Australian Government

Fair Work OMBUDSMAN

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

May 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and Elders, past, present and future.

Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for a fair, diverse and socially inclusive workplace where we build understanding and respect amongst our employees for the histories and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of Australia.

This understanding and respect will be reflected in our services.

About our artwork: Stepping forward

Timothy Buckley was commissioned to produce this artwork, called 'Stepping forward'. Stepping forward represents taking the next step on the journey towards reconciliation and the potential possible when everyone is included.

Connecting with diverse peoples; meeting, listening and sharing together, can build respect and trust. Working in concert for a common purpose and united in the mission to make meaningful change.

It serves as a reminder of the dynamism and vibrancy of First Nations peoples and the lands from which they come, making the emergence of new ideas and ways of being possible that enables the envisioning of a brighter future.

Our commitment to stakeholder relations

The FWO's purpose is to promote harmonious, productive, cooperative and compliant workplace relations.

We understand that to be an effective and efficient regulator, we must be responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of the Australian Government and the community.

Genuine consultation and collaboration are critical to enabling effective regulation and support us to achieve effective outcomes.

We are committed to looking for opportunities to engage and collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders and building relationships based on trust and respect.

We value the expertise, knowledge and experience our stakeholders contribute which helps inform the work we undertake. As an independent regulator we remain independent and impartial.

Purpose of the strategy

This strategy outlines the key principles informing our approach to stakeholder engagement. It supports consistent, purposeful, meaningful, productive, and transparent stakeholder engagement that delivers benefits for all involved.

Our key stakeholders

We interact with a broad range of stakeholders through our work.

These include:

- unions and employee representatives
- industry and employer representatives
- small business peak bodies and representatives
- government departments and agencies at the federal and state/territory level
- Australian and international regulators
- business advisers and other intermediaries (e.g. accountants)
- non-government and community organisations (e.g. not-for-profit groups, community legal centres and migrant resource centres)
- academia
- the public.

Note: This strategy does not directly apply to individual workers, employers, or other entities when they interact with us as customers, or to the exercise of our statutory compliance and enforcement powers. Our customers and their interactions are supported by our Compliance and Enforcement Policy and our Customer Service Charter. How we engage and work with media is covered in our Media Policy.

Our engagement principles

The following 5 key principles underpin and guide our stakeholder engagement activities:

Inclusive

We seek intelligence and insights from a range of sources, including industry, community, government, academia, and other non-traditional stakeholders.

We aim to provide fair access to engagement processes by identifying and enabling participation for stakeholders who may be harder to reach (including by considering cultural appropriateness and accessible design).

Purposeful and effective

We clearly define our engagement objectives, choose the appropriate engagement approach for the situation and engage relevant stakeholders.

Respectful

We value our stakeholders' time.

We acknowledge and respect the expertise and different perspectives of our stakeholders.

We respect the needs of stakeholders to access information, provide feedback and be heard.

Timely and responsive

Taking into account legislative and operational considerations, we engage with stakeholders in a timely manner and share detail on the outcome of the engagement.

Transparent and accountable

We are open and honest in our engagement with stakeholders. We seek to build trust and credibility in the engagement process, both in our actions and our communication with stakeholders.

We are clear about what we are seeking to achieve, and the level of influence stakeholders have.

How we engage with stakeholders

Considerations

When we undertake our work, we look for opportunities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and consider the most appropriate approach.

As part of this we consider:

- the guiding principles regarding engagement and collaboration set out in our Statement of Intent
- the specific issue, project or engagement objectives and what's in scope to be influenced
- any limitations or reasons why engagement should not occur, acknowledging that not all issues or projects provide the same level of opportunity for consultation or active stakeholder participation
- relevant stakeholders and their interest or expertise in the matter
- previous engagement with relevant stakeholders and their expectations
- the appropriate extent and timing of stakeholder involvement.

Ways we engage

We consider the following ways to engage:

Share

We often share information to inform stakeholders of new initiatives, changes and updates to relevant workplace relations issues. Examples include:

- changes to awards, annual wage review outcomes, and other legislative changes
- significant court or tribunal decisions that may impact our information or advice
- new or updated information, materials and resources that may be relevant or of interest to stakeholders or their clients
- changes to our operational model and policies, as well as our priorities.

Our intention is to share information that is timely, concise, reliable and user-friendly.

Example methods:

- our website, including news articles and My account updates
- social media
- email updates and newsletters
- presentations and webinars.

Consult

We consult stakeholders where there is a genuine opportunity to inform our work. Examples include:

- developing and updating website content
- developing new education resources

- developing presentations
- reviewing priorities
- reviewing education resources and services.

We are clear on the scope of the consultation, listen to and consider input and feedback, and share the outcomes of the consultation when we can.

Example methods:

- surveys
- user testing
- direct email with FWO contact for feedback
- focus groups.

Involve and collaborate

We may also engage with stakeholders for advice, to seek expertise, to share perspectives or experience, to generate innovative ideas, or to help address complex issues.

When we involve and collaborate with our stakeholders, we are clear on the intent of the engagement and each other's roles. We ensure a range of views are sought and that stakeholders are provided appropriate scope, context and information to inform their engagement.

With consideration of our operating environment, we take account of advice and recommendations from our stakeholders. Where relevant, we also seek stakeholders' involvement to co-design and implement solutions and activities together.

We also work cooperatively and collaboratively across government to share information and ideas, and to support the development and delivery of policy initiatives that are aligned with government objectives and the public interest.

Example methods:

- advisory and reference groups
- taskforces
- cross-government working groups
- Memorandums of Understanding and other formal arrangements
- co-design / collaborative projects and activities
- bi-lateral and multi-lateral government forums.

Further detail about our stakeholder engagement is included on our Engagement and collaboration webpage.

This strategy is informed by the Australian Government's **Charter of Partnerships and Engagement**, the Australian Public Service **Framework for Engagement and Participation** and best practice stakeholder engagement theory and approaches, including from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

For further information or to provide feedback on our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, please email us at **engagement@fwo.gov.au**