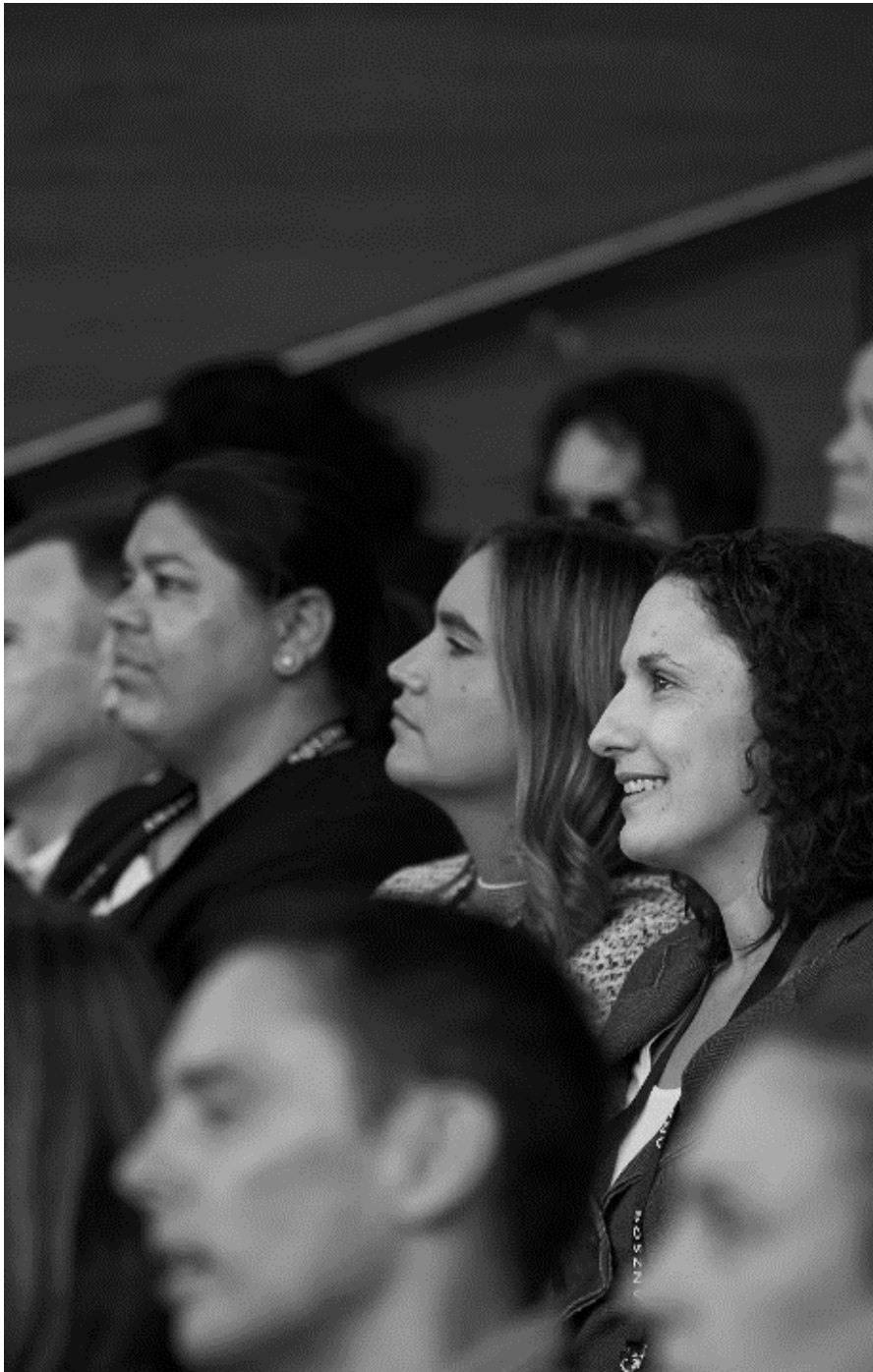# ANZSOG

Maranguka – A Study Based on Publicly Available Evidence

ΛNZSOG

MARANGUKA – A STUDY BASED ON PUBLICLY AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

A case study for ANZSOG's project on co-governance and trust in government

12 September 2025
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UNSW SPRC

ΛNZSOG

Acknowledgement of country

We value the cultures, knowledge and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and how this contributes to quality research. We are committed to not perpetuating harms that have been caused by research on and about Indigenous Peoples. We embrace and honour Indigenous knowledges and continue to learn from Indigenous Peoples where we work.

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About the Social Policy Research Centre

The Social Policy Research Centre is based in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture at UNSW Sydney. The Social Policy Research Centre makes a positive impact through independent and leading research that tackles critical social issues. For more information see https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/sprc.

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Suggested citation

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ANZSOG	Australian and New Zealand School of Government
CSLE	Cross Sector Leadership Executives
CSLG	Cross Sector Leadership Group (now the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group)
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-government organisations
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
UNSW	University of New South Wales, Sydney

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this case study is to examine co-governance, its interaction with trust and power relations as they relate to Maranguka, using documents which are in the public domain. This is part of a larger project for ANZSOG focusing on co-governance.

Note on methodology and scope

This case study was developed with approval from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council Ethics Committee and community approval. The research team travelled to Bourke to undertake cultural training and discussed the project with Mr. Alister Ferguson, Maranguka Executive Director, to discuss the research objectives and seek community approval for this study.

The case study is based on information available in the public domain only. It did not involve interviews with community members or the collection of new data. Instead, it draws upon published reports, evaluations, and documented reflections that include interviews with community members conducted for other purposes. A conceptual framework was used to interpret data across all three case studies for this larger project and was used to interpret the publicly available material.

The final version and a summary of this case study were shared with Mr Alister Ferguson for comment and approval. He signed off the report prior to submission. While this level of engagement is more limited than in the other two case studies in the series, it reflects an effort to ensure respectful and transparent representation of the initiative and minimise burden on the community. Readers should keep this in mind when interpreting the depth and nature of the findings presented here.

The Maranguka initiative in Bourke, New South Wales, is a community-led initiative aiming to improve social outcomes for Aboriginal families. The initiative exemplifies a transformative approach to collaborative governance (co-governance), addressing systemic inequities in Aboriginal communities through justice reinvestment. By shifting the focus from punitive measures to community-led solutions, Maranguka has redefined power dynamics, strengthened trust, and fostered alignment between community, government, and non-government stakeholders. The initiative's culturally anchored governance framework has achieved significant social outcomes while driving systemic change.

This report explores the evolution of Maranguka's co-governance framework, focusing on how the initiative tackled systemic barriers, enhanced data-sharing practices, and institutionalised cultural leadership to achieve its goals. At its core, the initiative is led by the Bourke Tribal Council, supported by the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, which facilitates cross-sector collaboration to align resources and efforts with community-defined priorities.

Throughout this report, we distinguish between 'data'—the raw figures collected across agencies—and 'data insights,' which represent the interpreted, contextualised outputs used to support collaborative governance. This distinction reflects the crucial role of local interpretation, narrative triangulation, and analytical work in transforming data into meaningful insights for decision-making.

Key Insights

Cross-sector collaboration: The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group became a critical platform for breaking down silos and fostering cooperation between government agencies, non-government organisations, and the Bourke community. This collaborative framework addressed systemic barriers, improved service delivery, and enabled resource alignment with community goals.

Cultural leadership: Aboriginal cultural authority is central to Maranguka's governance model. The Bourke Tribal Council ensures that decisions reflect community values and aspirations, embedding cultural practices into both governance structures and service provision.

Trust-Building: Trust has been foundational to Maranguka's success. Initial mistrust within the Aboriginal Community and between the Community and external stakeholders such as government agencies, non-government service providers, and philanthropic partners, was addressed through consistent engagement, transparency, and mechanisms such as daily check-ins between Maranguka and local service providers. These efforts established a culture of mutual accountability and respect among all parties.

Power Dynamics: Maranguka successfully rebalanced power, empowering the Bourke community to lead decision-making and resource allocation. This shift challenged traditional hierarchical systems, compelling government stakeholders to adapt to community-led priorities. High-level political advocacy, including the involvement of a ministerial champion, played a pivotal role in overcoming resistance and aligning institutional systems with Maranguka's goals.

Data Sharing: Early resistance to data sharing by government departments posed a significant barrier to collaboration. Through the CSLG and persistent advocacy, Maranguka improved data-sharing practices, enabling evidence-based decision-making and enhancing accountability across sectors.

System Change: Maranguka's governance model facilitated systemic change by addressing deeply rooted structural issues, such as the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in the justice system. Through a focus on cultural leadership and collaborative governance, the initiative redefined how stakeholders worked together to create equitable outcomes.

Sustainability: While Maranguka has made significant progress, long-term sustainability remains a challenge. Reliance on external funding and political support creates vulnerabilities. To address this, the initiative has explored innovative strategies, such as leveraging market-based tools like social bonds and strengthening cross-sector partnerships, to secure stable resources for the future.

Outputs and Outcomes: Maranguka's collaborative governance approach has yielded measurable impacts, including reductions in youth crime rates, enhanced community wellbeing, and strengthened local leadership. These outcomes highlight the initiative's capacity to drive systemic change while addressing immediate needs.

Maranguka has demonstrated the transformative potential of community-led governance in a historically marginalised context. By prioritising trust, cultural leadership, and systemic reform, the initiative has not only achieved significant outcomes but also set a precedent for how collaborative governance can drive equitable and sustainable change. However, sustaining these successes will require ongoing efforts to institutionalise gains, maintain cross-sector alignment, and balance external collaboration with community self-determination.

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this case study is to scope the themes on the organisation of collaborative governance, its interaction with trust and the power relations in the context of Maranguka using documents which are in the public domain.

This is part of a larger project for ANZSOG focusing on co-governance.

1.1   Definitions of co-governance

Co-governance, or collaborative governance, is a structured approach where public, private, and community stakeholders actively engage in shared decision-making to address complex societal challenges(Ansell & Gash, 2008). This governing model moves beyond traditional governance by emphasising inclusivity, deliberation, and consensus-building. It is particularly effective in addressing issues requiring integrated responses across multiple sectors(Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2015; Emerson et al., 2012). In this process, participants recognise and leverage each other's unique contributions, creating synergies that are difficult to achieve through isolated actions(Ansell, 2016; Ansell & Gash, 2018; Gash, 2022). Studies identify key principles of co-governance, including shared power(Qi, 2022; Ran & Qi, 2018), mutual respect (Emerson et al., 2012; Gash, 2022), transparency (Kapucu et al., 2009), and a focus on common goals (Morse, 2014).

1.2   Purpose

This report explores the Maranguka co-governance initiative in Bourke, New South Wales. The initiative has been recognised for its innovative approach, which combines community-led strategies with government collaboration. The initiative highlights the potential of co-governance to drive systemic change in areas with complex, intergenerational challenges. Maranguka evolved from a Justice Reinvestment initiative which was later adapted to address other community decision-makings.

This case study uses an evidence-based framework to identify the process of co-governance in Maranguka – this is informed by publicly available information. The purpose of this case study is not to judge the co-governance arrangement, or the outcomes achieved, but to help further develop a framework for governance to help other communities learn how to work together better.

1.3   Approach

This case study was developed under a research process approved by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC). It synthesises publicly available information—including academic literature, evaluation reports, policy documents, and online materials—published between 2014 and 2024. It does not involve the collection of new data or direct engagement with community members, but draws on published sources that include interviews with community members conducted for other purposes.

A conceptual framework was used to interpret data across all three case studies for this larger project and was used to interpret the publicly available material for the Maranguka case study. This conceptual framework was used to interpret the evidence on co-governance processes in the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment initiative. The case study examines how key components of co-governance—identifying the need, establishing collaborative structures, implementation, and evaluation—were enacted in this context. It identifies enablers and barriers at each phase, offering a comprehensive account of the dynamics, tensions, and lessons involved.

While limited to existing sources, this case report reflects an effort to ensure respectful and accurate representation. The research team visited Bourke in the early stages of the project and undertook cultural training with the community. The research team discussed the research objectives with Mr. Alister Ferguson, Maranguka's Executive Director, and community approval was sought. The community approved the use of a document review to help prepare the case study. The final report and a summary were later shared with Mr Ferguson for review and

approval, which was formally provided. Although this engagement is more limited than in the other two case studies in this series, it aimed to support transparency and accountability in the research process. Readers should keep this in mind when interpreting the depth and scope of the findings presented.

Maranguka exemplifies a transformative model of community-led, cross-sector collaboration aimed at improving social outcomes for Aboriginal families in Bourke, New South Wales. Anchored in justice reinvestment principles, the initiative reconfigures relationships between community, government, and non-government stakeholders. Its governance framework, led by the Bourke Tribal Council and supported by the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, aligns institutional systems with community-defined priorities and cultural leadership.

Throughout this report, we distinguish between *data*—the raw figures collected across agencies—and *data insights*, which are the interpreted, contextualised outputs used to support collaborative governance. This distinction reinforces the role of local analysis, narrative triangulation, and knowledge brokering in transforming administrative data into meaningful, community-relevant insights for shared decision-making.

The detailed method for document selection and review is presented in Appendix A.

1.4   The context of Bourke and Maranguka

Bourke is a small, remote town on the Darling River in far north-west New South Wales (NSW), approximately 800 kilometres from Sydney, with a population of around 2,500, of whom roughly 30% are First Nations peoples, reflecting a strong and enduring Aboriginal presence in the region Historical context, including colonisation and restrictive government policies, have profoundly shaped conditions in Bourke. During the 19th and 20th Centuries, Aboriginal families were frequently forced onto missions and reserves, while the removal of Aboriginal children and the suppression of cultural practices undermined traditional governance structures, severed kinship networks, and eroded cultural knowledge (Counsel, 1990; Evans & Thorpe, 2001). Such policies led to enduring mistrust of state institutions and contributed to long-term social and economic marginalisation (Cowlishaw, 2006; Schouls, 2011). Bourke has long been recognised as one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas in NSW (REMPLAN, n.d.; Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.).

These historical injustices remain evident in contemporary inequalities. Indigenous residents in Bourke face disproportionately high rates of incarceration, unemployment, and poor educational outcomes, as well as inadequate housing and limited access to vital services (Awofeso, 2011; Cassidy, 2003; Cunneen, 2011; Gale et al., 1990). Within the justice system, punitive measures have led to substantial over-representation of Aboriginal youth in detention, failing to address underlying causes of offending and imposing significant economic costs (Cunneen, 2011; Dickson-Gilmore & La Prairie, 2005).

These entrenched inequities and the limited efficacy of punitive responses to crime have encouraged new approaches, informed by evolving national and international recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination. Australian milestones such as the 1967 referendum, the Mabo decision, and the 2008 national apology to the Stolen Generations, as well as global frameworks like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have stressed the need for culturally grounded and community-led solutions (Maddison, 2012; Davis, 2012).

In Bourke, this impetus for change crystallised in the Maranguka initiative. Drawing on principles of justice reinvestment, Maranguka aims to shift resources away from punitive systems towards preventative, community-led interventions (Lockwood et al., 2023). It is managed locally in partnership with Just Reinvest NSW and governed by the Bourke Tribal Council, ensuring that Indigenous leadership informs decision-making. The initiative operates through a 'hub' model supported by a small 'backbone team' of around five local staff, who collaborate with Aboriginal-controlled legal, health, cultural, and family services, as well as other local agencies, to reduce contact with the criminal justice system and build long-term wellbeing. In doing so, Maranguka exemplifies a tradition of

Aboriginal community-controlled efforts, demonstrating the potential of self-determined, culturally anchored strategies to restore trust, address historical legacies, and foster sustainable social and economic development in Bourke and beyond.

1.5   Structure of this report

This report is structured around key phases in the co-governance process to explore how the Maranguka initiative in Bourke was developed, implemented, and sustained. Each section draws from publicly available data to examine enablers, barriers, and contextual factors shaping the co-governance arrangement. The structure reflects an analytical framework designed to assist policymakers, practitioners, and communities seeking to understand or replicate similar initiatives.

- **Section 2** examines the *rationale and conditions under which co-governance may be beneficial*, including theoretical perspectives, local drivers, stakeholder roles, and the process of identifying the need for co-governance.

- **Section 3** explores the *establishment of the co-governance arrangement*, covering system context, institutional design, leadership structures, authorisation mechanisms, and resourcing models.

- **Section 4** examines the *implementation of co-governance*, distinguishing between strategic and operational dimensions. It considers shared goals, trust-building, adaptation, and practical tools such as working group structures and data usage.

- **Section 5** discusses the *outcomes* of the initiative, including direct community impacts, behavioural and systemic change, and the broader influence of the governance model.

- **Section 6** reflects on the interplay between *trust and power* in the co-governance process, with attention to evolving dynamics among community, government, and partner stakeholders.

- **Section 7** focuses on *cultural considerations*, highlighting how cultural authority was embedded into governance, and the challenges and strategies related to cultural alignment.

- **Section 8** considers *broader implications*, including sustainability, scalability, and the potential for application in other settings.

- **Section 9** is the conclusion, summarising insights and key lessons from the case study.

The report is supported by appendices that include methodological details, relevant strategic documents, assessments of impact, and further information on governance arrangements.

1 IDENTIFYING WHEN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE MAY BE BENEFICIAL

| Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial | Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement | Implementing collaborative governance | Identifying and reporting outcomes |
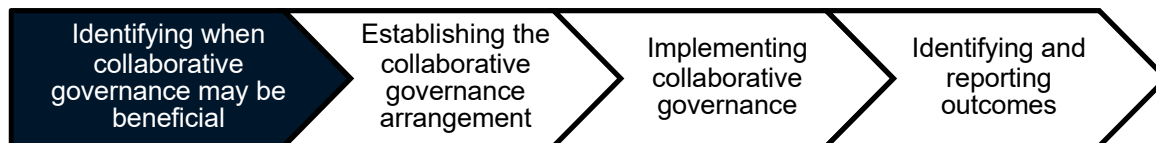
1.1 Theoretical perspectives of the need for collaboration

This first stage of the co-governance process considers when a co-governance arrangement may be beneficial. Factors considered include:

- Who might initiate a co-governance arrangement (who proposed the issue, who were approached at the early stage and who were engaged)

- How was the issue defined/finalised?

- Why a co-governance arrangement might be initiated

  o from an instrumental perspective to address a specific problem and achieve better policy outcomes?

  o from an ethical perspective to ensure communicates have power, resource and information over policy development and implementation

  o or both

- The scope of the co-governance arrangement (aims and objectives, scope)

- What is required to initiate a co-governance arrangement?

  o whether it requires delegated authority or powerful sponsors or champions

  o What was the estimation of resources needed? Was it discussed early on?

- How a co-governance arrangement can be developed.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

1.2 Understanding of co-governance

For *the Bourke Aboriginal communities*, co-governance is fundamentally about **empowerment and self-determination**. It emphasises the centrality of the community in the decision-making process, ensuring that all initiatives align with cultural values and address community-specific needs. This perspective prioritises community leadership as the cornerstone of collaboration. Collaboration also means **co-designing solutions** that are culturally appropriate and driven by the community's priorities, rather than imposed by external stakeholders.

> "We developed the Maranguka proposal with a clear focus on creating better coordinated support to vulnerable families and children in Bourke through community-led teams working in partnership with existing service providers." Alister Ferguson (CEO, Maranguka, Just Reinvest NSW., n.d.)

This understanding has evolved over time. Maranguka's current understanding of collaboration, as outlined in its *2023–2025 Strategic Plan*, emphasises a culturally led, community-centred approach that fosters self-determination and systemic reform. It positions collaboration as a process of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

- Collaboration is viewed as a way to create shared accountability and transparency among stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, and the community. This involves co-designing solutions to systemic challenges and tailoring services to meet the specific needs of Bourke's people. The process prioritises building trust and long-term partnerships that align resources and decision-making with cultural and local values.

- Through the Cross-Sector Leadership Group (Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group) and related structures, Maranguka operationalises this approach by convening stakeholders to address gaps in service delivery and avoid duplication.

- In practice, collaboration also means flexibility and responsiveness. Maranguka focuses on ensuring that services are coordinated and delivered effectively, avoiding fragmentation.

- Collaboration agreements and shared accountability frameworks provide the structure to align stakeholder efforts with the overarching goals of the Growing Our Kids Up Safe Smart and Strong strategy. This outcome-oriented approach ensures that systemic reform is both place-based and community-led.

From the *government's perspective*, collaboration involves **aligning policies and resources** with the community-led agenda. Government agencies recognise the importance of fostering trust with the community and adopting a long-term perspective to achieve sustainable change. Co-governance here also entails integrating local actors like the police to enhance public safety and trust.

> "The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group and Executive are very important for building relationships, exploring difficulties, and creating shared accountability between the Bourke Tribal Council, government, and non-government organisations." (UCLG, 2022)

> "We don't take a step without having community alongside us. It's a reset for everyone when you start working in that way – and then, slowly, they start getting it." (Sarah Hopkins, Just Reinvest NSW, Platform C, 2019)

For *philanthropic organisations*, collaboration is about **leveraging resources and expertise** in a way that supports the community's vision. These organisations highlight the importance of **long-term commitment** and capacity building to ensure sustainable outcomes. The focus is on forging partnerships that respect the autonomy of the community while providing strategic support. In this sense, collaboration is a **partnership model**, where NGOs offer tools, funding, and knowledge to empower community initiatives rather than dominate them.

> "Dusseldorp Forum's approach to philanthropy involves forging long-term partnerships with place-based and community-led initiatives, such as Maranguka, that work strategically to improve health, education, and social outcomes for children and families." Teya Dusseldorp (CEO, Dusseldorp Forum)

Prior to the collaboration being implemented in 2016, KPMG published a preliminary assessment, in which it conceptualised co-governance, as applied to the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project, which is based on the integration of a **Community-led Collective Impact approach** and the principles of **Justice Reinvestment**. The assessment outlines a structured model for collaboration among diverse stakeholders to address systemic issues through shared responsibility, mutual accountability, and a focus on achieving sustainable, community-driven outcomes (KPMG, 2016).

At the end of the two-year implementation, KPMG further articulated collaboration as a dynamic process requiring **transparent communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making.** From their perspective, genuine collaboration created the trust and confidence necessary to bring diverse stakeholders together effectively.

Therefore, collaboration should be **actionable, outcome-focused, and solution-oriented**, fostering real change rather than remaining symbolic. As mentioned in the KPMG Impact Assessment Report:

> "Maranguka is creating real collaboration, building strength and confidence, and bringing stakeholders together in a way that is action, outcome, and solution focused."(KPMG, 2018)

Despite differences in focus, all stakeholder groups converged on several critical elements of co-governance:

- **Community leadership**: Ensuring that the local community drives the agenda and decisions.

- **Trust and transparency**: Building and maintaining trust among stakeholders through clear communication and accountability.

- **Shared goals and outcomes**: Aligning all efforts towards collective goals that reflect community priorities.

- **Long-term engagement**: Recognising that sustainable change requires ongoing commitment and adaptation.

1.3 Why was co-governance needed?

The perspectives shared by local community members highlight significant issues with the previous service provision and decision-making processes. The community felt excluded from decision-making, leading to a lack of ownership and engagement with the services provided. This exclusion fostered a sense of disempowerment and frustration.

> "…they would give us I would say housing projects you know that sorts of stuff, health projects and the wins that they would give us not what we needed, but what they think we needed so it is always done on that side of the river…" (Uncle Phil Sullivan, Bourke Tribal Council, Platform C, 2019)

> "The community was saying they were worried that people were going underground, disengaging with services, not connecting with family, not going to school." (Sarah Hopkins, Chair, Just Reinvest NSW and Managing Solicitor at the Aboriginal Legal Service ACT/NSW, Circuit Breakers, 2018)

Services were often designed without adequate consultation, resulting in services that did not meet the actual needs of the community. This top-down approach contributed to widespread disengagement, with some community members withdrawing from available services, becoming disconnected from family supports, and reducing participation in education. Community voices indicated a growing frustration with externally imposed solutions that lacked cultural relevance and responsiveness. These concerns underscored the need for a fundamentally different governance model—one grounded in community leadership, cultural authority, and shared decision-making.

1.4 What was the proposed scope?

In late 2012, Alister Ferguson, representing the Bourke Aboriginal community, approached Sarah Hopkins from Just Reinvest NSW with a proposal to implement a justice reinvestment approach in Bourke. At the time, Just Reinvest NSW was primarily focused on advocating for justice reinvestment as a concept to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. It had not yet undertaken a practical justice reinvestment project (KPMG, 2016). Ferguson's leadership and the readiness of the Bourke community to seek locally led solutions provided the foundation for this collaboration (Platform C, 2019).

During their initial conversation, Ferguson proposed a model that would shift resources from punitive criminal justice measures to community-driven initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of crime. He emphasised the

need for local decision-making and culturally appropriate solutions, advocating for an approach that integrated community leadership and aligned resources to better support vulnerable children and families. This vision resonated with Just Reinvest NSW's goals and laid the groundwork for a transformative partnership (KPMG, 2016).

1.5   Who instigated the co-governance arrangement?

Even before the formal establishment of Maranguka, the Bourke community had begun identifying and addressing complex social issues, including family violence and youth incarceration. Community members, led by Ferguson, initiated conversations about solutions that aligned with their lived experiences and cultural context.

> "Understanding that sustained change to complex issues, including domestic and family violence, cannot be changed by a single organisation or program acting alone, there is a commitment to collaboration between all parts of the system including community, services, policymakers and families." — Alister Fergurson, Executive Director and Founder (Maranguka Justice Reinvestment in Bourke, 2017)

> "The initial phase was in around 2008 where we had the forum and a very, very well-attended representative forum around working with the state government to bring in alcohol restrictions—hugely contentious right across community… people stayed and really actively engaged around it, and that, to me, was sort of the genesis of Maranguka. It was very soon after that Mick and Alister did the trip to Cape York to look at the models that were happening up around the Cape."
> — Gerry Collins, Department of Premier and Cabinet (Platform C, 2019)

Ferguson's proactive engagement marked a turning point, positioning Bourke as the first community to collaborate with Just Reinvest NSW in piloting a justice reinvestment model. Led by Ferguson and the Bourke Tribal Council, the initiative gained momentum with technical and strategic support from Just Reinvest NSW. Together, they conducted extensive consultations with the Bourke community, government departments, and other stakeholders, identifying local priorities and building mutual trust for systemic change. This collaboration eventually led to the establishment of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project, the first practical application of justice reinvestment in Australia.

> "They had for a number of years been looking at solutions and really looking at community-driven solutions, so it was like we came mid-stream, and there was already something happening, something palpable. We had an initial meeting with community members, and Mick's approach at that time was very much… 'We'll come back if you invite us to come back,' and they did invite us to come back and kept inviting us to come back to talk more about what justice reinvestment might look like in Bourke."
> — Sarah Hopkins, Just Reinvest NSW, Platform C, 2019

The importance of a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach was also recognised within government. As Jo Lawrance from the Department of Families and Community Services reflected:

> "You can't just have government fix it. You actually need a composite of supports to actually make these sorts of complex social issues resolved to some degree." (Jo Lawrance, Department of Families and Community Services, Platform C, 2019)

1.6   Summary of practice: Identifying the need for co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka

Why	How was the need for co-governance identified and defined?	The need for co-governance was identified through local recognition of deep systemic failure. By 2012, Bourke topped six of eight major crime categories and had the highest juvenile conviction rate in NSW. One in five Aboriginal young people had been sentenced or were on remand (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017). These conditions, and frustration with imposed, culturally misaligned services, underscored the need for community-led decision-making.
Who	Who instigated the co-governance arrangement? What was required to initiate the arrangement?	The **Bourke Tribal Council**, as the collective voice of the Aboriginal community, instigated the need for a new approach to justice. **Alister Ferguson, a respected Elder and key figure within the Council, then took the lead** in operationalising this vision, approaching Sarah Hopkins from Just Reinvest NSW in 2012 to propose a justice reinvestment model. This required creating a safe space for conversations, building trust among stakeholders, and developing an empowerment framework aligned with the community's vision.
What	What is the aim/scope/ timeframe? Were stakeholders involved in defining the scope?	The aim was to redirect funds from punitive justice measures to community-driven initiatives, addressing systemic inequalities and supporting vulnerable families and children. The initial timeframe was five years to prototype the justice reinvestment model in Bourke. The scope, objectives, and priority actions were co-designed with key stakeholders to ensure alignment with community needs and aspirations.

2 ESTABLISHING THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT

| Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial | Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement | Implementing collaborative governance | Identifying and reporting outcomes |

2.1 Theoretical perspectives

As identified in the evidence review, the stage of establishing the co-governance process considers how to establish the co-governance arrangement in terms of institutional design, composition and leadership. Factors considered include:

- The system context and the collaboration dynamics

- Whether/how the group was granted the authority to act, and whether there is senior and middle management support

- Whether there is a formal (visible), credible and independent governance mechanism – with clear and transparent roles, processes, tools and structures around decision-making (how was this mechanism decided, based on what principles and what was the decision-making process?)

- Whether the arrangement includes actors from civil society affected by the initiative in the governance – alongside other organisational actors

- Whether there was an appointment of a clear, independent and skilled leader that instils trust and supports contributions, facilitating collaboration (and how this was achieved)

- The mechanisms needed to enable the group to have the capacity to act, through procedural and institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources

- Whether there is a realistic timeframe to establish and implement the arrangement.

2.2 The system's context

The development of the Maranguka initiative began in 2013 when Bourke became the first major pilot site in Australia to adapt and implement an Aboriginal-led place-based model of justice reinvestment. The project was initially funded for two years starting in April 2014 by **philanthropic organisations such as the Dusseldorp Forum, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (**VFFF, n.d.)**, alongside initial in-kind and some direct funding from the NSW Government (Just Reinvest NSW, 2019, March 12).** Since then, it has received further funding for additional periods from both the Commonwealth (Federal) and NSW Governments (Fletcher & Hazzard, 2019) as well as ongoing support from its philanthropic partners, which have come to include organizations like the CAGES Foundation (CAGES Foundation, n.d.).

The Maranguka initiative is deeply rooted in the principles of self-determination and cultural authority, as exemplified by the leadership of the Bourke Tribal Council. This Council has placed the concept of "caring for others" at the heart of the initiative, embodying the community's unique expression of self-determination and cultural authority. This approach operationalises the community's "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong" strategy, ensuring that the initiative is guided by local values and priorities.

> "The Bourke Tribal Council have put this idea at the centre of the Maranguka initiative,
> our unique expression of self-determination and Cultural Authority, which operationalises

our community's Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong strategy." (Alister Ferguson, 2022)

The authority to act within the Maranguka initiative is further reinforced by its community-led approach. The initiative has developed a model that is tailored to the specific needs and context of the Bourke community.

"In developing Maranguka, we took two frameworks which had been developed overseas – justice reinvestment and collective impact – and we put into practice our own interpretation of them. Our way is from the ground up – it is led by community."(Alister Ferguson, 2022)

This ground-up approach is designed to let the community lead the way, making decisions that reflect their lived experiences and aspirations(The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC), 2017).

The following sections describe the institutional design and governance structure and their evolution.

2.3 Institutional design

Maranguka employs a 'hub' model supported by a small 'backbone team' of approximately five local staff. This team secures funding, coordinates partnerships, provides project management support, monitors progress, and maintains relationships with stakeholders. The hub also oversees justice reinvestment initiatives aimed at preventing Indigenous community members from entering or returning to the criminal justice system. At the heart of the Maranguka initiative lies the **Maranguka Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, signed in 2015. This foundational document formalises the roles and responsibilities of the Bourke Tribal Council, Just Reinvest NSW, and other stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local service providers. The MOU sets out the following commitments:

- **Collaboration and partnership**: All stakeholders agree to align their efforts towards the shared goal of justice reinvestment.

- **Community empowerment**: Ensuring that decisions are guided by local priorities and cultural values.

- **Accountability**: Establishing mechanisms to track progress and uphold commitments made by all parties (Just Reinvest NSW, 2020). The governance mechanisms rely on a collaborative framework that integrates diverse perspectives while being led by the Bourke Tribal Council. This ensures that the initiative is culturally grounded and responsive to community needs. Another critical feature is the incorporation of data-driven decision-making (Ferguson & Lovric, 2019). This approach uses robust data collection and analysis to:

  o Identify and prioritise community needs.

  o Measure the impact of interventions.

  o Allocate resources efficiently, ensuring they target areas with the greatest need.

"Data has been collected to tell a very big story about a young person's passage through the criminal justice system in Bourke and how the community is faring in terms of offending, diversion, bail, sentencing and punishment, and re-offending rates. Data has also been collected on the community's outcomes in early life, education, employment, housing, healthcare, child safety, and health outcomes including mental health and drugs and alcohol.'"(Platform C, 2019)

Additionally, the institutional framework prioritises capacity building, empowering local leaders and community members through training, mentorship, and workshops. These mechanisms enhance community ownership and ensure long-term sustainability (Willis & Kapira, 2018).

The Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke is supported by the financial involvement—through direct funding and in-kind support—of a diverse group of stakeholders and interested parties including the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, NSW Police, other state and federal Government agencies, the not-for-profit and philanthropic organisations and the private sector through Lendlease (Willis & Kapira, 2018). The co-governance structure plays a key role in aligning these resources with community priorities. Through shared decision-making, funding is directed toward initiatives identified by the Bourke Tribal Council and local working groups as critical for addressing root causes of contact with the justice system—such as youth engagement, education, and family support.

This institutional arrangement enables a shift in investment logic: rather than responding to crises after they occur, the co-governance process facilitates a proactive allocation of resources towards preventative, place-based strategies. By embedding budgetary decisions within community-led governance mechanisms, Maranguka operationalises the justice reinvestment rationale in practice(Bryant & Spies-Butcher, 2024).

2.4 Governance and leadership

The leadership structure of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project has evolved to enhance collaboration and align with the community's objectives. Initially, the project was spearheaded by the **Bourke Tribal Council**, under the leadership of **Alister Ferguson**, who served as the Executive Director (discussed further below). Ferguson played a pivotal role in developing the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong" strategy, which serves as the guiding framework for the initiative. This strategy was informed by extensive data collection, community consultations, and the establishment of clear goal areas.

Key elements of the governance structure include (Riboldi, 2021):

- **Bourke Tribal Council**: Established as an Aboriginal local governance mechanism, the Council provides cultural guidance and oversees decision-making for community services in Bourke.

- **Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group**: Created in 2015 as the Cross Sector Leadership Group (CSLG), the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group facilitates intersectoral collaboration among government agencies, non-government organisations, and community leaders. It meets annually to align efforts and resources toward the community-led agenda.

- **Cross-Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE)**: A focused subset of the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, the CSLE meets quarterly to operationalise strategies and ensure the implementation of agreed initiatives.

- **Subgroups and Working Committees**: Specialised subgroups were formed to address specific areas such as health, education, and justice, enabling agile responses to emerging challenges.

The governance structure has transitioned from a community-led model to a multi-tiered collaborative framework. This evolution reflects Maranguka's commitment to shared accountability and resource alignment to meet the community's vision.

2.5 Composition of the group

The governing structure of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project has evolved significantly over time, responding to the challenges of implementing justice reinvestment while maintaining a community-led ethos. This changing structure reflects the growing complexity of the initiative and its focus on addressing systemic inequities in Bourke.

2.5.1 Initial phase (2013-2015): Community leadership as the foundation

The early governance structure of the project was simple and centred on community leadership. It included:

- **Executive Leadership**: Alister Ferguson, as Executive Director, provided vision and cultural alignment, leveraging his role to bring together community stakeholders and external partners.

- **The Bourke Tribal Council**: Officially formed in 2014, the Council brought together representatives from 24 tribal groups, playing a pivotal role in ensuring that decisions aligned with cultural values and community needs. Its establishment provided a governance mechanism that gave the Aboriginal community a clear voice in local decision-making.

- **Just Reinvest NSW**: Sarah Hopkins, Chair of Just Reinvest NSW, supported the project with her legal expertise and advocacy, ensuring alignment with broader justice reinvestment strategies.

- **Backbone Team**: Established in 2014, the operational team at the Maranguka Community Hub coordinated daily activities, supported working groups, and implemented the "Safe, Smart, Strong" strategy.

This phase was instrumental in laying the foundation for a community-driven approach to justice reinvestment. It ensured that the initiative was culturally appropriate, locally relevant, and focused on the immediate needs of the Bourke community. Several sets of principles can be observed at this phase:

- **Community leadership**: The foundation of Maranguka was built on strong community leadership, with the Bourke Tribal Council playing a central role in decision-making.

- **Cultural alignment**: Ensuring that all initiatives were culturally appropriate and aligned with the values and needs of the Aboriginal community (for more details, go to.

- **Trust building**: The initial focus was on building trust between the community and service providers, which was crucial for the project's success.

2.5.2 Transitional phase (2015-2020): Structural changes towards multi-sectoral collaboration

The governance structure became more formalised to address emerging complexities and scale up collaborative efforts:

- **2015** – Introduction of the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group: This group brought together government agencies, NGOs, and community representatives to facilitate intersectoral collaboration. Meeting annually, it aligned resources and strategies to address systemic issues.

- **2016** – Formation of the Cross-Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE) in 2016: A more focused subset of the CSLG, the CSLE met quarterly to operationalise the "Safe, Smart, Strong" strategy and monitor progress. This tiered structure allowed for both strategic oversight and tactical execution.

- **2017** – Creation of Subgroups in 2017: Specialised working groups under the CSLE addressed key areas such as health, justice, and education. These subgroups provided targeted solutions and reported back to the CSLE, ensuring agile and responsive governance.

- **2017** – Introduction of Ministerial Championship in 2017: Ministerial Champions were engaged to advocate for justice reinvestment at the highest levels of government. This role facilitated systemic reforms, aligned state and federal resources, and provided political support for the initiative.

- **2020** – Incorporation of Maranguka Limited: Maranguka was formally incorporated as a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity to administer the Maranguka Community Hub on 11 December 2020 (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, n.d.).. This marked a significant step in strengthening its institutional capacity, ensuring financial accountability and advancing the long-term sustainability off community-led governance (Maranguka Limited, 2023).The formalisation of partnerships and the introduction of these new roles allowed Maranguka to scale its impact, address systemic barriers, and respond to the complexities of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Table 1 Evolution of Maranguka leadership structure

Time	Leadership Structure	Description
2008	Alister Ferguson and community activists	Started to explore community-led strategies.
2013	Alister Ferguson	Justice Reinvestment NSW partnered with Maranguka to propose a plan for the first major justice reinvestment pilot site in Australia.
2014	Alister Ferguson: Maranguka Executive Director. The Bourke Tribal Council was officially formed.	Bourke Trible Council brought together local community members representing 24 different tribes. The Backbone Team was set up.
2015	Partnerships between the Bourke Tribal Council, Just Reinvest NSW, and various government and non-government entities were formalised. Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group (Cross Sector Leadership Group)	Established to include government and non-government partners, meeting annually to support the community's agenda. This is a response to the need identified by Bourke Tribal Council to service sector reform.
2016	Maranguka CSLE (Cross Sector Leadership Executive)	Formed as a smaller executive group meeting quarterly to align resources and drive the "Safe, Smart, Strong" strategy.
2017	CSLE Subgroups (working groups)	The CSLE Subgroups were established to advance specific areas of work between the quarterly CSLE meetings. Each subgroup focuses on a particular aspect of the Maranguka initiative:

Time	Leadership Structure	Description
		Accountability Framework Subgroup: Develops collaboration-related indicators to measure progress.
		Maranguka Principles Subgroup: Works to embed the Maranguka Principles into service contracts.
		Service Mapping and Investment Subgroup: Maps the service and investment landscape in Bourke.
		System Solution Brokerage Subgroup: Identifies and addresses systemic issues and blockages.
2020	Maranguka Ltd.	Led by Alister Ferguson

Note: Produced by the author based on Riboldi (2021a)(Riboldi, 2021)(Platform C, 2019)

2.6 Authorisation

Riboldi (2021a) provided a comprehensive overview of the authorisation associated with Maranguka. The authorisation structure took five years to roll out. This structure is characterised by a community-centred approach and involves various levels of authorisation, including the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, Cross Sector Leadership Executives (CSLE), and Ministerial Championship. The authorisation structure is shown in the table.

Table 2 Authorisation structure of the Maranguka initiative

Level	Role	Function	Interaction
Bourke Tribal Council	"Overarching community governance body" or "cultural authority" for Bourke, Holds the top authorising position, representing the Traditional Custodians of Culture and Country around Bourke	Provides cultural authority and sets the strategic direction through the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong" strategy, which Maranguka implements.	Authorises Maranguka to interface with government and non-government partners
Maranguka Limited (incorporated legal entity, previously Maranguka Community Hub)	Maranguka's fundamental role is to act as the executive and implementing arm of the Bourke Tribal Council's (BTC) "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong" strategy. It translates the community's vision for justice reinvestment and local empowerment into tangible programs, partnerships, and advocacy efforts. It embodies the principle of "nothing about us, without us," ensuring	Maintains authorisation through respect and deliberation, and holds the space for collaboration and conversations: • **Program Delivery** • **Data & Evidence** • **Collaboration Facilitation** • **Systemic Advocacy** • **Community Capacity** • **Engagement & Voice**	Directly accountable to the Bourke Tribal Council and engages with community members and service providers

Level	Role	Function	Interaction
	that external resources and efforts genuinely serve the community's priorities.		
Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group	A formal meeting point for governments, non-government organisations, philanthropists, and service providers	Aligns policy and resources to support the Bourke Tribal Council's strategy	Annual meetings to update progress and align support
Cross Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE)	A smaller group evolved from the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group to progress key aspects of work	Brings together leaders from community, philanthropy, corporates, and all three levels of government to align resources	Quarterly meetings, with at least one meeting on Country in Bourke
Ministerial Champion and Executive Sponsors	Senior political and bureaucratic figures, such as the then-Minister Brad Hazzard and the then-Secretary Gary Barnes.	Provide political and bureaucratic authorisation for public sector employees to participate in collaborative activities	Address barriers within the bureaucracy or government and support the community-led agenda
Intermediate Organisations and Funders	Organisations like Just Reinvest NSW and funders like Dusseldorp Forum	Require ongoing authorisation to represent community interests effectively	Act as intermediaries between the community and external stakeholders, ensuring community involvement in decision-making
Public Sector Employees	Employees from various government agencies	Participate in collaborative activities with authorisation from senior political and bureaucratic figures	Engage in daily check-ins and collaborative efforts with the Maranguka Community Hub and other local service providers
CSLE Sub-Groups	Established to advance key aspects of work between quarterly CSLE meetings	Focus on areas such as developing a joint accountability framework, embedding Maranguka Principles, mapping services and investment, and identifying systemic issues	Report to the CSLE and work on specific tasks to support the community's strategy

Source: Produced by author based on Riboldi (Alister Ferguson, 2022).

The Maranguka authorisation structure indeed shows a community-led approach that places the Bourke Tribal Council at the centre of decision-making. This framework allows the Council to exercise cultural authority and self-determination, aligning external resources with locally identified priorities such as those articulated in the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong" strategy. The respect for cultural authority provides a critical foundation for trust and cooperation between the community and external stakeholders (more details see Section 8).

Maranguka's turning into the legal entity of **Maranguka Limited** demonstrates a strategic approach. This transition involved carefully crafting its constitution and governance to ensure that the operational entity remained directly

accountable to the **Bourke Tribal Council's** cultural authority and strategic vision. This ensures that while external partnerships and funding flow through a formal legal entity, decision-making power remains firmly with the community, offering a vital model for genuine self-determination.

The governance structure is strengthened by the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and Cross Sector Leadership Executives (CSLE). These groups enable coordination between diverse entities, including government agencies, non-government organisations, and philanthropic partners, through structured meetings and targeted sub-groups. This formalised collaboration ensures that stakeholder contributions align with the Bourke Tribal Council's goals, while sub-groups focus on specific tasks to advance priorities.

High-level political and bureaucratic support from Ministerial Champions and Executive Sponsors is an important enabler. Their involvement helps to overcome systemic barriers, provide authorisation for public servants to engage, and secure political and bureaucratic buy-in. Public sector employees also benefit from structured mechanisms, such as daily check-ins and cultural competency training, which facilitate their accountability to the community.

Intermediate organisations and funders, including Just Reinvest NSW and the Dusseldorp Forum, provide sustained capacity-building and resources, supporting systemic reforms such as justice reinvestment. The results have been measurable, with reported reductions in crime and improvements in community wellbeing, demonstrating the potential impact of the governance model.

However, there are also operational challenges to the structure. Some may even be posed by the advantageous design of authorisation structure. For example, it may be at risk of being reliant on influential individuals, such as specific ministers and other executive sponsors. This dependence risks destabilising the initiative should these individuals leave or political priorities shift. Additionally, the model requires ongoing funding, which may become precarious over time as the expectations of funders evolve or external priorities change. Maranguka has managed to work with new people in the governing structure. However, the risks remain.

The multi-stakeholder nature of the governance model introduces complexities. Coordination between government agencies, NGOs, and philanthropic organisations may have different expectations and organisational priorities, creating tension in achieving unified action. Public sector employees, for instance, must navigate the challenge of balancing traditional performance metrics, with community-driven accountability structures, which require different approaches to measuring success.

Operationally, the Maranguka Community Hub faces the task of managing its dual role. It must facilitate collaboration among external stakeholders while remaining directly accountable to the Bourke Tribal Council. Ensuring that collaborative efforts respect cultural authority and produce measurable outcomes is an ongoing challenge that requires careful oversight.

Scaling the Maranguka model presents further difficulties. While there is potential for replication, there is also a risk that the model's community-led ethos could be diluted in the process. External stakeholders must carefully balance their support with the need to preserve the initiative's locally driven focus. Without deliberate planning, the pressures of scalability could undermine the very principles that have contributed to its success.

Table 3 Stakeholders' perspectives on the authorisation structure

Stakeholder	Perspective	Success factors	Challenges
Bourke Tribal Council	Maranguka represents self-determination and cultural authority, aligning external resources with community-led goals.	• Respect for cultural authority • Strong community leadership • Empowerment to set strategic agendas	• Managing long-term relationships with diverse stakeholders (p. 19). • Ensuring sustained self-determination despite personnel and funding changes (p. 21).
Maranguka Community Hub	Acts as an operational interface for collaboration, implementing the Bourke Tribal Council's strategy.	• Consistent collaboration platform • Facilitates daily check-ins • Aligns community and service provider efforts	• Balancing operational responsibilities with accountability to the Bourke Tribal Council (p. 18). • Ensuring collaboration aligns with community priorities and results in measurable outcomes (p. 21).
Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group)	A forum for aligning policies and resources to the community's strategy through diverse stakeholder engagement.	• Structured collaboration (annual and quarterly meetings) • Inclusion of government, NGOs, philanthropy, and community representatives • Sub-groups advancing specific priorities	• Complexity of coordinating multi-stakeholder involvement (p. 17).
Cross Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE)	Drives action on key priorities, ensuring alignment with community goals.	• Focused quarterly meetings • Sub-groups for accountability and systemic issue resolution	• Sustaining momentum and engagement, especially during personnel changes (p. 21).
Ministerial Champion and Executive Sponsors	Provide high-level political and bureaucratic support for overcoming systemic barriers.	• Consistent support (e.g. then-Minister Brad Hazzard's involvement, p. 14) • High-level authorisation for public servant collaboration • Removal of bureaucratic barriers	• Dependence on key individuals for authorisation and political backing (p. 20). • Navigating political shifts that could affect continuity (p. 19).
Intermediate Organisations and Funders	Ensure alignment of funding and resources with community-led aspirations through long-term partnerships.	• Advocacy for systemic reforms • Capacity-building support • Justice reinvestment models	• Balancing funder expectations with the slower pace of community-led processes (p. 18).

Stakeholder	Perspective	Success factors	Challenges
			• Ensuring alignment of funding with evolving community priorities (p. 20).
Public Sector Employees	Engage in collaborative frameworks that prioritise community-driven outcomes over organisational metrics.	• Cultural competency training • Collaborative daily check-ins • Accountability to community priorities	• Adapting to new, community-driven accountability structures (p. 19). • Balancing traditional organisational KPIs with community priorities (p. 18).
Broader Stakeholders (Philanthropists, NGOs, Local Government, Academia)	Recognise Maranguka as a scalable model for community-led governance and collective impact.	• Demonstrated social and economic improvements • Holistic approaches (e.g. life-course focus) • Effective resource alignment	• Ensuring scalability without compromising the community-led ethos (p. 21). • Managing diverse and sometimes conflicting stakeholder expectations (p. 18).

Source: Produced by author based on Riboldi (2021a).

2.7 Resourcing

The initial concept of "justice reinvestment" was that the government would reallocate funds saved from the justice system as a result of the crime prevention efforts by the community to projects that would benefit the wellbeing of the community. In practice, however, governments allocated funding to a range of justice reinvestment sites across New South Wales, rather than returning savings directly to the communities that achieved them.

Maranguka could bid for funding for individual projects, and Maranguka Just Reinvestment Project is one of them (Bryant & Spies-Butcher, 2024). Table 4 includes more detailed information on the resources provided by the Commonwealth and NSW governments over time. Government support has been provided through both in-kind and cash contributions. Government support was mostly in-kind at the early phase of the initiative.

Table 4 Government support relevant to the Maranguka initiative (2012–2024)

Year	Government	Funding type and amount	Additional information	Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Funding
2012	NSW Government	In-kind support for Maranguka Justice Reinvestment	Support included resources for community consultations, coordination efforts, and initial project setup	In-kind support for community consultations, coordination, setup
2013	NSW Government	In-kind support for Maranguka	NSW Dept of Community Services provided office space for Maranguka Community Hub and an administration officer.	

2014	NSW Government	Commitment to fund pilot sites	Specific financial details not outlined at the time	
2015	NSW Government	In-kind support and one-off funding for a data position	The then-Attorney General of NSW, Brad Hazzard, appointed as cross-Government Champion for Maranguka Justice Reinvestment*	*NSW Government – In-kind support and one-off funding for a data-related position. This support helped initiate early data work but did not include development of a dedicated data platform.*
2019	Federal Government	$1.5 million over five years	Joint funding by Commonwealth and NSW governments: Part of the Stronger Places, Stronger People program	$1.5 million over five years
2019	NSW Government	$300,000 for the first year		$300,000 for the first year
2022	NSW Government	$9.8 million funding package	To expand Justice Reinvestment in NSW	Part of the $9.8 million funding package
2024	NSW Government	$7.5 million over three years	Funding provided through the NSW Justice Reinvestment Grant Program from June 2024 to June 2027	Part of the $7.5 million funding package

Note: 1. * Brad Hazzard served as Attorney General until April 2015, before moving on to serve as Minister for Family and Community Services and Social Housing, and later as Minister for Health from 2017 to 2023.

2. This table includes government funding related to justice reinvestment, community coordination, and related initiatives over time. Some items refer to broad programs or pilot schemes across multiple locations. Public data (e.g., ACNC) suggests Maranguka received approximately $1 million in government revenue in 2024; specific allocations for earlier years may be partial or indirect. .

Source: The data in this table comes from multiple sources: (Just Reinvest, 2019; NSW Government Communities and Justice, 2024; Paul Fletcher & Brad Hazzard, 2019, p. 2)

Table 5 below provides a summary of funding provided by philanthropy.

Table 5 Funding from philanthropy

Funding type	Funder	Details
Initial Seed Funding	Dusseldorp Forum	Provided multi-year funding to support Maranguka's core operations and strategic initiatives.
Initial Seed Funding	Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF)	$175,500 grant in 2020 to aid Maranguka's transition to independent governance.
Ongoing Support	Cages Foundation	Contributed to various programs, particularly those focused on early childhood development and family support.
Ongoing Support	St Vincent de Paul Foundation	Supported Maranguka's efforts in community development and justice reinvestment.
Ongoing Support	Matana Foundation for Young People	Funded youth development programs aimed at increasing school retention rates and reducing juvenile offenses.

Ongoing Support	Ritchie Foundation	Supporting Just Reinvestment NSW. Another key supporter, contributing to various community-led initiatives.
Transition Grant	Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF)	$175,500 grant in 2020 to support Maranguka's transition to independent governance.

In conclusion, the Maranguka initiative's approach to resourcing is multifaceted, encompassing financial investments, human capital development, co-governance, and flexible funding arrangements. By integrating these elements, the initiative not only addresses systemic social issues but also builds a sustainable foundation for Indigenous self-determination and community resilience. This model of resource allocation serves as a exemplar for other justice reinvestment projects aiming to achieve lasting social change.

Maranguka is widely recognised as one of the first community-led initiatives in Australia to operationalise a justice reinvestment model. During its formative years, its daily operations were primarily sustained through philanthropic funding, with limited direct government support. This funding model reflected both the early-phase nature of the initiative and the strong local momentum that helped mobilise non-government resources. While Maranguka later became one of several communities participating in the Commonwealth's Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP) program — all of which involve mixed funding arrangements and place-based design — its earlier experience provided a foundation that has informed the development of other sites. According to Just Reinvest NSW, Maranguka has actively supported knowledge transfer to new initiatives, offering a practical framework and lessons learned (Just Reinvest, 2023; Just-Reinvest-NSW-Annual-Report-2020-2021-2-1 (1), 2021).

2.8 Summary of practice: Establishing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Context (including dynamics)	Is the system and context defined? Are collaboration dynamics understood?	There is a long history of the community wanting action. The power to act has rested with government. The government services are disconnected and not always providing what people need. Collaboration dynamics are driven by community leadership, community will engage, strong partnership, and clearly defined area of intervention, i.e. crime and the whole some approach toward collective impact, with transparency driven by data-insights. Government departments were not all keen to join initially.
Institutional design	What formal arrangement is needed? What provides the group the authority to act? Does it have senior and middle management support? Is there sufficient time to establish the arrangement?	Initially setting up Bourke Tribal Council as the leadership and Maranguka as the safe space for operation. An MOU was set up in 2015, Later Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and cross sector leadership executives (CSLE) and sub-groups were appointed. Bourke Tribal Council has the approval right and other stakeholders need to get their senior authorities. The institutional arrangement developed over five years' time and is still evolving.

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Governance and leadership	Is leadership clearly defined? How was leadership established? Are the roles, processes, tools and structures for decision-making documented? How do chairs support contributions and enable collaboration?	Yes. The initial leadership was driven by Alister Ferguson and later through network and strategic appointment by Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and approved by Bourke Tribal Council. Sydney Policy Lab's report on governance roles and tools (2023) provides relevant insights. However, this scoping review did not cover the internal decision-making process that shaped program implementation. No very specific information available at project level regarding the governance.
Composition	Is membership representative? Does membership include civil society? Is power distributed equally?	Membership comprises government, NGOs, and community representatives (representative organisation and Tribal Council). Yes. Bourke Trible Council are composed of members of community. Membership does include civil society. While it is difficult to assess whether power is distributed equally among stakeholders, the process remains community-driven. Tensions can arise from a mismatch between government systems—often driven by deadlines, reporting cycles, and procedural requirements—and community approaches that prioritise relationship-building and trust, which require time and continuity. Nonetheless, there has generally been more enthusiasm and constructive engagement than resistance.
Resourcing	Is the group able to act through institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and resources?	Maranguka was formally incorporated in 2020. There are various agreements with the projects contracted from the governments. The governing body has agreements on the Maranguka Principles. There is call for more formal agreements for collaboration. Attendance is paid via philanthropy.

3 IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial	Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement	Implementing collaborative governance	Identifying and reporting outcomes

3.1 Theoretical perspectives

The third stage in the co-governance process considers the implementation of the co-governance arrangement at both the strategic and operational level to ensure it is implemented and effective. Factors identified from the literature include:

- Ensuring there is a joint understanding and commitment to the goals and scope (including accountability and desired outcomes)

- Developing mutual understanding, respect and trust (accepting trust may vary)

- Identifying strategies to build trust, including by learning, sharing information and resources, and being transparent

- Ensuring there is a joint understanding of commonalities and differences between collaborators, including different organisational cultures

- Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of arrangement and adapting to changes in the operating environment to sustain the arrangement over the long-term

- Supporting the arrangement to deliver and sustain collective action. At the operational level (in terms of diagnosis, design, implementation and assessment), this involves:

- Developing a theory of change. This involves a process of discovery, definition, deliberation and determination – leading to a shared theory of change/action or strategy (including measures of success) – fed by, and leading to, trust, understanding, legitimacy and commitment

- Having repeated, face-to-face dialogue and communication, leading to trust-building, commitment to process, and a shared understanding

- Having support from an intermediary (backbone support organisation), which is able to coordinate reinforcing activities across organisations

- Developing additional processes, such as co-creation, to drive innovative outcomes

- Establishing an accountable evaluation system that tracks inputs, processes and outcomes, and provides assurance back to bureaucracies

- Communicating accomplishments as early as possible.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

The implementation of co-governance in the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project has progressed through distinct stages, reflecting the complexities of establishing and sustaining a multi-stakeholder initiative in Bourke. Drawing on the documents reviewed, these stages highlight the deliberate efforts to foster trust, build capacity, and align diverse stakeholder contributions, while also navigating challenges inherent to collaborative frameworks.

3.2 Strategic implementation

The co-governance process of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project progressed through three interrelated phases, which correspond with the governance evolution detailed in Section 3.5 and summarised in Table 1. These include an:

- **Initial Phase (2013–2015):** Focused on building trust, gathering data to develop insights, and identifying community priorities. This phase established the foundations for the project, including the formation of the Bourke Tribal Council and early collaborative frameworks.

- **Implementation Phase (2016–2018):** Marked by the formation of the Cross Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE) and the development of structured strategies based on community needs, with implementation across youth engagement, community safety, and education.

- **Continuous Development Phase (2019–present):** Involves ongoing adaptation, evaluation, and program refinement in areas such as early childhood, cultural preservation, and systemic reform. This phase reflects increased institutional maturity, including the incorporation of Maranguka Ltd in 2020.

3.2.1 Agreed objectives, priorities and timeframe

The co-governance process of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project is designed to achieve several key objectives. Central to the project is the goal of empowering the local Aboriginal community to lead the decision-making process and to achieve higher level of self-determination. Additionally, the project aims to enhance coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-government organisations, and community members. This collaboration is perceived to be essential for the effective delivery of services and support. By redirecting resources from the criminal justice system to community-led initiatives, the project seeks to address the root causes of crime and improve social outcomes.

The governance process prioritises community leadership, building trust, shared decision-making, and service integration. Ensuring that the Bourke Tribal Council and community members are at the forefront of decision-making helps align initiatives with community needs. As Alister Ferguson, CEO of Maranguka, stated:

> "We developed the Maranguka proposal with a clear focus on creating better coordinated support to vulnerable families and children in Bourke through community-led teams working in partnership with existing service providers."(Paul Ramsay Foundation, 2023).

Building trust among all stakeholders through transparent and consistent communication is foundational to the success of the co-governance model. This trust is further reinforced by implementing a co-governance model where decision-making authority is shared between the community and other stakeholders. This approach helps balance power dynamics and ensures that community perspectives are central to the governance process. As previously noted, KPMG (2018) highlighted Maranguka's ability to foster collaborative, action-oriented relationships that build stakeholder confidence and produce solution-focused outcomes.

The co-governance process is structured around several key phases and ongoing activities. The initial phase (2013-2015) focused on building trust, generating data insights, and identifying community priorities, laying the groundwork for subsequent phases.

> "In the short term a number of justice circuit breakers were identified to drive immediate change in the lives of children and young people. The Warrant Clinic and Justice Support Team, as well as the Driver Licensing Program are now in operation, with early signs of positive impact."

> "The Maranguka JR Project was initially funded for 2 years from April 2014 and is now funded for a further 3-year period."(Maranguka & Just Reinvest NSW, 2016)

During the implementation phase (2016-2018), strategies based on community needs and priorities were developed and implemented. This phase saw the rollout of various initiatives aimed at reducing crime and improving social outcomes, covering the fields of youth engagement, community safety, economic development and education and health (KPMG, 2018).

The continuous development phase (2019-present) involves continuous adaptation and improvement of programs, with evaluations and adjustments as responses to the evolving needs of the community. These include early childhood and parenting, youth engagement and empowerment, cultural preservation and community celebrations, justice and social reform, community wellbeing and collaboration (Maranguka Community Hub, 2020)(Just-Reinvest-NSW-Annual-Report-2020-2021-2-1 (1), 2021).

Regular reviews and adjustments are integral to the governance process. Quarterly working groups bring together community members, government agencies, and service providers to review progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments. These meetings ensure ongoing community engagement and responsiveness. Additionally, annual reviews provide comprehensive evaluations of the project's impact and effectiveness, helping to refine strategies and set new goals. This structured yet flexible approach ensures that the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project remains aligned with the needs and priorities of the Bourke community, fostering a collaborative environment that drives sustainable change.

3.2.2 Understanding commonalities and differences

Maranguka's governance structures involve actors from vastly different sectors—government agencies, non-profits, community leaders, and philanthropists. Each comes with their own institutional priorities, operational norms, and cultural expectations. For example, community leaders prioritised long-term systemic change grounded in cultural preservation; whilst others may be pressed by KPIs imposed on them by either the government or the corporate hierarchies (Riboldi, 2021). This mismatch would unavoidably create friction, requiring deeper dialogue and ongoing efforts to realign expectations. Maranguka Limited, as the central coordinating body, had to actively navigate challenges among government agencies and service providers who were used to working in silos. Overcoming entrenched habits of siloed decision-making and establishing shared accountability demanded consistent effort and strong leadership that is from both within the Maranguka initiative (specifically from the Bourke Aboriginal community) and from its external partners (Maranguka & Just Reinvest NSW, 2016).

Cultural authority presented another area of tension, particularly for external stakeholders unfamiliar with its significance. While local cultural values were central to Maranguka's governance, some non-community actors perceived these principles as constraints on their usual practices. This lack of understanding risked undermining the trust necessary for effective collaboration and required ongoing efforts to bridge the gap. Sarah Hopkins from Just Reinvest NSW emphasised the importance of involving the community in every decision, stating, "we don't take a step without having community alongside us." Initially, this approach caused frustration among government officials when Just Reinvest NSW would not immediately agree to proposed processes or insisted on consulting the community first. Hopkins observed:

> "It's a reset for everyone when you start working in that way – and then, slowly, they start getting it." (Riboldi, 2021)

3.2.3 Actions taken to build understanding

To address these challenges, Maranguka undertook deliberate measures to develop a shared understanding of commonalities and differences. Central to these efforts was the integration of cultural authority within all aspects of governance. By ensuring that the Bourke Tribal Council's leadership guided decision-making, Maranguka required stakeholders to align their activities with community-defined priorities, fostering a sense of shared purpose. This

process not only reinforced the legitimacy of the governance model but also compelled external actors to adapt their behaviours and approaches.

Workshops and capacity-building activities were another critical component of Maranguka's strategy. These sessions aimed to educate stakeholders on the cultural, spiritual, and social dimensions of the Bourke Aboriginal community, helping them appreciate the local context and align their efforts accordingly. This approach facilitated a shift from transactional interactions to genuine partnership, enabling stakeholders to identify common ground while respecting differences.

Regular and structured interactions, such as daily meetings and data conversation meetings, further helped bridge gaps. These forums provided opportunities for stakeholders to discuss their perspectives, confront misunderstandings, and collaboratively interpret data. By grounding discussions in evidence and maintaining a focus on community outcomes, Maranguka ensured that differences became points of discussion rather than division.

3.2.4 Remaining Gaps

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully embedding a shared understanding of commonalities and differences. For instance, not all stakeholders possess the capacity or willingness to fully engage with culturally led processes. This is particularly evident in the inconsistent application of cultural safety principles by some external actors, who may lack the training or experience needed to align with community expectations.

Additionally, while data insight-driven governance has been a strength within the Maranguka initiative (see next section), its effective implementation is not without complexities. A key issue is the varied levels of data literacy among diverse stakeholders, which can impede equitable engagement. This disparity extends beyond simply understanding statistics; it encompasses varying capacities to interpret, contextualise, and critically apply data insights to local realities and decision-making processes. Consequently, equipping all participants, particularly Indigenous community members, with the necessary skills and culturally appropriate tools to effectively engage with and apply data insights—ensuring it is relevant, accessible, and meaningful to their context—remains an ongoing and crucial challenge for fostering genuine co-governance and empowering the community to drive change effectively (Seer Data & Analytics, 2021).

3.3 Operational implementation

With the governance structure in place, the focus shifted to implementing community-driven programs. Diversionary initiatives for youth, family support services, and capacity-building programs were prioritised. These efforts relied on the active participation of local stakeholders, leveraging pooled resources and expertise. Data insights-driven decision-making played a significant role in this phase, ensuring that interventions were evidence-based and responsive to emerging needs (KPMG, 2018).

Meetings with stakeholder participations are crucial for the functioning of co-governance. Several sets of meetings at different levels take place. Table 6 shows the nature of meetings.

Table 6 Working meetings

Aspect	Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group	CSLE	CSLE subgroups	Daily meetings	Data conversation meetings
Purpose	Broad forum for aligning policy	Smaller, focused group to progress	Specialised teams to	Tackle problems in the	Discuss data and its implications

	and resources towards the community-led agenda.	key aspects of work and implement the Safe Smart Strong strategy.	advance specific areas of work between CSLE meetings.	town as they arise, with early intervention from various service providers.	for the community to inform decision-making and prioritise actions.
Meetings	Annually.	At least 4 times per year, with at least one meeting on Country in Bourke.	As needed	Daily at 9.30am at the Maranguka Hub.	As needed
Participants	Senior leaders from government, non-profits, community groups, philanthropy, business, academia, and the community.	Leaders from the community, philanthropy, corporates, and all three levels of government with decision-making authority.	CSLE members participating in one of the subgroups, contributing their expertise.	Bourke residents, police, and various service providers.	Community members and representatives from various sectors.
Scope	High-level strategic alignment and relationship building among diverse stakeholders.	Operationalising the Safe Smart Strong strategy, developing ways of working that respect cultural authority and Cultural Safety.	Focused on specific tasks such as developing accountability frameworks and resolving systemic issues.	Early intervention and support for issues reported in the past 24 hours.	Using data insights to inform decision-making and prioritise actions that benefit children and young people.
Focus Areas	Strategic alignment and relationship building.	Implementation of the Safe Smart Strong strategy and maintaining networks.	Developing accountability frameworks, embedding Maranguka Principles, mapping services, and identifying systemic issues.	Addressing immediate concerns and providing support through collaboration.	Data insights-driven decision-making and prioritisation of actions.
Accountability	Broad accountability to align policy and resources.	Direct accountability to the Bourke Tribal Council.	Reporting to the CSLE and ensuring alignment with the community's aspirations.	Reporting back on progress the next day.	Ensuring data insights informs community decisions and actions.

Compiled by the author with reference to (KPMG, 2016; Riboldi, 2021)

- **Daily meetings:** Every day at 9.30am, key Bourke residents and service representatives gather to meet at the Maranguka Hub on Mitchell Street. These meetings have a clear purpose: to tackle problems in the town as they arise, rather than wait for them to grow. The gathering begins with police reporting any

incidents or concerns from the past 24 hours. As discussed by the Backbone Team Leader Kristy Kennedy: "Every morning, we have a briefing with police about what has happened in the past 24 hours. Often there are things that can be done without police taking action or charging people. Police are able to identify people who need our services so we can provide support as soon as there is an issue."(*Just-Reinvest-NSW-Annual-Report-2020-2021-2-1 (1), 2021*). The idea is to intervene early and get mental health, early childhood, education, family support and other service providers involved straight away. The next day everyone reports back on their progress. It allows the community to drive change(Southward, *Circuit Breakers*, 2018).

- **Data conversation meetings:** These meetings involve community members and representatives from various sectors to discuss data insights and its implications for the community. The goal is to use data insights-rather than raw data alone – to inform decision-making and prioritise actions that benefit children and young people. Maranguka has transformed the relationship between data collection and usage. As summarised in (*Bourke (Maranguka)*, n.d.)

"The data has been handed over to community members through community conversations held by local facilitators, and community feedback was recorded and fed back to the Bourke Tribal Council. This feedback, together with the data, informed the development of goals, measures and strategies for the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project reflected in the document Growing our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong, was developed by the Bourke Tribal Council. "(Platform C, 2019)

The methodology involves seeking a range of data inputs from government agencies that can provide insights into how Bourke community is using services (or not) and other issues of interest to the Maranguka initiative. These data inputs are aggregated and presented through the Palima platform, supporting a holistic view of service delivery across sectors. This approach does not rely on a single, linked administrative dataset. Rather, it generates data insights by triangulating government-sourced service data with community feedback, most significant change stories, and the contextual knowledge brought by local actors. These insights—developed by the Maranguka backbone team and supported by SEER Data Analytics—form the basis of collaborative decisions and enable more culturally grounded, evidence-informed governance. According to Reeve et al.(2024), this approach emphasises Indigenous Data Sovereignty, ensuring that the community controls and owns the data, which helps in holding government agencies accountable and aligning actions with community priorities.

- **Collaborative Working Group Meetings:** There are also various collaborative working group meetings with Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, CSLE and CSLE Subgroups. These are attended by cross-service community leaders and stakeholders to review data and discuss strategies for addressing community needs. "Quarterly Working Groups were started to bring the community, government and service providers together to deliver the strategy, changing the way everyone works together" (Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, n.d.).

These meetings review data regularly on Palimaa Data Platform which help ensure that efforts are aligned to address changing circumstances and that there is a collective approach to problem-solving.

3.4 Evaluation, reflection and adaptation

Ongoing evaluation, reflection and adaptation have been integral to Maranguka's co-governance. Several lessons can be learnt from Maranguka's experience.

3.4.1 Evaluation practices aligned with community goals

Maranguka's evaluation framework as shown in Blak Impact (Maranguka Community Hub, 2016) is closely tied to the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong" strategy. Key metrics such as Year 12 retention rates and

reductions in domestic violence incidents serve as benchmarks for progress (Maranguka, 2020; KPMG, 2018). Maranguka produces several key reports to document and evaluate their progress:

- **Impact Assessments**: These reports, such as the one conducted by KPMG, evaluate the economic and social impacts of Maranguka's initiatives. For example, the 2018 report estimated a gross impact of $3.1 million in Bourke, with significant reductions in crime and improvements in community wellbeing (KPMG, 2018)

- **Annual Reports**: These provide a comprehensive overview of the year's activities, achievements, and challenges, ensuring stakeholders are informed about the progress and impact of Maranguka's work, e.g. Maranguka Community Hub (2020). Since Maranguka was incorporated in 2020, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) also publish the annual reporting information of Maranguka Ltd on their website(ACNC, 2024)

- **Program-Specific Reports**: Detailed evaluations of specific programs, such as youth development (Kirby et al., 2024) to assess their effectiveness and areas for improvement.

3.4.2 Community-led reflection

Regular reflection is embedded in governance structures, such as through the Bourke Tribal Council and Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group. These forums ensure that data is interpreted in a culturally relevant way, aligned with the community's priorities(Maranguka Community Hub, 2020).

3.4.3 Iterative learning and adaptation

Reflection sessions are used to adapt and refine initiatives based on data insights. For example, insights on youth engagement led to the development of targeted programs such as mentoring and after-school activities (Maranguka Community Hub, 2020). During COVID-19, the project demonstrated agility by modifying processes to ensure continuity in monitoring (KPMG, 2018).

3.4.4 Independent impact assessments

External evaluations, such as those conducted by KPMG, provided validation of Maranguka's outcomes, highlighting cost savings and improved social metrics. These assessments complemented internal monitoring efforts and supported advocacy for systemic change (KPMG, 2018).

However, challenges exist at all stages:

- Maranguka faces difficulties in isolating its specific impact due to the absence of a control group. The complexity of systemic issues makes it challenging to attribute outcomes such as reduced crime rates directly to the project. KPMG also reported the difficulty to draw conclusions that can combine both qualitative and quantitative data (KPMG, 2018).

- Accessing high-quality and consistent data from external systems remains a challenge, limiting the ability to conduct comprehensive evaluations across all sectors (Maranguka Community Hub, 2020).

- Stakeholder capacity to engage meaningfully in reflection processes varies, particularly for smaller service providers and community members who may lack technical expertise in data interpretation (Maranguka Community Hub, 2020).

- While the project demonstrates agility in addressing short-term challenges, mechanisms for long-term adaptation are less developed, particularly in integrating evaluation findings into systemic reforms (KPMG, 2018).

To address these challenges, some solutions were introduced:

- **Culturally grounded evaluation and reflection**: Metrics are co-designed with the community to ensure cultural appropriateness. Tools like the Connection to Country framework integrate Aboriginal cultural values into evaluations (Maranguka Community Hub, 2016, 2020).

- **Integrated reflection processes**: Governance structures such as the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group facilitate iterative reflection by bringing together diverse stakeholders to review data and propose adaptations (Riboldi, 2021).

- **Real-time adaptation**: Initiatives such as Maranguka Daily Check-ins enable real-time data review and collaborative decision-making, ensuring responsiveness to immediate issues(Kennedy, 2017).

- **External validation**: Independent evaluations, such as KPMG's impact assessments, provide objective insights and support evidence-based decision-making (KPMG, 2016, 2018).
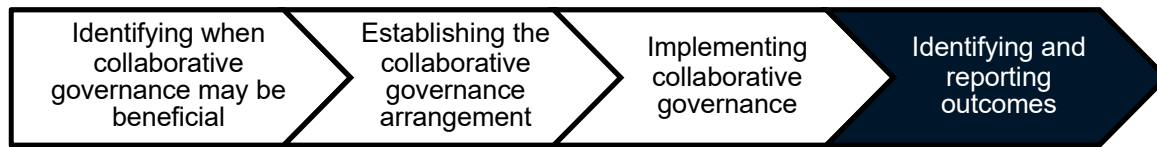
Some gaps remain:

- **Long-term adaptation mechanisms**: Frameworks for adapting based on multi-year trends are underdeveloped, limiting the ability to sustain systemic reforms (KPMG, 2018).

- **Integration of qualitative data**: Quantitative metrics dominate evaluations, with limited inclusion of qualitative insights that reflect the lived experiences of community members (Maranguka Community Hub, 2016, 2020).

- **Capacity building for reflection**: Building the capacity of smaller stakeholders and community members to engage in reflection processes remains a significant gap (Maranguka Community Hub, 2016, 2020).

- **Sustainability of adaptive practices**: Adaptation practices are often reactive and not yet institutionalised to ensure their longevity beyond the current project cycle (KPMG, 2018).

- The **Maranguka Strategic Plan 2023–2025** outlines several actions to address these gaps:

- **Data platforms and long-term trends**: The introduction and continued enhancement of the *Palimaa* data platform aim to strengthen long-term tracking of progress by consolidating data and enabling comprehensive trend analysis over time (Strategic Plan, p. 21).

- **Ongoing review of strategy**: The plan proposes regular reviews and updates to strategic priorities to ensure the framework adapts to evolving community needs and systemic challenges (p. 22).

- **"Stories of significant change"**: To balance the quantitative focus, the plan integrates storytelling as a method to capture the lived experiences of community members. These narratives complement the numerical data to provide a fuller picture of impact and challenges (p. 19).

- **Community consultations**: Regular **consultations with the Bourke Indigenous community** are planned to ensure their qualitative insights directly inform service delivery and strategic adjustments (p. 12).

- Maranguka supports initiatives like the Bourke Tribal Council's involvement in data evaluation and strategic discussions, which create space for community-led reflection (p. 14).

3.5 Summary of practice: Implementing co-governance

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Strategic implementation	What are the agreed objectives, priorities, timeframe? Is there a joint understanding of and commitment to the objectives? What are the mechanisms to develop understanding, respect and trust, including transparency, sharing information and resources?	The objectives are to reallocate resources saved from the justice system for the good of the community through collaboration and community self-determination. Initially one year, extended to five years and now incorporated and expected to be long term. There is joint understanding and commitment by attendees towards common goals. Data insights-driven, evidence-based decision making; culturally appropriate and respectful data presentation; data sovereignty to the community; protective data storage. Training to achieve cultural competence. Embedded cultural perspectives to all aspect of Maranguka's governance and make the initiative community centred.
	Is there understanding of the commonalities and differences between collaborators, including cultural?	Yes. Multiple stakeholders from outside the community talked about learning to respect the different approaches of the community, respectful to different time schedules, the need for flexibility.
	Is the group responsive to change in need? Is the group sustainable long-term?	Yes. Maranguka adapted its governing structure to cross sectoral leadership in response to the different subject matters and different level of governance. Maranguka faces challenges in terms of funding the governing groups participation. So far it has secured charity funds and lots of in-kind contributions from the government and community to support their work. According to the fundholders in a video, they are talking about longer term. But there were queries about whether the current voluntary service delivery should be paid.
Operational implementation	Is there a program logic?	Yes. The program's design centres on the **Justice Reinvestment model**, aiming to reallocate resources to Bourke for crime prevention and community strengthening. Achieving this requires a robust **collective impact approach**, bringing together diverse partners (government agencies, NGOs, and the community) to coordinate their efforts and achieve mutually reinforcing activities.
	Is there an ongoing engagement process?	Daily meetings for community, quarterly meeting with other stakeholders.

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
	Are organisational differences understood?	Members acknowledged the different resources and perspectives of different organisations.
		It is community centred. Stakeholders showed respect to community sensitivity about data, flexibility and cultural responsiveness.
		The stakeholders did not always understand the community's way of doing things. Maranguka recognised that they need to clearly communicate on this, and the Maranguka Principle was introduced in 2022
	How are decisions made? How is collective action facilitated?	Conversations first, consensus to take actions. When actions needed to take outside community, e.g. data online, seek community approval.
		Some group decisions then required further approval within organisations.
	Are stakeholders represented?	The cross sectoral leadership group, executives and subgroups represent stakeholders from different partners and the community. The Tribal Council represent the community and Maranguka was the interface of the council and the partners.
		There was identified gap in representation of smaller stakeholders in the 2023-2025 plan.
	Are stakeholders given the opportunity to engage?	Yes. There are various meetings for them to engage. They also have to come to Bourke to meet in person.
Operational support	What operational support is required?	The Backbone Team of five people provide support for the daily operation, liaise between the community and the leadership and reaching out to partners.

4 OUTCOMES FROM COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

| Identifying when collaborative governance may be beneficial | Establishing the collaborative governance arrangement | Implementing collaborative governance | Identifying and reporting outcomes |

5.1 Theoretical perspectives

The final stage in the co-governance process considers how to identify and report outcomes from the co-governance arrangement. The potential outcomes of collaborative governance can be varied, intentional, unintentional, measurable, unmeasurable, positive, negative, short-term and long-term. Ultimately, the test of whether collaborative governance is successful and increases public value is whether it achieves better policies or programs than would have been the case if decisions had been made by government on its own – reported as outcomes. Co-governance can also have other outcomes related to the *process* of collaboration.

Outcomes from specific actions include:

- Strategic plans and theories of change/action

- Short, medium and long-term outcomes 'on the ground' that have occurred due to the collaborative arrangement (intentional or otherwise).

Outcomes from the process of co-governance may include:

- Redressed power, information and resource imbalances

- Improved relationships, understanding and accountability

- Increased trust in government or service system

- Willingness to engage in future co-governance arrangements.

The absence of outcomes, or reporting of outcomes, may affect continuity of the arrangement.

This section documents each consideration for this case study site based on data collected, including enablers and barriers to their implementation in practice.

5.2 Outputs under the Maranguka initiative: strategic framework and theories of change

As a prototypical case, the Maranguka initiative was experimental, and the efforts to develop a narrative for its theory of change were evident from the outset. Rooted in the principle of **justice reinvestment**, Maranguka's strategic framework reflected a shift from traditional top-down governance to a model that prioritised **collaboration, community ownership, and culturally responsive practices.** At its core, the Maranguka initiative articulated a clear theory of change centred on the transformative potential of collaboration. The narrative was built around the hypothesis that by reallocating resources to locally tailored, community-driven programs, long-term outcomes could include **significantly reduced incarceration rates (the primary source of reinvestment savings),** enhanced community wellbeing, and strengthened social cohesion. This approach positioned the community, rather than external authorities, as the principal driver of change.

The theory of change explicitly connected short-term outputs, such as increased access to services and strengthened relationships between community members and institutions, to broader systemic goals, including breaking intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. It underscored the critical role of **trust-building** between

stakeholders, from government agencies to local Indigenous leaders, and the importance of embedding cultural values and lived experiences in program design. It redefined the roles of stakeholders, integrating diverse perspectives into governance processes and fostering a shared commitment to long-term outcomes.

5.3   Direct outcomes

The perspectives shared by key individuals involved in or observing the Maranguka initiative illustrate profound changes in governance, community dynamics, and institutional behaviour. These changes reflect the transformative nature of justice reinvestment and co-governance, focusing on shifts in autonomy, participation, accountability, and systemic influence[1].

5.3.1 Restoring autonomy and empowerment

The changes observed in Maranguka reflect both operational and systemic transformations, highlighting the potential and necessary for co-governance to restore autonomy, build trust, and drive systemic change, particularly for the Aboriginal Community in Bourke, where historical marginalisation and top-down decision-making have undermined local agency.

5.3.2 Behavioural changes of stakeholders

Working groups have fostered open communication, coordination, and transparency. This has allowed services and programs to align with the Community's needs and goals.

> "Since the working groups have started, what I've seen is that everybody is communicating, everybody is working together for a common goal and there is sharing of different information in different programs different activities and everybody knows what's going on in the community on what services delivered."
> --Vivian Prince, Maranguka Backbone Coordinator, (Platform C, 2019)

The move from siloed service delivery to an integrated, place-based approach supports operational cohesion and enhances the practical implementation of justice reinvestment strategies. Importantly, building ownership is a gradual process that requires consistent engagement and clear pathways for Community input.

> "Being part of those working groups, I could see that more and more people would attend those groups and engage with the strategy" ..."As the working groups continued, people started getting ownership over those strategies. The idea was that what happened in the working group would then feed back to the Bourke Tribal Council and other community members. That's a really important feedback loop that had to happen between those working groups to make sure that the community could be on board..."
> --Sarah Hopkins, Just Reinvest NSW, Platform C, 2019

The shift from passive engagement to active ownership by community members and stakeholders reflects an adaptive and inclusive governance process. Feedback loops between working groups and the Bourke Tribal Council ensure accountability and broader community of the whole of Bourke alignment.

> "We started seeing the service sector was operation through those work groups..."
> "People actually started to take responsibility for some of the work. There was initially a reticence a bit of reluctance for the service sector to sept into that. They were ...It wasn't part of their normal role. They weren't sure if they were meant to be doing it. Whether they could do it, so there was some fear I think there. Slowly over time, particularly when we started talking about the potential to bring in additional resources and supports,

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[1] In this section, the term *community* is used in different ways depending on context. At times, it refers to the entire Bourke population; in other instances, it refers specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. In line with respectful usage, *Community* is capitalised when referring to First Nations peoples.

they've really stepped into that space and… and being part of the design of…of how that strategy should roll out…"
-- Sarah Hopkins, Just Reinvest NSW, Platform C, 2019

5.3.3 Restoring autonomy and empowerment

The transformation of the service sector underscores the importance of fostering confidence and creating enabling environments where stakeholders, especially First Nations Communities, feel empowered to participate and innovate.

June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (2019) mentioned:

> "Through this strategy, Bourke is clawing back autonomy that has been stripped away over time and delivering results that leave no doubt that increased investment (including justice reinvestment) into community-driven solutions is the only way forward if we are to effectively address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage." … "Like any major program of change, the type of transformation that Bourke is undergoing presents a lot of hard work and a continuing struggle to have your voices heard, your strengths and achievements recognised, and your right to determine your own futures respected."…"I want to congratulate your community for embracing this challenge, and for leading the way in making a success of this country's first Justice Reinvestment project. It is through shared struggle that we can grow stronger together."

The shift is structural and systemic, where Community-driven solutions reclaim decision-making power and cultural authority, countering the imposed top-down models that have historically failed these communities. The process of transformation is not linear; it involves continuous advocacy to have Community voices respected, achievements acknowledged, and self-determination upheld.

5.3.4 Systemic influence and scaling

Maranguka's experience in collaboration has inspired policymakers and think tanks to expand the principles of justice reinvestment and cross-sector collaboration to other regions (The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research et al., 2022). Its model underscores the power of prototypes in catalysing systemic change, offering a framework for scaling equitable solutions nationwide.

The changes observed in Maranguka reflect both operational and systemic transformations, highlighting the potential of co-governance to restore autonomy, build trust, and foster systemic change. While challenges such as initial resistance and the need for sustained engagement exist, the initiative offers a roadmap for scaling these practices to other contexts, advancing governance frameworks that prioritise equity and cultural relevance.

5.4 Summary of practice: Identifying outcomes

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Outcomes from collaboration activities	What organisational outputs has the group achieved? (e.g. plans, theories of change/action)	Lower youth crime rate Family strength Adult employment
	What outcomes has the group delivered that are additional to what would have otherwise been achieved?	Save funds for the justice system Community centred decision making with the support of experts, NGOs and government

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Outcomes from process of collaboration	How have power imbalances been resolved?	Developing more outreach and collaboration at lower at all levels.
	Have new relationships formed, have existing relationships become stronger?	Set up strong partnership, bring in good quality partners from different sectors. Set up intersectoral leadership framework which allows to address issues outside the justice system.
	Has trust increased?	It was a case of low trust starting point, both within communities and between communities and stakeholder. Trust within communities improved as people started to see the results. Maranguka invited the government to be a co-designer in Just Reinvest indicating willingness to work with government.
	Is there a willingness to continue or apply the lessons learned here elsewhere?	Willingness to engage and to continue to engage in the long-term. Maranguka has already been extended to a range of other co- activities such as health and education. Maranguka generates a sense of community involvement which comes with shared responsibility.

5 TRUST AND POWER

5.1 Trust

Maranguka started from a situation of low trust. The words of Maranguka initiator, Alister Ferguson – Executive Director, Maranguka Community Hub, reveals that developing a trust environment was in his mind right from the beginning:

> "One of the key answers to the question of, 'what do you want out of this?' is a trusted, respectful, and meaningful relationship between community leaders and government. And that's two-way learning there because, at the moment, you have Aboriginal community leaders rightfully very mistrustful of any of these kinds of processes and reluctant to engage. This kind of structure and development will, hopefully, create that forum where community and government can come together and be a bit of a lighthouse for that." Alister Ferguson, Executive Director, Maranguka Community Hub (Riboldi, 2021b)

The first stage of the justice reinvestment project focused on building trust between community and service providers, identifying community priorities and circuit breakers, and generating data insights.

The Maranguka experience demonstrates that trust-building is not a singular act but an ongoing process requiring sustained effort and commitment. In Maranguka, this sustained focus on trust has been crucial in fostering collaboration between Indigenous communities and external partners, enabling a shared commitment to addressing social disadvantage.

> "…that doesn't happen magically that really needs nurturing and support and resourcing. And it also needs to work at the timeframes of the community and build from the strengths that they have." (Teya Dusseldorp, Dusseledorp Forum, (Platform C, 2019b))

> "…having those really nuanced community conversations in big forums but doing it in a really respectful way and getting again very good perspectives on what the priorities from community were and from young people through a whole lot of different cohorts so I think that constant reaching out and building and building and building a more nuanced picture has given a lot of credibility as well" (Cath Broke, Lend Lease, in (Platform C, 2019))

> "…so certainly, in the early days of the Maranguka program, there was a lot of stakeholder engagement, and I know that that can be a bit of a cliché, but it was genuine engagement and it was well structured and it gave all the voices in the community and a choice to be present and attend meetings. Not everyone did and that's still a challenge for us." (Greg Moore, NSW Police, in (Platform C, 2019))

The case study produced jointly by Maranguka Community Hub, Kowa and Seer Data & Analytics argues that data insights can drive trust in several ways, as demonstrated by Maranguka's Palimaa Data Platform (Seer Data & Analytics, 2021):

- **Empowerment and Sovereignty**: By giving the Bourke community access to and control over the generation of data insights through community-led interpretation, the platform ensures that the community feels empowered and respected. This sovereignty over data processes fosters a sense of ownership and trust in the processes and outcomes. The principle of **Indigenous data sovereignty**, the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the collection, ownership, and application of data about their communities, is increasingly recognised as foundational to ethical research and governance (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016).

- **Transparency and Accountability**: Regular reviews of data in collaborative working group meetings, attended by cross-service community leaders and stakeholders, promote transparency. This openness helps build trust as everyone involved can see how decisions are made and actions are taken based on the data insights.

- **Informed Decision-Making**: Data insights-driven decisions are more likely to be effective and relevant. When the community sees that actions are based on solid evidence, it enhances trust in the initiatives and the organisations involved.

- **Community-Led Narratives**: Ensuring that the narrative is controlled by the community and that local knowledge is central to decision-making helps build trust. It shows that the community's insights and experiences are valued and prioritised.

- **Collaborative Actions**: The collaboration around data insights leads to tangible actions such as refining service delivery, developing new initiatives, and building sustainable funding models. Seeing real, positive changes as a result of insight-driven collaboration reinforces trust in the platform and the partnerships.

Overall, the Palimaa Data Platform's approach to data management and collaboration helps build a trusted, respectful, and meaningful relationship between the community and its partners.

> "We collect data and bring it to our working groups to facilitate discussions around ways to better the Bourke Community. We have seen a dramatic decrease in youth crime. Seer makes my job a lot easier," said Tyra Kelly, Data Analyst at Maranguka Community Hub (seer2019-wp, 2020).

> "I see Maranguka on the journey from data dependency to data sovereignty, not quite there and investment would allow that, but progress has been substantial in just a few short years, " said Skye Trudgett from Kowa Collaboration (seer2019-wp, 2020).

5.1.1 Trust of the partnership

Low trust of the community's willingness and ability to achieve what they want to do was overcome by setting up strong partnership.

> "So right from the beginning there was a really important strong partnership model and then with that collective impact framework that really brought all those different stakeholders together and gave them that framework of how to collaborate together." (Platform C 2019)

5.1.2 Greater trust of government? Invite government as co-designer

The initiative has been instrumental in building trust between Indigenous communities and government agencies. Which can be observed by the willingness of the community to continue piloting with the government to co-design or invite the government to partner with the communities. As said: by Mr George Winters, CEO of JRNSW (Just Reinvest NSW, 2022):

> "Maranguka continues to pioneer justice reinvestment in Australia by asking the NSW Government to co-design a financial mechanism that will shift resources away from systems that harm into the hands of the community – driven by data – in areas such as education, health, care and child protection. This is the first time 'reinvestment' could be implemented in Australia." George Winters, CEO of JRNSW (Just Reinvest NSW, 2022)

Mr Winters added:

"In this Report (Just Reinvest NSW, 2022), and at the Reinvestment Forum, Aboriginal communities are committing to a process of co-design to find an answer to the question: how can we do 'reinvestment'? This is an invitation to government to partner with the communities already exploring justice reinvestment as a solution to the over incarceration of Aboriginal people in NSW" (Just Reinvest NSW, 2022):

In conclusion, trust is indispensable in co-governance, as it underpins effective stakeholder engagement, transparency, and mutual accountability. The Maranguka initiative showcases how trust-building enhances collaboration, empowers communities, and ensures the sustainability of interventions. This model offers valuable lessons for other initiatives seeking to address complex social challenges through co-governance.

Table 7 captures the evolving trust dynamics and highlights the iterative process of trust-building central to the Maranguka initiative's success.

Table 7 Trust at each stage of the Maranguka initiative:

Stage	Trust issues	Trust by whom	Trust who
Initiation	• Mistrust due to historical injustices and systemic failures. • Concerns about justice reinvestment principles being tokenistic.	Aboriginal community Government External stakeholders.	External stakeholders (government, NGOs). Community leadership.
Design	• Ensuring shared goals among stakeholders. • Trust in governance structures to maintain cultural leadership. • Trust in cultural integration for effective solutions.	Aboriginal community. External stakeholders. All parties involved in governance.	Governance structures (e.g. Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group). Community leadership. External systems.
Implementation	• Confidence in resource allocation. • Trust in the effectiveness of programs. • Sustaining collaboration between stakeholders. • Accountability in resource use and outcomes.	Aboriginal community. External stakeholders (funding bodies, NGOs).	Program implementers. Governance structures. External agencies.
Review	• Assurance of fair, culturally sensitive evaluations. • Trust in adaptive strategies for sustainability. • Long-term commitment from government and external partners.	Aboriginal community. Evaluation bodies. External stakeholders.	Evaluation frameworks. Government agencies. Governance bodies.

Notes:
Stage: Indicates the phase of the initiative.
Trust issues: Highlights the main trust-related challenges and uncertainties during that stage.
Trust by whom: Identifies the entities or individuals needing to place trust in others at that stage.
Trust who: Specifies the actors or systems in whom trust is being placed.

5.2 Power

While the initiative has demonstrated the benefits of shifting power to community leadership, it also highlights the challenges that arise when navigating entrenched institutional and political structures.

At the outset, the **power imbalance** between the Bourke Aboriginal community and the government reflected longstanding structural inequalities. The community's reliance on external government systems, as vividly described by Uncle Phil Sullivan—*"crossing the bridge to the other side of the river to ask the government"*—underscored a top-down relationship in which the community lacked agency (Storytellers, 2017). This initial imbalance posed a significant challenge to collaboration, as it required the community to rebuild its capacity for leadership while simultaneously persuading government stakeholders to acknowledge and engage with a community-driven approach. This power reclamation marked a turning point, as the community's decision to address its own challenges locally shifted the dynamic and began to **redefine collaboration** on their terms. While empowering, this shift also placed the onus on the community to prove the efficacy of its leadership, a burden that reflects ongoing systemic inequities.

The *Safe, Smart, Strong* strategy further underscored the tension between **hierarchical systems** and the need for **flexible, shared governance**. The strategy's success depended on government agencies sharing power with the community and aligning their systems to support community-led goals. However, as Sarah Hopkins from Just Reinvest NSW noted, many government departments were resistant to change, particularly in areas like data-sharing and responding to system reform requests (Platform C, 2019a). These challenges reflect structural constraints rather than outright resistance—agencies often face legal, procedural, and accountability obligations that limit flexibility. While community leadership enabled culturally grounded solutions, the collaboration also exposed the fragility of shared governance when institutional and community logics diverge. This reinforces findings that deeply embedded bureaucratic norms can complicate efforts to redistribute authority in collaborative settings (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group offers a compelling example of both the benefits and challenges of rebalancing power. Initially, the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group faced resistance, as government representatives joined reluctantly and were sceptical of the community's leadership. This reluctance reflects a fundamental challenge of power dynamics in collaboration: external stakeholders accustomed to hierarchical decision-making often view shared power as a threat to their authority (e.g., Ansell & Gash, 2008; Kotter, 1995, discuss resistance to changes that challenge existing power structures in collaborative and organisational contexts). However, over time, the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group evolved into a productive platform for **shared ownership and accountability**, with members becoming deeply committed to supporting the community's agenda. Sarah Hopkins described how *"every single person at that table has ownership"* and was enthusiastic about supporting the priorities set by the community (Platform C, 2019a). This shift exemplifies how **shared power** and **horizontal collaboration** can emerge when trust and cooperation are nurtured.

The role of **high-level political power** further highlights the dual nature of these dynamics. The engagement of Brad Hazzard, who served as Attorney General of New South Wales from 23 April 2014 to 2 April 2015, acted as a "ministerial champion" for Maranguka, using his influence to help overcome bureaucratic barriers and convene senior decision-makers. He later served as **Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing (2015–2017)**, and then as **Minister for Health (2017–2023)**. Across these roles, Hazzard's sustained engagement provided continuity and political endorsement, which were instrumental in legitimising the community-led model and facilitating systemic change. However, Hazzard retired from the NSW Parliament in 2023, raising important questions about continuity. While his involvement helped accelerate progress during his tenure, it also underscores the risks of relying on individual champions for institutional cooperation.

Following Brad Hazzard's departure, the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and later Minister for Regional Youth (December 2021 to March 2023) Ben Franklin played a supportive role. He visited Bourke to meet with the

Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group and community members (Franklin, 2022, May 25), publicly endorsing community-led approaches and advocating for the expansion of justice reinvestment models to other regions in NSW (NSW Department of Communities and Justice, 2023). Although not formally designated as Maranguka's Ministerial Champion, Franklin's engagement reflected continued political interest in the initiative. As of June 2025, he serves as President of the New South Wales Legislative Council.

These developments highlight a broader challenge for initiatives like Maranguka: sustaining political backing across election cycles and ministerial portfolios. While recent leaders have shown support, the long-term durability of co-governance arrangements may depend on formalising cross-sector mechanisms that are resilient to political turnover. Maranguka's continued implementation of its 2023–2025 Strategic Plan represents one such effort to institutionalise collaborative structures beyond individual political figures.

At an operational level, **daily check-ins** between Maranguka, local police, and service providers offer a more grounded example of power-sharing. These interactions fostered mutual accountability and trust, creating a more horizontal power dynamic that benefited collaboration. However, the initial lack of trust within the community itself, as described by Cath Broke from Lend Lease, highlights another layer of complexity. Building credibility and engagement required ongoing efforts to include all community voices, demonstrating that internal power dynamics—such as differing levels of participation—can also pose challenges to effective collaboration. The COVID disruption was such an example, as Ferguson said:

> "We're well equipped for fire, floods and droughts, et cetera but we weren't prepared for COVID."(Sally Sara et al., 2022)

In conclusion, the Maranguka initiative demonstrates that shifting power toward community leadership is both transformative and fraught with challenges. While rebalancing power has enabled culturally grounded, community-driven solutions, the process has exposed tensions between institutional resistance, hierarchical structures, and the need for sustained political advocacy. The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and daily operational practices reflect the benefits of shared power, fostering trust, accountability, and long-term collaboration. However, the reliance on high-level political support and the persistence of bureaucratic resistance highlights the ongoing struggles in achieving fully equitable partnerships. These dynamics underscore that while power-sharing is essential to collaboration, it requires continuous negotiation, trust-building, and structural adaptation to ensure that all stakeholders remain aligned in their goals.

Table 8 Power dynamics throughout the collaboration cycle

Stage of collaboration	Power dynamics	Impact on collaboration
Initial Stage: Structural Imbalance	**Top-down power dynamic**: The government held disproportionate control over resources and decision-making.	Created mistrust and disengagement within the community.
	Community disempowerment: Reliance on external systems without agency.	Highlighted the challenge of rebuilding agency and leadership.
Shift to Community-Led Action	**Reclaimed agency**: The community, led by the Bourke Tribal Council and Maranguka, decided to address local issues.	Empowered the community to set priorities.
	Power inversion: Government required to engage on community terms.	Challenged government to adapt to community-led governance.
Data-Sharing Challenges	**Institutional constraints**: Perceived resistance to data sharing and reform reflected deeper issues of legal limits, governance complexity, and priority misalignment.	Slowed progress in addressing systemic issues.

	Rigid hierarchies: Traditional bureaucratic systems conflicted with community-led approaches.	Highlighted tensions between flexibility (community) and rigidity (government).
Political Advocacy and Authorisation	**Political power**: The engagement of the then Attorney General Brad Hazzard as a "ministerial champion" introduced high-level advocacy.	Facilitated collaboration by overcoming bureaucratic resistance.
	External validation: Political involvement legitimised community leadership.	Risked dependency on external political champions.
Formation of Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group	**Reluctance to share power**: Initial resistance from government and non-community stakeholders.	Evolved into a productive collaboration platform.
	Gradual shared ownership: Over time, Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group participants embraced community leadership and goals.	Fostered trust and accountability but required persistent advocacy.
Operational Collaboration	**Mutual accountability**: Daily check-ins between Maranguka, police, and service providers created a horizontal power dynamic.	Strengthened collaboration through shared responsibility.
	Trust-building: Power was shared through ongoing, day-to-day accountability.	Fostered trust among stakeholders and improved outcomes.
Internal Community Dynamics	**Internal power imbalances**: The community has 24 tribes and families. They have differences.	They might have different priorities
	Relational power-building: Outreach and inclusion efforts addressed low trust baselines.	Highlighted the need for continuous engagement and representation.
Systemic Transformation	**Transformational power**: Rebalancing relationships between government and community.	Demonstrated the potential for systemic change.
	Collaborative power: Systems reform achieved through Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and intersectoral partnerships.	Created a model for collaborative, community-led governance.

6 CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Key challenges

Aboriginal communities in Bourke, like many Indigenous groups across Australia, have experienced systemic exclusion and mistreatment by external institutions, leading to a profound mistrust of government-led programs. Apart from the long historical grievances, the recent history continued to disappoint and disadvantage the Aboriginal communities. For example, the Native Title system created by the Howard Government created significant challenges for the Aboriginal communities, affecting their land rights, economic opportunities, and cultural connections (Robbins, 2007). These affected the trust of Aboriginal communities on the government's ability to protect their rights and care for their wellbeing (Howard-Wagner, 2008)(Watson, 2005). This legacy meant that many community members viewed collaborative efforts with scepticism, perceiving them as yet another external intervention rather than a partnership(Sullivan, 2011).

Bourke's Aboriginal community comprises 24 tribes and families, each with unique histories, customs, and priorities. While all shared concerns over justice, health, and youth development, differences arose regarding the methods and focus areas for addressing these issues (Alister Ferguson, 2022). For example, some groups prioritised preserving cultural practices and language, while others emphasised immediate socio-economic challenges, such as housing and employment (Maranguka Community Hub, 2020)(KPMG, 2016). This diversity complicated the process of forming a unified vision(Platform C, 2019). However, as mentioned by Alister Ferguson: "We have our differences, particularly around the flawed Native Title system that the Howard Government created, but we have agreed that we won't let these differences get in the way of collaborating on systems change, systems reform and systems transformation." (Alister Ferguson, 2022).

Government agencies and non-profits historically imposed "one-size-fits-all" policies that were ill-suited to Aboriginal contexts(Thomas, 2019). For instance, standardised youth crime prevention programs often failed to incorporate cultural elements, such as connection to Country or the involvement of elders, making them less effective and culturally inappropriate(Tulich et al., 2020). Such approaches reinforced the perception that external systems were dismissive of Aboriginal knowledge and leadership(Kennedy, 2015; Tonkinson & Tonkinson, 2010).

During the collaboration, a significant challenge was the lack of cultural competence within the external organisations collaborating with the community. Partners may lack understanding of Aboriginal cultural protocols, such as the role of elders in decision-making and the need for informal, trust-building consultations before initiating formal processes. For example, external stakeholders often assumed that quick, efficiency-driven processes would be effective, without recognising the importance of culturally appropriate, slower-paced engagement to build trust. This lack of cultural competence created misalignments and further alienated the community

The transactional attitude from the outside world emphasising funding justification, align with policy mandates, measurable outcomes, short term impact, often misalign with the preference for long term trust and culturally appropriate process. This misalignment threatened to undermine the sustainability and effectiveness of co-governance efforts.

6.2 Solutions

To address the challenges in cultural considerations, Maranguka implemented a series of solutions that bridged the gap between transactional attitudes prevalent in external governance systems and the long-term, relationship-based approaches valued by the Aboriginal community. These solutions not only tackled practical issues but also demonstrated cultural leadership and authority in action.

6.2.1 Establishing trust through prolonged engagement

Maranguka prioritised building trust through informal, relationship-focused engagement rather than rushing into formal partnerships or programs. Alister Ferguson, the initiative's founder, spent months in one-on-one

consultations with community elders and leaders. These meetings allowed him to listen deeply to their concerns and aspirations without imposing predefined solutions (Ferguson & Lovric, 2019). For example, when discussing justice reinvestment strategies, Ferguson ensured that elders' views on cultural mentorship and connection to Country were not just acknowledged but embedded into the program's framework in the planning, design and implementation of community initiative.

- **Direct consultation with Elders**: Elders were consulted in informal, trust-building settings to gather their perspectives on how cultural practices could inform the justice reinvestment strategy. Ferguson prioritised listening to the elders' insights on mentorship and healing, particularly the importance of cultural knowledge in shaping young people's identity and resilience. These consultations allowed the elders to articulate the need for solutions that strengthened cultural ties, rather than relying solely on mainstream punitive approaches (Sydney Policy Lab, n.d.).

- **Incorporating cultural mentorship programs**: mentoring sessions often included storytelling, discussions about Aboriginal traditions, and advice on navigating challenges in ways that were informed by cultural wisdom. The justice reinvestment strategy integrated On-Country programs where young people and their families participated in activities that reconnected them with the land. These programs, shaped by elders, involved traditional practices such as ceremonies, bushcraft skills, and learning about the spiritual significance of specific sites. On-Country programs served as both a healing process for individuals and a reaffirmation of community identity and cultural continuity (KPMG, 2016).

- **Aligning justice program with cultural values**: The cultural value on focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishment was embedded in the justice reinvestment framework, leading to the development of diversionary programs that redirected young people away from the criminal justice system. For instance, offenders were often encouraged to engage with cultural mentoring or community service guided by Aboriginal leaders, providing them with a sense of accountability grounded in cultural values(KPMG, 2016). More broadly, as discussed by Ferguson: "… the concept isn't new. We've been doing this for thousands of years, but putting it, I guess, into a contemporary empowerment framework", said Alister Ferguson (Storytellers, 2017)

- **Elders as decision makers**: To ensure their views were continuously embedded in the framework, elders played an ongoing role as decision-makers through the Bourke Tribal Council. The council reviewed and approved initiatives to ensure they aligned with cultural priorities. This authority guaranteed that the justice reinvestment strategy remained responsive to community needs and maintained cultural integrity(Riboldi, 2021).This demonstrated respect for the community's emphasis on long-term relational governance, contrasting with external stakeholders' typical focus on immediate outcomes.

6.2.2 Establishing the Bourke Tribal Council

The council provided a culturally authoritative structure for mediating differences and prioritising actions. For example, it led the development of the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong" strategy, ensuring it addressed a broad range of community needs—from youth mentoring to family support—while preserving cultural traditions.

6.2.3 Demanding alignment from external stakeholders

Maranguka required external agencies to adapt their systems and practices to align with the community's cultural protocols. This shift challenged the transactional attitudes of many government institutions, which traditionally prioritised efficiency and measurable outcomes over relationship-building. For example, New South Wales Police were encouraged to implement diversionary programs, co-designed with the Tribal Council, that reflected Aboriginal values of restorative justice rather than punitive measures. This approach strengthened the community's role as a leader in shaping governance (Just Reinvest NSW, 2022).

6.2.4 Improving partners' cultural awareness

Maranguka recognised the importance of ensuring that newcomers to Bourke understand the local strategy and know how to work effectively with the community. To address this, Maranguka implemented cultural competency training for employees from the public service, NGOs, and the private sector. The Bourke Tribal Council played a key role in delivering this training. The training included a language component that taught workers basic words in various local languages. This initiative had a meaningful impact on the community, as it allowed service workers from outside the area to greet community members in their local language, fostering a sense of respect and connection (Alister Ferguson, 2022). The Maranguka Principle explicitly laid down the conditions for external partners(*Maranguka-Strategic-Plan-2023-25*, n.d.). This process helps bridge cultural divides and fosters stronger partnerships based on mutual respect and shared goals (Bryant & Spies-Butcher, 2022).

6.2.5 Balancing short-term outcomes with long-term goals

While Maranguka acknowledged the need to demonstrate measurable outcomes, it balanced this with a commitment to non-transactional, long-term strategies. Programs like the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong" initiative integrated culturally significant practices, such as storytelling and intergenerational mentorship, while also addressing immediate issues like school attendance and youth engagement in employment (Just Reinvest NSW, n.d.). This dual accountability approach ensured that external stakeholders could report on quantifiable progress (e.g. reduced youth crime rates) while the community could maintain a focus on enduring cultural and social wellbeing (Riboldi, 2021).

With all these efforts, partners expressed their awareness and respect to cultural practices:

> "So that's a really different kind of working where you need to be very flexible, responsive, you need to listen well, not come in with pre-ordained visions that you hold yourself"
> --Teya Dusseldorp, Dusseldorp Forum (*3.-Maranguka*, n.d.)

> "if we're genuinely operating where we're backing self-determination, it's not our call what the timeframes are."
> -- Sarah Hopkins, Chair of Just Reinvest NSW (Riboldi, 2021)

6.3 Remaining challenges

Despite the significant progress made through Maranguka's community-led and culturally embedded solutions, several challenges and tensions persist. For example, should storytelling be used as performance evidence and how; how to reconcile, at a deeper level, the tension between differing temporal frameworks—such as traditional time orientations and the pace of new public administration reforms—and continuously navigate intra-community differences in culturally diverse settings? Also, differences in communication styles between Indigenous community members and external stakeholders can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations (Riboldi, 2021a).

6.4 Summary of practice: Cultural considerations

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Respond to cultural needs	What are the cultural needs? Have stakeholders been identified?	Complex history in the area and different cultural needs. Key stakeholders identified initially by members of the community and then through snowballing to include philanthropy and corporations.

	Are cultural protocols and different relationships understood?	It was not mentioned in the documents, but from the reports and stakeholder interviews, cultural protocols were driven by the community and the stakeholders were consciously of
	Is the community engaged and being heard? Are community groups (both services and advocates) engaged and heard?	It took a lot of initial engagement to building community members' support before the initiative started. The lead up period started several years in advance. Yes. not only services and advocates, but also users, young people, who were not usually part of the conversations.

7 BROADER CONSIDERATIONS

The literature raises several considerations and concerns regarding its implementation, sustainability, and broader applicability. These issues reflect the complexities of undertaking community-led, multi-stakeholder initiatives in a historically marginalised context.

7.1 Long-term sustainability

One of the key challenges to Maranguka's sustainability is its reliance on philanthropic contributions and in-kind support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These funding sources, while essential in the project's early stages, are not guaranteed in the long term and may be subject to shifting donor priorities (KPMG, 2018). The absence of a stable, recurring funding mechanism for leadership and operations creates vulnerabilities that could jeopardise the initiative's capacity to maintain its programs and governance structures.

To address these vulnerabilities, Maranguka has decided to adopt innovative approaches to secure resources for the future. For example, it has included as part of the corporatisation process the use of market-driven tools, such as social investment bonds[2]. These efforts not only provide a pathway to financial sustainability but also signal a shift toward more strategic resource mobilisation, blending community-driven approaches with market mechanisms to ensure longevity. However, the community may continue to face the critical tension that while these instruments can provide necessary resources, they may also impose market logics that conflict with the principles of self-determination. For instance, the requirement to meet predefined outcomes to satisfy investors could pressure community initiatives to conform to external expectations, potentially compromising their autonomy and culturally specific approaches (Bryant & Spies-Butcher, 2024).

7.2 Willingness to continue and apply lessons elsewhere

Another critical aspect of long-term sustainability lies in institutionalising the successes achieved by Maranguka. Since its pilot phase in 2014, Maranguka experienced a notable reduction in crime between 2016 and 2018. However, crime rates began to rise again from 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021 further disrupted service coordination and community engagement.

In response, Maranguka undertook several structural reforms: it was formally incorporated as Maranguka Ltd. in 2020, and a new Strategic Plan (2023–2025) was published to reaffirm its goals, strengthen community leadership, and embed collaboration with government and NGO partners.

Despite these efforts, the gains made through justice reinvestment remain vulnerable to being reversed due to changes in political leadership, shifting government priorities or fluctuations in community dynamics. One emerging challenge is whether Maranguka can sustain collaborative efforts when there is relapse in crime.

Even though crime declined by one-third between 2016 and2018, the overall number of offences started to rise and continued to increase through 2023 (Table 10.1). This trend has been partly attributed to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it difficult to sustain regular activities, daily check-ins and community service integration. However, it also reflects the inherent difficulty of maintaining long-term co-governance in the face of both internal and external pressures.

To mitigate these risks Maranguka has actively sought to embed its achievements into broader governance frameworks. These include the publication of a Strategic Plan (2023–2025), the formal incorporation of Maragnuka Ltd, and continued efforts to co-design initiatives with government agencies and NGOs (Teya Dusseldorp, Dusseledorp Forum, Platform C, 2019b). In the Strategic Plan, it wrote explicitly on page 12 that one of

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[2] Social bonds, also known as social impact bonds, are financial instruments that attract private investment to fund social programs. Investors provide upfront capital for initiatives aimed at achieving specific social outcomes. If these outcomes are met, the government repays the investors with interest; if not, investors may lose their investment. This model shifts financial risk from the public sector to private investors and incentivizes effective program delivery.

Maragnuka's key actions is "Prioritising community engagement and cultural groups' representation and interaction with government agencies and the Cross Sector Leadership Group" (Maranguka-Strategic-Plan-2023–25, n.d.). The Strategic Plan is publicly available on Just Reinvest NSW website for Bourke (Maranguka), indicating the willingness to continue collaborating.

In addition to these governance reforms, Maranguka continues to diversify its funding sources to reduce reliance on short-term or politically contingent support. Its strategic plan also commits to "providing robust information and data to inform the decision making of Maranguka and its partners" and "supporting collaboration partners to track progress of initiatives that seek to contribute to Safe Smart and Strong outcomes."(Maranguka-Strategic-Plan-2023-25, n.d.)

Table 9 Overall crime rate change overtime

Year	Overall Crime Rate (Incidents per 100,000)
2016	1500
2017	1163
2018	1113
2019	1290
2020	1451
2021	1504
2022	1565
2023	1678

Source: FindMyRates. (n.d.). *Crime rates for Bourke City Council, NSW*. Retrieved June 2, 2025, from https://crime.findmyrates.au/nsw/bourke-lga/Find My Rates+1RedSuburbs+1

While the overall crime rate initially declined, the upward trend from 2019 onward illustrates the fragility of progress and the difficulty of sustaining systemic change. These fluctuations may reflect a combination of endogenous factors—such as leadership transitions, coordination challenges, and service fatigue—as well as exogenous shocks like the pandemic and policy shifts. Although this case study does not constitute a formal evaluation, data insights generated through this initiative offers a valuable foundation for future assessment of co-governance outcomes. It highlights the need for adaptive, resilient systems capable of withstanding environmental pressures while maintaining alignment with community priorities.

As a test case, Maranguka has been actively collaborating with Just Reinvest NSW to create lessons of collaborative governance and practice guide for other places. Working closely with Just Reinvest NSW, the initiative has contributed to the development of leadership tools, practice guides, and governance frameworks for potential replication elsewhere. These are documented in Riboldi (2021), published by the Sydney Policy Lab and in materials disseminated by Just Reinvest NSW (Just Reinvest NSW, n.d.). Maranguka's continued involvement in this work, including co-authorship and ongoing engagement, demonstrates its commitment to cross-site learning and policy influence (Alister Ferguson, 2022).

While the initiative offers valuable lessons, its place-based, culturally specific approach may not easily translate to regions with diverse cultural or social dynamics. The literature suggests that justice reinvestment strategies must be tailored to local contexts, requiring significant adaptation and community engagement to achieve similar

outcomes (Willis & Kapira, 2018). Maranguka's experience affirms that sustainability depends not only on success but on a system's capacity to learn, adapt, and realign in response to changing circumstances.

7.3 Summary of practice: Other considerations

Objective	Consideration	Maranguka
Sustainability	Financial Personnel change Institutionalisation	So far so good. Will need more partners to support specific initiatives. Need more funding support.
The work of the group is transparent	How is the work of the group made public?	There are videos, reports, academic research and news items online.

8 CONCLUSION

This case study has examined the co-governance framework of the Maranguka initiative in Bourke, New South Wales, highlighting its innovative approach to addressing systemic social and economic inequalities within Aboriginal communities. The case study synthesises a wide range of literature, including academic journals, published reports, and publicly available online information, to explore the key components of co-governance: its implementation, structure, and outcomes.

The Maranguka initiative, grounded in the principles of justice reinvestment, has successfully redirected resources from punitive measures to community-led, preventative programs. This strategic reallocation has not only addressed the root causes of social disadvantage but has also significantly bolstered Indigenous self-determination and community wellbeing. The initiative's success is underpinned by several key factors: community-led governance, a collaborative framework involving diverse stakeholders, cultural integration, and data insight-driven decision-making.

The Bourke Tribal Council and local Aboriginal leaders have played a pivotal role in ensuring that governance structures reflect cultural values and community priorities. The establishment of intersectoral leadership groups has fostered a culture of cooperation and trust among government officials, enabling effective collaboration across various sectors. Despite initial challenges, including low trust within the community and resistance from government departments, Maranguka has demonstrated that community-based collaboration can transform stakeholder relationships and drive significant systemic changes.

The initiative's impact is evident in several key areas: a notable reduction in crime rates at times throughout the project, improved family and community relationships, and enhanced economic opportunities. These outcomes underscore the efficacy of community-based collaboration in transforming stakeholder relationships and driving systemic change. The initiative's success demonstrates that when communities are empowered to lead, they can effectively address complex social issues and create sustainable, positive change.

Maranguka's approach highlights the critical importance of building trust, fostering collaboration, and leveraging data insights to inform decision-making. The initiative serves as a model for other communities seeking to address similar challenges through co-governance and community-led strategies. By centring Indigenous leadership and cultural values, Maranguka has established a sustainable framework for long-term, positive change.

Despite its successes, the Maranguka initiative also underscores the complexities and challenges inherent in co-governance. Imbalanced power dynamics, resistance to systemic reform, and mistrust presented significant barriers in the early phases of collaboration. Additionally, the reliance on external funding and political champions raises concerns about long-term sustainability and the potential for external pressures to dilute the community's leadership and vision.

Looking forward, the initiative's continued success will depend on its ability to institutionalise gains, secure stable and recurring funding, and maintain the delicate balance between external collaboration and community self-determination. Maranguka offers a compelling model for co-governance, demonstrating that when communities are empowered to lead, systemic change is not only possible but sustainable. The lessons from Maranguka provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and other communities seeking to foster equitable and transformative partnerships.

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APPENDIX A   METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data sources

Data collection involved searches using both google scholar and grey literature repositories (Australian Policy Online (APO), Parliamentary Library). Google scholar was used to identify both academic and other formal publications (government, NGO or private consultancy reports). The purpose of this research was to include a wide range of stakeholder voices; therefore, we also included stakeholder websites and reports that captured the perspectives of different stakeholders. These included government, NGO, and community-based websites.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To ensure relevance, the following criteria were applied:

The inclusion criteria for this research prioritise studies, reports, or webpages published between 2013 and 2024. The literature must specifically address the Maranguka initiative in Bourke, ensuring the focus remains directly relevant to the initiative. Publications are limited to English-language sources, including both peer-reviewed articles and grey literature such as policy briefs, government reports, and other official documents. This approach is designed to provide a comprehensive and relevant basis for analysis.

In contrast, the exclusion criteria filter out materials that are unrelated to the Maranguka initiative or the Bourke community. Literature discussing justice reinvestment broadly, without specific reference to Maranguka, is excluded, as it does not provide the targeted insights required for this research. Similarly, articles or reports published prior to 2013 are not considered unless they are foundational to understanding justice reinvestment within the Australian context. These exclusions help maintain a clear focus and ensure the literature reviewed aligns with the scope of the project.

Search process

The search process has several elements:

- Database Searches: The predefined search terms were applied to Google Scholar and Australian Policy Online (APO) with filters for publication dates between 2014 and 2024. Australian Policy Online (APO) includes full text reports on Maranguka.

- Manual Screening: Titles, abstracts, and executive summaries were downloaded into Zotero and coded for relevance, with irrelevant or duplicate records removed.

- Snowball Sampling: There is no automatic way for the researcher to identify all publications and websites that are not academic articles. The researcher used the references of the papers, the stakeholder list of Sydney University's Maranguka CSLG Case Study (Sydney Policy Lab, The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group, 2021) and google search to identify websites to identify reports, webpages to trace stakeholder actions and comments on Maranguka.

Search terms and results

These terms were selected to target literature examining governance frameworks, trust dynamics, and community engagement within the context of the Maranguka initiative.

Table 10 The search terms

Sources	Search terms	Type of hits	Number of hits
Google scholar	Maranguka	Academic journal articles, reports	104
Parliamentary Library	Maranguka	Reports, books	16*
NSW Government: www.nsw.gov.au	Maranguka	~	0
Productivity Commission https://www.pc.gov.au/	Maranguka	Speech, article	2
Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse - A national resource on Indigenous ...	Maranguka	Report	1
Just Reinvestment NSW Just Reinvest NSW - solutions to Aboriginal over imprisonment	Maranguka	Speeches, blogs	8
Seer Data & Analytics Home - Seer Data & Analytics	Maranguka	Webpages, videos	11
Vimeo.com https://vimeo.com/	Maranguka	Videos	7
Australian Men's Health Forum (AMHF) https://www.amhf.org.au/	Maranguka	Webpages	2 (1 not working)
Google video	Maranguka	Videos	21
Google.com	Maranguka + key theme (e.g. trust, funding, partnership, etc)	Webpages, blogs, news	Snowballing handed selected

Note: some Parliamentary Library links are conditional access. However, the full texts can be found online by typing in names in google.
Source: Compiled by the author using the previously discussed methods.

Ethics considerations

The systematic search may be limited by the availability and accessibility of grey literature, particularly unpublished or confidential reports. Additionally, the reliance on English-language materials may exclude insights from community-led initiatives reported in local Indigenous languages.

What Does "Public Domain" Mean?

Materials in the public domain refer to works that are legally accessible to anyone and not protected by copyright. These include government reports, publicly funded research, and open-access resources. However, the legal availability of such materials does not absolve researchers of their ethical and cultural responsibilities (Lau et al., 2012). For example, documents containing Aboriginal knowledge or perspectives may include culturally sensitive or restricted information. In many cases, Aboriginal communities may not have granted consent for such knowledge to be used beyond its original context or intended purpose (Bull, 2010). Researchers must therefore critically assess whether their use of such materials aligns with relevant cultural protocols and ethical standards. This is essential to ensure that the research process respects Aboriginal values, avoids misrepresentation or harm, and upholds the integrity of the work.

This case study, which draws exclusively on publicly available materials, was developed with these ethical and cultural considerations in mind. While a formal literature review was not conducted, a structured scoping process informed the case study's theoretical framing and selection of sources. To ensure that Aboriginal perspectives were treated appropriately, we implemented the following measures:

- **Scoping Approach**: Instead of a systematic literature review or in-depth fieldwork, this case study draws on publicly accessible materials that were identified and assessed through a scoping process. This approach focuses on organising and contextualising existing knowledge, while requiring human researchers to evaluate the meaning, intent, and cultural implications of each source.

- **Public Access Criteria**: Only materials that are fully available to the public (e.g. full-text documents, or videos with transcripts) were included. Restricted or subscription-only sources were excluded to ensure transparency and accessibility.

- **Cultural Oversight**: An Aboriginal researcher is part of the research team to provide guidance on cultural appropriateness. All reference lists and early drafts were reviewed by the Aboriginal researcher, and any materials or methods deemed inappropriate were abandoned. The final report will not be published without the consent of relevant community representatives.

- **Awareness of Limitations**: We acknowledge that public domain materials may reflect historical biases, limitations, or gaps—especially in how Aboriginal voices and knowledge have been represented. To address this, the case study seeks to incorporate direct contributions from Aboriginal communities wherever possible, including publicly shared video statements and quotes, to ensure context and avoid misrepresentation.

By adhering to these principles, the case study aims to generate respectful, informed, and culturally sensitive insights into the Maranguka initiative, while recognising the limitations and responsibilities involved in working with publicly available sources.

APPENDIX B   JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Justice Reinvestment is a data insight-driven approach to criminal justice reform that aims to reduce incarceration rates and improve public safety by reallocating resources from the prison system to community-based programs. Justice Reinvestment was first conceptualised and introduced by the **Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Centre** in collaboration with the Pew Charitable Trusts in the early 2000s(Tucker & Cadora, 2003). This initiative was developed as a response to the growing concerns over mass incarceration and the prohibitive costs associated with the traditional punitive criminal justice system. The goal was to create a more effective and sustainable approach by redirecting funds from corrections to community-based programs that address the root causes of crime. This theory emerged as a response to the excessive costs and limited effectiveness of traditional punitive measures, advocating for a more sustainable and equitable justice system.

The core idea behind Justice Reinvestment is to identify and address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour by investing in education, housing, mental health services, and other community resources. By doing so, it seeks to prevent crime, reduce recidivism, and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

Key components of Justice Reinvestment include:

- **Data Analysis**: Using data insights to identify the drivers of incarceration and areas where resources can be more effectively utilised.

- **Community Engagement**: Involving local stakeholders in the decision-making process to ensure that investments meet the specific needs of the community.

- **Policy Reform**: Implementing changes in laws and policies to support alternatives to incarceration and promote rehabilitation.

- **Reinvestment**: Redirecting funds saved from reduced incarceration rates into community programs that address the root causes of crime.

Justice Reinvestment has evolved significantly since its inception by Susan Tucker and Eric Cadora in 2003. Initially, the concept focused on redirecting funds from the prison system to community-based programs to address the root causes of crime. Over time, the theory has expanded and adapted to various contexts and challenges.

- Initial Concept (Early 2000s):

  - Focus: Redirecting funds from corrections to community programs.

  - Goal: Reduce incarceration rates and address the root causes of crime through community investment.

- Adoption and Implementation (Mid-2000s to 2010s):

  - Expansion: The concept gained traction in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia.

  - Policy Integration: Justice Reinvestment began to be integrated into broader criminal justice reforms, emphasising data insight-driven approaches and community engagement

- Critiques and Adaptations (2010s to Present):

  - Challenges: Critics highlighted issues such as the difficulty in achieving sustained political support and ensuring effective reinvestment of savings.

  - Adaptations: The approach has been refined to address these challenges, with a greater emphasis on transparency, accountability, and measuring outcomes

- Current Trends:

    o Holistic Approaches: Modern implementations of Justice Reinvestment often include a broader range of social services, such as mental health care, education, and housing.

    o Community-Led Initiatives: There is a growing emphasis on involving local communities in the decision-making process to ensure that investments meet specific needs

Justice Reinvestment has been implemented in various jurisdictions with promising results, demonstrating that a shift from punitive to preventive and supportive measures can lead to safer and more resilient communities.

Positive Views: Proponents argue that Justice Reinvestment can lead to significant cost savings, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety by addressing the root causes of crime. It is seen as a more humane and effective approach compared to traditional punitive measures(Brown et al., 2012; Willis & Kapira, 2018).

Criticisms: Critics point out potential challenges such as the difficulty in achieving sustained political and community support, the complexity of implementing systemic changes, and ensuring that savings are effectively reinvested in ways that truly benefit communities(Fox et al., 2011; Sabol & Baumann, 2020).

Overall, Justice Reinvestment represents a shift towards a more holistic and community-focused approach to criminal justice, aiming to create safer and more resilient communities by addressing the underlying causes of criminal behaviour.

APPENDIX C   THREE LEADERSHIP GROUPS FUNCTIONS

Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group (Cross-sector Leadership Group (CSLG))	
Purpose	The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group is a broad forum designed to bring together senior leaders from various sectors, including government, non-profits, community groups, philanthropy, business, academia, and the community. Its primary purpose is to align policy and resources towards the community-led agenda set by the Bourke Tribal Council.
Meetings	The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group meets annually to update participants on the progress of the Safe Smart Strong strategy and to provide opportunities for aligning support and resources to the community-led agenda.
Participants	The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group includes a wide range of stakeholders, such as senior leaders from different sectors who are involved in supporting the Bourke community.
Scope	The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group focuses on high-level strategic alignment and relationship building among a diverse group of stakeholders.

Cross-sector Leadership Executive (CSLE)	
Purpose	The CSLE is a smaller, more focused group that evolved from the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group. Its purpose is to progress key aspects of work between the annual Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group meetings and to ensure the implementation of the Safe Smart Strong strategy.
Meetings	The CSLE meets at least four times per year, with at least one meeting held on Country in Bourke to engage directly with members of the Bourke Tribal Council.
Participants	The CSLE includes leaders from the community, philanthropy, corporates, and all three levels of government. These members have decision-making authority and are directly accountable to the Bourke Tribal Council.
Scope	The CSLE focuses on operationalising the Safe Smart Strong strategy, developing ways of working that respect cultural authority and Cultural Safety, and maintaining and creating networks to build social and economic prosperity for the Bourke community.

Cross-sector Leadership Executive (CSLE) sub-groups	
Purpose	The CSLE subgroups are specialised teams created to advance specific areas of work between the quarterly CSLE meetings. They address key issues and drive action on critical tasks.
Focus areas	The subgroups work on: • Developing a joint accountability framework between the Bourke Tribal Council and the NSW Government. • Embedding the Maranguka Principles into government and non-government service contracts.

	• Mapping the service and investment landscape in Bourke.
	• Identifying and resolving systemic issues and blockages among organisations working in Bourke.
Participants	Each CSLE member is expected to participate in one of the subgroups, contributing their expertise and resources to the specific focus area.
Accountability	The subgroups report to the CSLE and are responsible for driving progress in their respective areas, ensuring that the work aligns with the community's aspirations and the Safe Smart Strong strategy.

APPENDIX D   KPMG'S ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

Included here are key findings from KPMG's assessment of Maranguka, undertaken in **2018 (KPMG Report, 2018)**. This assessment was instrumental in establishing an early baseline for the initiative's impact and demonstrating the initial effectiveness of the Maranguka model, informing its subsequent development and ongoing investment.

Table 11 Reduction in crime rates

Category	Reduction (%)	Time period
Charges across top five juvenile offence categories	38%	2016-2017
Bail breaches by juveniles	27%	2016-2017
Major offences	18%	2015-2017
Assaults	34%	2015-2017
Drug offences	39%	2015-2017
Re-offending within 12 months of release	8%	2014-2016

Source: KPMG (2018)

Social outcome: youth development

Maranguka initiatives have also positively impacted youth development:

Table 12 Impact on youth development

Category	Reduction (%)	Time period
Reduction in breaches of AVOs	43%	2015-2017
Reduction in re-offending within 12 months of release	14%	2014-2016
Increase in year 12 student retention rates	31%	2016-2017

Source: KPMG (2018)

Social outcome: adult empowerment

The initiative has empowered adults in the community, leading to the following outcomes:

Table 13 Adult empowerment

Category	Reduction (%)	Time period
Reduction in bail breaches	14%	2016-2017
Reduction in days spent in custody	42%	2016-2017

Source: KPMG (2018)

Social outcome: Driving Licensing Initiative

The Maranguka Driving Licensing Initiative has led to more driver licenses and fewer driving offences:

Table 14 Reduction in driving offences

Category	Reduction (%)	Time Period
People proceeded against for driving offences	35%	2015-2017
Young people (up to 25 years) proceeded against for driving offences	38%	2015-2017
Young people (up to 25 years) proceeded against for driving without a license	72%	2015-2017

Source: KPMG (2018)

Economic outcomes

Maranguka has also had a significant economic impact, with savings and cost reductions:

Table 15 Savings to the Justice System

Category	Savings/Impact	Time Period
Gross impact (savings)	$3.1 million	2017
Savings to the justice system	$1.9 million	2017
Savings on service system	$1.2 million	2017

Source: KPMG (2018)

Family outcome: reductions in family violence

Reductions in family violence:

Table 16 Reduction in family violence

Category	Reduction (%)	Time Period
Domestic violence related assaults (all ages)	39%	2015-2017
Domestic violence related assaults by young people (up to 25 years)	43%	2015-2017
Domestic violence re-offending for 18–25 year-olds	33%	2015-2017

Source: KPMG (2018)

These impacts demonstrate the effectiveness of Maranguka's community-led approach in fostering a safer, more empowered, and economically stable community.

APPENDIX E   MARANGUKA 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Source: (Maranguka-Strategic-Plan-2023-25, n.d.)

Pillar 1: Cultural authority

Cultural Governance: Enhancing cultural authority through community-led decision-making and respect for cultural practices. Actions include:

- Revising the Bourke Tribal Council Constitution to ensure cultural appropriateness.

- Conducting cultural competency training for school faculty in Bourke.

The strategic priority of "Revising the Bourke Tribal Council Constitution to ensure cultural appropriateness" might seem to suggest that Maranguka is directing the BTC. However, this is precisely the opposite of their established co-governance model.

This priority underscores that Maranguka operates as the operational arm and key support mechanism for the Bourke Tribal Council. The Council is the overarching community governance body and cultural authority. Any strategic priority, particularly one as fundamental as the Council's own constitution, originates from the Bourke Tribal Council itself.

Therefore:

- The decision and drive to revise the BTC Constitution originates with the Bourke Tribal Council. This is a critical act of self-determination and strengthening their own governance.

- Maranguka's role is to facilitate and support the BTC in achieving its strategic priorities. If the BTC identifies the need to revise its constitution to better reflect cultural appropriateness and strengthen its internal governance, Maranguka would allocate resources (e.g., funding, legal expertise, project management support) to assist the BTC in undertaking this crucial internal process.

- This relationship reinforces the community-led nature of the entire initiative. Maranguka serves the agenda set by the BTC, not the other way around. By supporting the BTC's internal governance strengthening, Maranguka is directly contributing to the foundational resilience and effectiveness of the community leadership that guides the entire initiative.

Pillar 2: Collaborative and flexible service delivery

Community Priorities: Aligning services and investments with community needs. Key actions include:

- Supporting and coordinating services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Building strategies to retain teachers and stabilize teaching staff in local schools.

Pillar 3: Shared decision-making

Authorising Environment: Establishing frameworks for shared decision-making. Key actions include:

- Reforming funding models to prioritize community-directed resource allocation.

- Developing accountability frameworks with the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group.

Pillar 4: Brokering local solutions to systemic challenges

Systems Reform: Advocating and trailing local solutions to address systemic community challenges. Key initiatives include:

- Developing tailored programs to build community confidence.

- Advocating for the rights and needs of the Bourke community.

Pillar 5: Operationalising First Nations data sovereignty

Data Sovereignty: Leveraging data insights for community empowerment and decision-making. Actions include:

- Operationalizing the custom-built Palimaa database.

- Ensuring equal access to community data and using it to inform progress under the Safe, Smart, and Strong strategy.

APPENDIX F THE DETAILED LEADERSHIP GROUP COMPOSITION CHANGES

The governing structure of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project has evolved over time to enhance collaboration and align with the community's objectives.

Early phase governing structure

The core team of the initial Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project comprised:

- Alister Ferguson, serving as the Executive Director of Maranguka, provided leadership and direction for the initiative.

- Just Reinvest NSW, an organisation dedicated to justice reinvestment strategies, played a pivotal role in supporting the project's development and implementation. Sarah Hopkins, the Project Director, who also held positions as Chair of Just Reinvest NSW and Managing Solicitor of Justice Projects at the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), contributed her legal expertise and advocacy skills. Hopkins was working in the Children's Court as a criminal solicitor for the Aboriginal Legal Service when she decided there had to be a better way.

- The Bourke Tribal Council, representing the local Aboriginal community, including twenty-two language groups, makes decisions about strategy. It was helped to be set up by Alister Ferguson (Browne, 2018). It provides governance and ensures that the project's strategies were culturally appropriate, and community led (*The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group*, 2021).

- The **Backbone Team** is a dedicated group within the Maranguka Community Hub that supports the daily operations and coordination of the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment project. This team includes roles such as the Executive Director, Operations Manager, Backbone Coordinator, Project Officer, and Data Support. They facilitate community engagement, support working groups, and ensure the effective implementation of the Safe Smart Strong strategy. Bourke's police force, headed by Greg Moore.

This collaborative framework was instrumental in establishing a community-driven approach to justice reinvestment.

Initially, the project was spearheaded by the Bourke Tribal Council, with Alister Ferguson serving as the Executive Director. This leadership was instrumental in developing the "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong" strategy, which serves as the project's guiding framework (Bryant & Spies-Butcher, 2024). It has several elements (KPMG, Preliminary Assessment Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project, 2016):

- **Establishment of Maranguka**: A community hub designed to create better coordinated support for vulnerable families and children in Bourke. It involves establishing community-led, multi-disciplinary teams working in partnership with relevant government and non-government agencies and organisations. Maranguka has also developed a broad range of other initiatives including a Housing Strategy, a driver's licence program, a Business Survey, support work for vulnerable families, support and a safe house for vulnerable young people.

- **Establishment of the Bourke Tribal Council**: The Bourke Tribal Council is an initiative of the Bourke Aboriginal Working Party. The Bourke Tribal Council is an Aboriginal leadership group and was established as the authoritative Aboriginal local governance mechanism for government to work with and enable local decision making about the delivery and coordination of community services in Bourke.

- **Establishment of a Data Dictionary and community snapshot** – Data from a broad range of government departments (both state and federal) were collected which related to the Bourke Community.

The data collection included a profile of the Bourke community and a number of specific domains, including health, education, justice, employment, housing etc. The 'snapshot' concentrates on the child's life course and phases of development. In September to December 2015, a number of community conversations were held around the snapshot. The data collection exercise allowed community members to view data that specifically related to the community spanning several subject areas. The data insights generated from this process—through the combination of government data and community interpretation--helped inform the Bourke Tribal Council to identify four main goal areas for action.

- **Establishment of goals** – The data insights and community conversations recorded informed the decision by the Bourke Tribal Council to identify four main goal areas which form the basis of the strategy document Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong. This sets out key baseline and target measures for consideration which are still in the process of being finalised through the working groups.

Just Reinvestment Team

The Bourke Justice Reinvestment team was set up as follows (4 Creating Safe Communities | Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014):

- **Executive Officer:** Alister Ferguson is the Executive Officer in Community Development and has been based in Bourke over the two-year project period. The position of Executive Officer was funded by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

- **Facilitator:** Lend Lease was releasing Cath Brokenborough, Chair of Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation, to fill the role of External Facilitator, and to be based in Bourke for three days per month.

- **Data Manager:** Aboriginal Affairs NSW agreed to provide an in-house Data Manager to coordinate the collection of data and the generation of insights on Bourke.

- **Data Reference Group:** A Data Reference Group was established and included representatives from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), the ABS and BOCSAR. Both the ABS and BOCSAR were providing data for this project. Aboriginal Affairs NSW would assist the Data Reference Group by conducting data relevant research for this project. As the project's university partner, UNSW further provided advice on best practice responses to achieve the agreed shared measures.

- **Economic Modelling Team:** KPMG led the work of costing the implementation of justice reinvestment in Bourke. KPMG also produced an economic modelling of the cost savings for government observers.

- **Project Coordinator:** The project was coordinated by Sarah Hopkins, Chair of Just Reinvest NSW.

- **Collective Impact Consultant:** Kerry Graham provided advice on the collective impact framework.

- **New South Wales Police support:** Sergeant Mick Williams, a respected Aboriginal Police Officer and recipient of the Australian Police Medal, was assigned to support the project and Maranguka more broadly.

- **Project Officer:** St Vincent De Paul funded a Project Officer to assist Alister Ferguson for a 12-month term.

The project team engaged with a range of stakeholders in the community and is working with the Courts, Police and other community stakeholders to develop a number of initial circuit breakers. Proposals included an amnesty on warrants for young people in Bourke, and a set of protocols relating to the imposition of bail conditions and the circumstances in which bail were breached by the Police(4 Creating Safe Communities | Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014).

Cross sector leadership

To facilitate cross-sector collaboration, the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group was established in 2015. The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group comprises representatives from government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and service providers, all working in partnership with the Bourke Tribal Council. This group meets annually to align efforts and resources towards the community-led agenda(Riboldi, 2021a).

A more focused subset, the Cross-Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE), was formed to meet quarterly. The CSLE includes key stakeholders with resources aligned towards Bourke, working to implement the "Safe, Smart, Strong" strategy. This executive body ensures that strategic decisions are made collaboratively and that initiatives are effectively operationalised(Riboldi, 2021a).

Over time, CSLE Subgroups were created to address specific areas such as health, education, and justice. These subgroups work between CSLE meetings, focusing on targeted interventions and reporting back to the executive. This structure allows for specialised attention to critical issues and facilitates more agile responses to emerging challenges.

The latest governing structure

As of the latest available information, Maranguka operates under a structured governance framework designed to facilitate collaborative decision-making and effective implementation of community-led initiatives. While specific details about the current organisational chart are limited in publicly accessible sources, the governance structure is known to include the following key components:

- Maranguka Executive Director: This role is pivotal in overseeing the project's strategic direction and daily operations, ensuring alignment with the community's vision and objectives. Alister Ferguson has been identified as the Executive Director in previous reports.

- Bourke Tribal Council: Serving as the primary decision-making body, the Council represents the local Aboriginal community's interests and provides cultural guidance to the project. It collaborates closely with the Executive Director and other stakeholders to steer the initiative.

- Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group: This group comprises representatives from various sectors, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and community leaders. The Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group facilitates intersectoral collaboration, aligning resources and efforts to address the community's priorities effectively.

- Cross-Sector Leadership Executive (CSLE): A subset of the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group, the CSLE focuses on operationalising strategies and ensuring the implementation of agreed-upon initiatives. It meets regularly to monitor progress and address any emerging challenges.

- Subgroups and Working Committees: To address specific areas such as health, education, and justice, the governance structure includes specialised subgroups. These committees develop targeted interventions and programs, reporting their progress to the Maranguka Cross Sector Government Implementation Group and CSLE.

The leadership structure has thus transitioned from a singular community-led model to a multi-tiered collaborative framework. This evolution reflects a commitment to deep collaboration, shared accountability, and the alignment of resources towards achieving the community's vision.

This structured approach has enabled Maranguka to coordinate efforts across sectors, ensuring that initiatives are community-driven and that resources are utilised to address the needs of the Bourke community.

APPENDIX G   MARANGUKA PRINCIPLES (2020)

1. Work in ways that are culturally competent, ensure cultural safety, and recognise the cultural, spiritual, economic, and physical connections that exist in the Bourke Aboriginal community.

2. Fully support, work collaboratively towards, and report against the outcomes and indicators in *Growing Our Kids Up Safe Smart and Strong* (the Strategy).

3. Recognise and support the role of Maranguka and the leadership of the Bourke Tribal Council by embedding these Principles into our ways of working and, where possible, into service delivery contracts.

4. Build the capacity of local Bourke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support self-determination.

5. Engage Maranguka and the Bourke Tribal Council in decision-making around employment and procurement and support the development and implementation of an Aboriginal employment and procurement strategy for Bourke.

6. Work in ways to ensure responsibility, accountability, and transparency in decision-making, including ensuring access to data.

7. Provide leadership, authority, and facilitation to drive change and achieve better outcomes for the community of Bourke.

8. Be clear on roles, responsibilities, and accountability to the community.

9. Focus efforts on the identification of mutually agreed and defined problems and the co-design of local solutions.

10. Work to create an environment of trust between partners that supports a systems change approach, reform, risk-taking, and innovative responses to issues.

11. In recognition of the need for long-term commitment and sustainability, retain and seek to secure appropriate resources to support collaborative effort, meet community needs, and reduce gaps and/or duplication in service delivery.

12. Be open, fair, and transparent in engaging with other Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations, build capacity, and, where possible, avoid competing with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.

APPENDIX H   OUTPUTS OF THE JUSTICE REINVESTMENT PROJECT

This is the core initiative of Maranguka, aiming to reduce crime and improve community safety by reallocating resources from the criminal justice system to community-based prevention and early intervention programs. It has produced a range of outputs through community activities, reflecting Maranguka's comprehensive approach to community wellbeing. Key outputs include:

- **Community Engagement and Support**: The establishment of the Maranguka Community Hub in 2013 and the Men's Space in 2018 provided central points for community engagement and support. These spaces fostered a sense of belonging and offered safe environments for community members to gather and receive support.

- **Health and Wellbeing Initiatives**: The Healthy Kids Bus Stop (HKBS) in 2017 screened 39 children, with 32 requiring referrals, highlighting the proactive approach to child health. The Wellness Connect Mental Health Summit in 2021 underscored the focus on mental health, bringing together community members and health professionals to address mental health issues.

- **Educational and Employment Opportunities**: The Maranguka Education Employment & Training Community Summit (MEETCS) in 2019 focused on learning, employment, and training opportunities, addressing the socioeconomic factors that contribute to youth crime. The Driver Licensing Programme advocacy in 2015 aimed to enhance mobility and employment prospects for community members.

- **Family and Domestic Violence Reduction**: The Gawimara Burrany Ngurung 'Picking Up the Pieces' programme in 2017 and the official signing of the Collaboration Agreement in 2021 aimed to reduce family and domestic violence, creating safer home environments.

- **Youth Engagement and Cultural Activities**: Youth engagement programmes, such as the Summer School Holiday Programme and cultural activities like NAIDOC Week celebrations, provided positive outlets for young people, reducing the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour.

These projects collectively contribute to the overarching goal of "Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart, and Strong". The following is a list of Maranguka activities overtime, the key milestones and the corresponding stages of collaboration by time.

Table 17 Maranguka Initiative: Community activities, milestones, and stages of collaboration (2013-2024)

Time Period	Maranguka Activities	Aspects of Community Wellbeing	Milestones	Stages of Collaboration
2008-2012	Community consultation events	Community engagement	Leading up period	Identifying the need
2013	Maranguka Community Hub officially opened	Space for community activities	Community Hub established	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration
2014	Data request made to NSW Government to begin data collection within the community	Capacity building	Data collection initiated	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration
2015	Finalisation of the 'Snapshot of Life for Aboriginal Children and Young People in Bourke'	Youth engagement	Data snapshot finalised	Implementing collaboration

Time Period	Maranguka Activities	Aspects of Community Wellbeing	Milestones	Stages of Collaboration
	Local community members and service providers received training on how to interpret data snapshot	Capacity building	Training conducted	Implementing collaboration
	Bourke Tribal Council initiated 'Growing Our Kids Up Safe Smart and Strong' strategy and Working Groups were established	Child, youth and family support and safety	Strategy and working groups established	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration
	Maranguka partnered with Birrang and advocated for the Driver Licensing Programme to come to Bourke	Youth support	Driver Licensing Programme advocacy	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration
2016	KPMG produces a preliminary assessment of Maranguka	Evaluation	Preliminary assessment completed	Outputs and evaluation
	Maranguka secures three-year funding from philanthropy to begin implementation phase	Cultural engagement	Funding secured	Establishing the collaboration
	Save Our Sons, Save Our Sister (SOS) programmes initiated, SOS was a partnership through Birrang Enterprise	Youth support	SOS programmes initiated	Implementing collaboration
	Maranguka Working Groups meet for the first time	Organisational sustainability	Working groups convened	Implementing collaboration
2017	Maranguka advocated for a family violence service to come to Bourke, which launched the initiation of the Gawimara Burrany Ngurung 'Picking Up the Pieces' programme in Bourke	Family safety	Family violence service initiated	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration, Implementing collaboration
	The first Healthy Kids Bus Stop (HKBS) was held in Bourke, from which 39 children were screened and 32 of those children required some form of referral	Child health	HKBS conducted	Outputs
2018	KPMG produced an impact assessment of Maranguka	Evaluation	Impact assessment completed	Outputs
	The Men's Space was officially launched in July, providing the Men of Bourke a safe place to heal and grow as men together	Men's health and wellbeing	Men's Space launched	Implementing collaboration
	The SOS Youth Worker Assistant position started this year after the Maranguka Youth Advisory Council advocated for a role to support girls	Youth employment	SOS Youth Worker Assistant position created	Identifying the need, Establishing the collaboration, Implementing collaboration

Time Period	Maranguka Activities	Aspects of Community Wellbeing	Milestones	Stages of Collaboration
	Baby expo held in Bourke. MOB (Men of Bourke) hub	Child support	Baby expo and MOB hub established	Implementing collaboration
2019	Maranguka Education Employment & Training Community Summit (MEETCS) was held to discuss learning, employment and training opportunities across the life-span of people in Bourke	Employment and training	MEETCS conducted	Implementing collaboration
	A Collaboration Agreement workshop was held, including service providers and agencies from across Bourke	Multi-stakeholder engagement	Collaboration Agreement workshop held	Implementing collaboration
	Due to the reduction in family and domestic violence, a collaboration agreement workshop was held with service providers and agencies across Bourke to address contributing factors to this	Organisational sustainability	Collaboration Agreement workshop held	Implementing collaboration
	With the support of Gilbert & Tobin to establish Maranguka as an incorporated entity	Capacity building	Maranguka incorporated	Establishing the collaboration
2020	Maranguka coordinated NAIDOC week activities held in Bourke	Cultural engagement	NAIDOC week activities coordinated	Implementing collaboration
	Summer School Holiday Programme, which included a variety of organised activities for the Youth of Bourke	Youth engagement	Summer School Holiday Programme conducted	Implementing collaboration
	Early Childhood & Parenting Working Group partnered with Connected Beginnings to better achieve their goals. Inaugural Welcome Baby to Country	Family safety	Partnership with Connected Beginnings, Welcome Baby to Country held	Establishing the collaboration, Implementing collaboration
	Official signing of the Collaboration Agreement took place in the Bourke community, formalising the process of collaborative partnerships across services and agencies in attempts to reduce family and domestic violence in Bourke	Mental health support	Collaboration Agreement signed	Establishing the collaboration
2021	The Maranguka - Wellness Connect Mental Health Summit was held in Bourke, with Minister for Regional Health Mark Coulton joining local community and agency members	Health and wellbeing	Mental Health Summit held	Implementing collaboration

Time Period	Maranguka Activities	Aspects of Community Wellbeing	Milestones	Stages of Collaboration
	Maranguka coordinated a successful programme of youth engagement activities during the summer holidays. This included culturally appropriate activities such as painting, art programmes, boxing, culture camps, dancing, barbecues, basketball, and touch football	Youth engagement and community safety	Youth engagement activities conducted	Implementing collaboration
2022	School Holiday Programmes: Collaboration with service providers during the April 2022 school holidays to engage local children and young people	Youth engagement and community safety	School holiday programmes conducted	Implementing collaboration
	Maranguka worked with local police and service providers to address rising youth crime and school absenteeism	Community safety	Community safety initiatives implemented	Implementing collaboration
	Continued efforts to engage youth through various activities, contributing to increased school attendance, reductions in property crime, and improved relationships between the local police and the community	Youth engagement and community safety	Summer youth engagement activities conducted	Implementing collaboration, Outputs
2023	Activities included day trips to Gundabooka National Park, family fun days at the Men's Hub, cultural dance workshops, art workshops, and fishing trips	Cultural and Recreational Activities:	Cultural and recreational activities conducted	Implementing collaboration
	NAIDOC Week Celebrations: Various NAIDOC activities were held in the community, including events at the Bourke PCYC	Cultural and Recreational Activities:	NAIDOC Week celebrations held	Implementing collaboration
	Maranguka made a submission to the Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities, highlighting their innovative, community-led approaches to improving social, economic, and criminal justice outcomes	Community safety	Community safety submission made	Outputs
2024	Ongoing Youth and Community Programmes: Continued focus on early intervention and prevention programmes, supporting children and families through the Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong strategy	Early intervention and prevention	Ongoing youth and community programmes conducted	Implementing collaboration, Outputs

Sources: Ferguson(2024); Australian Institute of Criminology (2023) Maranugka Community Hub (2024)