



Webinar Notes

SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PREVENTION

Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE)

Wednesday 2 July 2025 (12-2pm).

Moderator: Brooke Boney

Welcome to Country: Uncle Tony Garvey (Wadjari Country)

Keynote speakers

- Dr Luke Craven, CEO of Place
- Sean Gordon AM, Board Chair, PLACE.
- See [Our Board — Partnerships for Local Action and Community empowerment \(PLACE\)](#)

Panelists

- Daniel Daylight, Just Reinvest NSW Manager, Daniel is a proud Gamilaraay (NSW) man who has family ties to the Gubi Gubi nation (QLD).
- Karyn Walsh, Chief Executive, Micah Projects (QLD)
- Rowena Mouda (Derby, WA). Ngunga Group Women's Aboriginal Corporation CEO
- Joselle Griffin (TAS), Tasmania Aboriginal Legal Service Project Officer

SUMMARY NOTES

- PLACE launched in Sept last year. The idea for PLACE came from community leadership, recognising that hundreds of communities are leading change, including systemic.
- From the Question? *What would it look like to create a national support system, share learnings, opportunities, advocacy at national level and connect communities up from grass roots to national policy conversations?*
- Place is a national support system to do that work. Accelerate workforce, progress around research and data and lean into shared challenges and opportunities communities are experiencing across the country.
- To shift the needle and innovate at national level.

Why a National Listening Tour?

- This was undertaken even before they had a team.
- 2023 consultation process gave birth to PLACE.
- Then silence during 2024 as funders explored what it looked like and how to bring it to life.
- **Need to start with community experience.**
- Recognise we don't know everything about an incredibly diverse sector and set of experiences.
- 200 communities responded to the call to come out and visit and explore what place-based work looks like in their community.
- PLACE visited 53 over last 12 weeks.
- Reflecting on lessons and what that means on a national level.
- Are we winning? Indigenous vs non-indigenous (e.g., high rates of incarceration)
- Accepting what we've been doing isn't working and we must do something different.
- That something different is PLACE.

Challenges

- Cyclic funding of programs based on election cycles.
- Doesn't provide the long-term investment needed to drive real change.
- We need to get governments to commit to 10-year investments to give stability to communities to drive change and address complex challenges.
- Structural change and systems reform is needed to get better outcomes for our communities.
- 48000 Australia children are in home care system.
- Many passionate and committed people working on the ground doing place-based work.
- Need to engage with governments at all levels.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: *Let's begin this conversation by grounding it in place. Who you are, where are you from and how do you define your community?*

Rowena

- Important I understand the community I live in work in
- People connect to the place and reasons they are there, to better provide a service to the family and community we represent.
- Strong indigenous connection. Need early connections and respect from people who live in that community.

Daniel

- Gamilaraay man from Tamworth. Work in multicultural community (Western Sydney), Mount Druitt. Median age 20, thousands of Aboriginal young people.

Karen

- CEO of Micah Projects and worked in the community sector over 45 years
- Community has multiple dynamics (e.g., who I have coffee with; live in the streets with, work with, people living in hotels due to domestic violence and inequality)



- Disproportionate number of First Nations peoples.
- Multiple communities of advantage and disadvantage.
- A lot of disconnection and connection.

Daniel

- Shared learnings from working with young people in Mt Druitt
- Cultural supports are so important.
- Policy makers want to support cultural activities, but policy makers often limit what they think is culture (e.g., painting, dancing).
- They are risk adverse and do the safest things possible.
- Connecting people to country from what they've been removed from is a lot riskier.
- Putting in cultural plans for young people is needed.

Karen

- Answered the question "*What is it about place that keeps you connected*"?
- Humanity and how we treat each other respectfully and equally.
- The status quo needs to change (racism, sexist, etc)
- Focus on people! Programs are a means to an end
- A lot of siloed working. How do we all connect?
- A lot of Royal Commissions and people have said what we need, but we don't listen.
- *We don't want to give people false hope but that's often what they get.*
- *They've spent years sharing their story/reality and the programs comes out and it looks different, and they are not getting the benefit of any of it.*
- *How can you participate in it when it's funded, from when it's not funded.*
- It was a lot more bottom-up years ago, then become top down as the amount of money and investment grew and how it's accounted for.
- **We need to reflect more on how we can make people the heart of it.**
- **Ask people, make that the starting point, and let it blossom and grow.**
- Too many rules and labels (customer, consumer, citizen, lived experience, professional) and they disconnect. We just want to work together and accept diversity.
- A lot of inequality and poverty and discriminations.
- We've not short of ideas and evidence but we choose to keep changing it.
- Closing the Gap is one example

Joselle (Brighton, TAS)

- Take lived experience into work every day.
- Lots of service offering programs for limited time and then funding ends, and they make people the problem.
- **Need to go out where community is, listen to them, solutions with and by community**
- Listening is only half of it, we need to act!!!!

Graphical recording took place during panel discussion (see image below)





Rowena

- Raised in small community with population of 350 people.
- Originated from the islands. Removed from the Island 50 years ago.
- Raised watching innovative thinking determined for positive change and remain strong and not be driven by situations of the day.
- Been given the right tools to start with. Carry that in community development work.
- The governance structure about who make decisions are important to pay attention to
- How do you make do with limited resources to make outcomes happen for people impacted?
- Analogy of earth and sea with how decisions are made.
- *Government funding comes in and leaves with the tide. How do we survive in that space when the tide is in or out? How do I ensure I'm listening? Go back to what I was raised with and my identify to remain grounded. Decisions might take us a long time to get there. Waves can be heavy and high or smooth sailing. Take advantage of the smooth sailing.*

Joselle

There are some amazing initiatives happening that are changing the lives of people.



Daniel

- Chair of Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service
- His analogy about his work in Mt Drutt
- *Funding comes in on trucks down the motorway and gets drop off at huge NGO warehouses.*
- It's important that influential people come and sit in community.
- **We need to put the power back into communities.**
- This is what we've been pushing for for years.
- **Most change has happened across kitchen tables and campfires.**
- **Traditional responsibilities and roles given to us in place-based sense**
- **Move away from big conference and towards community kitchen tables and campfires and placed based engagement.**

Rowena

- The Derby Good Life Program: partnership between Anglicare WA, Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation and Nunga Group Women's Aboriginal Corporation
- https://www.anglicarewa.org.au/docs/default-source/derby-good-life-project/derby-good-life-project-2-page-snapshot.pdf?sfvrsn=c945fb59_3/
- *How do we support communities on the ground to live the best life they have in front of them?*
- **It's important to listen to people's stories, visions, and aspirations—this is how real change happens.**
- Change has been evolving for generations, and now it's time to carry our stories forward.
- Take what we've shared—our hopes, our experiences—and be our voice at tables where we may not be present or may never have the chance to sit.
- **Let the passion behind our words be heard by those with the power to shape policy and systems. What we need is long-term, sustainable change.**

Karen (Reflections from the listening tour)

- *What should PLACES accountability to community look like?*
- We engaged with people in a motel where people were living.
- Women, domestic violence and safety
- Saw strength and comedy.
- Brought joy to it.
- Talked to different cluster leaders
- Supported people so they don't lose their agency.
- How does data play a role (Zero). How does it tell a story with the numbers.
- Interested in the idea of an ecosystem
- It can be challenging not to create more silos.
- Wanted to make visible people who are often invisible



Q&A SESSION [SEAN AND LUKE]

Did the tour see examples things being embedded into systems?

- Incredible networks of place-based work happening across the country
- Stronger places, stronger people initiative. [Stronger Places, Stronger People | Department of Social Services](#)
- Much of the work is built around individuals and they eventually burn out.
- Establishment of strong organisations
- **We need to break the silos down at a community level to drive positive change and positive reform.**
- **Collective advocacy is much harder work and takes collaboration from a group of dedicated organisations.**
- **How can we come together as communities to respond to complex challenges.**

Note! I had to leave the Q&A, so will share the video recording when/if available.

Notes taken by Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing Queensland. E. karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au

