

Stakeholder Engagement Framework

July 2022



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Written by	Communication & Engagement Officer
Approved by	Chief Executive Officer

Revision history:

Version	Approved by	Approved date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Professional Standards Councils	August 2019	August 2019	This is a new framework
2.0	Councils	June 2022	July 2022	Reviewed and revised to support <i>Strategy 2025</i>



Aim

This stakeholder engagement framework supports the Professional Standards Councils in achieving their vision for professional and other occupational associations to lead the way in continuously improving the high standard of professional services to Australian consumers. Stakeholder engagement and participation are vital to the Councils delivering on their statutory objectives and the goals set out in *Strategy 2025*.

Engagement with stakeholders provides the Councils with a greater understanding of the key issues in professional standards regulation, and helps to build stakeholder capacity to meet regulatory requirements.

The Councils are committed to using open communication, reflecting on feedback, and taking action where appropriate.

Background

The Councils are independent statutory bodies established in each state and territory, with Commonwealth representation. They have specific responsibilities under professional standards legislation for assessing and approving applications for, and supervising the preparation of, professional standards schemes operated by occupational associations.

We seek to actively engage with occupational associations, regulators, policy makers, consumer organisations, researchers and many others to engage with us in delivering the national system for professional standards regulation.

This Framework

The stakeholder engagement framework sets out:

- who we will engage with
- how we will engage
- principles to guide our engagement
- challenges to consider
- strategies for success
- channels for stakeholders to provide feedback

Our stakeholders

The key stakeholders of the Councils are:

- regulated occupational associations, their officers, and members
- the public and consumers
- prospective applicant occupational associations
- Commonwealth, state and territory ministers
- Commonwealth, state and territory departments
- industry bodies



- the media, including sector-specific media
- other regulators
- insurers and actuaries
- professional advisers and consultants who work with associations, and
- academics and researchers.

Stakeholder engagement principles

The Councils have adopted five principles to guide stakeholder engagement activities and the way in which we build working relationships. The principles are consistent with national and international stakeholder engagement standards and practices¹.

1. Purposeful

Every engagement starts with a clear understanding of what we want to achieve. We aim to

- engage stakeholders early in the process, to enable a meaningful contribution and relationship
- be aware of our stakeholders' objectives and their environment
- plan our communication to enhance the understanding of stakeholders participating in the process.

2. Collaborative consultation

We work with our stakeholders in partnership

- on issues of common interest and listen to their contributions
- In developing our approach to regulation using a variety of communication channels.

3. Informative and engaged

We provide our stakeholders with the information they need to participate by informing regulated associations of their obligations using policies, guidance notes, the Councils website, roundtables, workshops, and professional standards forums.

4. Transparent

We are open and honest in our engagement by

- providing information so stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way to foster understanding and better decision making.
- reporting back on the outcomes of engagement processes and reasons for our decisions.

5. Respectful

We acknowledge and respect the expertise, perspective and needs of stakeholders including by:

¹ Adapted from Department of Health, Stakeholder Engagement Framework, November 2018



- Recognising the differences in the in the architecture of the regulatory system for each profession and each jurisdiction.
- balancing the needs of established and emerging professions.
- Tailoring our approach for smaller and larger associations and jurisdictions.

How we will engage and types of activities

The Councils use a spectrum of stakeholder engagement based on the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum². As a regulator, engagement forms the foundation of our approach in encouraging and assisting associations to understand and meet their regulatory obligations and to build their self-regulatory capacity. It also forms the foundation of our approach in communicating and raising awareness of the benefits of professional standards schemes in improving consumer protections and professional standards. Different types of engagement are appropriate for different stakeholders. It will be appropriate to use one or more of these mechanisms, depending on the nature of the goal to be achieved.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
We will provide balanced, objective accurate and consistent information to assist stakeholders to understand the issues, opportunities and solutions	We will seek feedback from stakeholders, listen to and acknowledge concerns and inform them of the outcome of their feedback.	We will work directly with stakeholders to ensure their needs are directly and consistently understood and considered and provide feedback on the outcome of their contribution.	We will partner with the stakeholder, including the development of alternatives, making decisions and the identification of preferred solutions.	We will engage with stakeholders to build networks, create opportunities and empower groups to lead the development of initiatives.
What this looks like				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance notes - Social Media - Website - Email distribution - Annual Reports - Presentations - Correspondence - Resources for community and consumer organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus groups - Professional Standards Forums - Public or industry meetings - Surveys - Calls for comment - Briefings - Public notification - Exposure drafts of guidance notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops - Professional Standards Forums - Partnership/ agreements - Memorandum of Understanding - annual reporting requirements review - Scheme application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councils meetings - Committees - Roundtables - Contracts/legal agreements - Reference groups - Expert panels - Use of online collaboration tools - Working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint planning - Shared projects - Provision of data - Capacity building

² Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum: www.iap2.org.au (2019)



Priorities

Strategic priorities are identified each year by the Councils, that link with *Strategy 2025*. These then form the basis for the Authority’s annual stakeholder engagement plan. Our engagements are directed towards:



Working closely with associations to protect Australian consumers



Demanding high levels of professional standards from those that participate in professional standards schemes



Encouraging and assisting associations to develop their regulatory capacity.

Potential issue	Method for supporting success
Unclear purpose	If the purpose of the engagement is poorly defined, all the activities that follow will be affected, including the identification of stakeholders, determining the methods to be used, and managing stakeholder expectations. Councils may need to involve stakeholders in defining the purpose of the engagement.
Differing capacity of stakeholders	Stakeholders can sometimes have different levels of skills and experience in engaging with government. This can affect their ability to fully participate in an initiative, as well as the quality of the information they provide. Councils may need to work with some stakeholders to build their capacity to contribute.
Insufficient skills in the team and/or limited resourcing	Effective stakeholder engagement requires a specific skill set. The absence of the right skills or insufficient resourcing can hinder collaboration across organisational boundaries and make it hard to identify issues and opportunities. This can result in damaged relationships, and poor-quality advice and information. During the planning stages, Councils will identify skills available and the skills and resources required at subsequent stages.
Unfocused dialogue	Stakeholder engagement can cover a range of issues that are important to stakeholders but may be less so to the initiative. If this happens, it can distract from obtaining relevant input. The engagement plan should be clear on what issues are relevant and how to manage and respond to any ad hoc issues that are raised.



Failure to review and evaluate

Without robust review and evaluation, it is difficult to know if the approach is working and whether changes are needed. Failure to review and evaluate also reduces the ability to learn from and improve engagement. The engagement plan should include review points throughout the design and implementation, with flexibility to adjust the approach if needed.

Challenges and strategies for success

The Councils understand that there will be barriers to effective engagement and that we have a responsibility to identify and respond to them³. Effective monitoring, continual review and robust evaluation processes will assist the Councils to identify challenges and find solutions.

Performance measures

The Councils monitor progress in achieving stakeholder engagement goals under *Strategy 2025* through an analysis of:

- social media and website engagement analytics
- stakeholder feedback via our consultations and social media
- one-on-one interactions with stakeholders
- stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- satisfaction with website content and accessibility

Key performance indicators reported in the Councils' combined Annual Report to responsible ministers include:

- Number and type of engagements – quantitative and qualitative
- Stakeholder feedback on engagements – quantitative and qualitative
- Research and guidance reach and impact – quantitative and qualitative
- Net Promoter Score: a customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement taken from asking stakeholders how likely they are to recommend the Councils' services to others, expressed as a number from minus 100 to 100
- Impact of engagements with regulated associations
- Improving visibility of schemes and consumer benefits

³ Adapted from Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC), 2013, *Cabinet Implementation Toolkit*.



Feedback

The Councils welcome your feedback – whether compliments, suggestions or complaints. What you tell us can help to improve our planning, foster innovation and identify potential issues for resolution.

You can provide feedback by contacting us through

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