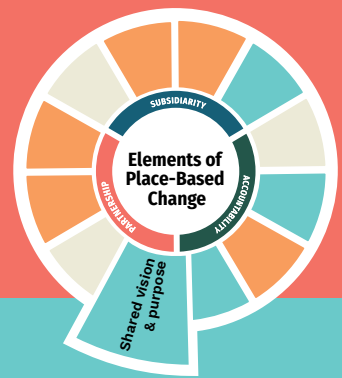


Partnership: Complex challenges can't be solved by one actor alone. Place-based change brings together governments, service providers, funders and communities to work collaboratively, across siloes, sectors and timeframes. To be effective, these partnerships must be grounded in trust, reciprocity and shared purpose.



3.1 Shared vision and purpose

Stakeholders co-create a common agenda grounded in the community's aspirations, rather than institutional mandates.

What is a shared vision and purpose in the context of place-based change?

A shared vision and purpose are the articulation of a community's unique picture of the change they want to see in their local area and how a group of interested stakeholders will work together to bring about that change.

The process of articulating a shared vision and purpose is one of the foundational activities for building partnerships and collaborations to enable place-based work, usually happening in the early stages of a place-based initiative. Centring community voices and surfacing local priorities is essential to co-creating a shared vision and purpose.

Developing a shared purpose and vision is the process of collectively exploring and answering the following questions:

- What is the future (state) we want to see?
- What can we do better together than alone?
- What will we do together to make it happen?

Community-led workshops, roundtables and broad-ranging one-on-one consultations and other community engagement activities support the development of a shared vision and purpose. Structured activities and forums enable different stakeholders to come together around shared challenges and develop a common understanding of the change they want to work towards.

For place-based initiatives involving First Nations communities, a shared vision and purpose must be grounded in self-determination. This means ensuring that processes

are led or co-led by First Nations peoples, respect cultural protocols and embed Indigenous governance structures. It's also about creating inclusive environments where members of marginalised communities have a seat at the table. Activities, information and spaces should be accessible, culturally safe and trauma-informed to ensure the voices of all community members are heard and respected.

For place-based collaborations, the co-creation of a shared vision and purpose and collective action plan – a 'common agenda' – is often a first step. This is followed by the establishment of a governance structure that's suited to the local context and will support community participation in decision-making and equitable contribution and influence from all stakeholders.

Why a shared vision and purpose is important in place-based change

A co-created vision increases buy-in, bridges divides between stakeholders and strengthens engagement. It is the social glue that sustains a shared purpose over time by fostering commitment and increasing belonging, and guides the collaboration.

Collective Impact, a popular framework for place-based change in Australia, tells us that place-based approaches call on everyone to work differently – meeting in a shared middle space where communities, government and service providers come together to collaborate, generate new ideas and share power. A shared purpose facilitates alignment and fosters the trust necessary for coordinated action by the different partners involved in a place-based initiative. Without a common purpose,

actions by different partners are at risk of becoming fragmented, leading to duplication and conflict.

Collaboration around a shared vision is about rebalancing power, embedding local leadership, and ensuring government agencies and services respond to local priorities. A shared vision and purpose centres the community's aspirations and lived experience, empowers community members and supports the sustainability of the place-based initiative.

Key takeaways

- **Anchor vision in culture and place**

Ensure the shared vision reflects local history, identity and cultural strengths.

- **Inclusive participatory processes**

Engage stakeholders in participatory processes (workshops, roundtables and forums) to define a shared vision and purpose grounded in community aspirations.

- **Embed cultural safety and self-determination**

Lead or co-lead processes with First Nations peoples, respect cultural protocols and embed Indigenous governance structures.

- **Establish inclusive governance and shared leadership**

Create decision-making structures that support achievement of the shared vision and purpose, and give genuine authority to communities, local leaders, governments and service partners.

- **Ensure ongoing reflection, learning and adaptation**

Revisit and renew the shared vision and purpose through continuous dialogue, reflection and feedback with community and partners.