Being at the Political Table: Building a National Professional Profile Through Focussed Representation
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Overview of presentation

- The current practice environment
- Our Representation Framework
- Our approach to Lobbying and Representation using position statements
- The impact of using one of our Position Statements in occupational deprivation
- Five key learnings and some recommendations.
VUCA

Volatile
Rapidly changing; 24/7 news; technology advances

Uncertain
Unable to know everything; lack of predictability

Complex
Multiple forces and drivers

Ambiguous
Differences in interpretation
Our Lobbying and Advocacy Framework

**INPUT**
- Special Interest Groups
- Reference Groups
- Experts
- Board
- Members (surveys, feedback)
- Divisions

**KEY POLICY AREAS: STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 – 2017**
- Disability, Aged Care, Mental Health, Primary Health, DVA, Aboriginal and Indigenous, CALD, Rural and Remote

**OPERATIONAL PLAN 2014: TARGET POLICY AREAS 2014**
- Areas of immediate interest and focus for 2014

**BRAINSTORM OF ISSUES WITHIN EACH KEY POLICY AREA**
- Profession
- Consumer
- Community

**KNOWLEDGE DATABASE (FOR EACH KEY POLICY AREA IN STRAT AND OPERATIONAL PLANS)**
- Evidence-Based Position Descriptions, Facts, Data, talking points, quotes, examples

**PRIORITY ISSUES**
- Significant impact on profession and members
- Significant impact on OT consumers
- Time critical – government directive/policy announcement / media issue
- Opportunity for leverage – other organisations interested
- OTA knowledge and response capability

**RISK ASSESSMENT**
- Assess risk of each aspect of Delivery Plan

**DELIVERY PLAN**
- Identify Decision Makers
- Determine lobbying Tools to use
- Establish potential Partners
- Timing and Schedule of any lobbying activity
- Potential role for media

**ACTIONS**
- Meet with minister
- Committee submission etc

**REPORT BACK TO MEMBERS**
- Connections, E-News, seminars and workshops, General communications with members
... in order to influence politically, professional bodies like us needed to be clear about what values we represent and how these translate into “positions” on societal issues that distinguish professional organisations and the constituents it represents (members) from others...
Position Statements...

... present the view or stance of an organisation on a topic. They are unique in their presentation of a definitive official view to public and professional audiences. They are practical and solution-focused.
OTA’s Position Statement on Occupational Deprivation

“a state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors that stand outside the immediate control of the individual”.

(Whiteford, 2010)
Examples of occupational deprivation

- Individuals who are incarcerated
- Refugees and asylum seekers who are placed in detention and processing centres both in Australia and offshore
- People with disability or mental illness
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Those living in geographically isolated environments (for example, Australian rural locations categorised as “remote”)
- Those living on or below the minimum income
- People experiencing homelessness
- People experiencing long term unemployment
Using our position statement in our submissions to Government

- In 2015, 16 and 17
- OTA developed 4 submissions to National Government enquiries into areas of significance, using many of the core messages from our Position Statement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate Community Affairs References Committee</td>
<td>Adequacy of existing residential care arrangements available for young people with severe physical, mental or intellectual disabilities in Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate Community Affairs References Committee</td>
<td>Delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee</td>
<td>Conditions and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees at the regional processing centres in the Republic of Nauru and Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Government</td>
<td>Review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities</td>
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Example…

Conditions and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees at the regional processing centres in the Republic of Nauru and Papua New Guinea contained 62 references to occupational deprivation.

“Occupational deprivation has serious consequences. It reduces people’s capacities and can significantly diminish physical and mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life.”
Example…

NSW Government – Review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities contained 14 references to occupational deprivation.

“People with disabilities who are detained also have the right to services that aim to prevent further disabilities. By allowing occupational deprivation to occur in mental health units, governments are placing consumers at risk of worsening health and therefore reducing their chances of eventually being discharged.”
In summary – the representation process:

1. **Obtaining Clarity on Our Values and Messages**
2. **Obtain Data**
   - (Published Evidence; Profession’s Feedback – Surveys; Case Examples; Thought Leader Opinions)
3. **Develop Position Statement**
   - (From Interested Committee to Authorship by Scholar)
4. **Use in Lobbying Activities**
   - (Submissions; Hearings; Meetings with Ministers / Departments)
5. **Publish / Promote**
   - (Media; Website; Journal – AOTJ)
6. **Review Impact**
Our Reflections and Learnings

• Get clarity re values we represent
• Generating position statements is a strategic journey in culture and organisational development and capacity to clarify and represent those issues close to our domain of concern ie occupation, inclusion and participation
• Share our voice and get heard by publishing
• Importance of ensuring rigour in the process of development of position statements

• Ensure content is evidenced based – takes time to get the focus and our message right
• Include cycles of stakeholder input where appropriate – members love to be asked for opinions, data and evidence!
• Importance of reviewing position statements regularly as evidence changes / evolves
• Publish / disseminate via website; media; AOTJ – Australian Occupational Therapy Journal
Recommendations

- Associations consider this strategy as a profiling initiative and one that engages members.
- Opportunities for synergistic and possibly unified representation
- Research into impact of Position Statements is undertaken in terms of discourse development
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