

Sustaining effective social partnerships: Support document

TERRI SEDDON

STEPHEN BILLET

ALLIE CLEMANS

CAROLYN OVENS

KATHLEEN FERGUSON

KATHLEEN FENNESSY

This document was produced by the authors based on their research for the report *Sustaining effective social partnerships*, and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's website:
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This document comprises the support document that offers a more detailed account of the data and its analysis that was gathered during the Sustaining effective partnerships project (NR5004).

It commences with presenting the aggregated data that were gathered about, firstly, the two social partnerships that were in the forming phases and then the two that are already developed. Following this, the data for each of the social partnerships is presented and discussed.

Assessing partnership health

In Phase 1 of this project an instrument to assess the health of social partnerships was developed, based on the five principles of partnership work and practices identified by informants as contributing to the formation and maintenance of partnerships. In Phase 2 of this project, the instrument was presented to informants to further validate the principles and practices seen as important in forming and maintaining social partnerships.

These data are presented in two ways. First, data are aggregated for the social partnerships in the forming stage of their life cycle (Table 1) and in the maintaining stage (Table 2) as a basis for assessing the utility and validity of the principles of partnership work. The aggregation of data provides a larger number of cases over which these judgments can be made. The data indicate that the principles and practices are useful in appraising the health and progress of social partnerships.

Secondly, the data are presented for each social partnership in order to draw out the way the principles of partnership work were enacted in each partnership and to clarify changes in their enactment over time. This qualitative analysis gives some indication of the utility of the principles for understanding changing circumstances within each social partnership.

Aggregated data related to partnerships in forming and maintaining stages.

Each table presents aggregated data from the informants in the developing (Pacific Bay Educational Precinct and Partnership for Community Care) and maintaining social partnerships (Western District Social Partnership and Community Café). The left-hand column of each table shows the main elements and some sub-elements of the principles and practices that support partnering. The right hand column presents informant's ratings of each sub-element's value in supporting the development of effective social partnerships. The rating scale ranged from 1-4 (ie. *inappropriate*, *partially appropriate*, *desirable*, *highly desirable*). The figure in brackets indicates the number of informants who recorded the specific rating.

In Table 1, the data from the eight informants in the two developing social partnerships are aggregated. These data show overwhelmingly that, where appropriate in their use, the principles and practices identified in Phase 1 can be used to understand the practices of, and measures for, effectively developing social partnerships. Across the sub-elements of this table, the responses to the principles and practices of partnership were typically to rate them highly.

Table 1: Aggregated ratings of principles and practices for developing social partnerships.

Building shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities

The social partnership, should aim to:	Developing
identify the scope of and depth of shared purpose within the locale or partnership	4(7) 3 (1)
consolidate and articulate that purpose	4 (8)
reinforce the value and values of collective action by exemplification	4 (5) 3 (3)
acknowledge the diversity, yet be inclusive of, partnership needs and contributions	4 (6) 3 (1) 2(1)
identify and champion both short term and long term goals and bases for achieving them	4 (7) 1(1)

The sponsoring agency, should aim to:	
encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns	4 (6) 3(1) 1 (1)
reinforce the values and valuing of collective action and advice;	4 (7) 3 (1)
champion the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners' needs and shared goals	4 (7) 3 (1)
permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals	4 (6) 1(2)
<i>Building relations within the partnership and with partners</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Developing
be responsive to partners' concerns and open about differences in their needs and goals	4 (8)
engage partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work	4 (7) 3(1)
be consultative in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance	4 (6) 3(1) 1 (1)
The sponsoring agency, should aim to:	
enact administrative arrangements that are accountable, yet whose processes and outcomes can be negotiable and tailored to partnerships' goals	4 (6) 3 (1) NA (1)
encourage social partnerships to determine their means of governance, processes and determining their outcomes	4 (6) 2 (1) NA (1)
be tolerant of ambiguities in processes and outcomes	4 (5) 2 (1) NA (1)
<i>Building the capacities for and values of partnership work</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Developing
build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action	4 (6) 3 (1) 1(1)
accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs	4 (6) 3 (1)
The sponsoring agency should aim to:	
support the building of localised capacity for collective (partnership) work	4 (6) 3 (2)
engage with social partners in building partnership infrastructure	4 (7) 3 (1)
recognise that capacity building will differ in scope, nature and duration across social partnerships	4(4)
exercise patience in the achievement of demonstrable outcomes	4 (7) 2(1)
<i>Building partnership governance and leadership</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Developing
enact its partnership work through the fair and consistent application of agreed principles that are closely aligned to its purposes, yet can be transformed as required through changes in purposes or agendas	4 (6) 3 (1) NA (1)
exercise governance that both balance inclusiveness with practical processes	4 (6) 3 (1) 2 (1)
demonstrate openness and trust in communication and practice; and	4 (8)
identify and organise leadership most appropriate to the social partnerships' stage of development and/or urgent goals	4 (7) 3 (1)
The sponsoring agency should aim to:	
evaluate partnerships' progress on process outcomes (e.g. measures of inclusiveness, trust building and consultations) as much as program goals	4(6) 3(1) 2 (1)
support the development of governance appropriate for the partnership's goals, practices and stage of development	4 (7) 3 (1)
align support with processes and goals identified by the partnership	4 (7) 2 (1)
<i>Building trust and trustworthiness</i>	
The social partnership should aim for:	Developing
processes that engage, informed and are informed by participants contributions	4 (8)
a history of partnership work and time for trust to evolve among partners	4 (8)
processes that aim to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work (i.e. competitive environment)	4 (8)
engaging individuals locally to address partnership goals	4 (8)
explicitly and deliberately focused activities on an area of important and common concern: the partnership's goals	4 (8)
The sponsoring agency should aim to:	
work to build trust in its relationship with partners	4 (8)
be fair and transparent in its dealings with the social partnership	4 (7) NA (1)
be flexible with its own imperatives and requirements	4 (6) (1) 2 (1)

The data presented across the multiple parts of this table indicate a strong pattern of endorsement of these principles, with the majority of responses indicating that these principles are either highly desirable or desirable. Much of the more distributed responses are located in those referring to the role of the sponsoring agency. Moreover, there appears to be particular consensus about the importance of building trust, governance and ways of engaging partners across the responses.

Aggregated data for maintaining social partnerships

In Table 2, the data from the five informants from the two social partnerships in the maintaining stage are aggregated. Community Café has no sponsoring agency as it is a community partnership, which explains the high number of NA (not applicable) ratings. However, the pattern here is similar to the developing partnerships, the principle and practices identified earlier were seen as highly appropriate and applicable. In particular, maintaining trust and relationships within social partnership work is highly rated.

Table 2: Aggregated ratings of principles and practices identified in Phase 1 for maintaining social partnerships.

<i>Maintaining shared purposes and goals of partnership activities</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Maintaining
maintain and renew partnership goals and processes through constructive reflection, and by focusing on core business	4 (5)
actively champion partnership successes	4 (3) 3 (1) 2 (1)
rehearse the complexity and importance of sustaining commitment to the partnership's work and goals	4 (3) 2 (1) NA (1)
accommodate changing views, processes and goals	4 (4) 3(1)
The sponsoring agency should aim to:	
acknowledge, support and accommodate the task of maintaining shared interests and partnership performance over time	4 (3) NA(2)
acknowledge the successes of and contributions of the social partnership	4 (2) 3(1) NA (2)
be tolerant of social partnerships' changing processes and goals	4 (3) NA (2)
<i>Maintaining relations within the partnership and with partners</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Maintaining
rehearse and remind partners of the overall project	4 (4) 2 (1)
fulfil some of partners' expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions	4 (4) 3 (1)
build productive relationships with sponsoring agency as a partner in a shared project	4 (5)
exemplify how partnership work has achieved its goals	4 (4) 3 (1)
manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers	4 (4) 3 (1)
manage the recruitment and induction of new partners	4 (5)
The sponsoring agency should aim to:	
acknowledge the partnership's contribution and that of its partners	4 (3) NA(2)
have productive and reciprocal engagement with the social partnership	4 (2) 2 (1) NA (2)
demonstrate how partners' (and in particular volunteers) contributions have been acknowledged and enacted	4 (2) NA 3
draw upon the partnerships' experiences in establishing and developing further existing partnerships	4 (2) 3 (1) NA (2)
<i>Maintaining the capacity in and values of partnership work</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Maintaining
attract and retain partners and resources capable of continuing partnership work	4 (5)
maintain the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work	4 (5)
manage the turnover of staff and partners to secure continuity of the partnership's work *	4 (5)
The sponsoring agency, should aim to:	
direct support to each social partnership strategically in ways to assist its continuity	4 (2) NA(3)
assist in processes of support for the induction of new partners	4 (3) NA(2)
identify and provide strategic infrastructure support to the partnership.	4 (3) NA(2)
<i>Maintaining partnership governance and leadership for continuity over time</i>	
The social partnership should aim to:	Maintaining

maintain trust and openness as key principles for partnership governance	4 (5)
manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations	4 (4) NA(1)
locate and select effective leadership	4 (5)
maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership	4 (5)
<i>The sponsoring agency should aim to:</i>	
respect and acknowledge the preferred mode of partnership governance	4 (3) NA(2)
acknowledge the importance of open and trust in partnership work by accepting advice and valuing its contributions	4 (3) NA(2)
advise about alternative governance strategies for long levity	4 (3) NA(2)
encourage and support meetings and communication processes	4 (3) NA(2)
<i>Maintaining trust and trustworthiness</i>	
<i>The social partnership should aim to:</i>	<i>Maintaining</i>
demonstrate trust and openness through partnership work	4 (5)
welcome and encourage partnership input	4 (5)
actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners' expectations and needs	4 (3) 2 (1)
emphasise the achievements and effectiveness of the partnerships' work	4 (5)
<i>The sponsoring agency, should aim to:</i>	
demonstrate continuing and growing autonomy as the partnership matures	4 (2) 3 (1) NA (2)
demonstrate an openness to criticism and reform of its processes and goals as result of partnership feedback	4 (2) 3 (1) NA (2)
acknowledge and identify the partnerships' contributions	4 (2) 3 (1) NA (2)
continue to champion the effectiveness of partnership work	4 (2) 3 (1) NA (2)

These aggregated findings suggest that the five sets of principles and practices associated with developing and maintaining social partnerships are consistently appraised as being useful by participants engaged in developing and maintaining social partnerships. Of course, these principles and their sub-elements represent ideals or desirable outcomes and processes. However, it is evident that these kinds of processes need to be sought and supported in order to secure partnership work. Furthermore, they help in understanding how partnership work should best proceed. In short, the aggregated data validates the principles and practices identified in the first phase of this project.

Analysis of principles in changing circumstances in each social partnership

Single site analyses of social partnerships showed that the principles of partnership work are significant factors that support the development and continuity of social partnerships or, in their absence, inhibit that development. Yet the goals to which they are directed and their importance according to the stage in the lifecycle of the partnership and as circumstances change. Using interview data, it was found that the principles and practices were helpful in different ways and in different circumstances within each of the four social partnerships. These differences are captured in Table 3 that identifies the ways and degrees by which these principles were enacted during key decision-making moments. From this analysis, the following variations were identified across the four social partnerships.

Firstly, the size, scope and, kind and level of institutional governance shape the prospects for the effective exercise of these principles. They seem more difficult to sustain in larger, dispersed partnerships than they are in smaller and tightly focussed and collaborative partnerships. Also, those partnerships that have less immediate and accessible governance structures (strong management committee, governmental committee decision-making) appear to find it more difficult to carry the partnership work forward through building relations and trust with partners.

Secondly, partnership work needs to be developed and sustained through active participation which provides opportunities to practice partnering, get evidence that partnering matters, and that it is being practiced by others. Yet, across these four partnerships, opportunities for participation varied, particularly in relation to decision-making about the partnership.

Thirdly, in partnerships at the maintaining stage, the use and utility of these principles appeared most significant when the social partnership had to respond to threats about continuity (e.g. external threats caused a revisiting of goals and firming relationships with partners). At these times it seemed that partnerships mobilised to reconfirm the partnership by reaffirming goals and purposes, and addressing effective working relationships. The size and scope of the partnership influenced the extent and character of this remobilisation. For instance, in times of crises, the smaller Community Café partnership exercised the five sets of principles more fully than did the larger Western Districts partnership.

Finally, while the practices of partnership work, captured by the principles, are influenced by the size and complexity of the partnership, and appear to become more significant in times of crisis, it is clear that the principles provide a guide to the ongoing work necessary to form, maintain and sustain social partnerships. In this respect, the principles provide a framework for leadership and governance that is embedded within the partnership. In this respect, the research suggests that rather than remote management, social partnerships depend upon embedded and trustworthy leadership in partnering and governing.

Table 3 - Enactment of principles across four social partnerships

Principle/Partnership	LLEN	Community Café	Pacific Bay Educational Precinct	Partnership for Community Care
Shared purposes and goals	<p>Negotiating relocation of premises and rationalising its program caused reflection upon and revisiting the partnership's goals and purposes.</p> <p>These only became revisited by those participating in this process.</p> <p>Yet, strong consensus may limit consideration of alternatives</p>	<p>The explicit and shared values in this partnership are maintained through partners with a common goal and his practices and purposes bring them together, despite having distinct organisation imperatives.</p>	<p>The failure to secure and getting commitment to shared purposes made the formation of this partnership is very difficult. Arising from an initiative outside of the partners, it was never fully embraced nor enjoyed solid commitment.</p>	<p>A set of common goals and shared concerns about addressing those goals between two key institutions and needs of target group were the source of initial impetus for the development of the social partnership.</p>
Relations with partners	<p>Relocation necessitated re-engaging with partners ("call in favours"), renegotiating boundaries with partners and new partners being sought.</p> <p>It required crises to precipitate conscious re-engagement, negotiation and seeking new partners.</p>	<p>In times of threat, these partners have worked together to secure their goals, through joint activities directed towards common (overlapping) purposes and goals.</p>	<p>Relations with partners suffered from a lack of clear purpose, and alignment of key institutional interests, which serve to marginalise other potential partners. There was a lack of mechanisms to build relations.</p>	<p>There were tensions between centralised goals and processes and the need to be locally responsive, which made the process of building partnerships problematic. The role of a central agency in facilitating relationship building and support became important.</p>
Capacities for partnership work	<p>The size, open-endedness and duration of social partnership can make sustaining the capacity for partnership work more difficult.</p> <p>Participants in an established social partnership may not be engaged in ways that inherently build the capacity for partnership work.</p>	<p>Capacity building here is enacted through the ongoing participation in the social partnership by partner members in formulating and enacting activities in response to shared concerns.</p>	<p>A lack of mechanisms to develop capacity for partnership work, along with institutional commitment, meant little partnership capacity building occurred. Instead, individuals' efforts that carried the initial partnership development</p>	<p>The nascent social partnership utilised an existing social partnership to initiate its development. However, there were concerns about grafting one set of goals and purposes on to a partnership which had different goals and agendas.</p>
Governance and leadership	<p>Strong leadership provides impetus and direction, but may make effective governance more difficult in an established and open-ended social partnership.</p>	<p>Here, leadership and governments is premised upon shared sets of concerns, rather than power relations.</p>	<p>Institutional tensions about leadership and difficulty with collaborative governance, made problematic effective leadership and governance for this nascent social partnership.</p>	<p>Much of the effective leadership has come from a facilitating agency, whereas governments is constrained by departmental committees, despite this initiative being an imperative for these departments.</p>
Trust and trustworthiness	<p>The larger and more open-ended the social partnership the greater the need to actively secure trustworthiness</p>	<p>The sense of shared concerns and need for collaborative action is built upon trust and this is exercised through participants' activities</p>	<p>Initial enthusiasm waned as did trust among partners, particularly outside of the key institutional partners. Efforts of individuals, rather than institutions may have eroded trust in partners.</p>	<p>The Central agency's decision to develop local infrastructure to enact this initiative was important in developing trust within this partnership.</p>

The robustness of the principles of partnership work is illustrated by their usefulness in processes of decision-making across changing circumstances in each of the social partnerships. The absence of practices corresponding to the principles also had discernable negative effects in the processes of partnership work.

There is therefore a pattern of association between the perceived virtues of these principles and desirable practice which correlates, qualitatively, the use of these principles and practice and effective management of change. In one case, Western District Social Partnership, there was evidence of partial deployment of the principles which appeared to present some threats to the partnership.

These findings suggest that, albeit in different ways, the principles of partnership work provide guidelines for forming, maintaining and sustaining social partnerships that can support vocational education and training, and through changing circumstances.

The evidence to support these conclusions is provided in relation to each of the social partnerships. Each section presents the informants perceptions of ideal and actual practices of partnership work in relation to their interview responses in order to ascertain the degree by which those informants believed the principles to be helpful for partnership work (as ideals) and the degree by which they are being enacted in the partnership work (actual) within each of these four partnerships.

Pacific Bay Educational Precinct

The social partnership enacted to assist develop the Pacific Bay Educational Precinct struggled with its formation because of the withdrawal of a key partner and sponsoring agency, the subsequent loss of a physical site, shifting institutional imperatives and the failure to provide and secure the kinds of social infrastructure required for partnership development. Hence, this is became a troubled nascent partnership.

The first principle to be appraised in this *developing* social partnership was “building shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities”. In the Pacific Bay Educational Precinct, there was strong consensus that partnership work should identify the scope and depth of the shared purpose within the locale or partnership, consolidate and articulate that purpose, and reinforce the value and values of collective action. This was to be achieved through practices that exemplified and acknowledged diversity yet were inclusive of partnership needs and contributions, and that identified and championed both short term and long term goals and bases for achieving them (see Table 4).

Table 4 is structured as follows. In the left hand column are the items that the informants were asked to rate in terms of what is desirable and what is actually occurring. Their rating of each of these in terms of the ideal and the actual were rated on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. In addition, if a particular item was not applicable, the informant could indicate NA. The data presented here on the desirability of these principles has been aggregated in Table 1. However, in Table 4, the informants’ rating of the desirable and actual element of partnership work is presented in the middle and right-hand column. In considering the data presented within the table, comparison can be made between what is held to be desirable and what is actually occurring.

From this table, it can be seen that there is a consistent degree of distance between what is perceived to be desirable and what is actually occurring. In terms of *their sponsoring agency*, one informant agreed that it was very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns, while the other saw this as inappropriate and another as desirable. Most agreed that it was very desirable that the sponsoring agency reinforce the values and valuing of collective action and advice, while one saw this as desirable. Most rated as desirable that the sponsoring agency champion the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners’ needs and shared goals, while one saw it as very desirable. All agreed it was very desirable that the sponsoring agency permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals. Divergent views were expressed about the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*, and those of *their sponsoring agency*. One informant rated the partnership work to not apply while others saw it as occasionally practised. Most responses regarded the sponsoring agency as not practising an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns.

Table 4: Pacific Bay Educational Precinct -- Building shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities

The social partnership, should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
identify the scope of and depth of shared purpose within the locale or partnership	4, 4, 4, 4	NA, 2, 1, 2
consolidate and articulate that purpose	4, 4, 4, 4	NA, 2, 1, 2
reinforce the value and values of collective action by exemplification	4, 4, 3, 3	1, 2, 2, 3
acknowledge the diversity, yet be inclusive of, partnership needs and contributions	4, 4, 2, 3	2, 4, 1, 3
identify and champion both short term and long term goals and bases for achieving them	4, 4, 3, 4	2, 3, 1, 1
The sponsoring agency, should aim to:		
encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns	4, 1, 3, 4	3, 1, 1, 1
reinforce the values and valuing of collective action and advice;	4, 4, 3, 4	NA, 3, 2, 1
champion the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners' needs and shared goals	4, 3, 4, 4	NA, 4, 2, 3
permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals	1, 4, 4, 4,	2, NA, 4, 1, 2

Significantly, the highest level of consonance between the desirable and the actual refers to the need for the sponsoring agency to champion contributions of partners and partnership work. In this instance, it seems that such a sentiment reflects this as an important role for the sponsoring agency. The highest level of dissonance within the actual category is that associated with permitting social partners to have some scope in nominating goals.

The gulf between the desirable and enacted is evident in the informants' responses in this table. Informants explained this in terms of the process that featured individual rather than collective action and engagement. Some participants claimed to be acting individually as spokespersons for a set of interests and others were seemingly acting to advance the development of the partnerships, sometimes between the key institutional partners. There were also activities within and outside of the key institutions that were not subject to collaborative engagement. It was also suggested that the impetus for this development had shifted and was now elsewhere as the source for funding. In all, it seems that the kinds of social infrastructure to develop this partnership have not been enacted. There seems little in way of regular meetings or the kinds of engagement that engender trust in partnership interests.

The second principle to be appraised for the Pacific Bay Educational Precinct as a *developing* social partnership was "building relations within the partnership and with partners" (see Table 5). This table uses a similar organisational structure as used in Table 4. Within this table, informants are presented as all agreeing that it is very desirable that partnership work should be responsive to partners' concerns and open about differences in their needs and goals. This includes the practices of engaging partners in deciding about the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work. All but one informant saw as very desirable that the social partnership should be consultative in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance; that response saw the task as desirable. However, there was no consensus in the rating of the *actual tasks* of their social partnership. Two of the four saw the responsiveness to partners' concerns and engaging partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work tasks as practiced frequently, one indispensable and one occasionally practised. There were also divergences in rating the partnership work *ideally* in their *sponsoring agency*, including enacting administrative arrangements that are accountable, yet whose processes and outcomes are negotiable and tailored to the partnership's goals. This also extended to the practices of encouraging social partnerships to determine their means of governance and processes for determining their outcomes, and for tolerating ambiguities in processes and outcomes. One rated these tasks as not applicable, one rated enacting administrative arrangements as desirable, one rated encouraging social partnerships as determining their means of government as partially appropriate. Another rated being tolerant of ambiguities as inappropriate while another informant rated this as partially appropriate. Divergence in rating ideal roles and requirements of the sponsoring agency becomes very apparent here.

Divergent ratings also persisted for the ratings of *actual tasks* of their *social partnership* and those of their *sponsoring agency*. While one informant saw the tasks as indispensable others saw being responsive and engaging partners in deciding the kinds and scope of partnership arrangements as practised frequently. One informant stated that being consultative in forming partnership goals and processes including its governance was not practised at all. For the tasks of the sponsoring agency: one response regarded the tasks as not appropriate; one regarding all as

occasionally practised; one considered they were not practised at all; and one saw the task of being tolerant of ambiguities as practised frequently.

Table 5 Pacific Bay Educational Precinct --Building relations within the partnership and with partners

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
be responsive to partners' concerns and open about differences in their needs and goals	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3, 2
engage partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3, 2
be consultative in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance	4, 4, 4, 3	3, 4, 1, 2
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
enact administrative arrangements that are accountable, yet whose processes and outcomes can be negotiable and tailored to partnerships' goals	NA, 4, 3, 4	NA, 1, 1, 2
encourage social partnerships to determine their means of governance, processes and determining their outcomes	NA, 4, 2, 4	NA, 4, 1, 2
be tolerant of ambiguities in processes and outcomes	NA, 1, 2, 4	NA, 4, 3, 2

The respondent who questioned tolerance of ambiguity was really looking for some kind of closure within the partnership arrangements, particularly where commitment was being evaded. Certainly, as one informant stated, "It has been a long time, however we are at the very early stages in [the partnership]". Another advanced the following: "An outcome driven partnership; ambiguity in processes and outcomes should not be tolerated; an inclusive approach is similarly essential".

The third principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was "Building the capacities for and values of partnership work (see Table 6). Most of the responses agreed that partnership work *ideally* should build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action, and accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs. Again, there were divergent views in rating the *actual tasks* of their social partnership. Most thought the tasks were occasionally practised while one thought building skills and dispositions through collective, shared and supportive action was not practised at all. Two of the four thought that accumulating infrastructure and procedural capacity was not practised, with one seeing it as occasionally practised and another that it was practised frequently. Most of the responses rated what tasks should occur *ideally* in the *social partnership* and with their *sponsoring agency*. Most supported the building of localised capacity of collective work, engaging with social partners in building partnership infrastructure. This included the practices of recognising the capacity building will differ in scope, nature and duration across social partnerships and that exercising patience was indispensable. One saw patience as ideally needed occasionally; another considered building localised capacity and engaging with social partners in building partnership infrastructure as frequently practised. Ratings about actual practice were also divergent. Two of the four saw building the skills and dispositions as occasionally practised while the other two saw this as not practised at all. Two of the four saw the accumulation of partnership infrastructure as not practised at all and the other two saw it as occasionally practised or practised frequently. In terms of the practice of their sponsoring agency, all saw patience as indispensable. Most considered that the recognition that capacity building will differ according to the scope, nature and duration of social partnerships was practised frequently. One response regarding it as occasionally practised. The most divergent views were those referring to engaging in building partnership infrastructure. Most identified that support of localised capacity for collective partnership work was occasionally practised. For instance, the lack of consonance between the need for building partnership skills and what is being enacted is quite stark and consistent with what is reported elsewhere. Thus, dissonance was articulated by a University partner as: "The comment I would make is the same as the cause of the gap between real and ideal, we are dictated to by others and especially as TAFE is putting up all the money." Complementing this is the greatest consonance, between what should be and what is being enacted is for patience in the formation of partnerships.

Table 6 Pacific Bay Educational Precinct -- Building the capacities for and values of partnership work

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action	4, 4, 3, 4	2, 2, 2, 1
accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs	4, 4, 3, 4	1, 1, 2, 3

The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
Support the building of localised capacity for collective (partnership) work	4, 4, 3, 4	2, 4, 2, 2
engage with social partners in building partnership infrastructure	4, 4, 3, 4	1, 4, 2, 3
recognise that capacity building will differ in scope, nature and duration across social partnerships	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 2, 3, 3
Exercise patience in the achievement of demonstrable outcomes	4, 2, 4, 4	4, 4, 4, 4

The fourth principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was “Building partnership governance and leadership” (see Table 7). Most agreed that partnership work *ideally* should enact its partnership work through the fair and consistent application of agreed principles that are closely aligned to its purposes. They acknowledged that principles can be transformed as required through changes in purposes or agendas. It was considered important to exercise governance that both balances inclusiveness with practical processes, demonstrate openness and trust in communication and practice and identify and organise leadership most appropriate to the social partnerships’ stage of development and/or urgent goals.

The picture was quite different in regard to the *actual tasks* of their social partnership. One regarded the application of agreed principles as not appropriate; the remainder suggested it was occasionally practised. Most saw the tasks as indispensable, except for the view that the exercise of governance that balances inclusiveness with practical processes was occasionally practised. Views diverged around the *ideal* tasks that their *sponsoring agency* should aim for. Two of the four rated evaluating partnerships’ progress on process outcomes (e.g. measures of inclusiveness, trust building and consultations) as much as program goals as very desirable, the others as desirable and partially appropriate. All saw the alignment of support as very desirable, while most rated as very desirable support for the development of governance appropriate for the partnership's goals, practices and stage of development and for aligning support with processes and goals identified by the partnership. As one informant suggested: “There is vague agreement about resources. It has to be a proper partnership”. Another said: “The project has stagnated for so long there is a lack of any obvious development to support”.

Table 7 Pacific Bay Educational Precinct -- Building partnership governance and leadership

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
enact its partnership work through the fair and consistent application of agreed principles that are closely aligned to its purposes, yet can be transformed as required through changes in purposes or agendas	4, 4, 3, 4	NA, 2, 2, 2
exercise governance that both balance inclusiveness with practical processes	4, 4, 2, 3	4, 2, 2, 2
demonstrate openness and trust in communication and practice; and	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3, 4
identify and organise leadership most appropriate to the social partnerships’ stage of development and/or urgent goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3, 4
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
evaluate partnerships’ progress on process outcomes (e.g. measures of inclusiveness, trust building and consultations) as much as program goals	3, 4, 2, 4	NA – not formal, 2, NA, 3
support the development of governance appropriate for the partnership's goals, practices and stage of development	4, 4, 3, 4	1, 4, 2, 3
align support with processes and goals identified by the partnership	4, 4, 4, 4	1, 1, 2, 2

Divergence characterised the views of the *actual* tasks of the *sponsoring agency*. Two of the four saw the evaluation of the partnerships’ progress as not appropriate, one saw this as occasionally practised and the other as practised frequently. Two of the four suggested that the alignment of support with process and goals identified by the partnership as not practised at all and the other two as occasionally practised. A key feature of participants’ responses to the gulf between the intended and the actual was the alignment of support to secure the goals identified by partners.

The fifth principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was building trust and trustworthiness (see Table 8). The informants all agreed that partnership work *ideally* should establish processes that engage and inform participants, that were informed by participants’ contributions and the history of the partnership’s work, and that allowed time for trust to evolve among partners. That is, processes aiming to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work (i.e. competitive environment), by engaging individuals locally to address partnership goals and explicitly and deliberately focusing activities on an area of important and common concern: the partnership's goals. This consensus weakened in regard to rating the *actual*

tasks of their social partnership; while one rated processes that engage as standard and indispensable, the others saw this as practised frequently or occasionally. This pattern was repeated for other tasks such as taking time for trust to build, overcoming conditions and tensions where it was rated as not applied, as standard and indispensable, practised frequently and occasionally.

Table 8 Pacific Bay Educational Precinct - Building trust and trustworthiness

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
processes that engage, informed and are informed by participants contributions	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3, 2
a history of partnership work and time for trust to evolve among partners	4, 1, 4, 4	3, 2, 3, 4
processes that aim to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work (i.e. competitive environment)	4, 4, 4, 4	NA, 4, 3, 2
engaging individuals locally to address partnership goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3, 3
explicitly and deliberately focused activities on an area of important and common concern: the partnership's goals	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3, 3
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
work to build trust in its relationship with partners	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3, 3
be fair and transparent in its dealings with the social partnership	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3, 4
be flexible with its own imperatives and requirements	4, 1, 2, 4	4, 4, 3, 4

Given the earlier comments, it is perhaps not surprising that there was almost complete consensus in the responses that their *sponsoring agency*, ideally should aim to work to build trust in its relationship with partners, be fair and transparent in its dealings with the social partnership and be flexible with its own imperatives and requirements. One participant stated that “there needs to be “a partnership not based on the building and property.”

One respondent rated being flexible with its own imperatives as frequently practised; another not practised at all. Rating converged for the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*, and those of their *sponsoring agency*. Two of the four saw the actual tasks of the social partnership as indispensable or practised frequently; one as occasionally practised. One rated processes that aim to overcome conditions and tensions as not applicable. Most of the responses rated the tasks for the *sponsoring agency* as indispensable and practised frequently in relation to most of the tasks for their social partnership and the sponsoring agency, however one rated being flexible with its own imperatives as inappropriate and another partially appropriate.

When considering the difference between the ideal and enacted, one informant noted the problems of imperatives within which the sponsoring agencies (TAFE system and university) were operating. “The greatest difference between ideal and real is caused by there being no opportunity to develop processes and be consistent – it is stop and start to it – this is not the fault of either partner – university or TAFE. The timeline changes – and the agenda – it is hard to fully trust as the situation changes but we believe we are not in competition”.

In all, the difficulty arising from a loss of one of the sponsoring institutions, and a lack of a clear project emerging for the remaining sponsoring agencies has done much to complicate the formation of this social partnership. However, sitting alongside this is the relatively immature basis for social partnership to develop. Absent here is the lack of the social infrastructure building required to engage partners and capture their interests and build their trust. Instead, much effort seems to be that of the few energetic and at times frustrated individuals working within or across institutional partners. In addition, the passage of time has led to the dissipation of initial interest and may well make gaining committed partners and partnering institutions more difficult in the future.

Partnership for Community Care

This social partnership is set within the home and community care sector in Queensland. It was slow in its initial development and faced issues of a lack of State support with the withdrawal of the public sector service delivery, as advised in earlier reports. However, these issues now may have been resolved. Yet, the nascent partnership here sits within the complication of a system which is under review, and therefore needs to be highly accountable, and the need to engage partners and partnerships in ways which meets their interests and needs. These partnership imperatives are not always consistent with the sponsoring agencies’ and are also mediated by a

history of relationships with the sponsoring agency. Moreover, the auspicing institution (i.e. the Industry Training Council) has a need to work carefully with the sponsoring department in order to sustain its relationship and influence policy. So, there are a complex of institutional factors and imperatives which both characterise and shape the formation of this social partnership.

The first principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was “Building shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities”. The informants almost all agreed as very desirable that partnership work should identify the scope of and depth of the shared purpose within the locale or partnership, consolidate and articulate that purpose. This is to be realised by practices that reinforce the value and values of collective action by exemplifying and acknowledging the diversity, yet being inclusive of partners’ needs and contributions and identifying and championing both short term and long term goals and bases for achieving them. All, but one respondent agreed as very desirable that partnership work in *their particular sponsoring agency, ideally* should encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns. Also, practices associated with reinforcing the values and valuing of collective action and advice, championing the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners’ needs and securing shared goals and permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals. This was the focus of the shared purpose and permission of social partnerships, reinforcing the value and values of collective action, and permission for some scope in nominating goals for success and timelines. These were regarded by this response to be desirable tasks.

Informants strongly agreed that partnership work in *their particular sponsoring agency, ideally* should aim to encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns, reinforce the values and valuing of collective action and advice, champion the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners’ needs and shared goals and permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals.

Table 9 Community Care-- Building shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
identify the scope of and depth of shared purpose within the locale or partnership	4, 4, 3, 4	2.5, 3, 4
consolidate and articulate that purpose	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 4, NA, 4
reinforce the value and values of collective action by exemplification	4, 4, 4, 3	2, NA, NA, 3,
acknowledge the diversity, yet be inclusive of, partnership needs and contributions	4, 4, 4, 4	3.5, NA, NA, 4,
identify and champion both short term and long term goals and bases for achieving them.	4, 4, 4, 4	3.5, NA, NA, 4
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
encourage, but not overly specify, an inclusive approach to articulating localised concerns	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, NA, 4
reinforce the values and valuing of collective action and advice;	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, NA, 4
champion the contributions of partners and partnership work in meeting partners’ needs and shared goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, NA, 4
permit social partnerships some scope in nominating goals for its success and the timelines for meeting those goals	4, 4, 3, 4	4, NA, NA, 4

However, the consensus was not as strong for individuals rating their responses in regard to the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*, and those of their *sponsoring agency*. The informants who responded to the items about the role of the sponsoring agency of emphasised that it is role in managing the initial development of social partnership was crucial. In one instance, the respondent understood her partnership work to have not yet begun. Another, operating at a strategic level understood the identified tasks for the sponsoring agency did not yet apply. Other responses rated the *actual* tasks as practised frequently while others regarded the tasks as indispensable to their social partnership. Yet, the bases for the building of social infrastructure remain incomplete. For instance, one informant suggested that “Developmental trust -- time to explore ideas depends on the frequency of meetings – there have been only two.” This informant then went on to suggest that “If there is enough continuity of meetings as a partnership then they can take the issues forward.”

Other suggested that there was a clear need to build continuity and share purposes through more and regular interaction among the partnership members. They were also some distinct views about how the partnership should be conceived and therefore, how such processes might be enacted. The informant from the sponsoring department, suggested the use of departmental regional officers as validating the funded services satisfaction with

the partnership but also that the central relationship was that between the department and the auspicing institution, while conceding that this was subject to contractual arrangements which placed the partnership on a particular kind of basis. This contractual basis, while appropriate in dealing with public finance etc, may not help overcome some of the concerns about the history of relations between the sponsoring department and some of the partnership members.

The second principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was “Building relations within the partnership and with partners”. The informants almost all agreed that partnership work *ideally* should be responsive to partners’ concerns and open about differences in their needs and goals, engage partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work and be consultative in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance.

Table 10 Community Care - Building relations within the partnership and with partners

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
be responsive to partners’ concerns and open about differences in their needs and goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 1, NA, 4
engage partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements and the conduct of partnership work	4, 4, 4, 3	4, 1.5, NA, 3
be consultative in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance	4, 4, 3, 4	4, 1, NA, 4
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
enact administrative arrangements that are accountable, yet whose processes and outcomes can be negotiable and tailored to partnerships’ goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, NA, NA, 4
encourage social partnerships to determine their means of governance, processes and determining their outcomes	4, 4, 4, 4	3.5, NA, NA, 4
be tolerant of ambiguities in processes and outcomes	4, 1, 4, 4	4, NA, NA, 4

One informant rated as not applicable engaging partners in deciding the kinds and scope of the partnership arrangements, the conduct of partnership work and consultations in forming partnership goals and processes, including its governance as desirable, the others as very desirable not clear which was desirable and which very desirable. The consensus was not as strong with the *actual tasks* of their social partnership. One informant rated the tasks as not applicable. Another operating at a strategic level rated the tasks as practised frequently or indispensable. Informants almost all agreed that *ideally* partnership work in *their sponsoring agency*, should aim to enact administrative arrangements that are accountable, yet whose processes and outcomes are negotiable and tailored to partnerships’ goals, encourage social partnerships to determine their means of governance, processes and determining their outcomes and be tolerant of ambiguities in processes and outcomes.

The consensus was not as strong for the *actual tasks* of *their social partnership*, and those of their *sponsoring agency*. While two of the four the responses rated the tasks as indispensable to their social partnership and the sponsoring agency, the other two responses rated them as not yet applied. Again, the issue of the contractual basis for some aspects of the partnership emerged. “There is after all a contract of service – we are bound by what is set – and can also change what can be changed – by the contract. Some pre-set and some negotiable.” So, here the informant is suggesting that there is some scope to negotiate around contracted arrangements. This possibility is, however, shaped by a belief that while “Partnerships are fundamental to the livelihood of government department” yet they demonstrate their lack of interest and commitment to them. There was also a sense that these social partnerships, while held to be important, were less of a priority than other imperatives (e.g. “In the case where one agency is driving to achieve the outcomes in the contract, partnership comes second to that”).

In other social partnership research we found that a key statement about the health and trust building of social partnership was when one partner gave up something for the benefit of social partnership. Yet, here there seems to be an unwillingness and the unlikelihood of this to occur.

“We have to foreground this project in the light of a long history of poor partnership practice – both corporate and social many people feel it is not worth trying one more time – they have been burnt. Saying “Sorry it costs my agency much more than I gain”. This is especially the case in rural and remote communities. They have had bad experiences with training in this regard. The last unit never recalled the reference group as it did not want to hear any criticism.”

So, here, issues of history of relationships, and a lack of confidence in or effective share governments stand to impede the development of effective social partnership based on trust.

The third principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was building the capacities for and values of partnership work. Informants almost all agreed that partnership work *ideally* should build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action, and accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs.

Table 11 Community Care-- Building the capacities for and values of partnership work

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 1, NA, 4
accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs	4, 4, 3, 4	4, NA, NA 4,
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
support the building of localised capacity for collective (partnership) work	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4, 4,
engage with social partners in building partnership infrastructure	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4, 4
recognise that capacity building will differ in scope, nature and duration across social partnerships	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4, 4
exercise patience in the achievement of demonstrable outcomes	4, 3, 4, 2	4, 3, 4, 2

The consensus was not as strong in the rating of the *actual tasks* of their social partnership. One informant rated as not applicable 'build the skills and dispositions required for partnership work through collective, shared and supportive action'. Two of the four respondents regarded accumulate infrastructure and procedural capacity for partnership work and fulfilling partners' needs as not applicable, and the other two as indispensable. One response that collective, shared and supportive action was not practiced at all. However, near consensus were evident in the ratings for the ideal tasks of *their sponsoring agency*, in building of localised capacity for collective (partnership) work, engaging with social partners in building partnership infrastructure, and recognising that capacity building will differ in scope, nature and duration across social partnerships. One response regarded that the exercise of patience in the achievement of demonstrable outcomes as desirable and another as partially appropriate. Yet, the consensus was not as strong for the ratings for the *actual tasks* of *their social partnership*, and those of *their sponsoring agency*. While two of the four the responses rated the tasks as indispensable in relation to their social partnership and the sponsoring agency, the other two of the responses understood the identified tasks for the sponsoring agency did not yet apply.

It was noted that two of the partner institutions were competitors for the contract, thereby complicating the relationships and also issues about capacity building, among the partners. However, given the ongoing review of this department and its practice of not being flexible enough and dictating conditions contractually, there was a legacy of cynicism among the partners. A principal concern was that the sponsoring department, while claiming to value social partnerships, and also the services that the partnership was supposed to be delivering, there was little evidence of conscious capacity building to achieve these ends.

"Funds are extremely limited for the training delivery side of the work. There are funds for developing in the social partnership but no recognition in the contract requirements. In fact there are scarce resources and funding and the skills base is not up to the challenges in rural and remote contexts."

One participant elaborated the current dilemma as follows. "The overall partnership is constrained by the context and overall strategy. The means of governance is developing and adapting – advisory meetings have been held with the manager for the Community Care project to begin understanding what they can deliver. But there are contractual constraints – responsibility for public funds. "Nevertheless, it is suggested that the social partnership itself could play a role in attempting to achieve some of the partnerships' goals through its advisory processes. But here, it is dependent upon the agency of individual in managing upwards within the Department. This is in contrast to the idea of collective engagement.

The fourth principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership is "Building partnership governance and leadership". Informants almost all agreed that partnership work *ideally* should enact its partnership work through

the fair and consistent application of agreed principles that are closely aligned to its purposes, yet can be transformed as required through changes in purposes or agendas, exercise governance that both balance inclusiveness with practical processes, demonstrate openness and trust in communication and practice and identify and organise leadership most appropriate to the social partnerships' stage of development and/or urgent goals. Most of responses rated them as very desirable for the partnership work, yet with one rated the first as not applicable. Two of the four the informants rated the *actual tasks* of their social partnership as not applicable, occasionally practised or practised frequently.

Near consensus is indicated for the *ideal* tasks of *their sponsoring agency*, of evaluating partnerships' progress on process outcomes (e.g. measures of inclusiveness, trust building and consultations) as much as program goals, supporting the development of governance appropriate for the partnership's goals, practices and stage of development and aligning support with processes and goals identified by the partnership. One informant rated as inappropriate aligning support with processes and goals identified by the partnership.

Table 12 Community Care Project -- Building partnership governance and leadership

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
enact its partnership work through the fair and consistent application of agreed principles that are closely aligned to its purposes, yet can be transformed as required through changes in purposes or agendas	4, NA, 4, 4	4, NA, NA, 4
exercise governance that both balance inclusiveness with practical processes	4, 4, 4, 4	3, NA, NA, 4
demonstrate openness and trust in communication and practice	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 2, NA, 4
identify and organise leadership most appropriate to the social partnerships' stage of development and/or urgent goals.	3, 4, 4, 4	NA, 3, 4, 4
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
evaluate partnerships' progress on process outcomes (e.g. measures of inclusiveness, trust building and consultations) as much as program goals	4 on process, 4, 4, 4	NA for the program, 4, 4, 4
support the development of governance appropriate for the partnership's goals, practices and stage of development	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 2, NA, 4
align support with processes and goals identified by the partnership	4, 4, 4, 2	4, 4, NA, 2

The consensus was not as strong in the ratings of the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*, and those of their *sponsoring agency*. While two of the four rated the tasks as very desirable for their social partnership and the sponsoring agency, the other two rated the tasks of the sponsoring agency as not applying or inappropriate.

A key constraint that emerged through these interviews was that the governance of the social partnership was in some sense constrained by the auspicing institution (i.e. Industry Training Council) being in a complex and potentially subservient relationship with the sponsoring department. Therefore, there was not always confidence among partners that the auspicing body was able to act on interests of the social partnership and its partners. This observation is not meant to be critical of the auspicing institution that illustrates the complicated bases for inter-agency relationships that will arise, particularly in circumstances where it is necessary to find ways of working with sponsoring agencies and other partners in delivery of provisions for training and development. Elsewhere, within the field of vocational education, complications associated with adhering to national curriculum frameworks for mandated approaches to training and assessment have led to similar complicated arrangements.

The fifth principle to be appraised for the *developing* social partnership was building trust and trustworthiness. There was agreement about the partnership work *ideally* as establishing processes that engage, informed and are informed by participants contributions, a history of partnership work and time for trust to evolve among partners, processes that aim to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work (i.e. competitive environment), engaging individuals locally to address partnership goals and explicitly and deliberately focused activities on an area of important and common concern: the partnership's goals. Most of the responses, however did not see as very desirable the listed group of *actual tasks* of their social partnership; one rated these as not applicable, another rated as inappropriate aiming to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work. Near consensus was indicated in ratings for the *ideal* tasks of their *sponsoring agency*, as building trust in its relationship with partners, being fair and transparent in its dealings with the social partnership and being flexible with its own imperatives and requirements; one rated being fair and transparent as not applicable.

Table 13 Community Care Partnership -- Building trust and trustworthiness

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
processes that engage, informed and are informed by participants contributions	4, 4, 4, 4	4, NA, 4
a history of partnership work and time for trust to evolve among partners	4, 4, 4, 4	2.5, NA, 4,
processes that aim to overcome conditions and tensions that militate against building trust through partnership work (i.e. competitive environment)	4, 4, 4, 4	3, 1, 4
engaging individuals locally to address partnership goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 2, 4
explicitly and deliberately focused activities on an area of important and common concern: the partnership's goals	4, 4, 4, 4	4, NA, 4
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
work to build trust in its relationship with partners	5, 4, 4, 4	4, 3.5, 4
be fair and transparent in its dealings with the social partnership	5, NA, 4, 4	5, NA, 4
be flexible with its own imperatives and requirements	4, 4, 4, 4	4, 2, 4

The consensus was not as strong in the ratings of the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*, and those of their *sponsoring agency*. While two of the four of the ratings gave desirable and very desirable for the tasks, one rated most of the actual tasks as not applicable including being fair and transparent as not applicable to the sponsoring agency. Here, again, concerns about the relations between the sponsoring department and the auspicing institution we seem to compromise or complicated the development of trust. “But it is after all a contract of service – ITC has to balance the pressure down from the funder with the regional operational issues from below.” Here, it can be seen that partnership work is a process that draws previous competitors and allies into the same space. For some of the informants, the onus for developing trust stands clearly with the sponsoring department. “The Department can show leadership by concentrating on the broad based need of the [service] providers and request that we are getting the outcomes from the innovative approach of social partnership that we signed up for. If our providers are satisfied and positive about what they are getting out of the approach, then we are going to be pleased that the Community Care badge has value in the community and is improving the quality of service.”

So here, the complicated inter-agency and inter-institutional imperatives are hindering the development of an effective social partnership. The real problem is that the unequal relationships across and within the social partnership, shapes the agenda, the actions of the auspicing institutions and also leads to misunderstand the needs of the partner organisations to deliver their important services. This scenario is heightened and accentuated by the current process of review that the sponsoring department is currently encountering. However, the history of relations has led to a lack of belief by some partnering organisations that their interest will be served once the review process has been completed. These complications probably reflect much of what occurs in enacted social partnerships which involve interagency and departmental partnerships.

Western District Social Partnership

This social partnership is a longstanding one. Currently, it is seeking to address issues and threats associated with its long-term funding. Its actions, recently, have included staff changes and reductions in paid working hours and also its relocation to less costly accommodation. Among other activities, there is some pressure for it to more tightly manage its membership and partner numbers as the cost of maintaining contact with none active and none contributing partners is seen to be too costly.

Here, the first principle appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership focus is “Maintaining shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities”. In *the social partnership*, Western District Social Partnership, informants rated as very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should maintain and renew partnership goals and processes through constructive reflection, and by focusing on core business, actively champion partnership successes, rehearse the complexity and importance of sustaining commitment to the partnership’s work and goals and accommodate changing views, processes and goals. Only in the case of “rehearse the complexity” did one respondent query what was meant in terms of the *ideal* situation.

However, the consensus was not as strong in the ratings for the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*. While most rated the tasks as desirable and very desirable, ratings for *ideal* tasks of the *sponsoring agency* were largely very desirable. Yet even here, the divergence of ratings appears in the *actual* tasks: one rated acknowledging the successes of and contributions of the social partnership as not practised at all. This, an informant suggested is

“The only way I would know about accommodating changing goals is at a planning meeting, and I’m not on that meeting. I mean, we don’t hear about those things in the rest of the social partnership and I don’t know that we have the opportunity to change processes and goals – although I think it is important.

Table 14: Western District Social Partnership - Maintaining shared purposes and goals of partnership activities

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
maintain and renew partnership goals and processes through constructive reflection, and by focusing on core business	4, 4, 4	4, 3, 3
actively champion partnership successes	4, 2, 4	4, 3, 3
rehearse the complexity and importance of sustaining commitment to the partnership’s work and goals	4, - 4	3, 3, 3
accommodate changing views, processes and goals	4, 4, 4	3, 3, 3
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
acknowledge, support and accommodate the task of maintaining shared interests and partnership performance over time	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3
acknowledge the successes of and contributions of the social partnership	4, 3, 4	3, 1, 2
be tolerant of social partnerships’ changing processes and goals	4, 4, 4	3, 3, 2

So despite the higher levels of agreement between the desirable and the actual, the need to maintain a focus on shared purposes and goals and articulating those across partnerships still stands as being important. This is likely accentuated as new partners and participants engage with social partnership. For instance, this social partnership has experienced some changes in staff in recent times and is considering realigning some of its partners’ status. These changes bring around particular needs to explicitly maintain focus on share purposes and goals.

The second principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining relations within the partnership and with partners. Informants rated as very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should rehearse and remind partners of the overall project, fulfil some of partners’ expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions, build productive relationships with sponsoring agency (though in their case the partnership was organisationally sponsored) as a partner in a shared project, exemplify how partnership work has achieved its goals, manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers and manage the recruitment and induction of new partners. There was also convergence in rating the *actual tasks* seeing the tasks as “practised frequently” or “standard and indispensable practices” except in the case of the task, “fulfil some of partners’ expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions” as rated as “occasionally practised” and “manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers” as “not practised” or “occasionally practised”. In regard to the sponsoring agency, ratings for the *ideal tasks* were very desirable or desirable and this pattern was repeated for the *actual tasks*.

Table 15 Western District Social Partnership - Maintaining relations within the partnership and with partners

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
rehearse and remind partners of the overall project	4, 4, 4	4, 3, 4
fulfil some of partners’ expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 2
build productive relationships with sponsoring agency as a partner in a shared project	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 4
exemplify how partnership work has achieved its goals	4, 4, 4	3, ?, 4
manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers	4, 4, 4	1, 2, 4
manage the recruitment and induction of new partners	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 3
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
acknowledge the partnership’s contribution and that of its partners	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 3
have productive and reciprocal engagement with the social partnership	3, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
demonstrate how partners’ (and in particular volunteers) contributions have been acknowledged and enacted	4, ?, 4	3, ?, 4
draw upon the partnerships’ experiences in establishing and developing further existing partnerships	3, 4, 4	3, 4, 3

The one informant referred to the shared responsibilities of relationships within the partnership. “Managing the burden placed on partners is an ideal – but partners have a big stake in doing this for themselves.” That is, the need for the partners to play a role in their relationships with social partnership. She went on to state that “... part of the assessment of what this partnership is worth to each partner – if too onerous, then it is not worth doing it etc.” nevertheless, she also acknowledge that “Burn out would point to poor planning / implementation,

poor sharing of work etc. so here, reciprocity between the social partnership and its partners in the maintenance of relationships, and as directed towards the partnership's goals seem to be important imperatives.

The third principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining the capacities for and values of partnership work. Informants agreed as very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should attract and retain partners and resources capable of continuing partnership work, maintain the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work and manage the turnover of staff and partners to secure continuity of the partnership's work. When it came to rating the *actual* tasks only "manage the turnover of staff and partners to secure continuity of the partnership's work" was regarded as "occasionally practised" or impossible because of the short term and program specific funding by stakeholders. The other tasks were regarded as "standard and indispensable" or "practised frequently". For the sponsoring agency, ratings for the *ideal* were largely very desirable and the ratings for the *actual* tasks of the sponsoring agency were very desirable and desirable; one rating direct support to each social partnership strategically in ways to assist its continuity as occasionally practised.

Table 16 Western District Social Partnership - Maintaining the capacity in and values of partnership work

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
attract and retain partners and resources capable of continuing partnership work	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 4
maintain the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work	4, 4, 4	4, NA, 4
manage the turnover of staff and partners to secure continuity of the partnership's work *	4, 4, 4	2, NA, 4
The sponsoring agency, should aim to:		
direct support to each social partnership strategically in ways to assist its continuity	4, ?, 4	2, NA, 4
assist in processes of support for the induction of new partners	4, 4, 4	3, 3, 4
identify and provide strategic infrastructure support to the partnership.	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 4

The fourth principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining partnership governance and leadership for continuity over time. Informants rated as very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should maintain trust and openness as key principles for partnership governance, manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations, locate and select effective leadership and maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership. In all but one case, the respondents indicated that all the tasks were very desirable as *ideal*. One respondent did not rate "maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership". When it came to the *actual* tasks of their social partnership, ratings converged as "standard and indispensable" and "practised frequently". All the *ideal* tasks for the sponsoring agency were rated as very desirable. The *actual* tasks of the sponsoring agency were rated as very desirable and desirable.

Table 17 Western District Social Partnership - Maintaining partnership governance and leadership for continuity over time

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
maintain trust and openness as key principles for partnership governance	4, 4, 4	4, 3, 4
manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations	4, 4, 4	2, 3, 3
locate and select effective leadership	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership	4, 4,	3, 3,
The sponsoring agency should aim to:		
respect and acknowledge the preferred mode of partnership governance	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
acknowledge the importance of open and trust in partnership work by accepting advice and valuing its contributions	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
advise about alternative governance strategies for long levity	4, 4, 4	4, 3, 4
encourage and support meetings and communication processes	4, 4, 4	3, 4, 4

The suggestion here is, overwhelmingly, that building and maintaining trust, managing the contributions in capacities of partners and maintaining communications within the partnerships and across partners stands as important principles and practices.

The fifth principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining trust and trustworthiness. The respondents rated partnership work *ideally* should demonstrate trust and openness through partnership work, welcome and encourage partnership input, actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners' expectations and needs and emphasise the achievements and effectiveness of the partnerships' work as very desirable or desirable. The informants rated the *actual* tasks as standard and indispensable or practised frequently. A similar pattern appeared for the sponsoring agency ideal tasks rated as very desirable and desirable and actual tasks standard and indispensable or practised frequently.

Table 18 Western District Social Partnership - Maintaining trust and trustworthiness

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
demonstrate trust and openness through partnership work	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
welcome and encourage partnership input	4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4
actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners' expectations and needs	4, 4, 4	3, ?, 4
emphasise the achievements and effectiveness of the partnerships' work	4, 4, 3	4, 4, 3
The sponsoring agency, should aim to:		
demonstrate continuing and growing autonomy as the partnership matures	4, 4, 3	3, 4, 3
demonstrate an openness to criticism and reform of its processes and goals as result of partnership feedback	4, 4, 3	3, ?, 3
acknowledge and identify the partnerships' contributions	4, 4, 3	4, 4, 3
continue to champion the effectiveness of partnership work	4, 4, 3	4, 4, 3

Informants here suggested that, "I think it's important to acknowledge the role of partners. I've seen that and seen the publicity, so I think that's great. The partnership work has achieved its goal." Another suggested that "Openly and actively praise – we don't do that very well. We have a sense that we are doing well. It is good to reflect and there is not much discrepancy between the ideal and our practice." So here, building and maintaining trust comes through reflecting upon what the partnership is supposed to be doing, how it is doing it and communicating its achievements.

Community Café

This is a 'community partnership' that has arisen through shared interests and commitments among partners. The informants here stand by their interests in and concerns about maintaining the localised and community origins of the partnership. In this way, they claim that there is no sponsoring agency or department. Certainly, the scope of the partnership and its specific focus, and the relationships among the partners does much to sustain this view. However, to sustain the social partnership and to engage in the provision of educational activities, attention is also given to securing funding from government agencies.

The first principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining shared purposes and goals for and scope of partnership activities. Informants agreed as very desirable or desirable that partnership work *ideally* should maintain and renew partnership goals and processes through constructive reflection, and by focusing on core business, actively champion partnership successes by rehearsing the complexity and importance of sustaining commitment to the partnership's work and goals and accommodate changing views, processes and goals. One informant rated rehearse the complexity as partially appropriate. The consensus was not as strong for individuals rating their responses in regard to the *actual* tasks of *their social partnership*. They agreed on desirable and very desirable but in the case of "rehearsing the complexity" they both saw this as "occasionally practised". One informant stated "We rehearse in an unstructured way rather than formally. We should champion with each other and externally more. We easily accept changing views. It is good because we are very flexible. We are open and hear what the needs are."

Informants rated all ideal and actual tasks of the sponsoring agency as not applicable, so no responses were provided. Importantly, there was strong and shared sense of optimism. "I feel like the partnership is consolidating even further than before. Participation in the café has increased by 100%. It is now even opening on a Wednesday evening. It is running out of space though. So relations among partners are at a strong stage. The increased participation in the café means that they might not be so locked into 6 monthly contracts. Their position is now strengthened."

Table 19 Community Café -- Maintaining shared purposes and goals of partnership activities

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
maintain and renew partnership goals and processes through constructive reflection, and by focusing on core business	4, 4	4, 3
actively champion partnership successes	3, 4	2, 3
rehearse the complexity and importance of sustaining commitment to the partnership's work and goals	2, 4	2, 2
accommodate changing views, processes and goals	3, 4	4, 4

The second principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining relations within the partnership and with partners. Informants mostly rated as very desirable that partnership work *ideally* should fulfil some of partners' expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions, build productive relationships with sponsoring agency (though in their case the partnership was organisationally sponsored) as a partner in a shared project, exemplify how partnership work has achieved its goals, manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers and manage the recruitment and induction of new partners. In the case of "rehearse and remind partners of the overall project" an informant rated this as very desirable and the other partially appropriate.

The *actual tasks* were rated as "practised frequently" or "standard and indispensable practices" except in the case of "managing the recruitment and induction of new partners" with one informant rating this as "occasionally practised".

Table 20 Community Café -- Maintaining relations within the partnership and with partners

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
rehearse and remind partners of the overall project	2, 4	3, 3
fulfil some of partners' expectations and habitually acknowledge their contributions	3, 4	3, 4
build productive relationships with sponsoring agency as a partner in a shared project	4, 4	4, 3
exemplify how partnership work has achieved its goals	3, 4	4, 3
manage the burden placed upon partners and avoid burnout of volunteers	3, 4	4, 3
manage the recruitment and induction of new partners	4, 4	4, 2

Informants rated all ideal and actual tasks of the sponsoring agency as not applicable

While denying they were in a dependant relationship with a sponsoring agency, they referred to the kinds of relations they enjoy with a government department to whom they look for financial support. Their relationship with the government department is claimed to have been strengthening because of increased participation in the café. They are trying to get another building which would allow them to extend the café. They have been offered a building by a local branch of a major Church and have put in an application for funding to a government department to support their expansion. They are confident that they will be successful in their intentions as government recognises the café as a sign of real community engagement. The partners have supported this move verbally and through the provision of letters of support in the application. They have also requested funds from the local government and will borrow the rest from this local government. This will allow them to have more people in the café. The building could also possibly be used for entertainment at the weekends. "We have had discussions with the partners about this potential and they have talked to a local member of parliament about this."

In pursuing these activities they are responding to needs that are central to the social partnerships' purposes. The long term challenges are that they need to have a real commercial kitchen so that they can provide more training opportunities and run accredited courses. Community Café is now running at full capacity and so they need more facilities. They are still talking to Council about relocating sports room so as to allow them to expand. "Their reaction though is one of laughter. They won't do it but we keep talking. The increased participation in the café, however, has put us on the radar for other government departments."

The third principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining the capacities for and values of partnership work. Informants rated as very desirable that the ideal tasks should involve attracting and retaining partners and resources capable of continuing partnership work, maintaining the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work and managing the turnover of staff and partners to

secure continuity of the partnership's work. When it came to rating the *actual* tasks only "maintaining the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work" was regarded by both as practised frequently with the other tasks as standard and indispensable.

Table 21 Community Café -- Maintaining the capacity in and values of partnership work

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
attract and retain partners and resources capable of continuing partnership work	4, 4	4, 4
maintain the infrastructure required to fulfil effective partnership work	4, 4	3, 3
manage the turnover of staff and partners to secure continuity of the partnership's work	4, 4	4, 3

It was suggested that the capacity to sustain social partnership was now easier because of its standing in the community. "Our partners come to us – so we do attract them. We are much better at this now." This informant then went on to suggest that this changing relationship between the partnership and the community also empowers the social partnership. "Before we would go along with what partners wanted. Now, I am more confident and put my views forward." This suggests that as the partnership becomes accepted and acknowledged within the community which service that relationships and capacity to build on secure support also change.

The success of the café has given confidence to the partners in their working with the social partnership. "We are now attractive to our partners and not as dependent on them as before. Our relationships which are based on a shared vision are also what help this partnership. What we do here supports their clients, be they long terms unemployed or disabled and it is beneficial to the partners because we nurture them. There is a natural reciprocity and sense of symbiosis in the work provided by each partner."

The fourth principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining partnership governance and leadership for continuity over time. Informants almost all agreed that partnership work *ideally* should maintain trust and openness as key principles for partnership governance, manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations, locate and select effective leadership and maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership. In all but one case, the respondents indicated that these tasks were very desirable as *ideal*. One respondent indicated that "manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations" did not apply to partnership work. When it came to the *actual* tasks of their social partnership, there was little agreement. Rated either "not practised at all" and "occasionally practised" was "maintain the effective provisions of meetings and communications across the partnership".

Table 22 Community Café -- Maintaining partnership governance and leadership for continuity over time

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
maintain trust and openness as key principles for partnership governance	4, 4	4, 4
manage the diverse contributions to avoid both over and under representations	NA, 4	NA, 3
locate and select effective leadership	4, 4	4, 3
maintain the effective provision of meetings and communications across the partnership	4, 4	1, 2

The scale of this social partnership and the scope of its project is evident in the comment that "We tend to manage our partners individually. The good leadership comes naturally among the partners." Nevertheless the imperative to maintain the current level of engagement and consensus is evident in the comment that "...with new partners, we are more discerning about looking specifically for evidence of good leadership."

In a statement about the qualities of leadership the following powerful statement was made.

"[Leadership] is influenced by my total belief in what we do here. Each year, I gain confidence of this and have more understanding so it is seen by others. I am more forthright with this. We now have a product that people are attracted to. This gives me confidence. It releases creative energy and collaboration among partners. We can think up new ideas. I am energised and productive. It has attracted so many who share the vision. Being open with people I meet is helping too. Having time to speak with people brings new opportunities. I spoke with a co-ordinator about our café last year and now she wants us to come and talk in her centre so she can replicate what we do here. I am recognising that I am absolutely in the right role –

being a leader in a people focussed organisation is where I am meant to be. Devolving jobs to others allows me to work with my strengths. “

In this way, the governance and leadership are emerging through success and commitment to the project.

The fifth principle to be appraised for the *maintaining and sustaining* social partnership was maintaining trust and trustworthiness. Informants agreed that partnership work *ideally* should demonstrate trust and openness through partnership work, welcome and encourage partnership input, actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners’ expectations and needs and emphasise the achievements and effectiveness of the partnerships’ work. However, in one case, the respondent suggested that “actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners’ expectations and needs” is partially appropriate. A similar ratings pattern appeared in the *actual* tasks rated as “standard and indispensable” or “practised frequently” with one rating “actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners’ expectations and needs” as occasionally practised.

Table 23 Community Café -- Maintaining trust and trustworthiness

The social partnership should aim to:	Desirable	Actual
demonstrate trust and openness through partnership work	4, 4	4, 4
welcome and encourage partnership input	4, 4	4, 4
actively and openly appraise the level of meeting partners’ expectations and needs	2, 4	2, 3
emphasise the achievements and effectiveness of the partnerships’ work	4, 4	4, 3

It was suggested that the partnership needed to “actively and openly appraise – (because) we don’t do that very well. “We have a sense that we are doing well. It is good to reflect.”

In some ways, this social partnership based upon its own local and community response, rather than something enacted by others, stands as a useful exemplar of how the rationale for a partnership remains a key concern, rather than the survival of the partnership itself. Moreover, the degree of engagement with the community and the apparent success of the partnership’s project seems to be securing the local and funding support that others are struggling to achieve. Of course, there are issues here associated with scope and scale, and the relative low level of complexity of arrangements. Nevertheless, in terms of responding to local issues and needs, this partnership seems to be achieving its principal purposes.

In some ways, this social partnership based upon its own local and community response, rather than something enacted by others, stands as a useful exemplar of how the focus of the partnership remains a key concern, not the partnership itself. Moreover, the degree of engagement with the community and the apparent success of the partnership’s project seems to be securing the kindness local and funding support that others are struggling to achieve. Of course, there are issues here associated with scope and scale, and the relative low level of complexity of arrangements. Nevertheless, in terms of responding to localise issues and needs, this partnership seems to be achieving its principal purposes.

From the data provided here, it is possible to conclude that the from the changes encountered in the two developing social partnerships the principles were helpful in appraising progress and the factors promoting and inhibiting that progress. For instance, the lack of social infrastructure in the first instance, and then too much social infrastructure in the other. In both, the lack of effective auspicing and partnership work is constraining the development of social partnerships that have, in the case of Pacific Bay Educational Precinct, never emerged and are being constrained within the Community Care project.

The two existing social partnerships indicated that when effective partnership work is enacted, social partnerships have capacities to respond to changes. Both are different in terms of their origins (one an enacted partnership, the other a community partnership), the scope and scale of their activities and the extent of partnership arrangements. The localised social partnership work of the Community Café seems well-suited to its project, energies and commitments. However, the larger and more established Western Districts Social Partnerships indicates that social partnership work can sustain social partnerships as they encounter transformations in goals and circumstances. In both cases, the social partnerships cannot lose sight of importance of building capacity, trust and exercising governance that is inclusive and engaging.

