

BANDING TOGETHER AT ENDEAVOUR

Evaluation Report July 2019



FIGURE 1: RESIDENTS AND CHILDREN AT ENDEAVOUR CHRISTMAS 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, economic inequality in Australia and abroad has risen substantially. Moreover, beyond economic inequality, the complexity of social problems facing many Australians has also intensified. Systemic injustices are causing significant social marginalisation, with impacts being felt by children and families across domains such as housing, health, and education. In response to this, research has focused on effective solutions to complex system-driven marginalisation, with promising findings. As one report summarises:

International evidence, derived from studying initiatives to improve the health and well-being of children and families experiencing significant impacts from disadvantage, finds that non-stigmatising, soft-entry, relationship-based approaches are essential to tackling complex disadvantage. (Logan Together, 2018, p. 3)

As highlighted above, certain initiative characteristics can alleviate the “significant impacts” of disadvantage. This report is an evaluation into one such response to supporting families and children experiencing complexity. The community resides in a residential caravan park in South East Queensland. As an innovative, agile and collaborative project, the work being carried out by an alliance of social agencies in Deception Bay, is proving relationships are vital in responding to social complexity.

Part One – A Developmental Practice Model

A core part of QUT's remit was to distil a practice model of the unique approach being used in the residential village. Found to underpin, and infused throughout all principles of the guiding practice, was a core regard for relationships. Ten other interconnected principles make up the practice model that is drawn from a developmental approach to working with communities (See Figure 2 on page 13). They are:

- **Relationships** – genuine, trusting and reciprocal relationships cultivated between residents, practitioners and other stakeholders.
- **Systems Thinking & Practice** – regarding issues as ecological and complex.
- **Creativity & Play** – adopting a creative and playful approach.
- **Emphasising Resource & Agency** – rather than adopting a problem centric stance.
- **Soft Entry & Space-Making** – a soft entering of community spaces.
- **Practitioner Agility** – demonstrating flexibility.
- **Co-Agency Collaboration** – multiple agencies working together.
- **Enabling Participation** – creating space and opportunity for resident involvement.
- **Engaging Communication** – using inclusive and engaging communication.

- **Longevity of Practice** – being in the work (the residential park and the resident's lives) for the long haul.
- **Mandates & Accountability** – negotiating a mandate and being upwards and downwardly accountable.

As well as principles behind the practice, the researchers identified **a method** to the approach. The method moves through three levels:

1. Starting with micro-level activity (between worker and a resident);
2. Then moving to mezzo-level work that builds on this relationship and expands to include others;
3. Before finally moving to macro-level work, which relies on important engagement and relationship with a local auspicing organisation.

Part Two – an Evaluation of Effectiveness

The evaluation team examined the effectiveness of two key things: first, the on-going BBQs that have been happening for many years, as an inter-agency initiative; and second, the one-year funded project: Banding Together at Endeavour (BT@E), that has provided a worker, a permanent site in the park, resources and activities. Across all aspects of the work, three key themes emerged as significant indicators of effectiveness of the work. The themes are:

- Complexity & Culture Shifts;
- Relationships, Connections & Networks; and
- Trust in Responding to Trauma.

Through a deeper analysis of each segment of the 'work' (including the BBQs, The Role of the Worker, Cabin One and the Activities), some valuable insights emerged.

Key Findings: BBQs

The BBQs provided food, benign services and a crucial opportunity for residents to get together and socialise. Importantly, they also functioned as a soft-entry point for services to engage with residents in a non-threatening way. Furthermore, workers demonstrated authentic rapport with residents, indicating a depth and quality of relationship, beyond the usual professionalised service worker and 'client' dynamic. Finally, they acted as an networking opportunity for agencies and practitioners, which in turn leads to a responsive and effective co-working culture in the area.

Key Findings: The Role of the Project Worker

The role of the Project Worker facilitated ongoing connection and continuity between residents and agencies. The worker also fostered social connection in the park, acted as a knowledge broker and most importantly, built meaningful relationships with residents which then translated into responsive and agile program outputs, such as workshops and excursions on request. The Project Worker demonstrated an agility and adaptability essential to a developmental approach.

Key Findings: The Cabin Space

Cabin One assumed a role similar to a neighbourhood centre, facilitating a flow of informal mutual support. Mutual support being understood as help (resources, social support etc.) for residents when they are experiencing need. Yet, the research found that here mutual support encompasses a broader process than simply a direct one-way exchange. It became a place to grow mutual ties and exchange. The cabin importantly became a “Third Place” offering a vital external site of refuge for the residents who experience complex disadvantage and trauma and often do not have a place of employment to escape to. The physical aspect of Cabin One was also important, specifically in the context of being a safe space for children to play outside of the confines of their home.

Key Findings: Activities

The salient theme from the activities is that they fostered a sociability, which has a beneficial impact, both individually – overcoming isolation – and for the whole community.

Conclusion

While numerous challenges, tensions and minor weaknesses emerged out of the research evaluation, the overarching sense is that this developmental practice and project approach is one of demonstrable value to the sector; specifically, when working in this setting and community and grappling with complex and multiple social issues. Paramount to the success of ‘the work’ (all components) was the fidelity to valuing genuine relationships premised on trust. From relationship-centred practice, many adversities can be faced in solidarity with agility and effect.

Recommendations

1. To keep resourcing this work financially and locate more funding particularly for third place and project worker.
2. To share the story of this work with wider audiences – e.g. via Networks, Community Development Queensland Conference, with the possibility of co-publishing a paper to ensure longevity of access to a broader audience (i.e. academic and practice circles).
3. To develop a training induction process for new workers working in the Residential Park; with the view to possibly offering training to other organisations in the unique practice model outlined in the report.
4. Engage in more research that could be longitudinal work. Another option could be to locate the work in on-going action-research such that data is collected and analysed by Alliance workers.

INTRODUCTION

*"[T]he **nature** of the connections in any given community is what ultimately determines its capacity for justice."* Arneil, 2006 cited in Gilchrist 2009

In Australia and internationally, there is a growing understanding that linear approaches used to address the complex social issues facing many children and families are no longer sufficient. Many social services often work in isolation, missing an opportunity to collaborate with other services to deliver a more holistic version of care by working alongside people in their everyday struggles. As research from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (cited in Logan Together, 2018, p. 3) asserts, the health, education, civil and community sectors will not be able to provide the necessary support for children (and their families) with complex health, emotional, social and learning needs if they carry on working in segregation. This points to the need for collaborative inter-agency initiatives to address complex disadvantage and marginalisation.

Further evidence indicates that prevention and early intervention models are crucial in advancing the wellbeing and quality of life for children and families (Logan Together, 2018, p. 3). And while prevention and early intervention mechanisms work when considering social change as a linear process, arguments have been made that – especially in the context of community and social change – "incremental developments in capacity or awareness can be largely invisible until a sudden leap in activity or consciousness occurs, resulting in a major shift in levels or direction of community activity" (Gilchrist, 2009, p. 126). As those living with complex disadvantage often experience chaotic lives, programs designed to support their wellbeing need to facilitate non-linear and creative ways of working and measuring improvement. The following report is an evaluation of a unique project working with families and children living with complex marginalisation.

THE PROJECT – BANDING TOGETHER AT ENDEAVOUR

The Banding Together at Endeavour (BT@E) project is built on more than eight years of consistent work with a population of people living in a long-term caravan park, in the Deception Bay region of South East Queensland. At the heart of the ongoing work is a fortnightly barbecue (BBQ) open to all residents and attended by strategic numbers of agency representatives; the BT@E project builds on this ongoing work, but is bound by a one-year timeline and has discreet features, funding requirements and resources. These include the provision of a cabin for the duration of the project, funds allocated for activities (such as excursions and workshops) and resources and the financing of a community development worker (Project Worker forthwith) one day a week.

BT@E proposes a series of activities aimed at engaging the residents with staff from community agencies; strengthening linkages in the work that has begun through the BBQs. The activities are varied, yet directed at children and their families, with the intent to build and enhance internal family relationships as well as resident-to-resident relationships, and agency-to-resident relationships.

Both the BBQs and the BT@E utilise a developmental approach to working with the people living in the park. Drawn from a practice framework of community development practitioners, developmental practice emphasises shifting the 'development standpoint' from one that is traditionally about "'bringing resources' to 'facilitating resourcefulness' (ibid, p. 17), from engineering to guiding (at best), from constructing to responding, from analysing to reading the social situation (and assisting others to read)" (Westoby & Kaplan, 2014 p. 217).

Defining features of the project and approach include: an emphasis on building relationships and trust; fostering networks and purposeful connections; allowing scope for non-linear change; inter-agency collaboration; a 'soft entry' approach and capacity to respond to complexity and trauma in an effective way.

The overarching objectives of the work is to build family resilience; understand the needs of the population more effectively by having a worker co-located onsite; co-designing fun and uplifting activities with residents, to shift the project from expert-driven practice to immersive learning; having conversations around issues such as parenting styles, schooling, budget tensions, drug and alcohol abuse, and Domestic Violence (DV); and gently facilitating appropriate referrals and soft entry for those agencies. The funding body for the BT@E project is the "Creative Communities Fund" administered by Mercy Community Services in the Moreton Bay Region with funding from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

The following report provides two things: first, a distillation of a model of practice, seeking to make visible the practice style that has emerged out of the work at Endeavour over many years; second, an evaluation of the project(s), namely an investigation into the effectiveness of both the long-term BBQs and the BT@E project. A guiding assumption is that the model of practice is infused throughout both the long-term work and the one-year project.

To begin, the report sketches a contextual overview of residential villages and low-income housing dynamics in Australia in order to render a full picture of the community with which the work is situated. This is then followed by a portrayal of the community at Endeavour, introducing demographic information. The report then shifts to the evaluation brief and methodology, giving detail on the conceptual lens, data gathering methods, and participants. The next two segments are divided into Part One: Distilling the Practice and Part Two: Evaluation and Effectiveness. Each part has various subsections visible in the list of contents. In closing, the report offers recommendations for next-steps.

A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF LONG-TERM RESIDENTIAL PARKS IN AUSTRALIA

Housing trends in Australia over the past three plus decades reflect a narrative of neoliberal policy, converting social need to economic 'asset' (Delaney, 2019). As a result of this trend, the gap between the rich and poor has widened, with housing security clearly portraying this disparity. As Brendan Coates of the Grattan Institute attests:

There is a clear link between homelessness and housing prices. The consequences of affordability are felt at the bottom. People with a low income are spending more of their money on housing. Add in disability, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence – in a world where they are already vulnerable – it increases their risk of being homeless. (cited in Delaney, 2019, n.p.)

In a climate where housing security poses a significant issue to many Australians, long-term caravan parks support those discursively constructed as 'vulnerable' in the community; for example, they are a "halfway point for women fleeing domestic violence along with those people suffering serious mental health issues" (Caravan Industry Association of Australia and Residential Land Lease Australia, 2018, p. 7). In a 2011 study entitled Counting the Homeless Australia, Chamberlain and MacKenzie (cited in Eastgate, 2011, p. 26) noted there were 56,000 permanent caravan park residents in Australia, inclusive of over 17,000 who were considered "highly disadvantaged and at risk of homelessness". However, according to data from the 2016 Census, the number of permanent residents in caravan parks now sits at 62,080, with a further 9,090 living in what is termed a 'Manufactured Housing Estate' (MHE) (CIAA & RLLA 2018). Furthermore, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), homelessness itself is not a clean-cut concept. The ABS state a person is considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

With this expanded conception of what constitutes homelessness, long-term residential caravan parks offer support for those vulnerable to sleeping rough, while simultaneously housing people experiencing various stages of homelessness.

Caravan parks are considered fringe spaces, housing those in the community who live on the margins. As Eastgate (2011, p. 26) expands, "residents are often at the margins of the community, more likely to be on low incomes, unemployed or not in the workforce, and to have serious health or social issues". Caravan parks perform an important role as "pathways [both] in and out of homelessness" (Stuart, 2008, p. 31). Additionally, as over 90% of caravan parks and MHEs are situated in regional areas, they play a meaningful role in providing safe affordable accommodation to the "59% of long-term residents [who] earn less than \$500 per week" (CIAA & RLLA, 2018, p. 8). Yet these forms of housing remain under-researched, with minimal data and information available making them under-prioritised by policy-makers (Eastgate, 2011).

Although children and families make a small portion of the population living in caravan parks or MHE's – this in part is due to some sites not allowing families to stay onsite – those that do are considered vulnerable and disadvantaged (Stuart, 2008). Stuart (2008, p.31) attests that "children living in caravan parks are often vulnerable to poverty, child protection issues, under performance at school, illness, poor nutrition and injury". However, he goes on to note that simultaneously there are "strengths and resources" on offer in caravan park communities that can indeed support child wellbeing (Stuart, 2008, p.31).

The Endeavour Residential Village is reflective of this notion of strengths and resources being available to children and families within these contexts.

An important aspect to note is that the work of the BBQs and BT@E will continue to be increasingly relevant as housing insecurity and inequality are growing and prominent issues in Australian society. With this in mind, it is helpful to think of the work as tied to place (the residential caravan park, Endeavour), not a singular issue requiring an 'intervention' *per se*. Rather, the work is perennially responding to the complexity of individual residents' lives, based at Endeavour and the wider Deception Bay region, through the formation of connections – the building of community.

One final point of significance is the people who have collaborated in this research and report are not comfortable with the language of 'vulnerable families' as this easily puts the emphasis of blame on the individual or household. Instead, with current social and housing policy – particularly housing non-affordability and the low income from Newstart and so forth – many people are being *made* vulnerable by society. Hence, the research team have opted to use the language of 'families struggling with complex issues.'

PORTRAYAL OF THE RESIDENTIAL PARK AND AREA

Endeavour Residential Village is a neat and clean accommodation service in Deception Bay, a suburb of the Moreton Bay Region. According to the 2016 Census, Deception Bay had a population of 19,850 and "of these 49.0% were male and 51.0% were female", with 5.3% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ABS Website, 2019). While 53.1% of the population were in full-time employment and 29.3% indicated they were employed part-time, the area recorded an unemployment rate of 12%, nearly double the Australian average of 6.9 % (ABS Website, 2019).

Services at the caravan park include 85 powered sites, four unpowered sites, seven on site, 12 hot showers, seven washing machines, two dryers, BBQ, a space for big rigs, bins, sites for motor homes, picnic tables, powered sites, tent sites, toilets and water. Pets are not allowed on site. The Village accommodates permanent residents, while also providing emergency accommodation for those in need of it.

Endeavour is run by Roofley Property Management and managed by a Park Management Team. Management works as a crucial conduit between residents, agencies and government bodies. Not only does management support and facilitate the ongoing inter-agency organised BBQs, but they also play a role in ensuring some residents are cared for. At times of emergency or crisis the management also steps in to ensure the correct service is called to respond.

The profile of residents varies significantly. Of the 23 residents surveyed as a part of this research, some reported having lived there from as little as five weeks to as long as 20 years. However, a majority clustered around the four to nine-month mark, with a second cluster of two to four years. Occupational status ranged from looking for work, full-time parenting, casual employment, full-time employment to volunteering and retired. Overall,

residents reported to appreciate living at Endeavour; they said the place was “quiet” and “peaceful”. Another theme among residents was an appreciation of their neighbours. As one resident states: “The people, there’s good people here, like family”. Two parents also stated that it was a good place for their children. Other reasons people liked living at Endeavour were more practical, such as: “there’s no inspections and I’m trying to get ahead” to “cheap rent” and “It’s a place to live... I’m trying to get a reference (for future house rental).” Finally, some residents responded to the question of what they enjoyed about living there, with a more wry, strained or cynical outlook: “Besides a man getting shot? It’s a quick fix as the rent is reasonable. It’s a stepping stone.” And that Endeavour is: “Alright, but you wouldn’t make it permanent.”

The diversity of Endeavour is also expressed in the ways in which residents participate in the community life of the park. Some residents live quite reclusive lives and are happy not to interact with other residents or attend the fortnightly BBQs. Other residents demonstrate a willingness to partake in many social activities ranging from dropping by the onsite space allocated to the BT@E project for a “cuppa and yarn” to regularly helping out at the BBQs. Of the cohort that don’t participate in social activities, such as the BBQs, many indicated health, mental health and not enjoying socialising as prohibitive factors to participation. As one resident explained: “I don’t like mingling with people. I’m a keep to myself type person.”

Many residents at Endeavour are dealing with difficult circumstances, a complex array of issues that intersect and overlap. Issues such as economic poverty, drug and alcohol abuse (for example, witnessed as a group cracked open beers at 11am and through talks of neighbours being ice addicts and dealers), domestic and family violence and children facing expulsion or challenges at school, are prevalent. Multiple traumas are evident in some residents’ lives.

Rather than focus on the adversity faced by residents, the research team have approached this evaluation process with a ‘double story’ listening. That is to say, while the first narrative in residents’ lives and experiences may be a hard story, in the second story, there are many capacities and substantial resilience (put simply, people demonstrate an ability to bounce-back from hardships). Overall, the research team observed a resilient and connected ‘community’ in Endeavour, demonstrated by a substantial willingness to participate in social activities and to help each other out. A prime example would be the way kids play with one another at the BBQs; it is evident there is a very strong cultural of care and collaboration between children, not needing a lot of parental supervision.

HISTORY OF THE WORK

Deception Bay Community Youth Programs (DBCYP) and other agencies in Deception Bay have been providing outreach services to the Endeavour Residential Village since 2009. The work began with a youth worker from DBCYP, having developed some relationships with residents with high needs in the two sites (Endeavour Residential Village and Bay Residential Village), holding regular BBQs as an opportunity to provide a meal for those

who had little and use the time to foster stronger relationships with young people and their families living in the parks. DBCYP negotiated with the owner (who owns both parks) to donate \$50/fortnight for BBQs at both parks (this still continues today in Endeavour). Initially, the youth worker was working alone, but after some planning and consultation with other community stakeholders, DBCYP sought to broaden this work. In 2011 it was agreed that the Child & Family Alliance would organize and host the BBQs. Since then, the Deception Bay Child & Family Alliance (referred to as Alliance forthwith) has introduced a number of agencies to the BBQs with each agency taking turns for the 'running' of the BBQ. The Alliance has purchased BBQs, marquees, cooking equipment, and children's toys. All this equipment remains in the parks, in residents' care.

Up until last year the BBQs were held monthly at each park, but in 2018 became fortnightly. Unfortunately, the Park Manager at Bay Residential Caravan Park decided to stop the BBQs, which led to the fortnightly BBQs being held solely at Endeavour. Currently there about 300 residents at Endeavour, of which many have attended either a BBQ or park activity.

Building on eight years of work, nearly 12 months ago the Banding Together project begun as an early intervention program using a developmental community development approach to addressing complex social issues. This approach emphasises quality relationships as the foundation of practice, a capacity for practitioners to be "present and responsive to other and context" while also being "intuitive, empathic, careful, thoughtful, creative, playful and disciplined" (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p.18).

THE EVALUATION BRIEF & FRAMEWORK

In September of 2018, Queensland University of Technology's (QUT) School of Public Health and Social Work, Faculty of Health was contracted to achieve two things: a) distil a practice model; and, b) evaluate the effectiveness of the BBQs and BT@E project. The Alliance saw an opportunity to use a portion of funding for the BT@E project to better understand several things, including: the ways in which the agencies had been working (and were going to work through the BT@E) with the community at Endeavour; what were the exact principles and methods behind the approach; how effective was the approach at responding to the complexities the households, families and children are confronted with; and what are the impacts. The brief from the managing agency (Deception Bay Community Youth Programs (DBCYP) states the aim of the research as:

To evaluate and inform all participants of progress and learnings, inclusive of residents and staff. Explore how this work can be expected to build confidence, communication and self-expression, ensuring it is valued across all sectors.

Led by Associate Professor Peter Westoby, the research team devised an evaluation methodology reflective of the strengths-based ethos of the Alliance.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach, QUT designed an evaluation process to gather data on two key dimensions of the longstanding work being done at the Endeavour Residential Village. Practice, in this sense, refers to the developmental approach and style adopted by workers involved in both the Banding Together at Endeavour project and ongoing BBQs. An assumption of this evaluation project is that the full spectrum of activities, practices, rituals, frameworks and ideologies that inform and guide practitioners' work are not fully cognisant to the practitioner from the outset. A guiding motivation for this research project is to uncover or distill what is often an organic or tacit style of working in community. By tacit, we mean, knowledge that is 'learned on the job' but is rarely explicit.

Effectiveness is a challenging notion to determine in an absolute sense due to the complex and fluctuating life circumstances of residents, coupled with the developmental approach used in BT@E. That is to say, the approach is non-linear, much like the lives of residents and the trauma they experience, therefore, effectiveness may be captured by the absence of an event (prevention) nor an explicit improvement of a health indicator *per se*. Nonetheless, QUT researcher have sought to capture the voices of residents and children to understand how they experience and value the work being done in the park. And through using this voice, demonstrate *the effect* this approach is having on individuals and the community more broadly. In this sense, effectiveness is not a measure linked to pre-determined or 'imported' indicators, but an uncovering of the effect on people.

The Methodological Approach

Appreciative Inquiry was identified as an ideal lens, as it accommodates complexity (processes that are non-linear, adaptive, emergent, fluid, dynamic) and systems thinking (attention to boundaries, perspectives, inter-relationships); both complexity and systems thinking facilitate a true consideration of the complex issues faced by residents in Endeavour.

The Methods

QUT's evaluation used a variety of qualitative methods to understand the two core components of the work: practice model and effectiveness of approach. They are understood and applied as follows:

Participant observation – refers to a mode of observation whereby the researcher partakes in activities as opposed to being 'a silent observer'. The aim being that traditional boundaries are transcended, bringing a more relational approach to data gathering.

Interviews – took place in informal settings and centred on gathering information on practitioners' practice and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the project and approach.

Surveys – a survey was co-designed with practitioners and administered face to face to 23 residents of the residential village. Residents were targeted across three groups: highly engaged in BBQs, moderately engaged and not at all engaged. The purpose being that

the researchers and workers wanted to get a sense of what drew people to be involved in activities and what prevented them.

Document Analysis – drawing from a wealth of available materials, such as the fortnightly reports prepared by the Project Worker of BT@E, organisational reports and general literature, this dimension ensures further triangulation of the above empirical methods.

The application of data gathering methods is explained in detail below, with an overview of the total numbers of hours and individuals included.

Method	Participants	Total Hours
Participant observation at BBQs	Varying numbers of residents and children. Averaging between: 6-25 Adults 5-18 children Workers ranging from 3-15.	Observation at 7 BBQs over an 8-month period with each covering 2 hours: Total: 14 hours
Participant observation at agency meetings	11 workers from agencies across the Deception Bay area.	Observation of 2 meetings at 1 hour each: Total: 2 hours
Participant observation at Cabin One	Varying numbers of residents and children, averaging between: 4-8 Adults 2-8 Children	Observation informally while researcher was on site: Total: 4 hours
Interviews with practitioners (all but one interview were done face to face)	6 workers from several key agencies including: DBCYP, Yourtown, Banding Together Project Worker and independent practitioner	Each interview ran from 20-45 minutes, averaging 30 minutes. Total: 3 hours
Surveys with Residents	23 residents of Endeavour Village, including a cross section of the community as explained above.	Not Applicable
Document Analysis	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

PART ONE: DISTILLING A MODEL OF PRACTICE

"The work is at heart – 'organised chaos' – moving around apparent crisis. The conversation can go from light and easy: talking about the weather to deep problems and issues. As practitioners, we weave our approach (practice) through this. Sometimes you stay in the shallows, then you have to align to the chaos." Alliance Practitioner, 14 March 2019

The following practice model depicted in **Figure 2** on the following page has evolved through an initial analysis of data by the researchers, then co-refined with Alliance members at a workshop mid-way through the evaluation project. A further sift through data surfaced new themes and pointed to the need to combine aspects and foreground others. At the heart of the practice lies relationships and this was evident across all data streams: surveys, interviews and observations. Meaning, all stakeholders in the work, value relationships and see them as foundational to the approach.

THE PRACTICE MODEL

As mentioned above, relationships form the heart of this practice model, with the ten other principles linking with each other and flowing out of a primary regard for relationships. While the figure below demonstrates connection of each principle as linked with two principles on either side, the reality is, each dimension is of equal weight and deeply interconnected. That is to say, practitioners involve creativity and play, while practicing engaging communication and demonstrating practitioner agility, and so forth; all the while nurturing relationships. Each element of the practice model is now discussed, acknowledging that relationships form the basis of the practice.

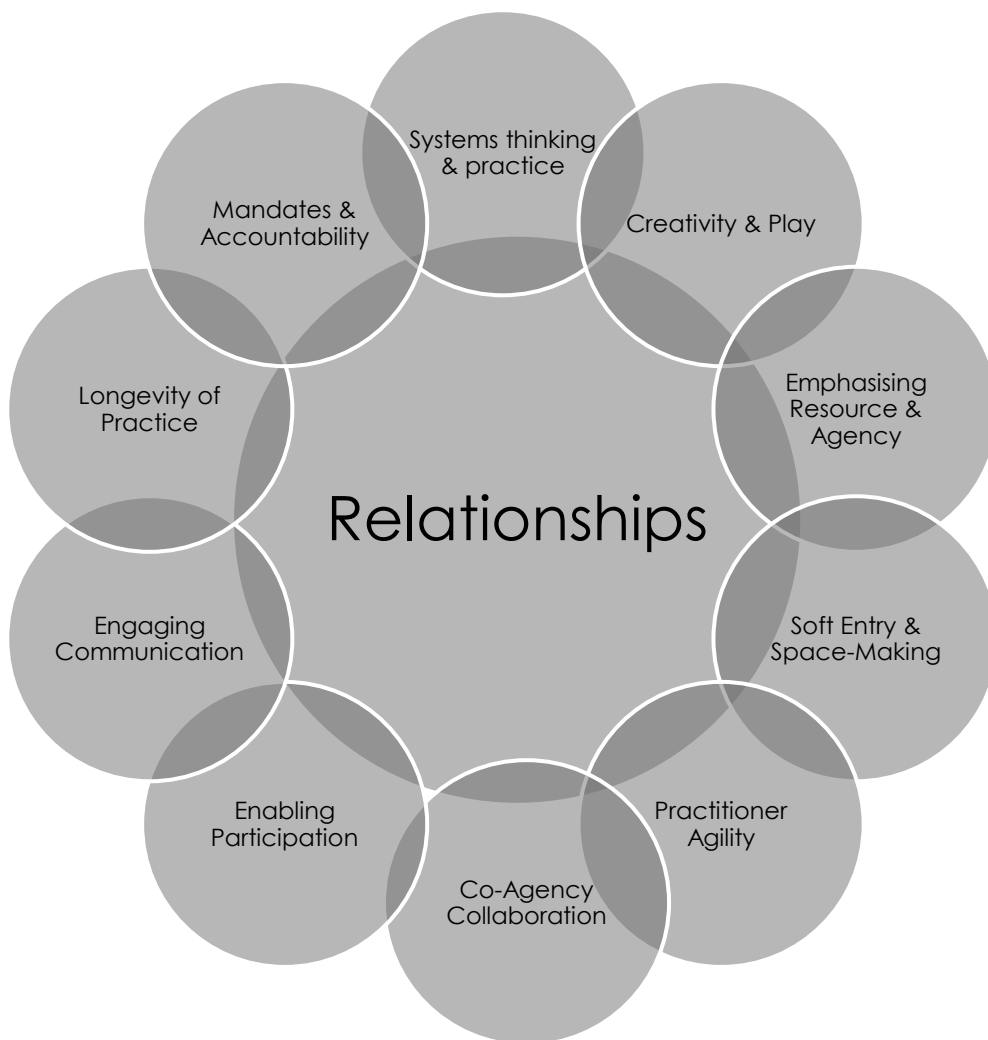


FIGURE 2: THE PRACTICE MODEL

Relationships

Building genuine, trusting and reciprocal relationships was seen to underpin the practice and flow through each aspect of the model. Relationships build connections and networks, facilitating everything from social wellbeing to interagency collaboration. Relationships build connection, which in turn fosters social capital (Putnam, 2001). As a principle of practice, relationships are understood to be the anchor that guides all other aspects of the work. In this sense, practitioners develop genuine trusting relationships with residents, which then facilitate the worker being able to respond rapidly to a challenging event or offer support and guidance in a non-threatening way. The research team also observed that relationships between agency workers, the Park Manager and other services also allow the work to be effective. The vignette below (Observation Notes, Wednesday 13 February) captures the importance of relationships in this practice model.

RELATIONSHIPS-IN-ACTION

I arrived early and was able to have an informal chat with workers Mark and Gail. Gail shared a story of a family that used to live in the park and often experienced incidents of domestic violence (DV). The community in the park would intervene and call the cops, which ultimately protected the mother and kids. Now they live in the wider Deception Bay region and are more "invisible". Gail expressed frustration at this as she had built a strong relationship with the younger kids and the mother. Gail's project focuses are families with children 0-12 years. The teen daughter from this particular family had a good connection with Howard when they lived in the park, established through the BBQs. But when they moved, the relationship changed as the family was no longer seeing Howard each fortnight at the BBQs. Howard had identified her as a "high-risk" at dropping out of school and getting in trouble. Gail recalls a community event where she saw the girl with her mother, and they were looking for Howard. The mother now realised that the daughter might benefit from connecting with DBCYP, and Howard was that connection. However, the "referral" didn't occur immediately due to the complexity of barriers when trying to organise a meeting together.

When the connection reoccurred Howard was able to introduce the daughter to a DBCYP youth worker who encouraged her to enroll in a local alternative school. This process took some time and through Gail's continued connection with the mother, Gail was able to broker an appointment. This process did not reach connection until Term 1 of the next year, when the school contacted Gail and she made a couple of home visits to convince them of the benefits of attending an interview. The daughter (at time of writing is 14y.o) is now enrolled in the school but is still at significant risk of engaging in harmful and risky behaviours. While neither Gail nor Howard see the daughter regularly, the relationship that began years ago based on trust and care appears to provide an ongoing "life-line" of hope. The Flexi-school has picked up and built on the relationship with the young woman and her partner and despite ongoing issues the relationships remain constant.

This story highlights the flow of community development work that is relational and developmental. Opportune moments arise in non-clinical, regimented and service settings. Timing can be a catalyst for essential work. Non-interventionist spaces/approaches actually facilitate prevention, with relationships being key.

The above story highlights the value of an ongoing opportunity for practitioners to relate and connect with residents in an informal way. Relationships, in this practice are spun through a web of many relationships, from schools, non-government organisations to workers and residents. This in turn, acts as a highly responsive linking mechanism, where individual need is attended to via networks. Further to this, the quality of relationships involved in this practice model, can act as a vital source of hope, a life-line in times of severe circumstances.

Engaging communication

This element of practice refers to how workers engage in communication with residents of the park. Important dimensions of using engaging communication include:

- Regular communications with people in the residential park either through face to face chats, developing a Facebook page for online communications, using accessible and enticing design to promote events through posters and so on.
- Always using non-jargon and inclusive language that meets people where they are.
- Taking literacy seriously, encouraging children's literacy and also being sensitive to adult literacy needs.
- Transparency, communicating openly about intentions.
- Knowing that not everyone will participate, but communicating in ways so they can.

This principle prioritises inclusivity. The research team noted this aspect was applied through many facets of the approach; from the promotional posters to events, to the ways in which workers communicate with residents at the BBQs, often being jovial and relatable.

Enabling participation

This aspect of the model is indicative of the various levels of participation for residents that are important; from small actions of involvement to significant co-design/co-organising. Conversely, residents also allow workers to participate, in the sense that workers enter the resident's "backyards". This results in mutual exchange of participation and trust. Examples include:

- Residents organising the Christmas Carol event.
- Worker dreams of a 'ladder of participation' – e.g. the community forms its own Community Reference Group to lead on future initiatives: *"At first residents will bring ideas for activities to me. Eventually we hope residents will bring their ideas to a Community Reference Group made up of residents."*
- Not just adults, but child experience is also a consideration: *"Thinking cross-generationally – what was this activity like from a kid's point of view? Constantly tweaking."*

- Co-designing “with” residents and community members: *“We’ve done some work to bring resources in. We want explore with you what you’d like to do with these resources.”*
- Shared ownership of resources and assets. This relates to the resources assets not being just for the ‘project’ or organisation, but an important part of community ownership. *“The equipment at Endeavour can be used by anyone – for BBQs, holidays, birthdays...”*

Co-agency collaboration

The importance of various organisations being able to collaborate was a key theme. One worker noted that the quality of communication and collaboration within the Alliance was something they had not experienced before when doing similar service/community development work. Again, examples include:

- Multiple agencies collaborating to organise the fortnightly BBQs has meant the workload is shared. People suggested that we, *“Need at least three working agencies on-site to make the BBQs work, any fewer and it becomes too difficult to ensure that there are always sufficient staff to assist.”*
- *“More organisations are involved in the BBQs now – this makes the BBQs more sustainable. Takes the burden off me.”*

Practitioner agility

Crucial is the quality and skills of the practitioner, and several key ideas have been listed under ‘practitioner agility’. This term refers to the ability of a practitioner to be fully present and responsive to people, place and phenomenon.

- Practitioners come to the space with an attitude of playfulness and responsivity; not predominantly in service-mode; workers engage playfully yet remain alert to their primary intention.
- Relationships with role clarity: workers primarily engage in relationship with residents; role is important but secondary. As someone suggested, *“fluid role”, “[you] keep your role at the gate.”*
- Boundary negotiating: staff comment on experiences of friendship with residents whereby it is important to not be rigid about professional boundaries. Workers are thoughtful about how to combine professionalism with positive gestures of reciprocity. The reality is that workers are valued people in residents’ lives – there’s scope to welcome and respect that.
- Flexibility to support creating deep connections: *“I’m not constrained by the need to spend a certain amount of time at an office. I can go to night meetings. Easier to access to communities.”*

Soft Entry and Space-Making

This refers to two of the key intentions of the work so far to:

1. Make a safe space; and
2. Create a soft entry for residents to connect relationally with workers (which enables access to support and referral in a non-clinical setting).

The soft entry approach was observed by the research team at one particular BBQ, when gentle conversations took place with a young woman (resident) experiencing some personal issues. The workers connected her with an agency able to help her cope with what she was experiencing, all while outdoors enjoying a BBQ. Someone described this aptly: *“Where there are levels of kindness, people want to be there.” “In a world that’s so commodified, it is nice to have these spaces where we can just be.”*

Emphasising Resource and Agency – not ‘the problem’

While many social interventions are problem oriented or even problem saturated (with many workers attracted to a problem like bees to honey), this model focuses on resources and agency within people, groups and the park. In turn, resources are linked to need as quickly as possible.

Longevity of practice – the Long Haul

Workers highlighted this, also commenting that it is almost too obvious to mention – the importance of time for this kind of work cannot be underestimated. When establishing relationships with people, workers understand that they must move at the pace of those they are connecting with and *“connect on their terms”*. For example, workers said:

- Alliance staff have been working with the one community for near and over 10 years. *“The children in the park have known me for years.”*

Mandates and Accountability

This theme acknowledges that there are multiple mandates and accountabilities in the work, not just the mandate of the organisation and funder, and not just accountability ‘upwards’ towards funder. Mandate refers to legitimacy in the work and also needs to be downwards (to residents) as well as upwards (to organisation/funder).

- In particular, this aspect is applied as workers invite the ideas and voices of residents in regard to formulating ‘what is to be done.’ As a worker reports: *I really wanted people to tell me what to do. [...] if they told me what to do and then they would have some ownership and be part of that, so I was, I follow that fairly faithfully.*

Systems Thinking and Practice

The model requires not just a problem focus on residents, but a relational and strengths approach working with many elements of a complex system. In turn the practice needs to work and relate within an ecological frame. This means working not just with residents but the relationships and systems – inclusive of agencies, caravan park managers, police, other services. An example:

- The ecological nature of this practice is evidenced in the way in which workers have been able to support and advocate for residents when encountering issues with police or government agencies. Having an existing relationship with residents means workers understand the complexities of their situation and can therefore respond appropriately.

Creativity and Play

This aspect speaks to the creativity demonstrated by practitioners as they negotiate boundaries, relationships, respond to and engage with children and adult residents in an intentional yet spirited playful manner. One worker commented that their practice is based on listening and in creating an environment *“like a real BBQ, a place to chat”*. A part of this approach was to bring *organic practice*, being on people's level, talking their language. The practice vignette on the following illuminates this in action.

A STORY OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE, GAIL AND MARCIA*

**All names of residents have been changed to protect their identities.*

This week I met Marcia, an older aboriginal woman. She has been living here for a while. Marcia, Gail, a worker from the Benevolent Society (BS) and I were seated around chatting. Marcia noticed the NDIS logo on the BS work shirt and opened up about her brother who lived in NDIS housing. He had turned to extreme alcoholism after the death of his wife and is now severely disabled and lives alone with carers that come and stay regularly. She is not happy with his care. She worries about him. Gail and the BS worker are able to talk to her about his care, ask supportive questions: does he get taken out? Gail uses her humour to draw people out of their shell in the BBQ setting. She makes people feel at ease, almost using a larrikin like persona.

At the moment, Mark is working with a guy who is a podcast maker to help record some of the residents' stories. The theme of the series is a *turning point*. Initially there was interest within the group for the project, yet now people seem to be shy and withdrawn about sharing their yarns. Gail demonstrates her larrikin humour, as James approaches Marcia to share her story (for the project). Marcia was noticeably clamming up, so Gail stepped in and hooted: “meeting me was definitely a turning point for you Marcia! You can say that I'm your turning point.”

In a more earnest shift though, Gail then talks about how Marcia has been very supportive of her in her efforts to diet and lose weight. This sharing of a private or personal matter, and then affirming the significance of this with others creates a sense of value – valuing Marcia's support, care, concern – this then creates a sense of intimacy. It also felt like a gesture of solidarity, both are larger women, they have bonded over this physical struggle. And Gail sharing this bond served (in my perception) to make Marcia feel safe, at ease and valued.

A PRACTICE METHOD

Throughout the evaluation and distillation process the research team also observed there to be a method at work, not just a set of principles as per the elements of the model above. This method moves through three levels, starting with micro-level activity (between worker and a resident), then moving to mezzo-level work that builds on this relationship and expands to include others, before finally moving to macro-level work, which relies on important engagement and relationship with a local auspicing organisation.

Micro-Level

For example, the Project Worker expressed his approach as listening, building relationships, looking for commonalities, bringing a few people together, understanding that he is a resource. The Project Worker describes this process below:

[...] in terms of getting ideas and working around them and trying to get a few people together and connect it up [laughs] get small groups to work on things, see if people want to get together and work on activities...

The worker demonstrates use of a method that works from a micro starting point, being a good connection between worker and resident to a mezzo process, where more people are drawn into the connection, with the intent to build a group activity or initiative. Similar to frameworks from participatory development practice, the method used by the Project Worker is based on “building relationships” then moving to “strengthening groups” and finally, shifting to macro-level work through partnership with a responsive local organisation (Kelly & Westoby, 2018). **Figure three** below depicts the method processes.



FIGURE 3: MICRO, MEZZO AND MACRO-LEVEL METHOD

Mezzo-Level

The Project Worker has several examples of this method in practice, one being the setting up of a closed Facebook page for residents. After hearing from residents that their anxiety made them unable to attend the morning teas being held at the onsite space, the Project Worker connected with some other residents to set-up a Facebook page to see if it could be “another way to breakdown the exchange of information and ideas, for those people

that are more comfortable to work in that space". The method facilitates responsive practice as it is predicated on relationships, where genuine listening has taken place. An additional space that responsiveness takes place, is in the crucial relationship with the auspicing organisation, DBCYP.

Macro-Level

The method applied through the BT@E project (and through the on-going BBQs), moves fluidly between each level (micro, mezzo and macro) in a sequential manner but also returning to the beginning with new relationships and beginning the cycle again. At the final stage of this method and process, is the crucial role of the auspicing organisation, DBCYP. However, DBCYP does not necessarily come as an end result of the other stages. Rather, it plays a critical role of 'holding' and resourcing the work in a flexible and responsive manner at necessary junctures. Furthermore, DBCYP is a community-based organisation with history of over 25 years, providing varied social support for the Deception Bay community. In this particular project, DBCYP has been able to facilitate agile resourcing for project activities; provide guidance, information and professional support for the project worker through regular meetings with a manager who has an extensive history of working in the area and residential park community; and finally, a degree of flexibility and agency not available to projects connected with larger organisations with more bureaucratic procedures and regulations in place.

Additionally, the auspicing body was able to recruit the Project Worker in a relational way. That is to say, that the worker was hired through existing relationships and having suitability for the unique kind of work happening in Endeavour. The end result being, a working environment where the Project Worker has been able to work in a flexible and responsive manner and apply both the practice model and methods in a supported and resourced way.

Tension of Practice at Macro-Level

A significant tension of the practice comes through as workers expressed challenges with managing the expectations and policies within their own organisations. As one practitioner noted:

Sometimes it's really difficult, because you have a lot of flexibility within your role to really work genuinely with the families in the caravan park...and because I'm restricted to a lot of duty of care and you know policies stuff from a [name of employer] perspective, so the stuff that I did with the incident that I told you I was told that "oh look I shouldn't be doing that"...But, I think I should be, because I'm in there to build relationships with these families so it's about actually genuinely a hundred percent backing your workers to be able to do that...

This indicates that it is not only about inducting new workers to the practice approach, but 'managing' upwards within the organisations practitioners work for.

PART TWO: EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation team was given the mandate to examine the effectiveness of two key things: first, the on-going BBQs that have been happening for many years, as an inter-agency initiative; and second, the one-year funded project: BT@E, that has provided a worker, a permanent site in the park, resources and activities.

Both are using a developmental approach (as articulated above), but with different intent. For example, within the discreet BT@E project, a timeframe of one year has shaped the objectives of the work, meaning there has been a notable intention to achieve clearer measurable outcomes – in this case, provide activities, create a cabin space and having a worker present one day a week. Whereas, the longstanding work of the BBQs is ongoing and has no clear end date. It is also important to note that while separate initiatives, there is much overlap and interaction between the two. It is helpful then, to think about the BT@E project as nested within the longer work, and it is impossible to evaluate the former without considering the role of the latter. For example, the Project Worker has commented that making connections with the residents was expedited through the established trust and familiarity connections with locals because of the long-term nature of the BBQs. This is demonstrated through the Project Worker's reflection that it "*definitely fast tracked getting to meet some people*".

With this integrated nature in mind, the research team sought to understand each individual component of the work: the ongoing BBQs and the BT@E, inclusive of the community worker's role, the activities made available and the drop-in cabin space, while reasoning that the culture created through the BBQ work, flows through all aspects. This evaluation framework is depicted in Figure four below:

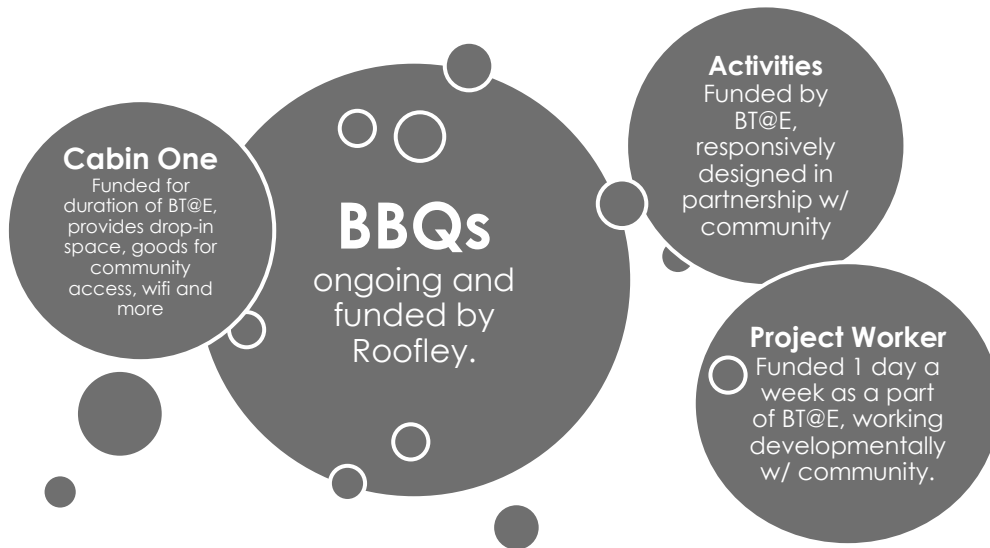


FIGURE 4: THE LAYERS OF THE WORK

To begin evaluation, the report introduces the conceptual lens of appreciative inquiry and how this was applied. Secondly, this section investigates some overarching themes present in both the BBQ and BT@E work. The themes are as follows: Complexity & Culture Shifts; Relationships, Connections & Networks; and Trust in Responding to Trauma. Then, what follows is a deeper analysis of each segment of the 'work' – this includes the BBQs, The Role of the Worker, Cabin One and the Activities. Following this, the report analyses some of the challenges across all aspects of the work, noting points of tension. In a similar light, weaknesses are also highlighted and discussed. Finally, the report makes some future recommendations.

APPLYING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

In applying the Appreciative Inquiry approach to evaluation, the research team focused on asking workers and residents: What's going well about BT@E? What works well about the practice approach used? What do you enjoy about the BBQs? And so on. Appreciative Inquiry was chosen as the framework for these reasons.

1. The work in the park responds creatively to highly complex social, economic and cultural phenomena and interacts with the large systems that influence people's lives. Appreciative Inquiry accommodates complexity (processes that are non-linear, adaptive, emergent, fluid, dynamic). Appreciative Inquiry accommodates systems thinking (attention to boundaries, perspectives, inter-relationships).
2. The work in the park is highly relational and dialogical - appreciative Inquiry shares that approach.
3. The researchers wanted the inquiry to be useful to residents and Alliance. An Appreciative Inquiry process involves co-learning between researchers and participants with a focus on learnings that can be applied and tested immediately.
4. Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based approach to research that is designed to validate and energize the people who are doing a piece of work.

OVERARCHING THEMES

The following subsections were identified as cross-cutting themes over all aspects of the work in Endeavour.

COMPLEXITY & CULTURE SHIFTS

One resident who engaged in the evaluation highlighted a *profound cultural shift* that has emerged in the residential village. It is plausible that this cultural change is reflective of a similar shift experienced in the wider Deception Bay region and that the residential village is a microcosm of such change. Yet, it is the view of the research team that this shift is also due to the many actions and interactions – intentional and organic – linked to work of the Park Manager, the agencies and workers and residents participating in the BBQs. It seems

that the right conditions for culture change have been created. An example of evidence of this profound cultural shift comes from the views of a male resident who said he had lived in the park some 12 years ago and returned five weeks ago. The participant stated that:

12 years ago, it was an unsafe space and I would never have let [Child's Name] play outdoors in the afternoon like he is now... honestly, it was a real nasty place; kids weren't safe, crack heads were everywhere. The work that Mark has been doing and the other workers with the BBQ have really improved the community here.

From a linear approach it would be hard to say what has affected such cultural change. There's certainly no 'silver bullet'. But, from a complexity and living systems perspective, it all makes sense. Gilchrist (2009, p.125) argues that community is a complex system, with the currency of social capital, a "shared resource that can be accessed by all who are connected" flowing through its networks. As Gilchrist (2009 p.125) surmises, "[I]n a complex social system the collective behaviour of the community is not directly deducible from the characteristics of individuals but evolves according to successive interactions between nodes in the networks." Likening this rationale to the observed cultural shift that has occurred in the residential village and the shift is understood as being a direct result of multiple interactions between the nodes – such as the Park Manager, residents and agencies – all adding to the ecology of community life.

Adding to this, George Monbiot (2017) suggests that a turning point in a community culture occurs when about 30% of people start participating in activities, shifting from a 'serviced' and 'atomised' community to a participatory culture. Although the changes are subtle within the Endeavour community, there has been a noted increase in 'participation' within the park, specifically attributed to the Worker's regular presence. As articulated by one worker (Interview W4, 2019):

I've seen banding together really, I guess, provide a platform for a lot of people to be more involved in the caravan park... but because Mark's [Project Worker] been there a little bit more consistently, you see more involvement from people and you see more interest of "oh well, what's going on in the cabin so I would definitely say that's evolved in having him there more permanently..."

The culture shift in Endeavour is a combination of the efforts of many, made possible by the quality of relationships in the community network.

RELATIONSHIPS, CONNECTIONS & NETWORKS

A key element of effectiveness is the way in which the practice emphasises the development of connections. Whereas service models tend to think in linear ways, from prevention, to early intervention and so forth, developmental work is built on ways of understanding change through complexity theory (see Gilchrist's explanation above). Gilchrist expands:

Informal networks enhance people's ability to cope with difficulties and disasters by keeping hope alive and bolstering well-being, even in the face of long-term social exclusion and sudden crises (Cattell, 2001). Sharing scarce resources during times of hardship is common among communities living in poverty or harsh environments and can be crucial to the survival of some community members (Lupton, 2004). (Gilchrist, 2009, p. 4)

In a nutshell, this suggests that networks of connections and relationships are crucial to the health of community. More dense networks enable people's needs to be linked to resources more rapidly, and for people to feel less isolated. Some networks are configured with strong ties and weak ties, nodes, or points where connections come together. For example, the project worker indicated that the existing relationship with the Park Manager as being "*absolutely critical*" (Interview W1, 2019). And as one practitioner so poetically observes, the networked system, of the residential park, works like, "*a coral reef. Everyone has their role to play*" (Interview W2, 2019).

Extending beyond the boundaries of the park BBQs, the connection between residents and workers remains effective. As one worker (Interview W4, 2019) highlights in the excerpt below, they see the relationship building as crucial in enabling them to do their "other job" (outside of BBQs).

So, for me, the benefit [of the BBQs] that I see and what I think works, that works really well, is just the relationship building, really being able to build really strong relationships with the residents. And that's enabled me when I do my other job, so if I see them at school or if I see them down the street or...here or you know, I'm a familiar face and someone who will just chat about random stuff...you know it's that opportunity just to connect.

This clearly demonstrates social connectivity, community networks in action. Yet, connection is not assumed by practitioners as a right or outcome of their presence at the BBQs. A salient theme across all data streams is the cognisance of workers being in 'residents' backyards' and thus needing to respect and connect on 'their terms'. As an excerpt from one interview (Interview, W3, 2019) affirms:

You know, they [residents] don't have to connect just because I want to build a connection... They'll connect on their terms.

At the heart of community connections is trust. Trust speaks to the nature of the relationships and connections, as a practitioner explains (Interview, W3, 2019):

We've actually built a level where we've, you know not only with the residents but with also with Bev the Park Manager – we've got a connection that is beyond a worker, client connection. It's way beyond that. It's actually it's, it's a ...I don't know, I don't know how to describe it [...] it's a far stronger and richer relationship than a service provider/client relationship.

This example of a trustful relationship was also captured through observation and will be touched on further on in the report below. A powerful example of how the trust cultivated

between workers and residents – through intentional developmental practice – and its effect, can be seen in the excerpt from an interview (Interview W4, 2019) below:

W4: Most recently we had a Mum who was living in the caravan park with her step-mum, and her little boy and two or three older siblings. And anyway, and there was an incident and it was quite um, intense and ugly, but if we didn't have that relationship with her when we went down and asked her what was going on, we wouldn't have been able to support her...

EG: Mmm.

W4: ...and I think, that for me is one of the best things that come out of it - is that people feel comfortable to just chat to us about anything and she actually made the comment to Gail and I said, 'oh look, I don't, if it was anyone else I wouldn't trust them, but because you guys are here and we know, you know that um', what did she say she said 'we know that you guys get us and the way that we work so we trust you'.

EG: Mmm.

W4: And I just thought well that's really powerful...

EG: Mmm.

W4: ...because yeah that's why for me we're here. It's about building those connections and then being able to support those families, you know in, to connect with the other services out here...

EG: Yeah.

W4: ...it's about connection um, so for me that's the purpose of the BBQ's and I think it does work and when that incident happened it made me think well it does really work well.

AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO TRAUMA

Many of the residents at Endeavour are dealing with both personal and ongoing systemic trauma. Systemic trauma is understood as “the contextual features of environments and institutions that give rise to trauma, maintain it, and impact posttraumatic responses” (Goldsmith, Gamache Martin & Parnitzke Smith, 2014, p. 118). As a framework for envisioning trauma, the notion of systemic trauma includes the ways in which cultural norms, institutions, churches, the education system and so forth, affect and perpetuate individual suffering (Goldsmith, Gamache Martin & Parnitzke Smith, 2014). This trauma colours some residents' everyday experience and determines their capacity to participate in the micro (activities in the park community), as well as the macro (society more broadly). In an interview with one worker (Interview, W3, 2019), they expressed conceiving of systemic trauma as being perpetuated through residents' interactions with agencies inept at responding to their existing trauma:

I think more than anything else we would like to reveal the unrelenting and cyclic nature of the trauma that the residents in the caravan park are experiencing, whether that be personal trauma...through their own personal history of events or whether it be systemic trauma with their interactions with agencies that have not been able to respond to their personal trauma.

It is important to note this context as the practicing environment in which workers at the BBQs and the BT@E project must operate.

Additionally, during the seven-month long evaluation phase, there were two significant traumatic events at Endeavour, impacting the community collectively. The first, is alluded to earlier, and involved an Aboriginal child being forcibly taken from his mother and carer. Over three days, the child was hidden by other residents as Department of Child Safety, Women and Families came to take him into care. The family (older teenage brothers and mother) had been causing significant trouble and tension within the park. The second event occurred only few months after and involved an elderly man suffering from both mental and severe physical illnesses being shot by police. This traumatic event was witnessed by a young resident, who is a regular at the BBQs and also involved in a program with the auspicing organisation, DBCYP. As workers from the Alliance have an existing relationship of trust with this young woman, nurtured through ongoing contact at the BBQs, they were able to rapidly and attentively respond to her need for support after witnessing such a violent incident. Furthermore, the event sent shocks throughout the whole residential park, with many families worried about the impact of witnessing such an event on their children. The below passage from a DBCYP report on the incident and subsequent response from the Alliance highlights the effectiveness of the developmental approach in responding to trauma:

The coordinated response was simple, hold a BBQ in the park (like we had been doing for almost a decade) and invite residents to join in. Three workers turned up at the park at 9:30am to run the BBQ and assist anyone who was experiencing trauma from the previous day's events.

The result was evidence that this approach works. It started with a couple of residents sitting under the gazebo chatting and helping out with the BBQ. Then others joined the group – young mums with their little children, older folk, dads and single men and the ever-reliable Park Manager (who incidentally was recovering from a heart attack she had only three weeks earlier) – all who at some point had been part of the fortnightly BBQs. One of the young mums said... "oh thank goodness you are here...I have been too scared to let the kids out of the Van since 2pm yesterday (3yr and 14-month-old)...".

They all felt comfortable in this environment, sitting around in a circle and talking about the events of the day before. Some were angry with Police, some were angry with the media reports, some were angry with other residents for giving the impression to the media that the park was a dangerous place to live. Most just needed to vent. We provided a safe place for this to occur. Some just needed to listen to the others so they could make sense of what had happened relative to the viewpoints of others. The workers skillfully listened, responded, facilitated and enabled the discussion to be productive and inclusive.

While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation project to analyse the extenuating and flow-on effects of these events in detail, what this project has taken into account is the ways in which practitioners have been able to respond. That is to say, the developmental approach informing the work done through the BBQs and BT@E, has facilitated a unique way of responding to trauma. This is evidenced on the following page through a passage from an interview with a worker.

The below excerpt from an interview with a practitioner captures the intention behind the practice approach when applied in the context of trauma work.

W3: Now as community agencies doing work in this space...
EG: Yeah.
W3: ...we are very aware that we could easily, quite easily be perceived as being the ones who cause trauma. However, that's why we've taken the relational approach...
EG: Yes, right.
W3: ... in this work, because the relational approach says 'hey we're with you'...'hey you can tell your story to us and we're not going to go and repeat it...or we are not going to go and use this story against you, we are going to actually just ask you more about your story in terms of building the relationship.
EG: Yeah.
W3: And you may ask us about our story, and we will tell you our story as well...to build that relationship. Um, that to me is the core of, um, the core purpose of relational work in terms of how we respond to intense trauma...um, because we sometimes, I think, I think as a society we think that anyone who has experienced intense trauma the only way they can be healed is to go through some sort of therapeutic process...
EG: Yep.
W3: ...which may be the case and may be helpful, but I think more often than not it's having people around you...
W3: ...who can be those voices of reason, to be those voices of compassion, you know those voices of care, um, who will not judge you and who will just be walking along side you...and you know I've watched the agencies that the, you know the workers...
EG: Mmm.
W3: ...from the agencies and I sometimes um, I sometimes go away with a tear my eye because it's just so beautiful watching the way that some of these workers are responding to the intense trauma that their hearing...

Where traditional models of service delivery can pathologise those experiencing trauma (thus, continuing the experience), the developmental response is one of solidarity. The BBQs act as an ongoing site where positive experiences can “foster norms of reciprocity”, “that generate trust” (Dukes, Williams & Kelban, 2012, p. 234), essentially cultivating ‘social capital’ (Putnam, 2001). Dukes, Williams and Kelban, (2012, p. 234) argue that this cultivation of social capital “must then be a key part of resilience in the face of trauma.”

EVALUATING THE BBQS

As described earlier, fortnightly BBQs have been taking place at Endeavour for over eight years. Of significance, the BBQs are ingrained into the identity and culture of the park. All evaluation methods indicate people love the BBQs, both practitioners and residents alike. However, the effect of the BBQ is multi-faceted, and not easy to distil in finite terms. As a regular activity within the residential park, the BBQs provide food, benign services such as haircuts and bike servicing and a crucial opportunity for residents to get together and socialise. Importantly, they also function as a soft-entry point for services to engage with residents in a non-threatening way. Furthermore, workers were seen to demonstrate authentic rapport with residents, indicating a depth and quality of relationship, beyond the usual professionalised service worker and ‘client’ dynamic. International research

indicates that these kinds of approaches are fundamental in improving “the health and well-being of children and families experiencing significant impacts from disadvantage”, with findings pointing to “non-stigmatising, soft-entry, relationship-based approaches” as critical to “tackling complex disadvantage” (Logan Together, 2018).

Attendance

The fortnightly BBQs are open to any of the residents at Endeavour and a select number of agencies working in the area are also invited along. The numbers fluctuate each time, with an average of 6-12 adult residents and a similar number of children attending. The number of agencies present also varies and at times the number of ‘workers’ has outnumbered the residents, causing some tensions (discussed later in the report). It was observed that there is a core group who attend the BBQs regularly, with another segment of residents that attend occasionally and a final group being those in crisis short-term accommodation.

A Key Role in Community Life

The BBQs play a major role within the community at Endeavour; at a very basic level, they provide food for families or people who are living on the edge. However, primarily they serve as occasion for adults to socialise and children to play. For the children, the ability to play in an open, public safe-space, with a supportive community around them clearly contributes to fostering their wellbeing. Likewise, play is an essential aspect of child development, as is being around positive role models and supportive relationships (Jennings, 2017). Both the research team and Project Worker noted that the children in park played together very well; they look out for one another, collaborating, caring and sharing. Comparatively, in a privileged kids BBQ there would be much more parental supervision and more conflict between children. In the park, there’s no snatching of toys.



FIGURE 5: CHILDREN ORGANISE FOR ICECREAM

Social Benefits

For the residents who do attend the fortnightly BBQs, most indicated it they enjoyed the social aspect of them first and foremost (14 out of 19 who said they attend the BBQs), with food a close second. Somewhat striking is one residents' comment that they enjoyed:

The fact that everyone's hanging out. It's a good feeling – opposite from the agro (aggressive behaviour) [usually happening outside in the park]. It's satisfying for mental wellbeing.

The positive social atmosphere that is created at these BBQs should not be underestimated, especially when many residents are dealing with both personal and systemic trauma and significant disadvantage. Additionally, a strong culture of shared and supportive parenting between a couple of single-mothers was observed. At the BBQs, they can relax a bit, as other safe adults are engaging with their kids.

The socialising and play invariably contribute to resident wellbeing, however, there is a purposefulness to the sociability at the BBQs. The BBQs – inclusive of food, activities (cooking, packing up and setting down, and children's games), location and attendees – all combine to create the grounds for connections to form. And from these connections, a process of networking occurs, building community. The scope of connections includes new arrivals in the park to residents connecting with service providers.

Building Connections

On four occasions, the research team observed families (and once, a single woman) who had just arrived in Endeavour in crisis circumstances join the BBQs, making new social connections. As the community gathering occurs out in the open, it quickly gives them opportunity to connect to other residents over food and conversation. Usually, the initial introduction or curiosity comes from the children. Having free food available also works as a fast-track to community. The below vignette from observation notes (Wednesday 23 January 2019) captures this in effect:

A new family arrive half way through the event (Circus Connect + BBQ). They feel safe to approach the group as their children are eager to be involved and approach the session with openness. The children make easy conversation with me, telling me their names and ages and what activities they like. The parents don't make conversation with the other adults. Yet, after a short-while, the mother says to me:

"They miss their baby sister"

"Where is she?" I reply

"Her Dad abducted her in the middle of the night. She's somewhere with him, but who knows where? I've been to get a DVO out on him."

The mother went on to tell me the family had arrived in crisis circumstances the night before. The gathering (Circus Connect + BBQ) provided a clear opportunity for the family to make connections. Children act as a conduit for these connections to form.

The following week, the researcher observed this same mother talking with one of the service providers, who was able to offer gentle advice on how to get her children enrolled in school for the year. In this respect, the BBQs provide a soft-entry approach for services to connect with families experiencing complexity who may not have the knowledge or resources to seek out specific services. Soft-entry approaches – taking formal services to non-threatening and familiar spaces that families go to – are known as effective strategies for reaching hard to reach groups and those experiencing vulnerabilities (Muir et al., 2010). Evidence of residents being easefully connected with necessary services was captured across both observation and interview data, triangulating the finding that a core strength of the BBQs is the connections that flow between service providers and residents. This is indicative of linking, being understood as, “the links between people or organisations beyond peer boundaries, cutting across status and similarity and enabling people to gain influence and resources outside their normal circles” (Gilchrist, 2009, p.12). That is to say, the BBQs provide residents with access to people outside of their immediate community and social sphere. At times, this can result in being linked with a particular service or resource they may need.

Relationships of Purpose

Importantly, the relationships between service providers and residents appeared to be something beyond a referral pathway. There was a genuine trust and friendship manifest in the social dynamics between agencies and residents. The research team observed on one occasion, a resident approaching a worker and asking if they could keep a secret. In the observation notes, they wrote:

The moment seemed intimate, like it transcended the boundaries of the usual client and service provider dynamic.

Later on, during the project, the research team too established ties with some of the residents and learned that residents valued the opportunity to connect with others outside of the park as there can be lots of ‘gossip’ within the community. Outsiders (workers) provide a non-judgmental ear to talk to. One of the residents surveyed also remarked that what they enjoyed about the BBQs was: “Meeting people – including the staff. It’s good to be able to talk to someone outside of the caravan park.”

Creating Agency Networks

In a similar way, the BBQs serve as an important place for workers to network and get to know one another, facilitating a cross-flow of information. This networking opportunity breaks down traditional siloed approaches to service delivery, identified as inadequate in addressing complex disadvantage (Logan Together, 2018). It creates a more holistic and collaborative way of working. As explained in this excerpt from an interview with project worker (Interview,W1, 2019):

EG: What do you think works well about the BBQ's, having attended for the past little while?

W1: Yeah um, well there's a few things, one I think it's a fantastic way for different organisations to get workers to get together [laughs]. [...] I don't think you should underplay that, the fact that the workers are prepared to come along and commit and get to chat and talk to one another... I think is, is great, um, ah, the openness of it is useful like, anyone can come along...

This same sentiment is echoed by another practitioner: (Interview, W2, 2019) "it's really bought an opportunity for us (multiple agencies) to network and collaborate as a group...". The fortnightly BBQs provide a strategic opportunity for bringing together multiple agencies so they can share, knowledge, skills and link with services and resources more swiftly. As Gilchrist affirms, this networking engenders healthy multi-agency partnerships:

The evidence from practice suggests that networking is a holistic process, involving a strategic interweaving of knowledge, skills and values. It is a vital aspect of community development, as well as supporting multi-agency partnerships and alliances that span organisational boundaries (Gilchrist, 2009, p.121).

The quality of the relationships between the Alliance has allowed the agencies to respond quickly and effectively to two major situations that have occurred in the park recently (reflected on earlier).

EVALUATING THE ROLE OF THE PROJECT WORKER – BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Unanimously, within the park community, people feel very fondly towards the Project Worker. Residents reported feeling like it was easy to establish a relationship with him [Mark]. As one resident enthuses: "I really love coming here [Cabin One]! I look forward to Wednesdays! Mark is a lovely man who has helped me a lot!" As alluded to earlier, The Project Worker feels they were able to expedite relationship-building due to the work already done in through the ongoing BBQs. In their capacity as Project Worker, they have been able to provide varied kinds of support to people, from a friendly ear to talk to, to more pronounced acts of support, such as organising financial literacy workshops at the request of residents.

Fostering Social Connection

The social connection these interactions provide should not be overlooked, particularly as research asserts that in low-income areas "relational well-being" is scant, with families and individuals assuming "social isolation as a strategy for survival" (Bess & Doykos, 2014, p. 269). This isolating strategy is reinforced when they "perceive their neighbors as untrustworthy and threatening rather than as a source of support and connection" (Bess & Doykos, 2014, p. 269). As an evaluation indicator, the Project Worker's role as a facilitator of social connection is an important one. The worker observed that one particular resident who is exceptionally shy and reserved made the effort to visit and talk with him, turning up the following week to be deterred by the other three residents already there chatting. It is also important to highlight that the personal attributes and working approach of the Project Worker are essential in facilitating social connection. The Project Worker was identified as

having the right attitude, personality and an obvious relatability, which enabled a certain sociability in the residential park setting. The role of Cabin One as a vital community space will be discussed further on in the report. Here, it is helpful to note that it has become a site of weekly “ritual” gatherings where the Project Worker and community members engage in “chewing the fat” (Fortnightly report, week 26).



FIGURE 6: A FORTNIGHTLY BBQ AT CABIN ONE

The Role of Knowledge Broker

The Project Worker also plays a role as a ‘knowledge broker’, sharing, sourcing and verifying information for residents. This role has both subtle and significant effects in an individualised context and when applied to a group, such as when the Project Worker has organised workshops. For example, the Project Worker indicated in a report (Fortnightly report, week 26) that they were going to verify if residents were ineligible for government housing as they had four children, as this is what they had been ‘told’. Undoubtedly, this information could be of significant benefit to the family. Knowledge brokering was also applied to a group, through the organising of educative workshops, such as a First Aid session. It could even be argued that the Project Worker’s lead role in organising the install of Wi-Fi – which is free and accessible for residents when in the vicinity of Cabin One – has empowered residents with knowledge and information. As one resident asserts: [the] ‘Wi-Fi is helpful as when I run out of credit, I can still do my job search’.

Continuity of Presence & Supporting Capacity Building

In regard to the role, the continuity of having a worker presence on-site weekly has had a significant impact on broadening the reach of the work. That is to say, the worker has had the space to reach out to other members of the park community, beyond the regular or itinerate attendees of the BBQs. In an interview with one worker, they reflect on this extension of reach as having exciting potential, as explained below:

Yeah, I think it's awesome that Mark [Project Worker] is there every Wednesday...I think that continuity is really important. I think the activities that he has done have worked really well...I think the fact that he has tried to chat to different residents, not just children and families is good as well...getting that different interest. I think the potential of that moving [forward] mean that next steps are really exciting. (Interview, w4, 2019)

What the worker refers to as being exciting is the possibility of building the capacity of residents to take on leadership of managing Cabin One. In their fortnightly reports the worker makes reference to two residents who say they are interested in the possibility of volunteering to supervise Cabin One on days of the worker's absence. While this is yet to transpire, the wave of confidence that these residents feel to even begin the negotiations of taking on more ownership and leadership within the community speaks volumes. Considering the life complexities and marginalisation many residents experience, the fact that they feel emboldened to assume some responsibility can be attributed to the effectiveness of the Project Worker's role and how they have managed to build trust and confidence.

The consistency of having a Project Worker there weekly was also reported as being of benefit to other agency workers as a challenge in the work previously was in the BBQs being only held fortnightly. On occasions where workloads or illness prohibited a worker from attending, it would mean a month before returning. As the worker (Interview, W3, 2019) confirms:

...and that's the thing, that having Mark there on that weekly basis...as the project worker, that has been enormous...in us being able to maintain connection, because Mark becomes our conduit...for that continuous connection...

Continuity of connection has been valuable for the residents, Project Worker and the other agencies in the Alliance.

Agility & a 'Light Agenda'

Furthermore, the Project Officer has demonstrated an agility and adaptability essential to a developmental approach. The 'negotiable agenda' style of this work, and how the role of Project Worker has been created to reflect that, has meant they have been able to be responsive; trial and error activities according to community need and engagement. As Gilchrist (2009 p. 122) argues, "workers need the flexibility and confidence to respond opportunistically to events occurring outside of their intentions or control."

According to the perceptions of residents, the Project Worker inhabits an agenda-less role (which we have titled 'light agenda') and is not seen to be attached to an organisation or service. This in turn facilitates a positive effect in that residents have opened up to them in ways they normally wouldn't when the service worker to client dynamic is present. As the Project Worker (Interview, W1, 2019) confirms:

the strength would be yeah, it's, I think people see that there's no agenda or anything here [laughs] um...they disclose some stuff that probably makes them look a bit bad, but they don't have many issues disclosing that [laughs], cause they can see that I'm not necessarily attached to someone in a reporting sense or anything...

The challenges and weaknesses of the role of Project Worker will be discussed further on in the report.

EVALUATING THE CABIN – A THIRD PLACE AS VITAL TO THE PARK

As a core component of the BT@E project, a permanent cabin space was rented out and used as a site for the Project Worker to operate out of. Throughout this report this is referred to as Cabin One. Far from being solely a workspace for the Project Worker, Cabin One became a multi-purpose zone housing clothes, books, food, toys, computer and Wi-Fi access and many other resources for park residents to access.

Mutual Support & Beyond

Cabin One assumed a role similar to a neighbourhood centre, facilitating a flow of informal mutual support. Mutual support being understood as help (resources, social support etc.) for "community members in times of need" (Greene et al., 2019, p.123). It is pertinent to note that here mutual support encompasses a broader process than simply a direct one-way exchange. Rather, this project assumes that people come (to the cabin space) for self-interest at the outset, such as needing resources or feeling lonely, but soon after this can develop into relationships with others, which can in turn, facilitate shifts to a more other-oriented or community-interested mindset. This in turn, becomes a fertile ground for more community ties to evolve.

When asked whether they had accessed the resources on offer at the cabin, 19 out of 23 residents had used the space or accessed some of the offerings, with most stating either were useful to them. As one survey respondent states: "Yes, I've accessed everything. [How did you find the things available to you?] Good – helpful, especially the kid's clothes."



FIGURE 7: CABIN ONE – THE THIRD PLACE

The Physicality of Cabin One

The physical aspect of Cabin One was also highlighted as of importance, specifically in the context of being a safe space for children to play outside of the confines of their home dwelling. Research indicates that there are numerous challenges and dangers for families raising children in residential villages, among them being the lack of safe spaces to play (Stuart, 2008). In particular, these are exacerbated by weather conditions such as sun and heat, rain and cold (Stuart, 2008). Further to weather conditions, a lack of safety provisions such as fencing or risks associated with exposure to child protection issues, also impede children's capacity for safe play (Stuart, 2008). With this in mind, the impact of Cabin One as a safe space for children to play, rest and socialise – as it was observed being used for on many occasions – is a definite beneficial outcome of the BT@E project. Not only were children observed playing and socialising joyfully by the researcher on multiple occasions, but three parents surveyed reported appreciating the cabin as an accessible space. As articulated by one resident: *"It is good as a space to send the kids to play and be undercover, where it is safe and there's a breeze and shade."*

Young people in the park expressed an appreciation for the free Wi-Fi access, reporting it to be helpful for a range of purposes, especially as a back-up when they had run out of credit due to a lack of funds. The security of having access to internet, when many services

such as Centrelink are now heavily digitised is of definite benefit to residents. However, Cabin One's most notable strength or role is in its function as a *third place*.

The Cabin as a Third Place

The notion of a third place was first coined by urban sociologist, Ray Oldenburg who thought of a third place "as a place of refuge other than the home or workplace where people can regularly visit and commune with friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers" (in Mehta & Bosson, 2010, p. 780). In a setting such as a residential park like Endeavour, where residents experience complex disadvantage and trauma and often do not have a place of employment to escape to, an external site of refuge is of significant value. The value placed on this space was apparent through three data gathering mechanisms: observations, interviews and surveys. In the surveys comments ranged from: "It's a good space to drop in for a yarn" to "it is good as a social area" and the more enthusiastic "I really love coming here! I look forward to Wednesdays!" The Project Worker also noted that the space acted as an attractant:

The space here's been really good. It surprised me I guess, some people were just... they just literally wonder in, they've never met me, and I've never seen them before, and they go "ah so what goes on here". Like I just love it when that happens, that's great [laughs]...it opens conversation and lets me say, "well this is what's happening now, what would you like to have in here and different stuff, so that's been really good.

The third place operates to attract residents that are not necessarily engaged in any of the existing work, sparking a new connection for the worker, but it also functions as a space for sociability to occur; where residents, workers and the Park Manager can engage in generous banter that strengthens the quality of bonds between each other. Through observations, the research team saw conversations take place that were casual and convivial, but also more serious discussions that acted as a space for concerns to be aired.

EVALUATING THE ACTIVITIES – PARTICIPATION TO ANIMATE CONNECTION

In addition to the space of Cabin One, and through the BT@E, a series of activities were put on in the park. These activities came from suggestions by park residents and have been further refined through a process of on-going negotiation and engagement. The activities on offer included:

1. Footy tipping;
2. a Facebook group (to try and encourage participation and community dialogue from more reclusive residents);
3. a Wild Life visit;
4. Circus Connect Workshop;
5. Afternoon Soccer;
6. \$tress-Less (a financial literacy workshop);
7. *Tell Your Story: A Turning Point* – an audio media storytelling initiative.

8. A First Aid workshop;
9. Wi-fi / computer access: and,
10. Several external trips (excursions) with residents.

By far the most popular activity was the footy tipping, with 35 residents reporting to have participated. The second most popular activity was the Wild Life visit, with residents indicating they liked that they came to them and animals were involved (animals are not allowed on site). Despite there being low-engagement with the other activities, the positive feedback from those residents who did partake, demonstrates that participation has significant positive benefits to wellbeing. As exemplified by these comments from residents, when asked what they enjoy about the activities:

- *Makes you happy on the inside! Something to do instead of stare at the walls.*
- *The whole community thing. Its improved the community here.*
- *Gets me out of the house doing something with the kids.*
- *Everybody partakes and it brings light into some of them.*
- *Fun – you get to do something but then you also get a bit of a chat.*

In essence, all of these statements confirm that the social dimension of the activities has a beneficial impact, both individually – overcoming isolation – and for the community.



FIGURE 8: CIRCUS CONNECT WORKSHOP

CHALLENGES ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF 'THE WORK'

Despite the varied positive achievements of the BT@E project and the ongoing work done through the BBQs, there are certain challenges that impede a full realisation of possibilities to improve the lives of residents. To begin to understand these challenges, this section will start by sketching the broader contextual issues at play. Following this, there will be a discussion on the challenges surrounding engagement, such as prohibitive factors to resident participation. Then, this section of the report moves to an interrogation of the challenges surrounding the practice approach. That is to say, a developmental approach is quite unique to the wider cultural norm of social work and service delivery in Australia, therefore certain challenges arise in the delivery of this model. Finally, the report looks at practical challenges, such as funding cycles.

Contextual Issues

Like many communities, Endeavour is very diverse in its residential makeup. For example, some households work a standard 9am-5pm day, five days a week, whereas others are recluses and choose to keep to themselves. Some residents have mobility issues and there are also residents with health and mental health issues that require specific attention. Additionally, there are single parent families with three plus children, living alongside those who deal and take drugs, such as ice and marijuana. What these groupings reveal is a significant diversity of social, physical, emotional and material needs all co-existing in the one setting. This in turn means that: a) the developmental approach will not resonate with all residents; b) social and community gatherings, such as the BBQ, are either not appealing, accessible or in some cases, are avoided by some residents (not wanting to interact or come in contact with other people's problems); and c) the cabin space (and its resources) and the activities of offer through the BT@E, do not meet the immediate needs or concerns of some residents. For example, a resident grappling with issues such as alcoholism and substance abuse may not feel confident attending a BBQ with 'workers' present.

Endeavour also has high mobility, meaning many short-term and crisis accommodation residents come through the site. Yet, there are also residents who have lived there longer than ten years. This disparity can cause challenges for creating bonds; between residents and workers alike. Evidence of the impact of this can be seen in the below comment in the Project Worker's fortnightly report (Fortnightly report, n.26, 2019):

It was also voiced that more generally some residents are reluctant to connect with other residents, (seems to me this runs roughly along lines of long-term residents vs. short-term residents) because they don't want to get 'involved in anything' (by which I understand that this means seen to be taking sides in disputes) or alternatively they are tired of being asked for 'do you have a spare \$5' or some food. These concerns were voiced to me as a reason why some residents keep pretty much to themselves.

The propensity to withdraw from social engagement, due to the perceived risk of being caught up in others' problems could also cause an unwillingness to partake in the activities organised through BTE.

Engagement

As touched on above, there are some obvious social reasons residents do not engage with any of the activities on offer (BBQs, cabin space and organised activities) in the park. Some people want profound privacy, and do not want engagement. Conversely, there are some residents very willing to engage in creating community; those who attend the BBQs frequently, contribute and help-out and assume responsibility. While this seems an inevitable part of community engagement (there being a spectrum of involvement and interest in all places), it does lend itself to the challenge of some residents feeling strong ownership of the BBQs, and therefore doing the work; setting up, helping out, cooking and so on, while simultaneously deterring others to possibly step-up. This notion emerged in the context of one resident, who was very involved in the BBQs having a heart attack and consequently was unable to contribute. However, in his absence, other residents were able to step forward and assume more responsibility, which begs the question of how participation and involvement are supported through the 'fluidity' of the BBQs (Interview, W4, 2019).

In the survey data there was a predominant theme of shame – in the sense that people expressed embarrassment about living at Endeavour and/or their circumstances. For example, when asked how long they'd lived here, many answers indicated people do not like being there and see it as impermanent. Essentially, shame produces challenges around issues of 'respect' and engagement and helping. In turn, shame renders individuals unable to connect so easily with those perceived to judge them, or even wanting to 'help'.

Another barrier or challenge to engagement is differing ways of being in/with time. That is to say, the project worker in his interview communicated challenges with negotiating times and dates for events and meetings, stating that as residents live on a day-by-day basis, they will sometimes miss an agreed-to planned meeting. Residents will comment with something like, 'oh, that got away from me'. The Project Worker reflected that this seems to be a way of being in the caravan park that's different to more resourced populations and communities. Understandably, this hinders the community worker's capacity to build relationships and gentle along community processes, both foundational to the developmental approach.

Challenges for Activities

Activities came with a few specific challenges. Of note, is that much discussion had taken place in early 2018 with residents about what kind of activities they would like to see in the park pre-roll out of the BT@E. However, when implementation begun in 2019 many of these residents had moved on. This meant that the mandate had been negotiated with residents no longer living there, resulting in confusion for those now living in Endeavour around what the activities were, their purpose and also, what the role of Project Worker was.

Further challenges have been around participation and follow-up. The Project Worker reflected that perhaps some of the barriers people face in terms of attending diarised meetings is that residents' lives are somewhat unpredictable, complex, and people do not know what's unfolding from day to day. The Project Worker also identified challenges around willingness and confidence to step into responsibility with some of the residents.

Challenges of Practice Approach

The way in which workers and their respective agencies have come to approach their work in the park (explained earlier in the practice model), differs from many normative styles of service delivery. This in turn, brings layers of complexity when communicating the details and subtleties to government organisations like Child Safety, other services and workers and residents alike. Across four interviews with practitioners, aspects of this challenge surfaced. The question of how to induct workers who come into the park, yet do not understand the approach or culture of working with the residents, is a common concern. As one worker describes below (Interview W1, 2019) this is a challenge of mentality:

Yeah, there's a couple of workers I guess who are still definitely from that service thing, you know like a couple of times we've had the BBQ here, I think you were here...Yeah so a couple of weeks before that they had one here and this worker just drove in a park the car right up here [in front of Cabin One] and there was only a few people here and it was just at the start but for the entire BBQ she left her car there and then at the end she had to go so out she goes. My sense is that she just had no sense of you don't just go and drive and park when it's someone's home...not that this is someone's home but still, it's extending that attitude through to the place.

The disconnect or trouble of differing mentality, seems to manifest around a lack of respect or sensitivity that workers are coming into "people's backyards" (Interview W4, 2019).

In an interview with another practitioner, the issue crystallises around the notions of 'consistency' and 'relationship building'. As explained below:

Ok, I'm a bit concerned about some agencies who come and go and are not consistent and haven't put in the hard yards of building the relationships and I think...

EG: So, it's that agency consistency.

W4: ...yeah, we need to tighten that up...we definitely, and we've even had comments from the park manager...saying as such you know, like where are all these people coming from, where, who invited them and where or why are they here? So, we do need to tighten that up but not that, I don't wanna [sic] become a gatekeeper for this work...

This poses as a challenge in the following ways: first, how to communicate the work to other agencies effectively so they are respectful and aware of the approach used in the

park. But, also how to do this without existing workers acting as gatekeepers, trying to maintain a culture and potentially not allowing new life to come into the work.

Interagency Tension

A further tension, of a similar vein, surfaces in the area of interagency work. In particular, when the agencies in the Alliance need to work with a government body, e.g. Department of Child Safety, Women and Children. In an interview, one worker expressed frustration at the organisation funding Banding Together in Endeavour, yet not being open to talking with the practitioners about their views on situations.

So, for me like it's really frustrating because it's like well you've funded this banding together project to say yeah look well go in there, build relationship with the community and you know it's about building the resilience to keep them out of care...but then they don't want to work with us to [laughs]it's so frustrating, so frustrating. How does that work? Funding us to be in there and to provide this service...but then you're not even acknowledging that and then you're like yeah, don't even want to talk to us... (Interview, W4, 2019)

As the excerpt demonstrates, there's a notable divide between the way in which government services operate and the ongoing approach used by practitioners.

Expectations of the Role of Project Worker

A further challenge of the practice approach arises in the way in which residents relate to the practice of the Project Worker. That is to say, for some residents a service mode of working is all they are accustomed to, therefore, when the Project Worker does not seem to provide obvious services or resources, residents are confused or perturbed. As this passage illuminates:

I definitely feel that there's a bit of a, for some of the residents there's like a service mentality...that I'm here to help them access Centrelink or help sort some stuff with Child Safety or...do something for them [laughs]...And, yeah, I well a couple of people I can think when I say that that's not really what I'm here for they, there a bit um, 'oh gee okay then' [laughs]... (Interview, W1, 2019)

On other occasions, the worker has been able to organise events, as per interest from residents. Here he has used the 0-1-3 practice of taking private concerns and attempting to link up with others who share these same concerns (Kelly & Westoby, 2018). However, the plans dissolved at the last minute (people did not show up) with the worker reasoning that “people have a lot of stuff going down” so hence, they couldn't make it.

Practical Issues

Finally, there are a few practical challenges attached to the broader approach and the discreet project of BT@E. For one worker (Interview, W3, 2019), the fortnightly occurrence of the BBQs is problematic, because if something prevents attendance for a BBQ, it becomes a whole month until they are able to attend again. Again, as already mentioned,

for the BT@E project, there was a discrepancy due to high mobility in the park, between residents who had been consulted regarding the activities planned for the project and by time funding came, those residents had moved on (Interview, W1, 2019). This in turn meant that the Project Worker had to begin afresh negotiating a mandate. Lastly, there are obvious tensions surrounding the future of the BT@E work post funding finalising in June 2019.

WEAKNESS

Overall, there have been multiple positive benefits observed as direct outcomes of both the BBQs and the BT@E project. However, there are also notable weak spots, potentially limiting a fuller realisation of positive impact within Endeavour. While both entwined, it is helpful to discuss the weaknesses of the BBQs and BT@E as separate concepts, as some concerns are relevant only to the BBQs and so on.

Serving Who?

The eight-plus-year work behind the BBQs has built strong connections and networks within the park, with this resulting in workers being able to swiftly respond to distressing and traumatic events. However, a limitation of the BBQs – specifically, the approach to engagement – is that they predominantly service a regular cohort, who appear to be (or have become) relatively well-connected within the park already. As this passage from a practitioner interview indicates, those in the *clique* are already well-connected through strong family and social ties:

[...] There's almost like a bit of a click around that group, that cohort of people, that I, I feel probably might exclude people once they realise that they are extended family. Um, and so that's the bit that sort of troubles me a little bit and the workers investing all that time when we see a lot of them coming along...they, those people already have a sort of really good connection with one another and they've had good connections for a long time with lots of organisations. So, that's a bit and I think I'm in some of those reports I have written about some of the, that's makes it all a little [laughs]... complex at times. (Interview, W1, 2019)

The researcher also observed this across five observation sessions, that there seems to be a regular cohort who have established rapport with the service providers. This in itself could be quite exclusionary and intimidating, entering a BBQ where everyone seems to know each other well. Furthermore, as the above excerpt indicates, there are others in the park who may very much need access to the food, sociability and service provider connections the BBQ offers. In essence, there is a tension with the idea that the BBQs are open, organic and not a space for deliberate recruitment of “clients”, yet services are potentially not reaching “hard-to-reach families and children” (Logan Together, 2018). As research reveals, there is a “need for skilled and trained outreach workers to connect with families under stress in the places they usually go” to begin to build “connection, relationships, and trust in a welcoming and non-stigmatising environment” (Logan Together, 2018, p.18). Overall, this weakness highlights the need for an on-going Project Worker, who can

intentionally start to build relationships with those who are less or not engaged, or are more invisible.

Resident to Worker Ratios

Another finding regarding the BBQs was that *sometimes* workers outnumbered residents, creating a manufactured or forced feel. This detection came through in multiple data streams; through survey, observation and interview data. As the comment from the Park Manager below highlights, top-heavy worker presence acts as a deterrent to residents attending BBQs.

Less workers! Because they are in your face. A couple of people have complained and said they don't come anymore because of the workers. There needs to be a roster.

Another resident echoed the Park Manager's sentiments:

There are so many workers. Most of the time there's more worker than there are residents. People don't attend because they feel workers want information from and about them.

While workers from the Alliance seem to be aware of this tension, and have discussed options for future rostering systems, further attention could be paid to ways in which resident numbers could be increased. This could be improved by seeking to encourage more residents to attend (as described above).

Encouraging Ownership

Furthermore, while residents do participate in helping out at the BBQs, workers hope that there will be more ownership and community leadership in the future, yet there are no distinct paths or mechanisms in the practice (as yet), which can help guide this process along. As expanded on in an interview with one practitioner (Interview, W3, 2019):

I think now is the time to start to harness the energy of the residents and let them drive it forward...being in the back, not running away, definitely not [laughs] not you know, disembarking and moving completely out of it...definitely not. That's a bit of the wrong thing to do...but to move more to the background of how we enable, how do we support, how do we resource, how do we...? Just move us along but being driven and owned by the residents.

The Tension of Practice with Timeline & Funding Restraints

The limitations of the BT@E are by and large informed by timeline and funding restraints; the complexities tied to developmental work in finite periods, when in essence the work hinges on relationship building (which can be a slow process). The Project Worker has indicated that timing has been a challenge, with some things moving slowly. The gradual trust, relationships and shared projects will come out of a much longer framework than a one-year timeline. And like the BBQs, there's a gap in how residents can be supported to assume more ownership and leadership of the community space at Cabin One. As the

passage from one worker's interview suggests, there's an identified need and sense that community members could help run the space at Cabin One:

One thing I think would work and one thing that we were looking at trying to get the funding to progress it was to actually upskill the residents to take more of an ownership over that role. The cabin space. Opening up that cabin as like a drop-in internet café like every day...

Yet, the timeframe of the BT@E may not allow for sufficient capacity building to take place.

Feedback Platform

One final gap in the BT@E is the lack of a formal structure for residents to give feedback for the Banding Together Project (this evaluation aside). While it was evidenced clearly that the Project Worker engages in ongoing dialogue with residents regularly, there are limitations around how honest feedback could be in this format. One practitioner (Interview W4, 2019) noted this as a weakness, that a reference group was not established from the outset (albeit, recognising that a formal reference group is not something that can just be established, but could only emerge from a long process of developmental work):

I really strongly advocated for that, um, that we with the banding together project set up some kind of reference group...with the residents, so they can feedback with people how are things going, what would you like to see more...one thing that I probably would think that's not maybe working that well is probably having a bit of a structure like, well where are we gonna [sic] take it and have we got the input from the residents about what they want...

While survey data indicates residents are happy with the activities and resources provided via the BT@E, the researchers sense is that this is because there was the lapse in the original residents with who a mandate was negotiated. Therefore, current residents do not fully understand the purview of BT@E. Perhaps with a formal structure in place for current residents to provide ongoing feedback, overall engagement could have increased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To keep resourcing this work financially and locate more funding particularly for third place and project worker.
2. To share the story of this work with wider audiences – e.g. via Networks, Community Development Queensland Conference, with the possibility of co-publishing a paper to ensure longevity of access to a broader audience (i.e. academic and practice circles).
3. To develop a training induction process for new workers working in the Residential Park; with the view to possibly offering training to other organisations in the unique practice model outlined in the report.

4. Engage in more research that could be longitudinal work. Another option could be to locate the work in on-going action-research such that data is collected and analysed by Alliance workers.

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