

## **Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP) National Leadership Group (NLG) - Communique – March 2026**

**The *Stronger Places, Stronger People* (SPSP) National Leadership Group (NLG) met virtually, on Monday, 2 March 2026.**

The SPSP National Leadership Group (the Group) held its first meeting of 2026 virtually. It was the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of NLG since it commenced in 2020. The following matters were discussed.

### **Leadership changes in DSS**

Members were introduced to Pia Van De Zandt, the new Group Manager responsible for supporting the place-based agenda for the Department.

Members heard how the Department remains committed in its role in leading the work under the SPSP initiative in partnership with other Commonwealth departments and agencies. There is a focus on addressing the operational barriers with Commonwealth funding in place to ensure it is flexible enough to back local leaders and local plans.

### **Stronger Places Alliance (SPA) Update**

Members were provided with an update on the work being undertaken by the Stronger Places Alliance (SPA), PLACE and the Department to develop a Shared Decision-Making (SDM) Framework.

The update provided details on how the SDM Framework was developed, the key components of the SDM Framework, the next steps to implementation and key opportunities for NLG.

Members agreed to include a discussion point on future SPA updates to create greater connection between NLG and SPA.

### **Life Course Data Initiative**

Representatives from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provided an update on the work they are doing in relation to the Life Course Data Initiative (LCDI).

The ABS is working with partners to create an evidence base, bringing together data from a range of early childhood, health and community services, and associated data insights to inform longer term policy response to address disadvantage.

Members agreed to a virtual extraordinary meeting to be held in May 2026 to focus on the future workplan for the NLG, governance arrangements and further updates from the Department.