

Thriving Communities Partnership

Partner Workshop Report 2018



Founding partners



Community and supporting partners



We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and value the continuing rich culture and the contribution of Aboriginal people and communities.

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	7
Governance	8
Refining Our Value Proposition Through Storytelling	10
Reviewing Our Vision & Mission	13
Strategic Landscape	14
Prioritisation of Initiatives	18
Appendix 1	20
Next Steps	23

Executive Summary

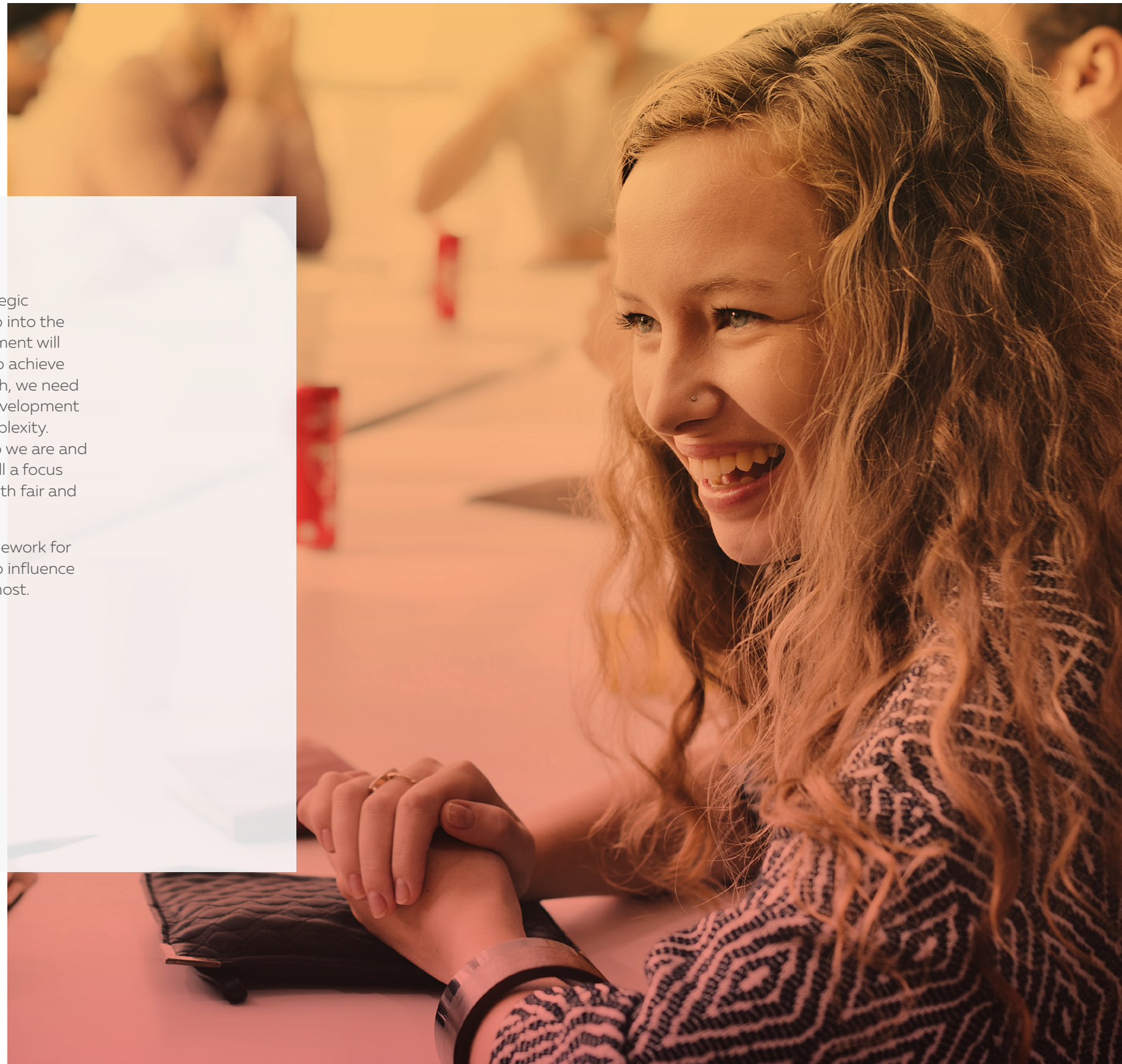
The Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP) is a collaborative network of 150 organisations across corporate, community and the government sector. The overall aim of the TCP is to build more resilient communities and stronger businesses. Specifically, the TCP is working to find solutions to systemic issues of consumer vulnerability.

The TCP wants all Australians to enjoy fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary life. These essential services include utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

With the backing of 21 founding and supporting partners, the TCP secretariat is currently hosted within Yarra Valley Water. Interim board members are: Pat McCafferty (Chair), Cynthia Gebert, Catie Moore and Ciara Sterling (CEO).

Through refinement of our purpose, 4 strategic goals have emerged to lead our partnership into the future. An emphasis on growing our movement will be an important grounding factor if we're to achieve systemic change. This is not enough though, we need a collective commitment to learning and development so we can evolve with, and respond to complexity. Partnerships will remain the essence of who we are and how we go about influencing change; as will a focus on aligning and connecting communities with fair and complete access to services and support.

Taken together, these goals create the framework for collective action and provide opportunity to influence meaningful change for those who need it most.



Introduction



On Monday 26 March 2018, a number of the founding partners of the TCP met in Melbourne for a workshop. This workshop was facilitated by the National Sector Leader, Power & Utilities at KPMG, Cassandra Hogan and the TCP secretariat.

Through co-creation, the purpose of this workshop was for partners to contribute toward our future vision, strategy and prioritisation of initiatives.

This report captures the key outcomes of the workshop and is intended to guide our future direction. Outcomes of this work have now been socialised with various community partners in preparation to engage representatives from the broader partnership base.

Governance

Over the past six months, the TCP has been working closely with KPMG Partner, Mark Jones AM with the aim of defining our future governance structure.

This focus on governance has highlighted the need to establish the TCP as a separate company, with a board, a CEO and a management team. The most obvious benefits of a company structure are:

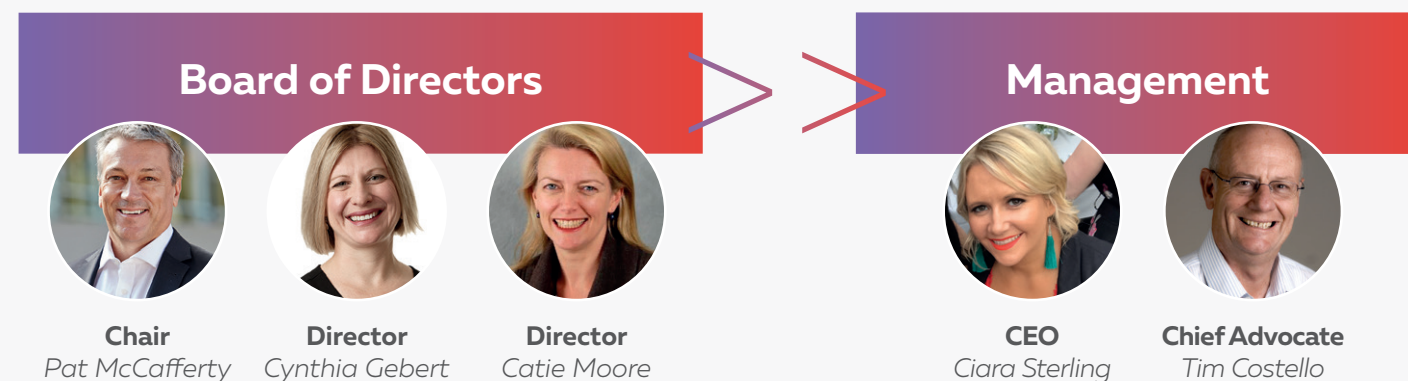
- The ability to more efficiently move from a pilot program to an established entity
- The ability to seek Deductible Gift Recipient status and thus open the door to philanthropy
- The ability to better stabilise and scale for the long-term
- The transparent management of sponsorship funds.

Subsequently, KPMG has recommended that we establish an interim structure by 30 June 2018 for the purpose of achieving the following:

- ASIC approval for establishing the company
- Implementation of the company strategy
- Managing the appointment process for the future independent chair and board of directors
- Representing the TCP in funding negotiations and philanthropic opportunities.

From 1 July 2018, the TCP will move into a transition phase with the objective of dissolving the interim structure by 30 June 2019.

The interim board and structure is as follows:



Refining Our Value Proposition Through Storytelling

Creating a future where all people experience equality and inclusion is not simple. Many of us are already well aware of just how complex it is.

When we work in a complex workplace, our working life can be unpredictable, interdependent and dynamic. When our world generally has nothing that is linear and everything is subjective, it is difficult to connect socially and align with others in a common purpose. The best way forward may well be through the emotion of powerful storytelling.

Storytelling creates deep emotional connections among people which promote mutual understanding and relatedness – the very same ingredients necessary to foster collaborative relationships. Through storytelling we can explore the complex by analysing a deeper meaning behind our behaviours, values and needs.

In this exercise at the workshop in March, partners were challenged to discover their relationship to the TCP by sharing personal stories of experience, emotion and personal connection. The following themes arose out of this activity which we share here in the hope that we are laying the foundations of our future value proposition.

- *A feeling of personal responsibility to influence meaningful and long-term change for all people.*
- *Driven by values for altruism and social justice.*
- *Deeply passionate about working for social change – emotionally connected.*
- *Inspired by the opportunity to learn, grow and influence as a collective (stronger together).*
- *A desire to change values, mindsets and behaviours at a macro/societal level (legacy).*
- *A belief in the opportunity to create shared value (good practice is good business).*



Reviewing Our Vision & Mission

The Thriving Communities Partnership is a cross-sector collaboration with the goal that everybody has fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia, including: utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

From the Vulnerability Roundtable held in 2016 there was a collective commitment. This commitment was to establish a cross-sectoral collaboration to bring together government, the community sector and business for the purpose of acting together.

At the heart of our commitment is a determination to bring about a future where people can access the essential services that we all need to survive and thrive. Today, this commitment is summed up in our mission statement:

The Thriving Communities Partnership is a cross-sector collaboration with the goal that everybody has fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia, including: utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

We acknowledge that while a mission is necessary we also need a supporting vision.

- The mission clearly states our purpose and who we are.
- A vision should express our emotional essence and future aspirations in a way that inspires, while at the same time supporting our purpose and guiding our strategy.

During the workshop, attendees were invited to consider the following draft vision. Ideally, our vision statement should clearly point to the change we are seeking to make in the world.

Thriving and resilient individuals and families live in inclusive communities and experience well-being and fullness of life.

The following themes were raised by partners in response to this draft vision, revealing the principle underpinnings of a meaningful vision for the TCP.

- Our vision must be simple, accessible and inclusive for all partners (corporate, community, government).
- It is vital that a vision statement highlights that we have a national agenda and that we exist to benefit all Australians.
- Our vision should cover the social impacts that are important to us such as equity, equality, fairness, trust, participation, empowerment and resilience.

In this exercise, partners were also challenged to develop a vision statement. The following examples were proposed and tested for acceptance among the group.

- A world where no one is left behind.
- Empowering people to reach their full potential.
- Creating an Australia where everyone can reach their full potential.
- Connections for a fair Australia.

On balance, we agreed on the importance of developing a strong vision statement to bind and guide us as a collective. The TCP secretariat will continue to progress this work and will re-engage partners with options to better reflect the now defined principles.

Strategic Landscape

Resulting from the 2016 Vulnerability Roundtable there were also six breakthrough projects identified as critical to moving toward our collective purpose.

They include:

1. Securing commitment for the Thriving Communities Charter.
2. Establishing the Vulnerability Hub.
3. Building an enabling platform for collaboration.
4. Growing awareness and capability.
5. Developing insight for early intervention.
6. Agreeing to implement common policy and practice.

Since the time of that Vulnerability Roundtable, we have continued to examine our true purpose and think about what really are the best opportunities for us to pursue.

Valuable input has come from:

- The TCP Leadership Think-Tank,
- The Development of our Charter, and
- Ongoing networking within the TCP.

We can now see that our breakthrough projects, while important, deal with both macro and micro issues.

To position ourselves for long-term success we need specific parameters to guide our investment as well as clear and measurable goals. Once we have such goals in place, it will be much easier to choose the best opportunities for us to pursue in order to fulfil our mission and vision.

Most recently, the TCP secretariat has looked at all the ideas suggested and has put forward the following four goals that together fit very well with our mission. By pursuing these goals, TCP can influence fair access to the modern essential services that people need to thrive in contemporary Australia.

Goal 1

Grow the movement

Amplify awareness of the growing state of social inequality in Australia and influence institutions to improve access to modern day essential services

Goal 2

Build capability & capacity

Establish a leading source of information, networking, professional learning and development which elevates the collective capability of Australian institutions to effectively respond to consumer vulnerability

Goal 3

Broker partnerships

Build and leverage a network of partnerships to address systemic issues impacting people at risk of vulnerability and hardship

Goal 4

Align and connect access to support

Create an interconnected support system to reduce complexity and provide vulnerable consumers with fair and complete access to modern day essential services

Goal 1 - Grow the Movement

“Helping people in vulnerable situations will become business as usual for everyone”

The starting point is acknowledging that we must influence others. Through promotion we can build awareness of the TCP and the social problems we are concerned about. We need a strong public voice to grow our influence because complex problems require systemic solutions.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

As a partnership, we already have a strong voice and this has become a pivotal strength in growing our movement to where it is today. Examples include:

- Promotional activity including a strong social media presence,
- Guest speaking on industry panels, and
- Submission of case studies such as the SDG National Voluntary Review.

WHAT DID PARTNERS SAY?

Raising awareness and influencing attitudes is beneficial for all stakeholders who participate in our partnership. Should we be successful with this goal we can expect social accountability to become normal in business.

To achieve this goal, we need to work with influential corporate, community and government bodies to spread our message far and wide. In addition, we need to gather strong evidence to support our views so that our case becomes more compelling.

“We need to activate values based ministers to spread the word”

“We will need good evidence based research”

Goal 2 – Build Capability & Capacity

“We need to get better so our people are less stressed and overwhelmed”

Working together under the TCP banner is just the beginning. Our partners need to have an ongoing commitment to developing knowledge, skills and experience. For systems change, we need to think about ourselves as a whole and take advantage of our collective capability so that everyone benefits and no one is left behind.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

TCP partners are naturally attracted to the idea of building our collective capability and capacity. Steps in this direction already taken include:

- Development of a Charter of Principles which provides guidance for organisations that want to influence change.
- Implementation of a new website, thriving.org.au, which provides a learning content repository that offers the opportunity for online collaboration.
- Facilitation of connections among partners for mentoring and development.

WHAT DID PARTNERS SAY?

Building our capability is critical for achieving our goals. Of course, it is also beneficial for all partners, secondary stakeholders and, obviously, the communities we serve.

Should we be successful in this goal we can expect to cultivate safe working environments that:

- Are supportive of our staff,
- Build and strengthen cross-sectoral relationships, and
- Deliver more effective support products, services and programs.

To get there we need to formalise our knowledge so that it can be shared easily. And we need to be able to spread new insights and intelligence.

Fundamentally, achieving this goal means building relationships and supporting new connections.

“This will require us to share information and network so we can learn and grow together”

Goal 3 – Broker Partnerships

“Partnering is fundamentally about shifting macro indicators of financial resilience”.

Tackling complex problems in partnership with others is usually a very effective approach. However, collective action has its own challenges especially when you consider the diversity of cultures, industry forces, resources and strategic priorities.

Effective partnerships don’t just happen. They require careful nurturing to support and strengthen connections, align values, navigate differences and facilitate collaborative processes. The TCP needs to build networks and manage partnerships with intent so we can effectively respond to social challenges.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Partnership brokerage is the basis of what we do. Our 2016 Vulnerability Roundtable was the first demonstration of partnering toward a cause and the effort has continued in various forms ever since. Another prime example of a partnership is our ‘Supported Decision Making’ project which has spawned a partnership between telecommunications, water and energy industries to investigate how we can better support customers with limited decision making capacity.

WHAT DID PARTNERS SAY?

Partnerships offer obvious benefits to those involved. None of us have all the answers or unlimited resources. Should we be successful in partnering we can expect to see an increase in the number of partnerships. Gradually, people will feel engaged and supported and the results will become obvious.

To accelerate our partnering capability, we first need to build alignment and common language for identifying, understanding and communicating on issues of customer vulnerability. Additionally, we need to expand our national presence and identify influencing bodies that can support the health of our partnership.

“We can measure success by the number of state based chapters successfully operating across the country”.

“It’s integral to have the support and participation of the community sector – we don’t have all the answers”.

“If we’re going to collaborate well, we need to create a common understanding and language around vulnerability”.

Goal 4 – Align & Connect Access to Support

“There will always be a lot of parts to think about and manage”.

The objective of our final goal is to create a cohesive and interconnected support system. We need an integrated front-end delivery that gives everyone, including the most vulnerable, simple access to the essential services they need for surviving and thriving in modern Australia.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

The flagship project for this goal is the ‘Vulnerability Hub’ – a one stop, one story solution allowing organisations to use technology and shared data to more effectively support vulnerable people.

WHAT DID PARTNERS SAY?

Creating an overall system that is easy to access is critical if we’re going to have lasting change.

We need to also recognise that an accessible delivery front-end is dynamic. It will change. And we’ll need to be evolving to be ready for that change.

Should we be successful in this goal we can expect to see many more people accessing the practical support they need. Ultimately, it is about building community resilience which will improve quality of life for people, performance for business and support for the community sector.

To achieve this goal we need alignment across sectors, healthy collaboration, strong governance and sustainable funding.

“This is our opportunity to really make a difference in a lot of people’s lives”.

“It’s not going to be easy, we’ll need strong commitments and a desire to reach consensus on many things”.

Prioritisation of Initiatives

With broad enthusiasm from all partners, the TCP is pleasantly overwhelmed with the number of viable project opportunities that have been suggested. However, with resources being limited, we need to prioritise. Which projects can be delivered within our capacity? And which best align with our strategy?

With this need for prioritising in mind, partners were invited to consider a selection of current opportunities to more closely gauge expectations of delivery. The following heat map summarises the projects and their respective priority according to partners. (Refer to Appendix 1 for more detail on each project.)



Initiative		
1	Partner networking and learning events	0-12 Months
2	Develop repository of online learning content	
3	Develop and execute a plan for grant funding	
4	Vulnerability Hub (Phase 1)	
5	Design a monitoring & evaluation framework	
6	Establish state based leadership chapters	
7	Define future membership model	
8	Design a vulnerability maturity assessment model and capability framework	1-2 Years
9	Implement a consumer awareness campaign	
10	Undertake a vulnerability research project	
11	Assemble learning and development resources to supplement the maturity assessment.	
12	Establish a TCP foundation	3+ Years
Initiatives in train		
13	Training program for financial counsellors	0-12 Months
14	Host the Teachable Moments workshop	
15	Augment existing cross-referral projects and develop case study	
16	Secure commitment to the TCP Charter of Principles	
17	Impaired decision-making research project	

Appendix 1

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Formalise recurring networking events to support learning, industry connections and engage partners in TCP operations and plans |
| 2 | Develop and launch a website content repository which provides partners with relevant information for learning about and managing issues of consumer vulnerability |
| 3 | Undertake research to identify and pursue opportunities to seek grant funding for execution of vulnerability projects |
| 4 | Design a Phase 1 Vulnerability Hub that provides customers and social service organisations with a single point of entry for all vulnerability support services |
| 5 | Design a partnership monitoring and evaluation framework to identify and capture value outputs, monitor health and manage risk |
| 6 | Pilot a state based leadership chapter and operating model to advance our national presence and operations |
| 7 | Design a future membership framework, with equity principles and tiered benefits to support future financial sustainability |
| 8 | Develop a maturity assessment model for organisations to evaluate performance in the area of vulnerability management, and include a capability framework for identifying opportunities for considered development |
| 9 | Implement a consumer awareness and behavioural change campaign to increase access to corporate and community support services |
| 10 | Design and implement a research project that examines perceptions, behaviours and value drivers within vulnerable consumer groups and how these elements impact business outcomes. The research should also include measuring performance across industries |

- | | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Assemble a suite of learning and development services/resources that supplement the maturity assessment to enable organisations to pursue growth opportunities |
| 12 | Develop a charitable foundation aimed at generating revenue in support of community service organisations and the operation of the TCP |
| 13 | Design a national training program for front line workers including financial counsellors and social workers that improves awareness, knowledge and access to supplier support services |
| 14 | Facilitate the assembly of stakeholders to launch the WIRE 'Teachable Moments' research, and examine opportunities for business to facilitate interventions for those who experience family violence |
| 15 | Conduct research and produce a pilot case study to communicate the approach and outcomes of cross-referral partnerships undertaken by Energy Australia and Yarra Valley Water. Pursue opportunities to expand cross-referral pilot programs |
| 16 | Work with existing partner organisations to develop and secure commitment to the TCP Charter of Principles |
| 17 | Participate in research and development of a supported decision making model to assist persons with limited decision making capacity |



Next Steps

With over 150 organisations on board, an interim board in place and several cross-sector interventions underway the TCP has achieved real momentum. The thoughts, feelings and directions gathered through our May workshop are currently being used to refine our strategy, prioritisation and sustainability plan for the next three years. A formalised strategy document will be produced and distributed in the new Financial Year. A huge thanks to all our partners and supporters for growing this movement – a once in a lifetime opportunity to create positive step change for vulnerable communities.

We now invite all partners to contribute thoughts and perspectives toward our strategy.

Go to
<https://bit.ly/2L3L7Hc>
to provide feedback on
the vision & strategy.

