

Case Study

Caroline Springs Partnership

Commissioned by

Community Hubs and Partnerships

Produced by

Deloitte Access Economics

December 2017

Case Study 3: Caroline Springs Partnership



Victoria, Australia

Overview

Caroline Springs is a rapidly growing municipality in Victoria¹. The population is culturally diverse, with one third born overseas and 28% from a non-English speaking background⁴.

The Caroline Springs Partnership was established in 2005 by the Shire of Melton, Delfin Lend Lease and the Department of Victorian Communities. The partnership was a place-based initiative focussing on bringing government, business and community groups together to plan the provision of community infrastructure including community centres, education and health facilities.



Source: City of Charles Sturt

Note that no consultation has been undertaken for this case study, and therefore the information contained in this case study is based on desktop research.

Context/setting



Service mix



Education, including schools¹
Health, including private health services¹
Community infrastructure, including libraries¹
Community services, including child and family services¹
Wellbeing, including sport and recreation facilities¹
Commercial, including shops¹

Level of integration

Unable to be confirmed through desk top research

Site characteristics



Majority **greenfield**, however some components of the partnership were already in existence
Urban

Funding



Public/private, shared funding was emphasised as a priority of the partnership. Funding was shared among the key project partners: local government, state government and developer

Partners (inc. lead agency)

Lead agency: Shire of Melton
Partners: Delfin Lend Lease and Department of Victorian Communities

Foundations for success

This hub exhibits three key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



Leadership and management



Focus and vision



Governance and culture

Leadership and management

A good facilitator was reported as the main factor underpinning an effective partnership^{1,2}. The partners involved must understand that they are interdependent, and thus, the success of the partnership relies on building trusting relationships between each other and having a facilitator to guide this process. The facilitator was also beneficial for keeping focus, pulling work together and keeping all partners on track.

Focus and vision

People needed to have a clear purpose and objectives that focuses and clarifies roles and responsibilities, so everyone has clear expectations and a shared vision^{2,3}. Most partners interviewed raised the importance of this, and particularly determining parameters so the partnership does not get involved in everything and lose effectiveness.

Governance and culture

Having strong governance with the right decision-makers at the table was another key success factor². Specifically, having people with a commitment to contribute was highlighted; senior enough to make decisions and expert enough to assist effective decision-making.

Outcomes

Reduced operating costs

An evaluation of the partnership showed that efficiencies were gained by sharing the planning and management of facilities². Specifically, there were reduced costs through joint contracting and utilising in-kind labour, economies of scale in the management of shared facilities, minimise overlap of services and savings from joint tendering.

Improved Services

All key project partners that were interviewed reported that the use of a planning model led to more timely and coordinated delivery of services and infrastructure³.

Educational outcomes

All organisations reported that they had learned through their partnerships and that these had increased their capacity for planning social infrastructure^{1,2}. It was also agreed that the partnership had led to innovation and opportunities that would not have been realised otherwise.

Community networks, cohesion and engagement

Residents in Caroline Springs reported that their area has a more active community where people do things and got involved in the local issues and activities^{1,2}. People are friendlier, with good neighbours willing to help each other. They also reported having access to good services and facilities such as shops, child care, schools and libraries.

Civic involvement

Evaluation shows increased community involvement and therefore social connection between residents². The delivered infrastructure fostered a range of clubs and activities for residents to participate in. Social connection was also enhanced by the urban design details raised by the partnership, promoting a sense of community.

Lessons

- Partnership processes can be difficult and time consuming^{1,2}. There is the potential to disenfranchise people – particularly with the pressure of already full workloads. Some partners reported they would like the process be faster than it was
- Turnover of organisational personnel can pose difficulties as new relationships need to be built¹
- It can be difficult to sustain motivation of partners throughout the process³. Partnerships that are working on intractable problems may also fail to see the impact of their activities as they are engulfed in what needs to be done.

References

1. City of Charles Sturt, 2011, Social Infrastructure in Urban Growth Areas
2. Pope, J., 2010, Strengthening local communities
3. Pope and Lewis, 2008, Improving Partnership Governance: Using a Network Approach to Evaluate Partnerships in Victoria
4. Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2010, Community activity and service delivery models

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Prepared for Community Hubs and Partnerships by Deloitte Access Economics Pty Ltd



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