

PARAGUAY WORKING TOGETHER

STUDY TOUR ON COORDINATED AND DECENTRALISED SOCIAL SERVICES
NOVEMBER 2012



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ABOUT THE TOUR

In 2009, the Government of Paraguay established 'Paraguay for Everyone'; a social development policy entitled that seeks to achieve goals in human development and social inclusion. In particular, the policy aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of Government social services.

Hoping to contribute to these improvements, the Governments of Chile, Germany and Australia are collaborating with Paraguay via an initiative called 'Paraguay Working Together'.

Discussions with public sector agencies in Australia revealed a great willingness to share experience and knowledge with counterparts from Paraguay, recognising that the visit could advance the goals of 'Paraguay for Everyone' by providing exposure to an array of service model examples and methodology.

With this in mind, Australian organisation 'Community Works' met with AusAID and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and offered to facilitate an Australian Study Tour of a senior delegation from the Government of Paraguay.

Government Ministries of Paraguay involved in the reform of social services, nominated representatives to participate in the Study Tour.

In Australia, a mix of government and non-government agencies that work at local, state and federal levels were invited to share their knowledge, particularly those agencies with a wealth of experience in reforming, developing or improving services. Scholars specialising in Australian Local Government added critical commentary and historical context to the program.

The intensive learning experience documented in this publication demonstrates the firm support that so many gave in order that improved access to social services is generated and delivered for the people of Paraguay.

DELEGATES

1. VICTORIA BEATRIZ MELGAREJO
Executive Director, Technical Unit of the Social Cabinet, President's Office
2. MERCEDES JUVINEL
Director General of Social Policy and Local Development, Social Action Secretariat
3. RUBÉN ARÓN SOSKY
Director-General of Planning and Evaluation, Ministry of Public Health and Social Well-being
4. ANA MARÍA CUEVAS CHAMORRO
District Leader for Areguá Support Program, Secretariat for Children and Adolescents
5. MARTA BEATRIZ DÁVALOS ACOSTA
Director of National Policy and Planning, Technical and Planning Secretariat
6. MARIO VACCHETTA
Director General for Shelter, National Secretariat for Housing and Shelter
7. HÉCTOR RAMÓN CÁRDENAS MOLINAS
Executive Secretary, Technical Unit of the Social Cabinet, President's Office
8. MYRIAN MELLO
'Paraguay for Everyone' Project Coordinator, Technical and Planning Secretariat

Pictured in the centre is Esteban Bedoya, the Chargé d'Affaires for Paraguay in Australia





ITINERARY

Saturday, 17th November

Arrival in **Melbourne** (evening).

Sunday, 18th November

Rest.

Monday, 19th November

Orientation and introduction to program, objectives, needs and expectations of participants. Preparation for groupwork task during Study Tour.

Welcome lunch with **Jane Foley, Community Development, City of Melbourne** and representative from **Victoria University**.

Overview of Local Government Service Delivery in Australia. **John Martin, Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities**.

Tuesday, 20th November

Visit to **Department of Human Services, Victoria** to learn about latest developments and thinking on services, especially new initiatives of the Victorian Government on improved service coordination, led by **Leonie Middleton, Manager of Corporate Strategy and Special Projects**.

Wednesday, 21st November

Visit to **Melbourne City Council** and meeting with key management staff, led by **Linda Weatherston, Director of Community Development** to examine local approaches to services, especially the way in which Melbourne Council fits within the Australian Government system and decentralised arrangements.

Training workshop on 'Public participation in service settings in Australia'. Speaker: **Martin de los Rios, Community Works**.

Thursday, 22nd November

Visit to service providers in Melbourne to observe decentralised arrangements in practice, to be led by **Maria Rodrigues, Community Works**.

Shared service models in Australia; workshop and participatory training. Speaker: **Melissa Gibbs, Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government**.

Travel to **Canberra** (evening)

Friday, 23rd November

Visit to Canberra-based service agencies.

Brian Gleeson, Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services to discuss lessons learned from Federal Government programs in remote communities with emphasis on policy frameworks, integrated service models, baseline mapping and the evidence base developed through the work of his office.

Visit to **AusAID**.

Michalina Stawyskyj, International Branch Manager, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and **Graham Maloney, Department of Human Services** to discuss policy frameworks and service delivery arrangements for social services.

Saturday, 24th November

Return to **Melbourne** from Canberra.

Rest.

Sunday, 25th November

Cultural activities; visits to historical sites in Melbourne, markets and other local places of interest.

Monday, 26th November

Travel to **Brisbane** (morning).

Introductory session on Queensland including a seminar on the **Queensland Compact** by **Carolyn Mason**

Tuesday, 27th November

Roundtable with the **Queensland Government Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**, facilitated by **Carolyn Mason** and hosted by **Helen Ferguson, Executive Director Social Inclusion**, to discuss the social inclusion agenda of the Government and its implementation. A case study will discuss the seven urban and regional Homelessness Community Action Plans to demonstrate the provision of social services to a decentralised population with the partnership of Government and community service providers.

Meeting with the **Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works** and **Director-General for Housing Services**. Presentation and discussion on the planning and provision of public housing to a dispersed population across Queensland.

Site visit to the Brisbane **Common Ground** supportive housing development.

Wednesday, 28th November

Field visit to meet Queensland Government service providers in the **Toowoomba** area, hosted by **Brooke Winters, Regional Executive Director of the South West Queensland region of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**. Visit will include regional office and other regionally-based staff involved in

planning and coordination of service provision to a regional and rural population.

Return to **Melbourne** (evening).

Thursday, 29th November

Training seminar on 'Services and local government; critical success factors in achieving results' hosted by **Victoria University** and with invited specialists.

'Politics Matters in Service Delivery', **Bligh Grant, Centre for Local Government, University of New England**.

Improving interaction between government and Aboriginal people; research for improved services, **Judy Lovell, Ada Lechleitner and Theresa Alice, Ninti One, Northern Territory**.

'Service dynamics; reflections on the interplay between demand and supply for decentralised services', **Steve Fisher, Community Works**.

Followed in the afternoon by workshop session and group work to process and analyse material and prepare for Colloquium.

Friday, 30th November

Colloquium on 'Planning for improved service coordination in Paraguay; what are the critical factors?'

Participants present and discuss issues in a facilitated way over the course of the morning. Individuals and agencies with whom the participants met during their visit are invited to participate.

Certificates and closing ceremony.

1st Saturday, 1st December

Departure from Melbourne.

NOVEMBER 19

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

WELCOME TO AUSTRALIA!

"It's so wonderful to have you here. We're looking forward to a very exciting couple of weeks. The program is intensive because we want you to have as much opportunity as possible to see, understand and assess the systems for social services in Australia. This means that we will meet key professionals from the three levels of government in Australia, participate in workshops on relevant topics and meet with non-government organisations working with particular client groups in urban and rural settings. It will be a demanding study tour, but I know you will make the most of it."

Steve Fisher, Director of Community Works at the launch of the Study Tour

It was the first day of the 'Paraguay for Everyone' Study Tour and after warm introductions from Community Works team members Maria Rodrigues, Martin de los Rios and acknowledgement of the great work done by Vanessa Angulo, expectations of the tour were discussed by the Delegation and laid on the table.

Amongst these expectations was a need to have the following questions answered:

- How can we best achieve service decentralisation?
- What systems best serve public-private alliances for service delivery?
- How can service coordination be achieved at a local level?
- How can the delivery of effective services be assured locally?
- How can we replicate effective services via public policy?
- How can policy be translated into action at the local level?
- What kinds of participation and communication processes work best?

Professor John Martin of the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities at LaTrobe University then joined our group. Outlining the framework of Australian Local Government, he described where it sits within the broader political system.

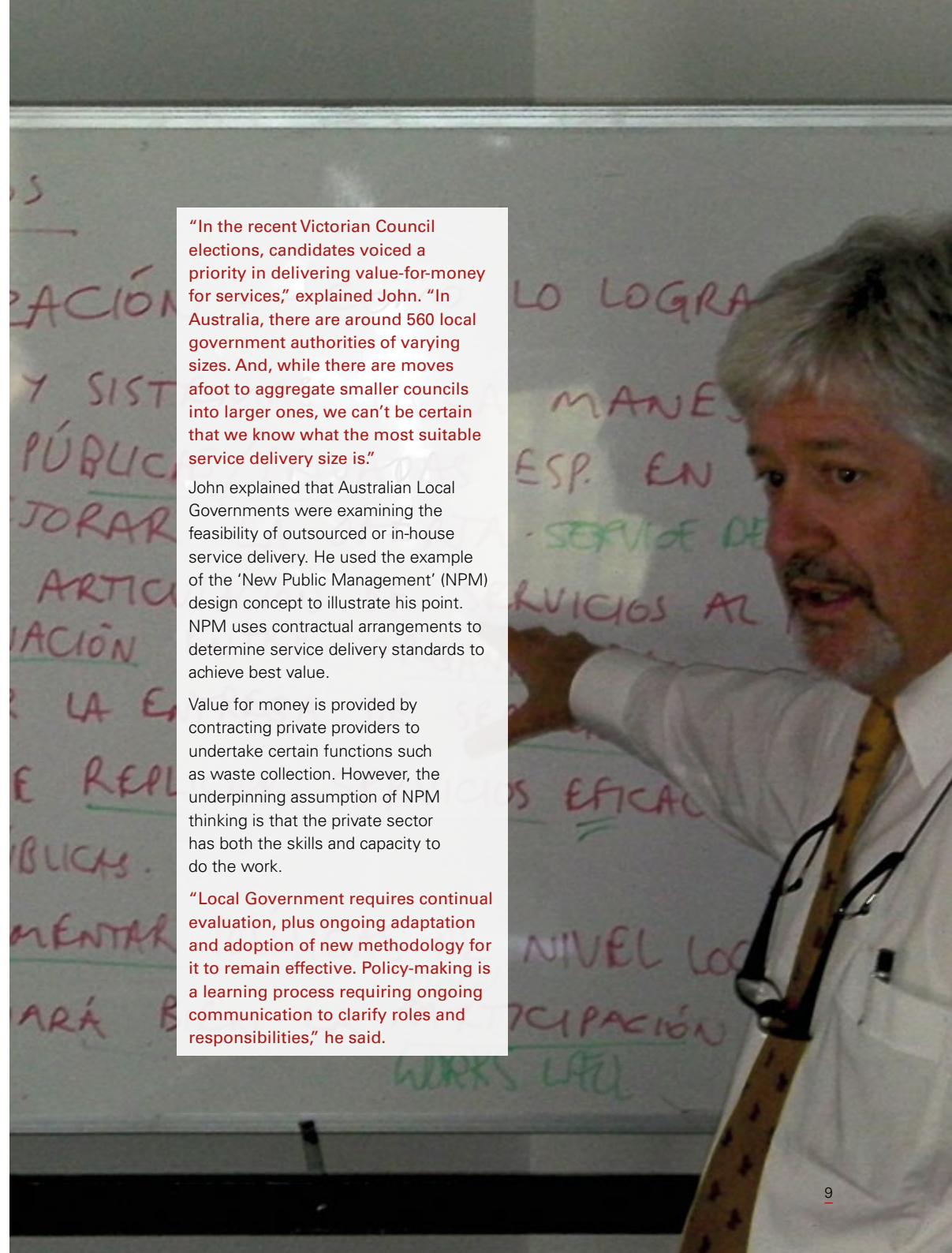
"If you understand this," he explained, "you'll know why people in our Government do what they do. As to the question of centralisation versus decentralisation, it reflects the balance of power within the system."

"In the recent Victorian Council elections, candidates voiced a priority in delivering value-for-money for services," explained John. "In Australia, there are around 560 local government authorities of varying sizes. And, while there are moves afoot to aggregate smaller councils into larger ones, we can't be certain that we know what the most suitable service delivery size is."

John explained that Australian Local Governments were examining the feasibility of outsourced or in-house service delivery. He used the example of the 'New Public Management' (NPM) design concept to illustrate his point. NPM uses contractual arrangements to determine service delivery standards to achieve best value.

Value for money is provided by contracting private providers to undertake certain functions such as waste collection. However, the underpinning assumption of NPM thinking is that the private sector has both the skills and capacity to do the work.

"Local Government requires continual evaluation, plus ongoing adaptation and adoption of new methodology for it to remain effective. Policy-making is a learning process requiring ongoing communication to clarify roles and responsibilities," he said.



Q&A

What is the main objective of your trip to Australia?

The main reason we are here in Australia is to learn about the delivery of services. We really want to understand the system in Australia and try to apply this knowledge to improve services in Paraguay.

In what ways can Paraguay benefit from understanding the delivery of services in Australia?

I think we can learn a lot. For example, the healthcare system here is much more sustainable and reaches more people than the system in Paraguay. We can also see that in Paraguay, unlike in Australia, there is no government funding for students.

What are you hoping to achieve while in Australia?

First of all, I think it is very important to learn about the structure of the Australian Government, and the cooperation between the federal, state and local levels of government. It applies because if we can improve cooperation between the different levels of government in Paraguay, it may help the delivery of services in our country to be more effective.

Since your arrival, could you name one aspect of service delivery in Australia that might have application in Paraguay?

It is interesting to understand the way housing is provided to indigenous people in Australia. As Paraguay also has a significant indigenous population, there are several aspects of the way services such as housing and healthcare are delivered to remote communities that are useful in Paraguay. However, it is also important to understand that every country has a different experience and we cannot apply everything we learn in Australia to Paraguay.



NOVEMBER 20

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Presentation: Chris Ingham, Project Director Industry, Workforce & Strategy Division, Lucy Benbow, Senior Advisor, Industry & Workforce Development Branch, Sheila Ross, Director, Service Connect Design Team and Mick Naughton, Director, Child Protection Workforce Reform.

Four Victorian Government staff members, Chris, Lucy, Sheila and Mick described various work undertaken by the department. Specifically their presentation focussed on 'Service Connect', an innovative approach that seeks to improve integration and coordination across the different levels. They also spoke to a new program called the 'Child Protection Operating Model', which focuses on ways to improve access to services relating to the protection of children.

Alex McGillivray: Manager of the Funding and Monitoring, Department of Human Services of the Victorian Government.

The Victorian Government manages a service mix that includes both direct service provision and contracted services via other providers such as Non-Government Organisations.

Alex manages agreements with over 1,000 Non-Government and community organisations. He described the process that underpins his work and provided an example of a service agreement to provide practical application.

Jill McCabe: Assistant Director, Industry Workforce Development Branch spoke with the group about the challenges that she and her colleagues are working to overcome in the 'Victorian Action Plan to Address Violence against Women'.

Margaret Crawford, Executive Director, Organisational Design and Transformation: One DHS Transformation

We concluded our day hearing from Margaret on the methods that 'One DHS Transformation' is using to align major strategic reform processes and ensure that the client is placed at the centre of the Department's functions. It's an initiative that had strong resonance with the group given the reforms occurring in Paraguay.



Q&A

What are the most valuable insights you have regarding the delivery of services at the state level of State Government in Australia?

After visiting the Victorian Government, it was most interesting to see that the reform of human services was effective in improving coordination between departments. In the Victorian system, each client is able to access services through a social worker.

Is it possible to apply these ideas to Paraguay?

I would like to use these ideas in Paraguay as I think they would be effective in improving services. However, implementing similar changes will be a challenge because in contrast to Victoria where the restructure began at the top of Government, it is often difficult in Paraguay to convince those at the top to make important changes.

NOVEMBER 21

CITY OF MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

Linda Weatherson, Director for Community Development welcomed the group and set the stage by providing some Victorian specific statistics, including the fact that:

- Victoria hosts 79 municipalities
- Melbourne has a population of 100,000 with a daily influx of 805,000 people arriving for both work and leisure
- The average household size is two; half the population is made up of students

The City of Melbourne caters to the centre of Melbourne and maintains certain responsibilities under the Local Government Act of 1989.

The Council is made up of five divisions: City Design, City Business, City Planning and Infrastructure, Corporate Business and Community Development. These divisions reflect Council services.

The Community Development Division was of particular relevance to the Delegation given that it manages Community, Health and Recreation Services. Each of these functions is carried out via seven branches wholly dedicated to a service group.

Q&A

What are the most useful ideas about services that you have learned so far on the Study Tour?

I have gained many useful ideas about the way services are effectively delivered and outsourced in Australia. By contrast, while the Government in Paraguay is providing services it is not administering them efficiently.

How did your visit to the City Council provide you with information around efficient and effective delivery of Government services?

I was very impressed by the high level of organisation, commitment and technical ability demonstrated at the City Council. In addition, it is clear that an interrelated system is important for the functioning of Local Government and the effective delivery of services in Australia.

In your opinion, what should the major focus be in improving Paraguay services?

There must be a major emphasis on capacity-building to improve services in Paraguay. This includes bringing resources and good ideas into action which will benefit the community. While there is much discussion in Paraguay about services, it's vital that we begin to see actual results.



NOVEMBER 22

CITY OF MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

Tour of City of Melbourne key Service Centres conducted by Linda Weatherson, Director for Community Development, and Cecilia Hernandez, Social Support and Inclusion Officer.

THE BOYD BUILDING, SOUTH BANK, MELBOURNE

“The cross-pollination between the different services housed in the building has improved the quality of services and increased the level of public participation.”

Natalie Warren, the City of Melbourne’s Community Animator and our guide for the visit to Boyd Building.

The Boyd Building is a multi-purpose Community Centre located in the humming inner city hive of South Bank. It services a broad array of activities such as:

- A family counselling service
- A Maternal and Child Health Centre
- A playroom for family support programs
- A library
- Seven subsidised studio spaces for artists
- A lounge room for both staff and visitors to share space and interact

A parcel of land attached to the centre is being developed into a 30-storey, mixed-use high-rise property. Low income housing will be apportioned to 20% of the development. With more and more families living in high-rise developments, Melbourne is transforming itself into a ‘vertical city’. In light of this, the City of Melbourne is looking to encourage

family living, outdoor recreation and a sense of ‘real community’.

Mateja Telich; Director of Lady Huntingfield Childcare Centre, North Melbourne

After a drive through Docklands, the group arrived at the award winning Childcare Centre and enjoyed morning tea with Mateja. It’s a progressive centre, providing many opportunities for children to come into contact with nature. The delegates praised Mateja for her fantastic work. Given that 50 preschoolers were there, it was amazing that not a single cry was heard in the hour we were there!

Cecilia Hernandez Social Support and Inclusion Officer; Kensington Neighbourhood Centre

Cecilia spoke about the delivery of Aged Services in Melbourne. Along with the rest of Australia, Melbourne has an aging population which the Council is looking to support with the provision of healthy meals, effective public transport and social activities like gardening, exercise classes, outings and games.

Melissa Gibbs, the Assistant Director; Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG)

Melissa presented on the recent increase of shared service arrangements in Australia and how they work in practice. The Delegation was keen to learn about the structure and functions of ACELG and how they might best apply in Paraguay. Interestingly, while ACELG is funded by the Federal Government, it is autonomous in the way it determines and delivers its projects.



Q&A

What are your thoughts regarding the meetings, visits and presentations that you’ve engaged with across the last two days?

The Service Centre we visited in Melbourne offers much for us to consider in relation to the process we are developing in Paraguay

Although the resourcing of the Centre was very good and this has been the case for everything we have seen, the methods and the practice is interesting for us to think about.

The idea of shared service models, as described by Melissa Gibbs, shows what might be possible with closer cooperation between government and universities, while recognising that these connections are still developing in Paraguay

A long-term view is important. Many of the reforms in Australia have been planned and implemented over periods of many years. Where cultural change is required, this will take a long time.

NOVEMBER 23

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Presentation: Mr Brian Gleeson;
Coordinator-General for Remote
Indigenous Services (CGRIS)**

The CGRIS seeks to improve accountability for the performance of services in the field of remote services. Every six months, it reports in detail the advances made as well as areas for concern. Specifically the reports focus on the identified remote service delivery of communities located in both the Northern Territory and four of six Australian states. Each location has a Local Implementation Plan that identifies specific community priorities.

“Improving remote services is like a football team. We need to work together to score goals rather than working only as individuals. The program also encourages a ‘bottom-up’ approach. We believe that this helps to emphasise ownership of change within the communities themselves.”

*Mr Brian Gleeson; Coordinator-General
for Remote Indigenous Services*

The role and functions of CGRIS have much in common with the effective local decentralised services that Paraguay for Everyone is seeking to achieve.

The group made a courtesy visit to AusAID and enjoyed a discussion with the Assistant Director of the Latin America Section, Sue Nelson. They described their interest in longer-term collaboration with AusAID.

**Presentation: Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs or FaHCSIA;
Michalina Stawyskyj; Dr Leanne
Merret & Jennifer Teece**

FaHSCIA's national operations include coordination of over 36,000 staff across its 26 call centres and 523 service centres. The Delegation also learned about the Service Delivery Reform (SDR) process and vital concepts such as ‘no wrong door’ which conceptualises services as part of an overall system.

**Michalina Stawyskyj the Branch
Manager, Social Security**

**Relationships and International
Branch of FaHCSIA** provided a solid understanding of the FaHCSIA structure, its operations, its client services and its client access. Dr Leanne Merrett then presented on a National Framework titled, ‘Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business’, generating a host of delegate questions regarding the Framework’s scope and capacity.

**The National Manager of Face to Face
Channel Operations and Emergency
Management, Jennifer Teece**

completed the presentation, outlining the varied service commitments published by the Department. These include ‘Medicare’, ‘Centrelink’, the ‘Child Support Program’ and the ‘Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service’.

Q&A

Are there any particular insights you may have gained to influence your future work?

In many ways, the human emphasis within services is critical. Many Australian agencies place the citizen or the client at the heart of what they are trying to do. In other words, they are trying to avoid being a self-serving bureaucracy and to achieve a fair approach to services.

Our meeting with the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services was interesting because it appears that the Federal Government has established a powerful entity to lead a reform

process focussed on a particular problem that has been difficult to overcome for many years.

So the Coordinator-General is both an internal agency but also has a monitoring and evaluation role in working towards improvements in services. This is an unusual strategy.

It is interesting to think about not just service supply but also the ‘quality of demand’. This means the ability of people to describe what they need, to be engaged with government and to make effective use of services.

NOVEMBER 26

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

Facilitator: Carolyn Mason,
Partnering Works

Carolyn started with a few facts:

- Queensland is more than four times the area of Paraguay
- Most of Queensland's population live in the state's south-east corner
- The Queensland Government has recently increased the number of departments and reduced staff by approximately 12,000

The current Queensland Government is moving away from the previous State Government's position on advocating strongly for partnerships with non-government organisations. Carolyn illustrated the move by speaking about the now closed **Queensland Compact**. **Queensland Compact** was an entity created to facilitate the relationships between the community sector and the Government.

An evaluation conducted three years after its establishment indicated that collaboration in the sector had been improving. Success was won by bringing NGOs into program planning and design at an earlier stage, combined with activating and supporting effective relationships between local government and local organisations.

The Delegation asked many questions in regards to **Queensland Compact**, including information on the key ingredients relating to its effectiveness. There was also much discussion on such an entity's policy, legal and governance frameworks.



NOVEMBER 27

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

Facilitated by Carolyn Mason,
Partnering Works

Presentation: the Queensland Government: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

The services of the Department divide into three groups; child safety, disability and social inclusion.

The Delegation's questions focused on:

- The situation for children
- The housing situation in Paraguay
- Indicators of poverty, a critical issue in Paraguay

Helen Ferguson, Executive Director of Social Inclusion, presented on social inclusion in Queensland. Helen mapped out the Department's clientele, its services, service planning and delivery, partnerships and the establishment of standards between government and non-government organisations.

Mark Henley, Chief Executive of the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) gave perspective to the organisation's needs, use and delivery and demand of services across the state.

His colleague, **Darren McGhee, Manager of Homeless Planning and Coordination for QCOSS** discussed how local planning is being used to address homelessness.

Christine Makumbe, Manager of Homelessness Community Action Planning, presented case studies from Caboolture and Mt Isa. Key interest areas included costs, effectiveness of service delivery via NGOs, outsourcing models, and the perspective of unions and NGOs regarding the recent changes to government services in Queensland.

In the afternoon the group was invited to meet with the **Department of Housing and Works, Tony Waters, Deputy Director-General of Housing Services, Kirstine Harvie, Executive Director of Housing Programs and John Stalker, Director of the Public Housing Program.**

Tony provided an overview on Queensland public housing and implementation.

The Department's current greatest challenge is the transfer of responsibility of services to the Non-Government sector. Tony explained that in Queensland:

- The median cost of housing construction for a three bedroom, 180m² home is \$350,000
- There are 72,000 public housing units of which 25% are managed by NGOs for the Not for Profit sector
- The Government wants to achieve 100% non-government future management

To be eligible to do this work, non-profit organisations need to register under the relevant act.



Jonathan Leitch, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy, discussed the Department's key aims in more detail, including the capacity to fully utilise existing social housing, the reshaping of the portfolio to meet demand and the improvement of financial sustainability for social housing.

COMMON GROUND: BRISBANE HOUSING PROJECT

Common Ground provides a range of services for up to 146 residents who had previously experienced homelessness or insecure housing. As a relatively new project it is managed by NGO, Micha Projects.

There have been many insights provided in having the opportunity to learn about a leading program's history, activities and plans.

NOVEMBER 28

TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND

Tour Guide: Brooke Winters, Regional Executive Director for the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

On the bus journey to Toowoomba, Brooke provided a full introduction to the region, including the impact of the floods in 2011 and the process of recovery for local people, businesses and services. The group visited a victim's memorial of the floods in Grantham.

Lifeline Distribution Centre: presented by Derek Tuffield, CEO and colleagues

Derek explained the operations and services of Lifeline, a commercial operation run to generate income for its community services and reduce waste via the recycling of donated goods.

Child Safety Service Centre, Toowoomba

Staff of the **Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services** presented on the work that they had conducted in the region with particular emphasis given to the Contract Management Unit.

It was interesting to see the processes used to contract NGOs of different sizes and areas of focus. The Disability Services Unit for example, works with 34 NGOs that offer five different types of service including Residential, Respite, Community Access Support (including participation in community activities), Community Support (such as early intervention) and Advocacy.

The Delegation was thrilled to be invited by the Department to a great barbecue in a full room attended by staff of other Government agencies and NGOs.

The varieties of meat on offer included kangaroo; "We're eating your national emblem!" laughed Myrian Mello before she thanked the staff on behalf of the Delegation in both Spanish and Guaraní.

The Delegation completed their visit to Toowoomba with a meeting with members of the **South-West Action Table** who presented on the work of many Non-Government Organisations providing services in the region.





Q&A

Can you describe any aspects of the work of the last two days in Queensland that have been particularly interesting to you?

The high levels of commitment and pride in the work they are doing has been very notable in all the places we have visited. It is a form of patriotism for the achievements of their nation.

The work of the Queensland Compact, like that of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services, is an interesting reform initiative. The progress made by the Compact and the impact it has achieved was clear to me. In many ways, the Compact comes across as a management agreement between the Queensland Government and the community sector, with accountability to the Government but which creates a space to negotiate arrangements in a positive way. Another observation we have is that the attention given to the negotiation of service arrangements at all levels is impressive.

Overall, the structures of some of the Government departments seem very heavy in terms of their management levels. But it is interesting to note the quality of the women we have met who occupy leadership positions.

Many people we have met have emphasised the importance of the quality of personal interaction and understanding between members of their teams. This also applies to relationships between the Government and NGOs.

Considering our own reform process, it is useful to see how Australian federal and state Governments have sometimes chosen to establish a new lead agency or led individual (such as the Compact). The idea has often been to form alliances for change in which everyone is expected to benefit from the results.

Clearly, the public administration in Queensland is dedicated to the challenges of delivering services across a vast area. The Westminster system provides for a separation of state and government, which is positive in the context of what we have seen.

An insight into services in the two countries is that Australia is managing a situation of richness of resources whereas in Paraguay the situation is opposite as we are managing a situation of poverty of resources.



NOVEMBER 29

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

Victoria University: Hosted by Professor Anthony Love

Seminar led by Maria Rodrigues of Community Works: 'Services and Local Government; Critical factors in Achieving Results'

Three organisations presented their experience in the seminar:

- Centre for Local Government, University of New England
'Politics Matters in Service Delivery: Two Case Studies and a Comparative Analysis of Relative Success'
Bligh Grant
- Ninti One, Northern Territory
'Improving Interaction between Government and Aboriginal people; Research for Improved Services'
Judy Lovell, Ada Lechleitner and Theresa Alice
- Community Works, Victoria
'Service Dynamics; Reflections on the interplay between Demand and Supply for Decentralised Services'
Steve Fisher

Questions and discussion followed each presentation and ranged across many topics including services in remote Australia, political considerations in forming local government alliances and the unlocking of local skills to provide more responsive service delivery models.

In the afternoon, Maria shifted the emphasis of the event.

"Now it is time for us to return to the focus of the visit; services and their delivery in Paraguay," she said. "We can set out the delegates' plans and actions based on the insights that they have gained over the past two weeks."

Two groups formed, facilitated by Rob Townsend and David Shires of Victoria University. Each developed a plan of action around identified service reform priorities with particular focus directed on methods that would bring people together, leading to increased participation in and support for the work when back in Paraguay.

In the space of an hour, two sets of ideas and approaches were presented with further discussion eliciting more ideas and excitement. Today's work was designed to help the group prepare for the Colloquium tomorrow.

NOVEMBER 30

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE THE FINALE

While the purpose of the Study Tour was to examine experiences in Australia, a personal outcome had been the Delegation's incredible impact on the people they had met on the way. Their kindness, thoughtful analysis and wonderful team spirit had touched everyone they came into contact with.

"We could learn a lot from the way that Paraguay values its indigenous language and identity so highly, and also from the community solidarity so evident in your culture."

Steve Fisher, Community Works

On the final day of the two week Study Tour, it was time for the Delegation to present on their findings. Invitations had been issued to those they had met during their time in Australia and special guest Esteban Bedoya, the Chargé d' Affaires for Paraguay in Australia had travelled from Canberra to attend.

The day was made up of two parts:

The first being **The Colloquium**, a small conference with the focus being **'Planning for Improved Service Coordination in Paraguay; what are the Critical Factors?'** The second being the **Formal Presentations of Certificates of Completion to Delegates.**

Colloquium topics included:

- A short video introduction to Paraguay
- A history of the relationship between Paraguay and Australia
- **'Paraguay for Everyone'**, an overview of the social policy to which the Study Tour contributes
- The lessons and challenges arising from the Study Tour and a summary of the group's key insights
- Action plans

Several people spoke to the challenges and complexities in achieving Government goals for improved services in Paraguay. They also spoke to the importance of this work in order that poverty be addressed and human development achieved.

The presentations were well received and many questions and observations followed.

In addition to the Paraguayan Delegation, the audience included Cecilia Hernandez of the City of Melbourne, Chris Ingham of the Department of Human Services, Government of Victoria and Kathryn Robb of World Vision.



CRITICAL FACTORS

Critical factors in service design and implementation identified by the Delegation over the course of the Study Tour:

- Participation of the third (or community) sector in services
- Public participation on the demand side of services
- Alliances with other sectors i.e. universities
- Good management of records and information on services
- Empowerment of local institutions and other actors
- Transparency and access to key information such as the costs of services
- Delivery of quality services within realistic expectations
- Distribution of roles and responsibilities between the three levels of government
- Making use of voluntary contributions to services
- Being results-focused
- High level training and professional development for public servants

A demanding day of discussion brought the Study Tour to a conclusion. In a short space of time, the group had absorbed a vast amount of information and knowledge from a wide range of service practitioners and policy makers in Australia. At the same time, they made a lasting and positive impact on everyone they met. The challenges and obstacles to achieving improved social services for the people of Paraguay are many, but the work completed during this visit represent one important step to overcoming them.



SUPPORTERS

- Government of Paraguay
- AusAID
- GIZ, the German Agency for International Cooperation
- The International Cooperation Agency of Chile, AGCI
- Victoria University
- Community Works
- City of Melbourne
- LaTrobe University
- Government of Victoria
- Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government
- Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services, Australian Government
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Government
- Department of Human Services, Australian Government
- Partnering Works
- Queensland Government
- Lifeline
- Common Ground
- South West Action Table, Toowoomba
- Centre for Local Government, University of New England
- Ninti One



