

**Collaborative Research Partnerships: a Powerful Impetus for the transfer of Knowledge into Action.****Ros Thorpe: James Cook University**

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**Abstract**

“What good will come from this research? Will anything change?” This not uncommon lament, from research participants and researchers alike, points to the barriers which seem to impede the transfer of knowledge into action. In this context collaborative research partnerships can provide a powerful impetus for overcoming resistance and affecting change in practice for the benefit of families and children.

Using experience from the partnership between James Cook University and the Mackay/Whitsunday region of the Queensland Department of Families (now Communities, soon to be Child Safety), the paper outlines some ways in which research can make a difference. Particular attention is focussed on research as (1) a transformative experience for participants, and (2) an impetus for improved practice in out-of-home care. Critical aspects of the process of transferring knowledge into action are identified as: changes in awareness; changes in organisational culture; and changes in service delivery.

**Major Points**

1. Barriers to the transfer of knowledge into practice
  - Competing influences on policy making
  - Resistance to implementation of research informed practice
  
2. Collaborative research partnerships as a means to overcome resistance: The JCU/QDoF Mackay/Whitsunday collaborative research partnership
  - What is it?
  - In what ways is it successful?
  - How is it influencing practice?
    - changes in awareness among practitioners and managers: including research as a transformative experience for participants
    - changes in organisational culture and practices
    - changes in service delivery: (a) program development  
(b) everyday practice
  - How is it influencing policy?

3. What Ingredients have underpinned success?

- **ACTIVE** commitment to research and to a Learning Organisation in Industry Partner Region
- Research minded leadership by Regional Director
- Research Interest Group for all staff
- Post graduate research projects by staff
- Team leaders enrolled in further study
- University researchers' visible and active involvement in the region
- Support of research participants: foster carers; children and young people in care; Indigenous elders and carers.

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