



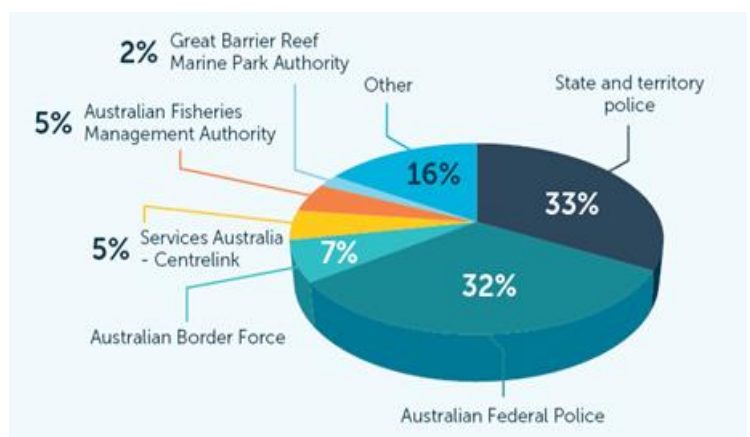
Partner Agency Engagement Strategy 2024-26

About the Strategy

1. The CDPP's overarching purpose is to contribute to a fair, safe and just society by delivering an effective independent prosecution service. Strong and effective partnerships are critical to the CDPP achieving this objective and prosecuting a significant number of crime types. We work closely with investigators, who play a vital role throughout the prosecution process. Recognising this, working in partnership is one of two key activities in the CDPP's 2024-28 Corporate Plan.
2. This strategy establishes a framework to focus and guide our partner agency engagement. It is a high-level statement of what we want to achieve through our engagement and the actions we will take to achieve that objective. The Strategy's four focus areas are:
 - 2.1. Improve early engagement to focus investigative and prosecution resources.
 - 2.2. Reciprocal upskilling of investigators and prosecutors.
 - 2.3. Embed a partnership culture.
 - 2.4. Fit for purpose criminal legislation and policy proposals.
3. The strategy recognises the difficult operating environment in which the CDPP and partner agencies work as Commonwealth criminal activity evolves and expands. The scale and complexity of our work is increasing, as is the volume of digital material involved, posing challenges for investigations and for disclosure. Joint investigations and taskforces are regularly employed. Criminal activity is often transnational, involving multiple defendants and agencies or multiple Commonwealth or State and Territory laws. Meeting the evolving needs of our partner agencies is fundamental to ensuring the CDPP's legal practice is fit for purpose.
4. To ensure we deliver a high-quality prosecution service in this environment we must reassess our traditional ways of working. We want to work with our partner agencies to continuously implement new and better ways to drive prosecutions and operate effectively and efficiently. We want to be proactive and future focussed – ensuring we modernise the way we operate to effectively understand and meet future challenges.

Our Partner Agencies

5. The CDPP provides prosecution services to around 50 Commonwealth partner agencies as well as State and Territory police. Around 75% of the matters we receive come from State and Territory police, the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force and Services Australia (Centrelink). Our partner agencies are diverse and require different services, support and guidance from the CDPP. This strategy is intended to be flexible and adaptive. Not all actions and activities will be relevant to every partner agency relationship.



Policy Agencies

6. Many Commonwealth and State government agencies are responsible for developing policy and legislation that impacts our work. The CDPP is in a unique position to comment on, and provide feedback to, policy formulators and lawmakers about the operation of Commonwealth criminal law. We have significant practical experience in applying these laws in matters before the courts.
7. Our engagement with these agencies generally takes two forms:
 - 7.1. Providing input on how proposed offences might operate in practice and highlighting issues that may arise during a potential prosecution; and
 - 7.2. Proactively identifying issues and bringing those to the attention of the relevant policy agency.

Governance, monitoring and evaluation

8. This strategy is underpinned by a strong monitoring and evaluation framework, developed as part of an implementation plan. We will use the 2024 Partner Agency Survey to obtain a baseline measure and will use the 2026 Survey to measure the success of the strategy. It will be important to track progress and make any adjustments at the end of the strategy's 2-year term.
9. The strategy will commence in mid-2024, with annual progress reports to the CDPP Executive.



CDPP

Australia's Federal Prosecution Service

CDPP Partner Agency Engagement Strategy 2024-26



Objective | To have strong and effective relationships with partner agencies

FOCUS AREA 1

Improve early engagement to focus investigative and prosecution resources

AIM

1.1 Review, target and provide more proactive pre-brief advice and strategic engagement

FOCUS AREA 2

Reciprocal upskilling of investigators and prosecutors

AIM

- 2.1 Improve training and development of investigators and prosecutors
- 2.2 Improve and promote online resources
- 2.3 Manage shared disclosure obligations more effectively

FOCUS AREA 3

Embed a partnership culture

AIM

- 3.1 Promote timely, transparent and effective consultation throughout a prosecution
- 3.2 Drive more effective two-way communication

FOCUS AREA 4

Fit for purpose criminal legislation and policy proposals

AIM

- 4.1 Identify law reform proposals and proactively raise with relevant policy agencies
- 4.2 Promote the need for partner agencies to seek CDPP input into New Policy Proposals that impact the CDPP

FOCUS AREAS

11. This strategy includes four clearly defined focus areas. Each focus area will be implemented by several aims which have measurable outcomes.

Focus area 1 – Improve early engagement to focus investigative and prosecution resources

12. Early engagement between investigative agencies and the CDPP is essential to addressing the increasingly complex nature of criminal offending. Early input and advice from the CDPP can assist agencies to target their investigations, focus on the criminal conduct that is best supported by the evidence, and better utilise investigative resources. For the CDPP, early engagement helps us understand and be responsive to the enforcement and regulatory priorities of our investigative agencies. It also leads to higher quality briefs of evidence, a reduced need for requisitions, and supports timely consideration of the appropriate charges to be laid or continued in accordance with the Prosecution Policy.
13. The CDPP encourages agencies to seek pre-brief advice, particularly where matters are sensitive, significant or complex. Pre-brief advice helps to sharpen the focus of the most serious criminality that can be proved on the evidence and minimises risks associated with compulsory examinations and complicit witnesses.
14. Advice may include assistance with the identification of possible offences, substantive impediments to proving an offence and how these might be addressed, identification of critical evidence that needs to be obtained, witnesses to approach and other lines of enquiry that may be explored.
15. In addition, in appropriate contexts CDPP involvement at the strategic phase of an investigation may assist partner agencies to target their investigations, resulting in resources being used more efficiently.
16. Over the next two years the CDPP will:
 - **1.1 Review, target and provide more proactive pre-brief advice and strategic engagement** – we will consider if our pre-brief advice service can be expanded or, in some circumstances, become the norm. In some instances, CDPP involvement could be more proactive, including checking in at various points after initial engagement to support structured e-brief building and disclosure planning.
 - We will review the best practice framework for pre-brief advice and develop a framework for strategic engagement. We will provide clarity around pre-brief advice versus strategic engagement, and better promote and track the provision of these services.

Focus area 2 – Reciprocal upskilling of investigators and prosecutors

17. While investigative agencies have the primary responsibility for training their investigators, the CDPP recognises the important complementary role we play. We are in a unique position to identify systemic and significant issues that have an impact upon the success of a prosecution. We seek to provide ongoing feedback to our partner agencies to drive constant improvements in prosecution outcomes.
18. The need for reciprocal training and upskilling has become more acute because agencies are experiencing high staff turnover. We will work with our partner agencies to quickly induct new investigators and prosecutors. This training will use existing or common resources and more efficiently deliver training by experienced personnel.
19. Disclosure is one of the most challenging issues confronting the CDPP, partner agencies and the modern criminal justice system. As the complexity of the CDPP's casework continues to increase, these issues will only compound. We will take proactive action now to work with our partner agencies and other key stakeholders to improve the way we collectively manage disclosure.

20. Over the next two years the CDPP will:

- **2.1 Improve training and development of investigators and prosecutors** – we will implement a tiered approach to partner agency training to avoid duplication of training and free up legal staff to provide more advanced and agency-specific training. Under the strategy, we will work with our partners to enhance both investigative and prosecutor knowledge and skills. We will invite partner agencies to provide targeted training to prosecutors.
- **2.2 Improve and promote online resources** – the CDPP will review our online resources – including our Partner Agency Portal – to ensure they are accessible, targeted and easy to understand.
- **2.3 Manage shared disclosure obligations more effectively** – we will take proactive steps and work with our partners to better manage disclosure to ensure we are all meeting our disclosure obligations.

Focus area 3 – Embed a partnership culture

21. Effective communication with our partner agencies is vital. We want to strengthen our partner relationships and work together in transparent and mutually beneficial ways. We understand partner agencies invest considerable time and resources into investigations and we want to ensure we keep our partners updated and explain key decisions taken during a prosecution. We want our decision making processes to be clear and consistent.

22. Over the next two years the CDPP will:

- **3.1 Promote timely, transparent and effective consultation throughout a prosecution** – we will promote a greater understanding of the CDPP's decision making processes and will clearly explain decisions taken throughout the life of a prosecution. We will provide reasons for requisitions and will embed processes to manage case officer changeovers within the CDPP.
- **3.2 Drive more effective two-way communication** – we will review the Guidelines for Dealings Between Investigators and the CDPP to ensure they are practical and flexible. We will promote the Prosecution Review process, update our internal training resources and policies to encourage better communication between prosecutors and investigators and identify opportunities to share CDPP information through partner agency forums.

Focus area 4 – Fit for purpose criminal legislation and policy proposals

23. Fit for purpose legislation and policies are vital to the CDPP delivering an effective and efficient prosecution service. The CDPP is in a unique position to comment upon and provide feedback to policy formulators and lawmakers about the operation of Commonwealth criminal laws. To do this effectively, the CDPP needs time to consider new proposals, including any funding implications for prosecutions.

24. Over the next two years the CDPP will:

- **4.1 Identify law reform proposals and proactively raise with relevant policy agencies** – we will embed a mechanism to capture legal and policy issues that impact upon prosecution outcomes which are then raised with the relevant policy agency. Laws can have unintended consequences and the CDPP is in a unique position to observe those and report them back to the relevant agency.
- **4.2 Promote the need for partner agencies to seek CDPP input into New Policy Proposals that impact the CDPP** – we will embed processes for CDPP involvement in NPPs that will impact us and proactively track NPPs to ensure ongoing CDPP funding.