Principles, procedures & related information

Background

The Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration (formerly the NR Regional Social Plan implementation group) was established in 2015 to support and manage implementation of the Northern Rivers Regional Social Plan 2013-18 – to improve community wellbeing in the Northern Rivers.

The Regional Social Plan identifies 13 desired future outcomes along with potential measures, partners and strategies. The group considered the plan, along with information about changes and issues in the service delivery, funding and policy context in the region, to identify three key action areas as opportunities to focus its work.

Activities

In 2015 the NR SCC identified three key action areas for its work:

1. improving outcomes for children and young people
2. a collective approach to domestic and family violence, including prevention
3. affordable housing investment and supply.

Work in these focus areas is continuing in 2017:

1. through the Better Chances Forum Steering Group (which is a subcommittee of the collaboration)
2. as opportunities arise to support and contribute to the work of the Northern NSW Combined Domestic and Family Violence Forum
3. in partnership with the Northern Rivers Housing Forum Steering Group.

Other work relevant to the purpose and objectives of the collaboration is considered as opportunities and needs arise.

Membership

The membership register will be maintained by the secretariat.

Requests to join the NR SCC will be considered by current member organisations, and may be considered out of session by email, circulated to members through the chair and secretariat. Where no response or comments are received on a new membership request, after five business days from when it was circulated to members via the chair and secretariat, membership will be accepted.

Members will:

- participate in and contribute to the work of the NR SCC in ways that are consistent with the collaboration principles listed in these Terms of Reference
- where possible, ensure representatives are able to make decisions as required to allow the

group to work productively. Brief any proxies sufficiently to represent their organisation and contribute effectively to the work of the NR SCC.

Working groups and subcommittees

The NR SCC may auspice, support or endorse establishment of working groups or subcommittees where this is useful and required to support its activities.

Before establishing a working group or subcommittee the NR SCC will consider existing groups and networks in the region and how activities of the group could or should link with those groups and networks, before deciding whether a new, separate group is required.

If and when the NR SCC establishes a working group or subcommittee it will also consider and agree on arrangements for chairing, facilitation, membership and secretariat for the working group or subcommittee. A member from each working group will be nominated to inform the NR SCC as required about the working group's activities.

Collaboration principles

The following principles guide how the NR SCC does its work.

- Acknowledge the tensions of working collectively in a competitive funding environment.
- Work to develop shared goals.
- Being clear and respectful about individual and shared intellectual property.
- Allow space for organisations to progress their own work.
- Communicate within and between member organisations.
- Be transparent about decisions and make information available to the community.
- Support shared measurement of impact.
- Promote access and participation – services, planning, design, delivery, community life.
- Understand and collectively influence positive systemic change.
- Pursue opportunities for strengths-based work and early intervention.

Information, participation and engagement

When engaging with other stakeholders and communities in the Northern Rivers the NR SCC will be clear about its purpose for engagement and the level of influence stakeholders will have in decision making. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) public participation spectrum will be used when appropriate to assist with explaining participation and engagement. See http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/iap2s-public-participation-spectrum.

Information summarising the activity and decisions of the NR SCC will be prepared for public dissemination and posted on the Regional Social Plan website. These Terms of Reference will also be posted on the Regional Social Plan website.

Quorum

A quorum of 50 per cent of member organisations plus 1 is required to make decisions relating to the strategic focus or direction of the NR SCC, or to commit the group to new activities. Such decisions may also be made out of session, including by email communication between members.

Decisions made out of session will communicated to members by the secretariat and noted in agenda and minutes of the following meeting.

Decision making

The NR SCC will aim to make decisions by consensus. Decisions may be made by simple majority vote when consensus cannot be reached (50 per cent of member organisations plus 1).

When considering what to work on collectively the NR SCC will consider and document how its activities – and options under consideration – respond to the considerations outlined below.

Considerations	
Aligning with available resources	• May not align with most important needs or best opportunities for impact • Other resources may become available if need/benefit can be demonstrated
Low cost options, quick wins	• Demonstrate success quickly and build support for collective action • Success may be short-term only
Willing partners with a shared agenda	• Important condition for collective action • Need to align with community needs and opportunities for positive community impact
Prioritising most critical needs and groups	• Easier to make an action plan • Sacrifice taking action on a wide range of issues and may have limited impact for the wider community • Can be arbitrary
Opportunities for change across multiple outcomes, strategies and groups	• Broader community impact • Longer timeframes • May require a broader range of resources and inputs
Identifying and responding to gaps	• Concrete • Lose complexity • Need better real time information (can't assume the plan is entirely correct)
Interest and potential for shared measures of impact	• Can track progress collectively • Program/ project level results may not reflect impact for the population • Can changes/results (eg, school attendance rates across the whole population) be attributed to our services, programs, system changes?
Identify and build on the strengths in our region	• Opportunity to get traction by focussing on strengths

Conflicts of interest

It is the responsibility of member organisations and their representatives to identify, declare and

manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to the activities and decisions of the NR SCC. This includes but is not limited to conflicts relating to funding.

The chair of the NR SCC will be available to discuss any issues relating to possible or actual conflicts of interest with members.

Register of member organisations – Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration – December 2016

1. 3SA OTCP
2. Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Department of Education and Communities
3. Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
4. Clarence River Women's Refuge and Outreach Services Inc
5. Clarence Valley Council
6. Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres
7. CRANES Community Support Programs
8. FSG Australia
9. Interrelate
10. Local Community Services Association (LCSA)
11. Nortec
12. North Coast Community Housing Company
13. North Coast Primary Health Network
14. Northern Rivers Childcare Services Inc
15. NSW Aboriginal Land Council
16. NSW Department of Education and Communities
17. NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS)
18. NSW Health Northern NSW Local Health District
19. Social Futures (formerly NRSDC)
20. The Family Centre
21. Transport for NSW
22. Tursa Employment & Training
23. Tweed Shire Council
24. YWCA NSW