

2026/01

22–24 February 2026

From 22–24 February, the Board and Management of PLACE came together for a strategic retreat to reflect, listen deeply, and sharpen our focus for the years ahead.

We acknowledge the substantial work already undertaken by communities, organisations, governments and philanthropic partners across Australia to improve outcomes on the ground. We also recognise that communities themselves have carried much of the weight - investing time, leadership and commitment in driving change locally.

Our unique role

PLACE occupies a distinct position between communities, governments and philanthropy. With that comes responsibility to be practical, disciplined and catalytic.

We will:

- Support communities to navigate solutions where local efforts stall;
- Surface patterns where reform efforts become blocked;
- Convene the right influencers to resolve those barriers;
- Translate lived experience into policy-relevant insight;
- Amplify proven models that are shifting outcomes; and
- Champion the funding, policy, programmatic and governance settings that make room for community-driven change.

PLACE will prioritise:

- **Elevating** examples where place-based approaches are demonstrably shifting outcomes;
- **Translating** these examples into actionable insights for policy, funding and program-design; and
- **Advocate and co-design** with opt-in communities, new models of service commissioning that value localised planning, delivery and decision-making.

In short: we will work where we have consent to plan with communities, and take the view from the ground into policy.

Turning community experience into system change

The Board and Management were united around a core proposition:

PLACE must concentrate its efforts on converting the community-felt experience of barriers and opportunities into tangible, system-wide change.

While place-based work is happening in diverse communities across Australia, too often the same obstacles occur. PLACE is uniquely positioned to identify these patterns, track trends and broker solutions that unlock potential and allow local efforts to move forward.

This is where we can add the most value – and where we intend to focus.

Positive change that communities can feel and lead.

Our ultimate purpose is to improve the health, education, justice, employment, culture and wellbeing of communities.

To that end, the impact measure that defines and tests our work is whether positive change is *experienced* by children, families and communities – as defined by them.

So what now?

The Board and Management have set a strategic direction, grounded in community-led collective impact to ensure that all PLACE operations – partnerships, research, advocacy, learning and convening - are geared toward these goals.

We look forward to working with our members, Community Council, opt-in communities and governments across Australia to bring this renewed focus to life and accelerate improved community outcomes and locally driven, system level change.

Please keep a look out for our Expression of Interest (EOI) Process: targeting opt-in local communities with local leadership and commitment to work together on positive change.

PLACE Board

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