

Reclaiming our Purpose:

It's time to talk about the public good

A PRACTICAL AND VALUES-LED FRAMEWORK

The research

From the middle of 2020 through to late 2021, we listened to Australians talk about what was sustaining them, and what they wanted more of: be it better roads, more community spaces, or different ways of doing democracy.

Australia reMADE recruited several hundred participants, embedded in more than 45 different organisations and networks, from diverse backgrounds, interests and political inclinations. Dr Millie Rooney and a team of Australia reMADE-trained community facilitators led a series of qualitative interviews and focus groups focused around two key questions, "What do you want available to you and your communities?" and "forgetting who pays for it, who do you think should provide this?".

Further details about this project can be found on our website,

australiaremade.org/public-good

The findings

- The public good: it's a phrase we tested in this work, and found deeply useful for showing us what people value, regardless of their politics or background.
 - There are a handful of basic goods and services people want to be available to everyone. These came up time and again, in every conversation and group, regardless of people's socio-economic resources, location, cultural background or political leanings. Namely, they are **housing, healthcare, education, jobs, access to nature and access to the internet.**
- Going deeper, we heard the call, beautiful in its sincerity and simplicity, for three core things:
- The opportunity to **CONNECT with each other and with place;**
 - The ability to **CARE and be cared for;** and
 - Pathways to **CONTRIBUTE locally and nationally** to who we are as communities and as a nation.

Connection. Care. Contribution. These are what we've come to understand as the real building blocks of public good. They require both 'physical' infrastructure (hospital beds, roads, internet connection) and 'enabling infrastructure' (money, time, space and engagement processes).

The takeaway

Connection, care and contribution provide the principles and framework through which to develop, advocate and evaluate policies, programs and solutions for the public good. These needs cross the left/right divide and offer us a pathway forward based on shared values. We should be asking:

- Does this work, policy or solution help **meet people's need for connection** (including the time and space to connect)?
- Does it help **meet people's need to care and be cared for** (including the time and space to care)?
- Does it help **meet people's need to contribute, whether locally or nationally** (including the time and space to contribute)?

We must recognise the value of the **often-invisible enabling infrastructure** required for connection, care and contribution. And in doing so **use and embed the language of the public good in our work, set high expectations of government**, and be clear that the **public good means ensuring that everyone is included**.

For more information, including messaging advice to seed new conversations about the public good, see the full report at

australiaremade.org/public-good.

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About Australia reMADE

Australia reMADE exists to support ambitious, collaborative, and transformative change-makers to reMAKE more of the world we want. We are independent, not-for-profit and here for anyone who aligns with our vision and values.

Living, loving and working across this country, we respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to elders both past and present.

