

Stakeholder Engagement Framework

August 2019



Aim

This stakeholder engagement framework was developed to support the Professional Standards Councils in achieving their mission to regulate occupational associations to facilitate and promote consumer protection through improvement of professional standards under approved schemes. Stakeholder engagement and participation are vital to Councils delivering on their statutory objectives and the goals set out in *Strategy 2021*.

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

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

Councils acknowledge that this engagement framework has been modelled on the good practices of Commonwealth, state and territory regulators.

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 application of, professional standards schemes operated by occupational associations.

Purpose

The stakeholder engagement framework sets out:

- who we will engage
- 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 professional and occupational associations, their staff, and members
- the public and consumers
- professional and 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.



How we will engage and types of activities

The Councils use a spectrum of stakeholder engagement based on the one developed by the International Association for Public Participation¹. 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. 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 	<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 - PSIP 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

¹ Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum: www.iap2.org (2007)



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 practices².

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.

² Adapted from Department of Health, Stakeholder Engagement Framework, May 2017



- 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.

Priorities and resourcing

Strategic priorities are identified each year by Councils, that link with *Strategy 2021*. These then form the basis for the Authority's annual stakeholder engagement plan. Limited resources will ensure that the priorities identified are carefully targeted.

Challenges and strategies for success

Councils understand that there will be barriers to effective engagement and that we have a responsibility to identify and respond to them³.

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



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	Effective stakeholder engagement requires a specific skill set. The absence of the right skills 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 skills 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.

The measures of our success will include:

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



Feedback

Councils welcome your feedback – whether compliments, suggestions or complaints. What you tell us can help us improve our services or correct a problem we may not have been aware of.

You can provide feedback by contacting us at pscinfo@psc.gov.au.

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