

SA AMBULANCE SERVICE CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2025



Government
of South Australia

SA Health



SA
Ambulance
Service







ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

SA Ambulance Service acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this land and water. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the diversity and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities today.

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RECOGNITION OF CONSUMERS

“SAAS recognises consumers and carers, their expertise and lived experience. Their perspective is vital in helping SAAS to define and achieve its goals.”





FOREWORD

ROB ELLIOTT ASM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) holds a truly important place in the lives of South Australians. We are on the front line looking after people, often in the very worst of circumstances, and so are among the most visible parts of the health service.

Giving South Australians a greater stake and role in how their ambulance service operates is critical to ensure we continue to provide services that meet the needs of communities across the State. We are already partnering with consumers in so many ways and adapting our service delivery based on feedback, but there is more we can do. This plan is the connecting piece that brings together our aspirations and our operations, through consumer engagement. It is a plan about how we make choices and connects us with people who are central to our core values.

SAAS is overflowing with passionate people, driving fantastic work programmes and initiatives to improve and reimagine emergency care for all South Australians. Those people will continue to learn from consumers and communities.

We recognise that continuous improvement of services is essential and believe this can be best achieved by working together with patients and carers.

We will commit to explicit actions to engage with a diverse cross section of South Australian communities and our service users, with particular regard to groups within diversity streams and those who have traditionally been considered 'hard to reach'. We would like to pay particular regard to engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities and people with accessibility requirements.

I thank everyone involved in developing this plan, particularly our Consumer and Community Advisory Committee, and look forward to working with our wider communities in the coming years.

ABOUT US



SAAS provides a vital service that contributes to improving the health of the South Australian community, delivering high quality pre-hospital emergency health care and response to 1.7 million people covering an area of almost 985,000 square kilometres.

We are uniquely placed as the statewide emergency health responder, in engaging and partnering with people and communities, to respond to the emergency health needs of SA's diverse population.

Changes such as the ageing profile of the population; population growth around the metropolitan fringe and regional areas; demographic changes in many rural communities; increasing community expectations of health services more broadly and growing complexity of health and social issues including substance misuse and family violence, mean that our ambulance service needs to change and adapt to continue to meet community expectations.

Today, we have more than 1500 highly skilled frontline health professionals who, together with more than 1200 community volunteers and our key health and emergency service partners, are playing a vital role in providing emergency health care and response and contributing towards improving patient outcomes for South Australians in need. We also provide a major emergency and disaster management response in partnership with other key emergency and health services.

Increasingly, with the growth in people experiencing long term health conditions and their health needs may not be as urgent, the ambulance service is changing and evolving, to better connect people to the most appropriate health provider to match their health need.

In rural locations, we rely heavily on our contingent of volunteers who are strongly embedded with the local communities providing that initial first response in an emergency. They are an integral part of the statewide ambulance system.

SAAS PROVIDES A VITAL SERVICE THAT DELIVERS HIGH QUALITY PRE-HOSPITAL EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE AND RESPONSE TO:



1.7 MILLION
SOUTH AUSTRALIANS



COVERING AN AREA OF ALMOST
985,000
SQUARE KILOMETRES

INTRODUCTION

Why is consumer and community engagement important?

At SAAS, our patients, carers and others in their support networks are users of our service, they are members with us and they are passionate about what we do. It is important for us not only to capture people's experiences, but also to learn and act upon them. Effective and meaningful engagement will help us to be responsive to the needs of people who use our services, their families, carers and our staff and stakeholders. We want to be a listening organisation and make positive changes to the service, developed with consumers and the wider community.

We believe that consumer and community engagement helps us to strengthen our partnerships with service users.

The aim of this plan is to improve engagement and relationships with partner agencies, patients, consumer groups and individuals, and communities to ensure the service meets the need of patients and carers.

Implementation of this plan will lead to greater visibility and an improved reputation amongst a wide range of organisations and groups, as well as improved patient experience.

The plan also aims to ensure that SAAS meets its statutory, legislative and other external requirements, enabling us to derive the maximum benefit from engaging with patients and the greater South Australian community in authentic and meaningful ways.

Benefits of consumer participation

There are many reasons why we need community participation:

- positively influences an individual's health outcomes if they are given quality information and are actively involved in decisions;
- improves quality and safety by helping to design services that meet consumer needs;
- provides feedback to drive service improvement; and
- enhances accountability by openly and transparently reporting on performance to consumers.

SAAS is committed to being inclusive, engaging the community early and enabling people to have a say in the development of its ambulance service. Through innovation and authentic engagement, SAAS will ensure that the ambulance service evolves to meet the changing needs of the community so that the best possible health outcomes are achieved for our patients.

Our consumers and communities

Our consumers are broad – they are the patients, carers and networks that support them and we aim to work with all. In delivering our plan we will engage with the following groups:

- Consumer and Community Advisory Committee (CACAC)
- Local Health Networks
- Community groups and their networks
- Patients, service users, carers and families
- SAAS staff and volunteers
- Community support organisations including local authorities

Who we engage with		Why they are important
Health Consumers	Patients and their families/carers who have used an ambulance for an emergency or transfer.	We partner with this group so they can influence their own individual care and health outcomes.
Community	Any member of the South Australian public.	We involve the community in service design and planning using our Consumer Network, through social media channels and consultation platforms, to enable us to deliver the best emergency health care to all South Australians.
Consumer Advocates/ Representatives	Providing a consumer perspective, usually as part of a formal advisory committee or sitting on a SAAS Governance committee. Advocates and Representatives may also sit on focus groups, participate in community forums, write articles for staff newsletters, review documents, new procedures and policies, giving feedback from a lived experience consumer perspective. They may also be asked to sit on staff interview panels or assist staff with projects.	<p>We endorse and support this group to represent and advocate for other consumers of the service.</p> <p>Consumer involvement on Governance committees is essential in influencing the longterm governance arrangements of an organisation. A consumer committee member is a trained, experienced and skilled consumer representative.</p>
SAAS stakeholders	Any organisation who has an impact of the consumer journey external to SAAS e.g – GPs, Priority Care Centres, community groups, other government agencies, Local Health Networks, Access cab companies (this list is not exhaustive).	Engaging with our stakeholders allows us to build long term relationships, share and disseminate information, and collaborate to deliver services that best meet the needs of the communities that we serve.

Engaging with different groups and communities

Our engagement work will include targeted engagement with those who belong to the following characteristic groups:

- Aged
- Disability
- Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Sex and gender identity

Delivery of the plan will be overseen by CACAC who report directly to the SAAS Executive Leadership Team.



Consumer and Community Advisory Committee and the SAAS Consumer Network

A key component in the development of effective and meaningful consumer engagement at SAAS is the CACAC, formally established in February 2020.

The committee is advisory and comprises of 10-12 lived experience consumer advocates, plus 3-5 organisational representatives, who reflect the voice of patients, carers and families, and the cultural (including from the Aboriginal community and CALD), gender and geographic diversity of the South Australian community. The committee is an integral part of strengthening the consumer and community voice within SAAS and enhancing the design and delivery of our services and the experiences of consumers who receive them.

Consumers are also embedded across the organisation as full voting members of the following Governance committees:

- Service Delivery Committee
- Finance Committee
- Clinical Governance Committee

In May 2021, SAAS launched the Consumer Network. This is an online register of interested members of the South Australian community, wishing to have their say on their ambulance service. Members receive:

- Bi-annual e-newsletter
- Invitations to participate in patient surveys or specialist focus groups
- The chance to voice opinions on patient facing materials



Community Engagement – schools and groups

SAAS is committed to engaging with the community and supporting young people to learn about emergency health. Calling Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance in an emergency, often at a stressful time, can be challenging and scary.

We endeavour to attend as many community requests as possible, to schools, kindys, scout groups and many more. However, we do rely on our busy workforce to support these. It is often light duties personnel who are able to attend, so it is dependant on rostering and availability. We also provide goodies for the kids in the form of; a cardboard build your own ambulance kit, book stickers and temporary tattoos.

We will capture and enhance service user experience through:

- Giving service users a greater voice in driving quality
- Enabling communities to become involved in the planning, design and delivery of services
- Involving and engaging with people learning from their experiences and opinions



OVERVIEW



Our consumers are at the centre of everything that we do. They, alongside staff members and volunteers, play an integral role in applying their unique perspectives, skills and healthcare knowledge, to develop and achieve excellence in emergency care for all South Australians.

What we aspire to achieve through consumer and community engagement

Through innovation and engagement, we will evolve our services to meet the changing needs of the communities that we serve to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

What we will do to embed consumer and community engagement

Provide services that are responsive, flexible, sustainable, high quality and patient focused, continually improved, and inspire patient confidence through positive contributions from consumers and the community.

Our approach to consumer and community engagement:

- Participation
- Dignity and respect
- Information sharing
- Collaboration

Participation

We will support and encourage our consumers in participating in care and decision-making at the level they are comfortable with.

Information Sharing

We will communicate information about emergency health care and aims to improve health literacy. We aim to provide our consumers with complete, accurate and honest information so they can make informed decisions about their own health care. We will share complete and unbiased information with our consumers in ways that are affirming and useful.

Quality

Partnering

Collaboration

We will collaborate with our consumers with regards to; service delivery models, policy and program development, implementation and evaluation, education, marketing collateral, fees and billing and most importantly, the delivery of their emergency care. We know that achieving our aim will lead to better health outcomes in emergency service delivery for our consumers and the wider community. In turn, this will also ensure an improved experience of care, better clinicians and staff satisfaction, and a smarter coordination of resources.

Meaningful

Empowering

Dignity and Respect

We will communicate information about emergency health care and aims to improve health literacy. We aim to provide our consumers with complete, accurate and honest information so they can make informed decisions about their own health care. We will share complete and unbiased information with our consumers in ways that are affirming and useful.

* Adapted from the Institute for Patient Centered Family Care

Engagement values

Five core values set the standard for consumer, carer and community engagement practices across all SA Health services.[^]

Inclusive of diversity

Accessible and informed opportunities to participate

Partnering in co-design, planning and evaluation

Systems, strategies and mechanisms for active engagement

Consumer-centred best practice

[^] Adapted from Department for Health and Wellbeing, Government of South Australia.

Our framework

We recognise that many consumers simply want to know about the services we offer and a smaller number want to be engaged in consumer-led activites to help shape our service.

Given the diversity of our consumers and communities, we will use different ways to ensure that we hear all perspectives. The IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation presents a well-tested

model which provides a full picture of ways in which meaningful engagement can occur in relation to decision-making. We recognise that the level of engagement can change, and sometimes will need to change, to adapt to the decisions, behaviours or outcomes that are being made. In choosing the level of engagement with our stakeholders we will be honest and transparent about their capacity to influence the impact on the matter, decision or outcome that is being made.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



OUR OBJECTIVES

The SAAS Consumer and Community Engagement Plan is based on three key pillars, each comprising strategic objectives, co-deisigned with our Consumer and Community Advisory Committee.

1 Relationships and information

We will develop and sustain the relationships and networks we have with communities across the state, and ensure the provision of accessible and clear information to support health choices.

How we will do this:

- Expand and evolve our communication channels and ensure that our messaging is meaningful, diverse and inclusive.
- Provide our community with accessible, straightforward, inclusive and balanced information across a variety of formats, and involve them in the development of communications.
- Continue to inform consumers and community about our changing role and encourage improved access to alternative care pathways.
- Develop and sustain effective relationships with a wide community of health consumers through a variety of methods.
- Identify strategies to engage with specific communities who experience health disadvantage (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities), people with mental health issues, those living with a disability and LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- Strengthen consultation and engagement opportunities and processes between SAAS, LHNs and stakeholder organisations, such as aged care providers and disability services to understand their needs.

2 Governance and shared decision making

Ensure that consumers can meaningfully contribute and enhance decision making, both within their own personal care and in the design and delivery of our services. We will learn from their experiences.

How we will do this:

- Provide and promote opportunities for the community to contribute to service change delivery, design and re-design of programs and policies.
- Ensure patients and their stories/experiences are at the heart of SAAS Governance and decision making.
- Establish and implement ways for consumers from specific groups – e.g motor, sensory, cognitive, disability, mental health, paediatric, aged, palliative, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to share their voice and experiences.
- Enhance our feedback culture and opportunities to ensure lessons are learned, and close the gap with consumers.
- Be evidence led, demonstrating that action is taken as a result of consumer experience data and feedback, and source rich data from CACAC, Consumer Network and patient surveys, community outreach work, social media, complaints and incidents.

Capacity building and knowledge

We will continue to build engagement capacity and knowledge across the organisation and externally, ensuring that we are able to embed best practice consumer and community engagement, and deliver effectively.

How we will do this:

- Identify and expand the mechanisms for community engagement by reimagining the nature of engagement and modelling best practice engagement, and ensuring engagement is appropriate to the diversity of our consumers.
- Include mechanisms and systems for consumers to participate in all levels of SAAS Governance.
- Ensure consumers have the tools, education, policy knowledge and guidance to effectively participate in co-design and decision making and agree a set of principles with consumers through a Consumer Charter.
- Record and measure all outcomes of consumer and community engagement, share learnings with staff and executives and close the loop about what worked well and recommended improvements.
- Build an organisational culture that supports a sound understanding of, and respect for, consumer engagement, and values the benefits of partnering with consumers to enhance shared decision making.
- Further develop workforce capacity and capabilities (knowledge, awareness, skills and training) to proactively engage with consumers and community.

Development of this framework and plan

The plan has been developed by the SAAS CACAC and is specific to SA Ambulance Service but is underpinned by the following resources:

- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS)
- National Standards of Mental Health Services (NSMHS)
- Australian Charter of Health Care Rights
- Carers Recognition Act (SA)
- Privacy Act (1998)
- Department for Health and Wellbeing State-wide Consumer and Community Engagement Frameworks 2019-2022
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), IAP2.org.au
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet - Better Together – Principles of Engagement
- Charter of Health and Community Services Rights 2nd Edition (2019)
- Charter of Aged care rights (2019)
- National Disability Strategy (2010-2020)
- SA Health Charter of Health and Community Rights Policy
- SA Health Guide for Engaging with Aboriginal People (2013)
- SA Health Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Policy
- National Aboriginal Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026 developed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Standing Committee for the Australian Health Minister's Advisory Council
- Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender
- Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care - Partnerships for Quality and Safety

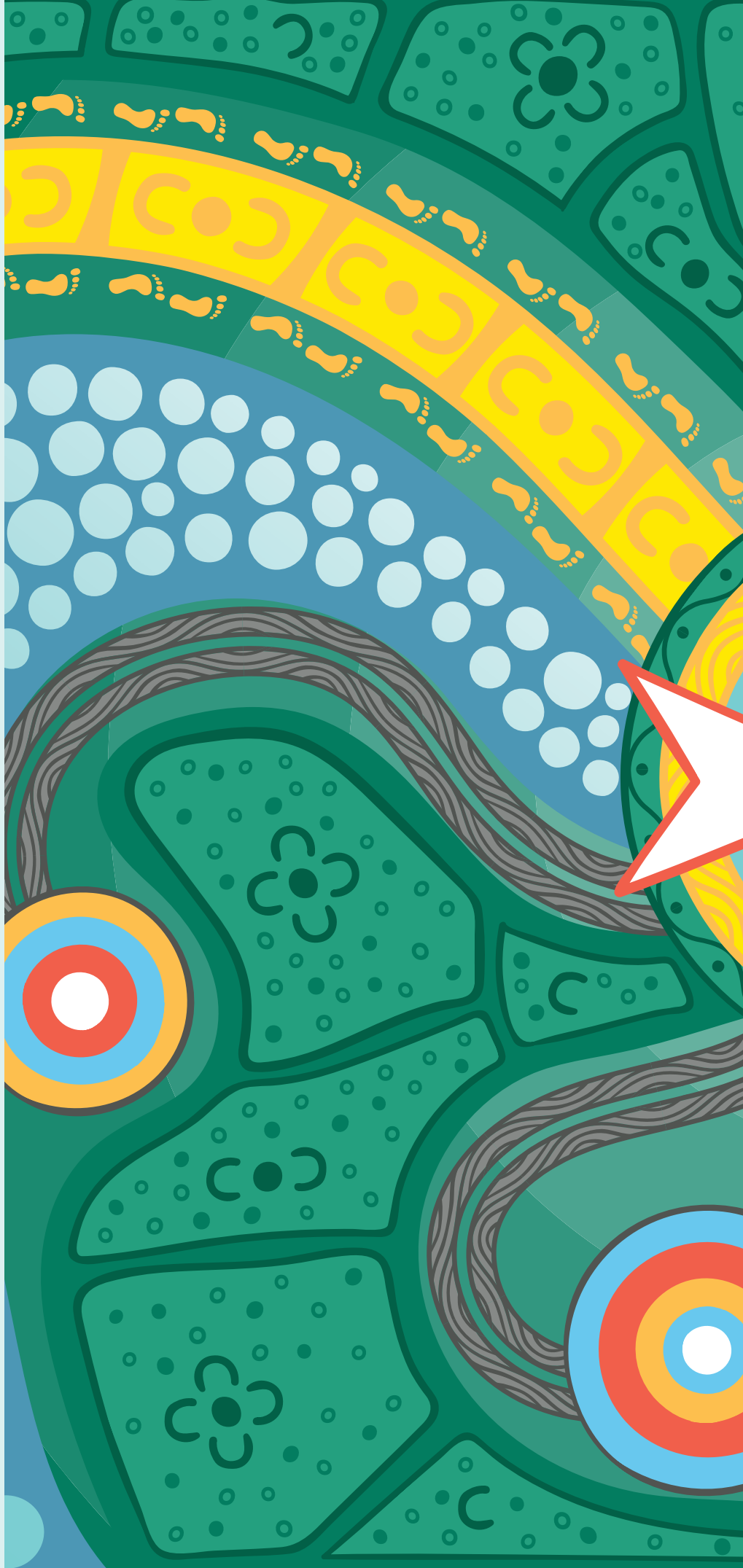
Our Reconciliation artwork

SAAS commissioned an Aboriginal artist to design artwork that tells the story of SAAS's vision for reconciliation.

The artwork, by Jordan Lovegrove, a Ngarrindjeri man, shows SAAS's reconciliation journey through learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples histories and cultures, and working with communities and health services to close the gap.

SAAS is represented by the large meeting circle in the middle with the big yellow pathway showing the learning journey.

The smaller meeting places represent different communities, with SAAS going out to them to provide emergency medical assistance, treatment and transport. The green section represents all the individuals and groups that SAAS has responded to. The dots and symbols represent the lives saved or improved quality of life provided to patients, their families and friends. No two sections are the same, demonstrating the diversity of patients.





For more information

SA Ambulance Service

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www.saambulance.sa.gov.au



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons

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