

Partnership Principles

Quick Guide

What are partnership principles?

Partnership principles document shared expectations about how First Nations communities and their government and non-government partners will work together.

When are partnership principles used?

They are often developed at the outset of the partnership and will be used in a variety of ways and throughout every stage of the partnership, as follows:

Cross-referenced with other documents such as

- Data sovereignty principles
- Local community JR strategy
- Terms of reference for working groups/committees

Embedded into or annexed to other key documents such as

- Funding contracts
- Collaboration agreements
- Data sharing agreements

Adapted into different formats such as

- General principles to sit across all partnerships
- Tailored principles unique to each partnership
- Summary version and in-depth version
- Conversation tool (internally facing) to provide talking prompts to speak to what each principle means
- Written principles, diagrams, and/or artworks

What to consider (including examples):

Partnership principles should consider the needs and interests of the community, and the nature of the partnership being developed. Key areas for consideration, including examples of how they have been considered in other partnership principles, are shared below:

Self-determination

How is the work to always stay centred on First Nations voices from your community”

Examples from other partnerships:

Maranguka ([principles for government and non-government partners](#))

- Fully support, work collaboratively towards, and report against the outcomes and indicators in *Growing Our Kids Up Safe Smart and Strong* (JR Strategy).
- Recognise and support the role of Maranguka and the leadership of the Bourke Tribal Council by embedding these Principles into our way of working and where possible into service-delivery contracts.
- Build the capacity of local Bourke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support self-determination.

Victorian Human Rights Commission ([Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy](#))

Self-determination: We will promote and adhere to the principle of self-determination by embedding First Nations knowledge and lived experience into our work. This will include ensuring First Nations people have a genuine opportunity to shape and steward our work.

Social Ventures Australia([Aboriginal Community Engagement Principles](#))



Image: [Feeling from Country: Desert] Illustrates people coming together and making decisions for themselves. This is about all First Nations people, working together towards self-determination.]

Self-determination: SVA recognises and supports First Nations peoples' right to control over their own lives, consistent with UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Embedding self-determination through our work means centring First Nations peoples' voices in project design, planning and governance; supporting the free pursuit of social, cultural and economic development; supporting their autonomy over intellectual property and affairs; and developing individual and organisational capabilities.

Cultural rights

How are the community's sovereign rights to data, culture, country and customary practices protected?

Examples from other partnerships:

Maranguka ([principles for government and non-government partners](#))

Work in ways that are culturally competent, ensure cultural safety and recognise the cultural, spiritual, economic and physical connections that exists in the Bourke Aboriginal Community.

Victorian Human Rights Commission ([Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy](#))

Cultural rights: We will consider and respect the cultural rights and requirements of our First Nations staff to ensure they are being supported to work in a culturally safe environment. We will also engage with First Nations stakeholders in recognition and respect of their cultural rights, and consider how our initiatives and actions promote cultural rights.

Social Ventures Australia([Aboriginal Community Engagement Principles](#))



Image: [Feeling from Country: Stone Country

Represents the diverse nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It reflects the formations found on stone Country, echoing the different language groups and cultures of First Nations peoples.]

Recognise diversity: SVA respects and deeply values the cultures of First Nations peoples, acknowledges their unique cultures and histories, and ensures our work is informed and framed by them by respectfully incorporating these elements into our work. We acknowledge that First Nations peoples are experts in their own lives, and that no work should be conducted about them, without them.

Ways of working

How will community, and its partners work towards a shared goal? This may include, for instance, commitments to working transparently and sharing responsibility and accountability for outcomes.

Examples from other partnerships:

Maranguka ([principles for government and non-government partners](#))

- Work in ways to ensure responsibility, accountability and transparency in decision-making, including access to data.
- Provide leadership, authority and facilitation to drive change and better outcomes for the community of Bourke.
- Are clear on roles, responsibilities and accountability to community.
- Focus efforts on the identification of mutually agreed and defined problems and the co-design of local solutions.
- Work to create an environment of trust between partners that supports a systems change approach, reform, risk taking and innovative responses to issues.
- Be open, fair and transparent in engaging with other Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations, build capacity and where possible avoid competing with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.

Victorian Human Rights Commission ([Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy](#))

- Promoting First Nations voices and perspectives: We will elevate and magnify the perspectives and voices of First Nations peoples in our First Nations rights-related work.
- Accountability to the First Nations community and transparency: We will act with transparency in our work involving First Nations rights to ensure that we are accountable to the First Nations community while proactively seeking and responding to feedback.

Social Ventures Australia ([Aboriginal Community Engagement Principles](#))

Image: [Feeling from Country: Rainforest



Rainforests are dependent on the reciprocal relationships that exist within the ecosystem. Everything works together, respectfully.]

Respectful relationships: As a non-Indigenous organisation working in the First Nations space, SVA is deeply committed to ensuring we are respectful and authentic when engaging with First Nations peoples. We meaningfully engage with First Nations peoples to ensure their priorities, values, perspectives and voices inform the work. We

are sure to obtain free, prior and informed consent for our work, ensuring sufficient time for engagement whilst being respectful of local cultural protocols.



Image: [Feeling from Country: Freshwater.]

Represents how freshwater moves, pushing towards a larger body of water. This movement reflects how currents work in an ensemble to bring powerful consequences, both good and bad.]

Real partnership: Real partnerships should mean reciprocal benefit, value and learning for First Nations peoples and being accountable for the impact that our work has on First Nations peoples. It's important to be upfront about potential benefits and unintended consequences, acknowledging and addressing community needs, seeking to embed capacity building opportunities, and ensuring the benefits are proportionate to expectations of participation.



Image: [Feeling from Country: Saltwater]

Saltwater Country is recognised by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people for its healing qualities. This theme references the experience of being near saltwater, and the cultural significance of its healing properties for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.]

Trauma aware: SVA recognises the trauma experienced by First Nations peoples, often as a result of the ongoing impacts of colonisation and use appropriate trauma informed practices. This means we look to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation to First Nations peoples through our work. We embed cultural safety by providing positive and emotionally safe experiences, and implement culturally-specific practices.

More information

For access to more resources on how to establish your JR initiative, [visit our resources hub](#) on the Justice Reinvestment Network Australia website, or contact the JR Partner team on justicereinvestment@nintione.com.au.