

SPSP National Leadership Group Communiqué 1 - 25 May 2021

Why *Stronger Places, Stronger People* is important

The complex issues of disadvantage rotate through many families and communities in Australia. Despite \$48.1 billion dollars spent on welfare services by different levels of government each year, issues such as inter-generational poverty, family and domestic violence and shorter life expectancy continue to persist in many communities across our nation.

Whilst the financial cost is significant, the human cost can be devastating. For these groups there is a need to consider how the system can be changed to produce better outcomes. While there are strengths in our system to build upon, the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative is demonstrating early results and has the potential to make more progress.

We need a cohesive ecosystem, which focuses on prevention, integrates social, health and education services, and understands communities holistically. Ultimately, we need a system that gives those experiencing disadvantage and those close to it a role in shaping solutions. As the National Leadership Group (NLG), we can see that the *Stronger Places, Stronger People* (SPSP) initiative has the potential to create real change through community-led collective impact. Our focus is to strengthen the evidence for this as a better way of working.

The NLG has been concerned about a number of systemic barriers to change. There are further opportunities for governments and service providers to consider work in terms of place, align resources to community solutions and enhance coordination of activities. Members see that alignment to community-led strategies is critical to support community resilience and recovery from the pandemic, floods and bushfires and to shift entrenched disadvantage.

There is a sense of urgency and desire to accelerate and sustain action, as reflected in the four key roles of the NLG:

- To advise on strategy and implementation of SPSP
- To generate national support, new networks and investment in SPSP and place-based collective impact
- To reform funding and institutional arrangements
- To engage with SPSP communities and champion resolution of systemic barriers

Agreements and Actions from NLG Meeting on 25 May

The NLG met in Sydney on 25 May 2021 to work through a substantial agenda.

The NLG designed and agreed an approach to convene governments and service providers to build readiness and authority for community-led change. The focus of this convening will be how governments and service providers increase their readiness to align behind community-led place-based collective impact agendas. Members will plan the details of this convening over coming months.

Members were advised on implementation of the initiative in SPSP communities at different stages of their collective impact journey – building readiness for collective impact work; building the foundations of collective impact practice; and scaling for impact.

The NLG again agreed the critical importance of commissioning a National Enabling Partner – an independent entity to build the evidence base and support change at community, government and service provider levels. The group provided strategic advice to shape the commissioning of a National Enabling Partner, including co-investment and co-governance arrangements.

The NLG is advising on how to develop and sustain leaders in systems change, including communities of practice and a systems leadership program. Members supported investments to enhance data access for communities and build a platform to track indicators at the initiative level. The connections of the SPSP initiative with ChangeFest 2021, to be held this year from 8-10 June in Darwin, were also canvassed.

Members again emphasised the importance of measurement and evaluation of progress at the community level and shared measurement of outcomes at the initiative level. Members who are part of the Measurement and Evaluation Reference Group, are contributing to the development of indicators for systems change and the conditions that enable change, plus targets for the initiative.

The May meeting was attended by NLG Members (without Special Advisors from governments).

End.