potentially divisive. Mainstream organisations have Aboriginal Advisory Committees made up of various stakeholders. Some non-Aboriginal service organisations have strong Aboriginal units within them. Not all First Nations people want to use mainstream services.

6.2 Engagement

The *Action Plan* acknowledges the historic impact of governments on First Nations peoples in its *TOR* and provides a commitment to listen to Aboriginal communities and collaborate with Aboriginal community alliances to ensure successful and sustainable outcomes (see *TOR*:2). Initially, the Waterloo Group invited service providers, representative bodies and peaks to participate in the collaborative. Despite initial interest from some groups, one declined due to the lack of additional funding saying that it would participate through the Aboriginal Interagency, while others met with the Secretariat but did not engage further.

> When we put that membership of the collaborative group together, **we chose two people who had representative sort of roles within the community, one from the Land Council and one from an interagency of Aboriginal people who were going to be the conduit back into the community.** (*Group 3*)

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Redfern Waterloo Alliance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Social Housing Organisations, the Inner City Aboriginal Interagency Network, and NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs initially joined the groups. Further, several organisations met to provide feedback on the draft *Action Plan* (MLALC, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Redfern Waterloo Alliance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Social Housing Organisations, the Inner City Aboriginal Interagency Network, Aboriginal staff from

Alexandria Park Community School, and Redfern Aboriginal Communities Alliance (RACA) including Tribal Warrior, Redfern Youth Centre, and Burbana). Tribal Warrior and Mudgin-Gal also met to provide advice on implementation of the *Action Plan* (*Participant 1*).

The group recognised the importance of showing respect to Aboriginal organisations and people and recognising the past injustices and policy failures. The Group took an **individualised approach** to each organisation recognising different preferences for meeting format (in-person or other), meeting frequency (one off or more frequent), meeting flexibility (due to competing priorities), and targeting of feedback (posing specific questions) (*Participant 1*). Similar to other stakeholders involved, Aboriginal organisations had competing priorities and operated at larger scales – even the more local organisations considered Waterloo and Redfern as one place (*Participant 1*). Organisations also had a long history of addressing the poor treatment of Aboriginal communities, families and children and while often engaged in lengthy consultation processes rarely saw improvements (*Participant 1*).

There is limited evidence engagement with the Aboriginal community has been successful.

> So a lot of effort has gone into engaging the Aboriginal controlled organisations and the and the process, but it **hasn't led to much** or it hasn't. You know, it's had a start and stop approach, I not quite sure why ... (*Group 1*)

> That really didn't work in the way that we wanted it to – there were a number of meetings set up to try and get involvement from the Aboriginal community. Thankfully, over the last few months, **we've had some of the Aboriginal organisations come and start to be involved directly as those organisations, not through sort of representative type mechanisms**. (*Group 3*)

All participants are concerned about this gap in membership and representation.

> But it I think that one of the things that could have been strengthened is that Aboriginal community-controlled voice in terms of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and NGOs, and also NGOs that are independent of government and purely there for the advocacy and have a kind of wider lens of community, you know, community concerns and there has been an element of that. (*Group 3*)

Participants also flagged that while there might not be resources from the group to support participation, individual agencies may be able to provide support outside of the group.

> One of the conversations was **can we actually provide some resources** for these conversations to actually be strengthened, which **resulted in a grant application to the** [member organisation] to then provide some resources. … So that's not necessarily reflected in the Waterloo Human Services [action] plan, but there's actually been conversations that have occurred here that has meant that resourcing, and I guess that ability to provide more of a platform for a consolidation of voices to occur. (*Group 3*)

The same participant also recognised that while Aboriginal organisations might not be attending this group, they might be involved through specific actions and resourced to lead those actions:

> In terms of the discussions we had around the **inclusion of the concept of cultural safety in the Waterloo Human Services [Action] Plan**, I know that that's an action that still lives with the [member organisation] and there is the work that we're doing with the Waterloo Wellbeing Safety Action Group. But in terms of the cultural safety element of it, to really acknowledge that that can't be done by basically a colonialist [member organisation], that it will be an exercise to actually resource that for that to be completely community led. So I think it's been about acknowledging that **there may not be the representation here at the table today**, **but how are we actually providing the resources and platforms to ensure that those voices are heard and then it's done in a way that is supported to be autonomous and therefore a community led**. (*Group 3*)

The group recognised further work was required to engage with the Aboriginal community. Some of which was facilitated or supported by staff in identified positions within government agencies (*Group 6*).

6.3   Summary of practice: Cultural considerations

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
Respond to cultural needs	What are the cultural needs?	Complex history in the area and different cultural needs.
	Have stakeholders been identified?	Key stakeholders identified.
	Are cultural protocols and different relationships understood?	Unable to be determined whether cultural protocols were understood.
	Is the community engaged and being heard?	Initially, organisations were engaged in the development of the plan. However, no organisations are resourced to attend the group.
	Are community groups (both services and advocates) engaged and heard?	Subsequently, organisations have been engaged more through individual projects/actions rather than through attending meetings.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the four-step process and related activities identified in the evidence review, two other considerations emerged from this case study. They relate to data and transparency.

7.1   Data

Data has a role in identifying need, informing priorities, and measuring outcomes.

In terms of identifying need, there were different perspectives of whether and how data informed the establishment of the group. One stakeholder indicated data did not have a role in establishing the group as 'creating a human services plan was a ministerial commitment' (*Participant 2*). However, undoubtedly data had some role in building evidence of need and informing early advocacy by community groups and formed the basis for change (*Participant 1*). This has also been observed in the discussion of the tenants' survey data (*Group 10*).

Data was the subject of many discussions during the initiation of the group, with both government and NGO stakeholders wanting data but neither being able to provide formal data at a scale required (*Group 6*). Government departments asked NGOs for data. NGOs advocating for tenants and providing services locally provided anecdotal evidence of the problems experienced in the area to government. However, this was not recognised by government as data ('we took that, or I did, as actually quite insulting, because I thought it indicated a lack of trust in the advocates') and more formal collections of data from researchers or datasets were required (*Group 6*).

> [Staff] see the day-to-day stories of social tenants and would then communicate those stories, but if that story wasn't translated in the data form then it was dismissed quite easily by government representatives. … Some of the things we advocated in the first year or two for which were questioned, the evidence in the [tenants] survey has clearly been what we said. But some government agencies wouldn't move until they had that. … we could ask the same questions as a single agency, and they wouldn't necessarily be accepted as credible because it's not been done by a professional researcher. (*Group 6*)

Subsequent research by external researchers confirmed the type and extent of problems experienced.

NGOs also asked government agencies for data; however, data was not collected (with place indicators) to provide insights at the scale required – for example, to disaggregate Waterloo tenants' responses, such as to maintenance surveys, from other housing tenants in Sydney (*Group 6*).

> So what we eventually concluded was we don't really have good data sets for the issues, but we now have a tool that can do that and we will use it to look for change within the Community. (*Group 6*)

There were also questions about the validity of some data collected by government agencies. One example was given of very high rates of satisfaction with maintenance of social housing by tenants (for a broader geographical area); however, service providers and community organisations knew maintenance was a key area of concern for tenants beyond this site – yet the source or quality of government data was not questioned (*Group 6*). This was attributed to the data not being understood in the context of what was collected, when and how. In this case, data was only collected once repairs had been complete – as opposed to a broader population study (*Group 9*).

There were also concerns that if the outcomes were poor, data were not shared more broadly, indicating the politics of data and the transparency of reporting (*Group 9*).

There was no evidence that existing data collections, such as identifying more granular locations in data collections, had changed as a result of the collaborative (*Group 6*). Rather, the work of the group resulted in new surveys being developed for this location. Although, in the development of new contracts for the maintenance of housing, there is the potential to collect better data about housing and tenants (*Group 9*).

Data had a greater role in informing the development of the plan and its priorities, with stakeholders asking, 'where is your data for that, it needs to be data informed' (*Participant 1*). This data came largely from organisations working in the area and consultations with the community rather than government departments.

> *'What is the data?'* was a big question early in the establishment of the Collaborative. The NGOs referred to the Waterloo Impact Report and also to listening sessions with tenants as the basis of the evidence and also suggested to DCJ and Health that they must have relevant data which could be interrogated, however there were difficulties getting the departmental data as they said they could not share the data, it was across a larger area, or it was not specific enough. (*Participant 10*)

One stakeholder said that while DCJ or SLHD may have had data, they were not able to share that data. However, the 'data conversation dissipated over time as trust grew and people accepted more at face value what people were saying about the issues – presumably it was not contracted by their own data' (*Participant 1*). Another said not all the necessary quantitative data were available, and therefore the Group used existing survey data, qualitative data, and feedback through consultations (*Participant 2*). Yet data would have helped inform the prioritisation of issues (*Participant 1*).

One area of concern was the lack of reporting of health data – particularly the health impact (physical and mental health) of the planned redevelopment; baseline health data 'would be useful to assist with planning and also tracking outcomes' (*Participant 10*). Further, while demographic data was used to help inform priorities (*Participant 2*), there were concerns that ABS demographic data was not available for public housing residents in Waterloo as it is distorted by private residents (*Participant 1*). Agencies only collect data about interactions with individuals and therefore may not identify unmet need. Further, it is not necessarily reported at a single suburb level.

As the work of the collaborative group progressed, data was captured through client service user journeys to 'identify pain points for users' and help inform future work (*Participant 1*).

Data was considered to be central to measuring outcomes. Recognising this, DCJ commissioned UNSW to conduct a review and 'create a dataset and measure a baseline which will be used to monitor success of the Action Plan' (*Participant 2*). However, it is not clear about how and when these outcomes will be measured without funding (*Participant 2*). It was recognised that each agency should monitor their own customer service data to understand whether they were making a difference. However, given the focus was on a relatively small cohort, it may be difficult to identify whether this sub-group has been impacted (*Participant 1*).

DCJ commissioned UNSW to provide support in developing and administering a baseline Tenants Survey with the intention that the survey will be repeated at multiple time points in the future and will inform the monitoring of the *Action Plan*. Findings from the 2023 baseline survey have been presented to the group.

Data, and specifically evaluations, also identified outcomes of specific actions (*Participant 7, 10*). Other evidence was also provided to the collaborative to support cases for service improvement (such as agency staff not responding to emails over a 6-month period) (*Participant 10*).

Data has also been collected to understand the impact of and functioning of the group itself. Data has been collected through surveys of and consultations with group members about how the collaborative is progressing (*Participant 10*).

7.2   Transparency

While the Waterloo Human Services *Action Plan* is publicly available (*Participant 2*), the planned public launch of the *Action Plan* was significantly delayed by the NSW state government election period and the subsequent change in government and the creation of a new department (Homes NSW) to manage housing. Given this delay, it was agreed that a launch was not useful because implementation of the Action Plan had been happening for some time. (*Group 6*). As one participant said:

While the *Action Plan* was being developed there was not a great deal to say about what was happening although a public presence would have helped people know people were working on one. Similarly when we started groups working on implementation there was not much to say but as implementation started to deliver results then it has become important to have a public presence. (*Participant 1*)

While the activities of the group are not secret, at the time of writing, there was no single website which identifies membership, the *TOR*, the *Action Plan*, other outputs (such as the tool kit), or a point of contact for the group. This may reflect the public sector ownership of the group and the lack of flexibility to establish an independent website. One participant said, 'transparent enough? No, not really, no. It's not honest enough' (*Participant 7*).

The possibility of hosting a website about the Action Plan is being investigated by one of the non-government co-chairs on behalf of the group (*Group 4*) and work has been underway to develop content for that website (*Secretariat*).

7.3   Summary of practice: Other considerations

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study
Data informs actions	How does data inform need? How does data inform priorities? How does data inform whether outcomes are achieved? How does data identify the health and functioning of the group?	Data from NGOs (rather than government departments) helped inform the need for this Group. Additional data was collected in consultation with tenants and organisations. This supplemented NGO data. There are differences in value placed on different types of data by different stakeholders (e.g. government versus local NGOs), and different levels of trust in different sources of data. In 2023, a baseline survey of tenants was conducted. The outcomes of this and subsequent surveys will help inform future priorities and whether outcomes have been achieved. Individual evaluations of actions were used to inform whether outcomes had been achieved. The Group also collected data about the health and functioning of the group. This was used to justify changes to how the group operates (frequency of meetings).
The work of the group is transparent	How is the work of the group made public?	There is no online single publicly available repository of information about the group, its membership, or its work.

8. CONCLUSION

This case study provides insights into co-governance in an initiative sought by the community but involving more government than community organisations. This may suit the nature of the issues the co-governance was needed to address.

The co-governance arrangement commenced at the end of 2020 after a decade or more of pressure from the community organisations to act. The group required more intensive work during the initiation phase and now appears to be in a steady state of implementation – evidenced by changes in frequency of meetings, achievements of outcomes, and reports of trust.

While members of the group appear connected through shared goals and understanding, clearly set out in the *TOR*, it is unclear how many of the actions were business as usual – or whether the collaboration has expedited or improved how those actions were delivered. However, the ethos of the co-governance group has spilled over into member organisations and other actions and collaborations.

While the co-governance arrangement is a distinct group, it is also embedded within a variety of other 'co-' activities. That is, **co-governance does not appear to operate in isolation on the participation spectrum** – and the spectrum should also include co-implementation.

The findings of this case study will be combined with two other case studies to inform future practice.

APPENDIX A   SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT AND DESIGN

Timeline and steps of engaging the group in the case study

Timeline of engaging the Waterloo Group in this study

- 27 April 2023, letter of support from Co-Chairs (signed Briony Foster, DCJ)

- 28 April 2023, Waterloo Group meeting agreed to establish co-design working group

- 26 June 2023, co-design with the co-design working group

- September 2023, research agreement in place with DCJ for staff participation

- February 2024, returned to co-design group, co-chairs and cross chairs, and collaborative group to validate findings.

Outputs of co-design group

The co-design group was facilitated by Fiona Haigh, Ilan Katz (first meeting) and Shona Bates (second meeting), and involved representatives from DCJ, SLHD, Counterpoint, Mission Australia (second meeting). All members signed off the output of the co-design process which was then signed off by the chairs and the broader group. The group reconvened to discuss the draft report.

Proposed approach

- The aim is to minimise burden and maximise use of existing information
- The research team will prioritise document review and observations
- Potentially add to agenda of existing meetings and ask a question of attendees
- Consider conducting a survey of broader group of stakeholders about perceptions and impact of the Waterloo Group
- Interviews to be conducted with group of stakeholders - particularly to address gaps in information. This is likely to include:
  - Chairs of main group and working groups
  - Stakeholders who engage and those who do not
- Group made suggestions to improve research instrument – the questions can be used for survey or interviews
- The research team will provide updates on progress to the Waterloo group on progress
- We will validate findings with the co-design group then the wider group

Discussion guide/questions for Waterloo Group

About your organisation and you

- What is your organisation?
- What is your relationship to the Group? (organisation and you)
- What is your role in the Group? (you)

About your understanding of co-governance

- What does co-governance mean to you/your organisation?
- What does co-governance mean to you in terms of the Waterloo Group?
- What do you hope to get out of the Waterloo Group? (you/your organisation)

How was co-governance was established and organised for the Waterloo Group?

- How did the Waterloo Group come about? (if you were involved)
- How did you get involved? (your organisation, you)
- How is co-governance organised at Waterloo?
    - Leadership
    - Formal arrangements/agreements (one or more?), resourcing
    - Processes
    - Tracking progress
    - Informal arrangements
- What works well? What could be improved?

How does the Waterloo Group operate in terms of:

- Strategic planning
    - What have you been involved in or planning to be involved in?
    - What has helped (or not helped) strategic planning?
- Operational activities
    - What operational activities have you been involved in? (examples?)
    - What has helped (or not helped) strategic planning?
- What works well? What could be improved?
- Do you think the co-governance model will support future human services planning in Waterloo during and post redevelopment?

What are the outcomes to date for the Waterloo Group?

- In terms of the co-governance process
    - Were your expectations of co-governance met?
    - Has co-governance had a positive or negative impact on your or your organisations involvement? (has it encouraged you to be a part of the group or discouraged you from being involved)
    - Do you think co-governance has any impact on relationships and trust?
- In terms of what outcomes the group has achieved
    - Against its objectives to date?
    - What do you think it will achieve in the future?
- In terms of outcomes for the community (if different from above)
    - What tangible outcomes have been achieved for residents?
- What works well? What could be improved?

Learnings for this group and others

- Any final thoughts about
    - How the approach could be improved?
    - What would you keep, what would you get rid of?
- If you could do things differently, what would you do?
- Have you seen good examples of co-governance elsewhere?

APPENDIX B   DATA SOURCES

Data sources are denoted in the report in parentheses and italics.

Documents

Short form	Full title
TOR	Terms of Reference of the Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group
Action Plan	Action Plan (an excel file tracking the actions of each group)
Action Log	The action log records actions arising during group meetings and their progress.
Research Report	Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity at UNSW Sydney was engaged to review the WHSCG and the Plan for DCJ. O'Callaghan C, Williamson M, Meikle K, Haigh F and Barr M: Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity. Review of the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan: Qualitative Study, Sydney 2023
Background Paper	Waterloo Human Services Plan: NGO Background Paper. Prepared on behalf of Groundswell NGOs (Counterpoint, ISV, REDWatch Inc).
Timeline	Timeline of the group available on the REDwatch website.
Secretariat	Information circulated to group members by the secretariat. For example, email seeking feedback on a draft website for the group (5 February 2024).
Issues paper	Waterloo Impact Project: Mapping Local Client Referrals and Agency Services Coordination. Commissioned and prepared by Counterpoint Community Services INC, July 2020.

Observations

Observations were made at collaborative, coordination, co-chairs and cross-chairs group meetings.

Focus groups and discussion at meetings

Short form	Full title
Group 1	Co-design group – initial design
Group 2	Coordination group (September 2023)
Group 3	Coordination group (September 2023)
Group 4	Cross-chairs (28 November 2023)
Group 5	Co-chairs (cancelled)
Group 6	Co-design group – validation (6 February)
Group 7	Cross-chairs and co-chairs (15 Feb 2024)
Group 8	Collaborative group (23 Feb 2024 and any feedback before/after the meeting)
Group 9	Additional feedback session (11 March 2024)

Interviews

Short form	Stakeholder group#
Participant 1	NGO (written response – general)
Participant 2	Government representative (written response – general)
Participant 3	NGO (written response – co-chairs)
Participant 4	Government representative (written response – co-chairs)
Participant 5	NGO (written response – co-chairs)
Participant 6	Government representative (written response – co-chairs)
Participant 7	Government representative (interview)
Participant 8	NGO (written response – stakeholders)
Participant 9	Government representative (written response – co-chairs)
Participant 10	NGO (written response – stakeholders)