



Improving Lives Through the Power of **Humanity**



AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS BLOOD SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN



Our Vision

To improve the lives of patients through the power of humanity.

Our Mission

To perform a critical role in healthcare by providing a safe, secure and cost effective supply of quality blood products, essential services and leading edge research to meet the needs of patients.

One organisation. One direction.

- A cohesive national organisation delivering a vital national service.
- Collaborative in working with our blood donors, our partners, health professionals and governments for the benefit of patients.
- Committed to providing quality blood products.
- Cognisant of the need to manage resources efficiently.
- Recognising the professional and creative skills of our people.
- Open and engaging in our communications.
- At the forefront of innovation and technological and regulatory change.
- Acknowledging the need to continue to improve our performance and strive for excellence.

Our Values

We believe in...

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Integrity | We act honestly and ethically at all times. |
| Safety and Quality | We make safety and quality part of everything we do. |
| Service | We focus on meeting the needs of patients, the community, customers, donors, stakeholders and colleagues. |
| Collaboration | We work together to achieve our goals. |
| Accountability | We take ownership of our actions and behaviours to ensure we achieve our goals. |
| Excellence | We strive to be the best at what we do. |

Contents

On the cover:

Anna McGibbon (Internal Communications), Clark McKenna (Donor Services) and Neil Waters (Transfusion Medicine).

Anna, Clark and Neil are some of the 1 in 30 Australians who are active blood donors.

Our Vision	2
Our Values	3
Message from the CEO and Chairman	5
1. Delivering for the Community	6
Working in the Community	7
Manufacturing and Distributing Safe, Quality Products for the Nation's Healthcare System	7
Supporting the Nation's Healthcare System	9
2. Responsiveness in a Complex and Dynamic Environment	10
Driving Efficiencies to Minimise Blood Sector Costs	12
Building our Donor Base	12
Responding to Changes in Demand	13
3. Our Strategic Objectives	14
Strategic Objective 1: Deliver service excellence for our customers and donors	15
Strategic Objective 2: Provide value for stakeholders	16
Strategic Objective 3: Improve organisational capability	17
Chart 3.3 Strategic Objectives	18
Chart 3.4 Delivering the Strategic Objectives	19
4. A Sustainable Blood Service	21
Contact us	23

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www.donateblood.com.au

Message from the CEO and Chairman



In 2009, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS) is celebrating 80 years in providing a blood service for our community as part of the Australian Red Cross. While blood products are now more diverse and sophisticated, the responsibility to the community has remained the same – to deliver safe, quality blood products and related services to save lives.

We acknowledge the trust governments and the community place in our organisation to maintain the integrity of Australia's blood supply. We uphold and honour ethical blood collection that recognises the value of donors and the gift they provide. We maintain the integrity of this gift through our dedicated approach to safety and product quality. We are committed to meeting our responsibility to deliver life saving and life enhancing blood products to the Australian health sector to assist in achieving positive patient outcomes.

ARCBS acknowledges that governments have finite health resources and we are committed to providing value for their investment – not just through efficiencies, but also by promoting appropriate blood use to deliver better, more cost effective health outcomes.

The Australian blood sector is dynamic. Demand for blood products fluctuates and is influenced by the emergence of new treatments, new technologies and changes in clinical practice. Australia's ageing population and the increasing burden of disease together with Australia's improving sophistication of clinical care are likely to increase future demand for both fresh and specialised blood products.

Our organisation needs to be responsive to these changes. We need to further develop our capability to anticipate and plan for change, and to embrace new and innovative approaches.

This Strategic Plan seeks to achieve this by focusing on three central strategic objectives:

Deliver service excellence for our customers and donors by enhancing our service and championing innovative improvement opportunities;

Provide value for our stakeholders by delivering our products and services efficiently, and in a way that balances stakeholder priorities; and

Improve our organisational capability by attracting and retaining engaged and productive employees and enhancing systems and facilities to support future organisational sustainability.

These objectives will focus ARCBS on the needs of our stakeholders and actions which support the sustainability of our blood sector into the future.

We look forward to working with all our stakeholders in delivering these objectives for the ultimate benefit of the patient.



Hon Dr David Hamill
Chairman

Ms Jennifer Williams
CEO



Delivering for the Community

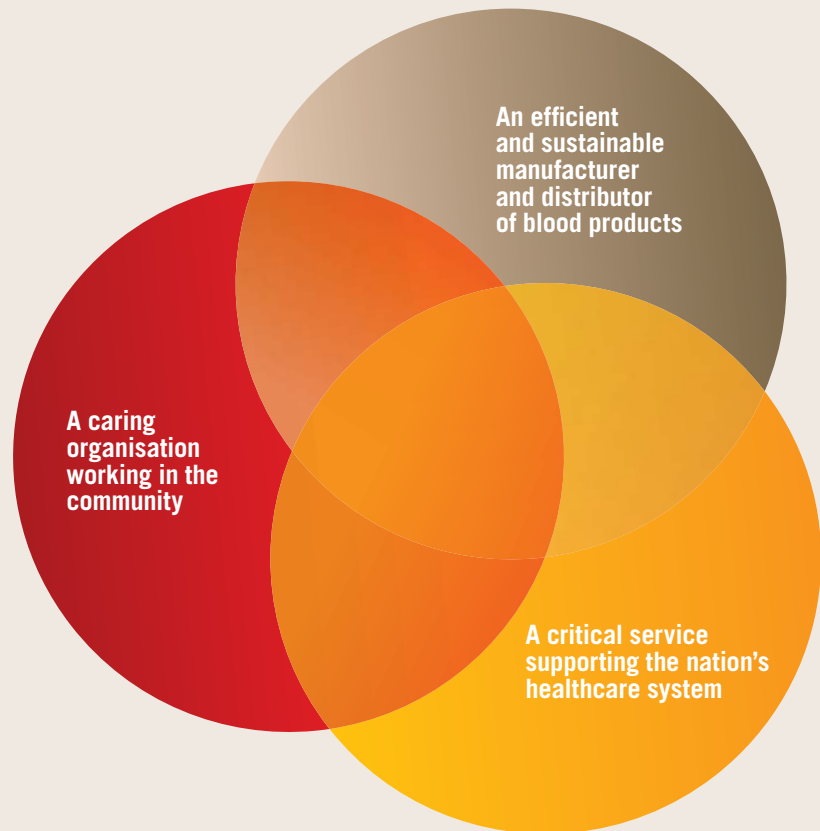


Diagram 1.1 - Three Dimensions of Australian Red Cross Blood Service: Community Organisation, Manufacturer and Distributor, Service Supporting the Nation's Healthcare System

¹ National Blood Agreement (2003), Commonwealth of Australia, Part 1.1 (a).

² National Blood Agreement (2003), Commonwealth of Australia, Part 1.2.

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS) is responsible for meeting the nation's need for blood products and related services in collaboration with Australian governments. Our 3,300 employees are committed to ensuring the cost effective collection, processing, testing and distribution of donated blood, as well as providing reference testing services, clinical and technical expertise and undertaking informative research. ARCBS operates from more than 100 static and mobile sites around the country with the support of over 2,000 volunteers.

Funded by Australian governments, we work to ensure Australia has "an adequate, safe, secure and affordable supply of blood products, blood related products and blood related services".¹ Ensuring the timely delivery of quality fresh and plasma-derived blood products is our foremost priority. We recognise the importance of providing value to governments in return for their investment, delivering high quality products and services with a strong emphasis on efficient, effective and sustainable health outcomes.

Australian governments set out the conditions for the supply of blood and blood products in the 2003 National Blood Agreement.² This recognises international obligations and standards, the objective of national self-sufficiency – reaffirmed in the 2006 Australian Health Ministers' Policy Statement on National Self-Sufficiency in the Supply of Blood and Blood Products – and a commitment to voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. These conditions provide a solid foundation for a safe, ethical and sustainable blood system.

Stewardship of the blood supply extends from donor blood collection through to promoting and supporting appropriate clinical transfusion practice. In meeting national blood supply needs, ARCBS connects into communities, hospitals and other health services. This reflects the diverse character of ARCBS – we are a community organisation, a manufacturer of blood products and a service provider to the broader health system. ARCBS balances these responsibilities to achieve the best outcomes for donors, patients, health professionals, governments and the wider community.

Working in the Community

The largest operating division of Australian Red Cross, ARCBS upholds the International Red Cross fundamental principles of: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. ARCBS' donor community has been built from a strong, ongoing community connection. It draws upon the spirit of volunteerism, from both donors and community members who assist at donation centres. We provide communities throughout Australia with access to donation facilities.

Australia's blood system relies upon the power of humanity – it is supported and sustained by the generosity of over 550,000 volunteer blood donors and 5,000 bone marrow donors annually. ARCBS is beginning to reach more extensively into diverse communities so that our donor pool is more reflective of our society. The acts of donation and volunteerism in and around donor centres support community spirit and social cohesion.

Volunteerism is critical to our success and to the sustainability of our blood system. Donors come to our centres to make a difference to others' lives. We value their contribution and respect the integrity of the donation they provide. This relationship is founded upon the trust we have built through 80 years of stewardship of the blood supply. The voluntary, non-paid nature of donation is pivotal to this relationship and the wider community benefit derived from it.

Manufacturing and Distributing Safe, Quality Products for the Nation's Healthcare System

ARCBS receives approximately 21,000 blood donations each week. These include whole blood donations and apheresis collections of plasma and platelets. From these donations, more than three million units of blood products were provided to Australian healthcare providers including over 350 tonnes of plasma to the fractionator, CSL Bioplasma, for processing into specialised blood products in the 2007/08 year.

Red cells, plasma and platelets are manufactured and tested to ensure that they meet strict quality and safety standards in compliance with the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Code of Good Manufacturing Practice. A proportion of these fresh blood products also have additional testing performed or undergo specialised manufacturing processes to meet specific patient requirements. A large share of the donated plasma is processed by CSL Bioplasma to produce a range of plasma-derived products in different presentations. Thus, a diverse range of blood products is produced within Australia to meet the needs of Australian patients.

ARCBS delivers these products in response to demand from Australian healthcare providers. We seek to deliver adequate and timely fresh and plasma-derived blood products for all Australians, regardless of where they may reside. This is a significant task given the expanse of Australia and the remoteness of some communities. We closely monitor supply and demand with an aim to ensuring that blood products are available when they are required. As well as delivering to forecast demand, we also plan for contingent supply of blood products during critical periods where there is unexpectedly high demand.

ARCBS provides services in patient testing and manages tissue typing and red cell and platelet reference laboratories. We also coordinate bone marrow donation and organ testing for organ transplantation.



John suffered third degree burns, and needed blood to recover.



ARCBS Medical Scientists working in our state-of-the-art laboratory in the new purpose built facility in Queensland.



**Dr Erica Wood (Haematologist – Transfusion Medicine, ARCBS),
Elisa Spiliopoulos (leukaemia patient), and Dr Ali Bazargan
(Haematology Registrar, St Vincent’s Hospital).**

Elisa has been diagnosed with leukaemia and is a patient at St Vincent’s Hospital, Melbourne, under the care of Dr Bazargan. In her first three weeks of treatment she required transfusions of red cells and platelets. We wish Elisa well on her road to recovery.

1. Delivering for the Community

Supporting the Nation's Healthcare System

ARCBS' products and services are delivered to more than 600 hospitals and healthcare providers. We provide education programs and undertake research to understand and promote leading practices in blood safety, blood supply and transfusion medicine.

We work in partnership with healthcare providers and clinicians to make best use of limited blood products for the benefit of the patient. ARCBS' transfusion medicine specialists, medical officers, scientists, research scientists and nurses liaise with hospitals and healthcare providers to promote and support appropriate blood usage and optimal clinical transfusion and blood inventory management practices. We work with healthcare providers to ensure blood products are available when needed to support life-saving and life-improving treatments. We strongly encourage appropriate use of blood products, management of blood stocks and storage procedures.

Through our research activities and international networks we keep abreast of and explore potential developments, emerging themes and examples of best practice in the blood and health sectors. This information informs our decision-making and dialogue with stakeholders.

ARCBS provides red cell, platelet, neutrophil, tissue typing and immunogenetic reference testing services. We also coordinate bone marrow donation and organ testing for organ transplantation. ARCBS Tissue Typing laboratories match patients who need solid organ, bone marrow or cord blood transplantation through the use of highly sensitive compatibility testing techniques. Our Cellular Reference Laboratories provide a range of services to detect specific characteristics of blood products which can then be supplied to meet individual patient needs.

We also host a number of Commonwealth funded transplantation support agencies, including the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, National Organ Matching Service, Australian Donor Awareness Program for Transplantation and the Research Infrastructure Support Services.

2.

Responsiveness in a Complex and Dynamic Environment

The blood sector is dynamic, continually adjusting to changes in health and society. Societal factors such as population ageing and a greater burden of disease are driving increased demand for blood products. Community attitudes to volunteerism and changing expectations in relation to the donor experience influence our capacity to sustain a strong donor base. There is greater sophistication in the design and manufacture of blood products and in their use, reflecting the emergence of new technologies and advancements in clinical practice. Global policy developments and increasing convergence in regulation (such as the wider adoption of Council of Europe guidelines) also influence the parameters within which ARCBS operates.

ARCBS is seeking to embrace new opportunities that arise in this changing environment and is well positioned to anticipate and respond to new developments. ARCBS research and development is focusing on leading edge science, medicine, and technology, as well as understanding the psycho-social aspects of blood donation. We are engaging in international expert groups, blood service networks and horizon scanning to promote new learning and identify emerging themes that might influence Australia's blood sector. We are an active contributor in developing international blood sector networks, including the Asia-Pacific Blood Network, of which we were a founding member. We will also collaborate with the Australian Red Cross to implement an agreed international humanitarian blood strategy. As well as collaborating with other blood services, involvement in these networks provides ARCBS with early signals of global developments and innovative approaches, enabling us to engage proactively.

By integrating our approach to research, environmental analysis and business needs, we are developing our capability for continuous improvement, both as an early innovator and a fast follower. This will enable ARCBS to respond actively to challenges, including the need to minimise costs, build our donor base and more flexibly adapt to changes in demand.



Tram Nguyen (Medical Scientist), Lisa McGrath (Public Relations) and John Sassine (Medical Laboratory Technician).

Tram, Lisa and John all work in our Southbank Donor Centre, where the samples for blood collected from all centres in Victoria and Tasmania are tested. John receives the samples from the donor centres and prepares them for testing. Tram and her team then perform a comprehensive range of tests to ensure the health of our donors, and the safety and quality of the blood supply.

In her role as Public Relations Team Leader, Lisa promotes blood donation to the local media to help raise community awareness of our work.

³ Examples of improved blood safety measures are the introduction of leucodepletion of all red cells and platelets and bacterial contamination screening of all platelets.

⁴ Percentage refers to 2007/08 donor number as a proportion of the eligible population.

Driving Efficiencies to Minimise Blood Sector Costs

Governments in Australia, as elsewhere, face the challenge of maintaining a safe and sustainable blood system in the context of escalating health costs, an ageing population and increasing burden of disease. The increase in the range of blood products produced together with the introduction of enhanced blood safety measures³ have resulted in a marked increase in the unit cost of blood products.

ARCBS recognises this increased cost for governments and is implementing a program of efficiencies as recommended in the 2007 ARCBS Business Study. ARCBS is committed to continually reviewing the collection, processing and distribution of blood products and services. Further efficiencies are planned as a result of the investigation and adoption of advanced operational technologies and promotion of appropriate clinical practice that makes most effective use of limited blood products.

Federal reforms outlined in the November 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations include significant additional Commonwealth funding for hospitals. This will increase clinical activity, which is likely to increase demand for blood products. Activity based funding will be introduced across public hospitals to enable increased transparency in the use of public funds. The introduction of output funding for ARCBS and devolved blood budgets to hospitals is anticipated to turn attention towards the costs of specific blood products and how these costs are distributed within the health system.

ARCBS will improve transparency in the cost of blood and blood products. In consultation with the National Blood Authority, we are working on a costing model that will provide clarity regarding the cost of blood products and support government efforts to encourage appropriate and judicious use of these blood products.

Building our Donor Base

A strong culture of volunteerism and community engagement in health sets the foundations for a sustainable donor base. This is reinforced by the promotion of social inclusion and community participation by Australian governments.

While at least one in every three Australians will require blood products in their lifetime, only 3.3% of the Australian population aged between 16 and 70 years donate blood.⁴

In order to safeguard both the health of the donor and the recipient, blood donors must meet strict donor eligibility criteria including restrictions related to donor age, health and travel. In 2008, as many as 8% of those who presented for donation were deferred. Outbreaks of potentially transfusion-transmissible diseases, such as occurred with dengue fever in North Queensland early in 2009, either result in further donor deferrals or restrictions on the types of products that can be manufactured from collections in affected areas. The spread of tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue is forecast to become more prevalent as a consequence of climate change and population migration.

ARCBS is working to broaden the donor base significantly by increasing both the number of donors and the cultural diversity of donors. We face an ongoing challenge in attracting and retaining donors and maintaining regular patterns of donation. Heightened expectations for the donor experience demand a more personalised approach. Convenience and availability to donors at suitable times are key considerations. We also recognise the importance that the donor community more closely reflects the composition of the Australian population. This requires greater engagement by ARCBS with multicultural communities. ARCBS is also increasing youth awareness of blood donation in order to instil its importance early in the prospective donor population.

Responding to Changes in Demand

Over recent decades there have been advances in the use of blood products in health. Tailored blood products have emerged to provide more advanced treatments, such as intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg) derived from plasma to treat immune deficiencies and autoimmune disorders. IVIg demand has become the main driver for plasma collection.

The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission anticipates that health provision will become more personalised. Tailored and targeted treatments will be focused on the health needs of individuals and support people in improving their own health.

Societal factors such as the ageing population and the increasing burden of disease are resulting in an increase in demand for blood and blood products. The percentage of Australians over 65 years of age has increased from 10.8% in 1988 to 13.3% in 2008⁵, and is projected to increase further. In partnership with hospitals and governments, ARCBS is investigating the implications of the ageing population and the impact of disease for the volume and type of future blood products we supply and upon the composition of our donor base.

Currently, the most common use of red blood cells is for treatment of cancer and blood diseases (34%) and anaemia (19%), with trauma related indications constituting only 2%.⁶ Cancer is the leading cause of disease in Australia and many cancer treatment regimes require significant long-term support with blood and/or plasma-derived products. Cases of cardiovascular disease are similarly increasing. While advances in cardiovascular surgery techniques have reduced the use of fresh blood products, plasma-derived products are increasingly sought in treatment.

The impact of an ageing population is potentially most significant in regard to future demand for IVIg. IVIg is being trialled overseas for many new clinical indicators, such as in the treatment for mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. If proven effective in treating Alzheimer's, and should no alternative treatment become available, demand for plasma may escalate dramatically.

While ARCBS has achieved a 7.8% increase in the supply of plasma for fractionation in the year since 2006/07, domestic supply remains insufficient to meet current demand for IVIg, with imports anticipated to comprise around 27% of IVIg requirements in 2008/09. We are working in close partnership with the Department of Health and Ageing, the National Blood Authority and the Therapeutic Goods Administration in developing a strategy to meet Australia's future plasma needs.

The way blood and blood products are used has a key influence upon demand and patient blood management. ARCBS works alongside health providers to promote and support the appropriate use of these limited products, including the provision of education programs and other support materials for the ultimate benefit of the patient.

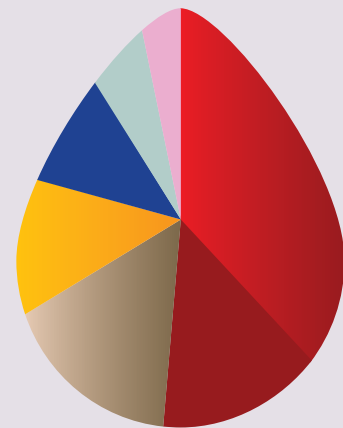
2.

Responsiveness in a Complex and Dynamic Environment

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (Report 3201.0), June 2008.

⁶ ARCBS 2008 Bloodhound data, submitted for publication.

Chart 2.1 - Use of red cell donations



- 34% Cancer and blood diseases
- 19% Other causes of anaemia
- 18% Surgical patients, including open heart surgery and burns
- 14% Other medical problems, including heart, stomach and kidney disease
- 10% Orthopaedic patients, including fractures and joint replacements
- 4% Obstetrics, including pregnant women, new mothers and young children
- 2% Trauma, including road accidents

Other blood components including plasma and platelets are also vital. Plasma components are used to treat and prevent bleeding.

Plasma derived products are used for children and adults with immune disorders, and to prevent some complications of pregnancy.

Platelets are used to manage bleeding in surgical patients and to support cancer patients, including those receiving treatment for leukaemia.

3.

Our Strategic Objectives

The complexity and uncertainty in our environment presents both challenges and opportunities for ARCBS. As we operate within an interdependent system, we recognise the need to act in synergy with our blood and health sector partners. We also recognise the need to improve continuously as we mature as a national organisation.

Identification of our Stakeholders' needs, the emerging environmental themes and internal improvement opportunities have focused the ARCBS on three areas that will enhance our responsiveness, strengthen our engagement with stakeholders and build the capability of our organisation:

1. **Deliver service excellence for our customers and donors:** Enhance our service for healthcare professionals and donors and champion innovative improvement opportunities for the benefit of patients, donors and the wider community.
2. **Provide value for stakeholders:** As part of critical health infrastructure, we will deliver our products and services efficiently and in a way that balances stakeholder priorities.
3. **Improve organisational capability:** Attract and retain engaged and productive employees and enhance systems and facilities to support future organisational sustainability.

These objectives will be achieved over the next three to five years through the delivery of integrated programs of work. Each program will be developed and integrated through ARCBS' business planning process in consultation with the National Blood Authority. Portfolio and Individual Work Plans will be used to direct action.

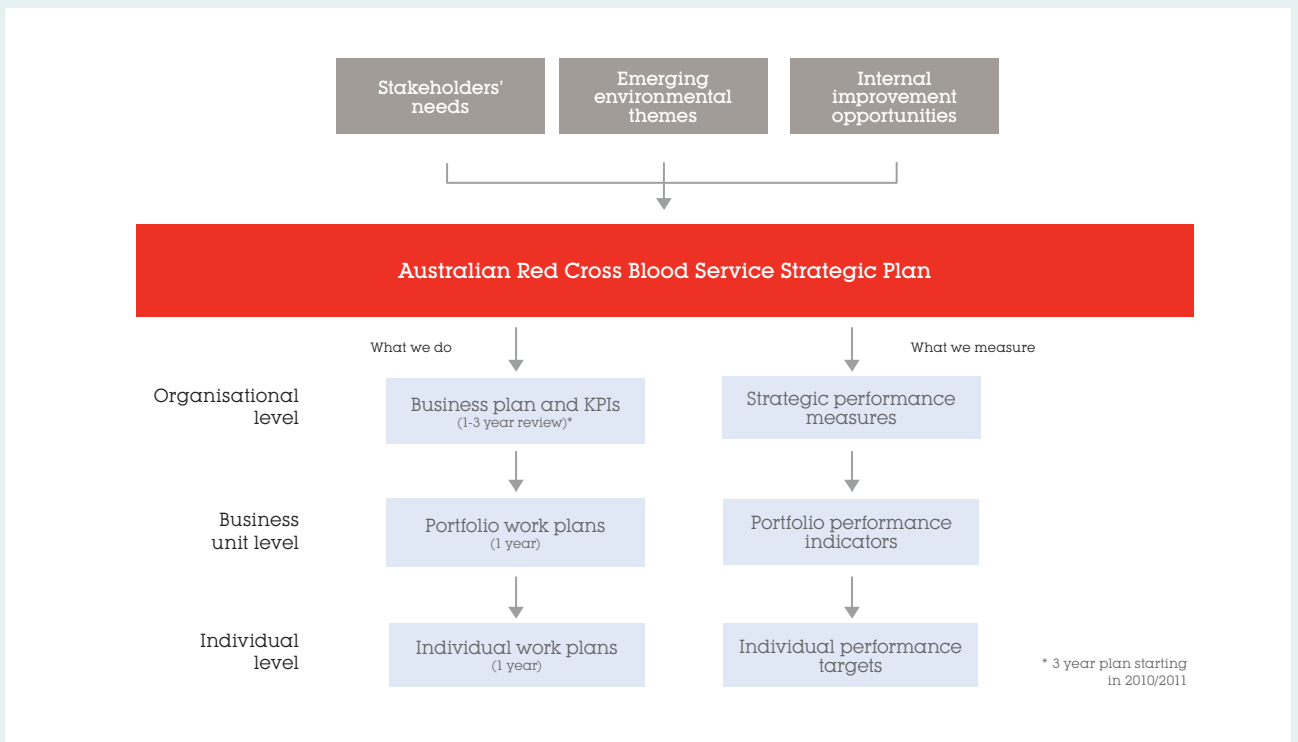


Chart 3.1 - Strategic and Business Planning Process

Strategic Objective 1: Deliver service excellence for our customers and donors

ARCBS is committed to providing a high standard of service to our customers – principally pathology providers and other healthcare professionals – and to our donors.

We will implement a framework to deliver tangible improvements in customer service. This will include a strong focus on quality, quantity and timeliness of service provision to healthcare professionals. ARCBS will work more collaboratively with healthcare professionals to ensure we are meeting their needs for blood products and related services including reference testing, tissue typing and other patient services. A customer-supplier framework will set agreed goals and transparent measures.

ARCBS aims to strengthen our commitment to promote and support optimal clinical transfusion and blood inventory management practices. We will continue to partner with Australian governments in transfusion practice improvement initiatives, provide undergraduate and postgraduate training in transfusion medicine and assist health professionals by making appropriate educational and other support materials available. ARCBS' clinical website (www.transfusion.com.au) will be expanded to promote interactive communities of practice. We will host an online community for health professionals focused on all aspects of transfusion practice, with synchronous, real time interactive sessions.

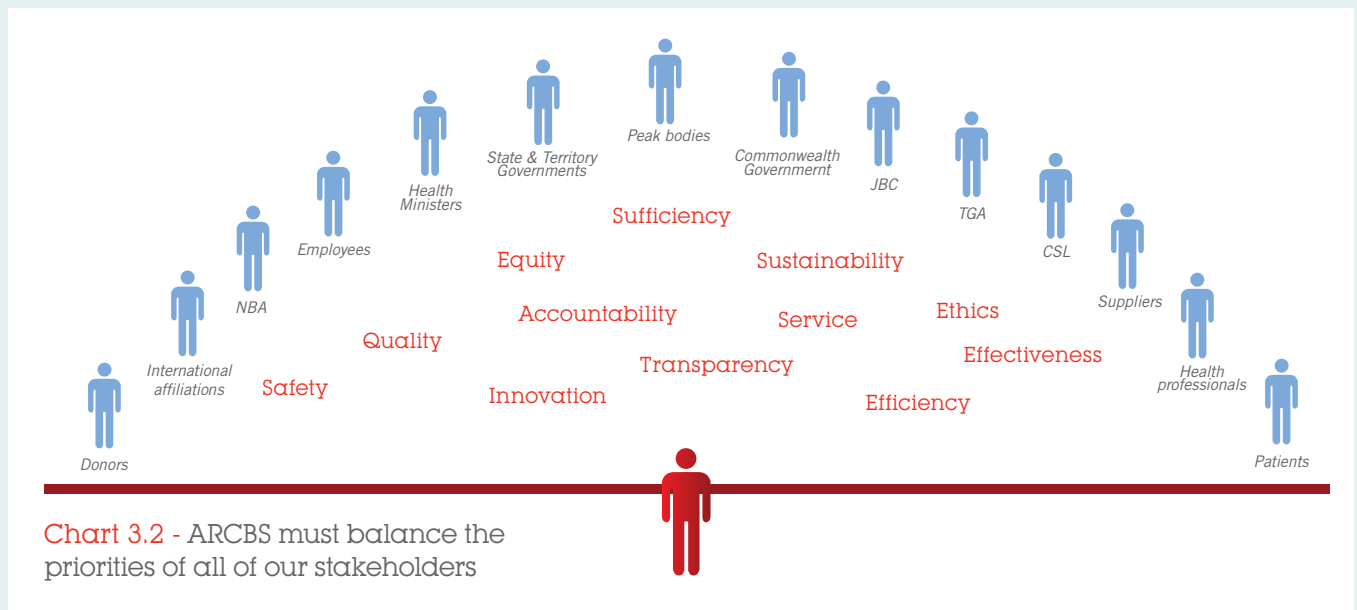
ARCBS research will include a strong focus on operational and clinical innovation to continuously improve our products and services.

To better reflect how we value our donor community, we will seek to enhance the donation experience and improve donor communication on donor deferral policies and regulatory requirements. ARCBS is introducing a Donor Relationship Management system, customer service training and improvements to the Donor Satisfaction Survey. A National Contact Centre will enable a more consistent and timely response to donor calls, as well as more open and effective communication with donors.

ARCBS will also commission research to better understand the demographics and motivations of blood donors. Research and monitoring will give us a clearer understanding of the drivers for blood donors and the needs of existing and potential donors. This will enable us to better target our donor marketing to attract new donors and to identify donor service improvements that might further support retention.

In order to facilitate a more convenient, faster and easier process for our donors, a self-service and web-based system will be introduced for donor appointments. ARCBS will also evaluate a computer-assisted pre-donation medical questionnaire.

3. Our Strategic Objectives



Strategic Objective 2: Provide value for stakeholders

In 2008, ARCBS commissioned independent research to gather the views of our stakeholders on ARCBS' contribution and priorities. While stakeholders presented diverse responses and very different expectations, many of these responses reflected themes of efficiency, effectiveness, safety, sufficiency, quality, service, sustainability, ethics and equity. Other aspects seen as priorities by some stakeholders included innovation, accountability and transparency.

The priorities of our stakeholders are informed from their particular perspective within our blood system. The National Blood Authority requires ARCBS to deliver the supply plan while demonstrating continuous improvement and efficiency gains. The Therapeutic Goods Administration values safety and innovative, applied research. Australian clinicians and other approved health providers require timely delivery of high quality products and expert transfusion advice. Donors expect excellent, consistent service with a high level of safety and value voluntary, non-remunerated donation. The Department of Health and Ageing – which has oversight of the whole blood system – prioritises the policy objectives of the National Blood Agreement, upholding World Health Organisation principles and ensuring a sufficient and safe blood supply.

In demonstrating value for stakeholders, ARCBS acknowledges that there is a need to provide a balanced, integrated perspective that supports the sustainability of our blood system. ARCBS will uphold the safety of the blood supply by researching and managing risks and planning for future demand. The ARCBS Plasma Strategy currently being developed in partnership with the Department of Health and Ageing, the National Blood Authority and the Therapeutic Goods Administration through the Plasma Supply Working Group, illustrates how ARCBS will balance and integrate stakeholder perspectives in its future planning. Another way ARCBS will provide value is by ensuring the ongoing provision of safe products in times of unscheduled events including excessive demand and disease outbreak.

ARCBS will support governments' objective to achieve and demonstrate value for money. The implementation of the following recommendations within the 2007 Business Study will serve as important activities to support this objective: a sustainable three-year output funding model; three-year budget planning cycles to align with longer-term planning and government financial timelines; and an improved capability in developing business cases to ensure consistency in the review of all activity proposals using robust cost-benefit tools.

Strategic Objective 3: Improve organisational capability

ARCBS will enhance the capabilities and performance of its employees through improvements to people management systems, infrastructure and facilities.

The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission highlighted the national shortage of healthcare professionals resulting from the ageing of the workforce and the shortages of health staff with specific skills. ARCBS, like other Australian health providers, is seeking to attract and retain suitably skilled healthcare professionals in the context of a global shortage of these professionals.

We will introduce new workforce initiatives to build our position as an employer of choice and to improve employee attraction, engagement and retention. These initiatives will provide greater working flexibility, improved role clarity and standardisation, and career pathway planning. Training will be delivered more efficiently and training records better managed through improvements to the online learning management system. The success of these initiatives will be measured by the reduction in unplanned staff turnover and from employee responses to the annual Employee Engagement Survey.

Major changes will be introduced to our information systems over the next three years. Primarily this will include investment in new systems and upgrades to the legacy systems. Secondly, we will invest in productivity tools, new skills, training and development to improve our IT capabilities. Thirdly, we will implement new applications for the National Blood Management System, Blood Inventory Management and for improved electronic integration with approved health providers and other third parties.

The IT change program will also provide a greater focus on electronic enablement projects. E-enablement will empower ARCBS to perform tasks using the internet and to integrate business and technology. This will increase our ability to respond to change in business requirements, increase service value and reduce operating costs. Programs of work will include donor and employee self-service facilities and e-learning.

New infrastructure projects will re-engineer and enhance our testing and manufacturing laboratory processes. Over the next three years, ARCBS will undertake detailed design and construction of Principal Manufacturing Sites for Victoria/Tasmania and New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory. Infrastructure needs in South Australia will also be considered in this period.

ARCBS will also refurbish certain collection sites to enhance the donor experience. We will also open new sites and reposition other sites to improve access and convenience for our existing donors and in order to attract new donors.