

# Stakeholder Engagement Framework

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**WA Primary  
Health Alliance**  
Better health, together

**phn**  
PERTH NORTH, PERTH SOUTH,  
COUNTRY WA

An Australian Government Initiative

## Foreword

The Commissioning for Better Health Program published in April 2019 outlines our commitment to develop the commissioning capabilities of WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA). Integral to this program are the strong partnerships and trusting relationships we have across the diversity of stakeholders in primary care.

As noted in Commissioning for Better Health, 'commissioning for primary care services is a relational and not a transactional activity. It values and focusses on building and continually developing strong partnerships as the basis for providing person-centred care.'<sup>1</sup>

I encourage all WAPHA stakeholders to actively engage with us and contribute to our own learning and growth in the practice of stakeholder engagement.

We are maturing in our own engagement approaches, working to improve on our inclusivity, transparency and accountability to stakeholders. We know that this requires us to welcome and facilitate more opportunities for stakeholders to be engaged with all aspects of our work. This will require us to develop our own capacity to truly collaborate and empower others through our engagement practice.

We see that as a facilitator of systems integration, WAPHA has a role in bringing people together to share the strengths and maximise the opportunities that will strengthen our primary care sector and ultimately improve health equity in Western Australia.

Learne Durrington  
CEO, WA Primary Health Alliance



<sup>1</sup> WA Primary Health Alliance 2019 Commissioning for Better Health available online: [www.wapha.org.au/about-us/what-we-do/commissioning](http://www.wapha.org.au/about-us/what-we-do/commissioning)



## Background

At WAPHA the practice of stakeholder engagement refers to the ways in which the knowledge, skills and experience of our stakeholders is actively sought and used to shape the direction we take.

WAPHA has a vision of improved health equity in Western Australia which can only be achieved through strong relationships with the diverse stakeholders that contribute to the whole health system.

WAPHA believes that meaningful stakeholder engagement is essential to ensure that commissioned services are appropriate and address local health needs. Continuing to understand the changing needs and context of all our stakeholders is essential for WAPHA to achieve our vision.

WAPHA has committed to developing our approach to co-design and co-production to move engagement practice towards collaborative processes that bring together all the people who inform and influence our work. This includes leading, promoting and supporting stakeholder engagement at an individual level, service level, sector level and system level through our role as a commissioner of primary care services in WA.

WAPHA follows the commissioning cycle defined by the Australian Government Department of Health to guide all PHNs. WAPHA facilitates practices and processes to engage stakeholders at all levels and through all stages of this cycle, from planning through to monitoring and evaluating.



## Defining stakeholders and stakeholder engagement

The AccountAbility 1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard<sup>2</sup> defines stakeholders as "those groups who affect and/or could be affected by an organisation's activities, products or services and associated performance. This does not include all those who may have knowledge of or views about an organisation. Organisations will have many stakeholders, each with distinct types and levels of involvement, and often with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and concerns.

Stakeholder engagement is the process used by an organisation to engage relevant stakeholders for a purpose to achieve agreed outcomes."

## Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Framework

This framework provides a guide for WAPHA teams and stakeholders as we deliver an engagement approach that facilitates a culture of inclusion and collaboration to improve health equity in WA.

The purpose of the framework is to support a consistent and shared approach to engaging with stakeholders in delivery of our strategic priorities of:

- health equity and access
- person centred models of care
- integrated and outcomes focussed commissioning
- strong partnerships
- primary care capability.

WAPHA's approach to stakeholder engagement is informed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values and public participation spectrum. WAPHA aims to reflect the IAP2 core values in the way we engage with our stakeholders.

WAPHA has also drawn on the extensive work recently undertaken by WA Department of Health, Mental Health Commission and the Australian Government Department of Health, in the development of complementary frameworks.

<sup>2</sup> Accountability 2015. AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES)  
Available at: [www.accountability.org/standards](http://www.accountability.org/standards)

## Principles

WAPHA has adopted the Australian Government Department of Health's Stakeholder Engagement Principles as articulated in its Stakeholder Engagement Framework.<sup>3</sup>

### Purposeful

We begin every engagement with a clear understanding of what we want to achieve.

- While our engagement will be driven by our strategic priorities, we must be aware of our stakeholders' objectives, environment, expertise and level of influence.
- When we know why we need to engage and we agree on what success looks like, it is easier to conduct focussed and meaningful engagement.
- By planning our communication and managing expectations, we aim to build lasting goodwill with stakeholders participating in the process and develop an understanding about their capacity to engage.

### Inclusive

We identify relevant stakeholders and make it easy for them to engage.

- We identify and enable the participation of those people and organisations who contribute to, influence, or are affected by our work. This includes those that may be harder to reach for reasons such as language, culture, age or mobility.
- We provide our stakeholders with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

### Timely

We involve stakeholders from the start and agree on when and how to engage.

- We will clearly identify and explain the engagement process, and negotiate with stakeholders, where possible, as to timelines.
- This includes meeting schedules, and response times for information requests or feedback.

### Transparent

We are open and honest in our engagement and set clear expectations.

- We will provide information so stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way and will foster a culture of sharing ideas.
- We will clearly identify and explain the engagement process, the role of stakeholders in the engagement process, and communicate how their input will inform the project.

### Respectful

We acknowledge and respect the expertise, perspective, and needs of stakeholders.

- We understand that engagement is a two-way process.
- We take care to be open to alternative views and to listen as well as speak.
- We respect our stakeholders' expertise and appreciate the benefits of mutual learning.
- We recognise the different communication needs and preferences of stakeholders and endeavour to meet these wherever possible.

<sup>3</sup> Stakeholder Engagement Framework 2018, Australian Government Department of Health. Available at: [beta.health.gov.au/resources/publications/stakeholder-engagement-framework](https://beta.health.gov.au/resources/publications/stakeholder-engagement-framework)

## Stakeholders

WAPHA recognises that there is great diversity amongst those who can affect and can be affected by our work. Taking a co-ordinated and inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement is essential for all areas of the organisation.

## Targeted and tailored engagement approaches

WAPHA gives consideration to the specific interests and needs of each stakeholder it seeks to work with, promoting and supporting an inclusive approach in all activities. This is reflected in a range of ways, including in the timing and methods of engagement used, the materials that support engagement and the communication channels used with stakeholders.

Stakeholder participation is also recognised and supported through paid participation policies for community, consumers, family and carers and for general practitioners, specialists and allied health professionals. These policies include provision for enablers to engagement such as use of translators and child care costs where these are identified barriers to participation.

Video conferencing, telephone and online methods, supported by appropriate facilitation, are essential considerations to encourage participation.

Additional considerations are needed when engaging with community, consumers, family and carers and specific population groups. WAPHA particularly draws on the expertise and insight from the Mental Health Commission's Working Together: Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Engagement Framework 2018-2025<sup>4</sup>, when engaging with consumers and their support persons (families, carers, significant others, friends and advocates) and uses You Matter<sup>5</sup> as a resource to support WAPHA teams when engaging groups who have historically been recognised as being harder to reach when it comes to engagement with health services.

Engagement with Aboriginal people is guided by WAPHA's Aboriginal Health Team with further advice available through the Strategic Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group.

<sup>4</sup> Government of Western Australia Mental Health Commission 2018 Working Together Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Engagement Framework 2018-2025.  
Available at: [www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/consumer-family-and-carer-participation/statewide-engagement-framework-and-toolkit/](http://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/consumer-family-and-carer-participation/statewide-engagement-framework-and-toolkit/)

<sup>5</sup> Western Australian Department of Health 2017. Quality Improvement and Change Management Unit. You Matter: A Guideline to support engagement with consumers, carers, communities and clinicians in health.  
Available at: [ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Consumer-carer-and-community-engagement](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Consumer-carer-and-community-engagement)



## Co-design in the PHN commissioning context

The Australian Government Department of Health has set a broad interpretation of co-design for PHNs.

"Co-design... brings together various stakeholder as a mechanism for better informing and supporting commissioning by harnessing a range of views, ideas and experiences ... This approach goes beyond consultation and involves PHNs working closely with providers, communities, other stakeholder and potentially other co-commissioners..."<sup>6</sup>

Delivery of the Commissioning for Better Health program prioritises building engagement of community, consumer, family and carers into all stages of the commissioning cycle to ensure that this critical voice is heard alongside clinical and commissioner perspectives.

## Engagement methods

WAPHA takes a planned approach to all engagement. Advice from the Stakeholder Engagement Team informs engagement planning, promoting use of engagement methods that are appropriate to the scope of the work and to the target stakeholders.

To support consistency and shared expectations between WAPHA teams and stakeholders, standard titles and core terms of reference for the types of structured engagement 'groups' convene.

### Focus groups

**Consult.**

To provide insight to a project from a particular stakeholder perspective. Focus groups are usually brought together as a one off activity.

### Working groups

**Involve/collaborate.**

To work on a specific problem and/or task, often reporting into other committee or group structures. They are task oriented, with an often narrow remit within which to recommend priorities and work up concepts and ideas from a practical and operational perspective.

### Steering committees

**Involve/collaborate/empower.**

To guide the development and implementation of a project or activity, provide leadership, oversight and direction, monitor progress and delegate actions to within the membership and to others.

### Expert advisory groups or reference groups

**Consult/involve.**

For seeking strategic, independent, timely guidance, advice or options from a range of experts in a given area. They provide insight and input from their field of expertise for consideration in the development and delivery of a program or activity.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Government Department of Health 2018. Co-design in the PHN commissioning context available at: [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/PHNCommissioningResources](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/PHNCommissioningResources)



## Stakeholder workshops

### Consult.

To gather insight from a large and diverse group of stakeholders to inform process, direction and seek feedback or input.

## Open forums

### Inform.

To present information and provide a structured opportunity for discussion that focuses on establishing a shared understanding across stakeholders.

## Stakeholder panel

### Consult.

WAPHA has established a Stakeholder Panel to assist with timely consultation with stakeholders. The panel is open for all stakeholders to join and enables us to be targeted in our engagement, supporting timely and purposeful consultation.

## Better Health, Together

### Consult.

WAPHA also supports stakeholders to give their input to WAPHA on a continuous basis through the Better Health, Together platform. This is one method through which we gather, collate and theme qualitative and quantitative information from all stakeholders in primary care.

Information shared through Better Health, Together assists with WAPHA's understanding of the current and emerging health needs and trends, as a complement to all other structured and informal consultation.



## Clinical and Community Councils

Clinical Committees, Clinical Councils and Community Advisory Councils are strategic level advisory groups. These structures operate as part of WAPHA's contractual requirement to the Australian Government Department of Health and are an essential element of WAPHA's governance.

The role of Community Advisory Councils is to provide community-grounded strategic advice to the WAPHA Board from the consumer perspective. Clinical Committees and Councils provide advice from a clinical perspective.

The Strategic Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Group holds the role of bringing the Aboriginal community, service and policy sectors' insights to the work of WAPHA.

Advice from Councils and Committees is provided to the Board through regular reports via the Strategic Engagement Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Board.

Councils and Committees work through the WAPHA Stakeholder Engagement team to draw on any of the identified structured engagement methods to inform the advice they provide to the WAPHA Board.

## Members and partners

WAPHA has established formalised relationships where appropriate through memberships, agreed partnerships and memoranda of understanding with stakeholders who have made a commitment to collaboration. These formalised relationships acknowledge a joint commitment to a shared common agenda and are part of WAPHA's strategy to achieve system level innovation and change.

Visit [www.wapha.org.au](http://www.wapha.org.au) for a list of current WAPHA members.

## Continuous improvement of our engagement practice

WAPHA welcomes feedback from stakeholders that can help us to continuously improve our stakeholder engagement practice. Where possible evaluation forms are distributed at the end of structured engagement initiatives and feedback is welcome at any time through our online engagement platform, Primary Health Exchange

|                           | Inform   | Consult  | Involve   | Collaborate   | Empower  |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Public Participation Goal | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.  | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.  | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.                               | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| Promise to the Public     | We will keep you informed.   | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions/ outcomes to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide.                         |

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[www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)

## Contribute to a shared vision of improved health equity in WA

Share your insight through Better Health, Together or visit [www.phexchange.wapha.org.au](http://www.phexchange.wapha.org.au) to register to join WAPHA's online stakeholder panel.



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