



*Bottom up LGA change – Dealing with resistance and encouraging the use of social capital*

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# A 'bottom-up economic development strategy – Coffs Harbour

1. 'GROWTH THROUGH LOCALISATION AND **LOVE** OF OUR CITY'
2. Bernard Salt Project Launch & SWOT – August 2012. Nine Industry/Sector workshops held August 2012-March 2013. 400 participants approx.
3. Early on identified a degree of divergence among sectors of community. By Workshop 4 (mid-Sept) was identified city needed to develop sense of pride and love for place we live and work in.
4. Must overcome 'cargo-cult mentality'. ***“City has to reframe it’s attitude and refocus the energy, there is an opportunity to build on our co-creators have and make things happen ourselves.”***
5. **“You can’t attract until you are attractive”**

# Bottom-up is change – there will be resistance!

- After Draft Strategy released resistance emerged.
- ‘Bottom up’ change is about empowerment – possible weakness is that *already empowered* will resist for differing reasons.
- Numerically not large. But representative of some ‘important players.’
- ‘Bottom up’ is about change management. Most change attempts are met with some form of resistance and there are many possible explanations for it:
  - *Local/organisational politics*
  - *Inappropriate use of power*
  - *Challenges to cultural norms and institutionalised practices*
  - *Lack of understanding*
  - *Bad timing*
- Coffs Harbour was not exempt.

# What to do in a practical sense?

- (1) Sit down at the start of process, prior to engagement, assess who is likely to resist and **why**. Re-assess during process too.
- (2) Try and involve those likely to resist for psychological (i.e. threatened self-importance', debate need for change) and systems reasons (perceived loss of status/benefits) in the process. Empower them. Educate them. Give them '**ownership**' of process and outcomes and implementation of strategy.
- (3) Emphasise there is no difference between 'the greater good' and self interest. **Turn resistance into a positive as much as possible.**
- (4) 'Bottom-Up' is *also* 'Top-down'. Have Mayors publicly support and fight for 'Bottom-up' open system decision making. Have paid officials support it strongly (as **was** case in CH).

# Encourage your social capital

- Use your 'stock of accumulated resources that one can access based on relationships that can aid or be leveraged in accomplishing an end or furthering a pursuit' (Tymon and Stumpf, 2002; 12).
- Where you have strong relationships within and across community and business sectors. Use them. Your community is blessed. (Bonded social capital). Innovation will be encouraged.
- Where you have good relationships with external stakeholders. Use them. (Bridging Social Capital). Entrepreneurship and innovation will be encouraged.
- If you have one sector that has strong bonded social capital. Use them as a pilot. (Food group in Coffs Harbour). **Show them it can be done!**
- Both bonding and bridging social capital are important for successful bottom-up economic development outcomes (Woodhouse, 2006).
- **You will then be attractive enough to attract. 😊**

