

Community Engagement Strategy

2024 - 2026



Pursuing fairness for
the people of NSW.

 **Ombudsman**
New South Wales

Aim

The aim of the NSW Ombudsman’s Community Engagement Strategy (**Strategy**) is to set an agreed approach to coordinated engagement with members of the public, communities, and the organisations that represent them across NSW. The Strategy focuses on raising awareness of, and improving access to, our services, providing accurate and meaningful information, and providing opportunities for face-to-face engagement with members of the public and communities across NSW.

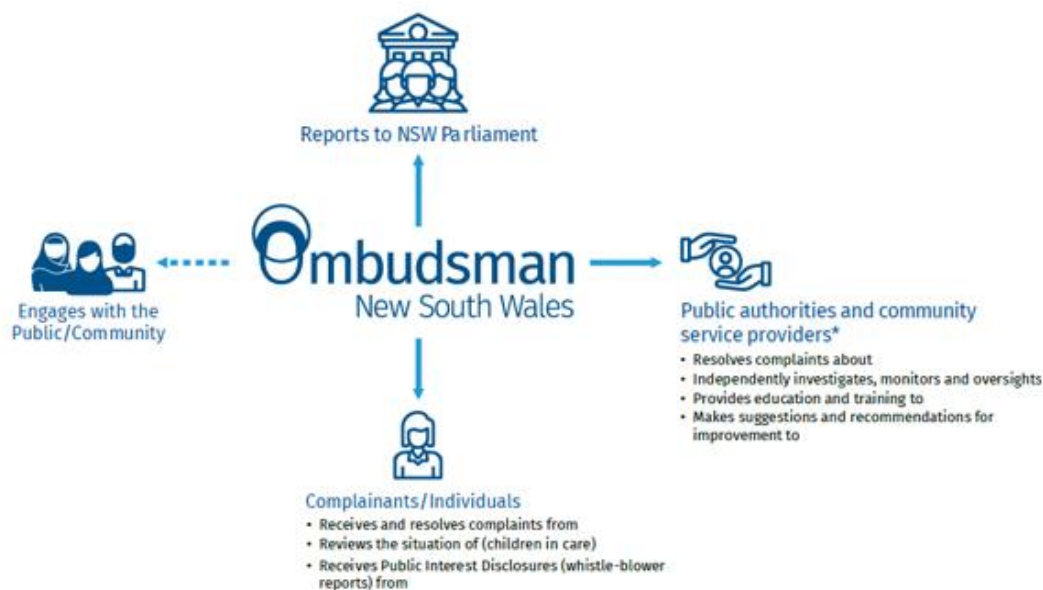
Engagement with people and communities across NSW

We are committed to serving all people and communities in NSW. **Our vision is to ensure that everyone receives the right services and fair treatment from those we oversight.**

It is critical that we engage with people and communities across NSW to ensure that:

- everyone who needs our services is aware of their right to complain to us, understands what we do and do not do, and is able to access our services
- we understand the issues of importance affecting communities in relation to matters within our jurisdiction so that we can better target resources
- the information we provide is accurate, meaningful and easy to understand
- we are continuously improving the way we deliver our services and perform our functions, to ensure that they are as effective and efficient as possible, and meet community expectations
- there is community awareness of the fact that we oversight the conduct of public authorities or community service providers, and if such conduct is unreasonable, wrong or unlawful, those agencies will be held accountable.

The diagram below highlights how this Community Engagement Strategy connects with our stakeholder network:



* Defined in the *Ombudsman Act 1974* and the *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews & Monitoring) Act 1993*.

NSW communities

Community can mean many things to different people. In some circumstances this term is used to mean people who live in a particular neighbourhood or place. However, community is not limited to a geographic neighbourhood group and people may belong to multiple communities.

For our purposes, we mean community in its broadest sense, to include all types of groupings or cohorts within the NSW public.

Our work supports everyone in NSW, and we are committed to broad engagement with communities across NSW.

Some communities are more likely than others to need our services. This may be because:

- their interactions with public authorities or community services providers are more frequent or more intensive
- they are not aware of their right to complain
- their cultural heritage makes them less likely to use the services of an Ombudsman; or
- they have limited access to other ways of ensuring that they receive the right services and fair treatment.

Our Community Engagement Strategy includes specific focus communities, with whom we may need to do more work to ensure that we are proactively listening, informing and providing access to our services.

Specific focus communities include:

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)
- children and young people
- people with disability.

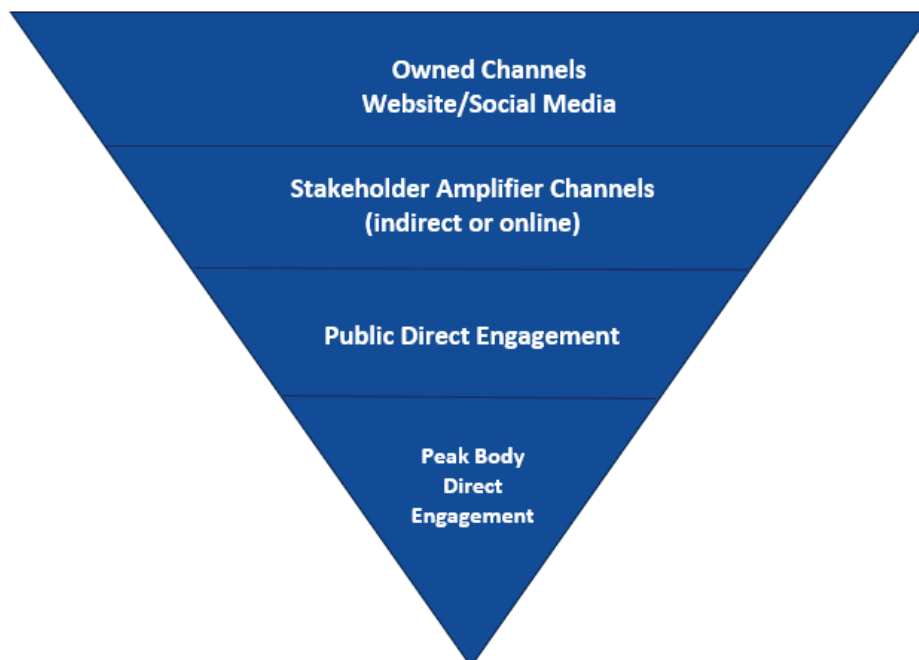
Separate to this Community Engagement Strategy, we also undertake program focused engagement with a range of groups and communities in the delivery of statutory functions. This includes:

- Aboriginal people and communities – through our Aboriginal Programs Branch in relation to Aboriginal Programs (contact); through our Aboriginal Community Liaison officer, complaints and resolution; and through our Aboriginal Engagement team in public interest disclosures.
- people in, or released from custody or detention – led by our Complaints and Resolution Branch.
- consumers of public health services, with a focus on rural and regional NSW– led by our Complaints and Resolution Branch.

Other communities that may face vulnerabilities or service access challenges include the elderly, those living in remote and regional areas, and those who are homeless or in unstable accommodation. We will continue to engage with these communities and may consider the inclusion of additional focus communities under this strategy in future.

Community Engagement Strategic Concept

The Community Engagement Strategic Concept leverages platforms, relationships and third party events to maximise community outreach with increasing focus on target communities as we move to the tip of the inverted triangle. Details of the focus and objectives of each part of the segments of the strategy appear below.



Strategic Concept Rationale

Owned digital channels

Our online channels are the method for most members of the public and organisations to receive information and have opportunities to easily engage with us. This can include access to guidance on various topics, as well as the opportunity to make complaints online and access complaint related information.

Stakeholder amplifier channels

Stakeholder owned channels for engagement offer the next scale opportunity for us to engage with focus communities as it allows two-way dialogue with organisations that represent and/or have direct engagement with large segments of these communities. This approach anticipates development of digital toolkits (awareness videos, social media updates, etc) focused on raising awareness amongst these stakeholders' customers of the role of the Ombudsman and their right to complain about unfair treatment – in a format that makes it easy for sharing and redistribution across their networks.

Public direct engagement

Attendance at community events gives us an opportunity to engage directly with members of the public and/or organisations that directly support the public. We can share information, answer questions, take complaints and gain valuable insight into the areas of interest and concern held by the public and focus communities.

Peak body direct engagement

Direct engagement with peak bodies and community leaders enables us to gain timely feedback on how well we are known and perceived within the community, but also to gain important insight into the support and information our focus communities need. This insight allows us to better tailor engagement experiences in the future.

Deliverables

The following table breaks down our Community Engagement Strategic Concept into our key deliverables.

Engagement opportunity	Deliverables
Owned digital channels	<p>Publish social media posts and ongoing website updates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote, before and after, face-to-face community engagement activities the NSW Ombudsman’s Office will be participating in • publish and promote the creation of digital toolkits that focus on the provision of information for specific stakeholder groups and the organisations who support them • raise awareness of reports, factsheets and other information that are of direct impact or interest to different stakeholder groups across NSW • enhance website information and functionality to support community groups, including a translation feature that dynamically translates all website content into 43 languages.
Stakeholder amplifier channels	<p>Develop 2 digital toolkits and further targeted information/support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and young people (with specific focus on those in out-of-home-care) and organisations who support them • culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations (with specific focus on new migrants) and organisations who support them.
Public direct engagement	<p>Attend a minimum of 10 face-to-face community events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focused on target groups spanning both urban and regional areas • aimed at interacting with: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; CALD populations; children and young people; people with disability; seniors.
Peak body direct engagement	<p>Meeting with community leadership groups to gather insights on issues and perceptions and identify opportunities for further tailored engagement and support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of the largest CALD groups by total population • 2 of the largest CALD groups by recent migration in the last 2 years • disability advocates and support services (public and private) • supporters or advocates of young people in out of home care.

Action plan

Our action plan outlines how we plan to execute on the identified engagement opportunities as we seek to further develop and deepen our community engagement over the next two years.

These initiatives are aimed at ensuring that everyone understands our role, can access our services, and have trust and confidence in what we do.

For the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 financial years we aim to focus our efforts on improving the awareness of our services and providing additional targeted information and support for:

- children and young people (particularly those in out-of-home-care); and
- people from CALD backgrounds (particularly recent migrants); and
- people with a disability and/or their carers.

By focusing on these groups for the 2024-2026 period we will be in a position to meaningfully enhance our engagement and support activities before moving our focus to different groups in the next biennial action plan.

Our 2024-2026 action plan is set out in **Appendix A**.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

We will use the following measures to assess the impact and effectiveness of our community engagement activities.

Owned digital channels

For digital communications and engagement channels owned by the NSW Ombudsman:

1. **Website:**
 - a. Page visits to our 'complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - b. Total users who visit our 'complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - c. First time visitors to our 'complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - d. Views per user of our 'complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - e. Average length of time spent on our 'complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - f. Document downloads from our 'Complaints' and 'guidance for organisations' pages
 - g. Website translate function usage.
2. **Social Media:**
 - a. Engagements (likes, shares, etc)
 - b. Clicks
 - c. Total reach
 - d. Some demographic information (e.g. locations, age ranges, etc).
3. **Electronic Direct Mail (EDMs) related to community engagement initiatives:**
 - a. Open rate
 - b. Clicks / click through rate
 - c. New subscribers / unsubscribe requests.

Stakeholder amplifier channels

1. Assessing the effectiveness of our engagement activities will be based on:
 - a. feedback on the value and relevance of the digital tools provided
 - b. advice on additional or different resources/tools to develop that would be of value to their communities
 - c. whether, and through which channels, they would support the redistribution, sharing and promotion of these resources through their networks and platformsfrom an indicative range of organisations, both public and private, that represent and/or support the focus community(ies) engaged with for piloting an initial digital toolkit draft.
2. After release of the first iteration of the finalised digital toolkit to a broader range of organisations that represent and/or support the focus community(ies), we will request feedback relating to:
 - a. their feedback on the value and relevance of the tools provided
 - b. their advice on additional or different resources/tools to develop that would be of value to their communities.
3. We will monitor the online traffic that accesses the resources supplied in the digital toolkits that are hosted on our website or other owned channels, such as YouTube for video content, in order to assess the impact of the toolkits on increasing uptake of resource utilisation.

Direct community event engagement

1. We will promote our involvement in face-to-face activities on social media, both before and after each event – monitoring the total numbers of views, reactions, reposts/shares, and increases in followership in order to determine the impact of our engagement in particular events.
2. We will also compare the difference in social media engagement relating to face-to-face events between the different focus communities and consider these outcomes against the whole-of-population numbers for each group to determine where different activities may have a greater or lesser impact on different focus community stakeholder groups.
3. We will survey internal staff who participate in the engagement events on their views of the value and impact of the event, in order to determine the impact and value of the event from their perspective.
4. We will monitor whether further and ongoing engagement with organisations who support or represent the different focus communities arises as a result of our participation in the face-to-face engagement activity.

Peak body direct engagement

We will engage directly with peak bodies representing and/or supporting our identified focus communities. We will do this to better understand how well our community engagement activities inform them about our work, their stakeholders' rights, the impact of our work broadly and community engagement and capability uplift activities specifically. We will also request feedback about our engagement, resources and strategies.

Progress and reporting

Each year we publish in our Annual Report the progress of activities aligned to this strategy.

We welcome feedback and suggestions about this strategy, and how we can better engage with communities across all the work we do.

Contact us

02 9286 1000

1800 451 524 regional/charges may apply on mobile phones

Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) 131 450

If you are deaf, and/or find it hard hearing or speaking with people who use a phone, contact us through the: [Accesshub](#)

- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 02 9286 1000
- NRS Internet relay users connect then ask for 02 9286 1000

Email: info@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Appendix A – 2024-2026 Action Plan

Focus	Action
General Community	
1.1	Develop and publish a biennial community engagement strategy and action plan.
1.2	Ensure the Executive monitor the delivery of projected outcomes in our Community Engagement Action Plan and Multicultural Plan.
1.3	Update our website with improved stakeholder focused functionality – design, search, translate, etc.
1.4	Build strategic agency partnerships to better understand target community needs and leverage each other’s expertise and to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for target communities.
1.5	Provide staff with training to build their capability to work effectively with the diverse range of people in the community.
Disability Community	
2.1	Build the capability of staff at services that support people with disability to effectively handle complaints from their service receivers, and better assist them to access the NSW Ombudsman.
2.2	Carry out engagement surveys with relevant disability community organisations to ascertain awareness levels and barriers to access.
2.3	Develop and launch Disabilities Digital Toolkit v1.0 in different languages – including posters, animations on when and how to contact us and what the complaints process is, visual flow chart of complaints process, links to info with social media prompts.
2.4	Development and publication of web/podcasts in partnership with community workers in Disabled communities.
2.5	Improve website accessibility functionality and develop easy read information and complaints making guides.
2.6	Attend significant or broad reaching events focused on people with disability.
CALD Communities	
3.1	Develop, publish and monitor annual Multicultural Plans.
3.2	Meet with Community Leaders and undertake engagement surveys with community organisations to ascertain the most effective way of raising awareness of our services and individual’s right to complain.
3.3	Develop and launch CALD Digital Toolkit v1.0 in different languages – including posters, animations on when and how to contact us and what the complaints process is, visual flow chart of complaints process, links to info with social media prompts.
3.4	Development and publication of web/podcasts in partnership with Legal Aid NSW for community workers in CALD communities.
3.5	Website with translate function, translated information and complaints making capability.

Focus	Action
3.6	Attend significant or broad reaching events focused on CALD communities.
3.7	Work with Multicultural NSW to transition into their refreshed multicultural policies and services program.
Children and Young People in out-of-home care (OOHC)	
4.1	Undertake engagement and feedback surveys with community organisations.
4.2	Develop and launch Digital toolkit v2.0 including, animations on when and how to contact us and what the complaints process is, visual flow chart of complaints process, links to relevant NSW Ombudsman published reports.
4.3	Development and publication of web/podcasts in partnership with Legal Aid NSW for community workers working in OOHC.
4.4	Website with information and complaints making capability
4.5	Attend significant or broad reaching events focused on community organisations that support children and young people.
4.6	Undertake feedback surveys on OOHC Digital Toolkit v2.0 from all distributed stakeholders.
4.7	Prepare an educational toolkit for loading on the Parliament House website for awareness raising and use by teachers and students.