# INSPIRING AUSTRALIA FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

Australia aspires to be an innovative society with a scientifically engaged community and a technologically skilled workforce. The *Inspiring Australia* strategy aims to build a strong, open relationship between science and society underpinned by effective communication of science and its uses.

The Australian, State and Territory Governments have agreed that by working together the goal of a scientifically engaged Australia will be far more attainable. To give expression to that desire for collaboration these governments agree to work together towards the implementation of the *Inspiring Australia* Strategy so that a coherent approach to science communication across Australia can be developed.

This *Framework of Principles* supports this collaboration. It has been adopted by the Australian, State and Territory Governments to guide policy development and program implementation for science communication initiatives at a national and state level.

## Purpose of the Framework

The *Framework of Principles* is intended to guide, rather than mandate, government involvement in science communication initiatives. It sets out to:

* define and improve standards;
* promote consistency of best practice;
* optimise appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency; and
* increase accessibility.

Firstly the principles recognise these key features as essential for quality science communication:

1. **strategic** direction and goals;
2. **relevance** to Australians;
3. **credible** science;
4. defined **target audience;**
5. **evaluation;** and
6. program **design** which enables effective delivery.

Secondly, the principles guide the involvement of governments by addressing the importance of:

1. support for **a scientifically engaged Australia** as articulated in the *Inspiring Australia* report;
2. clarity on the need for **government involvement**;
3. consideration of **government collaboration** across the commonwealth, states and territories; and
4. responsiveness to Australia’s demands and **needs**.

## Principles and Guiding Considerations for Initiatives

### Principles essential for quality science communication

#### Principle 1: Strategy

**Includes a clearly articulated strategy with purpose, expected outcomes and key performance indicators.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* The stated goals and outcomes in the strategy are linked.
* Measurable performance indicators.

#### Principle 2: Relevance

**Targets identified needs, priorities and trends.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* Current issues, needs and priorities relevant to Australians are targeted.
* Feedback and adaptability to ensure ongoing relevance to target audience are enabled.

#### Principle 3: Credibility

**Demonstrates credible, defensible and accurate science.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* Rigour, accuracy and authority of the science being communicated.
* Sufficient qualified personnel are available for implementation and to address any challenge relating to credibility.

#### Principle 4: Target Audience

**Designed with a defined target audience(s) in mind.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* The audience is considered for its science interest and engagement as well as geographic and demographic factors.
* Accessibility and delivery mechanisms appropriate to the target audience are incorporated.

#### Principle 5: Evaluation

**Provides for adequate evaluation.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* An appropriate evaluation strategy is employed to assess key performance indicators and outcomes, and accounts for issues/difficulties in measuring long-term outcomes.
* Evaluation results are shared to provide performance feedback to government to guide and inform future improvement and investment.

#### Principle 6: Design

**Has clear rationale for its delivery mechanism**

*Guiding Considerations*

* The most effective mechanism is indentified for the strategy, and incorporates sufficient flexibility to maintain relevance or to be scaled-up as required.
* Potential risks are identified, assessed and mitigated.

### Principles to guide government involvement

#### Principle 7: A Scientifically Engaged Australia

**Actively works towards a scientifically engaged Australia[[1]](#footnote-1) as broadly outlined in the *Inspiring Australia* report**

*Guiding Considerations*

* Contributes to a scientifically engaged Australia addressing one or more of the 15 Inspiring Australia recommendations.
* Addresses a government science communication priority as identified by the Inspiring Australia strategy and/or State and Territory priority areas.

#### Principle 8: Government Involvement

**The rationale for government being involved or not involved is clearly identified, and supported by the best available, relevant evidence**

*Guiding Considerations*

* The rationale for government involvement considers alignment with existing activity, cost/benefit analyses and the best available evidence to address appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency factors.
* Alternatives to government support are considered.

Principle 9: Government Collaboration  
**Collaboration opportunity and consideration of the most appropriate government(s) to be responsible for design and delivery**

*Guiding Considerations*

* Collaboration with other governments is considered, undertaken or supported
* Is assessed for its appropriateness to national, state or territory government involvement.

#### Principle 10: Need

**Identification of needs and/or priorities.**

*Guiding Considerations*

* The need is articulated as a response to identified gaps, opportunities and demand as supported by the best available, relevant evidence
* Aligns strategically with one or more priorities as articulated in the *Inspiring Australia* report or other government policy.

1. For a definition of a “scientifically engaged Australia” please refer to pp 2-4 Section 1.1 of “Inspiring Australia – a national strategy for engagement with the sciences” at [www.innovation.gov.au/inspiringaustralia](http://www.innovation.gov.au/inspiringaustralia) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)