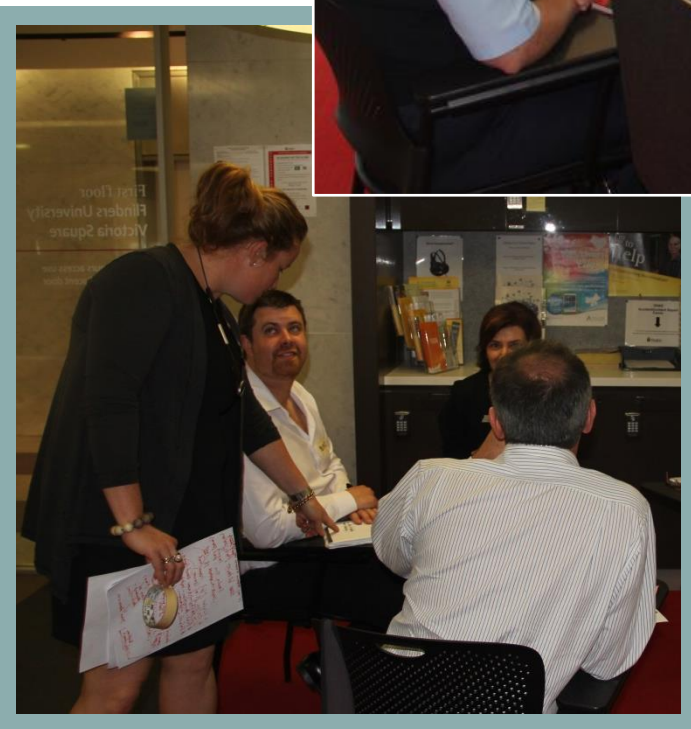




Government of South Australia
Department for Correctional Services

2014 - 2016

DCS Strategic Partnerships Engagement Framework



Dear colleagues,

DCS plays a crucial role in the South Australian community and specifically in the criminal justice system. The work that we do in relation to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders relies heavily on strong, meaningful engagement with our strategic partners.

Partnerships with the non-government sector are integral to providing the best targeted opportunities possible to reduce reoffending.

The importance of these partnerships is reflected in the Department's 2013-2014 Business Plan addressing Community Engagement. The Department aims to "strengthen partnerships between the Department and the Non-Government sector, to improve community engagement" and also to "increase community engagement and the understanding of Corrections."

This Framework is particularly important in helping to achieve these outcomes by ensuring our strategic partners' needs can be considered in our decision making practices in a consistent and transparent way.

The Strategic Partnerships Engagement Framework also helps to meet the Premier's Seven Strategic Priorities, in particular 'safe communities, healthy neighbourhoods'. The Framework achieves this by providing an accountable, open process for how the Department will engage with the non-Government sector to provide these opportunities.

For our department, the creation of partnerships can lead to many benefits, including gaining local knowledge, resources and skills to provide opportunities that otherwise might not be possible.

The Framework will provide guidance for both current and future strategic partnership engagement activities, as well as the context in which DCS will plan and implement the strategic partnerships engagement activities. It also sets out the principles we are committed to when undertaking these engagement activities.

David Brown

Chief Executive

Department for Correctional Services

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1. Introduction

The Department for Correctional Services (DCS) is proud of its partnering activities with a range of non-government organisations, businesses, research and tertiary institutions and third sector communities. The outcomes achieved through these collaborations have helped provide opportunities to prisoners and offenders that we could never have delivered alone.

The development of this Strategic Partnerships Engagement Framework will help meet the Premier's Seven Strategic Priorities, specifically 'safe communities, healthy neighbourhoods' by providing an accountable, transparent process for how we will engage with individuals, groups and organisations to provide these opportunities.

This Framework works towards this outcome by ensuring our strategic partners' needs can be consistently and transparently considered in our decision making processes, as well as providing an opportunity to promote our expectations of our partners.

The core objectives of our Stakeholder Partnerships Engagement Framework are to:

- Improve the way we communicate and engage with strategic partners.
- Facilitate our ability to understand and respond to stakeholder partner concerns and interests and incorporate them into our reintegrative activities and decision making processes.
- Build greater cohesion with our stakeholder partners to deliver effective and innovative reintegrative pathways.
- Identify and explore opportunities to engage new strategic partners.
- Build trust and confidence in DCS as a potential strategic partner.
- Promote the achievement of effective reintegrative pathways for prisoners and offenders.



2. Welcome to DCS

DCS has an important role in the criminal justice system in South Australia. It is a key strategy that offenders under supervision by the Department are offered meaningful and targeted opportunities to address their offending behaviour to break the cycle of crime.

Some of these opportunities are provided to offenders still in prison to help them prepare for release back into the community while other opportunities are available to offenders already in the community. Our strategic partnerships are crucial to being able to provide opportunities for both.

To help achieve these strategy outcomes, DCS engages the services and expertise of multiple strategic partners. While some strategic partners have a long history with DCS, new strategic partnerships are always being considered to help improve the outcomes of those affected by criminal behaviour.

Our commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships to help reintegrate offenders back into the community or support those already in the community is further demonstrated by its inclusion in our 2013/2014 Business Plan.

3. Benefits of Strategic Partnerships

Numerous benefits can be achieved by those involved in an effective strategic partnership. For an external partner, it can mean contributing at various levels to departmental policy, projects and programmes, thereby assisting the department to achieve its core objectives.

For our department, it can mean accessing local resources, knowledge and expertise to provide opportunities that we might otherwise not have been able to.

Effective strategic partnerships translate into the ability to promote:

- Improved service coordination and delivery
- Reduced inefficiency and duplication
- Strengthened partnering work
- Opportunities for innovation
- Improved accountability
- Improved risk management processes
- Improved outcomes for prisoners and offenders

4. Purpose of the Engagement Framework

The purpose of our Framework is to provide the context in which we will plan and implement our strategic partnerships engagement activities. It also sets out the principles we are committed to when undertaking these engagement activities.

The Framework sets out the:

- Scope of our engagement activities – who we will engage with and the kinds of issues we will engage strategic partners on.
- Principles that will guide our engagement activities.
- Levels of engagement we will use to engage our strategic partners, recognising that engagement activities must appropriately reflect the decisions, activities and processes we are seeking to engage on.
- Process used to identify, engage and maintain our strategic partnerships.
- Review process of the Framework.



5. Engagement principles

We have adopted a principles based approach to engaging with our strategic partners. These engagement principles are based upon the collaborative work with our strategic partners and potential partners during a workshop in December 2013. The principles derived from this workshop however, are not absolutes as specific issues will be more relevant to some strategic partners than to others. Each of our engagement principles is viewed as being reciprocal in nature. That is, we would expect that our strategic partners are also guided by these principles.

Principle 1 – Communication

DCS will provide information to strategic partners where they may be affected by a departmental policy, project, programme or strategy to allow them to participate in an informed and meaningful way. An annual forum for our strategic partners will be held to provide information and seek feedback on our engagement activities and processes from the previous year.

Strategies DCS will pursue:

- Promote opportunities for mutual ownership of the communication process.
- Maintain professional and ethical standards of communication with all of its strategic partners.
- Use the strategic partner's preferred way of communicating with the department, accommodating any changes to this preference.
- Provide opportunities for strategic partners to contribute to policy, projects and programmes where they possess recognised levels of expertise and experience.
- Commitment to communicate changes to our processes and policies that have an impact on the strategic partnership.
- Establish clear and realistic timeframes for the partners to provide input and receive feedback on projects, policy or programmes when it impacts on the strategic partnership.
- Provide feedback to strategic partners on consultation processes they were involved in or effected by, in accordance with the Levels of Strategic Partner Engagement Scale (table 1)
- Establish annual Strategic Partnerships Forums.
- Promote opportunities for new strategic partners to engage with DCS.

Principle 2 – Transparency

DCS will be open and honest in its undertakings with its strategic partners. This will include exploring opportunities to improve transparency based on strategic partnership feedback.

Strategies DCS will pursue:

- Clear communication to the strategic partners of the purpose of the engagement activity, the role of the strategic partner and the anticipated outcomes from the engagement including what is negotiable and what is not negotiable.
- Seek to understand, acknowledge and actively monitor the concerns and expectations of our strategic partners throughout the engagement process.
- Develop feedback mechanisms to strategic partners, including how their input contributed to the decision making process or outcome.
- Provide information on any changes to the engagement process or objectives.
- Explore opportunities for new strategic partners to improve their level of understanding about DCS core business, thereby building their capacity to engage with the department.

Principle 3 – Relevancy

DCS will conduct its engagement activities with its strategic partners according to the nature of the issue, the level of influence and impact the strategic partner has on the issue as well as how the issue can influence and impact the strategic partner.

Strategies DCS will pursue:

- Review its engagement activities with each strategic partner on an annual basis, taking into account any changes to funding arrangements, new technologies, changes in policy, government etc. This review will be conducted with each strategic partner to ensure understanding, commitment and accountability is maintained.
- Ensure strategic partners are kept informed of changes to policy, projects or programmes that impact the strategic partnership.

6. Levels of Strategic Partnership Engagement

Levels of engagement activities can vary from an information exchange to participating in fully integrated, ongoing multi-agency service delivery.

DCS engages with various individuals, groups and organisations on a range of issues. Not all issues will affect everyone and not all issues will affect everyone equally. To communicate effectively with its strategic partners, DCS uses the below table to help inform which strategic partners, and at what level, engagement activities should occur.

Table 1 Stakeholder Partner Engagement Scale.¹

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Characteristics	One way engagement	Limited two-way engagement	Two-way or multi-way engagement	Two-way or multi-way engagement, joint decision making and actions	Decisions delegated to you.
Our promise to strategic partners	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision	We will work with you so your concerns and issues can be directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how you input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide.
Strategic partner participation goals	We will keep you informed	To obtain your input on analysis, proposed solutions and outcomes	To work directly with you throughout the process.	To partner with you in the process, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	Place the final decision making in your hands
Example of engagement tools	Newsletter Media releases Website Corporate documents	Meetings with selected stakeholder partners	Stakeholder forums Workshops	Participatory decision making partnerships	Delegated decisions

¹ The DCS strategic partnership engagement spectrum is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

7. Building Strategic Partnerships

The model below outlines a three stage process for identifying, engaging and maintaining a new or existing partnership. The first stage identifies the steps involved in identifying potential strategic partners. The second stage identifies the steps involved in building the strategic partnership and the final stage identifies the steps involved in maintaining the strategic partnership.

1. Strategic Partnership Exploration

1. Determine the engagement objective and goal(s) for the policy, project or programme.
2. Identify the engagement parameters:
 - Stage of the policy, project, or programme.
 - Type of stakeholder partner(s) being engaged.
 - Local, State or National
3. Anticipated or expected contribution from the partnership partners:
 - Resources
 - Money
 - Time
 - Staff
 - Expertise
4. Identify potential strategic partners:
 - Brainstorm for additional strategic partners
5. Categorise the strategic partnership groups:
 - Government agencies, industry groups, NGO's, research, consumer groups etc.
6. Analyse the potential strategic partnership based upon:
 - Credibility
 - Reputation
 - Legitimacy
 - Reliability
 - Image
 - Resource implications
7. Map the strategic partnership:
 - Map stakeholder partnership relationships and patterns of influence
 - Map stakeholder partnership-issue relationship
8. Develop a communication plan.

2. Strategic Partnership Building

1. Identify the common strategic interests of the partnership.
2. Negotiate the strategic partnership Agreement.
3. Build stakeholder partner's capacity to contribute:
 - Access to relevant networks
 - Access to appropriate technology
 - Improved content knowledge

3. Strategic Partnership Maintenance

1. Review and Evaluate partnership performance and re-negotiate if necessary.
2. Review annually unless:
 - Critical event
 - New obligation(s)
 - Public strategic partnership scrutiny

8. Review of this Framework

DCS will review this Framework every three years to coincide with its Strategic Plan to see how effectively we have demonstrated these principles. Informal monitoring of the effectiveness of the Framework will be ongoing and based upon feedback from both internal and external stakeholder partners.

9. Conclusion

With the increase in opportunities for cross-sector strategic partnerships and collaboration, the need arose for a Framework to support these activities and processes. The principles for our engagement activities and processes were derived from a 2013 workshop with both current and potential strategic partners.

This Framework provides guidance for both current and future strategic partnership engagement activities, outlining the key principles to be followed and the appropriate level of engagement according to the issue, and level of influence and impact on the strategic partner.

The Framework will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with the DCS Strategic Plan. This process will ensure our strategic partnerships remain strategic, relevant, and accountable in helping to deliver better outcomes for prisoners and offenders.



Based on the AER Stakeholder Engagement Framework released October 2013