

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:

7. support for **a scientifically engaged Australia** as articulated in the *Inspiring Australia* report;
8. clarity on the need for **government involvement**;
9. consideration of **government collaboration** across the commonwealth, states and territories; and
10. 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 identified 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 Australia¹ 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