

Introducing PLACE's framework for place-based change

Place-based change is about working differently. The work of place-based change uses structures, processes and practices that enable and empower communities to be active participants in shaping local systems, identifying solutions and driving change on the issues that affect their lives.

In this document, we share our first iteration of PLACE's framework for place-based change, including an introduction to each element. This is a starting point in our collective journey towards shared language, understanding and learning about what works for place-based change.

Developing the framework

This framework builds on what we heard on our Listening Tour in March–May 2025, and what we continue to learn from ongoing collaborations. The work of place-based change is defined not only by geography, but also by its governance – who gets to decide, whose knowledge counts, what is

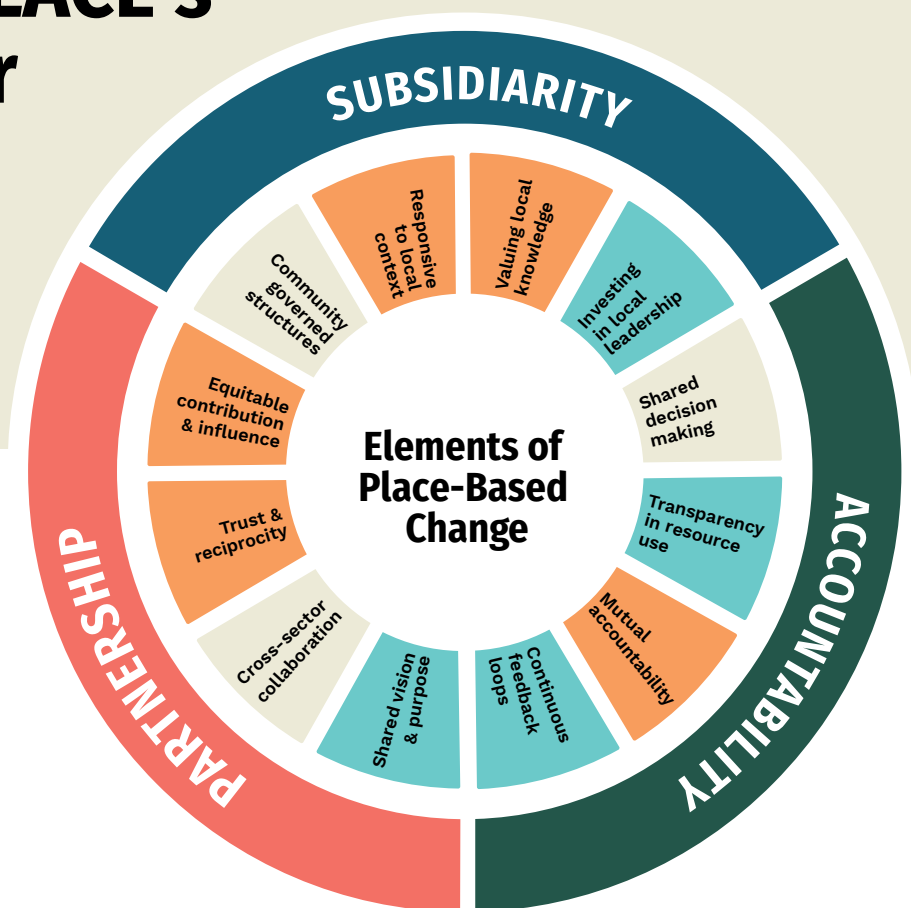
prioritised and how systems can adapt to serve people in the full complexity of their lives.

It's this distinct approach to governance, grounded in the 3 principles of subsidiarity, accountability and partnership, that makes the work of place-based change different. In this framework, each of the 3 principles is supported by 4 elements – various enabling structures, processes and practices – all of which are interdependent and reinforcing.

Reviewing the evidence about the 12 elements

Following initial development of the framework (the 3 principles and 12 supporting elements), we tested this framing by investigating the available evidence about each of the individual elements and their significance for place-based change.

We undertook a rapid desktop review of more than 130 published sources of peer-reviewed literature



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and grey literature, including evaluations, reports, resources and toolkits. With a strong focus on the Australian context, we also consulted international publications and resources to ensure that best practice was reflected in the framework.

Unpacking the 12 elements

We've developed a brief synthesis of the evidence for each of the 12 elements, focusing on:

- what the element is in the context of place-based change
- whether the element is an enabling structure, process or practice
- why the element is important in the context of place-based change
- Key Takeaways to consider when applying the element in place-based work.

In addition, on the 'Resources' page of the PLACE website, you'll find:

- practical tools and resources to support the development of each element
- a reading list of relevant publications and resources
- a glossary of key terms.
- in practice examples of the elements taken from current place-based initiatives.

Our selection of place-based initiatives as examples is designed to show what each element can look like in practice. The in practice examples also highlight the breadth and diversity of place-based work across Australia in terms of location, scale and area of focus.

We know that many other place-based initiatives with excellent examples of practice are happening all over Australia, and acknowledge that the case studies included in this framework are only a tiny sample.

An invitation to build the evidence base about place-based change

The desktop review revealed significant gaps in the evidence base, particularly in the 'practice evidence' about the work of place-based change. The published literature about individual place-based initiatives is very limited. We know that every place-based initiative generates valuable knowledge and insights, but most initiatives don't have the time or resources to collate and write about that knowledge.

Our team is keen to learn alongside place-based initiatives. We'll document what we learn, develop case studies and co-design resources that will build the evidence base for what works, how it happens, and what it takes to achieve enduring change.