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Thanks very much Joe. I'm not here to tell you how to do it Brisbane-style, I don't think that's a very good start Joe. I'd actually like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land upon which we stand today and pay my respect to the elders of that community.

And I bring Jude Munro's apologies. She's asked me to say to you and to you Rhonda and Joe how much she enjoyed last year's conference, and I know that she was very much looking forward to speaking to you today and talking alongside David Henshaw.

We have a very interesting political situation in Brisbane at the moment. Brisbane as you know, and for those of you who don't know, [for] the international visitors, Brisbane's up in Queensland on the east coast. It's a city of 900,000 people so it's a bit different to other cities around Australia. It's not different in population terms but in the way our local government is organised is different. We have one local government for those 900,000 people, a large budget, and lots of locations. And it's also a very political council, we've only ever had, to the best of my knowledge, two parties that have been in power, we don't have independents or anything like that, it's the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. The Lord Mayor is elected at large and then the ward councilors are elected [by] direct elect.

Now we have a situation for the first time where the Lord Mayor is a Liberal Lord Mayor and the council has a Labor council majority. That occurred in March, so it's sort of fascinating. On Wednesday we had the first budget to be brought down by the Lord Major, because he has the executive power to present the budget.

I was thinking today [about] this theme of Revolution. Maybe we'll see a revolution of democracy in Brisbane. We'll certainly see some interesting things in the next few years. So Jude today and tomorrow as the chief executive officer is sitting through pre-briefing sessions for the budget before Wednesday. I have to do that as well but I get to do mine tomorrow, she changed them all around so that I could be here today. We worked all of this out about last Wednesday so I'm delighted to be here and really delighted to have the privilege to have talked alongside David [Henshaw]. David [Henshaw] visited our leadership team a few years ago and we really enjoyed him at that time.

So without further ado to start with just a little bit of a reflection on innovation. What I'm going to do today is take you through a pastiche or a photo album of some of the innovations in Brisbane. Brisbane does not stand alone in being an innovative local government. I know that out here there are so many local governments that are innovating and doing many wonderful things. So please, I acknowledge and applaud all of the other local governments in Australia for the work that you do. In fact you'll see one or two little ideas that we might have lifted from you. That's what it's all about: sharing and caring about that as well.

And I wanted to acknowledge as well that three of the staff from Brisbane City Council who are involved in some of this work are in the audience. That's **Pam Bourke, Colleen Kelly and Louise Carnie**, they are over there and they are wonderful innovators and creative people so have a chat to them later on.

I like this quote: Creativity is thinking up new things but innovation is doing new things. So we're going to talk to you about, as I said, a pastiche of some of the innovative things that we're doing. And these are some of the things that Jude wanted to share with you. It's not the big strategies and the big picture, these are actually quite small things but if we roll them out they could be revolutionary we think.

So what is innovation about, and David [Henshaw] has touched on a lot of these in his speech. You need to create an environment for innovation. And that is about leadership; it is leadership in vision terms, developing shared outcomes, it's both political and it's organizational. But it's recognizing that leadership occurs at every level within the organization and out there in the community.

I really liked that analogy that David [Henshaw] was using not only about dancing (I love dancing, I'll come to that later) but that the community also has to take a shared responsibility in helping us to be innovative. So I think leadership is so critical.

An environment of risk taking. It's taken us I think about ten years, I've been in Brisbane City Council ten years and it's actually a very interesting job. I was listening to Joe [Caddy's] introduction and thinking 'Oh my goodness, it doesn't sound that exciting' but it is fantastic. I've been in Brisbane City Council ten years and I've done a number of different roles in that time. I think we've started to get quite good at partnering and risk taking, but it's taken us a long time. So getting that environment where staff feels that they can take risks. We did some work a few years ago when Jude Munro first arrived and we found that staff actually felt that we were very risk-adverse and if anything they felt quite scared of taking risks. So we've been working over the past few years to overcome that. You've got to invest in staff and new ideas and allow people to make mistakes.

You have to have a value set of courage to make a difference and this is one of our values [referring to slides]. And I guess the power of collaboration and partnering and I hope you'll see this coming through in the examples that I give you. Taking the ideas or having the ability to take the ideas from the start; taking things from idea through to implementation. And recognizing that sometimes we need to make some step changes, some radical changes rather than incremental innovation. And I just picked up one of the things, which David [Henshaw] said, which is about valuing people and releasing the energy. I think that's just so important.

Just put this up [referring to slides] this is our shared vision and the reason I put it up is not so much that it's any different necessarily from your own shared vision but this is genuinely a shared vision with the community. [We] did a lot of work in council, a lot of future thinking, but then put it out to the community and they came back us and said, "Well we like clean and green, and accessible, and all that sort of stuff is very important but we think that we should be putting a focus on activity and the importance of that in our lives." So Active and Healthy came from the community and the initiatives under that, and the city designed for sub-tropical living also did.

I'm going to focus on three areas:

1. Looking at as an employer what are some innovations we can make,
2. Achieving inclusivity and some examples there,
3. Citizen engagement.

This [referring to slides] is an example of I guess a strategy; the illicit drug strategy which came out of my area but which was very much led and driven by the Lord Mayor of the time, Jim Sorley. And what he was concerned about is that we often have, as David [Henshaw] was saying, lots of strategies, things we want to do but we don't necessarily get to the heart of what will make a difference.

And his [Jim Sorley's] belief was that what would make a difference is to be able to offer employment to people, particularly young people in recovery. So this is a program that offers twelve-month traineeships to young people in rehabilitation from drug taking. It's run in partnership with the Mercy Centre, which is a community organization in Brisbane, an excellent community organization. They do all the work of work preparation; preparing the young people for the traineeship and then they come into, not just council (and this is the part of the innovation) but our partners in the State Government and the private sector. And that was very much driven by the Lord Mayor at the time. [It] won't just be council doing this let's work together.

Now it might look like we haven't necessarily got very far – fifty people is not a lot. But this is a risky project. Large bureaucracies are not equipped to put the effort to working closely with people, to support them through change. So I think this is a fantastic initiative.

What did we learn? Rhonda [Galbally] said [to] make sure I talked about the challenges. When we started this project which was run out the human resources area we didn't think about the support that we would need as an organization so if we could do it again and have hindsight we would have got the Mercy Centre in straight away because we just weren't able to get the retention rate up. Since they've been involved the retention rate is up to 80% and people are starting to get permanent employment out of the project. But I guess the proof will be is this

model self-sustaining? Is it part of the ethos of our organization and the ethos of our partners?

Similarly with indigenous employment, again I guess you'll be doing things like this as well. So what's innovative about this? What's innovative is again our goal a couple of years ago was to get over [the thinking] oh well we'll get a couple of aboriginal people in, we'll give them traineeships and that'll be good. We'll look like a good employer. This again is about the ethos of employing indigenous people across the organization. And we have got our target up [by] up to 2.3% in Brisbane City Council [with an] 80% retention and people getting jobs. The IT division (which) a couple of years had never had an aboriginal employee have now just appointed the first indigenous executive role within our organization. So we're getting there with that one.

Moving on to this next one [referring to slides] Jude asked me to share this one with you. I was a beneficiary of this. I spent three months at the beginning of this year in South Africa working in a rural community in the goldfields area on public participation through ward committees. I suppose that the point we wanted to make here is that as an employer we need to be flexible. As senior executives we need to be modest and humble enough to be able to work I guess different community context. And I found that the most extraordinary experience. I've come back very excited about public participation ward committees and the challenge will be how will the organization deal with that? Because as the speaker was saying earlier on some of the people in the organization think that I'm about participative democracy, that'd be a terrible thing.

The next one and I wanted to very quickly talk about some of the things that I think are starting to make a difference in our genuine partnering with community and this [referring to slides] is a social tendering project with the Nundahh Co-op that wonderful organization. I guess a couple of things out of here that I wanted to point out. The project came out of a leadership group in training. They identified that they wanted to try and find a way of community organisations taking some of our contract work, winning tenders. So that's what this project is about. The Nundah Co-op have now been awarded some maintenance in eight parks and also recently in one of our streetscapes. They've won a state government tender as a consequence of having the work with Brisbane City Council. Our own local assets services people are now open to awarding similar tenders and it is a remarkable alliance. What we want to do now, and this is the challenge for a large bureaucracy, the battleship slowly moving forward, what we want to do now is to work out how we can more quickly roll this out across our city. So we're working with Nundah Co-Op to find ways of building capacity. We're aiming for a social tendering floor if you like so that we'll have a group of organisations there equipped to get some work and give people employment. It is about volunteering but it's also about creating jobs for people. Again [the

question is] can we roll this out, can we retain the commitment? But it's a great initiative.

Rhonda [Galbally] was talking to us last week – can we talking about examples where communities are given control? And I think there are plenty, including the one I just showed but our Visible Link program, which is a program with young people I think is getting there, being able to hand over control to young people. [It's] taken us a few years, I think we're in about our fourth year of this, and this is about empowering young people, making the invisible visible. Some recent things anecdotally that make me think this is working [are] we've got a group of young people from a suburb called **Winmalee** who have been lobbying very hard our Lord Mayor to get them a youth facility. They've done that on their own bat.

There are a lot of stats [referring to slides] and you can read this later but we reckon that this is about 80% self-organising, particularly [in] our local community hubs. We've now introduced a social enterprise component to it so we starting to provide training and mentoring and so on for young people to set up their own businesses. But I was talking to our youth stuff, what do we have to do? We have to learn how to let go. We also have to think a bit about a medium sieve solutions. You know young people do get older so it would be nice if they didn't have to wait till they were 40 [years old] before they see the benefit – a visible link. And that is our challenge for organisations, to let go, to be quick, to be immediate, and to respond.

This [referring to slides] is an idea, which we adapted from Melbourne City Council, so thank you very much Melbourne City Council. I suppose this was a way for us finding creative ways of engaging the community in complex issues. The complex issue being homelessness. This is an example of co-production with homeless people working with arts organisations and also with a PR company to get the question of homelessness discussed. This is a recent initiative so we have to evaluate it and see how it's going to go. But we do now over the last couple of years as we've talked more about homelessness that the awareness of the issues has grown. I suppose there's a challenge about what happens next particularly for the people involved and how do we embed this as a way of working? We wanted to build on our already existing consultation mechanisms.

The next one I guess I wanted to talk about is what do you do as a local government when you find yourself in a situation? In our case it's a problem with affordable housing. What do you do when you find yourself with that situation? You've created the problem partly yourselves through your renewal and gentrification but you don't have a direct service delivery role. Part of our solution to this was the Brisbane Housing Company, which is a subsidiary, a PTY Limited subsidiary company of Brisbane City Council. The shares are owned by Brisbane City Council, [the] State Government and the community themselves. We think

it's a pretty innovative model. We've put up front \$10 million into the Brisbane Housing Company and the State Government have put \$50 million in and it's [now] over the company to work out what else can we do to make this a sustainable model?

Unfortunately part of our original thinking was that we'd be able to get developer contributions fed into the Brisbane Housing Company but the State Government weren't able to give us the legislative power to do that, so that's a bit of a shame. So now we're having another thought about some other creative, innovative ways of supporting that company.

Citizen engagement next [referring to slides, these are] not new strategic plans, you do them all the time. This is a strategic plan for the Fortitude Valley, which is an old area in Brisbane city, old and challenging area. It's also an area that the urban renewal taskforce have been working in for a long time. We wanted to find a way of involving the diversity of interests in this current strategic plan. A lot of good engagement with property developments, some engagement in the past with businesses, but not an engagement with the young people who make the music. This is also the heart of the music industry in Brisbane. And Brisbane does have a thriving music industry; [producing bands like] Powderfinger, Regurgitator, I could name lots of them. But this is where it all happens.

So we had a situation where residents were coming to live in Fortitude Valley and didn't like the noise and so the music industry, the venues were starting to close down. And we said, "No. That's not good enough. This is actually part of our economic base." So the strategic planning process has built in input from musicians, venues, people working in HIV/AIDS organisations, homeless etc. Very dynamic and that's a great poster [referring to slides]. It sends the message of what we are trying to show is that this is about old people, young people, and a diversity of people working together.

At the same time we've had a campaign running called 'Loud And Proud And V Is For Volume', so we're actually making some changes. For the residents if you want to live here you've got to accept the noise. And we might have to think about how you soundproof yourselves a bit, we might have to work with the venues, but we've all got to be in this together. So a pretty exciting engagement program, a little bit like the area committees that David [Henshaw] was talking about.

Our E-Democracy program wanted to find a way of building on what's happening on the ground; the work with community organisations, the consultation program out there on the ground, and put a knee layer over the top of it. Rhonda [Galbally] and her organization's [Our Community] been working with us on many of this as well. I'm not going to talk about that in detail, I'm happy to talk to you later about that.

I wanted to move then quickly on to places for people, which I guess is place management or as David [Henshaw] was talking I was also thinking that the area committees, I think this is a great model. When I was in South Africa I was working with ward committees, they've got a legislative base there and a constitutional base. I think that this work in these three disadvantaged communities is probably taking the best of what South Africa had to offer in their democratic process and public participation and what we've got to offer here.

There is genuine community involvement in these three communities [and] it's very impressive. Starting from needs identification and more importantly through to the roll out. Three of the people that I worked with in South Africa are in Brisbane as we speak and [are] very impressed and excited by this. This is about new arrangements for working between government, community and business. And I know a number of you are experimenting with this in your own areas. The important thing about this I guess is that there is links to budget and so on involved in it. But I again come to how do we roll this out across the city? That will be the evidence. Are we able to do that?

The last one [referring to slides] and the very last example that I wanted to use was one that I have been closely involved in the notion of local government being a creative dynamic risk taking organization is what has always attracted me to working in local government and what I've loved about working in Brisbane City Council. So the Brisbane Powerhouse was an enormous privilege. It's an old powerhouse, whom we've turned into a live arts venue; it has absolutely turned the live arts scene in Brisbane on its head. It has reduced the fees that people have to pay in venues like the Queensland Performing Arts Complex. It introduced a whole level of access to groups from gay and lesbian communities, from young people across the city; their access to a place like this.

And Brisbane City Council did it. Again we set it up, once it was built as a PTY Limited company to give it independence and arms length. There was a lot of criticism. People said this is the gays taking over, and Brisbane City Council doing something or other. Anyway there was a lot of criticism of it. But to the credit of our political leaders, they never baulked once at this experiment and it's been a wonderful experiment. And I think a real icon and symbol of what councils are capable of if they really put their mind to it. And most particularly it was great to be involved in a project like this and the other day when I was thinking of this presentation I thought about **Emma Goldman** and absolutely if you work in local government, for me if I can't dance to it, it's not my revolution. So thanks very much.