

# Who Changed Tara? A Case Study of Community Participation and Engagement

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## Abstract

Government service delivery 'silos' are a commonplace experience everywhere, so for disadvantaged rural communities penetrating the seemingly impervious layers of bureaucracy can be a difficult task. This is the story of Tara, 200 km west of Toowoomba, where years of hardship and the negative impacts of rural residential subdivision development have been turned around. Tara's dedicated government and non-government service providers have engaged fully at the strategic level with 'whole of government' to take perceptions of Tara from being in the 'too hard basket' to now being a showcase example of an effective 'place' based collaboration between community and government. So, in the Darling Downs and western regions, it is often referred to as the Tara Engagement Model. Evidence-based practice and key socially conducive values or practice principles have underpinned the change design and successful implementation process in Tara. Some of these practices and key social values are: promotion of local leadership, using non-blame as an operating principle, running parallel consultation and capacity building processes and underpinning this with theoretical frameworks that are applicable, by way of making sense of the realities experienced. This case study presents numerous lessons about what works and what doesn't, but more importantly provides some insight into why things work or don't work.

## Introduction and background

This case study tells us the answer to the question 'Who changed Tara?' is 'everyone'. This paper is drawn from a full report outlining a whole-of-government engagement and capacity building process undertaken at Tara, with local Tara government and non-government service providers (Cruickshank and Darbyshire 2004). The story is about how this community was changed from a centre of high disadvantage to a much more positive community with new and augmented services and appropriate infrastructure.

The background to this story is Tara, a small rural community west of Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia. The community has all the hallmarks of a rural community in decline. The situation is compounded by these issues and the large number of people who reside on rural subdivisions, drawing heavily on local services, experiencing high levels of unemployment, disability, crime, domestic violence and health. These issues were recognised as having systemic causes, so the Tara Community Action Team (TCAT) was formed to work at a whole-of-government level to address the following commitments:

- Working towards a better Tara Shire
- Using open, honest and transparent communication
- Solving local issues that can be solved locally
- Engaging government and others to solve larger issues.

The following quote explains the objective that TCAT set out to achieve:

“To facilitate a progressive collaborative approach to address social, community, economic and human services in Tara community. Basically, to solve what we can locally and engage government for those problems we cannot. To create a better environment for our community e.g. look at, feel, develop ownership of the community, sense of place. Ripple effect: benefits would flow through out the rest of the shire.” (Interview data, 2004)

Staff commented:

“Believed we only had one chance to make this work.”

“We needed to be certain the actions we took were right, apply for funding wisely.”

“Government perception, expecting us to fail.”

“Government would not be willing to work together.” (Interview data, 2004)

The Tara Community Action Team (TCAT) established in October 2001, involves government managers from health, education, police, Tara Shire Council and Tara Neighbourhood Centre. The primary focus of TCAT is to facilitate a progressive collaborative approach to address social, community, economic and human service issues in Tara Community. This collaborative approach provides better outcomes for the Tara community. Leverage areas have included health, education, transport, child protection, housing, statistical and professional services.

### **Literature review**

The literature was selected because of its relevance to the topic, and drew on an eclectic selection of study fields but focussed mainly on action, reflection, theorising and planning as an iterative process to achieve pre-designed purposes. These concepts included the spiral of cycles in action research first conceived by Lewin in 1926. The first cycle involves identifying a general idea, reconnaissance, general planning, developing the first action step, implementing the step, evaluation and revising the general plan. From the first cycle, the researcher spirals into developing the second action step, implementation, evaluation, revising the general plan, developing the third action step, implementation and so on (Lewin 1952). Elliot (1991) argues that the ‘general idea’ identified initially in Lewin’s first cycle should be revised after each cycle and therefore be allowed to shift. This argument put forward by Elliot marks a milestone in research methodology in that research in this perspective is not imposed upon real life situations but emerges for them.

Another iterative learning process used was single loop, double loop and triple loop learning. The terms single and double loop learning originate from the work of Argyris and Schön (1974) on the basis of research into organisational behaviour. They laid the foundations for a methodology known as action science. Action science tries to enable people in organisations to engage in a process of enquiry to explore defensive routines in situations requiring creative responses.

Basically, Argyris and Schön (1974) suggest that there are two types of learning that are necessary in all organisations, namely single loop learning and double loop learning. Single loop learning is focussed on correcting errors by changing routine behaviour. Double loop learning, however, corrects errors by examining the underlying values and policies within an organisation. Triple loop learning, also referred to as

deutero learning, includes designing norms and protocols that govern single and double loop learning (Groot and Maarleveld 1999).

Groot and Maarleveld (1999) point out that it is important to note that one loop is not necessarily more important than another. In some situations, single loop learning suffices (such as in the change of rules and procedures) but in other situations, double and triple loop learning is required (a radical transition or innovation). Groot and Maarleveld (1999) provide a useful table for looking at the implications for facilitation of the three learning loops (table 1).

**Table 1. Implications for facilitation of the three learning loops**

<b>Improving (single loop learning)</b>	<b>Renewing: double loop learning</b>	<b>Triple loop learning</b>
Facilitation focuses on learning about rules and regulations	Facilitation focuses on the underlying assumptions of the rules and regulations.	Facilitation focuses on underlying paradigms, objectives, norms and values.  Facilitation focuses on learning about single and double loop learning
Facilitation focuses on how questions: how to improve, how to avoid failures?	Facilitation focuses on the why questions: why do existing practices, rules and regulations exist?	Facilitation focuses on the underlying why questions: why do we have the insights that underpin our routine as we have them? Why these goals?
Facilitation focus on obligation and permission	Facilitation focuses on knowing and understanding	Facilitation focus on will and being
Evolutionary, incremental	Revolutionary, concerned with conflicts and disputes	Revolutionary, concerned with conflicts and disputes
Increasing efficiency and effectiveness/do the things right	Renewing/do the right things	Development

King (2000) provides insight on the changing role of a facilitator over time. When new ways of learning are introduced into a group environment (e.g. participatory action research), a group has to be facilitated through a process of change, in order to accept and understand new ways of learning. In the light of these insights, the following steps are useful in facilitative learning system development over time:

1. Natural learning and learning, using traditional education techniques.
2. Facilitator mixes traditional learning techniques with action learning process to learn about content (potential for single loop learning).
3. Facilitator facilitates action learning processes to learn about content.
4. Facilitator facilitates action learning processes to learn about process (potential for double and triple loop learning).

5. Facilitator works with participants in developing and running their own action learning processes about content (with wider networks).
6. Facilitator works with participants in developing and running their own action learning processes about process (with wider networks).
7. Facilitator becomes a participant while others run action learning processes about content and process and assists the group to deal with more complex issues of learning systems (e.g. power relations, working with institutional hierarchies, etc.).

These steps are presented as a sequence but the practitioner is required to gauge where in the sequence a group is located. Trust between the facilitator and the participants increases, dependency on the facilitator decreases, complexity of learning increases, and interdependency between actors and then between learning systems increases.

### **Research methodology**

The methodological approach used throughout the Tara engagement and capacity building process was action research (see Figure 1). Preparation for this paper was a reflective with TCAT members and the authors to reflect on the past 3.5 years of TCAT's community and government capacity building and engagement process. Qualitative data was collected over time using a variety of tools such as reflection and planning meetings, survey results, documentation of before and after engagement statistical changes and ongoing participant observation and learning.

Previously TCAT members stated the importance of group reflection documented in the multi-perspective analysis (Cruickshank and Darbyshire 2004) and again reinforced this in their most recent reflection in preparation for this case study:

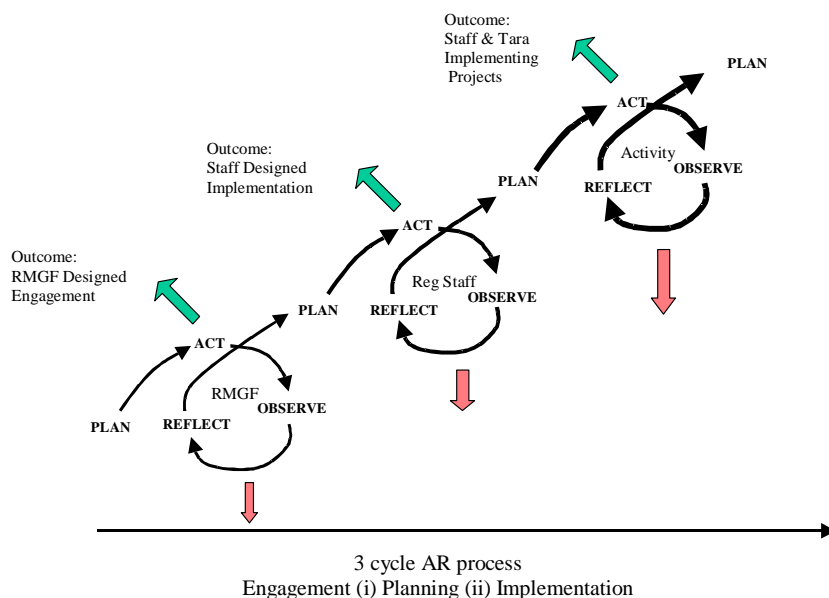
“The team has learnt project management skills, smart use of external media, with their skills base expanding and playing more of a mentoring role rather than undertaking tasks. The team works smarter not harder, planning to implement systems and continually moving forward.” (Interview data, 2005)

Tara's capacity building methodology processes were designed using stakeholder analysis tools to ensure different perceptions of problems and solutions could be gained. This is achieved through an iterative process of recognising different realities, not seeking consensus but learning from each other. This avoidance of consensus-building processes (where differences can challenge) was a key success process, so genuine co-learning could occur (learning from different realities). The participatory processes, used initially to inform TCAT members work practices, are continually demonstrated in practice through all engagement processes either at community or government level.

Action research and action learning, along with King's (2000) stages of the changing role of a facilitator over time was used. King's analysis proposes a series of steps where the facilitator becomes a participant, while others run action learning processes about content and the facilitator assists the group to deal with more complex issues of learning systems (e.g. power relations, working with institutional hierarchies, etc.).

Emergent process design and implementation tools were used, including King's (2000) 6P's and Foster's workshop design framework, along with local Indigenous knowledge and expertise.

Figure 1, shows a three-cycle action research process, with the first cycle involving the design and facilitation of the first Regional Managers of Government Forum (now Regional Managers Coordinating Network); next was the meeting at the Country Club with RMGF interdepartmental operational staff; and the third cycle involving ongoing implementation of multi-partnership projects.



**Figure 1. Action research spirals for the Tara process**

Case study author, Yin (1974), suggested that every investigation should have a general analytic strategy, so as to guide the decision regarding what will be analysed and for what reason. He presented some possible analytic techniques: pattern-matching, explanation-building, and time-series analysis.

Questions explored in the case study included:

1. Where we began:
  - i. What was the issue we set out to address?
  - ii. What did you plan to achieve?
  - iii. What concerns did you have before you began?
2. Methods we used to involve people:
  - i. Who was involved?
  - ii. What process or processes did you use to involve people?
  - iii. Why did you choose these processes?
  - iv. How long did it take to engage your stakeholders?
3. On the journey:
  - i. What helped make your activity a success?
  - ii. What were the major challenges faced along the way?

- iii. How did you deal with these challenges?
- 4. Where we ended up:
  - What changed as a result of the activity for the agencies involved and the community?
- 5. What we learnt:
  - i. What did you learn about government and community engagement from this experience?
  - ii. What would you do differently if you had your time over again?
- 6. Keeping it going:
  - What will it take to keep government, community members, agencies or business engaged in this process?

**Data collection and analysis**

Data collection employed a variety of tools including case study data collection and analysis, semi-structured interviews, group reflections and surveys. The sample was self-selecting, with respondents drawn from Tara community and government stakeholders. Yin (1994) presented at least four applications for a case study model:

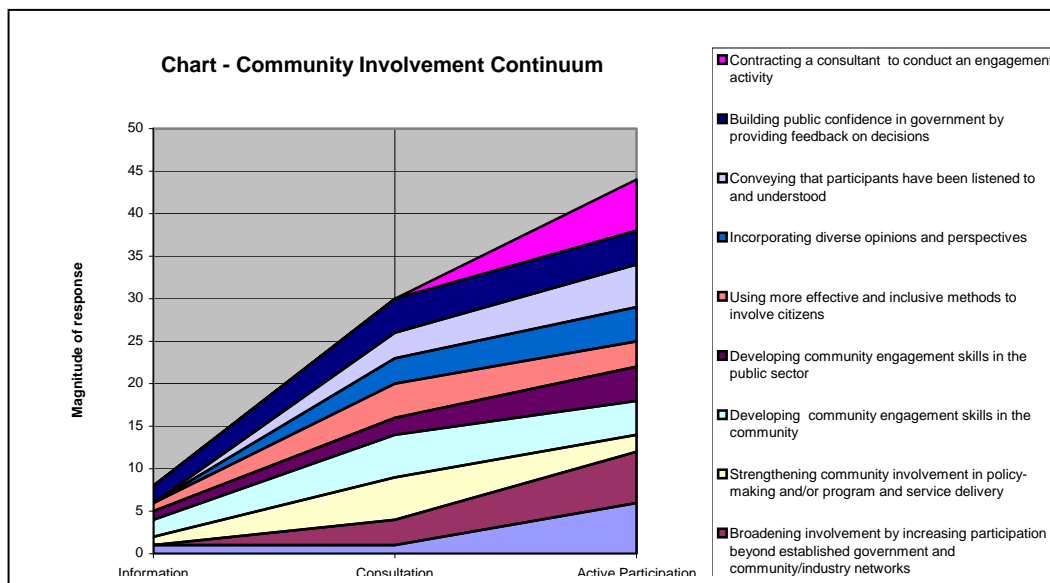
1. Explain complex causal links in real-life interventions.
2. Describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred.
3. Describe the intervention itself.
4. Explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes.

Data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin 1974). Table 2 shows pattern-matching of Yin's four applications with a high degree of agreement in the case of Tara service providers about the issues identified, the process designed to achieve the purpose along with skills transfer with resulting leadership growth. Increased abilities to design and implement their own processes were agreed while the five columns on the left shows demographic and contextual data.

**Table 2. Case study data analysis**

Community engagement and capacity building									
Cases	Male	Female	Internal	External	Agreement on Issues	Intervention causal links	Process Agreement	Skills transfer and leadership	Totals
CM1		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
GN2	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
RW3		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
MM4	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
MC5		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	3
AD6	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	3
Totals	3	3	4	2	6	4	6	6	

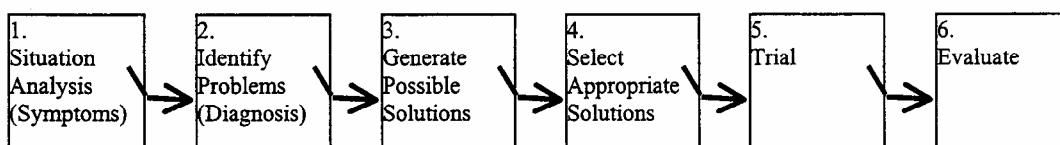
Figure 2 demonstrates greater levels of involvement in the Tara process than simply information provision on the community involvement continuum. The data collection and presentation in this form shows the strong view of respondents that community capacity building and engagement occurred at the more active consultation and participation end of the continuum.



**Figure 2. Respondents combined perceptions of the Tara process**

Source: DPC Community Engagement Case Study Part 1 template, Continuum of Engagement

Steps and processes in capacity building were examined, with identification of questioning processes employed consistently, so real problems could be identified and addressed. Often just the presenting symptoms are worked on and this leads to false starts and frustration. Figure 3 shows the six-step problem-solving model with the steps used in Tara's community capacity building. It was adapted from Clarke (1996) and signifies identifiable steps in the process.



**Figure 3. Six-Step Problem Solving Model**

Source: Clarke 1996

### Research findings

An analysis of the data collected in the above process tells the story of the changes in the Tara community. This is a series of interconnected events, opportunities and outcomes. The catalyst that initiated the whole process was the Chinchilla community applying for funding for an alternative education centre to be based in Chinchilla, which used Tara statistics. The frustration was an Education Queensland employee meant to be representing the entire district was again concentrating efforts on funding Chinchilla. This single action

sparked outrage and motivated those involved to apply for funding, an application that was unsuccessful. This was probably lucky for Tara, because it caused questioning about what was really needed in Tara.

Since this initial unfocussed reaction, change has been purposefully designed and implemented. These changes in Tara include a more progressive council attitude, introduction of the Tara Shire Council Housing Policy, active community relationships and government participation, a heightened sense of community and positive attitudinal change, and a new doctor and Youth Development Officer. Specific changes are: a desire for people to feel safe, which is demonstrated by increases in offences against the person and domestic violence with historic rapes reported — police continue to target these offences, while property offences continue to decrease; an increase in educational opportunities and participation; a broader cross-section of the community voicing their concerns; more volunteers; and numerous new projects and new community organisations.

This coincides with an increase in the number of departments heavily engaged in the community, resulting in greater respect in the community for government workers. A profile of need and disadvantage was developed using analysed data and a comprehensive statistical analysis of the ABS Census 2001, including Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data. This profile forms a basis for continual updating of Tara's informational and strategic planning needs.

Occasional group self-evaluation negates power plays and personal agendas, with all players being open and accountable. It also supports their working towards the one vision and provides a first step in the development of trust as well as a support network (so individuals don't have to solve problems alone). Within the first six months, a strong committee group had emerged with trust, transparency, inclusiveness, communication and sharing. TCAT is not going away, as evidenced by 3.5 years of TCAT commitment, with new members participating in the International Community Engagement Conference (2005).

Engaging government occurred through a series of presentations, meetings and discussions. These meetings were all designed for a specific outcome and led towards successful engagement of government (over 12 months). The use of photos and community and rural subdivision tours was a reality-based 'in your face' style campaign, which helped government managers and officers get a feel for the conditions and problems of the rural subdivision residents.

The following criteria for capacity building were applied to the Tara context. While a checklist is useful to scope a project against some criteria, it's also important to note 'capacity building' occurs whenever someone seeks to learn something new or do something in different ways. Some of the different frameworks leading to increased capacity building includes different models of empowerment, programmed learning, technological development and access to information.

**Table 3. Capacity building checklist**

Criteria for capacity building	Comment and application in Tara	Yes or No
Is the program based on co-learning so that everyone, who has knowledge relevant to the project, is willing to share, and is also willing to learn more? If not the case, for example a provider/user perspective is taken where an agency or organisation (providers) develop and offer training, information or resources for users, such as landowners, then the project is unlikely to be a capacity building project. Power relations in this model are inherently unequal and likely to distort mutual perceptions and expectations.	Processes were designed using stakeholder analysis tools to ensure that different perceptions of the problem and solution could be gained using different realities to inform each other. Also choosing not to use consensus building processes where differences can challenge, so genuine co-learning could occur	✓
With capacity building 'providers' are best seen as providing access to the resources needed to improve a problematic situation.	Engagements were designed to explore the issues, while allowing open ended and best match inputs from service providers	✓
Do the initial goals of action-taking vary among stakeholders, e.g. an increase in financial capital for commercial agents, physical and financial capital for farmers, social capital for community groups, and human capital for educators? This is a key element of capacity. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach where there is one (often imposed) goal for taking action to improve a particular situation is not consistent with capacity building.	A principle of creating places and spaces for serendipity to occur allowed for different agendas, different mediated decision-making processes in government departments. Avoidance of priority setting but rather focus on 'areas of leverage'	✓
Are incentives tailored to meet the initial goals of different stakeholders, e.g. a tax incentive or access to infrastructure funds for those seeking an increase in physical or financial capital? Offering a single incentive to all stakeholders is not likely to stimulate participation in capacity building.	TCAT's strategy of expanding cooperative power has empowered the engagement with individuals in both the community and government to define their own agenda seeking roles (incentives) to engage with the Tara process.	✓
Do other stakeholders participate in a joint effort to improve a problematic situation? This participation provides a context for generating shared increases in the stock of human, social, financial, physical and natural capital.	The participatory processes used initially to inform TCAT members work practices is continually demonstrated in practice through all engagements either at community or government level	✓
Is leadership style facilitative and does it result in all stakeholders being able to initiate action to do with	Methodologies, e.g. Action research, co-learning and action learning along	✓

<p>the project? Facilitative leadership is essential for building and maintaining a pattern of reflective practice* among stakeholders in a joint effort to improve a problematic situation. If leadership style is top down or the leader comes from a funding group or organisation that sees itself as the one to which the group is 'accountable' then it is unlikely that capacity building principles are being implemented.</p> <p>(* Reflective practice refers to on-the-spot surfacing, criticising, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understandings of your experience with a particular event or activity. It is an important part of capacity building as it allows learning and co-learning to occur).</p>	<p>with King (2000) the changing role of a facilitator** over time through a series of steps the facilitator becomes a participant while others run action learning processes about content and process and assists the group to deal with more complex issues of learning systems (e.g. power relations, working with institutional hierarchies, etc.)</p> <p>(** Used emergent process design and implementation tools including King's (2000) 6P's and Foster's workshop design framework and local Indigenous knowledge and expertise)</p>
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Source: *Growing the Capital of Rural Australia – the Task of Capacity Building* (2004)

### Research findings

A total of six written case studies were analysed with data collected using the former Department of Premier and Cabinet's (DPC) Community Engagement Case Study Template. Pattern-matching identified a mixture of male and female respondents residing both in Tara and outside (Table 2). Triangulation is a term used in data analysis to seek agreement about issues from a number of different sources. Triangulation is evident between internal and external respondents about issues, processes designed and run with stakeholders and skills transfer, while external respondents did not focus on causal links but more on the broad intervention that occurred.

The major success factors were the 'work ethic' and the following principles adopted in Tara:

- Non-blame
- Take on no new work; work smarter, not harder (initially TCAT members stated this never works; the reality is you have to do the 'hard yards', now they espouse the original value)
- Expand 'cooperative power'
- Include What's in it for Me (WIFM)
- Build leadership capacity and engage in skills transfer
- Remain in the 'change driver's seat'
- Create places and spaces so serendipity can occur
- Engage operational staff in being strategic while getting managers to think operationally
- Use 'think tank' processes, so the best ideas and motivations of people can be harnessed
- Mutual respect of barriers, work agendas, etc.

TCAT members are receiving well-deserved recognition with presentation of their initiative at regional, state, national and international levels, e.g. Participate 2004 Conference, Regional Local Government and the Queensland Ministerial Regional Communities Forum at Mitchell 2005. Members have also received awards

in their own fields. Police sergeant, Geoff Noller, won a Queensland Quiet Achievers Award in 2003 while, as members of the group, they support each other's work by participating in events and community forums, e.g. Disability Forum, 'Crime in the Community Meeting' and Community Consultative Committee (CCC), etc.

Locally the following changes were noted:

- A heightened sense of community with positive attitudinal change
- Appointment of a number of positions to address identified needs including a second doctor and a Youth Development Officer (YDO)
- Reductions in crime (especially juvenile crime) and domestic violence
- Council adopting more progressive attitudes around community needs, amenity, engagement, infrastructure and leadership
- Increase in educational opportunities and participation
- A broader cross-section of the community voicing their concerns about a larger number of issues
- More volunteers participating in service delivery, planning and local initiatives
- There were numerous new projects and new community organisations, such as the Community Consultative Committee (CCC)
- Increase in the number of departments heavily engaging in the community
- Access to up-to-date, analysed information referring to need and disadvantage
- Active community and government participation
- Government workers gained more respect in the community
- Comprehensive statistical analysis of the ABS Census 2001, including SEIFA data, provided a valuable profile of the Tara community
- Raising of the living standards with the Council Housing Policy
- Relationships between community members and local services were strong with committed local service providers.

"Tara is no longer viewed as "the too hard basket". Tara has shown Government and the rest of the state what we are capable of and that change begins from the lowest level. There are numerous changes that have occurred within Tara, with the biggest change being of an intrinsic nature. It does not show up in any figures. You need to talk to the people to view it." (Interview data, 2004)

- "Tara definitely on the map with government at all levels
- Active participation by government staff
- Partnerships
- Had to find champions in government" (Interview data, 2004)

"The needs in the community are being better addressed, as well as the achievement of a lot of 'good will' and mutual trust between all stakeholders." (Interview data, 2004)

"TCAT started as representatives from local government and non government agencies working together to try and address the issues and ended up as a lobby group. A very effective tool to be used by the community to advocate on their behalf." (Interview data, 2004)

“Community feels they are not alone, that government does care (to a certain extent), and listen but debatable whether that turns into actions.”

“Collaborative approach allowed projects to have multiple partnerships and be multi funded.”  
(Interview data, 2004)

The major challenges included maintaining energy and enthusiasm, dealing with government silos and negative attitudes to Tara, community pressures to see visible results, balancing time constraints, and burnout. The strategies employed for overcoming challenges included believing the process would lead to fruitful outcomes, telling government we’re not going away, reprioritising tasks, using a reality based ‘in your face’ style campaign, working together to solve the problem jointly, leadership and support from key government workers.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

In conclusion this case study presents numerous lessons about what works and what doesn’t, but more importantly it provides some insight into why things work or don’t work.

TCAT members have learned that the process of engaging government is long and slow. Government sometimes downplays the impact on communities of their decisions and policies, while continuing to maintain silos. TCAT recognised the importance of ‘good process’ to achieve the desired results, as well as communication, transparency, and flexibility. Also important was valuing everyone’s inputs, inclusiveness, building trust and multi-partnership projects.

While TCAT learned many innovative ways to do things, the process did not follow a set formula, but is a combination of timing, adherence to set values and principles. The process can’t be controlled by one person. If appropriately and effectively undertaken, it leaves the community stakeholders with enhanced skills, tools, self-esteem and ultimately empowerment.

These are things TCAT members would recommend others do differently:

“Don’t put my hand up; eat and sleep better; take regular breaks; don’t work long hours; don’t ignore the family; listen to my husband. Reality is, you need to do the hard yards.” (Interview data, 2004)

“I would have gone into this with more realistic time-frames for government action.” (Interview data, 2004)

“Ask for a raise”

Keeping the Tara engagement and capacity building process going will need ongoing commitment, continuing personal sacrifice of TCAT members, RMCN services mapping, continual engagement with government and celebrations, recharging, new partners and new members.

“Need to have someone coordinating core engagement activities with government – (while) community coordination is not essential.” (Interview data, 2004)

This case study shows the power of teamwork, cooperation, collaboration and purpose designed engagements so areas of leverage are progressed. What doesn't work is 'top down' approaches and self-talk that says it's all too hard. The idea is to start where you can start and work with who you can and slowly success breeds success.

Some ideas that others can adopt include:

1. Undertake a profiling process that involves many different stakeholders with facts that relate to community issues.
2. Empower a local team, so staff changes in government departments have less impact on continuity in community capacity building and engagement.
3. Continually expand local skills base by supporting local leadership development through ongoing mentoring (both within the community and for ourselves).
4. Work smarter not harder, by planning and implementing systems for all manner of tasks such as data collection, issues status, project monitoring.
5. Take action to resolve issues, use a process of risk management and step out of existing roles.
6. Smart use of external media to help build synergies between service providers, develop community awareness and build a whole shire's positive self perception.
7. Most importantly expand on personal and cooperative power and employ a non-blame principle in all engagements.

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### **Biographical summaries**

Margaret Cruickshank (BA, GC PSM and GD RSM) graduated with a BA in 1995 as a mature-age external student and since then has continually engaged in personal and professional skills development through evidence-based practice. Margaret spent extensive time in socio- and industry-based rural contexts to gain unique insights into rural and urban cultures while working in journalism, social change and new service development. During time with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries 1996–2005, and most recently with the newly-formed Department of Communities, she has contributed to the Queensland and national rural change agenda through a range of complex engagements with primary industry groups and rural communities, with multiple stakeholders and competing agendas. The task involved is primarily about working with individuals and groups to design and implement their own change agendas — 'Helping people to help themselves'.

Andrew Darbyshire (B Soc Wk) graduated in Social Work (University of Queensland, 1975), specialising in the 'community development' methodological approach. Since graduating he worked initially in social worker or related roles, then in 'front line' resourcing roles focussed on child and family work, as well as the resourcing of funded community-based social support agencies and facilitation of community services development. Andrew is currently a Social Planner (Department of Communities, Queensland), so for the past five years has been directly involved in, or contributed to: social assessment work; regional and local planning; social impact assessment and land use planning.