

Explaining the way Place-based programs work



Place-based work is slow, relational, and deeply local. It recognises that every community has its own history, strengths, challenges, and rhythms — and that meaningful change grows from within, not from outside interventions dropped in quickly.

This graphic shows this using ‘planting’ metaphors - the seed, the watering, the tending, the fruit. Each stage represents a different kind of work, but all of them rely on time, trust, and people working together.

What “place-based” really means

- **Local knowledge** — understanding what matters to the people who live there, not assuming what they need.
- **Relationships first** — conversations, listening, and building trust are the foundation for everything that follows.
- **Shared ownership** — solutions are co-created with community, not delivered to them.
- **Long-term commitment** — progress is measured in strengthened connections, small wins, and steady growth.
- **Working with what’s already strong** — building on existing assets, skills, and local leadership.

How this graphic connects

Each figure in the circle represents a stage of place-based practice:

- **Planting seeds** — early conversations, listening sessions, noticing what's emerging.
- **Watering and tending** — supporting ideas, connecting people, collaborating with services, building confidence and capability.
- **Growing together** — partnerships form, community leadership strengthens, shared goals take shape.
- **Harvesting fruit** — outcomes appear: programs, sharing, trust, activities, stronger networks, connections and a sense of belonging.

The sun in the centre — *"Building Place Takes Time"* — is the reminder that none of this happens quickly. Like a tree, community change grows through consistent care, patience, and collaboration.

Why this approach matters

A place-based approach leads to:

- **More sustainable outcomes** because they're shaped by the people who live there.
- **Stronger community resilience** through relationships and shared problem-solving.
- **Better alignment** between services, local priorities, and lived experience.
- **Greater trust** between community, organisations, and government.