



Department of Human Services

Social Impact Framework



Government
of South Australia



human
services



University of
South Australia

The Australian Alliance for
Social Enterprise (TAASE)

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Acknowledgement of Country

The South Australian Government acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the State's first people and recognises their traditional relationship with Country. We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal people come from their traditional lands and waters, and that the cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are still of importance today.



The Social Impact Framework

Supporting service providers and government to assess how well a program is meeting the evidence-based conditions for social impact.

The framework represents a significant shift in thinking about how government:



assesses and optimises the impact that community sector and government activities have on society.



builds collaborative partnerships with the non-government sector.

Research, provider expertise and the lived experience of people accessing services show that a program, new initiative or service has the best chance of creating social impact if they are:

1

aligned to clearly defined purposes and outcomes

2

able to meet best-practice service design criteria

3

delivered through a partnership with service providers

How was the framework developed?

The framework has been developed with the Department of Human Services (DHS) by the Australian Alliance for Social enterprise (TAASE) at the University of South Australia.

The framework was informed by:

- national and international literature and research
- best practice case studies in human services reform and contemporary commissioning practice
- feedback from a Social Impact Steering Committee, with representation of DHS and community services sector leaders
- targeted consultation with DHS contract managers, policy developers and procurement advisers
- community services sector survey inputs from January 2019 and sector consultation on Australian Service Excellence Standards
- the DHS Strategic Plan
- South Australian Not for Profit Funding Rules and Guidelines (SANFRAG) Principles, now known as Premiers Circular 044
- DHS Commissioning Strategy
- a review of all program logic and outcomes for funded programs in DHS community and family services.

Sector consultation

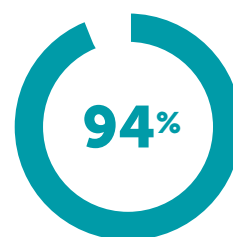
Following initial development, the draft framework was refined and strengthened with input from the sector and the strategic guidance of the DHS-funded peak organisations.

The following consultations were also held:

- **4 focus group sessions** with community and family services peak organisations
- **2 provider ‘think-tank’ sessions** with 16 non-government providers of community and family services
- **targeted provider engagement** with additional 4 non-government providers
- **feedback session** with Critical Sector Friends with extensive expertise across human service fields (and no current funding arrangements with DHS)
- **feedback session** with Aboriginal-controlled organisations and advisers
- **a testing and trial** of the framework with 2 providers, one a multicultural organisation with predominantly CALD clients.



Peak organisations



Providers

were willing to work with DHS to utilise the framework.



Peak organisations and providers

were positive about the potential of the framework to:

- Assess DHS funded programs in a more consistent manner
- Build knowledge, capacity and collaboration within the sector.

How will it be used?

The framework can be used by both government funders and service providers to better articulate what the actual impact is coming from the activities we are investing in.

The framework provides an opportunity for government funders and service providers to better understand how a program or service is generating social impact.

This means impact that is:

**positive and meaningful
for people seeking support**

**extended in scope beyond
individuals to include families,
communities and societies**

**future-focused with the potential
to drive sustainable change in
lives and communities**

For providers, the framework presents an opportunity to assist government to better understand constraints and strengths in how services are being delivered and enables them to identify challenges and risks, as well as areas where additional government support or capacity building would be beneficial.

It also encourages providers to highlight successful approaches or innovations that could usefully be up-scaled or more broadly shared across a program or the wider sector.

For government, the framework provides a consistent and evidence-based mechanism to assess the individual, community and societal impacts that are being returned through its investment.



“

The Social Impact Framework acknowledges the inter-dependence of government and non-government providers.

Relationships are at the core of its success.”

DHS can use the framework to:

- **review** existing funding to enhance alignment and collaboration between funded programs and create greater whole-of-system coordination
- **assess** new initiatives or proposals for funding for their potential to generate social impact
- **identify** provider strengths and common areas where capacity building is required to strengthen impact potential
- **assess** investment across multiple programs (within a place-based location, across DHS or even other government agencies).

What difference can it make?

The framework will promote and enhance:

- alignment and coordination of activities to achieve agreed outcomes
- clarity in expectations about what funding is really trying to achieve
- the partnership between government funders and service providers by creating new forms of accountability
- the importance of informal networks, community strengths and the central role communities play in achieving broader social impact
- people-centred, strengths-based approaches to service provision that are informed by lived experience and the voices of people accessing services
- evidence-based interventions informed by data and local, community and provider knowledge
- innovation and targeted approaches to supporting a community
- our joint capacity to describe the impact we are looking to achieve for and with the people who access services
- collaboration and referral connections amongst service providers and other community organisations
- relationship-based commissioning and contract management that is open, based on trust and supports innovation and experimentation
- the potential for impact by identifying areas for capacity building and encouraging continuous improvement and best practice.

How does it work?

The Social Impact Framework provides the basis for government funders to have conversations with providers about their program and how they are working to meet each of the evidence-based conditions for social impact.

There are three key elements to the Social Impact Framework:

1

**Aligned to
outcomes**

**Social impact
objectives**

2

**Designed
for impact**

Design criteria

3

**Developed in
partnership**

**Partnership
principles**

These three elements are underpinned by an **Assessment Tool** that covers a range of discussion points, designed to spark deeper shared understanding of how a program, initiative or service is generating impact for individuals, families and communities.

1

Aligned to outcomes

Social Impact Objectives

The Social Impact Objectives (the Objectives) act as outcome clusters across investment in DHS to ensure there is a mechanism for greater whole-of-government coordination and assessment.

These Objectives also provide a broader framework for reporting purposes.

The Objectives are aimed to:



enhance strengths-based approaches to service support recognising assets



reflect place-based and community development principles

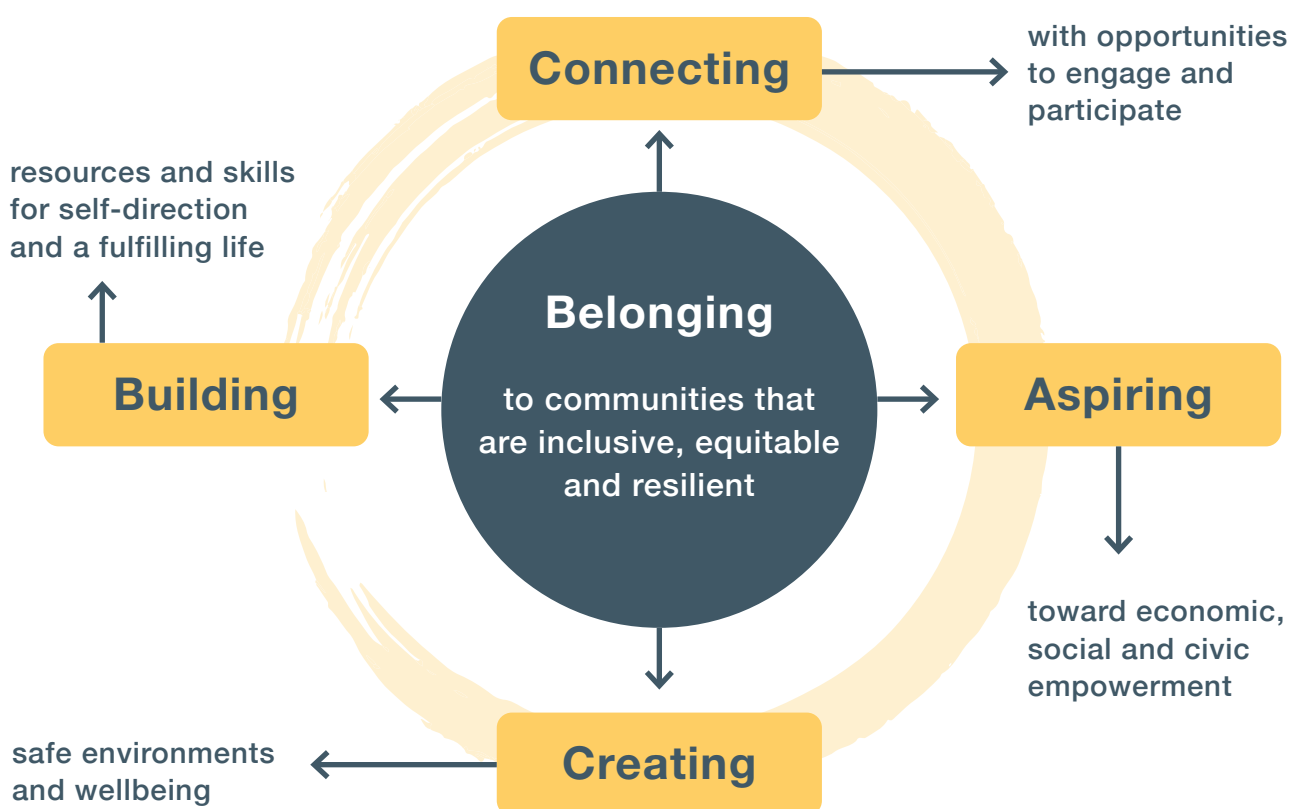


capture how individuals can improve the quality of their own life and contribute to broader social and economic outcomes.

Underpinning this shift toward outcomes-led investment is the need to foster more collaborative, cross-organisational approaches to tackling complex social problems and entrenched disadvantage within families and communities.

At a system level, achieving all five objectives will require a well-coordinated eco-system of interventions, with regular review to detect potential gaps, and in response, identify opportunities to create or extend partnerships to address those gaps.

Five objectives underpin quality of life, however, it is only when we take a system level view of investment that we see where and how individual programs, policies and strategies are contributing.



2

Designed for impact



Design criteria

The Design Criteria seeks to ensure individuals can access a continuum of support to meet their needs within a family, community, and place-based context.

The Design Criteria aims to:



enshrine best practice approaches to community and family services support across human services investment



systemise collaboration and partnerships.

“

The framework will enable government and providers to better **target their activities to achieve longer lasting outcomes** within communities.”

The Design Criteria are organised into three categories, which encompass a range of elements proven to enhance the effectiveness of program and service decisions, design, and delivery.

These are:

- **evidence-informed**
- **people-centred approaches**
- **systemised alliances**



3

Developed in partnership

Partnership Principles

The Partnership Principles reflect:



Premiers Circular 44

(previously known as South Australian Not-for-profit Rules and Guidelines)



Australian productivity

Commission's recommendations on contemporary commissioning practice in Human Services.

The Social Impact Framework provides a mechanism for enacting these principles in collaboration with the sector to build shared accountability, co-contribution and capacity building.

The aim is to enable joint stewardship of system quality so that service delivery is more responsive and effective in generating social impact.

“

This is a strong framework that demonstrates values of **collaboration, accountability and focus on outcomes.**”

Shared accountability

- Transparency, data sharing, clear parameters for funding and purpose
- Agreement on co-contribution not attribution

Coordinated and aligned

- Build understanding of program in context of related funded programs
- Increase coordination and connection with other government agencies and services

Relationship-based

- Authentic, open relationships between funders and providers
- Build understanding of the conditions for program and service delivery

Innovative and responsive

- Improve access to quality services, meet emerging and changing needs
- Increase capacity to seize opportunities, new ideas and partnerships

Robust evidence and evaluation

- Assess and build data reporting capabilities and evidence base
- Establish evaluation frameworks and processes

Capacity for improvement

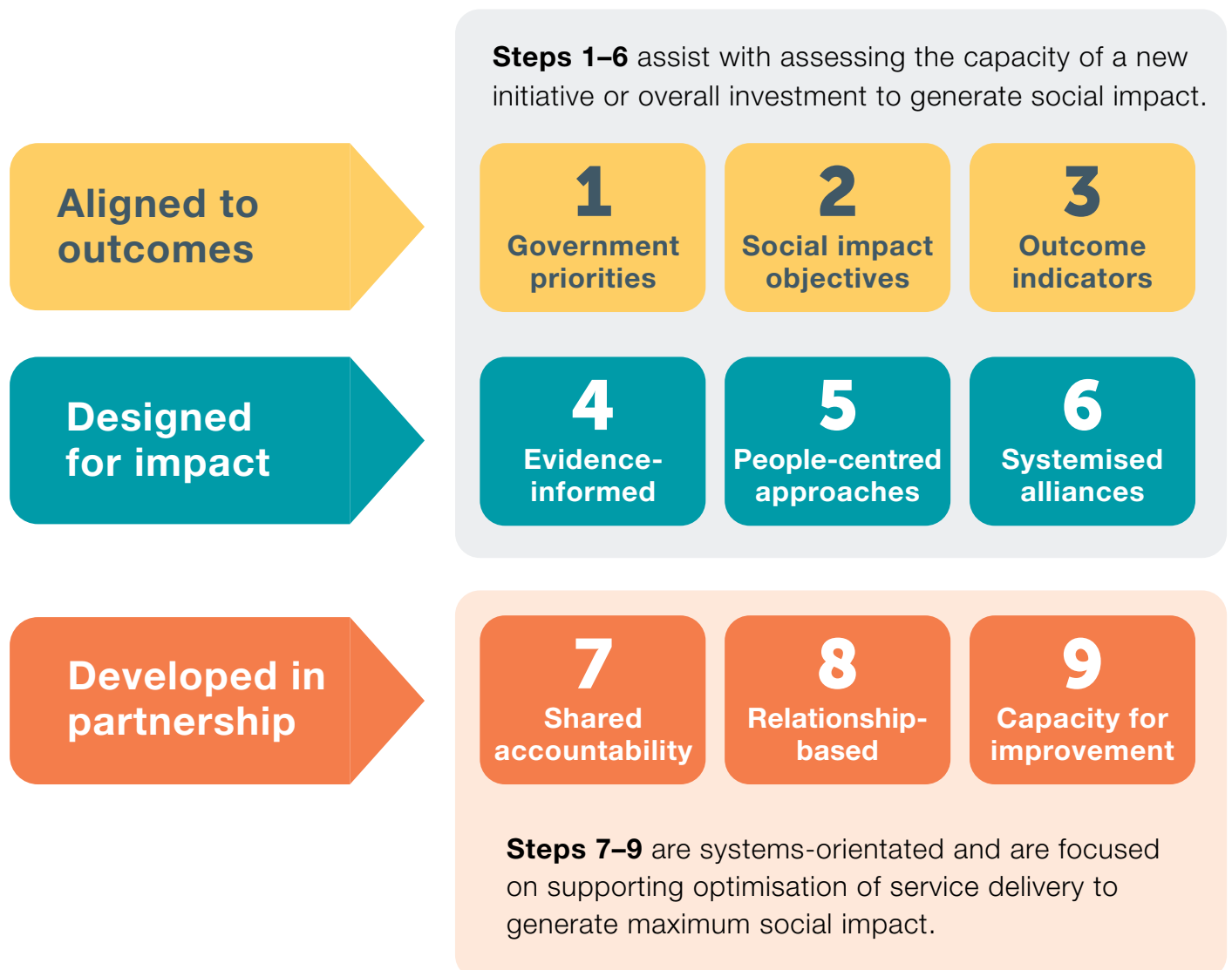
- Establish strong foundations for quality (accreditations and workforce)
- Identify and strengthen capacity to meet the conditions of social impact

Social Impact Framework Assessment Tool

The Assessment Tool is used to assess and optimise the social impact potential of investment in community and family services.

Each of the nine steps cover a range of discussion points, designed to spark deeper shared understanding of how a program, initiative or service is generating social impact.

The Social Impact Framework is not designed to be a compliance tool and is intended to provide greater value than simple 'yes' or 'no' answers.





Thank you to our partners

The Social Impact Framework has been developed by The Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise (TAASE), the Department of Human Services (DHS) and sector partners. Thank you to everyone involved in developing the framework. Your invaluable input and insight will continue to inform the implementation of the framework as we move forward in partnership.

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January 2022 | DHS-1436

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