



Partnerships for Local Action &
Community Empowerment

A photograph of a community meeting. A man with dreadlocks and glasses, wearing a colorful patterned shirt, is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. A woman with a yellow headband is visible on the left, and another person with long hair is on the right. The background is blurred, showing other people and an outdoor setting.

2030 Strategy Collaboration for lasting change

2030 Strategy on a page

Vision

Communities share decision-making with government and other stakeholders to accelerate progress on the issues that matter most to them.

PLACE supports and enables place-based change by creating and sustaining the conditions for place-based initiatives to thrive.

Values

Empowering:

We work with communities for impact

Curious:

We learn by doing

Respectful:

We respect diverse perspectives

Honest:

We are guided by data and local context

Independent:

We are trusted across sectors

Accountable:

We honour our responsibility to our funders and to communities.

Priorities

1. Address structural barriers to place-based change

2. Build momentum and capacity for place-based change

3. Develop a strong, shared understanding of the impact of place-based initiatives

Pillars

Enable workforce and empowerment across sectors

Learn & share evidence, knowledge and good practice

Support **collaborative solutions** to shared challenges

Strengthen data, governance and capability

Enablers

Working with community

Our learning approach

Our governance structure

Our collaborative funding model

Acknowledgement of Country

PLACE acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters, skies and communities. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that systemic inequities continue to impact First Nations communities disproportionately, and that these are the result of colonisation, dispossession and historical injustice that persist in current systems.

The work of PLACE is grounded in a belief that those closest to the challenges must be central to the solutions. In this, we recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long practised community-led, place-based governance and decision-making.

We are committed to walking alongside First Nations communities in a spirit of respect, learning and shared leadership, amplifying their voices, supporting self-determination, and embedding equity in all we do.



Photo by Morgan Roberts

Introduction

Australian communities, governments and philanthropic organisations are increasingly recognising that existing solutions are failing to address entrenched disadvantage. Complex problems demand tailored, holistic solutions. Local communities are best placed to direct and own those solutions.

PLACE – Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment – exists because we believe that communities know best what matters to them. Our vision is to support those communities by building local capability, amplifying success and driving systemic reform.

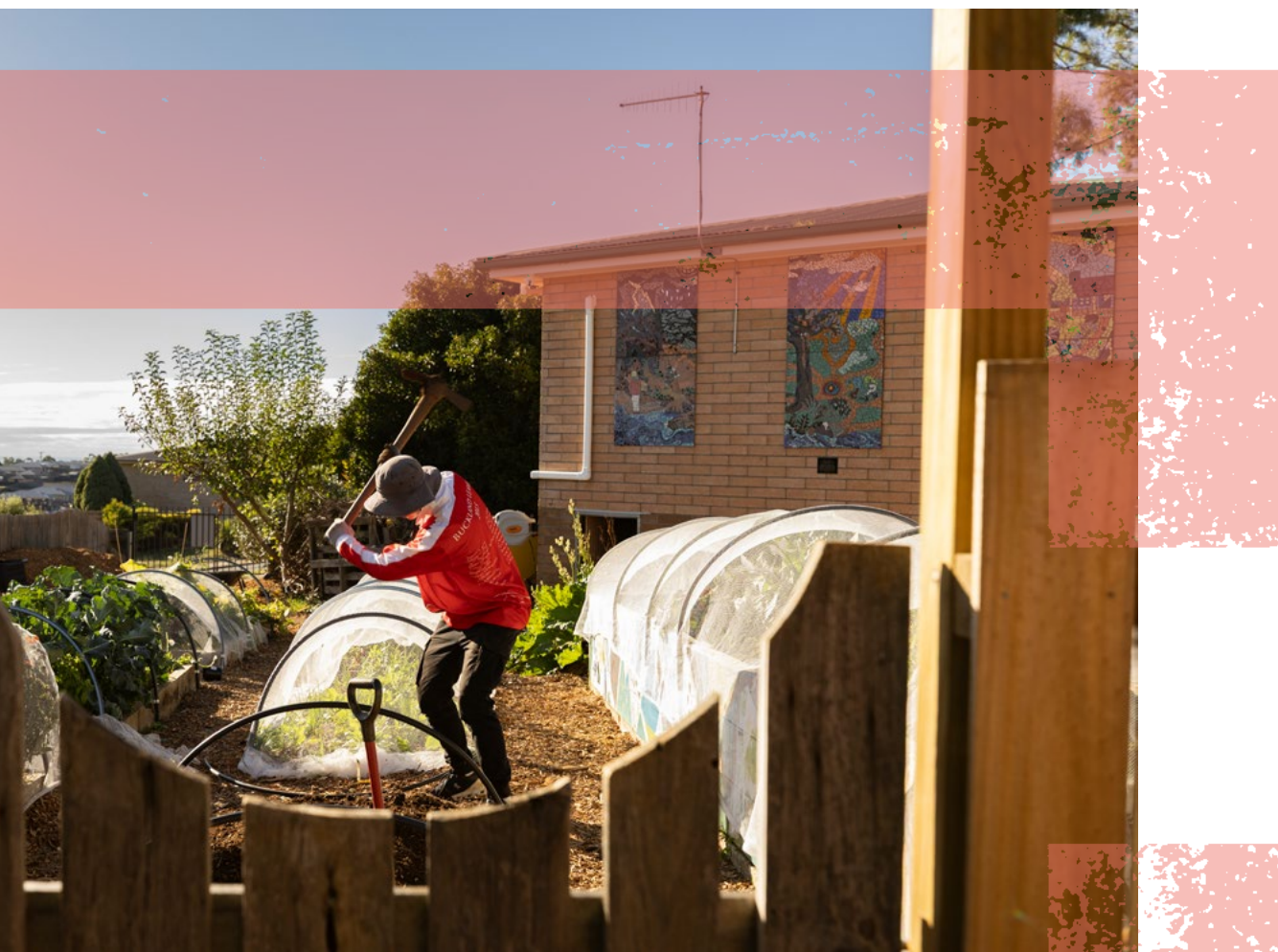
As a national, independent organisation, we work to create the conditions in which local

efforts can thrive. PLACE has already begun to connect and activate Australia's community-led initiatives.

We're working across the community sector to build the momentum for place-based change and create a shared understanding of place-based work.

We know this work is urgent. In many places, disadvantage is entrenched and rising. But we also know this work is hopeful. Every day we see communities stepping up – not to be rescued, but to lead.

PLACE is for them. And we're proud to be part of this collective effort to build a more just, inclusive and locally empowered Australia.



About us

Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE) is a national organisation that champions and supports community-led approaches to social and economic challenges.

PLACE is an independent non-profit funded by the:

- Australian Government
- Minderoo Foundation
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Bryan Foundation
- Dusseldorp Forum
- Ian Potter Foundation.

Our vision

Communities share decision-making with government and other stakeholders to accelerate progress on the issues that matter most to them.

PLACE supports and enables place-based change by creating and sustaining the conditions for place-based initiatives to thrive.

Our values

- **Empowering:** We work with communities for impact.
- **Curious:** We learn by doing.
- **Respectful:** We respect diverse perspectives.
- **Honest:** We are guided by data and local context.
- **Independent:** We are trusted across sectors.
- **Accountable:** We honour our responsibility to our funders and to communities.

PLACE empowers communities to share decision-making with government and other stakeholders.



Our strategic priorities

Priority 1: Address structural barriers to place-based change

- Identify and understand the policy and system barriers that impact place-based approaches.
- Work with communities and governments to embed structural reforms that support greater subsidiarity and accountability.
- Advocate for community need within the place-based ecosystem.

Priority 2: Build momentum and capacity for place-based change

- Establish trusted and purposeful relationships across community, government and other stakeholders to amplify place-based initiatives.
- Drive sustained collaboration, connection and learning across the place-based sector.
- Produce tools and resources that actively shape the practice of place-based initiatives.

Priority 3: Develop a strong, shared understanding of the impact of place-based initiatives

- Document the practices and outcomes of effective place-based approaches.
- Amplify and share effective, high-impact place-based practices across diverse communities.
- Strengthen the use of community-informed data, evaluation and learning to continuously improve practice.



Our functional pillars

Enable

Lead the development and implementation of a national workforce strategy for place-based change, supporting the needs of communities.

Learn and share

Bring together, translate, disseminate and generate evidence, knowledge and other resources to amplify and accelerate place-based practice and policymaking.

Collaborative solutions

Enable and convene expertise and experience to identify possible solutions to shared challenges and incubate concepts through partnerships and wraparound support.

Strengthen data

Provide a range of practical supports to place-based approaches to improve data, monitoring and evaluation.



Our strategic enablers

Working with community

We work alongside communities across Australia, making sure their needs shape what we do. We build trusted relationships, use local knowledge, and support shared decision-making so that community voices lead real change. Our Community Council gives communities a strong, independent voice in our work, bringing lived experience and local leadership and priorities to the forefront.

Our learning approach

PLACE is a learning organisation. We guide all our work – projects, decisions and community engagement – through a cycle of understanding, monitoring, evaluating and learning. We also work with others in the place-based sector to improve our strategies and approaches over time.

Our governance structure

Our governance is built on transparency, shared power and community accountability. We bring together a wide range of voices in decision-making and make sure communities are at the centre. PLACE also plays an independent role in shaping the policy and systems needed for place-based change.

Our collaborative funding model

We work with funders in government and philanthropy to activate the strengths of every stakeholder and incorporate diverse perspectives. Our funders are custodians and enablers of PLACE's community-led structure.



Photo by
Thomas Annetts

How we will track our progress

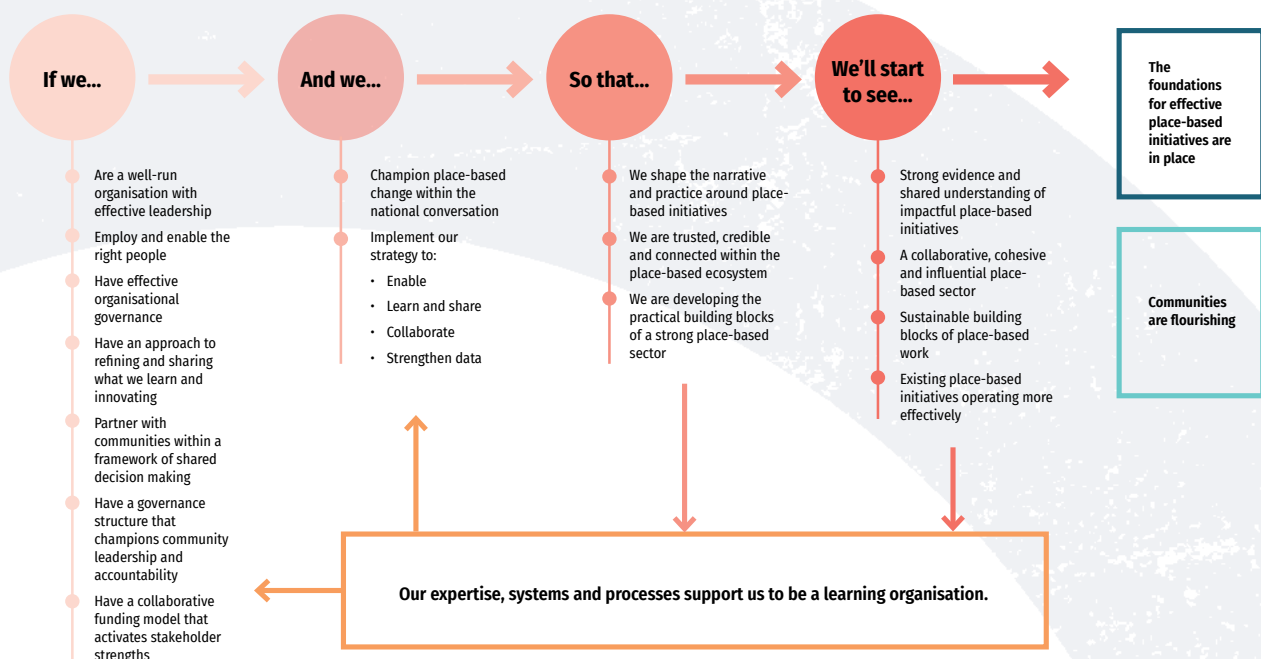
PLACE is committed to continuous learning, independent evaluation and shared accountability. As a learning organisation, PLACE's progress will be tracked through a robust understanding, monitoring, evaluation and learning (UMEL) framework.

Central to PLACE's community-led methodology is ensuring community voice is integral to decision-making, and responding to community priorities through learning and iterating.

The UMEL framework helps PLACE understand what the organisation delivers, and the impact created across our 4 functional pillars: Enable, Learn and Share, Collaborative Solutions, and Strengthen Data.

PLACE's UMEL framework will monitor performance, identify emerging lessons, ensure meaningful data collection, facilitate structured reflection with stakeholders, support independent evaluation, and drive organisational learning through systematic adaptation.

PLACE Theory of Change



Connect with us

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