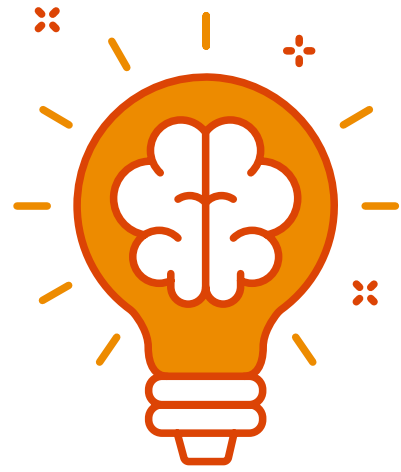


RETHINKING ORGANISATIONS



Susan Basterfield and Kate Fulton



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About WAiS

Western Australia Individualised Services (WAiS) is a member based organisation working in partnership with people, families, service providers and government to promote and advance individualised, self-directed supports and services.

WAiS has a significant role in supporting the human services sector to explore contemporary practices to further develop approaches that assist people to live full lives in society.

Over the last 10 years, WAiS has supported a range of organisations who provide support services to people with a disability, people who require psychosocial support and / or older people. Many of these organisations are not for profit, with a mission and purpose typically focused on social justice and intending to assist people who are typically pushed to the edges of our society to find their place and live a life of meaning and purpose.

About the authors

Kate Fulton

Kate Fulton is a prominent thinker in the Human Services sector in Australia and the UK. Kate has worked in Human Services for over 20 years and as an Associate of WAiS for over six years. Kate is a Fellow of the [Centre for Welfare Reform](#) sharing her learning in a range of publications including Architecture for Personalisation.

Kate's work is committed to enhancing citizenship for all and over the last four years Kates focus has been on working to really understand what citizenship for all people including those who work in human services takes to actualise. Kate is co-founder of [Citizen Network](#) a global non-profit cooperative movement, formed to create a world where everyone matters – where everyone can be an equal citizen.

Kate is also a leader with [Avivo](#) a Western Australian Support Provider who is on a journey of transformation to radically change the assumptions, beliefs and conditions that many support workers are expected to work within. Avivo continues to provide the real space and experience to practice all that rethinking organisations is promoting.

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Having lived and worked in 20 different countries, Susan chose New Zealand as home in 2003. Susan serves the [Enspiral Foundation](#) – a global entrepreneurs collective – as a Director and Ambassador and does her work from within an Enspiral Venture – [Greaterthan](#).

As a catalyst and convener, she helps individuals and organisations release potential through participatory creation – unique manifestations of ways of working and being beyond traditional hierarchical models. These include ongoing experiments in Self-Management, Agile Beyond Tech, Deliberately Developmental Organisations, and Facilitative Leadership. She is a prolific writer and speaker, and has shared her experiences from India to Korea, Canada to Chile, Sweden to Australia and most places in between.

Susan is the co-author of [Reinventing Scaleups: Radical Ideas for Growing Companies](#) and [Better Work Together: How the Power of Community can Transform your Business](#). She's the creator and convener of the Practical Self-Management Intensive at [Leadwise Academy](#).

She holds a BA in Communications, a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning, and in 2015, received the Perkins Award for most exceptional body of work in the second cohort of Seth Godin's altMBA.

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Rethinking organisations

In 2018, WAiS designed and delivered a program called Rethinking Organisations. The aim of the program was to assist Support Providers to explore alternative organisational theory and practices that could potentially benefit the human services sector.

The program drew on many leading thinkers and many successful organisations globally who have individual development and autonomy at their heart. We also drew on the experiences of the participating organisations who all strive to do better with the resources they have, to ultimately create working places that support all employees to do their best work.

This resource aims to share some of the learning, both the theory and the practices, that the participating organisations explored.

We thank the participating organisations in Western Australia who shared their learning and experiences along the way including:

- Accessibility
- Atlas
- Avivo: Live Life
- Chorus
- Community Living Association
- Connecting Communities Home Care Inc.
- Enable WA
- Mosaic Community Care Inc.
- The Multicultural Services Centre
- My Place
- One2One
- St. Jude's Disability Services
- Southern Districts Support
- Uniting Care West

This program of work and resource would not have been possible without the support of Western Australia Department of Communities.

Why do we need to rethink?

As Australian Human Services undergo radical changes with the introduction of reforms, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, assisting people with a disability or people who require psychosocial support; and Consumer Directed Care focused on supporting older people, it has proved to provide a disruption to business as usual.

The reforms have provided opportunities to organisations, not only to reconsider how they provide support and services, but also how they do business – how they operate and support their employees.

Rethinking Organisations supported participating organisations to do exactly this:

- Consider what they provide and how this assists people and families
- Explore how the organisation itself operates and supports their employees to do a great job

Providing support and services

Wais' long term friend and ally, [Simon Duffy](#), provided a framework for us to consider what we need to pay attention to, in striving to develop a good life for people who are typically marginalised. Many Support Providers have adopted this framework as the foundation for assisting people and families to develop their own citizenship. The keys to citizenship¹ include;



Freedom

Being a citizen means being in control of your own life – being able to make decisions, make mistakes, make your own way. Everyone can be in control – especially if we listen to those who know and love the person most.



Direction

Being a citizen means having a life of meaning – your own meaning. When our lives don't fit our passions, interests and abilities, we are diminished – but if we can find a path that is right for us then we help other people to see us with respect.



Money

Money is important but may be not for the reason we all think. Money gives us the means to be independent, to set our own course and to achieve our own goals. But too much money is an obstacle to citizenship – mad consumers and millionaires aren't citizens – but citizens do pay their own way.



Home

We all need a place we can call our home, not just a shelter, but a place where we can have privacy, where we can be with those we love, where we belong. When we have no home, we appear almost rootless and disconnected – when we say someone has gone into 'a home' we mean they've lost their home.



Help

We live in a world where we imagine that needing help is bad, even though we all need help every day and the giving and receiving of help from others is the key to a good society. The challenge today is to get help without having to give up your citizenship.



Love

The beginning and the end of citizenship is found in love. Through meeting, working with and joining in with other people we can form relationships, friendships, find lovers and make a family. Love is also the best guarantee of bringing into existence a new generation of citizens to help build a better world.



Life

By giving something back to our community we can really help others to understand our worth, and there are so many more ways to give back than we think. We can contribute by just being there, by buying, by joining in, by working, by laughing or even by crying. But we cannot contribute if we are absent.

1. Duffy, Keys to Citizenship 2010, Centre for Welfare Reform

How organisations operate and support their employees

Research across human services has a long history of providing the evidence of the critical need for people providing support to others to be recognised and valued for the work they do. A recent study into the effectiveness of [Positive Behaviour Support in Western Australia](#) echoed the need for organisations to invest in positive cultures and engaged employees to really see the benefit of Positive Behaviour Support. recent abuse scandals within Human Services demonstrate the tragic consequences of disengaged employees.

Gallup² argues that in Australia, at best, 63% of the workforce is disengaged and up to 24% actively disengaged – leaving only 13% of employees engaged. This is valuable information for anyone leading and supporting a human service organisation.

So what can we do to support employees to engage and be able to do their best work?

With the active support of Avivo, a Support Organisation in Western Australia, we explored in greater detail the experience of Support Workers both those who were working alone and as members of a support team.

What helps you be your best self at work?

We asked the Support Workers who provided direct support to people and families, what helps you be your best self at work?

The following themes emerged:

1 Contributing to something that matters to me

2 People who support me to be me and believe in me

3 Freedom to do things in the way I believe is right

4 The opportunity to try something that helped me grow

5 Feeling safe to explore

6 Security to know the basics are covered

7 Connection to something more than me – the chance to help others

Is citizenship our business?

Not surprisingly, although different wording is evident, the themes from the Support Workers are the same elements as the areas we need to pay attention to, to live life as an 'active citizen' as described in the keys to citizenship.

This demonstrates that the elements of citizenship in life matter just as much in the world of work.

Many people working in Human Services would describe traditional organisations as hierarchical, autocratic and far from self-directed. This is incredibly worrying given the purpose of most organisations in the sector is focused on enhancing and promoting self-direction.

Rethinking Organisations created an opportunity for small groups working within organisations to explore how we practice and support each other to do our work.

The program began by highlighting the potential reality for people working as Support Workers. We found examples that work directly against what we are beginning to understand really helps people be their best self at work – including four to five layers of supervisors or 'management', which leave Support Workers with limited authority or influence. Decision making is often far removed from the critical partnership at the heart of the support relationship – the person and the Support Worker, resulting in delayed, protracted and potentially inaccurate decision making. Support Workers who are disconnected from their colleagues with limited 'team' time due to the related expense.

Throughout the program, we learned from some amazing practitioners who generously shared their learning, insights and organisational practices, many of whom work outside of the human service sector.

Keys to citizenship

What helps me be my best self at work?

Freedom



Being a citizen means being in control of your own life – being able to make decisions, make mistakes, make your own way

Freedom to make decisions and do things in the way I believe is right

Direction



Being a citizen means having a life of meaning – your own meaning

The opportunity to try something that helped me grow and develop in the direction I can

Money



Money gives us the means to be independent, to set our course and to achieve our goals

Terms and conditions – Security to know the basics are covered

Home



We all need a place we can call our home, where we belong. When we have no home we appear almost rootless and disconnected.

A place where I feel safe to explore and be me

Help



The giving and receiving of help from others is the key to a good society

People who support me to be me and believe in me and the chance for me to help others

Life



By giving back to our community, we can help others to understand our worth, we can contribute in many ways

Contributing to something that matters to me

Love



The beginning and end of citizenship is found in love – through meeting, working with, joining in with others, we can form relationships, friendships, find lovers and make a family

Connection to something more than me, my colleagues, team and wider community

The 8 Habits of progressive organisations

The practitioners graciously allowed us to record our sessions, (with the exception of the Corporate Rebels who were a live workshop) and links to the recordings are provided here and include:

[Pim de Moree and Joost Minnaar](#) ▶

Corporate Rebels who research the world's most progressive organisations and support others to learn from these and begin experimenting with different ways of working.

[Doug Kirkpatrick](#) ▶

A leader of Morningstar, a tomato-processing factory with a seasonal staff of up to 3000 who organise entirely as self-managing teams.

[Bryan Ungard](#) ▶

Chief Purpose Officer of Decurion a Deliberately Developmental Organisation based in Los Angeles, California.

[Erwin van Waelleghem](#) ▶

Introduced the notion of self-management and teal practices into the Belgium Police Force.

[Jos de Blok](#) ▶

CEO of Buurtzorg a community nursing organisation, based in the Netherlands with over 1400 staff who operate as self-managed teams.

[Helen Sanderson](#) ▶

CEO of Wellbeing Teams a UK initiative of self-managed support teams providing domiciliary care.

[The Tautoko Services Team](#) ▶

A New Zealand based human services organisation who are a year into their transformation to self-organisation.

Undoubtedly, Rethinking Organisations enabled participating organisations to explore contemporary organisational theory and the opportunity to connect to real organisations practicing alternative approaches.

Pim de Moree and Joost Minnaar are the founders of [Corporate Rebels](#). Pim and Joost connected with the Rethinking Organisations program and shared their view of the 8 Habits that they've seen in progressive organisations around the world.

They asked participating organisations to consider their organisations and where they might be today if they decided to move from traditional management paradigms to more progressive and contemporary practices.

By completing the [8 Habits Canvas](#), organisations considered areas they want to focus experiments on (throughout the course of the program) to move from the old to the new.

8 Habits

- 1 From profit to **purpose**
- 2 From hierarchical pyramids to **networks of teams**
- 3 From directive leadership to **supportive leadership**
- 4 From predict and plan to **experiment and adapt**
- 5 From rules and control to **freedom and trust**
- 6 From centralised authority to **distributed authority**
- 7 From secrecy to **radical transparency**
- 8 From job descriptions to **talents and mastery**

Outcomes from the 8 Habits Canvas

In a Human Services context participating organisations had a plethora of ideas and experiments (and how to measure them) including:

St Judes – A focus on Supportive Leadership

Evaluate your manager – send out a survey and measure through discussions after the feedback.

Mosaic – Radical Transparency

Share the financials each month with each service to support ownership and transparency. Create a dashboard graph with percentages to share at the monthly house meeting. Begin small. Measure through a pre and post survey, e.g. how much influence etc.

Chorus – Distributed Authority

Testing current approval process for policy. 1) set up a SharePoint site for policies to contribute 2) old way will continue for a number of policies. Measure by looking at how many people engage in the new way.

One2One – Mapping the team’s talents

2 teams – face to face conversations, measure through engagement.

Avivo – Experiment and Adapt

20% rule – 10% an experiment to see if ring fencing time and see what the outcome is by measuring and reflecting on the impact on our work and life.

Community Living Association – Network of Teams

One coordinator to pilot self-management of their own role and the team. Measure by satisfaction of current team (job satisfaction).

My Place – Distributed Authority

Prepaid credit card for three teams. Look at claims over the past month. Also measure morale and explore what happens for team members.

Southern District Support – Distributed Authority

Coordinator for NDIS has the approval without it going up the chain.

The Multicultural Services Centre – Distributed Authority

Empower Support Workers to make some decisions. Explore together what they might need to be able to feel comfortable making decisions, e.g. support plans etc.

The experiments demonstrate that any organisation can take small, low risk steps in areas that they suspect might have an impact. Further understanding of how these experiments developed is documented throughout this resource.

Uniting Care West – Distributed Authority

Mapping situations/decisions across one team leader – where and to whom might they be distributed?

Enable – Network of teams

Taking one team and see what it would take for the team to self-manage – discuss hours, skills, teach note taking etc.

Teal Organisations

[Reinventing Organisations](#) by Frederic Laloux identifies the evolutionary conditions for transformation to Teal, where fear is replaced by the capacity for trust, thereby relinquishing our need to control others.

Integral theory, metaphors for evolution, wholeness and vulnerability, self-organising management, work and teams, personal accountability, purpose-centered work – all come together in this breakthrough exposition. Using real-world examples of organisations that are pioneering the paradigm of self-management, Laloux shows us what is possible when we are fearless in the pursuit of taming ego, ensuring we are valuing our ‘inner compass’ when making decisions, and feeling brave enough to bring all of who we are to the work we do.

Frederic Laloux was working as consultant for McKinsey. Through his work, he began to see patterns in companies organising in non-traditional ways. He took a deep interest in the subject and eventually left McKinsey to research these organisations full-time. His exploration led to the writing of *Reinventing Organisations*. The book has been defined by many as a game changer in the advancement of an eco-systemic approach to business.

Frederic’s writing is centered on three breakthroughs: Self-management, Wholeness and Evolutionary Purpose. Rather than being presented as a defined system, Teal is a philosophy and way of being as an organisation.

Self-Managing organisations, in the Teal context, are built on a foundation of mutual trust. Workers and employees are seen as reasonable people that want to do good work and can be trusted to do the right thing. With that premise, very few rules and control mechanisms are needed. And employees are energised to make extraordinary things happen. The practice of self-management should provide a level of increased ‘safety’ for us to show up to work with more expressions of our

“The most exciting breakthroughs of the twenty-first century will not occur because of technology, but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human.”

– John Naisbitt

“Helping home-based patients become healthy and autonomous.”
– Buurtzorg, healthcare org

“Use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”
– Patagonia, clothing retailer

“Two fundamental purposes: the first is to provide meaningful work in the area of Hallencourt, a rural area in northern France where good work is rare; the second is to give and receive love from clients”
– FAVI, foundry and engineering firm.

individual gifts and perspectives, our Wholeness. If we are not having to play the politics of a traditional command-and-control hierarchical structure, we can be safe to be more our ‘whole selves’.

Consider this perspective: “Every time we leave a part of us behind, we cut ourselves off from part of our potential, of our creativity and energy”. The richness of these perspectives in the workplace allows more than the rational perspective to be in play when considering options, making decisions, or planning strategy. Wholeness provides another lens on the dichotomy of having to balance our work with our life.

If work is so unpleasant one has to balance it with something else, perhaps it’s because we consider work a place safe enough to only show one facet of our whole self. The ability to bring our playful self, or our creative self to work, might allow us to attend to our work as a reflection of our life, not a fenced-off part (or vice versa).

When we look at our organisations not as machines to be optimised, with static parts and cogs aligned for a binary purpose, but rather as a living organism or even ecosystem, we can see the Evolutionary Purpose of the organisation. Margaret Wheatley says: “Like any living system, every organisation co-evolves. Its character and capabilities emerge as it plays with possibilities.”

The evolutionary purpose of a Teal organisation reflects the deeper reason the organisation exists. It relates to the difference it wants to make in the community it operates in, as well as in the marketplace it serves. It is not concerned with competition or outperforming others; it is serving the ‘greater good’ that matters. Some examples (from the [Reinventing Organisations Wiki](#)) are above.

EXAMPLE

Teal organisations

Buurtzorg

Buurtzorg, a Dutch nationwide nursing organisation, operates entirely using self-managing practices. Teams are fully self-organised, with independent teams supported by a lean back office, with one single function: “The headquarters takes care of the inevitable bureaucracy, so the nurses won’t be bothered with it. Think about charging for the health care, making the official financial statements and making sure that our nurses getting paid.”

The Netherlands has a long tradition of neighbourhood nursing. In the 1980s the state pushed nurses to join organisations for economies of scale. Nurses were expected to rigidly adhere to ‘time and motion’ metrics, i.e. five minutes to change a dressing, two minutes to speak to the family. Clients hated the system. They used to have one trusted nurse. Now, they had new nurses who were in a hurry. The nurses hated it – they’d been turned into a machine and had less contact with clients.

Buurtzorg was started by Jos de Blok in 2006 with one team. There were people with different skills and roles within the team. Together the team members would be able to give the care that their patients need. Teams are fully self-organised. They plan and track the work that they do to deliver care to their patients, and they carry out the work. Teams also have their own education budget.

When teams grow to over 12 people, they are split up. Currently, Buurtzorg has 12000 employees in nearly 1000 teams. They have a back office with 50 employees and there are 20 coaches who support the teams.

There are no strategy meetings or other structured meetings. Nurses and back office employees can see 24/7 what’s happening in the organisation. From the start, Buurtzorg integrated social communication into their way of working. They established closed on-line communities where nurses could ask questions and learn from each other.

Self-organisation isn’t anarchy; you need a framework to make it work.

How you might begin?

Self-Management is principally a mind shift. As Laloux puts it: The tasks of management – setting direction and objectives, planning, directing, controlling, and evaluating – haven’t disappeared. They are simply no longer concentrated in dedicated management roles. Because they are spread widely, not narrowly, it can be argued that there is more management and leadership happening at any time in self-managing organisations despite, or rather precisely because of, the absence of fulltime managers.

Think about how teams could hold joint accountability for some objectives, rather than being held by one person. Or, embarking on a role definition process whereby the team identifies all the tasks the team needs to do and allowing team members to choose roles. You might start small, for example by agreeing that the role of meeting coordinator or note taker rotates each meeting.

Wholeness requires psychological safety. A simple and effective starting position is check-ins and check-outs at meetings. Rather than launching straight into the agenda, with the manager leading, invite everyone gathered to settle in by answering a question – for example “what has your attention today?”. This practice gives breathing space and context for where people are at. By making check-in’s a ritual, people start to feel comfortable expressing themselves and what’s important to them. Checking out gives a temperature check of how people are leaving the session – experiment with a ‘one word’ or ‘tweet size’ check-out.

Evolutionary Purpose starts with the understanding that the organisation is a complex, adaptive system that changes. If we can pay attention to what’s changing, and have a practice of naming what we are noticing, we can help the organisation respond to these needs more fluidly than if we assume everything is fixed. A great starting point is to make time for regular ‘retrospectives’. Every three months, gather the team and spend some time surfacing and discussing four questions below.

Learning how to reflect well together will unlock learning and collective wisdom, and will help the team to ‘listen’ to how the purpose of the organisation is evolving.

1 What went well?

2 What didn’t go so well?

3 What have I learned?

4 What am I (still) curious about?

Rethinking organisations examples

My Place

The My Place team noticed that some support teams were constrained by having to obtain approval for spending small amounts of discretionary funds that could have a significant impact on the well-being of the people they support. In addition, there was an administrative workload associated with Coordinators approving and acquitting small amounts for expenditure claims. A simple solution was developed to obtain some additional 'one off' funds to allow individual teams to have the freedom and autonomy to spend this money based on the question: "Will this achieve a positive outcome for the consumer, the organisation and myself?" Sebastian was curious about what could happen if a team was given a credit card to be able to make the decisions without prior approval.

"I purchased three visa gift cards pre-loaded with \$200 each and gave them to a team of four. To begin with, the team was quite suspicious; I had to reiterate that we trusted them to do the right thing", said Sebastian "people came up with some great ideas such as purchasing 'one off' items that would make a big difference for the consumer or sharing new positive experiences with the consumer that they previously assumed to be cost prohibitive. The team communicated about their decisions via a team group on Messenger, problem solved any issues that arose and pooled the remaining balance of the cards at the end to maximise the benefit".

That team experienced an increase in ownership, permission and trust – a good outcome for the team, the managers and the customer.

Uniting Care West

Uniting Care West noticed that when teams had access to and an understanding of the financial operating budgets (allocated amount of hours) for their services, they were more confident to make decisions about rostering and how and where to spend their hours.

"We learned that we still needed local leadership to help support and guide them, and to safeguard decision making" said Fiona "some of the positives were that the teams became more aware of the relationships between the funding body and the organisation and were much more engaged as a result of their increased responsibilities."

"Providing more context so that people can get a sense of the bigger picture helps everyone feel more connected, especially when working remotely from head office."

Deliberately Developmental Organisations (DDO)

There is a growing movement of organisations with a deliberate focus on and commitment to the ongoing development of all employees. These companies create a culture with the premise that the everyday operations of the organisation provide the raw material to support and encourage the ongoing development of the individuals in the organisation.

For many years organisations have invested their time, energy, and effort into attracting, recruiting and retaining the 'best' people – the most knowledgeable or the most experienced, continually searching for the people who they believe will make the organisation succeed. Many organisations invest in a small percentage of the workforce in a belief that only some people (i.e. those with leadership potential) are worth the investment.

Deliberately, Developmentally Organisations support all employees to explore their own growth, consider their own development goals, and find opportunities within the business to develop, either in their daily role or in other parts of the business. This simple yet profound approach is producing incredible results around the world.

"High performing organisations recognise that success hinges on the capability of all of their people."
– Robert Kegan,
Harvard Business Review

Deliberately Developmental Organisations are dedicated to using the workplace as an environment or community that provides opportunities for individual's growth and development. A DDO's focus is firmly rooted in developing the capability and capacities of all employees using the culture and operations of the business as the 'classroom.'

DDO's operate on the foundational assumptions that adults can grow through a combination of challenge and support, and that the workplace is a perfect place to practice, explore and develop yourself. This could be as simple as sharing your desire to be able to do public speaking as well as your terror at the thought of it! Then, together with colleagues, finding real every day opportunities within the business to practice such as team meetings, colleague circles etc.

It could be declaring that your team has no idea how to action a strategy, but being willing to share this and openly explore together what it would take to develop the capability.

“The minute we separate development from how we do things every day, this gets us into trouble – culture is operations, operations is culture.”
– Bryan Ungard, Decurion Chief Purpose Officer, Harvard Business Review

Robert Kegan articulates four fundamental principles of DDO's that shape how they operate;

Running on principles

Most organisations have mission statements and purpose statements. DDO's also have principles that are not just stated but are alive through employee's actions and behaviours. In a strong developmental culture, principles are discussed, debated, applied, revised, posted; in short, they are ever-present and play an active role in daily life. One example is a DDO whose principle around mistakes is demonstrated across the organisation. It is OK to make a mistake, but unacceptable not to identify, analyse and learn from it.

Adults can grow

DDO's principles are rooted in development and a foundation for this is the belief that adults can grow, and that our learning and development does not cease once we reach adulthood. This is not the same as an annual appraisal process where an employee is given feedback and agrees to 'improve' on a particular skill or knowledge set but more focused on self-directed growth and exploration. Colleagues are supported to identify a personal challenge to work on in order to grow as an individual. These 'growth edges' are shared amongst teams so that the team can help the individual focus on their challenge in daily work.

Weakness is a strength and error is an opportunity

As Fredrick Laloux demonstrated, many people spend much of their time at work hiding their weaknesses due to fear of being found out. DDO's encourage and support sharing weaknesses as solid opportunities for growth, actively encouraging individuals and teams to declare what they are not good at, as well as the areas they find difficult. Examples include failure blogs and mistake think tanks – using these platforms not just to share the learning, but to give the individual or team the opportunity to reflect on the work and examine their own behaviours and thoughts throughout the process.

The interdependent bottom line

Like all businesses, DDO's need to monitor their bottom line and productivity. However, they don't see productivity and human development mutually exclusive – they both depend upon each other. So bold business aspirations such as high profitability and further developed people are part of a single whole.

EXAMPLE

A deliberately developmental organisation

Decurion Corporation

Decurion is a privately held company with a diverse range of businesses, including Pacific Theatres Entertainment Corporation, Robertson Properties Group, the ArcLight Cinema Company and Hollybrook Aged Care Facility. Decurion employs approximate 1,100 people in California. Their purpose is to provide places for people to flourish, by creating and cultivating the conditions for the business to flourish by supporting people to flourish. They enable people to self-direct their own lives and their own contribution within the Decurion community.

Decurion demonstrate the deliberate aspect of the DDO by intentionally supporting people to consistently consider what they themselves and their teams don't know how to do yet and explore what they need to develop personally and collectively to achieve this.

An example of this is within the Arclight cinemas. Each cinema has a Manager – whose role is to support the operations and culture of the cinema. As each Manager becomes competent at managing their cinema and their teams, the Manager is supported to consider their personal growth and may be asked to move to a different cinema or other part of the business – providing challenge and support to grow into a new role or context. To remain merely competent in one role does not provide the opportunity to grow and develop.

Personal development is alive in their Aged Care facility Hollybrook. Understanding the personal and professional lives of the Care Givers has led Decurion to support individual's in a very different way. A recent survey completed by colleagues surfaced what skills would help them in their personal and professional lives, these included assertiveness skills, budgeting skills and self-regulation. Open workshops for all employees provide up-skilling in the areas they feel will support their growth and development, with the support of their colleagues.

Bryan Ungard says “Development can be a tough process sometimes, its full-on, full of ambiguity, anxiety and confusion – Decurion's role is to actively sit alongside people and to support their growth and development in a way that makes sense to them”.

How you might begin?

Begin small – where there is an opening

Introducing the notion that all adults can grow and that our workplace is a great environment to practice your development is a perfect place to start. Think about your organisation as a community where all of the elements of the business provide opportunities for the individual's ongoing development.

Start with yourself and your team

Holding conversations that invite shared vulnerability and ask us to explore questions such as:

- What can I / we not do yet?
- What do I / we need to grow or develop to achieve this?
- What is the thing you / we want to work on?
- How does this area of development link to the business and support it to flourish?
- How can colleagues support you to deliberately find the place or places where you can practice this?
- In what ways do you need to be supported?

Nothing Extra™

Explore the notion that in both our Organisations culture and operations, opportunities to grow and develop are everywhere. The notion of Nothing Extra™ is focused on finding the opportunities in our everyday work, not in 'special events', but that our every day practices are invitations to grow and develop ourselves. Looking for opportunities in everything that that organisation does will open up a whole community of development.

Rethinking organisations examples

Avivo

Avivo participants focused one of their experiments on development. As a team, they agreed to spend 10% of their working week focused on their own development.

Natasha explains, 'Initially this worked well, but we struggled to maintain this long term as a group. We did however do this individually and this led us into different places in our teams. I think I learned that this is an evolving practice, it requires a level of bravery and most certainly investment.'

Janette used her learning as an opportunity to host conversations with support workers about their growth and development and how Avivo can provide the space and opportunities for them to develop. Janette explains that, 'this journey has highlighted that the organisations growth and development is also about me – I need to invest time in it.'

Some members of the group explored their own assumptions and limitations by using the Immunity to Change map – a tool designed to assist people to explore and understand our individual beliefs and collective mind sets that can be stopping our own development. The tool helps people to focus on an area that may be a limiting belief or a behaviour linked to a mindset and helps the individual to construct their own experiments to enable change.

Across Avivo, there are small teams made up of a cross section of people in a range of roles who meet regularly to explore and reflect on how they are developing and where in the organisation they can focus their efforts to practice their development goal. One group calls their sessions 'Practical Philosophy' and have been meeting for over a year.

JulieAnn explains "the group has helped me develop a more thoughtful reflective style of working. In some ways, it is challenging and tough and in other ways it is supportive and helpful. Growth is always optional, unlike change which is a constant. Developing the capacity to think and reflect together on my work and share this with members outside my team has helped".

Self-organising and participatory organisations

Mosaic

Mosaic participants have been supporting teams to work more autonomously. We've discovered that teams need all of the information, not just the small bit of information that relates to their role, or information that typically only Managers would have access to.

To enable this, they are creating a dashboard for each service, which shows the overall operations and budgets for each unit, so that teams can track how they are doing and make decisions themselves.

Gemma explains, 'People need to know all of the information to be in a position to make decisions. The dashboard will display everything such as agency costs, cancellations, costs of utility bills and all things that relate to the service – it's like a little mini budget that everyone can see, so they can track themselves. I think if people are have more knowledge and understanding of the bigger picture then they will be more inclined to work together as a team to make it work'.

Uniting Care West

Uniting Care West are in the process of transformation, and experimented with the process of 'acting up'. Typically, when a Manager or supervisor is on annual leave, a member of the team would be invited to act in their role during that period. Megan was curious about the impact of this practice, particularly what this message was giving to teams. "I kept thinking that the notion of acting up could be saying to the team we don't trust you to continue your work in my absence, therefore we need someone to take up the mantle of overseeing you".

Megan explored this with the team and shared her thoughts. The trust in the team was shared, the team agreed that they could use each other for support during this period and all felt very capable and confident to continue their work. Megan explains, "the impact of this has been significant both on team trust, accountability and on the budget – we no longer routinely pay acting-up reimbursements where it's not necessary".

Some organisations, like Buurtzorg, were created 'from scratch' to be participatory and self-managing. This is a rare opportunity, and the reality is that most of us will have to figure out how to transition our current organisations into something different.

This means that the impulse for the organisation's transition must be initiated by the current leadership, and probably at the level of the CEO. We were all raised in an era where the expectation about what the organisation was, involved someone sitting at the top of a pyramid. Probably 99% of all organisations in the world today are organised around that philosophy as a given.

As the world transitions and the combination of consciousness, technology, the speed of change and the complexity of navigating the interconnected nature of our lives and work increases at an ever-accelerating pace, it's become apparent that organisations created to extract value or limit disorder, (based on the Tayloristic paradigm which assumed an illiterate workplace), the very structures within which work is 'done' are long overdue for conscious iteration and change.

Understanding our core values around people and work mandate that we create the conditions for those values to be made manifest. For a millennium or more, the assumptions about the workforce were that people;

- Are lazy
- Work primarily for the money
- Own interests are more important than the organisation's
- Not capable of making good decisions

Our development as leaders, as well as the potential for the organisation, is limited by those values and beliefs.

Conversely, if our fundamental values and beliefs are that people;

- Are capable of asking for what they need
- Have the ability to make and keep commitments
- Have the innate potential to develop

"An organisation cannot evolve beyond its leadership's stage of development."
– Frederic Laloux

“The right question is not: how can everyone have equal power? It is rather: how can everyone be powerful? Power is not viewed as a zero-sum game, where the power I have is necessarily power taken away from you. Instead, if we acknowledge that we are all interconnected, the more powerful you are, the more powerful I can become.”

– Frederic Laloux

We are shifting the possibility space 180 degrees, and even from within the existing organisation create the possibility for true transformation.

Last year, Jan Perkins, CEO of Tautoko Services in New Zealand, decided to tell her board of directors that she intended to step back to two days a week within one year, and with that announcement also recommended that they not replace her, i.e. the role of CEO. Jan had a very strong sense that the job title and even job description of CEO could easily be redistributed into the team at large. So began a process for the organisation to first design, then implement participatory organising.

Jan is indicative of a conscious leader who is clear in their understanding that the legacy they want to leave, and what they believe is possible for the organisations they serve, is not to simply replace themselves as the benevolent leader at the top of the pyramid. They believe that the latent leadership potential of self-management and commitment can not only distribute the sense of accountability and ‘ownership’ but can and will create developmental growth for those members of the team who opt-in to the participatory process.

Transition must not be a top-down mandate, but rather, firstly, an invitation to opt-in to participation, and a carefully scaffolded (and co-created) set of opportunities and challenges from which to start practicing. Ideally, these opportunities should quickly transition from being ‘event based’, i.e. off-sites and workshops to being ‘practice based’ and part of how work needed to transition is created and implemented.

This does not mean that leaders instantly disperse all of their power and simply become participants. This is neither sensible nor integral. Leaders are called to model the new expression of ‘leaderly behaviour’ – to invite participation in the decisions that were once their sole purview or domain. To create the opportunity for others to step into the practice that was once concentrated in a single person, and co-create the scaffolding for others to safely step into leadership and accountability.

How you might begin?

Simple practices to make information transparent and accessible may be where your organisation is at right now. If we are inviting everyone to opt-in to decision making, for example, ensuring access to the same levels of context and information as those currently making decisions is obvious and necessary. When devolving power, consider context and information first – it’s easy to be disappointed or judge action from a position of power and knowledge.

The consistency of invitation and communication is really important. As we move from event-based change to practice-based transformation, a predictable cadence helps. Formal, event-based consultation followed by long periods of management plotting in dark rooms is what we’ve grown used to. In a participatory organisation, frequent updates and ongoing invitations for participation are needed to help everyone un-learn the expectation that change is ‘done to us’. A practice space that’s proven valuable in a number of organisations is Working Groups.

Working groups are transient teams that come together to deliver a specific piece of value to the organisation. They are not limited by traditional departmental assumptions, like only the marketing department can create communications materials, or only the finance department can optimise the process for expense claims. Rather, they are self-organising, self-selecting teams that answer an invitation to participation. Each working group has a convener whose responsibility it is to craft an invitation, and (in the case of oversubscription) select participants on the basis of diversity.

Working Groups are usually, at least initially, defined by an organisation-wide sensing exercise to understand where the needs and opportunities exist, and how they will serve the vision of visible future. This is usually a three-month horizon. Working groups, once they form, are asked to make visible their objective and three month deliverable within their first couple of meetings. It’s a healthy practice for working group conveners or self-selected representatives to meet regularly to notice what they are learning and surface patterns.

This practice gives everyone in the organisation the ability to experience self-selection, self-organisation, self-management, time-boxed deliverables, making and keeping commitments not only to the working group but to the teams and impacted individuals (to ensure they are not compromised through the additional commitment to the working group), and to have the lived experience of building the organisation, not waiting for it to be built around them, or have it mandated and presented to them.

Transformation happens when everyone who wants to build the new thing actually builds the new thing. It's not easy, and it's not fast. It can't be emphasised strongly enough that this is not work that can be done by even the most enlightened 'leadership team' – it HAS to be an invitation to everyone. Of course, an enlightened leadership team might create a new structure that 'feels better' but it will still be a top-down mandate, no matter how benevolent.

Rethinking organisations examples

The Mosaic team are working hard to maximise transparency and communication – in both directions. They have four initiatives designed to encourage transparency and access to information:

1. **Speakers Corner** – held quarterly in different areas, an open invitation for all employees to come join two of the Executive Team members for a coffee and tell us anything and ask us anything.
2. **The Bulletin** – a one-page weekly newsletter that includes an NDIS Update, and updates on 'you said / we did' as a practice of leadership accountability to the teams.
3. **Bright Ideas Mailbox** – a Mailbox called 'bright ideas' so staff can send any bright ideas through to the Executive Team.
4. **Spotlight on Quality** – a monthly newsletter which uses the National Disability Standards as the framework to which real-life examples and great stories are recognised.

Avivo have focused on moving decision making closer to those working in partnership with people and families, and reducing beaurocracy. Alison prompted a rule change so that anyone can self-authorise petty cash expenditure up to \$50. She invited colleagues to help her think about whether the rule was reasonable and in line with Avivo's new cultural objectives. Then she set about understanding who set the rules, and how to apply them. She got them changed the same afternoon. Another change was ripping up the agenda for regular team meetings, dumped items that just appear out of habit/routine, added detail to topic instead of just heading, and extended it by 50% to allow for a check-in.

Team development and team decision making

Many progressive organisations are structured around a network of teams. Teams who celebrate each person's uniqueness, support each other's limitations and support each other to grow and develop.

We see an explosion of self-managed teams – teams who are responsible for their own performance, have accountability for how they behave and for what they deliver, which supports people's individual autonomy and overall investment in the outcomes.

Team development plays a significant role in enabling teams to set the foundations of how they will work together, how they will make decisions and how they support every member's contribution.

Many of the organisations featured in this resource invested in assisting teams to establish their foundations, be it with team development programs such as Building Brilliant Teams or establishing frameworks / agreements on how this unique team set the parameters of how they will operate as a team, and as part of the organisation.

'The effectiveness of a self-managed team is partly determined by the degree to which the team members can form workable agreements with each other.'
– Vermeer and Wenting

Team agreements

All teams are different and as such will create different agreements, based on the people in the team, the nature of their work and their areas of priority. Team Agreements set the team up from the beginning with agreed ways of working and practices that ensure everyone is clear about what their colleagues expect of them and what they are prepared to give. All of the organisations who explored this recommend spending the time up front to establish agreements within the team – learning that in its absence teams can get into trouble and feel unsupported.

Team agreements may include:

- Our team purpose – why the team exists and what is its purpose
- The team's social contract – how we will behave with each other and hold each other to account
- Team roles – roles that team members will perform and how these roles can rotate
- Team communication – how the team will communicate daily and how they will create time to explore and reflect on their work
- Team decision making – agreed process and principles for how individuals and the team make decisions
- Team support – clarity on the support around a team and a process for working through conflict
- Team quality – agreement on how the team will monitor their progress and measure their impact
- Team onboarding and exiting – clarity on how new team members will be recruited and how teams' members will leave the team

Coaches instead of managers

Critically, organisations such as Buurtzorg and Avivo have moved to enable the support of a Coach to assist teams to establish their agreements and navigate work in times of difficulties. Importantly a Coach is not the same as a Manager – the Coach's role is to champion the team's thinking to find their own solutions, not as someone with higher authority telling them what they should or shouldn't do.

There are pivotal moments when Coaches can support or hinder the team's health and development, and it is largely based around a deep understanding that whatever the team is experiencing it is the team's problem to solve. Assistance to help the team think is helpful, but it is essentially the team who find the solution that they believe will work for them. In the absence of managers some organisations were worried about the team's motivation – do we need a manager to motivate people?

For a long time, organisations have believed that money is the main motivator for team members. However, Daniel Pink argues that for most people, once secure pay and conditions are in place, there are other factors that motivate us and these are surprisingly simple. According to Pink [the three areas that motivate](#) us include:

1 **Autonomy**
The desire to self-direct and to be in control of ourselves

2 **Mastery**
The desire to get better at things and learn new ways of working

3 **Purpose**
The desire to do things that matter and that make a difference

Team development plan

Autonomy and purpose are a focus in the team agreement, however we need to pay attention to mastery – the opportunity to grow and develop. A team development plan is based on each team members own growth and development, which identifies what that person has identified as their own learning and development needs, how they intend to progress these over the next few months and what they need from their colleagues to support their development.

Once each team member has completed this, these are shared amongst the team, so the team know and understand collectively what each team member is focused on. Alongside this we have learnt that in addition to sharing each individual's development plan – the team need to consider what they as a team need to grow and develop into. Examples include things such as the team learning more about hearing voices as they support a number of people who are voice hearers. Some teams focus on knowing and understanding their local area better to become more useful to the people they support.

A team development plan could include:

1 What are we focused on this year, next six months as a team?

2 What are we individually working on to grow and develop?

3 As a team what are our big goals?

4 How will we know we are progressing and developing?

5 How will we keep track?

Making decisions as a team

Decision making in teams is critical and assisting a team to understand how they will make decisions is at the heart of the team development work.

There are a variety of ways teams can make decisions and can use a range of approaches to do so. Rethinking Organisations have explored a range of decision making processes.

The Advice process is a process used by Buurtzorg and was detailed by Fredric Laloux. The process supports everyone in the organisation to be a decision maker – but to seek advice from those with technical expertise if relevant and those who will be impacted by the decision. This is a process that is based on seeking the advice of others, not consensus.

Another simple tool that was explored was the use of a decision filter that all team members are expected to use when faced with a decision.

Each decision is expected to be filtered through the following questions:

1 Is it good for you?

2 Is it good for the customer?

3 Is it good for the organisation?

Decision making styles

We have learnt that there are times when teams need to use varied approaches, but getting clear on the style of decisions is important, which may include any of the following:

Delegated decision-making

Granting authority to individuals for specific types of decisions. This approach can be improved by increasing transparency within the Organisation before, during and after decisions are made. Sharing the thought process behind the decision and the major decision criteria used, helps build trust and confidence within the team. The most common misuse of delegation is passing along decision-making responsibility without providing sufficient authority to execute on the resulting decision.

Consensus decision making

Requires ongoing discussion until everyone involved agrees with the proposed solution or, at minimum, is prepared to support the decision. It requires a level of shared context that time often doesn't permit. This process can be especially useful when stakes are high, the decision is not reversible and most of the team shares sufficient context. The most common challenge is false consensus where individuals indicate willingness to support and move on to other business, but are not actually aligned. The lack of consensus can show up later when some team members fail to fully support the decision or even sabotage it.

Consent decision-making

There are two decision-by-consent approaches we've seen work well: the Advice Process and the Integrated Decision-Making Process.

Making decisions by consent enables team members to proceed in any area not otherwise assigned to an individual or role. It requires a team-wide agreement on how individuals will go about making those decisions. With this approach, decisions are generally led by those with domain accountability. Note that this is not decision-making by consensus, which requires each team member be consulted and confirm support in advance of a decision being finalised.

Integrated decision making

In comparison to the Advice Process, Integrated Decision-Making is a more structured approach. It's a tool normally used in a live meeting where everyone relevant to the decision is present.

Two key elements make Integrated Decision-Making powerful. First, whoever makes the first proposal becomes the proposal holder. Their job is now to on-board and integrate feedback from all other meeting participants. This process may result in a decision that diverges completely from the initial proposal.

Second, participants may only object to a proposal if they feel it will 'cause harm or move us backward.' Having a better idea is not a sufficient reason to object. This is where traditional consensus-based processes often fail. When individuals believe a better solution exists, the search for consensus can drag on endlessly. Integrated Decision-Making operates on the agile principle of 'good enough for now, safe enough to try.'

EXAMPLE

Self-managed teams

Wellbeing teams

Wellbeing teams are small, neighbourhood, self-managed teams inspired by Buurtzorg based in the UK. They work in local neighborhoods and deliver support to people in their own homes. Teams have up to 12 members and each team has a number of different roles. Examples include a recruitment coordinator who takes a role in recruiting new team members and a story teller who has the role of communication for the team, sharing stories and insights.

Each identified role has a different allocation of time to fulfill their role for the team alongside their role as a Support Worker.

Teams are supported by two coaches – a Practice Coach who takes the role of learning and development in typical originations and a Team Coach who has a focus on HR and employee relationships. The Coaches support a number of teams.

Teams have clear practices and approaches in how they pay attention to the health and wellbeing of their teams. Team gatherings are held weekly for two hours and the meetings have a process that checks in on each other and the people they support. It includes time to reflect, problem solve and agree actions to assist their progress and development. Alongside this all team members have a named Buddy – a colleague whose job is to support the onboarding and the ongoing development of the team members.

How you might begin?

Team development

Supporting a team to establish its team agreement and development plan are a great foundation for all teams. Patrick Lencioni a leader in team development helps us to consider areas that healthy teams need to pay attention to including;

- Building trust amongst the team members, so there is no reason to feel unsafe
- Practicing robust conversation to work things out and not being fearful of conflict
- Active and public commitment from team members to the collective goal
- The ability of team members to hold each other to account for their contribution
- A clear understanding of the results and the aims of the team

Team roles

Exploring the kind of roles and functions the team as a whole need to support its growth, development and every day functioning is a useful starting point. Traditionally, these kinds of tasks are those often held by a Manager such as understanding and monitoring the budget, ensuring people know their roster or times / places of work, reflection and problem solving. How can team members take on these roles and what will it take for the team to understand what the person is responsible for?

Team tasks

Teams need time to be a team and in busy organisations this can be overlooked. Exploring ways for teams to be a team such as work on a shared goal, problem solving together or developing the practices needed to hold each other to account are approaches that all healthy teams need to develop. Teams defining a team goal and then working together to understand how to get closer can help build teams. A helpful question taken from the Deliberately Developmental Organisations is “What does this team not know how to do yet and how can we support each other to grow and develop into this”?

Rethinking organisations examples

The Communication and Engagement Team at Avivo have been trialing self-management. Three members became five and together they created their team agreement and drew on the [Superpowers](#) approach. The tool helped the team members learn about their strengths and limitations individually, but also as a team – identifying the team’s strengths and areas they need to develop into.

Together they defined the team roles necessary to support them as a team and they each self-selected a role they wanted to take on.

Natalie explains, ‘the process we took to develop our team agreement was a little different but definitely worth it. We chose to lock ourselves away in a hotel room for 24 hours and created our agreement – we debated our purpose and our priorities; we also agreed how we would make decisions and tested this out on some scenarios we had previously faced. Once we were clear on what each of us brings to the team – we were able to select the work that we think plays to our strengths and identify where each of us needed support.

We have developed our roles based on our contributions so we now have a creative advisor, an experience advisor, a strategic advisor, a involvement advisor and our campaign advisor – all new roles based on who we are. It has been such a liberating process – our team is strong and our outcomes are publicly shared for the whole organisation to see!’

Accessibility CEO Graeme has been exploring what it means to be a great executive team. Graeme is curious about the need for a CEO, ‘Accessibility runs the way it does because of the contributions of all of the team – not just the CEO. I wonder what the impact would be if we didn’t have my role as the appointed leader, but that we are a leadership team, we are responsible as a team – we make up a much bigger contribution together than alone’.

Concluding reflections

Rethinking Organisations challenged participants to explore, challenge, and grow opportunities for both themselves and their organisations. Overall, the feedback from the program was very positive, and there is a lot to learn from:

Personal learning outcomes reflections included:

- ‘To move mountains we must start by moving stones’.
- The journey never ends, it shapes and grows into what it’s going to be.
- A very different way of organisational development that just feels more ‘human’
- We are mostly facing the same challenges in the sector and have a genuine interest in wanting to improve organisational culture.
- That it is acceptable to trust teams to operate under their own steam without my constant control
- That reinventing organisations is hard work! And that there is no magic formula for doing so!!

Overall organisational learning outcomes reflections included:

- That the work is in supporting human to human relationships, fostering trust in each other. The ‘fluffy stuff’ is the important stuff.
- Individual’s intrinsic motivation to be adaptable and embrace new ways of thinking and working is necessary to move forward. Not everyone can feel comfortable with this. We need to be kind to one another.
- That there are many different elements of self-management and there is no one path/approach/method. That time needs to be dedicated to achieving the change and to keeping it on track
- That more work can be managed when there is trust that teams are operating within the scope of the organisations value and expectations with limited facilitation.

Alison, Finance Business Partner at Avivo, shared this comprehensive reflection which she titled ‘a back-office perspective’;

When I was recruited, the people who interviewed me talked a lot about the current re-organisation within Avivo and how important this was to the business, but once in my position, my colleagues in the finance team did not seem particularly engaged with the change.

I realised that the whole team needed to get on board and felt that participation in the WAIS project would improve my understanding of self-management, provide me with real life examples and models and inspire me to influence my colleagues and my organisation. The project did this and more.

I was called to share my experiences of the project with my back-office colleagues in finance, IT and office services. In preparing my presentation, I realised that there was so much that I had learnt, so many interacting facets of self-management, so many insights, that I found it impossible to pick out three/four top items to share. So, I made up a pack of cards, each one bearing a few notes about some aspect of my insights from the project and invited my audience to pull out one card at a time, and I shared about the topic on that card.

This demonstrated how many different facets there were, how they interlinked/overlapped with each other, how diverse the topic is. It also gave me the chance to show my passion, how there is no one clear defined approach, and how I was still on the journey of discovery, development and learning.

Now a little further along the path, I feel a little more able to identify the really key learnings that have stayed with me:

- You need to lay the foundations in the form of the underlying principles of self-management e.g. citizenship and what that means, the organisation's values and how that aligns with/supports self-management
- It takes time to convince people to join you on the journey – different people engage in different ways, are inspired by different things, and take varying amounts of time and evidence before they get on board.
- It's a journey of faith. You have to take the plunge before you can see the results. But we can see that it works from the organisations around us who have made it work
- It takes time to make it happen and to keep it on track. Talking with colleagues about how they feel and how we work together is so important, and spending time on the 'fluffy stuff' saves time later on.

The part of the journey that I am now on is working on systems to dismantle the command and control structures and to deliver appropriate financial information to our front-line staff – considering new IT systems, revising the delegations matrix etc.

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to participate in the WAIS project and look forward to continuing on the self-management journey with my colleagues.

The long-term success of this programme is yet to be known – what we do know is that challenging well-entrenched paradigms of organisations can't happen over night. We also know that we need to do this work if we truly believe that it's in service of supporting the Human Services sector to create the conditions for both the people we support, and those whose vocation is to provide support, to equally thrive.

