

The **Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration** brings community and government organisations together to work collectively to improve community wellbeing and attract and facilitate investment for positive social impact in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

The group was established in February 2015 to support and manage the implementation of the Northern Rivers Regional Social Plan launched in early 2014. Membership started with Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC – now Social Futures), Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Rivers and other organisations that nominated as implementation partners for the plan before it was launched (CRANES, The Family Centre, Northern NSW Local Health District, North Coast Community Housing Company, North Coast NSW Medicare Local (now North Coast Primary Health Network), Nortec and Tursa.

The group is using a snowball method to identify and include additional organisations with interest and capacity to participate and contribute. **Any organisation can nominate to join the Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration.** It now has 25 community and government organisations in its membership (see page 2). **Terms of Reference** are available on the **Regional Social Plan website** (www.regionalsocialplan.org.au).

The group identified the following **strengths of our region we can build on collectively.**

Diversity | Proactive community | Resourceful people | Region of choice | Capacity to influence | Strong networks

Opportunities for working collectively

The Regional Social Plan identifies 13 desired future outcomes along with potential measures, partners and strategies. The group considered the plan, along with information about changes and issues in the service delivery, funding and policy context in the region, to identify three **key action areas** as opportunities to focus its current work.

Key action area 1: **improving outcomes for children and young people**

Our action in this area focuses on understanding how our services and service systems in the Northern Rivers are responding to what works for children and young people – to support them to reach their potential and be safe. We are at the beginning of a collective process to:

- understand how children and young people across our region are faring on key indicators including child development (readiness for school) and numbers in out-of-home care, and why
- consider existing evidence about what works and how we can offer better support
- establish an engagement process or platform to identify what is working well and how we can respond to barriers and challenges and provide better support.

We are aiming to draw together work of member organisations, other activities engaging with children, young people and families in the region, and service providers' perspectives to consider how we can better support children and young people.

Key action area 2: **a collective approach to domestic and family violence, including prevention**

The group identified supporting a collective approach to domestic and family violence, including prevention, as an important opportunity for improving community wellbeing in the region. We will work with the Northern NSW Combined Domestic and Family Violence Forum to progress this work. The forum brings together representatives from the local domestic and family violence committees and regional services to focus on providing the best possible outcomes for women and families affected by domestic and family violence given the current resources available in Northern NSW.

Key action area 3: **affordable housing investment and supply**

In this action area, the NR Social Change Collaboration is working with the Northern Rivers Housing Forum Steering Group on activities to attract and facilitate investment in affordable housing in the Northern Rivers. This includes events and activities to encourage and support collaboration between housing providers, developers and investors, and sharing information about housing supply and demand highlighting housing risks, challenges and opportunities for vulnerable households and the whole community.

Collaboration principles for the Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration

The following principles guide how the group does its work.

- Acknowledge the tensions of working collectively in a competitive funding environment.
- Work to develop shared goals.
- Being clear and respectful about individual and shared intellectual property.
- Allow space for organisations to progress their own work.
- Communicate within and between member organisations.
- Be transparent about decisions and make information available to the community.
- Support shared measurement of impact.
- Promote access and participation – services, planning, design, delivery, community life.
- Understand and collectively influence positive systemic change.
- Pursue opportunities for strengths-based work and early intervention.

Using the online Results Scorecard to document and share our work

We are working collectively to develop an online scorecard using a Results-Based Accountability framework to identify:

- population results we are seeking to impact for each of our key action areas
- how our region is doing on key indicators
- the partners who may have a role to play in doing better
- evidence about what works to improve results
- how we will act to affect change – our strategy focusing on the best opportunities to work collectively.

Member organisations – Northern Rivers Social Change Collaboration (October 2016)

Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Department of Education
Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Clarence River Women's Refuge and Outreach Services Inc
Clarence Valley Council
Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres
CRANES Community Support Programs
FSG Australia
Interrelate
Local Community Services Association
Nortec
North Coast Community Housing Company
North Coast Primary Health Network
Northern Rivers Child Care Services Inc

NSW Aboriginal Land Council
NSW Department of Education
NSW Department of Family and Community Services
Northern NSW Local Health District
OTCP (Formerly On Track Community Programs)
Social Futures (formerly NRSDC)
The Family Centre
Transport for NSW
Tursa Employment & Training
Tweed Shire Council
YWCA



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout the Northern Rivers, their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures and to Elders past, present and future.

Social Futures acknowledges the funding contribution made by NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) through the Community Builders program, which contributed to the development of the Regional Social Plan and enables our organisation to continue to build capacity in the regional community services and health sector.