Partnerships toolkit

Our Watch

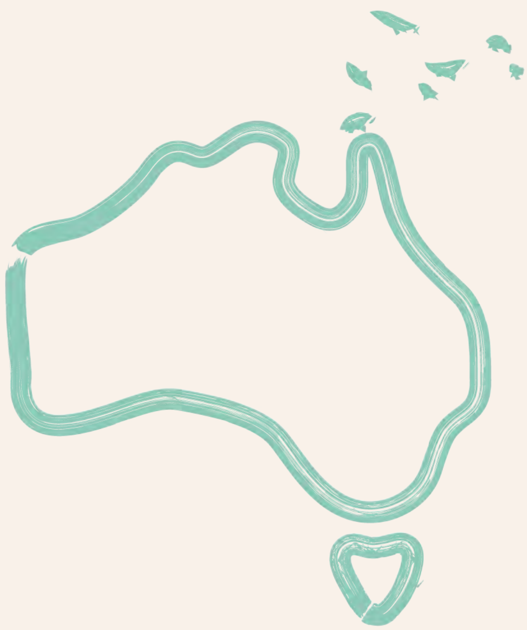
Preventing violence against women

Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuing connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land, culture, knowledge, and language for over 65,000 years.

As a non-Aboriginal organisation, Our Watch understands that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is an issue for the whole community. As highlighted in Our Watch's national resource *Changing the picture*, the evidence clearly shows the intersection between racism, sexism, and violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Our Watch has an ongoing commitment to the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, who continue to suffer from violence at a significantly higher rate than non-Aboriginal women. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who continue to lead the work of sharing knowledge with non-Indigenous people and relentlessly advocate for an equitable, violence-free future in Australia.



Acknowledgements

The content in the *Partnerships toolkit* is based upon resources and information developed by the Partnership Brokers Association. Our Watch acknowledges the Partnership Brokers Association and in particular the work of Yeshe Smith, independent partnership broker and trainer, whose expertise, knowledge and careful guidance was central to developing the Partnership Brokers Association model into the approach used at Our Watch.

We acknowledge the vast work and leadership of organisations, individuals, and PBA-trained partnership brokers who have been instrumental in embedding this approach strategically across the Australian prevention sector.

We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our partners and stakeholders, whom we work with and learn from each day.

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Introduction

Relationships are central to Our Watch's work.

The complex nature of gender-based violence means that any efforts to stop this violence before it starts cannot be done in isolation. Healthy relationships across all levels of society are embedded in how we approach preventing gender-based violence, and are critical to ending this violence nationally.

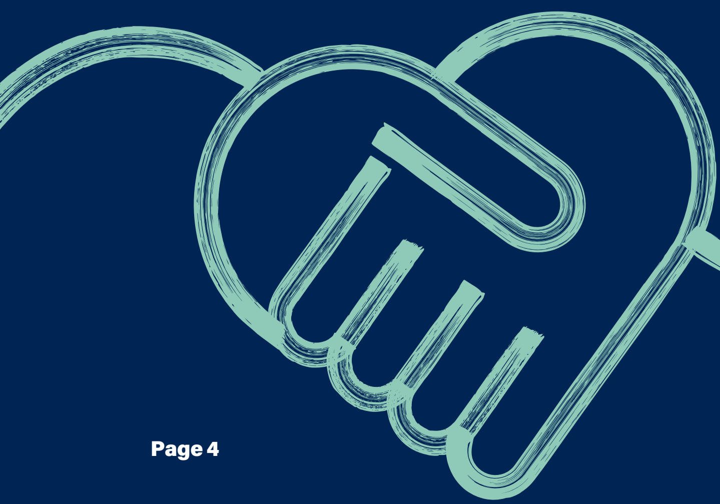
At Our Watch, we believe that relationships are at the heart of everything we do. Ending gender-based violence requires collective effort — working together with groups, communities, individuals, and alongside organisations and institutions, to drive lasting change. This belief underpins our current partnership approach, which has been developed with insights and guidance from the Partnership Brokers Association.

At the heart of this *Partnerships toolkit* is the idea that partnerships require both strong relationships and robust processes and practices. Developing and applying a dedicated partnership approach is part of a broader shift across the prevention workforce, where partnerships are increasingly recognised as a vital strategy for building strong coalitions and evidence-based practice.

The *Partnerships toolkit* outlines Our Watch's approach to working with partners and other stakeholders. Our approach to partnership is guided by our partnership principles of preparedness, transparency, mutual accountability, a relational lens, and continuous improvement.

The primary purpose of this toolkit is to share our commitment with stakeholders about how we intend to work in partnership. It outlines our approach and provides resources and tools that may be useful for other organisations to adapt and apply within their own partnership contexts.

We are committed to cultivating a culture of openness, where ideas flow freely, learning is continuous, reflection is encouraged, and shared growth is a collective responsibility.



This resource is our commitment to our partners, both current and emerging.

Our Watch's partnership model has four core elements:

1. A principles-based approach to partnerships.
2. The concept of a 'continuum' of partnerships and other working relationships.
3. A set of processes to organise partnerships and help parties share expectations with one another.
4. Working with partnership brokers.

This *Partnerships toolkit* is based on the approach developed by the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA). It covers our current partnership approach, developed with insights and guidance from the PBA. In 2022, Our Watch began upskilling staff in the model of partnership practice developed by the PBA, commencing with staff attending PBA training designed for the prevention sector.

We continue to learn from the skilled and brilliant partners we collaborate with, and we are constantly evolving our ways of working to be appropriate, respectful, and genuinely collaborative. Through continued learning with our partners, we expect that our approach as reflected in these resources will grow and strengthen over time.

We are not experts in partnerships, but we are committed to applying a principled approach to all our valued relationships.

Already, this approach has been valuable to existing and emerging partnerships. Our Watch developed an internal document, the *Relationship framework*, to guide staff in applying principles, Ways of working agreements, and Health checks to the partnerships in which they work. The *Partnerships toolkit* has been built from the *Relationship framework*.

Scope of stakeholder relationships

This toolkit refers to 'partnerships' primarily, but many of the concepts and tools will apply to other stakeholder relationships. Our Watch works with five 'relationship types' in mind, which captures many, although not all, relationships and engagements.

The concept of 'types' of relationships is derived from the idea that partnerships exist on a spectrum, as developed by the PBA and others[1]. The Relationship continuum depicts various 'transactional' and 'collaborative' relationships types at Our Watch. (See Relationship types on page 8).

DEFINITION

Our Watch uses the PBA definition of partnership, which describes partnership as:

"A working relationship between two or more organisations that come together for joint work and share risks and benefits of that work[2]."

1. The Partnering Initiative (2018), available at https://archive.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/The-Relationship-Spectrum.pdf; Tamarack Institute (2017), available at https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca (search 'collaboration'); and International Association for Public Participation (no date) available at https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum.
2. See this short video 'What is a Partnership', The Art and Science of Partnership Brokering – Partnership Brokers Association.

How Our Watch defines 'partnership'

There is no single definition of partnership, and partnership definitions and approaches vary over time. The following is provided as background and a reference point for how Our Watch considers the concept of partnership.

While all relationships are valuable, not all relationships are partnerships. Partnerships are a specific type of relationship that deliver joint work and are defined by key characteristics.

Internally, the term partnership is commonly used to describe any form of engagement with stakeholders. We do this to communicate our intent to be collaborative, open and reflective, but individuals and organisations have different understandings of what the term partnership means. In previous instances of using the term broadly, we observed a need for clarity about the purpose of various partnerships.

REFLECTION

It has been valuable to begin using the term 'partnership' more specifically and deliberately than Our Watch has done in the past. Doing so enables clarity with stakeholders about purpose, expectations and scope, and possibility for the working relationship.

Partnerships have five core characteristics:

1	A common purpose
2	Shared and individual interests
3	Co-creation of process design and solutions
4	Commitment to mutual accountability
5	A principled approach

Relationship types

Relationship types are various forms of external relationships that Our Watch has with others, that differ in their purpose.

Rather than using one term (e.g. partnerships, collaboration, or stakeholder engagement) to describe all working relationships, we have begun working intentionally within five distinct types. Each type has a different purpose for a project or activity, and there is no one 'type' that is more valuable than another.

The five relationship types are:

- Network
- Consultation
- Contractual
- Collaboration
- Partnership

Each relationship type has a set of key features and processes for designing and managing the relationship.

Types of working relationships differ between organisations so this is shared in the toolkit as an example of how we prepare for and design/co-design working relationships. Distinguishing five 'relationship types' has been important because:

- **Partnerships are a particular type of external relationship** with distinct features that differ from other relationships.
- Most, if not all, external relationships **require design and management.**
- External relationships serve **a wide variety of purposes.**
- Underpinning each relationship with **structure and business process** improves the quality of our collaborative work.
- **Relationships become protected from staff changes.**
- Defining the type of relationship staff are working in equips them to **communicate expectations with stakeholders.** This is important for managing power imbalances between stakeholders and working in a way that is collaborative, transparent, and accountable.
- We better **mitigate risk** because the nature of each external relationship is clear, communicated and understood, and recorded in a Ways of working agreement.

Figure 1: Our Watch Relationship continuum

LOW — Level of relationship building, commitment and shared accountability — HIGH

Network	Consultation	Contractual	Collaboration	Partnership
Power neutral.	Power sits with the stakeholder who is scoping.	The contracting party retains power and control over how work is delivered and assessed.	Our Watch will retain a degree of power but hold less power than a contractual relationship.	Ways of working processes are designed around sharing power around every aspect of the work.
Low transparency as stakeholders have low expectations.	A high degree of transparency is required for managing these relationships.	Significantly lower expectations about transparency.	High transparency on motivations and limitations, expectations, assumptions and risks.	Partners should expect full transparency with each other.
Dialogue focused rather than activity focused.	Focused on a specific project or activity.	A contract is at the core of the work.	Joint delivery of parts of the work.	A shared common purpose and joint delivery on the work.
Scope and terms of engagement are not necessarily defined.	Our Watch defines the scope through the consultative process.	Many aspects of how parties work together are compliance based according to the contract.	Allows for contribution of different skills and resources without having to work together on everything.	Principled approach to working together.
Low degree of commitment.	Low to moderate level of commitment.	Moderate degree of commitment.	Relatively high degree of commitment.	High degree of commitment and mutual accountability.
		Investment early in the contract in addition to establishing the contract.	More time invested in design, management, and review than a typical contractual relationship.	High level of time required for co-creation of process design and solutions.
			Some risks may be shared.	Shared risk is jointly identified and jointly mitigated.
			More negotiation is involved than in a typical contractual relationship but less than in a Partnership.	Collaborative decision-making and problem-solving.
				High level of uncertainty around potential outcomes and benefits.

The Partnership cycle

The Partnership cycle is a structure for the partnership process, developed by the PBA and which Our Watch uses to inform both project and partnership design. The Partnership cycle depicts four stages of the partnership life cycle, with specific activities.

The four stages:

- Managing & maintaining
- Revisiting & revising
- Sustaining outcomes
- Scoping & building

The Partnership cycle in practice

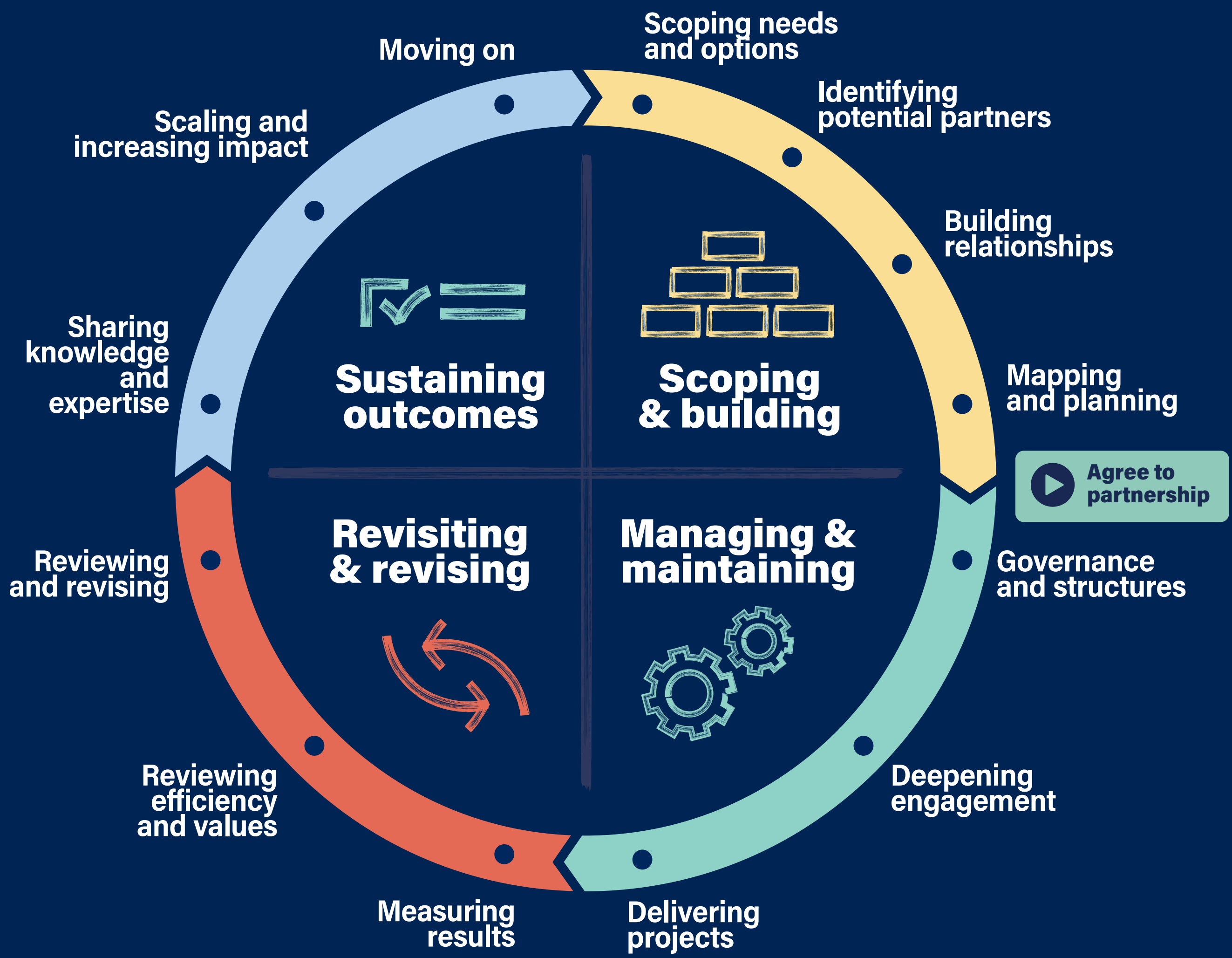
Priorities are identified differently in every partnership, and so activities are often done in the most practical order, rather than followed exactly. Additionally, there will be stages in the Partnership cycle that aren't necessary in some partnerships. For example, scoping and identifying might not be required in situations where the scope of the work is already set. Some activities, such as building relationships throughout the life of the partnership, are likely to be ongoing. The process will vary from one partnership to the next, depending on the particular strengths, needs, challenges, opportunities, and broader context.

Our Watch has found the Partnership cycle helpful in the partnership process. The tool prompts staff to integrate various steps and activities into partnerships, depending on the stage. The tool has also been useful in understanding whether or when it is time to progress to the next phase, or return to an earlier phase.

Retrofitting

When partnerships have been established but not yet involved a partnership broker or used the Partnership cycle, they can be 'retrofitted' with these processes and practices. For example, two partners who are already delivering joint work and have a Memorandum of understanding in place can benefit from a partnership broker who introduces the tool from the 'managing and maintaining' stage.

Figure 2: The Partnership cycle



Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups

Working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, groups and communities is central to addressing gender-based violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our Watch has a strong commitment to allyship, engagement and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and we continue to build and grow our ways of working effectively and with respect.

Our Watch strives to embed self-determination and community ownership in how we work together. We recognise the legacies and ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities, including the many and multi-layered traumas which occurred at the hands of non-Indigenous people.

The *Partnerships Toolkit* (and internal *Relationship framework*) has a power analysis throughout the approach, because recognising and responding to power imbalances is central to Partnerships and Collaborations. Doing so involves practices like integrating partnership principles into partnerships, holding frank and open discussions about the relationship dynamic and looking for opportunities within the relationship design to assess and address power imbalances. Using the Relationship continuum is another way to address power imbalances. By sharing a definition of the working relationship dynamic, parties are clear about decision-making and other aspects of power throughout the relationship.

Our ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders is informed by *Changing the picture*, our latest Reconciliation Action Plan, principles of data sovereignty, and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory (APO NT) Principles, a set of principles guiding Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations working together.

There is further work to be done about how Our Watch engages and partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups. This is emerging work.

Changing the picture

Changing the picture is an essential resource that establishes the evidence base for the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. *Changing the picture* sets out a series of principles that inform how we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support culturally safe, community-owned and led solutions to preventing violence. *Changing the picture* guides how we show up as a non-Indigenous organisation in our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Changing the picture principles:

1
Self-determination, community ownership, control and leadership

2
Cultural safety

3
Trauma-informed practice and practitioner self-care

4
Healing focused

5
Holistic approaches

6
Prioritising and strengthening culture

7
Using strengths based and community strengthening approaches

8
Adapting to different community, demographic and geographic contexts

9
Addressing intersectional discrimination

10
Non-Indigenous organisations working as allies in culturally safe ways

Principles in the Partnerships toolkit

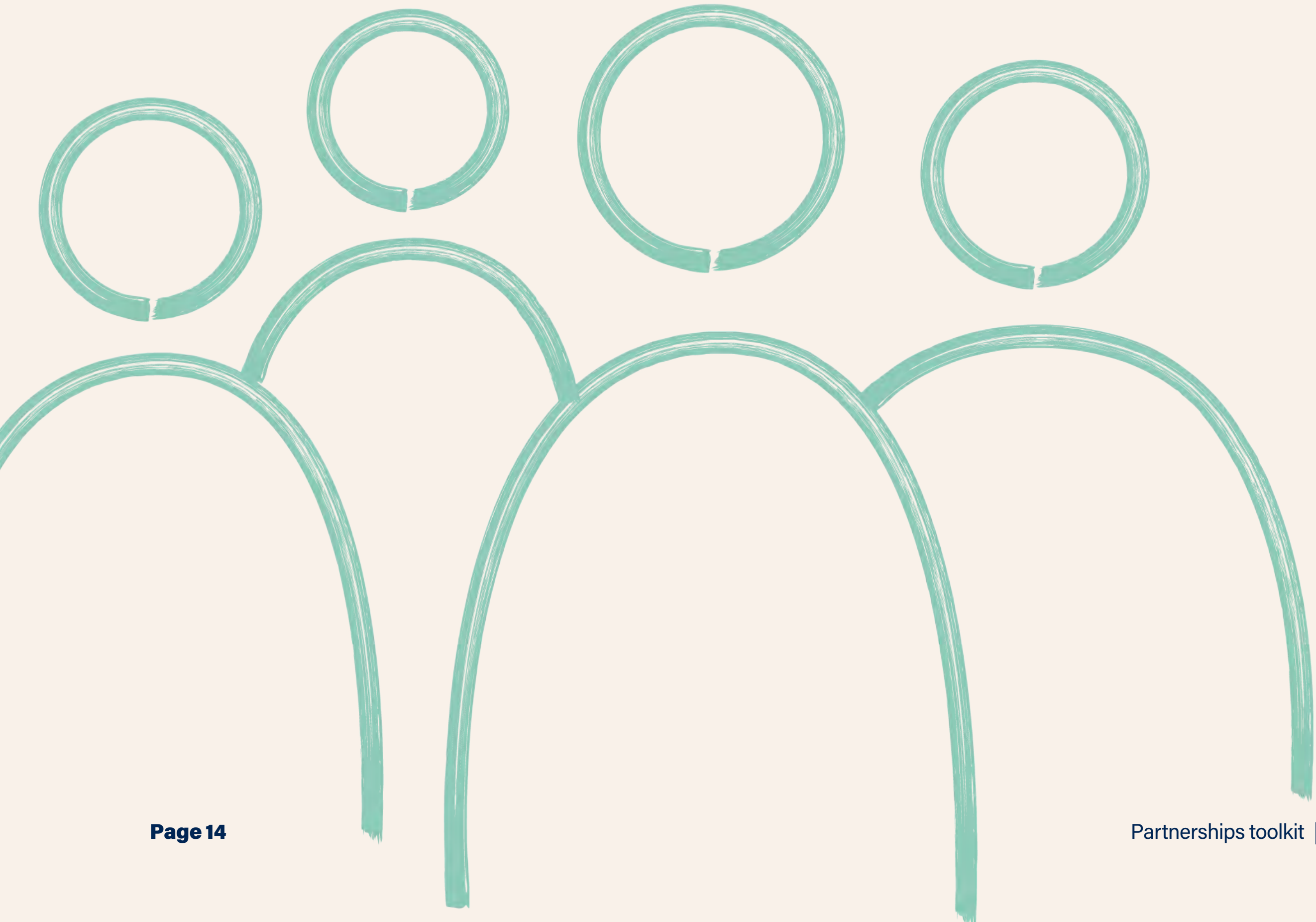
The principles set out in this toolkit guide how Our Watch works in partnerships and other working relationships. Again, principles and priorities will vary between organisations, so these principles are shared here as an example of a principles-based organisational approach.

Establishing a set of principles will provide a foundation for partners to engage in a more equal, constructive and transparent working relationship. These principles will be a key point of reference during the design phase as well as the delivery and evaluation stages of a Partnership, including for a Health check.

The PBA also offers a set of partnership-specific principles for the work that 2 or more parties do together:

- diversity
- equity
- openness
- mutual benefit
- courage.

These can be used as a model for developing a set of principles relevant to each Partnership. Under each principle, partners should develop a list of related behaviours to ensure that expectations are clear.



Our Watch principles to partnerships:

Preparedness

We are prepared to engage honestly and openly with our stakeholders to ensure we communicate our needs and asks from the relationship, articulate boundaries, and define capacity. We are deliberate, considerate, and reflective in how we approach and behave in our relationships.

Preparedness includes asking ourselves:

- What do we want this relationship to do or achieve?
- What are our objectives of the project or activity?
- Is there a shared understanding of the nature, purpose, and outcomes of this relationship?
- What does/do the stakeholder/s and what do we care about?
- How much capacity (time, energy, and resources) do we have to invest in the relationship?
- How is power held and demonstrated?
- What are the potential biases?
- Where are the risks and opportunities?
- Who needs to be involved and or/kept informed?

While these questions are important to ask before engaging with stakeholders, they also require regular reflection, discussion, and clarification. Relationships are rarely static; they will naturally evolve and change over time and are shaped by multiple impacting factors (both internal and external). By acknowledging this variable and fluid nature, we are better able to effectively design, manage and support our relationships.

Mutual accountability

All our external relationships will have established project or activity measures that hold Our Watch and our stakeholders accountable to each other. We build trust by demonstrating authenticity, integrity, honesty, in our ways of working and we are courageous in exploring and addressing power dynamics within relationships. We work together to ensure mutual accountability for how the relationship functions, navigates challenges, and meets objectives.

Mutual accountability means establishing:

- Open lines of communication, where we seek to listen and approach with compassion, respect, and curiosity.
- Agreed behaviours and practices which stakeholders and Our Watch can expect from each other, a defined way of working.
- Processes that support giving and receiving constructive and honest feedback on relationship expectations, conduct, performance, and negotiating challenges.
- Willingness to revisit, review, and re-work the relationship over time and as required.

Transparency

Our relationships reflect a transparent design and management process. We recognise that transparency is essential to building trust and mutual understanding and will need to be demonstrated throughout the lifespan of the relationship.

When designing and managing transparent relationships we:

- Consider the merits and limits of what information we can share and why.
- Acknowledge that transparency is a key component of ethical organisational practice.
- Clarify what information is recorded and how it can be shared.
- Explore the limits and motivation for information our stakeholders can and can't share.
- Push for higher levels of transparency and open communication from our stakeholders because this is an investment in an effective relationship.
- Commit to effective internal communications processes and information exchanges.

Acknowledge that transparency can be challenging in practice as it operates within formal structures and regulations. The aim is to facilitate meaningful conversations containing as much relevant and pertinent information as can be shared.

Relational lens

Well-designed and well-managed relationships are a key business process. Bringing structure to how we work with other organisations benefits the relationship and the work.

The relationship becomes one between organisations, or teams, and not individuals, which is important in the case of staff turnover. Processes and potential issues are anticipated and planned for, and so when they do arise, can be effectively addressed.

We use a relational lens to focus our attention on the crucial importance of relationships (alongside work actions and objectives) and to signal our interconnectedness with others.

A relational lens creates opportunity to:

- Demonstrate the Our Watch values in our practice and actions.
- Build and nurture our trusting relationships.
- Create space and time for relationship building and reflective practice.
- Strengthen our reputation as a national leader that is innovative, collaborative, and courageous in our work.
- Increase the effectiveness and value of the projects, activities and work our relationships are designed for.

Continuous improvement

The *Partnerships toolkit* is the starting point on a learning journey for Our Watch. We know that consultation, review, and refinement are essential to the success of the work. We are committed to trying, failing, sharing learnings and building a model that works for Our Watch and our stakeholders.

As part of our dedication to continuous improvement we will:

- Introduce learning loops for implementing this approach (Ways of working agreements, relationship types, having discussions with stakeholders).
- Be prepared to learn and update the *Relationship framework* at regular intervals according to use, response, opportunities, and reflections.
- Monitor, evaluate and record the value of having an organisation wide stakeholder approach.

Partnerships toolkit

Case studies and resources

Ways of working agreement

GUIDANCE

The following guides the development of a Ways of working agreement (WWA):

Introduction: This explains what the Ways of working agreement (WWA) is for, how it will be used, how long it goes for (it may be open ended) and its non-legally binding nature.

Background: This sets out how the parties have come together, their history working together, and their purpose in working together now. This section should allow any new member to the group to pick up the document and get a good idea of the work, the relationships between the groups, and the context around the relationship.

Parties to the agreement: This explains who each organisation is, and it may set out particular roles or teams which are central to the collaborative work.

Shared objectives (purpose): This sets out the shared purpose or objective of working together, on which all parties are aligned on a single or multiple shared purpose or objective/s.

Individual objectives: This is the organisational objectives that exist for one party but not necessarily for another. Naming each party's objectives is important for building understanding between one another, and it is something that is not always discussed but is beneficial to the partnership to understand one another's drivers and objectives.

Contributions: This component sets out what contribution each party will make to the shared work. This is an important power-sharing activity, as it validates all the resources that are being brought to the table and focuses the discussion away from funding as the central resource. This discussion should highlight the importance of the different contributions each party will make. Sometimes it is useful to ask each organisation to name what contributions they think another organisation will make, rather than their own organisation. This is a chance to demonstrate respect for each other's expertise and can also bring to light incorrect assumptions that the parties may have about each other.

Guiding principles: These are about how the parties will work together, and how they will be accountable to one another. The principles will be different for each partnership, but will usually be about building trust, demonstrating respect, working transparently and building mutual accountability. These commitments can be revisited regularly to ensure everyone is behaving the way they said they would.

Each one of the commitments detailed in this section of a WWA should be actionable and clear, so that people understand what behaviours they are committing to, and it should be a behaviour that can be checked on or checked against. So, when the project team comes together for a Health check, they could work through the commitments list and say 'yes, you're doing that,' or 'no, we haven't done that.'

Shared and individual risks: Risks in a partnership context focuses on the things that might happen that could negatively effect the working relationship. These are different to risks to the delivery of the project or activity. Ideally, risk mitigation should also be discussed and recorded.

Communications arrangements: Internal communications – who will speak to whom, when, about what? What are the protocols around phone calls and emails? What are the individual communications preferences of the core staff involved? Will parties be communicating outside of business hours? Will parties be using any social media platforms, and if so which ones?

External communications: How will parties as a group talk about our work together to the outside world? What is the agreement on logos and branding? What is the protocol around individual organisations putting out press releases or other media about our work together? Is there a social media protocol for the work in this partnership?

Governance arrangements: These processes determine how parties will make decisions in the partnership, and the administrative processes that support that. For example, what structures will be put in place (such as a steering committee or advisory group)? Who will chair various meetings? How often will meetings occur and who will they be held between? Who will compile agendas and take notes?

Agreements on particular business processes: This component sets out the business processes that will be designed to guide the partnership. A discussion might be held about the organisations' previous experience of reporting and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) within other partnerships. What worked well? What was frustrating? Is there scope for parties to co-design reporting and MEL frameworks? How will each party report on the work?

Once these discussions have been held, a section can be included in the WWA which outlines agreements on the way particular business processes will run, and why, i.e., how running the business process in that way supports the principles underpinning the relationship.

Having these business processes in the WWA means they will be reviewed in Health checks, and therefore amended if they are not working as initially planned. It also means that anyone new coming into the relationship can read the WWA and understand why the group is working the way it is.

Working through difficulties and differences: What is the agreed protocol for the group if difficulties or differences emerge which are impacting on their collaboration? How will they manage this?

Evaluation of the partnership: How will the partnerships' value be evaluated at the end of the working relationship or completion of work?

Ways of working agreement

TEMPLATE

Introduction	
Background	
Parties to the agreement	
Principles for working together	
Shared objectives (Purpose)	
Individual objectives	
Contributions	

Guiding principles	
Shared and individual risks	
Communications arrangements	
Governance arrangements	
Agreements on particular business processes	
Working through difficulties and differences	
Evaluation of the partnership	

Health checks

GUIDANCE

Health checks, like Ways of Working Agreements (WWAs), can be creatively designed to be fit-for-purpose for particular relationships. Some groups may add a fifteen-minute Health check discussion to their monthly meetings, with three regular questions they ask themselves.

Some may have quarterly Health checks which are separate to their project meetings. Some may work through their WWAs twice a year to ensure it is still relevant and fit-for-purpose, updating it after each Health check. Some may design a large annual Health check which takes half a day and brings in representatives of the groups is serving to help assess the health of the working relationship.

There is no set way to run a Health check, but regular Health checks are a good practice for managing effective and efficient relationships. Regardless of how Health checks are designed, they should include the following elements:

- The Health check is a monitoring tool for managing relationships. It is a separate process from monitoring the project, delivery on workplans, KPIs, milestones etc. A Health check process should be deliberately separated from workplan monitoring.
- A good Health check will be designed around the question 'what does this relationship need now to keep it on track, and to continue to grow?' That may mean having a dedicated conversation about communications if that is troubling the working relationship, or updating the relationship risk mitigation measures from the WWA. It could mean committing to regularly working through and revising the WWA. The group should decide together what would be most useful for a regular, or for each specific, Health check.
- Ideally Health checks should be recorded in some form of Health check report. These reports are a useful source of data for reporting more broadly on the development and effectiveness of implementing relationships. They are also a great source of historical knowledge and understanding for new staff coming in to work with the group.
- Health checks are foundational to keeping relationships on track and continuing to grow and develop. They are also one of the first processes that tend to be dropped if people get very busy or stressed. To people who are unfamiliar with relational Health checks, they can seem like a 'nice to have' rather than a process which is central to the delivery of the work however, this is a false economy. Health checks need advocates or champions to get them going and keep them happening until collaborative groups come to see and understand the value of them.

Retro-fitting Health checks in relationships which are already running

It is never too late to retrofit more structured relationship management processes into relationship arrangements, even if they are already running, and even if they have been running for a long time. Either party can come to the group and explain why they would like to add a regular Health check into the groups processes. It's important to explain why it will be useful to the partnership as a whole.

If the group has already been running for a while, it may be useful to work through the questions in the template as the basis for a Health check process. In general, people find it easier to talk about what they are doing together, not how they are working together. The discussion facilitator will need to focus the discussion on how they are working together. Comparing and contrasting people's responses to these questions can give a good sense of whether individuals and organisations as a whole are on the same page and can also flag the important collaborative issues to focus on going forward.

Health check

TEMPLATE

What has been working well in the relationship, in terms of the way we work together (not what we do)?	
What could have been better?	
What are we excited about/looking forward to, going forward?	
What are we nervous/worried about going forward?	

Case study

CASE STUDY

Connected Communities and From Understanding to Action

The following case study demonstrates how a particular Our Watch framework, *Changing the picture*, was used to inform our ways of working in partnerships.

Connected Communities

Leading approaches to prevention were funded from the Department of Social Services under the National Plan of Action to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children as part of the Fourth Action Plan. Connected Communities is an example of how the principles for prevention in our national framework *Changing the picture* have been used to guide a partnership approach at Our Watch.

> **The project aimed to broaden the reach of, and engagement with, primary prevention work; and build the evidence base for what works in community-led primary prevention.**

The project partnered with three community-led organisations who designed and evaluated their own primary prevention initiatives. From Understanding to Action focused on strengthening prevention knowledge and capacity by creating partnerships with three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations across Australia to support Aboriginal-led primary prevention.

The three organisations and Our Watch worked together to strengthen the evidence base developed in *Changing the picture* by testing practices and approaches to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

Lessons learned from Connected Communities and From Understanding to Action[3]

Both projects shared similarities in the project model, scope, objectives and implementation period. Both projects worked with community-led organisations to support self-determined primary prevention projects, and the projects shared an evaluator. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led independent evaluator, Murawin, evaluated the effectiveness of the partnership approach taken by Our Watch in Connected Communities and From Understanding to Action.

Several key recommendations emerged from the evaluations detailing improvements to Our Watch's partnership approach and community engagement efforts. This included a recommendation to apply the learnings from Connected Communities and From Understanding to Action to develop an intercultural responsive model for partnerships and to create protocols around data sovereignty and data sharing.

As stated in *Changing the picture* 'community ownership of prevention initiatives means that (activities) should grow from and be driven by the community, address community-identified needs and priorities, use community developed solutions and be implemented via strong community relationships'. Prevention initiatives need to be led and delivered by organisations embedded in their communities, rather than delivered to them by outside organisations. While this was a finding that came out of the Connected Communities interim evaluation, we recognise that this is something that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and advocates have highlighted previously.

Connected Communities and From Understanding to Action gave insight into effective ways of working with others. Specifically, sharing resources and an evaluation team helped to build connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant and refugee organisations.

Supporting connections this way can lead to primary prevention that:

- Is led and delivered by organisations who are embedded in their communities, rather than delivered to them by outside organisations.
- Can increase connections and relationships that support communities to have conversations about violence.
- May support communities to have more conversations about violence with an intersectional lens; and
- May facilitate connections across communities that are often siloed.

3. From Understanding to Action was made possible by funding generously received from the Luke Batty Foundation.

Glossary

Collaboration and collaborative relationship	Collaboration as a general term describes much of the way Our Watch works with external stakeholders. As an organisational value, collaboration continues to be an essential part of implementing prevention work. In the *Partnerships toolkit*, collaboration or a collaborative relationship is a specific type of external relationship. A collaborative relationship shares a high level of planning, decision-making, and control. There may be new processes, structures and relationships built because of the collaboration, and a commitment to combine some resources and practices. A collaborative relationship requires more investment than a contractual relationship but less than a partnership.
Health check	A process for discussing how the partnership or other working relationship is going for all parties, at regular intervals throughout the work.
Partnership	A partnership is a working relationship between two or more organisations who come together for joint work. In the *Partnerships toolkit*, partnership is defined by seven core characteristics. These are common purpose; shared and individual interests; co-creation of process design and solutions; sharing risk and benefits; commitment to mutual accountability; principled approach to working together; and collaborative decision-making and problem-solving. Other relationships will likely have some of these characteristics but not all of them. Investment is made into the 'relational' aspects of partnership in addition to the work being undertaken. Dedicating time, attention and resources to the partnership itself often includes guidance, management and leadership from a partnership broker. The partners work throughout the relationship on getting and staying aligned with one another.

Partnership Brokers Association	The Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) is a not-for-profit organisation based in London, specialising in training, professional development and upskilling for those who want to work as 'partnership brokers' and/or manage partnerships effectively. The Partnership Brokers Association has developed principles of good practice which have helped to shape our thinking.
Partnership broker	A partnership broker (broker) works as an intermediary between partners, in a partnership as defined by this set of definitions and relationship types. Brokers have multiple roles within the partnership, providing management, guidance, facilitation, and support to the partners throughout the life of the partnership. A broker may be internal or external to an organisation.
Relationship types	'Relationship types' is used here to define different forms of external relationships. The 'types' defined here are: network, consultation, contractual, collaboration and partnership. Each relationship type has a set of key characteristics, guiding questions and processes that support it.
Ways of working agreement	A non-legally binding agreement that records discussions between two or more parties about how they will work together. The document will vary according to the type of relationship. Other common names for a Ways of working agreement are Memorandum of understanding, Terms of reference, and Partnership agreement. Stakeholders may choose any one of these or another name other than a 'Ways of working agreement'. A Ways of working agreement may include a set of principles for partnership and is useful even when both parties do not wish to enter a partnership.

Further resources

Partnership Brokers Association

Training with the Partnership Brokers Association

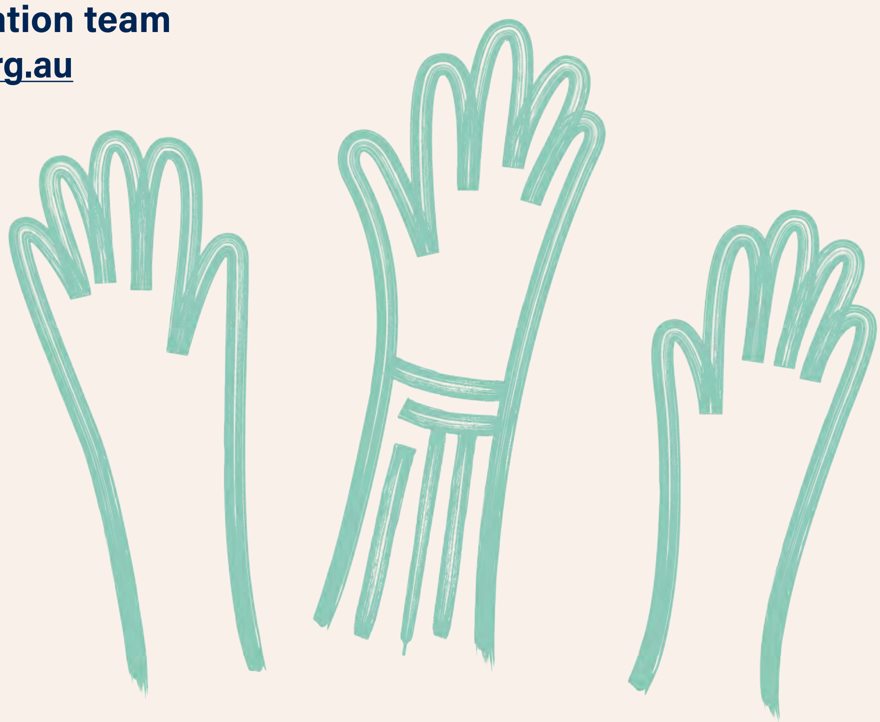
Pride in Prevention Partnership Guide by Rainbow Health Australia

Community-led Prevention Brief by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and Safe and Equal

The Partnering Initiative

Partnership Analysis Tool by VicHealth

To find out more about the toolkit or partnerships at Our Watch, please contact the Innovation team at innovation@ourwatch.org.au



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Our Watch

Preventing violence against women