South Australia’s Strategic Plan, Governance and Civil Society

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Abstract

The aim of this report is to present South Australia’s Strategic Plan (SASP) in the light of social sciences, framing the talk into the controversial stream of the political theory of modern governance.

The way the SASP is structured and organized, especially in its 2011’s version, and the way it is open to the external environment, are examples of excellence, cutting edge in the field of policy making, a great example of how modern governance concepts can be implemented into policies.

A brief portrait of modern governance theory, based on past literature about public administration, will be given, beginning from its relationship with New Public Management organizational theory.

More importantly, in the end of this first section, in order to better understand the processes by which South Australia’s Strategic Plan changed over time and the mechanisms through which Australians helped producing a new plan in 2006 and 2010, the role of civil society in modern governance will be investigated. In this context, the advocacy coalition framework theory and a brief outline of New Social Democracy concepts will be provided.

Four fundamental aspects of the South Australian Strategic Plan, in the view of this report, are characteristic of modern governance processes: the Alliance program as emblematic example of the introduction to public-private sector blending; the specification of explicit standard and measures of performance of the plan’s achievements; the regionalization of the Plan and lastly the involvement of civil society in the updating of the SASP in 2006 and 2010 through the Community Engagement Process.

In particular, the attention will be focused on the Community Engagement Process as an instrument to embed into the SASP new priorities, visions and aspirations of South Australians, in order to grant that the SASP remains a stable, long term blueprint for the state’s future.

Keywords: modern governance; South Australia; South Australia’s Strategic Plan; SASP; community engagement; civil society;
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"South Australia's Strategic Plan creates a future shaped by choice, not chance. Keeping our communities strong and vibrant, protecting our rich environment and pursuing shared economic prosperity will provide a better future for South Australians. By investing together in our health, education and innovative ideas we can secure our top priority: the wellbeing of all South Australians. Our plan expresses our values; its targets reflect our priorities."

Mike Rann
Premier of South Australia
South Australia’s Strategic Plan 2011
Preface

The word “democracy” has a long history. Its etymology is tracked back to Ancient Greek; it combines the elements δῆμος (δῆμος, which means "people") and κράτος (κράτος, which means "force" or "power"), so that democracy, originally δημοκρατία, is the power of the people.

Today, a form of government is said to be democratic when all eligible people have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. Ideally, this includes equal (and more or less direct) participation in the proposal, development and passage of legislation into law.

South Australia has an outstanding history of leading the institution of democratic systems and giving political and social power to its citizens. The report presents South Australia’s Strategic Plan as a case study for a modern, democratic approach of policy development, oriented to community engagement and to citizens’ participation in all stages of policy development decisions.

The philosophy behind the Plan has always been that success relies not only on the Government’s action, but on the fact that we must all contribute to the future. Since 2004, when it was first launched, the Plan has steered the State’s growing prosperity, assisted South Australians to work towards attaining sustainability, and encouraged our creativity and innovation; during this time, the Plan has focused on sharing these successes with all South Australians through enhanced wellbeing, expanded opportunities and stronger and more vibrant communities.

In 2007, with the publication of the updated version of the Plan that embedded the priorities emerged through a wide community leaders’ consultation, the Government managed to accomplish the first step towards extending the ownership of the Plan.

In this context, the 2011 updated version of the Plan, launched this month, has taken a step forward.

The vision of the Plan has been shaped by thousands of South Australians, who shared the collective commitment to make our state the best it can be: prosperous, environmentally rich, culturally stimulating, offering its citizens opportunities to live well and succeed. The Plan provides strategic direction not only to the State Government, but also to community groups, business, stakeholders, families and single individuals, who can identify and align their long term visions with the Plan.

As the report is well describing, through this bottom-up approach, focused on a state-wide, citizen-centric community engagement, the State Government is showing strong leadership by working with and for the community.

The report indeed draws a vivid portrait of how the evolution of the South Australia’s Strategic Plan reflects, year after year, update after update, an increasing trend of community engagement and adoption of a modern approach to public management.

Through the characterization of South Australia’s Strategic Plan in terms of the modern governance theory, it provides a useful key resource to understand the history of the changes occurring in the Plan from 2004 till this most recent update, representing a powerful tool to gain a deeper knowledge about the mechanisms that are now driving policy development and evolution.
Introduction

South Australia, through its experience of community engagement into the formulation of South Australia’s Strategic Plan (SASP), provides the evidence for a more democratic way to do politics, in which civil society’s involvement in the processes of policy making is encouraged. Policies as the SASP reconfigure the relationship between state and civil society, fortify democracy, making citizens effective actors in the game, policy makers but also as conscious players in their everyday life. Due to the transparent process the SASP’s evolution and achievements are reported to the community, the SASP was awarded an international prize in 2009. This is an international recognition of the SASP as excellence, as a model to enhance citizens’ participation and governance and to create real change and benefit to communities.

Furthermore, strategic planning is not a renewed belief in the role of the state in the economy and society, but a renewed belief in social change as desired objective of government action. In this framework, SASP is a blueprint, a beacon for the future of South Australia. The Plan provides directions for the State Government, for business and community organizations, and for individuals, about how, together, they can mostly effectively balance economic, social and environmental issues in a way that improves wellbeing and creates new opportunities.

The history of the SASP hasn’t been a straight line: born under a top-down approach, with time it evolved towards a state-wide bottom-up approach in policy development. What is really amazing about the trend followed by the Plan is the role of “learning by doing”, the capacity of South Australia’s policy makers to understand from past experiences and, through a high degree of flexibility, to be able to meet the changing needs of South Australians.

This report has been written with the intention and the aspiration of talking about South Australia’s Strategic Plan in the light of social sciences, framing the talk into the controversial stream of the political theory of modern governance.

The Plan indeed represents an excellent case study in this view. It embodies the pivotal characteristics of modern governance, especially in reference to the embedding of civil society into the processes of decision making and planning. Through the regionalization of the SASP, the Alliance program, and community engagement process in 2006 first, and then in 2010, Government, industries and community were aligned with one focus, to work together to achieve the Plan’s targets.

The way the Plan is structured and organized, especially in its 2011 version, and the way it is open to the external environment, are examples of excellence, cutting edge in the field of policy making, a great example of how modern governance concepts can be implemented into policies.

The report is indeed structured as follows.

1 Community Indicator Consortium’s 2009 Community Indicators Performance Measures Integration Awards
In the first part, a theoretical analysis is provided. The report explain how the political theory of modern governance is linked to the organizational theory of New Public Management (NPM), which firstly promoted trends such as privatizations, devolutions, competition and the introduction of managerial tools into public management. The report explores the mutual aspects, their differences and how modern governance was somehow triggered by the discussion about New Public Management. Modern governance theory will be analyzed in its focal cornerstones, particularly in reference to the involvement of civil society. In this context, the advocacy coalition framework and a brief outline of New Social Democracy concepts will be provided.

The second chapter introduces the reader to public administration in South Australia. A brief review of public administration trends and the history of planning in Australia are discussed; then a background of South Australia’s Strategic Plan, from 2004 till the last update in 2011, will be provided. The third chapter, the core of this study, analyses the Plan in the light of modern governance. The Plan envisages several elements of modern governance: the Alliance Program, a paradigmatic example of introduction to the public-private sector blending; the focus on performance measures; the regionalization of the Plan and above all the Community Engagement Process. The report describes all these elements under the light of what is understood about NPM, modern governance and civil society.
1. A Theoretical Framework to South Australia’s Strategic Plan

This section will briefly describe New Public Management (NPM) and governance theories, in order to better understand how the South Australia’s Strategic Plan reflects their elements.

NPM is an organizational theory prescribing introduction of managerial strategies and tools into the public sector. Indeed, it is linked with trends such as competition, privatisation, devolution, and the downsizing of the administrative staff.

The debate about NPM to some extent triggered the discussion about a “third way” of managing the public sector with respect to the hierarchal state and the market approach (NPM). Indeed, modern governance is the political theory describing the relationship between state and society. In particular, it promotes the involvement of citizens, organized into networks, into the game of politics and policies development.

In this framework, the concept of networks and civil society will be deepened, adopting an advocacy coalition framework and giving an outline of the New Social Democracy theory.

1.1 New Public Management (NPM): the evolution of public management models in modern society

In 1978, Max Weber, the father of the hierarchal, rule-based and professionally-staffed conception of bureaucracy, about public management said:

"The choice is only that between bureaucracy and dilettantism in the field of administration"

_Weber, 1978, 223_

What he meant with the term bureaucracy was the classical, centrally organized and rule-bound mechanism of public administration, typical of Prussian State of the end of the Nineteen Century. In his view, this was the ideal type of organization: steering towards precision, speed, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination and reduction of costs efficiency; in one world, towards efficiency.

But it’s a commonplace that children do not always follow the path that their parents had imagined and hoped for them. So, neither did public management: in the last century it evolved through a new and different path from the one that the German sociologist had forecasted. Indeed, according to cultural theory, embracing social science jargon, in the portrait of the different styles of public management organizations, public sector organization moved down-grid and down-group (Dunleavy, Hood 1994).

According to this framework, the grid dimension represents the degree to which individual lives are circumscribed by rules and conventions, while the group dimension depicts the extent to which choices are constrained by group choices (Hood, 1991).
Weberian public administration was characterized by a high-grid and high-group position in the above mentioned matrix: strict procedural rules governing conducts and a specialized, functional, division of labor identifying the professional staff of bureaucracy are only two of several characteristics that define Weberian bureaucracy. It represented “the good administration”, the organizational and normative structure where government is found on authority, i.e. the belief in a legitimate, rational legal political order and the right of the state to define and enforce the legal order (Olsen, 2005).

**Table 1: Four styles of public management organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatalist</td>
<td>Hierarchical (Weberian Bureaucracy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>Egalitarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Hood (2000)*

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, a movement called *International Scientific Management*, born from Frederick W. Taylor’s innovative ideas about the production system, brought the business-type model of management into public sector. The idea of professional management expertise surpassed the technical expertise one: a competence portable through textbooks and training, requiring discreitional and central power to better achieve results, supported by an appropriate managerial culture and the active measurement and adjustment of organizational output became an order of the day. Several administrative reform doctrines were born from this movement and it set the ground for the consequent developments of public management discipline.

One of the possible (and likely) explanations of the origin of New Public Management is indeed the marriage of this managerial attitude in the public sector (managerialism) with the stream of *New Institutional Economics*, a doctrine rose after World War II around the concepts of public choice, transactions cost theory and principal agent theory. These ideas contributed to the generation of a set of administrative reforms based on the notion of contestability, user choice transparency and incentive structures, far from Weberian conception of administration (Hood, 1991; Rhodes, 1996).

Moreover, the emergence of NPM is contemporaneous with the rise and spread of some trends, linked with it:

1) the attempt to downsize government expenditure and staffing
2) a shift toward privatization and quasi privatization of public service provision
3) the development of automation in the production and distribution of public services
4) the development of a more international agenda

(Hood, 1991; Gallup, 2006)
These elements are characteristic of some reforms that go under the name of Reaganomics\textsuperscript{2} in the US, Thatcherism\textsuperscript{3} in the UK and Economic Rationalism\textsuperscript{4} in Australia: these trends, as we will see, had a role in shaping the condition for the rise of NPM and modern governance theories.

As many academic commentators observe, describing the organizational theory of New Public Management (NPM) is not a trivial issue: some scholars criticized it, claiming it has just been some kind of “pop” public management, a “whim of fashion” of the 1980s, a “cult phenomenon”; but NPM is more that these negative definitions: as Christopher Hood (1991:3) opportunely said, NPM is

\textit{“the shorthand name for the set of broadly similar administrative doctrines which dominated the bureaucratic reform agenda in many of the OECD group of countries from the late 1970s"}

What we can do in our attempt to define this theory is, with the help of literature reviews in the public administration field, to try to depict the environment in which it has been developing, the trends which it is linked with, and finally to portray the doctrine elements that are usually identified as NPM.

We have said that NPM can be seen, from an academic point of view, as marriage of managerialism in public administration and New Institutional Economics: but in which ground did it find a fertile opportunity to settle down, develop roots and grow? Some scholars interpret, in a kind of deterministic fashion, the emergence of NPM as a response to a set of post-World War II socio-economic conditions in developed countries, such as changes in income levels, the development of new technologies that lessened the gap between private and public sector, the shift towards “new machine politics”, that is the attitude of making public policy by intensive opinion polling of key groups in the electorate and last but not least the spread of a culture less tolerant towards a patriarchal and authoritative process of policy making (Hood, 1991).

NPM, as we have said, is an organizational theory, a set of administrative doctrines: in order to define the guiding principles of NPM, scholars have looked the inspiring components of public sector policy in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and many OECD countries in the 1980s.

Merging these principles, they came to six main inter-linked doctrinal components of NPM:

1) An increasing emphasis on competition in the public sector, using rivalry as the principal driver for lowering costs and rising standards;
2) The downplaying of Public-Private dichotomy, focusing on private-sector styles of management practice;
3) A shift toward a pragmatic professional management in the public sector: the entrepreneurial style of leadership as a winning model of leadership;
4) Increasing the emphasis of an output control rather than an input control, through explicit standard fixing and quantitative measures of performance;

His supply-side economic policies, dubbed “Reaganomics”, advocated reducing tax rates to spur economic growth, controlling the money supply to reduce inflation, deregulation of the economy, and reducing government spending.

\textsuperscript{3} Margaret Hilda Thatcher (born in 1925), Conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1979-1990).
Her conviction politics, economic and social policy, and political style are famous with the name of “Thatcherism”. Thatcherism claims to promote low inflation, the small state and free markets through tight control of the money supply, privatizations and constraints on the labor movement.

\textsuperscript{4} The term was born in Australia in the 1970s to describe advocates of market-oriented reform within the Australian Labor Party, whose position was closer to what has become known as the ‘Third Way’.
5) The disaggregation of units, of separable functions, of public agencies, in order to operate as a decentralized area, and deal on an arms-length basis with manageable units;

6) The stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resources used, responding to the motto “do more with less”.

(Hood, 1991; Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Peters and Pierre, 1998; Rhodes, 1996; Gallop, 2006; Ewalt 2001; Goetz 2008)

Not all of these elements are equally presented in all the policies inspired to NPM: administrative reforms and consequent processes of policy making reflect the history, the culture, the societal roles of a country, hence the element of path-dependency always constitutes a powerful guide line in shaping reforms (Peters and Pierre, 1998).

Taking into account path-dependency issues, NPM has been claimed to be exportable and applicable to different contexts (institutions, level of government, policy fields) and countries. Moreover, according to its advocates, NPM, even if with different facets and shades, is a neutral, valid instrument for every political party or program (Hood, 1991). The countries that implemented NPM reforms after World War II include UK, Australia, New Zealand, Western Europe and the United States (Peters and Pierre, 1998).

1.2 Beyond traditional government: the concept of modern governance

For some scholars, the debate about modern governance was to some extent triggered by the NPM management doctrines (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Rhodes, 1996; Gallop, 2006).

This idea has mainly been driven by the fact that these two concepts hit political agendas nearly in the same time and in the same countries, such as UK, Australia and New Zealand (Peters and Pierre, 1998). Moreover, it is commonly claimed on one hand that some reforms inspired to NPM philosophy, as privatization, regulation, decentralization and devolution trends, created and reinforced networks outside public administration, whose importance is the crucial element of governance, and on the other hand that modern governance rose as reaction, as alternative way to NPM (Rhodes, 2003; Mayntz, 2003; Gallop, 2006).

Albeit some researchers use NPM and governance as interchangeable terms, the literature marks a fundamental distinction between the two: governance is a political theory, describing the relationship between state and society, while NPM is an organizational theory, focused on developing techniques that ensure customer satisfaction and efficiency (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Ewalt, 2001; Goetz, 2008).

As the report progresses, several similarities between the two theories can be found more at an operative level, while the differences are located at a theoretical level (Peters and Pierre, 1998).

Quoting Mayntz (2003),

"The term governance refers to a basically non-hierarchical mode of governing, where non-state actors participate in the formulation and implementation of public policy".
This definition holds the main characteristics of governance political theory: the change in the function of the state and above all the importance of networks, with the consequent appearance of not-public actors on the political scene (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Mayntz 2003).

After World War II, a sense of disappointment in the capacity of guiding the states spread all over Western democracies, and alternative ways of governing, which envisage non authoritative, direct, paternalist roles of the state have been investigated.

One of the solutions was the adoption of an approach based on modern governance concepts; an answer not grounded on the deprivation of authority and legitimacy of governments (the so called “hollowing out of governments”), but on the shift of the state from a control function to an influence function. Governments aren’t the only players in the game of policy making any more; they are now part of a negotiating process which also involves partners from the external environment. The so called Third Way, a new path with respect to the hierarchical state and the market (NPM’s doctrines), was founded.

Without any doubt, the steering function of government remains a key concept: governance is concerned about enhancing government capacity to act by forging strategic inter-organizational coalition with non-state actors; it refers to steering networks (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Post and Rosenblum, 2002; Mayntz, 2003; Rhodes, 2003).

Here we observe the first similarity and the same time the first difference with NPM philosophy; still a central role of steering ability of the government, but in a different perspective: instead of focusing on processes of steering, NPM draws attention to output. Steering, according to NPM, is an intra-organizational strategy, a managerial technique, aimed to ensure customer satisfaction and efficiency (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Rhodes, 1996 and 2003; Goetz, 2008).

Always speaking about the role of the state, both NPM and governance theories embody a downplaying in the role of elected officials, promoting political entrepreneurship (Peters and Pierre, 1998).

The presence of strong networks, a feature that we will examine at later, leads the boundaries between private and public sector overlapping. The dichotomy of the two sectors is felt obsolete and inefficient: governance, as well as NMP, promotes a blending of public and private sector, in particular with respect to resources.

Despite both theories putting the accent on this aspect, they adopt different perspectives. NPM, through the introduction of managerial strategies and tools, basically promotes reforms aimed to transform public administration to a set of organizations whose only difference from the private sector is the nature of the products and services offered. On the other hand, governance is less ideologically driven: public institutions should approach private actors through ventures and partnerships with the aim of a cross-sectoral resource mobilisation (Peters and Pierre, 1998).

This overlapping of boundaries introduces competition in the public sector, under both NPM and governance, but with a fine difference: again, governance is more concerned about blending resources, while NPM always stress the accent on competition as driving force for efficiency.

Furthermore both theories have a fundamental interest in results (Peters and Pierre, 1998). The emphasis on output control, in terms of setting standards, measuring performance with quantitative indicators of customers’ satisfaction or indexes of target achievements, remains a central component in both NPM and governance philosophies.
As it has been said, the emergence and increasing prominence of networks is the prominent feature of modern governance. The dominance of networks in public policy has been possible thanks to the transformation of the role of the state from a control to an influence function and as some degrees of outsourcing, decentralization and devolution took place. Indeed, modern governance is about steering networks (Rhodes, 1996; Mayntz, 2003). These networks represent the interests of citizens, grouped in corporate actors such as registered charities, development of non-governmental organizations, community groups, women’s organizations, faith based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalition and advocacy groups: in one word, the so called civil society (LSE CCS; Mayntz, 2003).

1.3 Embedding Civil Society

Modern governance can emerge only in a context where the society meets certain institutional and structural preconditions. Governance is state-dependent, meaning that a specific functional form of the state is required. Government should be invested with political steering capacity and influence; political authorities, powerful but not omnipotent, should be the guardians of public welfare and representative of society’s interests, i.e. they must be politically legitimated by election. Indeed, governance is also society-dependent: in order to work, governance relies on the capacity of non-public actors to organize themselves into networks. The precondition is then the existence of a strong, functionally differentiated and well organized civil society (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Goetz, 2008).

But what exactly is this “civil society”?

Always relying on literature, civil society remains a contested concept. Social theorist and philosophers have debated characteristics and boundaries of civil societies at least since the late seventeen century, when scholars such as David Hume or Alexis de Tocqueville started to use it in its modern meaning (Hendriks, 2002). The complex interaction it holds with the state and the economy makes really hard to draw its exact confines. According to the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society’s working definition,

“Civil society refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power […]”

Civil society is indeed defined as the site where a range of non state actors and networks undertake a particular class of action. The freedom held by these actors to pursue their interests is only constrained by the same right of others and by the duties to the state itself (Hendriks, 2002; Mayntz, 2003).
The actions referred to are about activities aimed to create, influence and communicate the public opinion, till the more concrete activity, in the proper venues, of proposing issues to the public agenda and participate in the policy making process and debate (Post and Rosenblum, 2002; Hendriks, 2002; Mayntz, 2003).

Referencing back to the relationship between modern governance and civil society, for modern governance to emerge it is necessary that, among the actors making up civil society, there is at least a minimal sense of identification with, and responsibility for, the greater whole, i.e. a common identity. Shared values and norms is the glue which forms the complex set of relationships between the different groups and networks together; culture-based trust is essential for the cooperative behaviour and the existence of civil society networks. In a context where individuals are isolated, atomized, and they don't develop a sense of belonging to the surrounding community, there is not much space for a successful adoption of modern governance.

Moreover, public authorities and private corporate actors must be effective in their respective spheres, and, as we have said, they must cooperate in policy making processes instead of fighting each other (Rhodes, 2003; Mayntz, 2003).

With the focus of governance instead of NPM, the distinction between state and civil society can therefore blur. The state becomes a set, a collection of inter-organizational networks composed of governmental and societal actors: a challenge for governments is to empower these networks and to seek out new forms of co-operation (Rhodes, 1996).

With respect to democracy, civil society is generally considered a positive force. In particular, theorists of the micro deliberative democracy, that branch of social sciences whose purpose is to define the ideal deliberative procedure in democracies, encourage civil society’s collaboration in the processes of policy making by participation in deliberative forums and assemblies. Under this view, civil society indeed enhances and expands participatory possibilities of citizens and private actors in public policy making (Hendriks, 2002).

In the context of governance and civil society it is also worthy, and maybe necessary, mentioning the debate about the so called “New Social Democracy” (NSD).

Modern governance, as Third Way, has been described as a set of programmes with common features such as an emphasis upon giving real opportunities to citizens rather than equal resources, a concern with a strong civic responsibility, an emphasis upon the idea of community (Pierson and Castles, 2001; Manwaring, 2007).

Hence, NSD is the attempt to reinvigorate the democratic conversation between governments and civil society, through consultations strategies and a top-down community engagement. NSD seeks to reconfigure the relationship between state and civil society, and fortify democracy (Manwaring, 2007).

As we can see, NSD places itself only in the stream of modern governance. The claims it heralds, the need of embedding civil society consultation into the processes of government and policy making is the thickening of a branch of modern governance in the direction of a commitment to formal democracy.

When principles of governance and NSD are put in action, civil society and networks play a pivotal role in public policy making.
In this context, I would like to propose the advocacy coalition framework of policy change by Paul A. Sabatier (1988). His theorization of the process of policy change encompasses in itself the role played by civil society in this mechanism and gives a fundamental importance to it.

This model is composed of different keys ideas. First of all, the dominant idea is that the policy process as a whole may be understood in the context of policy networks and communities, in terms of policy subsystems; then, that public policies can be conceptualized in the same way as beliefs systems; in the end, the idea that its comprehension through policy analysis requires a time perspective of a decade or more.

A policy subsystem is basically the interaction of actors from different institutions and parts of the civil society interested and actively concerned with a specific policy area or problem. This framework indeed heralds a widening of the classical conception of policy subsystem, composed by the traditional elements of the so-called “iron triangle” (elected politicians, bureaucracy, and interest groups), i.e. “decisions makers”. A policy subsystem comprises also journalists, think-tanks, researchers and academic analysts, who play crucial role in the generation, dissemination and evaluation of policy ideas, and actors at multiple levels of government who are involved in policy formulation and implementation, such as the civil servants (Sabatier, 1988; Parsons, 1995)

The model predicts that, within the subsystem, people from various organizations are aggregated into advocacy coalitions, which can be identified in terms of beliefs and resources. Within the advocacy coalition, actors share values priorities, norms, ethics, beliefs about the efficiency of some political instruments, perceptions of causal relationships, of reality and situations, and so on; they are getting involved into politics, act in concert and also with the aim to translate their beliefs into public policies (Sabatier, 1988).

Public policies hence incorporate these value priorities, and therefore they can be conceptualized in the same manner as the system of beliefs:
While belief systems determine the direction in which an advocacy coalition try to influence a policy, its ability to do so depends upon the resources they have at their disposal.

Money, but also expertise, supporters, authority, voice and political resources strongly affect the capacity of advocacy coalitions to actually translate their deep beliefs into policy decision (Sabatier, 1988; Parsons, 1995).

Sabatier argues that policy change is then the product of the interaction of political elites (well-endowed advocacy coalitions) within a policy subsystem attempting to respond to other changes (Sabatier, 1988).
These changes are divided in several subgroups, but the two main sub-streams taken in consideration are the class of “macro” factors, big external shocks or perturbations in the economical, social, cultural or political life of a country; on the other hand, secondary factors from a “micro” perspective, i.e. evolution in the system of beliefs and priorities in the subsystem, usually as result of a process called policy orientated learning.

Policy oriented learning is the mechanism referring to

“relatively enduring alteration of thought or behavioural intentions which result from experience and which are concerned with the attainment or revision of policy objectives. Policy-oriented learning involves the internal feedback loops, perceptions concerning external dynamics, and increased knowledge of the state of the problem parameters and the factors affecting them”

Sabatier, 1988, 133

That is, secondary aspects of belief systems can be affected by policy analysis; advocacy coalitions learn from past experiences of policies and strive to reorientate programs to their goals, on the line with their beliefs’ systems.

This theorization of the evolution of policies fits perfectly the statement of Charles E. Lindblom (1959:86), one of the first developers of the evolutionary theories, rather than revolutionary, about the processes of public decision making:

“Policy is not made once and for all; it is made and remade endlessly. Policy making is a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under consideration.”
People’s beliefs, priorities and values shift and change with time. Thoughtful policy makers should always take in consideration that their policies will achieve only part of what they expected that they will have some unintended consequences and that citizens’ priorities will evolve over time. Reviews of policies allow for incremental changes, step by step evolutions, enabling policy makers to learn from past experience, becoming more conscious of their tools and instruments and embedding the most recent expectation and visions of advocacy coalitions.

In the next sections, the report discusses how this concept perfectly fits with the South Australia’s Strategic Plan\(^5\).

In order to remain a stable, long term design for the state’s future, the Plan was developed with a high degree of flexibility. Taking advantage of biennial reports that track the Plan’s achievements and progresses, it is updated every four years after a widespread round of community consultation, in order to reflect and to embed in its targets the changing priorities and visions of South Australians.

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\(^5\) From now on, we will refer to South Australia Strategic Plan either with its extended name, with the acronym SASP or simply calling it “the Plan”
2. South Australia’s Strategic Plan

After a brief introduction about public administration trends and history of planning in Australia, this chapter provides a background on South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP).

2.1 Australia: From Theory to Practice

As the report previously mentions, NPM claims to be a universal theory, enforceable in different contexts thanks to its portability and neutrality. On the other hand, we have also said that the emergence of NPM philosophy in the public sector is dependent on past history, political tradition and culture of a country, in one word that it is path-dependent. Objectively, we observe a wide spread of NPM approach in Anglo-Saxon countries in the 1970s, but with different fashions and characteristics.

Governance has often been mistaken with NPM because, despite the several differences at the theoretical level, they present many similarities at the operative level and because they emerged at about the same historical moment and regions.

Here there is a nice visual summary of the spread of NPM and modern governance theories around the world:

Table 2: Spread of Governance and NPM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPM</th>
<th>Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in the table, the UK is the leading country where both governance and NPM theories were broadly adopted. Australian political system, as well as New Zealand’s one, has always felt the influence of Britain, due to its colonial ties. Moreover, being organized as a federation of states, the Australian political system has always presented some similarities with that of the US.

Indeed, Australian governments have been influenced over many years by approaches to strategic public governance appeared in the UK political and public administration systems, but also it has been influenced by some trends established in the US (Johnston, 2000; Scott and Wanna, 2005).

To varied degrees, over the last 80 years, the NPM in Australia has been on line with the broad principles and doctrinal elements encompassed by this theory. However, NPM has been realized and put in concrete in a specific form, dependent on Australia’s local history, traditions, and political figures (Hood, 1991; Peters and Pierre, 1998; Johnston, 2000).
In Australia, a first phase of reforms, that could be read either as managerialist reforms or as a mild and moderate approach to NPM philosophy, begun in the 1980s. This period was inaugurated under Prime Minister Hawke’s Australian Labour Party’s government, when he embraced a corporatist and collectivist approach supporting labour, adopting a moderate version of NPM philosophy to economic and public sector administrative improvements. Moreover, his Treasurer (and later Prime Minister) Paul Keating, influenced by the practices of the Iron Lady and probably Regan’s government, i.e. Thatcherism and Reaganomics, introduced some reforms based on management by objectives, adoption of accrual accounting and some devolution of authority over budget management. Deregulation of markets, public sector downsizing, more favourable taxing rates, monetarist and fiscal policies to decrease inflation and reduce government debt are some examples (Johnston, 2000; Barton, 2001).

The more recent NPM reforms extended these managerialist reforms by fostering, wherever possible, competitive market principles in public sector management and by downsizing the role of government in terms of activities. Both major political parties appeared to support the reforms, since they were introduced by a labour government and then extended by the successive Conservative Coalition Government. These reforms included, always under Australian Labour Party’s government, for example, mergers, deletions and creation of new agencies inside the Australian Public Service and the adoption of managerial, private sector tools, in the spirit of sector reduction, strengthening of government direct control over policy and service provision, enhancing public sector efficiency and curtailing costs and waste. Under Howard’s government, the adoption of NPM has been apparent across a range of policies including foreign relations and trade, industrial relations and a more direct downsizing of the Australian Public Service (Johnston, 2000; Barton, 2001).

As Geoff Gallup, affirmed academic and ex Premier of Western Australia as well, claimed in a speech 2006, innovative words as “strategic planning”, “joined-up government”, “collaborations and partnerships”, “sustainability” and “progress indicators” somehow displaced concepts linked to NPM such as “benchmarking”, “comparability”, “sustainability”, “choice” and “competition”. A new form of government, associated to a commitment to principles of sustainability with respect to economics, social issues and environment was born, and with that an innovative attitude of strategic planning came again into public agendas. This version of planning was not just about command and control; instead, issues linked to individual motivation and community endeavour were seen as pivotal as legislation, regulation and public vision (Gallup, 2006). ALP has been at power from 2002 to 2007 in every state and every territory of Australia: indeed, a common feature of the several Labour governments spread all over the country has been a focus on developing state-wide plans, which set out mid-to-long term economics and social policy targets.

In particular, in each case, community consultation was a significant part of both shaping the plan and legitimizing the broad political agenda set out (Gallup, 2006; Manwaring, 2010). This feature sounds as a call for modern governance.

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7 Paul John Keating (born in 1944), 24th Prime Minister of Australia (1991-1996), ALP
8 John Winston Howard (born in 1939), 25th Prime Minister of Australia (1996-2007), Liberal-National Coalition
9 Geoffrey Ian Gallop (born in 1951), 31st Premier of Western Australia (2001-2006), ALP
The first of these mentioned state-wide plans was launched in Queensland in 1988 by Beattie’s\(^{10}\) government (the “Smart State” plan); then in 2001, in Victoria by Bracks’s\(^{11}\) government (“Growing Victoria Together”) and in Tasmania by Bacons\(^{12}\) government (“Tasmania Together”).

Two years later, the Gallop-led government in Western Australia launched the “Dialogue with the City” initiative examining the long term challenges facing Perth and the state.

In 2002 in South Australia, after three Liberal Governments, in 2002 Mike Rann\(^{13}\), leader of the ALP, won the election. The genesis of the SASP lies in the new governance arrangements that the Rann Government established when he won the office. Rann appointed several external boards to foster sustainable growth and development of the State. Among these, the most influential board were the Economic Development Board (EDB)\(^ {14}\), the Social Inclusion Board\(^ {15}\) and the Premier’s Roundtable on Sustainability\(^ {16}\). In April 2003, following a series of reports by the EDB, concerning the economic future of the State, Rann Government held the Economic Growth Summit, where 280 representative delegates participated. The outcome was the recommendation for South Australia to develop a targeted action plan with deliverable (and measurable) outcomes (EDB, 2003). Indeed, in 2004, the Rann Government launched South Australia's Strategic Plan\(^ {17}\), a state-wide initiative that through some evolutions is still effective in the State.

In 2006, in New South Wales Iemma\(^ {18}\)’s government launched its “State Plan”.

These plans all involved major topics for government, priority setting around sustainable-type objectives, the setting of targets or strategic outcomes the engagement of people and the monitoring of performance.

### 2.2 A Background for SASP

South Australia’s Strategic Plan was firstly launched by Rann Government in 2004 in response to a resolution from the Economic Growth Summit they held in 2003. In that occasion indeed, the EDB, having examined the key economic trends and issues facing South Australia, recommended the Government to develop a state-wide plan that encompassed social, environmental as well as economic targets.

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\(^{10}\) Peter Douglas Beattie (born in 1952), 36th Premier of Queensland (1998-2007), ALP

\(^{11}\) Stephen Philip Bracks (born in 1954), 44th Premier of Victoria (1999-2007), ALP

\(^{12}\) James Alexander Bacon (1950-2004), 51st Prime Minister of Tasmania (1998-2004), ALP

\(^{13}\) Michael David Rann (born in 1953), 44th Premier of South Australia (2002- Present), ALP

\(^{14}\) The EDB is a key advisory body to the Government on economic and development issues in South Australia. Its purpose “is to maximize the value of emerging economic opportunities for the State, so that South Australia is recognized as the most competitive place in Australia in which to invest and grow business […]” (EDB Purpose Statement)

\(^{15}\) The Social Inclusion Board was established to advice Government on new ways to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged people in South Australian community. This includes identifying collaborative actions that can be taken across government to address specific issues and proposing partnerships between State Government and others sectors.

\(^{16}\) The Round Table contributed to oversee the implementation of South Australia’s Strategic Plan through membership of the Update Team and Audit Committees, and through direct advice to Government in reference to “Attaining Sustainability” targets, key interactions across the SASP, the “Building Community” targets and data analysis.

\(^{17}\) When first produced in 2004, South Australia Strategic Plan was called “State Strategic Plan”. In the 2006 revision of the plan, the name has been changed in SASP to promote a broader community ownership

\(^{18}\) Morris Iemma (born in 1961), 40th Premier of New South Wales, (2005-2008), ALP
For the formulation of its plan, as Tasmania’s “Tasmania Together” plan, South Australia took inspiration from the experience of Oregon State in the US (Oregon Shines Plan)\(^{19}\), one of the first whole-of-state planning initiatives. In particular, inspiration was taken from the high community participation on initiatives concerning this plan since its first beginning and the long life of the plan (Tryens, 2005).

SASP is a document aimed to direct political action, policy making and everyday citizens’ life towards pre-established targets. It isn’t a manual, nor a set of rules; it draws an ideal path for the future of the state, fixing priorities and targets.

The first SASP included 84 outcome-focused targets on a broad range of issues under the following six key strategic, interrelated objects:

1. **Growing Prosperity**: sustaining economic growth; rising living standards, more and better job opportunities and accessible high quality services
2. **Improving Well-Being**: improving quality of life, focusing on health issues, crime and safety
3. **Attaining Sustainability**: attaining environmental sustainability, including healthier river Murray, a more sustainable management of water resources, reducing energy consumption and protecting biodiversity
4. **Fostering Creativity**: emphasizing the importance of promoting technical innovation, research and commercialization
5. **Building Communities**: encouraging community participation to civic life
6. **Expanding Opportunities**: ensuring that all South Australians can realize their potential, particularly through education

From the beginning (April 2004), the Government also committed to publish every two years a report in progress against plan targets, and it established an external, independent advisory body, the **SASP Audit Committee**\(^{20}\), to prepare this document\(^{21}\). The so called Progress Reports are still now fundamental for the

\(^{19}\) See Appendix A: Oregon Shines
\(^{20}\) See Appendix B: SASP’s Boards
\(^{21}\) At first, in 2004, the Audit Committee had to refer to SASP Implementation Committee, a board with the commitment to oversee reporting on the Plan. In April 2005, the Implementation Committee was disbanded in favour of the Executive Committee of Cabinet, a new board chaired by the Premier
Plan, since they provide the opportunity to review strategies and targets to make sure that the State is striving towards measurable goals.

This independent monitoring body delivered the first Progress Report in 2006: it included recommendations to the Government, about modifying targets to ensure that reliable data were available to measure. The report provided a detailed description and a quantitative evaluation of the progresses made with respect of each specific target. It reported that real achievements were obtained in the area of employment, economic growth and productivity, credit rating, the film and television industry; reducing infant mortality rates and rates of psychological distress, improving education and increase in the number of community based-accommodation options for people with a disability (Audit Committee, 2006).

The nature of the Plan is that it was drawn to drive policies for the state, and as such as it should reach all the South Australians.

Indeed, in 2006 another board, the **Update Team**, launched a whole-of-state community engagement program of consultation, including meetings, presentations and questionnaires. The aim was to check if the Plan was in line with the priorities of South Australians, and eventually edit the Plan. On the basis of the opinion, concerns and advice collected and then embedded into the 2006 Progress Report by the **Audit Committee**, the Update Team recommended to the Government a number of changes to the targets.

The **Update Team** suggested that the plan be regionalized, meaning that individual regions focus on those targets that were local priorities and develop

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and including the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure and the Minister for Education and Children’s Services.

22 See Appendix B: SASP’s Boards
their own regional ‘sub-plans’ about how to achieve results in those target areas; it advised to identify and underline key interactions between different targets and objective areas, in order to underline and promote synergies among targets; to retune the Plan in terms of vision and strengthen the contact with South Australians; indeed, to continue, always with more strength and conviction, to engage the community into the process of policy making; it proposed the establishment of a partnership with private sector business and organization and to give more space to the issues faced by Aboriginal people.

An updated version of the SASP was indeed launched in 2007, with 98 targets. Some of the past targets were substituted with others since they had already been achieved, or they have been dropped in favour of more challenging targets; others were amended to be more specific or easier to measure (only eight targets were left unchanged or subjected to “no substantial change”). Among these changes, new targets were added in areas such as early childhood, sustainable water supply, multiculturalism, employment participation and work-life balance. Moreover, the new version of the plan gave more prominence to Aboriginal people.

A time horizon was decided for the achievement of results: the plan’s targets reflected South Australians’ goals for where they wanted to be as a State in 2014. Interactions between different targets and objective areas were pointed out. Innovative thinking and collaborative behaviour were encouraged, in order to avoid the achievement of a target at the expense of another.

The plan was indeed regionalized: 12 regions were identified across Adelaide Metropolitan area, Greater Adelaide and Country regions.

A new body, the **Community Engagement Board (CEB)**, was established, with the function of conduit between the State Government and the South Australian Community, taking the place of the Update Team itself. The CEB had (and currently has) the commitment of advising the **Executive Committee of Cabinet** through regular reports on community involvement with the Plan, providing advice on the community’s vision and goals for the inclusion in the updated future version of the Plan. This process was designed by Jeff Tryens, called from the US, a pivotal actor in the framing of the Oregon Shines community engagement mechanism.

In particular, in 2007 the Board focused on regionalization and a partnership program with community and business organizations to demonstrate their involvement into the Plan.

Finally, the “Alliance Programme” was established, to develop partnerships agreements with external stakeholders.

In 2008 the **Audit Committee** produced a new Progress Report, as scheduled. Again, it produced recommendations for a change to targets and ongoing community engagement. Particular achievements were noted in the areas of business investments and jobs; reduction of smoking rates and healthy life expectancy; biodiversity conservation, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, public transport use and the production and consumption of renewable energy; strong growth in the number of people involved in creative activities and in film industry; lower crime rates, volunteering, homelessness and some of the literacy and numeracy targets (Audit Committee, 2008).

The Plan is updated every four years: indeed, in 2010 a new round of consultation to refresh the existing plan took place.

As the report explores further on, the consultation took a different perspective with respect to the previous one: it was “grass-roots” based, citizen-centric,

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23 See Appendix B: SASP’s Boards
24 See Appendix B: SASP’s Boards
orientated to investigate people’s vision about the future rather than their opinion about current targets.

The CEB, through classical and innovative tools, from community meetings and *ad hoc* consultations to social media and online surveys, asked South Australians about their expectations about the future of the State. The CEB produced the report “South Australia’s Plan for the best... 2020 and beyond”, embedding the visions of the community about the Plan with a time horizon of ten years.

Furthermore, the biennial Progress Report by the Audit Committee independent body in 2010 presents several highlights, including an increase in South Australia’s economic growth and labor productivity, higher employment rate; decline in crime rate, improvement in work safety; progress in reducing smoking rates and increasing healthy life expectancy, including for Aboriginal South Australians; improvements in land and marine biodiversity conservation, soil protection, renewable energy and energy efficiency of dwellings; increase in public transport use; encouraging improvements in elements of Aboriginal wellbeing, and in housing for people with disabilities (Audit Committee, 2010).

An updated version of the Plan was launched in September 2011, reflecting the feedback provided by the CEB after community consultation and embedding the new attitude of the Plan, being much more an outward looking, people-centric document focusing on the vision and goals developed by the community.
For this reason, the Plan changed and a new structure was adopted. The six areas of focus (growing prosperity, improving wellbeing, attaining sustainability, fostering creativity, building communities, and expanding opportunities) evolved into six “priorities”:

1) Our Community
2) Our Prosperity
3) Our Environment
4) Our Health
5) Our Education
6) Our Ideas

The new Plan contains 100 targets: 21 targets were added, more than a half of which reflecting opinion collected through the community engagement process; on the other hand, some of the existing targets have been dropped, grouped, reworked or amended in order to reach a better measurability or a more significance.

Goals and targets are now grouped under the already mentioned six macro-objects, which, even if they basically reflect the same ideas as the previous ones, also envisage the innovative attitude of the plan. In this view, “our” is a key word: this is everyone’s effort towards everyone’s targets, our tension towards our shared visions and goals.
3. Evolution of SASP towards a modern governance approach

The Plan envisages several elements of modern governance: the Alliance Program, a paradigmatic example of introduction to the public-private sector blending; the focus on performance measures; the regionalization of the Plan and above all the community engagement process. The report describes all these elements under the light of what is understood about NPM, modern governance and civil society.

3.1 Alliance Program

Alliance partners are non-government organisations, for profit private or government funded organisations, business or individuals that are identified by and formally sign up to contribute towards specific targets in the Plan. Many targets indeed have strong links to the private sector, while others are influenced by the behaviour of families and individuals. This partnership is then a conduit for South Australians to have a more conscious and active role into the SASP, encouraging them to put SASP targets at the centre of their own planning: in most cases, Alliance partners strive and invest resources in direct pursuit of targets. Alliance members are able to use the Alliance program to formally recognise their contribution towards achieving Plan targets, signing up through the CEB. To date, about 70 alliance partners have signed up\(^\text{25}\), covering 94 over 98 targets\(^\text{26}\), but the situation is continuously evolving.

The Alliance program is the example of what it has been defined as private-public sector blending. It has been said that the modern governance approach suggests that public institutions should approach private actors through ventures and partnerships with the aim of a cross-sectoral resource mobilisation; the program enables external organizations, business, private and public actors, and individuals to affiliate with the Plan and to do their own business planning using the targets that are important to them, or for which they want to contribute and get recognition for doing so. They are all stimulated to act and to direct their efforts toward the same aims, the development of South Australia, through SASP targets. This is a fundamental step in raising community responsibility. The 2011 update of the Plan recognizes the importance of the Alliance program as a tool for an integrated action for business, non government organizations and representative bodies to achieve common goals.

\(^{26}\) Source: http://www.stateplan.sa.gov.au/alliance-members
3.2 Measuring Achievements

In the outline of NPM organizational theory and modern governance political theory the report describes how both stress the importance of measuring progress and performance with quantitative tools.

Every two years, the Audit Committee, fulfilling its monitoring and reporting task, presents a Progress Report in order to advise the Government on issues of interpreting plan targets and measuring progress towards their pursuit. This is a fundamental aspect to the Plan: policy makers, communities, business and individuals can monitor the course, the patterns in achieving targets step by step. These reports, giving a snapshot of the current situation, indeed steer actors’ actions and direct them toward the Plan’s more challenging or distant goals: they increase the awareness about the plan and allow citizens as well policy makers to know whether South Australia is “on track”.

But the truth is that they do much more. Progress Reports are fundamental at the time of updating the Plan, in order to re-set targets according to achievements and difficulties met in the previous years.

Quoting Lindblom (1959; 86):

“Making policy is at best a very rough process. [...] A wise policy-maker expects that his policies will achieve only part of what he hopes and at the same time will produce unanticipated consequences he would have preferred to avoid. If he proceeds through a succession of incremental changes, he avoids serious lasting mistakes in several ways.”

So, how are achievements practically measured?

The first Progress Report, released in 2006, classified targets in five categories, according to their achievement status. As you can see from the table, the major part of the measurable targets was judged on track, or already achieved.

### Table 3: Rating Scale (2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th># of targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Achieved – currently at or better than the target level</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>On track to meet the target in the timeframe</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Progress has been made but the target is unlikely to be reached in the timeframe</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Little/no/negative movement has been made on the target</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCLEAR</td>
<td>No data or no new data are available or measurement is problematic</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total # of targets 84

Source: Adapted from South Australia’s Strategic Plan Progress report 2006
Over time, as it was recommended in 2006 from the Audit Committee itself and from the Update Team, the Audit Committee adopted a new way of evaluating the SASP pattern. It developed more expertise in measuring and interpreting targets, and members’ views on the best way to explain data have evolved. For this reason, the second Progress Report, developed in 2008, uses a different target rating system than that adopted in the 2006 version.

A clearer and more meaningful two-part rating system to assess progress was indeed adopted. This new mechanism included separate ratings for 1) progress observed to date and 2) achievability, which is the Audit Committee’s evaluation about how likely it was that the target would be reached within the timeframe.

Table 4: Progress Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of targets</th>
<th>in 2008</th>
<th>in 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive movement</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Steady or no movement</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Negative movement</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unclear (new target – baseline established)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unclear (no data or no new data)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total # of targets</strong></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from South Australia’s Strategic Plan Progress Report 2008

Table 5: Achievability Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of targets</th>
<th>in 2008</th>
<th>in 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Within reach</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 0            | Unclear (new target–baseline established) | 9 | 5 Unreached
| 0            | Unclear (no data or no new data) | 8 | 2 |
| **Total # of targets** | 105 | 100 |

Source: Adapted from South Australia’s Strategic Plan Progress Report 2008

A key measure and the corresponding data source for each of the 98 targets are specified. Most targets are expressed as achieving/keeping a specified level or ratio of performance, or improving or maintaining it, within a specified time frame. For most Plan targets, a baseline year of 2003/04 or 2004 has been specified, with the target horizon of 2014. When it was considered necessary, some targets in the Plan have supplementary measures, and that’s the reason why in the table there are 105 targets classified for 2008 instead of 98.

In 2010, in its most recent report, the Audit Committee adopted the same ranking scales, carrying out only some alterations on the last grades (in both rating scales the two “0” classes were combined into only one “0–Unclear”; in the achievability scale, a further label, 5-Not reached within the target timeframe, was added). Supplementary measures were adopted, but were not given a separate rating. On the other hand, some targets were broken up into two
ratings, when necessary for accurate measurement. That’s the reason why targets appear to be 100 in 2010.

These findings, together with the CEB’s response, were integrated into the updated version of the Plan just released.

In order to oversee the wellbeing of the most vulnerable part of the population, the current Plan suggests, for the next years, to have disaggregated data by gender, age, region and ethnicity, so that more focused actions could be directed in cases of need.

Moreover, following the example of Canada, the State is striving to realize a “South Australia’s wellbeing index”, to evaluate in a proper way those social aspects that are usually left out from the economic analysis. 

For its robust targets and for the transparent way it is reported through the commitment of the Audit Committee, the SASP was awarded with the Community Indicator Consortium’s 2009 Community Indicators Performance Measures Integration Awards. This is an international recognition of the SASP as excellence, as best practice to enhance citizens’ engagement and governance and create real change and benefit to communities.

3.3 Regionalizing the Plan

Historically, different departments and agencies have used differing regional boundaries across government; i.e., different departments have had different definitions of what areas a particular region included.

In 2006, the South Australian Government led negotiations with departments about creating a unique set of consistent, uniform regional boundaries for use in planning.

Twelve standard regions were identified using local government areas and the Australian Bureau of Statistics ‘Statistical Local Areas’ as a basis. These uniform regions were adopted by departments and agencies over a two year period and were fully in use by mid-2009. A two-year implementation period was then chosen to help avoid sudden and costly business changes.

As previously mentioned, when the Government released the updated version of the Plan in early 2007, the Update Team recommended that the Plan be regionalized. This implied that individual regions would focus on targets which were a local priority and that specific sub-plans would have to be fostered and implemented by each regions in order to achieve those targets.

The way to be followed in achieving results in target areas is indeed through freedom given to region, aligned with six key strategic objects of the SASP.

The twelve regions are grouped in three macro-areas:

- Metro Adelaide: Northern Adelaide, Eastern Adelaide, Western Adelaide and Southern Adelaide
- Greater Adelaide: Barossa, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island

27 Note that Australian researchers are currently also developing a Australia National Development Index
- Country regions: Eyre and Western, Far North, Yorke and Mid North, Murray and Mallee, Limestone Coast

Graph 6

Regional Plans for all Country regions and Greater Adelaide regions were finalized and published in 2008. This process was supported through several new or existing mechanisms varying from region to region. In some regions, Regional Development Boards or Regional Coordination Networks helped local communities in determining priority targets in the region; in others, Steering Groups including community leaders, government representatives (federal, state and local), local business leaders and not for profit organizations were specifically established to design a local version of the SASP.

The four metropolitan regions are still working on their local Plans. This process is being undertaken in partnership with Northern Connections and the Office of the Southern Suburbs; meetings have been held, including with local community leaders, government (state, federal and local) representatives, and local business and not-for-profit stakeholders in order to refine local priorities to be envisaged in Regional Plans.

The CEB (through the Office of the Executive Committee of Cabinet) has been re-linked with country and outer metropolitan regions to monitor their plan design and to start discussions about how best to consult with their region in light of the next update of the Plan expected in 2011.

Regionalization is part of the mechanism put in action according to modern governance to develop a bottom up approach to policy making. The decision to regionalize the plan reflects the efforts to ensure that regional communities were engaged in the process. Devolving the design of a plan to a regional level is a way to reconnect citizens and local communities to the governance processes: the steering function of the government deploys itself into the setting of the main six keys target areas, but by leaving regions free to set their own specific targets and their own mechanisms to achieve them, public consultation is stimulated and highly incentivized (Manwaring, 2010).

3.4 Community Engagement

Even though in 2004 the Premier Mike Rann’s launched the SASP as a “goad for action” for all South Australians, at that time the Plan has largely been seen as a plan for government alone. Indeed, it was clear that the primary focus was to improve the state’s growth, and it is widely agreed that this iteration of the plan was more top-down driven, a government-imposed agenda without much consultation and public awareness28 (Manwaring, 2007 and 2010, Community Engagement Board, 2011).

In 2005, the Premier felt that, in order to grant that the SASP remain a stable, long term blueprint for South Australia’s future, some changes to the Plan had to be made. He wisely foresaw that the SASP would have been an effective and long lasting plan only deeply engaging both government agencies and South Australia’s citizens into its formulation and implementation.

In 2005, a new board, the Executive Committee of the Cabinet (ExComm) was established as overseeing authority for driving implementation of the Plan.

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28 Also reported by Mrs Tanya Smith in a meeting on 17 August, 2011
The establishment of the Executive Committee of the Cabinet (ExComm) was a crucial first step for governmental engagement into the Plan. The ExComm is indeed a cabinet committee, but it is the only board in its genre to host two non parliamentary members as independent advisers, one from the Economic Development Board and one from the Social Inclusion Board. The role of the ExComm is very important because, driving the implementation of the Plan through Government and beyond, it is the conduit between the community, that indirectly speaks through the CEB (at that time it was the Update Team) and the Government, to which it has the commitment to report.

The Premier’s vision was indeed to bring the SASP’s targets into the Government’s political agenda as priorities and to extend the ownership of the Plan to the community. In order to achieve this challenging goal, in the month of August he called two experts to work on the Plan: Ms Tanya Smith and Mr Jeff Tryens.

Ms Tanya Smith, the then Executive Director within the Office of the Executive Committee of Cabinet, had the mission of embed the SASP in government and establish accountability on the part of chief executives to pursue and deliver on the Plan targets. Indeed, if on one hand it was needed to draw a closer link from the SASP to the community, on the other hand there was also the necessity to drive SASP’s targets into the priorities of government agencies.

Specular to Ms Smith’s job there was Jeff Tryens’s role, the Director of Oregon Shines Progress Board. The Premier was asking for a major interest of the citizens into the Plan, but as Mr Tryens assessed, there is no interest without engagement29. If the Plan had to be felt near to South Australians, South Australians had to have a role in shaping it; indeed, an update of the Plan was needed, as a means to better engage the wider community in it. Following this idea, Mr Tryens was placed along Ms Smith and the Update Team, and he designed the South Australia Community Engagement Process and suggesting the 2007 pit stop for the SASP, in order to integrate people’s priorities into the Plan30.

As Mr Tryens himself stated31, the challenge was how to retrofit a community engagement process onto a pre-existing plan. His biggest contribution was, “as an empowered, risk-taking American, to provide cover for government employees to engage in what would otherwise have been considered career threatening activities in the name of community engagement”.

Mr Tryens, in a presentation held in October 2005, highlighted the problem the community awareness about the plan was low among South Australians, and that a specific strategy for establishing a collaboration with communities was needed. Even if some surveys run in that period shown that about 90% of South Australians perceived that SASP-type projects were worthwhile and that there was a growing willingness from the public to participate in SASP-related community projects, at that time the Plan didn’t enjoy much popularity. It was felt as distant, top-down driven; no data about the Plan were available to the public and a kind of scepticism about its long lasting effect was tangible (Tryens, 2005).

Bringing into South Australia the fruits of his experience in Oregon Shines, to solve this issue Mr Tryens suggested upgrading the SASP website, launching an awareness campaign and a partnership program, and developing periodic SASP community “products” (Tryens, 2005). Moreover, he advised to establish an

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29 As reported by Mrs. Tanya Smith in a meeting on 17 August 2011
30 As reported by Mrs. Tanya Smith in a meeting on 17 August 2011
31 As he wrote in our correspondence by email
independent body to monitor the Plan’s results and to strive in order to have citizens feel that SASP was an important project.

He proposed a strategy working through these principles:
1) Work with and through partners
2) Use community leaders as proxy for plan “owners”
3) Build processes around good data
4) Insure a broad reach
5) Learn from previous planning cycles
6) Keep partners in the loop

(Tryens, 2006)

Indeed in 2005, a short public awareness campaign about the SASP was run by the government, mainly through radio and TV advertisements, and in April 2006 the consultations began.

In April 2006, the Update Team was appointed in order to oversee the update process of the Plan. It launched a widespread round of consultations all over the state, with the aim of collecting the opinions of citizens about the Plan, in the perspective of the 2007 timeframe for the update of the Plan.

The system of consultations draw by Mr Tryens had a tripartite structure.

**Graph 7: 2006 Community Engagement Process**

In the first period, from March to June, 14 regional consultations took place, called “Talking to Regions”. On invitations, community leaders assisted these meetings (average attendance of 60 – 80 people (Update Team, November 2006)), bringing local opinions on existing targets.

At the same time and usually tagged onto them, from May to June, also the “Community Forums” were being held: these meetings were open to the public,
i.e. everyone could attend them and propose their own opinions. Unfortunately, these forums had low success level, till a zero attendance recording in one case. During the same months, the Update Team also ran the Talking Targets, thematic events where, on invitation, stakeholders, local government representatives, scholars and NGO could have their say. These six meetings, each one dedicated to one of the six target-areas, had a higher level of attendance, from 90 to 200 people (Update Team, November 2006). All the feedback collected during these meetings, together with the opinion of South Australia’s submitted by email, letters, and expressed in an online survey and during other presentations held by Mr Tryens himself and Tanya Smith, were summarised into the Preliminary Report by the Update Team. The Community Congress then, held in July, reflected on the ideas expressed by the Preliminary Report. It played a very important role in the creation of the Plan update: it was “the culmination of the process, in a highly democratic way, identified the priorities that would drive the Plan in its next phase”32. It registered a pretty wide participation, with an attendance of about 400 people from community groups, the business sector, state and local government. The only requirement for the invitation was that the participant had engaged in the process in some earlier stages. “The breath of representativeness at the event appeared to convince even some skeptical Cabinet members that this was a very unusual and far reaching process”33. Following the Congress, the Update Team released a second report.

From August to November, a series of working groups convened to express the priorities as draft targets. These were winnowed down to those that best captured the main themes from the consultations and which could be easily measured. Several working groups also looked at thematic issues about the Plan, as its governance and the process of community engagement itself, for example. Hence, the Update Team produced the Final Report containing key recommendations to the Government about the Plan’s targets. Among those, it has to be remembered again the advice for an ongoing commitment into community engagement processes, continuous in time and more “grass-roots’ based. But not only: the Update Team also suggested retuning the Plan in terms of philosophy, or vision statement, in order to widen the explanation behind it, framing it in a more effective way into day to day life and aspirations of South Australians (Update Team, 2006).

As we have already said, the main outcomes of the consultation process were the establishment of the Community Engagement Board (CEB), working as a conduit between Government and the community; the Alliance program to develop partnership with external stakeholder; the actual regionalization of the Plan; an increase in the Aboriginal profile in the Plan.

The overall process engaged more than 1600 people across all South Australia, being the first and the largest community consultation process in the young history of the State.
A first step toward community engagement was indeed made: the public awareness about the SASP increased after this round of consultation (Manwaring, 2010).

As Mr Tryens’s strategy indicated, community leaders were considered a proxy for South Australia’s population; mainly community groups, NGOs, other key stakeholders, along with a set of so called community leaders were indeed involved into the engagement mechanism. Reporting the words of Mr Tryens, “my underling premise for the first update process was to engage and hold the

32 As Jeff Tryens wrote in our correspondence by email
33 As Jeff Tryens wrote in our correspondence by email
interest of the few thousand people on the front lines in communities who actually make things happen locally.\textsuperscript{34}

Some objections, in time, were heralded against the 2006 community engagement process.
It was particularly claimed that consultations were never designed to be a fully representative exercise, in that it would engage with a broadly representative sample of the ordinary South Australians. Furthermore, it was asserted that unequal voice was given to different groups, and that some of them were underrepresented in the consultations (women, low income groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander South Australians, metropolitan-based South Australians, groups and individuals not civically engaged, smaller community organizations, private sector representatives). On the other hand, more organized groups had the chance to deliver to the board their opinions about changing targets, i.e. groups already politically and civically engaged, people with professional and academic occupations, state and local government officials, people from South Australian regional areas (Manwaring, 2010).

This situation suits the advocacy coalition framework that we have outlined: policy change was the product of the interaction of advocacy groups, within a policy subsystem attempting to respond to changes in the external environment. Parts of these subsystems were also journalists, academics, columnists, the \textbf{Audit Committee} members, with the Progress Reports, all of them portraying the current situation somehow, even if marginally, might have influenced advocacies’ opinions. Among several advocacy groups, the ones that were better endowed with resources, in terms of power, supporters, expertises, authority and voice had the chance to direct the change inside the SASP, managing to drive the rise of some new targets and the eclipse of some old ones, mainly according to their instances and beliefs.

In our view, the structure suggested by Mr Tryens and Ms Smith was functional to the environment they had to face at that time. As we have said, before the consultation there wasn’t much public involvement in the Plan, and the biggest challenge they had to face was indeed engaging people in an already existing plan, government-led and top-down driven. They approached the main representatives of communities and built the first important solid bridge between government and non-government institutions, asking them for the first time the priorities that the Plan should be reflecting. As Ms Smith said, this was intended to be the first action toward a wider community engagement; it was aimed to check if SASP was in tune with South Australia’s priorities and it never pretended to be a grass-roots consultation.

As recalled from the words of Lindblom, policies have to be flexible and adaptable to changes in environment. South Australians’ visions, priorities and values shift and change with time. Reviews of policies allow or step-by-step evolutions, enabling policy makers to learn from past trials, becoming more aware of the instruments they have at their disposal, and embedding the most recent expectation and visions of advocacy coalitions.
Indeed, 2007 and 2011 updates of the Plan reflect all these positions.

Part of the process of policy making is indeed “\textit{learning by doing}”. By past experiences and decisions, the know-how is gradually increased, and by previous criticisms new ideas and projects arise.

Fours years after the first consultation experience, in 2010 South Australians were called again to have their say about the SASP.

\textsuperscript{34} As he wrote in our correspondence by email
Basically, a brand new attitude drove the designing of the consultation mechanisms: it was a complete citizen-centric engagement, based on the premise that people engage people. It was focused not on South Australians’ priorities and targets, too “technical” concepts35, but on visions, emotions, and feelings about the future of the State36. The all engagement strategy, from its first beginning, was bottom-up thought: focus groups helped the CEB designing the consultation process. The new system chased four cornerstones:

1) An integrated approach for a multi-layered engagement
2) Citizens centric approach
3) Extending the reach
4) Innovative tools

Graph 8: 2010 Community Engagement Process

35 As reported by Emma Lawson in a meeting on 12 August 2011
36 As reported by Emma Lawson in a meeting on 12 August 2011 and by Mrs. Tanya Smith in a meeting on 17 August 2011
As Mrs Emma Lawson, the current Executive Director of South Australia's Strategic Plan, explained\textsuperscript{37}, these points were articulated in an innovative rethinking of the consultation system, aimed to reach all South Australian citizens and involve them in a discussion about their vision for the State in 2020 and beyond.

A first round of consultations, comprising local meetings open to the public, and stakeholders’ forums, gave to the CEB draft about which were the visions that the community considered more important for the State. An innovative, surprising feature of the 2010 community engagement was the adoptions of the cutting edge digital channels of communication. Social media including Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, live blogs, YouTube channels and the SASP’s website worked as interface between the people and the CEB. The Board, after the consultations, used to publish a review about the meetings and the principal findings: users could interact commenting, criticizing, suggesting; no pre-filtering of comments was adopted by the CEB. These instruments gave initial feedback about the results of the consultations; furthermore, a second turn of meetings, involving the class of stakeholders in the six objective areas of the Plan, population specific meetings in order to get in touch with the more disadvantaged parts of society, took place. In order to test the consistency of the conclusion drawn by the CEB from the Community Consultations, also a broad online survey was launched. Governmental analysts assess that thanks to this system at least the 73% of the 1,433 people who responded to the questionnaire were not previously associated with the Board’s consultations (Community Engagement Board, 2011).

The overall consultation touched about 9,200 people over six months. This massive operation led to the compilation of the report “South Australia’s Plan for the Best... 2020 and beyond”, which highlighted that the primary visions of South Australian are being safe in homes, communities and work; having access to an affordable house; adopting sustainable water management.

Mrs Emma Lawson’s provided her opinion about the 2010’s community engagement process. She assessed that they did their best effort especially in reaching the more disadvantaged, the outcast from the word of politics. They went directly to people asking their opinion, also through street talking and barbecues; Mrs Lawson, in her feedback, said that she would stress the importance of this kind of link with the citizens, if the process could run again from the beginning: “go and speak with the people, local groups, sport clubs, small cultural communities; we don’t have to expect them coming to us: we should move and go directly, in person, to them”.

\textsuperscript{37} As reported by Emma Lawson in a meeting on 12 August 2011
Conclusion: SASP as Best Practice

In the last seven years the SASP mutated, changed and evolved.

It followed an incremental path towards an increasing community involvement into its formulation and implementation.
At first, it was just a state-wide long-term plan, encompassing the main subjects, of economics, social life and environment.

Of course, it was a “goad for action”, but it wasn’t perceived as everyone’s goad. In 2005, the Premier took note of the fact that neither public agencies neither the community were pivoting the Plan. Indeed, thanks to his innovative perspective, to his prompt intervention to the Plan, and to the contribution of experts such as Ms Smith and Mr Tryens, the first fundamental step toward a new approach of public management and policy making was done. Designing the current structure of the Plan and the Community Engagement Process, they managed to involve community leaders into the Plan and to raise citizens’ awareness about the Plan.

Through this loop of “learning by doing”, observing past achievements and failures, consulting stakeholders and the community, in 2007 the Plan was updated.

But to have a plan which was in tune with the needs and priorities of South Australians, a unique update of the Plan wasn’t enough. It was vital to bring people into the process of shaping the Plan, and continue to do that on a regular basis. That’s why in 2010-2011 the Government launched a new community engagement campaign in the perspective of updating the Plan again, to ensure that it is responsive to changing social, economic and environmental situations in which it operates. With 2010 consultations, Government managed to approach to people not only as citizens and subjects, customers and clients, but also as co-producers in the new rights and responsibility mix of modern politics.

What Mr Tryens had in his mind, when he first designed the SASP Community Engagement Process, was to “open state government up to the idea that citizens have valuable information to provide in guiding the state’s direction and, more importantly, energy and resources that can be harnessed in working toward a shared vision”, and, at every update, South Australia gets closer to this aim.

The experience of South Australia in policy making can be a beacon to other countries. It provides the evidence for a more democratic way to do politics, in which civil society collaboration in the processes of policy making is encouraged. Participatory possibilities are expanded and enhanced, the democratic conversation between government and civil society is reinvigorated through consultation strategies and top down-community engagement. Policies as the SASP reconfigure the relationship between state and civil society empowering democracy, making citizens effective players in the game of politics, conscious actors in the proposal and development of policies. The SASP is indeed a powerful tool to align Government’s action with citizens’ aspirations and priorities, a way to create synergies between public and private actors and sectors, to join the efforts toward a common aim, i.e. wellbeing in all the aspect of life.
We consider South Australia’s experience in the field of policy development particularly successful. What was firstly felt as a government-imposed plan, thanks to wise political figures such as the Premier Mike Rann, it turned out to be a flexible document, designed and shaped according to citizens’ needs and visions. Currently, the SASP is an example of modern governance, in which political authority, bureaucracy and citizens together pursue the same goals and targets in terms of economic, cultural and social growth for the State.

“The Plan must be a dynamic, living document. A plan that is about achieving change must itself be open to change when circumstances alter.”

Mike Rann
Premier of South Australia,
South Australia’s Strategic Plan 2007
Appendix A: Oregon Shines

Oregon Shines is the strategic plan for Oregon State and all Oregonians. It was firstly mandated by the Governor in 1989 to help turn around a struggling economy. Indeed, when Oregon Shines was designed, the state was coming out of a deep recession where unemployment had reached double digits and incomes had fallen dramatically.

The plan resulted in three goals: 1) a superior workforce, 2) an attractive quality of life and 3) an international frame of mind. The plan also recommended strategies to achieve these goals and created the Oregon Benchmarks to measure progress; the Oregon Progress Board has been created to keep Oregonians focused on their future through biennial benchmark reports and periodic updates of the plan.

In April 1996, the Governor John Kitzhaber formed the Governor's Oregon Shines Task Force to work with the Oregon Progress Board to assess what has been accomplished since 1989, and to recommend how to change the plan to accommodate new realities.

The Task Force consulted with hundreds of business and civic leaders around the state, worked with consultants to analyse trends in society and the economy, and examined the Benchmarks used to chart progress toward the Oregon Shines goals.

Thousands of Oregonians participated in updating the original Oregon Shines, helping produce a new plan, called Oregon Shine II. They took on a more holistic approach, focusing as much on community and the environment as on the economy.

Oregon Shines II engaged a more "bottoms-up" process that included meetings with leaders across the state. It established three new goals: 1) quality jobs for all Oregonians, 2) engaged, caring and safe communities, and 3) healthy, sustainable surroundings. The Progress Board pared down the list of Oregon Benchmarks to less than 100, with 25 identified as "key."

Indeed, the Oregon Shines II process concluded that Oregon had made progress and reaffirmed the need for a knowledge-based economy. Oregon Shines II also determined that many Oregon families were not benefiting from the state's prosperity.

A third phase of the plan, Oregon Shines III, was adopted by the board in September 2008. It addressed the concerns raised by the partner panels and numerous other stakeholders. Through expanded partnerships, the board modified the scoped timing of the plan to adapt to the economic downturn that occurred in the months immediately following.

Seven expert “Oregon Shines III Partner Panels” hosted by the Progress Board voiced a common need for Oregon Shines III to seriously invest in collaboration, coordination, and prevention.

Oregon Shines III was organized around four phases aimed to

1) Take Stock phase: publicly discuss the key challenges facing Oregon’s future and increase understanding of how progress occurs across goal areas (economic, social and environmental)

38 Source: http://www.oregon.gov
3) Re-Think phase: better understand how to achieve the Oregon Shines goals. In this step findings from the Take Stock phase are synthesized into new priorities and strategies for consideration by government agencies, policy makers and communities.

4) Pull Together: pull together information and people from across the state to help achieve shared goals. It connects local communities and citizens and arm policymakers, investors and partners with better data for dialogue and decision making.

5) Stay Focused: provide continuous benchmark data reporting and continually add local data and inspirational stories to the online “Infrastructure for Results”
Appendix B: SASP’s Boards

The Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a small, independent body (membership doesn’t entail any remuneration) whose primary purpose is to provide advice and recommendations to the Executive Committee of Cabinet about the interpretation of South Australia’s Strategic Plan targets, about the proper indexes and data sources to use in measuring progress against the targets and on the starting point, or ‘baseline’, for measurement.

It is responsible for producing a Progress Report every two years; from August 2004, it has met every three months and 2006, 2008 and 2010 Progress Reports were published. These reports have the purpose of identifying targets where progress is on track and areas where more effort or new approaches are required.

The Audit Committee does not comment on government strategies nor does it make recommendations on policies in pursuit of the targets.

Membership of the Audit Committee includes five members, each one from non-government representative from South Australian Government’s major advisory boards.

The current members are:

- Mr Bill Cossey (Chair), Social Inclusion Board;
- Anuradha Mundkur, Premier’s Council for Women;
- Dr Leanna Read, Economic Development Board;
- Dr Suzanne Miller, Premier’s Climate Change Council;
- Mike McGrath, SA Australian Bureau of Statistics;

Update Team and Community Engagement Board (CEB)

The Update Team was appointed by the Government in 2006, comprising 26 South Australian community leaders from key government advisory boards and councils, with the aim of oversee a community engagement program in relation to SASP.

The Board, with the support of Mr Tryens and Ms Tanya Smith, held the 2006 community consultations, and reported the results in a final report in November 2006 called "Have your SAy... it’s your State".

Among the recommendations assessed in this document, the advice for the establishment of a new board, with the explicit aim to foresee and steer community engagement was clear.

Indeed, in 2007 the CEB was introduced, in order to provide leadership and continuity in relation to community involvement in the Plan. It exists to promote the involvement of individuals and organizations outside State Government in South Australia’s Strategic Plan (the “Plan”). It is an advisory body to the Executive Committee of Cabinet and, as such, a conduit for community views on the Plan and its implementation. The Board meets four times a year, with extraordinary meetings arranged as required. Sub-committees also meet on regular occasions; at least one meeting a year is to be held in regional South Australia. The Board is be supported by a small secretariat in the Office of the
Executive Committee of Cabinet within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The Board advises the Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm) through regular reports on community involvement with the Plan and on information to be shared with the wider community on Plan implementation and specific initiatives directed at Plan targets.

The CEB comprises a representative of eleven high level South Australian Government boards and committees. Each member brings a wealth of skills and experience and also a particular focus and this diversity results in many of the community’s interests being represented on the Board. Members are appointed to the CEB on a biennial basis and are eligible to serve for a maximum of three terms.

Current Members
- Peter Blacker, Chair, Minister’s Regional Communities Consultative Council (Board Chair)
- Deb Agnew, Member, Regional Communities Consultative Council
- Professor Don Bursill, Member, Climate Change Council (proxy for David Klingberg AM Chair, Premier’s Climate Change Council)
- Dr Ian Chessell, Chair, Premier’s Science and Research Council (and SA Chief Scientist)
- Emeritus Professor Anne Edwards co-chair, Premier’s Council for Women
- Kate Gould, co-chair, Premier’s Council for Women
- Lorna Hallahan, Minister’s Disability Advisory Council
- Emma Moulds, Chair, Ministerial Youth Council
- Sharon Starick, Member Natural Resources Management Council (proxy for Dennis Mutton Chair, Natural Resources Management Council)
- John Rich, Member, Local Government Association (proxy for Mayor Felicity-Anne Lewis, President, Local Government Association)
- Hieu Van Le, Lieutenant Governor Chair, SA Multicultural & Ethnic Affairs Commission
- Margaret Wagstaff, Member, Social Inclusion Board (proxy for Monsignor David Cappo, Chair, Social Inclusion Board)
- Paul Vandenbergh, Member, South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council
- Darren Thomas (representative of the Economic Development Board)

The last report submitted by the Board is “South Australia’s Plan for the best... 2020 and beyond”, summarizing feature and findings from 2010’s community consultation process and proposing a series of recommendations for the 2011 Plan’s update.

Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm)

The implementation of the SASP is overseen by the Executive Committee of Cabinet. Before its establishment in 2005, under the advice of Tanya Smith, this function was accomplished by the SASP Implementation Committee. This Board was disbanded in order to consider a new arrangement to drive the implementation of the Plan in the public sector, bringing sharper political leadership to the process while retaining input from the community.

The ExComm focuses on ensuring that State Government agencies are pursuing the plan’s targets in a collaborative, focused and innovative way.
It provides direction on strategies to achieve plan targets and holds government agencies to account for their approach to plan implementation. ExComm discusses suggestions from Ministers, Audit Committee and CEB for changes to targets for consideration in updating the plan.

Current Members:
- Board Chair: Premier Mike Rann
- Cabinet Members:
  - Deputy Premier John Rau
  - Hon Patrick Conlon
  - Hon Jay Weatherill
  - Hon Jennifer Rankine
  - Hon Jack Snelling
- Independent Advisors:
  - Mr Raymond Spencer (Economic Development Board)
  - Monsignor David Cappo (Chair of the Social Inclusion Board)

The presence of two non parliamentary members was from the beginning an innovative feature, since there was no record for a Cabinet Committee involving members external to the Cabinet.
This newness is linked with the necessity to give a stronger accountability and transparency to the Plan, granted by the presence of two members from the crucial independent committee of the Economic Development Board and Social Inclusion Board.
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