

Assessing achievements in implementing place-based initiatives

# Unboxing the assessment process

AES Sydney 2019



# About AHA

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Specialist health and human services management consultancy



Policy and program development, evaluation and review, research and analysis, and outsourced program administration



Recognised for our ability to engage sensitively with people from vulnerable or under-served population groups

# Presentation outline

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- Background to tool development
- The tool development process
- Distilling literature findings into a useable tool
- Next steps

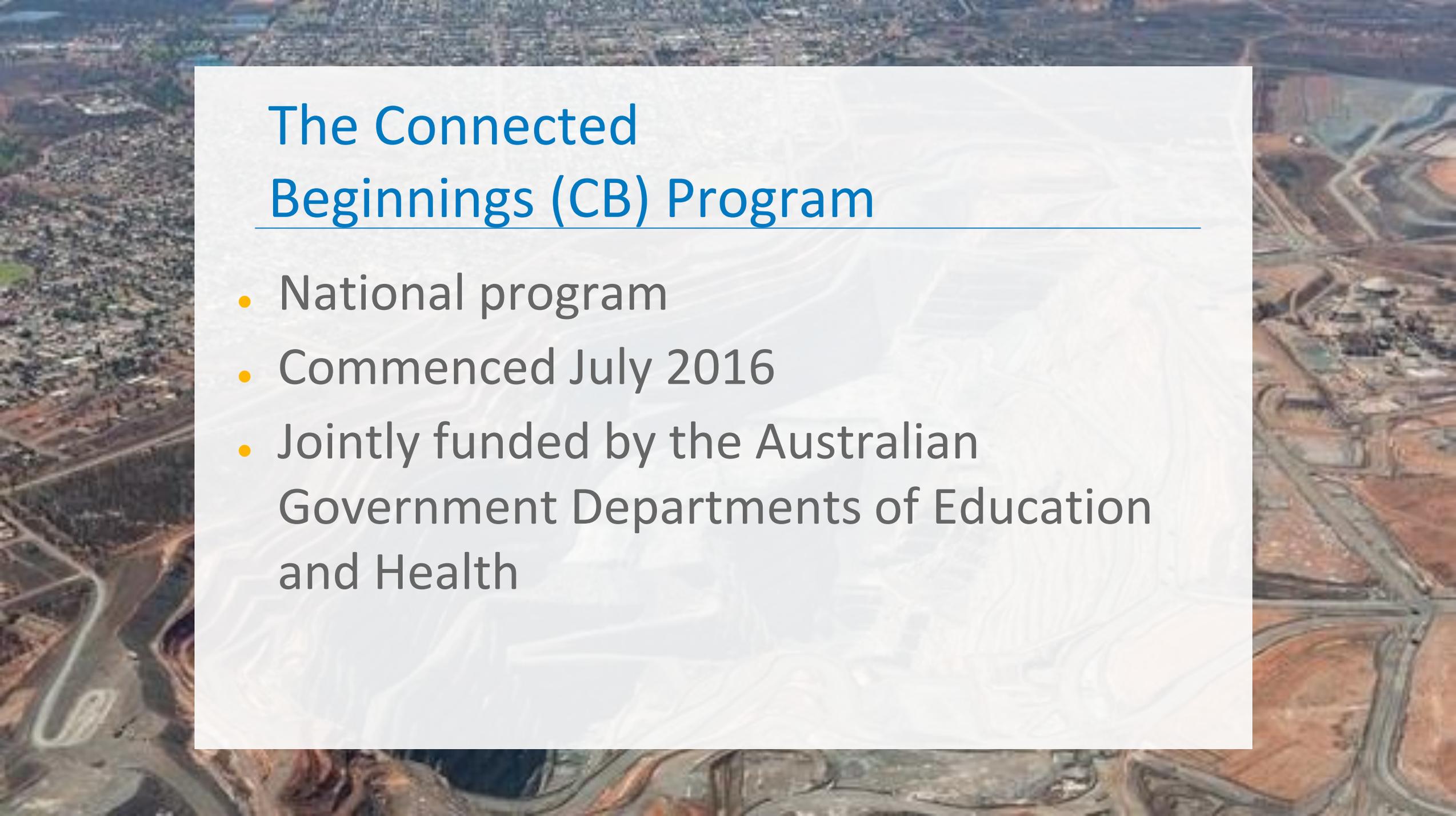
# Background to tool development

# Impetus

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April 2017

- Australian Healthcare Associates (AHA) was appointed by the Australian Government Department of Health to evaluate the Connected Beginnings Program



# The Connected Beginnings (CB) Program

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- National program
- Commenced July 2016
- Jointly funded by the Australian Government Departments of Education and Health

# CB Program Aims

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- Improve the **school readiness** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Reduce the **gap in educational attainment** between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



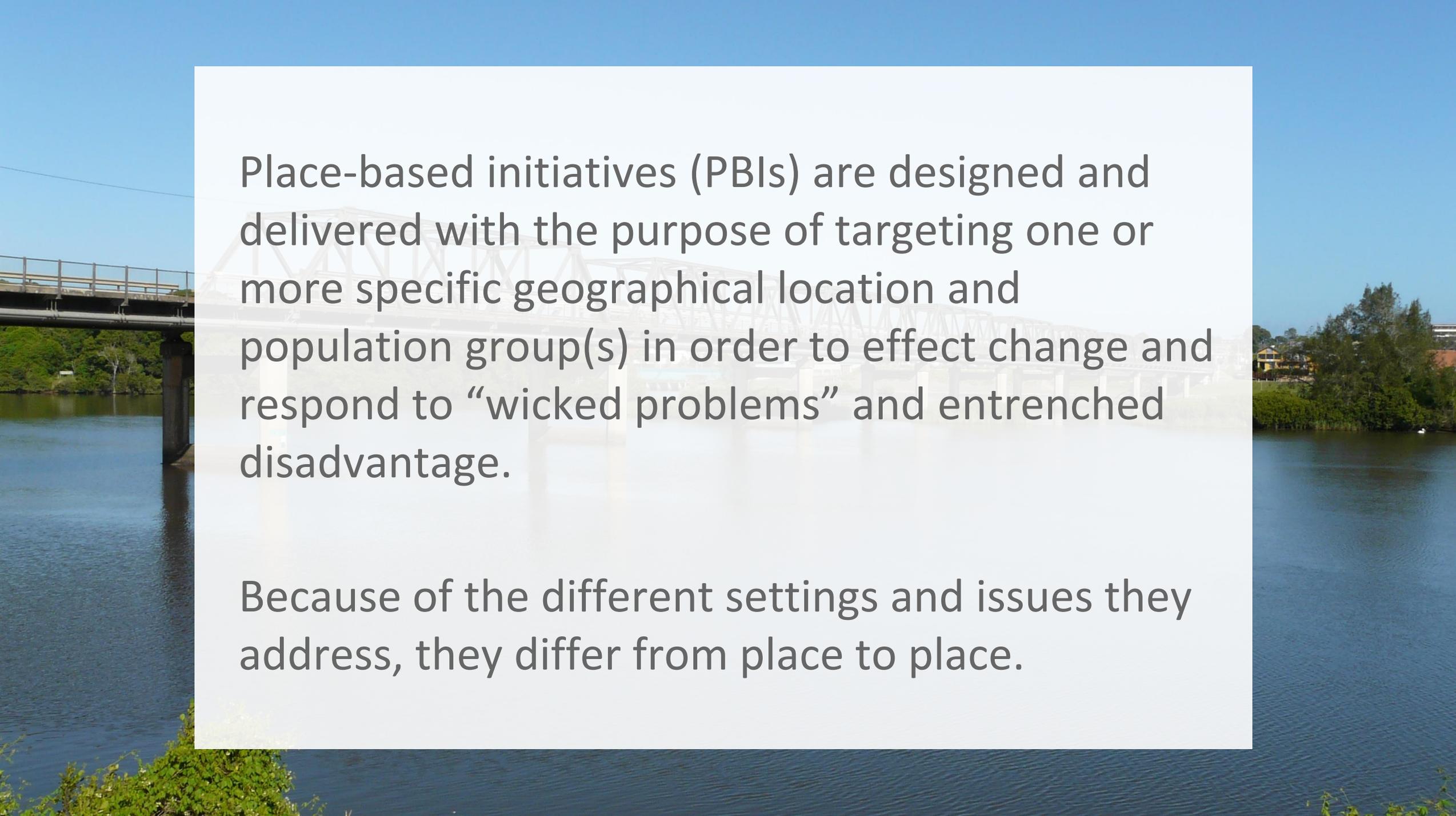
# Location of Connected Beginnings sites



Over the two-year evaluation period...

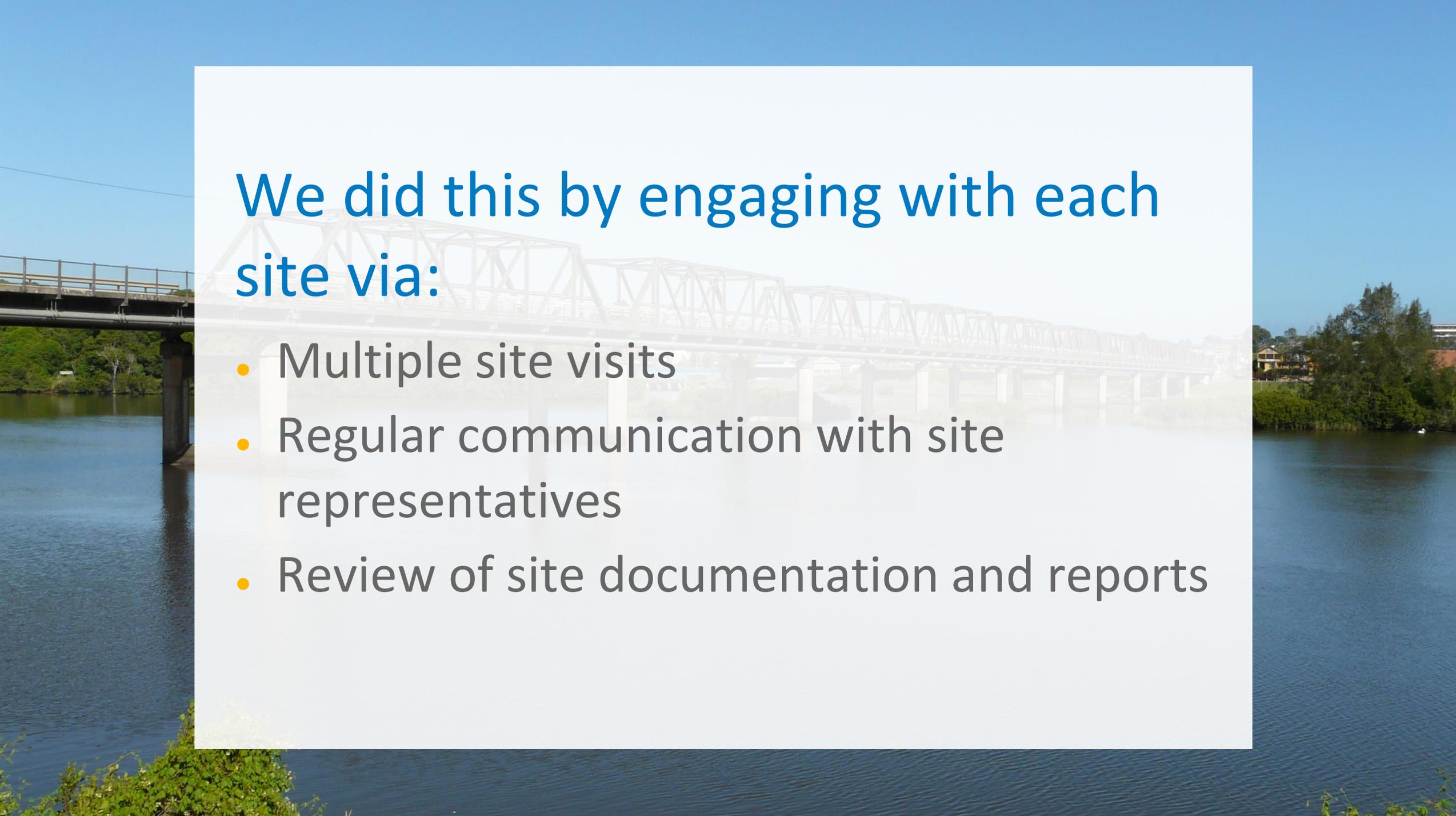
We were tasked with assessing site achievements in:

- Implementing their place-based initiatives
- Service integration

A scenic view of a river with a bridge in the background under a clear blue sky. The bridge is a steel truss bridge with a walkway on top. The water is calm and reflects the sky. There are green trees and bushes along the banks. The text is overlaid on a white semi-transparent box in the center of the image.

Place-based initiatives (PBIs) are designed and delivered with the purpose of targeting one or more specific geographical location and population group(s) in order to effect change and respond to “wicked problems” and entrenched disadvantage.

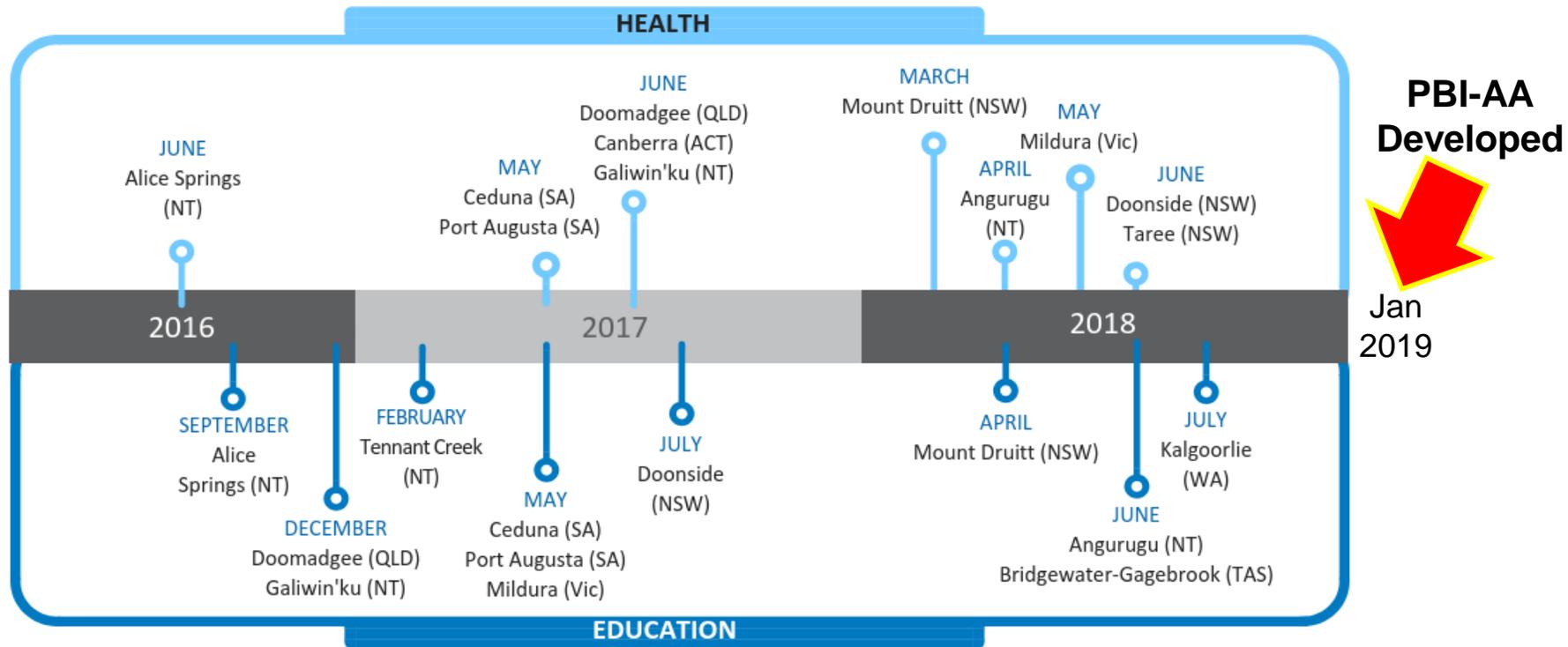
Because of the different settings and issues they address, they differ from place to place.

A large steel truss bridge spans a wide river under a clear blue sky. The bridge has multiple spans supported by concrete piers. The water is calm and reflects the sky. In the background, there are green trees and some buildings on the far bank.

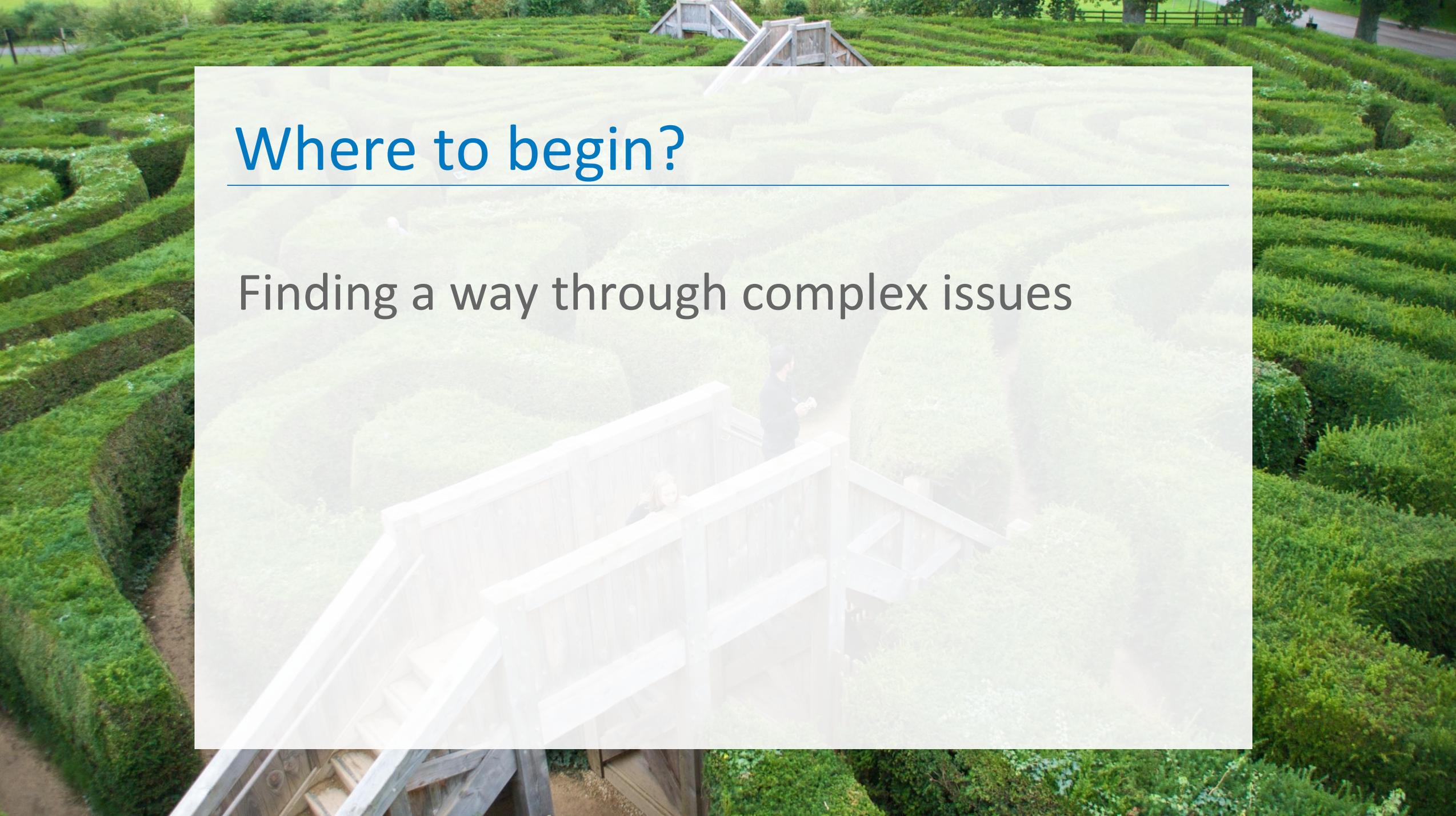
## We did this by engaging with each site via:

- Multiple site visits
- Regular communication with site representatives
- Review of site documentation and reports

# Staged rollout of CB Program



# The tool development process

An aerial photograph of a large, intricate hedge maze. The maze is constructed from tall, green hedges. A wooden walkway with railings winds through the maze. Several people are visible walking along the path. The background shows more of the maze and some trees.

# Where to begin?

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Finding a way through complex issues

# Literature scan

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- Focus on Place-Based Initiatives (PBIs)
- Health/Education context
- Australian and international research/experience



# Eight attributes of successful PBIs

(Adapted from Centre for Community Child Health 2012)

# Attribute 1

Are there clearly articulated objectives that are shared by both the government and the community?

## Attribute 2

Do Program guidelines and other Program documentation reflect objectives unambiguously but provide autonomy for local areas to achieve the objectives?

## Attribute 3

Is data being collected to measure, track and translate – to inform decisions and enable evaluation?

## Attribute 4

Is there strong consultative and collaborative local leadership in place for the PBI?

# Attribute 5

Is the PBI being driven by communities, local needs, community leadership and engagement?

## Attribute 6

Do the organisations involved in running the PBI have the capacity to liaise with government but also respond and engage with the local community?

# Attribute 7

Are there long-term commitments in place to enable communities to address challenges?

# Attribute 8

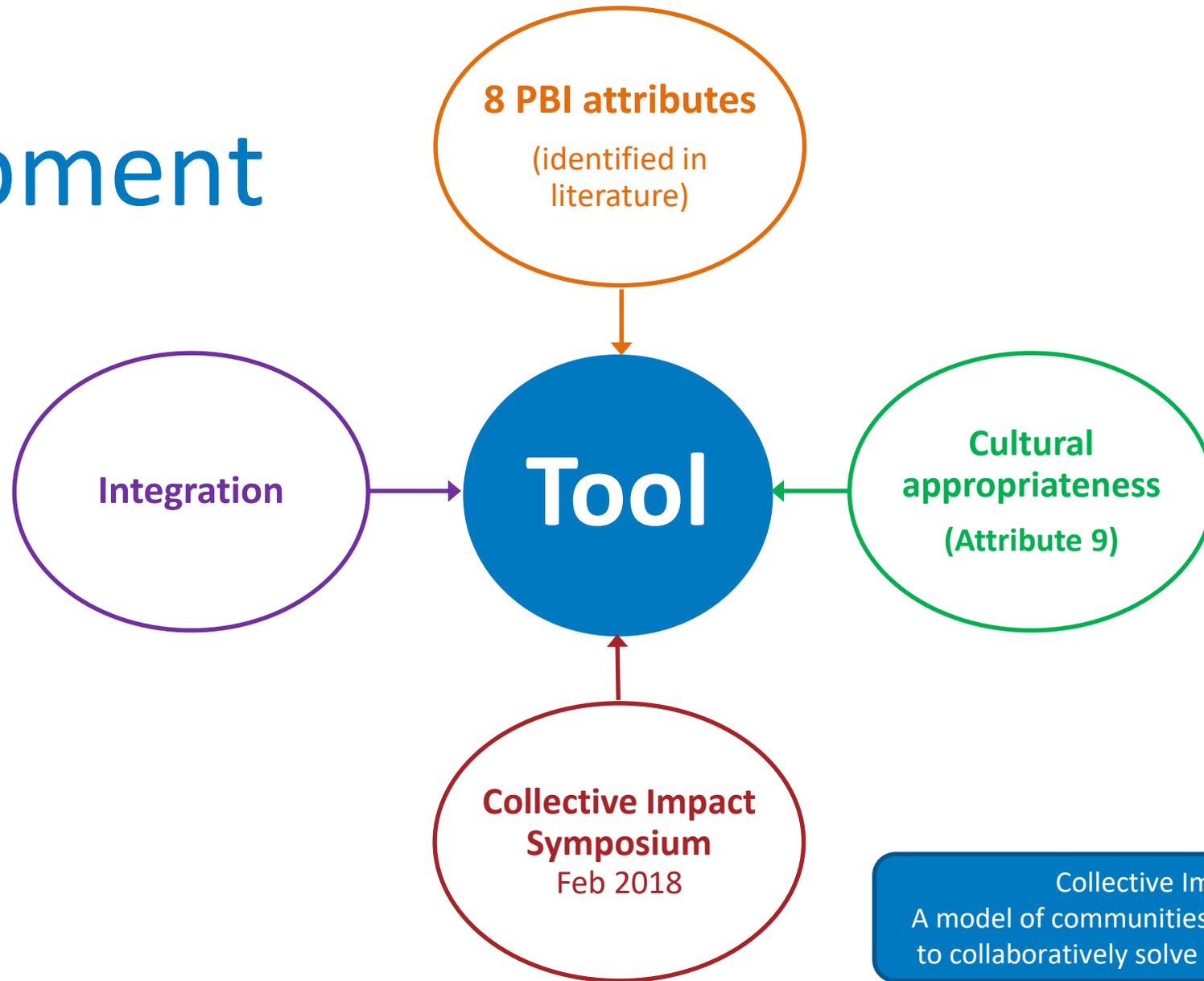
Does the workforce possess effective skills to implement the PBI?

# Attribute 9

Is the environment culturally safe and welcoming for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

(McGough et al. 2018, Gladman et al. 2015)

# Tool development inputs



**Collective Impact:**  
A model of communities coming together  
to collaboratively solve a social problem.

# Collective Impact:

## Preconditions for success

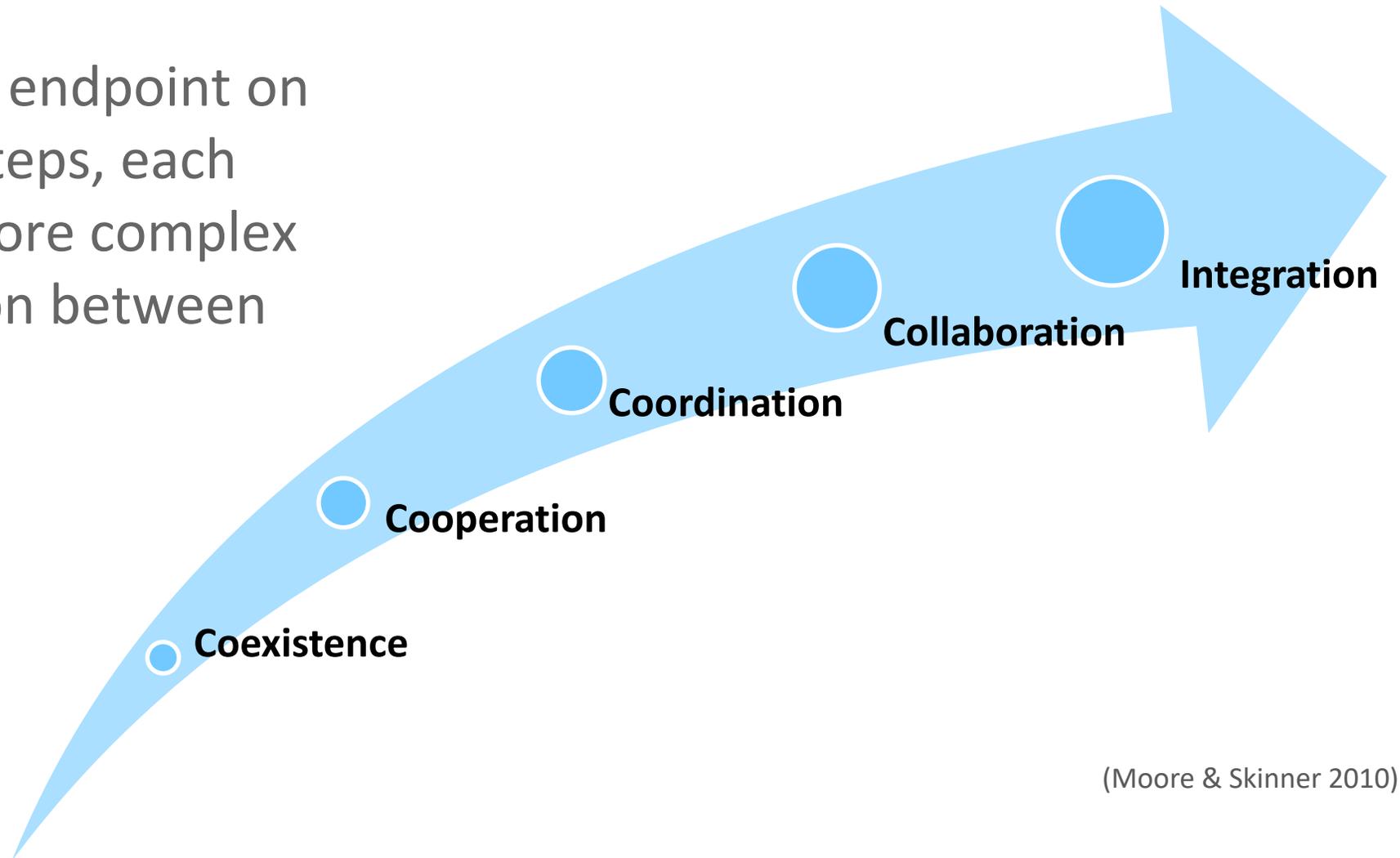
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Precondition	Source
Common Agenda	(Kania & Kramer 2011)
Backbone infrastructure	
Mutually reinforcing activities	
Shared measurement	
Continuous communication	
CI Learning culture	(Preskill et al. 2014)
CI capacity	
Nuts and bolts are in place	(Collective Impact Forum 2014)

# Measuring integration: The integration continuum

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Integration is the endpoint on a continuum of steps, each representing a more complex level of interaction between services



(Moore & Skinner 2010)

# Distilling literature findings into a useable tool

# From synthesis to question bank

1

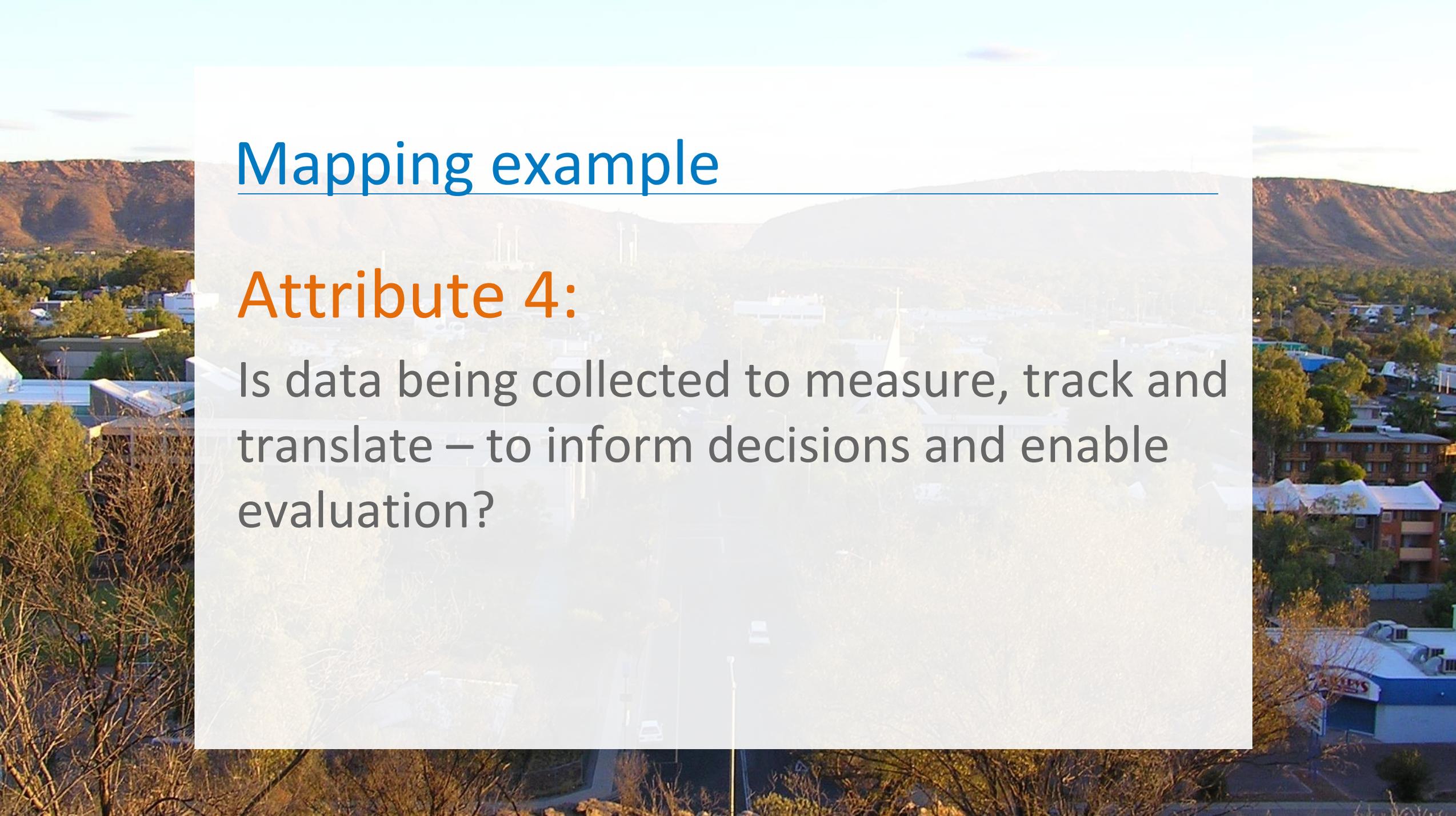
Literature findings were mapped against each of the 9 PBI attributes

2

This mapping generated a list of questions specific to each attribute and applicable to the CB context

3

A question bank was developed: the Place-based Initiative–Achievements Assessment (PBI-AA)

A background image showing a town with buildings and trees in the foreground, and hills in the distance under a clear sky. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be read.

# Mapping example

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## Attribute 4:

Is data being collected to measure, track and translate – to inform decisions and enable evaluation?

# PBI-AA questions

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Is data being collected to measure, track and translate – to inform decisions and enable evaluation?

- Data is being collected to inform and enable evaluation<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- A shared measurement strategy is in place<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Metrics and benchmarks have been agreed upon to use for measuring Program progress<sup>1,2,3</sup>

# PBI-AA questions

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Is data being collected to measure, track and translate – to inform decisions and enable evaluation?

- Systems are in place to track the following levels of Program progress:
  - Process (how effectively is the PBI approach being implemented?)<sup>1,2,3</sup>
  - System changes (are we seeing desired changes in practice?)<sup>1,2,3</sup>

# PBI-AA questions

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Is data being collected to measure, track and translate – to inform decisions and enable evaluation?

- Stakeholders are sharing results and learning from each other<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Data is being used for learning – to understand and adapt to the problems, opportunities and progress<sup>4</sup>

# How the tool was used

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Questions selected based on **appropriateness** and **relevance**:

- Type of activity being undertaken
- Implementation stage

# How the tool was used

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Achievements were ranked:

- By consensus by the team of consultants who visited the particular site
- In conjunction with the Project Director who visited all 14 sites
- Using a five-point scale ranging from 0 (Not yet started) to 4 (Achieved)

# Next steps

## Next steps

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Ideally if timeframe permitted, go back to sites for them to:

- Undertake a self-evaluation using the PBI-AA to confirm the assessment score allocated to them by AHA
- Experience capacity building in relation to their PBI using the parameters developed by AHA

# Resources

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Resources used in the development of Attribute 4 questions:

1. Centre for Community Child Health, Place-based Initiatives Transforming Communities - Proceedings from the Place-based Approaches Roundtable (2012).
2. Kania and Kramer, Collective Impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review 9, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 36–41.
3. Collective Impact Forum, Collective Impact Forum Readiness Assessment (2014)
4. Dart and Barry, Place Evaluation Framework (2018)

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