





Partnership Kit:
**Supporting Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
Partnerships**

MISSION
AUSTRALIA | together
we stand



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.

Acknowledgement of Land

An Acknowledgement of Land is a statement included at the beginning of internal and external meetings, team gatherings, presentations, and special events as a way of recognising and as a sign of respect to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who are the traditional custodians of the country you are meeting on. Mission Australia has a standard Acknowledgement of Land, found at the beginning of this Partnership Kit, which can also be found on Mission Australia's Reconciliation page on the Intranet.

For more information on the use of an Acknowledgement of Land, along with information regarding a Welcome to Country, please refer to the *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Factsheet – Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Land*, which can be found on the [Reconciliation intranet page](#).



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Table of contents

Introduction

Background

Purpose

Partnerships at Mission Australia

Using the Partnership Kit

1: Getting to know the community

1.1 Cultural awareness

1.2 Benefits of relationships and partnerships

1.3 Considerations when relationship building

1.4 Knowing your community

1.5 Community and stakeholder mapping

1.6 Early considerations of choosing who to develop relationships and partnerships with

2: Relationship building

2.1 Creating connections and initial conversations

2.2 Courageous conversations

2.3 Communication guide

3: Preparing for partnership

3.1 Determining the 'why'

3.2 Designing your partnership

3.3 Pre-partnership activities

3.4 Mapping opportunities for collaboration

3.5 Partnership approach activity

3.6 Internal preparation for partnership

4: Formalising partnerships

4.1 Knowing when to formalize a partnership

4.2 Our commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities

4.3 Partnership conversations

4.4 Legal Issues to consider

4.5 Financial Issues to consider

4.6 About due diligence

5: Strengthening Partnerships

5.1 Sustainable partnerships

5.2 Celebrations and milestones

5.3 Conducting a partnership health check

6: Beyond the Partnership

6.1 Why a partnership may end

6.2 Forming an exit strategy

Appendices

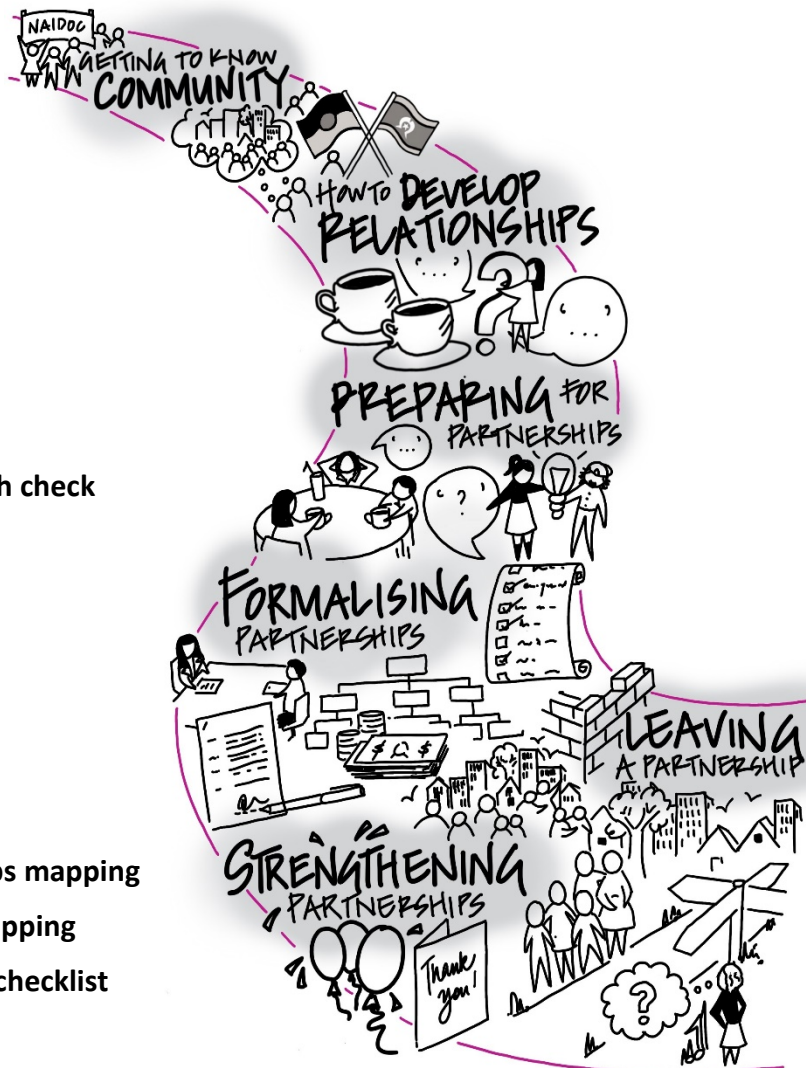
Partnership benefits, risks, and gaps mapping

Opportunities for collaboration mapping

Internal preparing for partnership checklist

Due diligence checklist

Partnership health check



Acknowledgement

This resource draws upon the wealth of experience, knowledge, and insights shared by the many Mission Australia staff whose contributions have made this partnership kit possible. We would also like to thank those staff who have contributed case studies for this resource based on their experiences working in local communities across Australia.

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Illustrations by: Leander Kreltshheim, Service Design and Development.

Background

Mission Australia's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), adopted in 2017, shares an organisational vision for reconciliation. We aspire to deliver culturally appropriate practice, develop trusting relationships, and seek opportunities to restore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to a place of equity, dignity and respect. Founded in a value of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures, the RAP outlines a commitment to developing relationships at every level of our organisation. Specifically, Mission Australia has made a commitment to *develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations to support positive outcomes* (Mission Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan, 2017).

Partnerships have long been considered an essential part of Mission Australia's work in communities throughout Australia, supporting our goal to *Reduce homelessness and Strengthen Communities* across Australia. A framework of core principles and aims outlined within Mission Australia's Partnership Framework has supported the establishment and strengthening of a spectrum of partnerships across many of Mission Australia's current services throughout Australia. In supporting our commitment to *increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations we partner with* (Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, 2017), it was identified that additional resources were needed to equip staff to develop locally grounded relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups.

In forming partnerships, we recognise it is possible to achieve more together than it would be possible to achieve alone.

Partnership Framework

This *Partnership Kit: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships* has been developed through consultation and collaboration with a range of staff and services across Mission Australia, including the RAP Reference Group. These contributors have offered a

wealth of insights and experiences from building partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups, and communities. By building upon the many resources that Mission Australia has already developed to support the Innovate RAP's commitments, this partnership kit collates and highlights practical resources for you to use. Guides include the 'Acknowledgement of Land', 'Calendar of Events', Interactive Ochre online modules, Cultural Awareness training. Additionally, branding guidelines specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander marketing materials can be found within [Mission Australia's Brand Guidelines](#). A variety of other resources and links provided on [Mission Australia's Intranet Reconciliation page](#), are also available to equip staff as they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users, communities, and organisations in local areas.

Purpose of this Partnership Kit

Mission Australia is committed to supporting staff with the guides and tools needed to establish and strengthen culturally appropriate partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups, and communities throughout Australia. It is not the purpose of this partnership kit to provide direction to formalise all of your partnerships, nor is it the intent to define in a directive nature how and what all partnerships should look like across Mission Australia's services. We recognise the diversity of Mission Australia's services, service users, and that every community is unique; a partnership should be established in a locally relevant way that recognises the needs, strengths, and opportunities within the local community.



In recognising this diversity, the information and tools you will find in the *Partnership Kit: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships* are founded on the idea that all

partnerships and work with a community form part of a journey based on relationship. Such a relationship should ideally form well before a formal partnership is established, demonstrate principles of collaboration, coordination, cooperation, and communication, and seek to retain a connection of some form beyond the ending of a formal partnership.

This diagram illustrates the journey that you will be taking as you develop partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations in your community.

This partnership kit will provide you with the guidance and tools to ensure that you are well equipped throughout the journey, from getting to know your community through to potentially ending your partnership in the future.

As you begin applying the information and resources found in this kit, it is vital that you look to approach relationship and partnership development in a manner that is locally relevant and culturally appropriate. Information to guide you in learning more about who is in your community, how to create connections, and activities to



support initial relationship building have been included.

Partnerships at Mission Australia

For Mission Australia, partnerships are considered a crucial part of our work, aiming to achieve more together than it is possible for an individual organisation to achieve alone. Mission Australia's Partnership Framework outlines our commitment to partnerships, the principles that guide the purpose and approach to our partnerships, and the spectrum of shapes and sizes partnerships come in.

Partnerships refer to our relationships with other service providers or community groups, which help us to deliver services to our clients and community. Partnerships may vary in purpose, size, formality, and may change or develop over time.

The Partnership Continuum, below, represents the spectrum of partnerships you may seek to establish with another agency within the community. Below you will find information regarding each of these classifications of partnership.

Adopt a spirit of humility and willingness to understand and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

Reconciliation Action Plan

The partnership continuum



1. Information networks:

This refers to agencies you collaborate with informally and formally. You may share insights and information with them in discussions about shared goals and community outcomes at intra-agency network events or in your 1:1 catch-ups with key personnel.

2. Referral networks:

These are agencies that you make client referrals to or receive client referrals from.

3. Advocacy networks:

These are agencies that you have collaborated with in order to advocate to community, government or other decision-makers, for change. Generally, these are formalised networks with a clear purpose and membership, however there may not be documented agreements binding the agencies.

4. Alliances:

These are agencies that Mission Australia has formally joined to advocate for change on a single and specific set of issues. In these cases, the relationship is formal and documented. It is often signed off by a State Director or the CEO.

5. Consortium agreements:

This describes a formal relationship between one or more agencies working towards an opportunity for joint-delivery of a service or project. This will be a documented relationship and can include government, non-government, and commercial entities. These relationships are often concerned with co-design of new solutions to social problems.

6. Joint venture:

This describes situations where Mission Australia is working directly with another organisation to co-deliver a project or service. A legal document will exist to outline each partner's roles and responsibilities, which are generally complementary.

7. Legal relationship:

This refers to a wide range of scenarios, in which Mission Australia signs a legally binding contract with another organisation. This can include subcontracts to deliver services.

Using the Partnership Kit

There are six modules in this partnership kit. They have been designed to provide you information and tools for each key stage of the relationship journey, however each module can also be completed and referred to independently of the others. For example, you may already have an existing partnership and need support on strengthening the partnership, in which case you can refer directly to Module 5: Strengthening Partnerships.

As you go through this partnership kit, you will also notice that we have highlighted certain elements of the guide. These include:



Case Studies



Tools and Activities to support your journey of developing relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups.



Definitions and key information for you to know and understand, to support your relationship journey.



Key pictures from the relationship journey, which will help you identify the part of the relationship journey you have reached.

Partnership and relationships vary in size and formality, from working with an individual Elder to a formal partnership with an organisation. The suite of activities and tools look to support the breadth of relationships and partnerships that may occur, thus not all the included tools and activities will be applicable to every partnership context.

As you commence your journey of developing relationships and/or forming and strengthening local partnerships, we wish you all the best and encourage you to take time in embedding in your local community, growing in your understanding of the local protocols and practices, and supporting local communities for a stronger tomorrow.

1. Getting to know community

Throughout this module you will:

1. Learn a number of ways you and your team can further **develop cultural awareness**
2. Understand the **benefits that come from developing relationships and partnerships** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
3. Learn how to **grow in your understanding** of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, in a respectful and culturally appropriate way.



*Imagine you are leading a new Mission Australia service and team in the region. You are excited to be commencing work within the local community, and quickly recognise that forming connections with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, groups, and community will be essential... **but where to start?***

1.1 Cultural Awareness

At Mission Australia, we recognise the diversity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples. Dedicated to delivering evidence based and culturally appropriate services across Australia, we are committed to developing the capacity of all staff to understand and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users and their communities.



This is being achieved through a number of internal and external resources, available to staff in Mission Australia. We encourage all staff to further their own cultural awareness with these resources, including:

- Completing the OCHRE online Cultural Awareness Training module
- Watching the film *Occupation: Native* – available on the Mission Australia intranet
- Utilising the various cultural protocol information guides available on the intranet
- Completing the *Share our Pride* training at reconciliation.org.au



For more information on these and other resources to support culturally appropriate service delivery, please check out [Mission Australia's Reconciliation page](#) on the intranet.

1.2 Benefits of relationships and partnerships

It is important, as you begin creating connections with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups, and community members, to acknowledge the motivations for investing time and energy in forming these connections. The benefits and motivations for Mission Australia may differ from those of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation. This isn't necessarily a barrier to forming a relationship or partnership, however being open and honest about the benefits and motivations is important.

In *Module 3: Preparing for Partnership*, you will have the opportunity to explore the benefits and motivations of forming a partnership further. These may include some of the below benefits.

- Develop **Trust** with service users, community, and other agencies
- **Build relationships** ready for future opportunities
- **Learn together** how to best support the community and its needs
- Improve **referral coordination and pathways**
- Strengthen Mission Australia **staff cultural competency**
- **Grow community acceptance** of Mission Australia services
- Support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander **self-determination**
- **Understand the community**, and the hopes, strengths, tensions, barriers, and history of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- **Mutual capability development**, learning together and sharing opportunities, resources, and mutually reinforcing activities
- **Develop collaborative and coordinated programs**, that are culturally appropriate and safe
- **Grow Mission Australia's emerging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce**
- **Empower organisations and leaders** to respond to the needs and aspirations of the community

1.3 Considerations when relationship building

Relationships and partnerships require an investment of time and energy. In the early phases of relationship building, this may fall beyond the scope of a funded program.

However, at Mission Australia we recognise the benefits that come from forming relationships with groups and organisations across local communities. Recognising, and being transparent about, the benefits you hope to see as you broaden your relationships with other organisations and groups is an important part of the relationship building journey.



As you begin learning about a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, and start forming relationships, it is important to be mindful of the following:

- Avoid aligning to a single organisation or group
- Seek to understand a community's history without entering into its politics
- Opportunities to strengthen relationships often lie in knowing your community
- Look 'outside the box' for initial opportunities
- Ensure you don't make promises you may not have the ability to keep
- When an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation or group initiates contact, ensure you accept these opportunities to connect
- Don't seek a relationship only when a funding opportunity arises; foster community connections both outside of and within the context of funded programs
- Look for small opportunities to offer support, strengthen existing initiatives and programs in the community, or share resources such as a meeting room as an in-kind gesture. Small opportunities often help build trust and points of connection in the initial development of cross organisational relationship building
- Allow time and be patient; don't give up if it takes time or you experience delays. Allow the relationship time and opportunity to evolve
- Be mindful of cultural practices that may take precedence over business

1.4 Knowing your Community



The challenge of initiating fresh connections with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and groups can be an overwhelming one. Questions of who to meet with, where to find the appropriate agencies and groups, and how to connect without offending, are all important and relevant considerations.

This section provides a number of key steps and considerations to help you get to know your community's profile as you navigate the initial connections within your local region.

We suggest you read all of Modules 1, 2 and 3 within *Partnership Kit: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships* before initiating contact.

Identifying organisations and groups within your area:

The best way to learn about organisations and groups within your region is to ask. Information on who to contact within your community can be found in the RAP Information Guide under 'Organising a Welcome to Country', found on the [Mission Australia's Reconciliation Intranet Page](#).

Remember that local government areas (LGA) and boundaries are not always reflective of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander boundaries. You may find multiple groups within a region, or alternatively only a few groups spanning multiple LGAs.

Examples of where you may seek information from include:

- [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet](#)
- Office of Aboriginal Affairs
- Local Council
- Local Aboriginal Lands Council
- Speak with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees within a mainstream organisation

A recent opportunity to meet with some of our clients at the local Aboriginal owned gym each week, has quickly provided the additional opportunity to strengthen connections in the local community. This small step has been an opportunity to demonstrate support for the Aboriginal owner, building his client base, and strengthening connections with community members. It has also enabled our staff with a way of engaging with previously disengaged and hard-to-reach Aboriginal young people, and provided the opportunity for the Aboriginal owner to mentor our students and staff, developing our cultural competency.

Area Manager, Mission Australia



Things you might seek to learn...

- Research the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander history of the Land
- Attend local cultural events. Check out the local government website for what's on
- Meet with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employee within Mission Australia or a local mainstream organisation
- Learn the names of people, places, and groups within your local area
- Find out about local community cultural protocols and practices
- Conduct a general 'Google search' to learn about the programs and supports the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations offer within your community
- Learn who the local Elders are, along with what name you should address them by
- Research who the various local services are, what supports they provide to the community, and suitable referral pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families
- Grow your understanding of the experiences, issues and needs, and aspirations of the local community

Learn who the local Elders are, along with what name you should address them by.

'Sorry Business' refers to a period of cultural practices and protocols associated around the bereavement and funeral of a deceased person, to mark an experience of grief, or around loss in other circumstances.

'Sorry Business' is an important custom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, that includes a variety of cultural protocols. These often vary across each local community.

It is important to inquire before going to a location or visiting community members, to ensure that Sorry Business protocols are not being observed.

For more information on Sorry Business, we encourage you to look at the [SNAICC website](#)

1.5 Community and Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholders include external and internal groups and individuals who will be impacted by, or have an influence on, a project or issue.

Stakeholders may include:

- Community services
- Mainstream services
- Government
- Citizens
- Network groups
- Specific cohorts of people
- Mission Australia service users
- Internal individual or teams



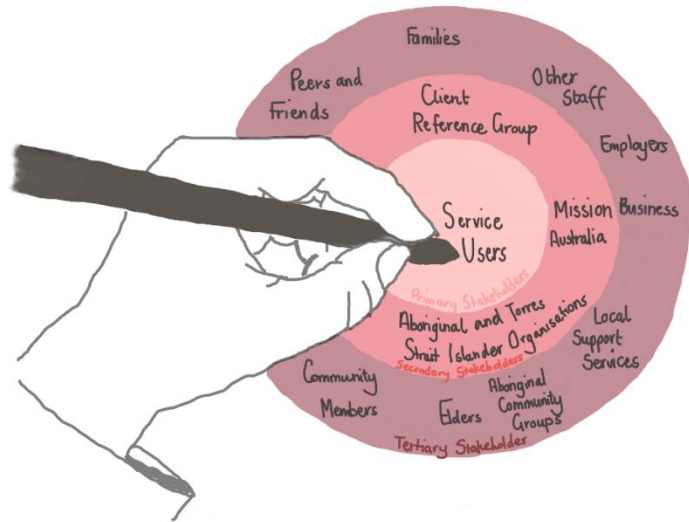
Below you will find an example of a stakeholder map, developed to support initial relationship development within a program supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in a transition to employment program. For templates and resources on conducting your community and stakeholder map, check out the *Stakeholder Analysis Kit*

found on the [Partnerships workspace](#).



Figure 1 Examples of who you may find in your local community

Community and stakeholder mapping is a method of visually identifying and classifying all known significant stakeholders in relation to a program, cohort, or issue. By classifying them across Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary levels, you can gain an idea of the level of impact a group has to an issue or need. This supports future stakeholder engagement by identifying opportunities and gaps, existing relationships, and ensuring that all those important to a project are included.



1.6 Early considerations of choosing who to develop relationships and partnerships with

Some regions have many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups, and key individuals that you could connect with. **We encourage you to be purposeful in the connections you begin to develop**, to what extent you foster relationships, and throughout the journey spend time identifying key organisations where it may be beneficial to develop a deeper relationships with.

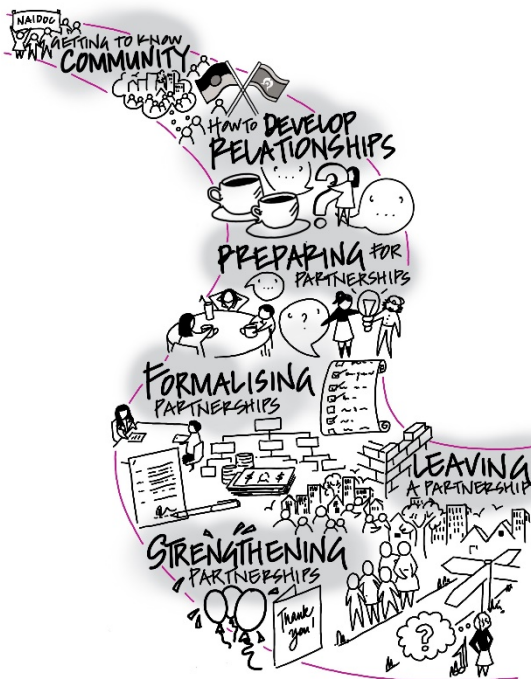
In reflecting on your community and stakeholder map, consider:

- Which organisations have values and goals that align closely with Mission Australia's?
- Which relationships are more likely to add mutual value and complement service supports, and/or has the potential to develop into collaborations, or even a future partnership?
- What do we need to be mindful of within the broader community context?

2. How to Develop Relationships

Throughout this module you will:

1. Understand how to **initiate contact and meet** with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
2. Understand how to **navigate challenging initial conversations** courageously and respectfully
3. Learn a few tips on **culturally appropriate communication** and interactions within meetings



You and your team have spent time learning about the local community; its history, who the community groups and organisations are, and which key individuals and Elders to connect with. You have spent time with your team building cultural competency and local understanding.

*During this time, you have come to identify a few key agencies and groups you could connect with, or perhaps you have come to realise you already have a few points of connection, perhaps through a local network. **It is now time to develop relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups.***

2.1 Creating Connections and Initial Conversations

The initial 'meet and greet' is all about introducing yourself and Mission Australia to a new organisation, and to learn about the roles played by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or group within the community.



Ideally, initial contact will be established while attending a local community event, and include a Mission Australia Regional Manager or Area Manager, however this may not always be the case.



I had the opportunity to meet with the CEO of a local organisation in a remote town. We had a wonderful chat over a cup of tea and cake. A short time later I was again in the town, and popped in to say hi. Before long meeting for a cup of tea and cake became a regular event.

That connection has now extended to the broader community. Kids and families will say hi when I walk through town, and I have been invited to some of the local events.

Chaplain, Mission Australia



The initial face-to-face meeting and conversation with your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait organisation, group, or community is important. While the temptation may be to initiate discussions on a program or partnership opportunities, we encourage you to keep it casual.

Avoid having an official agenda, instead chat over a cup of tea, and allow time to get to know each other 'offline'. Focus on developing connections, trust, and understanding their perspectives of the local community. Listen, and hear; seeking to understand the ways they already support the community and their aspirations of the future of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

We have included a few examples of questions you may consider including in your initial face-to-face meeting. For more information on the process of establishing contact, please refer to the 'Connecting – Visiting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and services guide, found on the [Reconciliation page on Mission Australia's Intranet](#).

Q

Tell us about your service, what is your agency's role in the community?

Q

Tell us about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?

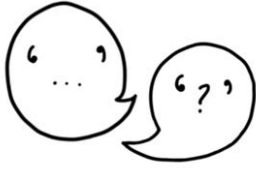
Q

What are some of the needs you are seeing in the community? What's your understanding of these needs?

Q

How could Mission Australia complement or strengthen the work you are currently doing in the community?





2.2 Courageous Conversations

Historically, the role many purpose-led agencies have had in the lives and communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has not always been associated with positive outcomes. There can sometimes be a mistrust of people who offer services based on the concepts of intervention, protection, and mission.

Many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups, and communities have also had negative experiences with tokenistic relationships with government and mainstream organisations.

Governance imbalances, 'tick box' partnerships, lack of self-determination, and short-term commitment in some communities, have left many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations with a level of distrust and hesitancy about developing new relationships with mainstream organisations.

We heard about services and programs 'blowing in and out of town', and organisations 'dropping in' once a year to tick a box about 'community consultation'. Through courageous conversations, we asked many times over many months – How do you think we can be helpful with the service/s we have to offer? How do you think we can provide a culturally safe and culturally informed service? Who else should we meet/speak with/learn from?

Area Manager, Mission Australia

As you meet with various organisations and groups, be prepared for some tough questions, such as:



We decided to introduce ourselves and our service to the local community. We held a number of service information sessions, attended inter-agency meetings, and started to contact organisations and request meetings with key stakeholders. The local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, are always key stakeholders and we knew we needed to start a conversation.



Gradually we explored possibilities for collaboration to strengthen support and outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people choosing to work with us continued to increase and we were invited to Aboriginal communities where we held barbeques and morning tea with Elders and families. We offered support to local events, held stalls, volunteered, cooked barbeques, met with local sporting teams and art groups – we continued to build our relationships and become part of the community generally.

When our funding ceased we were devastated! But even though the service ended, our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations didn't. We still keep in contact and work together, we attend events, we still drop into services for a catch up and a coffee.

Area Manager, Mission Australia

Keeping the conversation going:

Beyond the initial 'meet and greet', keeping the conversation going and developing the relationship is important.

You could try to:



Set up regular opportunities for staff from a number of organisations to network

Visit each organisation's services; are there opportunities to share resources?

Identify how best to strengthen referral pathways for service users.

Share the relationship... support other staff to develop connections.

Maintain consistent contact via email, phone, and face-to-face

Look for opportunities for capacity building activities.

Invite consultation on how to create a culturally welcoming environment

Attend and support local community events, such as NAIDOC week.

Support existing programs and events where possible.

Be mindful of cultural obligations, such as sorry business

Make relationships standard practice at all levels of your team.

Keep asking and learning!

2.3 Communication Guide

Effective communication is a key element in developing a strong partnership. How you approach communication with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and Peoples is important. It can be the foundation of building trust, community connections, and collaboration; alternatively, it can foster misunderstandings, offense, and distrust.

Cultural appreciation involves recognising that people, through their cultures, are different. It is about recognising that another person's view of the world may differ from your own.

As you look to develop new relationships, ensure you approach engagement with cultural appreciation and respect. **Cultural appreciation involves recognising that people, through their cultures, are different. It is about recognising that another person's view of the world may differ from your own.** Demonstrate understanding, respect, tolerance, sensitivity, demonstrate servant leadership in practice, and be mindful of your personal attitudes.

"We openly acknowledged we were not experts; we were not from the region, and we had a lot to learn from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about their culture, family and kinship, Country, history and future pursuits. We listened a lot. This is how we approached our initial conversations – with respect, and from a place of learning."

Area Manager, Mission Australia

The nations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are many and varied and, likewise, cultural practices vary across regions and groups. Aboriginal culture is a predominantly oral culture, with many Aboriginal nations and hundreds of dialects that have existed throughout history. While there are many commonalities between the

"Mission Australia seeks to model servant leadership, which is likened to turning the leadership hierarchy pyramid upside down so as to use our leadership, influence, or power as an organisation, to strengthen, serve, and benefit others"

now commonly spoken Aboriginal English and Australian English, being mindful of suitable communication, both verbally and through demonstrated practices, is important.

The following are pieces of advice that may support you to develop respectful conversations with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals – and indeed will be relevant to your development of partnerships more broadly.



Don't rush business; take time to develop relationships and build rapport

Avoid dominating the conversation; allow space for periods of silence within dialogue

Enquire about, and use preferred names for individuals and communities

Listen well, waiting for your turn to speak

Use clear, uncomplicated language. Don't mimic colloquial terms or use jargon

Note that direct eye contact may be considered rude in some regions

Be mindful that words may hold different meanings in different communities

Be open to different conversation and body language practices

Be authentic... be yourself

In the next module...

You will begin to explore and define what your partnership will involve. This will include building a clear case for your partnership by defining the goals of the partnership, and identifying the benefits, risks, and activities your partnership may involve.

Preparing for a partnership is founded in the understanding that you have already built a relationship with your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation or group; some of the activities in the next module will involve your potential partner, preparing you both for the partnership.

3. Preparing for Partnership

Throughout this module you will:

1. Establish a clear case for the benefits of establishing your proposed partnerships
2. Understand the breadth of activities your partnership may involve
3. Use tools to support the establishment of a strong partnership foundation and goals



Defining what a partnership could look like and involves is admittedly a challenging prospect. Just as each community is different, so too are the reasons and formats for partnerships.

The question of 'how to' establish a partnership can be a daunting one, and the following information and tools are designed to help you reflect on and discuss together, the opportunities that your partnership could be formed around.

3.1 Determining the 'why'

Opportunities to expand an ongoing relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation into a formalised partnership, offer a variety of benefits for both organisations, as well as service users and community. However, it is important that everyone fully understands all the motivations, benefits, and risks, and that these are established from the outset of the partnership process.



In this section, you will find a number of activities, questions, and a checklist; which are all aimed at guiding you to prepare for initiating a formal partnership.

List your past experiences with partnerships and external agreements with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups.

What learnings from these experiences can help inform your approach to entering into a partnership this time?

What are potential barriers that may impact this potential partnership being a healthy and successful partnership and project?

REFLECT...

3.2 Designing your partnership

Opportunities for collaboration and partnership, both formal and informal, often begin in recognising touch points or crossover areas between agencies you already interact with. Perhaps you provide outreach in the same area or community, informally refer to one another, or share a mutual aim or focus. These are great launching points to expand an informal collaboration into a formalised partnership.

Not all collaborative work needs to become a formalised partnership, in fact great outcomes in the community are often seen through informal collaborative connections between agencies. Never underestimate the potential of small connection points

Below you will find a Partnership strengths mapping tool. You could use this independently or with a potential partner organisation to identify a few potential areas from which collaboration might develop. Explore options together between organisations – as you consider ideas for how and why a collaborative approach may work, ideas and opportunities will begin to form.

Think about...

Who else might you bring into such a collaboration?

What partnership structure and level of partnership will best help to achieve the outcome of the collaboration?

Explore a variety of ways you could work together to address the identified needs of service users and the community

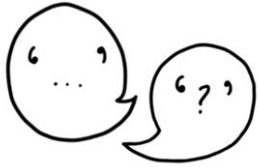
Your collaboration could involve:

- Formalising referral pathways for service users
- Supporting a community connection event
- Joint service delivery
- Co-designing a program or service response
- Simultaneously and collaboratively delivering outreach in a community or region
- Co-location of services or a staff member/role
- Advocating together
- Coordinating service delivery processes and support for the same cohort or clients
- Providing a complementary support for service users
- Sharing information and resources
- Sharing training opportunities
- Co-facilitating a workshop, program, or service
- Growing the scope of an existing initiative or program
- Forming multi-disciplinary teams
- Learning how to reach hard-to-engage service users and cohorts
- Mutual capability building of each organisation

As the opportunities for collaboration develop, so too will the trust and relationship building, bringing opportunities to work more closely. Focus on a few achievable activities, and allow things to develop over time. However, do not feel collaborations and partnerships must involve all of these. Also, **not all relationships may evolve into formalised partnerships; rather, identifying the most suitable option(s) for your collaboration and community is important.**



3.3 Pre-partnership Activities



Spending time discussing and sharing insights and ideas for how the proposed partnership could best function is an important step, and one that should be given time. This often occurs across multiple face-to-face interactions with your potential partner agency. Founded on an existing relationship, this phase supports activities in this initial stage of formalising a partnership, focusing on specific partnership benefits, goals and outcomes.

“We explored possibilities for collaboration to strengthen support and outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people choosing to work with us increased and we were invited to Aboriginal communities where we held morning tea with Elders and families. We offered support to local events, volunteered, cooked barbeques, met with local sporting teams and art groups – we continued to build our relationships and become part of the community generally.”

Area Manager, Mission Australia

The following activities and tools provide ways of collaboratively developing an understanding of the specific structure the partnership could take. We encourage you to sit down together, spend time chatting about options, take pen to paper, or alternatively draw ideas for discussions.

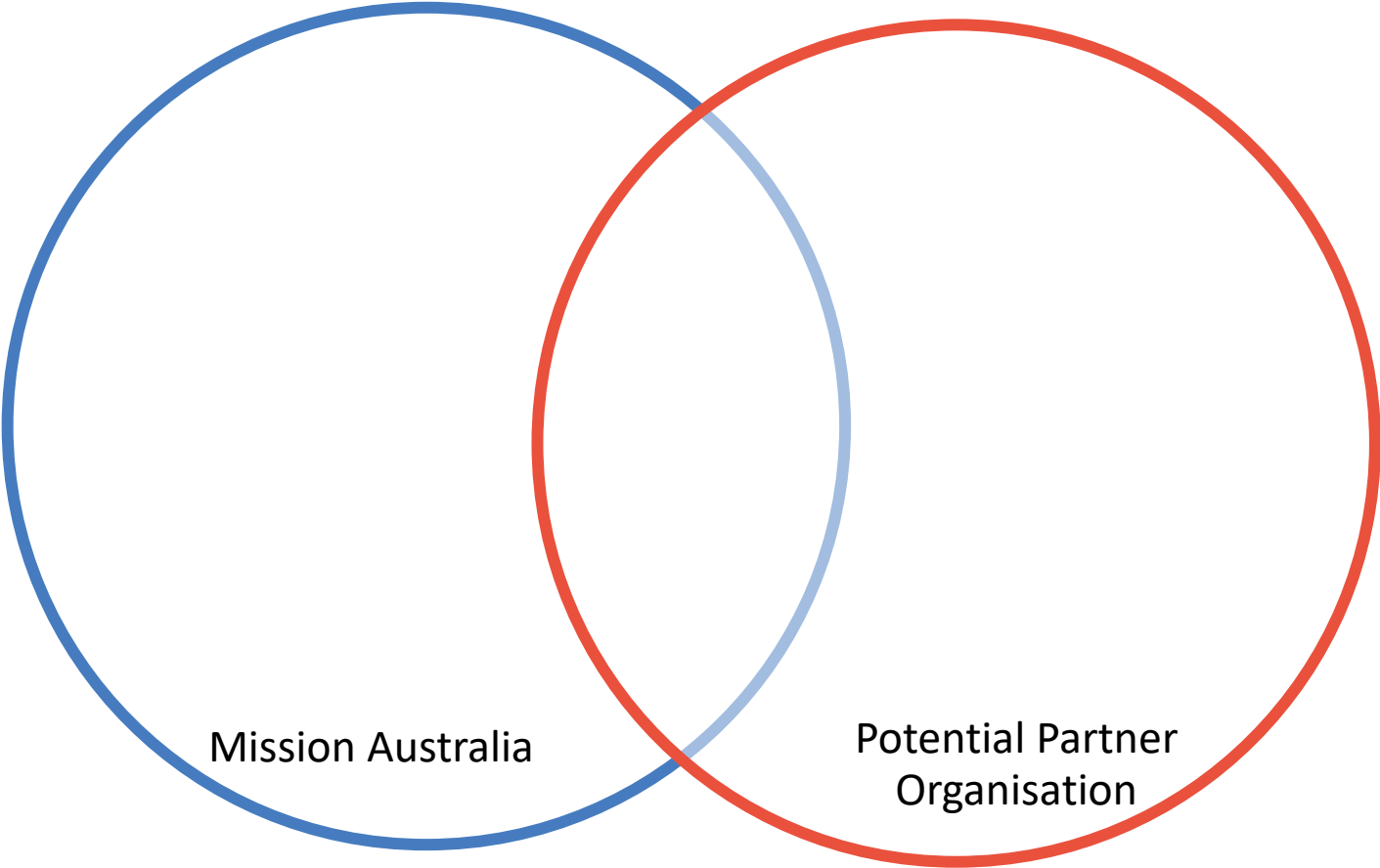


3.4 Mapping opportunities for collaboration

Completing a partnership mapping activity together provides an opportunity to identify what opportunities exist in common goals, service delivery, or approaches to working in the community.



Below is an example of a mapping activity for identifying activities that a collaboration may be launched from. This tool and template is available in the appendices of this partnership kit, as well as on the Partnership workspace.



3.5 Partnership approach activity

Defining the partnership principles that will form the foundation of a strong and sustainable partnership is important. Establishing a partnership well will support a strong and sustainable partnership in the long term. Additionally, your answers below may be able to help inform the activities, milestones, or expectations that you will include in a partnership agreement or contract.

For more information on contacts and partnership agreements, please refer to 'Section 4. Formalising Partnership' within this Partnership Kit: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

REFLECT together...

We hope this partnership will involve...

What values does this partnership need to be founded on to be successful?

Opportunities to support capability and capacity building of each organisation during the partnership include...

The outcomes each partner hopes to experience through this partnership in the next:

Short Term (0-2 years)

Long Term (2 years +)

Mapping Benefits, Risks and Gaps

Using the below template as a starting point, spend some time with your potential partner to identify and discuss all possible benefits, impacts, and gaps this partnership may have.



Consider the **benefits** this partnership could have for each organisation, for service users, and for the broader community

BENEFITS

Consider the **risks** this partnership could have for each organisation, for service users, and for the broader community

IMPACTS

Consider any **gaps** this partnership could fill which may not have been previously considered for each organisation, for service users, and for the broader community

GAPS

3.6 Preparing for Partnership: For Internal Use

This Preparing for Partnership form can be used when forming a partnership with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation or group, to guide key activities and topics for consideration and discussion. Information documented here should be shared with your line manager. This form can also be found on the Partnership Workspace



Why does your service wish to establish or formalise a partnership?

What are the potential activities and benefits of the partnership?

	Activities	Benefits for Mission Australia	Benefits for Partner
Short Term (0 – 2years)			
Long Term (2 Years +)			

How does the project align to Mission Australia’s goals to *reduce homelessness and strengthen communities*?

What is Mission Australia’s motivation for establishing a partnership?

1.

2.

What client or community outcomes will this partnership support? (please refer to Mission Australia's Outcomes Framework for more information)

Checklist:

- The goals and aims of the potential partnership have been discussed.
- Potential benefits and impacts of this partnership have been discussed and documented.
- In-principle agreement has been reached with key internal stakeholders regarding this proposed partnership, including the Regional Manager and State Director.
- A general media and 'Google' search has been conducted to identify the organisation or group's reputation, history, values, and current footprint of services and activities.
- Does the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or group's values align to Mission Australia's?
- Have you identified the most suitable type of partnership for this context? (Please refer to Mission Australia's Partnership continuum in Section 1 for more information.)
- Mission Australia's Partnership Framework has been read.
- Opportunities for capability development and/or transitioning key components of service provision to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation has been explored. (Please refer to section 4.2 *Our commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities*)
- An initial assessment of potential costs has been conducted, relating to:
 - Staffing
 - Administration
 - Resources and infrastructure
- Any specific risks and benefits have been considered and documented across the following areas. (Please refer to *section 4. Formalising Partnerships* for further information and who to seek support from regarding this)
 - Financial
 - Legal
 - HR
 - IT

4. Formalising Partnerships

Throughout this module you will:

1. Understand when to develop your collaborative relationship into a formalised partnership
2. Know what key topics you need to discuss with your potential partner, during the initial stages of formalising your partnership
3. Learn about key considerations you will need to explore and seek support on, during the process of formalising some partnerships
4. Understand Mission Australia's commitment to how we partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities



It has come time to formalise your partnership. Not all partnerships are formalised to the same level, and it is important that you ensure the partnership structure you put in place (for example a working agreement, due diligence check, and activities to move your partnership beyond a 'hand shake') are suitable for the type of partnership you are forming.

Identifying ways to achieve more together than would be possible alone, are what make forming a partnership so beneficial.

4.1 Knowing when to formalise a partnership



For Mission Australia, partnerships refer to our relationships with other service providers or community groups that help us to improve the health and wellbeing of clients and communities. Partnerships vary in purpose, size, formality, and may change or develop over time. The activities you will need to complete when formalising a partnership, or even whether a partnership even needs to be formalised, will depend on the nature of the proposed partnership.

Partnerships involving an **information network, referral network, advocacy network, and some alliances or collaborations** are generally considered **‘informal partnerships’**. Informal partnerships may not necessarily require a partnership agreement or legal contract to be established.

Informal partnerships include: information networks, referral networks, advocacy networks and some alliances or collaborations.

Formal partnerships include consortiums, joint ventures, sub-contracting services or programs and legal relationships.



Partnerships such as **consortiums, joint ventures, sub-contracting services or programs, and legal relationships, are all considered formal partnerships**. Formal partnerships require additional activities and documentation, put into place during the initial stages of formalising the partnership. As is outlined within this module, please seek support from Mission Australia’s Strengthening Communities Advisor as you begin formalising your partnership.

4.2 Our commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities

Mission Australia has made a number of key commitments to how we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations, both now and into the future. Mission Australia is a signatory to ACOSS' Principles for a partnership-centred approach for NGOs working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations and Communities. Mission Australia's partnership commitment is founded in a development approach to partnerships and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities; we seek to develop partnerships with a strength-based focus that empowers and enhances existing community assets and aspirations in a genuine and collaborative way.

While recognising that each partnership is different, when formalising a partnership, we will look to identify if there is an opportunity to strategically incorporate activities focused at strengthening and empowering a partner organisation with the view to building their capacity and capability to support their own community into the future. Further, some opportunities may include a strategic approach to transitioning a service or program to primary management or control by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation in the future. These opportunities should always be explored openly with potential partner organisations, and be approached in a way that places consideration on allowing time, flexibility, transparency, and learning together along the way.

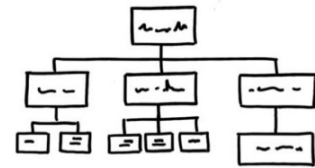
We are currently working with a small Indigenous organisation that we have a long standing connection with, to develop a plan to co-tender for an upcoming funding opportunity. Through multiple open conversations, we have drafted a 3-year plan to transition the new program for young people from Mission Australia as the lead agency in the first year of the contract to them being the primary service deliverer by the last year of the contract.

Being new to this area of working with young people, they have lots of areas they need support in, as they build their capacity and capability for service provision. We are planning this together from the start. We are looking at the best ways to develop frontline skills, knowledge, providing administration support, and teaching as we go. In turn, our local Mission Australia team is looking forward to also learning and building our cultural capabilities, and connections to the community, as we partner together. The outcomes of this partnership will have lasting impacts, not just for service users, but for both organisations and the local community, that span beyond just 3 years.

Regional Leader, Mission Australia

4.3 Partnership Conversations

This Partnership conversation guide can be used during the process of defining what a partnership will involve and how it will be approached.



What is the purpose and goals of this partnership?

Which partnership structure is best for this partnership?

**What are the opportunities for cooperation and collaboration within the partnership?
For example, referrals, and information and resource sharing and more.**

**What opportunities exist to develop each organisation’s capability in supporting
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users and community?**

**What governance or leadership structure will best support a healthy and sustainable
partnership?**

**How can this partnership create value for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
community and service users, instead of duplicating services?**

**What are the opportunities for sharing resources within this partnership? For example,
physical spaces, staffing, training, and infrastructure?**

**What opportunities can be established or encouraged for staff to have formal and
informal interaction?**

What are the main milestones and deliverables we need to include in this partnership?

**Is there a desire or opportunity to gradually transition service management and delivery to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation control in the future?**

4.4 Legal Issues to Consider

The following guide has been developed in consultation with Mission Australia's Legal team to assist your understanding of key legal considerations you may need to consider and seek support with, as you begin formalising a partnership.

Across Mission Australia, partnerships vary in size, purpose, and formality. Different tools, structures, and legal activities and approvals may be required, depending on the nature of the partnership being adopted.



When a partnership is considered a formal partnership, involving joint working arrangements, additional legal documentation will need to be established as part of the process of formalising the partnership. Partnerships involving the establishment of referral or advocacy networks, alliances, and collaborations will require a written partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (or 'MOU').

For further support contact:

Contact MA Legal by lodging a spark request for support in drafting an agreement. The relevant MOU template will need to be completed with all relevant details to enable legal to draft the MOU. Drafting, review, approval and execution of all agreements is managed through the legal team.

The Legal Intranet pages outlines the three pathways to seek legal advice:

1. Self-Service
2. Fast Track
3. Legal Review

Partnerships involving consortiums, sub-contractor arrangements, joint ventures, and legal relationships require a due diligence to be conducted *prior* to entering into a partnership agreement, and will involve the development and signing of a legal contract. Where a legal contract is required, you will need to contact Mission Australia's legal team for further support.

A due diligence checklist template has been provided in this module for your use; as all partnerships vary depending on the local context, not all questions will be relevant in all situations. For further support please contact the Strengthening Communities Advisor.

4.5 Financial Issues to Consider

The following has been developed by Mission Australia's Finance team to guide you in the understanding key financial considerations you may need additional support with as you begin formalising a partnership.

First you need to **define the partnership type and legal requirements (as above)**. If the partnership is based on an MOU, a formal Partnership Agreement, a Sub-Contractor Arrangement, a Prime Contractor Arrangement, a Teaming Agreement or another form of agreement; these will define the financial considerations you will need to include.



1. Delivery of Service

Financial Terms and Conditions

As you clearly define financial responsibility and risk, the following will need to be considered:

- a) At which point in time will a service be considered as effectively completed for any financial consideration to take effect.
- b) Consider clear service KPIs that can be measured to trigger a financial outcome.
- c) Ensure the KPI is time bound. For example, will the partner be responsible for delivering training and if so what training will the partner be required to deliver and when will the delivery of service trigger a financial outcome?

2. Financial Outcome – consider the following:

- a) Income share – in this scenario the partner and Mission Australia share the income. Determine whether the income will be a fee for service or a fixed amount or a percentage of income. Definitions for fee for service or percentage of income will need to be clearly defined. Any payment of income must be subject to Mission Australia receiving the funds from the Funder.
- b) Cost reimbursement – the partner is reimbursed for the cost of delivering the service. Determine and define whether the cost will include management overheads, a margin or cost reimbursement only.
- c) Asset purchases – where applicable, Mission Australia must specify ownership rules, responsibility for maintaining assets and disposing assets and risk associated with the asset purchase.
- d) Substantiation required – for payment to occur, Mission Australia will issue a Recipient Created Tax Invoice or the partner will issue a valid tax invoice. Consider if back up documentation is required, for example reports, receipts and or other key requirements which provide evidence of the amount to be paid.
- e) Invoice frequency, terms and payments – Mission Australia payment terms are 30 days from invoice date. Determine invoice frequency, options are monthly, quarterly and 6 monthly. Invoice frequency should reflect Funder payment terms.
- f) Invoice amount – any amount paid under any Partner agreement will be exclusive of any GST.
- g) Reporting – it is recommended a partner provides financial reports to meet any financial requirement imposed on Mission Australia. Consider the following:
 - i. frequency of reporting

- ii. types of financial reports, in certain circumstances a partner may be required provision of income and expense statements, asset listing, a balance sheet and or other financial document.

3. Partner Assessment

It is recommended a financial check is performed before any partnership is established. At minimum the partner will be required to agree to a credit check, provide financial statements and other key financial documents. For large partnership agreements, Mission Australia may require a partner be audited by an external audit organisation.

For further support contact your state/territory Mission Australia Financial Business Partner, or alternatively Mission Australia's Strengthening Communities Advisor, for support in contacting suitable financial supports within Mission Australia.

4.6 About Due Diligence

A due diligence analysis is a structured method of checking and confirming the suitability of the organisation you are proposing to establish a partnership with. It includes questions to consider regarding areas such as suitability of a partnership approach, service delivery capacity, legal and financial considerations, and information to collect and review throughout the partnership.

This due diligence analysis should be completed *prior* to signing any contractual agreement, and is relevant when entering into any of the following partnership arrangements: Consortium, Sub-contractor agreement, Joint venture, or Legal relationship.

A due diligence analysis is required when entering into any of the following partnership arrangements: Consortium, Sub-contractor agreement, Joint venture, or Legal relationship.

A due diligence form has been provided for you in the appendices of this Partnership Kit, and can also be found on the Partnership workspace.

For more information on these types of formal partnerships, please refer to Section 1: Partnerships at Mission Australia, and in particular the Partnership Continuum Diagram on page 9 of this partnership kit.

Note: It is advised that you seek legal support, initiated through a Mission Australia SPARK request, to identify any further due diligence requirements that may be specific to the proposed partnership and context.

In the next module...

You will explore Mission Australia's principles of partnership, which support strong and sustainable partnerships. Activities to support a healthy ongoing partnership will also be provided.

This module is important to understand as you commence a partnership, however will also be relevant to return to at regular points throughout your partnership journey to ensure you maintain a strong partnership.

5. Strengthening Partnerships

Throughout this module you will:

1. **Understand key principles** that are core to strong and sustainable partnerships
2. **Learn about the importance of celebrating** together within teams and partnerships, and consider ways you could incorporate achievements, milestones, and hard work within your own partnership
3. Explore ways you can **improve and strengthen areas of your partnership** that may need attention within your partnership.



Your partnership has been up and running for a while... ensuring the partnership is strong and sustainable is important, to support the partnership towards the goals and outcomes it set out to achieve in the community. As you reflect on how the partnership has been functioning up to this point, there will no doubt be aspects of the partnership that are working well, however there may be other areas that could be improved. This module will help you to identify these various aspects, and share some ideas for strengthening the partnership for the future

5.1 Sustainable Partnerships

Establishing effective, inclusive, strong, and sustainable partnerships doesn't happen overnight, it takes time and a purposeful approach.

It's important for Mission Australia to acknowledge that partnerships evolve over time, just as communities do. They require commitment and nurturing to achieve their goals and be sustainable.



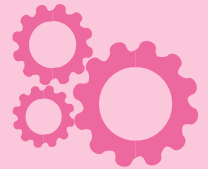
Mission Australia's partnerships are guided by a set of principles that inform the purpose and approach to partnerships across all settings. These have been outlined in Mission Australia's Partnership Framework, available on the intranet. We believe partnerships founded on these principles will be stronger, supporting greater outcomes for service users and communities.



Mission Australia's partnerships are guided by a set of principles that inform the purpose and approach to partnership in every setting. Our partnerships will adhere to the following principles:

Collaboration

- **Client and community focussed:** Our decisions, plans and priorities in partnering are guided by the needs and priorities of our clients and the community.
- **Shared success:** We celebrate success and the contribution of the partnership and its members is acknowledged, recognising that this success is not possible without our partners.



Coordination

- **Shared vision and commitment:** We are committed to the goals of the partnership and will invest the time and effort to achieve them, even when things don't go as planned or in difficult times.
- **Clarity of purpose and leadership:** With partners we define why we have chosen to collaborate and how the partnership will be governed recognising that there is a time to lead, and a time to support the leadership of others.



Cooperation

- **Trust:** Developing trusting relationships with partners is essential and we act with integrity to develop and maintain this trust.
- **Capacity development of the partnership and shared learning:** Through shared learning the partnership is able to be more than the sum of its parts, and value is added through the collaboration.



Communication

- **Transparent and ethical:** Open, honest communication and a shared commitment to the challenge, the vision and the success gives our partnerships integrity and strength.
- **Respectful relationships:** We value the relationships with people that make collaboration possible, and we show compassion and respect in all interactions



In addition to the above mentioned Principles for partnerships, and also referred to in Mission Australia's Partnership Framework, Mission Australia is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, and expects all partnership organisations to share the same commitment.

In partnering, Mission Australia is also committed to, and expects the partners to be committed to:

Respecting and valuing the rights of all children and young people, and supporting them to reach their full potential.

Promoting the right of children and young people to **feel safe**, and to **be safe** at all times.

Taking a **preventative and proactive approach** to the **safety and wellbeing** of children and young people.

Not tolerating any abuse or neglect of children or young people accessing services through the partnership.

5.2 Celebrations and Milestones

Celebrations are an important part of any community or relationship. Milestones such as a birthday, culturally significant dates, an achievement or a job well done, provide an opportunity to come together in gratitude and joy. Within a partnership, pausing to acknowledge the journey so far is an important way of recognising the hard work and effort contributed by a team of people. Celebrations within a partnership are an opportunity not only to honour the partnership, but to recognise the time, energy, and collaborative effort that has been contributed to the partnership and goals.

Celebrations don't have to be limited to exceptional milestones. No matter the outcome, it is important to step back from the intensity of everyday work, pat yourselves on the back and reward those involved in the partnership for what they have accomplished. Celebrations



should never be reserved strictly for accomplishing incredible goals. Any time people put time and energy toward improving their community, it is worth special recognition.

What can be celebrated?

- Hard work
- Achievements
- Milestones
- Transitions
- An individual going above and beyond
- Small victories and steps along the way
- Outcomes of service users

Who can you celebrate with?

- Partners
- Colleagues
- Service users
- Community members
- Community Reference Group
- Other stakeholders

Things to consider...

- How much time do you available for planning?
- Who are you celebrating with or recognising the contribution of?
- When is a suitable time and date to celebrate?
- Do you need a budget?

How can you celebrate?

The ways that you can celebrate are endless. Consider what budget is available, how much time you are able to commit to planning a celebration, who will be responsible for organising, and the needs of those you will celebrate with.

Below is a list of possible ways to incorporate celebration and recognition into the everyday activities of your partnership and workplace.

Celebrating is as easy as...

Making a call	Acknowledge a positive contribution that a staff member has made
Call out awards	Nominate innovation, effort, good practice, roles, contributions and demonstrated values through office or Mission Australia’s quarterly Celebrate Awards.
Send a thank you card	Recognise when an individual or team goes above and beyond

In the news	Initiate a media release to share the good news story of an activity, event, or program in the community. The story can be shared internally through Mission Australia's Intranet or even externally in the local newspaper.
A 'Big Thank You to'...	Include a section in quarterly or yearly partner reports that recognises key contributors
Nominate a colleague	Nominate an individual or team for one of Mission Australia's quarterly Celebrate Awards.
A picture says a thousand words	Visually capture and share your partnership in action. Tell the story of the partnership, the activities, and the foundations that support a health partnership.
A morning cuppa	Set regular time aside to all meet together for morning tea and a cuppa
Tell the story	Seek opportunities to tell others within your community about the partnership and progress along the way.
Open house	Hold an open day for all those involved in the partnership, including other agencies and the broader community, to visit and learn about the partnership, the issues, and ways you are working within the community.
Take time to reflect	Reaching milestones is also a great time to reflect on the journey so far, learnings to inform the future, and opportunities to strengthen the partnership and project
Create a video	Why not create a video to highlight the ongoing impact of the partnership.
It's everyone's business	Make recognition everyone's business, by encouraging all staff to recognise and thank colleagues in small ways.
Woohoo! We did it!	Convene a group gathering to celebrate the completion of a project or goal.

Why celebrate?

There are many benefits to celebrating within a partnership. Celebrations offer an informal opportunity to strengthen communication between partners, to maintain shared goals and provide a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration.

“We recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of the people we help, volunteers, supporters and staff. We acknowledge the small and large successes of our colleagues, clients and supporters. We recognise the positive results of collaborative team work. We foster a positive working environment and choose to acknowledge the good.”

Mission Australia – Values in Action

Celebration is also one of Mission Australia’s 5 core values, along with **compassion, integrity, respect, and perseverance**. We recognise the importance of celebration and hold it as a core value in how we approach our work.

Celebrations offer a way to encourage one another, recognise the challenges involved, and maintain momentum within a project for the long haul. Partnerships are formed amid an understanding that more can be achieved together than would be achieved alone. particularly when working within communities where entrenched issues and disadvantage exist. Working towards a stronger community often involves setbacks; individuals and teams can sometimes begin to feel burnt out or unmotivated along the way.



"We held a community celebration day. As part of Diversity week we invited our staff, volunteers, other agencies, service users, and community members to all come together for an afternoon of fun and celebrating the successful role out of recent initiatives. "

"We organised afternoon tea as a team to celebrate the hard work we had each put into multiple projects over the past 6 months."

"We are waiting to hear on a funding submission we have collaboratively put in for. Regardless of the outcome we are planning to have a celebration lunch, with Mission Australia, the Aboriginal organisation, and the Elders and leaders. The hard work and relationships formed in the journey so far are worth celebrating and acknowledging."

5.3 Conducting a Partnership Health Check

A Partnership Health Check is a way to assess and reflect on how a current partnership is functioning and supporting community outcomes. This is an opportunity to

- recognise the strengths and capabilities contributing to the current partnership
- progress the strength of the developing partnership and relationship
- make plans for moving forward within the partnership

Creating a strong and sustainable partnership requires regular and purposeful attention to ensure the collaborative work of the partnership maintains momentum and fosters positive outcomes.



When things need improving:

Below you will find two separate tools that are designed to support reflection on the current health of the partnership. There will be times when opportunities for improvement are identified.

1. The **Partnership Self-Assessment** is for internal use, as a way of assessing the partnership's alignment to Mission Australia's partnership principles, for Mission Australia's perspective only.
2. The **Partnership Health Assessment Questionnaire** is designed for use within a meeting with all partners. Ideally facilitated by a third party, this questionnaire aims to highlighting strengths and opportunities to improve the partnership into the future.

Partnership Self-Assessment: For Internal Use



This Partnership self-assessment can be used within any partnership to reflect on the level of alignment to the Mission Australia Partnership Principles. Insights should guide the prioritisation of activities within the partnership.

Partnering Framework Principles		Evidence statements	Unclear	Emerging	Established
Collaboration	<i>Client and community focussed</i>	There is evidence (such as mapping and planning documents) of the partnership priorities meeting client and community needs.			
		The partnership has a written purpose or objective that reflects client or community need.			
	<i>Shared success</i>	The contributions of all partners are recognised.			
		Achievements among the partnership are acknowledged and celebrated.			
Coordination	<i>Shared vision and commitment</i>	The goals of the partnership are clearly defined.			
		There is written evidence of partners agreeing to a shared objective, goal or vision.			
	<i>Clarity of purpose and leadership</i>	The partnership agreement articulates the purpose of the collaboration.			
		Protocols for decision making and leadership of the partnership are documented.			
Cooperation	<i>Trust</i>	Partners are comfortable disclosing organisational information relevant to the partnership.			
	<i>Capacity development of the partnership and shared learning</i>	Joint capacity building activities or collaborative development opportunities are offered such as shared research, training or guest speakers.			
Communication	<i>Transparent and ethical</i>	Material relevant to partners including financial and performance details of the partnership are shared at least annually.			
		Decision making processes and decisions made are documented and shared with partners.			
	<i>Respectful relationships</i>	The partnership is inclusive of all members and all members are able to contribute.			

6. When a Partnership Ends

Throughout this module you will:

1. Develop an understanding of the various factors that may contribute to a partnership coming to an end
2. Gain insights into the key principles core to navigating the end of a partnership with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation
3. Be encouraged to discuss with your partnership how best to conclude this partnership

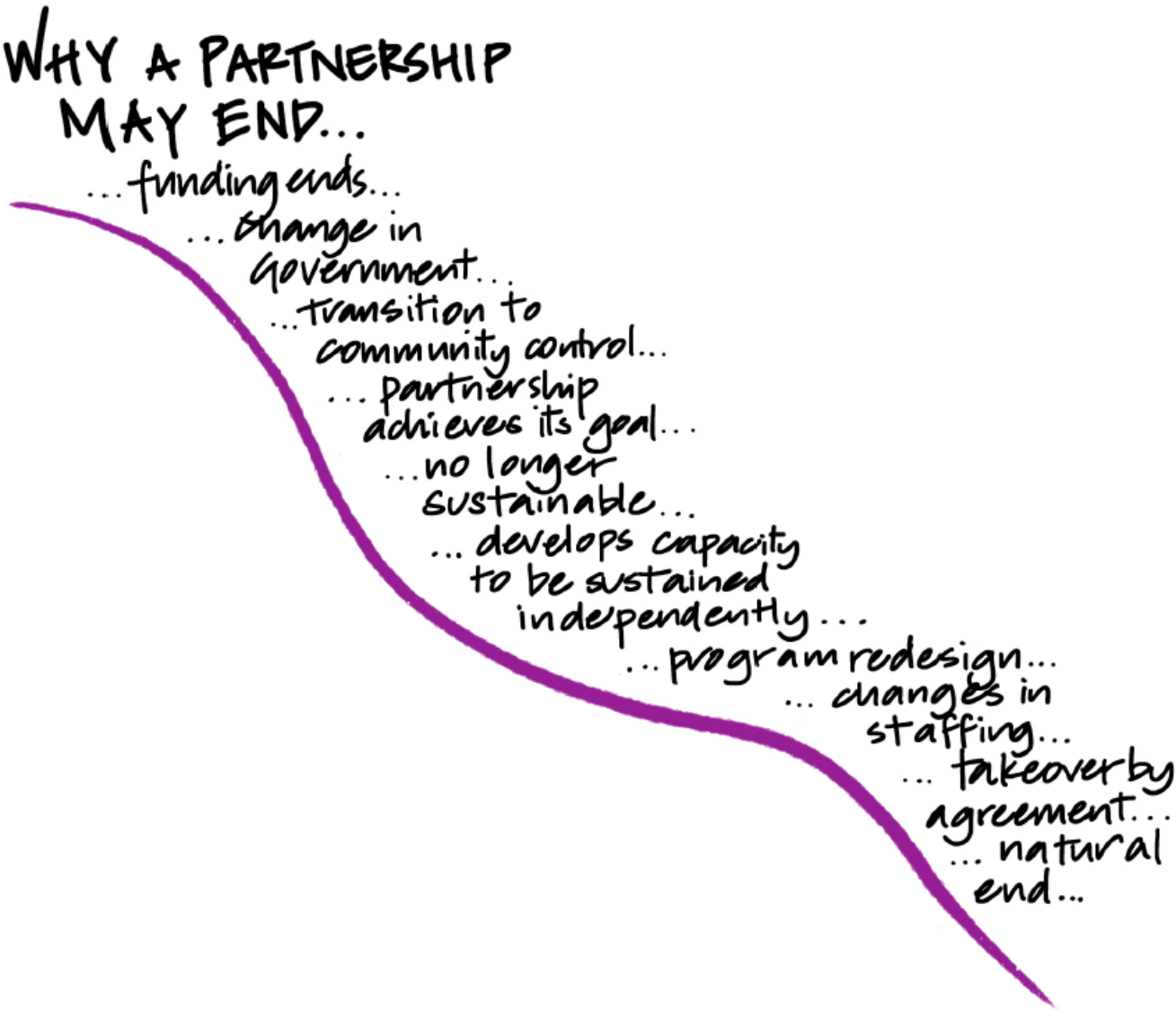


You have just received devastating news... the partnership you have been a part of will be coming to an end at the end of the quarter. You immediately are aware of the many things that will need to be done, handovers, referrals, the list goes on...

Pausing, identifying how best to approach navigating the coming months, and retaining a vision for the future and community are vitally important, like a compass to guide the activities ahead.

6.1 Why a Partnership may end

Many partnerships are developed within the context of a service contract or funded program, and as such many formalised partnerships will reach an end date. There are a variety of reasons a partnership in its current state may end, these may include:



Navigating such an end date can involve uncertainty, questions of what the future may look like for the community, and understanding what a reallocation of staff and resources may mean. Aiming to maintain connections with the partner organisation or group, and remaining embedded in the community, should both be key aims as you exit a partnership. Core principles that can support this include:

- Respect
- Be transparent and upfront
- Keep communicating on an informal basis
- Develop an exit strategy together
- Celebrate the journey together
- Maintain contact at a governance level, identifying opportunities to remain embedded within the community

DISCUSS together

Q: What do we need to include in an action plan for ending this current partnership?

Q: How will this change impact:

- a. Service Users?
- b. The broader community?
- c. Each organisation?

Q: How can we transition service users and community to alternative supports?

Q: How can we maintain the continuity of connection and collaboration between organisations?

Q: What outcomes of this partnership can we recognise and celebrate?

Q: In what ways can we empower the community to sustain positive impacts?

6.2 Forming an Exit Strategy

The primary purpose of developing a partnership exit strategy is to ensure the sustainability of support, and where possible minimise negative impacts for service users and the community. Ending a formal partnership in a manner that retains the founding relationship between organisations is also important.



Collaboratively developing an exit strategy does not necessarily need to be a negative process. Having a purposeful focus on developing and empowering the community's

There are a variety of approaches to an exit strategy, such as phasing down, transitioning, or phasing out a program and partnership. The benefits, risks, and desired outcomes of each approach should be carefully considered and discussed before forming your strategy.

capacity to grow in ownership of and ultimately maintain or grow the positive impacts of the program in the community, should be a key aim throughout the entirety of a partnership and program.

Unfortunately, you may not always have sufficient time to form a comprehensive exit strategy, when facing the end of a formal partnership. Regardless of the timeframe, there are key activities and considerations to do:

- Keep timeframes realistic, flexible, and based on the needs of all partners
- Establish and communicate points of contact for service users and community members after the partnership ends
- Maintain tangible opportunities for communication and contact between organisations and staff, following the conclusion of the formal partnership
- Establish community and cultural supports to link service users to for ongoing support
- Communicate changes in key staff and contact points both internally and externally. Mission Australia's communication plan template is a useful resource to support you in communicating these changes
- Share relevant reports and data between partners. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations should always be the owners or custodians of data that affects their

people, families, communities. This should also be shared at intervals throughout the partnership

- Ask “what’s next” for the community
- Spend time reflecting on what activities and approaches within the partnership were beneficial. This will help inform strong and sustainable future partnerships

As a small rural community, we only had one psychologist providing outreach support to the predominantly Aboriginal community. Unexpectedly funding was withdrawn, the existing partnership dissolved, and we and the community were left facing a future where all the closest clinical supports were over 530km away.

Quickly an emergency meeting was convened, inviting any and all local stakeholders; including Mission Australia, department of Education representatives, school principals, health services, the local youth service, and the local Aboriginal organisation. Over a few meetings, a strategy and partnership plan for the region was developed, to see the psychologist able to provide outreach across multiple local towns,

This has not always gone perfectly, but as a community we will keep working together and asking what’s next for our region.

Support Coordinator, Mission Australia



Appendices

Mapping partnership benefits, risks, and gaps tool

Mapping opportunities for collaboration tool

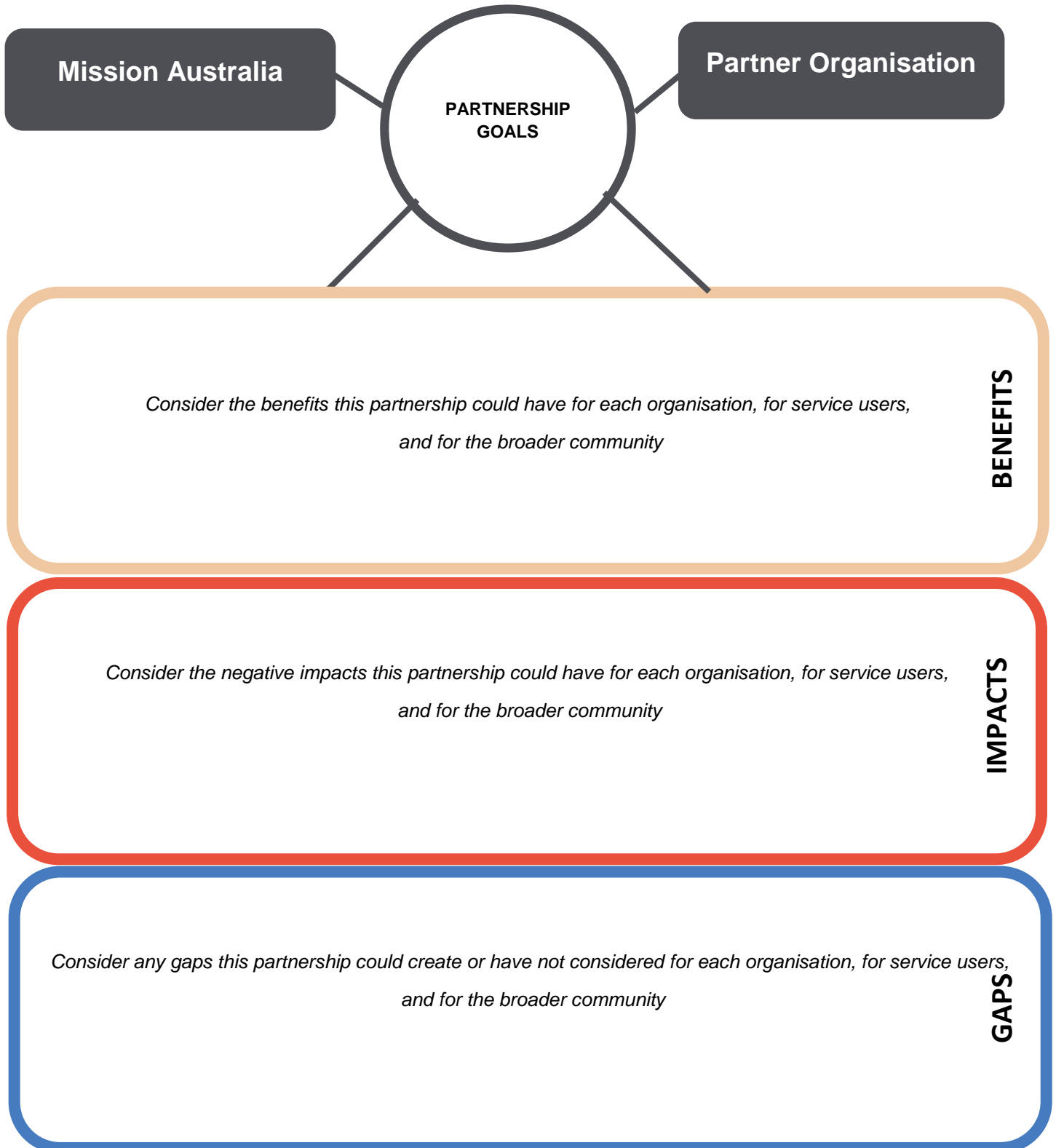
Internal Preparing for Partnership checklist

Due Diligence Checklist

Partnership Health Check

Mapping partnership benefits, impacts, and gaps

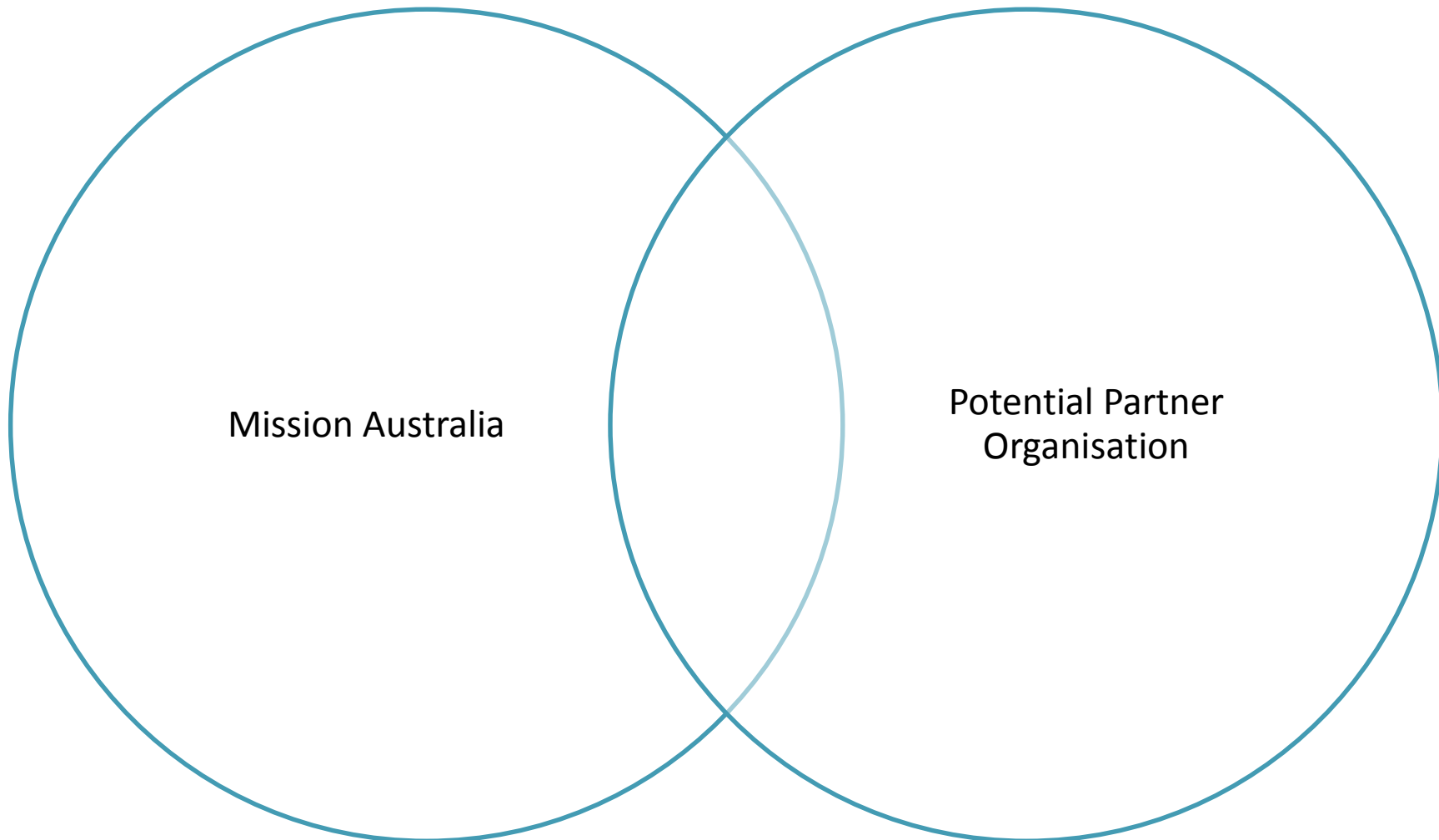
Using the below template as a starting point, spend some time with your potential partner to identify and discuss all possible benefits, impacts, and gaps this partnership may have.



Mapping Opportunities for Collaboration



Completing a partnership mapping activity together provides an opportunity to identify what opportunities exist in common goals, service delivery, or approaches to working in the community. Using the template below, identify with your potential partner, what crossover opportunities exist on which you might develop a partnership program.



Internal Preparing for Partnership



This Preparing for Partnership checklist can be used within a forming partnership, to guide key activities and topics to consider, discuss, and document to support the development of a partnership with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation or group.

Why does your service wish to establish or formalise a partnership?

What are the potential activities and benefits of the partnership?

	Activities	Benefits for Mission Australia	Benefits for Partner
Short Term (0 – 2years)			
Long Term (2 Years +)			

How does the project align to Mission Australia’s goals to *reduce homelessness and strengthen communities*?

What is the motivation for establishing a partnership?

1.

2.

What client or community outcomes will this partnership support? (please refer to Mission Australia's Outcomes Framework for more information)

Checklist:

- The goals and aims of the potential partnership have been discussed.
- Potential benefits and impacts of this partnership have been discussed and documented.
- In-principle agreement has been reached with key internal stakeholders regarding this proposed partnership, including the Regional Manager and State Director.
- A general media and 'Google' search has been conducted to identify the organisation or group's reputation, history, values, and current footprint of services and activities.
- Does the organisation or group's values align to Mission Australia's?
- Have you identified the most suitable type of partnership for this context? (Please refer to Mission Australia's Partnership continuum in the *Partnership Framework* for more information.)
- Mission Australia's Partnership Framework has been read.
- An initial assessment of potential costs has been conducted, relating to:
 - Staffing
 - Administration
 - Resources and infrastructure
- Consideration have been made and documented specific to risks and benefits of the following areas. (Please refer to Section 4. Formalising Partnerships within the *Partnership Kit: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships* for further information and who to seek support from regarding this)
 - Financial
 - Legal
 - HR
 - IT

Due Diligence Checklist

This Due Diligence Checklist should be completed prior to signing any contractual agreement.

It is advised you seek legal support, initiated through a Mission Australia SPARK request, as you begin completing this due diligence.

Item	Progress Notes	Check when Completed
Name and Position of Mission Australia staff member completing this Partnership Due Diligence Analysis Date		<input type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation due diligence is being conducted on		<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Partnership Suitability Scoping		
1.1 Have you established the aims and purpose of this partnership? <i>Think about: Why are we seeking to establish a partnership? Which community or client priorities will this partnership support?</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Have you mapped shared values of the potential partner and Mission Australia to ensure alignment? Are there any conflicting values?		<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Have you conducted a general 'Google' search of the organisation's reputation, history, and current footprint?		<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Identify the most suitable type of partnership – refer to the Partnership continuum found within Mission Australia's Partnership Framework		<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Partnership Functioning		
2.1 Have you established an agreement with partner regarding: - a) Scope of Partnership b) Roles and Responsibilities c) Governance structure		<input type="checkbox"/>

2.2 Have you established protocols for conflict resolution?		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Has the capacity and infrastructure of the organisation been checked to confirm capacity to perform their role for the duration of the partnerships? <i>Consider: Information Technology, Infrastructure, Resourcing, Staffing.</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Have opportunities for cooperation, collaboration, and sharing of resources been established? <i>Consider: Staffing, physical spaces, training, community relationships, networking, and referral pathways.</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Have asset and fleet management and safety been outlined?		<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Qualifications of Staff: Do service delivery staff meet minimum qualifications?		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Do service delivery staff hold a current Working with Children Check and Criminal Record Check?		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Do service delivery staffs have the ability to collect and report data as required?		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Maintaining a Staff record: Has a record been established of all staff holding roles within this partnership, including their Working with Children's Check, Criminal Record Check, contact details, driver's license (if driving a vehicle as a part of their role) and role?	Established: Date of annual review and update:	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Policies and Procedures

4.1 Does the organisation have suitable client and service delivery policy and procedures specific to service and cohort?		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Drug and Alcohol Policy - Service Users - Staff		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 Suitable Risk Management plan exists		<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>4.4 Employment Staff List</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevant employees identifying job titles - status of employment i.e. full-time, part-time or casual <p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - position description - WCC and Criminal Checks as listed above - Driver's license if they will be driving clients around as part of their PD's, Or doing home/community visits 		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5 Policies around staff and premises inductions		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6 Recruitment policy exists		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7 Employee relations policies exist		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8 Injury Management and Workers Compensation policies exists		<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4.9 Work Health and Safety, including safe work practices, policies exist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there any prohibition or improvement notices 		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.10 Social Media policy exists		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.11 Evacuation and Emergency procedures for premises		<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4.12 Smoking and Tobacco products policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Users - Staff 		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.13 Finance policies (including account policy details)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4.14 Environment / Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any known exposure of employees to hazardous materials, noise, vibrations, or dust; relative to the premises or provision of service 		<input type="checkbox"/>

5. General Corporate

<p>5.1 Current Australian Company Number (ACN) and Australia Business Number (ABN) have been provided.</p>	<p>ACN: ABN:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Organisational structure chart		<input type="checkbox"/>

5.3 Certificate of incorporation (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4 Constitution		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5 Legal entity to enter into subcontract <i>Note: unincorporated associations do not have legal capacity to enter into subcontract nor do trading names</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 At the time of signing Subcontract, signatories to provide evidence of authority to sign (for example, copy of delegation, Power of Attorney or other document)		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 Collate a list of any other joint ventures or partnership agreements in existence with the partner. Are there any contracts or arrangements that may impact the execution of the contract.		<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Legal

6.1 How will intellectual property be protected?		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Do any other commercial contracts, including joint venture or partnership agreements exist?		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3 Do any contracts or arrangements exist that may directly or indirectly affect the execution of the contract with Mission Australia? - Consider subcontracting, independent contractors, and outsourcing of services.		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4 Commercial contract – including other joint venture or partnership agreements		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5 Any other contracts that: - restrict business operations in a region; - may be breached or terminated in certain circumstances; - have outstanding or imminent breaches of performance requirements with may result in contract termination		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.6 Financial Contracts and charges - Bank or corporate guarantees		<input type="checkbox"/>

- any breaches of the above arrangements		
6.7 List any current disputes, litigation, arbitration, proceedings, or current conflicts of interest.		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.8 Certificates of Currency with respect to: - Public Liability Insurance - Professional Indemnity - Worker's compensation Insurance		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.9 How will issues of confidential information be shared and/or protected?		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.10 Property - Details of ownership, leases, assignments, options and licenses with respect to properties involved in the delivery of the service		<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Financial

7.1 Are there any known issues that would impact on the current or future financial liability of the organisation?		<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Have all financial and infrastructure requirements been detailed and agreed upon?		<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3 Three years audited accounts of the contracting entity, including the last 6 months.		<input type="checkbox"/>

Partnership Health Check



This Partnership Health Assessment Questionnaire can be used within any partnership as a regular health check activity. This activity is designed to be completed with partners, at set points in time throughout the partnership life cycle. Results should be collated and shared, with actions decided on together to strengthen the partnership moving forward.

About the Partnership:

List each organisation currently part of this partnership:

- a)
- b)
- c)

How long has this partnership been in place?

Describe the type of partnership currently in place

Please refer to Mission Australia's Partnership Continuum for further information.

What currently contributes to the strengths of this partnership?

Consider areas such as Leadership, advocacy capabilities, service delivery expertise, skill mix, multiple service delivery locations, community connectedness, communication etc.

Partnership progress and achievements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Relevant
Agency collaboration when delivering services has increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication between agencies has strengthened in the past year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliverables and milestones are being reached	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The capabilities of people within the partnership has increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved outcomes for service users are being observed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community members are aware the partnership exists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are achieving outcomes that would not be possible without the partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Towards a stronger partnership:

What milestones and positive impacts has the partnership achieved?

How have/will these achievements be celebrated?

1.

2.

In what ways could the effectiveness of this partnership be improved?
