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Managing for Joint Outcomes:

Connecting Up the Horizontal and the Vertical

'Others have asked about what we did but no-one has asked before about why or how.'[1]

Introduction

In pockets throughout the New Zealand public sector, ordinary officials are doing extraordinary things as they learn to do something very difficult: how to collaborate with people from other agencies. This occurs as they learn what needs to be done in managing for shared outcomes in complex policy cases. They appear to be doing excellent work in achieving desired outcomes for clients; yet they are doing so in spite of the public management system they work in, without much support from their organisations and the sector generally, and in the general absence of a learning culture. As there are no textbooks, they also confront the challenge of making it up as they go along. In several respects, therefore, their ways of working are unlike those assumed by traditional models of Westminster officials – and Kiwis may be better off because of it.

If those working in this way indicate that support and culture are some of the biggest barriers they face, then the

solutions must focus on so-called 'soft system' matters – which, of course, are the hardest to address. This, therefore, represents a significant challenge for public sector organisations in New Zealand, but, even more, for the collective leadership of the public sector.

This paper is based on some key findings from a recently completed research project undertaken by the Victoria University School of Government on behalf of the New Zealand public service.[2] While much had been written in New Zealand on collaboration, there is very little published New Zealand research on what actually happens when officials work together;[3] in other words, research that focuses on enacted practice and 'what works' rather than prescribing systems or models from the top down or as context-free 'best/ good practice'. This, therefore, is the approach taken in this project – as intimated by the quote above.

The imperative for this research was not a desire to fill a research lacuna but a practical concern to diffuse and accelerate shared learning about working together. As New Zealand public officials gradually figure out what 'managing for outcomes' means, and especially 'shared outcomes', they are progressively realising that 'we can't do this on our own' and that 'we need to join up to get the results'. Their talent in their practical response has been to build their work on small, informal horizontal networks that flow between organisations (and sectors): these have the advantages of being energetic, flexible and responsive, while still having the access to human and other capital that comes with being part of larger, vertically-aligned formal organisations.

Trends in 21st-century governance will increasingly demand this sort of approach, which is partly why New Zealand public sector managers are asking how it is to be done. This research is an attempt to first identify what is being done, and then to explore ways of diffusing and accelerating these experiences throughout the public sector.

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What did we do?

The project on Better Connected Services for Kiwis brought together academic and practitioner perspectives on what is happening on the ground in New Zealand. It drew on the experience of other administrations, such as Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and on the public policy literature.

The project has focused on the preconditions for more joined-up citizen/user-focused services, the characteristics of areas where it occurs and factors influencing diffusion, as evidenced in work undertaken up and down New Zealand. A key result has been an attempt to spread the shared learning about collaborative working. The research phase included a literature review and intensive interviews with individuals involved in seven case studies. The case studies were deliberately drawn from a range of locations and central government sectors and included:

• autism – national;
• the Government Urban and Economic Development Office – Auckland;
• Mayors Taskforce on Jobs – national;
• National Maritime Coordination Centre – Trentham;
• integrated case management – Papakura;
• recognised seasonal employers in the fruit industry – Hawke's Bay; and
• strengthening education in Mangere and Otara – Manakau.

We also conducted multiple collective interviews/workshops (a.k.a. focus group discussions) in Auckland, Napier, Wellington and Christchurch with over 60 senior and middle managers and front-line staff drawn from a range of agencies and projects, selected via a snowballing technique. These interviews included a final round of discussions in which we asked the subjects to respond to, and, if necessary, correct, our interpretations.

The project adopted a grounded theory approach; we asked staff to describe how they worked together and why they did it. This meant engaging with practitioners in a range of sectors, locations and contexts, including both policy and service delivery, regarding their everyday practice (including their tacit practice).

What did we find? Some key findings on the roles

In managing for shared outcomes, there is considerable support throughout the New Zealand public sector for more 'collaborative' working. This entails not just 'co-existence' (working alone), 'communication' (talking together), 'co-operation' (getting together) or 'co-ordination' (working together), but something more: namely. 'collaboration' (sharing work). One mode is not inherently superior to any other: the nature of the work involved and the goal sought will determine which is most appropriate. Working at the 'collaborative' end of the spectrum is essential when dealing with 'wicked issues' for which 'standard operating procedures' are not effective;

where simple solutions to complex problems simply will not work and responding requires experimentation with 'sensing'[4] and 'learning your way forward', and where the penny has already dropped that the problem is multidimensional and that no one agency can deal with the matter ('we cannot do this by ourselves' and 'we need all of you'). In this context no one person or agency has all the knowledge or resources, or knows what to do; moreover, since 'no system will connect you up', 'the right kinds of connections with the right kinds of people have to be created'.

The New Zealand officials interviewed here confirm several important points: e.g. that 'working jointly is hard ... [and] success is harder'; that current success stories are 'too reliant on individuals' and innovative ways are needed to diffuse these ways of working; that 'top-down approaches drive out collaboration – remember Circuit Breakers'; and rules-of-thumb such as the 'six-meeting rule' – 'If there is no money on the table within six weeks of meetings, I stop coming because it's dead in the water.' Another key learning from this project is that the problem of working together effectively to achieve results is a complex one: it defies attempts to produce a simple cookbook of key steps. But while each collaborative process is different – and extraordinary when compared with 'standard operating practice' – at another level they are all the same. Each revealed a certain set of necessary 'roles'; and each went through a 'process' of group dynamics. It is these two aspects that we concentrate on in this article.

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The cases we looked at are all instances of complex policy tackled by multiple agencies, and in some cases the shared outcome was the primary driver and in others there was 'top-down' requirement to 'work together'. The specific goals generally emerged as staff began working together, and attempts to prescribe and mandate these in advance often would have derailed the process.

Each of these cases was also marked to a greater or lesser extent by an 'a-ha!' moment: a moment of crisis, emergency, sudden and unexpected appearance, frustration or realisation experienced by some participant in the group or process already engaged in trying to deal with the issue – and it did not matter whether that participant was a provider, official or client or whether high or low in the status hierarchy. The sudden galvanising moment ('everyone here is talking crap'; 'doing it the normal way isn't working'; 'it's not a miracle at all; it's a disaster'; 'this school is going to be closed') has the effect of instantly shattering all the previous assumptions regarding

normality. It requires and demandes that the participants create new ways of thinking and acting in relation to the issue. It is a point of no return.

It was critical that a trio of roles be enacted based on this moment of recognition to enable new ways of doing things. We stress that these are roles which individuals can move in and out of and do not stand as descriptions of particular individuals.

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The 'public entrepreneur'

In some ways the public entrepreneur is the most critical role, certainly in relation to initiating new ways of working. This person recognises the import of the moment of recognition and responds in kind with new ways of working with others to achieve the desired outcome. People who adopt this role can be in a variety of formal positions, although they are usually an official in the 'middle' of a setting (e.g. a line manager in an organisation, or a senior manager relative to their chief executive and the minister). Their key driver is the need to achieve the desired outcomes, but with the realisation that previous ways prescribed for getting there in particular cases are insufficient and inadequate. New ways must therefore be created, 'made up as we go along'. In other words, work is treated as action learning and not rule following.

Because public entrepreneurs are marvellous networkers, their initial activity is focused on pulling together 'fellow-travellers' whom they can trust to collaborate. Equally, however, because the problem has suddenly appeared in new terms, the solution often cannot be devised without the active participation of the client. The public entrepreneur often therefore also establishes a new relationship with the client, listening closely and working 'with' (rather than 'over' or 'for') them in co-producing the way forward and, if necessary, empowering the client to do so.

Characteristically, these public entrepreneurs do not regard 'rules' as fixed or as a constraint. If and when these general rules get in the road of achieving the organisational outcomes, public entrepreneurs work by 'bending' (and sometimes 'breaking') the rules. This enables the new ways required to make the system work in the cases concerned. Knowing there is no textbook, they 'learn as they go'. However, they regard themselves as 'acting normally', doing no more than 'what needs to be done to achieve the outcome for the client', justifying their actions by the specifics of the

case or context and what they need to do, as a public official, to make it happen. If there is a possibility of challenge they will usually 'act first and seek approval later'.

The public entrepreneur and their fellow-travellers – the core of the policy network being formed to take the response forward – will sometimes keep their activities below the organisational radar, largely because of the risk-averse organisational cultures they believe permeate the public sector ('I keep my head down … my colleagues handle everything the same way').

In short, critical to the role of public entrepreneur – the individual who initiates a transformational response to a moment of recognition – is a 'can do' attitude. These individuals, however, are not – any more than their fellow-travellers – organisational mavericks or 'loose cannons'. They are often savvy about power, influence, organisations and individuals, and seek to manage in particular cases for the overall organisational outcomes while maintaining a deeply-felt grasp of the public interest and the proper and legitimate role of the official. In other words, their personal and emotional commitment to the role, purpose and efficacy of the public servant is central to their personal and professional being.[5] They do more, however, than say the right things, follow standard operating procedure and conduct due process.

'Fellow-travellers'

Fellow-travellers are exactly as the term implies: working in the public sector is inherently a social and political activity. No public entrepreneur responding to a complex policy issue can be effective by him or herself; each needs like-minded people with whom they jointly collaborate, each or any of whom might themselves play the 'public entrepreneur' role in another setting. This applies even more where the policy problem and solution span agency boundaries and demand 'joining up' to achieve 'shared outcomes'. The process that develops is one of 'collective policy learning'.

It is worth noting that this process is inherently unstable, under perpetual risk of 'falling back to the old ways', and so must be constantly pushed forward. In our case studies, what held the network together was the degree of trust and reciprocity shared by the members. It is notable in this respect how established these networks have become, and the emphasis the members placed on not just the personal relationships but also their stability and longevity ('restructurings mean that key people move on'). Equally, potential members, even if new to the context, are recruited on the basis of their willingness and capability to buy into and work within this kind of working culture.

For fellow-travellers, the key issue is the extent of the resources they can put on the collective table for others to share and use; they do not regard themselves as 'agency representatives'. In this respect their behaviour is almost the

complete opposite of the turf protection that bedevils much inter-agency work.

A 'guardian angel'

While the public entrepreneur and their fellow-travellers might often keep the first stages of innovation to themselves and work under the organisational radar, there will usually come a point where they need a 'guardian angel'. This is an individual, often a more senior manager in or close to the organisation, who can mentor, protect, advise, advocate for and otherwise generally 'ride shotgun' for the network. Interestingly, staff suggested that there were enough public entrepreneurs and fellow-travellers scattered around the New Zealand public sector but far too few high-level officials or other individuals capable of enacting the 'guardian angel' role.

'Guardian angels' themselves value innovation, flexibility and new thinking and are all too aware of how conventional thinking and standard operating practice can hamper and close down innovation. Accordingly, a guardian angel will be keenly attuned to the context, reading the ebbs and flows, managing the authorising environment for and on behalf of the public entrepreneur and fellow-travellers, and sensing the moment when opportunities arise. Equally, they know how to stand back and let an innovation develop (or more actively facilitate its development), even though the risks in doing so may be quite high ('they must not own but get out of the way'). They too know the value of working under the radar, but they also know when it is possible to 'go public' and when it is necessary to do so for reasons of public accountability.

The 'guardian angel' does not simply serve the vertical, organisational interest as the innovation proceeds, but does ensure that that interest is served and that certain hard limits are not exceeded. In short, managing the authorising environment in which the public entrepreneur and fellow-travellers are getting on with their work is the critical function of the guardian angel.

This trio of roles – each of which is not necessarily one person, and not one person all of the time – acts in a way that combines the vertical and the horizontal by:
• balancing overall strategic goals and particular circumstances;
• balancing system demands and case conditions;
• focusing all on the common goal; and
• creating new ways of working that involve all the parties.

The 'active client' ('co-producer')

In most of the cases examined, the client was an active participant in the process and fully engaged: active because the public entrepreneur and fellow-travellers know this is essential (no complex problem can be identified or solved anew without the participation of those affected) and because they ensured that the client was empowered to participate (whether by providing resources or by removing obstacles). From another angle it can be said that these agents are sensitive to power imbalances (whether between clients and officials or between

officials themselves) and, wherever possible, where they prevent progress, seek to minimise them.

The active engagement of the client that seems so important in most of the cases examined points to another set of findings arising out of this study. The most effective cases of collaboration required different relationships between front-line staff, national office officials, ministers and clients from those given by the classical constitutional models. These cases also point to the interaction between policy development and implementation. They also raise questions about how far national policy can be implemented without discretion allowed for regional variations to suit the specificities of the context.[6]

Some key findings: the process

The points made so far relate to the roles taken up by the participants in each of the cases examined, the structure of positions and the ways they interact. We have also noted that each of the cases entailed a long, involved process of establishing and maintaining their new ways of working. In other words, there was a group dynamic and a set of preconditions that emerged that seemed more or less common to all cases. We have used the group process as the basis for an organising framework. Each case seemed to have at least four phases, which we have labelled simply 'before starting', 'getting together', 'working together' and 'sustaining'. We have used the analogy of a chemical reaction in the discussion that follows, as also shown in Figure 1.

'Before starting'

Figure 1: Joined-Up Public Services
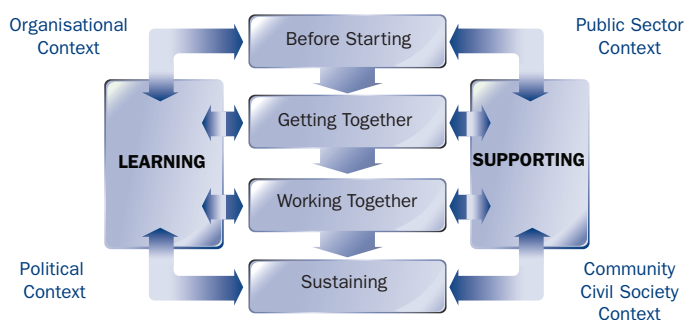
In this phase – before the critical 'a-ha!' moment occurs – the staff are working within their vertically-aligned organisations in the delivery of services. 'Standard operating procedures' apply. The elements are in a stable state. Then 'the moment' of realisation, the instance of recognition, arrives: that moment when a disconnect between the theory and the reality suddenly becomes apparent, when the conflicts between the realities presumed by the 'normal ways of doing things' and 'the ways we need to act to deal effectively with this case' can no longer be ignored – that moment that can arise out of sudden new external pressure or a moment of internal reflection.

Key conditions required to enable the public entrepreneur

(and perhaps, already, their fellow-travellers) include a sense that 'we can't do it on our own'. A critical imperative – a crisis or emergency – or a window of opportunity is offered by serendipity and the official in the right place at the right time decides to grab the moment.

> ## As no one person has all the knowledge or resources, there is no received discourse or language, no cookbook or paint-by-numbers.

'Getting together'

Making chemical elements bond in new ways takes energy and a catalyst. Similarly, in getting together, an initiating agent (the 'public entrepreneur') is required who has the passion, the energy and the credibility to break down the vertical bonds sufficiently to enable resilient horizontal bonds to be established: to break down the vertically-aligned authority structures and organisational practices that prevent those caught up in them from recognising the new realities. Organisations that encourage reflection and learning and that know how to risk-manage create an environment and culture which makes this process easier.

Getting together requires a catalyst, an initiator, someone able to activate the personal qualities, resources, nous, authority and trust within the system and who can galvanise and pull together a group of fellow-travellers: like-minded people who are open to new possibilities, 'go to' people with an equally 'can do' attitude who are willing to engage with the unfamiliar. Not that those individuals will necessarily be available. There were many points in our discussions when subjects mentioned the role of plain, simple good luck in ensuring that the various elements required to make it all work were present, when and where needed. Equally, as noted in the discussion of roles, this nascent network is sometimes (but not always) supported at this stage by one or more sponsoring managers who know how to balance tight and loose and allow the space for individuals to create new ways of working. Success in these respects also requires organisational cultures that empower (or, at least, do not prevent) bottom-up problem solving and that define their mission-critical tasks broadly and not too narrowly.

'Working together'

We were told that public entrepreneurs and their fellow-travellers find it hard to create new ways of working together if the bonds and practices they are developing are not reinforced in various ways. Working together effectively seems to require that staff from the various agencies have the permission and the power to 'try out new ways of working',

and the skills to span organisational boundaries by enacting a role beyond the purely formal (e.g. the terms of their job or technical mandate). This is the critical sense in which they can act as fellow-travellers alongside the public entrepreneur.

There seemed to be no fixed keys to successful governance of the group or process, as the group determines the process whereby individuals become members (i.e. whether an open or a closed process). Much the same applies to the style of governance and processes of monitoring (formal vs. informal), which tend to be shaped and reshaped by the specific context and the imperatives of the situation, particularly as these shift around. Similarly, we observed a wide range of leadership styles (although commanding and controlling styles were rare). The commonalities were around matters such as high value placed on 'heart' (the personal and often emotional commitment to making a difference) and 'smarts' (sufficient savvy and street sense to know how to read the context and make the system work).

Supporting

Working together in achieving shared outcomes does not occur in isolation: horizontal networks need to be connected to the vertical organisation(s) and supported as they work. This requires support from the host organisations (in the form of coaching, financial resources, time and administrative back up) and learning within the group (particularly through a culture of learning and a commitment towards problem solving).

Our subjects described this as 'working in the grey zone, not black & white' for the individual, the relationships and processes, which demands a preparedness to work with uncertainty and complexity. Far from being blind, naïve or wayward, public entrepreneurs, their fellow-travellers and their guardian angels need a high degree of legitimacy inside their organisation and a sophisticated understanding of its formal and informal imperatives, structures, resources and limits. Equally, in terms of cross-organisational relationships, access to resources from host organisations that could be brought to the collective task, either as an earmarked budget within a silo or with flexible or horizontal expenditure rules, was critical in working together effectively.

Learning

Working differently to solve complex problems requires managing on the edge of chaos, where learning is crucial. As no one person has all the knowledge or resources, there is no received discourse or language, no cookbook or paint-by-numbers. It also requires an understanding that structure does not substitute for people or practice ('no system will connect you up'). What must be built up over time is a shared understanding and collective learning, a continual reframing of the problem, often from an outside-in view. Some described this as 'learning your way forward' (to act>sense>respond, as Kurtz and Snowden (2003) might put

it). But doing so also requires the right evaluative capability. Some of the cases explicitly built an 'evaluator' role into the network and several subjects spoke positively of having them in the process, walking alongside as 'critical friends'.

'Sustaining'

Support and learning are crucial for the group to sustain itself and develop. If reflection, group learning and problem solving are expected and are part of the accepted organisational culture, the new structure of roles and the ways of working being developed by the trio of innovation will be sustained. Without this, without organisational support and a culture of learning, joining up will fail and the elements will return to their initial, ineffectual state.

The logic of bureaucracy in relation to processes is to identify repeatable tasks, create a rule and enforce its implementation. The cases examined in this project suggest that complex multi-agency work on shared outcomes often does not lend itself to being simplified and routinised in this way. In these cases everything depends on context, people, and responsiveness from the bottom up and middle outwards, as each continually changes ('it relies on people'). The process of collaboration cannot be set up and walked away from. Sustaining it is critical, via enablement and definitely not control. The absence of active sustenance – at the organisational and sectoral levels – is something felt keenly by the people doing the work discussed in this article, and is a point to which we return in the conclusion.

Wider contexts

Working together is much more than people in different roles working through a process with a group dynamic. It is not about hierarchies *or* networks, it is about working horizontally *and* vertically at the same time. In addition to managing the systems and relationships in their home organisations, staff also live in communities, belong to the public sector and are citizens in the wider society. These wider contexts shape the extent to and manner in which organisations can individually and collectively support these new ways of working, learn from them and develop. Four contexts seem particularly important in this respect: the 'organisational' context, the 'public sector' context, the 'political' context and the 'societal' (civil society) context. A discussion of these would necessarily be lengthy and will not be undertaken in this article, but is available in the discussion document.

Some key findings: assorted enablers and constrainers

Several findings regarding enablers and constrainers have emerged out of the study, some of which are worth reporting here – although the following discussion is selective and brief and does not do justice to the range and depth of issues identified by our subjects.

'The usual suspects'

Certain matters are often identified as constraining innovation. We explored these with the interview subjects and the general trends in their responses are worth noting briefly.

- *$$$ and budgetary silos?* The external budget system is often used as a rationale for not collaborating, but in almost all of the cases it was not a constraint. What staff said *did* matter is the overall Budget constraint, and how budgets/contracts are defined and measured ('payments are tied to widgets and ignore complexity'). Budget 'silos' were identified by several subjects as obstacles to collaboration and other modes of working together, but others said there are plenty of ways 'these can be worked around', and 'when there is a will there is a way'. Here, as elsewhere, it seems that lesser mortals are stopped in their tracks by system limits, whereas public entrepreneurs are not deflected from their overall goals and can often find ways to make things happen.
- *Do embedded systems constrain?* In an obvious sense the answer is 'yes': that is what they are designed to do. The formal embedded systems were designed with vertical

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organisational ways of working in mind and do not support cross agency processes. Many of those interviewed said they do not feel supported by the formal systems operating with their organisations (e.g. client/customer relationship management, information technology, human resource and finance systems), as these were almost entirely focused on vertical, hierarchical ways of working. People often found ways to work around these formal systems ('where there is a will there is a way'); in fact, it was necessary to do so if they were to connect the vertical with the horizontal. Again, it seems that what are barriers to some are no more than challenges to others – in some situations, anyway.
- *Formal differences in other systems?* These too can be bridged, as in the case of staff terms and conditions and their potential impacts on developing new ways of working.

What did emerge out of discussion as significant constraints at the system level were:
- differences in regional boundaries, which can have significant consequences for relationships and the ability to work together – or not; and
- the Privacy Act: in many discussions this was reported

as a major obstacle to risk profiling and pro-active case management intended to maximise access to services.

Other issues

Perhaps the most significant finding arising is that the key blockers identified by our subjects do not appear to be the formal or hard systems. The key obstacles were the 'soft' issues: organisational cultures, values and routines, and professional beliefs, values and preferences, which are also the hardest things to change. Staff referred positively to the phrase 'no-one ever got fired for doing the right thing' (the 'right thing' defined in terms of client outcomes), as opposed to the culture of an earlier time, represented, perhaps, by 'no-one ever got fired for following standard operating

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practice'. Frustration and discouragement were traced back to 'risk-averse organisations and managers', senior managers who are 'busy managing upwards and not for outcomes', the dangers of 'putting your head above the parapet', the 'culture of busy-ness', and so on. A 'lack of leadership', a 'lack of permission' and a 'lack of reward' were also identified. Particular questions were also asked about the perceived silence on these matters from the central agencies and other mechanisms of collective leadership.

In that respect, empowering logics such as the State Sector Development Goals, the Review of the Centre and the community planning provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 all help, but there must be much more active follow-up. Equally, Cabinet mandates in and of themselves are neither necessary nor sufficient; the support must flow from the organisation itself to have real effects for those attempting to deal with the issue.

Ultimately, joining up in order to achieve shared outcomes applies not only between organisations but also within them. The longstanding chasm between 'Wellington' (i.e. central government policy shops, a.k.a. 'policy dinosaurs!') and 'the regions' remains, even within the one organisation. In the regions, there was little gap between the world-views of managers and line staff and, hence, between views on how to respond to new challenges, but generally a big gap between the world-views of managers in the regions and managers in central office. Similarly, there is little concern in the regions for the daily ups-and-downs of the minister's issues; there is

far more for the overall policy goals and how to make them work for the particular clients presenting themselves.

Conclusions

What are the major findings from the project? What are the factors that seem to be essential when problems are complex, the answer not knowable in advance, yet the outcomes are shared?

- First, remain focused on the outcomes, noting that complex situations often defy easy description and do not lend themselves to detailed ex-ante planning processes because of their dynamism. Outcomes and plans are often best defined, and refined, along the way, rather than being clear from the outset. Joining up and working together are given by the nature of the problem, the outcome to be achieved: they are no more than means and must not be allowed to create goal displacement. Work, the systems and models that underpin it and the circumstances in which it is conducted should be treated as conditional and subject to action learning and modified as experience grows, know-how develops and emerging circumstances demand.
- Second, a trio of roles (not necessarily single individuals) – the public entrepreneur, their guardian angel(s) and their fellow-travellers – form the core of this innovative, learning-oriented, networked way of doing things. Without people playing these roles, the conditions for achieving shared outcomes for complex problems will not be present, and nothing else can follow.
- Third, co-production with clients often also appears to be a precondition. In many complex settings there must also be a process of empowerment for clients to overcome the power imbalance and to allow them to act proactively, as an 'agent of change'. In other words, those in the trio of roles realise that, to achieve the outcomes sought by policy, the client must be engaged as a partner, a co-producer.
- Fourth, developing and implementing policy solutions for complex, whole-of-government (or sectoral) issues demands ongoing learning by doing, but including a constant reliance on monitoring and evaluation.
- Fifth, success is difficult. Working collaboratively is hard and it takes energy and commitment. It involves working on the edge and taking managed risks. It also requires managing the dynamics as the group goes through phases – initiating, working together and sustaining, while being supported and learning.
- Sixth, there seem to be plenty of 'public entrepreneurs' and 'fellow-travellers', but not enough 'guardian angels' and champions.

Ultimately, if the behaviour explored in this project is to be encouraged – and we would argue strongly that it should be – then the question arises: how can this best be done? There seems little doubt, particularly if officials are supposed

to be managing for outcomes, that public sector work will get harder and more complex in the future and will increasingly confront the kinds of challenges that led to our case studies. Based on our research, we would argue that some staff, some of the time, could figure out how to do it, which they do by getting going and working together. What they struggle with is the lack of sustained support and learning.

In other words, these tend to be 'soft systems' problems and much less problems of structures or pay or silos. The collective leadership of the New Zealand public sector, particularly agencies such as the State Services Commission, needs not just to 'give permission' for these ways of acting but to actively encourage and enable them – to act, in other words, as the 'guardian angel of collaboration'. An innovation fund which assisted with the learning would also be useful. So would ongoing rhetoric and clear and explicit signals to

all and sundry that the individuals already acting as public entrepreneurs and fellow-travellers could come out from behind the ramparts, and the bureaucratic shadows, and be recognised for their insights and expertise in managing for outcomes.

1 Unless otherwise indicted, all comments in quotation marks are non-attributable comments from state sector staff participating in the project workshops.
2 This paper summarises some key points in a longer document written for practitioners and available for download at http://ips.ac.nz/events/completed-activities/joiningup.html. Other, more academic publications are planned before the end of 2008.
3 The exception is Local Partnerships and Governance Research Group, 2005.
4 Interesting work is presently being done by researchers such as Kurtz and Snowden (2003) regarding effective approaches when confronted by 'complex' situations (probe>sense>respond), and chaotic situations (act>sense>respond), as opposed to the known (sense>categorise>respond) and knowable (sense>categorise>respond). These ideas have an obvious applicability here, but will not be explored in this paper.
5 In these respects it is worth noting that the new ways of working emerging in these cases signal major shifts occurring in relation to the constitutional role and function of the official in a modern democracy: a set of issues which we will explore in later analyses.
6 These matters too will be covered in more detail in subsequent publications.

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There are two websites for this project – a restricted website (the PSI) https://psi.govt.nz/home/projectsandnetworks/display.aspx?liveID=358 and VUW website http://ips.ac.nz/events/completed-activities/joiningup.html.

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