Models for supporting translational research in community services

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

27 July 2016
27 July 2016

Dear Stacey

Review of models for supporting translational research in community services

PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting Australia (PwC) is pleased to provide you with our final report providing an assessment of models for supporting translational research in the Queensland community services industry.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services plays a major role as a service provider, funder and ‘steward’ of the community services industry. In 2015-16, the department invested $1.9 billion in services delivered by over 900 non-government organisations across the State, in addition to delivering a number of direct frontline services. Looking forward, it is expected that there will be further growth in demand for services which will necessitate additional and/or alternative investment.

The future success of the industry, and hence its ability to meet the requirements of its clients, will rely on its ability to be innovative and develop new ways of working. This places an increased emphasis on the application of evidence based research in practice, informed by effective research translation activities, to build a sustainable and innovative industry that is able to attract investment while meeting the requirements of its clients.

The purpose of this review is to identify research translation models that have the capability to promote and facilitate research and innovation in the community services industry. In order to identify these models, we have considered leading practice approaches in research translation more broadly, examined more than 10 existing research translation models, and conducted interviews with a targeted group of stakeholders to gain insight into existing research translation practice and successful research translation models.

This report provides a detailed description of three collaborative research models (industry-initiated, government-initiated and university-initiated), including potential governance arrangements, funding arrangements, operational risks and other key matters (e.g. copyright and commercialisation opportunities).

We look forward to discussing the findings of our final report with you.

Yours faithfully

Signed for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting (Australia) Pty Limited

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PwC was engaged to identify research translation models which could be applied in the community services industry.

Engagement overview

Community services play a vital role in promoting the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities, and improving the lives of people experiencing significant and often complex disadvantage. In 2015-16, the Department of Communities, Child Safety, and Disability Services (the department) invested $1.9 billion in services delivered by over 900 non-government organisations across the State, in addition to delivering a number of direct front line services. Looking forward, it is expected that there will be further growth in demand for services which will necessitate additional and/or alternative investment. The success of the industry, and hence its ability to meet the needs of people experiencing vulnerability, will rely on its capacity to be innovative and develop new ways of working.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting Australia (PwC) was engaged by the department to identify models of translational research that have potential to enable the community services industry to maximise innovation and deliver positive benefits for clients and communities into the future.

The translational research models identified in this report were informed by:

- a review of guiding principles for effective research translation;
- the examination of a number of existing research translation models (in Australia and internationally); and
- targeted stakeholder consultation to gain insight into existing research translation practice and successful research translation models.

This report also drew on the expertise of Dr Ian Goodwin-Smith, Director of the Australian Centre for Community Services Research at Flinders University.

Research translation in theory and practice

Research translation is a growing area of focus associated with driving greater returns for investment in research. In community services, research and its effective translation into practice, offers significant potential for informing and improving policy and practice decisions.

Examination of theoretical research translation models identified key factors that should be considered in any potential model design. These include:

- the roles of the researcher and the end user in designing and undertaking the research task; and
- methods for disseminating research to end users, including engagement processes.

These factors, along with a broader review of literature, informed the development of guiding principles for effective translation research (summarised below).

Models for Supporting Translational Research in Community Services

A. User engagement

Effective translation is underpinned by the process of engaging end users in the research development process, from the conceptualisation of research questions through to the process of carrying out the research.

B. Capacity building

There should be mutual capacity building / knowledge exchange between researchers and end users. This process requires recognition of the expertise that each party brings to the research task.

C. Effective communication

Key messages and implications of research findings must be demonstrable for end users. Research translation processes should include the use of multicomponent, multifaceted and interactive activities.

D. Impact measurement

Monitoring and evaluating the uptake of research should occur during and beyond the research project. Data should be gathered on research uptake and the extent to which the expected benefits are derived by users.
We reviewed a number of research models and defined five classifications of research translation models.

Model options for supporting research translation

To inform the design of a potential research translation model relevant to the community services industry we reviewed a select number of organisations – in Australia and overseas – involved at least in some capacity in research translation.

Informed by this process, five classifications of research translation models were defined: research sharing, research facilitation, research partnership, collaborative research and social innovation enterprise (see table on the right).

Research and its uptake for the purpose of informing evidence based policy and practice, innovation, and further research requires a model that can effectively bring together researchers and any potential end users of research. In the community services industry these research end users can include:

• industry, including NGOs and the bodies that represent them (e.g. peak bodies or industry organisations);
• governments agencies, along with statutory authorities and related government bodies where relevant;
• researchers, typically linked to a university; and
• service users/clients.

While each of the five classifications of research translation models have the potential to embody the guiding principles for effective research translation and support research uptake, the collaborative research model, and the range of forms which it can take, was identified by the department as warranting a more detailed assessment given its potential to bring together each of these end users.

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**Research sharing**

This model typically involves an online portal or clearing house which provides access to existing research free of charge, or by subscription. Features of this model include:

- the conversion of traditional research into accessible formats; and
- the assessment and ranking of published research based on empirical support and/or relevance.

**Research facilitation**

This model is structured around brokering relationships between industry and researchers for the purpose of undertaking mutually beneficial research (or identifying existing research).

The brokering entity can be government or non-government, and may also be involved in identifying areas for further research, commissioning research and publishing research findings.

**Research partnership**

This model is commonly used for undertaking research. It is typically a one-off arrangement established to address a specific issue/objective. The research activity could be initiated by government, industry, universities or a combination of these entities.

Research translation processes may be included in the design of the research task.

**Collaborative research**

This model typically brings together researchers, governments, and industry participants, in a range of different collaborative arrangements. Features of these models include:

- an ongoing partnership, which covers a number of years; and
- formalised agreements which underpin the collaboration.

**Social innovation enterprise**

Social innovation enterprises are established as a private sector entity to develop innovative solutions for a range of social issues.

Social enterprise activities can include the provision of collaborative research, but this may not always be the case.

These organisations can be either for profit or non-profit, but are typically driven by a social mission.
Collaborative research models were identified as having the most potential to align with the guiding principles of research translation.

Collaborative research models – three variations

The collaborative research model is based on the principle that research outcomes are more likely to be translated into policy and practice where end users are an engaged participant in the research task. At the centre of this model is engagement across all participants – universities as the entity providing research expertise and independence; community service providers, as the entity best able to articulate the needs of the industry (and its clients) and inform research activities; and government agencies as both a potential end user of research outcomes and/or a facilitator of research activities.

Three variations of this model were explored, based on which entity – government, university or industry – initiated the collaboration. This was based on a recognition that subject to the research agenda of either of the three entities, the features of the collaborative arrangement may differ. These models and their high level features are summarised on the right, with further detail provided in Section 4 (page 28).

While collaboration is a key part of these models, the practical application of each model may incorporate practices characterised within the ‘research sharing’ and ‘research facilitation’ models, where this enables the dissemination of outcomes beyond the research collaboration (subject to any broader commercialisation or intellectual property considerations).

Industry-initiated collaborations

Industry-initiated collaborations are models of research translation which are guided by entities delivering community services (i.e. NGOs) and the bodies that represent them (i.e. peak bodies or industry organisations). These models are structured around formalised relationships between industry and researchers. Other parties, such as government agencies, may also be involved.

This model is likely to be most suitable where a single service provider or group of providers have identified a need and are seeking to address this need through research. Some collaborations may benefit from government engagement, where government is either a contributor to, and/or a consumer of the research output.

Government-initiated collaborations

Government-initiated research collaboration models could involve the creation of a research centre which is operated by government and a university (or universities) for the purpose of undertaking mutually beneficial research. This collaboration could be structured as a unit within a government agency or sit externally within a university. The unit would be staffed by personnel from both government and the university(ies) using, for example, secondment arrangements.

The use of this model is most applicable where the purpose of the research centre is to inform government policy and the delivery of services provided directly by government, as well as services funded by government. Accordingly, it is likely that such a model would have a capacity building and knowledge sharing focus.

University-initiated collaborations

University-initiated models leverage teaching and learning to drive uptake of new practice and support that in service delivery. The outputs of research can be informed by the needs of the community and used to inform practices in collaboration with industry (e.g. through pilot projects). The research may also be used to inform and develop teaching and learning frameworks.

A university-initiated model may be suitable where there is a desire to influence specific post-school qualifications in community services as well as leverage the independence and research capability of the university.
While the research translation model is a consideration, driving research uptake will depend in part on how the model is implemented.

Research translation in community services

This review has assessed a range of research translation models, and in line with the guiding principles of research translation, has focused on collaborative research models.

In doing so, the emphasis has been on the community services industry (industry), researchers (universities) and policy and program makers (government) and the role they could play in any collaboration. This is because the engagement of these three spheres can drive congruence in research, policy/program, and practice objectives, and support research uptake.

Where there is a breakdown between the priorities of these three entities, research translation may be undermined:

- Research that lacks independence or does not align with best-practice may not be sufficiently robust to inform policy, programs and practice.
- Research conceived and performed in isolation of industry (or government where it relates to policy/programs) may limit its uptake where it fails to capture the industry expertise regarding service delivery and their clients, or provide the information in a format that can be readily accessible.
- Research priorities that are set without broad engagement across industry, the research sector and the broader community, may miss emerging issues and stifle innovation, particularly where this influences the allocation of research funding.

A model structured around collaboration and how to draw in the expertise of each entity is therefore critical to research translation and driving innovation in community services.

It is essential to emphasise that while the collaborative research models explored can support research translation, the model alone will not necessarily guarantee the translation of research into practice. Its success is based on the supporting frameworks that underpin these models including:

- a clearly defined research plan setting out the research priorities and objectives, and how it will inform practice, policy and research;
- a research translation strategy that identifies the potential end users (both within the collaboration and external to it), develops strategies for engaging with these identified end users throughout the research task, and sets out the range of methods for sharing research outputs; and
- an independent advisory committee with experts from across universities, government, industry, clients and other relevant parties (such as philanthropists and private sector players).

These frameworks help to embed the guiding principles of research translation into any research process, and could arguably be incorporated into any of the models of research translation defined in this report.

Harnessing new collaboration opportunities

It is also acknowledged that there is a desire to see the community services industry build relationships with other players such as philanthropists, investors, technology firms, and entrepreneurs, where this can open up new opportunities for the sector, including access to alternative funding mechanisms.

The features of the collaborative research models explored all allow for broader partnerships that go beyond government, industry and researchers. However, the priorities of these entities may be different to those of industry and/or governments. While this may not be an issue, it highlights that any collaboration may require additional supporting frameworks to underpin these activities.
Engagement overview
This project sought to identify research translation models which have the capability to promote and facilitate research and innovation in the community services industry.

Overview

PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting Australia (PwC) was engaged by the Department of Communities, Child Safety, and Disability Services (the department) to provide advice on models of translational research with potential to enable the community services industry to maximise innovation and deliver positive benefits for clients and communities into the future.

Context

Community services play a vital role in promoting the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities, and improving the lives of people experiencing significant and often complex disadvantage. The industry is diverse, comprising mostly non-profits, along with government service providers, social enterprises and a small but growing number of for-profit entities. It is also a major employer and one of the fastest growing industries in Queensland, with future employment growth expected to be double the State average.1

The department plays a major role as a services provider, funder and ‘steward’ of the industry. The remit of the department is to promote and support excellence in the delivery and funding of services, enabling the most vulnerable people to participate in and contribute to a fair, resilient and prosperous Queensland. In 2015-16, the department invested $1.9 billion in services delivered by over 900 non-government organisations across the State, in addition to delivering a number of front line services directly.

However, forecast growth in demand for community services – underpinned by population growth, an aging population, and predicted increases in unemployment, mental health consumers and social disadvantage – is expected to be significant which will necessitate additional and/or alternative investment. This coincides with a time where the industry is having to respond to a range of new challenges associated with participant-led service delivery, the emergence of new, private sector players in the community services industry and the continuous evolution of technologies.

The success of the industry, and hence its ability to meet the needs of people experiencing vulnerability, will rely on its capacity to be innovative and develop new ways of working. This places an increased emphasis on the application of evidence into practice, informed by effective research translation activities, to build a sustainable and innovative industry that is able to attract investment while meeting the requirements of its clients.

Purpose of this review

Within the context of recent work undertaken by the department, including an analysis of the current and future state of the communities services industry, Forecasting the future: Community services in Queensland 2025, the purpose of this review was to identify research translation models that will have the capability to promote and facilitate research and innovation in the community services industry.
Our approach included targeted stakeholder consultation, a review of the literature regarding the principles of effective research translation, along with a review of current translational research models.

**Approach**

This engagement consisted of four phases of work to identify potential translational research models that would be suitable for community services in Queensland. These phases were structured to address the department’s requirements specified in the request for quote and included:

- a review of guiding principles for effective research translation, with a particular focus on its applicability to community services;
- targeted stakeholder consultation with representatives from the community services industry, universities, the department and other government agencies with responsibilities for community services;
- a review of current translational research models applied in Australia and internationally, to identify the range of models which could have applicability to the Queensland community services industry; and
- the prioritisation of three models for detailed assessment and consideration of the factors that would support their operation.

**Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge the time and effort of the stakeholders consulted with during our stakeholder consultation process. A list of the organisations consulted is contained in Appendix D (page 65).

The contents and context of this report were also informed by the expertise of Dr Ian Goodwin-Smith, who is the Director of the Australian Centre for Community Services Research located at Flinders University, South Australia.
This report is structured to provide both a theoretical and practical overview of research translation models.

Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

• Chapter 2 provides an overview of current research practices in the community services industry, along with the theory of research translation and the guiding principles for effective research translation.

• Chapter 3 describes the range of research translation models identified and provides an overview of their features.

• Chapter 4 explores the three shortlisted models in further detail, with a focus on the governance and operationalising factors which would support their implementation.

• Appendix A provides a list of references used in this report.

• Appendix B provides case studies of a range of research translation models across the community services and medical research industry. These case studies should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 of this report.

• Appendix C provides an overview of key considerations where there are opportunities to commercialise any new knowledge generated by research.

• Appendix D provides a list of the organisations consulted, along with a summary of consultation findings.

Key definitions

For the purpose of this review, the following definitions have been used:

• Community services encompasses the department’s areas of responsibility including child safety, community services (community, domestic and family violence, individuals, multicultural affairs, older people, women and young people) and disability services.

• Research, and the activities that constitute research, can be interpreted in a variety of ways. There are differing views on the extent to which research activities differ from other strands of evidence (particularly evaluation). For the purpose of this report ‘research’ encompasses any projects or activities that produce new knowledge.

• Research translation is defined as a dynamic and iterative process that includes the synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically sound application of knowledge to improve practices and outcomes for clients and the community. Knowledge in this context includes research undertaken by universities and other research bodies, research commissioned by industry and/or government agencies, and research undertaken in-house by industry and/or government agencies.

• Industry refers to community services providers such as non-government organisations (NGOs) (be they for-profit or non-profit organisations).
Research translation in theory and practice
Research in community services is directed at informing policy and practices that can improve outcomes for people experiencing vulnerability.

Current research practices

Understanding current practices around research provides an important lens through which to view the role of research translation and how activities and models which support these processes can be used to better design research outputs for uptake by end users. This section has been informed by the stakeholder consultation component of this engagement.

Research in community services is directed at informing policy and practices that can improve outcomes for people experiencing vulnerability.

Research can be initiated by government or industry (with the objective identified by the end user, and performed ‘in-house’ or commissioned externally). Researchers, including universities and think tanks or other independent researchers, may also initiate research directly themselves. This may be undertaken in partnership with industry and/or government, or independently.

Research undertaken by community service providers is often undertaken by larger service providers who have the resources to support research activity (such as access to private funding). Smaller service providers are often less likely to have the additional resources required to undertake research activities.

Industry or researcher driven activities may be conducted with or without involvement from government. Where government is involved, partnership arrangements may be used (e.g. ARC linkage grants) or government may act as a facilitator between researchers and end users.
While the interest in using research to inform policy and practice is growing, differing cultures across researchers, policy makers and practitioners can impede effective cooperation and research uptake.

**Researcher, government and industry engagement in research**

Research translation in the health and education industries has become common practice, with the emergence of a close relationship between researchers and practitioners. Indeed, it may be common for practicing clinicians to be directly involved in the design and performance of medical research. This relationship between researchers and community services policy makers and practitioners however is less common.

While there is interest in using research more in policy and practices around community services, it has been found that changes in policy and practice rarely occur as a direct result of research evidence. This is attributed to the different cultures of the three primary stakeholders in community services - researchers (universities), policy makers (government) and practitioners (industry and government) - which can create barriers to effective cooperation and hence the uptake of research.

Such findings were consistent with consultation which highlighted that while the industry was highly skilled (with the majority holding post-school qualifications), there were less examples of practitioners being directly involved in research activities (when compared to the health or education sector). Those consulted also indicated that the industry has tended to place a heavier weight on tacit knowledge developed through 'hands-on' experience, as opposed to new research concepts where there can be uncertainty regarding their effectiveness.

Community services providers have also historically derived the majority of their funding from government sources. This funding is typically structured around the delivery of key services, hence many organisations may have limited scope to fund or allocate resources (funding or workers) towards research activities.

While this is not always the case, and some larger organisations with private funding will undertake their own research, the industry is often reliant on government and/or universities to drive research activities.

**Types of research**

Research in the industry may be undertaken or commissioned for a number of reasons, these include:

- **Research around existing client needs** – This research may be designed to improve processes or drive wider innovation in how the industry meets known client and industry requirements.

- **Research to address new client needs** – This research could be done in response to a shift in clients and/or their requirements which result in a gap in service provision. Such research may be used to better understand the specific client and/or industry needs and determine what response is most likely to be effective.

- **Evaluations of existing practices or processes** – This can include assessing the ongoing appropriateness of existing service delivery practices, industry systems and processes, and government policies and programs. It may also be used to evaluate service delivery practices for which a strong evidence base does not yet exist (e.g. tacit knowledge within the industry).

**Users of research**

The likely end users of community services research are numerous and varied. The primary end users are likely to include researchers, policy and program makers, and clients and their families, and community services organisations. Research may be used to inform policy, programs and practices, including requests for funding for the provision of services and in improving effectiveness and viability. It may also play a role in informing future research priorities.

Other groups, such as private enterprises, social enterprises, philanthropists, parents, workers and their employers, and researchers and practitioners from outside community services may also have an interest in community services research due to a range of different motivations including an interest in the health and well-being of their community.
The theory of research translation

Research translation is a growing area of focus associated with driving greater returns for investment in research. It seeks to more effectively promote and support the use of evidence based practice, and in doing so bridge the gap between research, policy and practice.

In the community services industry, research and its effective translation into practice offers significant potential for improving policy and practice decisions, and in doing so drives better outcomes for clients and community. Research translation could also facilitate a broader stakeholder reach for the industry and create opportunities for collaborations with investors, technology firms, entrepreneurs and research institutions. Such collaborations could support innovation and a transition towards new service delivery models and industry practices.

There are four theoretical models for research translation commonly cited in social science literature. These models can inform the evaluation of potential translational research models for the community services industry and include:

- **Science push** – This model is based on researchers developing knowledge which is then made available for uptake. The model is described as placing emphasis on the knowledge ‘product’, rather than its applicability to the end user.

- **Demand pull** – This model is structured around the view that research should be driven by the end user of research. This is on the basis that knowledge uptake will increase if the research questions are developed by the end user themselves, rather than researchers.

- **Dissemination** – This model is structured around researchers developing dissemination strategies for their research to support uptake. This model is still largely guided by researchers themselves, rather than end users and the communication of findings may only be considered after the research is completed.

- **Interaction** – This model is structured around collaboration and cooperation between researchers and end users. It seeks to bring together both researchers’ empirical knowledge and end users’ tacit knowledge throughout the production of research. This model is also seen as incorporating the dimensions of the above three models, given it takes into consideration researcher expertise, user requirements and the methods for bringing these two parties together.

This discussion of theoretical models highlights some of the key factors which would need to be considered in assessing the suitability of any research translation model. Indeed, it suggests that any model design would need to consider the following key factors:

- the roles of the researcher and the end user in designing and undertaking the research task; and

- methods for disseminating research to end users, including engagement processes.

These factors are explored further on page 17.
There are four guiding principles which apply across all research translation models to support positive outcomes.

**Guiding principles for research translation**

There are a number of guiding principles that support research translation outcomes. These principles were informed by a review of relevant literature, including work undertaken by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and our consultation with industry (summarised at Appendix D (page 65)). The principles were structured around four key areas.

### A. User engagement

Effective translation is underpinned by the process of engaging end users – be they clients, industry, government or others - in the research development process. This helps to ensure the research addresses a genuine need. The co-design and co-production of research can also ensure shared ownership of the research and embed research translation activities into the creation of knowledge and process improvement.

### B. Capacity building

There should be mutual capacity building/knowledge exchange between researchers and end users. This process requires recognition of the expertise that each party brings to the research task. This principle is best supported via ongoing, regular communication between researchers and users which can help build users’ capacity to conduct and participate in research, while at the same time allowing researchers to understand what evidence is useful for practice.

### C. Effective communication

The delivery of research findings should be part of a continual and interactive process. Findings need to be presented in the context of the whole body of research, with key messages and implications readily identifiable for end users. Research translation processes need to go beyond the publication of plain language findings, to include the use of multicomponent, multifaceted and interactive activities to foster the translation of research into practice.

### D. Impact measurement

Monitoring and evaluating the uptake of research should occur during and beyond the project, as opposed to focussing narrowly on the final outputs only. Data should be gathered on the uptake of research findings and the extent to which the expected benefits are derived by users. These findings can then be used to adapt research uptake strategies and to influence future projects.
User engagement and capacity building are two guiding principles for research translation models.

A. User engagement

A regularly cited barrier to research uptake is the differences in the cultures of researchers, practitioners, and policy and program makers. These differences affect the emphasis that each stakeholder places on research and research processes, along with how they work, requirements around timeframes, communication styles and environmental or organisational factors.

A research process that engages the intended end users as a co-designer and co-producer of research is one approach to reducing these barriers to research uptake. It can also ensure a greater link between the research task and a need; thus moving beyond the production of knowledge only to something that is more suited for use by policy and program makers, and industry practitioners.

This principle of end user engagement does not seek to discount the expertise of the researcher, rather harness the know-how of each party; researcher, government, industry, or all three. Indeed, it is where all parties come together that the best outcomes will occur.

This principle is also important in the context of research that could have implications for other cultures, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. End user engagement for these groups is particularly important to ensure that cultural expertise and customs are appropriately respected in the process of conducting research.

B. Capacity building

Research models should incorporate measures to build capacity across all involved stakeholders. This approach seeks to shift research activities away from one in which the research subject is researched on, towards one which recognises local expertise and invites the translation of industry, client and community knowledge and capacity into the research process.

A process of mutual capacity building could also assist practitioners and policy makers to gain a better understanding of research design and research processes, and in doing so increase their capacity to conduct research or participate in the research process. At the same time, it may help researchers to understand what research or evidence will best address the requirements of the end user.

Mutual capacity building can be supported through a range of mechanisms. These include:

- **Ongoing, regular communication between researchers and end users** – An ongoing engagement process, rather than just at the beginning and the end of the research task, provides opportunities to build trust and mutual respect between parties. Such an approach allows for iterative refinement of research, helps end users to understand more deeply any research findings and may support greater (and earlier) uptake of findings.

- **Utilising opportunities for ‘shadowing’ or the secondment of staff between organisations (industry/government to researchers, or vice versa)** – this arrangement can help to bridge differences in cultures between each organisation while guiding the development and the interpretation of any research outputs.
Effective communication and impact measurement are two guiding principles for research translation models.

C. Effective communication

A critical principle of research translation is that new knowledge needs to be presented in such a way that it can be readily understood and applied by policy and program makers, practitioners and clients/community.

In communicating findings, consideration needs to be given to how, when and where users engage with the research. For instance, there may be cases where there may be multiple end users – government, industry, clients and other researchers. It may therefore be useful considering how to frame any materials summarising research findings such that it highlights the implications for policy makers, for practitioners, for clients and for researchers.

Evidence also supports the use of multicomponent, multifaceted and interactive activities for fostering research translation. This could include:

- plain English articles, succinctly summarising findings for a non-technical audience with the use of visuals or diagrams;
- fact sheets or practice guides which emphasise the relevance of the research for policy, practice or research;
- workshops, webinars, seminars or other interactive sessions for discussing findings and allowing end users to ask questions; and
- the formation of an online community to facilitate ongoing discussion and support for knowledge uptake.

It may also be necessary to consider how information is shared (e.g. via a central repository that is accessible to policy-makers, researchers, community service providers and service users).

Consideration of intellectual property arrangements will also be necessary.

D. Impact measurement

Research performed for the purposes of informing policy, practice and future research should embed a framework for impact measurement (that is the assessment and measurement of research uptake). Incorporating evaluation processes at the start of the project, rather than the end, will help ensure consideration is given to defining a baseline and identifying what data should be collected through the research task to determine the impact of the research against the baseline. It is also the case that research translation activities may not solely relate to the end research product, but also include the engagement with end users and other stakeholders throughout the research task.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of research and its uptake may need to consider:

- indicators for measuring outcomes; and
- methods for measuring impact, such as end user surveys or case studies of where research has been applied.

Ongoing research and evaluation processes can also help inform the research task and allow for priorities to be reviewed and changed where this will better address the research question and/or generate a better outcome for end users.
We reviewed a number of organisations involved, in some capacity, in research translation to define the categories of research translation models.

To inform the design of a potential research translation model for community services we reviewed a select number of organisations – in Australia and overseas - involved in research translation in some capacity. These organisations included:

- Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)
- CRC Optimising Resource Extraction
- Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO)
- The Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC
- Knowledge Translation Unit – University of Cape Town Lung Institute
- Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support
- Child Family Community Australia
- The Australia Centre for Social Innovation
- The Auckland Co-design Lab

Case studies for each of these organisations were developed, based on a desk top assessment, and supplemented with consultation relevant representatives where possible.

Based on these case studies, five research translation models were defined:

1. research sharing;
2. research facilitation;
3. research partnership;
4. collaborative research;
   a. university-initiated collaborative models;
   b. government-initiated collaborative models;
   c. industry-initiated collaborative models; and
5. social innovation enterprise.

These models are explored further in Section 3 (page 21) while the detailed case studies for the assessed models are contained in Appendix B (page 46) and are referred to throughout the following sections.
Model options for supporting research translation
**Our assessment identified five classifications of research translation models.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research sharing</td>
<td>This model typically involves an online portal or clearing house which provides access to existing research free of charge, or by subscription. Features of this model include:</td>
<td>• UK Social Care Institute for Excellence&lt;br&gt;• Child Family Community Australia (AFIS)&lt;br&gt;• Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services (C4EO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research facilitation</td>
<td>This model is structured around brokering relationships between industry and researchers for the purpose of undertaking mutually beneficial research (or identifying existing research). The brokering entity can be government or non-government, and may also be involved in identifying areas for further research, commissioning research and publishing research findings. Other models may incorporate a research broker role.</td>
<td>• Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Research partnership</td>
<td>This model is commonly used for undertaking research. It is typically a one-off arrangement established to address a specific issue/objective. The research activity could be initiated by government, industry, research organisations or a combination of these entities. Funding is typically short-term and related to the delivery of the specific research task. Funding sources can include government (via grants or direct funding), industry, university or philanthropists. Research translation processes may be included in the design of the research task.</td>
<td>• Common model for undertaking research, including ARC Linkage projects&lt;br&gt;• Knowledge Translation Unit (University of Cape Town)&lt;br&gt;• Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support (DCCSIDS)&lt;br&gt;• Australian Centre for Community Services Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaborative research</td>
<td>This model typically brings together universities, governments, and industry participants, in a range of different collaborative arrangements. Features of these models include:</td>
<td>• The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)&lt;br&gt;• The Auckland Co-Design Lab (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social innovation enterprise</td>
<td>Social innovation enterprises are relatively new arrangements, established as a private sector entity to develop innovative solutions for a range of social issues. Social innovation enterprise activities could support the application of research, but this may not be the primary objective of the entity. These organisations can be either for profit or non-profit, but are typically driven by a social mission. Some social enterprises have been established with seed funding from government. Ongoing funding may be sourced from government and philanthropists, but would be subject to the nature of the project.</td>
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</table>
Research sharing models commonly take the form of clearing houses or online portals.

Overview

Research sharing arrangements are commonly applied throughout the industry, both in Australia and internationally, and can take the form of clearing houses or online portals. These measures provide a useful mechanism for making existing research available to policy and program makers, and practitioners.

The model can be classified as a ‘dissemination’ model. Operators of these information portals take existing academic research and adapt it into practical and accessible outputs. For example, all material that the United Kingdom’s Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) produces is published on their website in easy to use formats, such as: e-learning resources, Social Care TV films, interactive guides and tools that are specially designed to work online.

Some operators of research sharing models engage directly with industry practitioners to understand what information they require and how they can ensure greater uptake of the existing research. This is typically done through the use of advisory boards, expert panels or reference groups, which include industry representatives.

Organisations delivering research sharing models may do so as part of a broader research facilitation role.

Across the identified organisations providing these services, all were funded at least in part by government. Funding levels ranged from an estimated $1 million per annum for Child Family Community Australia (CFCA)\(^1\), which is part of the Australian Institute of Family Studies to £7 million (A$12.5 million) per annum for SCIE.\(^2\) The quantum of funding is linked to the nature of activities undertaken by the organisation, which can differ significantly.

Pathway for research sharing

Applicability to the department

Consultation highlighted that research sharing platforms were highly valued by the industry for facilitating access to research, and that government could have a role in supporting the coordination and dissemination of existing research, including ensuring that research is in an accessible format for end users through such a model.

However, evidence suggests that passive models of research distribution, such as these, are unlikely to lead to knowledge uptake.\(^3\) Indeed, such mechanisms are generally only effective where they complement or reinforce other research translation activities. There are also a large number of clearing houses/research portals in the community services industry which publish information regarding domestic and family violence and child safety. The creation of another information portal would only be justified where there was a clear gap in current information provision.

The best use of government resources may be to leverage existing research databases, through awareness raising and providing links to these sources via a departmental website. For example, the department could provide links to Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) for research on violence against women and children or to CFCA as a national information exchange on research relevant to children, families and communities. It is also noted that the department provides funding to peak bodies to undertake activities which could include research sharing. There could be a role for other entities, such as industry bodies, to be involved in supporting research sharing and dissemination.
Research facilitation models incorporate a range of activities to develop linkages between producers and users of research.

Overview

Research facilitation can cover a range of activities including developing relationships with, among and between producers and users of knowledge by providing linkages, knowledge sources and in some cases knowledge itself. Research facilitation can include:

- knowledge management (collation, possible creation, translation and dissemination of evidence in different formats such as webinars, workshops and plain English summaries);
- linkage and exchange (which emphasises the utility of interpersonal partnerships spanning across traditional barriers, often on an ongoing basis); and
- capacity building (in which brokers take responsibility for enhancing the ability of end users to understand and use research evidence).

Many organisations performing research sharing activities also have a formal research facilitation role. For example, the UK Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services (C4EO) acts as a best practice evidence hub for ‘what works’, while also providing hands-on support to build capacity of front-line of service providers.

Peak and industry bodies, research entities and government agencies such as the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) may also perform some of these activities on an informal basis.

This model is similar to a ‘dissemination’ model, and can support access to, and understanding of, existing research. However, it also supports collaboration for new research activities.

The funding required to support the implementation of this model would be subject to further assessment. However, as an indicative guide, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) received around $4.3 million in 2015 to perform its research facilitation activities.

Applicability to the department

Consultation highlighted that smaller NGOs would likely benefit from a research brokerage arrangement where this helped them to identify potential research partners, or access relevant existing research. Larger NGOs with their own research capacity did not feel the same need for this facilitation support, though may still benefit from these models.

Similar to research sharing models, there are a number of organisations providing research facilitation services to the industry such as ARACY. The department along with some researchers and peak bodies also perform some of these activities on an informal basis.

While industry supported research brokerage arrangements, this does not suggest that the department should expand its role in this area. Consideration would need to be given to how the department can leverage existing organisations providing these services, such as peak and industry bodies along with entities such as ARACY.
Research partnership models are typically short term, one-off arrangements between producers and end users of research to address a specific issue.

Overview

Research partnerships are a common model for undertaking new research. The research may be initiated by the end user (government or industry), led by researchers, or developed in partnership. It is typically a one-off arrangement established to address a specific issue/objective.

The model could be classified as either a ‘science-push’, ‘demand-pull’ or ‘integrated’ model, but its effectiveness for translating research into practice may differ based on how the research task was scoped and implemented.

Research translation is best facilitated where there is a direct link between the research being undertaken and the end user of the research. Research partnerships would be able to facilitate this link in theory, particularly where partners work together to co-design and co-produce the research.

There may be some overlap between research partnerships and research collaboration models. For instance, government or an NGO may partner with an existing research collaboration to undertake mutually beneficial research.

Applicability to the department

This model could support research translation, however, its success at achieving these outcomes is linked to governance arrangements and how each party is engaged in undertaking the research task. This model will only support research translation where there is a high level of collaboration between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in designing the research question and developing an approach to the research task.

Given the common use of this type of arrangement for undertaking research by both government and the NGO sector it remains a potential model for supporting research translation in community services. However, to ensure greater uptake of knowledge created through this model, consideration should be given to ensuring that the guiding principles of research translation are embedded into the partnership agreement – that is, user driven research, mutual capacity building, multifaceted research delivery and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
Overview

Collaborative research models capture research partnerships between industry, researchers and government via long term arrangements. These arrangements can include alliances (established under memorandums of understanding), joint ventures (which can be structured around the eventual commercialisation of research) or research institutes (which can involve the establishment of a stand alone entity to undertake research).

These models tend to be structured around a discipline or set of research topics. For example, the Knowledge Translation Unit (KTU) in South Africa is focussed on health care in underserved communities, while the Queensland Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support is focussed on disability and behaviour support.

Collaborative research models are commonly used for performing new research. These organisations may also undertake research sharing and research facilitation activities in addition to their research creation function. This model could be classified as either a ‘science-push’, ‘demand-pull’ or ‘integrated’ model, with its effectiveness for translating research into practice differing based on how the research task was scoped and implemented.

Research translation is best facilitated where there is a direct link between the research being undertaken and the end user of the research. Collaborative research models would be able to facilitate this link in theory, particularly where partners work together to co-design and co-produce the research.

Funding sources typically include government (via grants or direct funding), industry, university or philanthropists. The level of funding required is dependant on the number and scale of research projects undertaken and the range of research translation activities employed to facilitate the transfer of research into practice.

Pathway for collaborative research

Applicability to the department

Collaborative research models have the potential to support effective research translation. Consultation highlighted that some existing models, which emerged from within universities, may not always deliver practical outcomes for end users. Indeed, it was indicated that there was often an absence of direct and ongoing end user engagement. This underscores the importance of ensuring these models have effective mechanisms in place to support collaboration.

Given the wide variation in the types of collaborative research models, it is useful to divide this category into three sub-models: *industry-initiated* collaborations (a research arrangement which is facilitated by an NGO or collaboration of NGOs); *government-initiated* collaborations (a research arrangement which is facilitated by government); and *university-initiated* collaborations (where research is facilitated by a university). The department could seek to engage with (or lead) a collaborative research arrangement where it is seeking to explore a specific area of research within the community services industry.
5 **Social innovation enterprises are a rapidly growing type of research translation model which apply commercial strategies to address social objectives.**

**Overview**

Social innovation enterprises provide an example of non-traditional methods for driving innovation in the community services industry. The nature of these organisations can vary, but this category includes organisations which apply commercial strategies to address social objectives. Social enterprises can be revenue generating, but this is not seen as their overarching objective.

An example of this model is the Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI). TACSI was established in 2009 with seed funding from the South Australian Government of $6 million over three years. The purpose of this organisation was to drive innovation in the areas of health, education and housing. The organisation is now self-funded and delivers consultancy-like services for governments across Australia for a fee.

Another example is the Auckland Co-Design Lab which uses a co-design approach to help different agencies, stakeholders and the community to come together to explore new solutions to complex, multi-agency social issues.

This model of research translation does not align perfectly to the theoretical research translation models defined earlier in the report. These types of organisations tend to look outside traditional research performed by universities for new ideas (such as through the use of open innovation and accelerator forums).

However, the activities and processes applied by social innovation enterprises may drive collaboration between government, industry, clients and researchers and hence support evidence based practice or the implementation of innovative practices. The effectiveness of any translation of research into policy or practice would be subject to the nature and design of the project.

**Pathway for research by social innovation enterprises**

**Applicability to the department**

Research translation is best facilitated where there is a direct link between the research being undertaken and the end user. While social innovation enterprises fall outside the theoretical models of research translation, subject to how their activities are defined and delivered they may support the practical uptake of research and innovative practices. However, these organisations may undertake activities which go beyond research translation (e.g. direct service provision).

While social innovation enterprises have the potential to bring new thinking to the industry and facilitate partnerships across government, industry, researchers and philanthropists, they may be viewed with suspicion by industry. Where social enterprises were discussed during consultation it was suggested that these entities might not always effectively engage with end users (including industry or clients), or their solutions may not address the root cause of disadvantage.

If there was a desire to establish a social innovation enterprise with government seed funding, consideration would need to be given to the specific objectives of the enterprise, its requirements for engaging with industry and end users, and how it would support community services outcomes. Potential commercial arrangements and legal implications for the enterprise should also be considered, including whether a new entity should be created, or whether an existing enterprise could be scaled up to perform these activities.
Defining a model applicable to the community services industry
The collaborative model was identified as a potential research translation model best meeting the guiding principles of research translation.

Defining a preferred model for research translation

This review identified a range of suitable models for undertaking research and translating this research into practice. While each of the models have potential benefits in terms of supporting research translation activities, the collaborative research model, and the range of forms which it can take, was identified by the department as warranting a more detailed assessment.

The collaborative research model is based on the principle that research outcomes are more likely to be translated into policy and practice where end users are an engaged participant in the research agenda.

Three variations of this model have been proposed:

• **industry-initiated** collaborations - a research arrangement which is facilitated by an NGO or collaboration of NGOs;

• **government-initiated** collaborations - a research arrangement which is facilitated by government; and

• **university-initiated** collaborations - where research, teaching and learning is facilitated by a university.

The design of the three models was based on a recognition that subject to which entity initiated the research, the features of the collaborative arrangement may differ. However, it is important to highlight while one entity may ‘initiate’ the research, this model is based on collaboration and ensuring that all research participants are equally engaged in driving research outcomes.

This section provides an overview of the potential design features for each of these models including:

• governance arrangements, encompassing the role of government, scope for partnerships and networking and how research translation can be facilitated;

• financing arrangements, including estimated set up costs and funding sources;

• operational risks and other key considerations; and

• research dissemination, including intellectual property (IP), copyright and commercialisation opportunities.
Industry-initiated collaborations are models of research translation which are guided by community service providers.

Overview

Industry-initiated collaborations are models of research translation which are guided by community service providers. These models are structured around formalised relationships between industry (either a single community service provider/NGO or group of community service providers/NGOs) and a researcher (or group of researchers).

Some collaborations may also benefit from engagement with other stakeholders. For example, there may be a role for government where it is either a contributor to, and/or a consumer of the research output.

Governance arrangements

The structure of this model could include:

- a research collaboration, initiated by a single NGO; and
- a research collaboration, initiated by an alliance of NGOs.

Consultation indicated that some community service providers are readily undertaking their own research activities. These organisations are typically larger organisations, with access to a range of funding sources. These larger organisations tend to have the capacity to operate internal research units to manage and oversee research activities, including collaborative arrangements with external research providers.

While individual community service providers may wish to drive their own research activities independently, in a fiscally constrained environment, this may not be possible – particularly for smaller NGOs with fewer resources to support access to alternative funding. To overcome this constraint, a research collaboration involving multiple NGOs may be effective.

The governance arrangements for bringing together multiple NGOs could include the following:

- A contractual partnership, established as part of a research collaboration – for instance, a number of community service providers could agree to collaborate on a research task with an external researcher. The relationships between the organisations could be formalised through the collaboration.

- An alliance model – this model is based on the creation of a backbone organisation to act as an independent facilitator between each of the participating NGOs. Such a model could support the delivery of a research agenda, but may endure beyond this activity.

While two variations are proposed, it is noted that the alliance model may have benefits due to the existence of an independent facilitator. This feature can ensure that each NGO has an equal position in the research collaboration.

The design of the potential governance arrangement for the alliance model can be informed by collective impact models. For example, Together SA, a collective impact model operating in South Australia, has a separate entity which manages the engagement of each partner NGO. This model also allows for NGO staff to be seconded into the entity.

Beyond the governance arrangement for any NGO collaboration, it would be necessary to define how the industry-initiated collaboration would partner with researchers, and other entities such as government (where they are involved in funding and/or engaging with the research activities of the industry-initiated collaboration).
Establishment costs of an industry-initiated collaboration are linked to the governance arrangement underpinning the collaboration.

**Networks and partnerships**

Similar to other collaboration models involving multiple organisations, this model will require clearly defined research priorities to guide its research activities and ensure goal congruency across each of the participating NGOs. The model would also require regular mechanisms for engaging partner NGOs on research progress and outcomes.

It may also be appropriate to establish formal and informal mechanisms to ensure ongoing engagement between NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders (including government and community where appropriate). These mechanisms can include advisory committees, comprising representatives from research organisations, government and community.

**Translation of evidence into practice**

Research processes which have clear industry engagement are expected to result in outcomes that have greater practice congruence. This is because industry is best able to articulate the problems requiring further investigation and ensure any research is aimed at addressing a real need within the industry.

However, while industry has a lead role under this model, the development of a research translation strategy may be necessary to align priorities and define desired research outputs across all parties. Such a strategy would need to define:

- the expected end users of the research, particularly where these end users sit outside the formal collaboration arrangements (e.g. government, clients and investors);
- strategies for engaging with researchers throughout the research project; and
- potential information sharing mechanisms (including traditional informal sharing portals), along with non-traditional methods such as direct engagement, workshops, webinars etc).

**Funding arrangements**

**Establishment costs**

Similar to the other models, the costs of establishing an industry-initiated collaboration can vary.

For instance, where formal alliance arrangements are not required, there is not expected to be any set up costs. By comparison, the formation and ongoing operation of a collective impact model will generate costs associated with the operation of the independent facilitator role. Where this role sits within government, the costs would be linked to the number of staff required. Where a separate entity is created, establishment costs will include the salaries along with any on-costs and overheads.

**Funding sources**

There are likely to be a range of funding sources for industry-initiated collaborations including:

- private revenue generated by the NGO from its activities and other payments such as donations;
- research grants such as ARC linkage grants (where community service providers partner with universities, as generally only universities are eligible to apply for this funding);
- funding from philanthropic partners; and
- government funding.

Together SA operates a collective impact model which is funded by contributions from NGO partners (which covers slightly over 50% of its annual operating costs), with the remaining funding being sourced from government. It may also seek funding through research grants or additional government funding to support its program delivery activities.
Industry-initiated models require strong governance frameworks to align the priorities of all parties.

Operational risks and other key considerations

Industry collaborations can have a number of risks which may affect outcomes:

- **Dilution of research objectives over the life of the collaboration** - NGOs operate in an environment where constraints on resources and funding are common. Funding allocated to research activities may shift towards frontline service provision if funding arrangements for the NGOs are altered over the life of the collaboration. This will impact the ongoing effectiveness of the collaboration if NGOs disengage over the life of the research task.

- **Lack of engagement with government (e.g. policy makers)** – where industry leads the research task there may be limited scope for government engagement. While this may not be a significant risk for most research activities, such as where research is self-funded by industry, it might be relevant where research findings have implications for government policy or the research is funded by government.

- **Limited sharing of research outcomes** – where a community service provider (or group of community service providers) self-funds its research activities, they may be unwilling to share this information with non-participating organisations (or other entities more broadly), particularly where it provides them with a market advantage.

- **Duplication** – where a single service provider drives its own research agenda, there may be risks of research duplication. This however is not expected to be a significant risk, as the process of seeking funding through research grants may minimise any duplication.

Research dissemination

In practice, the involvement of community service providers throughout the research task is likely to support the development of outputs tailored to meet their requirements. However, beyond the community service providers directly involved in the collaboration, there may be limited measures for sharing findings more broadly.

In some instances limited sharing might be appropriate, such as where the community service provider self-funded the research and they are best able to action any research findings. However, some community service providers may not readily realise the practical application or even commercial opportunities of the research, and sharing research outputs may help to fully realise the benefits of any research task.

There may be benefits in encouraging NGOs to share research findings. Where government funds the research task, there may be scope to include requirements for research findings to be shared more broadly.

Copyright and licensing

As with any collaboration, arrangements regarding the treatment of IP and licencing will need to be negotiated at the outset.

This will include consideration of who is best to own the IP, and how best to manage opportunities around commercialisation. Further detail regarding key considerations for commercialisation of knowledge generated is provided in Appendix C (page 60).

Monitoring and evaluation of improved outcomes

Research performed for the purposes of informing policy, practice and future research should include a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation from the outset of the research project.

An industry-initiated research entity should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that can be applied across research projects. This framework should include an approach to developing methods and indicators for measuring outcomes (including alignment to any overarching outcome frameworks), as well as methods for measuring impact, such as end user surveys or case studies of where research has been applied.
Government-initiated models could involve the creation of a research unit by a government agency and a university for the purpose of undertaking mutually beneficial research.

Overview
The government-initiated collaboration model has been defined as the creation of a research unit by a government agency (or agencies) and a university (or universities) for the purpose of undertaking mutually beneficial research. The features of this model have been informed by consultation with NGOs as well as the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support (CECIBS), which is a collaboration between the University of Queensland (UQ) and the department.

The use of this model is most applicable where the purpose of the research centre is to inform government policy and the delivery of government funded or operated services.

Governance arrangements
The structure of this model could take two different forms:

1. The model could be structured around the creation of a separate research centre or unit, within a government agency, which is chaired by a university professor. The centre may be staffed by both departmental and university employees.

2. The model could be structured around the creation of a research centre or unit, that is led by government but is based within a university. The centre may be staffed by both departmental and university employees.

These ‘secondment’ type arrangements can facilitate greater dialogue between both entities, supporting the alignment of research priorities.

Under the first approach, the chair of the research centre can be funded by the department, and paid via the relevant university. For example, the CECIBS chair is employed on a full-time basis by UQ under a three year contract. A portion of the chair’s salary is paid by the department to UQ, with the university funding the remaining portion. Under the second approach, departmental staff may continue to be employed by the government agency but are embedded in the research centre. This ensures research projects are aligned with agency priorities and helps to build the research capacity of agency staff.

Staff in these research centres can include researchers, policy and program makers, trainers and practitioners. They may also include industry representatives on secondment. Additionally, the university may contribute research fellows and/or research candidates to a research centre that is based within the university. The number of staff, and the nature of their roles would be subject to the research activities being undertaken.

Networks and partnerships
The co-location of university researchers and government staff in a research centre (regardless of its location) can help to facilitate close links between the activities of researchers and the requirements of government and its stakeholders. However, enabling frameworks, such as clearly defined research priorities, along with regular mechanisms for reporting on research progress and outcomes will be important for reinforcing this relationship.

In addition to the links between government and researchers, mechanisms to facilitate industry engagement will be necessary. Industry engagement is best achieved where there is ongoing and regular contact. This could be supported via the creation of an industry advisory committee which can be engaged to guide the development of research priorities. It can also support the provision of regular updates throughout the research task.

Engagement with industry could also be facilitated through formal and informal research sharing arrangements over the life of the project (including relevant articles, practice guides and seminars involving the researchers directly) as well as seconding industry representatives into the research centre.
A research translation strategy can assist to align priorities in a government-initiated model.

Translation of evidence into practice
The creation of an entity with both university researchers and government employees can help to bridge cultural differences that may exist between these organisations, and in doing so support research translation. It will, however, be necessary to develop a research translation strategy at the establishment of the collaboration to guide these activities. This strategy would need to define:

- the expected end users of the research, particularly where these end users sit outside the formal collaboration arrangements (e.g. industry or clients);
- strategies for engaging with end users throughout the research task; and
- potential research sharing mechanisms, both traditional and non-traditional.

Financing arrangements

Establishment costs
Indicative set up costs for a government-initiated collaborative research centre can vary significantly; influenced by the scale of the centre (in terms of staffing) along with the specific tasks performed.

The CECIBS had an establishment cost of $290,000 when it was formed in 2008. At this time, it was operated as a research institute within UQ and these costs are likely to reflect the salaries of those employed by the Centre, and is not expected to cover operating costs (such as rent etc). In practice, the true cost of establishing a research centre would be linked to the salaries of the staff, and any associated operating costs.

In 2013, following machinery of government changes, the Centre was incorporated into the department with an expanded role. Current operating costs of the Centre are approximately $4 million annually. This may provide a reasonable indication of the costs of establishing and operating a research centre based within a government agency.

Funding arrangements
Funding arrangements for a government-initiated collaboration are likely to rest with the relevant agency undertaking this task. In the case of the CECIBS, the department funds the operation of the model, with some funding provided by UQ.

Subject to how the model is implemented, it may be possible for a government-initiated collaboration to seek funding through measures such as ARC linkage grants where this is appropriate. There may also be opportunities for the centre to establish funding relationships with other entities, such as NGOs, philanthropists, social enterprises and other tiers of government, where research priorities and outcomes are aligned. However, any engagement with these third parties would need to take into consideration the features of the specific research agenda and the nature of any research outcomes.

Operational risks and other key considerations
Each model can have a number of risks which may affect outcomes, these include:

- Dilution of research objectives over the life of the collaboration – funding targeted at research can be affected by electoral cycles and, in fiscally constrained environments, priorities can shift towards frontline service delivery. It may be necessary to establish clearly defined objectives for the research centre to ensure that appropriate funding and resources are provided to achieve research outcomes.

- Constraints on the ability to access external funding – care should be taken in the design of governance arrangements underpinning the model. For instance, while short-term employment contracts may provide the department with the greatest flexibility to manage their centre, such short-term arrangements could impede the ability to apply for funding which may require a longer, guaranteed employment timeframe.
Operational risks and other key considerations continued

- **Perceived bias** – government-initiated research centres (particularly those based within government agencies), may be viewed as having a lower degree of independence than would be assumed of a university institute. This could create a perception of bias which might undermine relationships between the centre and industry, and impede the uptake of knowledge.

- **Decreased ability to influence government decision making** – physical distance from government operations and decision makers can affect the ability of a university based research centre to influence policy and government provided services. If the aim of the centre is to inform government decision making, then proximity of the centre to the government agency it seeks to influence should be considered.

- **Limits to accessing research resources** – while a government based research centre offers greater alignment between the department and a university, as the chair of the centre is deemed to be employed by the department this can affect their ability to act as the primary supervisor to research candidates and in doing so limit access to researchers which might support the activities of the centre.

**Research dissemination**

This model can include a research sharing component to make research findings available and in an accessible format. It can support the use of multicomponent, multifaceted and interactive activities for fostering research translation, through the development of plain English summaries, policy briefs and practice guides, followed by webinars, workshops and forums.

The use of creative commons licencing can be used by this model to remove barriers to uptake and use created by copyright by allowing research outputs to be widely disseminated online for public use.

It may also be necessary to consider whether any knowledge should be commercialised. Further detail regarding key considerations for commercialisation of knowledge generated is provided in Appendix C (page 60).

**Copyright and licencing**

IP rights and licencing should be negotiated from the outset between the partners in the collaboration. A common method for dealing with IP under this model is for one partner to retain the IP, and to grant the other an unlimited and unconditional licence to use the research outputs.

**Monitoring and evaluation of improved outcomes**

Research performed for the purposes of informing policy, practice and future research should include a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation from the outset of the research project. A government-initiated research centre should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that can be applied across research projects. This framework should include an approach to developing methods and indicators for measuring outcomes (including alignment to any overarching outcome frameworks), as well as methods for measuring impact, such as end user surveys or case studies of where research has been applied.
University-initiated collaborative research models are able to leverage industry partnerships, and influence teaching practices, to encourage the adoption of new practices in service delivery.

Overview

University-initiated collaborations can operate through various mechanisms, such as via the creation of a subsidiary/institute belonging to the university. The institute could be structured as a stand-alone entity within the university (an example of this model is the Knowledge Translation Unit within the University of Cape Town) or it can be linked to an existing university faculty (this is the current model used for the Life Course Centre based at UQ’s Institute for Social Science Research).

In describing the features of this model we have drawn upon the Knowledge Translation Unit (KTU), the Life Course Centre and the Australian Centre for Community Services Research located at Flinders University South Australia.

These university-initiated models are differentiated from government and industry-initiated research models by their focus on leveraging teaching and learning to drive uptake of new practice in service delivery, (as summarised in the diagram to the right). The outputs of research can be translated into new practices in collaboration with industry (e.g. through pilot projects) and are subsequently used to inform and develop teaching and learning frameworks. These frameworks are used to instruct practitioners in order to ensure research outputs are applied by practitioners in the field.

For example, the KTU utilises a cascading ‘teach the teacher’ framework where the Unit directly teaches practitioners how to apply research outputs in the delivery of health services. The end result is the upskilling of large numbers of frontline healthcare workers in evidence based practices. This in turn creates a feedback cycle where the experiences of frontline healthcare workers are incorporated into subsequent evidence based practices and the next iteration of the ‘teach the teacher’ framework. Being part of a university, KTU had a unique ability to operate across the whole research process, from the initial research study, to the evaluation of outputs, to a pilot study, and to full scale implementation.
University-initiated models must implement mechanisms to ensure the end users of the research are closely involved in defining the issue and structuring the outputs.

Governance
All university-initiated models should operate with a strict governance framework to ensure co-design principles are built into the operations of the model as a precondition to research translation. This may potentially incorporate:

• an independent board of directors (or equivalent);
• an independent ‘advisory committee’ with experts from across universities, government and industry;
• reporting mechanisms to report on research progress and outcomes; and
• engagement mechanisms to engage with industry and government.

Translation of evidence into practice
It is necessary to develop a research translation strategy at the establishment of the collaboration to guide these activities, which defines:

• the expected end users of the research, particularly where these end users sit outside the formal collaboration arrangements (e.g. government, industry or clients);
• strategies for engaging with end users throughout the research task; and
• potential research sharing mechanisms, both traditional and non-traditional.

Role of Government
Access to unique data
Governments have access to unique data sources and as a result can provide insights not usually available to universities. The provision of data can allow universities to define a societal problem/issue within the context of a strong data source or conduct research using this data.

For example the Life Course Centre based at the UQ’s Institute for Social Science Research has been accessing welfare data maintained by the Australian Government in order to determine which demographical groups are most likely to go on to, and get off, welfare payments.

Access to funding
Governments can provide funding in relation to a research project if they deem the issue aligns with their priorities. The more involvement that government has in determining the research issue, the more likely the research will align with its policy and service delivery priorities.

Acceptance and incorporation of research outputs
Government could play a role in the formalisation of research outputs into policy and guidance for service providers, and the dissemination of this information across the industry. Government acceptance of new practices can be important for encouraging widespread uptake by the larger practitioner network as it provides a form of validation.
**While university-initiated models can require establishment costs co-contributions from government can assist with funding.**

### Funding arrangements

The set up costs involved in establishing a university-initiated model depends on the mechanism utilised.

From our consultations, stakeholders indicated that there were a number of funding mechanisms that could be accessed to supplement the operation of a university-initiated research centre. For example, a contribution from government towards research would likely be eligible to receive up to 20% of that contribution in additional funding through the Australian Government’s Research Block Grant program.

While the collaboration could be set up as an stand-alone entity within the university, or incorporated into a university faculty, there are cost savings associated with the latter (as existing infrastructure can be leveraged).

In the context of a university-initiated research model there are two types of costs:

1. **Institute related costs** – That is, the costs involved in establishing and running the institute, not taking into account any substantive research work. These costs are usually covered by an operating budget separate to project based funding and grants.

2. **Project related costs** – That is, the substantive research work conducted by the organisation which will usually be covered by funding related to specific projects (e.g. government grants).

There may also be costs associated with engaging with industry and other stakeholders (such as via the operation of an advisory board). Consultation with research stakeholders highlighted that within the community services industry such a process is unlikely to create significant costs as people may provide their time on a pro-bono or in-kind basis. This has the benefit of providing critical oversight and direction to the research organisation for minimum cost.

#### Institute related costs

From consultation we understand that the minimum funds required to fund (per annum) an institute within an existing university faculty are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Estimated cost (p.a)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation Director</td>
<td>$150,000 - $230,000</td>
<td>Director at the Associate Professor or Professor level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration officer</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating budget</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>Incidentals not incorporated under project related costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$210,000 - $290,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This can be considered a ‘minimum viable product’ where the only staff member is the director, utilising faculty administrative support.

#### Project related costs

While project related costs vary significantly depending on the scope of the research project, we understand from consultations that a short term ad hoc project could be comprised of the following budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Estimated cost (p.a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher costs</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management, ethics and project design</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This estimate is for a relatively low cost project. Consultation indicated that this budget could be significantly higher for larger projects (up to $1 million).
University-initiated models require strong governance frameworks to ensure all parties’ priorities are aligned.

**Operational risks and other key considerations**

University-initiated model risks which may affect outcomes include:

- **Disincentive towards translation** - It was raised during consultation that universities (and as a result university staff) may not have incentives to produce usable/translatable research. Instead the focus has traditionally been on the production of journal articles. As a result there is a risk that a university-initiated model may not have the same focus on generating research outputs fit for use by industry and government.

- **Misalignment of research priorities** – Universities operate in an environment where constraints on resources and funding are common. Funding drivers and performance measures may not always incentivise collaboration. This can affect how research is designed and any resulting outputs. It will be necessary for all collaborating parties to clearly agree on research priorities and the requirements of research outcomes at the commencement of any process.

- **Funding priorities** – Research centres can be funded on a co-contribution basis with universities contributing funds alongside government and other investors. Where priorities of the university change, this may result in the redirection of funding towards other activities.

These risks can be mitigated through effective governance models. Any end user should be closely involved in defining the problem/issue in question and structuring the outputs of the research to ensure that the research can be utilised in a practical sense. Where appropriate, research translation outputs should be formalised in contracts to ensure there is a legal obligation on parties to perform them.

**Research dissemination**

This model can include a research sharing component to make research findings available and in an accessible format. It can support the use of multicomponent, multifaceted and interactive activities for fostering research translation, through the development of plain English summaries, policy briefs and practice guides, followed up by webinars, workshops and forums.

The use of creative commons licencing can be used by this model to remove barriers to uptake and use created by copyright by allowing research outputs to be widely disseminated online for public use. It may also be necessary to consider whether any knowledge should be commercialised. Further detail regarding key considerations for commercialisation of knowledge generated is provided in Appendix C (page 60).

**Copyright and licencing**

IP rights and licencing should be negotiated from the outset between the partners in the collaboration. A common method for dealing with IP under this model is for one partner to retain the IP, and to grant the other an unlimited and unconditional licence to use the research outputs. Access by parties not directly involved in the collaboration would need to be negotiated. Where government is funding the research, there may be scope to require information sharing.

**Monitoring and evaluation of improved outcomes**

Research performed for the purposes of informing policy, practice and future research should include a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation from the outset of the research project. A university-initiated research centre should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that can be applied across research projects. This framework should include an approach to developing methods and indicators for measuring outcomes (including alignment to any overarching outcome frameworks), as well as methods for measuring impact, such as end user surveys or case studies of where research has been applied.
Next steps
Where there is congruency in research, policy/program and practice objectives, this is likely to align with the guiding principles of research translation and support research uptake.

Research translation in community services

This review has assessed a range of research translation models, and in line with the guiding principles of research translation, has focused on collaborative research models.

In doing so, the emphasis has been on the community services industry (industry), researchers (universities) and policy and program makers (government), and the role they could play in any collaboration. This is because the engagement of these three spheres can drive congruence in research, policy/program, and practice objectives, and support research uptake. Indeed, each entity brings something important to a research collaboration:

- Community service providers work closely with clients on a day to day basis and are best able to articulate any challenges associated with meeting client needs and effectively delivering services. Practitioners also bring the tacit knowledge gained from working in the sector to the research task.

- Universities are recognised for their independence, their ability to canvass best-practice from existing research, and their expertise in undertaking primary research. This is important for developing a robust evidence base on which to guide changes to policy, programs and practices.

- Government plays a range of roles. This includes acting as a facilitator of research, through funding (both grant funding and direct funding) and/or providing access to information, in-kind support along with general research contribution as a potential stakeholder. It can act as a broker between researchers and end users (or fund entities to provide these services). Government can also be an end user of research, commissioning it directly to inform policy and practice, or leveraging existing research where relevant to its activities.

Where there is a breakdown between the priorities of these three entities, research translation may be undermined:

- Research that lacks independence or does not align with best-practice may not be sufficiently robust to inform policy, programs and practice.

- Research conceived and performed in isolation of industry (or government where it relates to policy/programs) may limit its uptake where it fails to capture the industry expertise regarding service delivery and their clients, or provide the information in a format that can be readily accessible.

- Research priorities that are set without broad engagement across industry, the research sector and the broader community, may miss emerging issues and stifle innovation, particularly where this influences the allocation of research funding.

A model structured around collaboration and how to draw in the expertise of each entity is therefore critical to research translation and driving innovation in community services.

Supporting frameworks

It is essential to emphasise that while the collaborative research models explored can support research translation, the model alone will not necessarily guarantee the translation of research into practice. Its success is based on the supporting frameworks that underpin these models including:

- a clearly defined research plan setting out the research priorities and objectives, and how it will inform practice, policy and research;

- a research translation strategy that identifies the potential end users (both within the collaboration and external to it), develops strategies for engaging with these identified end users throughout the research task, and sets out the range of methods for sharing research outputs; and
Where there is congruency in research, policy/program and practice objectives, this is likely to align with the guiding principles of research translation and support research uptake.

Supporting frameworks (continued)

- an independent advisory committee with experts from across universities, government, industry, clients and other relevant parties (such as philanthropists and private sector players).

These frameworks help to embed the guiding principles of research translation into any research process, and could arguably be incorporated into any of the models of research translation defined in this report.

Harnessing new collaboration opportunities

It is also acknowledged that there is a desire to see the community services industry build relationships with other players such as philanthropists, investors, technology firms, and entrepreneurs, where this can open up new opportunities for the sector, including access to alternative funding mechanisms.

The features of the collaborative research models explored all allow for broader partnerships that go beyond government, industry and researchers. However, the priorities of these entities may be different to those of industry and/or governments, and include commercial potential and shareholder value. While this may not be an issue, it highlights that any collaboration may require additional supporting frameworks to underpin these activities.

For instance, in line with the guiding principles of research translation, collaborations with non-traditional players may need to clearly include:

- shared purpose across the collaboration in terms of the research objective and the likely outputs;
- defined roles and responsibilities, so that each participant understands how they will work together throughout the collaboration;
- mutual respect in the value of experience and knowledge that each participant brings to the collaboration;
- open communication for navigating the relationships and dynamics with and between each of the participants; and
- appropriate resourcing to manage the collaboration.
Appendices

1. Appendix A - References
2. Appendix B - Case studies
3. Appendix C - Commercialisation in the community services industry
4. Appendix D - Consultation Summary
Appendix A - References
References

1. Deloitte Access Economics (2016) *Forecasting the Future: Community Services in Queensland 2025 (Full report).*
11. Australian Institute of Family Studies (2015), *Annual Report 2014-15*, Melbourne, Australia. CFCA’s financial information is only released at the AIFS level. Their budget has been approximated based on a pro-rata basis of employees relative to the number of AIFS employees.
17. 2008-09 Queensland State Budget, Service Delivery Statements, Disability Services Queensland, 1-265.
18. Professor Karen Nankervis, Chair of the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support, in consultation with PwC, 28 June 2016.
Appendix B - Case studies
The Knowledge Translation Unit is a South African based knowledge translation organisation with an ability to work from research through to implementation.

What is the Knowledge Translation Unit?
The Knowledge Translation Unit (KTU) is a health knowledge translation organisation with an aim to improve the quality of primary healthcare for underserved communities through research, evidence based implementation, evaluation, and engagement of health systems, their planners and providers. The programs developed by the Knowledge Translation Unit aim to standardise and improve care delivered at primary level by nurses (or other non-physician clinician equivalents), doctors and lay health workers. Each program consists of a clinical practice guideline and an implementation strategy and is underpinned by five principles:

• the guideline aligns with policy and where feasible, is evidence based;
• engagement with decision-makers and end users improves uptake;
• the implementation strategy of educational outreach can change practice;
• training in primary care teams facilitates task-sharing; and
• a cascade model of training allows for rapid scale up.

How does it operate?
The KTU sits within the University of Cape Town Lung Institute, a wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Cape Town set up to research and promote lung health, predominantly through smoking interventions and Tuberculosis treatments. The KTU is one of five clinical research units under the Lung Institute and through the Lung Institute reports to a Managing Director and a board of directors. It operates with 45 staff.

As a subsidiary of Cape Town University, the Lung Institute does not disclose its financials, and therefore financials for the KTU are unavailable.

Research Translation Activities
KTU works with researchers from Cape Town University, to conduct trials/pilots in regions of South Africa. Then if proven successful, KTU works to implement the outcomes across the wider Sub-Saharan Africa Region. A successful example was the Practical Approach to Care Kit (PACK), a comprehensive clinical practice guideline that aims to equip nurses and other clinicians in developing countries to diagnose and manage common adult health conditions. PACK involved the following steps:

1. As part of a research study, KTU worked with researchers to conduct formal research trials across 40 health clinics in South Africa.
2. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation was then performed to determine the effectiveness of PACK which found a range of patient improvements.
3. A larger pilot study was then performed in three South African health districts, which similarly found a range of health outcome improvements.
4. KTU partnered with BMJ, a leading global healthcare knowledge provider, to distribute PACK to healthcare workers in low to middle income countries across the world in a full scale global implementation effort.
5. KTU participates in a cascading ‘train the trainer’ program where:
   o KTU trains training co-ordinators in the use of PACK;
   o Training co-ordinators train facility trainers in the use of PACK; and
   o Facility trainers train facility staff, the end deliverers of services to patients.

KTU demonstrates the benefit of organisations working closely with, or indeed as a part of, universities. KTU had a unique ability to operate across the whole project, from the initial research study to evaluation to a pilot study to full scale implementation.
The Social Care Institute for Excellence is regarded as an international leader in conducting research translation activities.

What is the Social Care Institute of Excellence?
The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is a not-for-profit organisation based in the United Kingdom (UK) and aims to improve the quality of care and support services for adults and children through:

- identifying and sharing knowledge about what works and what’s new;
- supporting people who plan, commission, deliver and use services to put that knowledge into practice; and
- informing, influencing and inspiring the direction of future practice and policy.

How does it operate?
SCIE is registered in the UK as a charitable organisation company limited by guarantee.

SCIE has around 55 staff across information specialists, researchers, social care workers and administrative staff. A board of 13 trustees also oversees the organisation.

In 2014-15, SCIE received revenues of an estimated £7m (A$12.5m), the majority from the receipt of grants from government departments, 63% of this was from the department of Health and 25.7% from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Collaborating Centre for Social Care.

In 2014 the SCIE board made an active decision to expand its commercial offerings in order to provide alternative sources of revenue. It has been tendering for work and has recently won projects including the evaluation of a UK community ‘homeshare’ programme and a project to convert child abuse case study outcomes into practice.

In 2014-15, the organisation spent its money as per the following categories:

- Hosted Services (17.2%);
- Governance (2.1%); and
- Other Charitable Activities (0.1%).

Research Translation Activities
SCIE’s role is to gather and analyse the research and evidence about practices and policies that benefit people across all social issues. Using that research, SCIE then develops resources and services to ensure that service delivery providers and policy makers are aware of what works, and what does not.

All material SCIE produces is published on their website in easy to use formats, such as: e-learning resources, Social Care TV films, interactive guides and tools that are specially designed to work online. This ensures their findings can be widely disseminated in an easy to understand format.

SCIE maintains a ‘co-production network’ which is a group comprised of service/care providers and equality groups. The group meets formally twice annually and supports involvement by these groups in SCIE’s strategic decision making and planning as well as providing a pool of stakeholders which SCIE can work with to produce projects and programmes.

Through partnering directly with organisations on the frontline of service delivery, SCIE has been able to understand the types of findings which are translatable from research to service. The co-production framework provides a formal governance structure in which community groups can directly contribute to the services of SCIE.
The Australian Research Alliance (ARACY) works extensively across research translation in the field of children and youth wellbeing.

What is the Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)?

ARACY is an organisation established to progress and promote evidence based programs and strategies to improve the wellbeing of children and youth. ARACY works with researchers, policymakers and practitioners, to turn 'what works' into practical, preventative action.

How does it operate?

ARACY was established as a not-for-profit constitutional corporation with a board of directors which meets quarterly to provide advice and guidance to the Chief Executive Officer.

ARACY also has a research committee which ensures funds from the ARACY Research Fund are disbursed according to the rules of its constitution.

In the calendar year to 31 December 2015, ARACY had nine employees and received revenues of an estimated $4 million from a variety of sources including federal and state governments, philanthropic organisations and the corporate sector. ARACY receives a large proportion of its funding as grant funding in relation to specific projects.

Research Translation Activities

ARACY operates widely across research translation acting at various times as a: gatherer, facilitator, educator and trainer.

ARACY’s flagship initiative in research translation is ‘The Nest’ which represents efforts by ARACY to gather and identify best evidenced-informed approaches to improve the wellbeing of children and youth in Australia (0 – 24 years). These approaches include greater collaboration and an increased focus on prevention and early intervention, strengths-based, holistic, child-centred and systems level approaches. The project is being supported primarily by the Bupa Health Foundation – the charitable foundation set up by private health insurer Bupa.

Research Translation Activities (continued)

The Nest is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of a variety of leaders from: community services organisations, corporate organisations, government and health organisations. An expert reference group also sits over the top of the project in order to review the evidence being produced by the project.

Through The Nest project, ARACY, has conducted an extensive search for all best-evidence programs in child and youth wellbeing. As a part of this, ARACY plans to develop a ‘What Work for Kids evidence database’, which will be a searchable online database detailing those evidence based programs and actions that have been shown through rigorous evaluation to improve child and youth wellbeing. This is in recognition by ARACY that the industry needs a database which is the central ‘go to’ for best-evidence programs that will inform decision makers in government, service delivery, philanthropy and practice of the best choice initiatives for investment and implementation.

ARACY is also facilitating ‘right@home’ a randomised controlled trial being conducted by the University of Western Sydney and the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute aiming at investigating how the universal child and family health nursing service might be improved to better meet the needs of all families. ARACY’s role in this project is to facilitate project management and oversight of funding, governance and reporting while leaving the research partners to conduct their specific area of research.

ARACY’s efforts in research translation highlights the importance of ‘doing it once and doing it right’ in community services research translation. Its strong governance structure ensures that all outputs produced can ultimately be considered ‘best evidence’, while its desire to create a one stop shop for evidence based programs and actions highlights that industry has a desire for an authoritative source of best practice programs.
CFCA is an information exchange for practitioners, policy makers, service providers and researchers working with children, families and communities.

What is Child Family Community Australia (CFCA)?

CFCA is a knowledge exchange set up to be a primary source of quality, evidence based information, resources and interactive support for professionals in the child, family and community welfare sectors.

CFCA was formed from the consolidation of three other knowledge exchanges in 2011. As part of this the organisation moved from a ‘push model’, where the organisation decides what research to gather and publicise, to a ‘targeted model’, where the organisation consults with their stakeholders through a range of mechanisms in order to understand what research and information would be useful to them.

As a knowledge exchange, CFCA does not conduct research itself but gathers research in order to be an authoritative source of information.

How does it operate?

CFCA sits under the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), a statutory agency within the portfolio of Social Services, established to be the Australian Government’s key research body in the area of family wellbeing.

CFCA has eight staff and operates with a budget of approximately $1-2 million*.

An external advisory group has been established to inform the work of CFCA. The group meets three times a year and is comprised of leaders from academia and community services groups. The group performs the following activities:

- identifying current and emerging research, practice and information requirements of stakeholders;
- providing guidance and feedback on the research and dissemination strategies of CFCA; and
- providing feedback on CFCA outputs.

*CFCA’s financial information is only released at the AIFS level. Their budget has been estimated based on a pro-rata basis of employees relative to the number of AIFS employees.

Research Translation Activities

CFCA operates a number of services:

- **Producing publications**, including long papers, resource sheets and practice guides, which are published electronically and are free to access.
- **Maintaining news and discussion pages**, on the latest information in the child, family and community welfare sectors.
- **Providing a research and information helpdesk** for use by child, family and community welfare service providers.
- **Library service of the latest research**, literature and other information resources relevant to protecting children, supporting families and strengthening communities.

CFCA also manages the ‘Expert Panel Project’, which is a panel of advisors which responds to requests from Families and Children Activity service providers for support to plan and implement programs, evaluate outcomes, and share the results with others, in order to improve outcomes for families and children.

The panel was established in 2014 via a tender process. The panel comprises research, practice and evaluation experts from a range of service delivery, research, training, academic and service support backgrounds. A Steering Committee provides guidance and advice on the work of the panel and is comprised of members from academia, community services and government.

The CFCA has recognised the importance of user-led research guidance by shifting from a push model to a targeted model.

The Expert Panel Project fills a gap in the knowledge base of community services organisations on how to best plan, implement and evaluate initiatives. Potential scope exists for the panel to become more pro-active as opposed to reactive, i.e. more actively approaching community services organisations in order to increase evidenced based initiative outcomes.
The C4EO acts as a central repository of best practice initiatives supported by evidence in the children’s services sector.

What is the C4EO?

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) is a not for profit organisation which operates as part of the children's charity National Children’s Bureau (NCB) in the UK.

The organisation acts as a central repository of best practice community initiatives in the children’s service sector which have led to significantly improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

C4EO operates across the children service’s sector including adoption, children in care, early intervention, safeguarding, SEN and disability.

C4EO works with and is commissioned by local areas and services (across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors). Examples of best practice are assessed by a panel of sector experts who consider them against established criteria, including the ability for other local areas to implement and use this best practice. C4EO then shares these examples with the sector.

How does it operate?

C4EO operates on a cost recovery basis for any activities provided to other organisations.

As a subsidiary of the larger NCB, financial information is only released at the NCB level. In 2014-15, the NCB received revenues of £20m (A$35 million). The majority of this revenue was received through grants and contracted work from government and community organisations.

Research Translation Activities.

C4EO has over 200 examples of 'what works', what is 'making a difference' and 'approaches towards service re-design and/or transformation' for local authorities and other organisations across the country. These are split into three categories depending on the level of evidence supporting the initiative:

- **Validated local practice** - strong rationale and strong evidence of impact and outcomes for children, young people and their families.

- **Promising practice** - good rationale and some evidence of impact and outcomes for children, young people and their families.

- **Emerging Practice** - rationale with clearly defined steps identified towards service redesign and/or transformation. There may be little or no evidence yet of impact and outcomes for children, young people and their families.

C4EO does not itself perform research. They act to gather examples of research from other established researchers including its parent organisation the National Children’s Bureau.

C4EO’s services predominantly involve the provision of information on best practice in particular areas to government and community organisations. This information is used to determine the structure of community programs/interventions with the hope of solving a particular need in children’s services. This is turn creates a feedback loop to C4EO concerning the validity of the initiative in question.

C4EO plays an important role in the children’s services sector acting as a knowledge exchange which leverages existing primary research and examples of successful service delivery to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.
The Lowitja Institute is in part funded as a Co-operative Research Centre and ensures that research projects consider research translation from the very start.

What is the Lowitja Institute?

The Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC (LICRC) sits within the Lowitja Institute, a not-for-profit organisation limited by guarantee. It is one of the co-operative research centres funded by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, through its Co-operative Research Centres grant program.

The LICRC brings together the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, government health agencies and research organisations to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research is controlled by, and directly benefits, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

How does the LICRC operate?

The LICRC has existed in several forms over the last decade with variations in their name, funding levels and objectives each time the CRC’s funding comes up for renewal. This is detailed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997 - 2003</td>
<td>No. 66 - CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health</td>
<td>$11.18 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 - 2010</td>
<td>No. 124 - CRC for Aboriginal Health</td>
<td>$21.13 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 2014</td>
<td>No. 178 - CRC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</td>
<td>$21.14 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 - 2019</td>
<td>No. 208 - The Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC</td>
<td>$25 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The LICRC’s current round of projects are across the following areas:

- community capability and the social determinant of health;
- enabling policy and system; and
- needs and opportunities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

Research Translation Activities

The LICRC mandates that knowledge exchange requirements are contained within all research projects. These include:

- a knowledge exchange schedule being attached to all research contracts;
- a proportion of each research project’s funding is identified for knowledge exchange activities; and
- a ‘Knowledge Exchange Coordinator’ has been appointed to liaise with researchers.

Along with this, the organisation holds an extensive range of research translation resources for public use on their website.

By allocating specific funding for research translation and contractually incorporating knowledge exchange into their research projects, the LICRC ensures that research translation plays an integral role in their research projects.
CRC for Optimising Resource Extraction (CRC ORE) is in part funded as a Co-operative Research Centre and aims to research and then implement innovative mining practices

What is the CRC for Optimising Resource Extraction (CRC ORE)?
CRC ORE is a not for profit organisation established to research, develop and deliver new technologies for the mining industry.

CRC ORE aims to ‘Optimise Resource Extraction’ through the implementation of step-change innovation to target operational inefficiencies, reduce energy use, and enable the economic recovery of lower grade ore deposits. CRC ORE has a particular focus on high profile projects that will have high impact outcomes to enable CRC ORE to transfer technologies for use by industry.

How does it operate?
CRC ORE is funded by a combination of government assistance and private sector support.

Over 2015-21 CRC ORE is receiving $34.5 million in grant funding from the Australian Federal Government, through the Cooperative Research Centres initiative. Over the same period CRC ORE’s commercial partners (including BHP and Anglo American) and research partners (including the University of Adelaide and UQ) are providing financial and in-kind support to the order of $70 million to take CRC ORE’s total support over 2015-21 to $100 million.

CRC ORE currently has 20 staff and is overseen by an implementation council which determines how to ‘supercharge’ their research focus and allocate funding for maximum benefit by its members. The council meets three times a year.

Research Translation Activities
CRC ORE is comprised of three categories of members which each have differing responsibilities in the research translation lifecycle. These include:

- research partners (universities and research institutes/organisations);
- mining equipment, technology and services (METS) partners (mining service companies); and
- implementation partners (mining companies).

CRC ORE has an applied innovation, technology development and technology transfer focus rather than a fundamental new research focus. This is based on the view that there is existing and latent technology already available which has not been integrated on mining sites or needs to be accessed from other sectors. As a result, CRC ORE’s research partners predominantly utilise existing research, rather than conducting new research.

CRC ORE’s METS and Implementation partners receive new technology for use on their mine sites with reporting requirements in regards to the effectiveness of the implementation. This in turn creates a feedback loop in regards to the practical effectiveness of the technology.

CRC ORE has seen success in bringing together research institutions and industry in order to develop innovative technologies and then implement these in the ‘real world’.

The commercial nature of the technologies means that CRC ORE’s implementation partners will implement the research where it makes financial sense. While this is not directly transferrable to the community services industry, it highlights the importance of members having ‘skin in the game’ and standing to benefit from the research in question.

Organisations which are not members of CRC ORE do not get access to the technologies produced, highlighting the IP issues which arise where research may lead to a competitive financial advantage.
The Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support was identified as an example of an effective government-initiated collaborative research model.

What is the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Support?

The Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Support was established in 2008, focusing on the improvement of quality of life for people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities who engage in challenging behaviour. In 2013, the centre was reconfigured to become the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support, taking on more operational roles within the department. The Centre now engages in a range of functions including practice leadership and disability research in clinical innovation and governance, forensic disability, high and complex needs and behaviour supports.

The Centre is headed by Professor Karen Nankervis, who holds a joint professorial chair between the department and UQ.

How does it operate?

The Centre was established as a partnership between the department and UQ. It was originally based at UQ and all operations were run from the university. At this time, the Centre was staffed by both UQ and departmental staff, with UQ contributing both research fellows and PhD candidates to the Centre.

This research focused model had governance structures including an executive committee made up of UQ and departmental staff, which contributed to the everyday running of the Centre. There was also an advisory committee with industry representatives to guide the research and practice leadership agenda.

After the Centre became part of the department in 2013, its research functions were merged with more operational government activities and research staff were no longer supplied by UQ.

The budget for the Centre is an operational one, that is predominantly made up of staff salaries. Its current budget is approximately $4 million annually. There is no portion of funding that is specifically dedicated to research.

The Chair of the Centre is employed full-time on three yearly contracts through UQ, with the department contributing a portion of her salary.

Research translation activities

As a translational research centre, the Centre undertakes discovery and synthesis of research to inform policy and practice, as well as extensive practice leadership (including developing and implementing training guides and providing an evidence base for policy).

Under the previous model the Centre was seen as independent from Government which helped it to establish strong relationships with industry. However, being based at UQ meant that the Centre was not close to the department making it difficult to influence and co-ordinate Government activities.

The new model has promoted closer ties to Government and is more effective for translating research to influence Government policy and practice. Greater association with Government has also increased traction of research projects that would otherwise have been unlikely to reach trial phase. The model has been highly effective for increasing engagement with, and uptake of research, by the department.

In terms of industry engagement, the Chair position itself does not have a highly industry facing role. However, the practice leadership team is constantly in the field engaging with, and training industry practitioners. The practice leadership component of the Centre includes the provision of development courses for a range of industry professionals. All courses include on the job follow up for participants to ensure new knowledge is applied in practice.

There are currently five clinicians from the Centre out in the field acting in a mentoring and capacity building role for the industry.
The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) is a social innovation enterprise that develops innovative solutions to address social objectives.

What is the Australian Centre for Social Innovation?
The Australia Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) is an example of a social innovation enterprise that uses non-traditional methods to drive innovation in the community services industry. Its areas of focus include ageing, families and disability.

TACSI delivers consultancy-like services for governments across Australia. It both initiates projects and collaborates with partners from business, government, academic and non-profit sectors to design and test new solutions to some of Australia’s most demanding social challenges.

How does it operate?
TACSI was established in 2009 with seed funding from the South Australian Government of $6 million over three years. The purpose of this organisation was to drive innovation in the areas of health, education and housing.

The organisation delivers its consultancy-like services for governments across Australia for a fee, which has enabled the entity to become self-funded. It may also partner with other relevant entities where appropriate (philanthropists, researchers etc).

TACSI states that its operating practices are structured around principles of co-design and co-creation, and apply frameworks for embedding innovation and building the capacity of others to innovate. It also uses ‘pilots’ to test new approaches and support implementation, which show that alternative approaches can work.

The TACSI approach helps to prioritise what people in the community want and need over what systems want. It allows TACSI to work with vulnerable groups to design policies, programs and solutions that work for them.

Research translation activities
While TACSI does not expressly engage in research translation, the principles of co-design and co-creation applied by TACSI can be used drive collaboration between government, industry and researchers and hence support evidence based practice and the implementation of innovative practices. The effectiveness of any translation of research into policy or practice would be subject to the nature and design of the project.

While TACSI falls outside the theoretical models of research translation, its co-design and co-creation approach can be used to support user driven research and ongoing engagement between government, industry and researchers, which in turn can support the uptake of new research and innovative practices.
The Auckland Co-design Lab is exploring the potential of user centred design and cross-sector collaboration to create system level solutions to entrenched social problems.

What is the Auckland Co-design lab?

The Auckland Co-design lab (the Lab) is an example of a social innovation enterprise. It was established to provide a neutral space to explore the case for change using co-design and other innovative approaches to complex social issues. It is designed to bring together different agencies, stakeholders and the community to explore new solutions to complex multi-agency issues.

The Lab comprises of a core team of six staff which encompasses experience from a wide range of disciplines, such as social labs, policy, big data, government and research. ‘Challenge managers’ work with co-design coaches and cross-agency teams to build the case for change across four key complex challenges and other aligned projects.

How does it operate?

The Lab is a partnership between the central government of New Zealand and the Auckland Council. It was created as a 24 month proof of concept initiative established under the Better Public Services Innovation Seed Fund. Over the past two years the Lab received approximately $1.3 million from the fund, with an estimated $200,000 to be received in 2016-17.

The core team behind the Lab work with stakeholders to identify the case for change. Their ‘story teller’ captures the data, learnings and outcomes of co-design sessions, with support from external evaluators. Its partners provide additional support in the form of advice, resources and in kind contributions. A Governance Group made up of senior government and NGO leaders provides guidance, access to resources and helps the team to overcome other obstacles.

Research translation activities

The neutral space in which the Lab is run allows agencies, stakeholders and government departments from across the community to come together to use new and innovative approaches for tackling social issues.

While the Lab does not engage in traditional research translation activities, its approach can be seen as an alternative method for translating new ideas into practice and driving innovation.

A key element of its approach is to use a range of different toolsets, such as social change theory, design thinking and co-design. The Lab uses its neutral space to create a uniting purpose and goal, take a human centred approach, not define the problem until it is understood from the users’ perspective, identify ideas and prototype before jumping to solutions, and to fail fast and early to create more relevant and durable solutions.

By bringing all the relevant parties together in one space the Lab helps to overcome the problem of public and NGOs trying to solve part of a large systematic problem individually and reduces the potential for duplication, waste of funds and disillusionment caused by low returns on investments.
Case Study References (1/2)

Knowledge Translation Unit, the University of Cape Town

- University of Cape Town Lung Institute, Governance, viewed 20 June 2016, http://lunginstitute.co.za/governance/
- Knowledge Translation Unit, University of Cape Town Lung Institute, About us, viewed 20 June 2016, http://knowledgetranslation.co.za/about/
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Social Care Institute for Excellence

- Social Care Institute for Excellence, About SCIE, http://www.scie.org.uk/about/

Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth, Who we are, viewed 20 June 2016 https://www.aracy.org.au

Child Family Community Australia


Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO)


The Lowitja Institute

Case Study References (2/2)

CRC ORE


Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support

- Professor Karen Nankervis, Chair of the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support, in consultation with PwC, 28 June 2016.


TACSI


The Auckland Co-design Lab


Appendix C - Commercialisation in the community services industry
There are a number of common characteristics in commercialised products relating to community services.

**IP and commercialisation in a social policy context**

The commercialisation of new knowledge is not common in the community services industry. However, with service providers increasingly required to find new ways of doing things, along with new ways of funding their activities, it is likely to become a growing focus.

In considering opportunities to commercialise innovations relating to community services, there are some key characteristics which need to be present, such as:

- The research output should be designed to *address a widely accepted problem*, and it should be evident that it meets an *explicit need*.
- The research output should be *new knowledge*, or reflect a different way of looking at, or applying existing knowledge, to existing practices.
- The research output should have a *clear beneficiary* (i.e. individuals or specific target groups) rather than broader ‘system-wide’ benefits.
- The research output should be *evidence based*, with a robust body of research demonstrating benefits that are directly attributable to the output.
- The research output should be able to be *commoditised* and packaged for consumption, with an easily recognised brand that is linked to the value of the product.

Examples of the successful commercialisation of products which could fall within the social sciences include the Positive Parenting Program (Box 1).

Other types of products that could be commercialised include online tools for the early identification of at risk clients. For example, Rumble’s Quest was developed as an online tool for measuring the wellbeing of children aged between 5 and 12 years. The information collected through Rumble’s Quest can be used to inform response strategies by carers.

**Box 1: Case study – Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)**

The Triple P program provides a relevant example of the commercialisation of social science research. Triple P is a system of parenting support that seeks to make raising children and teenagers easier. It was developed by a team of researchers at UQ and was commercialised through UniQuest.

Key features of this program include:

- Research indicated the quality of parenting received by children has a major influence on their development, wellbeing and life opportunities. It was also found that behaviourally active skills training programs that teach parents positive parenting and contingency management skills are effective.¹
- Triple P is built on more than 35 years of program development and evaluation. There are also ongoing independent studies assessing the impact of the program on child and parent outcomes.
- In Queensland, a two-year trial is underway, with funding provided by the Queensland Government. This allows families to access the program free of charge over the trial period. It also allows teachers and other relevant service providers to access free training to become an accredited Triple P provider.

It is also likely that there could be scope to commercialise community services practices and processes where this could be used to inform the development of these policies and processes in countries outside Australia. For instance, it is understood that some Asian countries are exploring possible arrangements to address disadvantage, and could seek to learn from the practices applied in Australia.
Decisions to commercialise innovations should be driven by a number of key IP and commercialisation considerations.

Key considerations for commercialisation in community services

While there may be a number of new innovations resulting from research conducted by and for the community services industry, the ultimate decision to commercialise these innovations should be guided by the following:

• **Nature of the research** - In considering the commercialisation of research, it will be necessary to answer the following:
  - Does the research output address a widely accepted problem?
  - Is the output new, or is it a new way of looking at an existing practice?
  - Is there a clear beneficiary?
  - Is the research output evidence based?
  - Can the research output be commoditised and packaged for consumption?

There may only be some instances where research meets the above criteria. Indeed, community services research may include general research projects that are unlikely to result in the creation of a 'new' output but which have other beneficial uses for informing policy or practices.

• **Appropriateness of commercialisation** – Much of the research commissioned by the industry, and any resulting IP, is generally used to address significant areas of entrenched and complex disadvantage. This may raise questions regarding the appropriateness of commercialising these practices, particularly where the research was government funded. Where research is privately funded, the same concerns may apply but they might not be as significant.

• **Allocation of IP rights** – Where research outcomes are developed in collaboration, it is necessary to consider the appropriate allocation of IP rights. This may require upfront negotiation to determine which party is best placed to manage any IP rights, the appropriate split of rights between parties and whether additional governance arrangements are required for the continued use and distribution of IP.

• **Management of IP rights** – Many organisations that generate, own and manage IP rights may establish a separate business unit or entity to oversee these matters. This is due to the complexity of management requirements associated with IP (which can include renewing IP rights, and ensuring the use of IP by licensees is consistent with the conditions of the licence). A number of universities, such as the University of Queensland have created separate companies to manage their IP rights. This may have implications for any new innovations resulting from research activities involving universities.

Specific considerations for government agencies

The Queensland Government maintains Intellectual Property Principles\(^2\) as a high level policy guide for the management of IP by Queensland Government agencies. These principles encourage the development of an agency-specific IP policy to reflect the needs and objectives of that department.

Key themes from the Intellectual Property Principles include:

• When developing an IP and commercialisation policy, an agency should consider:
  - the objectives and breadth of activities of the department;
  - the costs of managing and administering IP;
  - the desirability of making IP available to non-government entities for use; and
  - the potential risks of commercialisation.

• A Creative Commons least restrictive licence should be applied as a default position, following a process of due-diligence assessment on a case by case basis, unless it is in the public interest to restrict access. For example, where the IP is of commercial value.

• An IP register may be used to manage IP that is of special value or importance.

• When determining ownership of IP, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the approach provides Queensland with the best opportunity to benefit from the IP.

• If the commercialisation of IP is being considered, the department should seek professional advice from a suitably qualified expert to assist in this process.

Standard clauses for the treatment of IP

The department’s common service agreement – which is used for commissioning research – includes standard clauses for the allocation of IP rights between the department and universities. This includes provisions which allows for the use of the department IP under certain circumstances.

It is noted that these standard clauses may be subject to variation based on the nature of the research activity and request of the researchers they are engaging with.
Commercialisation references


Appendix D - Consultation Summary
Stakeholder consultation

Targeted consultation was undertaken with stakeholders identified by the department. These included representatives from community service NGOs and peak bodies, government agencies, research organisations, and the department.

The purpose of our stakeholder engagement was to explore current research translation practices with a view to understand:

- what is working well for supporting research translation;
- what are the barriers and/or challenges which might limit research translation (as it relates to the industry and more generally);
- how research translation practices are implemented, including the roles of different stakeholders, research priorities, evaluation practices, funding and IP issues.

This section provides an overview of the insights from our stakeholder engagement process and is divided into eight key themes:

1. Requirements for effective research translation
2. Barriers to research translation
3. Current research translation activities
4. Engagement with industry
5. Funding arrangements
6. IP and information sharing
7. Evaluation practices
8. The role of government

Stakeholders

**Government agencies**

- Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Queensland Family & Child Commission
- NSW Family and Community Services
- Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support

**Community service industry**

- Wesley Mission Brisbane
- YourTown
- Mind Hive
- Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS)
- Community Services Industry Alliance

**Research organisations**

- Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety Limited (ANROWS)
- Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR)
- Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course (The Life Course Centre)
- Griffith University
1. Requirements for effective research translation

Consultation with stakeholders identified a number of factors that supported the effective translation of research into practice in the community services industry.

**Insights from the community services industry**

- NGOs indicated that a key requirement for effective research translation is that all parties (including the NGOs themselves) contribute to developing the research question as well as the project design.

- Trust and respect between policy and program makers, academics, and practitioners was highlighted as being critical for supporting research translation.

- There was a view that researchers did not always value the tacit knowledge of community services practitioners, undermining research partnerships and limiting the effectiveness of research translation.

- It was highlighted that practitioners, and the people they provide services to, should be seen as experts in their own right and that their insights should be valued.

- It was identified that the research topics and methodologies need to be designed to address real need, and that this would help ensure outputs were able to be translated into practice.

**Insights from research organisations**

- Effective communication methods were identified as essential for sharing existing research. While no specific methods were described, researchers recognised that their research outputs have to be useful for practitioners, and there must be appropriate infrastructure that supports the use of these products. For example, it was suggested that a mechanism which rewards industry for using evidence-based practice will help to promote the use of research products. One example of this was the requirement to require NGOs to prove that a certain proportion of their activities were evidence-based. This approach is currently used for the Australian Government funded Communities for Children program.

- Many research organisations indicated that they were actively driving research translation through the development of a range of different publications, practice guides and training programs.

- It was recognised that research translation does not happen on its own but requires infrastructure to facilitate engagement between research and practice. This infrastructure include formal and informal communication methods, along with broader incentives for industry to seek out new research.

- Push models, where information is simply made available to end users, were recognised by some entities as not being effective methods for getting research out into the community. Where this was recognised research entities had started to devise new ways of engaging with end users (such as conducting public seminars or webinars). However, a number of research entities still used this model as their primary method for sharing research outcomes.
2. Barriers to research translation in the community services industry

It was generally agreed that research translation, and the practices which support research translation, need further development in the community services industry. When compared to the health sector, there is a more evident split between academic researchers and end users (including practitioners and policy and program makers) which can affect research translation.

- Researchers identified the usual constraints to research translation, including lack of funding and lack of time to engage in translational activities beyond the production of research papers for publication.

- It was noted that while NGOs are encouraged to engage in evidence based practices, they are rarely given the funds to undertake the research necessary to enable this.

- It was identified that practitioners on the ground rarely have a research background, which can act as a barrier to effective engagement between researchers and practitioners and can impede the uptake of evidence based practices.

- There is limited funding for NGOs to attend research conferences or seminars, or to subscribe to journals to help them understand current research. This was seen as one factor constraining the ability of NGOs to actively engage with research outcomes.

- Some larger research bodies which fund research activities acknowledged that while they have sought to implement research translation practices, more work was required. For instance, while their funding required researchers to demonstrate they had partnered with industry, they acknowledged that industry may not have been effectively engaged in practice, and this may have limited any research translation outcomes. This was not necessarily at the fault of industry. Rather a closer relationship between universities and industry in undertaking research is a new approach, and the incentives to drive these behaviours may need further consideration.

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- Government departments may not be well adapted to defining the research question or the scope. Staff may also have limited experience working with researchers. Where research is poorly designed and/or managed, this can affect the quality of research outputs and their ability to be effectively translated into practice.

- It was suggested that there is a lack of new research in the industry, it can be difficult to know what research exists, and that research is not always readily disseminated.
3. Current research translation practices

Most research translation activities used by the community services industry were via the communication and dissemination of research from researchers to end users. This could be via publications and practice guides, along with workshops, training programs and webinars. Some research entities also highlighted the importance of research translation processes which include involving end users in designing and performing research.

**Insights from government agencies**

- Consultation with government agencies highlighted that the focus on research translation activities was growing. Some agencies indicated that while they have not explicitly focused on research translation, they do perform activities which could be classified as research translation.
- Where research translation activities are performed by government departments, they were generally aimed at policy makers and program designers.
- Research translation activities include:
  - training initiatives for policy staff to better understand evidence;
  - facilitating knowledge exchange events for researchers, practitioners and departmental staff (e.g. research forums);
  - community education through information sessions and webinars;
  - commissioning evidence reviews to identify existing evidence and gaps;
  - creating short, ‘fit-for-purpose’ research summaries; and
  - developing ‘evidence hubs’ to act as a repository for evidence that can be shared across government departments and potentially the community at large.
- There has been a range of investment throughout the industry in clearing house type arrangements, particularly directed at gathering and maintaining evidence at a national level.

**Insights from research organisations**

- One of the larger research organisations identified research program design and collaborative partnerships with industry as a crucial activity for research translation.
- Some organisations have established networking databases to assist industry and researchers to connect on areas of interest. By clearly identifying their end users, this helped to ensure that research conducted, along with the outputs generated, were meeting the requirements of practitioners.
- Other organisations typically engaged in research translation activities focused on communication and dissemination (similar to those used by departmental agencies) such as:
  - interactive websites, data portals and clearing houses;
  - varied modes of delivery for research outputs including resources and factsheets, newsletters, forums, workshops, seminars and research symposiums; and
  - community education.
- Some organisations indicated that research translation strategies employing a combination of these methods were the most effective at influencing practice. Determining the right combination would be subject to the nature of the research task and the specific attributes of the end user.
4. Engagement with industry

A key takeaway from consultation was that engagement with end users for many government agencies and research organisations meant engagement with policy makers rather than industry. From those consulted, engagement with industry was not always seen as a primary focus.

**Insights from the community services industry**

- There is a belief that the more actively an NGO is involved in the research process, the more satisfied it will be with the result. However, there is a trade off between active engagement in research and the cost to the organisation.
- NGOs highlighted that university-initiated research centres were not always effectively engaging with industry. While NGOs may partner with researchers (via ARC linkage grants), the NGOs often had a limited ongoing role.
- Collective impact models, such as Together SA and Logan Together, were suggested as a good way to get smaller NGOs involved in research projects. However, such a model requires neutral intermediary to lead the collaboration (particularly in a competitive tendering environment).
- QCOSS and similar organisations were seen as having an important role in supporting the research agenda and brokering relationships.

**Insights from research organisations**

- Researchers in government agencies with their own research teams often act as knowledge brokers between external researchers and policy makers.
- Where government agencies are contractually required to develop and coordinate a research agenda for a particular field, there has been greater consultation with practitioners and researchers to identify the research questions.

**Insights from government agencies**

- Government tends to engage with smaller NGOs through peak bodies such as QCOSS and the Community Services Industry Alliance.
- The level of industry engagement will generally depend on the project and its specific needs (e.g. agencies may engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups where the project involved working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities).
- One government agency indicated that the central office has minimal consultation/partnership with industry. However, their regional offices tended to have greater end user engagement, given their activities included service delivery.
- Annual meetings with senior representatives from government along with direct practitioner engagement to guide research programs were mechanisms used to engage with industry.
- Engagement with service providers and policy makers through a rigorous and collaborative process to develop research agendas was seen to support better research outcomes. While no specific detail was provided regarding such a process, the key emphasis was the need for industry input.
- A difficulty associated with government funded research organisations is that they are limited by their contractual obligations and often only engage with industry as required. Such engagement is not seen to be highly effective as it may be viewed as being forced on industry providers.
- A common project aim is a good starting point for encouraging researchers and industry (particularly government agencies) to work together.
- Large research centres and universities have limited engagement with smaller NGOs. There was no specific rationale for why this was the case, though limited resources within smaller NGO was discussed.
- Some organisations have introduced measures to help effective engagement, such as defining end users and prioritising these users into high, medium and low target groups. This process helped to inform how research outputs could be designed for uptake by these groups, though the greatest focus was placed on those users in the high priority target group.
5. Funding arrangements for research models

Consultation provided limited insight into the various funding models applied across the industry for research. The general theme was that most research was reliant on government funding in one form or another.

Insights from the community services industry

- Large NGOs typically have their own research team within their organisation. These entities may therefore conduct research in-house or commission research externally (through universities or other independent researchers). Subject to the nature of the entity, research activities may be self-funded or they will apply for grants.

- Some NGOs indicated that while funding sources such as ARC linkage grants have been used in the past, they did not always derive the best outcomes. Although these grants often require researchers to partner with industry, NGOs generally have a limited ongoing role. As such, they have limited influence over outputs, which means these outputs may not be relevant in practice. Long timeframes for research were also seen as a particular issue, as the industry is grappling with current issues and waiting a number of years for research outcomes may not be seen as practical.

- Current government funding for NGOs rarely includes funding for research, as these contracts are specifically linked to service provision. This means that smaller NGOs or community services providers typically will only undertake research where they receive grants or have access to private funding (such as donations).

- NGOs indicated that sometimes they will partner with philanthropic organisations for the purpose of undertaking research. While this funding can help to support research activities, philanthropic agencies typically set the research question themselves and the ultimate research outputs may not always achieve real impact for the industry. Therefore caution should be exercised to ensure this research generates outputs that will directly support the industry.

Insights from research organisations

- A significant number of research organisations consulted through this process were funded by government. Funding agreements will typically specify the activities to be performed by the research entity.

- Large research centres may be funded through ARC linkage grants, and are required to report against key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs for research projects are typically activity orientated, rather than outcomes-orientated and can include the number of students trained, papers published, workshops, program briefs, and programs developed and piloted.

- Researchers indicated that they may receive funding from philanthropic organisations. While these organisations tend to set their own research priorities, researchers indicated that they are generally progressive in their thinking and can be guided by researchers.
6. IP and information sharing

IP was not seen as a major constraint to research translation across the community services industry.

**Insights from the community services industry**

- NGOs have found that when partnering with universities on research projects, the university will typically require ownership of IP. However, they are normally able to negotiate a licence to use the research outputs.
- It was noted that in some situations it can be difficult to negotiate a licence however, the standard ARC linkage agreement tends to fit most research arrangements.
- Organisations who undertook their own research said that they were generally willing to share their findings. However, noting that they operate in a competitive environment, where self funded research generates findings that would give them a market advantage, they may be less willing to share the findings.

**Insights from research organisations**

- It was suggested that upskilling around IP may be useful, in that researchers and NGOs may be more willing to share information if they have better understanding of the different licence options.

**Insights from government agencies**

- Government agencies are generally happy to publicly release information and research funded by government.
- Consistent with consultation with the NGOs, government agencies noted that community organisations which contribute time (or funding) towards government facilitated research may be reluctant to share any research outputs. In part this can be due to a desire to maintain a market advantage over other community services providers (within a competitive funding environment).
- While IP and licences with universities were not seen as a major issue, there is still a lot of negotiation between legal teams.
- Some government agencies have recently been engaging with creative commons licencing, which they have found to be valuable. However, even with this type of licencing they have found that it ultimately rests with the owner of the IP to make it known that the information is available.

- Major research organisations are able to contract with researchers such that they keep the IP and grant the researchers a licence to use it. Research is often published under a creative commons, non-commercial, non-attributable licence allowing the research to be promoted as a public good.
- There was a concern that protecting work with IP risks obscuring or preventing research translation.
- The general view, however, was that IP is not an issue for research translation in the community services industry, and that where research was performed, findings were readily shared and could be accessed by industry and/or government.
7. Evaluation practices and measuring impact

Across all stakeholder groups, there was agreement that evaluation should be an ongoing process in the delivery of research, and its eventual application. It was also acknowledged that evaluation measures need to focus on outcomes, rather than activities or outputs.

**Insights from the community services industry**

- Evaluation should be an ongoing process across the research task and through implementation. Funding for evaluation should be part of the total funds provided for research activities. This is different to current processes, where evaluation tends to happen as an afterthought.

**Insights from government agencies**

- Government agencies are increasingly being required to demonstrate their investments will have impact. Therefore, evidence of 'what works' is becoming more relevant.

- There has been recent improvement in evaluation processes, with current evaluations using clear and well developed evaluation and data collection practices. This has been driven by an increasing focus on outcomes measurement.

- A number of evaluation programs however, still focus on program design and implementation rather than outcomes. It was recognised that further work was required to facilitate outcomes measurement.

- Some government agencies have adopted an evaluation framework which provides an approach to help understand and measure whether the services being funded and delivered are having real impact on people’s lives.

- Some government agencies also have dedicated units responsible for developing and commissioning evaluations of programs to provide evidence of what works. In these agencies evaluation of what works was considered critical for effective research translation as it helped to inform future research activities.

- Evaluation programs typically increase in detail and complexity relative to the size and complexity of the programs.

**Insights from research organisations**

- Requiring KPIs that are difficult to measure outcomes was not seen as an effective measure for evaluation. This is because they may create a bias towards activities even where these do no lead to improved outcomes.

- Best practice says that research programs should have evaluation built into them as an ongoing process and should be funded from project inception.

- It was acknowledged that establishing research translation metrics for the social sciences will be difficult. However, it is necessary to move from activity or output based measures to outcomes.

- One method for measuring research uptake and use is user surveys. Targeted surveys, sent to e-news subscribers were conducted every two years. It was also highlighted that gathering qualitative data was important, as this could help to identify not only if information was accessed, but how it was actually used.
8. The role of government in research translation

There was a general sentiment among stakeholders that government should have an overarching role in research translation rather than more direct involvement.

**Insights from the community services industry**

- NGOs felt government has a role in establishing infrastructure and coordinating research. Particularly, it was suggested that government could have a role in facilitating access to existing research and data.
- It was also suggested that government could have a role in bringing together smaller NGOs for the purpose of undertaking research (where these entities would otherwise be unable to undertake research).
- Government funding for research should include provisions for ongoing evaluation.
- Government may have a role in increasing capacity/capability to use research through training its own staff and NGOs on research evaluation and analysis.
- Organisations indicated that they would like greater access to performance data regarding the activities and outcomes of NGOs funded by government, where this would facilitate benchmarking of their practices.
- NGOs felt that while government has an important role to play in setting the priorities for research, they should not undertake this activity in isolation. Many NGOs felt that the industry should be effectively engaged in developing any research priorities to ensure they will meet their requirements.
- Some organisations highlighted that the Community Services Industry Alliance could play an important role in bringing the industry together to develop research priorities and inform a government research agenda.

**Insights from government agencies**

- Some government agencies saw their role as stewards of the industry. This included taking responsibility for encouraging evidence based practice and the effective and efficient use of resources.
- For government to have an effective role in research translation, it needs to build a culture of research and excellence within its own departments. This requires developing internal capability to support a research-driven environment.

**Insights from research organisations**

- Governments may influence the use of evidence based practice by NGOs through contractually imposed requirements. There have been cases where evidence based practice has been contractually imposed (e.g. Communities for Children).
- Under the Communities for Children model, community organisations could meet their requirement for evidence based practice by adopting programs that had previously been assessed as evidence based. Alternatively, assessment criteria were provided to determine whether an organisation’s current practices were sufficiently evidence based. The program gave organisations the flexibility to continue to use their own programs (provided they met the assessment criteria) or to adopt pre-approved evidence based programs.
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