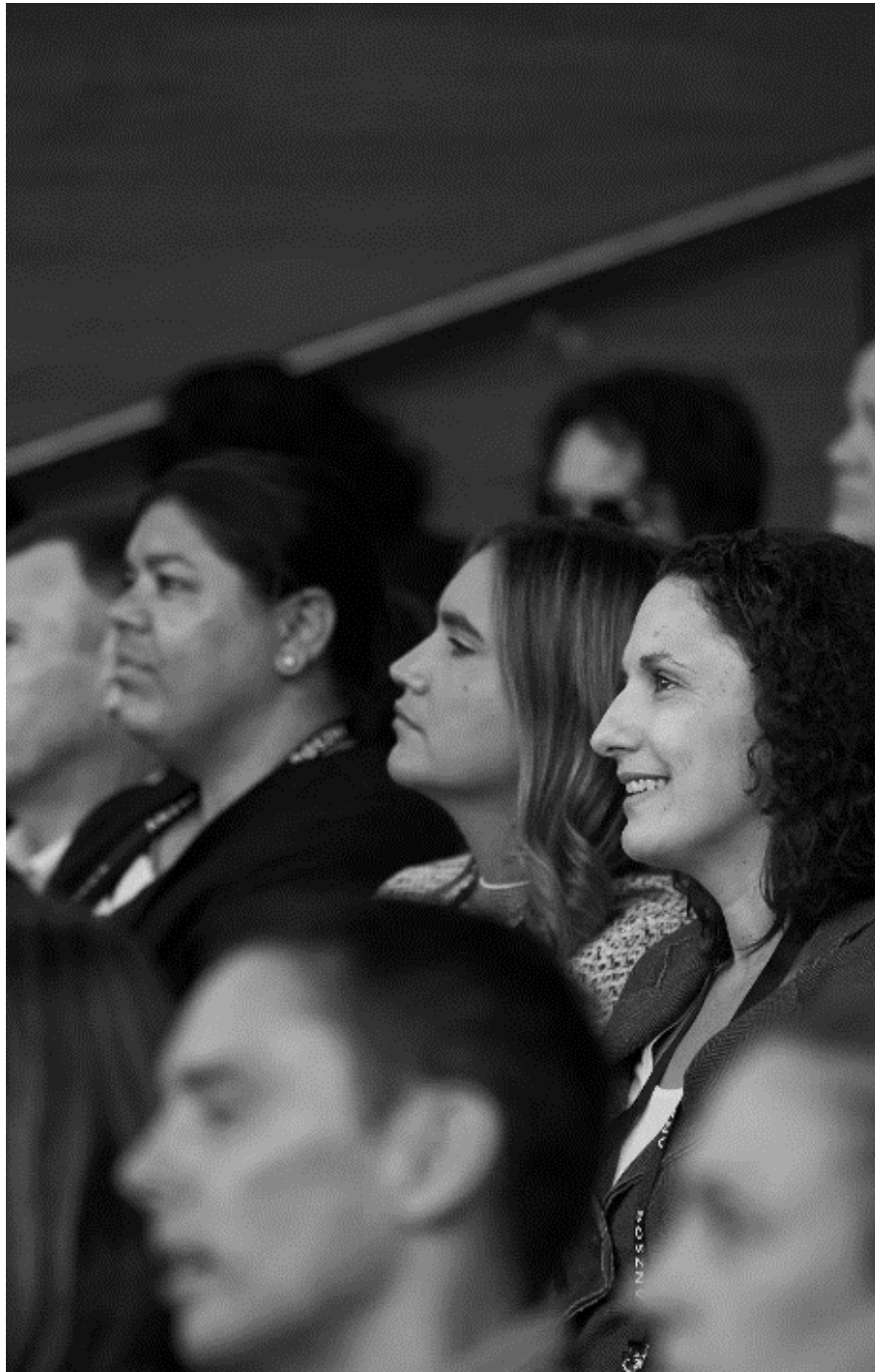


Co-Governance – Working Better Together

CO-GOVERNANCE – WORKING BETTER TOGETHER



**The final report of
ANZSOG's project on
co-governance and
trust in government**

12 September 2025
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Co-governance is one mechanism to enable public participation and shared decision-making, increase perceived value of initiatives and build trust in public services. This study sought to build understanding of the co-governance process, including when and how to enable co-governance. Learning from practical examples, this study developed guidance for both government and community stakeholders to consider when deciding whether to use co-governance, recognising that it is resource intensive, is not a short-term solution, and each co-governance arrangement is likely to be unique to each context.

This summary presents key outcomes from the study.

Increasing understanding of what co-governance is

This research furthers our understanding of what co-governance is in a way that is meaningful to participants. This recognises that while different co-governance processes share common factors, no two co-governance arrangements are identical. Co-governance enables the community to have a bigger role in public administration but is not necessarily used in isolation of other public participation activities.

Co-governance may occur in and among other processes in the public participation spectrum and for this reason may be non-linear or non-sequential where other participative processes have contributed to the development and implementation of co-governance. While the co-governance arrangement is a distinct activity, it is also embedded within a variety of other 'co-' activities. That is, co-governance does not appear to operate in isolation on the participation spectrum – and the spectrum should also include co-implementation. Co-governance can result from other forms of public participation that may build trust or develop the working arrangements for co-governance.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation is often presented in a linear form noting the increasing impact stakeholders have on the decision moving up the spectrum below.

FIGURE A: IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (LINEAR)

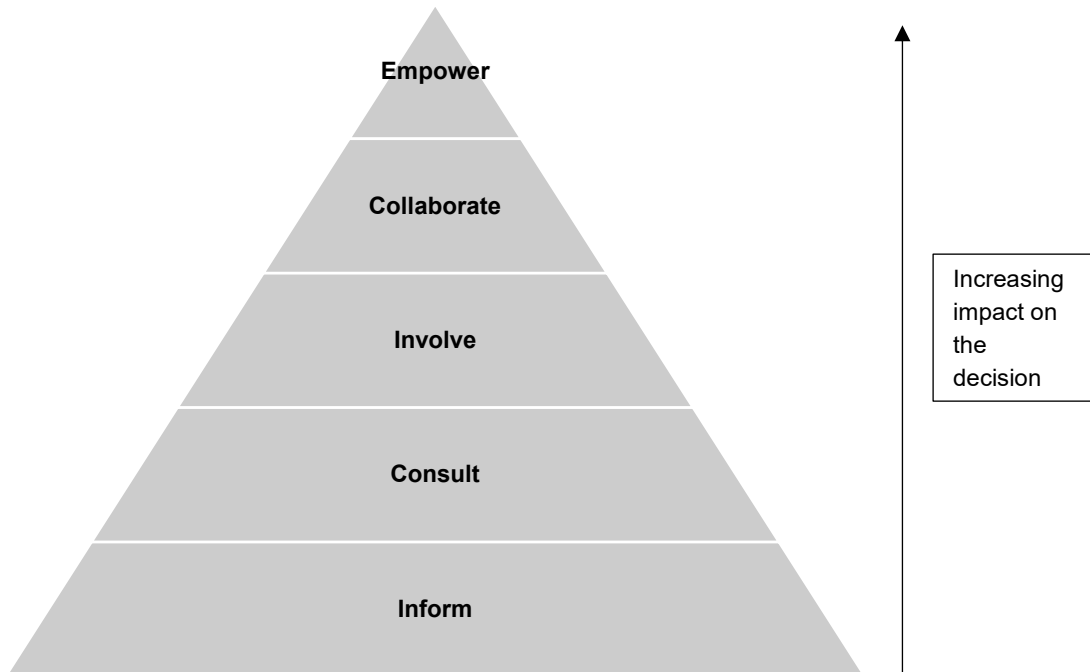


Source: <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>

Case study participants described how co-governance may involve participation elements beyond collaboration such as involving, providing information, consulting, seeking advice, and in some cases such as Maranguka, self-determination.

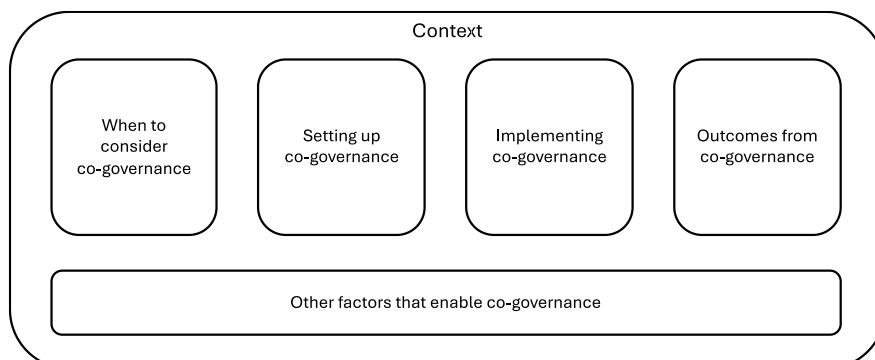
The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation may at times form a pyramid where the bulk of government engagement is likely to be informing, then consulting, then involving (such as through advisory groups), then collaborating (such as through co-governance), then empowering (such as through self-determination).

This reflects that activities are not likely to be independent of each other, and moving up the pyramid represents a closer proximity between government and community.

FIGURE B: IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (PYRAMID)

Providing a process and guide for community and government stakeholders

This research uses evidence from both community *and* government stakeholders participating in co-governance in different contexts to develop a guide or considerations for those interested in embarking on co-governance. This differs from the literature which is largely informed by the public sector's experience of co-governance (Smyth and Bates, 2023). The guide provides a clearer understanding of the four stages of co-governance, cross cutting factors that enable co-governance to be sustained, as well as enablers and barriers to implementation and how barriers might be overcome. The guide provides considerations for implementation rather than a manual, recognising that each case is likely to be different. This process of co-governance, while reported as linear, is iterative and continuously changing and responding to changes in context.

FIGURE C: ITERATIVE PROCESS OF CO-GOVERNANCE

Clarifying how we think about trust and power in relation to co-governance

This research provides insights into how trust functions between government and society, as well as its role in co-governance and its interactions with power to influence the process and outcomes of co-governance enablers, such as clear agenda, accountability, representation, transparency, and cultural authorities within specific contexts. Trust is not static; rather, it operates dynamically throughout governance processes, shaped by institutional history, power dynamics, and stakeholder engagement. The role of trust varies across different stages of co-governance and may evolve depending on whether an initiative begins in a high- or low-trust environment. Furthermore, trust may differ between and within cohorts, influenced by past experiences, institutional arrangements, and individual perspectives. As a result, co-governance can serve as a mechanism to navigate distrust but does not inherently generate trust beyond those directly engaged in the process.

This research also highlights that trust is not uniform across stakeholders; it is shaped by the distribution of power, the presence of accountability structures, and the extent to which governance mechanisms are perceived as legitimate and responsive. Trust can be fragile and subject to fluctuations due to participant turnover, historical mistrust, and shifting political or institutional priorities. Different cohorts may require tailored approaches to trust-building, addressing specific concerns and prior experiences. While trust can be reinforced through transparency, inclusivity, and sustained accountability, these mechanisms require time, adaptability, and a clear commitment to equitable governance.

Trust, in this context, is both a prerequisite and an outcome of effective co-governance. It facilitates cooperation and shared responsibility, but it also depends on power-sharing, embedded accountability, and genuine engagement. Trust is not merely an incidental byproduct of governance structures; rather, it must be intentionally cultivated through mechanisms that demonstrate consistency, fairness, and responsiveness to stakeholder priorities. Moreover, the interdependence of trust and accountability underscores that sustainable governance requires both legitimacy and institutional mechanisms that ensure ongoing responsiveness. This research underscores that trust-building is an iterative and ongoing process that must adapt to evolving governance contexts. When properly nurtured, trust can serve as a foundation for sustainable, equitable, and accountable co-governance, reinforcing the resilience of governance structures over time.

Recognising co-governance may become normalised

Finally, while this research is informed by both a scoping review and case studies, the case studies included are quite formal arrangements of co-governance. Over time, as co-governance becomes normal practice, and individual and organisational experience grows, the level of formality of arrangements may change. However, such formality, even as simple as terms of reference, is useful to demonstrate agreement and accountability as co-governance evolves.

Next steps

The guide should be tested and validated with stakeholders involved in existing co-governance mechanisms. Particular attention should be given to testing the guide with First Nations communities to understand whether it is relevant to First Nations communities and organisations or whether further research is required.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research seeks to build evidence about whether co-governance can help build community trust in the public service. The research was funded by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and the NSW Government and delivered by the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), with the International Centre for Future Health Systems, at UNSW Sydney.

1.1 Study aims

There is a growing interest in and application of co-governance as a mode for all stakeholders affected by an issue to come together to engage in creative problem-solving and decision-making.

At the start of this research, this study aimed to:

1. Examine how and to what extent co-governance arrangements:
 - increased the quality of community engagement
 - increased the perceived public value of an initiative
 - built trust in the public service.
2. Inform understanding of the practical enablers of co-governance – the capabilities and mindsets that participants (community and government) identify as important to build trust within collaborative processes.

Following the scoping review, the study aims were updated to reflect the learnings of that review and recognise the complex interaction between trust and co-governance – recognising that trust can be precursor to and an outcome from co-governance, and that trust can mean different things to different stakeholders (Smyth & Bates, 2023).

1.2 Approach

This study was conducted in three parts.

- A **scoping review** (Smyth & Bates, 2023) was undertaken to identify methods to operationalise and implement co-governance, and identify outcomes reported from co-governance. The review identified a four key stages of co-governance and the elements of each stage which provided the analytical framework for the study. The findings from the review are presented in Section 1.4.
- **Three case studies** were used to test the findings of the review (described in Box 1). Each case explored what co-governance meant to participants as well as the key stages identified in the review to identify how to initiate, develop and implement co-governance arrangements from different perspectives. This provided an opportunity to observe whether there is a universal understanding and process of co-governance, or if this was unique to each case. Each case study is reported in detail in a standalone report (see Box 1) and reflects the activities and perceptions of participants at the time the fieldwork was undertaken.
- **Cross-case analysis** examined the similarities and differences between the cases to answer the research questions. This analysis was supplemented by feedback received from presenting interim findings at the NSW Government Conference (2023), the Sydney Policy Lab Policy Bites Seminar (2024), conference presentations (at the Australian Institute of Family Studies), and workshop discussions between the research team and the funders. The insights from the case studies and supplemental data were used to develop a guide both government and community stakeholders can consider when approaching co-governance.

Box 1: Overview of case studies

Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group

The Waterloo case study is an example of a place-based co-governance arrangement where key stakeholders came together to work alongside the social housing redevelopment in the Waterloo area of Sydney. The Waterloo Group was established in 2021 'to assist with engagement, planning, and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community, in advance of the Waterloo Estate redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the community, specifically those living in public housing' (Waterloo Human Services Action Plan). See Bates and Haigh (2024).

National Disability Data Asset – The process of developing co-governance

The National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) case study documents the process of designing and proposing to establish a co-governance arrangement for the enduring National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) by the NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council (DAC). The DAC was established in 2020 to advise on the acceptability of the proposed NDDA; however, its scope and the mechanism to deliver this scope, over time grew into a process that had some of the practices that we may expect to see in co-governance arrangements – the key difference being the membership of the group did not include government representatives hence this is not co-governance as defined by this project. The DAC was tasked to deliver recommendations to government on how the asset should be used and any governance or safeguard arrangements that should be in place to build and maintain public trust in the asset. The process of establishing the co-governance of the NDDA, through the collaborative work of the DAC and its recommendations to Ministers, is included as a case study in this project given the rich insights from the process of designing co-governance and any relevant lessons for practices that may enable co-governance. See Bates and Katz (2024).

Maranguka

Maranguka is a model of Indigenous self-governance guided by the Bourke Tribal Council. The first stage focused on building trust between community and service providers, data collection, identifying community priorities and 'circuit breakers'. During the next phase, a community strategy for change was developed with shared vision, goals and measurement system by the Bourke Tribal: Growing our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong. The initiative involves quarterly Working Groups which bring community, government and service providers together to deliver the community developed and led strategy, changing the way government, NGOs and community members support and service the community. A Cross Sector Executive meets quarterly to authorise/facilitate the work in Bourke. The development and the implementation of Growing our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong Strategy underpins the framework of the community-led and place-based initiative. [adapted from www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/3.-Maranguka.pdf]

The method for the research was approved by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Committee Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and ratified by UNSW HREC.

1.3 Concepts used in this study

This study draws on three key concepts – co-governance, trust, and power – defined below.

1.3.1 Co-governance

In this study, co-governance and collaborative governance are interchangeable terms that refer to collective decision-making, formal arrangements, deliberative and constructive processes, involving government and other stakeholders, including community members (Smyth & Bates, 2023). This recognises there is a continuum of co-

governance arrangements from informal networks to the creation of formal governance entities. Co-governance involves sharing power between the public sector and civil society.

The scoping review undertaken for this study identified **four key stages of co-governance** and their key elements:

- Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial
- Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement
- Implementing collaborative governance
- Identifying and reporting outcomes from collaborative governance. (Smyth & Bates, 2022)

Notably, the evidence presented in the scoping review is largely from the perspective of the public sector rather than civil society.

The review identified an opportunity to provide clear evidence-based guidance to both the public sector and civil society about what co-governance is (and is not), where it is most useful, and to provide insights when negotiating co-governance arrangements to ensure they address issues of power imbalance (including information, knowledge and skills), accountability, resourcing and trust.

1.3.2 Trust

Trust is defined as the willingness to rely on another party with confidence in their integrity, competence, and reliability. The trusting party believes that the trusted party will act in their best interest, even in uncertain or risky situations (McKnight & Chervany, 2001).

Key elements of trust include:

- **Reliability:** The belief that the other party will consistently act in predictable and dependable ways (Connelly, et al., 2018).
- **Integrity:** Confidence in the moral and ethical standards of the other party (Connelly, et al., 2018).
- **Competence:** The perception that the trusted party has the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil expectations (Chen & Dhillon, 2003).

Trust operates across various domains, from interpersonal relationships to organisational contexts and societal systems. It is dynamic, requiring continuous reinforcement through actions that align with expectations and shared norms.

In public governance, **trust** refers to the confidence that stakeholders – citizens, organisations, and institutions – have in the capacity of public governance systems to act fairly, effectively, and in the public interest (Fukuyama, 1995). It is a critical element for maintaining the legitimacy and functionality of public governance structures.

Key types of trust in public governance include:

1. **Interpersonal trust:** Trust between individual actors within governance processes, such as public officials and community leaders.
2. **Organisational trust:** Confidence in specific governance bodies, such as local councils, government agencies, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
3. **Systemic or institutional trust:** Trust in the overarching system of governance, including legal frameworks, policies, and institutional arrangements (Blind, 2007).

Trust in public governance is essential for:

- **Legitimacy**, by enhancing the perceived legitimacy of governance institutions, ensuring public acceptance

and compliance with decisions and policies (Tyler, 1990).

- **Cooperation**, by facilitating collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and the private sector, enabling more effective policy implementation (Ansell & Gash, 2008).
- **Efficiency**, reducing transaction costs by minimising the need for extensive oversight and enforcement mechanisms, streamlining decision-making and implementation processes (Hardin, 2002).

However, trust in public governance is fragile. It can be eroded by perceived failures in transparency, accountability, or equity, and once lost, it can be challenging to rebuild. Conversely, participatory and inclusive public governance practices can build trust by ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice in decision-making and that their concerns are acknowledged and addressed (Fung, 2015).

1.3.3 Power

Power is broadly defined as the capacity or ability to influence the behaviour of others, the course of events, or the distribution of resources (Web, 1947; Dahl, 1957). In co-governance, power is often shared between the public sector and civil society, recognising that it can manifest in various forms such as decision-making authority, control over resources, access to information, and expertise. The real power in co-governance frequently lies in the decision-making processes that establish the rules of engagement, rather than in the substantive decisions themselves. This distribution of power aims to create a more balanced and inclusive governance structure, where all stakeholders have a meaningful role in shaping outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Smyth & Bates, 2022).

1.3.4 Interaction of trust and power in the context of co-governance

The **interaction between trust and power** is fundamental to the effectiveness and legitimacy of co-governance. Power determines who has decision-making authority and control over resources, while trust facilitates cooperation and reduces the perceived risks associated with power imbalances. When power is exercised transparently and inclusively, it can build trust by fostering a sense of fairness and accountability. Conversely, the misuse or abuse of power – such as through coercion, exclusion, or corruption – can erode trust, leading to resistance and disengagement from stakeholders. Trust legitimises power by enhancing public acceptance of authority and enabling efficient delegation of responsibilities. However, trust is fragile and can be undermined by opaque decision-making and unaccountable practices. To balance these dynamics, **co-governance must prioritise participatory processes, ensure accountability, and embed mechanisms for equitable power sharing**. This interplay highlights the need for co-governance frameworks that leverage trust to mitigate power imbalances, fostering more inclusive and sustainable outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Tyler, 1990; Meijer, 2022).

1.4 Findings from the scoping review¹

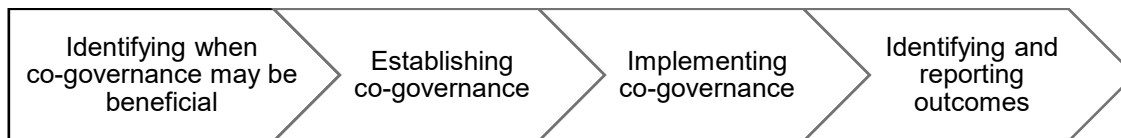
Declining trust in government, policy failures, and the intractability of wicked problems signal an urgent need for policy innovation which has fostered a growing interest in collaborative governance (hereinafter co-governance). Co-governance is an attractive proposition because, in theory, it involves all stakeholders affected by an issue coming together to engage in creative problem-solving. A co-governance approach might appeal to policy makers in particular circumstances such as when the policy issue crosses multiple policy domains, is beyond their expertise and competencies, where they would benefit from working with individuals or organisations that are well-regarded in their communities, and/or they work at a federal or state level and the issue requires local knowledge and implementation (Scott and Thomas, 2017).

There are many examples of initiatives that claim to be co-governance. Co-governance may be very difficult to achieve as it can be costly, difficult to implement and manage, take a long time to implement, and create

¹ The full scoping review is published separately (Smyth & Bates, 2023). The implications of the review are repeated verbatim here as they frame the remainder of the study.

accountability challenges. Additionally, not all policy issues are suited to co-governance and the policy context may or may not support a collaborative approach (Lahat and Sher-Hadar, 2020). The review highlighted key stages and components of co-governance that have been identified from the literature – including the drivers and preconditions of co-governance, mechanisms needed to establish co-governance, the process of co-governance, and potential outcomes (see **Error! Reference source not found.** below).

Figure 1: Summary of stages of co-governance identified in the review



The components of each stage of the process are presented in full in Appendix A and summarised at the beginning of Sections 3 to 6 of this report.

The review highlighted that a range of elements across each of the four stages of co-governance will be required to establish effective co-governance and their configuration is likely to vary based on the context, policy objective, preconditions, and time and resources available.

While the original objective of the study was to understand whether co-governance arrangements help build public trust in government, it is clear from this review that: trust is only one element of co-governance; trust may be a driver of (either the absence of or existence of), requirement and/or outcome of co-governance arrangements; and there are multiple components to trust and multiple relationships to which trust is potentially relevant.

1.4.1 What we don't know

The scoping review indicated that much of the literature was written from the perspective of the public sector rather than civil society involved in co-governance, and there was an **opportunity to provide clearer guidance to both the public sector and civil society about what co-governance is** (and is not), **where it is most useful**, and to provide insights when **negotiating co-governance arrangements** to ensure they address issues of power imbalance (including information, knowledge and skills), resourcing and trust. The literature does not provide evidence relating to the extent co-governance arrangements have been initiated by the community and to what extent they should or could be.

There were also concerns that, similar to co-design, co-governance occurs on a spectrum of participatory activities. There is scope to develop a broader understanding of what co-governance might look like within that spectrum, to ensure trust is not eroded in making co-governance out to be something it is not. For example, co-governance could be seen by some stakeholders as a step towards self-determination, while others see co-governance as an end in itself. It is not clear whether universal measures or principles of accountability may apply to all co-governance arrangements, or if they need to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

1.4.2 What next

There is currently little detailed guidance in Australia and New Zealand about how to operationalise collaborative governance – not just from a public sector perspective, but also from the perspective of other stakeholders involved. Using the stages and elements of co-governance identified in the review, the research project examined three examples of co-governance (case studies) to develop a more detailed understanding of the process of co-governance from the perspective of both civil society and public sector organisations as to how co-governance works in practice – recognising trust is just one element, and accountability is another. This included why and how the co-governance arrangements were initiated, and how they developed and evolved over time.

1.5 Practical Guidance

This report presents both the findings of the research study and a guide for practice embedded within the report that is informed by the findings of this study. The guide is also available as a separate standalone document.²

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 provides the study's aims, approach, concepts used, and findings from the scoping review that informs this work.
- Section 2 further develops the concept of co-governance based on case study participants experiences and provides definitions for the guide.
- Each step of the process of co-governance is presented in Sections 3 to 6; this includes the findings from the scoping review, high-level cross-case analysis testing those findings, and the elements of a guide for practice based on the analysis and observations in this study.
- Additional elements to consider in enabling and sustaining co-governance are presented in Section 7.
- The role of trust and power is discussed in Section 8 as it relates to the co-governance process drawing on the overall analysis from the findings and the case studies.

This report is supported by several appendices as well as the case study reports. The detailed process identified by the scoping review is presented in Appendix A. Summaries of the case studies, the research instrument used, and the findings from the case studies are presented in Appendices B-D. Additional resources that support the guide are presented in Appendix E.

² Bates, S., Haigh, F., Li, B., Katz, I., and Raven, M. (2025). Co-governance – A Guide: Practical Guidance from ANZSOG's Project on Co-Governance and Trust in Government. Melbourne: Australia and New Zealand School of Government, September 2025. <https://doi.org/10.54810/KTZS8042>

2 WHAT IS CO-GOVERNANCE?

'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'
(Conference participant)

This section reports on the concept of co-governance, building on the findings of the scoping review and case studies. Participants in each case study were asked to describe their understanding of co-governance. In addition, analysis of each of the co-governance arrangements included in the study were used to further distil the key elements of co-governance.

2.1 Evidence from the review

In this study, co-governance refers to **collective decision making, formal arrangements, deliberative and constructive processes, involving government and other stakeholders, including community members** (Smyth & Bates, 2022). This concept recognises there is a spectrum of co-governance arrangements from informal networks to the creation of formal governance entities.

Co-governance involves **sharing power between the public sector and civil society**, recognising that power comes in various forms (such as decision-making, resources, information and knowledge). When the original decision-making power rests with government, government ministers may need to formally establish co-governance and define its parameters. In these cases, government delegates elements of decision-making to a co-governance group. In these situations co-governance arrangements then make recommendations to government with the government retaining decision-making power. How the co-governance arrangement operates may shape participants understanding of whether something is co-governed or not.

Co-governance was identified as particularly well-suited to circumstances where shared decision-making is beneficial, such as:

- Addressing complex issues where input from multiple stakeholders may lead to better outcomes than when each stakeholder tackles those issues alone
- Resolving longer-term or ongoing issues that have been unable to be resolved through traditional approaches.
- Building trust and social licence.

2.2 Evidence from the case studies

The case-studies demonstrated that co-governance can look different depending on the context and the stakeholders involved. The case studies demonstrated that co-governance arrangements can occur with varied scales, locations and partners, challenging assumptions that co-governance is typically place based and/or focused on arrangements between First Nations and government partners. After an initial delegation of decision making to a co-governance mechanism, participants collectively decide whether their actions constitute co-governance in practice, emphasising the importance of mutual agreement. There is flexibility in the notion and application of co-governance, with fuzzy boundaries that allow for adaptation to specific contexts.

Co-governance has common key features, each of which may vary in their implementation by case, meaning that each co-governance arrangement may look very different to another. Some features are contingent in that they may or may not be present in every co-governance arrangement. For example, a well-resourced secretariat or coordination function can provide essential administrative and strategic support, facilitating communication between members, maintaining momentum, and safeguarding agreed processes, but may not always be an identified resourced feature in all arrangements. Mutual accountability and transparency are key enablers and frequent features

of co-governance but may vary in how explicitly they are incorporated into co-governance arrangements – yet enough of these features need to be present for something to be considered to be co-governance. Further, these features may change as co-governance arrangements mature. There may be differences between co-governance processes as they are intended, enacted and experienced by different stakeholders. Case studies participants described a feature of co-governance is that it involves working differently than ‘normal’ government and community decision-making processes.

Table 1: Essential components and components that support co-governance

Essential component	Components that support co-governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation of decision-making power to the co-governance group to make decisions or recommendations, recognising decision making may include decisions about recommendations made to ultimate decisionmakers (e.g., ministers) • Formal arrangement to collectively make decisions between government and community through deliberative and constructive processes • Representative membership of government and non-government organisations, including community stakeholders and researchers (if relevant) • Mutually agreed area of focus and goals encompassing topic and geographic/population scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat or coordination support (in collective impact terms, a ‘spine’) that facilitates the operation of the co-governance group. • Accountability and transparency mechanisms (structures, processes and documentation) to enable participants and community members to understand how and what decisions are made hold co-governance participants (mutually) accountable. • Agreed principles and ways of working, including shared values and a common understanding of the issues, goals and expectations. • Shared leadership of co-governance group either through shared or rotating chairs • Members having delegation from their respective organisations to make decisions, recognising members may need to seek internal sign off for decisions formally.

*Source: drawn from analysis of case study findings presented in Appendix D, **Error! Reference source not found.***

Co-governance arrangements are shaped by the context in which they operate. Historical factors and experiences influence current relationships and expectations. For example, trust can act as both a precursor and an enabler, facilitating the establishment of co-governance arrangements by fostering a collaborative environment. Conversely, mistrust can hinder these processes, necessitating deliberate efforts to build and maintain trust among stakeholders. The effectiveness of co-governance is contingent upon these contextual factors, which dynamically interact to influence co-governance processes.

Explicitly considering co-governance features can facilitate discussions on whether co-governance is the desired approach. What each element looks like will be adjusted to suit specific needs and may change over time as needs change and as the arrangement matures. Co-governance arrangements are typically formally agreed between parties during the initiation phase, establishing shared expectations and commitments. However, there is an important distinction between formal co-governance (as documented in agreements) and experienced co-governance (how participants actually experience the co-governance process in practice). As co-governance processes become more established, participants' experiences and perceptions of the arrangement may evolve, potentially transforming what might not have initially been considered or recognised as co-governance into co-governance.

Ultimately, a participation activity is not co-governance if there is no delegation of decision-making and decision-making power (that is making decisions or recommendations) is not shared among government, community and other stakeholders.

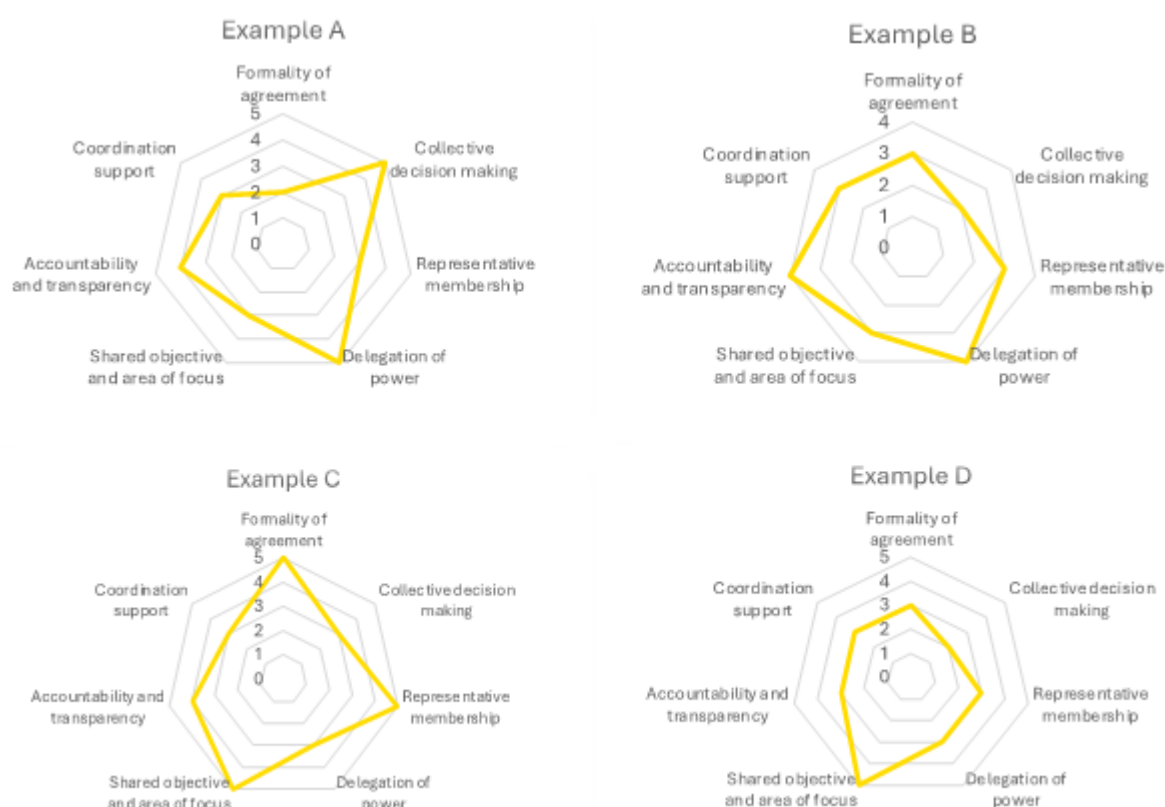
2.2.1 Co-governance is a spectrum

The case studies demonstrated that co-governance involves collective decision-making, formal arrangements, and deliberative processes that include government and community. It encompasses a spectrum of arrangements, from informal networks to formal governance entities, and involves sharing power between the public sector and civil society. Key elements of co-governance include mutual agreement on goals, representative membership, and accountability mechanisms.

Co-governance is not static over time and is expected to go through stages of development where it may change or mature, and in some cases cease (as discussed further in Section 5.2.3). Likewise, some of the key elements of co-governance may change in depth over time. For example, co-governance may start with a high-level shared goal or purpose, and this may change over time.

The spider diagrams in **Error! Reference source not found.** below illustrate how the extent of different features of co-governance can vary across different case studies – consequently, while they have similarities, no two examples of co-governance are expected to look the same.

Figure 2: Variances in what co-governance looks like based on key features



The case studies highlight that what co-governance looks like and how it functions can vary significantly depending on the context and stakeholders involved. Although there are common features, they may differ in implementation and according to context, requiring flexibility and adaptation. The role of trust and mistrust in establishing and maintaining co-governance arrangements is discussed in Section 8. Ultimately, while co-governance may be initiated

by one stakeholder, for example, government, co-governance is agreed to by the participants and can evolve over time, with its features changing as the arrangement matures.

As co-governance arrangements mature and demonstrate their value, some case study participants identified that they could move beyond individual cases to become a normalised way of working. This institutionalisation is characterised by growing capability among both government and community stakeholders, established frameworks for implementation, and increasing recognition of co-governance as one of a number of options for addressing complex and evolving issues. Over time, this may help embed collaborative decision-making practices and co-governance into organisational cultures and governance systems.

2.3 Guide: Introduction

As noted in section 1.5 above, this report includes an embedded guide to co-governance. This section introduces the key terms and structure of the guide as it appears throughout the report.

This guide has been developed **for both community stakeholders and public servants** interested in co-governance. The guide includes:

- When to consider co-governance
- Setting up co-governance
- Implementing co-governance
- Outcomes from co-governance
- Other factors to consider across the co-governance process.

The guide was developed by university researchers, funded by ANZSOG and the NSW Government. The basis for the guide was developed using evidence from around the world that was reported in both the academic and practice literature. This evidence was synthesised and then tested in the Australian context using three case studies of co-governance in action. This guide includes learnings from community organisations, researchers and government from a range of sectors and locations.

2.3.1 Key terms used in this guide

Term	Definition
Co-governance or Collaborative governance	Collective decision-making, formal arrangements, deliberative and constructive processes, involving government and other stakeholders, including community members.
Stakeholders	Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's [or in this context, initiative's] objectives (Freeman, 1984).
Government	The formal institutions and processes through which binding decisions are made for a society, including elected officials, public service agencies, and statutory bodies at all levels that exercise authority in governing a country or state (Binder et al., 2008)

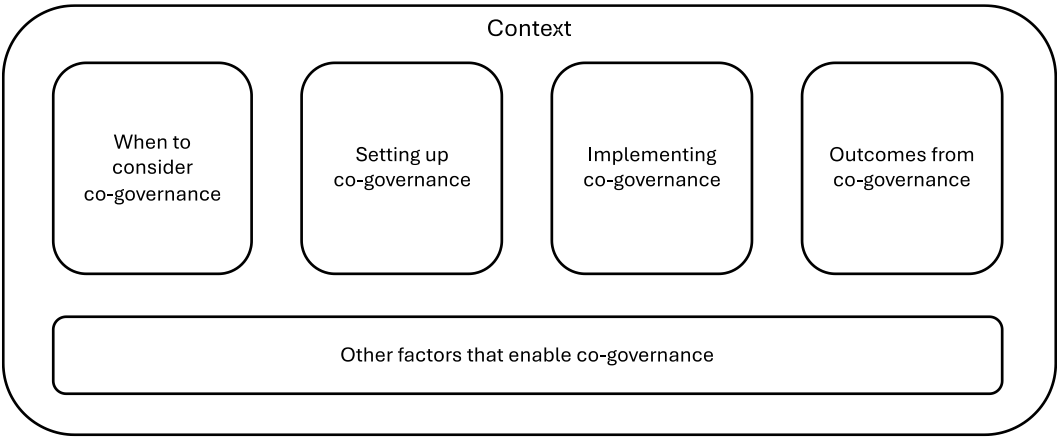
2.3.2 Structure of the guide

The guide explains each key step in the process of co-governance – from identifying when to use co-governance, setting up co-governance, implementing co-governance, to identifying and reporting outcomes of co-governance – and other factors that enable and sustain co-governance (see Figure below).

Each part includes a description of factors that enable and sustain the co-governance process, the challenges that may be faced, and how they might be overcome.

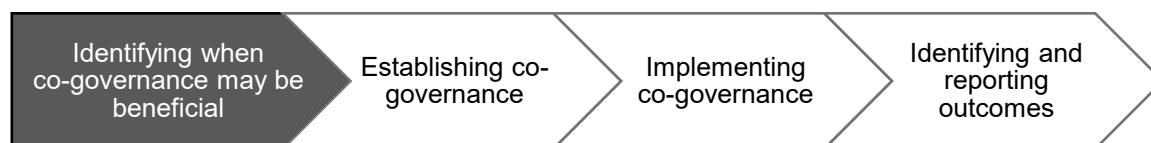
Each part is also supported by a summary of publicly available tools and resources.

Figure 3: Iterative process of co-governance



Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.1.

3 WHEN TO CONSIDER CO-GOVERNANCE



3.1 Evidence from the review

The review established identifying **when a co-governance arrangement may be beneficial as the first stage of the process**. The review identified several factors to consider:

- Who might initiate a co-governance arrangement (who proposed the issue, who were approached at the early stage and who were engaged)
- How was the issue to be co-governed defined/finalised?
- Why a co-governance arrangement might be initiated:
 - from an **instrumental perspective** to address a specific problem and achieve better policy outcomes?
 - from an **ethical perspective**, to ensure communities have power, resource and information over policy development and implementation
 - or **both**
- The scope of the co-governance arrangement (aims and objectives, scope)
- What is required to initiate a co-governance arrangement? (whether it requires delegated authority or powerful sponsors or champions)
- What was the estimation of resources needed? Was it discussed early on?
- How a co-governance arrangement can be developed.

Since the review, the conceptual framework for understanding motivations to initiate co-governance has been refined. This expanded framework identifies three key perspectives:

- The **substantive perspective** (better outcomes) focuses on achieving better quality outcomes through the incorporation of diverse expertise and local knowledge. It enables better decision-making through the authentic involvement of those closest to the issues, leading to solutions that are more likely to work in practice. This perspective is primarily concerned with improving the quality and effectiveness of policies and decisions.
- The **normative perspective** (doing the right thing) arises from democratic, human rights and social justice principles recognising that those affected by decisions should participate in making them. This represents a fundamental commitment to sharing power and decision-making authority. Unlike the substantive perspective, the normative view values participation as an inherent right rather than primarily as a means to better outcomes.
- The **instrumental perspective** (getting things done) addresses practical benefits, such as enhanced legitimacy of decisions and increased trust between government and communities (rather than better decisions). This perspective differs from the substantive view by focusing on benefits like institutional credibility and implementation progress rather than the quality of specific decisions. It also differs from the normative perspective by valuing participation as a means to achieve specific goals rather than as an intrinsic right.

In practice, stakeholders may have a mix of motivations (e.g. substantive, normative and instrumental reasons) for considering co-governance arrangements.

3.2 Evidence from case studies

There were some similarities and differences in why co-governance was initiated across the three case studies in this study (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Table 2: Summary of similarities and differences in why co-governance was initiated

	Similarities	Differences
Why needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to resolve complex issues in a disjointed context • Where there are multiple stakeholders or actors involved • Where input of different types of expertise and knowledge are needed • Common goal, incentive or goodwill • Medium to long-term (18 months plus) issues • Co-governance offered optimal solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggered by a change or lack of change • Pre-existing levels of trust • To deliver something one-off or to support ongoing work • Where there is a 'high stakes, low trust' environment • Where there is a need for community trust and a social licence • Other forms of co- may have preceded co-governance
Who initiated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by an individual champion • Supported by key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by community, government, or both
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope varied based on place, time, population and policy areas • Scope – identified up front or developed over time • Duration - fixed term or ongoing

*Source: drawn from analysis of case study findings presented in Appendix C, **Error! Reference source not found.***

The case studies demonstrated both similarities and distinct variations in why co-governance was needed. All co-governance mechanisms evolved to resolve complex issues in disjointed contexts, often involving multiple actors or stakeholders with different responsibilities, expertise and knowledge. Working independently was not able to address the complex issue, and an alternative approach was required with multiple actors working towards a common goal. The case studies showed that co-governance took time to establish and was only used for medium- to long-term initiatives which suited either highly complex issues or ongoing work. In all cases, there were individuals who acted as champions driving the development of the collaboration.

There were differences in who initiated co-governance. For the Waterloo case study, the community had been pushing for a collaborative group for many years. However, it was ultimately government who initiated the arrangement as it was required to delegate power and resource the initiative. For the NDDA case study, the Pilot Disability Advisory Council was initiated by government to address a specific need and this group recommended the establishment of a formal co-governance arrangement for the enduring asset. For Maranguka, this was initiated and established by Aboriginal communities in the region. Therefore, co-governance may be initiated by government and its agencies, community groups, or initiated jointly.

The analysis also showed how agile co-governance can be in addressing different needs. Co-governance was identified as useful to support change, but also useful to address a lack of change; trust may be a precursor to or the need for co-governance; co-governance could be used to deliver something as a one-off or support ongoing work; and co-governance may have been the initial solution or evolved from other forms of collaboration over time.

While the scope of the co-governance was sometimes loosely defined at this stage, the case studies highlighted how this was best determined through a clear process in the establishment phase.

3.3 Guide: Step 1 – Identifying when to consider co-governance

3.3.1 When to consider co-governance

Co-governance requires significant time and resources to establish and implement compared to continuing to operate as business as usual. Co-governance is not expected to look the same everywhere it is used and must be tailored to suit each circumstance – drawing on lessons from elsewhere. Therefore, the decision whether to develop a co-governance arrangement must be well informed to ensure its success.

Co-governance might be considered when:

- There is evidence of a **complex issue** ('wicked problem', 'grand challenge') that is unresolved due to fragmented or uncoordinated operating environment and there is an **ongoing need to make decisions**.
- There **are multiple stakeholders with a shared goal**, with similar and differing expertise and responsibilities, that brought together through sustained collaboration, could address the complex issue over time.
- There are **compelling benefits** (relative to time and cost) for those involved and the wider community to work together than continue to work alone – these might relate to reducing power imbalances, generating knowledge, and providing economies of scale and scope.³
- There is an **enabling environment** – e.g. co-governance aligns with organisational priorities of those involved (through policy or strategy) – and government can delegate power to a group.

Co-governance is a potential mechanism, through shared decision-making, to address complex issues that involve multiple stakeholders and take time to resolve. As co-governance takes time, it **may not be suited to address short-term issues** unless the co-governance mechanism is already established.

3.3.2 Why should stakeholders engage in co-governance

The table below identifies some of the reasons why different stakeholders may want to engage in co-governance.

³ See Table 2, The Collaboration Playbook: A leader's guide to cross-sector collaboration.

Table 3: Expected benefits of co-governance for community and government and both

Shared benefits	Community-specific benefits	Government-specific benefits
A structured framework for proactive collaboration between government and community stakeholders to make decisions and take coordinated action on complex issues	Greater access to and influence over decision-making processes that affect local communities	Access to community knowledge and expertise about local issues and community needs
Enhanced information sharing and mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities	Opportunity to build expertise in working with government systems and processes	A mechanism to build knowledge and expertise, recognising that community actors may have a longer history and knowledge of an issue
An opportunity to change the language and tone of a conversation, and bring new perspectives	Direct channel for community advocacy and representation ensuring community priorities are heard and addressed	Ability to overcome internal resistance ('veto actors') through demonstrated community support
Increased trust and strengthened relationships between government and communities	Opportunity to shape solutions that work for local contexts	More effective program and policy implementation through diverse stakeholder input, buy-in and engagement
Clear mechanisms for mutual accountability	Direct access to decision-makers and government processes	Stronger social license for government initiatives

3.3.3 Who can initiate co-governance

There are no set rules about who can initiate co-governance – it may be initiated by the community, by government or jointly. However, ultimately, in most cases, the government needs to delegate decision-making and anyone initiating the use of co-governance will need to seek this delegation of decision-making to the group.

A 'champion' may be needed to drive this process and provide a central point of contact.

3.3.4 What is the scope of co-governance?

The scope of a co-governance arrangement is determined by need, by stakeholders, and may vary over time. Scope may be a factor of:

- Place – from small local initiatives to national initiatives
- Time – from medium-term to ongoing
- Population – from specific cohorts to all
- Policy areas – from individual to multiple.

The final scope of a co-governance arrangement is based on need and defined in a collaborative process with key stakeholders involved (described in Section 5).

3.3.5 Enablers and challenges

There are several enablers that can support the initiation of a co-governance arrangement. They include:

- Having a champion to lead the establishment
- Mapping stakeholders

- Building on existing relationships
- Gaining leadership buy-in
- Having the authority to establish and participate in co-governance
- Stakeholders committing to common objectives
- Having resources to establish the arrangement.

The challenges that may be experienced and how they might be addressed are described in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Table 4: Challenges to initiating co-governance and how they might be overcome

Challenges	How challenges might be overcome
Building new relationships	Stakeholder mapping can help identify connections between existing participants and other stakeholders which the group can build upon. Other external engagement may be needed to promote the initiative and engage others – this may require explanation of co-governance itself, as well as the focus of this initiative.
Seeking agreement from all involved	The process of seeking agreement may differ between the organisations involved but may be similar by types of organisations (such as government organisations and non-government organisations).
Time needed to establish the arrangement	Allow and plan for sufficient time to establish the arrangement. Co-governance is not a 'quick fix' and may take months to establish. This may be quicker where relationships and buy-in already exists, and longer where the initiative is new.
Overcoming structural and cultural barriers –	Structural and cultural barriers may exist between organisations and between professions. These differences need to be understood (mapped) to be able to navigate them. This may include governance structures, risk appetite, resources, priorities, and willingness or ability to share information.
Power differences between partners (real or perceived)	Much like structural and cultural barriers, power differences are likely to exist (whether real or perceived) and need to be understood to be managed. Power differences may be associated with organisation size, resources, data, and knowledge. It may also exist between professions.
Differences in what participants and organisations may contribute to co-governance	Co-governance benefits from different capabilities, resources, data, knowledge of its members and is a strength to co-governance arrangements. However, such differences may also impact the capacity of different stakeholders to participate based on organisational priorities and resources. These differences should be mapped, and contributions maximised according to capacity.
History of mistrust and failed initiatives	Previous failures should be identified, acknowledged and understood to ensure they are not repeated. Trust may be rebuilt through the process of engagement and by achieving early wins. Trust is likely to change over time.

Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.2.

4 SETTING UP CO-GOVERNANCE



4.1 Evidence from the review

The second stage in the co-governance process considers how to establish the co-governance arrangement in terms of institutional design, composition and leadership. Factors considered include:

- The system context and the collaboration dynamics
- Whether/how the group was granted the authority to act, and whether there is senior and middle management support
- Whether there is a formal (visible), credible and independent governance mechanism – with clear and transparent roles, processes, tools and structures around decision-making (how was this mechanism decided, based on what principles and what was the decision-making process?)
- Whether the arrangement includes actors from civil society affected by the initiative in the governance – alongside other organisational actors
- Whether there was an appointment of a clear, independent and skilled leader that instils trust and supports contributions, facilitating collaboration (and how this was achieved)
- The mechanisms needed to enable the group to have the capacity to act, through procedural and institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources
- Whether there is a realistic timeframe to establish and implement the arrangement.

This section documents each consideration for the case study sites based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

4.2 Evidence from case studies

The case studies demonstrated the importance of meaningfully engaging stakeholders when setting up the co-governance arrangement. This was considered essential to determine the scope and priorities of the arrangement, and also to build relationships and trust in the process. For this reason, the process and outcomes from establishing the co-governance arrangement are reported separately. As with other steps in the process, there were some similarities and differences in how co-governance was established across the three case studies in this study (see Table 5, below).

Table 5: Summary of similarities and differences in establishing co-governance

	Similarities	Differences
Design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context defined and understood Arrangement designed with stakeholders to identify priorities, governance arrangements, membership and resources required (including secretariat support) Requires commitment from senior staff to participate in the process – each organisation has a different mechanism to authorise participation Going through process key to aligning goals and building trust in each other and the arrangement How members and leadership are appointed can affect trust in process and outcomes Level of representation by different groups also affects trust in process and outcomes Process to establish co-governance takes time The process should be documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different starting points, some co-governance arrangements built on different existing co- activities Different power relations – some co-governance is driven by government, others by community organisations, some by both Each case is a different context with different levels of existing engagement between stakeholders Each stakeholder is resourced differently and has different priorities – the initiative may be a priority for some and not for others Different levels of transparency Time taken to establish arrangement The process of establishing the co-governance arrangement may be ongoing
Design outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal delegation of decision-making power to the group Terms of reference Leadership Representative membership Resourced secretariat Clear decision-making arrangements (e.g. distribution of votes, and process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variations in what mechanism is required to formalise engagement – from terms of reference to memorandums of understanding Variations in whether mechanism supported by additional resources Members have different resources to fall back on – creating a power imbalance with well-resourced government agencies compared to non-government organisations Variations in who provides secretariat Variation reflected each context, length of relationships and levels of trust

Source: drawn from analysis of case study findings presented in Appendix C,

4.2.1 Process of setting up co-governance

The **process of designing and negotiating the co-governance arrangement** was of high importance to stakeholders. There were reductions in trust and engagement in co-governance where there was no clarity or transparency of processes, particularly in terms of establishing membership. The key considerations in the process of establishing co-governance included:

- Context
 - Is the system and context defined? What is the evidence base?
 - Are collaboration dynamics understood?
- Institutional design
 - What formal arrangement is required?
 - What provides the group with the authority to make decisions and act?
 - Does the group have senior and middle management support from each of its representative organisations?
 - Is there sufficient time to establish the arrangement?
- Governance and leadership
 - How will the leadership be established and defined?
 - Are the roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making documented?
 - How do the chairs support contributions and enable cooperation?
- Composition
 - Is membership representative?
 - Does membership include civil society?
 - Does membership include appropriate government representatives?
 - Does membership include any other parties with specialist knowledge or skills (recognising that knowledge or expertise rarely rests with one group)?
 - What is the quality of the relationships between stakeholders? What strengths can be leveraged and what relationships need to be built?
 - Is power distributed equally?
- Resourcing
 - Is the group able to act through institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources?

The process reflected the scale, organisations and community involved, and the local context, building on the strengths of existing relationships.

This process requires **time** and a **genuine opportunity to be part** of the arrangement and determine how co-governance would be established and operationalised.

4.2.2 Key elements of the co-governance arrangement

This section focuses on the key elements that **facilitate ongoing operations** of the co-governance arrangement. There are six key elements that were common to each group – the detail of each varied by group:

- **Delegated power** – delegated power by government (includes the power to make decisions or make recommendations), and / or an agreement to share power between stakeholders.
- **Terms of reference** – in each case this set the clear role or mission, objectives and expectations of the group and how it would operate. Terms of reference were strategic and operational and sometimes extended to other documents.

- **Leadership** – a clearly defined chair or co-chairs. In Waterloo, the role of chair was shared equally by three (then four) key partners. In the NDDA case, the pilot's Disability Advisory Council had a single chair, while the subsequent NDDA Council that oversees the enduring asset is co-chaired by government and a community organisation. The chair of the co-governance was not necessarily the initial champion for the initiative. Maranguka has a Cross Sectoral Leadership group and an executive team. At one point, the Leadership Group was jointly chaired by Alistair Ferguson, Executive Director and Founder of Maranguka, and the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, the then NSW Minister for Health and Medical Research. This co-leadership structure facilitates collaboration between the Bourke Tribal Council and various government and non-government organisations.
- **Representative membership** – each group sought to have representative membership; however, full representation of stakeholder groups and different types of expertise was not necessarily feasible.
- **Resourced secretariat** – each group had a resourced secretariat that was able to support the co-governance group. For both Waterloo and NDDA, the secretariats were government based, with some tasks allocated to other organisational members (e.g. the group's website). For Maranguka, the backbone organisation was funded through philanthropy. The executive leadership group were funded through a combination of philanthropic contributions and government project funding.
- **Structured decision-making** – both Waterloo and NDDA's pilot Disability Advisory Council made decisions by consensus. However, action by government agencies who were members of the collaborative often required recommendations by groups to be ratified by others. In Maranguka, decisions were made in the Cross-Sector Leadership Group and finally approved by Bourke Tribal Council.

A common theme across the case studies was having clear terms of reference, leadership (often joint), and a representative membership recognising that representative membership was difficult to achieve. There were also clear decision-making processes, often based on reaching consensus within groups.

The **secretariat** was identified as a key mechanism that helped support both the establishment and implementation of co-governance arrangements in the cases observed. The secretariat provided a **central point of communication and support**, who also had a role in supporting the chair(s) to **safeguard the agreed decision-making processes**. There was discussion about the ideal location for a secretariat. Secretariats located in government knew how government worked and could navigate processes, but were less knowledgeable about how non-government organisations worked and could be bureaucratic in nature. Secretariates located in community organisations had strong ties to the community and a clear understanding of how community organisations worked, but were less knowledgeable about government organisations. There was one example where actions that were constrained by the host government organisation of the secretariat were transferred to a community organisation which was more agile and able to deliver. The evidence highlights that while a secretariat is needed, particularly when there are resource constraints on participants, there may not be an ideal place to locate the secretariat and a good compromise is to share the role or delegate some tasks to others.

Variations were often driven by context and the scope of the arrangement, affected by existing relationships and levels of trust. The **type of delegation** for decision-making is like to vary. For example, for the NDDA, delegation was provided by the ministerial reform council. For the Waterloo case study, there was no such delegation; decisions made by the group had to then be ratified by individual organisations to be implemented. The formality of the co-governance agreement varied to reflect the delegation. Maranguka's decision-making authority originates from within the community, and external partners collaborate to support locally determined priorities.

There may be **limitations on what decisions government can delegate** and to whom; reducing the distance between government decision makers and the community, such as by using co-governance to make recommendations to government decision-makers, is still a good outcome. While there may be no gatekeepers between the co-governance group and government decision-makers, the public service may still provide or seek its

own advice to support the decision-making process. Maranguka's approach differed by centring decision-making within the Bourke Tribal Council and Aboriginal-led governance structures, ensuring that government and philanthropic partners aligned with community priorities rather than dictating them.

There was also variation in **whether the members of co-governance were resourced** to attend. The Waterloo collaborative purposely did not resource the group to ensure it could be sustained should resourcing be withdrawn. As a result, attendance was dominated by members in paid positions, by organisations that could afford to support attendance, and by organisations who believed the mechanism was an organisational priority. In the NDDA's pilot Disability Advisory Council, members were not resourced and this was subsequently rectified in the new model for the enduring asset. Some types of organisations have a higher expectation of being resourced to participate than others due to precedent being set. This includes Aboriginal controlled organisations and disability representative organisations. Maranguka's model, by contrast, was supported through philanthropic funding from the Dusseldorp Forum, government contributions, and other charities, ensuring that Aboriginal community members were resourced to participate, reducing financial barriers to engagement.

4.3 Guide: Step 2 – Establishing co-governance

4.3.1 Design process

The design process includes engaging with key stakeholders from the community and government to **jointly**:

- **Negotiate the overall purpose** (objective, reason co-governance is needed rather than business as usual), **scope** (policy areas, place, people, duration), **and shared goal** (aims, objectives, measures of success) of the co-governance arrangement
- **Identify and map key stakeholders** (relative to place and people) – go beyond the 'usual suspects' to consider seldom listened-to groups, and their roles. Consider approaches such as stakeholder salience model for stakeholder mapping.
- **Identify dynamics, willingness to collaborate, and how to engage.**
 - Consider whether engagement is forced (e.g. through a statutory requirement) or voluntary.
 - Identify the potential benefits of collaboration for different stakeholders.
 - Identify barriers to participation.
 - Identify whether participants require resources to participate.
 - Identify any potential power imbalances.
- **Appoint a strong chair(s)** (considering both leading organisations and leaders as people) – while also ensuring the group is sustainable beyond individuals leading the group
- **Identify any existing organisational policies, procedures, and protocols that may enable or constrain the work of the group**
- **Identify what arrangements** need to be put in place to give effect to co-governance
 - **Delegation of decision-making by government to group**
 - Arrangements between organisations (if needed)
 - Arrangements within organisations (if needed) to enable participation and support
- **Identify how co-governance will be supported** (backbone, secretariat) –
 - Consider is this best placed in government, a community organisation, or shared in some way
- **Identify how co-governance will be resourced**
 - **Identify resource requirements needed by group and by its members**
 - **Identify whether existing resources meet that need or new resources required**
 - Consider ways to manage tension between resources and power
- **Carry forward the momentum of design into the establishment phase**

The process should be inclusive of stakeholders involved

4.3.2 Design outcomes

Common outcomes from establishing co-governance include:

- **Delegated power** – and/or an agreement to share power ensures that the group has authority to make decisions (including decisions about what to recommend to decision makers such as Ministers) and take action.
- **Terms of reference** – establishing the scope, role or mission, objectives and expectations of the group, and how it will operate. Terms of reference are strategic and operational, and sometimes extend to other documents outlining ways of working.
- **Clear leadership** – either single or joint chairs appointed by the group. The chair of the co-governance arrangement does not have to be the initial champion for the initiative, but someone with the skills and authority to enable the collaborative process and manage stakeholder engagement helping to facilitate collaboration, manage conflicts, and drive progress.
- **Representative membership** – including senior and operational staff, and recognising full representation is not necessarily feasible, ensures that diverse perspectives and interests are considered in decision-making
- **Resourced secretariat** – to support the co-governance group, recognising there are strengths and challenges whether located in government or non-government organisations and that some tasks might be delegated to others.
- **Structured and transparent decision making** – such as by consensus supports transparency and accountability.

4.3.3 Enablers and challenges

There are several enablers that can help establish a co-governance arrangement. They include:

- Being transparent
- Working inclusively
- Having a strong advocate for change (not necessarily the chair who may be appointed later)
- Having a clear process.

In addition, there are several challenges that may be experienced when setting up a co-governance arrangement. **Error! Reference source not found.** below identifies some of the anticipated challenges and explains how they might be overcome.

Table 6: Challenges to setting up co-governance and how they may be overcome

Challenges	How challenges may be overcome
Lack of resources	<p>Additional resources may not be available for the co-governance group. This in some ways makes the arrangement more sustainable as it is not at risk of funding cuts.</p> <p>Some organisations may be able to support others in participating. In some arrangements, the co-governance may be a form of mutual reinforcement where existing resources are further aligned to the objectives of the co-governance arrangement.</p>
Power imbalances	<p>Power imbalances are likely to exist (whether real or perceived) and need to be understood to be managed. Power differences may be associated with organisation size, resources, data, and knowledge. Imbalances may also exist between professions. Identify what power imbalances exist and discuss how they might be navigated.</p>

Challenges	How challenges may be overcome
Lack of authority or delegation	Ideally, members should have delegation to contribute to decisions as part of the group. Where members lack authority or delegation to implement decisions, the process by which decisions can be implemented should be facilitated in other ways – for example, a memorandum of understanding with the group, or clear process and timelines which the group needs to consider to translate decisions into action.

Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.3.

5 IMPLEMENTING CO-GOVERNANCE



5.1 Evidence from the review

The third stage in the co-governance process considers the implementation of the co-governance arrangement at both the strategic and operational level to ensure it is implemented and effective. Factors considered at the strategic level include:

- Ensuring there is a joint understanding and commitment to the goals and scope (including accountability and desired outcomes)
- Developing mutual understanding, respect and trust (accepting trust may vary)
- Identifying strategies to build trust, including by learning, sharing information and resources, and being transparent
- Ensuring there is a joint understanding of commonalities and differences between collaborators, including different organisational cultures
- Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of arrangement and adapting to changes in the operating environment to sustain the arrangement over the long-term
- Supporting the arrangement to deliver and sustain collective action.

At the operational level (in terms of diagnosis, design, implementation and assessment), this involves:

- Developing a theory of change. This involves a process of discovery, definition, deliberation and determination – leading to a shared theory of change/action or strategy (including measures of success) – fed by, and leading to, trust, understanding, legitimacy and commitment
- Having repeated, face-to-face dialogue and communication, leading to trust-building, commitment to process, and a shared understanding
- Having support from an intermediary ([other] support organisation), which is able to coordinate reinforcing activities across organisations
- Developing additional processes, such as co-creation, to drive innovative outcomes
- Establishing an accountable evaluation system that tracks inputs, processes and outcomes, and provides assurance back to bureaucracies
- Communicating accomplishments as early as possible.

This section documents each consideration for the case study sites based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

5.2 Evidence from case studies

There were some similarities and differences in how co-governance was implemented across the three case studies in this study (**Error! Reference source not found.**). A summary of the key findings from each of the case studies is presented in Appendix C, **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 7: Summary of similarities and differences in implementing co-governance

	Similarities	Differences
Strategic implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed objectives, priorities and timeframes • Clear understanding of and commitment to the objectives • Secretariat ensured transparency within the group, sharing information and resources • Demonstrated understanding of differences in how organisations work and how things were understood differently in different contexts • Understanding of strengths and knowledge different stakeholders brought to the process • Responsive to changes in need and context • Short-, medium- and longer-term perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different levels of transparency within the group and of the groups operation to stakeholders outside of the group • Different perspectives, ways or working, language and resources • Different time schedules requiring flexibility or accommodations • Variations in resources available to the co-governance arrangement and to the stakeholders involved
Operational implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term cases were underpinned by a program logic • Working to a common purpose • Regular scheduled meetings with agenda, and outcomes documented • Organisational and stakeholder differences understood better over time and seen as an asset • Issues discussed, decisions made by consensus – facilitated by secretariat within meetings and external to meetings (such as when members could not attend) • Members purposely engaged in discussion • Some decisions required further approval within organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed term case did not have a program logic • Different organisations had different approaches to risk, information sharing and privacy – some of which limited what outcomes could be achieved • All cases recognised the importance and value of in-person meetings but this was not always achieved • Stakeholder representation varied by both membership and attendance
Reviewing the arrangement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of formal review processes to ensure the co-governance arrangement remained fit for purpose – including reviewing scope, membership and attendance

5.2.1 Strategic implementation

After establishing the co-governance arrangement, each case then worked to develop a strategic plan or action plan to determine *how* the group operated. At a strategic level, the different co-governance groups:

- Agreed the **objectives**; the **short, medium and long-term priorities**; and **work plan**. One case study purposely built in short-term goals to secure early wins and help build trust and engagement in the collaborative process.
- Developed a **joint understanding** of and **commitment to the objectives**. This may require revisiting the

objectives to ensure they remain relevant (see Section 5.2.3 below). While the objectives are developed for the co-governance mechanism, they are also likely to be relevant to and align with the work of member organisations.

- Developed **agreed ways of working together**. One case highlighted the importance of spending time together in person to develop an understanding of different organisations and different members, to understand how best to work together. This included **understanding commonalities and differences**, both at an organisational level in terms of how different organisations ‘do business’ and also at an individual level in terms of the knowledge and experience individuals brought to the group. Getting to know each other better was critical to build relationships, develop respect and trust, and enable sharing of information and potentially resources both within the group and external to the group.
- Built in review points to ensure the co-governance arrangement was **responsive to changes in context and need**.
- Developed a **program logic or theory of change** on which to inform action. There was variation in whether this was completed initially or post implementation.

The case studies identified the importance of transparency within the group *and* externally to other stakeholders about the work of the co-governance group. This was resolved in the case studies over time but potentially at a cost to building broader trust with other stakeholders in the community.

The case studies also highlighted the different perspectives, ways of working, language, resources and priorities of different stakeholders involved, potentially creating power imbalances in terms of both knowledge and resources. This required the co-governance groups to actively manage these issues in developing ways of working to reduce power imbalances and build trust within the group.

5.2.2 Operational implementation

Operational implementation considered *what* the group did to deliver its strategic plan. This included:

- Having **regular meetings** to discuss issues, progress and make decisions. In-person meetings allowed relationships to develop; there were examples of in-person meetings occurring bilaterally at other events which allowed interpersonal relationships to develop. Online meetings provided some efficacy and flexibility with attendance and time but did not support building relationships unless convened specifically for that purpose. In Maranguka, there were a mixture of both online and face to face meetings due to geographical accessibility.
- **Ensuring stakeholders were represented and engaged in meetings**. Members need to regularly attend and engage in meetings to ensure stakeholders were represented. Low attendance may require a revision of stakeholders or membership, or other forms of engagement (such as outside of meetings between the chair/secretariat and the member). A high turnover of members was disruptive as it required new relationships to form and knowledge of the history of the group may be lost. Groups worked well when members knew and supported the mission.
- **Ensuring different types of expertise were respected**. Members need to understand and respect different types, depths and breadths of knowledge and expertise, recognising the lived experience of community members accessing services and systems in the community. For example, respecting the lived experience of disability, the detailed operational experience of disability advocacy, the experience of policy makers, and the academic study of disability policy. In Maranguka, stakeholders received briefings/training about the long history of collaborative governance in the communities, the experience of members of the communities, and the culture of respect within the communities.
- Ensuring **collective decision-making through discussion of issues and voting**. The process of voting

was managed by the chair and supported by the secretariat. In all cases, conversations occurred prior to consensus being reached – this demonstrated that decision-making was informed. Different types of decisions were made – some related to the operation and work of the group, while others related to the delegated decision-making authority of the group and were passed back to government to action. Both required **decisions to be translated into action**.

- Providing **operational support through a secretariat or executive team**. Each group had a secretariat or equivalent to support its work. Locating a secretariat within government enabled the secretariat to navigate public sector processes and ensured compliance with public service standards on reporting. Locating a secretariat within the public sector offers resources and broader organisational support but also was associated with constraints in its ability to navigate other organisational process and in its flexibility to do things; for example, establishing an independent website for a co-governance arrangement to share information and resources. Locating a secretariat within the non-government sector offered advantages of knowing how non-government organisations work – but provided the secretariat with limited access to government stakeholders. An alternative was to share tasks or allocate certain tasks to others as needed (such as the hosting of a co-governance website to a non-government stakeholder). Maranguka was involved with multiple sectors and each sector had multiple stakeholders. Executive teams were formed to represent each sector. For example, a team based in the communities was responsible for reaching out to other sectors and implement decisions in the community. The executive team of the Cross Sectoral Leadership Group dealt with the operational side of the collaborative governance group and played an important facilitation and execution role in the process of collaboration and provided the key contact points for outreach.

5.2.3 Reviewing the arrangement

The NDDA pilot Disability Advisory Council lasted just over 18-months and met the objectives it set out to achieve. The Waterloo Group is ongoing at the time of writing but underwent reviews to ensure it remained fit for purpose and was updated to reflect changes in context and membership. Maranguka has undergone multiple reviews at different stages to assess its governance framework and ensure alignment with evolving community needs and stakeholder dynamics. This includes two KPMG reviews (2016,2018) to measure early outcomes, on-going internal stakeholder reviews to ensure the Cross Sector Leadership Group is fit for purpose, and a more recent review to develop the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. All three examples highlight the need to check the health of any arrangement and ensure it continued to have a purpose, remained fit for purpose, members remained engaged, and changes were made as necessary.

The data showed different elements of the co-governance arrangement were reviewed and updated frequently:

- Co-governance **arrangements (scope)** – to identify whether the scope should expand or contract in focus or scale, and whether to continue, change scope or stop.
- Co-governance **arrangements (mechanism)** – to ensure it enables the group to operate and achieving their objectives and reflect any change in requirements from its members.
- Co-governance **membership (representation)** – to ensure it remains representative, at an appropriate scale, reflects changes in government and society. While memberships needed to be refreshed to ensure sustainable in the future, too high turnover was disruptive as it required new relationships to form and knowledge of the history was lost.
- Co-governance **membership (relationships)** – to ensure the relationship between members, particular with new members, are working well. As the transition from the NDDA pilot Disability Advisory Council to the NDDA Council showed, a break in continuity and a significant change in membership required new relationships to become established prior to getting on with day-to-day business of co-governance.

- **Co-governance membership (attendance and participation)** – to ensure members continue to engage. This should include reviewing processes of conflict management and repair. Other considerations include reviewing attendance and understanding whether non-attendance is due to lack of time and resources, lack of trust in the process, or lack of trust in others. Or, in contrast, whether non-attendance also showed trust in the process and trust in others acting on someone's behalf.
- **Strategies and operational plans** – to reflect outcomes achieved, and to reflect new data and information, changes in priorities, resources available, and changes in needs.
- **Decision-making processes** – to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- **Resourcing** – to ensure resources are available to enable participation, including the ongoing development of capabilities.
- **Secretariat support** – to ensure the secretariat is meeting the needs of the group and enables the group to function through day-to-day operational support. The functioning of the secretariat should be validated by members to see whether the secretariat is an enabler or a barrier (gatekeeper) to achieving the group's goals.

Reviews may be undertaken at different stages of a co-governance process (early-, mid-, mature- stage) or at any time of change that may affect the arrangement. A review may lead to three possible outcomes, as outlined in the table below.

Table 8: Outcomes from review process and follow up action

Outcome	Action
Deciding to continue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the findings of the review and the continuation of the arrangement as is. • Announce the date for the next review (and mechanism to request an earlier review if needed).
Deciding to change (may include shifting focus or scaling up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the findings of the review. • Identify the change process and the timeline for implementation. • Announce the date for the next review (and mechanism to request an earlier review if needed).
Deciding to stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the findings of the review. • Identify the change process and the timeline for implementation. • Store information with key stakeholders.

The scaling-up of co-governance arrangements, like any policies and programs, needs to be carefully considered to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Scaling up may include increasing the geographic or policy scope (remit). Further research may be required to study how to scale up co-governance.

5.3 Guide: Step 3 – Implementing co-governance

5.3.1 Strategic implementation

The strategic implementation of co-governance includes working together to jointly:

- **Agree objectives;** short-, medium- and long-term **priorities;** and a work plan– being realistic and aiming for initial wins to build trust in the process.
 - short-term outcomes may include enablers for change, medium-term outcomes may include local changes, and long term outcomes may relate to population impact.
- **Develop a joint understanding of and commitment to the objectives** – and check in regularly to ensure this understanding is maintained
- **Support members to understand organisational differences** – different cultures, different timeframes (may be misaligned), different ways of working, different sign off processes; different professions; different sizes of organisation (smaller may have less resources but be more agile, larger may have more resources, need more than one representative, and be less agile); different risk appetites
- Develop a program logic or **theory of change** on which to inform action
- Develop **agreed ways of working** together. This includes understanding commonalities and differences between members – both at an organisational level and an individual level.
- Build in **review points** to ensure the group can identify and respond to **changes in context and priorities.** **Check for power imbalances and changes in trust.**
- Identify **what is required to sustain the group's operation** – whether engagement, information, resources or other support
- Develop a **communication plan** to ensure the work of the group is transparent and the group can be held accountable

5.3.2 Operational implementation

Operational implementation considers *what* the group does to deliver its strategic plan. This includes:

- Ensure there is **continual engagement** with members to discuss issues and make decisions. Consider when it is better to meet in person and when to convene remotely.
- Ensure stakeholders are **represented and engaged** in meetings.
- Ensure **different types, depths and breadths of expertise are recognised and respected** – including **lived experience**.
- Ensure **informed decision-making** through use of evidence, discussion of issues, and voting.
- **Translate decisions into action.**
- Encourage stakeholders to **engage with the community** they represent.
- Provide **operational support and evaluation** through a secretariat – considering whether secretariat (or tasks) are best located in government organisations or other stakeholder organisations.

5.3.3 Reviewing the arrangement

Review processes need to be integrated into the implementation of co-governance to ensure the arrangement remains fit for purpose in terms of both scope and operation. Reviews may be undertaken at different changes of maturity of the arrangement (early-, mid-, mature stages) or due to changes in external factors.

The scope of the **co-governance arrangement** should be reviewed to ensure:

- Policy areas remain relevant
- Geographic scope remains relevant
- Priorities remain relevant

Membership requires a health check to ensure it enables the group to operate and achieve its objectives and reflect any change in requirements from its members. A regular review is necessary to ensure:

- Membership remains **representative** and reflects changes in public organisations and societies interests

- Members are **engaged** (attend and participate in meetings) and are supported
- **Turnover** in membership allows the group to be refreshed to reflect any change in scope, to remain sustainable in the future, but not too high to cause disruption
- Any **change in membership** requires support to build new relationships and to ensure the history and learnings were not lost.

Groups work well when they know and support the mission of the collaborative. Establishing and maintaining relationships between members is key to group functioning.

The **operational mechanisms** should also be reviewed to ensure

- **Strategies and operational plans** remain relevant and reflect outcomes achieved, new data and information, changes in priorities, resources available, and changes in needs.
- **Decision-making processes** remain fit for purpose.
- **Resources** are available to enable participation, including the ongoing development of capabilities.
- **Secretariat support** is an enabler (rather than a gatekeeper) to the operation of the group.

5.3.4 Enablers and challenges

There are several enablers that can help support the implementation of a co-governance arrangement, and challenges that may be experienced. Enablers to implementing co-governance include:

- **Clear mission**, mission promoted, and members support and advocate for that mission.
- **Genuine opportunity to participate** – not tokenistic – and different strategies and opportunities to engage.
- **Understanding who does what** – and by extension, who can do what.

Challenges, and how to potentially overcome them, are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Table 9: Challenges to implementing co-governance and how to overcome them

Challenges	How to overcome the challenge
Low attendance or participation due to lack of time and resources, lack of trust, or due to trusting the process or other participants.	Given non-attendance could indicate trust or lack of trust in the process, it is important to understand why participants have disengaged. Where this is due to a lack of time and resources may be overcome through alternative forms of engagement, or by resourcing where resources are available. Where this is due to a lack of trust, the group may need to work through a way to rebuild trust.
Poor relationship between stakeholders or a lack of understanding of each other.	This can be mitigated by setting aside time to get to know each other (preferably face to face). If there is a high turn-over of participants, this should be repeated as needed.
Limitations in what decisions can be made.	Decision-making may be only one role of co-governance. Relationships formed through co-governance, and information shared, may spill over into other activities. Therefore, it is important to capture the direct and indirect outcomes of the group. Having a clear understanding of the scope of the group, the decisions that are expected to be made, and other outcomes, can manage expectations of participants.

Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.4.

6 OUTCOMES FROM CO-GOVERNANCE



6.1 Evidence from the review

The final stage in the co-governance process considers how to identify and report outcomes from the co-governance arrangement. The potential outcomes of co-governance can be varied, intentional, unintentional, measurable, unmeasurable, positive, negative, short-term and long-term. Ultimately, the test of whether co-governance is successful and increases public value is whether it achieves better policies or programs than would have been the case if decisions had been made by government on its own – reported as outcomes. Co-governance can also have other outcomes related to the process of collaboration.

Outcomes from specific actions include:

- Strategic plans and theories of change/action
- Short, medium and long-term outcomes ‘on the ground’ that have occurred due to the collaborative arrangement (intentional or otherwise).

Outcomes from the process of co-governance may include:

- Redressed power, information and resource imbalances
- Improved relationships, understanding and accountability
- Higher quality decision-making
- Increased trust in government or service system
- Willingness to engage in future co-governance arrangements.

The absence of outcomes, or reporting of outcomes, may affect continuity of the arrangement.

This section documents each consideration for the case study sites based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

6.2 Evidence from case studies

There were some similarities and differences in the outcomes from co-governance across the three case studies in this study

. A summary of the key findings from each of the case studies is presented in Appendix C, **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Outcomes have been reorganised in terms of:

- Outcomes from the process of co-governance (process outcomes)
- Direct outcomes from co-governance over and above what would have been achieved by individual members (direct outcomes)
- Indirect outcomes from co-governance, such as transferring process and direct outcomes to other contexts (indirect outcomes)

Table 10: Summary of similarities and differences in understanding how co-governance is working

	Similarities	Differences
Process outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOR, strategic plans, work plans, theories of change, ways of working • Mechanisms to monitor and report operational outcomes • Understanding and awareness of how other organisations work • Building (new and existing) relationships that carry forward into other contexts outside of the co-governance arrangement • Sharing of information, power and resources • Informed decision-making (discussion, clear understanding of issues, clear decision made) • Identified other needs such as training • Increasing trust in process and willingness to continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the co-governance group is closer to government, the cases had different proximities to community members either visibly or through engagement. • Variations in the publication of outcomes from the co-governance arrangement • Variations in the development and use of program logics • Incorporating other co-activities as needed to support the co-governance work.
Direct outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental case specific outcomes • Early wins and short-term outcomes that build trust in process • Mechanisms to hold government to account • Agreement to continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some medium-term outcomes emerging • Variations in the publication of outcomes from the co-governance arrangement
Indirect outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spillover effects – building on relationships in different context • Other co- activities • Transferring lessons to other areas (policies and contexts) 	

6.2.1 Process outcomes

For each case study, process outcomes were considered in terms of:

- **Outputs of the co-governance process.** This included the terms of reference, strategic and operational plans, charters, work plans, minutes from meetings, ways of working, that were an outcome of the process and provided accountability for the groups work.
- **Mechanism to monitor and report operational outputs and outcomes.** Given the context specific nature of co-governance arrangements, establishing mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report on the outcomes of co-governance is essential. This provides an opportunity to build confidence in the process, ensure transparency and identify where changes may be required. Outputs for Waterloo, the NDDA and Maranguka were tracked and shared with members and key outputs published on the group's or stakeholder's websites.
- **Increased understanding and awareness of how other organisations work.** While government agencies

and public servants often understand how government 'does business', this is not always well understood by other organisations. Similarly, non-government organisations have different governance mechanisms, risk appetites, and delegations, depending on organisation and sometimes associated with size. The co-governance process strengthened understanding of these differences among participants. In the NDDA case, differences in expertise and communication styles among government, academics, and community representatives required ongoing adjustments, particularly as government staff turnover required re-education of new members. For Waterloo, regular dialogue improved coordination and mutual understanding. In Maranguka, tensions arose between community-led priorities and government-driven performance metrics, requiring structured governance mechanisms like the cross-sector leadership group and the 2022 Maranguka principle to clarify decision-making roles.

- **New relationships formed and existing relationships strengthened.** Often non-government organisations have a long history in a context and have developed strong relationships with others – this was evident in both the Waterloo and NDDA case. Some research participants highlighted that a breakdown in relationships had the potential to undermine the functioning of a group. In the case of Maranguka, long-standing relationships through the Bourke Tribal Council and Just Reinvest NSW were key to building trust and securing multi-sector collaboration. The initiative also established new partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, philanthropic organisations like the Dusseldorp Forum, and private businesses such as Lendlease. These relationships were actively monitored through the cross-sector leadership group and the executive to ensure alignment with community-led priorities and to sustain funding, service delivery, and policy advocacy.
- **Information, power and resources shared.** Co-governance can be used to address imbalances in information, power and resources. Each arrangement included in this study included sharing of information, power and resources. Therefore, it is important to monitor whether this sharing is effective and identify areas where further work is required.
- **Informed decision-making** –Participants need to have access to sufficient information and be engaged in discussion in an ongoing way to develop shared understanding of issues and make well informed decisions. The NDDA case provided a good example of differences in knowledge and understanding and showed additional supports were provided outside of meetings to ensure decision-making was informed.
- **Trust increased** –The co-governance process can help build trust among stakeholders, including trust in government, trust in the co-governance process itself, or trust between stakeholders.
- **Other needs identified** – the process of co-governance can identify additional requirements to support the effective functioning of the arrangement such as training and resourcing.
- **Trust in process and willingness to continue.** Developing trust through the co-governance process supports participants willingness to continue engaging and helps ensure sustainability.

Other process outcomes identified were changes in response to review processes and also gaps in the work plan or capacities and capabilities of members.

Several differences were observed in terms of process outcomes.

While the co-governance arrangements represented a much closer relationship between government and the members of the co-governance group, there were differences in the proximity between the co-governance group and the broader community – although this did improve over time. For the Waterloo group, the large membership tried to engage as many stakeholders as possible yet remained underrepresented in some areas. The secretariat and chairs made effort to engage underrepresented groups outside of meetings. There were some delays in making the work of the group public. In the case of the NDDA pilot, outside of the group there were significant efforts to engage the

broader community through consultations. Maranguka initially focused on engagement through the Bourke Tribal Council and key stakeholders but expanded participation over time. The introduction of the cross-sector leadership group improved coordination across sectors, and regular community meetings strengthened broader involvement. Later, Maranguka Co Ltd became the representative organisation of the Bourke Tribal Council in the cross-sector leadership group. The Waterloo case study had developed a logic model or theory of change that clearly documented what the arrangement was expected to achieve and why. The NDDA case study had very specific objectives and timeframe to deliver. Maranguka's governance model evolved reflecting a shift from a justice-focused initiative to a broader community-led governance framework, **incorporating** self-determination, cultural leadership, and systemic change.

Each case varied in the location, timing and content of public information provided on co-governance websites. The hosting of the Waterloo website was delayed until transferred to a community organisation to manage. The NDDA website containing outputs from the pilot Disability Advisory Council came almost halfway through its operation. Maranguka's public information was initially shared through Just Reinvest NSW rather than a dedicated website. Over time, formalisation increased, and by 2020, Maranguka Ltd. was incorporated, providing structured governance updates through reports and strategic plans. The key documents were made available via Just Reinvest NSW's website and other third-party websites such as the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse and the Sydney Policy Lab (University of Sydney). An independent and dedicated Maranguka website is still under construction at the time of reporting.

There were also examples where cases incorporated other 'co-' activities to support the co-governance work. For example, consultations and collaborations.

6.2.2 Direct outcomes

The time taken to establish the process and achieve process outcomes should not be underestimated. Further, each case sought to address complex problems. This was anticipated by the Waterloo group in its planning which aimed to achieve 'quick wins' to build trust in the co-governance process. The outcomes from the NDDA pilot disability advisory committee were time limited.

Key outcomes identified in each case were:

- Incremental and case specific
- A mix of early wins to demonstrate the functioning of the process and short-term outcomes that build trust in process
- Mutually reinforcing activities – where work of individual partners or collaborations contributed to mutual goals
- Mechanisms to hold government to account
- Agreement to continue.

6.2.3 Indirect outcomes

There was evidence during data collection of indirect outcomes arising from the co-governance arrangement. They included:

- **Spillover effects**, such as benefiting from relationships built through co-governance in different contexts. For example, where two members of the Waterloo group participated in another forum were able to collaborate based on that established relationship. Spillover effects also included forming new partnerships as a result of the co-governance group, such as working on separate projects with a member of the group. Maranguka has supported other communities in achieving collaboration by delivering training through Just Reinvest NSW and developing

a practice guide with Just Reinvest NSW.

- **Transferring lessons to other areas** (policies and contexts). Several participants in the NDDA and Waterloo case studies commented on transferring lessons learned through co-governance to other areas of their work. This included considering co-governance to address other issues, or transferring the outputs of co-governance to other contexts.

6.3 Guide: Step 4 – Reporting outcomes of co-governance

Outcomes should be monitored and reported to build trust in the process for all stakeholders and the broader community. This provides accountability for the group's actions.

Outcomes arise from:

- The process of co-governance (process outcomes)
- What co-governance achieves over and above what would have been achieved by individual members (direct outcomes)
- Spillover effects, such as transferring process and direct outcomes to other contexts (indirect outcomes)

6.3.1 Process outcomes

Process outcomes include:

- **Outputs of the co-governance process.** This includes the terms of reference, strategic and operational plans, charters, work plans, minutes from meetings, ways of working, that are an outcome of the process and provide accountability for the groups work.
- **A mechanism to monitor and report operational outputs and outcomes.** Given co-governance is tailored to specific contexts and no two arrangements may look the same, it is critical to establish a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and report on the outcomes of co-governance. This provides an opportunity to build confidence in the process and identify where changes may be required.
- **Increased understanding and awareness of how other organisations work.** While government agencies and public servants often understand how government 'does business', this is not always well understood by other organisations. Similarly, non-government organisations have different governance mechanisms, risk appetites, and delegations, depending on organisation and sometimes associated with size.
- **New relationships formed and existing relationships strengthened.** Often non-government organisations have a long history in a context and have developed strong relationships with others. It is important to monitor how new relationships were established and existing relationships strengthened.
- **Sharing of information, power and resources within the group.** Co-governance can be used to address imbalances in information, power and resources. This should be monitored to understand whether this sharing is effective or further work is required.
- **Sharing of information with the broader community.** This increases transparency, accountability and can build broader trust in the process.
- **Informed decision-making** – having sufficient information and discussion to understand issue and decision made
- **Trust increased in other stakeholders** – this could be trust in government, trust in the co-governance process, or trust between stakeholders

- **Other needs identified** such as training
- **Incorporation of other ‘co-’ activities as needed**
- **Trust in process and willingness to continue.**

6.3.2 Direct outcomes

The time taken to establish the process and achieve process outcomes should not be underestimated. Direct outcomes are likely to be:

- Incremental and case specific
- A mix of early wins to demonstrate the functioning of the process and short-term outcomes that build trust in process
- Mutually reinforcing activities – where work of individual partners or collaborations contribute to mutual goals, or stopping activities that undermine, compromise or threaten mutual goals
- Mechanisms to hold government to account – publishing plans and reporting progress against those plans
- Agreement to continue.

Mechanisms need to be established to measure direct outcomes; for example, documenting outcomes against a work plan.

6.3.3 Indirect outcomes

There are also likely to be indirect outcomes arising from the co-governance arrangement. Such outcomes should be captured periodically to highlight the broader benefit of co-governance; for example, through a membership survey/health check. Indirect outcomes may include:

- **Spillover effects**, such as **benefiting from relationships** built through co-governance in different contexts. Spillover effects also included forming **new partnerships** as a result of the co-governance group, such as working on separate projects with a member of the group.
- **Transferring lessons to other areas** (policies and contexts). This includes using co-governance elsewhere, or transferring the outputs of co-governance to other contexts.

6.3.4 Enablers and challenges

There are several enablers that can help support the achievement and recording of outcomes from a co-governance arrangement, and challenges that may be experienced. Enablers include:

- Having a **clear workplan and monitoring plan** to track outcomes
- Having **regular check ins** with members to ensure healthy functioning of the group
- Identifying **short-term outputs** which may be the enablers of change, **medium term outputs** which may be early evidence of change, and **long-term outcomes** which may be a population level impact.

Table 11: Challenges to achieving and recording outcomes of co-governance and how to overcome them

Challenges	How to potentially overcome challenges
Slow to show progress.	Develop some work items that are 'quick wins' to build confidence in the process.
Lack of data.	Data needs should be identified early in the co-governance process, along with meaningful data that is available either publicly or through organisations that may help monitor outcomes. New data may be collected as part of the process; for example, surveys of co-governance participants, community members, and program data from any changes implemented.
Different value attached to different data types and different data sources.	<p>Different organisations and disciplines place different values on different data types and sources. During initiation phase, include explicit discussion and agreement for how different forms of knowledge and evidence will be considered and valued. This includes recognising the value of community-generated data and lived experience alongside traditional data sources. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking agreement on how different types of evidence will inform decision-making • Developing processes for transparent documentation of all data sources and their limitations • Identifying mechanisms for addressing disagreements about data interpretation.

Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.5.

7 OTHER CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS THAT ENABLE AND SUSTAIN CO-GOVERNANCE

In addition to the four-step process and related activities identified in the evidence review, several other linked cross-cutting considerations emerged across the case studies that enable and sustain co-governance. They relate to engagement with First Nations communities and organisations; engagement with other priority populations; data usage; trust building and power sharing, transparency and accountability; and resources (including capabilities, time and financial resources). This section provides evidence from the case studies for each cross-cutting consideration and corresponding content for the guide.

7.1 Evidence from case studies

There were similarities and differences across the three case studies in this study in how other factors were considered in co-governance (

). This section draws from the key findings from each of the case studies which is presented in Appendix C, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 12: Summary of similarities and differences in considering other factors

Consideration	Similarities	Differences
First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple communities and organisations were stakeholders in each case. Communities and organisations manage multiple interests and are not resourced sufficiently to plan or respond to requests if they are not a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterloo engaged some Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in shaping the action plan but struggled with sustained participation as there was no additional resourcing available to facilitate participation. Engagement with the broader First Nations community was inconsistent. NDDA had efforts to ensure broad representation within the Disability Advisory Council and this initially included representation from the First Peoples' Disability Network. Maranguka was led by First Nations, with decision-making embedded in local governance structures. It worked closely with the Bourke Tribal Council, ensuring that First Nations leadership directed the co-governance process.
Other populations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each case targeted different priority populations and representative organisations either through direct involvement in co-governance or consultations.
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of data to inform priorities at a strategic or operational level Use of data to report outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which data informed strategic direction varied. Maranguka has a very strong data driven approach through use of the Palimaa Data Platform (supported by Seer Data Analytics and the Kowa Collaboration) which allowed identification of priorities for action and to evaluate change. The platform is used to identify priorities for action and evaluate changes over time, integrating community-

Consideration	Similarities	Differences
		<p>controlled data with external sources. This enables real-time tracking of progress and helps inform decision-making within the initiative's governance structures. Waterloo and NDDA used different sources of data, including qualitative data through consultations, to inform work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different stakeholders valued different data sources differently. For example, public sector organisations in Waterloo treated data from universities differently to data collected by community organisations. For Maranguka, government and external evaluators considered quantifiable indicators are stronger evidence whereas communities valued stories about personal experiences.
Trust and power, transparency and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each case aimed to be transparent in its operations and transparency was not achieved immediately. Trust, power, transparency and accountability were interrelated in each case. Transparency supported trust and accountability. Power was related to transparency, accountability and trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mechanisms used to foster trust, distribute power, and ensure transparency and accountability varied by case. In the NDDA case, trust was built through structured information sharing and public reporting, with the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) publishing communiqués on meetings and decision-making processes. For Waterloo, trust and accountability improved once responsibility for information sharing was transferred to a community organisation, allowing for more direct engagement with stakeholders. For Maranguka, trust was established through community-led decision-making, with power embedded in the governance model via the Bourke Tribal Council. Transparency and accountability were reinforced through the Cross-Sector Leadership Group and the Palimaa Data Platform, formalised in the 2023–2025 Strategic Plan to ensure key stakeholders had access to data and decision-making processes.
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in co-governance had different capabilities and knowledge 	<p>Differences existed in terms of how participants in co-governance were supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDA: Participants were supported through structured knowledge-sharing facilitated by the pilot Disability Advisory Council (DAC) and the secretariat which helped participants to navigate complex governance processes related to both disability and data/digital ministers and officials. Waterloo: Support varied depending on organisational resources, with government agencies having internal capacity to participate, while NGOs and community representatives faced resource constraints.

Consideration	Similarities	Differences
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maranguka: Support was embedded in leadership development initiatives, with a focus on building local capacity through training and mentorship. The initiative applied for government funding to reinvest in community needs beyond youth justice, expanding support to fathers, women, and families.
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-governance takes time to set up and implement • Co-governance arrangements had ongoing responsibilities and work programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work during the NDDA Pilot showed the time required to negotiate the setup of a co-governance arrangement. The work of the NDDA pilot DAC was time limited but led to the creation of an ongoing mechanism.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-governance arrangements largely relied on mobilising existing resources to meet the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Waterloo group did not allocate additional resources to the group beyond the secretariat support, concerned that it would not be sustainable if the resources were cut. • The NDDA pilot Disability Advisory Council members were not paid but they determined the governance mechanism members for the asset should be resourced – along with resources for capacity building. • Maranguka initially relied on in-kind support and philanthropic funding, with Just Reinvest NSW providing early resources. Over time, it secured dedicated funding, including government and philanthropic contributions.

7.1.1 Engagement with First Nations communities and organisations

Similarities and differences between case studies varied in the extent which First Nations communities and organisations were engaged. Some of the differences were driven by the purpose of co-governance. For example, the Maranguka case study was driven by First Nations communities who came together through the Bourke Tribal Council. In contrast, while the considerations of First Nations communities and organisations were important considerations in terms of both the NDDA and the Waterloo human services collaborative, they were an additional consideration rather than the primary consideration. Participation was contingent on funding and consequently engagement was limited in the Waterloo collaborative where First Nations organisations were addressing multiple competing demands for their time.

In terms of similarities, each case, particularly the Maranguka case study, highlighted that First Nations is not one homogenous group and multiple nations and stakeholders needed to be engaged. Further, each case highlighted the need for meaningful engagement and resourcing, and ways of working, that enabled First Nations communities and organisations to be part of the co-governance process.

7.1.2 Other cultural or population specific considerations, including adjustments required to ensure engagement

Any other population specific considerations need to be identified and understood. None of the case studies specifically engaged culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Only the NDDA case specifically engaged people with disability both as part of the pilot Disability Advisory Council (and the subsequent co-governance group) and through extensive consultations with the community as part of the preparation work done by the NDDA project team to understand the community's perspectives on the development and use of the NDDA.

The case studies demonstrated it is critical to engage the affected community and ensure the community is heard through the co-governance arrangement and associated activities. This may require some adjustments to be made in how people are engaged to ensure they can do so safely and on an equal basis with others. An intersectional approach may be taken to ensure priority populations are identified and responded to (Bates et al. 2024).

7.1.3 Data

Data (including administrative data collections, program data, evaluation data, and other evidence and insights) has a role in identifying need, informing and mapping priorities, measuring outcomes from co-governance, and identifying the health and functioning of the co-governance group. As the Victorian place-based initiative guidance explains, data can explain what is happening and potentially why and what may happen in the future. Co-governance relies both on existing data collections and potentially new data to report progress. In addition to informing decision-making, having access to and sharing data also helps build trust, demonstrates accountability (through regular reporting), and reduces power imbalances with stakeholders.

All case studies were evidence based to some extent, drawing on different sources of data for different parts of co-governance process. For example, whether informing the need for co-governance, to developing strategy or workplans, to implementing projects under the co-governance arrangements and tracking process. Measuring outcomes was also seen as critical to report success and also validate the co-governance mechanism. In the Maranguka case, the use of data through the Palimaa Data Platform supported by Seer Data Analytics and the Kowa Collaboration, is highly sophisticated, 'enabling shared learning and shared measurement' across a wide source of data.⁴ In the Waterloo case, the use of data is more ad hoc and supports specific initiatives. While the NDDA case is all about data linkage, the development of the co-governance mechanism through the Pilot Disability Advisory Council was also informed by ad hoc qualitative studies.

One observation from the case studies was the perceived legitimacy of data by different stakeholders from different sources. In the Waterloo case, it was observed that different stakeholders valued different data sources differently. For example, public sector organisations valued independent data (such as data collected and presented by university researchers) over and above data collected using similar methods by community organisations. Similarly, community organisations perceived administrative data from government differently to qualitative data from the people they represented. In Maranguka, community-controlled data was embedded in governance structures, ensuring that the Bourke Tribal Council and community representatives had ownership over data use and interpretation.

Another observation from the case studies was ensuring the context in which data was collected and presented was understood and not used out of context. For example, data about satisfaction with a service needed to be understood in terms of who was surveyed, when and in relation to what specific service. In the NDDA case, concerns were also identified about how data is used and ensuring governance mechanisms prevent the misuse of data collected. Additional considerations may be required for data in relation to First Nations peoples, through the application of Indigenous data sovereignty principles, which may be subject to additional governance requirements. Maranguka's

⁴ See <https://seerdata.ai/wp-content/uploads/Palimaa-Data-Platform-overview.pdf> (accessed 16 January 2025).

approach to data governance emphasised contextual understanding, ensuring that data interpretation aligned with local priorities and lived experiences.

In terms of checking on the health and functioning of the co-governance arrangement, the Waterloo group collected data through surveys and conversations with its members about participation and the health and functioning of the group. This was used to inform the review process about membership and the groups operation. Maranguka used structured governance reviews to assess participation and community leadership within its model, leveraging data from the Palimaa platform to guide decision-making.

The data needs of each co-governance arrangements are likely to be unique. As part of the set-up phase (see Section 4), conversations are required around what data is needed to both identify need and priorities, as well as measure progress. A common understanding should be sought about the values around different types and sources of data by different data and how any concerns about quality or legitimacy of that data can be addressed.

Data sharing is a critical element of co-governance, underpinning trust-building, informed decision-making, accountability, and inclusivity, fostering meaningful collaboration.

7.1.4 Trust and power, transparency and accountability

Trust and power, transparency and accountability are interrelated and difficult to consider separately.

For example, transparency in operations is likely to build trust in the process and outcomes of co-governance for both participants and other stakeholders. When considering how the work of the group is made public, it is essential to establish clear and accessible communication channels. The Maranguka and Waterloo case studies highlight the importance of publishing meeting outcomes, progress updates, and decisions in formats accessible to all stakeholders, including marginalised groups. Regular updates not only enhance the legitimacy of co-governance but also reinforce the collective commitment of all participants to shared accountability. Transparency ensures that all participants and stakeholders can understand and contribute to the process, creating a shared sense of ownership and mitigating concerns over hidden agendas. To sustain trust, transparency should cover how decisions are made, how resources are distributed, and how responsibilities are shared.

The quality and timeliness of information provided are equally critical. Information disseminated within and beyond the co-governance group must be accurate, current, and reflective of ongoing developments. Delayed or inconsistent communication risks eroding trust, as stakeholders may interpret this as a lack of commitment or transparency. Both the NDDA and Waterloo case studies emphasise the value of maintaining high-quality communication through dedicated secretariats or agile community organisations that can swiftly adapt to the needs of stakeholders. Maranguka's governance model prioritised self-determination by communities, ensuring that information remained aligned with the priorities of the local community

Accountability mechanisms play a central role in reinforcing trust and ensuring that power is exercised equitably. Co-governance arrangements should incorporate clear processes for monitoring and evaluating performance to ensure that all participants fulfil their responsibilities. Mechanisms should also address non-compliance or misaligned actions that could jeopardise group cohesion. For example, in the Waterloo case, shared accountability frameworks and secretariat support enabled more balanced participation and aligned power dynamics among stakeholders. Similarly, the recommendations of the NDDA pilot Disability Advisory Council led to the establishment of a disability-informed ethical oversight committee as part of the data governance for the NDDA once the asset was established, with a role in overseeing uses of the asset. Maranguka's model went further, incorporating community-led oversight and regular data reviews to guide governance decisions.

Finally, the interplay between trust, power, and accountability is dynamic and context specific. While co-governance can act as a mechanism to address pre-existing mistrust, it requires sustained effort to uphold transparency and demonstrate accountability. Building trust through transparent power-sharing is a gradual process, particularly in

contexts where historical grievances and systemic inequities persist. Addressing these challenges involves deliberate strategies, such as co-designed accountability frameworks, inclusive reporting structures, and ongoing dialogue among stakeholders to align priorities and foster mutual respect. Waterloo's governance arrangement evolved over time, with ongoing adjustments made most recently to reflect changes in government organisations – creating three government co-chairs and one community co-chair. NDDA's approach recognised that trust-building required ongoing efforts to maintain the social licence for the scaled use of data, ensuring that decisions about how the data is used remain transparent and accountable to the disability community. Maranguka's governance model demonstrated a long-term commitment to transparent power-sharing, ensuring that decision-making structures remained responsive to community needs.

Embedding transparency and accountability into every stage of co-governance can help to balance trust and power more effectively, laying a strong foundation for sustainable collaboration.

7.1.5 Capabilities of individuals and organisations

Co-governance relies on bringing individuals and organisations with different knowledge, expertise and scope together to collaborate. Co-governance may require individuals and organisations to have certain capabilities for the co-governance group to function. The first consideration is therefore to identify what capabilities are required when establishing the group and identify how these needs will be met. This may include representation, delegation of decision-making, knowledge and information, and resources to attend.

In the implementation phase, co-governance decision-making should be informed – this requires both information and skills. Different members often brought different skillsets and expertise yet they were also expected to overcome potential gaps in information, differences in language, and cultural (in the organisational sense) and disciplinary barriers to communicate and make informed decisions. Therefore, capabilities of individuals needed to be mapped and any gaps supported or addressed.

The NDDA Pilot identified differences in participant knowledge and worked to build capacity through structured knowledge-sharing sessions facilitated by the government secretariat.

The Waterloo case highlighted disparities in knowledge and experience among participants. Long-standing community representatives had deep contextual knowledge of the issues, while many government representatives had shorter tenures and expertise in narrow policy areas. The secretariat played a role in addressing knowledge gaps by coordinating resources, but disparities remained, particularly for Aboriginal-controlled organisations that lacked resources to participate.

Maranguka embedded capacity-building within its governance structure. The initiative worked with Just Reinvest NSW to develop leadership training and support community members in navigating co-governance processes. There was also training of cultural knowledge for the policy workforce and other stakeholders – training also taken up by two of the research team. The cross-sector leadership group and other leadership groups played a role in knowledge-sharing, ensuring that decision-making was informed by both community and government expertise.

All three case studies highlighted how the departure of experienced members affected group capabilities. New members often lacked institutional memory, requiring additional support and transition planning to maintain the effectiveness of co-governance. These findings reinforce the importance of succession planning to sustain long-term collaboration.

7.1.6 Time

As noted in the earlier chapters of this report, co-governance is a long-term mechanism to address complex problems that are better resolved working together than by organisations and community working alone. Further, they enable the community to be involved in decision-making.

As described throughout this report, each step in the process of co-governance takes time – that is, time to engage stakeholders, set up and implement the co-governance arrangement. Further, the processes involved are as important as the outcomes and cannot be rushed.

In the Waterloo case, despite the long history prior to the group being established and the priorities being relatively well known among stakeholders, the group committed to a process of developing the strategic plan recognising it was key to building relationships and trust between members and trust in the process. The Waterloo group also recognised co-governance would take time and to gain trust and buy-in to the process, short-term wins and outcomes were needed.

The NDDA case took a different approach in establishing a group to deliver a very specific time-limited task. The Pilot Disability Advisory Council had approximately 12-18 months to design what was needed to build and maintain community trust in a data asset, which was articulated as a co-governance mechanism that was accepted by the group and stakeholders (as opposed to an ongoing schedule of work). While the work of the Pilot Council was not considered to be co-governance as government were facilitators of rather than participants in decision-making, it did demonstrate that co-governance could be bounded by a specific task and timeframe– in contrast to the other arrangements which had ongoing work programs. The co-governance mechanism it established is now an ongoing arrangement. The other cases established co-governance mechanisms that were all ongoing.

Maranguka has operated for over **a decade**, evolving from the **Just Reinvest** initiative into a broader **community-led governance model** that focuses on systemic change. The initiative followed a phased approach, with initial work focusing on community-led justice reinvestment. Over time, Maranguka expanded its focus to broader social and economic issues, embedding governance structures to support long-term community leadership. The development of the Maranguka Principle in 2022 and the 2023–2025 Strategic Plan formalised its co-governance model, ensuring sustained collaboration and accountability.

All case studies demonstrated the need to understand and manage expectations of the time required to achieve outcomes and work out ways to expedite the timeline where possible.

7.1.7 Resources

Co-governance was resourced differently in each case study – often determined in the set up phase.

For the Waterloo group, the group made a conscious decision not to resource the group to ensure it could be sustained – it would not be under threat of the removal of funding. The group has developed a common agenda and organisations work within existing resources to deliver against that agenda where it can. While this has made the group sustainable, this has also impacted on participation by stakeholders who did not have sufficient resources. Hence resources available was also linked to power.

In the pilot phase, the NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council members were not paid; however, resourcing participation in co-governance was identified as a key requirement for the NDDA co-governance mechanism once the asset became operational.

For Maranguka, co-governance was resourced through multiple funding sources, including philanthropic contributions from the Dusseldorp Forum, government funding, and support from other charities. These funds covered operational costs and participant engagement, ensuring sustained involvement, particularly for those lacking independent resources. Maranguka's backbone organisation secured external funding to support coordination and governance. Resourcing was not limited to the cost of attendance but also related to the operational elements of the co-governance arrangement. Operational elements were often funded by other agencies.

7.2 Guide: Other considerations

This section of the guide identifies other considerations when implementing co-governance not dealt with elsewhere – many of which cut across multiple steps of the process.

7.2.1 Engagement with First Nations communities and organisations

Recognising each co-governance context is likely to be unique, in establishing co-governance, consider:

- Identify different nations and community leaders, and relevant organisations, to engage in co-governance
- Identify cultural needs and cultural protocols
- Identify relevant stakeholders
- Identify cultural protocols
- Work with communities and organisations to identify ways of working. Considerations include:
 - Who, how and when to collaborate
 - What resources are required to enable collaboration
 - Mechanisms to ensure transparency with the community, communicating outcomes through different channels.
- Check the community is engaged and being heard

7.2.2 Identify any other cultural or population specific considerations, including adjustments required to ensure engagement

Identify population specific considerations that need to be identified and addressed. This may relate to priority populations or organisations. This includes:

- Identifying specific populations or groups - taking an intersectional approach to take account of different social identities, life experience, power relations and how they interact with context.
- Understanding local context and history of relationships between stakeholders including addressing past experiences that may affect trust and willingness to engage
- Recognising and addressing challenges posed by 'business as usual' government practices including: bureaucratic complexity; inconsistent communication; lack of consideration for unequal levels of resourcing, capacity and power.
- Identifying mechanisms to ensure different groups are included. For example:
 - Providing interpreters
 - Providing plain English or easy read material
 - Following cultural protocols and creating culturally safe spaces
 - Developing a common working language, definitions and style guide to ensure language is inclusive
 - Ensuring access needs are met
 - Ensuring processes, ways of working, and language used are not stigmatising.

7.2.3 Data

Data has a key role across the co-governance process alone, and in combination with trust/power and transparency.

Both during conception and throughout life of co-governance arrangement, participants should consider how data informs:

- The need for co-governance
- The priorities of co-governance
- Whether outcomes are achieved
- The health and functioning of the group to inform the review process (see Section 5.3.3).

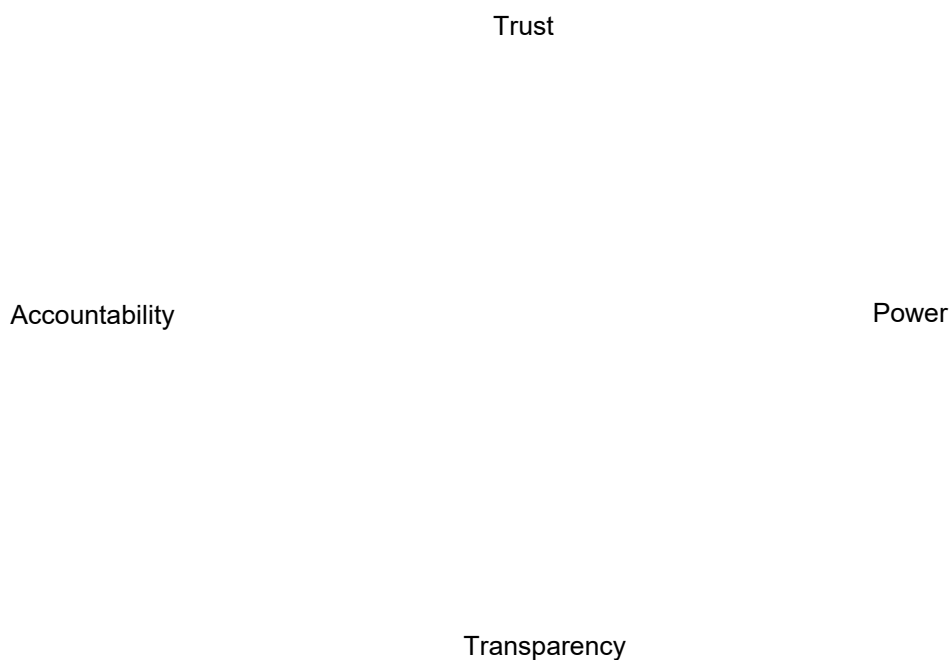
Consider:

- What data exists that meets these requirements, how it can be accessed and used
- What new data needs to be collected and how, including any ethics, data governance issues and data sovereignty
- Whether different stakeholders place different values on different sources of data and how this might be resolved
- How data is shared and reported.

7.2.4 Trust and power, transparency (and accountability)

Trust, power, transparency and accountability are interrelated as shown in the figure below.

Figure 4: The interrelation between trust, power, accountability and transparency



Transparency in operations is likely to build trust in the process and outcomes of co-governance for both participants and other stakeholders. Consider how the terms of reference for the group and its work are made public (where it is made available, how stakeholders know where to find it, what type of information is available).

To provide transparency, consider:

- Establishing clear and accessible communication channels
- Sharing information about the timelines, process, membership, work plan, meeting outcomes, progress updates, feedback and decisions in formats accessible to all stakeholders, including marginalised groups
- Ensuring information shared is accurate, current, accessible, reflective of ongoing developments and culturally appropriate.

The interplay between trust, power, and accountability is dynamic and context specific. While co-governance can act as a mechanism to address pre-existing mistrust, it requires sustained effort to uphold transparency and demonstrate accountability. Building trust through transparent power-sharing is a gradual process, particularly in contexts where historical grievances and systemic inequities persist. Strategies may include

- co-designed accountability frameworks
- inclusive reporting structures
- ongoing dialogue among stakeholders to align priorities and foster mutual respect.

Embedding transparency and accountability into every stage of co-governance can help to balance trust and power more effectively, laying a strong foundation for sustainable collaboration.

7.2.5 Capabilities of individuals and organisations

Consider:

- Identifying capabilities of individuals and organisations needed for the co-governance group to function – recognising that a diversity of skills and knowledge is important, but need a common level of understanding and language to engage
- Mapping capabilities of individuals and organisations – including skills, knowledge, resources (e.g. data, systems, financial resources), and constraints (e.g. ability to publish information)
- Identifying any gaps that need to be addressed, including training or support needs that enable participation in co-governance
- Providing a mechanism for knowledge sharing and sense-making among stakeholders
- Succession planning and succession processes, particularly where there is a high turnover of members.

7.2.6 Time

Each step in the process takes time, and taking time to go through different processes itself is important to build trust. Co-governance may not be a good option to consider if there is not sufficient time to design and then implement the arrangement.

Consider:

- How to develop understanding of time required and ways to manage expectations
- Identifying short, medium and longer-term initiatives and outcomes, allowing quick wins to build trust in the

process

- Recognise process outcomes (such as strategic plans) as well as operational outcomes (such as projects bringing about change)
- Opportunities to expedite the timeline where possible
- Whether a short-term goal or long-term plan is required

7.2.7 Resources

Resourcing can be considered when setting up co-governance and during its operation. Consider:

- Resources required to participate in co-governance
- Whether participants have resources to participate or whether additional resources are required for some or all participants (recognising that not being reliant on precarious funding can create some sustainability for those who can afford to participate)
- Whether resources are required to implement work plan or bring about change or whether change relies on existing resources of participating organisations
- Differences in resourcing and their impact on participation and power imbalances.

Further tools and resources are available in Appendix E.6.

8 TRUST, POWER AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CO-GOVERNANCE

Effective co-governance depends on the interaction between trust and power, and consequently accountability, shaping both the processes and outcomes of governance arrangements. Trust is often seen as a prerequisite for collaboration, enabling stakeholders to engage in shared decision-making. However, a lack of trust can also create the motivation for co-governance; and trust can emerge as a product of co-governance when institutional mechanisms provide transparency, inclusivity and accountability (Smyth & Bates, 2023). In parallel, power may influence who is included, how decisions are made, and which priorities are advanced (Hafer et al., 2022). While trust and power can be mutually reinforcing, tensions arise when power asymmetries undermine trust or when trust is exploited to legitimise unequal decision-making structures (du Plessis et al., 2023). Therefore, how to build trust and share power to sustain co-governance becomes a central challenge to implementing co-governance, requiring mechanisms that foster mutual trust among stakeholders and ensure meaningful and equitable distribution of power.

This chapter examines trust building and power sharing in co-governance and explores:

- **The key mechanisms of trust-building**, including historical legacies, inclusivity, transparency and accountability.
- **The exercise of power** sharing in co-governance through agenda-setting, stakeholder selection, and decision-making authority.
- **The interplay between trust building and power sharing**, identifying how the resulting trust and power relations reinforce or constrain the effectiveness of co-governance.

Using the *Collaborative Governance Framework* (Ansell & Gash, 2008) as an analytical lens, this chapter examines key elements such as trust-building mechanisms, power dynamics, and practical implementation strategies. This framework is particularly relevant for practitioners as it underscores the importance of inclusive representation, transparent decision-making, and adaptive governance in fostering sustainable and equitable co-governance. The case studies demonstrate how theoretical principles manifest in practice, while also revealing the challenges and adaptations that arise in different co-governance contexts.

It is important to highlight the differences in the nature of the three case studies. The NDDA case study focuses specifically on the role of the NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council as a mechanism that led to the establishment of an ongoing co-governance arrangement. As such, this case illustrates the first two phases of the co-governance process defined in this report – when to consider co-governance and setting up co-governance – in the context of a national data asset. In contrast, both the Waterloo case study and the Maranguka case study are place-based co-governance models.

8.1 Evidence from case studies

There were some similarities and differences in the outcomes from co-governance across the three case studies in this study. A summary of the key findings from each of the case studies is presented in Appendix C.

Outcomes have been reorganised in terms of:

- Outcomes from the process of co-governance (process outcomes)
- Direct outcomes from co-governance over and above what would have been achieved by individual members (direct outcomes)
- Indirect outcomes from co-governance, such as transferring process and direct outcomes to other contexts (indirect outcomes)

There were some similarities and differences in how trust and power operated in the case studies and how trust building and power sharing occurred (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Rather than detailing each case individually, the discussion distils patterns and divergences across the cases, identifying critical mechanisms that shape governance effectiveness.

Table 13: Summary of similarities and differences in trust and power across co-governance

	Similarities	Differences
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial trust building through representation Transparency and information sharing Accountable and regular outcome reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored engagement and autonomy Historical acknowledgement and cultural sensitivity Resource limitations affecting sustained trust Focus on specific community needs
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical authority in decision making Resource allocation and participation control Procedural power in structuring meeting and agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural sensitivity and power in representation Boundary setting through legal and regulatory constraints Power in conflict resolution and mediation Framing of success and evaluation metrics

8.1.1 Trust in co-governance: preconditions, challenges, and reinforcement mechanisms

Historical legacies shape trust in co-governance, particularly when past policy failures, systemic exclusion, and governance opacity had eroded institutional credibility. Across all three cases, pre-existing distrust required targeted strategies to restore legitimacy. In the NDDA case, mistrust stemmed from concerns about the earlier misuse of data (e.g. *Robodebt*) and fears about the potential impacts from the misuse of data – this required the group to focus on transparency. Waterloo public housing estate’s two decades of planned redevelopment has entrenched scepticism toward government-led processes. Maranguka was shaped by the past policies on Aboriginal communities, where over-policing, forced removals, and exclusion from decision-making created mistrust. These cases show that it is necessary to acknowledge and address historical grievances and to restore trust.

Inclusive representation is a cornerstone of trust in co-governance, yet its success hinges on how participation is structured and whether it translates into meaningful influence. Across the three cases, inclusivity varied in depth, impact, and ability to address power imbalances, offering critical insights into the relationship between inclusion and trust. Both NDDA and the Waterloo case study co-governance arrangements aimed to be inclusive and seek representation from across stakeholder groups but went about it in different ways. The Waterloo co-governance group had a large and broad membership consisting of key stakeholder organisations and tenants from the local community; however, without resources to support attendance, not all groups participated or were consistent in their participation. The NDDA pilot Disability Advisory Council and subsequent co-governance arrangement both sought to be inclusive but was limited in membership – this required the NDDA to also run consultation exercises in parallel to the work of the group. In contrast, Maranguka worked alongside the Bourke Tribal Council which provided inclusive representation from the community. Inclusive representation was recognised by each co-governance case study as critical but acted upon in different ways.

Transparency and regular engagement shaped trust in co-governance – participation influenced stakeholder trust. All three cases incorporated regular meetings. Transparency mechanisms varied in focus, detail and accessibility, influencing trust differently. While the work of each group was transparent to members, each group took time to establish mechanisms that provided transparency to community members. The NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council established a mechanism to share key outcomes of meetings and the outputs of the council through a unique centralised website. The Waterloo case also took time to establish a mechanism to publicly share key documents relating to the work of the group – this was established and maintained by one of the NGO partners. Maranguka's reporting mechanisms were explicitly designed to rebuild trust by ensuring community ownership over data and governance decisions. A website to share this information with the broader community is under construction.

Accountability mechanisms build on transparency measures by providing visibility about who is accountable to implement decisions made by co-governance groups. Accountability structures may differ in different types of organisation. Both the Waterloo case and the NDDA case were supported by secretariats located in government; this led to documented meetings and action logs that provided accountability within the groups. Maranguka adopted a dual accountability model, integrating formal government oversight with community-led validation through the Bourke Tribal Council and Cross-Sector Leadership Group. This structure ensured that both policy requirements and community governance expectations were reflected in decision-making. The case studies provide insights into institutional accountability mechanisms, with government frameworks prioritising compliance, financial oversight, and institutional performance, and non-government frameworks responding to their boards, to government and to the communities they serve. Without alignment, accountability mechanisms risk reinforcing power imbalances rather than strengthening governance.

8.1.2 Power in governance: structures, legitimacy and influence

Power dynamics shape how co-governance arrangements were initiated, their scope, who participates, how decisions are made, and ultimately whose interests are prioritised. The case studies illustrated different ways power was recognised, exercised and managed.

Power influenced the scope and structure of the co-governance arrangement. The NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council was established by government to build a social licence for the operation of the asset. The Waterloo co-governance arrangement was called for by the community sector but ultimately required multi-sector contributions to establish and shape priorities. Maranguka, in contrast, presents a community-led model, where agenda setting and governance authority remained within the Bourke Tribal Council, requiring external actors to align with local leadership. These cases illustrate different approaches to agenda-setting power, highlighting the varying degrees of stakeholder influence, institutional control, and cultural authority that can shape governance processes.

Power dynamics also influenced legitimacy of co-governance arrangements. Formal endorsements – including membership structures, funding support, public recognition, and performance evaluations – play a critical role in legitimising governance. The inclusion of people with disability as part of the NDDA governance mechanisms increased legitimacy to the broader community and reflected the 'nothing about us without us' rhetoric enshrined in the UN Convention. The Waterloo case's inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders, including tenants, front line staff, and executives, combined with a consensus based approach to decision making, equalised power and increased legitimacy of the group. **Maranguka illustrates the transformative effect of embedding leadership within the community**, requiring external actors to **engage on community terms rather than directing governance themselves**. Legitimacy in each case was built through **stakeholder engagement** – the extent and impact of which varied in each case. Each initiative aligned with **public sector goals**, which enabled government representatives to engage in the co-governance arrangement.

Power redistribution through co-governance. All cases sought to enhance collaboration and power sharing between government and non-government actors; the extent to which influence and power was shared was hard to

quantify. Distribution of power may be affected by which stakeholders were included, although group membership changed over time reflecting showing how the groups responded to new information or the need to revitalise membership if some stakeholder cohorts were no longer represented. The balance between government and non-government organisations in attendance. The chairs in both the NDDA and the Waterloo case were adept at ensuring the voices of consumers and community organisations were sought and heard during meetings. The Waterloo case study demonstrated how a co-governance arrangement with a large membership could create mechanisms for shared decision-making, balancing government authority with multi-stakeholder participation. Maranguka showed the ripple effect of anchoring the leadership within the community, with external actors having to act according to community priorities. Each case provides valuable insights into how governance arrangements can evolve to reflect diverse stakeholder needs and priorities.

8.1.3 Enablers and challenges

Power-sharing through co-governance requires deliberate mechanisms that account for historical context, institutional structures, and stakeholder relationships. While all three cases sought to enhance collaboration between government and non-government actors, they employed different governance models that shaped how power was shared. The case studies showed:

- Historical context influences trust. Co-governance can be used as a mechanism to rebuild trust between stakeholders and can build on the trust that already exists between different stakeholders.
- Power-sharing can take different forms – from delegating decisions about what recommendations to make to government to setting a common agenda for agencies to work towards.
- Stakeholder representation and participation may also vary based on co-governance design and resources – from limited membership to broader open membership.
- Trust-building, both within the group and the broader community, is influenced by accountability and transparency mechanisms. Those mechanisms may look different if managed by government compared to non-government actors.
- Governance frameworks must adapt to balance power and participation.

Therefore, key enablers that support trust-building in co-governance include:

- **Recognition of historical context** to acknowledge past injustices and foster credibility.
- **Inclusive representation** to ensure diverse voices are actively involved in governance processes.
- **Transparency and accountability mechanisms** to reinforce legitimacy and sustain engagement.
- **Adaptability and responsiveness** to build trust incrementally and align governance with stakeholder needs.

By embedding these enablers into governance structures, co-governance arrangements can foster trust that is not only established but also sustained over time

Power sharing can be supported through collaborative decision-making, flexible governance, participant capacity-building and resourcing support to low resource members. It could be argued that taking an intersectional approach – recognising how different social identities, experiences, context and power relations intersect and interact (Bates et al. 2024) – could help build trust.

Trust and power-sharing are interdependent yet distinct – trust enables collaboration but remains fragile without equitable power sharing, while power-sharing in a context of low trust can lead to increases in trust, (unacknowledged) uneven power can erode trust even when formal power sharing is in place. Trust in co-governance

arrangements is enhanced by both transparency *and* power sharing. Reporting and stakeholder engagement may foster trust when embedded in institutional structures that grant marginalised groups a share in decision-making power.

To ensure long-term collaboration, governance structures must be both responsive and adaptable to changes in context and also changes in engagement or participation. Governance structures must be sustainable within the current operational context with a mutual recognition of the limits of what participants can deliver. Addressing the historical context and systemic inequities requires more than inclusion – ongoing accountability, iterative policy adjustments, and safeguards against dominant actors controlling governance outcomes are needed. Flexible co-governance models and participatory decision-making structures ensure that trust is not only established but continuously reinforced.

8.2 Discussion

This study sought to identify how co-governance can contribute to building trust in government. The findings demonstrate the intricate relationship between trust and power in co-governance, and how their interaction shapes both governance processes and outcomes. Trust enables cooperation but is not static; it evolves in response to governance structures, power dynamics, and stakeholder interactions. When managed effectively, this interplay fosters inclusivity, legitimacy, and sustainability, but if left unbalanced, can create tensions that weaken the effectiveness of co-governance. Trust may drive the need for co-governance; at the same time, trust may be a precursor for co-governance. It is expected that managed well, co-governance can lead to increased trust between the actors involved and potentially this may in the longer-term impact on trust in government. That said, trust is complex.

8.2.1 Trust as a multilevel, dynamic, and evolving process

Trust in co-governance is complex, operating at multiple levels, evolving over time, and requiring continuous reinforcement. Understanding trust as multilevel, dynamic, and process-driven is essential for designing governance structures that foster long-term legitimacy and participation and ultimately build and sustain trust.

Trust as a multilevel phenomenon

Trust does not function uniformly across different levels of governance. Gaining trust at one level does not necessarily translate to trust at another. For example, individuals may develop trust in specific community leaders or governance structures without extending that trust to government organisations or the institution of government more broadly. Similarly, enhanced trust in a co-governance process – where multiple stakeholders share decision-making – does not always lead to greater trust in government more broadly. Even when co-governance mechanisms increase inclusivity and responsiveness, stakeholders may still remain sceptical of government intentions, historical commitments, or long-term accountability. This distinction is critical because it highlights that trust is layered and context-dependent rather than a single, transferable outcome.

At the institutional level, trust is shaped by how power is distributed within governance frameworks. If governance structures provide stakeholders with real decision-making influence, trust in those institutions can improve. However, when participatory mechanisms lack enforcement power or remain subordinate to centralised authority, trust may plateau or erode despite transparency efforts. At the cross-sectoral level, trust depends on how government, civil society, and community actors interact. Trust in one group, such as non-governmental organisations or grassroots leadership, does not guarantee trust in broader institutions, particularly if power remains concentrated.

Trust as a dynamic concept

Trust is not static – it shifts based on governance actions, historical memory, and stakeholder experiences. Past governance failures can create long-term scepticism, while consistent and transparent engagement can gradually

rebuild confidence. However, trust can also be fragile; a single instance of broken commitments, exclusion, or unfulfilled promises can quickly undo progress. Furthermore, trust dynamics vary across different groups – while one sector may see improvement in trust over time, another may become more disillusioned if they perceive governance structures as symbolic rather than substantive. Because trust is constantly renegotiated, governance systems must be adaptive, proactive, and responsive to shifting expectations.

Trust as a process, not an outcome

Trust cannot be assumed or secured through one-time interventions; it must be continuously reinforced. Procedural transparency alone is insufficient – trust depends on whether accountability mechanisms ensure that commitments translate into action. A governance model that fosters inclusivity but fails to redistribute power or ensure long-term institutional commitment risks reinforcing scepticism rather than alleviating it. Trust is most sustainable when governance systems align with stakeholder priorities, remain accountable beyond short-term political cycles, and adapt to changing needs over time.

Ultimately, trust-building requires more than transparency or consultation; it demands ongoing commitment to fair power distribution, long-term accountability, and structural adaptation. Without these elements, governance risks becoming performative rather than participatory, reinforcing scepticism instead of fostering confidence.

Power as structured, contested, and evolving in governance

Power in governance is not simply about authority but about how influence is structured, distributed, and contested within decision-making processes. While participatory governance models often emphasise inclusivity, the extent to which power is genuinely shared varies significantly. In many cases, formal structures allow for stakeholder engagement, yet ultimate decision-making authority remains centralised, limiting the scope of influence that non-governmental actors can exert. On the other hand, if government acts against the advice or interests of the non-government stakeholders in the co-governance arrangement, this can destabilise or undermine the arrangement itself. Therefore although non-government actors tend to have less direct power, their involvement in co-governance can constrain government's actions and enable government to be held accountable.

Power as a structured system

Governance frameworks define who has formal authority, agenda-setting power, and control over resources, but this does not always align with the principles of equitable power-sharing. Co-governance structures may increase transparency and participation, but they do not necessarily transfer decision-making power to stakeholders; for example, a co-governance group may make recommendations to ultimate decision-makers in government. Even in models where consensus-based decision-making is encouraged, policy control and resource allocation often remain within institutional actors. This structural imbalance means that participatory processes function more as consultation than empowerment, with key decisions still being made and shaped by those who traditionally hold power.

Power as a contested process

Power is not static – it is continuously negotiated, challenged and reinforced. Stakeholders may gain influence within governance processes, but this does not always result in institutional shifts that embed shared authority. Government actors may adopt participatory mechanisms but still retain control over key decisions, funding priorities, and implementation frameworks, limiting the transformative potential of power redistribution. At the same time, community leadership and advocacy efforts play a crucial role in pushing back against bureaucratic inertia and policy restrictions.

Political endorsement can accelerate power shifts, but may also introduce instability and external dependencies. When governance models rely on high-level political champions for legitimacy, the sustainability of power-sharing becomes uncertain. Without institutional safeguards, shifts in leadership or policy direction can re-centralize authority, undermining previous progress towards co-governance. This dynamic reinforces the need for structural mechanisms that protect stakeholder influence beyond temporary political cycles.

Power as an evolving dynamic

Power in co-governance is not a fixed achievement but an ongoing process that requires continuous reinforcement. While participatory models may introduce greater inclusivity, sustained power shifts depend on structural safeguards that prevent authority from reverting to dominant actors. Without mechanisms that embed stakeholder influence into co-governance structures, participation risks becoming symbolic rather than substantive. Decision-making processes must ensure that transparency translates into accountability and that stakeholder engagement leads to meaningful influence rather than superficial inclusion.

Power is structured, contested, and constantly evolving. While co-governance models promote participation, the extent to which power is redistributed rather than retained by institutions determines their effectiveness. Without clear structural commitments to long-term power-sharing, co-governance risks perpetuating existing hierarchies rather than transforming them. Sustainable power shifts require mechanisms that embed stakeholder authority within co-governance frameworks, ensuring that influence is not dependent on external validation or political will but is instead institutionalized and protected over time.

Trust as a product and prerequisite of power dynamics

Trust is both a prerequisite for and a product of co-governance. When power is distributed equitably, trust is reinforced as stakeholders perceive their participation as meaningful rather than symbolic. However, when power remains concentrated within institutional actors, trust is undermined, reinforcing scepticism and limiting the transformative potential of co-governance. This is particularly evident in contexts where historical injustices, systemic exclusion, and hierarchical decision-making have eroded confidence in public governance structures. In such cases, trust-building requires more than transparency and consultation – it demands fundamental shifts in power structures to ensure inclusive and substantive participation. When trust is established in co-governance processes, it strengthens accountability, as stakeholders become more willing to engage, monitor, and hold decision-makers responsible.

Contextual factors shaping trust-power interactions

The effectiveness of co-governance is shaped by the interaction between trust and power within distinct historical, institutional, and political contexts. In settings where mistrust is deeply rooted in structural exclusion or historical injustices, trust-building requires more than procedural transparency – it demands power redistribution, institutional recognition of past injustices, and mechanisms that ensure long-term accountability. Without these, trust remains fragile, and governance structures risk reinforcing existing hierarchies rather than fostering meaningful collaboration.

In contrast, where trust deficits arise primarily from concerns over co-governance efficiency, coordination, or data integrity, transparency and procedural safeguards may be sufficient to strengthen institutional credibility without necessitating fundamental power shifts. However, even in these contexts, power imbalances can re-emerge if co-governance mechanisms fail to adapt to evolving stakeholder needs. Rigid or top-down decision-making structures may lead to renewed scepticism, even in initially well-functioning co-governance arrangements.

Ultimately, the relationship between trust and power-sharing determines the long-term sustainability of co-governance models. When co-governance structures achieve a balance between accountability, inclusivity, and power distribution, they remain adaptive, responsive, and resilient. However, if power asymmetries persist or trust-building efforts remain superficial, co-governance risks becoming performative rather than transformative, undermining its legitimacy and effectiveness over time.

8.2.2 Implications for co-governance

The case studies emphasise that co-governance frameworks must be structured to balance trust and power-sharing rather than treating them as separate concerns. Effective co-governance requires:

- **Embedding power-sharing into co-governance structures**, ensuring stakeholders have meaningful influence over priorities and decisions.
- **Building trust through transparency and inclusivity**, ensuring these mechanisms go beyond consultation to provide real authority.
- **Investing in capacity-building**, to ensure stakeholders have the resources and skills to participate meaningfully.
- Designing **flexible governance structures** that can adapt to changing social and political contexts while maintaining accountability.

While specific governance challenges vary by context, the broader lesson is clear: co-governance cannot succeed without actively managing the relationship between trust and power. By ensuring that trust-building is backed by substantive power redistribution, co-governance can move beyond symbolic participation to create meaningful, equitable, and sustainable outcomes. One important outcome of this process is enhanced accountability, as governance structures that integrate trust and power-sharing more effectively can be better positioned to maintain legitimacy, responsiveness, and long-term success.

Further research may be required to check the health of co-governance arrangements to ensure they achieve their objectives, share power, and build trust.

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Appendix A Co-governance process identified in the literature

Table 14: Key stages of co-governance – facilitators

Identifying when co-governance may be beneficial	Establishing the co-governance arrangement	Implementing co-governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be initiated by any party (not just government) • Where benefits of working together higher than working independently (e.g. to address lack of trust or to benefit from trust) ^g • Where benefit (public value) of collaborations exceeds cost of collaboration (policy outcomes or ethical outcomes) ^{c,g} • To respond to external driver or policy ^g • Are specific to a problem and objectives ^a (e.g. to redress power, resource, information asymmetry; to solve 'wicked' problem ^{f,g}) • Require delegated authority ^a that allows capacity for action • Require powerful sponsors or champions ^d 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the system context and the collaboration dynamics ^g • Ensure the group has the authority to act ^h, and has senior and middle management support ^a • Design a formal (visible), credible and independent governance mechanism – with clear and transparent roles, processes, tools and structures around decision-making ^{a,f,h,i} • Include actors from civil society affected by the initiative ^{g,h,i} in the governance – alongside other organisational actors • Appoint a clear, independent ⁱ and skilled leader that instils trust and supports contributions, facilitating collaboration ^{a,f,j} • Establish mechanisms that enable the group to have the capacity to act, through procedural and institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources ^g • Provide a realistic timeframe to establish 	<p><u>Strategic level:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a joint understanding and commitment to the goals and scope (including accountability and desired outcomes) ^{a,f} • Develop mutual understanding, respect and trust (accepting trust may vary) • Identify strategies to build trust ^{a,f,g}, including by learning, sharing information ⁱ and resources ^l, and being transparent ^j • Ensure there is a joint understanding of commonalities and differences between collaborators, including different organisational cultures ^a • Reflect on strengths and weaknesses of arrangement ^e and adapt to changes in operating environment to sustain the arrangement over the long-term ^a • Supported to deliver and sustain collective action <p><u>Operational level (diagnosis, design, implementation and assessment ^d):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a theory of change ^q through a process of discovery, definition, deliberation and determination ^{g,j} – leading to action or strategy (including measures of success) – fed by and leading to trust, understanding, legitimacy and commitment ^{d,k} • Have repeated, face-to-face dialogue, communication, trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding ^{f,g,j,l} • Have the support of an intermediary (backbone support organisation), and coordination of reinforcing activities across organisations ^k • Develop additional processes, such as co-creation, to drive innovative outcomes ^b 	<p><u>Outcomes from actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans and theories of change/action • Short, medium and long-term outcomes 'on the ground' that have occurred due to the collaborative arrangement (intentional or otherwise) ^g <p><u>Outcomes from process ^q</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation and engagement ^p • Improved relationships • Improved understanding • Improved accountability • Increased trust • Redressed power, information and resource imbalance

Identifying when co-governance may be beneficial	Establishing the co-governance arrangement	Implementing co-governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes
	and implement the arrangement ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an accountable evaluation system that tracks inputs, processes and outcomes, and provides assurance back to bureaucracies ^{a,d} Communicate accomplishments as early as possible ^a 	

Table 15: Key stages of co-governance – barriers

Identifying when co-governance may be beneficial	Establishing the co-governance arrangement	Implementing co-governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No willingness to engage ^m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of leadership ⁿ Lack of representation ^{i,o} High turnover of membership ⁱ Limited engagement ^{i,o} Lack of supporting programs ⁿ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of time and resources ^{m,i,o} Lack of trust ^{n,i} Limitations of consensus building, particularly for contentious issues ⁱ Reactive rather than proactive ⁱ Lack of focus ⁱ Difficulty addressing complex issues ^o 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of outcomes affect continuity ⁱ

^a Butcher et al. (2019), ^b Torfing et al. (2021), ^c Lahat and Sher-Hadar (2020), ^d The intersector toolkit (<https://intersector.com/toolkit/>), ^e SNAICC, ^f Ansell and Gash (2008), ^g Emerson et al. (2012), ^h Wagenaar (2017), ⁱ Boyle et al. (2021), ^j Grootjans et al. (2022), ^k Clarke (2017), ^l Pierre et al. (2020), ^m Torfing and Ansell (2017), ⁿ Che and Hickey (2021), ^o Davies and Procter (2020), ^p Bartoletti and Faccioli (2020), ^q Process identified as important if not more important than the outcomes, NRCoP and ANZSOG 'Indigenous knowledge, partnerships and shared decision-making: Culturally responsive regulation in action', 28 February 2023.

Appendix B Summary of data collection by case

Waterloo human services collaborative group

The Waterloo case study is an example of a place-based co-governance arrangement where key stakeholders came together to work alongside the social housing redevelopment in the Waterloo area of Sydney. The Waterloo Group was established in 2021 'to assist with engagement, planning, and coordinated responses by human services agencies to the Waterloo community, in advance of the Waterloo Estate redevelopment, to address the current and future needs of the community, specifically those living in public housing' (Waterloo Human Services *Action Plan*).

The Waterloo Human Services Group provided initial support to participate in the case study in April 2023. The method was co-designed with a small working group in June 2023. To minimise burden and maximise use of existing information, the research prioritised document review and observations, collected data during existing meetings, and conducted interviews to address gaps in understanding. The findings were reported back to the group and validated in February 2024 and approved in May 2024.

In addition to documents reviewed, data included 9 group discussions and 10 individual interviews, and observations of both meetings and group correspondence.

National Disability Data Asset – The process of developing co-governance

The National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) case study documents the process of designing and proposing to establish a co-governance arrangement for the enduring National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) by the NDDA Pilot Disability Advisory Council (DAC). The DAC was established in 2020 to advise on the acceptability of the proposed NDDA; however, its scope and the mechanism to deliver this scope, over time grew into a process that had some of the practices that we may expect to see in co-governance arrangements – the key difference being the membership of the group did not include government representatives hence this is not co-governance as defined by this project. The DAC was tasked to deliver recommendations to government on how the asset should be used and any governance or safeguard arrangements that should be in place to build and maintain public trust in the asset. The process of establishing the co-governance of the NDDA, through the collaborative work of the DAC and its recommendations to Ministers, is included as a case study in this project given the rich insights from the process of designing co-governance and any relevant lessons for practices that may enable co-governance.

The co-chairs of the NDDA Council for the enduring asset agreed for the process of developing co-governance to be included as a case study in this study in May 2024. Similar to the Waterloo case study, the research prioritised document review (both public documents and internal documents) and conducted interviews to address gaps in understanding. A total of 15 interviews with 18 stakeholders were conducted between May and September 2024. The draft report was sent to all participants to validate (given the DAC no longer existed) in early November 2024.

Maranguka

The Maranguka case study was conducted as a secondary analysis using data from existing publications, reports, and publicly available resources. This approach ensured a focused and in-depth examination of the governance framework and outcomes of the initiative, relying on data already generated by various stakeholders involved in or studying Maranguka.

Data sources included government reports, NGO evaluations, academic papers, and consultancy assessments. Additionally, grey literature such as stakeholder websites, speeches, blogs, and videos offered valuable insights into the operational and community-driven aspects of the initiative. Reports documenting the outcomes of Maranguka, such as those by KPMG and Just Reinvest NSW, were particularly instrumental in providing quantitative and qualitative evidence of the initiative's impact.

The data collection process followed a systematic approach to identify and analyse relevant materials. Predefined search terms were used to locate publications via platforms such as Google Scholar and repositories like Australian Policy Online (APO). Manual screening and snowball sampling complemented this process, allowing for the inclusion of reports and stakeholder documents not immediately accessible through academic or formal databases.

The secondary data included detailed accounts of Maranguka's governance structures, trust-building efforts, and community engagement strategies. Quantitative metrics, such as reductions in crime rates and youth engagement indicators, were drawn from administrative datasets reported in existing evaluations and ABS websites. These were complemented by qualitative data on cultural leadership and stakeholder collaboration, highlighting the nuanced dynamics of the initiative.

By relying on secondary data, this case study synthesised existing knowledge to provide a coherent and comprehensive analysis of the Maranguka initiative. This method ensured efficiency while maintaining the depth required to explore the complexities of collaborative governance and justice reinvestment in Bourke.

Limitations of the method used for the Maranguka case study

While the secondary data analysis approach provided a structured and efficient way to examine the governance framework and outcomes of the initiative, it also introduced several methodological limitations. First, the reliance on existing publications and reports means that the analysis is shaped by the perspectives, priorities, and potential biases of the original data sources. Reports produced by government agencies, NGOs, and consultancy firms often reflect institutional priorities and evaluation frameworks that may not fully capture informal governance dynamics, community perspectives, or unintended consequences of the initiative. The absence of primary data collection limits the ability to verify claims, contextualize findings, or explore emerging issues beyond what has been previously documented.

Second, while grey literature and stakeholder-generated content offer valuable insights into operational and community-driven aspects, these sources vary in reliability, depth, and analytical rigour. Materials such as blogs, speeches, and stakeholder websites may reflect advocacy positions rather than independent evaluations, potentially influencing how governance success is framed. In this report, we focus on "who", "what" and "how" questions to reduce such bias.

Despite these limitations, the secondary data approach enabled a cohesive synthesis of existing knowledge, allowing for an in-depth examination of Maranguka's governance model while situating it within broader discussions of co-governance and justice reinvestment. However, future research could benefit from direct engagement with stakeholders, access to internal governance documents, and longitudinal data collection to provide a more dynamic and contextually rich understanding of the initiative's long-term impacts.

Appendix C Discussion guide

About your organisation and you

- What is your organisation?
- What is your relationship to the Group? (organisation and you)
- What is your role in the Group? (you)

About your understanding of co-governance

- What does co-governance mean to you/your organisation?
- What does co-governance mean to you in terms of the Group?
- What do you hope to get out of the Group? (you/your organisation)

How was co-governance was established and organised for the Group?

- How did the Group come about? (if you were involved)
- How did you get involved? (your organisation, you)
- How is co-governance organised?
 - For example, leadership; formal arrangements/agreements (one or more?), resourcing; processes; tracking progress; and informal arrangements
- What works well? What could be improved?

How does the Group operate in terms of:

- Strategic planning
 - What have you been involved in or planning to be involved in?
 - What has helped (or not helped) strategic planning?
- Operational activities
 - What operational activities have you been involved in? (examples?)
 - What has helped (or not helped) strategic planning?
- What works well? What could be improved?

What are the outcomes to date for the Group?

- In terms of the co-governance process
 - Were your expectations of co-governance met?
 - Has co-governance had a positive or negative impact on your or your organisations involvement? (has it encouraged you to be a part of the group or discouraged you from being involved)
 - Do you think co-governance has any impact on relationships and trust?
- In terms of what outcomes the group has achieved
 - Against its objectives to date?
 - What do you think it will achieve in the future?
- In terms of outcomes for the community (if different from above)
 - What tangible outcomes have been achieved for residents?
- What works well? What could be improved?

Learnings for this group and others

- Any final thoughts about how the approach could be improved, what would you keep or get rid of?
- If you could do things differently, what would you do?
- Have you seen good examples of co-governance elsewhere?

Appendix D Summaries of case study findings

Table 16: Summary of case studies: Identifying the need for co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA	Maranguka
Why	How was the need for co-governance identified and defined?	<p>Advocacy by community organisations identified a clear ['burning'] need to address complex needs and disjointed services in the Waterloo community associated with the Waterloo redevelopment. The need took time to evidence. The need was 'instrumental' – i.e. to solve a problem.</p> <p>Identified cross-responsibility for issues faced in the community, and therefore the need to work together. Required stakeholders to be willing to work together – to have common sentiment and goodwill.</p> <p>Key stakeholders looked at what tools could be used to work together, and co-governance/collaboration was identified as the optimal solution to focus existing resources.</p>	<p>The need for the NDDA was clear, but the asset needed community trust (also referred to as a social licence) to operate. Therefore, the need was 'ethical' and 'instrumental', to gain community support as well as expertise.</p> <p>The Disability Advisory Council identified co-governance as a mechanism to develop how community trust could be built and maintained alongside broader engagement with the disability community during the pilot period.</p>	<p>The need for co-governance was identified through local recognition of deep systemic failure. By 2012, Bourke topped six of eight major crime categories and had the highest juvenile conviction rate in NSW. One in five Aboriginal young people had been sentenced or were on remand (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017).</p> <p>These conditions, and frustration with imposed, culturally misaligned services, underscored the need for community-led decision-making.</p>
Who	<p>Who instigated the co-governance arrangement?</p> <p>What was required to initiate the arrangement?</p>	<p>Driven by community organisations who initiated discussions with government stakeholders.</p> <p>Once DCJ leadership was persuaded of the need for the group, DCJ led its establishment with funding for secretariat from LAHC.</p>	<p>The idea that co-governance could be a way to build community trust in the implementation of the NDDA was proposed by a member of the DAC as part of the Pilot's DAC discussions in mid-2021 and was subsequently supported by community groups and experts involved in arms-length testing of the co-governance proposals.</p> <p>The establishment of the DAC and the NDDA pilot project, required a mandate from the Digital Ministerial Council (later the Digital and Data</p>	<p>The Bourke Tribal Council, as the collective voice of the Aboriginal community, instigated the need for a new approach to justice. Alister Ferguson, a respected Elder and key figure within the Council, then took the lead in operationalising this vision, approaching Sarah Hopkins from Just Reinvest NSW in 2012 to propose a justice reinvestment model.</p> <p>This required creating a safe space for conversations, building trust among stakeholders, and developing an</p>

			Ministerial Council) and the Disability Ministerial Reform Council.	empowerment framework aligned with the community's vision.
What	<p>What is the aim/scope/timeframe?</p> <p>Were stakeholders involved in defining the scope?</p>	<p>To improve coordination of human services in the Waterloo precinct. While the Group was initiated to support residents during the redevelopment of social housing in the area, the need was there irrespective of the development. However, the redevelopment enabled action.</p> <p>No set timeframe. This had advantages and disadvantages. While the long-term commitment was welcome, it also created uncertainty.</p> <p>The scope, objectives and priority actions were co-designed with key stakeholders.</p>	<p>The initial pilot phase, including the DAC, was to last two years.</p> <p>It is unclear the extent to which stakeholders were involved in defining the scope of the Pilot's DAC. NSW and SA public servants consulted the disability community in the pre-pilot stage and the DAC was included as part of Ministerial Council agreement to the Pilot.</p>	<p>Reallocate saved money from the justice system to reinvest in the community in order to address entrenched social and economic inequalities faced by Aboriginal Australians. Initially five years to develop a prototype for Just Invest.</p> <p>The scope, objectives and priority actions were co-designed with key stakeholders</p>

Table 17: Summary of case studies: Establishing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA	Maranguka
Context (including dynamics)	<p>Is the system and context defined?</p> <p>Are collaboration dynamics understood?</p>	<p>There is a long history of the community wanting action. The power to act has rested with government.</p> <p>Collaboration dynamics are driven by role, size and resources of organisations – as well as their legacy (history of involvement in the initiative). Organisations vary in their structure and levels of hierarchy – NGOs are often flat structures, while government often have highly tiered structures meaning that sign-off through organisations can take a long time.</p>	<p>The DAC was established to guide the pilot of the NDDA and inform the development and use of the enduring asset, including the design of ongoing ways to build and maintain community trust (which resulted in the design of a co-governance mechanism).</p> <p>Collaboration at the DAC largely involved people with disability, academics and community group representatives. However, the DAC operated within the broader Pilot, which was delivered with a significant program of government-driven work engaging the disability community – the evidence developed through this work was used by the DAC to inform its recommendations and by public servants to validate those recommendations. In this way, the DAC performed its function within what became a broader collaborative process.</p> <p>Ultimately, Ministers were the decision makers empowered to decide whether to accept the recommendations from this collaboration process.</p>	<p>There is a long history of the community wanting action. The power to act has rested with government. The government services are disconnected and not always providing what people need.</p> <p>Collaboration dynamics are driven by community leadership, community willingness to engage, strong partnership, and clearly defined area of intervention, i.e. crime and the approach toward collective impact, with transparency driven by data insights. Government departments were not all keen to join initially.</p>
Institutional design	<p>What formal arrangement is needed?</p> <p>What provides the group the authority to act?</p> <p>Does it have senior and middle</p>	<p>The formal arrangement is the <i>TOR</i>. This establishes 6 priorities, governance arrangements (one collaborative group and two coordination groups overseeing delivery of actions), and membership. Supported by two addendums. The <i>TOR</i> is not</p>	<p>The ministerial council established the terms of reference for the DAC and the resources to support the Council.</p> <p>The secretariat was led by a senior NSW public servant, who was Head of the NDDA Pilot National Project Team, with the secretariat provided</p>	<p>Initially setting up Bourke Tribal Council as the leadership and Maranguka as the safe space for operation. An MOU was set up in 2015, Later cross sector leadership group (CSLG) and cross sector leadership executives group (CSLE) and sub-</p>

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA	Maranguka
	management support?	time limited – duration for as long as required.	by public servants employed by that team (rather than, for example, a secretariat employed by or appointed by the Chair).	groups were appointed. Bourke Tribal Council has the approval right and other stakeholders need to get their senior authorities.
	Is there sufficient time to establish the arrangement?	<p>There is commitment by senior staff to the group. This could be challenged due to restructures and staff changes.</p> <p>The <i>TOR</i> requires members to have the authority to make decisions (within their remit) – with a pathway identified for unresolved issues – and has support from across participating organisations. Decision-making is by consensus with one vote per organisation.</p> <p>Each organisation may have its own mechanism to authorise their participation.</p> <p>In addition to the <i>TOR</i>, the group is supported by formal and informal arrangements, and ongoing work.</p> <p>The institutional arrangement took at least 6 months to establish. While the process took time, going through the process was an important part of building trust that went on to underpin the work of the group.</p>	<p>The work of the group was time limited and operated during the context of the COVID pandemic. The deliverables were achieved within the time period, noting that the original 18-month timeframe for the Pilot was extended by agreement through the relevant Ministerial Councils to December 2021 (approximately 2 years).</p>	<p>The institutional arrangement developed over five years' time and is still evolving.</p>
Governance and leadership	<p>Is leadership clearly defined?</p> <p>How was leadership established?</p> <p>Are the roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making documented?</p> <p>How do chairs support contributions and</p>	<p>The main group is led by 3 co-chairs (senior staff from DCJ, SLHD and an NGO). The two coordination groups are led by 2 co-chairs (one government, one NGO/community group representative).</p> <p>The leadership of the groups was determined by a nomination process (therefore open to anyone) – and was potentially affected by the resources available to participate. The mix of government and non-</p>	<p>The chair of the group was clearly defined as part of the appointment process.</p> <p>The work of the group was documented.</p> <p>The chair ensured each member of the Council was heard and valued.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The initial leadership was driven by Alistair Ferguson and later through network and strategic appointment by CSLG and approved by Bourke Tribal Council.</p> <p>Sydney Policy Lab's report on governance roles and tools (2023) provides relevant insights. However, this scoping review did not cover the internal decision-making process that</p>

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA	Maranguka
	enable collaboration?	<p>government chairs may add credibility to the arrangement.</p> <p>The roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making is well-documented, with actions recorded and tracked by the secretariat.</p> <p>Chairs manage agendas, support contributions from all participants, and facilitate collaboration.</p>		<p>shaped program implementation.</p> <p>No very specific information available at project level regarding the governance.</p>
Composition	<p>Is membership representative?</p> <p>Does membership include civil society?</p> <p>Is power distributed equally?</p>	<p>Membership comprises government, NGOs, and community representatives (representative organisations and individuals).</p> <p>Government appears overrepresented in terms of individuals attending meetings; community representatives appear underrepresented. This was attributed to resourcing, capacity, workloads, and politics – and the willingness of organisations to engage irrespective of resources available.</p> <p>Membership does include civil society.</p> <p>It is difficult to assess whether power is distributed equally. The process encourages formal equality in power; however, the different representation and capacities of different stakeholders may imply and/or result in unequal power.</p>	<p>The group improved in representation over time. The process of establishing the group and its composition were questioned by members of the DAC.</p> <p>The group included some civil society – this increased over time. It also included some individuals with disability and experience of data and its use in disability contexts, who were not representing any organisation (nor were they researchers).</p> <p>Power appeared to be distributed.</p>	<p>Membership comprises government, NGOs, and community representatives (representative organisation and Tribal Council).</p> <p>Yes. Bourke Tribble Council are composed of members of community. Membership does include civil society.</p> <p>While it is difficult to assess whether power is distributed equally among stakeholders, the process remains community driven. Tensions can arise from a mismatch between government systems—often driven by deadlines, reporting cycles, and procedural requirements—and community approaches that prioritise relationship-building and trust, which require time and continuity.</p> <p>Nonetheless, there has generally been more enthusiasm and constructive engagement than resistance</p>
Resourcing	Is the group able to act through institutional arrangements, leadership,	Additional resourcing (provided by LAHC) enables the group to be supported by a secretariat. Otherwise, organisations draw from existing organisational	The group was able to act through its institutional arrangements with support from a funded secretariat. Some of these	Maranguka is formally incorporated in 2020. There are various agreements with the

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA	Maranguka
	knowledge and resources?	<p>resources and there were examples of organisations funding projects to support the arrangement (evaluation).</p> <p>Members are not paid to attend – there was no expectation there would be additional resources. There is no additional project financing to meet actions – all are within scope of the Group. This ensures group is sustainable (not dependent on funding); however, this means that some groups are underrepresented as they do not have the resources to attend.</p>	arrangements evolved over time.	<p>projects contracted from the governments.</p> <p>The governing body has agreements on the Maranguka Principles.</p> <p>There is call for more formal agreements for collaboration.</p> <p>Attendance is paid via philanthropy.</p>

Table 18: Summary of case studies: Implementing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the operation of the DAC	Maranguka
Strategic implementation	What are the agreed objectives, priorities, timeframe?	TOR establish the six action areas. The <i>Action Plan</i> identifies actions for each action area, and includes which group will monitor the delivery of that action, who will lead the action, and who else will be involved. There is no timeline for the overall group. Actions are prioritised in terms of ‘now’, ‘next’ and ‘later’.	The DAC had agreed objectives, priorities and timeframe. The advisory status was challenged and resolved by making decisions on recommendations that went to the Ministerial Council.	The objectives are to reallocate resources saved from the justice system for the good of the community through collaboration and community self-determination. Initially one year, extended to five years and now incorporated and expected to be long term.
	Is there a joint understanding of and commitment to the objectives?	There is joint understanding and commitment by attendees towards common goals.	There was a joint understanding and commitment to the objectives.	There is joint understanding and commitment by attendees towards common goals.
	What are the mechanisms to develop understanding, respect and trust, including transparency, sharing information and resources?	The action areas and actions were informed by various studies, consultations with community, and workshops with members. Actions provide opportunities for different agencies to work together, and further develop understanding and trust. Delivery of actions also increases trust with others.	The secretariat, and the members themselves, facilitated the development of understanding. Respect and trust was managed in the support and leadership of the group. Transparency was questioned and some improvements were made over time.	Data insights-driven, evidence-based decision making; culturally appropriate and respectful data presentation; the application of Indigenous data sovereignty principles; protective data storage.
				Training to achieve cultural competence.
				Embedded cultural perspectives to all aspect of Maranguka’s governance and make the initiative community centred.
	Is there understanding of the commonalities and differences between collaborators, including cultural?	Examples of group discussing terms or issues that mean different things to different stakeholders – such as anti-social behaviour. Willingness to learn from each other and understand differences in perspectives, ways of working, and resources.	Different members had different strengths and knowledge and this was understood. Rather than being considered strengths/deficits, the group and the secretariat focused on different strengths. Language of business was difficult at first, with a large group of academics using academic language, but	Yes. Multiple stakeholders from outside the community talked about learning to respect the different approaches of the community, respectful to different time schedules, the need for flexibility.

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the operation of the DAC	Maranguka
			this was resolved over time.	
	<p>Is the group responsive to change in need?</p> <p>Is the group sustainable long-term?</p>	<p>The group appears responsive to changes in the context. Following recent announcement regarding the redevelopment of Waterloo, those involved were invited to present to the Group.</p> <p>Group has made decisions, such as concerning resourcing, to enable it to be sustainable long-term.</p>	<p>The secretariat and the group appeared to be responsive across the period of operation.</p> <p>The group was established for a fixed term. However, the recommendations were to establish a co-governance group closer to the ministers in the longer term.</p>	<p>Yes. Maranguka adapted its governing structure to cross sectoral leadership in response to the different subject matters and different level of governance.</p> <p>Maranguka faces challenges in terms of funding the governing groups participation. So far it has secured charity funds to support their work. According to the fundholders in a video, they are talking about longer term. But there were queries about whether the current voluntary service delivery should be paid.</p>
Operational implementation	Is there a program logic?	Developed as part of a recent evaluation (finalised in 2022).	No program logic.	<p>Yes. The program's design centres on the Justice Reinvestment model, aiming to reallocate resources to Bourke for crime prevention and community strengthening. Achieving this requires a robust collective impact approach, bringing together diverse partners (government agencies, NGOs, and the community) to coordinate their efforts and achieve mutually reinforcing activities.</p>
	Is there an ongoing engagement process?	Regular meetings, where issues are discussed openly and transparently. Key points are noted and actions are recorded in an ongoing action log.	<p>Ongoing engagement through meetings.</p> <p>Organisational differences understood over time – organisational differences were seen as an asset.</p>	<p>Daily meetings for community, quarterly meeting with other stakeholders.</p> <p>Members acknowledged the different resources</p>

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the operation of the DAC	Maranguka
	Are organisational differences understood?	<p>Members acknowledged the different resources and perspectives of different organisations.</p> <p>The group recognised different approaches to privacy and information sharing, as well as bureaucracy and collaboration, by different organisations. This limited the sharing of data and shaped what outcomes could be achieved.</p>		<p>and perspectives of different organisations.</p> <p>It is community centred. Stakeholders showed respect to community sensitivity about data, flexibility and cultural responsiveness.</p> <p>Holding meetings in person.</p>
	<p>How are decisions made?</p> <p>How is collective action facilitated?</p>	<p>Discussion is encouraged to ensure decisions are informed. Decisions are then reached by consensus. Each group has one vote.</p> <p>There are different types of decisions – voting during meetings (soft decisions), and more formal decisions (hard decisions).</p> <p>Participants are working to a common purpose. Some actions are business as usual – therefore, not necessarily collective action but working towards a common agenda.</p> <p>Some group decisions then required further approval within organisations.</p>	<p>Decisions were made by consensus.</p> <p>The work of the group was facilitated by the secretariat.</p>	<p>Conversations first, consensus to take actions. When actions needed to take outside community, e.g. data online, seek community approval.</p> <p>Some group decisions then required further approval within organisations.</p>
	Are stakeholders represented?	<p>Some stakeholders are not involved due to resource constraints. Others are limited in their participation. Community is represented directly and through community groups.</p> <p>While the groups work actively to fill gaps in membership or bring others along outside of</p>	<p>Questioned whether stakeholders were adequately represented. This improved over time. It was recognised stakeholders could never truly be represented.</p>	<p>The cross sectoral leadership group, executives and subgroups represent stakeholders from different partners and the community. The Tribal Council represent the community and Maranguka was the interface of the council and the partners.</p>

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the operation of the DAC	Maranguka
		meetings, some groups are still underrepresented.		
	Are stakeholders given the opportunity to engage?	The agenda items of the main group was observed not to run to time – discussion was often dominated by government representatives (given their over representation). However, Chairs prompted non-government participants to participate and they are heard.	DAC members could engage in decision-making for recommendations made. Other community members were engaged through broader active engagement initiatives.	Yes. They have to come to Bourke to meet in person.
Operational support	What operational support is required?	A secretariat (one full time, one part-time staff member) provides support for all groups and allows the executive to function on the group and decision-making rather than process. Resourcing was provided by LAHC. It was unclear whether the group could be sustained without these resources.	The DAC was supported by a well-resourced secretariat which was highly motivated to support the success of the DAC. The secretariat had expertise in disability and data.	A secretariat (one full time, one part-time staff member) provides support for all groups and allows the executive to function on the group and decision-making rather than process. Resourcing was provided by LAHC. It was unclear whether the group could be sustained without these resources.

Table 19: Summary of case studies: How do you know co-governance is working

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – outcomes achieved by the DAC	Maranguka
Outcomes from collaboration activities	What organisational outputs has the group achieved? (e.g. plans, theories of change/action)	Examples include the <i>TOR</i> , the <i>Action Plan</i> , Tenant Survey and theory of change (facilitated through UNSW research project).	Recommended governance arrangement for the enduring NDDA (structure, terms of reference, charter) and other mechanisms to safeguard disability data.	<p>Maranguka Strategic Plan-2023-2025</p> <p>Theory of change:</p> <p>Collective impact</p> <p>Data-driven decision-making</p> <p>Empowerment and self-determination</p> <p>Culturally Appropriate methods</p> <p>Life course approach</p>
	What outcomes has the group delivered that are <i>additional</i> to what would have otherwise been achieved?	Examples include the Human Services Collaborative Toolkit, Tenant Survey.	Created a social licence for the NDDA to operate – this would not have been achieved without a co-governance mechanism and leadership by and engagement with people with disability.	<p>Lower crime rates, better family relations and adult employment</p> <p>Improved community engagement, better relationship between the government and community, the policy and the community</p> <p>Addressed issues that the community really cares about</p> <p>The application of Indigenous data sovereignty principles</p> <p>Developed broad partnership</p>
Outcomes from process of collaboration	How have power imbalances been resolved?	<p>Group recognises ongoing power imbalances – although some have been managed.</p> <p>Identified need for training and awareness of how other organisations work.</p> <p>Recognised that action leads may affect how an action is perceived by others; for example, if NSW Police lead the action on anti-social</p>	Decision-making on whether an NDDA is established and how it evolves ultimately rests with government. The new governance mechanism reduces the distance between community representatives and the Ministerial Council.	Through outreach and conversations, developing partnership, appointing high level champion for the community and setting up cross sector leadership groups

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – outcomes achieved by the DAC	Maranguka
		behaviour, this could imply it is criminal behaviour.		
	Have new relationships formed, have existing relationships become stronger?	<p>Established new relationships and improved relationships across different agencies and across different levels of staff.</p> <p>The Group operates in the context of existing and broader relationships and other co- arrangements.</p>	Relationships within the disability community are well established. New relationships with government are continually forming as government staff change.	Established new relationships within the community (Bourke Council); with the police force (Maranguka daily meeting); and with NGOs and education institutions (philanthropy, UNSW, Sydney University).
	Has trust increased?	<p>Trust was required to initiate the arrangement. Trust has increased over time as a result of the arrangement (both due to the process and the progress).</p> <p>Trust has grown through incremental action – the group intentionally looked for early wins. This has encouraged further action and increased participation (by previously absent groups).</p>	Mechanisms have been established to hold government to account.	<p>Trust was created through lots of community engagement at the early stage.</p> <p>Trust was created between community members and community leaders through feeling and seeing changes</p> <p>Trust was created through data conversation and responded to issues identified by the community.</p> <p>Trust was created between government and community through data driven evidence making.</p>
	Is there a willingness to continue or apply the lessons learned here elsewhere?	<p>Willingness to engage and to continue to engage in the long-term.</p> <p>The Group is supported and occurs within a range of other co- activities, including consultation, co- design and collaboration.</p> <p>The Group has provided participants with broader learnings and an increase in understanding of shared responsibility.</p>	Co-governance was established alongside the asset and is intended to continue for the life of the asset. Decision-makers will be closer to government; however, there will be less representation by community organisations due to representation by different governments in a co-governance forum instead of all non- government members of an advisory group.	<p>Willingness to engage and to continue to engage in the long-term. Maranguka is incorporated.</p> <p>The Maranguka case has become a case of success and attract international attention.</p> <p>Maranguka has provided community members a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.</p>

Table 20: Summary of case studies: Cultural considerations (First Nations)

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the outcome of the DAC	Maranguka
Respond to cultural needs	What are the cultural needs?	Complex history in the area and different cultural needs.	The cultural needs and considerations for the NDDA were not specifically identified.	Complex history in the area and different cultural needs.
	Have stakeholders been identified?	Key stakeholders identified.		Key stakeholders identified initially by members of the community and then through snowballing to include philanthropy and corporations.
	Are cultural protocols and different relationships understood?	Unable to be determined whether cultural protocols were understood.	The DAC included a member from FPDN. All members of the Council appeared to be able to contribute and were valued.	It was not mentioned in the documents, but from the reports and stakeholder interviews, cultural protocols were driven by the community and the stakeholders were conscious that they may not be competent in this and need training.
	Is the community engaged and being heard?	Initially, organisations were engaged in the development of the plan.	Reports on engagement suggest cultural needs in relation to First Nations were not identified or addressed in broader engagement processes beyond engagement with FPDN. It is unclear whether they were met within the functioning of the DAC.	It took a lot of initial engagement to building community members' support before the initiative started. The lead up period started several years in advance.
	Are community groups (both services and advocates) engaged and heard?	However, no organisations are resourced to attend the group. Subsequently, organisations have been engaged more through individual projects/actions rather than through attending meetings.		Yes. not only services and advocates, but also users, young people, who were not usually part of the conversations.

Table 21: Summary of case studies: Other considerations

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the outcome of the DAC	Maranguka
Data informs actions	How does data inform need?	Data from NGOs (rather than government departments) helped inform the need for this Group.	Broader consultations informed the need for the NDDA and the priorities of the NDDA.	Data was provided to data conversation meetings and to inform community so that they can decide what is the priority.
	How does data inform priorities?			
	How does data inform whether outcomes are achieved?	Additional data was collected in consultation with tenants and organisations. This supplemented NGO data.		Project reports and Maranguka annual reports.
	How does data identify the health and functioning of the group?	There are differences in value placed on different types of data by different stakeholders (e.g. government versus local NGOs), and different levels of trust in different sources of data. In 2023, a baseline survey of tenants was conducted. The outcomes of this and subsequent surveys will help inform future priorities and whether outcomes have been achieved. Individual evaluations of actions were used to inform whether outcomes had been achieved. The Group also collected data about the health and functioning of the group. This was used to justify changes to how the group operates (frequency of meetings).		KPMG impact assessment reports
The work of the group is transparent	How is the work of the group made public?	There is no online single publicly available repository of information about the group, its membership, or its work.	The DAC released communiques of meetings. Additional engagements were commissioned with community members to promote the NDDA and understand concerns.	There are videos, reports, academic research and news items online.
The group has the capability to	Have capabilities been mapped?	Not documented	Capabilities were not mapped.	Not sure about everyone in the council. But for Maranguka, yes. For the

Objective	Consideration	Waterloo Case study	NDDA – learnings from the outcome of the DAC	Maranguka
participate in decision-making	Have capabilities been developed through training?		Capabilities were not specifically developed. Some support was provided by the secretariat to provide information and support to individual members as needed.	leadership group and executive groups and subgroups, yes.

Appendix E Additional tools and resources

Tools and resources are organised by theme and therefore may appear more than once.

E.1 What is co-governance

- **Would adopting more co-governance arrangements with communities build public trust? A scoping study** produced by the Social Policy Research Centre for ANZSOG, available from <https://anzsog.edu.au/research-insights-and-resources/research/would-adopting-more-co-governance-arrangements-with-communities-build-public-trust/>.

This scoping study, developed during the first stage of the current project is the foundational academic and research basis for our subsequent case studies, this study explores methods to operationalize and implement co-governance. It highlights key findings and implications for policy and practice.

- **The Collaboration Playbook: A leaders guide to cross-sector collaboration.** By Ian Taylor and Nigel Ball, The Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) and the Government Outcomes Lab (GO Lab) University of Oxford. <https://golab.bsg.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-bank/resource-library/collaboration-playbook/>

This evidence-based guide is designed to support leaders in cross-sector collaboration. It addresses the complexities of collaboration highlighting practical tactics using 4 case studies. P. 10 provides a useful overview of five elements of collaboration; leadership, trust, culture, power, and learning. P17 provides useful definition of collaboration.

- **IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation** – see <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>. Developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

The linear model outlines five levels of public participation: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower. Each level defines the public's role in decision-making processes providing a useful resource for identifying and explaining levels and implications of types of engagement.

- **Working together collaboration for health: A practical guide** <https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/images/medicine-health/cphce/websites/2323-02-cphce-website/Working%20Together%20-%20Collaboration%20Guide%20for%20Health%20-%20Digital%20Version%2011-2023.pdf>

This guide provides practical guidance for collaboration both between health and other sectors. Is intended for people and organisations that have identified a complex social problem that can only be resolved through collaboration with other parties, necessitating work across sectoral organisational, professional and personal boundaries. Outlines a conceptual framework of the core elements of intersectoral collaboration for health.

- **Skills, attitudes and behaviours that fuel public innovation: A guide to getting the most from Nesta's Competency Framework for Experimenting and Public Problem Solving.** <https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/skills-attitudes-and-behaviours-fuel-public-innovation/>

The toolkit presents a competency framework that includes essential skills such as creative facilitation and systems thinking, along with attitudes like curiosity and empathy. This resource is useful for understanding and implementing co-governance, as it outlines attitudes and skills necessary to support innovation and

collaboration within public institutions.

- **Australian Public Service Framework for Engagement and Participation** (updated August 2021) produced by the Australian Public Service, available from <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/aps-framework-engagement-and-participation>

This decision tool helps public servants pick the right engagement technique for the problem at hand and includes a catalogue of techniques to apply. It consists of principles for engagement and participation, ways to engage, standards, what citizens and stakeholders should be encouraged to do, and a series of engagement tools.

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. Chapter 7, titled "Collaborative Governance," is particularly relevant for understanding co-governance. It outlines how collaborative governance structures can be established and maintained, emphasizing the importance of cooperation between various stakeholders to plan, implement, and monitor place-based initiatives.

- **The Place-based capability framework** produced by the Victorian Public Sector Commission available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-capability-framework>

This framework complements the "Place-based Approaches: A Guide for the Victorian Public Service, outlines 6 competency areas required for effective place-based approaches; adaptive and facilitative leadership, balancing power and sharing accountability, information and data sharing, joined up work, knowledge and application of place based approaches, and place based monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- **Collaborative governance: An introductory practice guide** produced by PlatformC, available from <https://platformc.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Collaborative%20Governance%20Guide%20June%202020.pdf>

This guide provides an overview of collaborative governance principles and ways of building and sustaining the collaborative governance structures and practices. It addresses questions such as the need for collaborative governance, its evolution over time, and the roles of government and other stakeholders. See 'What are the principles that guide collaborative governance?'

- **Sustaining Collective Impact Efforts Tool**, Tamarack Institute, 2017 available from <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Publications/Sustaining%20Collective%20Impact%20Efforts%20Tool.pdf?hsCtaTracking=60099437-beff-405a-9ff0-6195645617b4%7Cc907aaee-03ca-41f4-bcf0-acb58243a3c3>

This tool focuses on maintaining and sustaining collective impact initiatives. It emphasises 7 factors to ensure long-term sustainability and success: leadership competence, effective collaboration, understanding the community, demonstrating results, strategic funding, staff involvement and integration and community responsiveness.

E.2 When to consider co-governance

- Nesta. **Skills, attitudes and behaviours that fuel public innovation: A guide to getting the most from Nesta's competency framework for experimenting and public problem solving**. Nesta <https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/skills-attitudes-and-behaviours-fuel-public-innovation/>

Nesta is The UK's innovation agency for social good. This guide was developed to develop competencies needed to successfully solve public problems. It can be used to prompt conversations about some of the soft skills needed to work together, accelerate learning, and facilitate change.

- **A framework for place-based approaches: The start of a conversation about working differently for better outcomes, produced by the Victoria Government, available from** <https://www.vic.gov.au/framework-place-based-approaches>

This framework recognizes that working with communities is a key capability for government and government organisations should increase capability to support civic engagement. While focusing on place-focused and place-based approaches, the framework provides useful guidance on community and government readiness (P28) and the time it takes to demonstrate impact (P36).

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. Chapter 7, titled "Collaborative Governance," is particularly relevant for understanding co-governance. It outlines how collaborative governance structures can be established and maintained, emphasizing the importance of cooperation between various stakeholders to plan, implement, and monitor place-based initiatives.

- **The Place-based capability framework** produced by the Victorian Public Sector Commission available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-capability-framework>

This framework complements the "Place-based Approaches: A Guide for the Victorian Public Service, outlines 6 competency areas required for effective place-based approaches; adaptive and facilitative leadership, balancing power and sharing accountability, information and data sharing, joined up work, knowledge and application of place based approaches, and place based monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- **Would adopting more co-governance arrangements with communities build public trust? A scoping study** produced by the Social Policy Research Centre for ANZSOG, available from <https://anzsog.edu.au/research-insights-and-resources/research/would-adopting-more-co-governance-arrangements-with-communities-build-public-trust/>.

This scoping study, developed during the first stage of the current project is the foundational academic and research basis for our subsequent case studies, this study explores methods to operationalize and implement co-governance. It highlights key findings and implications for policy and practice.

- **Co-governance case studies:**
 - Waterloo human services collaborative
 - National Disability Data Alliance
 - Maranguka.

The co-governance case studies provide examples of how different co-governance arrangements came about.

- **The Collaboration Playbook: A leaders guide to cross-sector collaboration.** By Ian Taylor and Nigel Ball, The Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) and the Government Outcomes Lab (GO Lab) University of Oxford. <https://golab.bsg.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-bank/resource-library/collaboration-playbook/>

This evidence-based guide is designed to support leaders in cross-sector collaboration. It addresses the complexities of collaboration highlighting practical tactics using 4 case studies. See the chapter 'Why collaborate (and why not?)' about when to collaborate and the risks of collaboration.

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime. See 'Part 1: Preconditions for exploring JR. 'Is your community ready to explore a JR approach – Are you committed for the long term?' which sets out questions to think about when considering a new approach.

E.3 Setting up co-governance

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. Chapter 7, titled "Collaborative Governance," is particularly relevant for understanding co-governance. It outlines how collaborative governance structures can be established and maintained, emphasizing the importance of cooperation between various stakeholders to plan, implement, and monitor place-based initiatives.

- **The Place-based capability framework** produced by the Victorian Public Sector Commission available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-capability-framework>

This framework complements the "Place-based Approaches: A Guide for the Victorian Public Service, outlines 6 competency areas required for effective place-based approaches; adaptive and facilitative leadership, balancing power and sharing accountability, information and data sharing, joined up work, knowledge and application of place based approaches, and place based monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- **Place-based approaches in action – designing place-based approaches** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/framework-place-based-approaches>

This document complements the "Place-based Approaches: A Guide for the Victorian Public Service. See Section 3, 'Place-based approaches in action – designing place-based approaches', for guidance on designing and implanting place-based approaches.

- **Funding place-based approaches: A toolkit for the Victorian Public Service**, available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-funding-toolkit>

This toolkit complements the "Place-based Approaches: A Guide for the Victorian Public Service. See 'formalising a partnership' (P36) and Flexible Funding Spectrum (P31).

- **Getting stakeholder engagement right.** Australian Public Service Commission, available from <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-mobility-framework/taskforce-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement/getting-stakeholder-engagement-right>.

This resource from the Australian Public Service Commission provides guidance on stakeholder engagement within the APS Mobility Framework. The stakeholder mapping section outlines methods for identifying and categorising stakeholders based on their influence and interest. It includes a template to support in the mapping process.

- **The Collaboration Playbook: A leaders guide to cross-sector collaboration.** By Ian Taylor and Nigel Ball, The Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) and the Government Outcomes Lab (GO Lab) University of Oxford. <https://golab.bsg.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-bank/resource-library/collaboration-playbook/>

This evidence-based guide is designed to support leaders in cross-sector collaboration and recognises you 'need to be vulnerable to win' (P15). It addresses the complexities of collaboration highlighting practical tactics using 4 case studies. See P18 'Leadership'

- **Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability.** <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/9881>

This guidance explains how to engage people who have not been traditionally engaged in different processes. While targeting engagement of people with disability, there are key learnings that can help ensure design, planning and delivery is accessible and meaningfully engages people who have not traditionally been engaged.

- **Systems thinking: An introductory toolkit for Civil Services,** produced by the UK Government Office of Science available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-thinking-for-civil-servants/toolkit>

This explainer for public servants provides an overview of systems thinking concepts. See 'Principle 1: Identify the key issues and establish a collaborating community with a shared goal', and 'Principle 2: Reach a shared understanding of the problem'.

- **Co-governance case studies:**
 - Waterloo human services collaborative
 - National Disability Data Alliance
 - Maranguka

The co-governance case studies provide examples of how different co-governance arrangements came about.

E.4 Implementing co-governance

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 9 'Sustainability of place-based approaches' (P102).

- **A framework for place-based approaches: The start of a conversation about working differently for better outcomes, produced by the Victoria Government,** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/framework-place-based-approaches>

This framework recognizes that working with communities is a key capability for government and government organisations should increase capability to support civic engagement. While focusing on place-focused and

place-based approaches, the framework provides useful guidance on the time it takes to demonstrate impact (P36).

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. Chapter 2, 'Working with local communities and government agencies', is a usual resource to identify ways to work with different types of organisation.

- **Collaborative governance: An introductory practice guide** produced by PlatformC, available from <https://platformc.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Collaborative%20Governance%20Guide%20June%202020.pdf>

This guide provides an overview of collaborative governance principles and ways of building and sustaining the collaborative governance structures and practices. It addresses questions such as the need for collaborative governance, its evolution over time, and the roles of government and other stakeholders. See in particular, 'How does collaborative governance evolve over time'.

- **Systems thinking: An introductory toolkit for Civil Services**, produced by the UK Government Office of Science available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-thinking-for-civil-servants/toolkit>

This explainer for public servants providers an overview of systems thinking concepts. See 'Principle 3: Explore interventions using and understanding of the system and its possible leverage points'.

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime. See 'Part 6: Developing and Implementing your JR plan' which draws on the collective impact approach to (1) set a common agenda, (2) measure change, (3) have mutually reinforcing activities, (4) encourage continuous communication, (5) implement backbone support.

- **Co-governance case studies:**
 - Waterloo human services collaborative
 - National Disability Data Alliance
 - Maranguka

The co-governance case studies provide examples of how different co-governance arrangements came about.

E.5 Outcomes from co-governance

- **A framework for place-based approaches: The start of a conversation about working differently for better outcomes**, produced by the Victoria Government, available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/framework-place-based-approaches>

This framework recognizes that working with communities is a key capability for government and government organisations should increase capability to support civic engagement. While focusing on place-focused and place-based approaches, the framework provides useful guidance on the time it takes to demonstrate impact

(P36).

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 4 'Monitoring, evaluation and learning' which includes key considerations, case studies and additional tools and resources (P50), and Chapter 5 'Data and evidence'.

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for place-based approaches: A toolkit for the Victorian Public Service**, available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-toolkit>

This is a collection of tools developed to monitor, evaluate and learn from place based approaches. The toolkit highlights why monitoring, evaluation and learning is important. Chapter 2 provides an overview of what to consider when setting up a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework. Chapter 3 provides examples and guidance, including how to overcome challenges. The toolkit also includes economic assessments.

- **Systems thinking: An introductory toolkit for Civil Services**, produced by the UK Government Office of Science available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-thinking-for-civil-servants/toolkit>

This explainer for public servants provides an overview of systems thinking concepts. See 'Principle 5: Monitor, evaluation and learn with the community'.

- **Co-governance case studies:**
 - Waterloo human services collaborative
 - National Disability Data Alliance
 - Maranguka

The co-governance case studies provide examples of how different co-governance arrangements came about.

E.6 Cross cutting factors relating to co-governance

Engaging First Nations communities and organisations

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 3 'Working with diverse communities' and the section on working with First Nations communities (P43)

- **Cultural Capability Resources by the Australian Public Service Commission:** available from https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/first-nations-employment/cultural-capability?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The APS provides information, practical guidance, resources, and tools to promote culturally safe and inclusive practices across the public service. These resources aim to uplift cultural capability and support the design and delivery of better products and services.

- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Toolkit:** Developed by the Victorian Public

Sector Commission, available from <https://vpssc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit/>

This toolkit supports public sector workplaces in building their capacity to attract, recruit, and retain Aboriginal employees. It provides guidance on creating culturally safe and inclusive environments. While not directly on community governance, it provides important information on the cultural history, protocols, capacity and potentials of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the work environment, which can be useful references for government stakeholders and in the setting of community governance.

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime.

- **Indigenous Governance Toolkit:** available from <https://aigi.org.au/toolkit>

Developed by the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, this comprehensive online resource assists Indigenous organizations, communities, and individuals in building and strengthening their governance. It covers various aspects, including cultural legitimacy, leadership, and decision-making, providing practical tools and examples to support culturally informed governance practices.

- **Local Government Aboriginal Cultural Capability Toolkit:** published by LGA South Australia, Available from https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/members/services/research-and-publications/library/2023/local-government-aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit?utm_source=chatgpt.com

This toolkit offers practical guidance and resources related to reconciliation and cultural competence. It aims to support councils in developing culturally appropriate governance practices and fostering effective engagement with Aboriginal communities.

Working with other cultural groups and communities

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 3 'Working with diverse communities' which includes guidance on engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, engaging people with disability, engaging with different age groups, engaging LGBTIQ+ communities, and links to additional resources.

- **UN Womens' Intersectionality Resource Guide and Tool Kit: An intersectional approach to leave no one behind,** produced by UN PRPD and UN Women, available from <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf>

This toolkit aims to help organisations and individuals address intersectionality in policies and programs to ensure no one is left behind. It recognises intersectionality is a process – not an add on. It identifies eight enablers and provides a framework to provide an intersectional approach – drawing on practical examples – to help identify who is affected and how, and to include those affected in policy and program design.

- **Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability.**

<https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/9881>

This guidance explains how to engage people who have not been traditionally engaged in different processes. While targeting engagement of people with disability, there are key learnings that can help ensure design, planning and delivery is accessible and meaningfully engages people who have not traditionally been engaged.

- **Cultural Competence Tools by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health**, available from ceh.org.au

This resource offers two tools—one for organisations' to assess their cultural competence (<https://www.ceh.org.au/cultural-competence-assessment-for-organisations/>) and another for practitioners to reflect on their cultural competition <https://www.ceh.org.au/cultural-competence-reflection-tool-for-practitioners/>. These tools assist in assessing and improving cultural competence by focusing on policies, systems, practices, and individual self-reflection. These toolkits include discussions of immigrants and refugees.

Data

- **Government administrative data sources for evaluation in Australia**, provided by the Australian Centre for Evaluation (ACE), Commonwealth Treasury, available from <https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/publications/government-administrative-data-sources-evaluation-australia>

This resource explains what Australian Government routinely collected administrative data is available to inform evaluations – from both Commonwealth agencies and states and territories.

- **Website: Share data**, provided by the Australian Government, Office of the National Data Commissioner, available from <https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/share-data>

This resource, prepared by the Office of the National Data Commission, explains what Australian Government data can be shared and sets out the five safes for deciding if it is safe to share data.

- **Five Safes Framework – Data Confidentiality Guide**, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, available from <https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-confidentiality-guide/five-safes-framework>

This framework provides information on disclosure risk and data, providing useful information to data custodians which can include co-governance groups if generating new data as part of their work.

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 5, 'Data and evidence'

- **Website: How to find local data**, produced by the Victorian Government, available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/finding-local-data-tips-community-led-initiatives>

While this resource has been created by the Victorian Government and relates to Victorian government agencies, it provides a useful overview of the policy framework for accessing public data, key agencies, and how to request data.

- **Taking Control of Our Data: A Discussion Paper on Indigenous Data Governance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Communities**, prepared by the Lowitja Institute, Melbourne, available from

<https://www.lowitja.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Taking-Control-of-Our-Data-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

Part One provides the history of the Indigenous Data Sovereignty Movement about the rights of Indigenous people to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data and the provisions of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. The part explains what data is, its different formats, and provides a model for operationalising Indigenous data sovereignty (P19). Part Two outlines key considerations for a guide for data sovereignty for discussion with the community. The paper provides case studies.

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime. See 'Part 5: Data and justice reinvestment'.

Developing capabilities to build trust, address power imbalances, and increase transparency and accountability

- **Place-based approaches: A guide for the Victorian Public Service** available from <https://www.vic.gov.au/place-based-approaches-guide>

This best practice guide developed by ANZSOG for Victorian Public Service Employees provides overview of the key concepts and elements that underpin best practice place-based approaches. See Chapter 7 'Skills, capabilities and mindsets' (P96).

- **Putting People First: Transforming social services in partnership with people and communities**, developed by the Centre for Policy Development, available from <https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Putting-People-First-FINAL-Web.pdf>

This report describes the fragmented and complex service system and the need to work in partnership with people and communities to resolve this. The report emphasises the work required to build relations and connections, and resolve power dynamics through relational change (Fig 1, P16). In particular, relational change can include collaborative governance that 'challenges existing power dynamics, deepen trust, and promote transparency' (P17). Section 4 includes the need to ground relationships in trust and transparency, sharing and devolving power, being flexible and adaptable, and learning and sharing knowledge.

- **Conversations in the Middle: Practitioner perspectives on people- and place-centred social services**, developed by the Centre for Policy Development, available from <https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Conversations-in-the-middle-formatted-FV.pdf>

This report covers seven key themes for moving to a system that centres people and place. They are, (1) having a shared purpose, (2) grounding relationships in trust and transparency, (3) coordinated and cooperative approaches, (4) sharing and devolving power, (5) flexibility and adaptability, (6) learning and knowledge sharing, and an overarching theme (7) of growing community, provider and government capability and capacity.

- **Recommendation 2.3: Transparency and Collaboration Build Trust in Decisions, Available from:** <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/2021-australian-infrastructure-plan-implementation-and-progress/recommendation-2.3>

This recommendation emphasises building community trust in infrastructure decision-making by ensuring

transparency and reflecting place-based community needs. It provides guidance on inclusive decision-making and long-term planning processes that connect various stakeholders.

- **Strengthening Australian Democracy: published by** [Department of Home Affairs](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us-subsite/files/strengthening-australian-democracy.pdf), available from :
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us-subsite/files/strengthening-australian-democracy.pdf>
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us-subsite/files/strengthening-australian-democracy.pdf>

This document discusses the importance of transparency, accountability, and public trust in governance. It offers insights into tools and strategies to enhance democratic processes and address power imbalances within the Australian context.

Time

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime. In relation to time, the tool kit recognizes the impact of time on collecting and reporting data, the time taken to develop plans and strategies and the importance of taking time to do so, the time needed to engage and coordinate stakeholders, time requirements of participants, and the importance in taking time to build understanding and to build trust.

Resources

- **Justice Reinvest toolkit** developed by Just Reinvest, available from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/resources/files/jr-toolkit-v13-250119-1.pdf>

Just Reinvest is a NSW initiative, bringing together over 20 organisations and individuals to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system through investment in initiatives that reduce crime. Just Reinvest developed a toolkit to help communities learn how to invest in community initiatives that reduce crime. The toolkit identifies resources as a potential circuit breaker to bring about change. Resources can include data and financial resources to invest in new programs. Resources can also be created in the form of savings from investment. See 'Part 8: Reinvesting the savings – making your case for reinvestment'

- **Co-governance case studies:**
 - Waterloo human services collaborative
 - National Disability Data Alliance
 - Maranguka

The co-governance case studies provide examples of how different co-governance arrangements came about.



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