

PARTNERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL

Creating change through partnerships

Supporting and sustaining genuine
inter-agency partnerships in service delivery
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
children and families





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1

BACKGROUND

SNAICC has developed this training manual with the aim of supporting and sustaining genuine inter-agency partnerships in service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. As an **inter-agency** partnerships training manual, it focuses on relationships between organisations and the processes that support and facilitate those relationships.

While partnerships have long been recognised as important to developing effective and culturally-competent services, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had negative experiences of tokenistic relationships labelled as partnerships. This has led to a level of mistrust that governments and mainstream services may use partnerships to 'tick boxes' of cultural competence and community engagement, without engaging with the deeper commitment to sustainable relationships and local community empowerment. **Achieving better outcomes requires a shared commitment to building deeper, respectful and more genuine relationships.** This manual explores this deeper commitment and how it can be realised in practice.

This training manual is specifically designed to support partnership leaders and 'champions' within organisations wishing to develop and strengthen partnerships in child and family service delivery. It is particularly relevant for:

- organisational leaders and decision-makers, including managers, CEOs, and senior public servants
- community partnership facilitators (for example, organisations leading local family service integration and collaboration initiatives), and
- consultants and other professionals taking on partnership facilitation and support roles.

This training manual is an interactive guide that can be used as part of a facilitated presentation or independently to access relevant information, ideas, tools and practice supports.

This manual is part of SNAICC's growing body of research and skills-building publications about partnerships. Other publications available to download from the SNAICC website include:

- *Opening Doors Through Partnerships* (case study based research)
- *Working and Walking Together* (cultural competence training guide)
- *Developing Capacity through Partnerships* (profile of a capacity-building partnership model), and
- *Creating Change through Partnerships: Partnership Audit Tool* (Practice tool for partnership review and planning).

The training package deals in less detail with the specific elements of organisational cultural competence that provide a base for genuine partnerships. Significant cultural competence development resources are already available including SNAICC's *Working and Walking Together* resource and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency's *Building Respectful Partnerships* resource.

SNAICC provides training and facilitation support to accompany this manual. Please contact SNAICC for more information: www.snaicc.org.au



2 INTRODUCTION

The approach to and perceptions of partnerships will often be influenced by past experiences. As a first step, it's important to name and acknowledge what we have tried before; what we already know about partnerships; and what brings us to be exploring partnerships now. If you are completing this activity with your partners, it's an opportunity to learn from each other and make sure you start from your existing partnership strengths and knowledge.

What's your story?

What is your current **interest** in partnerships?

What experience do you have of **successful** partnerships?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners on the left side.

What experience do you have of **unsuccessful** partnerships?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners on the left side and a slightly darker border on the right side, suggesting it might be part of a bound notebook. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

2.1. Partnership structures

Partnership types	Level of integration				
	Low		Moderate		High
Collaborative partnership	Networking	Resource sharing	Alliance coalition	Consortium Joint venture	Federation
Commercial partnership	Supplier	Outsourcing	Sub-contracting	Auspicings	Merger Acquisition

Different organisations approach partnerships in different ways and the terms used reflect this diversity. The table above provides a summary of some common partnership arrangements, aligned by the nature of the relationship and the level of organisational integration.

Collaborative partnerships generally involve organisations entering into agreements as equals. Commercial partnerships involve the provision of goods or services from one organisation to another, generally for a negotiated price. There is a place for both types of partnership and many partnerships contain both commercial and collaborative elements.

Collaborative partnerships

Networking: A loose grouping of organisations with no integration — often set up for the sharing of information. May occur at the staff, management or corporate governance body level and occurs through informal networks, meetings, shared interest groups, workshops, etc.

Resource sharing: Often refers to an arrangement with a lead organisation facilitating the sharing of resources or information among partner organisations. Shared back office arrangements or collocation are types of resource sharing.

Alliance or Coalition: Multiple partners may work together to achieve a shared goal, such as improving outcomes for people receiving services. This does not require formal integration — each member maintains independence and autonomy. The formation of Industry Peak Bodies is an example of this type of partnership.

Consortium: A group of organisations jointly associated to pursue shared objectives under a legally binding agreement. Each organisation retains their independent legal entity, character and name. Consortia are often formed to fulfil the needs of a particular job that a single organisation does not have the capacity to cover fully.

Joint venture: In the not-for-profit sector the term refers to two organisations retaining autonomy and independence, but setting up a new legal entity to carry out a joint project. This entity could have a corporate governance body made up of representatives from each party.

Federation: Organisations with shared values or goals may come together in a federation in which there is a national or state (lead or umbrella) body, bringing together other organisations under a common banner who will generally adopt a shared name. Members of the federation will commonly establish clear geographic or service delivery type operating boundaries.

Commercial partnerships

Supplier: The supply of services at standard commercial rates is common business practice. A “preferred provider” relationships may be established in which a degree of trust and respect is developed — and so a partnership forms.

Outsourcing: A discrete piece of work is contracted out to a trusted supplier who can complete it more efficiently or effectively.

Subcontracting: An organisation enters into a contract with another third party provider to deliver services or activities that it would

usually provide directly. Subcontracting arrangements may require the formal written agreement of funding bodies. Subcontracting should be distinguished from brokerage, which is where an organisation facilitates the delivery of services on behalf of a person through another provider using funds that are available to support that person. For both subcontracting and brokerage arrangements, organisations must have the necessary safeguards in place to ensure that the services that are delivered are to an appropriate quality, deliver the necessary results and are value for money.

Auspecting: An established organisation may support and assist a new or struggling organisation by providing a management and governance structure, or back office systems (such as finance or human resource management). In some instances the auspecting organisation may share its existing accreditation/s with the junior partner. Generally, the auspecting organisation will charge a management or similar fee for the support it provides. The agreement will need to include clear exit provisions — commonly the junior partner will be developing the capacity to become an independent organisation in the future.

Merger: A merger is the amalgamation of two or more organisations to form a new single entity. It is considered a merger when two or more organisations voluntarily initiate a merging of organisational structure including legal structure, assets, funding and service delivery.

Acquisition: In certain circumstances, one organisation may acquire or take over another. This is a complex legal process, often triggered in the not-for-profit sector by a request from an organisation whose corporate governance body no longer feels that their organisation has a sustainable future. The corporate governance body begins looking for a partner as the alternative (closure) is a worst case scenario that could have an unacceptable impact upon people receiving services.

THINK ABOUT: What type/s of partnership structure are you involved in, or are you considering?

Do you expect the type of partnership to change over time?

2.2. Why partner?

It's important at the beginning of any partnerships relationship to acknowledge your motivation for 'getting involved'. What an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation may want out of a partnership may be very different to what a non-Indigenous organisation is seeking. This isn't necessarily a barrier to partnering, but honestly acknowledging motivations is critical to set the base for a trusting relationship.



Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had negative experiences of tokenistic relationships labelled as partnerships. This has led to a level of mistrust that governments and mainstream services may use partnerships to 'tick boxes' of cultural competence and community engagement, without engaging with the deeper commitment to sustainable relationships and local community empowerment.

Tokenistic involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people doesn't lead to better services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It can, in fact, hold up progress, as the appearance of partnership masks deeper mistrust, maintains power imbalance and fails to promote reconciliation. Achieving better outcomes requires a shared commitment to building deeper, respectful and more genuine relationships.

Consider some partnerships between Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people and entities. What is in it for each party? How do the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community benefit in each one?

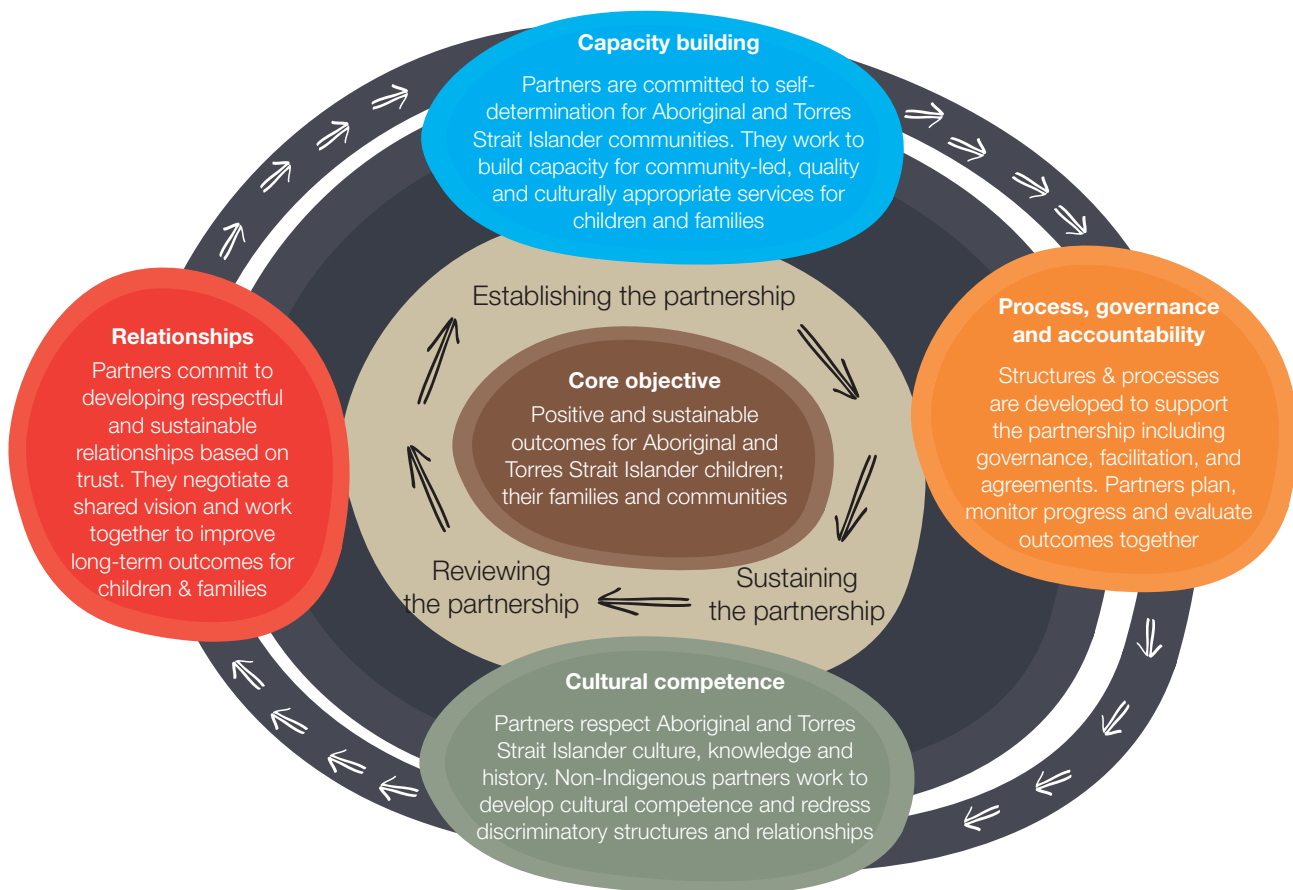
If partnerships are so useful, why do we not do them all the time?

Write down examples where partnerships have not been successful. What went wrong?

2.3. A framework for genuine partnership

The framework below provides a way of understanding and thinking about partnership development. It draws on the evidence of what is important for genuine partnerships in service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The outer boxes describe the four key domains that inform all the processes that take place in the inner-circle with the aim to achieve the core objective at the centre of the diagram.

The good practice knowledge that informs this framework is described in the SNAICC (2012) research paper, *Opening Doors through Partnerships*, available for download from the SNAICC website. The different aspects of this framework inform and are reflected throughout the training manual.



3 ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIP

3.1. Principles

The framework in section 2.3 above is based on eight inter-related principles that form the building blocks of successful partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and mainstream service providers (SNAICC 2012).

These principles are:

THINK ABOUT: How comfortable would your organisation be to signing up to these principles? Which are contentious? What is missing for you?

Commitment to long-term sustainable relationships based on trust	Significant time is spent building relationships between staff, organisations and community. Partners commit to ongoing relationship, not only an activity or project.
Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history	Commitment to build cultural understanding, to consult and listen to the local community, and to value Indigenous knowledge and professionalism.
Commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Empowering Indigenous communities to lead response to child and family needs. Building Indigenous community, organisation and workforce capacity.
Aim to improve long-term well-being for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities	Identifying and sharing respective strengths in supporting children and families. Partnership resources viewed as community resources and shared for the benefit of children and families.
Shared responsibility and accountability for shared objectives and activities	Negotiated and shared vision is developed. Partners jointly develop indicators of success and work together to monitor and evaluate progress.
Valuing process elements as integral to support and enable partnership	Agreements clarify commitments, roles and accountability. Time and resources are allocated to joint planning, review, and partnership development.
Redressing unequal or discriminatory relationships, structures and outcomes	Recognising that Indigenous disadvantage reflects historical and continuing discrimination, and working to correct resulting power and resource imbalances.
Working differently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families	Developing cultural competence in service delivery. Recognising mainstream approaches are often not the best way to engage and support Indigenous families.

The case studies below provide a brief introduction to a number of partnerships that reflect some of these principles in action. If you are interested in learning more about these partnerships, you can access the full case-studies in the SNAICC (2012) paper, *Opening Doors through Partnerships*, available for download from the SNAICC

website. These case studies were developed in 2011–12, and so they reflect where the partnerships were up to then.

ACTIVITY: Read the case studies below and identify at least one example of each of the principles in action.

Partnership: Wyndham Early Learning Activity (WELA) and Save the Children

In the remote community of Wyndham, in Western Australia's East Kimberley region, Save the Children partnered with Joorak Ngarni Aboriginal Corporation to foster the development of a community initiative supporting mothers, babies and young children. Since 2005 the Wyndham Early Learning Activity (WELA) has evolved from a playgroup to an incorporated and independent broader service with activities including focused learning for children with their mums, health and nutrition support, transition to school support, a breakfast club, a women's centre and more recently men's groups. Save the Children explains that their approach is to strengthen local Aboriginal community-based organisations to be responsive to their own community. In Wyndham this entails taking WELA's lead to build on the strengths of the Mum's group and ensuring WELA has access to Save the Children's local and national support and training and development opportunities. In the partnership, WELA asserts that all programs and services should be relevant to the community, the programs must be flexible and that WELA needs to grow to provide holistic services and local leadership. There has been a focus in the partnership on local employment and building the skills of local staff.

'I have only Aboriginal staff at the moment and that is because they are good. They are part of the success of WELA, their personal growth as community women. The building of their skills and confidence is enormous.'

— Jane Parker, WELA

Partnership: Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC) and Uniting Care Gippsland (UCG)

In Bairnsdale, in the East Gippsland region of Victoria, GEGAC works closely with UCG in the development and delivery of early years services. The partnership has emerged from a long history of the organisations working together, and is described in partnership agreements that include the shared vision of the organisations, roles and responsibilities for partnership activities, and the shared commitment to embed the partnership in organisational practice. A key practice that has made the partnership successful has been the employment of a shared staff member who works fluidly between both organisations in the role of Indigenous Early Years Coordinator. The shared staff member has been highly effective in building early years service capacity for GEGAC as well as integrating knowledge about culture and ways of working with Aboriginal families at UCG. This cross-learning filters through at the staff level and improves everyone's practice with Aboriginal families. The shared staff member has become an effective advocate for families with both organisations to ensure that services are delivered that respond to their needs.

'We use the words 'walk alongside' and we choose to walk alongside whenever and wherever we can to support their capacity to do what they need to do...the ideal for us at the end of the day is that the whole program area moves to GEGAC when they're ready for that.'

— Kim McAlister, UnitingCare Gippsland

Partnership: Dalaigur Aboriginal Pre-school

Dalaigur Aboriginal Pre-school in Kempsey, New South Wales, is growing and strengthening their service through a dedicated approach to developing partnerships that add value to their service. They engage in a wide range of partnerships for the development and implementation of programs and staff training, including with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF), NAPCAN, Kids Matter, Gunawirra Limited, and the local early intervention service and primary school. For Dalaigur, an openness to different ways of implementing a program that are culturally appropriate for their children and families is a bottom line requirement for engaging in partnerships. While Dalaigur strongly values the contribution of partnerships to service delivery they will only work with organisations that are trusting and accepting of the different ways of working in an Aboriginal service, and come with an open mind to develop programs together.

'It has to go both ways. We've got to accept that all children will be mainstreamed, it's a mainstream life and we need to give these tools to these children so that they can go into a non-Indigenous context and take on the world, but they still keep their culture inside.'

— Roslyn 'Lotti' Moseley, Dalaigur Pre-School

Partnership: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and Berry Street Victoria

VACCA and Berry Street are working closely together to provide the Indigenous Case Management component of the Integrated Family Violence Services, Women and Children, in the North-West Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. The partnership pursues the goal that more Aboriginal women will receive services from an Aboriginal organisation, and that where they choose to work with the mainstream agency they will receive a more culturally competent service. Significant differences in the understanding of and approach to family violence have been a challenge in the partnership. However, Berry Street have demonstrated a commitment to developing different ways of working with Aboriginal people, learning from the VACCA approach. A significant practice that has enabled effective partnership was the secondment of an experienced Family Violence program manager from Berry Street to VACCA. This provided an opportunity to develop systems, reporting mechanisms and referral processes that were complementary and for Berry Street to develop understanding around how they could fit in with the way VACCA needed to do business. The supportive role of the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) has been recognised as a key factor, enabling the partners to develop innovative approaches:

'They [DHS] are very clear about working in a very fluid partnership, not a hierarchical structure where they're saying: we're the funder, you'll deliver. Instead, they're saying: here's a bit of space, let's see what we can do because this needs to be successful.'

— Kerry Crawford, VACCA

3.2. Commitment

Any agreement will set out the mutual commitments that all parties make, but there are certain specific commitments that non-Indigenous organisations can make that will strengthen the foundations of any partnership.

While genuine partnerships require shared responsibility and joint action, there is a special obligation on non-Indigenous people and organisations working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This special obligation arises from the unique rights, history and cultures of Australia's First Peoples and the priority to redress the historical and continuing injustice and discrimination that they experience.

What do you think should be included in a commitment to genuine partnership from a non-Indigenous organisation?

ACTIVITY: Read SNAICC's template statement of commitment for non-Indigenous organisations below. Reflect on the following questions:

1. Would your organisation be happy to sign up to this or be reassured by it? Who would need to be consulted and sign off on this in your workplace?
2. If you work in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation, are these the commitments you would want or expect from a non-Indigenous partner?

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT FOR NON-INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

Our commitment to genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations

This statement describes the principles and actions that reflect our commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations to support wellbeing for children and families.

While genuine partnerships require shared responsibility and joint action, there is a special obligation on non-Indigenous people and organisations working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This special obligation arises from the unique rights, history and cultures of Australia's First Peoples and the priority to redress the historical and continuing injustice and discrimination that they experience.

At the core of this commitment is our recognition and respect for: the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination; and the strengths and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to care for children and support families.

In all of our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities, we undertake to:

1. Develop the cultural competence of our organisation and all of our staff.

LEARN about and respect local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

We will ensure cultural education for our staff is provided by local community organisations and Elders, as well as seeking cultural advice to inform our day-to-day practice working with children and families. We will adequately compensate people and organisations for cultural knowledge and expertise they share.

VALUE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge in our practice

We will work to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives influence mainstream service delivery frameworks. We are committed to practice that reflects the best of non-Indigenous evidence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural strengths in supporting children and families.

EMBED cultural competence throughout our organisation

We will work to develop organisational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence that is embedded in all of our processes, practices, relationships, and staff training and support.

2. Build respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

CONNECT with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

We will take the time to get to know people within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, to understand community leadership structures and the role of community organisations, and to listen to Elders.

LISTEN to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

We will consult with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through their own representative organisations and leadership structures. We will listen to the needs that they identify and respond by working with them to provide supports that they request.

TAKE a stake in the long-term wellbeing of children, families and community

We won't work with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community unless we are prepared to stick around while the community wants and needs our support for families or for community development. We will work with the community to secure funding for local needs beyond limitations of government contracts.

3. Support capacity for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led responses to child and family needs.

ASSESS existing community strengths and needs

We will identify existing child and family support strengths and needs in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community before we start any work, and ensure that we do not duplicate or compete.

ENABLE capacity growth for community controlled organisations

We will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to support their growth in line with their identified needs and priorities. We will not compete for service funding where there is existing capacity in these organisations to deliver services for their community.

TRANSFER service delivery to community controlled organisations

We will negotiate plans for the supported transfer of service delivery roles and resources in line with capacity growth. Capacity building plans will include realistic timeframes and specific targets to ensure growth objectives are met, and decision-making roles and resources are transferred without unnecessary delay.

DEVELOP local skills and employment opportunities

We will prioritise and support training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We will collaborate with community controlled organisations to create local workforce development plans and seek to limit competition with them for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

4. Establish the processes, governance structures and accountability required for effective and sustainable partnerships.

NEGOTIATE agreements with community controlled organisations

We will seek to establish memoranda of understanding with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that reflect these commitments, and our shared objectives to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Our agreements will direct resources to partnership development by establishing mechanisms to drive and oversee the partnership.

EVALUATE partnership work

We will establish joint processes for monitoring and evaluating our partnerships. We will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities participate to ensure culturally appropriate evaluation design, conduct, and interpretation of evaluation outcomes.

Commitment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations

While the statement above highlights special commitments needed from non-Indigenous parties, a genuine partnership will also require strong commitments from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties. These can sometimes be difficult to raise and identify because of the sensitivity to correcting past and continuing unequal relationships. However, it is essential to building trust in any relationship that the commitments of all parties are clearly identified and named.

What might a non-Indigenous organisation be concerned about when entering a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and people?

What should Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities include in their commitment to partnership?

Commitments that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties may make to their partners could include:

- to respect the skills, knowledge, expertise and experience of non-Indigenous organisation and staff
- to share cultural knowledge and skills where relevant to support their partner's capacity to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- to be open with concerns in the relationship and share them early

- to work through difficult issues, and give non-Indigenous people and organisations opportunities to learn from mistakes, to grow and to strengthen their work and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- to share credit and celebration for the successes of the partnership, and
- to solve problems together, drawing on knowledge and strengths of non-Indigenous partners to complement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and strengths.

3.3. Requirements

There are four basic requirements that each party needs before getting into partnerships.

RESOURCE and staff allocations to partnership work.

Partnerships are not cost neutral for either party, money and time has to be available.



Partnership **LEADERS** and champions. Like any change, partnerships require someone to drive and promote them. Who would that be in your organisation?



Base-level **CULTURAL COMPETENCE** and commitment to reconciliation. Before you start, you need to understand the basics. What has your organisation already done?



SUPPORT of the concept. This needs to come from the top and bottom. Board, staff, community.

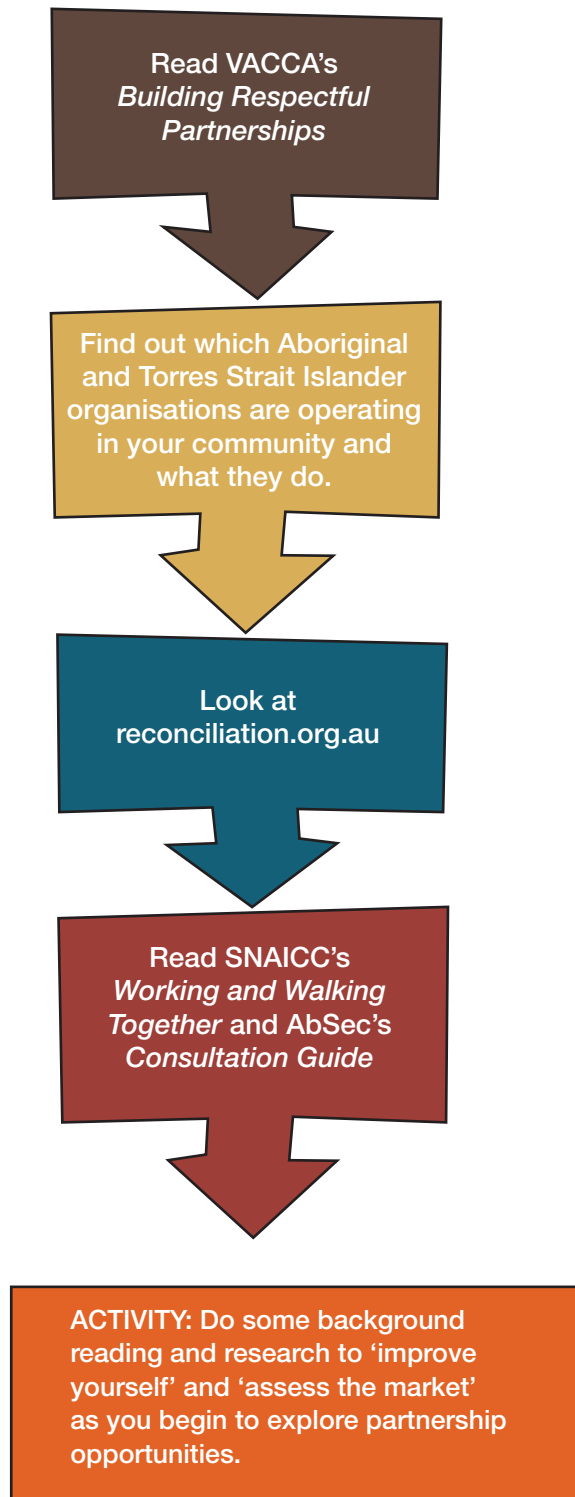


How ready are you? Do a quick scan of your organisational readiness against these four basic requirements.

What more needs to be done to ensure we are ready to partner?

3.4. Getting started

This section will be particularly useful for non-Indigenous organisations who are new to relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community. The framework below provides a way of thinking about the steps in starting a relationship.



Protocols for non-Indigenous organisations to consider before engaging with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues or people from a local community will be able to assist you in finding out which specific protocols you need to consider. If there is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation/s in the community you will be engaging with, contact them and ask who you should be talking to and what the appropriate protocols are.

Below is a list of some common protocols in engaging with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Remember, these are just examples, and protocols will vary significantly for different communities and cultures.

- Protocols for introductions are important — describing who you are and where you are from.
- Be patient when asking questions.
- Remember that different families may have different values and cultural beliefs, even if they are from the same community
- In some communities, direct eye contact may be accepted, however in other communities it may be considered offensive.
- The use of silence should not be misunderstood. It may mean that people do not want to express an opinion at that point in time, or they could be listening and reflecting on what you have said.
- Do not force a point of view. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have knowledge that may differ from yours. Remember you are consulting them to seek their knowledge and opinions.
- Use language that respects the integrity and beliefs of the family or community members with whom you are meeting.
- Avoid jargon and do not use acronyms.
- Consult with a variety of community people.

What is your experience of these protocols?

Are you aware of protocols that exist in your local area?

Who could you approach to ask and learn about protocols?

Partnership mapping

The page below provides space for sharing the story of your partnership and mapping it out in the context of your community. This exercise is about understanding where your partnership sits in the context of other relationships and the different stakeholders involved in supporting children and families. If you're only just getting started, this map could be used to share ideas about what the partnership could be and where you'd like it to go.

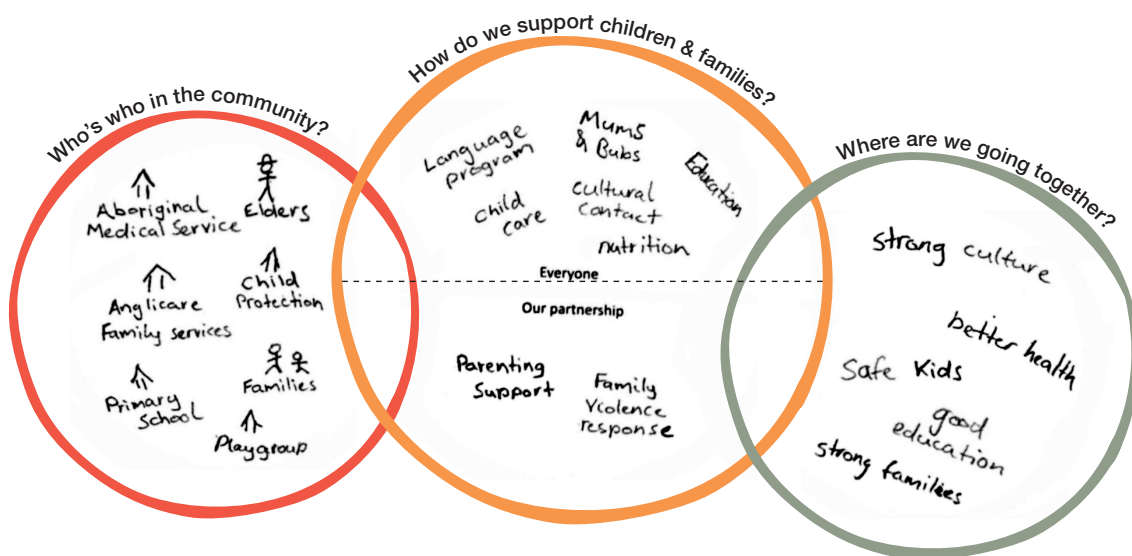
Completing this activity with your partner/s provides an opportunity to share and reflect on the history of your partnership as it has developed in the community. Try completing the diagram individually then sharing your different understandings of the partnership with each other. Those people who have had ongoing involvement could share their reflections on relationships that have changed and developed over time.

If you've been partnering for sometime, this activity could guide discussion on whether your partnership is contributing to a service system that responds in an effective and integrated way to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the community. Are there opportunities to strengthen partnerships with other stakeholders to improve the way service providers coordinate around the needs of children and families?

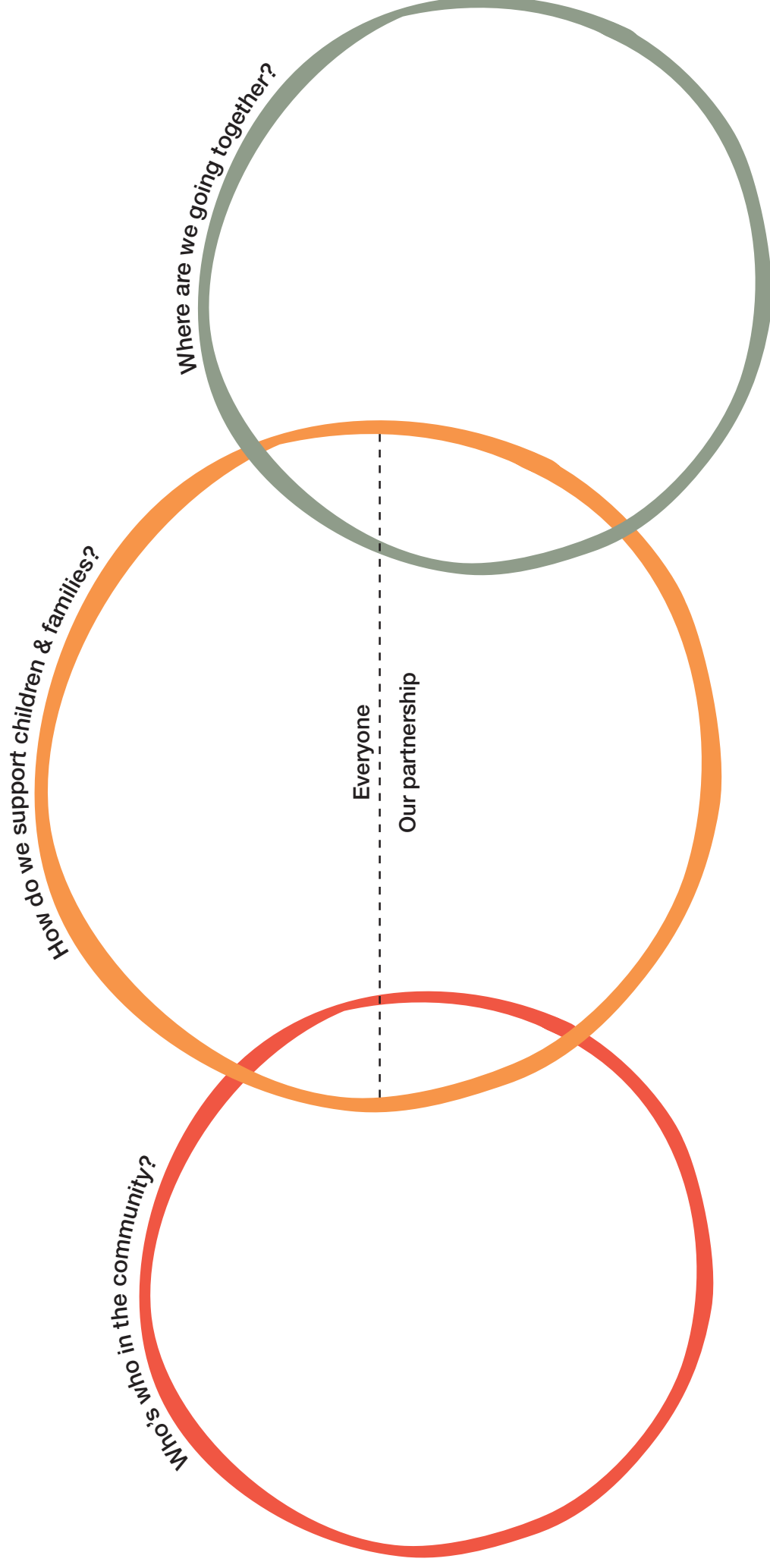
ACTIVITY: Get your deadly drawing skills out and create the diagram anyway that you think best fits your partnership and your community. Here's an example to get you started:

You may like to use arrows or lines to show relationships between different people, organisations, supports and outcomes. It's up to you how you'd like to describe your partnership and where it sits in the community.

Partnership Map (Example)



PARTNERSHIP MAP: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



FOR DISCUSSION:

- How have relationships changed over time? Could we work better together?
- What are the opportunities for more connected work? What other supports do our children and families need?

3.5. Aims and expectations

One of the first and most important tasks in any partnership journey is to be clear about what you are aiming to achieve together. There are three different types of objectives to consider:

Process objective	Impact objective	Outcome objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lets you know what you are doing and how you will do it; describes participants, interactions and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lets you know what the long term implications of your program/ activity will be; describes the longer term impact on your target audience or organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lets you know how you will change attitudes, knowledge or behavior; describe the degree to which you expect this change.

The partnership framework in section 2.3 above describes a 'core objective' in partnerships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family service delivery:



3.6. Gathering evidence

There are three useful tools that you can use to gather evidence to assess the viability and potential strength of a partnership. Gathering evidence in a systematic way will enable the Board or Management Committee from each organisation to make an informed decision about entering a partnership and what type of partnership it should be. The three tools are described below.

Assessing values worksheet

This tool is designed for assessing the organisational value alignment for partners considering working collaboratively. The first section prompts the organisation to define their values; the second set of questions help to assess how the values align and the third part requires the parties to draft a joint statement of values.

Cost/benefit analysis

A cost/benefit analysis will assist in evaluating the positive outcomes for people receiving services. It can be used by corporate governance bodies or senior managers to work through the process of identifying the costs and benefits of the partnership to clients, both financial and otherwise.

Due diligence

When considering an organisation with which to partner, it is important to ensure financial stability by exercising due diligence; due diligence is “doing one’s homework” on another organisation. This is a comprehensive but lengthy resource with instructions on what to look for and what questions to ask across five areas of an organisation’s activity:

- Commercial and Strategic
- Financial Accounts
- Commitment and Assets
- Tax, and
- Legal.

TOOLS for review and use:

Full versions of these tools are included in Appendix A, B and C.

FOR DISCUSSION:

What sensitivities are likely to arise in exercising due diligence on a partner organisation? How can these be addressed?

How much information should you share with your partner when getting started?

Are there different levels of due diligence required for different types of partnerships?

3.7. Partnership agreement

While many partnerships may choose to remain informal, there are some significant advantages to ‘writing it all down’ in a formal partnership agreement. Having a detailed agreement can help to ensure clarity of partnership objectives and the commitments of all parties. It can also help to ensure that strong, clear processes are in place and can continue, even when staff working for the organisations change.

Depending on the type of partnership, formal and legally binding contracts may be needed and should be drafted by a lawyer. However, a non-legally binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) between partners can be a useful tool that can be used instead of, or as well as, legal contracts. An MOU is a flexible and plain language way of capturing the nature of the partnership, its objectives, and the commitments of the parties.

It allows you to describe in writing what the partnership is about and what it will do, while avoiding an overly ‘legalistic’ document that may not have much meaning for the day-to-day work.

Definition

“An MOU is a document that records the common intent of two or more parties where the parties do not wish to assume legally binding obligations. An MOU is usually less complex and less detailed than a contract, but provides a framework and set of principles to guide the parties in undertaking a project or working arrangement.”

— Victorian Government
Solicitor’s Office

The list below sets out some of the matters you should consider covering in a collaborative partnership agreement. Not all of these will be relevant to every partnership. When it comes to matters concerning sharing and transfer of finances and other resources, serious consideration should be given to the need for a legally binding contract.

The contents of a partnership agreement may include:

- objectives of the collaboration
- relevant timelines for the collaboration
- project milestones
- the responsibilities of each partner
- the staff and other resources that each partner will bring to the project
- any specific risks associated with the project and responsibility associated with those risks
- expected behaviours of each party (for example, to act ethically and be transparent)
- dispute resolution clauses
- governance and Operations structures (including decision making responsibilities)
- division of income between the parties
- division of costs between the parties
- review and evaluation requirements
- renewal or exit provisions

- accounting arrangements including matters relevant to acquittals or funding
- confidentiality
- intellectual property
- ongoing communications plans/structures between the parties
- agreement as to responsibility and content of external communications
- key contacts for each partner
- early warning provisions — obligations to report early to the other party any matter that might affect the collaboration
- good faith provisions
- clauses relating to Deductable Gift Recipient status
- conflict of interest provisions
- employment matters, including work health & safety (WHS), and
- insurance.

FOR DISCUSSION: What would you add to the list? What do you think is unnecessary or inappropriate for your partnership?

Some tips for creating a good MOU

- Make sure the MOU is focussed on what the partnership is about. It should be a way to describe what you are doing and why in plain language that everybody can understand. Everyone involved should be able to relate to, refer to and use the MOU to guide the partnership.
- Make sure that the agreement includes a clause that states the intention that the agreement will not be legally binding. This will assist to ensure there are no unintended legal consequences of the agreement.
- A core component of an MOU is the partnership governance structure or committee. If setup well, this group will be an engine room for driving and oversight of the partnership, and accountability to the community. Pay particular attention to how this is created and described. Consider whether it reflects the principles described in section 3.1 above. Does it enable a leading role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation/s and community in the response to community needs? (see section 4.1 below for further information on partnership governance structures)
- Pay attention to when the agreement will end or be up for renewal. In many partnerships that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations it has been recognised as important to have 'sunset clauses' through which the partnership ends and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation takes full control of services for their community. If this is not the intention, it will still be important to think about how roles will change over time.
- Celebrate the signing of an MOU and hold an event that includes the broader community to inform them about the partnership and build excitement around what it can achieve and contribute to the community.
- Even though the MOU is stated to be not legally binding, it is advisable to get legal advice to ensure there are no unintended legal consequences of the agreement.

4 SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIP

4.1. Governance

Corporate governance is the legal authority given to the Board or management committee of an organisation to manage the affairs of the organisation.

The role of a governance body is to provide leadership, safeguard the organisation's interest, ensure accountability and ensure long-term viability. The governance body steers the organisation like a crew sails a boat.

A strong and enduring partnership requires both parties to have good governance. This requires:

- a well-governed non-Indigenous agency/ies
- a well-governed Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled organisation/s, and
- a clear governance structure for the partnership.

Particular attention is needed to how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is represented in the governance of the partnership. This will differ depending on the context of your community and partnership. Sometimes it will be appropriate for the community to be represented through the relevant community-controlled organisation, and sometimes it will be important for other community leaders and Elders to be included. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation in your partnership will be the best source of information about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community governance works where you are.

FOR DISCUSSION: What should the partnership governance structure look like for your partnership? How should it do business?

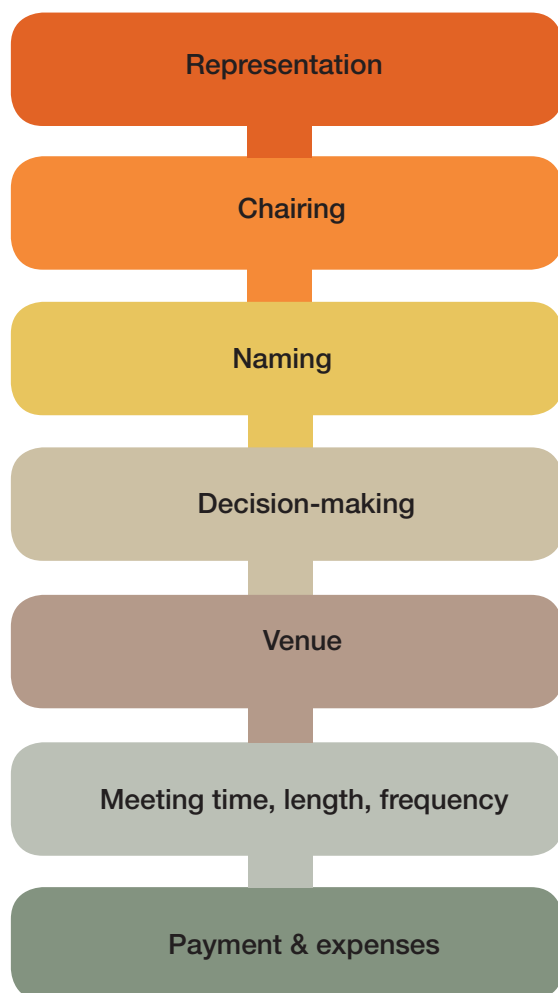
How should the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community be represented in the governance of the partnership?

It is important to pay careful attention to issues of control and power balance in the establishment of a partnership governance structure. In many cases, and often for reasons relating to histories and continuing realities of discrimination, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties have been disadvantaged in partnership negotiations.

They may have less resources and less initial service delivery capacity than larger mainstream organisations, and as a result, less bargaining power. The partnership governance development stage is a critical time to reflect on genuine partnership principles, including:

- how commitments to self-determination and community capacity-building are reflected in the structure, and
- how the governance structure seeks to address historic and continuing discrimination and resulting power imbalance.

Below is a list of areas in which a governance body may be structured on a scale in favour of one party or another. It will be important to think about the balance of power in relation to each of these areas.



FOR DISCUSSION: Where would you like to see the balance of control in your partnership?

How should the balance be created to reflect the principles in section 3.1 above?

Does the balance need to shift over time with capacity development of the partners?

4.2. Capacity building

One of the key outcomes of a partnership should be to build the operational and leadership capacity of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity. The evidence is clear that stronger outcomes in community wellbeing can be achieved where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are empowered to respond to the challenges they face.

Culturally-tailored services are also needed to ensure that they are appropriate for and used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The development of strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations has significant potential to promote both these objectives while serving broader goals of community development and economic empowerment.

Capacity building will be much more effective if it is explicit, focused and measured.

Areas of capacity

Organisational capacity can be divided into a number of areas. The capacity areas identified in the CARD framework developed by Matrix on Board for AbSec belong to the following five broad capacity areas:

People

The collective capabilities, experiences, potential and commitment of the organisation's board, management team, staff, and volunteers. It includes performance measurement and external relationship building.

Culture

The connections that unite an organisation, that is, the shared values and practices, behaviour norms, and the organisation's orientation towards performance.

Structure

The combination of governance, organisational design, resource coordination, and individual job descriptions that shape the organisation's legal and management structure.

Systems

The organisation's planning, decision-making, knowledge management, and administrative systems, as well as its physical and technological assets, tools and facilities needed to implement all programmatic, organisational and community strategies.

Leadership

The ability to create and sustain a vision, that is, to inspire, model, prioritise, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate, in an effort to achieve the organisation's purpose.

Capacity Transfer Plan

Capacity area	Skills or knowledge (What is being transferred)	Method (How will it be transferred)	Evidence (How will you measure capacity transfer)	Timeframe (When and for how long will the transfer take place)
People				
Culture				
Structure				
Systems				
Leadership				

ACTIVITY: What would you put in a capacity transfer plan for your project?
Add some detail to the plan above.

Partnership Case Study: Capacity Building

The diagram below describes how a newly formed Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation is planning to work in partnership to develop their experience, skills and accreditation to become an independent, accredited out of home care provider. The full case study is available in SNAICC (2013), *Developing Capacity Through Partnerships*.

The capacity building partnership model



Key resources and support

- Communication and reporting mechanisms, collaboration across organisations and regular stakeholder meetings.
- Funding for Aboriginal partnership facilitator and broker.
- Capacity building from non-Indigenous NGO peak body.
- Strong experience, facilitation and advisory support from Aboriginal peak body and non-Indigenous NGOs for entity formation and MoU drafting process.
- Aboriginal partnership facilitator provides ongoing support, advice, training, monitoring and acts as a communication point for partners and advocate with external stakeholders
- Funding arrangements for OOHC placements is negotiated with the NSW Department of FaCS for each partnership
- Resourcing and staffing arrangements are negotiated for each partnership.

The capacity building partnership model is one of three approaches developed by AbSec, the Association of Child Welfare Agencies (ACWA) and the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services to build the capacity of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to deliver out-of-home care services.

The model involves a partnership between an unaccredited ACCO and an accredited agency, with the primary aim of supporting the accreditation of the ACCO and the transfer of all placements assigned to the partnership to the ACCO once it is accredited. By partnering with an accredited agency, an unaccredited ACCO is able to develop and provide supporting programs, and also support placements in the short term, while developing service expertise through supervised work on placements. The accredited agency has an auspice role, and retains responsibility for the provision of out-of-home care and the authorisation of carers, while simultaneously providing capacity building support for its partner.

On accreditation, the newly-formed ACCO receives the funding, assets and full responsibility for staff and their caseloads assigned to the partnership, including all placements for Aboriginal children in their area of operation. The final result of the partnership model is two stand-alone and accredited out-of-home care agencies and increased cross-sector co-operation.

A crucial aspect of this model is the funded role of AbSec, an external, well-established Aboriginal organisation, as the partnership facilitator. It has a driving role, which includes communication and coordination with government and other stakeholders, facilitation of consultations, development and formalisation of the partnership, and provision of a range of ongoing support and monitoring for the partners as the partnership progresses. Having an established Aboriginal organisation in this role:

- ensures that the interests of the Aboriginal community are at the heart of all partnership activities
- increases trust and acceptance of the initiative by Aboriginal communities, and

- increases negotiating strength for Aboriginal communities that have less resources than large mainstream NGO partners.

There are five distinct phases of the capacity building partnership model, each of which place an emphasis on supporting a community driven, tailored response to local needs and ensuring quality and probity. The rationale and activities for each phase is discussed in the full SNAICC resource (available on the SNAICC website) and illustrated with examples of the model's tailored application to a partnership between Ngurambang Inc. and UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families. This was one of the most established partnerships and was within Phase 2 of the partnership model at the time of publication. Importantly, phases in the model are not time limited, allowing flexibility for the significant time required to build relationships and capacity building plans tailored to the different starting points and circumstances of each community.

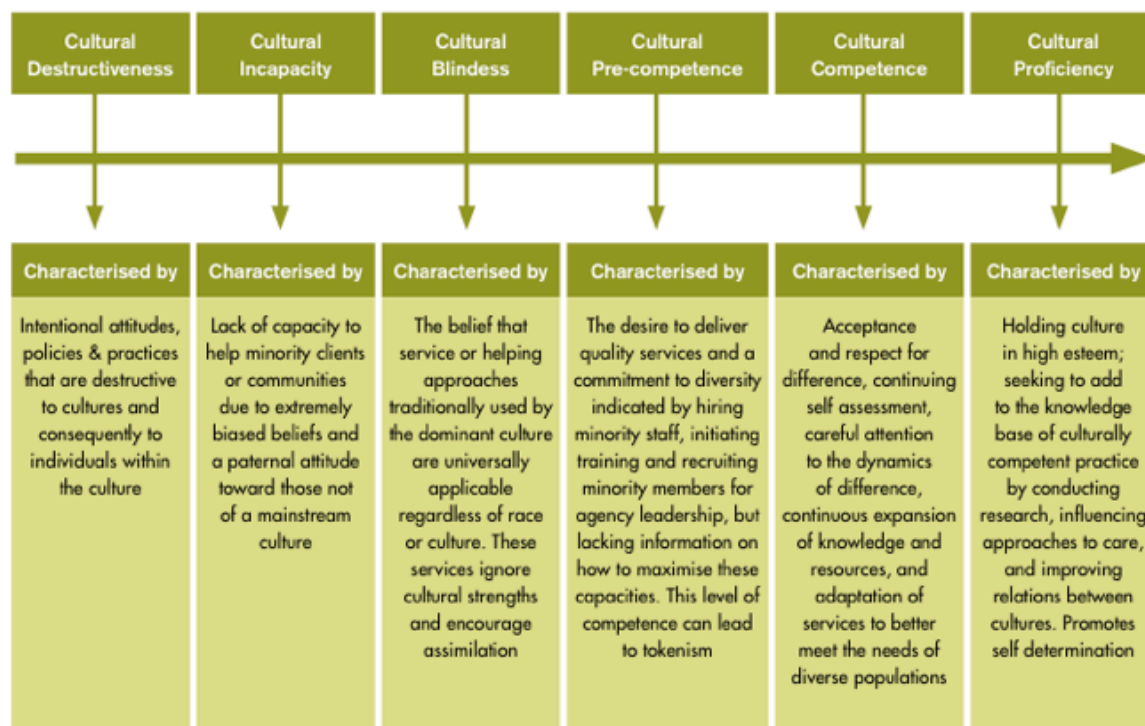
4.3. Cultural capacity

In genuine partnerships non-Indigenous organisations have a responsibility to develop culturally competent professional practice. As part of a partnership agreement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations have a role in teaching about their culture and supporting the other party to learn.

One of the key outcomes of a partnership should be to build the cultural competence capacity of the non-Indigenous party. Section 3.4 above provides some ideas for resources that non-Indigenous organisations can refer to when starting their cultural competence learning. However, genuine cultural competence develops primarily through relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

It is very important to remember that developing cultural competence is a learning journey and not a destination. It's also about much more than just being aware of cultural difference.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE CONTINUUM



Developing cultural competence requires a change in attitudes and practices through which individuals and organisations demonstrate genuine respect and value for a culture that is not their own. The framework below provides a way to think about a cultural competence journey:¹

THINK ABOUT:

- How have you learned about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, customs, history and language?
- Which organisations and people have helped you to learn?
- Who could you learn more from?
- How have you supported and encouraged other people to learn?
- Which stage of the cultural competence continuum do you think that you are at?

¹ The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework, Produced for the Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2008), p 24.

² Hunt, J. (2010). *Partnerships for Indigenous Development: International Development NGOs*,

Partnership Case Study: A Cultural Competence Journey

This case study extract shows some of the changes in practice that occurred in a partnership as a result of listening to and learning from the Aboriginal organisation. The full case study is available in SNAICC (2012), *Opening Doors through Partnerships*.

The Partnership

In the remote community of Wyndham, in Western Australia's East Kimberley region, Save the Children partnered with Joorak Ngarni Aboriginal Corporation to foster the development of a community initiative supporting mothers, babies and young children. Since 2005 the Wyndham Early Learning Activity (WELA) has evolved from a playgroup to an incorporated and independent broader service with activities including focused learning for children with their mums, health and nutrition support, transition to school support, a breakfast club, a women's centre and more recently men's groups.

WELA Coordinator, Jane Parker, explained to SNAICC that WELA's growth has been made possible through the partnership. Anthea Whan of Save the Children stressed that working in partnership with WELA is about helping WELA to meet their objectives and not about the prominence of Save the Children. She described Save the Children's approach of strengthening local Aboriginal and community-based organisations to be responsive to their own community. In Wyndham this entails taking WELA's lead to build on the strengths of the Mum's group and ensuring WELA has access to Save the Children's local and national support and training and development opportunities. In the partnership, WELA asserts that all programs and services should be relevant to the community, the programs must be flexible and that WELA needs to grow to provide holistic services and local leadership.

Cultural Competence

The cultural competence journey of Save the Children working with WELA and in East Kimberley has been a significant learning experience with many challenges. Aspects of this journey include:

- Save the Children planned to use community development expertise developed in South East Asia and implemented the same models, which didn't work.
- Early on, staff worked in ways the community considered culturally inappropriate. Partnerships were formed and cultural training done with Aboriginal organisations not from East Kimberley.
- The employment of local Aboriginal staff promoted a focus on cultural awareness for staff and changed relationships with the community.
- Save the Children had no formal framework for developing cultural competency. The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan has brought an organisational focus and ensured cultural awareness training for new staff.
- WELA believes that over time Save the Children have changed their approach, developed an appropriate team, built relationships and overcome cultural challenges.

FOR DISCUSSION: What do you think could be challenging or go wrong in the cultural learning journey within your partnership?

What could be put in place now to support the cultural competence journey of your partnership?

Cultural Capacity Learning Plan

ACTIVITY: What would you put in a cultural capacity learning plan for your project?
Add some detail to the plan below.

Capacity area	Skills or knowledge (What needs to be taught/learned?)	Method (How will the teaching/ learning happen?)	Evidence (How will you know it has been learned?)	Timeframe (When and for how long will the teaching/learning be done?)
Culture, family & community				
Social context				
Attitudes and communication				
Cultural protocols				
Working with respect				
Engaging communities				
Appropriate programs				

4.4. Project planning

It is suggested that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, like many not-for-profit and community-based agencies, favour a bottom-up (or community development) approach to project planning. Government funded programs are most typically top-down (or service delivery).

Some tips for project planning:

- Be prepared to go back to the beginning of the planning story.
- Be ready to invest more time than an individual planning process.
- Be clear about the elements that cannot be changed (for example: funding, regulation).
- Be flexible about the elements that can be changed.
- Present the plans in a format that is appropriate for each audience.

The table below shows some of the key differences between these two approaches.

	Top-down	Bottom-up
Root metaphor	Individual responsibility	Empowerment
Approach/orientation	Weakness/deficit Solve problem	Strength/capacity Improve competence
Definition of problem	By outside agent such as government	By community
Primary vehicles for health promotion and change	Education, improved services, lifestyle	Building community control, resources and capacities toward economic, social and political change
Role of outside agents	Service delivery and resource allocation	Respond to needs of community
Primary decision makers	Agency representatives, business leaders, 'appointed community leaders'	Indigenous appointed leaders
Community control of resources	Low	High
Community ownership	Low	High
Evaluation	Specific risk factors, quantifiable outcomes and 'targets'	Pluralistic methods documenting changes of important to the community

Source: Hunt. J (2010) Partnerships for Indigenous Development, CAEPR Working Paper No. 71

FOR DISCUSSION: Imagine a homework club that has been planned using a top-down approach. How would it be different to one planned using a bottom up approach?

Are your projects usually planned from the top down or the bottom up? Why?

Falls Creek Homework Club (FCHC)

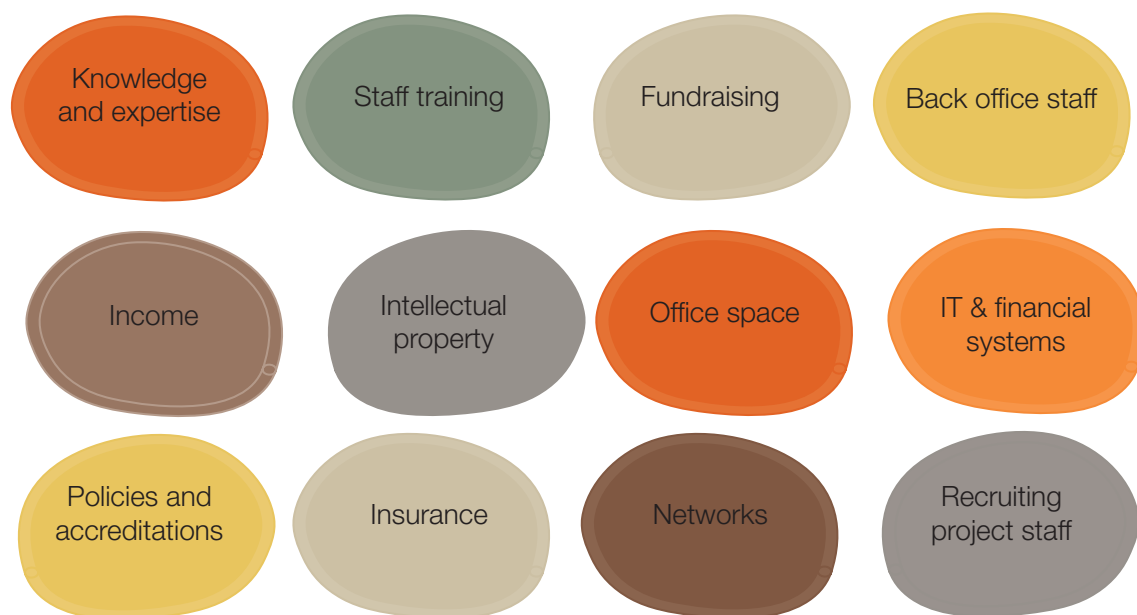
OBJECTIVE: increase engagement at school				PARTNERS: GoodKids and Falls Creek Aboriginal Medical Service		
Issue	Detail	Steps for the FCHC committee & staff	Steps for the Aboriginal Medical Service	Steps for GoodKids	By when	
Governance	Establish partnership agreement	–	Consult with members on MOU Contribute to MOU Sign MOU	Seek Board comments on MOU Sign MOU	Sept 2020	
	Establish governance committee	Appoint chair	Nominate 2 staff and 2 community members	Nominate 4 staff	Oct 2020	
	Set up room	Decorate	Clear out old equipment	Deliver donated desks	Nov 2020	
Building	Access	Get access codes	Install new alarm sensors	–	Nov 2020	
	Design flyer	Approve flyer	Source artist	Share examples of other clubs	Nov 2020	
	Distribute flyer	–	Give flyer to parents	Send flyer to schools	Nov 2020	

THINK ABOUT: What is good about this planning template?
What would you change?

4.5. Sharing resources

Sharing and transfer of resources to support partnership goals is an important component of most successful partnerships. Opportunities will be missed if partners simply hold onto and protect what they have instead of considering how resources can most effectively be used together to support the work. Importantly, when partners share resources, like staff and office space, it can create space and opportunity for shared-learning and relationship-building.

These are some examples of resources that you may think about sharing within a partnership:



FOR DISCUSSION: Beyond saving money, what are the benefits of sharing resources?

Are there resources we have that could be better allocated to support partnership goals?

Partnership Case Study: Sharing Resources

This case study focuses on the partnership between VACCA and Berry Street for the provision of the Indigenous Case Management component of the Northern Integrated Family Violence Services, Women and Children (NIFVS). The full case study is available in SNAICC (2012), *Opening Doors Through Partnerships*. This extract highlights how the secondment of a senior staff member supported partnership work.

There are challenges in the way this organisational commitment to respectful partnership filters to the staff team level and the Berry Street Director for this program, Craig, describes tensions in the beginning where 'the organisations had missed each other.'

He explains that the Berry Street family violence team viewed the way VACCA works as not being best practice, while VACCA staff viewed the Berry Street approach as not providing holistic support to families. There were a lot of assumptions made on both sides rather than trying to work through differences

The first major initiative put in place at this time to address partnership challenges was a full-time staff secondment. An experienced Family Violence program manager from Berry Street was seconded to VACCA for 12 weeks. This provided an opportunity to develop systems, reporting mechanisms and referral processes that were complementary and for Berry Street to develop understanding around how they could fit in with the way VACCA needed to do business.

Craig describes that the secondment to VACCA and various other staff team interactions are vital to ensuring that relationships of trust at the senior levels filter down to lower levels and promote 'a belief that this is a positive relationship to have.' Staff interactions that are taking place at lower levels include: having the VACCA family violence counsellor linked with the Berry Street counselling team and undertaking professional supervision together and; the VACCA team coordinator accessing supervision from a manager at Berry Street. The process has involved developing systems for working together and this has supported an agenda to 'change the narratives' that have limited effective partnership between staff and change the value they have for the partnership.

Craig describes that there are other benefits that have come out of informal relationship development. He explains:

'I can go to VACCA, walk in, wander about, get a cup of tea, and the next phase is for VACCA staff to be able to do the same. I think that makes a big difference, because when you need to do something, you can just talk instead of trying to get through our systems, which are really hard to break into sometimes, to be able to get to the right person and get the right outcome for the client.'

Craig believes that Aboriginal organisations are better at this type of informal relationship development and Berry Street needs to work on opening up this space for VACCA staff.

Staff secondment to support partnership development has also created challenges for Berry Street in having to cover the role, skills and time of one of its most senior and experienced managers. The lack of resources dedicated to partnership relationships has been identified as a threat to the sustainability of the partnership. However, Berry Street has strongly identified the benefits and Craig commented that it wasn't that they couldn't afford to lose their manager for that time, it was that 'we really couldn't afford not to.'

4.6. Managing the relationship

Successful partnerships in the not-for-profit sector are built on a person centred approach, good relationship management, clear and consistent project management and leadership, careful and considered planning and effective communication. Where these 'core partnership competencies' are lacking, the partnership can falter.

Principles for managing the relationship are:

- The plan may change — **stay flexible.**
- Mistakes may happen — **stay reasonable.**
- Problems will emerge — **stay positive.**

Warning signs

Common pitfalls and warning signs to look out for include:

- **Disengagement:** A partner may stop attending meetings, be slow in responding to communications, send more junior staff to partner meetings in situations where it's not appropriate, or contribute goods or services to the partnership that decline in quality.
- **Direction change:** A partner's corporate governance body or CEO may change, or their funding mix may significantly change.
- **Capacity challenges:** A partner organisation that has viability concerns and/ or high staff turnover may retreat from partnerships, focussing on survival and internal concerns.

Where your partnership is showing signs of any of these potential pitfalls, it is important to be proactive about managing and supporting the relationship. Consider meeting with your partner/s to discuss concerns and reflect on the benefits of the partnership, its value to people receiving services and your willingness to work collaboratively and cooperatively. Some additional effort on your part may make a lasting difference to the partnership.

Dispute resolution

Disputes will normally arise in any partnership and a process should be agreed in advance to resolve them when they do occur. Taking the time to develop these procedures can reduce difficulties and sustain the relationship later on.

Best practice dispute resolution outcomes should be:

- **quick** — the issues should be resolved quickly rather than allowing them to escalate through inaction
- **fair** — all relevant parties should be consulted so that all sides of the story are taken into account and where a resolution cannot be reached an independent arbitrator should be used
- **handled sensitively** — disputes should, where possible and appropriate, be resolved in a confidential context in order to minimise impact on people not affected by the dispute, and
- **transparent** — the procedure should be made known to every person involved in the partnership.

Example of dispute resolution clause

1. PARTY ONE and PARTY TWO recognise that, in light of the collaborative nature of the partnership, there may be differences of opinions between the parties from time to time in relation to the implementation of the services or the operation of the partnership or the expectations of one another under the MOU. Where this cannot be resolved, the parties agree that the persons who identify the dispute must provide details to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or delegate, of their respective organisations and the CEOs of the parties in disagreement will promptly confer and attempt to negotiate a decision.

2. If a solution is found, then all partnership parties will be notified of the agreed decision. If the matter remains unresolved after five business days, then written details of the dispute must immediately be referred to a Grievance Committee made up of the CEOs of the parties, or their nominees, who must seek to broker a solution.
3. If the Grievance Committee is unable to settle the dispute on the basis of a unanimous agreement within five business days, then the parties in dispute must attempt to resolve their differences by mediation. The mediator must be appointed by the Grievance Committee.
4. If the matter remains unresolved for 20 business days after it was first referred to the CEOs of the organisations in disagreement, then the dispute may be referred to an agreed arbitrator for determination. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding.

FOR DISCUSSION: What are some steps you can take to ensure disputes are identified and dealt with quickly and fairly?

5

REVIEWING PARTNERSHIP

5.1. Audit Tool

The SNAICC Partnership Audit Tool (available for download from the SNAICC website) has been designed to help you and your partner/s assess and discuss your progress towards developing and sustaining a genuine partnership. It also assists to identify gaps in the partnership development journey and come up with strategies to address them.

An audit tool is less detailed and complex than a full partnership evaluation. This allows it to be used as a more regular basis to 'check-in' on progress and gaps. It enables ongoing review to ensure a partnership is on track and consider additional activities and supports needed.

Using the tool supports relationship development by providing a simple way to open-up conversation between you and your partner about issues in the relationship. Regular use of the tool will also generate valuable progress information to feed into broader evaluation of partnerships, or of programs delivered in partnership.

The audit tool reflects the research on good practice in partnerships for service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. In doing so, it specifically helps to ensure that your partnership is on track to respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and their communities.

ACTIVITY: Read SNAICC's Partnership Audit Tool and reflect on whether it could be useful to support your partnership. If your partnership work has commenced, consider putting in place a process to complete the audit regularly with your partner.

5.2. Monitoring progress

While the partnership audit tool focuses on the progress of the partnership relationship, other processes are required to monitor the progress of the project itself. There is no single way of monitoring that is appropriate for every project, it depends on why you are monitoring and who the audience is.

Consider the following questions to inform your approach to monitoring partnership work and reporting on outcomes:

Why are you monitoring?

- Contractually obliged
- To improve the service
- To inform our partners

Who is your audience?

- Community
- Board of Directors
- Government

How often do you want to do it?












- Monthly/quarterly
- At key milestone dates
- To coincide with events

What will you measure

- Progress on the plan
- Activities we've done
- Impact we've had

FOR DISCUSSION: What different monitoring processes could you develop depending on the answers to these questions?
What are the differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream approaches to monitoring progress?
How should the responsibility for monitoring progress be shared between partners?

Falls Creek Homework Club (FCHC) Updated on: 24 November 2014

OBJECTIVE: increase engagement at school					PARTNERS: GoodKids and Falls Creek Aboriginal Medical Service				
Issue	Detail	Steps for the FCHC committee & staff	Steps for the Aboriginal Medical Service	Steps for GoodKids	By when				
Governance	Establish partnership agreement	–	Consult with members on MOU Contribute to MOU Sign MOU	Seek Board comments on MOU Sign MOU	Sept 2014				
									
	Establish governance committee	Appoint chair	Nominate 2 staff and 2 community members	Nominate 4 staff	Oct 2014				
									
Building	Set up room	Decorate	Clear out old equipment	Deliver donated desks	Nov 2014				
				 No longer available! Looking for others.					

THINK ABOUT: How can you engage everyone in the partnership to contribute to monitoring progress? Incorporating engaging graphics (like emoticons) is one way to make it more fun and communicate progress.

5.3. Evaluation

Building on the concept of bottom up project planning (section 3.4) it is important to have a wide view of evaluation in partnership projects between Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander agencies and non-Indigenous agencies. If you only look at outcomes for children you may miss issues such as organisational development, personal growth, and community pride.

In planning your evaluation strategy it is worth considering four areas:

- **Objective:** What do you want to know about? Is it the process, the impact or the outcome?
- **Subject:** Who are you looking at? Is it children, families, governance committee members, the local community, or the partner agencies?
- **Participants:** Whose opinion are you asking? Is it the community, the teachers, the parents, staff?
- **Researchers:** Who is driving the research? Is it the Indigenous agency, the non-Indigenous agency, the steering committee, or an independent evaluator?

ACTIVITY: Brainstorm to create a list of evaluation priorities under each of the four areas above. Where alternatives come up, think about and discuss what difference they will make to your evaluation findings.

Participatory action research

Participatory action research is dynamic process for involving project stakeholders in processes of evaluation through cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, then planning again for new action.

This type of evaluation has been identified as beneficial both within partnerships and in work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities because it takes a bottom-up collaborative evaluation approach driven by stakeholders and community, enabling shared learning for everyone to improve as they go along.

Research can be a very sensitive term for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have too often been the subjects of research without any control over how the results are used and who obtains the benefits of research outcomes. Participatory action research is about researching *with and for the benefit of* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to lead the response to research findings.

A guide to participatory action research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations is provided in Chapter 7 of SNAICC's *Working and Walking Together* resource, available for download from the SNAICC website.

ACTIVITY: Read Chapter 7 of SNAICC (2010) *Working and Walking Together*. Think about how an action research process could benefit and be implemented within your partnership.

Partnership Case Study: Participatory Evaluation Approach

Hunt (2010) provides a case study of an evaluation conducted in partnership between Oxfam Australia and Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation in Perth that includes promising practices for effective evaluation that incorporates the perspective and priorities of both partners.² Oxfam has provided support and funding to Yorgum for the provision of a counselling service for Aboriginal people affected by family violence and sexual abuse. The 2009 evaluation of the partnership and partnership activities included the following elements:

- Use of a participatory evaluation approach, which was viewed as an opportunity to support Yorgum's capacity development by Oxfam.
- A mixed evaluation team included staff from Oxfam, Yorgum and an external consultant who mentored the participating Yorgum researcher.
- Participation of Yorgum in developing the terms of reference for the evaluation.
- Use of a values-based approach that focussed not only on service outcomes, but included Yorgum's story and growth with sensitivity to Aboriginal cultural processes.
- Adaption of standard evaluation questions of Oxfam, made relevant by Yorgum staff.
- A focus on capacity building and community development benefits of the partnership.

The evaluation process was new to all partners and was not without challenges. However, it was recognised as enabling valuable shared reflection on the partnership and the services provided by Yorgum that would feed into future strategic planning processes.

FOR DISCUSSION: Would some of these approaches to evaluation be relevant for your partnership?

What would you do differently?

5.4. Ending a partnership

A partnership can end in many ways. It may be that the partners' interests diverge, that a deal-breaking dispute arises, or that the partnership achieves all that was required. Often the need to end a partnership will be obvious to both parties — but in some cases, one partner may wish to exit the arrangement while another wishes to retain the arrangement. Common reasons to cease a partnership include:

Natural end

Life of its own

Take over

Community Control

Strategic interest

Poor evaluation

² Hunt, J. (2010). *Partnerships for Indigenous Development: International Development NGOs, Aboriginal Organizations and Communities*. CAEPR Working Paper No. 71. Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU.

- A **natural end** was reached – the partnership’s goals may have been reached, a shared submission was unsuccessful, or a funding arrangement ends.
- The project takes on a **life of its own**. Sometimes collaboration may be so successful that the project or program moves out on its own. A detailed project plan for separation should be developed. Strong documentation of the project objects and processes gives the new organisation a good start in developing its own planning and operating procedures.
- One organisation may **take over** the project by agreement.
- The collaboration may move to a point where it can be handed to **community control**, either to the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander partner, or to a third organisation.
- Organisation strategy changes over time, and as a result collaboration may no longer sit within the **strategic interest** of one or both organisations.
- An **evaluation** of the collaboration can reveal that organisational resources could be better used elsewhere.

A clean end

It would be useful to come to agreement on these points before your partnership comes to end:

- Who will pay out any incurred costs?
- How will a decision to exit the collaboration be made?
- What are the triggers for exiting?
- What will happen to any employees?
- How will people you support be told?
- What will happen to assets?
- How will the organisations deal with publicity?
- How will you ensure that you learn from the experience?

If partners cannot reach a shared position in a legally binding arrangement, legal advice should be sought.

Self-determination and ending partnerships

In partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, an important driver for ending partnership can be to hand over control to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, based on the principles of self-determination (discussed in section 3.1 above). In line with self-determination it is important to discuss and plan with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners for what they want to happen at the end of a partnership. Remember that self-determination is not necessarily about leaving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation to ‘go it alone’, especially where they haven’t got the resources and capacity to undertake the work. There may be an ongoing role for mainstream partners to provide support, or continue service delivery where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or community wants this. This is a critical discussion to have and check-in on regularly in any partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream organisations.

FOR DISCUSSION: How and when do you think your partnership is likely to end?

How do you think your partnership may change over time?

5.5. Sharing and celebrating partnership outcomes

It is often easier to think of examples where projects have failed or organisations have been de-funded and to see the negative impact these have on local communities. Often, we do not take enough time to recognise and celebrate the successes and achievements of partnership work. Making an effort to celebrate can increase staff and community engagement and help to develop a sense of increased capacity.

THINK ABOUT: Why is it particularly important to share success and celebrate achievements in the context of partnerships with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations?

Celebrate the partnership

Set a positive, committed tone for new partnerships by releasing corporate governance body and CEO statements in support of the initiative. Clear statements in support of a partnership provide staff with motivation to support the change, while generating excitement about the benefit it can bring to people receiving services. Acknowledge the value your partners provide — to the partner directly, in your newsletter, in your annual report, at your annual general meeting and in other public forums. Invite your partners to the events your organisation hosts. As your partnership will be meeting the needs of people you support, invite the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to share their experiences as part of this process of celebration.

Celebrate success

All relationships need encouragement, and there is nothing like a shared and celebrated success to keep partners together. Consider the whole project cycle and plan for a number of points where efforts can be recognised, for example:

- funding agreement
- memorandum of understanding signed
- first employee starts
- first client attends
- first year of operation is completed, and
- evaluation report is completed and highlights positive outcomes

Share findings

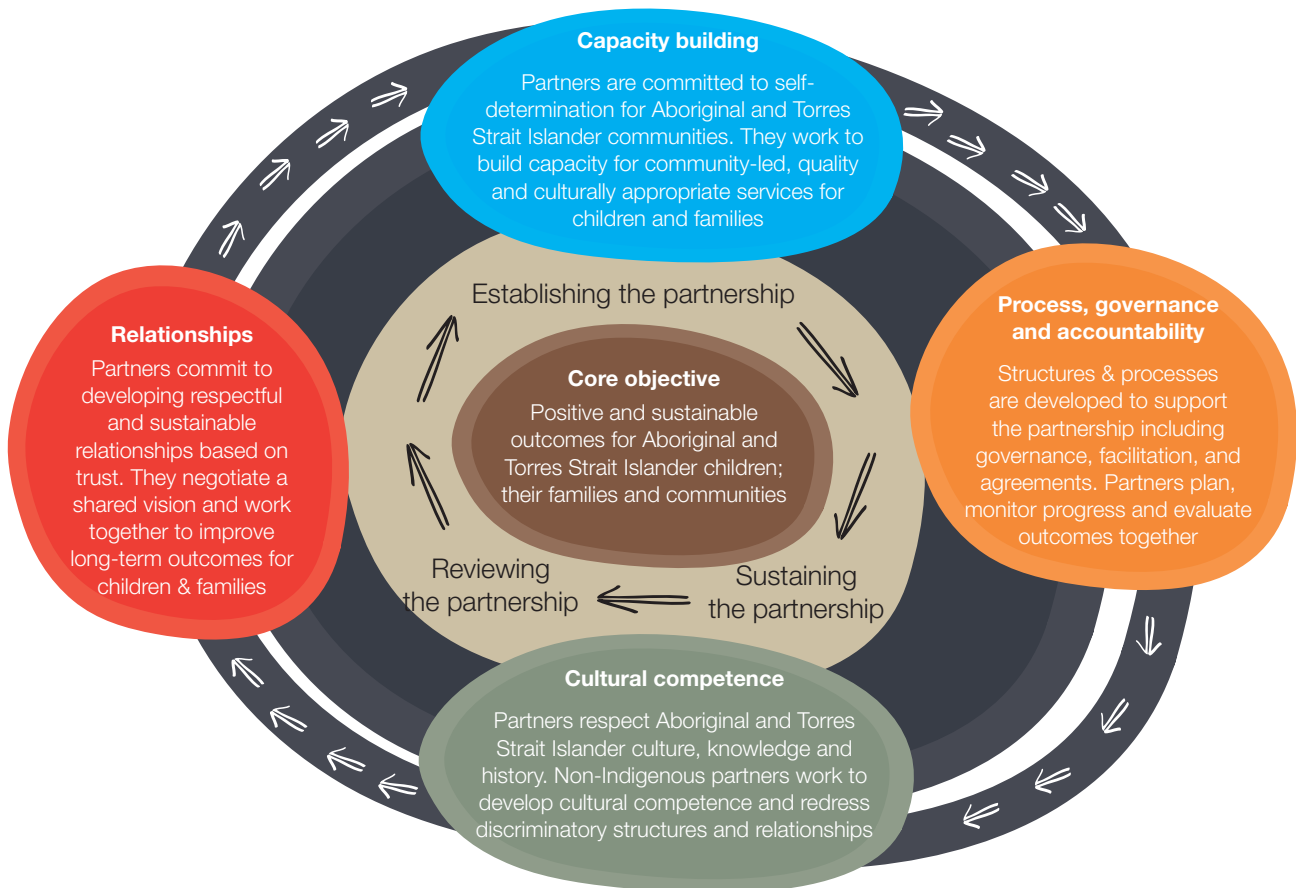
Ensure that all stakeholders involved in the project and in monitoring and evaluation processes are informed of the findings. The partnership steering committee could take a leading role in designing the most engaging way of distributing information for to the community and each stakeholder group.

6 OVERVIEW AND NEXT STEPS

Reflect on the partnership framework that was discussed at the beginning.

Have all parts of the framework been addressed throughout this manual?

Are there any parts that need to be discussed and looked at further?



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners on the right side.

A

PPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Assessing values worksheet

This tool is designed for assessing the organisational value alignment for partners considering working collaboratively. Each organisation should complete Part 1 individually, and use it as a starting point for discussions and to complete Parts 2 and 3.

Part 1: Our organisational and collaborative values

Questions	Set out the values here
What are our explicit values?	
What are our other values contained in other documents?	
What are the values we believe are necessary for this collaboration?	

Part 2: Assessing alignment

Questions	Set out the values here
The values for collaboration important to both organisations are:	
The values for the collaboration that are misaligned are:	
Will any misaligned values effect the collaboration?	
How will we control any misaligned values?	

Part 3: Joint value statement

APPENDIX B

Cost/benefit analysis

A cost/benefit analysis will assist in evaluating the positive outcomes for people receiving services. It can be used by corporate governance bodies or senior managers to work through the process of identifying the costs and benefits of the partnership to clients, both financial and otherwise.

Part 1: Benefits

Questions	Response	Dollar Value
What are the non-financial benefits for people receiving services?		n/a
How will this collaboration ensure that services are delivered more efficiently?		\$
How will this collaboration save costs that can be passed on to benefit service delivery?		\$
How will this collaboration attract new sources of funding for our organisation?		\$
Will it improve our fund raising capacity?		\$
Other financial benefits		\$
Total benefits		\$

Part 2: Costs

Questions	Response	Dollar Value
What are the non-financial costs?		n/a
Implementation costs – changed service delivery		\$
Insurance and work health & safety		\$
Staffing costs		\$
Marketing costs		\$
Management and corporate governance body costs		\$
Professional advice		\$
General and special meetings		\$
Information technology		\$
Training costs		\$
Other costs		\$
Total costs		\$

Part 3: Risks

Risk	Control Method	Dollar Value
Risk to reputation		n/a
Disruption to current activities		\$
Loss of funding or funding opportunities		\$
Gaps in organisational policy		\$
The impact on other areas of our work		\$
Other risks		\$
Total dollar value of risks		\$

Part 4: Evaluation

Will the collaborative arrangements add value to people receiving services, and justify the financial and other costs?

APPENDIX C

Due diligence

When considering an organisation with which to partner, it is important to ensure financial stability by exercising due diligence. Due diligence is “doing one’s homework” on another organisation.

THINK ABOUT: What are the key areas that you would want to know about a potential partner? Are there any risks in asking too much?

The resource below is designed for the most complex partnerships — mergers and acquisitions; when using it for less complex situations not all elements of the process need to be completed.

READ: Go over the resource below and highlight the areas that you think would be on your due diligence checklist.

There are five parts to the resource:

- Commercial and Strategic
- Financial Accounts
- Commitment and Assets
- Tax, and
- Legal.

This worksheet has been developed by the Charities Commission UK, as part of the publication *Collaborative Working and Mergers*. It has been reproduced with permission and not used in a misleading context.

Due diligence Part 1: Commercial and strategic

Area to review	Area to review	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Reasons for collaborating	Review appropriate corporate governance body minutes and identify the benefits of the collaboration for the clients.	What are the reasons for collaborating? What benefit will collaborating bring to clients?	
Strategic plan	Review strategic plan.	Are aspirations and objects compatible?	
Fundraising strategy	Review amount raised in the last two years and compare with budget.	Is the effectiveness of the fundraising strategy reviewed against a predetermined programme?	
Donors and funders	Consult with existing donors and funders about collaboration. Review other sources of financial support.	Will they support the proposed collaboration? Do they need to consider the source of funding for the other organisation?	
Clients	Review existing and potential clients.	How is the collaboration likely to impact on the client base? As a result of the collaboration, will the number of clients increase? What are the client outcomes?	
Corporate governance body and management	Review CVs and contracts of employment for CEOs and senior management. Get CVs of corporate governance body members. Compare current provision with future need.	Is there sufficient corporate governance body/ management experience in different disciplines for the collaboration?	
Organisational structure	Review organization charts and staff handbooks.	Are the organizational structures of the organisations compatible?	
Governance	Review current governance mechanisms.	What interim / future governance mechanisms will be required?	
Effectiveness of corporate governance body meetings	Review minutes of corporate governance body meetings. Review minutes relating to financial information.	Are there recurring issues in corporate governance body minutes, which indicate an issue that is not being properly addressed?	
Risk management	Review risk registers and appropriate corporate governance body minutes.	Are there significant risks that need to be resolved before collaborating?	
Information technology (IT)	Review IT systems.	Are systems compatible? How might existing IT systems be used in the collaboration? Is there scope to consolidate?	
Stakeholders opinion	Consult with stakeholders about collaboration.	Will they continue to support the proposed collaboration?	
SWOT analysis	Review any existing SWOT analysis or conduct a SWOT analysis.	What issues does this raise?	

Due diligence Part 2: Financial accounts

Area to review	What to do	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Annual financial statements	<p>Identify the main source of income and categories of expenditure for the last 2/3 years.</p> <p>Review the excess of assets over liabilities for the last 2/3 years.</p>	<p>What are the trends for the last 2/3 years of excess income over expenditure and excess assets over liabilities? This will confirm the organisation's solvency</p>	
Management accounts	<p>Compare accuracy of year-end management accounts with annual financial statements for that year.</p> <p>Compare management accounts with budget or latest forecast.</p> <p>Compare management accounts and annual financial statements for previous 2 years with budget/forecast for following 2 years.</p>	<p>Are periodic management accounts reliable for decision-making?</p> <p>Is current budgeting/forecasting reliable and realistic?</p> <p>What are the reasons for any variances that have arisen?</p>	
Cash flow	<p>Review cash flow and look for trends that show sustainability.</p>	<p>Are there any potential deficits that need to be monitored arising from timing differences in future cash flow?</p>	
Accounting Standards	<p>Confirm compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) or Australian Accounting Standards (AAS.)</p>	<p>Are there any departures from the IFRS or AAS?</p>	
Accounting policies and internal financial controls	<p>Compare accounting policies and internal financial controls with your own.</p>	<p>Are there any differences that make the organisations incompatible?</p> <p>How effective are internal controls?</p>	

Due diligence Part 3: Commitment and assets

Area to review	What to do	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Future funding	Review plans for funding in next 2/3 years.	Is it likely that future funding will be achieved?	
Funding of projects	Check that the practice of full cost recovery is being followed and that budgets allow for a small surplus to be added to reserves.	What is the risk of undertaking projects where full cost recovery is not achievable and what will be the effect if those projects have to be subsidised from unrestricted funds?	
Property	Obtain a list of properties and obtain title deeds. Check if cost exceeds market value.	Could losses arise if property has to be disposed of?	
Fixed assets	Get a register of fixed assets and reconcile the figures to the accounts. Check on sample basis fixtures and fittings.	Does the register represent the assets fairly? Are there assets that will be used in the collaboration? Will some assets have to be disposed of at a loss?	
Investments	Obtain a list of costs and value of investments.	Can you verify the legal title by checking certificates or other legal evidence?	
Accounts receivable	Obtain a list of debtors and amounts owed. Get direct third party verification on material amounts especially grant debtors.	Are adequate provisions in place for doubtful debts?	
Prepayments	Obtain a list of prepayments. Verify a sample of prepayments.	Where prepayments relate to agreements that will be terminated does the value of the prepayment need to be reduced?	
Bank	Obtain a list of bank balance(s) and cheque bank(s) reconciliations.	Are bank balances accurate? Are all bank accounts accounted for?	
Accounts payable	Obtain a list of creditors and the amounts owing. Enquire into and consider getting direct third party verification on material and long standing amounts.	Are all creditors genuinely still owed or could there be problems with the records?	

Area to review	What to do	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Debt and guarantees	Obtain details of terms for all debt, secured and unsecured and any guarantees. Review timing of debt repayments as part of cash flow analysis.	Can any terms, covenants and guarantees remain in place following collaboration?	
Accruals	Obtain a list of accruals. Verify a sample.	Are potential liabilities being calculated on a reasonable basis and is the list complete?	
Intangibles	Get details of patents, licences, brands and other intellectual property rights and goodwill together with copies of relevant agreements.	Is the valuation of intangibles reasonable?	

Due diligence Part 4: Tax

Area to review	What to do	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Payroll tax	Examine the payroll and find out the normal monthly liability for payroll tax.	Is payroll tax owed for one month or for longer? Does there appear to be any overpayments and if so, are they recoverable?	
Company tax	Check that there is no liability to pay company tax on any form of trading or relating to non- charitable expenditure.	Discuss with tax advisers.	
Goods and Services Tax (GST)	Check whether the organisation is GST registered or should be. Check procedures with regard to irrecoverable GST.	Discuss with tax advisers.	
Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)	Obtain a list of donations on which DGR is being recovered. Check on a sample basis whether the documentation is correct to enable recoveries to be made.	Would a DGR audit uncover liabilities for gift aid being reclaimed in error?	

Due diligence Part 5: Legal

Area to review	What to do	Questions to ask	FOR YOU?
Power to collaborate	Get copies of current governing documents. Review the legal basis on which collaboration will proceed.	Is there power for the organisations to collaborate in the governing documents?	
Employment awards and contracts	Review contracts of employment and seek professional advice.	What are the implications for any transfer of staff?	
Property	Consider various clauses of leases such as dilapidation clauses and seek professional advice.	What are the implications of these? Act on professional advice.	



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