



# Mapping your stakeholders

Identifying and planning stakeholder engagement throughout the life of a change project is critical to its success.

You must identify the full suite of stakeholders, not just the primary recipients of the change.

This means everyone from policymakers and practitioners through to citizens and communities. Each stakeholder group is likely to have different views and perspectives and different communication needs.

You need to carefully plan effective engagement with each of these groups.

Communication is only one form of stakeholder engagement. You must also consider consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering, as well as involving stakeholders in the decision-making process.

## How to do it

Consider stakeholder management early in the change process and throughout the journey. Stakeholder engagement is often an iterative process, and you must maintain feedback channels after testing solutions. There are three core steps and five sub-steps shown below.

These guidelines are the preferred process for managing organisational change but are not definitive.

### 1. Set up for success

- Identify stakeholders and their objectives
- Map stakeholders by influence and impact

### 2. Nurture the stakeholder environment

- Develop clear principles for engagement
- Prepare and engage stakeholders

### 3. Present results to stakeholder groups

- Close the loop with stakeholders by showing how input has informed decisions

# A common starting point

## Change Management Toolkit

### Step 1.1 – Identify and prioritise stakeholders

Ask two questions to check whether someone is a stakeholder:

1. Will they have an impact on the success of the change project?
2. Will they be impacted by the change project?

Remember that some of your most important stakeholders may sit outside your organisation. For example, other organisations may be able to contribute ideas from their experience or may be affected by the change, particularly if it affects any of their communities.

In some instances, there is a requirement to engage with or consult specific stakeholders, such as employee associations, make sure these stakeholders are identified and prioritised.

### Step 1.2 – Analyse stakeholders in terms of influence and impact

This process helps to determine each stakeholder's level of involvement in the change process and where they will fit within the broader engagement strategy. This process should inform the development of your communication plan.

Use a stakeholder map to compare individual stakeholders or groups in terms of:

- their ability to influence change outcomes
- the extent to which they are impacted by the change
- their level of awareness of the change
- their level of support.

For large and complex changes, it may be useful to map stakeholder networks to understand and influence a complex stakeholder environment. This analysis may involve:

- investigating the balance of power involved in relation to the change
- identifying priority stakeholders and target groups (for example using attributes such as power, legitimacy and urgency)
- determining how to influence each group to support successful change.

### Step 2.1 – Nurture and influence the stakeholder environment

The South Australian Government's [Better Together: Principles of Engagement](#) initiative provides six principles to guide stakeholder engagement. While these are designed to promote best practice in citizen-centric governance, they also apply to all stakeholder engagement.

The principles are:

1. We know why we are engaging and communicate this clearly
2. We know who to engage
3. We understand the background and history



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### Change Management Toolkit

4. We begin early
5. We are genuine
6. We are creative, relevant and engaging.

These principles are a good starting point and can be translated into more detailed, specific strategies to guide all your stakeholder engagement activities.

#### Step 2.2 – Prepare and engage stakeholders

Once you have finalised your overall engagement principles, you can begin to plan stakeholder engagement using the **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan** resource.

Use the plan to describe in greater detail the classifications of engagement that you assigned to stakeholders when you completed the stakeholder prioritisation exercise. This aims to ensure you do not over-promise the level of involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Some changes will be directive, where stakeholders are informed of decisions already made. While other more collaborative change projects require a more inclusive engagement process. The right strategy is critical to managing stakeholders' expectations.