

INQUIRY INTO STATE PLAN REPORTING

Organisation: Department of Premier and Cabinet (SA)
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Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair, NSW Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr McLeay

Re: Inquiry Into State Plan Reporting

Thank you for your letter of 11 October 2007, inviting the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (SA) to provide a submission to the Inquiry into State Plan Reporting.

As Executive Director of the South Australia's Strategic Plan unit within Cabinet Office, I am pleased to provide the following information.

SA's Strategic Plan – Overview

South Australia's Strategic Plan (the Plan) was initially launched by the Government of South Australia in March 2004 with an updated version released in January 2007.

The Plan was informed by wide-ranging community consultation and represents an attempt to capture the values, priorities and ambitions of the state. Premier Rann has described it as a 'goad to action for all South Australians'. It is the key reference point for Government determining the best way to meet longer-term goals for the state. But it is also a whole-of-state plan with ambitious targets that can only be achieved through cooperation within and between government, industry and the community. Partnerships will be critical to its success. The Plan issues a challenge to all South Australians to take action for a better future.

The Plan contains 98 targets, the majority of which have a 2014 timeframe, arranged across the following six interrelated objectives:

- Growing Prosperity
- Improving Wellbeing
- Attaining Sustainability
- Fostering Creativity and Innovation
- Building Communities
- Expanding Opportunity

The targets have been developed according to 'SMART' criteria – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound.

An important feature of the Plan is that neither the objectives nor any individual targets stand alone; they are all part of a larger inter-related framework. Achieving one target should not come at the expense of another. The Plan identifies a number of 'key interactions' between

targets under different objectives. These include, for example, economic growth (under Objective 1) and greenhouse gas emissions reductions (under Objective 3). These 'key interactions' are indicative and represent a sample of the broader range of interactions between targets. The aim is to encourage the collaborative behaviour and innovative thinking required to address some of the most complex issues South Australia faces. Of equal importance, these interactions also include some synergies between targets across the Plan.

Governance

The governance structure consists of the following three major bodies:

- the Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm), chaired by the Premier and including three other Ministers and two external advisers, which oversees the implementation of the Plan throughout the Government and into the community
- the Audit Committee, comprised of members of five key advisory boards, whose primary function is to provide technical advice and recommendations to ExComm on the interpretation of the targets, on the appropriate indicators and data sources to use in measuring progress against the targets and on the starting point, or 'baseline', for measurement. The Audit Committee is also responsible for producing a public report every two years on South Australia's overall progress towards the Plan targets.
- the Community Engagement Board, comprised of representative from eleven advisory boards, to advocate and advise the Government on community perspectives and to support the process of regionalising the Plan (more detail provided below).

Implementation Plans

ExComm, as the key driver of the Plan, oversees the development and delivery of implementation plans for all Plan targets, to ensure that strategies and actions are in place, and working, to deliver on the Plan's objectives.

Within Government a lead Minister and lead agency have been assigned for each of the targets, with primary responsibility for developing, coordinating and deploying an implementation plan, setting out key strategies to achieve the target in concert with other contributing agencies and stakeholders. This includes identifying interactions with other targets and areas of shared responsibility.

A pilot project, exploring how the key performance indicators for Plan targets could be used across various planning and budgeting documents in agencies – with the aim of greater integration and 'read-across' between such documents – is also underway.

Chief executives also appear before ExComm to discuss their strategies to achieve Plan targets.

Monitoring and Reporting

When the Premier first launched the Plan in March 2004, he committed to two-yearly public reports on progress towards the targets. The first of these reports, prepared by the Audit Committee, was released in June 2006 (available at www.saplan.org.au). The report found that two years into the plan, the state had already either achieved, or was on track to achieve, more than 50 per cent of the targets. The next such Progress Report will be published in mid-2008.

To supplement these two-yearly Progress Reports, the Government has also agreed to publish 'fact sheets' periodically for each of the Plan targets, setting out the latest data, key strategies and links to relevant agencies. These fact sheets will be posted on the internet shortly.

Chief Executive Performance Agreements

The performance agreements of agency chief executives contain specific references to Plan targets in which the relevant agency has a role, either as a lead or contributing agency. ExComm holds hearings to discuss the performance of all chief executives. This includes appraisal of their performance related to Plan targets.

Regionalising the Plan

With the release of the updated Plan in January this year, the Government agreed to remove a number of regional-specific targets from the original 2004 version (such as regional unemployment, regional crime rates and regional infrastructure) in favour of a more comprehensive process of 'regionalising' the Plan. Cabinet has since also agreed to a set of 12 regional boundaries to be adopted by all government agencies, and which will be used for regionalising the Plan.

The update of the Plan occurred with broad community input and advice on whole-of-state targets and regionalising the Plan is building on this strong community involvement at a regional level.

Regionalising the Plan seeks to reflect regional contributions to overall Plan targets. The idea is that regions adopt a number of targets from each Objective area of the Plan – identifying those that speak most directly to the priorities of that particular region. While there will be some targets adopted by all or most regions, thus enabling comparison, not all regions will necessarily have the same priorities.

A pilot has just been completed in the Limestone Coast which developed a regional version or expression of 32 Plan targets. A Steering Group of local leaders has been instrumental in driving this project. Members of the newly established Community Engagement Board (comprised of representatives of eleven of the key government advisory boards), supported by Cabinet Office and other government agencies, have also played an important role, particularly in the context of their networks and expertise. The results of the pilot will be posted on the Plan website shortly.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of South Australia's Strategic Plan further, please feel free to contact Simon Temple-Heald of this office on (08) 8226 2681.

Yours sincerely

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Cabinet Office

24 December 2007