Department of **Environmental Protection**
Water and Rivers Commission
Department of **Conservation and Land Management**

FACILITATION TOOLKIT

A practical guide for working more effectively with people and groups

Colma Keating

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DINKUM RESULTS

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Colma's contribution is dedicated to her parents Kitty and Nicholas for introducing her to the value and contribution of the public service – particularly when working collaboratively with the community.

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FACILITATION TOOLKIT

A practical guide for working more effectively with people and groups

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Section A — Overview

1. About this toolkit

This resource is designed for staff in the Department of Environment, Water and Catchment Protection (DEWCP) and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) who are often called upon to work with groups, yet, may not be professionally trained in facilitation. It is designed to:

- introduce you to group and facilitation processes
- encourage you to practise your facilitation, and
- as you become more confident, delve into understanding even more about groups, adults and yourself.

As individuals, our roles with groups can vary from being part of a group (such as a work team) to facilitating – to being responsible for ensuring time and energy are used most effectively and inclusively to complete a specific task. This can include public consultation during the development of a management plan for a national park or assisting the local rivercare group develop their annual work plan.

Often the groups we work with are a collection of individuals who have been brought together through circumstance, interest and/or responsibility. This guide has been developed to assist you in working with a variety of groups to enable better group decision making, and where necessary, action and evaluation – whilst ensuring an inclusive process is used.

This toolkit will assist you with:

- clarifying the task
- planning your process and event
- selecting the appropriate facilitation approaches and techniques
- undertaking and reviewing your event
- discovering extra resources and support.

It's a great feeling to help focus a big group of people, who perhaps were initially sceptical, towards a common goal.

John Elder, DEWCP

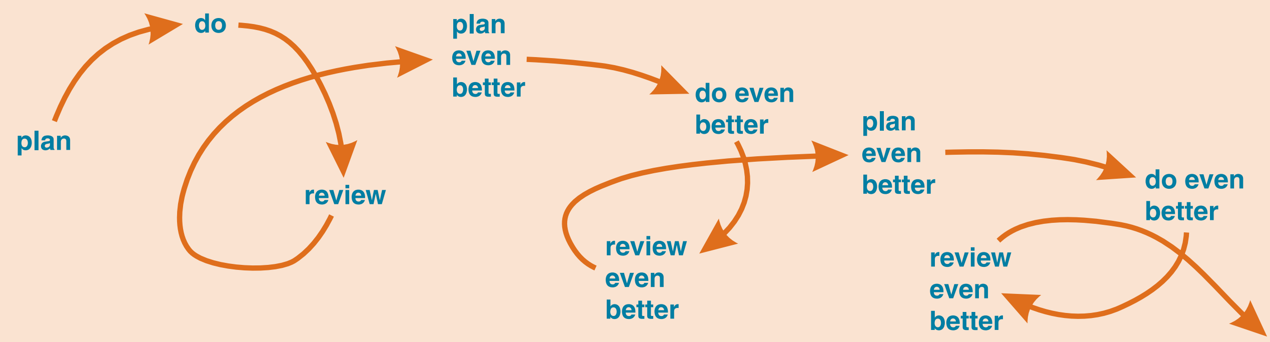
The appendices contain more information and guidance on facilitation methodologies as well as working with individuals and groups.

Much of this information is 'common sense'. In many cases it will act as a reminder or reinforcement of information and processes you may have already used, considered and/or encountered – but perhaps not known the formal terminology, stages and/or the reasons for their effectiveness.

This toolkit is based on **action learning** or 'learning by doing' where it will involve:

- planning your facilitation activity
- doing your activity
- reviewing your activity
- bringing your new learnings into the next time you plan, do and review an activity.

You can further develop as an effective and sincere facilitator through training, self-development, awareness, planning, practice and review. We encourage you to stretch yourself – and while you do, make your facilitation even more effective, interesting and rewarding.



2. Facilitation

At its simplest, facilitation is assisting a group to determine and or achieve a particular task such as clearly identify and solve problems. However, to achieve the most effective outcomes you will look for and use the most appropriate processes for both the group and the focus, clarify the purpose and design the session with the client, question and listen actively, ensure everyone has opportunities to contribute as well as challenge the participants to find the best results. You need to design and manage the process and allow the participants to provide the content.

> **Facilitation is about empowering people to take control and responsibility for their own efforts and achievements**
>
> *Trevor Bentley 1994*

Effective facilitation is about working with people and assisting individuals with their interactions and discussion. For the group to get the best results it is important therefore to understand and value differences in people – including yourself. How people think, learn and operate are a few of these complexities. If you can understand and apply these basic principles to the development and delivery of your facilitation you will go a long way to improving both the experience and the results of the group. [Refer Appendix III]

> **Remember the work belongs to the group not the facilitator – allow them to get on and do their work.**
>
> *Deborah Pearson*
> *Deborah Pearson Consulting*

2.1 Clarity of purpose and good design

Having a clear and shared purpose is critical. What does the group need or want to achieve? What does an organisation need or want to achieve through working with community/industry groups and organisations? What experience do you want the group to have as they work together? How can you best assist?

Good design [Refer Section B] is also critical. To do this well you will need to be clear about various aspects including the purpose, participants, anticipated end results (and intended use of these), relevant history of issue and group, range of processes that will assist and scope for orchestrating the participant experience.

> **Design is critical – and because you have invested so much time and energy in it you sometimes want to follow it rigidly. But remember being flexible is also critical. Be prepared to let go of your design so that you can work with what the group is developing.**
>
> *Colleen Henry*
> *Tourism Commission*

2.2 Guiding principles of facilitation

As you are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups become more effective, facilitating brings with it responsibility:

- to the individuals
- to the group
- to the purpose
- to the client, and
- to your own integrity in ensuring you are assisting the situation.

As facilitators you will have a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to individuals, organisations, issues and society where your effectiveness is based on your personal integrity and the trust developed between yourself and those with whom you work. You will also need to believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group, whilst you strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members.

An effective and sincere facilitator[3]:

- clarifies the purpose
- designs the process with the client
- uses processes, methods and tools appropriately and responsibly
- creates an atmosphere and opportunity for contribution – where all participants trust that they can speak freely and where individual boundaries are honoured
- opens and closes with purpose
- honours contributions
- caters for different learning styles
- respects the culture, rights and autonomy of the group
- understands the needs and processes of group development and effectiveness
- listens – and reflects back to ensure understanding
- engenders trust
- encourages participants to challenge 'the data' and not 'the person'
- practises stewardship of process and impartiality toward content
- clarifies the data by checking back with participants
- elicits a greater depth in both the data and the interrelationships of the date
- acknowledges openly any potential conflict of interest
- responds to the group – through flexibility of format and process
- manages conflict with sensivity
- maintains confidentiality of information
- invites in another practitioner for situations beyond their expertise and experience (e.g. conflict resolution)
- takes responsibility for continuous improvement of facilitation skills and knowledge.

Protect and treasure your independence from the outcomes produced by the group.

Jon Elder, DEWCP

Don't set your self up as an expert – have a variety of strategies to deflect difficult questions back to the group. E.g *"That's an interesting question! Is there any body in the group who has had a similar situation that they had to respond to?" "Is this something the whole group wants us to explore now or should we move on and you and I can catch up in the break?"*

Hugh Collin
Dept for Community Development

You know that you have got it right when the participants are all agog with their achievements and understanding of each others point of view and various contributions – and they hardly even noticed that you were there working your butt off get it happening.

Kevin Vear
CALM

3. Working with groups

3.1 What is a group?

A group is two or more people who can or need to do something together (such as make decisions). Most of us are 'members' of a myriad of groups – some more formally

[3] Partially based on the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for Group Facilitators.

identified as groups, others that we may not have considered 'a group'. Groups include our work team, our organisation, our family, our household, peak councils and the local foreshore or bushland group. There can also be the groups within groups.

Groups can operate at different levels of complexity. For example, looseknit and adhoc to discuss a work topic such as 'river management' or a highly organised group that has clearly articulated their values and determined a plan for what they want to achieve together. The appropriate level of organisation and development for each type of group will differ.

3.2 Effective groups

Within reason, groups can achieve almost anything. Effective groups form because they need or want to achieve something. It may be in response to an external decision or event, or it may be that a number of people have an idea for making a difference.

Groups achieve by:
- having a clarity of purpose
- valuing difference
- encouraging contributions from all members
- listening
- challenging assumptions
- seeking 'outside group advice' when appropriate
- making joint decisions
- sharing tasks
- providing honest and sensitive feedback
- using effective and transparent processes
- committing to action, and
- following through.

Group process can be both complex and ever-changing. More experienced facilitation requires much more insight into the forces at play in any group. Appendix II contains more detailed discussion and references related to group development and group effectiveness.

4. Interacting with adults

As much of your work is likely to be with adults, often in groups and often with a learning or personal development outcome (even when not specifically with a training and development focus) – you need to understand how adults interact and learn, why people get involved with groups and what sustains them.

In the mid-1960s Malcolm Knowles first articulated some key differences between how adults and children prefer to learn. These can also be expressed in terms of participation, demonstrating that adults:
- have a need to know why they should participate
- have a need to be self-directing and decide for themselves when they want to participate
- have a far greater volume and different quality of experiences than young people so that connecting learning experiences to past experiences can make the participation experience more meaningful

- become ready to participate and learn when they experience a life situation where they need to be involved
- enter into the participation process with a task centred orientation to learning
- are motivated to participate by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

4.1 Adult learning styles

Research and experience have shown that there are measurable differences in the way people assimilate and process information – or 'learn' – as well as differences in the types of environments that are conducive to learning. Despite this, many of us often lapse into operating in the environment and style that most suits our own learning style. It is important to break this habit and ensure that we are catering for all participants.

Kolb (1984) discovered that there are two different ways to perceive information as well as two different ways to process information, being:

- *perceiving information* by either *concrete experience* or *abstract conceptualisation* and
- *processing information* by either *active experimentation* or *abstract conceptualisation*.

From these combinations he then characterised four key learning styles as:

- ***dynamic learners*** – activists, who like to have a go and see if things work, learning through trial and error – *What if?* (i.e. they perceive through concrete experience and process through active experimentation)
- ***imaginative learners*** – reflectors, who gain most by observing and reflecting, learning through listening and sharing ideas – *Why?* (i.e. they perceive through concrete experience and process through reflective observation)
- ***analytic learners*** – theorists, who want to understand the underlying reasons, concepts and relationships, learning by thinking through ideas – *What?* (i.e. they perceive through abstract conceptualisation and process through reflective observation)
- ***common sense learners*** – pragmatists, who prefer using the experience they have already gained, learning by testing theories and applying common sense – *How does it work?* (i.e. they perceive through abstract conceptualisation and process through active experimentation).

4.2 Adult participation and learning principles

The discovery of learning styles together with ongoing research has led to the development of a range of Adult Learning Principles. This toolkit demonstrates how these can also be used as **Adult Participation Principles** to guide the design and delivery of your facilitation. These include:

- setting a positive climate for participation and/or learning
- clarifying the purposes of the participant/s and/or learner/s
- organising and making available participation and/or learning resources
- balancing intellectual and emotional components of participation and/or learning, and
- sharing feelings and thoughts with participant/s and/or learners, but not dominating.

Section B – 10 provides a practical guide for applying these principles to your activities and events.

Section B — Designing the process and the experience

Section B

5. Preparation with flexibility

The real estate industry's success mantra 'location, location, location' could translate in the facilitation world as 'preparation, preparation, preparation'. Preparation is an important element for bringing integrity to your role. Designing a facilitated activity or event is similar to planning any event. You need to:

- understand the purpose – both the rational and experiential objective as well as what the required products/results might look like
- know some details about the participants
- refine the purpose with the client (e.g. the group, your manager and/or whomever is contracting or asking you to assist the group)
- design the session
- do the session (with a beginning, middle and end)
- review the session
- do any required follow-up.

Poor design means you have to paddle very hard and fast during the facilitation.

Deborah Pearson
Deborah Pearson Consulting

At the same time you need to allow flexibility – your design needs to be comprehensive, but not rigid. Being able to respond to the development of the group and/or the development of the focus of the group is critical.

6. Working out your task

6.1 Purpose

Understanding and refining the purpose of any facilitation is crucial. If you don't know why the event/session is required and what results can be expected it will be very difficult to assist the group in a meaningful and sincere way. You will be unable to design an effective event and participants will be confused and thus not able to contribute effectively. You may have an interesting discussion – but its long-term value will probably be limited.

Take care when asked to facilitate at the last minute. What is the situation you are parachuting into?

Jon Elder, DEWCP

It is important to meet with the relevant decision-maker/s or group leader well in advance of the proposed session to discuss their needs. An effective way to refine the purpose and any proposed format is through enquiry such as:

- What do you want to achieve?
- Why do you want/need to do this session with these particular participants?
- What other ways could you achieve this?
- When is the best time?
- What other work has been done that links to this need?
- What will you do with the results?
- Confirm a joint understanding of the purpose by clarifying it in your own words the 'So the purpose is to …?'

[TIP: If the purpose doesn't fit with a facilitated exercise – inform the proposers – at a minimum it is waste of everyone's time and energy.]

With the clarity of purpose now resolved – prepare a skeleton design and meet with organisers or relevant internal decision makers again to ensure the purpose and process have alignment.

Keep clarifying and refining the purpose and your assumptions throughout the life of the project.

Nicole Hodgson, DEWCP

6.2 Stakeholders and participants

Sometimes you are presented with a group to work with and at other times you will be presented with a need – and your role may be to also determine who are the most appropriate participants. An example could be a public consultation workshop.

The stakeholder mapping technique [Section C – 12.15] is an effective way of determining whom you need to work with.

6.3 Project and/or group history

Again depending on the issue and focus it may be important to gather other background data – such as:

- Has this issue (or similar) been focussed on before?
- Who was involved?
- What processes were used?
- What were the results, conclusions?
- What happened to the results?

This will expose whether the proposed participants are already frustrated because they have not had a good experience from prior facilitated sessions. It could also produce some earlier information that may prove important to build upon in the current session – rather than re-inventing wheels and frustrating participants even more.

6.4 Facilitating yourself and/or working with someone else

(including extracts from McNamara)

Next is a decision of whether you should facilitate the session yourself, co-facilitate with another or use an independent facilitator.

Rules of thumb for choosing an outside/independent facilitator include:

- If the organisation/group has no expertise.
- If the organisation/group's previous attempts to meet their own needs were not successful.
- If there is conflict in the group and the independence of the facilitator will assist the group.
- If it is important that you participate fully in the event – which you could not from a position of facilitator.
- If there is an issue of respect given along lines of seniority – which you cannot gain immediately.
- If a consultant can do work that no one else wants to do.
- If an outside organisation demands that an independent facilitator be used.
- If you also wish the facilitator to use their broader knowledge of operating environments.
- If you wish/need to utilise someone with stronger, more developed facilitation skills than your own – often an ideal time to co-facilitate, and enjoy the learning!

When detailed knowledge of the organisation or technical aspects are required – an internal facilitator will probably be more advantageous to the group. However, remember to let the group know which 'hat' you are using as you move through the session.

7. Designing your process and event

No matter the focus, two key objectives will need to be clarified to enable you to proceed with designing and staging of each and every event:

- the **rational objective** or purpose of the session – What does the group need to know, to clarify or make a decision about? and
- the **experiential objective** or the experience the group needs to have – What mood or emotional tone will enhance and reinforce the purpose?

Whether your activity is a meeting, a public consultation, a planning session, a dinner, a briefing session, the launch of a community project in the wheatbelt or a national awards dinner with 500 guests – if both of these objectives are clarified, the design can contribute to both the effectiveness and success of the activity.

The following checklists FORMAT and STEPS have been developed for designing and orchestrating the rational and experiential objectives respectively. They are simple guides so that key aspects are given sufficient consideration – they will assist you to maximise quality and participation.

7.1 FORMAT – Designing the process

Once you have clarified the purpose, you determine the most appropriate process to use.

The acronym FORMAT represents six key aspects of designing the format or process of the session:

- ***Flow and Focus*** – investigate the best ways to keep the session moving towards its intended goal whilst being true to participation. This includes effective questioning, active listening and active management of participation. Other tools and skills include summarising, recapping, reflecting and 'parking issues' (to clarify or to enable the group to move on), activities and games (to boost flagging energy, or to demonstrate the value of teams and individual contribution) and silent thinking, pairs, small group work (to encourage and enable even better contribution as well as variety).
- ***Objective*** – clarify the rational and experiential objectives of the session – linked to opening with purpose and exploring the expectations of the participants. [Refer to Section C – 12.1 and 12.2]
- ***Results*** – determine ways to capture the work of the session (e.g. flip charts, notes) and how they will be displayed and accessible both during and after the session. [Refer Section D]
- ***Methodologies and Techniques*** – determine the processes appropriate for the purpose and the participants. Methodologies (such as meetings, strategic planning, search conference) are a coherent and logical approach or process for undertaking particular types of tasks, for solving particular problems and/or exploring particular issues – examples are included in Appendix I. Techniques and tools (such as brainstorming, mind-mapping, ORID focussed discussion) are the specific ways of completing the micro-level tasks that deliver the methodology. [Refer Section C for examples]

- ***Aids, Facilities and Materials*** – determine which will provide the most effective assistance to facilitation as well as take home documents etc. Range includes flip charts, overhead projectors, whyteboards, hand-outs, manuals, outdoor exercises, post-it notes, coloured markers, CD or cassette player for music, TV and video to your own facilitation scripts. [Refer Section D]
- ***Timing*** – ensure you have adequate time for the process you have chosen. Time allocated for each step – with welcome and opening, purpose and expectations, focus sessions, breaks, review and reflection, wrap up, next steps and close.

When planning an agenda I always begin from the time that people want to go home and work towards the start of the day. It helps me to remember Covey's habit 'to begin with the end in mind'.

Bevan Bessen
Bessen Consulting Services

7.2 STEPS – Designing the experience (extracts from Spencer 1989)

Because the experience of the participants is crucial to their effective contribution and therefore the worth of any session, it is important that the participant experience receives as much planning and consideration as the process format [Refer 7.1].

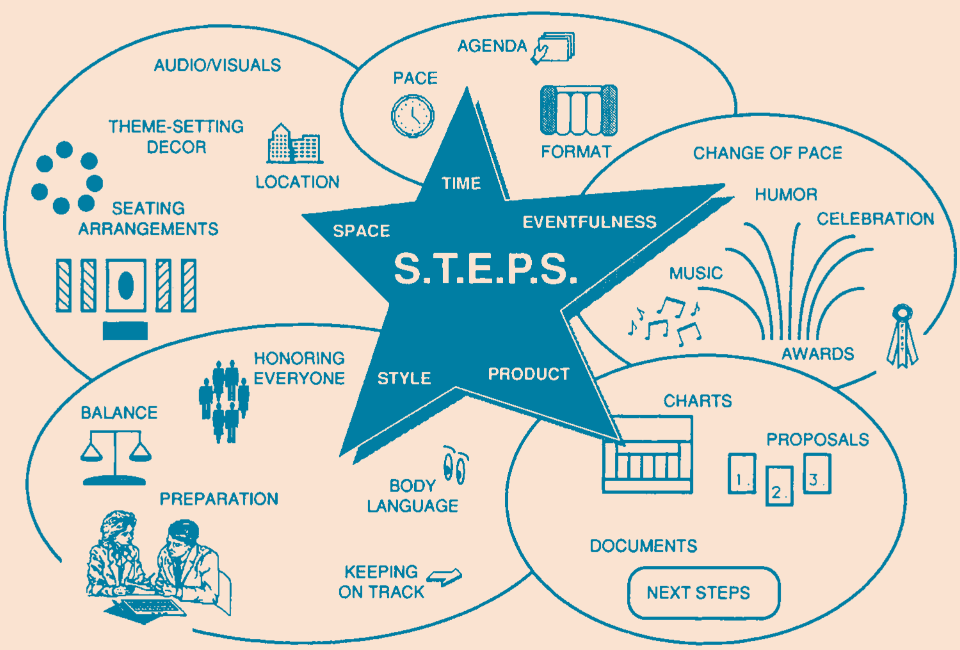
At this point you need to refer back to the rational and the experiential objectives that have been developed for the session you are to facilitate, then plan or orchestrate the experience.

The acronym STEPS represents five key aspects of planning for and orchestrating events:

- ***Space*** – carefully select the appropriate space for setting the mood of the meeting or the session and for influencing group dynamics constructively. Considerations include physical location and room layout, seating arrangements, decor, use of aids such as audiovisuals, or other facilities such as a creche [Refer Section D].
- ***Time*** – carefully schedule and discipline time management to establish the tone and importance of the session. This encompasses date(s), duration, schedule, pace, adherence to agenda timeframes [Note: linked closely to FORMAT – 7.1].

Value volunteers – recognise and show your appreciation for the work done by volunteers. Heartfelt words, a thank you BBQ or thank you card at the end of a key event can often be more appreciated by modest volunteers than certificates or awards. Don't assume someone else has said thank you.

Nicci Tsernjavski
CALM



Source: Spencer 1989

- ***Eventfulness*** – attend sensitively and creatively to the human dimension of group interaction. This will lead to heightened enthusiasm and commitment within the group. Examples are ice-breakers, change-of-pace activities, humour, celebration, use of symbols.
- ***Product*** – give serious attention to producing a tangible product to strengthen the group's sense of accomplishment and commitment to action. This can include decisions, plans, documents, charts [Note: linked closely to FORMAT].
- ***Style*** – consider carefully the facilitator and/or organising group's image. Their role and their way of relating to participants and the group process can affect the overall experience and product. This includes preparation, balance, honouring everyone, body language, keeping on track.

7.3 Coordination templates

Each time you are involved in a facilitated session, instead of preparing a new 'resources required' or TTD (Things To Do) list from scratch – organise templates which list the various facilities and materials you may need (including some blank lines) in a tabular format. Print one off for each new event – insert the focus, client, location and date and start highlighting the materials you need – then tick them off as they are organised. This also ensures that you don't overlook things and the element of heightened organisation can give you a boost.

Appendix IV provides some checklists and templates – use and adapt them to suit your style and needs.

8. Designing effective questions

8.1 Developing questions

Developing the most appropriate questions is one of the fundamentals of effective facilitation. Questions are used to provoke response by inquiry, to enable the participants to consider issues, to test assumptions, to gather information, to make decisions, to determine the underlying reasons – and to share.

If you use the term 'facilitative question' it helps you to focus on generating the specific questions you need to ask, particularly at the start of a process.

Christine Hogan

One reality check many facilitators use to gauge the appropriateness and usefulness of questions is trialing them with the client and on themselves – anticipating what the responses might be. This should highlight which questions are ambiguous, which could offend, which will not elicit the depth of response required and which could lead to one word answers, etcetera.

8.2 Question styles

Questions fall into a number of styles related to their function – and although it is important to have a range, it is more important to understand each style and when to use it. For example, when asked a 'closed question' respondents (although they may elaborate) are only asked for a single word response. Although closed questions are useful and needed – they can stifle discussion and not enable the group to get to the underlying or root cause – thus it is important to have a mix of questions.

Closed – require only one-word answers e.g. *Which of these issues is important? Do you think this is important? Has today's session been of value?*

Open – require a more detailed and considered answer and can often have more than one answer e.g. *How has today influenced your understanding of your role?*

In addition to the basics of open and closed questions, there are more layers including:

- ***Open Probing*** – gains further information, getting the participant to think deeper e.g. *Why do you consider that to be the most important? What series of decisions led you to this commitment?*
- ***Open Leading*** – suggests what response you would like to gain and often uses flattery or subtleties of power e.g. *As a smart thinking person can you tell the group why you consider … to be the way to go?*
- ***Open Reflecting*** – enables you to determine that the information is clear (often coupled with a closed questions) e.g. *So are you saying …? I understand you are meaning … Is this correct?*

An interesting exercise is to listen to radio interviews where the interviewees wish to promote something/someone and observe some court cases, where the defendants often wish to disclose as little as possible – observe how they respond to question styles.

9. Developing effective listening skills

9.1 Effective listening

Effective listening is another of the fundamentals of facilitation. Effective listening is active listening – and requires both physical and mental energy. As a facilitator your role is not only to listen well – but to clarify that you understand correctly and then assist the rest of the group to understand. Effective listening enables you to guide the group in making connections between pieces of data (e.g. that may have been contributed earlier in the program) and it will also help you to determine the level of challenge you can use to enable individuals and the group to explore even further their understanding of an issue or development of an option.

As facilitators you can help the group become more active and effective listeners.

9.2 The good listener

Hugh Mackay (1998) in his book *'The Good Listener'* explores how "the mind-set of the audience determines what communication is possible at all and it sets limits to the listener's capacity to respond to what we will say." In looking at his work from the perspective of a facilitator this then becomes …*'The mind-set of the facilitator determines what communication is possible at all and it sets limits to the facilitator's capacity to respond to what is said'*. Since significant slices of facilitation involve getting people to say something – to contribute to discussion and analysis – then our mindsets and their impact on our listening are critical. Mackay believes "once we understand how our 'mind-sets' are developed, how they work and how important they are to us, we will have understood the secret of successful communication." He thinks of it in terms of the 'three Rs of communication:

- ***Reinforcement*** – where our preferred messages – the ones that capture our ready attention and interest – will be those that reinforce the existing shape and structure of our mindset. Communication comes easily when a message supports what the other person already believes. However, when we are attacked we defend. In the process of defending our existing point of view, we actually reinforce it.
- ***Relevance*** – unless the message has obvious relevance to our needs, our interests or our situation, it will drift beyond the edge of our attention span.
- ***Relationship*** – which has been lurking beneath reinforcement and relevance – as we know that messages will tend to be interpreted in ways which reinforce our mindset and will probably be ignored unless expressed in a way which is relevant to us. Thus, we need to put more emphasis on building relationships than achieving particular communication goals – in practice communication begins with a discovery tour of each other's 'mindset': the deeper sharing comes later.

People are more likely to listen to us – if we listen to them.

Mary Power
Henderson Power and Assoc.

Mackay believes "listening is an art" and although we can't afford to be too rigid about the techniques for becoming better listeners there are a number of things we can do to improve our performance as listeners. "Indeed, when you look at the habits of good listeners, you notice a number of 'tricks of the trade'. These are not 'tricks' in the sense of being manipulative or devious: they are simply the disciplines which good listeners impose on themselves in order to ensure that *their brains – as well as their ears – are working*." [Refer Appendix III – 4]

10. Incorporating adult participation principles

(source John Goodlad)

As mentioned above [Section A], much of your work will be with adults. As you consider them in the design and delivery of your facilitation it is important to be aware that adults prefer participation and/or learning situations which:

Integrate new ideas with existing knowledge, allow choice and self-direction, so...
- Help them recall what they already know – that relates to the new ideas or situation
- Build your plans around their needs (including future goals and present situation)
- Share your agenda and assumptions and ask for input on them
- Ask what they know about the topic
- Ask what they would like to know about the topic
- Build in options within your plan so you can easily shift if needed
- Suggest follow up ideas and next steps for after the session
- *CAUTION* – Match the degree of choice to their level of development.

Show respect for the individual participant and/learner, so...
- Provide for their needs through breaks, snacks, coffee, comfort
- Provide a quality, well organised experience that uses time effectively
- Avoid jargon and don't "talk down" to participants
- Validate and affirm their knowledge, contributions and successes
- Ask for feedback on your work or ideas, provide input opportunities
- *CAUTION* – Watch your choice of words to avoid negative perceptions.

Promote their positive self esteem, so...

- Provide low-risk activities in small group settings
- Plan for building incremental successes
- Help them become more effective and competent
- CAUTION – Readiness to participate and/or learn depends on self-esteem.

Capitalise on their experience, so...

- Don't ignore what they know, it's a resource for you and the group
- Plan alternate activities so you can adjust to fit their experience level
- Create activities that use their experience and knowledge
- Listen before, during and after the event
- *CAUTION* – Provide for the possibility of a need to unlearn old habits.

Are practical and problem-centred, so...

- Give overviews, summaries, examples and use stories
- Plan for direct application of the new information
- Design in collaborative, problem-solving activities
- Anticipate problems applying the new ideas, offer suggested uses
- *CAUTION* – Guard against becoming too theoretical.

Section C - Facilitation processes

11. More than one way

Facilitation processes are considered as the combination of:

- the broad approach or **methodology** that you would use, such as a meeting or strategic planning or catchment mapping, and
- the specific **technique/s** that you would use for completing the micro-level tasks – such as brainstorming or mind mapping or SWOT analysis.

There is more than one way to facilitate a workshop or meeting and there may be even better ways of getting things done than just discussion. Yet, one frustration for many a participant is the lack of variety or variation that facilitators inject into their 'events' – producing in many participants a pathological distaste and distrust of both butcher's paper and brainstorming in particular.

There are a variety of methodologies and techniques one can use to facilitate, as well as a myriad of ways you can do them – even brainstorming can be varied. The following matrix provides some assistance in matching methodologies and techniques to your focus and requirements. Adopt and adapt a range.

Process	Gathering info	Ordering and/or ranking	Deciding	Planning	Committing to action	Reflecting and reviewing	Team building
Acts of God		+++	+++				+
Brainstorming	+++					++	
Card clusters	+++	+++	+++		++		
Exercises and activities						+++	+++
Focus groups	+++		+++			++	
Force field analysis		++	+++	++			
Future search				+++			
ORID focussed discussion	++		+++		++	+++	
LENS workshop	+++		+++	+++	+++		+
Meetings			++	++	++	++	++
Mind mapping	+++	+		++		++	
PMI		++	+++		++		
Rapid rural appraisal	+++			+++			
Rich pictures				++	+	++	++
Six Thinking Hats	++		++	++	++	++	++
Valuing difference							+++
SMART filter			+++	++			
Soft systems				+++	++		
Stakeholder mapping	+++			++		++	++
SWOT	+++	++	++	+++		++	

Effectiveness legend: +++ = high, ++ = moderate, + = low

The next 24 pages, provide outlines of key techniques to use when working with groups, whilst Appendix I explores a selection of facilitation methodologies such as Adult Learning Circles, LENS Workshop, Interesting and Effective Meetings and Strategic Planning. In addition, we encourage you to use the reference and resources list [Section E] as a guide to begin exploring and using a wider variety of facilitation processes.

12. Facilitation techniques

The following limited selection of facilitation techniques is presented as techniques for session beginnings, middles and endings – some straddle this structure.

> **People don't have the time to waste. When you bring people together for a meeting, it's vital to make it an energising and productive experience...or they stop coming and you miss out on their contributions. These days good process stands out head-and-shoulders from most meetings, so it's not hard to make an impact if you put the effort in.**
>
> *Gary McMahon, CALM*

Techniques for session beginnings…

12.1 Opening with purpose (OWP)

(extracts from Colliver, Pearson and Young 1993)

The effective welcome and opening of any facilitated session is critical to success – as it informs the participants of the reason they need to be involved and gives them a framework for how their involvement will be invited.

From the participants' perspective, the beginning must gain their interest and create a sense of anticipation for what lies ahead.

> **At the start of the session, be very clear about your role and the purpose of the session, so the participants can have confidence in the process.**
>
> *Roberta Mead*
> *Roberta Mead and Assoc.*

When…

At the beginning of the session – when each person is in the process of moving from what they were doing before the session and moving towards active involvement in this new activity.

Why…

Purpose is the reason why people are in a group and interacting. By purpose we mean the end results the group is heading for, not the activities along the way [Refer Section B]. If the purpose is unclear, there is no centre point to orient people, and no boundary to contain them. If people have different outcomes in mind, they could be working at cross purposes.

When purpose is explicit and shared, people concentrate and work harder together. Your role as a facilitator is to reach agreement on the end results the group is working towards. If the facilitator clearly and cogently presents the purpose, members will engage their own purposefulness and expertise. If the purpose is confused or not stated, it is much harder for them to engage.

How…

In your own style and in fitting with the group and task for the session:

- describe the context – what makes the work important
- describe the focus – the business we are here for

I could walk into a session having lost all of my notes and overheads but I would never walk in without my ground rules.

Bevan Bessen
Bessen Consulting

Section C

- describe the end results we're aiming for – the rational objective [Refer Section B] – and write this up
- acknowledge the different groups present and their potential contribution
- describe the process – introduce yourself, roles, tasks and ground rules
  – *"Your job will be to draw on your own experience and say what you think, my job will be to make sure each person's ideas are heard and understood and that we push through to decisions."*
  – *"We will be working through three tasks today …"*
  – *"Let me suggest some ground rules for our work today… e.g. value everyone's input, only one person speaking at a time …What others do you wish to add?"*
- find the fit with the purpose.

Materials…

Overhead transparencies, flip chats or posters can be used to illustrate or reinforce the purpose and session format as well as the ground rules. These can then be left around the work-space as a re-focussing tool.

Adding value…

Explore individual expectations of the day/program [Refer 12.2].

12.2 Expectations

Ensuring that participant and facilitator expectations are elicited and clarified enables the session to progress with a shared understanding of purpose.

When…

Early in the session, as a follow-on to the welcome and opening.

Why…

Although many facilitated activities have a disclosed focus – participants and the facilitator can have differing understanding of what the session entails. Also, participants often bring other issues and concerns with them and although these may be valid, they are perhaps not to be the focus for the session.

How…

Clearly explain the purpose of the session [Refer 'opening with purpose' above].

Then invite each participant to explain what their expectations are. *"By the end of the day/session I expect we will…"*

It is important to display the expectations as they are expressed – either on an overhead or a flipchart.

It is also important that you are honest and clear about which of the expectations the session will meet. When they are all listed – go through the list and state (you could also use a symbol) which expectations you believe the session will:

- go a long way to achieving
- partially meet

- just touch upon, and/or
- unfortunately, we will not be working on at all in this program/session.

This honesty will also allow those participants to let go of an expectation that will not be met ..rather than hold onto it …getting more and more frustrated as the session proceeds, often obstructing their full participation in the issues being discussed whilst waiting for focus to start on their area of concern – as they have never been clearly told it will not be.

Some facilitators and participants also see merit in leaving the expectations on display – perhaps at the back or side of the room as an acknowledgment and quick reminder.

Materials…

Butcher's paper and flip chart holder or transparencies and overhead projector and appropriate pens.

Adding value…

When the list is first recorded – provide each participant with 2-3 removable dots (you can also get them to put their name/initials on the dot) – and ask them to mark *"which are the expectations you most wish the session/program/event will meet?"* Although they may not have actually voiced that particular expectation earlier, it may be one they hold. Tally up the number beside the clusters.

At the end of the session – the list of expectations can also be used in review and reflection [Refer 12.18]. If you have used dots – you can get the participants to remove any dots where their expectations have been met (thus the need to initial dots) – this can be a very powerful and informing image. Otherwise get people to tick them – again a powerful image of achievement.

Within the bounds of confidentiality and sensitivity it may be useful to provide a copy of the group's expectations to the manager/client – so that key issues that fell outside the session focus can be explored in other forums with the participants.

12.3 Ice breakers (and other activities/exercises)

Icebreakers should allow participants to introduce themselves as well as lead into the topic/focus. They are not to be confused with an opener [refer Opening with Purpose 12.1 above].

When…

As part of the opening, though not as the very first activity. Caution – whilst most facilitators will not see icebreakers (or other games and activities) as threatening – some participants may, thus ensure they are appropriate for the group and within reason make sure there is a way out of participating.

Why…

The more comfortable participants feel with each other and the better the learning environment – the more likely they are to participate and generate new ideas. Icebreakers also cater for different learning styles and can inject an element of creativity and fun.

How…

Link the icebreaker with the purpose of the session/program. For example an icebreaker appropriate for team building, facilitation and even strategic planning could reinforce the need to listen and not pre-judge others.

There are number of guides and websites available with a range of icebreakers and/or training games. These compilations are presented with cross-referencing to the use of the activity such as changing energy levels, icebreakers, team building, problem solving and self-management. Activities also range from physically active ones, where problems need to be solved in role-playing scenarios, to working quietly with a pen and paper.

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Debriefing the icebreakers with a focussed discussion (e.g. ORID, Refer 12.9) can add another dimension to the associated learning and enjoyment.

The following are a selection of icebreakers from the *Results Through Training* website <www.RTTWorks.com>.

Dinner Plans – Have each person complete the following sentence: *"If I could have dinner with any person, living or dead, it would be .... because .... "*

I Noticed – If participants have made commitments in a previous workshop to change behaviours, ask others to share one thing they've noticed another person doing differently. As an alternative, have each individual share one thing he/she has done differently since the last session.

Picture Perfect – Have each person on a team draw a picture or series of pictures to represent their current view of the team/group/situation (e.g. draw on pieces of paper or flip charts posted around the room). Allow 5 minutes, then have the rest of the group explain what they see in each other's pictures.

Role Models – Have each person identify someone who is a role model for the topic being discussed. Have them share the person's name and the qualities or characteristics that make them a good role model. Post characteristics on a flip chart.

Learning from Experience – Have participants introduce themselves and explain one thing they have learned the hard way about the topic you are covering. Post the learnings on a flip chart and refer to them throughout the session.

Materials…

Depends on the activity and may require being set-up beforehand e.g. some out-door exercises. [TIP: can be critical to effectiveness that you ensure the chosen venue has the space required and that you check it out beforehand]

Adding value…

Pike's (1994) test for an effective icebreaker is:

- Does it break preoccupation? – people may be physically present in the room, but not mentally present.
- Does it facilitate networking? – does it help people to be more comfortable with one another.

- Is it relevant to the program? – can people see the logical tie-in between the opening, the icebreakers and the program.
- Does it maintain or enhance self-esteem?
- Is it fun for both the facilitator and participants? The fun factor may not always be important – but having some fun at the beginning is often useful.
- Is their curiosity aroused? Curiosity can be a powerful motivator.

References…

Kroehnert (1998, 1999 and 2000), Mindtools (website), Newstrom and Scannell (1998), Pike (1994), Results Through Training (website), Thiagarajan and Parker (1999) and Thiagarajan (website).

Techniques for session middles…

12.4 Activities, games, role plays, team building exercises

Exercises are used throughout the session/activity and act in a variety of ways including applying and/or reinforcing of learnings, challenging assumptions, self and group discovery, understanding and appreciating other perspectives and changing energy levels.

Refer above to icebreakers [12.3] for references and resources.

12.5 Acts of God (extracts from Dick 1991)

A complaints session is effective if a group is bogged down by issues and unable to find its direction – often because of negativity, hidden agendas and a feeling of inability to make a difference. Acts of God is based on the English phrase in insurance polices – about things beyond our control – and has nothing to do with religion.

When…

Use this technique when a group is focussing on negative comments, and losing energy to things they really have little or no control over. It is also an effective and often invigorating session for initial goal setting.

Why…

Non-confronting and simple process to marshall the negative energy in a group and focus on problems and/or issues the group really does have some influence over.

How…

Generate a list of complaints/concerns/problems/issues that are important to the group members – using brainstorming technique [Refer 12.6] – but it is important to ensure there is some quiet thinking time, and that each person has the opportunity to contribute all their complaints.

Invite each individual to contribute one comment at a time.

Scribe these onto butcher's paper – leaving a space on the left for later working.

As with brainstorming guidelines – don't allow discussion of the merits of comments.

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When the list is complete – explain the five categories of complaint that will now be used. Either write them up as you introduce them – or have a flip chart/overhead transparency prepared. Explain that some are called acts of God – that relate to the English phrase in insurance polices and has nothing to do with religion. These categories reflect what the group itself can do about the issue/problem etc.

Acts of God (AOG) Complaint Categories

1. Acts of God we/you have to live with
2. Acts of lesser gods we/you probably have to live with – but at least we/you can communicate our/your complaints to them
3. Issues that we/you share with others (e.g. another section of same organisation) – and can resolve jointly with them
4. Issues that are yours to work on – but for which we/you need help, or
5. Issues that we/you can work on ourselves/yourselves – without help.

AOG categories	Problem/issue/concern	Actions

Work through the problem/issue/concern list item by item – asking the group to allocate one of the five AOG categories to each item. During this period – do not allow any discussions on solving the problem/issue (there will be opportunity later). If it is difficult to gain consensus, then allow the occasional split category (e.g. straddles categories 1 and 2).

Now return to the list and add another sheet of butcher's paper – this time marked as actions. With items categorised as 1 'acts of God we have to live with' – these can either be crossed out – i.e. they have been acknowledged, and although they are important and valid concerns, it is now clear there is no value in wasting any more time and energy on them. This action often disposes of much of the negative energy bound up in those items. Or re-label them as *Learning to cope with….*

The remaining items should now only be ones that the groups can contribute to resolving – whether it be working with others or on their own. Options now include ranking them in order of priority [Refer 12.17] – then working on an action plan for each issue/problem [Refer last part of Appendix I – 1.7].

Adding value…

When choosing which issue to work on – it may be important for the group to work on some of the No. 5 category – so they develop confidence in achieving things.

Other references…

NOTE: 'Circles of Concern and Influence' as developed by Stephen Covey (1992) provides a similar technique for enabling groups to focus on issues over which they have significant influence – though acts of God develops them further with different categories and a way forward to commitment to action.

12.6 Brainstorming

A process for gaining data/information/ideas quickly and without judgement. It is often used as a sub-set of many wider processes, such as strategic planning [Refer Appendix I – 1.7], where the information generated can be later discussed and refined.

When...

If wishing to quickly gather a myriad of ideas from a group – without getting caught up in discussion or assigning value. Also, when wishing to encourage creativity and thus capture some slightly off-the wall responses which could later develop as good options – which otherwise may never have been generated and/or considered.

Why...

Brainstorming works by suspending value judgments and separating the creation of ideas from evaluation. Because judgements are not being made, brainstorming:

- enables participants to quickly contribute ideas without being hampered by having to justify them
- provides a process where lots of information is generated, and generated quickly
- encourages involvement of all participants as it is less threatening.

Brainstorming also works by enabling and encouraging news ideas to be sparked-off and/or builds on others.

How...

Question/s used are open-ended to encourage the greatest range of responses. It is better if the recording space is public – whyteboard/butcher's paper/overhead transparencies – however, a sheet of paper at a meeting is still an effective way of recording brainstormed responses.

- Set the brainstorming ground rules so that participants:
  – respond to the question
  – do not criticise, evaluate or censor contributions
  – build on each others ideas if possible
  – allow everyone to contribute
  – are given time at end for any clarifications.
- Clarify the topic – ask the focus question. [TIP: repeat question slowly – try not to paraphrase as this can confuse]
- Either go around in some order or be spontaneous. [TIP: often good to start with going around the group as ensures everyone has opportunity to contribute and warm up to the process – then let spontaneity take over]
- Record ideas/responses in a list (only clarify at end if unclear) – otherwise don't discuss.
- Treat everyone's ideas equally.
- Keep the pace moving – and if necessary give another break for people to reconsider the topic
  – at this stage, quickly reading out all the responses thus far can also elicit other ideas.
- Complete the brainstorm when ideas/responses run out.

In setting up a brainstorming session, it is vital you ask for people's agreement on the ground rules, you can't just state them and expect participants to abide by them.

John Skillen, CALM

- If necessary, check the understanding of all points – again don't need to accept them or evaluate them at this stage – just understand them.

Following the 'brainstorm proper', discuss options for further use of this information (such as selecting the five most interesting ideas or critical issues) as well as what process you might use to critically analyse the contributions.

Another option is to type out all the brainstorm ideas and circulate them – this allows more time for participants to 'sleep on' the information.

Adding value...

Allow individual thinking at the beginning of the session to enable all participants to consider their response/s (during this time you could write the question up on the flipchart/ whyteboard as a constant focus).

Use 2 scribes – to keep the pace moving and reduce the opportunity for participants to start questioning or criticising.

When making a list, use 2 or 3 different colour pens – to make each idea easier to read.

Use a combination of brainstorming and card clustering [Refer below, 12.7].

12.7 Card clustering (developed as Metaplan-Method by Schnelle brothers, extracts from Hogan 1998)

Card clustering in a structured way to manage and make sense of data, providing a dynamic process for making complex problems visible and more manageable.

When...

Generating lots of information that you wish to cluster into 'like ideas'. Often used in workshop settings.

Why...

Enables each person to contribute their ideas without pressure from the group. Also as each person is working individually, it enables more data to be collected. The physical activity of the clustering can also boost the energy levels of the group.

How...

Discuss and clarify the focus question.

Invite participants to respond to the focus question – one response per card – in clear, bold print for all to read – keeping their statement short.

Collect all the cards and shuffle them a bit – then begin to display them – getting the group to cluster like cards as you go – as the process continues – there may be a need to start forming new clusters. Group members can ask for cards to be clarified – but the originator can remain silent if they choose.

Once all the cards have been allocated – it is now important to get the group to name the cluster – *What is the underlying theme? What connects all these ideas/issues?*

The group now ranks the clusters by importance/priority – sometimes the number of cards in each cluster can indicate importance, but not necessarily – these may have been the easier issue/ideas to come up with. [Refer voting and ranking – 12.17]

Materials…

Marker pens for each participants and large post-it notes or ½ A4 sheets of paper and blu-tac. [TIP: Great opportunity to use scrap paper – ensure the original documents are not confidential or of particular interest to the group – or they cause divergence from focus topic!].

Adding value…

Another option, once the process of clustering has begun, and the group understands the process, is to split up into small groups of 4-5, with each taking a handful of cards. These small groups then work together to sort and cluster their pile. This results in lots of physical activity and discussion – everyone should be involved. Often it also requires the reading and re-reading of cards already on the board to ensure the right cluster is being selected. If this adaptation is used, then the whole group needs to spend some time confirming that the clusters are appropriate, which may entail some more movement of the cards with consensus.

Christine Hogan (1998) provides more options when using this technique – and in particular details how the cards can be used on a flat table – with group members initially turning over cards they think not important – and then discussing them later. Hogan demonstrates how to ensure open discussion and decision is made on each of the cards.

12.8 Focus Groups (extracts from McNamara)

Focus groups are a powerful means to evaluate services or test new ideas. Basically, focus groups are interviews, but of 6-10 people at the same time in the same group. One can get a great deal of information during a focus group session.

When…

Use the Focus Group process for:
- situations where social context is important
- action research where understanding, insight and depth of analysis are required
- generating ideas.

Often used when exploring issues before conducting a survey. Focus groups are a powerful means to evaluate services or test new ideas.

Why…

Focus Groups are effective because they provide well considered results from the ‘focussed topic’ and require intensive preparation, structure and facilitation. The participants are enabled and encouraged to prepare, the discussion environment is structured and logical and during the discussion participants are encouraged and supported to challenge and build on other thinking and interpretations.

How...

Focus groups are basically multiple interviews, thus many of the same guidelines for conducting focus groups are similar to conducting interviews. The process includes allowing participants some individual thinking time in which to record their response, then open up the discussion.

Preparation:

- ***Scheduling*** – plan meetings to be 1-1.5 hours long. Be sensitive to the best time for participants.
- ***Agenda*** – consider the following agenda: welcome, review of goal of the meeting, review of agenda, review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, wrap up.
- ***Focus and questions*** – clarify the focus and develop five to six questions. The ORID [Refer 12.9] is a possible question structure to use.
- ***Participation/membership*** – usually conducted with 6-10 members who have some similar nature (e.g. similar age group, status in a program). Select members who are likely to be participative and reflective. Attempt to select members who don't know each other. Phone potential members to invite them to the meeting. Send them a follow-up invitation with a proposed agenda, session time and list of questions that the group will discuss. Plan to provide a copy of the report from the session to each member and let him or her know you will do this. Then, about three days before the session, call each member to remind them to attend.
- ***Setting and refreshments*** – Hold sessions in a conference room, or other setting with adequate airflow and lighting. Configure chairs so that all members can see each other and provide name tags if all members don't know each other. Provide refreshments.
- ***Ground rules*** – It's critical that all members participate as much as possible, yet the session moves along while generating useful information. Because the session is often a one-time occurrence, it's useful to have a few short ground rules that sustain participation, yet do so with focus, maintain momentum and get closure on questions.

Record the session with either an audio or audio-video recorder – don't count on your memory. If this isn't practical, involve a co-facilitator who is there to take notes. Check the tape recorder works (try it!!) and watch your time so that you can change tapes etc.

Facilitating the session:

- Explain the purpose of the interview session, and the need for recording.
- Carefully word each question. Allow a few minutes for each member to carefully record his or her response/s.
- Facilitate discussion around the responses to each question – one at a time.
- After each question is answered, carefully reflect back a summary of what you heard (an independent note-taker may do this).
- Ensure even participation. If one or two people are dominating the meeting, then actively call on others for their contribution. Consider using a round-table approach, including going in one direction around the group, giving each person a minute to answer the question. If the domination persists, highlight it to the group and ask for ideas about how the participation can be increased.
- Close the session. Refocus on purpose, process and discussion. Remind members that

they will receive a copy of the report generated from their answers, thank them for coming, and adjourn the meeting.

Immediately after session:

- Transcribe the tapes and make any additions on your written notes, e.g. to clarify, ensure pages are numbered, fill out any notes that don't make sense, etc.
- Work out the best way to analyse the content.
- Write down any observations made during the session. (E.g. *Where did the session occur and when? What was the nature of participation in the group? Were there any surprises during the session?*)

Materials…

Tape recorder or audio-visual recorder.

12.9 Focussed Discussion — ORID/SAID

(extracts from Institute of Cultural Affairs and Spencer 1989)

ORID/SAID is a four-step tool for focussed discussion aimed at assisting any individual or group to proceed from surface observations of a situation to in-depth understanding and response.

When…

Incredibly flexible – can be used with a large group (e.g. following the viewing of a training video, at the end of an activity/meeting) through to one-on-one for healthy, constructive conversations with a friend or child as it provides a clear, simple and sincere way of asking relevant and meaningful questions. It is a great tool for catching up at the end the day. It is also effective when a decision or commitment to action is required.

Why…

Provides the questioner with a framework based on Kolb's experiential learning model [Refer Section A – 4] as well as focusses on the need to make decisions with a structure for effective communication that:

- provides a meaningful dialogue
- broadens perspective
- results in clear ideas and conclusions, and
- if necessary allows an entire group to participate.

How…

The ORID technique is to focus sequentially on:

- **O**bjective recall
- **R**eflective consideration
- **I**nterpretive analysis, and finally
- **D**ecisional intent.

[Note: The alternative name of SAID stands for **S**ituation, **A**ffective Domain, **I**nterpretation and **D**ecision.]

The questioner/facilitator asks sequential questions – remembering silences can just be people thinking about their answer before they respond. The four stages of questions are based on the way the mind naturally functions – moving from sensory stimulus to action.

The ***Objective*** (or situation) step draws out the facts about the experience/event/topic. The group recalls information and details to re-create the event so that it is clear in everyone's memory. (E.g. *What visual images do you remember? What words or phrases do you recall? What did you observe?*)

How the group/individual feels about the event or experience is the subject of the ***Reflection*** (or affective domain/feelings) step. Emotional responses and thought associations about the experience are brought into the open and acknowledged. (E.g. *What really frustrated you? What was the high-point for you? What do you remember about the groups' reaction?*)

The third step is ***Interpretation***. Participants consider the meaning and value of the event/issue and its significance for the group, thereby allowing members to put it into perspective and determine its impact. (E.g. *What was the greatest learning or insight for our group? How would we be different if we acted on this information?*)

The fourth and final ***Decision*** step is where the group or individual conceives a response by deciding what decision is necessary or what action is required, what their future resolve will be. (E.g. *What could we do tomorrow to demonstrate we have internalised the learnings from today? With whom will you share the learning from today? What change is needed?*)

Remember, preparation of primary and secondary questions is critical to the effectiveness of ORID – and questions need to be open ended [Refer Section B – 8.2].

Adding value…

ORID can also be adapted for question-action responses, as opposed to a more passive question-verbal responses, such as in the evaluation of a training program or at the end of a long workshop [Refer 12.18] – particularly when energy may be at a low ebb the element of activity can boost flagging energy.

12.10 Force field analysis (FFA)

(extracts from Mindtools and Chamala and Mortiss 1990)

Forecefield analysis is a relatively straightforward technique for a detailed analysis of constraints and opportunities.

When…

In situations when needing to make a decision – but not when there are hidden issues that participants are not prepared to acknowledge and deal with. Also when you have decided to carry out a plan, this technique helps identify changes that could be made to improve it.

Why…

Provides a powerful and visual tool for systematically analysing a situation/problem or planning a change strategy. It brings rigour to the process, combining analysis and graphic representation that meet the learning styles of a wider range of participants.

How…

Define the problem or situation that you wish to change.

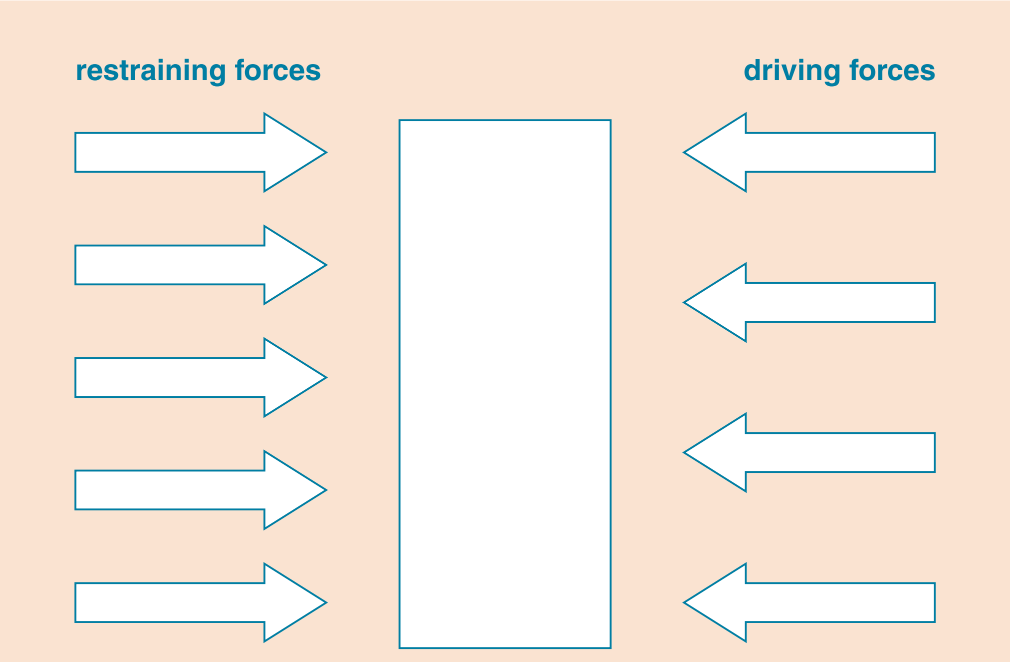
List all the forces that support the proposed change – called **driving forces** (e.g. using simple discussion, brainstorming, nominal group process). Initial steps can be done on post-it notes to ensure all the forces are considered.

Rate each of these driving forces in terms of their strengths and importance, attributing a score (e.g. 1 = weak, 10 = strong).

List all the forces that will oppose the change or make it difficult to achieve – called **restraining forces** (e.g. again using simple discussion, brainstorming, nominal group process).

Rate each of these restraining forces in terms of their strengths and importance, attributing a score (e.g. 1 = weak, 10 = strong).

Once this is done – transfer the information to a graphic representation.



Source: Chamala and Mortiss 1990

Now take each of the most important restraining forces and discuss how it can be reduced. Very often the restraining forces are so significant and complex that a separate Force Field Analysis is needed on each – called a **second order analysis**.

Check for ideas on how to enhance the driving forces.

12.11 PMI (developed by De Bono, extracts from Mindtools)

A simple decision making tool and a valuable improvement to the 'weighing pros and cons' technique used for centuries.

When…

If a course of action has already been selected or is still being considered, PMI is a good technique to use to check that it is worth taking.

Why…

PMI provides a simple decision-making tool that focuses on determining the benefits of an action. Before you move straight to action, it is important to check that it is going to improve the situation (it may actually be best to do nothing!).

How…

Determine the action focus the group wishes to work on.

Draw up a table headed ***Plus***, ***Minus***, and ***Interesting***, then:

- In the column underneath ***Plus***, write down all the positive results of taking the action.
- Underneath ***Minus*** write down all the negative effects.
- In the ***Interesting*** column write down the possible outcomes of taking the action – whether positive or negative.

By this stage it may already be obvious whether or not you should implement the decision. If it is not, consider each of the points you have written down and assign a positive or negative score to it appropriately. The scores you assign may be quite subjective.

Once you have done this, add up the scores. A strongly positive score shows that an action should be taken, a strongly negative score that it should be avoided.

Example: A young professional living in a rural town is deciding where to live. Her question is 'should she move to Perth?' She draws up the PMI table below:

Plus	Minus	Interesting
More going on (+5)	Have to sell house (-6)	Easier to find new job? (+1)
Easier to see friends (+5)	More pollution (-3)	Meet more people? (+2)
Easier to get places (+3)	Less space (-3)	More difficult to get own work done? (-4)
	No countryside (-2)	
	More difficult to get to work? (-4)	
+13	-18	-1

She scores the table as +13 (P), -18 (M) and -1 (I) = - 6

The comforts of a settled rural existence outweigh the call of the 'bright lights' – it would be much better for her to live outside Perth, but close enough to travel to the city if necessary.

12.12 Rich pictures

Rich pictures provide an opportunity for participants to use 'left brain' thinking. This alternative approach often results in less constrained gathering of information as well as a better understanding of inter-relationships, values and assumptions.

When…

You wish to gain a clearer idea of the connections and factors of a situation. When participating in a 'visioning' exercise rich pictures enables participants to be less constrained.

Why…

Drawing adds an element of 'removing boundaries' as well as enabling participants to more easily demonstrate inter-relationships. It can also change the energy in a group, as it employs a more 'fun' method of gathering and sharing information. Often, just the element of 'being different from the ordinary' is a bonus.

How…

Invite small groups to develop a picture of the issue the group is discussing (e.g. the future they wish to have). The picture is to include the physical and the social elements – as well as the inter-relationships.

Pictures may also be able to capture cause and effect.

Participants need to explain and discuss what they perceive so that the group understands and is supportive of such items being added to their rich picture. A selection of symbols can be developed that all groups use – so those pictures are easier to read.

Then have a discussion around the pictures.

Materials…

Large sheets of paper (e.g. butcher's) and coloured pens/crayons/paints.

Adding value…

Can be used effectively when doing visioning exercises – by creating two pictures – one the rich picture of the future and one the rich picture of the present. Discussion and decisions can then be about what needs to be done to shift from the present to the future vision.

Individual rich pictures can also be a useful way for group members to gain a better understanding of each others view of the situation/future.

12.13 Six Thinking Hats (extracts from De Bono 1985)

The 'Thinking Hats' tool forces you to move outside your habitual thinking style and helps you to get a more rounded view of a situation.

When…

Applies in a range of situations when structure in discussion will provide clarity. It has been effectively used as a tool in strategic planning [Refer Appendix I – 1.7] – to ensure that all angles are considered. Can also be very useful when a sensitive topic is being discussed – enabling the negative side or the sensitive side to be discussed without 'stigma attached'.

Why…

Without the formality of the hats, some thinkers adhere permanently to a single mode of thought (often the black hat). The six thinking hats disentangle our thinking in such a way that the thinker can use a single mode of thought at any given time instead of engaging all modes at the same time. The essential importance of the hats is that they provide roles of thought. A thinker can take pride in the action of each one of these roles.

How…

The method has been designed to switch thinking (questioning, considering and responding) from the normal style of argument toward a style of cartographic delineation. It converts thinking into a two-style process. The first stage consists of drawing the map and the second to selecting a route.

Introduce the group to the concept of 'Six Thinking Hats' and the function of each colour. [TIP: Remember colours have different significance in different cultures, thus they may be confusing and/or insulting – know your participants and change the colours accordingly].

Everyone has a colour hat 'from where to think'. Using coloured hats or cards can add another dimension and assist with refocusing on the 'thinking colour'.

Blue Hat Thinking – the colour of the sky and a cool colour. Is responsible for summaries, general vision and conclusions. Manages the thinking process and assures that it accords with the rules of the game. Holds back argument and insists on 'map-type' thinking. It imposes discipline.

White Hat Thinking – considered neutral and objective. We wear this hat when we want to concentrate on objective facts and figures. Does not put forward opinions nor interpret. Requires facts and dates. In practice, there is a double-standard system of data:

- the first strand or thread comprises verified or proven facts – first class data
- the second strand comprises facts considered verified, but which nevertheless have not been totally verified – second class data.

There is a spectrum of probability that extends from infallible truth to complete untruth. Between these two extremes there are useable levels like 'in general, 'sometimes', and 'occasionally' – which are needed to convey the probability.

Yellow Hat Thinking – is positive, constructive and optimistic. The colour symbolises clarity, brilliance and optimism. The thinking covers a positive spectrum that extends from extreme logic and practicality to dreams, visions and hopes at the other extreme. The yellow hat indicates and explores the values and benefits. It strives to find logical support for these. It is concerned with implementation and making things work – and not with simple euphoria, nor directly with the creation of new ideas.

When we take an optimistic positive, hopeful view of the situation, we are said to be wearing our sunny yellow hat.

Red Hat Thinking – legitimises emotions and feelings as an important part of thinking. It allows thinker to say, "this is how I feel about the matter". It brings feelings into visibility in such a way that they can form part of the 'map of thinking' and of the value system which 'discovers the route of the map'.

Permits the thinker to explore the feelings of the others, asking questions of them from this 'red hat point of view'. You do not need to justify or provide a logical base for feelings.

The Red Hat covers two extensive types of feelings:

- ordinary emotions as we know them – ranging from strong emotions, such as fear and displeasure, to more subtle such as suspicion
- complex judgments – such as presentiment, intuition, aesthetic feelings and other types of feelings that are not visibly justified.

Black Hat Thinking – is specifically interested in the negative judgement, signalling if the matter is bad, incorrect or mistaken. It indicates why something will not work – describing the risks and the dangers – it signals the errors in a plan. The Black Hat is not an argument and should never be used in that way – it is an objective intent to put the negative elements on the map table – IT IS AVAILABLE TO POSE NEGATIVE QUESTIONS.

The Black Hat should not be used to convey negative indulgences or negative feelings – these should be presented under the Red Hat.

Green Hat Thinking – stands for fertility and growth – for creative thinking and to generate new ideas, concepts and perceptions. The quest for alternatives is a fundamental aspect. There is a need to go far beyond the known, the obvious and the merely satisfactory. It takes pauses to consider if there is some alternative idea. Challenge is an important part of Green Hat Thinking and it takes us out of our normal pattern of thinking.

Lateral thinking is a combination of attitudes, notions and techniques to break patterns of self-organising systems and asymmetrical patterns.

Materials…

Providing each individual with the written details of their colour.

Having hats or cards can assist in the focus – and add an element of fun.

Adding value…

Instead of each individual having a different colour thinking hat – go through the process with whole group being one colour at a time – i.e. all thinking as Black, then all as Green. Sometimes it may be useful to use only two or three thinking colours.

When developing questions for another process – use the hats as a guide to develop questions from that thinking colour.

12.14 SMART filter for indicators

The SMART filter provides a simple tool for both the development and ongoing review of indicators. It could ensure that you don't start using indicators that are of little or no use.

When…

Determining and reviewing performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Why...

The SMART filter provides an easy gauge to the usefulness of indicators, adding rigour to their selection and development.

How...

When developing indicators of performance the 'SMART' filter is an easy guide to ensure you have the most appropriate filters that will deliver what you require. All indicators should be SMART, which means:

- ***Simple*** – easily interpreted
- ***Measurable*** – statistically verifiable, able to be combined with others to form indices, able to show trends over time
- ***Accessible*** – regularly monitored, currently used by public and private managers, cost-effective, consistent with other industries, regions/States/Territories
- ***Relevant*** – indicative of fundamental function/s, related to highly valued aspects, related to policies and management goals, relevant to international treaty reporting obligations, and
- ***Timely*** – transferring early warning of potential problems.

The following table developed by Alexandra, Higgins and White (1998) provides a practical approach to determining effective indicators for the environment that can be adapted to other areas.

Simple	Measurable	Accessible	Relevant	Timely
easily interpreted	statistically verifiable, reproducible and comparable	regularly monitored	indicative of fundamental environmental functions	an early warning of potential problems
easily monitored	able to be combined with others to form indices	currently used by public and private managers	related to a highly valued environmental aspect	
appropriate for community use	able to show trends over time	cost-effective	related to regional environmental policies and management goals	
mappable		consistent with other regions, States/Territory and nations	related to State/Territory and national environmental policies and management goals	
			relevant to international treaty reporting obligations	

12.15 Stakeholder mapping

(extracts from Colliver, Pearson and Young, 1993)

Strategic stakeholder mapping is a graphic way of highlighting who fellow stakeholders are and then showing how each is positioned in relation to you and other players.

When…

Most useful when doing an assessment of the external environment, at the point in a program/activity when you need to determine whom you need to work with:

- who you need to include and/or influence
- who could contribute to what you are trying to achieve.

Why…

Enables group and group members to be more strategic about where they are positioned. Allows a second dimension to be added i.e. the relationship dimension. Also enables group members to examine personal and professional links to stakeholders when determining who could have the most appropriate/useful influence.

How…

As either a large group or as smaller sub-sets of the group – focussing on the current state of play.

Each group has a large piece of paper and post-it notes.

Clarify the focus (e.g. even better foreshore management on the Collie River) and then pose the associated question (e.g. *Who has a stake in foreshore management of the Collie River?*)

Individuals work with post-it notes – scribing the name of person/organisation and if appropriate their role.

Prepare the butcher's paper by drawing a target with three or four circles. In the centre write the focus 'Collie River Foreshore Management'. As one moves away from the centre, the importance of the stakeholders diminishes. Individuals then begin to place their stakeholder post-it notes in the most appropriate circle – discussing with fellow members their reasons – relocate stakeholders as analysis continues and relationships of stakeholders are refined.

You can also begin to show relationships between stakeholders by adding to your map with marker pen.

Repeat the process for what is optimal and then focus on how to get there.

Move on to discuss how to influence these stakeholders – you may be able to add influential associations/relationships with group members.

Materials…

Post-it notes or card with blu-tac are really useful as they can be moved around as you refine your map.

Adding value…

Keep the map visible – use it whenever you reconsider or review strategy.

Update the map as new information comes to hand.

12.16 SWOT

The SWOT process explores the four basic questions of **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of a situation or proposed decision and/or direction.

When...

Is really useful to bring clarity to any situation – particularly when you need to take a step back and evaluate clearly before making future decisions. Often used within strategic planning process. Can provide an effective reality-check at any time.

Why...

SWOT's simplicity endears it to many – it is very transparent and concrete, i.e. you know what you are getting. The sound image of SWOT also gives a confident onomatopoeic resonance of "getting it done", "getting on top of it".

This focussed technique separates overlying influences, enabling participants to give full attention to specific elements (similar to De Bono's Six Thinking Hats, Refer 12.13).

How...

Historically SWOT had the dichotomy of focussing on:

- **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses of the ***internal*** environment and
- **T**hreats and **O**pportunities of the ***external*** environment.

Today, this rigour has changed somewhat with SWOT now being used to explore an issue, event, process or even personal reflection, and not necessarily across these two environments.

Draw up a sheet of paper in grid pattern – then begin noting the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the focus. Can also be done as brainstorming or card clustering exercise.

Focus: Issue/topic/program/situation		
External	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	Threats	Opportunities

The initial value of the process is in the clarity of all the elements exposed and provided by the participants. However, to gain maximum value you need to refine the work – determine the key elements and then the underlying causes (e.g. use other tools such as Force Field Analysis [Refer 12.10] or Acts of God [Refer 12.5] to further review Threats).

Adding value…

Be creative and challenging about how you explore the four SWOT aspects (e.g. use small group work, individual time, interviews – including outside the organisation/group), Six Thinking Hats on one question and/or brainstorming on another (such as Opportunities when you wish to illicit more lateral possibilities).

12.17 Voting and ranking

A simple and clear process when decisions are needed – particularly when there is a lot of data to work with.

When…

Voting and/or ranking is particularly effective when there is too much information/data and a quick stocktake/refocus process is required and at times when the group needs to make a decision – and a simple one is adequate.

Why…

A democratic system of selection is used – where each participant has an equal voting capacity. Can also work effectively to reduce ongoing discussion and/or argument about which issues are the most important – it is time efficient, fair and enables the group to then focus on the key issues.

How…

There are numerous ways to vote and rank – some techniques combine active movement by participants – which has the added benefit of changing energy levels.

Dots/ticks – provide each participant with 3-7 dots (depending on no. of issues, remember people need to make a choice). Ask participants to put a dot/tick next to the items they consider most important – e.g. the issues the group should work on first. It is ideal to restrict the use of only one dot per person per item. Tally up the dots in order to arrive at priorities.

Points – provide each participant with a number of points (e.g. 10-100) to allocate among the items to be sorted. Ground rule could be that no one can allocate more than 30-50% of his/her points to a single item. Tally up the points in order to arrive at priorities.

Secondary voting and ranking – if voting for some items is too even and/or there is still too many items for the group to focus on – you may need to do a second voting just on the main items.

Materials…

Dots.

Techniques for session endings…

12.18 Review and reflection

Provides important opportunity to reflect on a session/activity – to enable participants to share where they have come from and where they are now at – as well as what actions they will now take.

When...

At any stage when ‘taking stock’ is appropriate, and at the end of a session, program, event.

Why...

Reflecting often brings clarity to a situation – and in turn provides a clearer forward direction. It can also assist in reinforcing key elements of a session or agenda item.

How...

Section C

The ORID focussed discussion method is a powerful tool for review and reflection – as it also encourages commitment to action. [Refer 12.9 for an understanding of this process an how to use it].

Adding value...

ORID can also be used for a more active review process – particularly when energy may be at a low ebb at the end of a day or program. In this instance instead of verbal responses to the focussed objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional questions – you are also requiring active responses that have an element of fun attached. This adaptation requires more preparation so that momentum can be enhanced. You will need to have the day/session’s agenda on butcher’s paper and prepare an envelope for each participant that contains a range of sticky symbols and dots, cards and post-it notes.

Two easy reminders for reflection are WWW and WCBI.

- **What worked well?**
- **What can be improved?**

Tammie Reid, CALM

Firstly, the ***objective*** information is simply provided by the agenda that was followed. Get participants to stand around the displayed agenda (on butcher’s paper) as you quickly read through it, thus reminding everyone of what was done. Then explain that for the next part they will be responding to a series of focus questions using the aids in their envelopes.

The next two elements require placing the relevant sticky label against their chosen item.

- ***reflective*** – Place the ‘star’ against the session that was the most exciting for you. Place the ‘frowning face’ against the session that was most frustrating for you.
- ***interpretive*** – Place the specific symbols or coloured dots against sessions with particular relevance (e.g. where you had your greatest personal learning, your greatest organisational learning, the session that needed more time allocated to it, the session that will be the most useful in the next 3 months of your job). Allow everyone to complete their choice/response for each of your questions before moving on to another question.

Have some discussion around why they chose these sessions.

Then for the final focus question about what they will commit to do as a result of the program/event and their associated learning, ask participants to return to their seats and use the small card/post-it note for private contemplation in response to decisional questions such as:

- ***decisional*** –What you will do differently because of this program/day? What aspect of the course/session you will explain? – and to whom (colleague/friend/client)? (This can be important for reinforcement or learning).

Discussion can then conclude with an invitation for some participants to share their decisions.

Reviews can also be done in smaller groups or pairs – so that participants share more details of where their greatest learning was – and what they will now commit to doing differently.

12.19 Closing with purpose (CWP)

(extracts from Colliver, Pearson and Young, 1993)

Closing with Purpose is a critical aspect of any facilitation activity. It obviously occurs at the end of a session when the group needs to make a balanced assessment of its achievements and its process.

When...

At this point some will already be walking away from the group/session, putting distance between themselves and the group, getting ready for their next event. Others will want to hang on to the group or applaud it uncritically – it has become a haven in a hostile world. In the middle of these two extremes will be those who are preparing to finish, but who are thinking about what has happened.

Why...

Bringing the event/session to an effective close is critical. Summing up achievements, often hard-won and small, ensures that gains are not lost. Reviewing the process of getting to those results makes people more aware of what enhances or limits collaborative process, and ensures that gains in skill are carried on to future work. Looking ahead to next steps primes people to act on their responsibilities beyond the session.

Your role as facilitator is to maintain purposefulness in the group.

How...

You began with a specific purpose [Refer Opening with Purpose 12.1] and found ways to have people engage with that purpose. At the end of the session, it is time to look at what has been achieved, to acknowledge the effort involved in getting there, and to look ahead at next steps.

Sum up achievements – *"We set out to assess the advantages of different strategies. We now have a detailed statement of what each strategy is likely to produce, and we have decided which strategies we think will work best."*

Reflect on the process – *"What has been enjoyable in the process of working together? What has been difficult?" "What is one thing we need to pay more attention to the next time we work together?"*

Acknowledge the contributions of distinct groups – *"It has been valuable having finance people here to describe their perception of constraints and possibilities. And the views of client managers have helped us to orient to changes in the needs of our clients."*

Gain individual contribution – often a single word to describe the session can be a quick and revealing contribution to closing with purpose.

12.20 Evaluation

Evaluation is seen as another step beyond review and reflection [Refer 12.18] in that it is often more structured and there is greater commitment to considering the data, developing performance indicators and a more formal approach to refining/improving the situation. As evaluation could be a toolkit in itself, and there are many great guides available we chose to refer you to a selection. One tip though is – if using a questionnaire – trial it to ensure it will make sense to the respondent/s and really will provide the key information you require.

Section C

Other references…

The Australian Youth Foundation and Sharp (1996), Wadsworth (1997) and Woodhill and Robins (1998)

Section D - Quick tips for adding value

Preparation, understanding individual difference and dynamics of groups, trusting in the process and becoming comfortable and confident in your ability to facilitate are your first priorities. After that it is time to do some more refining and to extend your repertoire of methodologies and techniques. The following are some quick tips for adding value to your facilitation – start adding to these in your own 'tips book'.

13. Preparation and design

13.1 Things to keep in mind when designing the format…

Scripts/notes – are an effective way for you to maintain focus whilst enabling you to manage the group interactions (including prompts for when flip charts or aids are to be introduced). With time, as you become more confident and internalise particular processes, you may need them less.

Welcome cuppa and resource displays – are gentle ways to welcome participants to the session. They provide a small time buffer for arrival and an alternative activity for participants as they relax before the session proper begins – rather than possibly feel awkward or in the way. These simple details can reduce tension or anxiety before the session as they present normal, non-challenging activities.

Timing – starting on time honours those who did make it on time. However, if required you also have the opportunity of asking the group for permission to delay the start so that other participants have a little more time to arrive. This can be extended to other aspects of the day. Although you have allocated times you may determine that a particular topic is of significant importance and interest to extend the time allocated to it.

Agenda/program – provide participants with summary details only, ensuring they do not focus on time slots. Include key times like beginning and end of breaks and major session titles. This enables you to be flexible and respond to the session's development without making participants anxious, as they become aware that the initial timetable is not being rigidly adhered to – or focus too much on what is next.

Opening with purpose – is critical to the success of any facilitated session as it informs the participants of the reason they need to be involved and gives them a framework for how their involvement will be invited. [Refer Section C – 12.1]

Closing with purpose – is also critical to success, providing an important re-focus at the conclusion of a session. It re-affirms what has been achieved and what action decisions have been made. It also clearly highlights which expectations have been met and which ones remain unresolved. [Refer Section C – 12.19]

Evaluating – the session is important for gauging the value of the session for participants, and also helps to guide future sessions.

13.2 Things to keep in mind when designing the experience…

Choosing and visiting the venue

Usually any event held 'on-site' involves fewer costs – however the potential for interruption of the discussion and focus may mitigate this. Determine the importance of having an event off-site. Advantages include:

- physically extracting people from their normal routine tends to highlight the importance of this different thinking space
- participants aren't disturbed by interruptions not related to the focus
- participants aren't tempted to forgo their lunch break and slink back to the office to get a few important things done – breaking the flow and focus of the day.

[TIP: Look at creative ways of remaining on-site such as altering the venue and complacency through decoration, organising lunch in nearby park, arranging with other staff to manage without their colleagues and to not use the particular foyer near the chosen room – so that you can have less of 'the usual'.]

Visiting the venue beforehand is very important – it enables you to visualise how the space can be used, to discuss first-hand your requirements (room layout, refreshments) and to foresee limitations you will need to manage (e.g. quality of and distance to break-out rooms, outdoor facilities, room shapes).

13.3 Facilities that venue could provide

Venues provide a range of aids and services including:

- whyteboards (electronic ones are great for recording info)
- flip chart holders
- pin-up boards
- TV and video players
- slide projector
- screens
- powerpoint projector
- CD or cassette player
- refreshments (welcome cuppa, tea/coffee, meals)
- tables and chairs – ask them to be set up in particular design (refer below for some ideas).

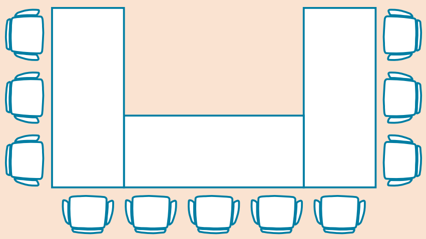
13.4 Room layout

Be alert for organisers setting-up the meeting space – facilitators need to set the space and environment up to further the purpose of the group.

Deborah Pearson
Deborah Pearson Consulting

Seating and/or table configurations are one of the most powerful influences on group 'mood' and interaction. Comfort, eye contact and clear view of the facilitator/leader/presenter as well as any presentation materials are critical. In many situations it is important also for all participants to have eye contact with one another. Obviously different arrangements are more appropriate for different activities. You may also need to have a flexible layout where participants can move easily from listening to a central person – to forming small discussion groups.

It is important to get to the venue earlier – even if the venue staff have set up the room, often you can make some small changes to improve the setting if required.

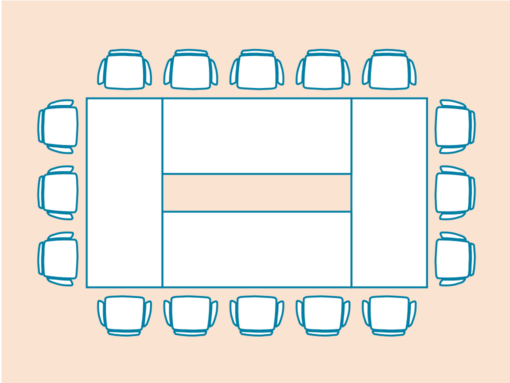


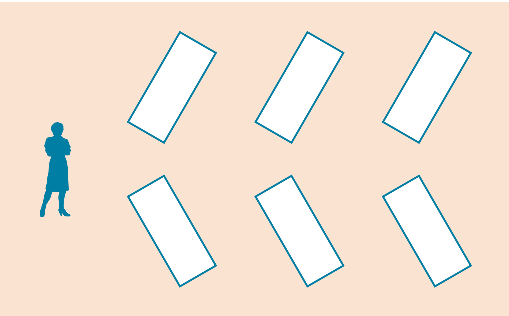
U-shape – Great for training or presentation – enables all participants to see one another as well as have unobstructed view of trainer/etc. Also, less confronting. Allows facilitator good eye contact and physical proximity to each participant – as you can move into the well of the U-shape.

Circle (no tables) – Great for group discussion as provides closeness, eye contact and focus – though can be confronting, particularly if participants don't know each other.

Circular tables – Great for small group work – as each person has equal positioning. If you have small tables in a larger setting and part of the format requires focussing on activities at the front – just reduce the number of seats and leave a space at the portion closest to the front. When the groups need to do individual work – get them to spread more evenly around the table.

Large table – Often used for meetings – implies formality. Ensure all participants and chair/facilitator have good eye contact. If large table is made up of individual tables – arranging them in a wider square or rectangle (with hollow centre) provides better visibility for all participants. [Note: Many people get heavily into the power of positions at a table].

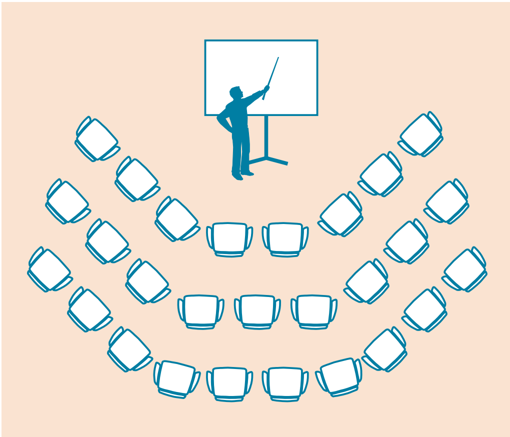




Small tables – herring bone – If part of the time the participants need to have their attention to the front of the room – just leave the top space at each table open. Placing tables in a herring bone pattern provides the best visibility for participants.

Rows – chairs and/or tables – Often the best for presentations – but make sure the chairs are staggered – so people are looking between heads. Slightly curve at the edges, to provide a stronger focus on the presenter and better visibility for the people on the sides.

[TIP: If people need to take notes and the group is not too large, a U-shape with tables can also be a very effective arrangement.]



Variety and refocus on important work

If having a long program over a number of days – rearrange the seating throughout the program to create a change in energy – also to encourage participants to mix.

Between sessions do a quick tidy-up of participants spaces (removing rubbish, straightening books, pens and chairs – taking care not to invade participant's privacy as you do a quick tidy-up) – this reinforces the image that there is valuable work going on. It can also refresh the group.

Getting participants to shift spots during a session – is a good way to change energy levels and allow people to interact and work with others.

Remember that participants shifting chairs or making a quick re-arrangement – can get the job done whilst functioning as an energy change.

14. The session

14.1 Being available before the session

Really important to be available for participants, at a minimum 15 minutes before the session. This enables you to welcome participants as they arrive, introduce yourself and be able to respond to any of their personal concerns before the session begins. It also gives you time to relax before the session proper and should instil confidence in the participants that you are prepared.

Section D

Names are very powerful in the management of the group. Holding the knowledge of the participant's name allows you to direct them to answer questions, do tasks or seek further comment from them.

Hugh Collin
Dept for Community Development

14.2 Nametags

Being informed of whom you are working with is a simple courtesy that should be extended to all participants. Often although some have met before – they just can't connect the face with a place or name – thus nametags are a relief, enabling them to relax and participate more fully.

Use simple nametags, even hand written sticky labels as a minimum. Remember to use large print so they can be read from a distance. First names may be sufficient and refrain from using all upper case letters (refer upper and lower case, below).

Begin establishing group cohesion for a new group by getting the participants to introduce their neighbour. I give them interview questions like: Who you are? Where you are from? What's something interesting about you? What do you expect from the facilitation?

Hugh Collin
Dept for Community Development

14.3 Introductions

As a minimum quickly go around and get participants to state their name and their affiliation (organisation/group/team). If it is a large group – get them to introduce themselves to their neighbour. More elaborate introductions can be done as part of opening with purpose and/or icebreaker.

[TIP: If the start has been delayed for reasons such as technical difficulties with audio-visual equipment, then use this time to have introductions – get things started.]

During a question and answer session for a large group – it is also appropriate to ask the questioner to state their name and affiliation (if relevant). This is a courtesy to the presenter/panel as well as the other participants and enables all to make other mental connections that may be useful and/or informative as they listen to both the question and the response.

14.4 Be up-front about expectations

At the beginning of sessions it is very healthy to ask what the individual expectations of the event are. Recording and displaying them in a public way is important as it demonstrates you value participant honesty and gives a clear view of the mix of expectations held by the group. This also provides the opportunity for you to quickly run through the list and highlight which expectations you believe the session and group will and/or will not meet [Refer Section C – 12.2].

14.5 Managing side issues

A simple technique for managing side issues is to record them either on a sheet of butcher's paper, post-it notes or simply on a sheet of paper. Openly acknowledge when an issue or comment is outside the agenda or focus and record it – sometimes referred to as 'parking'.

At the end of the session go back to the record and get the group to determine if there are any issues they now wish to discuss (time permitting) …or if there are any issues or creative ideas that they wish to have on their next agenda. This ensures neither the original focus of the day is side-lined nor good ideas, issues or concerns ignored. It can also be an important demonstration that individual comments are heard.

At times you may also need to assist the group to determine if a 'side issue' is of such importance and relevance that the agenda needs to be halted – whilst full attention is given to examining the new issue.

14.6 Silent thinking

Because we all have different styles for how we learn and think, it can be important to give individuals personal thinking time. Some people may need to consider the question and scrutinise the data in more detail. The quieter, more reticent participants will be able to prepare their considered response/s without having to compete to present them as well. It can also separate the thinking and deciding activity from the 'being heard activity'.

Silence or gaps in discussion and activities are okay and I don't have to fill them! (But it's good to observe who feels they have to, who looks uncomfortable and who comes up with a good suggestion). When asking people to do things that require thought, plan for some 'thinking space' (e.g. 5 mins to write down your ideas, 3 minutes to think of the 3 most important points from the session, 5 mins walk-and-think time). Also, insist on silence for thinking before sharing, some participants will need it more than others, but all will benefit.

Kathleen Broderick, DEWCP

14.7 Pairs and small groups

Working in pairs and/or small groups enables quieter and/or less confident individuals to share their thinking in a less threatening environment. It can also provide variety and a change in energy level.

It seems so easy to judge the needs of a group when you're in it as a member. When I take on the role of facilitator, I seem to lose my touch and confidence of reading the group body language. I'm learning that the solution to this is very straight forward – just ask the group to clarify whatever it is you're not too sure about.

***"Have we spent enough time on this?" "Do we need to take a break?" "Is it time for some concrete example?" "Is this process working?"* Ask and they'll tell you.**

Tammie Reid, CALM

14.8 Taking the pulse

Remember to see how the group is feeling and determine whether a break or change in activity is required to invigorate flagging spirits or perhaps overloaded brains. Include the participants in both the options and the decision.

14.9 Summarising and clarifying

Often there is lots of information generated by a group and it can be important to take stock of the data. *"Lets see what we have thus far…"* Read out all the points if they are recorded – and refocus the group. This helps people who may have lost track and it can re-invigorate a group if they can again see a clear focus.

14.10 Attention span, breaks and refreshments

The average attention span of adults is believed to be 15-20 minutes and neither participants nor yourself will be in the best form if you don't have frequent and adequate breaks. A break to revive or re-capture the attention can be as simple and subtle as a slight change in pace, asking the group a question, introducing a visual aid – so include some 'type of break' at least every 20 minutes. The next level of 'break' such as having a stretch, closing eyes, gently rolling the neck are effective every 40-50 minutes, whilst definite breaks where participants are able to 'break from the work' should be at a maximum, every two hours.

Add value to your activity by planning elements of fun and creativity into the day. Knowing your audience helps you choose the level and sort of fun or creativity they will be comfortable with.

Jenny Crisp
Dept of Agriculture

Some facilitators advise against long days with evening working sessions as well – whilst others feel this pressure can be important for particular programs. Be aware of when such extended sessions are no longer beneficial – they can even flip to being detrimental.

Always have water available – ensuring jugs on tables are replenished. Light foods are better, buffets are quicker and allow the remainder of the main breaks to be used for a walk/stretch away from the work space. Be clear about what time work begins again by informing the group as they move into their break.

14.11 Alcohol

When wishing to gain the best contributions from group members, alcohol can have a detrimental effect. Many workshops and training sessions are compromised by the reduced alertness of colleagues the day after an evening with alcohol – in essence it can affect both the purpose of the session and the learning experience of the group. On the other hand, drinks and nibbles at the end of the day can be a great way for participants to relax, rejuvenate and network.

Our social norms often tell us we are 'stick in the muds' if we don't allow alcohol – however the implications of both options need to be highlighted. Some ways to manage this include:

- openly discuss alcohol and responsibility (perhaps do a quick brainstorm of the pros and cons, including past experiences)
- invite participants to focus on the purpose of the event and as such to exclude or minimise their alcohol consumption
- have a private bar where the organisers provide a limited amount of alcohol
- hold the event away from access to alcohol and again either limit it (i.e. organisers provide) or exclude it.

Ultimately the participants need to be aware why the organisers and/or group have chosen or requested that we all minimise our alcohol consumption. Sometimes this needs to be done prior to the event so that individuals don't bring their own supplies…or don't give the next group 'prior warning' to secretly stock-up.

14.12 Outdoor exercises

Often specialists may be needed and contracted to facilitate this part of the program. Ensure the appropriate safety instructions and program materials are provided –and add value by always including a de-briefing session for review and reflection.

Remember also to provide sunscreen and water etc if working outdoors.

15. Aids/facilities

15.1 Visual aids

Research demonstrates that visual aids and energy changes greatly assist participation and learning. It is believed that people gain 75% of what they know visually, 13% through hearing and 12% through smell, taste and touch (Pike 1994). However, to be effective visual aids must be developed with thought.

Visual aids work by:
- attracting and maintaining attention
- reinforcing main ideas
- illustrating and supporting the spoken word
- minimising misunderstanding
- increasing retention
- adding a touch of realism
- saving time and possibly money
- aiding in organising your own thoughts
- ensuring key points are covered
- acting as a prompt and thus building confidence in yourself.

Simple rules of thumb are to use colour to separate ideas – enabling participants to more easily distinguish between them, to use no more than three font types and to only have 3-4 summary points on an overhead.

[TIP: When using overhead transparencies and wishing to reveal the information a little at a time – place your light-blocking sheet of paper under the transparency (not over it as many of us do). This way, as intended, although participants can't view the whole transparency – you can see what is coming up and thus be more in control].

15.2 Upper and lower case

Apparently, when we see text our mind registers an image of the words. Often although each letter is not identified our mind can correlate a particular grouping of letter forms (graphophonics) to determine the word in an instant. As such it is much easier to read text in a mix of upper and lower case THAN IT IS TO READ TEXT IN ALL CAPITALS DUE TO THE EVENNESS OF THE UPPER CASE in contrast to the variety in lower case – i.e. we get no 'form clues' from UPPER CASE. (Did you have to slow down a bit to register the PARTS IN UPPER CASE?)

15.3 Physical aids

In addition to the selection of the appropriate facilitation processes[4] for the task, reflecting adult learning and participation principles and group processes – your facilitator toolbox then needs to have the materials that will assist you and the participants in gaining

[4] For facilitation techniques refer Section C, and for facilitation methodologies refer Appendix I.

contribution, discussion, analysis and commitment to action – by both the individuals and the group.

If you are going to be developing your facilitation skills and will be responsible for a series of activities – it may be useful to develop a dedicated tool box. Fishing boxes, sewing boxes and plastic boxes with lids are three options many practitioners find useful for managing the various materials you may need. Some of these assist with:

> **Digital cameras are great for capturing visual data from workshops, e.g. butchers paper, whyteboard notes, pictures or diagrams. They can transfer directly into post-activity notes too.**
>
> *Jenny Crisp*
> *Dept of Agriculture*

> **Always carry a sewing kit in your toolbox...it helps when you rip seams of blouses and trousers – which then flap open! Yes both have happened to me!**
>
> *Christine Hogan*

Recording individual thinking

- cards (e.g. index)
- ½ A4 sheets (e.g. recycled)
- post-it notes
- permanent marker pens/textas
- pens/pencils
- coloured crayons.

Extra bits for decision making

- dots, stars
- sticky labels.

Recording and displaying group contribution

- butcher's paper
- static magic or extra large post-it notes
- overhead transparency film and pens
- blu-tac, sticky tape, masking tape
- drawing pins
- velcro dots
- masking tape
- whyteboard markers – fat ones
- permanent marker pens/textas.

Managing comfort, mood, time and energy

- nametags
- decorations (e.g. flowers, art, sculpture)
- CD or cassette player (venue may provide)
- music CDs or cassettes
- water – available at all times
- prizes (e.g. for quick quizes)
- refreshment breaks (light meals)
- clock.

16. Making your facilitation 'even better'

There are numerous ways we can improve our facilitation that will suit our particular inclination for learning and development. This is also a chance to stretch yourself and try some processes you wouldn't normally use.

16.1 Self assessment

All of us can benefit from reviewing our performance. A simple and effective way is to take time (at best immediately) after each facilitation and ask yourself:

1. What did I do well?
2. What could I have done differently?

For variety and clarity, Hogan (1998) suggests we try the SWOT method [Refer Section C – 12.16] and Crisp and Keating provide a detailed checklist that includes many of the elements of effective facilitation [Refer Appendix IV – 3].

Our role is to guide the group, allowing them to find their way. Be wary that our biases and constraints aren't limiting the possible group outcomes.

Kevin Vear, CALM

[TIP: Use the quiet time at the end of a session when participants are doing their personal evaluation of the session/program, or considering what they will now do differently – to do your own quick self assessment.]

16.2 Peer assessment

Another option is to get a colleague to come to all or part of your session and give you feedback – again, keep it simple along the same line of questioning as above. Even noticing a small (yet distracting) habit in your body language could be an important element for improving your facilitation.

16.3 Literature

Take time to review new literature – scan your local library and the internet, visit the bookshops attached to universities as well as those that cater for more technical info (e.g. Boffins). See if your work library can purchase the book, organise an inter-library loan or perhaps arrange to jointly purchase and share an expensive resource with a colleague and/or friend.

Some manuals can also be accessed and down-loaded from the internet – refer to the reference section of this guidebook for a selection of websites [Section E].

16.4 Learning from others

Choose to go to other facilitated sessions with the secondary objective 'to observe' how they do things – you can then make judgements on how you might tweak your own facilitation or get a better understanding of how participants can respond to a particular exercise and/or format. Ask more experienced facilitators if you can assist them or observe their session – remember to ensure that the participants and client are comfortable with such a role.

16.5 Training and development

One of the real pluses of further developing your facilitation skills and experience is that apart from the benefits of enhancing the quality and experience for the participants – it benefits both your own personal and professional development. A number of units are delivered as part of degree and graduate diploma courses e.g. Curtin University's Human Resources. The Departments of Training and Agriculture both manage websites that list much of the training and development available in WA. The Australian Institute of Management (AIM) and the University of WA (UWA) Extension Program also offer facilitation components, as do other private trainers. Perhaps you can investigate modules to be tailored for your organisation?

Contact your Communications/Training/Human Resources Sections to discuss both internal and external training and development opportunities.

16.6 Networking and mentoring systems

Interacting with other facilitators is another stimulating and rewarding way to further expand and develop your facilitation.

Networks – National – The Australasian Facilitators' Network (AFN) is a loose knit association of facilitators. Currently there is no membership fee, instead the organisation operates through volunteer peer support. Tangible benefits are the AFN annual conference and the AFN e-mail network (managed by Bob Dick in Queensland) where members post issues, latest info or pose questions. To subscribe, forward an e-mail to <listproc@scu.edu.au>. For the Topic/Subject header insert *subscribe AFN-L your firstname your lastname* and Bob will respond with a welcome, network details and ground rules.

Section D

Networks – International – The International Association of Facilitators (IAF) is more structured, has a website and holds an international conference each year. IAF also manages an e-mail discussion network. Recent discussions have included a draft statement of values, a code of ethics and 'Who is the client' developed both at international meetings and through internet discussion groups <www.iaf-world.org>.

Networks – Local – Go very local and casual – get a group of facilitators to meet over coffee e.g. once every 2 months – some discussion topics could be:
- one technique that worked really well
- new references and resources
- my facilitation experience from hell – ask others what you could do differently next time.

Remember these discussions need to be treated both with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Touchstone (contributed by Tammie Reid, CALM) – A touchstone was a piece of black jasper that was used in the testing of alloys, based on the colour they left when rubbed on the jasper. Our living 'touchstones' provide insight and judgement based upon their experiences, who they are, and what they've done can leave a mark of learning for other issues and people that follow.

'Touchstones' are more like a coach than a consultant, they may not provide the answers for your situation – however, they have insights and judgements that can add to your options.

Tammie Reid, CALM

At any one time, there is a huge range of experience and insight amongst our colleagues:
- There are many instances and projects that are similar in terms of conservation and community involvement outcomes.
- Various people have had in-depth experiences of certain techniques and groups. They have built up a wealth of understanding and judgement and can be an invaluable sounding board for your plans.

Seeking these people out and discussing your situation, particularly early on in your project can be very useful. The best way to find out who these people might be and where they are working, is to contact agency staff working in community involvement/public participation sections. They will be able to put you in touch with others.

The idea is to talk things through, listen to others and factor in past learnings and experiences.

Buddy – Pair up with a colleague (not necessarily from the same organisation) and plan some learning together. It could mean contacting each other before a session to check out the program you have developed – *Do they think it will achieve …..?* If they have used some of the techniques *What tips can you give?*

Mentor – Similar to 'buddy' but choosing someone who is more experienced than you – and whom you admire. Organise a regular session when you are able to meet with your mentor to gain guidance. Select one issue you are grappling with and also prepare some questions for the session. [TIP: Bear in mind this is not all one-way, as your older, more experienced mentor often benefits from your relationship by gaining a better understanding of new thinking or young recruits or just the thinking perhaps lower down an organisational structure. A caution also with mentors is sometimes they really don't want their 'mentoree' to out-grow them.]

Section E - References and resources

There are many resources focussing on facilitation (***f***) and/or group development (***g***). Added to this the internet (***www***) has opened up new possibilities for accessing and exchanging information. The following reference list is purposefully limited – a more detailed list compiled by Colma is available from the Community Involvement Section, DEWCP or Tammie Reid (Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, CALM).

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Section E

Appendix I - Facilitation methodologies

Facilitation processes are considered as the combination of:

- the broad approach or ***methodology*** you would use, such as a meeting or strategic planning or catchment mapping, and
- the specific ***technique/s*** you would use for completing the micro-level tasks – such as brainstorming or mind mapping or SWOT analysis [Refer Section C].

The following is a small selection of methodologies used in facilitation. In addition, we encourage you to use the reference list [Section E] as a guide to begin exploring and using a wider variety of facilitation processes.

1. Facilitation methodologies

These methodologies are a coherent and logical approach or process for undertaking particular types of tasks or solving particular problems.

1.1 Action learning

(extracts from The Training and Development Group 1993 and Dick 1997)

Bob Dick (2002) provides a useful distinction between action learning and research:

- in ***action learning*** – each participant draws different learning from different experience
- in ***action research*** – a team of people draws collective learning from a collective experience.

When originally developed and described by its founder Reg Revans, 'action learning' was mostly used across different organisations (i.e. managers from different coalfields in the 1940s). The current practice more often now is to set up an action learning program within one organisation and it is not unusual for a team to consist of people with a common task or problem.

When...

Action Learning has a particular importance when groups or teams are merging as it provides a supported process for sharing of information and knowledge as well as learning. However, it is effective at any time when learning and enquiry can be nurtured.

Why...

Action Learning deals with practical problems in the real world. It is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done (McGill and Beatty 1995).

Action Learning is embodied in the equation L = P + Q, where:

- L = learning
- P = store of programmed knowledge, or traditional instruction (e.g. from books, conferences)
- Q = questioning insight…engaging experience and creativity.

Action Learning acknowledges the need for ***review***, ***reflection***, ***rethinking*** and ***reinterpretation*** of 'taken-for-granted knowledge and experience'. It isn't a supply of fresh P…but a way of using existing P more effectively…it's an opportunity to re-interpret past experiences in the light of the future.

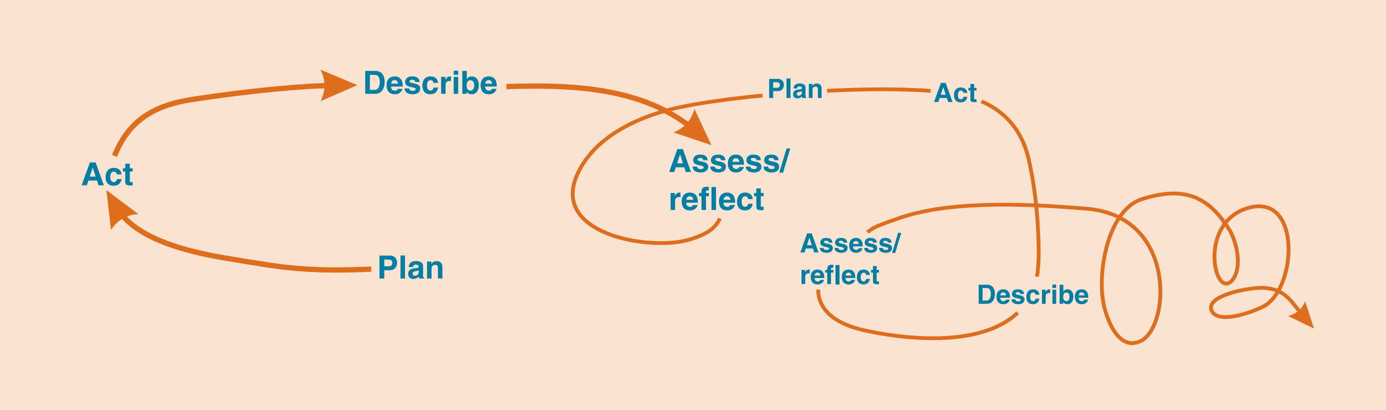
Action Learning emphasises the production of outputs, rather than the presentation of inputs with the intent that knowledge and skills are related to projects and tasks that have a purpose, rather than being ends in themselves.

- it develops higher order learning skills…judgement and learning 'how to learn'
- it respects adult learners' independence, experience, learning needs and motivations
- it is flexible…creating conditions in which people can learn to achieve results
- it works within the reasoning that 'judgments drive decisions and action'…more than procedures and precedents
- the intention is that you learn at a rate…the rate of change in the environment
- learning is seen as a key commodity…which enables flexibility to adapt…we are constantly told that management views action learners as critical thinkers and initiators of action (think also of how your teams view you as leaders!).

How…

Action Learning Sets/Programs are characterised by two criteria:
- the field of action wherein the real problem exists, and
- the set in which participants criticise – advise – support – challenge their fellows.

Action Learning is embodied in the process diagram:



Describe what's going on

Reflect on what works and why...as well as what doesn't work and why

Plan what to do differently

then between sessions ***act*** on your decision

Next time you review those informed actions…and so the cycle goes on.

Remember behind every opinion is a unique agglomeration of experiences – listen hard to understand what experiences inform their opinions – it will help you to more openly consider other points of view.

Ross Colliver
The Training and Development Group

An action learning set[5] is serious (and rewarding) work, it:

- deals with a workplace problem/issue you all wish to improve/remove
- questions views and ideas
- challenges other peoples' strong ideas and assumptions ..and your own
- requires trust
- has its ups and downs and thus needs to be worked on
- is hard work.....can be frustrating and doesn't necessarily make for everyone having a happy glow
- can challenge a reluctance to self-disclose with peers...who may be career competitors
- can be threatening – particularly the reinterpretation and constructive criticism
- can be a powerful process of organisational reform …and so threatening to others in hierarchy.

Examples of strategic questions to help the learning set include:

- *What lies at the centre of your interest or difficulty?* (question will often answer itself…or at least lose its troubled heat)
- What have you now discovered – that you are pleased about?
- What helped the process of your reflection?
- What was the effect of talking in that way?
- Why did you approach the situation that way?
- What other options could you have explored?
- *What about this interpretation of events…?*
- Apart from the commitment to meet in…what ways will you find to keep the thinking going around your question/project before we meet again?

Adding value...

The facilitator role for an Action Learning Set includes:

- helping establish trust and confidence
- focussing, guiding and challenging
- managing process not content
- not assuming responsibility for the set
- encouraging reflection
- seeking out resources and learning opportunities
- liaising with management.

Stretch your boundaries – use a range of tools to assist your learning strategy (e.g. discussion, debate, live research, consultants, experiment and evaluation, field trips, publications, video, workshops, other learning resources).

Extract your valued learning and share with others – it could be viewed as 'best practice'.

1.2 Future search conference (extracts from Dore et al. 2000)

Future Search is a planning conference that aims to help large diverse groups discover values, purposes and projects they hold in common. It enables people to create a desired future together and to start working toward it. The first future search conference was held in 1959 facilitated by Fred Emery and Eric Twist. The methodology of today has been further refined by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff.

[5] Different organisations use other terms such as 'wash-ups' which may have some or all the elements of a true action learning set.

When…

Future Search is especially helpful in uncertain, fast-changing situations. It provides a process whereby people can bridge differences in power, status, culture, class, gender, ethnicity and hierarchy as they work as peers on tasks of mutual concern. The focus can be on a wide range of purposes (e.g. economic, technological, social) and participants need no training or expertise. Through the 'future search process', many communities and organisations discover capabilities they did not know they had and take actions they did not believe were possible.

Why…

A future search conference is designed to promote principles that enable people to work together without having to defend or sell a particular agenda, thus opening the door to creative new opportunities. These principles are:

- ***Think globally, act locally*** – putting the focal issue into global perspective, helping each person to see a bigger picture than the one they usually consider.
- ***Work common ground/desired futures*** – creating problems and conflicts as information rather than action items, while searching for common ground and desirable futures.
- ***Self-manage discussions/action plans*** – inviting people to manage their own small groups in discussing and acting on what they learn.

How…

A future search usually involves 60-70 people – large enough to include many perspectives and small enough that the full group can be in dialogue at each step of the process. The optimal length is about 2 days. When people stay engaged in a task for that long, they are more likely to make a notable shift in their trust of each other and in their capability for action. The task is always *"The future of............................ "*.

A future search conference specifically aims to facilitate:

- a common understanding of features of the history
- mapping of world trends affecting the whole group
- assessment by stakeholders of what they are doing now that they are proud of and that which they wish to correct, as an important step in the development of mutual understanding
- devising of future scenarios, and
- identifying common-ground themes and action planning.

Other references…

Future Search Network, Hogan (1994) and Weisbord et al. (1992)

1.3 Meetings – Interesting and effective

(including extracts from Bens 1999 and Bozek 1991)

Unfortunately because of some sloppy practises meetings have become much maligned. The following examines what is considered a more normal, somewhat formal meeting where particular responsibilities need to be met – however there is much latitude – and 'interesting' meetings can still be responsible meetings.

When…

Meetings range from the casual catch-up to the formal 'Roberts Rules' meeting. The meeting style can be influenced by the number of participants, the focus and the levels of responsibility. These together with the degree of contention about the issue and the 'style adopted by the group' will influence the level of structure.

Why…

Meetings work most effectively for a wide range of things including to inform, to share information, to make decisions, as part of the constitution and to delegate tasks. Meetings bring together people with a range of perspectives and through their differences we arrive at better decisions. Meetings offer a structure within which to operate.

How…

Different styles of meetings are appropriate for different purposes e.g. information giving, decision making, special meeting and/or planning. Meetings don't have to pompous with motions and seconders etc…you may work out a more effective, less formal and/or less confronting way to run meetings. However, formal meetings also have their place and to be effective they also need to be well structured.

A well structure meeting should have:

- ***attention to task*** – thus an agenda enabling the variety of required reports e.g. Treasurer, president and transparent decision making procedure (e.g. multi voting, consensus, majority voting)
- ***attention to group needs*** – thus proper process in informing of the meeting, enabling discussion and facilitating decisions
- ***attention to individual needs*** – thus proper process to ensure individuals can understand the meeting and are given the opportunity to contribute, understand decisions and also their time is valued.

Most formal agendas require attention to:

- Welcome
- Apologies
- Attendance
- Minutes from previous meeting
- Matters arising from previous meeting – including actions
- Reports – e.g. President/Convenor/Treasurer/Manger/Project leaders
- Correspondence
- General Business – on the agenda
- General Business – placed on the agenda at meeting
- Close – thanks and details for next meeting

Ways to make meetings more effective and worthwhile include:

Decisions – summarise the decision and/or action after each agenda item. Indicate time frames and responsibilities for each, thus providing reminders and reinforcement.

Use ***Action minutes*** – on a flip chart/whyteboard for all to see during the meeting. Circulate as quickly as possible, preferably the next day. The minutes can take a little longer to be completed and circulated.

Managing correspondence to group – all correspondence doesn't need to be read out at meetings, effective options include:

- highlight the key correspondence
- pass around in a folder or number of folders during the meeting
- provide quick summaries
- gate-keep them.

Clear priorities – put some priority on details being discussed (particularly as items of low priority can subsume the time and sap the energy of the early part of any meeting). Items can be prioritised into:

- for decision
- for discussion
- for information (these can even be in written summary format, or pinned up in shared area, and thus can be viewed outside of meeting time – just alert participants to their existence).

If you suspect you organise or attend too many meetings – "think purposes not meetings" and check if you can use other techniques to achieve this e.g. if you need to hear about concerns – try 10 minute one-to-ones instead of hours with the whole group.

Examine the roles of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer – as a whole group, often people in these roles are unaware of either their responsibilities or the variety of ways in which they can meet them.

Proactively manage correspondence – with periodic review. Let organisations know if you no longer need/want their information (also review what you send out as well!). Try applying De Bono's PMI tool [Refer Section C – 12.11].

Last words – as a closing solicit a last word or final brief comment from each participant. Consider asking for particular responses e.g. *Which decision best liked? Which decision process best liked? Which issue warrants more time? What actions will they take as result of meeting?* [TIP: a good time for closed questions – as the focus is now on summary and close. Refer Section B – 8].

Adding value...

Many meetings are informal or adhoc – called quickly and conducted without a written agenda. Although such meetings are impossible to plan in detail, many things can be done to ensure they are effective and run efficiently including:

- consider your purpose before you call a meeting – will an e-mail or some phone calls achieve your purpose just as well?
- tell participants what the meetings are about and what they should do to prepare – if you are a participant, ask!
- clarify the start and finish time
- clarify the purpose (if possible write-up on whyteboard etc)
- speak concisely and encourage others to do the same
- periodically summarise.

Quick strategies for one-to-one meeting

- request and plan regular ones e.g. with your boss or group leader
- schedule it short and keep it short
- make it "your meeting"

- follow prioritised agenda
- bring solutions, not just problems
- speak concisely
- listen hard
- summarise at end of meeting – with action minutes and timeline
- encourage your subordinates to schedule their meetings with you.

PACER meeting model

- ***Purpose*** – Why meet? Why now? Why you? Check for acceptance from participants.
- ***Agenda*** – How will the time be best used? Check for understanding and ask for additions, changes.
- ***Expectations*** – What can we expect from this meeting? Identify what will be accomplished as a result of this meeting.
- ***Conduct*** – How will we behave? What are the ground rules?
- ***Roles and responsibilities*** – Who will do what for this meeting? Some roles include facilitator, recorder, timekeeper.

1.4 LENS workshop (extracts from Spencer 1989)

The LENS workshop is one of the Technology of Participation (ToP) tools developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs

When...

To explore an issue or situation that requires and deserves considerable focus.

Why...

Appendix I

Like the ToP Focussed Discussion Method or ORID [Refer Section C – 12.9], the ToP Workshop Method or LENS follows the natural thought process of the human mind as it makes decisions. It provides structure, opportunity for participation and analysis as well as supports the group as they make decisions.

How...

Stage 1: Set the context – defining the intent and parameters of the workshop. The leader defines the focus of the workshop, the intended result or product, the reason and the process and timeframe (i.e. the *what, why and how*).

Stage 2: Brainstorm the data and ideas – A rapid way of listing ideas and gaining insights from all participants. The purpose is to elicit from the group as much *objective* data as possible allowing each member of the group to gain new insights about the issue by seeing it through the eyes of others.

- Provide clear, brief, time-bound, answerable questions.
- Provide examples.
- Repeat question.

To give people time to think, it is best to get them to write down their initial thoughts and then get them to select the single most important one on their list. Work around the group until all participants have been able to contribute without the more assertive and confident dominating. The facilitator writes each piece of information up on the board.

Don't allow any critique or discussion of the data, this stage is objective and the intent is to get the data up without any assessment or critique [Refer Section C – 12.6].

Stage 3: Organise the data into categories based on similarity of content – This is a very creative process because people are forming new relationships between data or issues that may have previously been unseen. This is a way to push the intuitions of the group and look for points of agreement.

- Manage this step by asking for ***pairs*** – two bits of information which are similar (e.g. *What two items would lead to similar outcomes…similar barriers?*). Don't be rushed into grouping lots of items.
- It is easier for next stages if you give each of these pairs a ***symbol***.
- Stay with pairs until 4-5 distinct pairs have emerged. Then ***cluster***, whilst maintaining distinctions.
- If there are a few ***'stragglers'*** or unmarked items that don't seem to fit with any of the categories/symbols, they should not be lumped together into a miscellaneous category. The leader needs to ask the group to look again to see if they are similar to any other items. If not they should be noted and will be dealt with after the next step.

Stage 4: Name the categories – In this step the group is making a decision. It is deciding the meaning of the information and the relationship between the bits of information. The group is arriving at a consensus about the significance this information has for the group.

To accomplish this step, the facilitator asks the group to look at all the items in the first category of data and give it a name (e.g. *What are these items talking about…? What is the underlying theme…?*)

- Start with the largest cluster. Read them out again. Don't go beyond the data.
- Names must be compelling and clarify the understanding of content/issues/themes.

Stage 5: Evaluate the work and its implications – Reflecting or confirming the resolve enables the group to reflect back on the work they have done. A quick ORID focussed discussion can be effective. A diagram can be created as an effective way to look at relationships, to register the outcome and to assist with ease of recall.

Adding value…

A popular variation on the procedure described above is the use of cards for collecting and displaying the data generated in the brainstorm stage. Benefits include:

- It speeds up the process of writing up each point of data as the participants have already done this.
- It makes it easier during the *ordering stage*, as the cards can be shifted around into pairs and clusters.
- It makes it easier for later write-ups of the workshop outcomes as you can just collect all the cards up with their *name/theme* on the top.

1.5 Participatory (rural) appraisal (PRA)

(extracts from Dore et al. 2000)

PRA grew out a range of methodologies, including agro-ecosystems analysis and Rapid Rural Appraisal in the 1970s and 80s, in which the emphasis was placed on finding ways to express the diversity of local knowledge through facilitation by outsiders. It evolved from two distinct traditions:

- planners seeking to overcome the limitations of externally-dominated blueprint planning, and
- empowerment-oriented activists seeking to make their social transformation ideals more pragmatic.

PRA is increasingly being used autonomously by communities but is now so diverse in application that it is hard to speak of a single methodology.

It is an approach to analyse local problems and formulate tentative solutions with the local stakeholders. It makes use of a wide range of visualisation methods for group-based analysis, to deal with spatial and temporal aspects of social and environmental problems. It mainly deals with community level scale of analysis, but is increasingly being used to help deal with higher level systemic problems.

When...

The term 'rural appraisal' is somewhat misleading as the combination of techniques are:

- equally applicable in urban settings
- not limited only to appraisal
- linked to planning processes, and
- being adapted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Why...

PRA provides a structure with many practical ideas to stimulate local participation in the creation and sharing of new insights. The emphasis on ensuring community feedback also broadens the group of people involved, often beyond the initial participants. It is increasingly linked to participatory planning processes (e.g. using adapted forms of Logical Framework Analysis). Although PRA was not intended to collect statistically significant information, it is also used in combination with other methodologies to fulfil more scientific information needs.

How...

There is no single way to 'do' PRA – although there are core principles and over 30 methods available to guide teamwork including, do sampling, structure discussions and visualise analysis. The combination and sequence of methods will emerge from the context. Optimal ignorance and triangulation of findings guide the fieldwork, in recognition of the need to know enough without knowing it all and to ensure that the qualitative insights are cross-checked by different sources using different methods.

The core principles are:

- ***Sustained learning process*** – Enhancing cumulative learning for action by participants is the focus, and has three outputs: identifying strategies for improvement, motivating people to undertake these strategies and enhancing their capacity for solving problems.
- ***Different perspectives in group-based analysis*** – PRA explicitly seeks insights from, and needs of, different individuals and groups that may be conflicting but will better show the complexity of local situations.

- ***Key role for facilitators*** – To include different perspectives often means challenging local traditions of communication, this requires sensitive facilitation (often someone from outside the area, but also increasingly a role taken on by someone with a local stake in the process).
- ***Systemic and methodological basis*** – Creating a structured process that explores problems within the wider context and not just focusing on a narrow slice of reality – from description to analysis and action.
- ***Context-specific*** – Unique social/physical conditions means building a process of discussion, communication and conflict resolution – which by necessity evolves out of the specifics of the local context.

Other references

Pretty et al. (1995) and The World Bank 1996.

1.6 Soft systems methodology (SSM)

(extracts from Checkland 1981 and Finegan 1994)

Systems thinking is a transdisciplinary field that has emerged in response to the limitations of a reductionist and narrowly technical approach to solving problems. SSM was developed during the 1980s as large organisations realised that top-down and highly mechanical approaches to organisational management were not working in a rapidly changing environment. SSM has been used to facilitate change processes in many large private and public sector organisations.

When...

SSM is a methodology highly suited to assisting organisations clarify their purpose and then to design the 'human activity systems' – the functions and processes – to achieve this purpose.

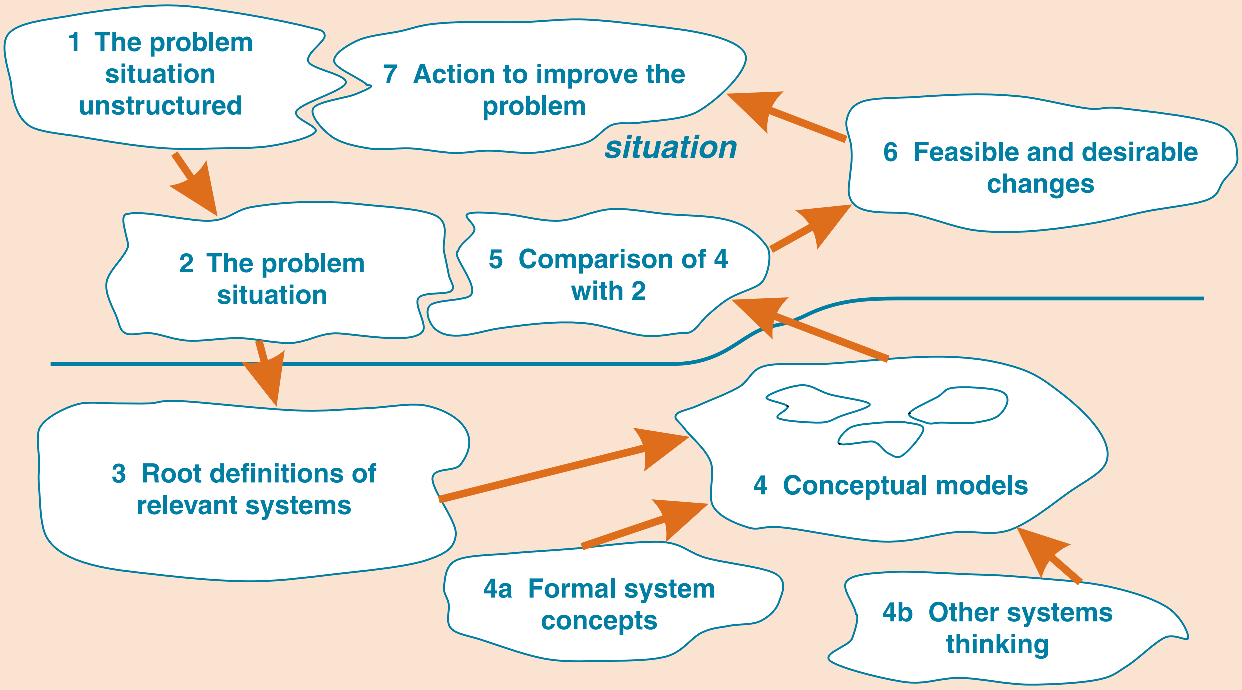
Why...

SSM is an approach to solving complex unstructured human problem situations based on holistic analysis and systems thinking. SSM is a participatory methodology that helps different stakeholders to understand each other's perspectives. It focuses on creating the human activity systems and human relationships needed for an organisation or group to achieve a common purpose. The SSM premise is that if people participate in the process of finding out about the problem situation and learning about ways to improve it, then they are more likely to understand the improvements being suggested, feel ownership of them and be committed to change.

How...

The methodology is based on a seven-stage process (see diagram) that moves from clarifying an unstructured or messy problem situation through designing ideal or conceptual human activity systems that would help improve the situation. These conceptual models are then compared with the problem situation in order to identify desirable and feasible change. The methodology integrates thinking about the logic of how to improve a situation with what is socially and politically feasible.

The seven stage process of soft systems methodology (SSM)



Adapted from Checkland (1981)

Appendix I

As illustrated in the diagram, SSM involves switching between the 'real world' and the 'conceptual thinking world'.

Stages 1 and 2: Find out – use rich pictures and other problem-structuring methods/ techniques to explore the problem situation.

Stage 3: Formulate root definitions of relevant systems – identify the clients, actors, transformations, worldview, owners and environment (CATWOE) and from this build definitions of the human activity systems needed to improve the problem situation.

Stage 4: Build conceptual models – based on the root definitions for each area defined, build a conceptual (systems) model of the required capabilities to achieve a given purpose or solve a particular problem.

Stage 5: Compare models and reality – compare the conceptual systems models of what is needed to achieve a particular purpose or solve a particular problem with what is actually happening in the 'real world'.

Stage 6: Define feasible and desirable change – from the comparison of the conceptual systems models with 'reality', identify and debate logically desirable and socially/ politically feasible change.

Stage 7: Take action – on the basis of Stage 6, develop an action plan for improvement of the problem situation.

1.7 Strategic planning (extracts from Derr et al. 1998)

Strategic planning is often made out to be more complex that it really is. In essence, it involves a group of stakeholders and the development of the framework of both what they wish to achieve in the long term and the broad directions they will take to get there

Why…

Experience and research have demonstrated that the most effective, well considered development or progress combines (if not all), a broad section of the organisation's personnel or stakeholders of an issue together with an overarching planning program. This needs to enable participants to not only determine what they wish to achieve together – but gain an understanding and acknowledgment of the underlying values from which they operate. It then plans how best to achieve the desired outcome with consideration for the current environment and the trends.

When…

The organisation or group needs or wants to re-focus on it's role, its desired achievements – when any aspect of the internal or external environments is markedly changing.

How…

Strategic planning is not a process that you engage in for an afternoon session. It requires significant time and commitment to ensure good decisions as well as ongoing commitment to implementing and reviewing the plan. It requires a strong emphasis on 'process', because gaining participation, ownership and support are crucial to achieving and enjoying any future or successful implementation. To ensure that the organisation/group is developing a legitimate future, it is imperative that it involves all stakeholders and the wider community, not simply a few key people acting in isolation. It also must be honest in its dissection of the working environment.

The initial planning session can include a series of focus sessions as well as homework tasks for either individuals or sub groups.

A simple model refined by Derr et al. (1998) presents a practical, commonsense approach to determining and documenting:

- ***Where are we now?*** This involves undertaking an analysis of the present situation and stakeholders, plus the relevant history. It may include using tools such as SWOT, Forcefield, trends analysis, stakeholder mapping [Refer Section C].
- ***Where do we want to be?*** This involves developing a vision of a preferred future; articulating the purpose; agreeing on core principles; developing goals (desired end-results or eventual impact of action) and objectives (the specific shorter-term results necessary to achieve goals). (E.g. Scenario Planing, Future Search)
- ***How do we get there?*** Developing action plans that articulate what needs to be done, by whom, by when, and with what resources. (Action Planning)
- ***How do we know what has been achieved?*** Agreeing on suitable performance indicators — ways of measuring and evaluating the extent to which objectives

'Hogan (1998) reminds us of the '5Wh' mnemonic for action planning:

What are you going to do?
Why are you doing it?
Who is going to do it?
When are you going to do it?
Where will you do it?
How long will it take?

have been achieved. Also, agreeing on a monitoring system to support evaluation and management. [Refer SMART indicators, Section C – 12.14].

- ***How do we adapt?*** Actively considering and deciding how the initiative/program/organisation can cyclically improve, reassess and adapt.

Adding value…

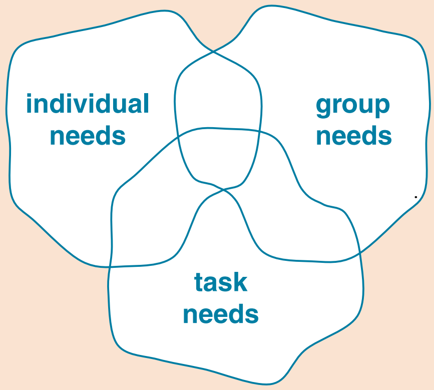
One way of enabling ongoing contribution is to have different individuals or sub-groups share the responsibility for guiding and reviewing the implementation of the strategic plan.

Other references…

Spencer 1989.

Appendix II - Working with groups

1. How do groups work together effectively?



Anecdotal experience and refereed research has given us a much more informed understanding of how groups work, the stages of group development and effective group process. Key references include Dick 1991, Schwarz 1994 and Tyson 1998. [Refer also Section A – 3]

Groups achieve by meeting task needs, group maintenance needs and individual needs.

1.1 Group effectiveness

As we all know from experience and observation – there are groups and there are groups. Trevor Tyson (1998) synthesises a range of models for effective groups that balance and meet these core individual, group and task needs through:

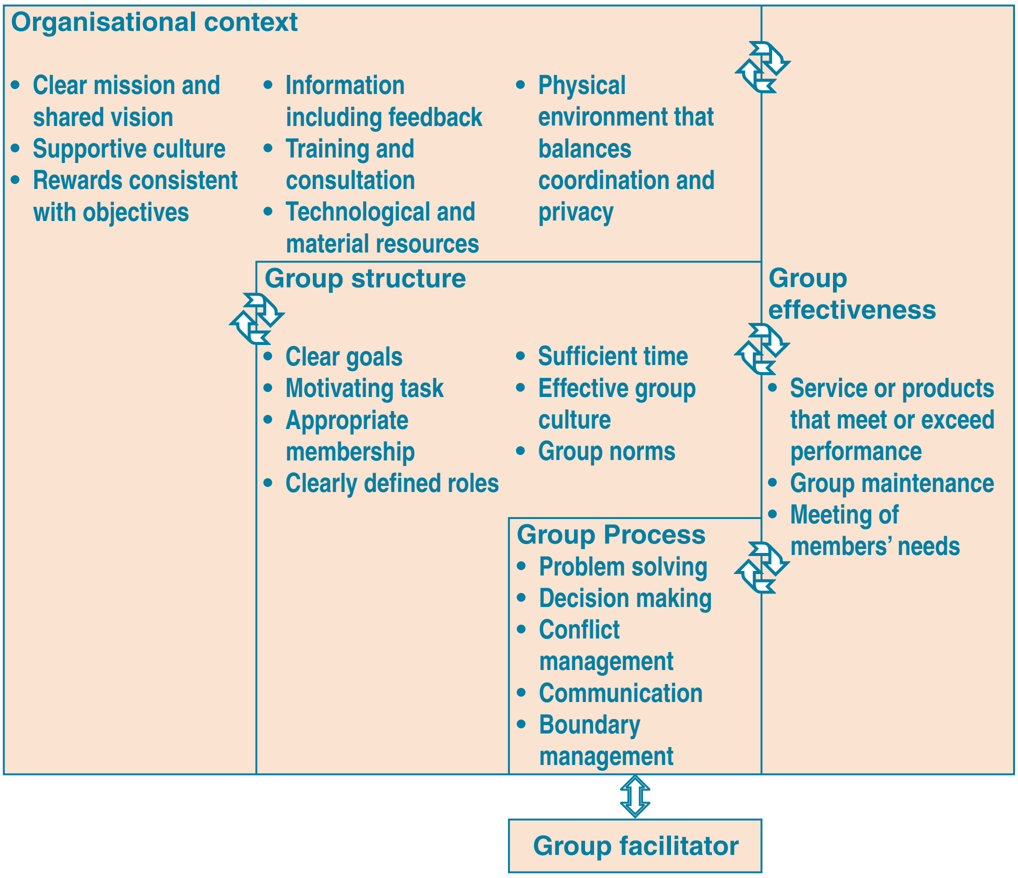
- ***Working atmosphere*** – all activities take place in a supportive atmosphere where suggestions, ideas, information and criticisms are offered and received in a helpful and respectful way.
- ***Roles*** – individuals are permitted to behave in accordance with their personal needs as well as with regard to a range of group needs.
- ***Goals*** – are cooperatively rather than competitively structured (if externally imposed, the goals are only accepted if clarified and formulated in such a way that members can commit themselves to achieving them).
- ***Commitment*** – to the task and to each other.
- ***Communication*** – high motivation to give and receive information which is relevant, uncensored and of value to the group's purpose. Interpersonal communication is two-way, open and accurate.
- ***Leadership*** – is competent, and is aware of and sensitive to the needs of individuals and to the characteristics of group behaviour. Power struggles are resolved on the basis of how best to achieve the task rather than who should control the group.
- ***Conflict management*** – comfortable with disagreement and committed to seeking resolutions through open negotiation.
- ***Decision making*** – a repertoire of decision making procedures from which the one most appropriate to the situation can be selected.
- ***Evaluation*** – self-conscious about its operations and frequently examines its procedures and processes.

Roger Schwarz (1994) and others consider group effectiveness (meeting task, group and individual needs) as a complex of relationships within and between Group Process and Group Structure and Organisational Context, where:

- ***Group process*** – includes problem solving, decision making, conflict management, communication and boundary management
- ***Group structure*** – includes clear goals, motivating task, appropriate membership, clearly defined roles, sufficient time, effective group culture and group norms, and

- ***Organisational context*** – includes clear mission and shared vision, supportive culture, rewards consistent with objectives, information (including feedback), training and consultation, technological and material resources, together with physical environment that balances coordination with privacy.

The Group Effectiveness Model (Schwarz 1994) illustrates these elements and interrelationships



Reflecting on both these illustrations should give all of us more insight into the forces at play in any group.

Appendix II

1.2 Group development

It is understood that groups have a lifecycle and most researchers acknowledge phases of early, middle and late development. The following figure highlights some of the stages that have been suggested.

It isn't necessary nor desirable that all groups remain together forever, rather it is appropriate and healthy that some groups emerge, develop, do their thing and then cease to exist. Also, there is no magic formula for how long groups take (or should take) to move through the stages – some groups may never move beyond stage one or may slip back a stage before moving forward again.

The following summary extracted from Tuckman and Jensen 1977 takes us through the five stages of group development focussing on the dimensions of personal-relations and task-functions.

Group development stages (extracts from Tyson 1998 and Campbell 1990)

	Tuckman 1965, '77	Charrier 1972	Neilson 1978	Campbell 1990
EARLY	Forming	Polite	Safety vs anxiety	Initiation
	Storming	Why we're here	Similarity vs dissimilarity	Establishment
MIDDLE		Bid for power	Support vs panic	
	Norming	Constructive	Concern vs isolation	Consolidation
	Performing	Esprit	Interdependence vs withdrawl	Maturity
LATE				
	Adjourning			Decline

Stage 1: Forming

Personal relations in the group are characterised by dependence. Group members rely on safe, patterned behaviour and look to the group leader for guidance and direction. Members have a desire for acceptance by the group and a need to know that the group is safe.

Tasks in the group concern orientation. Discussions centre on defining the scope of the task, how to approach it and similar concerns.

To grow from this stage to the next, each member must relinquish the comfort of non-threatening topics and risk the possibility of conflict.

Stage 2: Storming

Personal relations in the group are characterised by competition and conflict as individuals have to bend and mould their feelings, ideas, attitudes and beliefs to suit the group organisation. In response to the discomfort generated during this stage, some members may remain completely silent while others attempt to dominate.

Tasks in the group are characterised by organisation, and as group members attempt to organise for the task, conflict inevitably results in their personal relations. Questions will arise about who is going to be responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what the criteria for evaluation are. These reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power and authority.

In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a 'testing and proving' mentality to a 'problem-solving mentality'. The most important trait in helping groups to move on to the next stage seems to be the ability to listen.

Stage 3: Norming

Personal relations in the group are characterised by cohesion. Group members are engaged in active acknowledgment of all members' contributions, community building and maintenance, and solving of group issues. When members begin to know and identify with one another, the level of trust in their personal relations contributes to the development of group cohesion. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts.

Major tasks in the group concern data flow between group members. They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high.

Major drawback of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future break-up of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

Stage 4: Performing

Personal relations in the group are characterised by a capacity, range and depth of true interdependence where people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal facility.

The major tasks in the group are characterised by genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. Roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. By now, the group should be most productive.

Individual members have become self-assuring, and the need for group approval is past. There is unity: group identity is complete, group morale is high and group loyalty is intense.

Stage 5: Adjourning

Involves the termination of task behaviours and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension – in effect, a minor crisis. It is a regressive movement from giving up control to giving up inclusion in the group.

The most effective interventions in this stage are those that facilitate task termination and the disengagement process.

Appendix III – Working with people

1. Valuing difference

(adapted from Institute of Cultural Affairs and Performax)

How many times have you heard or said *"Isn't it great, we are all individuals?"* How many times have you been frustrated because someone doesn't understand something quickly enough, rushes into something or doesn't do something the way you would? Although we are proud of our uniqueness – we often fail in extending this understanding to others also being individuals and therefore they think and do things differently.

Despite our uniqueness – there has been much work done discovering some key behavioural traits or operating styles that we share. These are manifested in our pattern or group of recurring habits…resulting from the way we typically do things. The way we deal with people and situations. It is our comfortable method of behaving, most of the time…when we just relax and be ourselves. People do behave differently from each other:

- some people are ***more reserved***
- some people are ***more outgoing***
- some people ***like details***
- others ***like only the broad picture***.

Unfortunately, we have a tendency to believe something is wrong with someone who doesn't operate like we do. Fortunately there a number of models we can use to explore how we normally operate and then how this influences how we interact with others. Most focus on identifying your style, understanding yourself, understanding others and building on your strengths and the strengths of others.

These models[6] include:

- ***Personal Operating Styles*** (Institute of Cultural Affairs) and **DiSC** (Perfomax) – based on the continuums of assertiveness (an individual's efforts to influence the thoughts and actions of others) and responsiveness (an individual's tendency to respond to others or events with a show of feelings or lack of inhibition).
- ***Myers Briggs Indicator Type*** (Consulting Psychologists Press Inc) – based on the four preferences of: *Where, primarily, do you direct your energy?, How do you prefer to process information?, How do you prefer to make decisions?, How do you prefer to organise your life?*
- ***Enneagrams*** (Palmer 1995) – based on how each of us looks at the world.

Such models enable group members to explore their own and each others individual natural operating style and with this better understand and appreciate what contribution individuals bring to our groups. Often we develop a better understanding of our own individual strengths and will have some skills for improving our interaction with others.

Valuing difference is about understanding, accepting and respecting differences in people. In a group situation it is about understanding how a person thinks and thus what style of environment they need, to be able to think effectively e.g. perhaps some need more time

[6] A **caution** – many of these models require specific training to ensure they are understood and used both correctly and with sensitivity.

to think…perhaps they need more information to make a wise decision.

It is also very much about understanding that everyone has something to offer – even thinking about things from a different angle can be a bonus for a team.

Models are limited. Obviously we need to use this understanding with integrity to inform ourselves, not to control others…to help people work better together to get results.

2. Difficult people/difficult situations

Many people about to undertake a facilitation activity have two requests. They ask for:
- “Some techniques that work” and
- “Some tips on how to deal with difficult people”.

As you know, this second request is not quite so simple. Also often what are considered as ‘difficult people’ and/or ‘difficult situations’ should actually not have those negative connotations attached – they are just ‘different people’ and/or ‘different situations’.

Highlighting this, Jenny Crisp, Department of Agriculture WA shares two of her greatest learnings as a facilitator:
- *“Open conflict and disagreement in a facilitated session is not necessarily a bad thing. For many situations (depending on the desired session outcomes), it is healthy and vital that group members come to some level of conflict or disagreement for them to be aware of, and start to understand each other’s perspectives. This is a good first step in the convergence of group ideas. So don’t be afraid to let it all come out – an easy facilitation is not always the best!”*
- *“Those difficult, dominating participants are not all bad. They are also often the participants with the most passion and energy on the subject, and your facilitation and process should aim to harness and direct this, rather than squash it. All too often, facilitation is aimed just at keeping the dominator quiet for the benefit of the rest of the group. Think of the dominator as a positive participant (hard sometimes I know), and manage their contribution, rather than exclude it!”*

3. Conflict resolution

There are many guides that explore individual and group behaviour as well as how to effectively and sensitively manage interactions and conflict in individual and group situations. It is an area that requires some in-depth exploration, along with specialised training and development. We recommend you follow up the Conflict Resolution Network (www.crnhq.org) for up-to-date, practical guidance and also training and development opportunities. Pike and Arch (1997) also provide practical strategies on how to work with people when they are behaving inappropriately – often because their needs are not being met either during the facilitation activity and/or outside of it.

Remember also that people are complex and fragile – and if a situation is expected to have high levels of conflict for which you do not have the necessary skills or experience to facilitate – be responsible and engage another person who has. Also, if a situation develops that you do not have the skills and experience to manage – look for options to close the session and organise for a conflict resolution practitioner to be involved in ongoing resolution.

3.1 Twelve skills of conflict resolution[7]

(extracted from the Conflict Resolution Network)

Although to be effective and sincere 'conflict resolution facilitators' and/or 'mediation facilitators' requires specific training and development – as well as considerable experience, it is also important that as 'general facilitators' we develop a deeper understanding of these areas – as they will enhance our everyday working with groups and individuals. Conflict Resolution resources and training are based on ***12 skills that may be relevant to solving any conflict***. Pick and choose the skill or skills appropriate to your particular issue or crisis.

1. ***The win/win approach*** – identify attitude shifts to respect all parties' needs. This approach is about changing the conflict from adversarial attack and defence, to cooperation. It is a powerful shift of attitude that alters the whole course of communication.
2. ***Creative response*** – transform problems into creative opportunities. This approach is about turning problems into possibilities. It is about consciously choosing to see what can be done, rather than staying with how terrible it all is. It is affirming that you will choose to extract the best form the situation.
3. ***Empathy*** – develop communication tools to build rapport. Use listening to clarify understanding. This approach is about rapport and openness between people. When it is absent, people are less likely to consider your needs and feelings. The best way to build empathy is to help the other person feel that they are understood. That means being an active listener. There are specific listening activities relevant to different situations – information, affirmation or inflammation.
4. ***Appropriate assertiveness*** – apply strategies to attack the problem not the person. This approach is being able to state your case without arousing the defences of the other person. The secret of success lies in saying how it is for you rather than what they should or shouldn't do. *"The way I see it..."*, attached to your assertive statement, helps. A skilled *"I"* statement goes even further.
5. ***Co-operative power*** – eliminate 'power over' others, to build 'power with' others. This approach means when faced with a statement that has potential to create conflict, ask open questions to reframe resistance. Explore the difficulties and then re-direct discussion to focus on positive possibilities.
6. ***Managing emotions*** – express fear, anger, hurt and frustration wisely to effect change. This approach requires handling yourself – Don't indulge. Don't deny. Create richer relationships
7. ***Willingness to Resolve*** – name personal issues that cloud the picture. This approach involves 'projection' and 'shadow'. Does the situation inform or inflame?
8. ***Mapping the conflict*** – define the issues needed to chart common needs and concerns. This approach involves defining briefly the issue, the problem area or conflict in neutral terms that all would agree on and that doesn't invite a *"yes/no"* answer e.g. *"Filing"* rather than *"Should Sal do filing?"*
9. ***Development of options*** – design creative solutions together. This approach requires using a range of tools to generate options including: clarifying tools (e.g. chunking,

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goal setting), generating tools (e.g. brainstorming, lateral thinking), negotiating tools (e.g. trial and error, establishing alternatives) and selecting tools.

10. ***Introduction to negotiation***[7] – plan and apply effective strategies to reach agreement. This approach involves using the five basic principles of: Be hard on the problem and soft on the person; Focus on needs, not positions; Emphasise common ground; Be inventive about options, and Make clear agreements.

11. ***Introduction to mediation***[7] – help conflicting parties to move towards solutions. This approach involves applying the attitudes of mediation that are relevant whenever you want to advise, *in a conflict which is not your own*. Be objective – validate both sides; Be supportive – use caring language; No judging – actively discourage judgements as to who was right and who was wrong; Steer process – not content; and Win/win – work towards wins for both sides.

12. ***Broadening perspectives***[7] – evaluate the problem in its broader context. This approach requires respect and valuing differences. It may require us to change the mind chatter that says: "*For me to be right, others must be wrong.*" Recognise a long term timeframe – consider how the problem or the relationships will look over a substantial period of time. Assume a global perspective – look at the overall system, which may be the family, the organisation or the society and consider what needs this larger unit has in order to function effectively. Deal with resistance to the broader perspective – we may need courage to enter the confusion of complexity. Open to the idea of changing and risk-taking – identify what you can do to affect a particular problem, even if it is only a small step in the right direction. One step forward changes the dynamics and new possibilities can open up.

4. Communication

4.1 Communication skills

(extracts from International Assoc. of Public Participation)

'Work openly with differences.

Deborah Pearson
Deborah Pearson Consulting

The following are some of the communication skills used in conflict resolution – and also many other forms of facilitation.

Skill	Use of skill	How to use
Reflective Listening/Feelings	• To diffuse the situation • To reflect feelings back to person • To show understanding	Listen to tone of voice. Observe body language. Hunch feelings and reflect them back. "*You sound disappointed...*"
Paraphrasing	• Indicates you are listening • Lets you check for understanding	Say back your understanding of what they said, in your words. "*You thought the traffic light would...*"
Questioning	• To gather information • To focus discussion • To expand understanding	Use open ended questions – beginning with what, how, when, where. "*How did the new road surprise you?*"
Summarising	• To bring important points out • To review progress • To bring closure to move on	Restate the main points of the discussion, facts and feelings. "*Your main priorities were...*"

Continued...

Appendix III

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Skill	Use of skill	How to use
Validating	• To show what people say is important	Acknowledge issues and feelings as valuable. Appreciate efforts. "*Thanks for explaining the impact on the children...*"
Encouraging	• To show interest • To encourage discussion	Body language, nodding. Ask probing questions. Avoid agree/disagreeing. "*And then what happened?*"
Clarifying	• To ensure you understand • To clear confusion	Ask questions. Ask if interpretation is on track. "*By impacts, you mean...*"

Refer also to questions and question styles [Section B – 8]

4.2 Listening skills (extracts from Mackay 1998)

Hugh Mackay in his book *'The Good listener – better relationships through better communication'* provides ***seven tricks of the trade to better listening*** (pages 167-174). The following are extracts.

Some of the things good listeners do include:

1. ***They receive the message before they react to it*** – they try to postpone judgements until they are sure they have understood what is being said.
2. ***They resist the distraction offered by 'trigger words'*** – these unleash the tendency in us to stick with the comfortable, the familiar and the self indulgent – they set off a mental chain reaction.
3. ***They ask themselves "What can I do about this?" "How can I use it?"*** – Remember that one of the three Rs of communication is 'relevance' – when we try to communicate with someone we need to ensure that our message is relevant to their interests, needs and concerns. Good listeners apply the same principle in reverse – they keep looking for ways in which they might *make* the message relevant to their own situation.
4. ***They work hard at listening*** – because listening involves physical effort, we can be easily be distracted from it. For most of us, it is harder work than speaking. For that reason we may try to simplify the job of listening by simplifying the message we are hearing. There is a natural tendency to interpret the message in ways which will make it more palatable to us, more sensible to us and more painless for us to absorb. We need to remember that what is being said to us may not be simple, sensible or painless.
5. ***They harness their thought-speed*** – good listeners use up as much mental capacity as possible in the listening act, simply to minimise the possibility that they will be distracted by other thoughts crowding their minds. They question the speaker's motives: they consciously observe all the messages – spoken and unspoken which they are receiving from the speaker's tone of voice, rate of speech, facial expression, posture, gestures etc. One useful way of harnessing thought-speed is to focus on the speaker's intention rather than being exclusively concerned with the way the message is being delivered.
6. ***They try to empathise with the speaker*** – they have always sensed the need to work together with the speaker in the task of communicating. They realise that a big part of the job is understanding what the speaker is driving at involves trying to feel what the speaker feels.

7. ***They reflect what they have heard*** – merely listening to other people and understanding what they are saying is not good enough. Good listeners develop the habit of giving the speaker a summary of their understanding of what has been said before they express any reactions to it (especially when they know those reactions might involve some disagreement or the expression of a different point of view).

Appendix IV - Checklists and templates

The following are checklists and templates that you may find useful before, during and after your facilitation. Adapt them to suit your style and needs.

1. Checklist for event/program

EVENT/PROGRAM:			
Dates:		Location:	
Director:			Tel:
Fax:		E-mail:	
✔	RESOURCE	QUANTITY	COMMENTS
Equipment			
	• overhead projector		
	• screen		
	• flip chart tripods		
	• slide projector		
	• slide carousels		
	• extension chords		
	• double-adaptor		
	• laptop computer		
	• powerpoint projector		
	• training/facilitation box		
	•		
Facilitator/Trainer			
	• static magic		
	• butcher's paper		
	• whiteboard makers		
	• permanent markers		
	• ½ A4 paper		
	• post-it notes		
	• blu-tac		
	• course handouts		
	• dots - small		
	• dots - large		
	• prizes		
	• envelopes		
	• camera		
	• film		
	• resources/ref books		
	•		

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✔	RESOURCE	QUANTITY	COMMENTS
Outdoor Activities			
	• planks and ropes		
	• tents		
	• blindfolds		
	• torches		
	• web ropes		
	• tennis balls		
	•		
Participants			
	• program manual		
	• pads - small		
	• pads - large		
	• pens		
	• pencils		
	• overhead markers		
	•		
Nametags			
	• participants		
	• facilitator/s		
	• visitors		
	• spares		

2. Checklist for venue and transport

EVENT/PROGRAM:				
VENUE:				
Contact:		**Tel:**		
E-mail:		**Fax:**		
Dates: IN OUT		**Location:**		
Things to do (TTDs)	**Quantity**	**Responsible**	**Req by**	**Done**
Book venue – working spaces				
• conference rooms				
• small work rooms/break-out rooms				
• outdoor facilities				
• pay deposit				

Continued…

Appendix IV

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Things to do (TTDs)		Quantity	Responsible	Req by	Done
Book venue – accommondation					
• accommodation (single/twin/double)					
Book facilities/aids					
• overhead projector					
• screen					
• flip chart tripods					
• slide projector					
• slide carousels					
• extension chords					
• powerpoint projector					
• whiteboards					
• whiteboards – electronic					
Order Meals					
• b'fast	Time:				
• lunch	Time:				
• dinner	Time:				
• morning tea	Time:				
• arvo tea	Time:				
• special diets					
• packed lunches					
• water in all rooms – replenished between breaks					
Transport					
• vehicle					
• bus					
• driver					
Confirmations					
• attendees					
• venue					
• meals					
• Director's needs					
• Transport					

Appendix IV

3. Checklist for effective facilitation

(Crisp and Keating - initial development by Jenny Crisp, WA Department of Agriculture - with adaptations and additions by Colma Keating)

The following can act as a guide for the design of your facilitation and/or as a template for review and reflection.

Pre-session	
	Purpose clarified with client
	Participant/stakeholder 'profile 'confirmed
	Process designed – FORMAT (Flow and Focus; Objective; Results; Methodologies and Techniques; Aids, Facilities Materials; Timing) [Refer Section B]
	Facilitative questions designed and tested
	Experience designed – STEPS (Space; Time; Eventfulness; Product; Style) [Refer Section B]
	Pre-session information or promotion addressed (e.g. invitations, required participant preparation)
	Logistics organised (e.g. venue, co-facilitators, outdoor exercises, visitors, transport [Refer above checklists]
	Resources organised (e.g. equipment, materials, program manuals, nametags, people to help) [Refer above checklists]
When you get there	
	Equipment and room set up before session started
	Available before 'session proper' started
	Participants made to feel welcome (informal introductions, welcome cuppa, photos to look at, resource materials for browsing, find points of common interest)
Getting focussed	
	Welcome and introductions completed – an exercise broke the ice!
	Context and purpose of session clarified
	End results (outputs) of session clarified
	Expectations of participants elicited and displayed
	Session/s ability to meet expectations of participants discussed and clarified
	Ground rules/group norms determined and displayed – for easy referral
	Session structure/format/agenda clarified (e.g. timing, breaks, range of activities)
	Summary of structure/format/agenda displayed
	Roles and responsibilities of both facilitator and group clarified
	Participant's potential to contribute encouraged and acknowledged
	Process for session/s understood and committed to by participants
'Stand up' facilitation (gathering information, planning, decision-making etc)	
	Focus question/s for session/s stated and checked with group for clarification and agreement
	Focus question/s clearly written up for ongoing referral during session
	Contributions from all participants enabled and encouraged

Continued...

Appendix IV

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	Instructions clearly delivered
	Individual participants appropriately challenged – not uncomfortably singled-out
	Even and maximum participation gained
	Barriers to participation identified and overcome
	Positive body language evident in facilitator (eye contact; nodding, interested, warm, friendly)
	Participant's names used
	Pauses used effectively – including not rushed in as soon as silence
	Opinions not given on input (except where changing 'hats' if facilitator also group member or technical specialist)
	Facilitator judgements not made – facilitator remained impartial
	Participant judgements on input managed
	Underlying causes, concerns elicited
	Deeper level of information, understanding, informing and analysis elicited
	Group dynamics managed (e.g. dominating, withdrawn, socialising, dog-with-bone, sceptical participants)
	Interaction between participants generated and supported
	Active listening for content and feeling effective
	Feeling of the group read and managed (e.g. body language for agreement/disagreement, energy levels, motivation)
	Session focus and momentum maintained – (e.g. focus question referred to if heading off-track or where prompt needed)
	Side issues managed openly and effectively
	Ideas clarified with individuals to check accurate interpretation (i.e. mirrored or re-stated)
	Where appropriate (e.g. brainstorming) ideas were only clarified, not discussed, until all ideas elicited
	Agreement reached by group (e.g. through consensus, voting and ranking etc)
	Side issues were acknowledged but put aside for later (e.g. parking)
	Threatening situations managed
	Feedback given and received constructively
	Participant's motivation enhanced through process
	Ground rules/group norms maintained
	Original and stated timing respected and adhered to (within reason and/or alterations discussed and contracted with group)
	Actual delivery of session resulted in appropriate modifications to original design – in response to the group's needs and/or developing issues
	Energy/attention/focus 'breaks' sufficiently numerous, adequate and effective
	Space and layout ideal for session needs
	Learning styles catered for through variety in processes and facilitation
	Resources (equipment, materials, helpers) appropriate and sufficient for session needs

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Recording ideas	
	All input recorded accurately
	All recordings easily read/seen throughout session (e.g. size, colour, neatness, room layout)
	Sufficient materials/resources immediately available for session recording needs (e.g. blu-tac, card, textas, paper etc)
	Scribe did not draw attention away from facilitator (e.g. clarifications made through facilitator)
Closing	
	Main points/conclusions/achievements from session summarised and stated back to group
	Next steps – 'Where to from here' with the session's conclusions/achievements discussed and clearly stated and responsibilities assigned
	Expectations for session reviewed
	Group participation acknowledged
	Group feeling of accomplishment generated
	Recognition of achievement/outcome organised (e.g. Freddo frogs/drinks)
	Review and reflection included all participants
	Individual commitment 'to do things differently in response to session' determined, though not necessarily shared
Afterwards	
	Self assessment (WWW – What worked well? WCBI – What can be improved?)
	Promotion of session results to wider audience (newspaper, newsletters etc)
	Session evaluated by participants and facilitator/s (formal or informal)
	Next steps (small and/or large) of improvement for personal and professional development determined

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