

Private: How to use Results Based Accountability

It might take a while to achieve your target. Perhaps factors outside your service are affecting its ability to be effective – housing is a great example of this. The story of what is happening to slow down your achievement is one worth telling and thinking about too.

The 'Outcomes Statements' that are being developed as part of the DHHS Outcomes framework have three parts. One is a [Theory of Change](#), one is the overall goal for the Tasmanian community and how the government will measure whether this is being achieved (called population level outcomes and indicators) and the third is the part that relates to funded organisations – the program level outcomes and indicators.

The way the population and program level outcomes and indicators are being set out is based on a framework called Results Based Accountability (RBA). This is way of planning, monitoring and reporting. It aims to help you improve your service's impact, and therefore improve the lives of your clients.

This *How To* is a brief explanation of RBA, focusing on how the RBA framework fits with the outcomes reporting required by DHHS.

If you are interested in learning more, the [Results Based Accountability](#) website contains links to information and resources.

One of the best things about RBA is its commitment to plain English. Click here for a quick guide to [The language of RBA: what we talk about when we talk about outcomes measurement](#).

Background

RBA has two parts, or levels. The first level is about the community. The outcomes you want to see for your community are set, and then you describe how you will measure progress towards achieving these. The outcome might be 'children ready for school' or 'a safe community'.

DHHS calls this the 'population level'. It has set the outcomes it wants to see at a population level. It will monitor whether all the activity it is funding through its own services and through funded services is achieving these outcomes by looking at population level research.

The second part is about your program or service. It looks at the activities you use through your service delivery to achieve these community outcomes, and how you measure how well your service is working.

Here is a quick step by step guide to using RBA to meet your funding requirements.

The RBA questions

RBA prompts services to ask themselves:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

The answer to the last one can be given as a number (eg 30 clients were housed), or as a percentage (eg 40% of clients were housed).

Provide answers to the questions

The next step in setting up an RBA framework is to decide what performance measures you will use to answer the three questions. It is suggested that you choose three to five measures for each of the boxes below. The box below has some possible examples of performance indicators. (# means number)

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
<p># clients seen (this could be by client characteristic, eg # women, # women accompanied by children)</p> <p># activities (by type of activity, eg # workshops, # appointments)</p>	<p>% staff turnover rate</p> <p>% staff fully trained</p> <p>customer satisfaction</p> <p>% of actions timely and correct</p> <p>% of clients completing activity</p> <p>% of actions meeting standards</p>
Is anyone better off?	
<p># clients with increase in skills or knowledge</p> <p>#clients with change in attitude or opinion</p> <p>#clients with change in behaviour</p> <p># clients with changes in their circumstances</p>	<p>% clients with increase in skills or knowledge</p> <p>% clients with change in attitude or opinion</p> <p>% clients with change in behaviour</p> <p>% clients with changes in their circumstances</p>

Use the measures to improve your performance

In the RBA process you then ask seven questions to help you to use this information to plan for service improvement. They are:

1. Who are our customers?
2. How can we measure if our customers are better off?
3. How can we measure if we're delivering our services well?
4. How are we doing on the most important of these measures?
5. Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?
6. What works to do better, including no-cost and low-cost ideas?

And one last thing

In order to see if your performance is improving you need to have a baseline to measure against. Your baseline could be your own service's performance in a previous year, it could be a similar service, or it could be a set of standards. Click here for more information about [How to set a baseline outcome indicator](#).

RBA suggests that you **forecast** your baseline as well. This means you look at what your baseline data says for the last few years and then you project forward what it will look like. **You are not required to do this for your funding contracts** but we are including this information because if you can achieve improvements on your baseline it is important information to share with stakeholders.

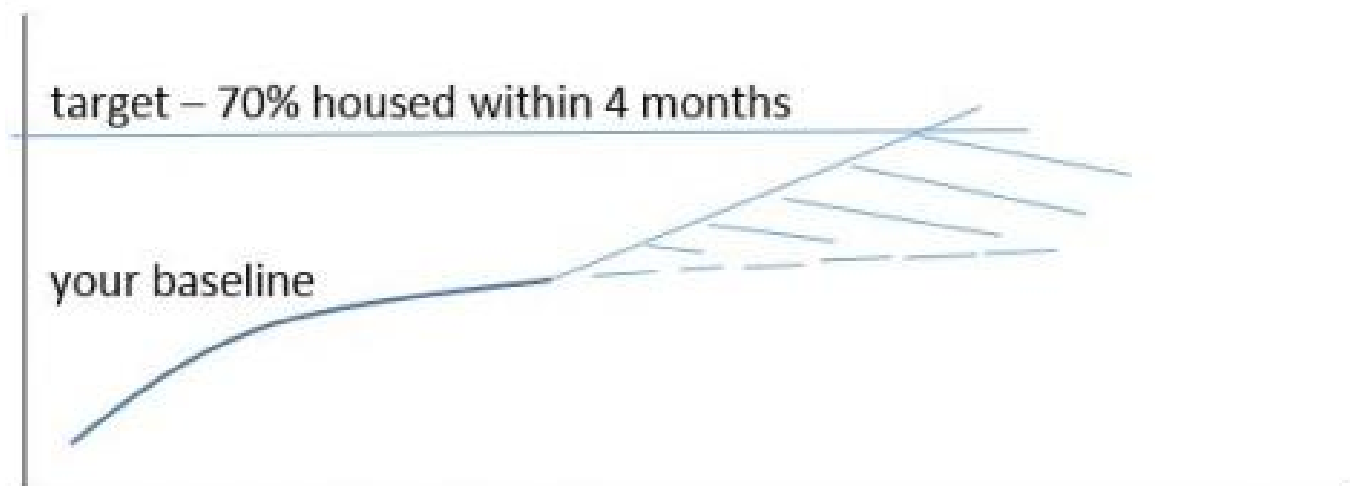
Here's an example of how the RBA thinkers suggest you forecast your baseline.

In the example below the service helps people find housing. Its performance measure is 'number of clients housed'. Let's imagine that no matter how hard the service tries it struggles to get more than 40% of its clients housed, but it wants to do better. Based on what it has been achieving in the past the service below predicts that it won't see much improvement on what it can deliver.



Why do you bother with the forecast? The RBA thinkers stress that forecasting the baseline is essential for two reasons. First, it prompts you to ask 'is this future ok?' If it's not ok you'll probably immediately start planning what you can do about it. Second, it helps you to show improvements against what would have happened without changes. Perhaps you'll change strategies and help more people find housing. Then you might be able to say 'in the last six months 50% of our clients were housed. That is 70 *extra* people who were supported to find housing on the baseline because we did x, y and z'

Once you have a baseline you can set a target for your efforts, a level of achievement that you want to reach. Your target might be 'the target is 70% of clients housed' or it might include a deadline 'the target is 70% of clients housed within four months of them contacting our service'.



It might take a while to achieve your target. Perhaps factors outside your service are affecting its ability to be effective – housing is a great example of this. The story of what is happening to slow down your achievement is one worth telling and thinking about too. The questions ‘who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?’, ‘what works to do better, including no-cost and low-cost ideas?’ and ‘what do we propose to do?’ could drive your service to completely revise its approach to tackling the problems your clients are facing.

In RBA language stopping a problem getting worse, or speeding up a good change is called ‘turning the curve’. To reach a target is also to turn the curve.

Referenced links

- [The language of RBA: what we talk about when we talk about outcomes measurement](#)
- [What is a Theory of Change?](#)