

**SUPPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2022** REFLECTIVE REPORT

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#### **PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of progress towards the seven actions identified in the Hands Up Mallee Action and Support Plan (2021).

The seven high-level actions were identified through a series of "Progress Mapping" sessions and a "Learning Circle" with Hands Up Mallee stakeholders in 2021 as part of our Stronger Places, Stronger People funding agreement with the Department of Social Services. The progress mapping, learning circle and action and support plan focus on the collective impact enablers for change.

COVID-19 has again impacted the planned activities and outcomes of Hands Up Mallee in 2021, and at times, changed the nature and focus of the work the collective undertook. Victoria continued to experience multiple periods of lock down, face-to-face meeting restrictions and schooling from home again in 2021. Mildura also experienced our first significant outbreak of the Delta strain of COVID-19 in October-November, 2021. This outbreak changed the focus of Hands Up Mallee's collective work to equity of access to vaccination in community, and resulted in Hands Up Mallee working with multiple stakeholders to broker collaborations which delivered over 1200 vaccinations to people in our community for whom the universal system was not accessible or appropriate. Community members, particularly Aboriginal Elders, played an enormous role in determining how and where this work needed to roll out in community.

## PROPOSED TIMELINE PROGRESS MAPPING AND LEARNING CIRCLE 2022

Hands Up Mallee plans for the Annually required progress mapping and learning circle to take place between February – May:

## February Planning

### March

### **Progress Mapping**

Stakeholder groups using the progress mapping tool to assess the growth and change of Hands Up Mallee collective over the last 12 months.

Format: 5-7 stakeholder sessions will take place.

### **April**

### **Progress Mapping Report**

Enabling everyone to reflect on what different stakeholders have shared.

#### **April**

### **Learning Circle**

Getting together with key stakeholders (including government) to review the findings and decide what most needs to be worked on in 2022.

#### May

### **Learning Circle Report**

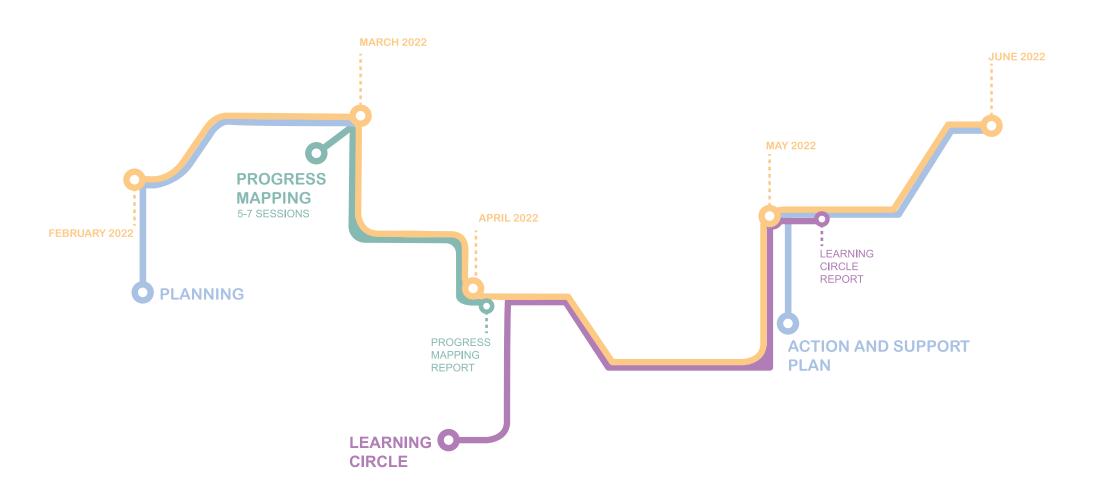
A document which details what was discussed in the learning circle.

### May - June

#### **Action and Support Plan**

Planning and prioritising actions, and what is needed to support them happening, in 2022.

## PROGRESS MAPPING AND LEARNING CIRCLE TIMELINE 2022





#### **OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY AGAINST THE ACTION AND SUPPORT PLAN ACTIONS**

The intention of this section of the document is to look back and reflect on what was achieved during 2021 in each of the seven action areas.

ACTION 1: CHANGE THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF HANDS UP MALLEE TO A FIT FOR PURPOSE MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL COMMUNITY INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT.

Proposed Timeframe: May 2021 - October 2021

#### **Progress:**

In the previous progress mapping sessions and learning circle (November, 2020) there was a strong call for Hands Up Mallee to review and revise the governance structure. Participants identified the need for community members to be heavily involved in designing a new, fit-for-purpose governance structure. Participants highlighted the need for the Aboriginal community to be involved in designing the structure and associated governance processes. The resulting structure must be appropriate for the Aboriginal community to engage with. Aboriginal participants identified that the new governance structure needs to "break down barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people".

After a delay due to COVID-19, work has commenced on co-designing a fit-for-purpose governance structure for Hands Up Mallee. In December 2021 the Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) were appointed as consultants for this piece of work to guide the co-design process. Members of the Mallee Community Voices group (formerly the community leaders table), Aboriginal community members, members of the existing Hands Up Mallee Executive Governance Group and members of the Backbone Team first met together in January to start the co-design process. Five group meetings are planned from January – April. It is anticipated this will result in key governance documents and a proposed changed governance structure in June 2022.

Revised Timeframe: January 2022 - June 2022

ACTION 2: WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS TO DEEPEN ENGAGEMENT WITH EVERY ASPECT OF HUM WORK, INCLUDING THE REVISED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.

#### **Progress:**

During 2021 Hands Up Mallee has worked alongside Aboriginal community members to develop an informal Aboriginal Reference Group in response to the previous Progress Mapping and Learning Circle which called for deeper and more authentic engagement with Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Reference Group indicated that employing a local Aboriginal person in the Backbone Team was an important step in working more closely with Aboriginal people. In 2021 the Aboriginal Reference Group worked with members of the Backbone Team to develop a job description and conduct an interview process for an Aboriginal Social Impact Lead. The role is an Identified Aboriginal position. In January 2022 the Hands Up Mallee Backbone Team welcomed Ada Peterson into the identified role and Sian Harris into another Social Impact Lead role.

Three local Aboriginal people, and an Aboriginal facilitator, are currently engaged in the co-design group (of ten) which is working to re-imagine and re-design the Hands Up Mallee governance structure in response to the call for strong Aboriginal representation in this work.

During 2021, Hands up Mallee projects and action teams had an increase in the number of Aboriginal people involved as active participants in the work. This has occurred through purposeful engagement, increased trust and stronger relationships with local Aboriginal community members.

Proposed Timeframe: April 2021 - Ongoing

# ACTION 3: DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING, MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR HANDS UP MALLEE AND AN APPROPRIATE COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

**Proposed Timeframe:** April 2021 – November 2021

#### **Progress:**

The previous round of progress mapping identified a strong need for Hands Up Mallee to develop a Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework with a clear focus on both the population level indicators we aim to shift in the long term, and a focus on what we intend to measure and evaluate, how we intend to do this, and how we embed learning into the work.

In August 2021 Clear Horizon Consulting began working with Hands Up Mallee to design and deliver a series of seven coaching and support sessions to progressively and collectively build the Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework and a detailed, overarching Theory of Change.

#### The sessions focussed on:

- Introduction to evaluation in complexity
- MEL Audiences
- MEL Principles
- Building a High Level Theory of Change Parts 1 and 2
- MEL Key Evaluation Questions
- MEL Rhythm and Reporting Cycles
- Landing the MEL Framework and Evaluation Toolkit.

The coaching and development sessions have involved participants from across the initiative including: agency partners, Mallee Community Voices members, government partners, Aboriginal community members and the Backbone Team.

The process has resulted in a robust MEL framework and Tool Kit, over a 15 year time horizon, linked to the ARACY Nest action areas and strongly informed by local input. A very useful toolkit of evaluation methods and tools is also linked to the framework. The MEL framework is in final draft form and is awaiting endorsement from the Hands Up Mallee Executive Governance Group.

During the coaching sessions it was identified that a community facing, visual document which describes the "journey of change" (which the Theory of Change was re-named during the sessions) would be useful to engage community further in the process. The need for "nested" MEL frameworks, which are more specific, over shorter time horizons, but linked to the overarching MEL, for HUM work in the 0-8 area and the 9-18 area was also identified. Work has commenced on the nested-MEL frameworks.

Significant work has also occurred to reframe the role of the former Research, Evaluation and Measurement (REM) team to become the Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Team (MELT). The MELT will oversee the application of the MEL framework across the initiative.

Hands Up Mallee has purchased a subscription to the Seer Data Platform to start to build a shared measurement framework and to house both population level data and initiative level data.

**Developing the MEL Framework Revised Timeframe:** September 2021 – March 2022

ACTION 4: REVIEW AND UPDATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCY PARTNERS AND GOVERNMENT THAT ARTICULATE, STRAIGHTFORWARD WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER AND CONTRIBUTING TO SHARED OUTCOMES TO REALISE THE COMMUNITY ASPIRATION/COMMON AGENDA.

**Proposed Timeframe:** May 2021 - October 2021 (to align with governance review timeframes)

#### **Progress:**

Work on revised partnership agreements needs to take place alongside the governance review, and also relates to how the structure of Hands Up Mallee is revised. This work has not been progressed due to the Governance Review being delayed.

**Revised Timeframe:** Continuing discussions as part of governance review, and develop once governance review is complete.

#### **ACTION 5: IMPROVE THE LINE OF SIGHT ACROSS THE INITIATIVE**

**Proposed Timeframe:** May 2021 – November 2021

#### **Progress:**

During both the Progress Mapping sessions in 2020/2021, stakeholders from across the initiative identified the need to better understand what was going on in the parts of HUM they were not directly involved in.

During 2021 the Hands Up Mallee backbone have re-instated a monthly newsletter (with a revised structure), introduced a more detailed monthly blog focussed on a particular aspect of our current work, and also introduced a monthly video update with the Executive Officer on the Hands Up Mallee Facebook Page. These initiatives aim to use community friendly language and are sent out to community members, agency partners and government partners.

It is envisaged that the MEL quarterly reporting cycle will serve to increase the 'line of sight' across the Hands Up Mallee initative.

ACTION 6: BUILD DIVERSITY OF VOICES INTO DECISION MAKING ACROSS THE INITIATIVE, WITH A CLEAR FOCUS ON THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WHO DISPROPORTIONATELY EXPERIENCE DISADVANTAGE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

**Proposed Timeframe:** May 2021 – November 2021

#### **Progress:**

During 2021 the Hands Up Mallee Backbone team have had a clear focus on this action. The Backbone have been working hard on developing ways of working that honour and include community voice alongside data and the evidence-base in decision making and action. This has involved ensuring community members are involved in every aspect of the work, including:

- Developing the MEL framework;
- Deciding on which outcomes the collective should work on to improve the lives of children aged 0-8 years;
- Involvement alongside agency CEOs and the backbone in developing a fit for purpose governance structure;
- Ready Connect A co-design project in Red Cliffs led by community members in partnership with agencies to address children's readiness for school;
- Involving young people and their families in a co-design process to decide on the most important outcomes for youth aged 9-18;
- Developing structures and ways of working for action teams which includes community members in all meetings and aspects of the work;
- Developing structures and policies to reimburse community members for their time and expertise has also been a key aspect of this work which the Backbone will continue to progress in 2022.

**Revised Timeframe:** May 2021 – Ongoing

ACTION 7: EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN HANDS UP MALLEE AND FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

**Proposed Timeframe:** June 2021 – October 2021

#### **Progress:**

In August 2021 the current Hands Up Mallee Executive Governance Group met with representatives from the Federal Department of Social Services and the State Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to discuss what a partnership with government might look like for Hands Up Mallee. The discussion focussed on how a genuine partnership with government could facilitate "busting barriers" to the progress of the work, data sharing and possibly mapping the government resources coming in to the region for children and families and the proportion of funding focussed on prevention and early intervention.

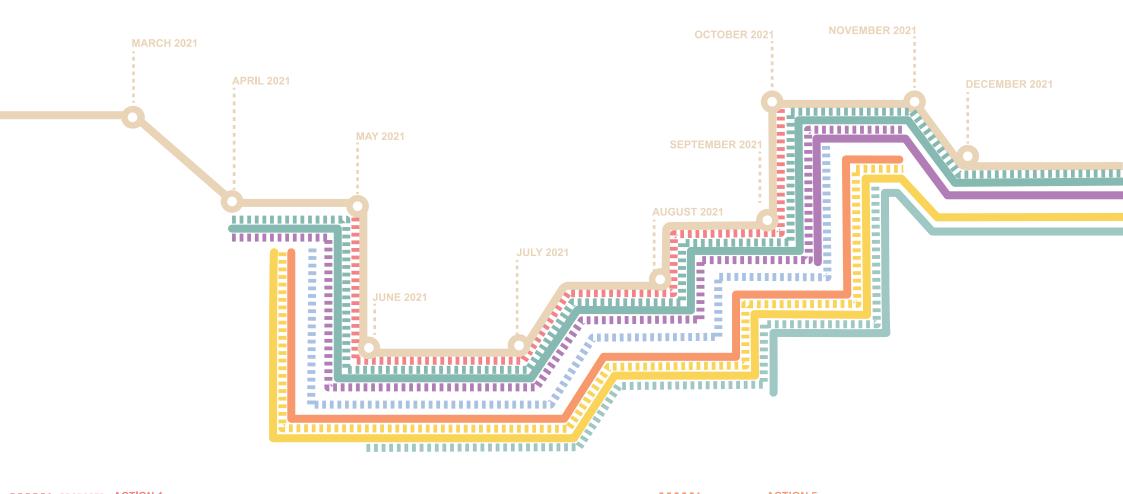
In January/February Department of Social Services and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions have been in contact with the Hands Up Mallee backbone to determine what government held data we need to progress our work and started discussions about how we might access it.

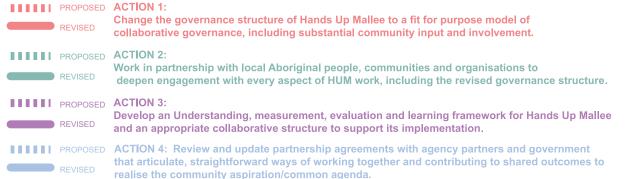
Conversations with government about what is required for the work and how we might partner are ongoing.

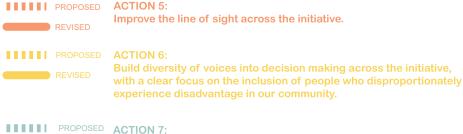
Discussions about the development of Data Sharing Agreements between Federal Government and Stronger Places Stronger People commenced in January 2022, and early exploration with the Victorian Government about the data needs of Place-Based Initiatives commenced in February 2022.



# ACTION AND SUPPORT PLAN TIMELINE PROPOSED VS REVISED 2021



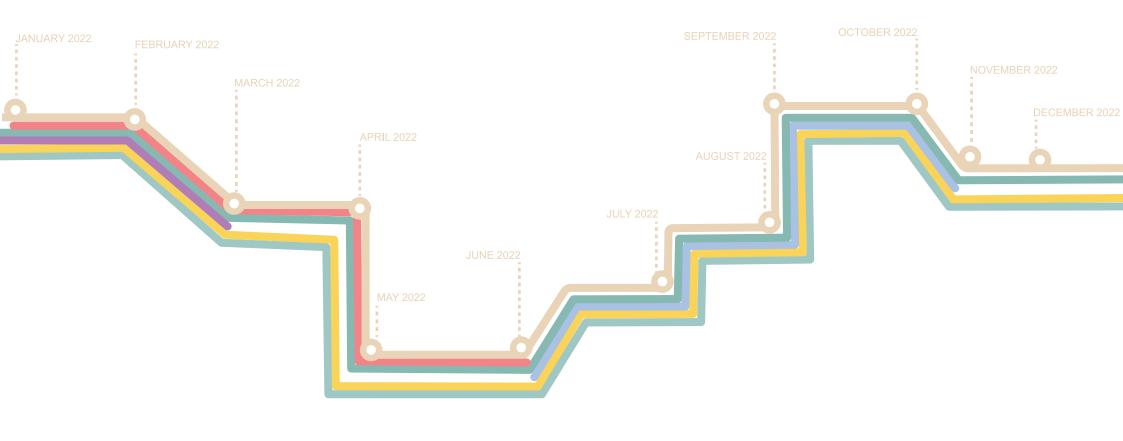




and Federal and State governments.

**Explore partnership opportunities between Hands Up Mallee** 

## HANDS UP MALLEE ACTION AND SUPPORT PLAN TIMELINE 2022



#### **ACTION 1:**

Change the governance structure of Hands Up Mallee to a fit for purpose model of collaborative governance, including substantial community input and involvement.

#### **ACTION 2:**

Work in partnership with local Aboriginal people, communities and organisations to deepen engagement with every aspect of HUM work, including the revised governance structure.

#### **ACTION 3:**

Develop an Understanding, measurement, evaluation and learning framework for Hands Up Mallee and an appropriate collaborative structure to support its implementation.

ACTION 4: Review and update partnership agreements with agency partners and government that articulate, straightforward ways of working together and contributing to shared outcomes to realise the community aspiration/common agenda.

#### **ACTION 5:**

Improve the line of sight across the initiative.

Build diversity of voices into decision making across the initiative, with a clear focus on the inclusion of people who disproportionately experience disadvantage in our community.

#### **ACTION 7:**

**Explore partnership opportunities between Hands Up Mallee** and Federal and State governments.

### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

In March 2022 we are undertaking the next round of progress mapping with a variety of Hands Up Mallee stakeholders. We invite you to be part of this process. The information gathered will help us develop an action and support plan for 2022.

If you have any questions about this reflective report or the next steps, please don't hesitate to contact us:

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