



University of the  
Sunshine Coast

Accident Research (USCAR)

# The Risk Assessment Process

From 'ticking the box' to an empowering and inclusive aspect in your overall risk management strategy

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# Aims

- Implications of the OHS Act for outdoor programs
- Compliance and achievement of meaningful outcomes
- Risk assessment process underpinned by contemporary systems thinking



# The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Victoria)

1. ...highest level of protection against risks to their health and safety that is reasonably practicable
2. ...responsible for eliminating or reducing those risks so far as is reasonably practicable...
3. ...proactive, and take all reasonably practicable measures...
4. Employers and employees should exchange information...
5. Employees...represented in relation to health and safety issues.

# Hazards and risks?

- “A hazard is anything in the workplace that has the **potential to harm** people.
- A risk arises when it’s possible that a hazard will actually cause harm. The level of risk will depend on factors such as **how often** the job is done, the **number of workers** involved and **how serious** any injuries that result could be.”

(WorkSafe Victoria)

# “so far as reasonable practicable”

- Likelihood
- Degree of harm
- Knowledge
- Availability
- Costs

(Safe Work Australia)





# What does this mean for me?

Risk identification and control are required to meet your obligations under the OHS Act



Some questions:

What is the role of a risk assessment in your organisation?

Are there any issues that confuse you when conducting a risk assessment?

# Risk Assessment

1. Address compliance requirements (**priority on safety, proactive, comprehensive, collaborative**); and
2. Focus on meaningful outcomes that align and compliment the desired aims of the program.

# Example 1...

http://www.owfc.com.au/Childcarewindow.asp

One World for Children Chil... x How to Capture Screen Shots i...

Google one world for children risk assessment Search Share More >>

Sign In

ii. Foreword by Charles Eis... Research students Register to apply online - ... Sorry Lance. claredallat Twitter Favorites Bar Facebook Inbox (2) - claredallat@g... Suggested Sites ATLAS

- general agreement (medical)
- emergency contact and phone number for that day
- name and contact of Doctor

### Risk Assessment

Explain all requirements expected from parent helpers

Determine the number of staff required to adequately supervise the children (Ideally 1 adult to every 2 children, or 1 adult to every 4 children) this depends on the destination of the excursion

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Are any other adults required to supervise the children that need to have specialised skills such as first aid, anaphylaxis or asthma training

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The transport to and from the proposed destination for the excursion (bus over 12 seats do not require booster seats)

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The proposed route and destination for the excursion

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2:14 PM 13/06/2014



# Example 1 cont'd.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.owfc.com.au/Childcarewindow.asp>. The page title is "One World for Children Chil...". The search bar contains the text "one world for children risk assessment". The page content includes a form with the following sections:

- Will there be any water based activities/risks**  
Three horizontal lines for text entry.
- The proposed activities at the excursion**  
Three horizontal lines for text entry.
- Proposed duration of the excursion**  
Three horizontal lines for text entry.
- Date Risk Assessment completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Staff member completing the Risk Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Approved by the Nominated Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Team Leader to evaluate the excursion and supervisory practices after the excursion**  
Two horizontal lines for text entry.

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons, including Internet Explorer, Word, and Chrome. A Skype notification bubble in the bottom right corner indicates that "Sue Natoli is online". The system clock shows the time as 2:16 PM on 13/06/2014.

# Example 2...

Table Tools NSW DOE Risk Assessment Plan [Compatibility Mode] - Microsoft Word

Home Insert Page Layout References Mailings Review View Design Layout

Paste Copy Format Painter Clipboard

Arial 9 Font

Paragraph

Styles: AaBbCcL Emphasis, AaBbCc Heading 1, AaBbCcD Heading 3, AaBbCcI Normal, AaBbCcI Strong, AaBbCcI Subtitle, AaBbCcI Title, AaBbCcI No Spacing, Change Styles, Find, Replace, Select, Editing

**Sample Risk Management Plan: Excursion**

Name of school: Excursion Plus High School  
 Name of principal: J Citizen  
 Description and location of excursion: Bushwalk in National Park  
 Date of excursion: 18 October  
 Group/class: 6S and 6G

Number in group/class: 55  
 Name of excursion coordinator: K Citizen  
 Contact number: XXXX  
 Accompanying staff, parents, caregivers, volunteers: 2 class teachers and 4 parent/carer volunteers

Task/Activity	Hazard Identification & Associated Risk Type/Cause	Assess Risk* use matrix	Elimination or Control Measures	Who	When
Bushwalking in national park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- uneven ground surfaces, bites and stings, exposure to sun, wind, rain and dehydration.</li> <li>- allergies to insects, reptiles and plants.</li> <li>- becoming lost or isolated from the group</li> <li>- change in weather conditions</li> </ul>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notify national park staff of expected arrival and departure times, location of walk and participants, students with medical conditions</li> </ul>	Excursion Coordinator	Prior to walk
		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Park staff to lead walk. Adult supervision at front and back to keep group together.</li> </ul>	Supervisors	On walk
		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform excursion participants of National Park safety instructions.</li> </ul>	"	
		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wear enclosed footwear suitable for walking, clothing to protect arms and legs and suitable for changing weather conditions</li> <li>- Wear hats, shirts with sleeves and sunscreen while outdoors.</li> <li>- Ensure participants carry water bottles</li> <li>- Staff carry insect repellent, additional sunscreen and ensure rest breaks are taken in the shade</li> <li>- Identify participants with known medical conditions and ensure appropriate medication/treatment is available</li> <li>- Ensure participation of students with known allergies has been considered, implement appropriate risk controls, e.g. a trained staff member is available to provide appropriate first aid (e.g. epipen for student with anaphylaxis)</li> <li>- Ensure staff and students are aware of emergency response procedures.</li> <li>- Check weather forecast on day of excursion</li> <li>- Carry maps and compass</li> <li>- Emergency plans communicated for dealing with potential incidents</li> <li>- Carry first aid kit</li> </ul>	All	
			Teachers		
				Excursion Coordinator	Prior to walk
				Teachers	

Page: 6 of 9 Words: 2,522

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# Example 3

Doc2 - Microsoft Word

Home Insert Page Layout References Mailings Review View

Paste Cut Copy Format Painter Clipboard

Arial 12 Font

Paragraph

Styles

Find Replace Select

Change Styles

Editing

## Identified Risks

Event	Inherent Risk Level (Circle)	Hazard Details (Tour leader to complete)	Required Management Strategies	Details of additional Management strategies to be implemented (Tour leader to complete)
<b>Communication</b>				
Lack of mobile phone contact between staff	Low Medium High Extreme	Inability for staff to communicate while participating in activities.	Arrangements should be known in advance. All staff to carry mobile phones with appropriate access. Share contact details with all staff.	
Lack of mobile contact between staff and students	Low Medium High Extreme	Inability for staff to communicate with students while participating in different group activities.	All staff to have all student contact numbers for the duration of the tour. All students to have all staff contact numbers for the duration of the tour. Student phones to be turned on or silent except whilst sleeping.	
Poor E-mail connection	Low Medium High Extreme	Difficult for parents to contact staff in emergency at home.	Staff to regularly check emails for communication from parents or xxxxxxxxxx.	
Poor availability of mobile contact between staff and xxxxx contact person(s)	Low Medium High Extreme	Inability to ask for guidance for behavioural issues, accidents or change of plans	Two xxxxxxxxx contact persons to be provided. Use email for non urgent contact. Regular reporting to contact person required and prearranged.	

Page: 2 of 12 Words: 2,026

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# Summary of main issues

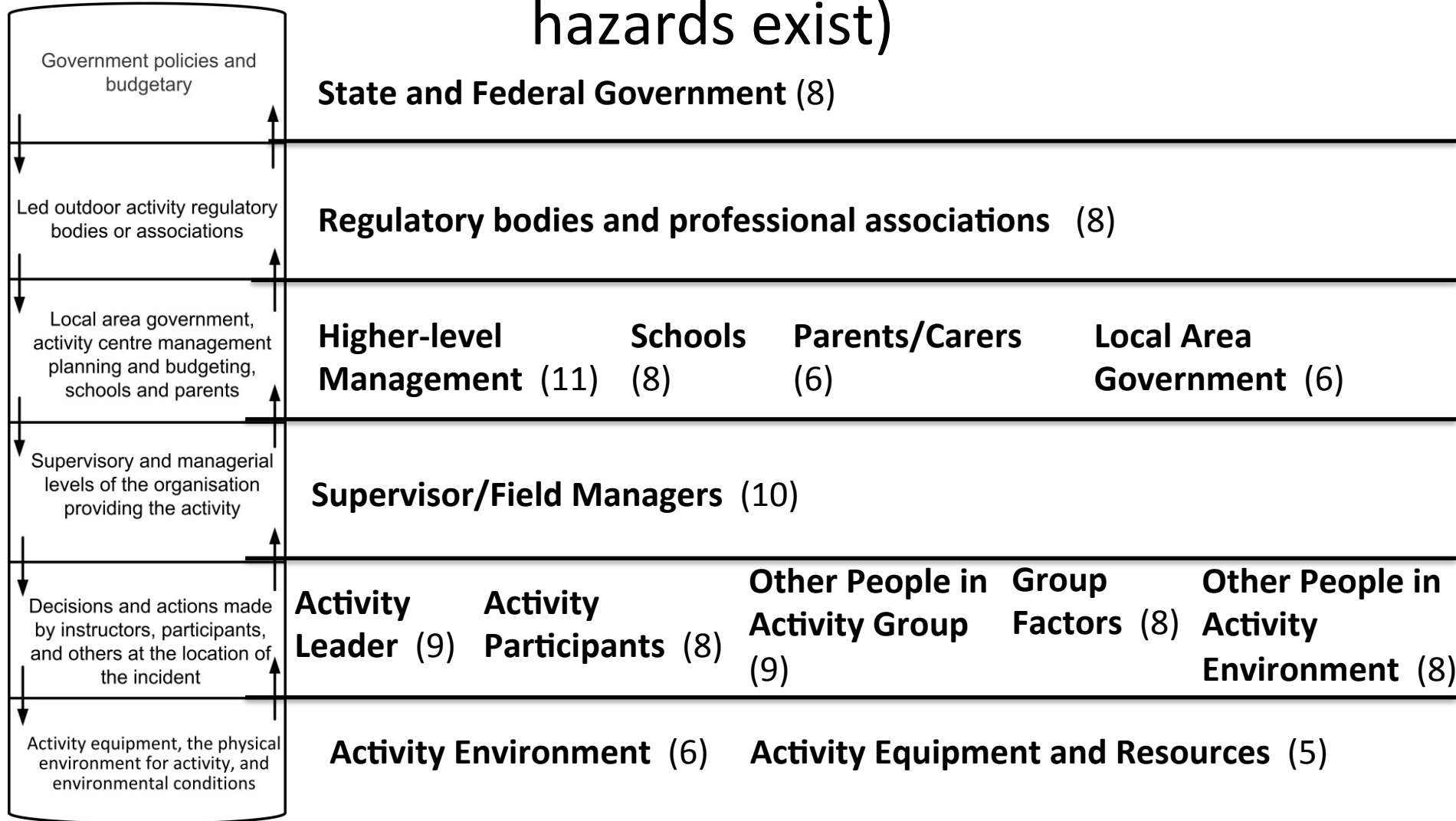
- Missing key hazards
- Focussing on high risk but low likelihood OR high likelihood but low risk
- Not program specific
- Non-specific controls
- Flexible vs. rigid
- Top-down approach vs. collaborative
- How detailed should a risk assessment be?
- How do you find out what the key hazards are?

# Some guiding theories...

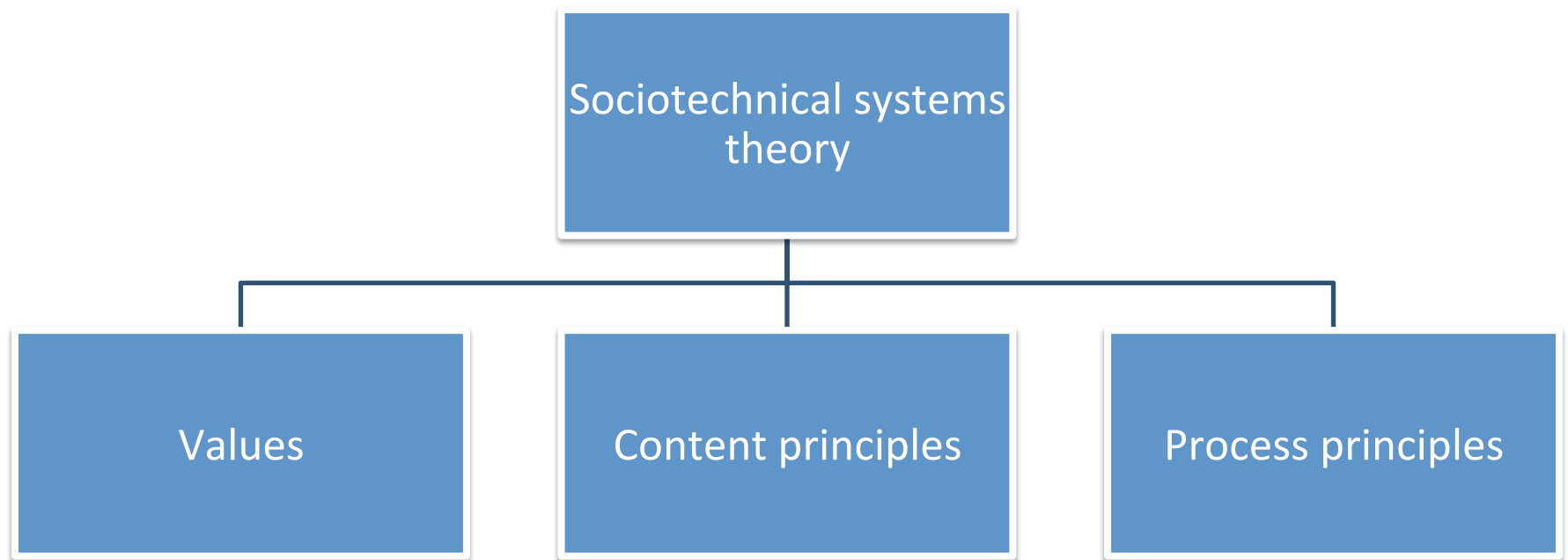
- UPLOADS Accident Analysis Framework (what hazards exist)
- Sociotechnical systems theory (how to identify those hazards)



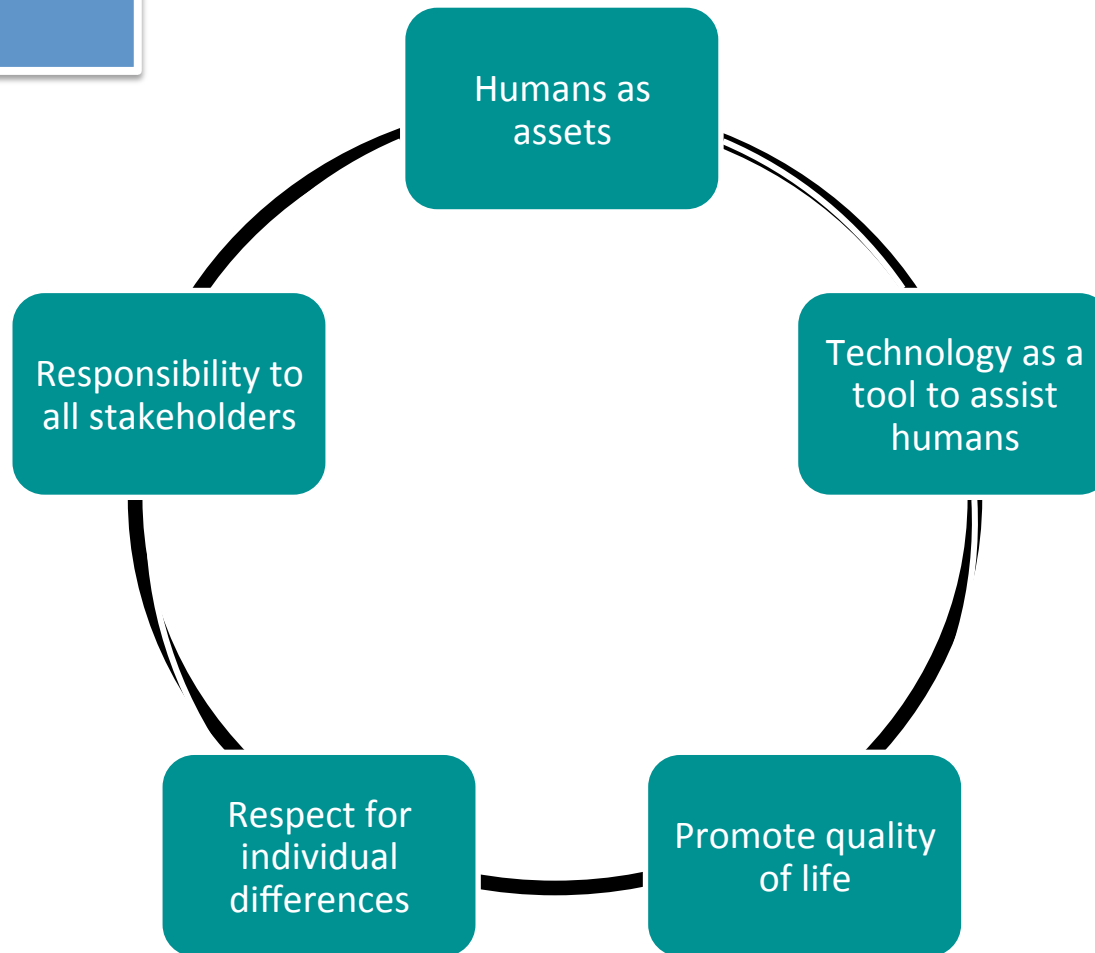
# UPLOADS Accident Analysis Framework (what hazards exist)



# Sociotechnical systems theory (how to identify those hazards)



# Values



(Cherns, 1987)

# Content principles

**Context appropriate**

**Incorporates stakeholder needs**

**Flexible specification**

**Multifunctionalism**

**Problems controlled at source**

**Task allocation**

**Congruence**

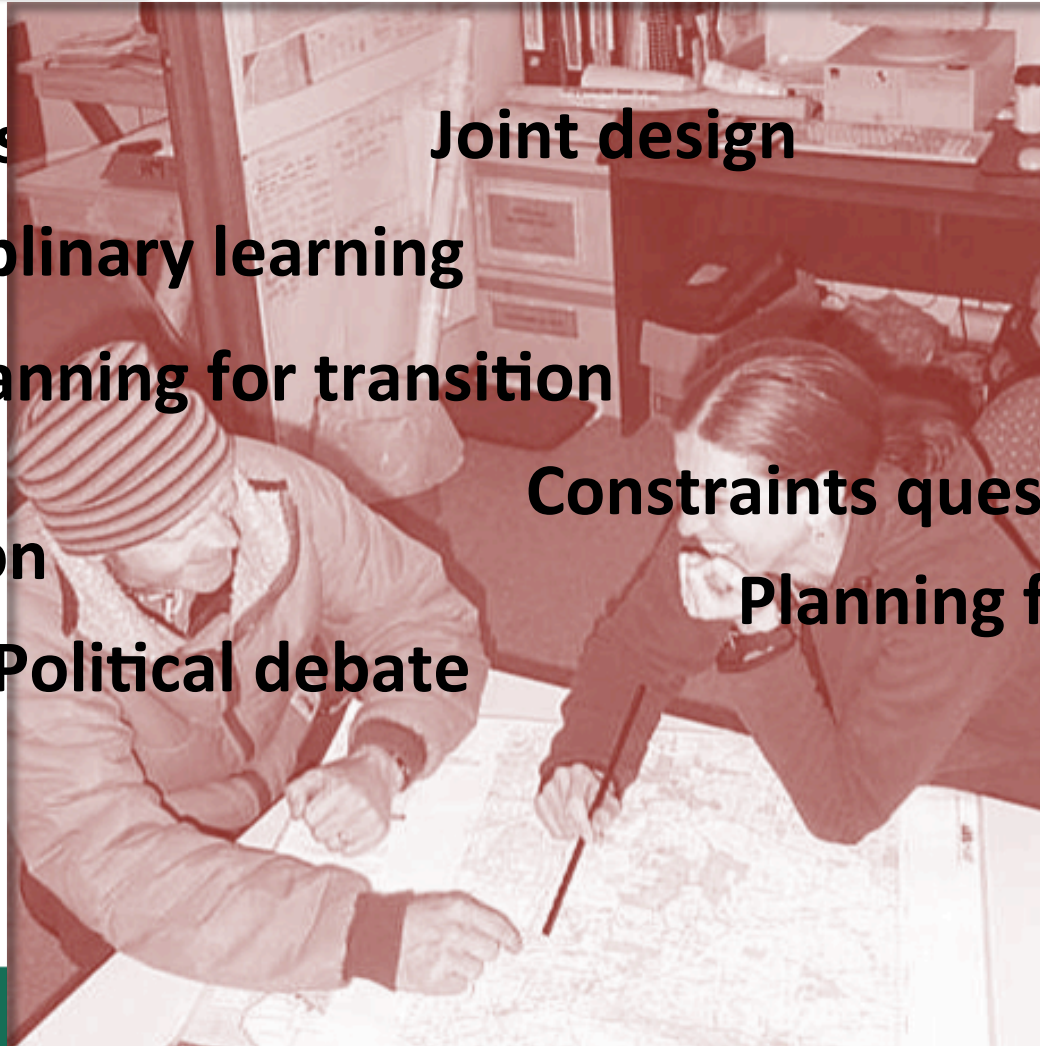
**Boundaries are managed**

**Useful, meaningful tasks**

(Cherns, 1976; Cherns 1987; Clegg, 2000; Davis, 1982; Walker et al, 2009)

# Process principles

**Agree values**  
**Multidisciplinary learning**  
**Planning for transition**  
**User participation**  
**Political debate**  
**Joint design**  
**Constraints questioned**  
**Planning for ongoing re-design**  
**Resources & support**





# In practice...one example

- HIRA – Program, Venue and Participant specific
- All staff involved from design to delivery involved
- Initially impracticable and therefore didn't work
- Role of technology to support process
- Resistance initially
- Continual challenge to make it 'living' and improvements needed
- Risk controls relationship ➡ program aims ➡ overall risk tolerance

# Thank you!

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