

Western Australian Community Foundation

2008 Summit

Evaluation

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Introduction

On 19 September 2008, Western Australian Community Foundation held its fourth annual Summit, “Today’s Choice for Tomorrow: Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way!”

The Summit is Western Australian Community Foundation’s flagship event. It is an opportunity for the Foundation to demonstrate its commitment to community sustainability and philanthropy by bringing together community leaders, academics, and government and business representatives to share information on innovative community theory, practice and personal experience.

This year, the Foundation embarked upon developing a program that would advance community leadership across the state. It aimed to promote philanthropy and philanthropic pursuits as an essential part of a vibrant and healthy metropolitan space. The 2008 Summit focused on equipping individuals, groups and organisations to assist communities to thrive and participate in the state’s development.

The Summit offered fertile ground for learning, sharing and understanding by:

1. Exposing participants to a variety of experiences and perspectives on leadership;
2. Connecting participants thus enhancing partnerships;
3. Providing participants with information and skills to lead the way; and
4. Engaging participants in thought provoking discussion on the challenges and rewards of leadership roles.

It also provided an opportunity for the Foundation to seek input from delegates regarding community needs – from a philanthropic and community leadership perspective.

Delegates participated in an afternoon session facilitated by Tim Muirhead of the CSD Network, which included an opportunity for all to discuss current community issues and needs. In addition to the points raised during this session, delegates were asked to complete a Summit evaluation form.

The outcomes of the 2008 Summit evaluation process and facilitated session have been captured here, forming the basis of an action plan that will be integrated into the operational priorities of Western Australian Community Foundation.

Summit Feedback

Of the 145 registered delegates, 62 completed Summit evaluation forms were submitted; a data sample of 42%. The Summit evaluation forms included direct statements, requiring a yes or no response, enabling the Foundation to capture quantitative data to statistically measure delegate feedback. Graphical representation of the compiled quantitative data is set out within the diagrams below.

Quantitative Data

Diagram 1: Which category best describes you (tick as many as needed)?

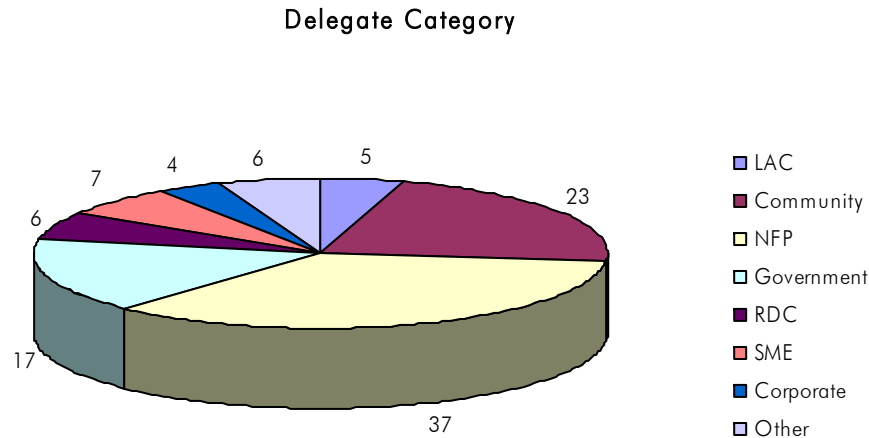


Diagram 2: Which region are you from?

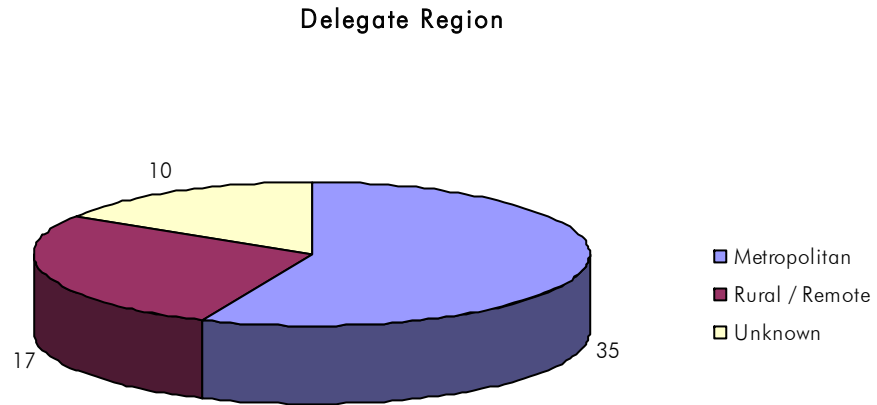


Diagram 3:

Was the Summit successful in expanding your fundamental leadership & influencing skills?

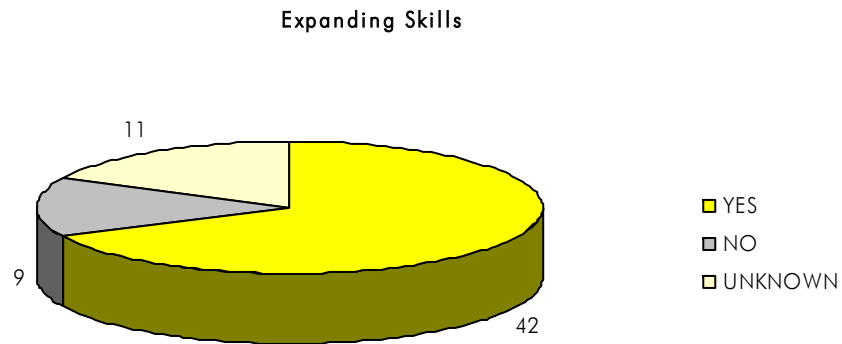


Diagram 4:

Was the Summit successful in exposing you to different experiences & perspectives on leadership?

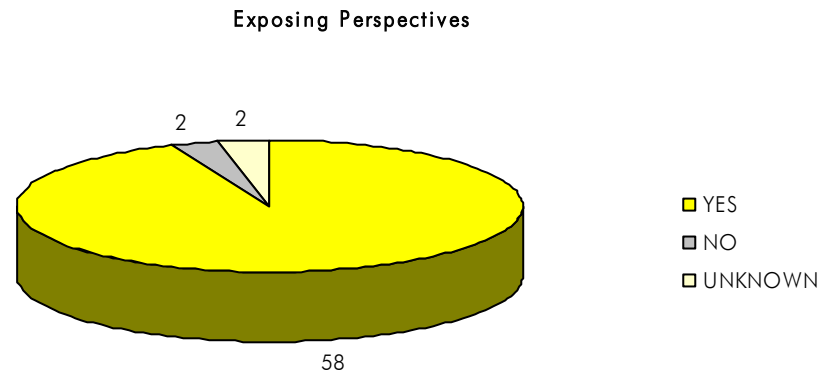


Diagram 5:

Was the Summit successful in connecting and networking you with other delegates?

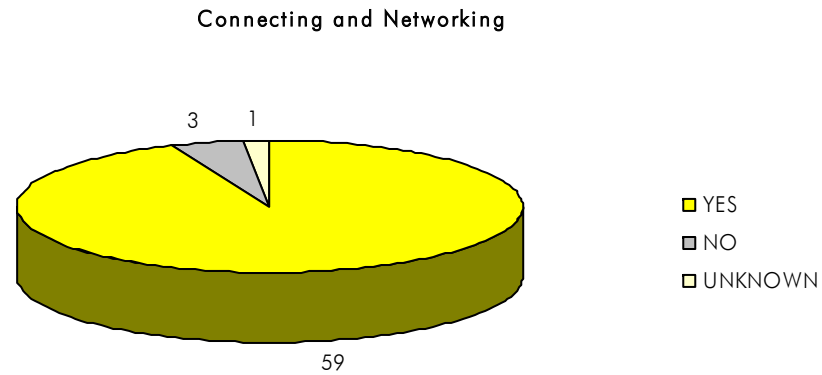


Diagram 6:

Was the Summit successful in engaging you in discussion on the challenges of leadership and social inclusion?

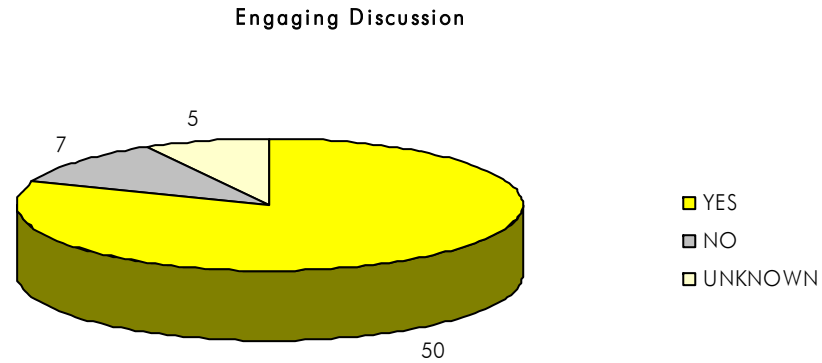


Diagram 7:

Did the Summit better equip you to recognise leadership potential in yourself or others?

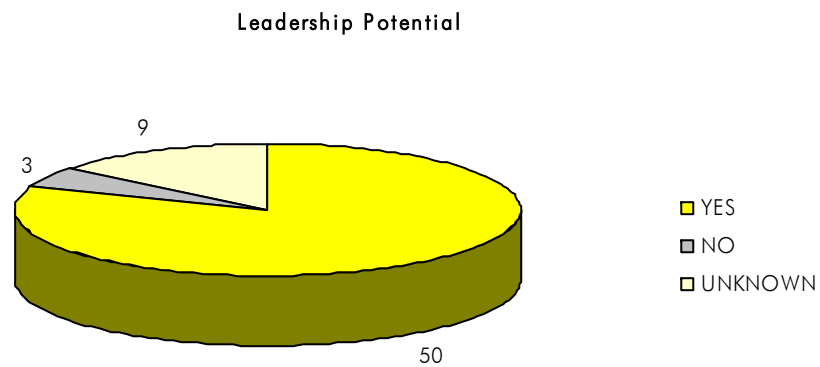


Diagram 8:

Did the Summit better equip you to support leaders in your work or community?

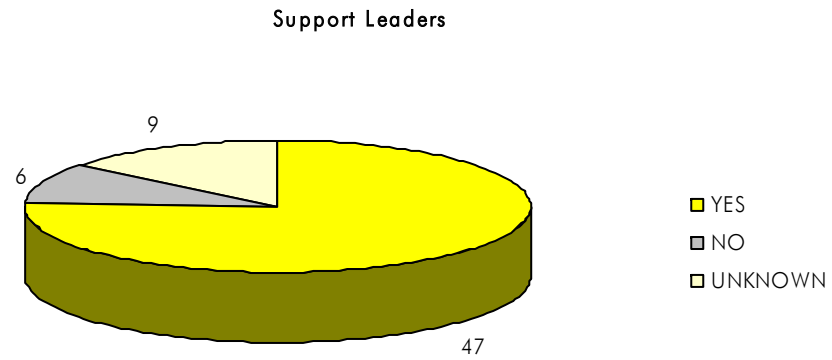
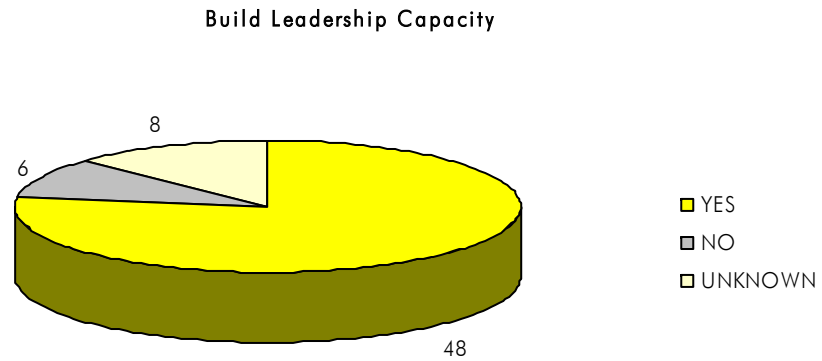


Diagram 9:

Did the Summit better equip you to build leadership capacity in your work or community?



Qualitative Data

Qualitative measures were ascertained by asking general open ended questions requiring delegates to reflect upon the proceedings, and make comments on future summit direction. These responses have been distilled and broadly categorised according to common themes, as below.

What was the most valuable part of the Summit for you? (62 responses : 100%)

- Quality, diversity and accessibility of speakers.
- Networking opportunities.
- Ambience was energising, rejuvenating, exciting and inspiring.
- Conversational style and real life examples.
- Information about Western Australian Community Foundation.

What was the least valuable part of the Summit for you? (33 responses : 53%)

- Not Applicable (29 responses : 46%)
- Some delegates felt that the *Decisive Action* session did not meet their expectations as outlined in the program. (8 responses : 12%)
- Some delegates called for more interaction and engagement, addressing practical content and skills. (6 responses : 9%)
- Some delegates felt that the *Reconnaissance & Surveillance* presenters did not address the topic as outlined in the program. (5 responses : 8%)

What aspect(s) of the discussions will assist delegates in building community leadership capacity? (40 responses : 64%)

- Collaboration and networking, sharing of ideas and resources.
- Strategic planning, identifying needs and establishing common goals and values.
- Awareness of and access to leadership development, training and mentoring.
- Western Australian Community Foundation's model and framework.
- Encouragement and motivation.

What do you consider to be the major challenge(s) facing the Foundation as it strives to grow philanthropy and foster a culture of giving? (53 responses : 85%)

- Apathy, burn out, reduced volunteering and demand for support and resources.
- Engaging government, business and community.
- Attracting others to engage in philanthropy, advocacy and education.
- Increasing collaboration, reducing competition and duplication of services and efforts.
- Effectively marketing the activities of the Foundation to those that need to know.

What topics do you think could form the basis of future Summits? (46 responses : 74%)

- Strategies to survive trend in short-term funding to achieve financial sustainability.
- Presentation of effective local community initiatives, case studies, including evaluation of what works and why.
- Business strategies including partnership development, marketing and promotion.
- Community engagement and mobilisation, and community capacity building.

After Action Review

A key element of the 2008 program included an interactive workshop facilitated by Tim Muirhead of the CSD Network. The purpose of this session was to seek specific feedback from delegates on their attitudes towards community capacity building and philanthropy.

The session included delegates responding to four short questions to assist the Foundation to gain further understanding of current community issues and needs with the aim of the captured information forming the basis of an action plan integrated into the Foundation's future operational priorities. Of the 145 registered delegates, 86 submitted completed questions following the facilitated session (59%). Of the four questions posed to delegates, the data included a 100% response rate. The responses have been distilled and broadly categorised according to common themes.

What conditions must be present for a community to grow and prosper?

- Basic needs such as housing, health, education, employment etc.
- Social justice, social infrastructure, inclusion of youth and family values.
- Community engagement, commitment and openness for change.
- Effective leadership and an identified common vision and purpose for communities.
- Awareness and understanding of needs and issues before strategies to address can be developed.
- Ownership with stronger local / regional governance and local resources for local people / projects.

In Western Australia what are some key challenges in meeting these conditions?

- Long term funding and financial sustainability.
- Amendments to government policy and alignment across agencies, tiers, business and community. Need for policy commitment across successive governments.
- Human conditions such as individualism, apathy, burnout, loss of identity and consumerism.
- Issues affecting rural & remote communities such as a decreasing population, tyranny of distance, isolation, uneven distribution of prosperity.
- Community disorientation caused through processes of disenfranchisement, disempowerment and competition for scarce resources.
- Overcoming media subjectivity and bias, moving focus from the negative to the positive.

What role do you think philanthropy could play in helping communities grow and prosper?

- Networking, collaboration and mentoring to formulate ideas, direction and innovation.
- Awareness of and access to expertise, assistance and support to enable skills transfer.
- Challenging leadership conventions and stereotypes.
- Utilising the Foundation as the lead agency and centre for philanthropy, building connections across business, government and community.

What will you take away from the Summit that will empower you to be active in community leadership?

- Ideas for funding opportunities, importance of corporate governance and need for communities to strategically plan its activities in response to current and emerging needs.
- Availability of expertise, professional services and mentoring opportunities.
- Importance of leading from within, and taking responsibility for encouraging leadership potential / succession.
- Networking, connections, and the importance of cross-sector communication.
- The various roles Western Australian Community Foundation can play.

Observations

Feedback demonstrated that the Western Australian Community Foundation annual Summit is greatly valued by communities and has been successful in supporting the Foundation's strategic priorities of strengthening the transfer of knowledge and strengthening strategic partnerships and alliances to build stronger communities.

There was a clearly defined need for a centralised approach to philanthropy leading to improved communication across the sectors and reduced duplication of services.

Having established the need for the development of community leadership, delegates recognised a lack of skill when dealing with a range of stakeholders and sectors, especially as it related to funding, sponsorships and partnerships. Further, delegates recognised that individuals, groups and organisations alike require further assistance in community mobilisation. It has been highlighted that all sectors have a great deal to learn from each other.

Delegates expressed they were experiencing community disorientation. Instead of a sense of belonging, ownership and identity they were witnessing a sense of helplessness, hopelessness and powerlessness. It was believed much of this stemmed from poor government leadership.

Recommendations

In response to the feedback from the delegates at the 2008 Annual Summit the following recommendations were approved by the Western Australian Community Foundation Board at their meeting on 15 October 2008.

- a) The 2009 Summit will be built on the theme of 'from grass roots to greatness', local examples of communities in action including evaluation of effectiveness of case study programs to facilitate knowledge transfer.
- b) Western Australian Community Foundation will continue to conduct events and form partnerships to promote the development of community business partnerships and stakeholder relationship management through the transfer of knowledge.
- c) Acknowledging the value of networking, the Board committed Western Australian Community Foundation to continue to create networking opportunities around Western Australia.
- d) Western Australian Community Foundation will explore the potential for establishing a "Gateway to WA Philanthropy" as part of the Foundation's website. This would act as a portal for individuals and organisations involved in philanthropy to register their interest.
- e) Western Australian Community Foundation will promote and assist its local advisory committees to tap into leadership training utilising the Foundation's network of stakeholders including groups such as Leadership WA and the Department for Communities.
- f) Western Australian Community Foundation will facilitate dialogue between community, business and government with a view to developing solutions to address long term community funding requirements.
- g) Western Australian Community Foundation will facilitate dialogue between community, business and government to address the responsibilities and rights of each with regard to the provision of services within Western Australian communities.

