**Paul Oliver on Pillar 4 - ‘Partnerships’**

I think the best partnerships, whether it’s in business, whether it’s in personal relationships or in sport, are those that communicate most effectively. That partnership needs to be open, honest, direct, and the relationship needs to be of respect and trust as its underlying principles. I really think you also need to know your shared goals and objectives for that partnership so you both know you’re heading in the right direction. Partnerships have, I think they have, an element of many of the other seven pillars of inclusion, particularly, as I said, communication, policy as well. As a partnership, you need to be working with the same policies or MOUs, or working on the same framework or groundwork so you know you’re going the same direction. And plus, opportunities is another pillar where it relates to as well. As you go throughout the partnership, different opportunities arise, and the flexibility of a partnership or the adaptiveness of a partnership needs to be paramount to take use of those opportunities. Play by the Rules is a perfect example of a partnership that works, or a collaboration. Play by the Rules is a partnership of 20 different organizations. It’s supported and funded by the Australian Sports Commission, all the Department of Sport and Recreation here in Australia, all the equal opportunities commissions and human rights commissions, the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People, and ANZSLA, the Australia New Zealand Sports Law Association. This group is a partnership where they all invest in Play by the Rules and the resources and the programs that it does. And Ply by the Rules feeds into a lot of the programs that they do in their states and territories around safe, fair, and inclusive sport. So it’s one of those partnerships that crosses the federal , state, and local boundaries, one of the few that I know of that works effectively there. Sometimes you have breakdowns in the different jurisdictions between federal, state, and local. Play by the Rules, because it supports and it’s supported back by all of those organizations, it seems to work and cross those bridges and barriers for that. One area of collective effort, or partnerships, that’s really growing, particularly in the social sector and not for profit sector is our collective impact, and collective impact’s just another way of different individuals or organizations coming together, often from different fields to solve a social issue or social challenge. Play by the Rules is the perfect example of collective impact in action, and I think the growth of collective impact and why it’s been so successful is a lot of different organizations are realizing that some social issues or problems, particularly in the inclusion area, can be too deep for one sector or organization to fold. So the beauty of collective impact is getting expertise, knowledge across a range of different sectors. It could be private, public, not for profit, all coming together and utilizing their knowledge and experience to work towards a common goal. There’s five successful ingredients for collective impact. The first one’s a common agenda, and I relate this to Play by the Rules, all of the organizations working towards a common agenda or a common goal. In this case, it’s promoting safe, fair, and inclusive sport and working together to positively change behaviors in sports, so it’s a safe, fair environment. The second one relates to sharing of data or information. Everything you do is evidence based, and very much sharing back that information that you gained from the evidence base that you’re learning about it, and that evidence base, it can be data, it can be surveys, it can be getting together as a group and finding out the current issues and challenge your facing. But they could use the feedback back to those croups so they’re aware of that stuff as you go, not just at the ned of the project, so that you’re constantly changing and adapting the work you’re doing throughout the project. The other ingredient for collective action is mutually reinforcing activities, so when Play by the Rules does core activities, resources, and processes, that that’s supported by the different state and territory partners. And vice versa, Play by the Rules is continually supporting a lot of the programs that the state and territory partners do around safe, fair, and inclusive sport. And the final ingredient for collective action is backbone support. So you need essential entity or backbone organization for all those different partners to be, I guess, the core organization that’s setting the policy or the goals or integrating that. Play by the Rules does that through an MOU with all the different partners. And you need support for that backbone organization, support for your funding and support through leadership. Play by the Rules does that through a strong national reference group, and it does it for a management committee as well. I’ve had a partnership before in business, and my partner always told me that partnerships are bound to fail in the end. And he was right, in the end. Our partnership did fail, but what I took from that is that partnerships always need to be adaptive. It’s no use two partners getting together, drawing up an MOU or setting goals and sticking to that. Partnerships need to evolve. Each of the different partner organizations is getting new opportunities, getting new funding, getting new information. Unless that’s shared, communicated, and directions can be changed and adapted to, partnerships will change. And the final word to leave – I was told that nothing will work, but something might. And that’s probably the end thing to take away from this. Nothing’s sure with partnerships, but if you give it a try and you stick to a lot of those different principles. You’ll go a long way to insuring that it might.