

# *Changing Lives, Changing Communities Mackay*



**17 & 18 OCTOBER 2018**

Magpies Sporting Club

**MACKAY**

# About Changing Lives, Changing Communities



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Changing Lives, Changing Communities are 13, two-day events across Queensland, creating new ways for people – citizens, community organisations, private sector and government representatives – to come together, envision and ask “what will it take to create communities where everyone contributes, matters and belongs?”

Changing Lives, Changing Communities is about bringing together all parts of the community to co-create solutions to ensure everyone is included in their community, and can access what they need; like a place to call home, good health, transport, education, and meaningful employment.

This document brings together the highlights of the two days in 2018 in Mackay.

Changing Lives, Changing Communities – Mackay is funded through Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) National Readiness Grants – National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

# Check - in: What inspired you to be here?



Looking to collaborate in building ideas for a more inclusive Mackay

I was inspired in the hope for change in our community and what we need, not what people outside of our community think we want!

I like learning about people with different backgrounds and their ability in life

Collective sharing gives power

I try to be involved in anything that has a positive influence for all people

To break down barriers and build skills

To start my journey as a support worker

Make Mackay a more inclusive, accessible place

The opportunity to meet with like minded people who share the desire to make our community more inclusive

Learn how to contribute to my community

Listen  
Learn  
Share

Hear and share stories from the community



# The Mackay context



## Panel



### **Tammy Lewis**

#### *The Incredible Tip Shop*

Tammie works at the Incredible Tip Shop in Mackay. Working with 22 staff and 25 volunteers the tip shop has been running for five years supporting people with disability make a change in their lives. People in the tip shop are supported to move through the ranks at their own speed. With no government funding the organisation works to train people, develop their confidence and start to realise their goals, whatever they may be!



### **Helen Styles**

#### *Mackay Regional Council Disaster Resilience*

Helen spoke about the importance of planning for natural disasters so when they do hit you are ready to act and bounce back. Planning is for community services as well as individuals, however it can be done together to make sure the most can be made of community assets and people. Remember, during an emergency, it is more likely neighbours will help each other than emergency services will help them.



### **Valeriya Edsell**

#### *George Street Neighbourhood Centre*

George Street Neighbourhood Centre has been supporting the Mackay community more than 30 years. The centre prides itself on being a resource for multicultural people in the area and is Valeriya's passion. The Mackay community is at the heart of everything the centre does, working tirelessly to build a sustainable and resilient Mackay. Inclusion is one of our foundation bricks.



### **Frances Rewharewha**

#### *University of Central Queensland*

Frances teaches an aspirational program for high school students preparing for steps after finishing school. She reminds the young people that they can ask questions because 'there are people paid to actually answer your questions so make them work'. Her focus is preparing students for the transition to post-school pathways which she believes are crucial to future employment. The Connect Year 12 Program is dedicated to helping students explore their own identity, interests and strengths, overcome any challenges they may face and explore opportunities for higher education.

# Stories of Inclusion



## Story tellers



### Lexis Geia

Lexis talked to us as a mother and staunch advocate of the NDIS. She has two children who have been diagnosed with autism and epilepsy and, until she accessed the NDIS, she was struggling and felt like she was managing this alone. Access to the NDIS has changed her life and the life of the two boys. Lex is now a huge advocate and takes the time to share what she has learned with others in her community.



### Dave Conway

Dave is a local, partially blind artist who is making his mark using the internet and local gallery spaces. Art from the Blind Side had allowed Dave to access the world and sell his art. He has also hosted exhibitions, although finding spaces has been a little challenging. After selling more than 400 pieces of art Dave is moving forward and is passionate about the future.



### John Slade

John works for Endeavour helping to manage the warehouse. He could not hold his enthusiasm back in talking about the work, helping others and how he has been able to start to realise his dreams. When asked what made it possible, John responded, "Determination - lots of determination!" Rising to his level of enthusiasm and positivity was met with cheers and clapping from the group.



### Gary Matthews

Gary told a story about the past and the present - his story of growing up in an institution and how things have changed for people with disability. For Gary, the NDIS has led to even more change. He has taken up archery, a long-held dream, as well as working to improve his mobility through a range of different services.

# Life changes for a family in Mackay



While most parents would enjoy spending time and having conversations with their kids, for Lexis Geia it is particularly special because it is something that has not been possible until recently.

Lexis has two boys who have been diagnosed with autism and epilepsy. She was struggling and finding it difficult to afford the necessary therapies until she was introduced to the NDIS.

“Before the NDIS we did struggle a fair bit. I had no understanding of what autism was. When they were diagnosed I was just handed a piece of paper saying this is what autism is. Just go home and read it,” said Lex.

“I read it, but it was not registering for me.”

After seeing many doctors and healthcare professionals, Lex met a doctor who mentioned that her boys would probably be eligible for an NDIS package.

“He knew the sort of person I was and that it would be hard for me to go home and make that call for help. So he made me contact the NDIS and fill out the paper work in his office,” she laughed.

“In fact he wouldn’t let me leave until I had it all done!”

“Once the boys got their plans everything has been smooth sailing. That was about two years ago and we have had no problems at all.”

The biggest difference for Lex is that her boys are now able to do things for themselves.

“They can dress themselves, bath themselves and brush their teeth themselves.”  
“It is awesome.”

With some excitement, Lex explains she is no longer working full time but able to be at home with her boys.

“I’ve never been able to do that before and it is amazing. I have a totally different relationship with them and it is great.”

Lexis now takes the things she has learned and generously shares them with others who find themselves navigating the same concerns and systems. She sees the two days at Changing Lives, Changing communities as an extension of that sharing.

“It’s an awesome two days, to listen to other people speak about their stories. It is great to see organisations and businesses coming together to understand and include people with disability in everything they do.”

# Recipe for inclusion



While storytellers were sharing their experiences, we asked participants to listen to the ingredients for inclusion. This is what they heard.



## Recipe:

1. Determination
2. Support
3. Accessibility
4. Social Media
5. Education
6. Community participation
7. Opportunities
8. Connection
9. Persistence
10. Understanding and acceptance

# Blue Skies Scenario (2009)

## A vision for an inclusive community



The Blueskies Scenario was a community response to the call for an alternative future for people with disability, their families and supporters.

It started with a **core group**, a dedicated group of community members working together who had power to influence, commitment and 'natural authority' across the stakeholder groups. The group included:

- Valmae Rose – National Disability Services
- Brad Swan – Assistant Director General – Department of Communities
- Lesley Chenoweth – Professor of Social Work at Griffith University
- Kevin Cocks – Director – Queensland Advocacy Incorporated
- Ric Thompson – Co-ordinator Inclusion Works
- Ann Greer – Manager Community Connections
- Mark Henley – CEO- Spinal Injuries
- Nino Lalic– Advisor to Minister Disability Services
- Grahame Schlect – Cares Queensland
- Fran Vlary – Coordinator Queenslanders with Disability Network
- Alissa Phillips – Executive Director – Space
- Margaret Ward- Strategic Planning and Policy Officer Mamre
- Ian Plowman – Registered psychologist (independent facilitator)

The core group had a **shared purpose** - they were clear about what we are doing, why and how we are going to achieve it. **The Champions** were a group of supporters who believe in what the core group were doing, who spread the word, talked to others about it and built the momentum. An integral part of the process was hosting community **conversations** with community members to develop shared values, purpose, and build the vision. This helped to develop a **shared vision** through conversations about what it needs to look like, and what will it take? **The scenario** was the clear articulation of what the alternative future will look like. Another important part was connecting with the **community** and getting their buy in, see how it benefits and getting people to care about it. It was also important to have **influential buy in**- People who could make decisions and influence on board.

This led to the end goal - **Deliver an outcome that makes good sense, socially and economically.**

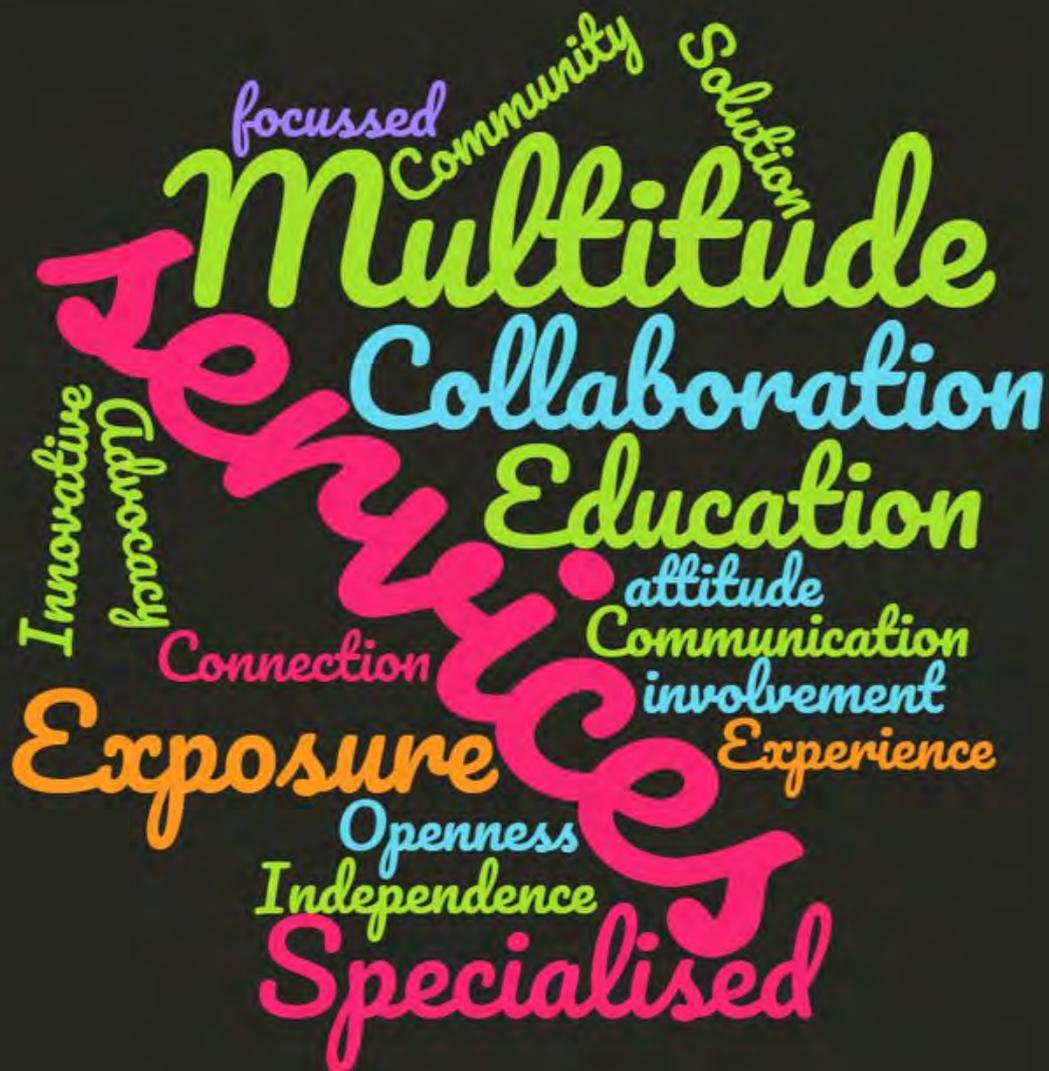
For more information on Blue Skies, visit: <http://blue-skies.info/videos/blue-skies-video/>



# World Cafe



What are the elements already happening here?



# World Cafe



What action am I willing to take to progress the vision?

A word cloud featuring various terms in different colors and orientations. The most prominent word is 'Education' in large green letters. Other words include 'Sharing', 'Identify', 'knowledge', 'Offer', 'Collaboration', 'gaps', 'help', 'information', 'Respect', 'Accessible', 'Awareness', 'Targeted inclusion.', 'Advocacy', and 'campaign'.

# Appreciative inquiry



Making social change requires courage. We asked participants to share when they had to be courageous to create change. We asked what was inspiring/important and what helped it to happen? These are their stories.

## What was inspiring/important?

- Perseverance
- Humour in the face of adversity
- Perception
- Confidence
- Finding your inner strength and independence

## What helped it to happen?

- Trusting yourself
- Accepting help from others

## What was inspiring/important?

- Courage to follow this idea
- Learning new skills - trust gut feeling
- Frame of mind, dignity and respect
- Stop, be grateful, acknowledge, and keep going

## What helped it to happen?

- Reached the end of the road experience
- Reaching out to others and seeing their experience
- Magic team using Facebook
- Appreciation of all aspects and value people

## What was inspiring/important?

- Brave and uplifting attitude
- Resilience to changing
- Desire to learn new things and succeed
- Dedication to be pushed to the best
- Diversity in experiences that helped with success
- Made into a kind and wonderful persona as a result

## What helped it to happen?

- Good attitude
- Hardworking ethic
- Changed environments to keep positive supports
- Family support

## What was inspiring/important?

- Personal passport
- Courage to go
- Courage to listen and act
- From big things, big things grow

## What helped it to happen?

- Individual agency
- Vision
- Real opportunity - create jobs!
- Combining education, opportunity with experience
- Having awareness to see what's missing and courage to create the opportunity
- From the heart

Mackay Regional Council Mayor Greg Williamson

**”WE HAVE  
EIGHT BEACH  
WHEELCHAIRS  
THAT ARE  
THERE TO BE  
DEPLOYED!”**



# Northview State School Signing Choir



# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 1



Host  
idea

Youth Mental Health

✓ What  
do we  
know  
works...

- Community consultation
- Social media
- Letting youth have a voice
- Individual encouragement and support

Who do we need  
to partner with...

- Councils x 3
- Education QLD
- Mental health providers and network
- Sporting bodies/cultural/recreational organisations
- Cultural bodies
- General public
- North Queensland Primary Health Network
- Respiratory and Sleep Disorder Centre
- Partner with QCOSS, Mackay Youth Connection Network, Youth Justice

What  
could this  
idea  
become...

Vision

*Regional Strategy*

Developed to support, develop and nurture all our young people so they feel:

- They belong and have a voice in our community
  - They are valued for their contribution
  - They have opportunities to learn, develop and participate
  - They feel safe and connected in their community

This strategy would apply to all young people, regardless of their ability

What are  
the risks  
and challenges..

- Prevention is better than cure
- Youth learning and understanding, self-regulation and how to identify the triggers
- Cohesive community approach
  - Interim goals - measurable
    - Attitudinal change
  - Genuine collaboration

## Project 1

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- It's what people are not saying that is important
  - Develop trusts with our youth
  - Opportunities need to be appropriate
  - Involved young people in solutions
- Need to learn genuine collaborative practice

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Be respectful
- Wide spread information
- Talk responsibility to be inclusive

What are our next wise steps...

- ILC grant may apply
- Connect with other project groups

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 2



Host  
idea

Employment Opportunities



What  
could this  
idea  
become...

Vision

✓ What  
do we  
know  
works...

- Funding
- Wage subsidies
- Boost
- Ongoing support
- Support workers
- Training/education

Disabled people given opportunities - the same as everyone else.

- Federal legislation
- Local business involved
  - Mackay Council
- Forming partnerships
- Chamber of Commerce
  - Centrelink
  - Job Active

What are  
the risks  
and challenges..

- Health and safety
  - Fear
  - Time, money
- EFFORT (too hard)

Who do we need  
to partner with...

- Mackay Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Centrelink
- Job Active
- Local business
- Franchisees

## Project 2

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- Stay positive
- Get back up again
  - Never give up
  - Follow up
- Keep connected

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Legislation
  - Enforce anti-discrimination
  - Make organisations accountable
- Fines, penalties for non-compliance

What are our next wise steps...

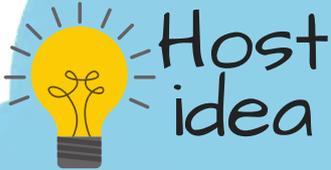
- Make contact with all listed and follow up

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 3



Host  
idea

TASKFORCE

What  
could this  
idea  
become...

Vision

✓  
What  
do we  
know  
works...

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Diversity of skills and knowledge
- Networks
- Power of numbers
- Planning
- Commitment
- Achieving small goals
- Local ownership

- Drivers/facilitators of change
- Consortium of local stakeholders
  - Glue for action groups

What are  
the risks  
and challenges..

- Commitment
- Getting buy in from right people
- Change of government
  - Political interference
  - Sharing information

Who do we need  
to partner with...

- Chamber of Commerce
- Peak bodies across sectors - local/state/federal
- Community members

## Project 3

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- Active listening
- Place-based response
- Celebrate and share (marketing internal/external)
  - Calculated risk (challenge status quo)
  - Keep it simple
- Action learning (geographic testing)
  - Documenting the journey
- Staying focussed/ clear sight of priorities

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Development of a charter
- Transparent and open communication (agreed process)
  - Form of communication (language)

What are our next wise steps...

- Participants (identify)
- BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE LOCAL MAYOR
  - Development of the Foundation (Principles)

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions.....



### Project 4



## Host idea

Promote disability tourism in Mackay  
AGGRESSIVELY combining private  
business sector



What do we know works...

- Giving consistent messages to business owners
- Having enough people with the right skill set
- Collaboration between organisations
- Incentives
- Profits

Who do we need to partner with...

- Tourism Mackay
- Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Motel/Hotel Managers
- Grants - ILC (NDIS) Chamber of Commerce
- Department of State Development

What could this idea become...

- It has the capacity to affect every aspect of accessibility in Mackay. Accommodation, shopping, transport, restaurants, leisure. It can also bring a great boost to our tourism industry which will have impact on the entire community.

What are the risks and challenges..

- Show financial incentives
- Business owners won't be interested
  - People lose interest in the project after a while
- Right people with right skills bored
  - Risk aversion insurance

## Project 4

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- Is my business accessible?
- Watch and follow a person in a wheelchair
- Perhaps experience using a wheelchair in their own facility?
- How to market the concept of a vital and financially empowered disability community?

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Educate business owners that the disability community is a great untapped market sector that EXCEEDS the Chinese tourism sector

What are our next wise steps...

- Mackay/Whitsunday tourism
- Chamber of Commerce
- Spinal Life

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 5



## Host idea

Accessibility inclusion for the whole community



## Vision

What could this idea become...

- Remove all barriers/full inclusion into every aspect of life
- To access basic needs to live
- Housing/transport/community/activities/health - without having to rely on others for access

✓ What do we know works...

- New builds - access improved because of new legislation
- New footpaths considered
- Good public support when needed
- Buses - wheelchair access

What are the risks and challenges..

- Private shop owners - change attitudes/awareness/education
- Limited footpath access
- RISK! Have to walk/travel on roads
  - No tie down points in buses for wheelchairs

Who do we need to partner with...

- State/federal members
- Accessibility forum
- Private sector/business
- Dept. of Housing/housing forum
- Private enterprises
- Council
- Tech services
- Buslink
- Transport/roads
- Taxi

## Project 5

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- Walk in someone else's shoes - experience their daily life
  - Feedback target groups
  - Feedback family/carers
- Feedback to community leaders/private sector/government
  - Find out why - limit change in private sector
  - Expand conversations to private sector

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Take disabled stickers off bouncing castle!
- Access - through front door, like everyone else
- Access - Mackay Regional Council website/forums - media releases including different formats and languages
  - Accessibility in our region

What are our next wise steps...

- Change legislation to include modification to old buildings and private stops
- Unisex toilets in all public places/areas - for all access

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 6



**Host idea** What education can be provided to the broader community to be more inclusive?



What could this idea become...

✓ What do we know works...

- Getting the education into young kids and exposing them
- Educating people through media and social media
  - CEO's, employers - professional development
  - Adult education

- Everyone is accepted and thought of
  - Planning and policies
- People with disabilities living parallel lives
  - Stop the word 'disabled'
- Understanding different forms of communication
- Everyone has their 20 universal needs

Who do we need to partner with...

- Service providers
- Families and carers
- Workshop holders
- Education sector
- People with disabilities
- Uneducated people

What are the risks and challenges..

- No segregation
- Ingrained attitudes
- NDIS not providing training for services and carers

## Project 6

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- To see people as people
- Nothing about me without me

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Stop segregation
- Education on inclusion
- Eliminate stereotypes

What are our next wise steps...

- Contacting education departments
- Contacting service providers

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....



### Project 7



## Host ideas

Mackay inclusive community centre



## What do we know works...

- People want help and want to be connected- "Build it and they will come!"
- NDIS has provided funding for people with disability to access the community but there are limited spots for volunteering and good places with accessibility outside of a shopping centre. So any more opportunities for capacity building would be well received.
- Schools need more work experience placements
- Needs to have a landmark for tourism to find us easily.

## Who do we need to partner with...

- Mackay City Council, Regional Development Australia
- All sides of govt (state and federal)
- Mayor to host a range of conversations with business partnerships
- The Mackay Taskforce - group formed at forum
- Community consultation

## What could this idea become...

- A safe environment that whole of community can access opportunities for volunteer jobs and growth. Like Seniors, schools and people recovering need a place to belong. A place of health and mental wellbeing. Short term accommodation would be a part of this. Mackay has limited options around respite, rehab and tourism opportunities for accommodation solutions. Safe to assist people with disabilities. Care Kitchen could be completed to supply the food. Promoting other business Education for families - community based, networking for family groups. Community gardens build to suit all needs and provide regular volunteer positions. Shed connected to have a space for any gender to build and connect with the community. Support workers would be able to get placements to help others and obtain employment. No alcohol, no pokies, no drugs. Just endless opportunities!

## What are the risks and challenges..

- That community might not use it
- Facility not built due to land size
- Ensuring the facility is built to all needs of the community
  - Location is not central enough
- Financial outlay and time constraints. Viability.

## Vision

## Project 7

What do we need to learn by doing?...

- Flexibility to adapt to community needs
  - Allow for growth
- Listen and be adaptable without losing focus
- Constant open and transparent communication across all sectors

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Promote a space where everyone feels valued, accepted and proud to be able to access
- Broad representation from community on Committee/Board

What are our next wise steps...

# Open Space

## Ideas to actions....

### Project 8



Host  
idea

Get business involved with INFO



What  
could this  
idea  
become...

✓ What  
do we  
know  
works...

- Done by accountants firm locally

- Part of HR, performance management and marketing

Who do we need  
to partner with...

- Champions - major boards
- Leaders
- Chamber of Commerce
- RIN

What are  
the risks  
and challenges..

- Getting business involved

## Project 8

What do we need to learn by doing?...

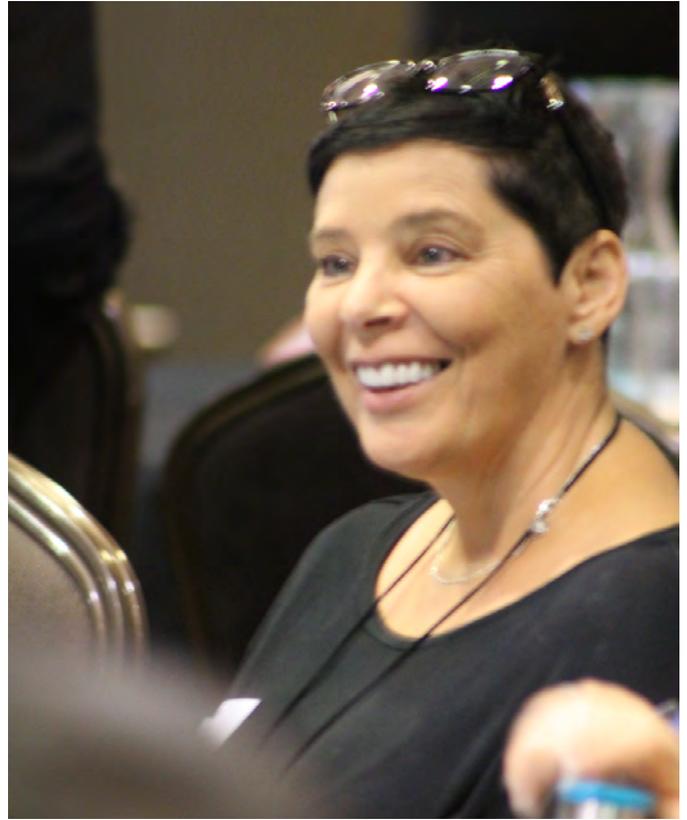
- Pilot organisations
  - Know industry
- Target specific organisation
- Find out what skills are needed on boards and committees
- Becoming advisors/sub-committees if cannot commit

How do we make sure everyone is included?...

- Awareness of the problem
- Market / advertise the need

What are our next wise steps...

- Start with Chamber of Commerce, Council and selected few organisations
  - Lions clubs and rotary clubs



# Four pictures, two days

Changing Lives  
Changing Communities

Mackay

17 October, 2018



What will it take to create  
Contributes,

What do the stories  
tell us? what do we  
need to focus on?

business people community  
organisations government



What inspired you

Setting the Scene  
QCSS  
ADN  
NDIA



goodwill  
rhetoric  
not enough

ideas  
to  
action

not just online!  
opportunity  
to come  
together  
accessible  
information

We know best  
whats needed

listen learn share

collective sharing gives power

support each other

enacting human rights

community led works

break barriers build skills

improving community

linking families

be with passionate people

make Mackay a place for everyone

Sharing local stories

Mackay regional Council  
community resilience building  
work together

break down silos  
share information  
access + integrate

determination  
dream drive

Communication  
ompassion  
ouage  
Community

Community value driven  
social connectedness  
inclusion  
George Street N.C.

inform educate include  
CUU

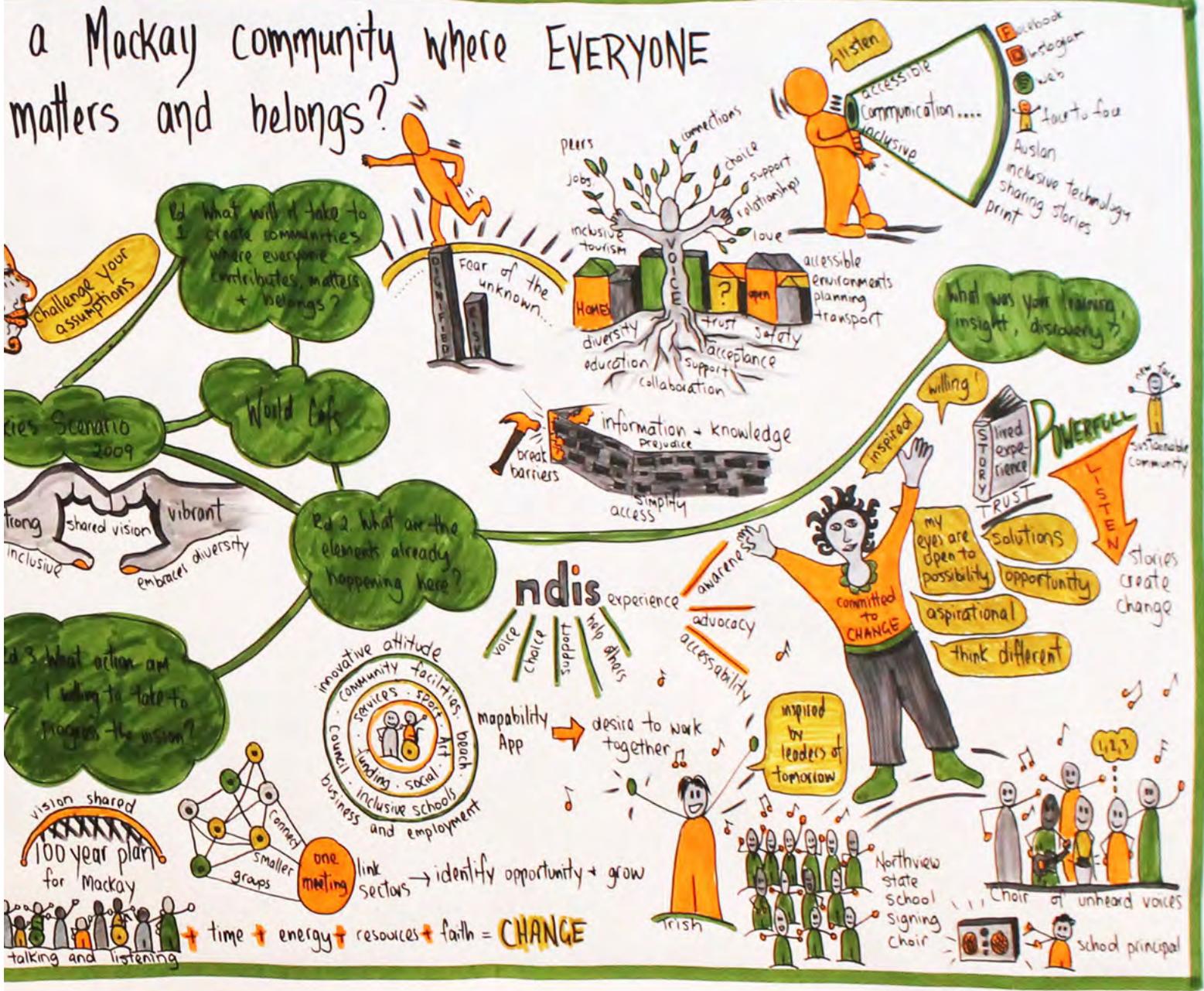
Shared visions  
• NDIS choice • support  
• resources • accept differences • accessible places • ask ???  
• education • resilience • employment + value  
• where there is a will there is at least ONE way...

incred ABLE tip shop  
people driven employment training

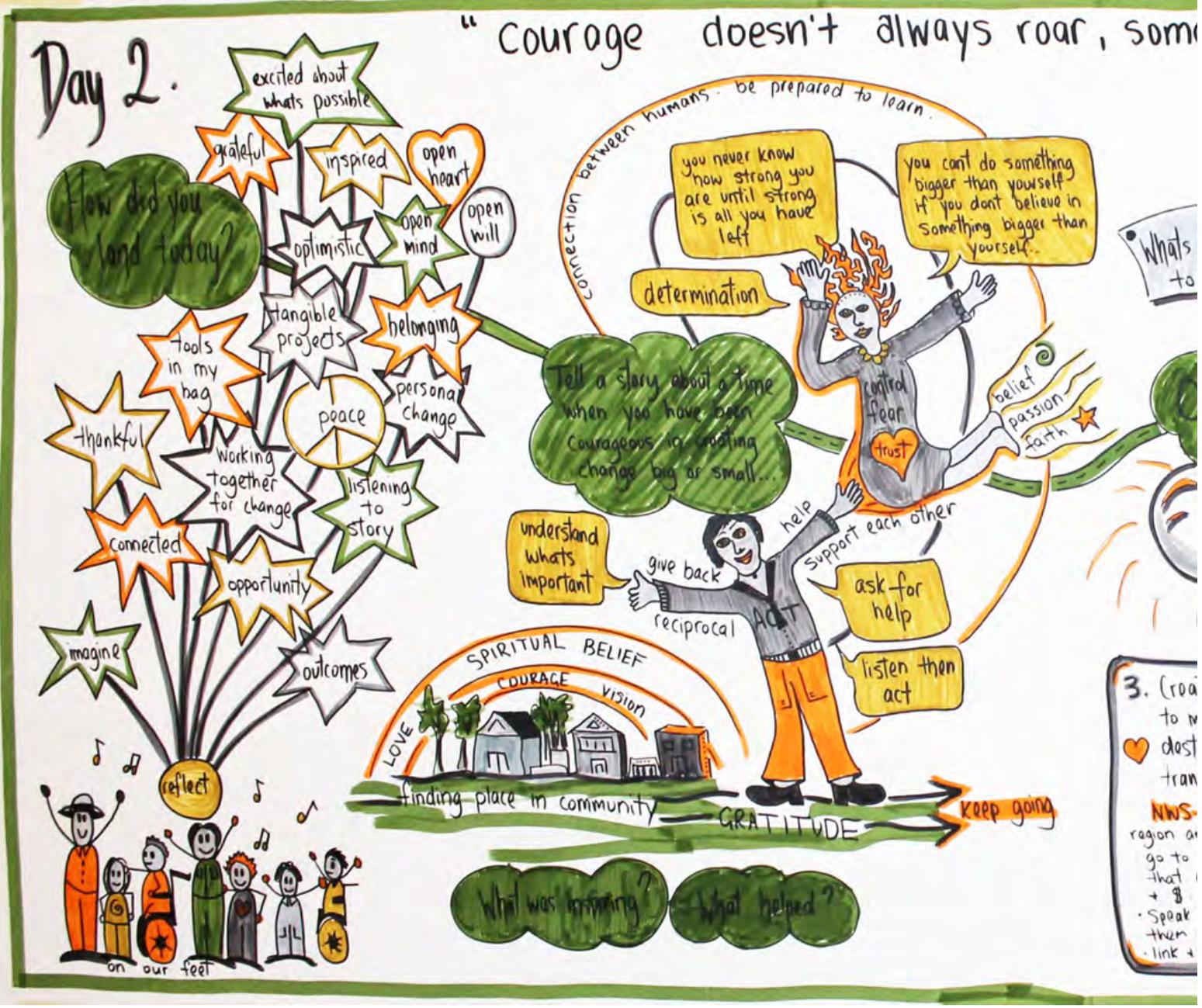


# Four pictures, two days

a Mackay community where EVERYONE matters and belongs?



# Four pictures, two days



# Four pictures, two days

Sometimes its a quiet whisper"

calling me action?

open space

ideas into action...

the inclusive tourism - the opportunity to make Mackay the inclusive tourism destination of Australia... hotels, sport, activities, beach chairs. it would affect all services across the rd improve livability for everyone Mackay tourism + promote the opportunity exists. People with disability have choice to Chamber of Commerce + work with support actions leverage with other projects

1. How do we work together to create a more accessible + inclusive community across housing, transport, shops, for EVERYONE?  
 remove barriers  
 ★  
 NWS... old + new infrastructure  
 • connecting with universal accessible toilets  
 • decision makers to influence policy + legislative change  
 • collect real stories about how accessibility impacts peoples lives

4. Employment for people with disability and a directory of businesses + organisations that would employ people with disability as volunteers and employees support for social enterprises  
 NWS... legislation to ensure orgs are required to employ a quota of people with a disability to combat discrimination Hold employers accountable  
 Connect with Council and the Anti-Discrimination Commission Supported wages

8. How do we get more volunteers involved in community organisations?  
 NWS... make it part of peoples cars to volunteer in community organisation make it a part of peoples performance plan + skill development - Advocate to Centrelink  
 • Connect with Chamber of Commerce + collect stories of success  
 • use examples from where it works

2. Who can we work with and where can we start an inclusive community centre for the Mackay region?  
 a safe space, work experience, placements a base for community groups + events monitoring progia accommodation?  
 NWS...  
 • collect data on community need  
 • location with accessible transport options - independence  
 • support people throughout the lifespan  
 • explore existing buildings + land available

5. Community education to reduce fear of people with a disability  
 NWS... stop people with disability living parallel lives. Include everyone in policy and program decisions  
 Influence education sector, reduce stigma  
 Create awareness in schools  
 Connect with stakeholders  
 Human Rights ACT - hold education accountable

9. How can we continue to connect and access CLCC Mackay participants + bring in broader community + business, to work on projects + plan for action...?  
 NWS... Changing Communities Taskforce the glue to keep us together  
 develop solid processes to work together  
 • develop founding vision + members  
 • emails of group to start developing charter - continue to hold + drive action

6. Youth mental health prevention and a broader strategy for young people. All young people, all abilities  
 NWS... Mackay Youth Commitment Taskforce involve young people look at grants available (ILC)  
 connect with whole family unit not just yp.  
 connect with other CLCC project groups

train the trainer model - vital information  
 7. Upskill participants, providers + mainstream organisations about the important role GPs play in NDIS access process.  
 NWS... gather good news stories of access + share them network more to get GPs to talk about functional access not just medical diagnosis. cost associated is a barrier (specialist diagnosis) PHN - connect  
 word of mouth and personal stories  
 health professionals who would provide 'at fee' assessments

nothing in world...

Thanks to everyone who came along to Changing Lives, Changing Communities Mackay.

We know you have made a difference!

**One thing I've learned and one thing I'm grateful for:**

Collaboration Reenergised  
 People Introductions Education  
 Generosity Love Inspired Ideas  
 Friendship Working together Future  
 Excitement Networking Respect  
 New Community Progress Connections Passion  
 Opportunity Motivation Perseverance Hope

***Changing Lives, Changing Communities Mackay***

***a partnership between:***

