

# Articulating your vision for change

A compelling vision for the future is critical for any change project, because it:

- gives people a clear reason to change
- tells them the basic information they need to understand the change
- serves as the 'light at the end of the tunnel', which they can draw strength from when the change gets tough.

A vision for the future is linked to, but slightly different from, your case for change. While the case for change is a high level summary to guide the *project*, the change vision is designed to guide the *people*, particularly those who will be affected by the change.

In the South Australian public sector, the change vision is often centred around citizens and the community. This is a compelling way to frame the reasons for the change in a way that will resonate with your organisation.



**Templates to help with developing the vision**  
[Communicating a compelling vision of the future](#)

## How to do it

### 1. Form a group to develop the vision

Convene a small workshop to build the change vision to ensure it resonates with a diverse audience. Limit the numbers to just 5-10 people, particularly if confidentiality is important. Participants should include:

- some formal or informal leaders who will be impacted by the change
- the project sponsor to ensure the case for change aligns with their expectations.

As leaders of the organisation this team plays a key role in driving the change. Employees will be looking to them to determine whether the vision for the future is really possible.

### 2. Develop a first draft of the vision

When developing the vision you must consider what the story means for everyone – what are the things we need to show that 'we mean what we say'. If as a collective group you are not bringing the story to life and providing leadership and direction, you won't get far.

As with the case for change, you must appeal to both the 'head' and the 'heart' in your change vision. For example, consider the ethical and moral dimensions of change, which may resonate more with some stakeholders than achieving efficiencies.

Make sure the vision sets realistic expectations because people will be sceptical and eventually disillusioned if it promises more than it can deliver.

The vision should also accord with the public sector values and behaviours.



The vision should cover:

- **Purpose** – why we need to do this and a compelling reason for change
- **Picture** – what the future will look like
- **Plan** – how we are going to get there
- **Part** – the role you and your team will play to make the change a success.



**Templates to help with drafting and articulating the vision**

- [Stakeholder prioritisation](#)
- [Change readiness assessment](#)



- Instructions for stakeholder analysis**
- [Read about managing your stakeholders](#)

### 3. Test with key stakeholders and refine

Check that the vision resonates with other stakeholders who were not involved in its development. If confidentiality is important limit your test to just a few senior people. Refine your draft and update workshop participants if there are major changes. Refer to your stakeholder analysis (under setting direction) and review what you have done to pinpoint key people.

### 4. Adapt to diverse audiences

Once you have confirmed the draft vision, adapt it to cater for your main audiences. Speak with a representative of each audience to uncover:

- what will your audience like about the change?
- what might they be fearful about?
- what is important to your audience (different people will draw meaning from various sources)?
- what stories from past successes are relevant and will resonate with them?

## Adjust for scale

<p><b>Small:</b> Improving and refining methods, policies and procedures; the future state is not very different to the current ways of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision for the future can be written by a team member to help frame the project, but it is not essential.</li> <li>• Testing will either not be required or be very limited.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medium:</b> Distinct modifications to strategies, structures and management processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process should be followed in full.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large:</b> Substantial realignment, restructuring and transformation of all or part of the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process should be followed in full.</li> <li>• The vision from the future must come from a senior leader such as the chief executive who must be involved in its creation, refinement and (in later steps in the change process) communication.</li> </ul>



## Success measures

At this stage the primary measure of success is the degree to which the vision resonates with test audiences and this can only be measured qualitatively.

In later stages, we recommend staff surveys to establish the extent to which the change is understood and adopted. This includes questioning whether people believe they understand why the change is needed and if the vision for the change is clear. Use the change readiness assessment to help prepare the survey. Responses will show how successful the case for change has been and whether any remedial action is required.

