**CUDA Brisbane Symposium**

**Edited Transcript for Malcolm Middleton, OAM, LFAIA**

**Governance and Housing**

Malcolm stressed the importance of good governance within government structures and the struggles of trying to get things done. Governance is a mix of politics and management and the additional struggles of trying to “influence different people at different times in different settings to do the right thing.” Good governance structures help guide everyone in the same direction.

“… good governance is a really unsexy thing. But if you don’t have good governance, you don’t get anything done.”

How do you get good governance?

“Because I think, if you can't get that structure, we all then struggle to influence various people at different times in different settings to do the right thing.”

Federated structures are “really difficult to navigate … and they come together in ways that are very inefficient.” When just one party at the negotiating table disagrees with the direction of the rest, the tactic is to delay and put things off. The adoption of the Livable Housing Design Standard is a case in point.

“And if you think about housing - and I think it's extraordinary, in some ways, that we are still having this conversation after 50 years - that what seems a very basic and obvious thing to design for, which is a whole-of-life design experience, it's not just universal access for particular groups - it actually affects everybody at all the different stages of their life. It would seem that it's what you would basically do. But it's not what we do.”

Malcolm spoke about his role when Queensland was getting ready to adopt the Livable Housing Design Standard. The Government Minister was determined to get this through, but there was opposition from the housing industry. But this decision was not just made on evidence alone.

“But I'm told, if he hadn't been in the room, it may not have got up, that kind of situation. So, here, you find yourself with an appropriate thing to do, all the work has been done, and it still relies on the right person being able to corral the group of people who have the power to make the decision to recommend across many governance structures to get something to happen.”

Malcolm’s advice was if you want something done or to change you have to be determined and be political and plan the way to get the governance in place.

“The public service is very powerful, as well as very slow, and it is also a hindrance if it doesn't want to do something - it doesn't happen. And it's not obvious why it's not happening. It just doesn't happen.”