



## **Stronger Families Alliance membership structure**

In July 2013 the SFA introduced a new membership structure. The new membership structure makes it simpler for your organisation or network to connect to the SFA, be clear about your role in the SFA and to coordinate with other organisations to implement the Child and Family Plan (the Plan). The three points of connection to the SFA are now as:

1. Core members
2. Partners
3. Affiliates

Each type of membership contributes differently to the SFA's (i) Governance structure (ii) Implementation of the Child and Family Plan (iii) Evaluation process and (iv) Promotion / social marketing activities.

The different ways the membership types contribute to the SFA are set out below with:

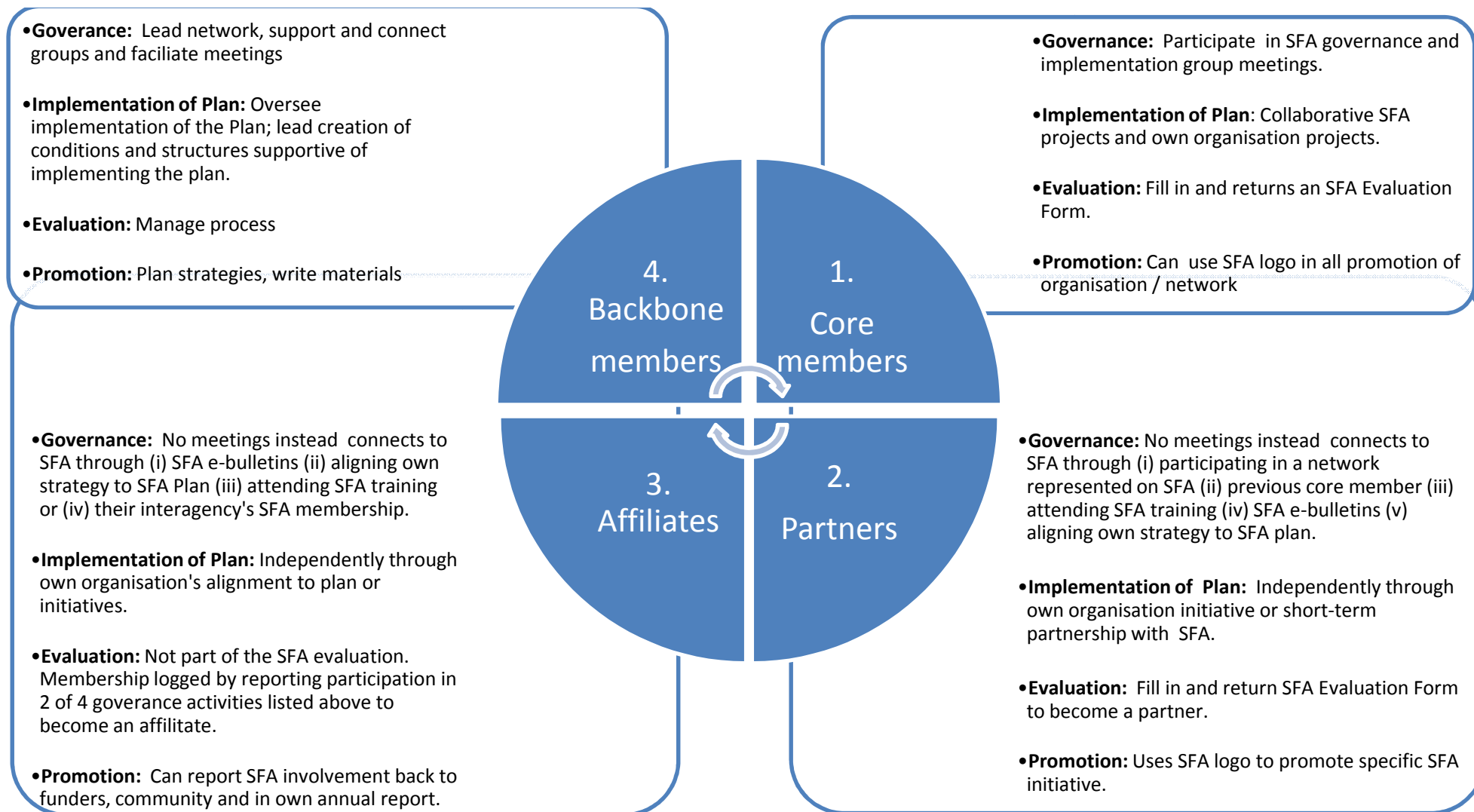
1. An overview
2. Full descriptions of types of membership
3. FAQ

***To discuss joining the SFA please contact the Stronger Families Alliance collaboration convener, Tanya James, (02) 47805542***

We will review our new membership structure at the end of the 2013-14 year with a view to refining it. We welcome any feedback you can provide about how to make our membership structure work best for your organization, program or network. Please call the Stronger Families Alliance collaboration manager with your feedback.

To find out more about the SFA and receive our newsletter: [www.strongerfamilies.co](http://www.strongerfamilies.co)

## 1. Overview of different membership types:



## 2. Full description of membership types:

### Core members:

Governance: Core members regularly attend SFA governance groups – the SFA Main Group; the Executive; or one of the three Implementation Groups – Connecting Families to Neighbourhood Service Networks, Moving Children Beyond Vulnerability and Creating Child Friendly Communities. Organisations that take a leadership role driving School Centred Community Hub steering groups are also core members. These members are considered 'core' because these meetings form a local, self designed governance structure charged with implementation of the Plan.

Implementation of Plan: Core members collaborate with each other to implement the Plan directly through initiatives and / or participation in sustaining the SFA governance structure. Core members also implement the Plan independently in their own organisation or network, independently of the SFA governance structure.

Evaluation: Core members have a commitment to evaluating the implementation of the Plan. To this ends they fill in and return a SFA Evaluation Form. Core members contribute to the ongoing development of the SFA evaluation approach as part of their participation in the SFA Governance structure.

Promotion: Because core members are involved in the SFA in multiple ways, they can use the SFA logo alongside their organisational logo.

*Example 1:* Centrelink Katoomba sits on the SFA main group and Moving Children Beyond Implementation Group. Its 2013 evaluation form shows that it is going to increase staffs' child development knowledge so they are better able to address children's needs within Centrelink services.

*Example 2:* Wimlah sits on the SFA main group. In 2013 Wimlah submitted an evaluation form on behalf of the network they represent, the Coalition Against Violence and Neglect. Wimlah submitted a second evaluation form about an initiative it will pursue independently to distribute a resource about domestic violence prevention to universal services.

**Partners:**

Governance: Partners do not attend SFA governance groups. Typically they have a close association with the SFA through being a regular participant in a network represented on the SFA; having previously been a core member or attending SFA professional development events. Partner members also connect through the SFA newsletter and their own contacts.

Implementation of the Plan: Partners independently implement the Plan through aligning their organisation to the Plan or through specific initiatives.

Evaluation: Partners fill in and return an SFA Evaluation Form about the specific initiative they are implementing in short term partnership with an SFA group or independently.

Promotion: Partner members use the SFA logo to promote the specific initiative they have submitted an evaluation form about.

*Example 1:* The BMCC Libraries sat on the SFA Main group until 2012. They now maintain an informal link to the SFA through their networking with School Centred Community Hub steering, plus attending SFA professional development events. In 2013 the library service has submitted an evaluation form about a child and community consultation process they will run as part of the library service level in partnership with the Creating a Child Friendly Community group. The SFA logo will be used in promotion of the child consultation.

**Affiliates:**

Governance: Affiliates do not attend SFA governance groups. They have an association with the SFA through (i) receiving SFA e-bulletins (ii) aligning their own organisation's strategy to the Plan (iii) attending SFA training or (iv) their inter-agency's SFA membership.

Implementation of the Plan: Affiliates implement the Plan by aligning their organisation to the principles of the Plan, attending SFA training or being part of an interagency initiative to implement the Plan.

Evaluation: Affiliate members do not participate in the SFA evaluation process. They acquire affiliate status by reporting annually to the SFA Collaboration Convenor two SFA activities from the following list: (i) key staff members receive the SFA e-bulletins (ii) own strategy

demonstrates alignment to the Plan (iii) key staff attended SFA training in the year (iv) staff attend an inter-agency that is an SFA core member (Blue Mountains Interagency, Child and Family Forum, the Coalition Against Violence and Neglect).

Promotion: Affiliate members do not use the SFA logo.

*Example 1:* A number of organisations, for example, neighbourhood centres, schools and early childhood centres have used the SFA development events to keep up with best practice and then make changes to their services.

### **Backbone members:**

The role of the Backbone is to lead the SFA & support members to implement the Child and Family Plan. Blue Mountains City Council's Community Outcomes Team is the primary Backbone Member. The Backbone creates conditions that support implementation of the Plan. This includes creating vision and strategy processes; creating alignment between the different organisations, groups and network implementing the Plan; designing and managing evaluation; and encouraging stakeholder support for the policy directions the SFA uses. Future new areas of development will include building community engagement with the SFA and sourcing external funding.

Organisations with specific backbone functions are also Mountains Community Resource Network (who lead strategic SFA initiatives); Gateway Family Services (who lead the Moving Children Beyond Vulnerability group) and Mountains Outreach Community Service (who lead the Creating a Child Friendly Community group).

## **3. FAQ's**

### **Can my organisation or network change their SFA membership? How?**

Yes. To change membership from an Affiliate to Partner, (i.e. a more resource intensive form of membership) you need to fill in an SFA Evaluation Form showing how your organisation / network is implementing the Plan and return it to the SFA Collaboration Convenor.

To change membership from a partner to core member, (i.e. a more resource intensive form of membership) you need to become a member of an SFA meeting group, as well as filling in an SFA Evaluation Form. This process begins with an interview with the SFA Collaboration Convenor. As your organisational priorities and workloads change, you can also change your membership to a less resource intensive type.

## **I'm thinking of joining a SFA governance group. What does it involve? How does my organisation benefit?**

There are different types of SFA governance groups are: (i) The Main Group (ii) 3 Implementation groups each aligned with the 3 parts of the Child and Family Plan – Connecting Families to Neighbourhood Service Networks; Moving Children Beyond Vulnerability and Creating a Child Friendly Community. There is also an Executive that members from the Main Group are elected onto.

SFA Implementation Groups drive the implementation of the Child and Family Plan through planned, collaborative, multi-organisational projects. SFA organisations join an Implementation Group because working with an Implementation Group helps them to achieve their business objectives more effectively than pursuing these objectives alone. As well as attending six meetings each year, being part of an Implementation Group involves working together on projects outside of meetings.

To find out more about Implementation Group membership, download *SFA Implementation Groups* from [www.strongerfamilies.co](http://www.strongerfamilies.co)

### **How does the SFA evaluation form work?**

The SFA Evaluation Form is the SFA EAT (Emergent Action Template) Evaluation Form. The Form is a simple two-page document structured to help members create a simple action plan to execute their initiative. The structure of the form and evaluation process reflects the reality that SFA members often use arising opportunities to implement the Plan that are not fully predictable or under their control. This is why we call the form an *emergent* action template. The SFA EAT Evaluation Form is filled in at the beginning of the financial year; updated mid-year and reporting upon at the end of the year. To view the form and read more about evaluation go to: <http://www.strongerfamilies.co/evaluation-and-improvement.html>

### **4. Other documents to read:**

*SFA Membership Structure* at [www.strongerfamilies.co](http://www.strongerfamilies.co)

*SFA EAT (Emergent Action Template) Evaluation Form* at <http://www.strongerfamilies.co/evaluation-and-improvement.html>